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visual ethnography



VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHY

Vol. IX, N. 1, 2020

Doing ethnographically grounded music videos

issue edited by Dario Ranocchiari and Eugenio Giorgianni

ISSN 2281-1605

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ANVUR Rivista di Classe A, Macrosettore 11/A5

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COVER IMAGE: The MuchilottuBhagavathi. Kerala, India. (photograph by Anil Gopi)

DOING ETHNOGRAPHICALLY GROUNDED MUSIC VIDEOS

Dario Ranocchiari, *Universidad de Granada*
Eugenio Giorgianni, *Royal Holloway, University of London*

ABSTRACT

This paper establishes the topic of the monographic number of Visual Ethnography that its authors co-edited. It begins with an account of how they found themselves in the situation of producing music videos while they were doing ethnographic fieldwork, and how it pushed them to gather other researchers with similar experiences in conference panels and this dossier. After proposing a definition for ethnographically grounded music videos, the authors present the contributions to the dossier. The paper closes with a more theoretical proposal, centred on the idea of ethnographically grounded music videos as transmodal outcomes.

KEYWORDS

Visual ethnography, collaborative research, music, co-utility, transmodality

BIO

Dario Ranocchiari is professor at the Dept. of Social Anthropology, Universidad de Granada (Spain), and collaborator researcher at Instituto de Etnomusicologia (INET-md, Portugal). He carried out ethnographic research in Portugal, Colombia and Spain, mostly on the relationships between music and ethnicity. His current research projects share the interest in the ethnographic use of fiction and the development of participatory visual methods.

Eugenio Giorgianni, born in Palermo, Italy, is an anthropologist and an audiovisual member of the Big Tree Collective. He has conducted research concerning urban anthropology, music and migration in Italy, Spain, Morocco, the UK, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. PhD in Music at Royal Holloway, University of London, his doctoral research examines the musical languages of Congolese migrants through a participatory audiovisual ethnography.

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1. Why this dossier

The idea of editing a monographic number of *Visual Ethnography* on ethnographic music video making came from a series of encounters we (Dario and Eugenio) had at conferences of anthropology and ethnomusicology. But it came, most of all, from our different experiences as videomakers-ethnographers. Different but with at least one point in common: the surprise we had discovering that a collateral and nearly accidental by-product of our academic researches, turned out to be a central piece of the ethnographic knowledge we produced.

I (Dario) remember very well the first time I presented an academic paper on the topic. Around twenty people were assisting to a panel dedicated to collaboration in music and dance, and my paper was centred on different attempt of 'shared research' I made along my career. I talked about the unforeseen adventure I had of co-producing music videos with musicians of the Caribbean island of San Andrés, Colombia. When the time for the debate arrived, silence was broken by a single astonished question: was it true that one of the music videos reached around 7 million clicks? Yes, it was (it reached 58 by the date). And then, silence fell again.

I was quite out of sorts when I left the room, but on the stairs one of the people that attended the panel stopped me. "I've shot a music video myself while I was doing fieldwork", she said, "but I never talked about this in a conference." Shortly after, another person told me the same thing, letting me understand that he did not considered his experience as a music video maker sufficiently 'scientific' to be shared with other scholars. When a third person confessed overlunch that he let some rappers talk him into not one, but three music videos, I understood that the society of the videomakers-ethnographers is secret, but not necessarily small.

Meanwhile the other editor of this dossier, Eugenio, had co-produced a music video with the Big Tree Collective in Goma, Congo (Giorgianni 2017; Mista Faba et al. 2015). And we decided to gather some videomakers-ethnographers in a panel of the 2016 AIBR International Conference of Anthropology. Apart from us two, the other panellists were Kieran Hanson, author of a documentary on the new dawn of creativity in audio-visual media in post-war Sierra Leone that contains two music videos (Hanson 2011); and Yushi Yanohara, a Japanese ethnographer and rapper who worked with an hip hop crew in Cameroon. Number of people assisting: 3. Attending other conferences we were luckier, perhaps due to their organization in plenary sessions and not parallel panels: many people, few questions, a lot of perplexity and – sometimes – more private confessions.

This great deal of absence and silence, and also, of whispered sympathy and palpable suspicion, made us clear – partially, to our surprise – that our line of research was somehow hard to talk about within the confines of ethnographic decency. What makes unspeakable the experience of having made music videos while doing ethnographic fieldwork? We will try to answer this question in the next section (where we make a try of definition for ethnographically grounded music videos). But the reason that got us to organize this monographic number is that we are persuaded that it is worthwhile to share these experiences of videomaking, and to reflect on their (possible) contributions to the ethnographic process of knowledge making.

The book and DVD *Ethnomusicology in Audiovisual Times* includes our first trying of systematizing ideas on ethnographically grounded music videos (Ranocchiari & Giorgianni 2018), and a track with a short compilation that can help the reader to get an idea:

<https://vimeo.com/223282472/ff6887ac01>

We do understand the perplexity of many scholars to consider a music video as an ethnographic outcome. In my case (Dario), the story of my resistance to the idea to be involved into this kind of visual productions dates to 2002. During the fieldwork for my first long-term ethnography – that I made in Lisbon with African-Portuguese rappers (Ranocchiari 2011) – I refused many times to film the music videos they wanted to make. The fear of the 'good ethnographer' to lose control on the research data, to fail discerning the product of participant observation to what my participation had contributed to create, is the same fear that made me initially refuse to produce music videos during my second long-term fieldwork. In 2009 I had already spent some months living in the Caribbean island of San Andrés, working on a project on the relationships between musical practices and performative ethnicity (Ranocchiari 2020), when Iván Samir and Maki Egusguiza, enthusiastic partners of the little production company Cotton Tree Media, asked me to cover their cameraman in the production of some music

videos they were preproducing. Initially, I did not accept. I wanted to study *their* music videos for *my* research: how could I do it if I had accepted? How could I analyse these videos if my aesthetic choices and preconceived ideas on ‘a Sanandreaan music video’ had contributed to shape them? But I eventually agreed, mostly due to the friendship I had begun to share with Maki and Iván. I had no suspect that since then my relations with the musicians of the island would change radically.

Without realizing it, my role had shifted from that of a researcher who wanted to work *on* Sanandreaan music, to *another actor* of local music scene. An actor that was involved in the production of a musical artefact (the music video) that was anything but secondary for the music market. This passage of status intensified the relations with my research subjects. Doors that I had been knocking at for months, unfolded spontaneously. Interviews I haven’t been able to get, transformed themselves into friendly lunches in which relevant topics for my research flowed more plentiful than the (abundant, by the way) whisky.

However, producing the first videos (Land Rose 2011; Rayo & Toby 2011) I made what I could for limiting my creative contribution and to follow as strictly as possible what director Maki Egusguiza told me to do. I tried to take advantage of my participation to the video making for building ethnographic data that were consistent to my research program. But as months go by, without even realizing it, my interest into the music video making has replaced the academic priorities of my research agenda. As I wrote elsewhere (Ranocchiari, forthcoming; 2015) I got carried away during the shooting and editing of the two other videos (Colombian Party Cartel 2011; South Side Crew 2011). I just accepted to lose control on the situation. For instance, I followed closely the editing (I had refused even to witness the editing of the first videos). Reading my diary once back to Spain, I realized with surprise that field notes had shifted into production notes: the intense experience of collaborating with my local partners into music video production overlapped any other ethnographic concern.

I (Eugenio) also felt a similar sensation of intensification when I worked with Congolese musician Mulele Matondo Afrika to his video *Seke Bien!* (2016). When I mentioned in our first conversation that I had in my mind to do a music video clip with him, I had already told him I was interested in Congolese music, and we were having a pleasant chat on the topic; but since he realised I was into videos, the discussion started vibrating at a more intense frequency. As we were envisioning the possibility of *doing something together*, the exchange of information between Mulele and I went deeper, and faster: he started browsing through folders and folders of raw footage while sharing with me his ideas about visual strategies and politics in music and images. When he finally invited me to join his current video clip project as a camera person, I felt the thrill of a new, sparkling dimension expanding through my research. In no time, I was booked for a video shooting session on 24 hours notice.

The day after, as soon as I arrived at the shooting place – a warehouse undergoing restoration in North London – I got enmeshed in a boisterous nexus of art-making. A small crew of Mulele’s friends had gathered, each with their own creative agenda. The singers were still recording their vocal lines through a studio microphone plugged into a laptop while the actors were painting dots and lines on each other’s faces and arms. Mulele was showing some Congolese dance patterns to his dancer friends, who were replicating his movements including their repertoires into the choreography, the song playing in a loop from the speakers, over and over again.

Except for Mulele, nobody had heard the song before, and the lyrics in Lingala were incomprehensible to part of the crew. The participants tuned in to the project’s general mood by looking at each other’s artistic practices, eventually discussing some detail about their part with Mulele. Rather than focusing on the *significance* of the song, they were more concerned with exploring the creative potential of the performing space that was taking shape.

Decorative elements were adding up on the set, animated by the light of trembling candle flames as were the bodies of the dancers and actors rehearsing their routines. The camera already on, Mulele was briefly explaining to the protagonist of the clip, a Londoner of African Caribbean origin, that one of her roles in the video was that of an African priestess. A Congolese backing vocalist who was taking a break from singing joined the conversation, suggesting her how to express the evoking of ancestral powers in a short choreographic sequence. Amused, she started to explore her role, moving her body on stage and playing around with the shell necklaces, the straw skirts, and the other objects Mulele had spread around over the floor.

Sensorily overloaded, I was astray, needlessly trying to understand the whirl of symbols, information and codes acting simultaneously in the same space. My attention was constantly shifting between the

(dis)play of body painting, skin tones, muscle movements, colourful clothes, intricate rhythm patterns, and multilingual verbal exchanges between the artists. The rich texture of the whole creative process was way out of my control.

Yet, I was there to film: I had to commit my body to the task of fruitfully using the camera in such a frenzied environment, and everyone was expecting me to do my part. Unable to just observe, I surrendered myself and got absorbed by that acephalous crew of music makers. Like any other participant, I stopped asking questions in my mind and started paying attention to the performances, moving myself and the camera in the space to canalise the flows of creative energies into the lens. I realised that the performers were directing the film more than myself: the actors' bodies, the mise-en-scène, the lights and shadows in the room were generating most of the narrative drama in the video, balancing the selective power of the camera operator.

The video clip was growing on its own. The original idea had expanded, fed by the artists' contributions. Each action was repeated and changed in front of the camera, each scene led to the next one through unforeseen creative dynamics. The synergy between the participants was gradually intensifying together with their enthusiasm: the atmosphere was a mixture of relaxation and creative frenzy. Pushed by the collective excitement and by the beauty of what was happening in front of me, I started engaging with the performers through the camera, spurring them, intervening in the stage dynamics, constantly feeding back. It felt nice. The concern of navigating an overflowing stream of information was compensated by the pleasure of sharing in this wonderful practice. At some point in the shooting, Mulele unexpectedly told me: "Man, it's your turn! Take your shoes off, step in the circle, and dance, just express yourself. I want you in the video, definitely!" Awkward and embarrassed, I passed the camera to Mulele and randomly danced on the improvised stage, happily entangled in that audiovisual web of authorships and representations.

My first experience in collaborative ethnographic music video making was astonishing. When I started editing the video clip a few days later, I wanted to reproduce the creative processes I had witnessed. Hence, I structured the video around the participants' dynamics and improvised narratives, respecting their paces, with little editing. I was wrong. Mulele participated in the editing changing my concept, tailoring my sequence to the song's polyrhythm, demanding faster image changes, interpolating different scenes, introducing jump cuts, adding effects in postproduction. During the long editing process, he remastered the song a couple of times and did a few shooting sessions on his own, each time adding material to the editing timeline, reworking the cut, rethinking the entire video depending on new ideas or feedback. Although reluctantly, I had to accept his choices: the video clip was for *his* song, and it was up to him to decide what suited best for Kinshasa bars, or Congolese TV channels, or African web radios, or whatever audience he was aiming at. The final result was an amazing assemblage of images, sounds and digital effects that keeps amusing me ever since, where I can hardly distinguish my ideas, editing and camera work from Mulele and his artist friends'.

The few fellow researchers we met who have experienced music video making – and the fewer ones who were keen on sharing these experiences with us at conference panels and seminars – all came upon very similar environmental conditions. The overlapping of various artistic practices and technical expertises make video clips very rich, yet complex processes over which the researcher cannot exert complete control. A multimodal artifact, the video clip is the nexus of multiple agencies, agendas and discourses whose audiovisual outcomes are often surprising and potentially bewildering, and rarely rest on the researcher's will. These are probably some of the reasons why video clips are not spoken out loud by ethnographers. Due to the very same reasons, we consider music video clips to be thriving research fieldworks and promising loci to rethink the discipline.

2. Ethnographically grounded music videos

If someone should watch the video clips presented in this dossier without reading the papers, she could hardly distinguish them from other music videos and guess that they are ethnographic products. In fact, music video clip is an autonomous audiovisual genre that assembles and operates outside of academia, ranging from video art and music experimentalism to commercial (Arnold et al. 2017; Illescas 2015; Frith et al. 1993). But most notably, it is the global language par excellence of the transmission of music trends and the mass consumption of music goods.

An ethnographically grounded music video does not necessarily have to rely on specific stylistic features, or autonomous filming techniques, or univocal methodologies. The creative aim of the researcher in accordance with the other actors involved is central in this kind of visual productions: creative, as the main aim in doing an ethnographic video clip is to produce, rather than to represent, what happens in front of the lens. The music video composes music and sounds, images, moving bodies, places, digital effects and other non-human actors into a hypertext that accompanies, expands, or is counterbalanced by a related musical text, establishing with it a multifaceted relationship beyond representation.

By joining this creative endeavour, the researcher partakes in the manufacturing of one or more staged music performances which will be re-manufactured through montage. The final outcome is a collective assemblage of multiple creative practices and discourses wherein anthropology is minority, for the complexity of its conception, production, and circulation overflows the limits of academia. To embark on a video clip production means for the ethnographer to largely share their control with a plethora of creative actors. The outcomes, the forms, the creative inputs, the communicative strategies, and all the other agenda shaping it are unforeseeable and depend entirely on the specific situation.

This unpredictable, unstable, research attitude leaves no space for any epistemological dictatorship: the researcher has no means to impose their views and their representational forms, for there is no space for them other than the camera movements in the field and a place in the edit suite, squeezed in among the other participants. Music videos allow no time to procrastinate decisions, nor space to make between researcher and fieldwork to rationalise, decant, digest the experience. The use of music video clips as a research method entails a radical collaborative commitment, puts into effect post-ontological objections to the division between theory and practise, and radically shares the power of producing knowledge between the research protagonists by substituting invention to representation as the main research rationale (Dattatreya & Marrero-Guillamón 2019).

Besides entailing a radical commitment to collaborate, the peculiar attitude of the ethnographer operating the camera for a music video touches on another nerve for the academic community: the role of the researcher's emotions, tastes, desires, opinions, and senses.

Like many ethnographic music video stories say, to be involved in a video clip is great fun. Low-budget music video production – a situation that applies to most if not all the case studies below – often entails a network of friends and partners sharing skills, interests, creative tasks, resources, locations, and free time, who join efforts to imaginatively carry out their artistic endeavour. The ethnographer usually gets involved in the project as a volunteer camera operator: she is just a node of the video clip network, a resource that the producers – sometimes the musicians themselves – have gathered free of charge. The usual outcome of these creative dynamics of mutual help is a friendly environment where the researcher, as everyone else involved, can experiment with new languages, play around with ideas and roles, and meet interesting people. This fosters personal exchanges with the research subjects, on a deeper personal level, and also increases the amount of information circulating between the ethnographer and the other research subject. But this comes at the cost of a consistent shift in the researcher's position: the ethnographer loses their aura of prestige and becomes workforce, having to be ready to renegotiate entirely or substantially the research agenda. Moreover, producing a video clip implies for the researcher to expose feelings, to rely on emotions, personal tastes and sensorial impressions, deliberately interfering with every cultural dynamic at play through irreversible decisions taken in the blink of an eye, far away from any academic comfort zone. This intense fieldwork involvement, its thickness and messiness, oblige the researcher to take position – a position very close to the other research subjects.

Music video making brings creativity and proactivity to the forefront of ethnographic practice; consequently, the ethnographer's choices, tastes, personal inclinations become immediately visible and directly shape the musical object of the research. The audiovisual ethnographer plunges into the observed dynamics, collapsing every remnant of distance between the subjects and the objects, the outside and the inside, the lens and the scene. The practice of music video making imposes to the researcher a bodily commitment and a sensory saturation that become non-verbal communication, emotional intelligence, intimate connection to the fieldwork and its protagonists. The ethnographic music video clip allows anthropologists to produce knowledge with their bodies, to communicate with their interlocutors – both in the field and afterwards – through the fabric of dreams, desires, and feelings, activating new contaminations between anthropological disciplines and other human practices.

Giving a minimalist definition to these peculiar visual artefacts, they are basically music videos produced while (part of) their authors was doing ethnographic fieldwork; whose fieldwork they influenced and from which have been already influenced. As we explain in the last section of this paper, our ambition for the future ethnographic use of this kind of videos is bigger, but at this early stage, we use the term ‘ethnographically grounded music video’ mainly in this more generic sense.

So they are not conventional ethnographic videos. They don’t document any aspect of the real life of local communities. They don’t portray directly the daily life of subjects that are representative of a certain cultural context. They don’t tell the story of an ethnographic encounter... they are rather one of the consequences of it. If that weren’t enough, they are works of fiction that move on the imaginary level and not on the level of the academic documentation of cultural practices. Recalling an old debate, they try to work on ‘the true’ and not on ‘the real’, as conventional ethnography does.

Fiction is helpful in ethnography mostly when it is used as a methodological tool for achieving a level of knowledge (about the musicking; the creative process; the social significance the subjects ascribe to what they do) that would not be achieved in any other way. The title of the dossier and at least two of the papers evoke the concept of ‘ethnofiction’ as close to that of ethnographically grounded music video. Jean Rouch’s ethnofictions are among the first and most accomplished ethnographic visual experiments that try to go beyond factual representation and scientific authority. In these films, participants are encouraged to express themselves establishing a direct relationship with the camera: the cultural aspects that are captured on film are those of their personal and cultural imaginary, not the product of some kind of phenomenological observation of social life.

As we wrote elsewhere,

“Our idea of participatory music video transfers to a musical context Rouch’s practice of ethnofictional filmmaking. After all, participatory music videos share with ethnofictions the idea that people express, through a performance facilitated by the camera, some aspects of a more intimate truth that otherwise would stay implicit. The central importance that Rouch gives to improvisation and spontaneity at expense of the narrative combines very well with the non-narrative structure of most music videos. And even if the pre-conceived or even pre-recorded musical track limits in some way the freedom of improvisation and requires a certain shooting plan, it also allows experimentation with the video layer largely independent of the audio layer.” (Ranocchiari & Giorgianni 2018)

The hybrid, ambiguous status of music video clip as a communicative mode is undoubtedly one of the reasons for the academic reticence we have encountered so far. This special issue presents a series of ethnographic experiences that embrace the otherness of music video clip into the academic debate, exploring the short circuits and the hybridisations, rethinking fieldwork and producing critical discourses *from* the otherness of the music video clip intended as a mode of production of knowledge.

3. The papers. Notes on the contributions to the dossier

The papers collected in this monographic number of *Visual Ethnography* are all about experiences of academic and non-academic researchers who participated into music video making processes while doing fieldwork.

Locations, social contexts, music genres and visual approaches are different from each other: rap by native Mapuche artists in Southern Chile (Rojas, Blanco & Mellado 2020), Brazilian pop music in São Paulo (Leaha & Hilgenberg 2020), working class rock in Southern Spain (Yáñez 2020), women-centred music in Mozambique (Boswall 2020), Brazilian funk, again in São Paulo (Boudreault-Fournier, Hikiji & Caiuby 2020) and Indigenous rap in Edmonton, Canada (MacDonald 2020). A problem of space made us decide to not include here our personal papers on the videomaking experiences we had with Congolese musicians in Africa and in the diaspora (Eugenio) and with Caribbean and Al Andalus-inspired musicians in Colombia and Granada (Dario).

The dossier opens with the paper by Rojas, Blanco and Mellado on the production of a music video with rappers of a Mapuche community in Valdivia, Southern Chile. The authors analyse their collaborative experience of co-creation as a possible way to go beyond the ‘ontological turn’ in anthropology. Having Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Philippe Descola and Bruno Latour as principal references, the perspective of the ‘ontological turn’ strongly invites to ‘take seriously’ the ontological

premises of the people the ethnographers work with. The authors of this paper took this challenge to the extreme consequences and decided to accept that the anthropological discourse (usually shaped by academic modality of knowledge transmission) should respect the format their epistemic partners (Marcus & Holmes 2008: 83) consider more adequate to convey the message: the rap music video. A music video – and not (only) an academic paper – as a product of collaborative research, as a ‘serious’ vehicle for critical knowledge as in the best hip hop tradition:

“The process of building the video clip [*Nuestro Territorio*], besides destabilizing the researcher/researched dichotomy, made the academic emphasis of the results and consequential limited reach of the resulting knowledge more complex. In other words, it allowed transit in and out of academic circles.” (Rojas, Blanco & Mellado 2020)

In the article that closes the dossier, Michael B. MacDonald expresses a similar concern for what we define, in the last section of this paper, ‘transmodal outcomes’. Reflecting on the making of a sort of expanded hip hop video, the musical ethnofiction *Unspittable* that he produced with Canadian Indigenous rappers from Edmonton, the author notes that this kind of video allows the researcher-artist to engage into the production of screen objects that traverse different media, networks and audiences, while at the same time they maintain a commitment “to the study of musical meaning in its broadest sense” (MacDonald 2020).

If MacDonald rethinks the classic form of ethnofiction harmonising it with Les Blank’s conception of music film as a piece of music, in which everything happens musically, Boudreault-Fournier, Hikiji & Caiuby (2020) use their paper to reflect on the music video sequences contained in their ethnofiction *Fabrik Funk*. If these authors consider the ethnofiction as a way to approach, through fictionalization, the fabrication of the everyday, the music video sequences break the daily routine of the main character, the aspiring funk MC Negaly, a young women from the district of Cidade Tiradentes).

Like MacDonald quoting Les Blank, Mihai Andrei Leaha and Katharina Hilgenberg consider their audiovisual collaboration with Brazilian pop artist Kasper Maldonado as an act of musicking – rather, of ‘videocliping’, paraphrasing Christopher Smalls – and approach ethnographic research as mainly a moment of co-creation spurred by the dialogue between “epistemic partners.” The article understands ethnographic music video clip within the frame of multimodality, as the encounter between multiple voices, artistic practices and political wills. Coherently, the essay is structured as an assemblage of written texts, time-lapse animations, photographic collages, and the music video clip, reproducing the non-linear multivocality of the research and calling for an active reception by the reader/viewer/listener.

The space, “a locus of entanglement between human and non-human agencies,” assumes a crucial importance: the Kasper Factory, an artistic hub close to Sao Paulo’s Municipal Market, provides the creative environment, the political discourses and clashes, and above all, the encounters that animate the artistic endeavour of Kasper, the authors, and their friends. In agreement with Rabinow, the fieldwork becomes assemblage-work, the creative act of putting together the different components of the musical texture. The no-budget production of the video clip for Papoula, a love song between Kasper and a puppy flower, requires the participants to multiply and swap their roles during the video production: this creative roleplay is the scenario where the authors transform anthropological practice into multimodal invention, endorsing the political stances of freedom of expression and the joyful imagination of an artistic collective facing homophobia and repression in contemporary Brazil.

Analysing their multiple roles of anthropologists, filmmakers, and friends, Leaha and Katharina Hilgenberg take particular attention to the scenography and the mise-en-scène of the music video clip as elements of a ‘spatio-temporal event’ of great ethnographic thickness, wherein the creative involvement of the researchers is the key factor to explore the complex fabric of the musicians’ imagination.

The relation between artistic creation and research that Leaha and Hilgenberg raise is a recurring subject throughout the dossier, and the paper by Karen Boswall is not an exception. The British anthropologist and filmmaker, who lived 17 years in Mozambique, writes about the making of a series of videos entitled *Fala Minha Irmã* (*Speak My Sister*). The collaborative production of the videos, that arise from workshops with the aspiring filmmakers and conclude with a tour of screenings in the places where the films were shot, is deeply concerned with gender equality. They have the precise objective of provoking discussion about the treatment of women in both the audience and young filmmakers (female

and male) that participated in the project, expressively defined by Boswall as ‘the knowledge makers of the future’.

The knowledge makers of the future are not ‘informants’ in an extractive research, but active parts of a collaborative project of video production that serves as a catalyst for the construction of shared knowledge. As in the videomaking experience described by Rojas, Blanco and Mellado, also Boswall’s paper is a response to the invitation to ‘take seriously’ the ontological premises of her epistemic partners and to put all the project to the service of the building a better vision of future. From here comes the choice to use the filmic language of Mozambican music videos. The intention is not to replicate the gender bias that often define mainstream music video language (Illescas 2015), but to accept that *that* filmic language is the principal aesthetic reference for young filmmakers (and audience). It can be re-semanticized, helping to reach an audience that would remain indifferent to filmic products like documentaries, that are conventionally considered more adequate to ‘educate consciences’.

The idea of counter-appropriation through audiovisual spaces and the use of music video language to foster rhetoric of contestation are also the main research focus of Paloma Yáñez Serrano, who addresses her experience of producing a “rural-punk” music video by Chotajo, a rock band of agricultural workers in the province of Almería, Southern Spain, as a collateral experience she had while doing fieldwork on one of the most important intensive agriculture areas in Europe. By analysing the filmmaking experience of this do-it-yourself band, the author explores through the video clip the (environ)mental ecology of a generation facing cultural and economic collapse. Music becomes a practice of everyday resistance channelling the anger and the sense of displacement experienced by young people, providing them with alternative popular narratives at the same time as letting them seeking refuge in a musical escapism, away from the industrial reality they live immersed in. The music video clip is an adequate language to reveal the existence of counter-discourses and to foster unconformity by overlapping musical imaginaries to local landscapes.

4. Towards transmodal outcomes

The contributions we selected show that an ethnographically grounded music video can be a musical ethnofiction, either thought as an autonomous product or inserted in a longer cinematic text, as in the case of *Fabrik Funk*. It can be of the same duration of its related music track, or it can expand into a feature film like *Unspittable*. It can be conceived as an audiovisual language colliding with cinema like in the *Fala Minha Imã* series, where documentaries are turned into musical portraits through the attitude of the video clip. They can also be conceived as video art pieces like *Papoula*; as instruments for community activism like *Nuestro Territorio*; or as collaborative devices maintaining the format of commercial video clips while promoting musical unconformity like *Menos Animal*. These forms, by no means exhaustive of the potential range of ethnographic music videos, are not mutually exclusive: in facts, they overlap and graft in the ethnographic experiments presented in this issue. Nonetheless, despite their eclecticism, these experiments introduce a coherent set of methodological choices and critical discourses based on the two elements they have in common: a creative drive in the use of camera while doing fieldwork, and a radical commitment to collaboration.

In fact, a common point to all the contributions is the idea that the process of video making is a shared space-time in which is possible to produce something that would not be possible to produce otherwise. It would not arise in a series of in-depth interviews, it would not emerge as a result of the revision of observational fieldnotes or through the meticulous editing of many terabytes of observational footage. In spite of the different situations and solutions that the authors found in their diverse research contexts, we all agree that music videos such as those described in this monographic number can be considered as fieldwork devices unfolded through creativity by the various subjects involved into the research process. As Estalella and Sánchez-Criado underline:

“In these situations, the traditional tropes of the fieldwork encounter (i.e. immersion and distance) give way to a narrative register of experimentation, where the aesthetics of collaboration in the production of knowledge substitutes or intermingles with the traditional trope of participant observation. Building on this, we propose the concept of ‘experimental collaborations’ to describe and conceptualize this distinctive ethnographic modality.” (Estalella & Sánchez-Criado 2018, p. 2)

But it is not their experimental or creative nature *per se* what interest us mostly of these particular fieldwork devices that are the ethnographically grounded music videos. We are much more interested by what their non- or para- academic nature allows us to do: to open up the research process – the process of ethnographic knowledge making – to people that would be, in a more conventional methodological frame, passive ‘informants’. The interest we have for improving a music video based ethnographic methodology comes from the commitment we feel towards the transformation of the research practices in anthropology and ethnomusicology in a non-extractive, collaborative, shared sense.

To accept to ‘lose control’ and produce music videos with artists that are interested in this kind of product (and not, for instance, in academic papers like this) means to leave behind the idea that ethnographic collaboration means only to share everyday life during fieldwork, or to recognize co-authorship when we write in specialized journals. We consider very important to respect what one of us defined as the principle of ‘co-utility’ of the research outcomes (Ranocchiari 2016). In this perspective, to do collaborative or shared research doesn’t mean only to unfold an efficient methodology for co-researching, but also to find a way to produce outcomes that are equally useful for the different subjects engaged. For instance, this paper is useful for who, like its authors, operate (also) in academic circles. The songs underlying the videos are useful for the musicians that composed and recorded them. But the ethnographically grounded music videos that were born from the encounter (the listening, the dialogue, the negotiation, the sharing) between academic and non-academic subjects, are a quite different thing.

As Dario notes in a recent publication, the problem of the final products is one of the less considered in the literature on collaborative research. Almost always “the process [of co-researching] is rightly considered most important than the product, or, in other words, the process *is* the product, the outcome” (Miguel, Ranocchiari, & Sardo 2020: 377). But if we want the impact of a shared research to go beyond the restricted circle of people who had the opportunity to participate in it, it is very important to transform the ephemeral process of co-researching in more persistent (and shareable) products. This is exactly what videos like those of the project *Fala Minha Irmã* and that of the Mapuche rappers described in this dossier by Boswall and Rojas, Blanco & Mellado try to do.

What is important here is to overcome barriers imposed by the *modality* of knowledge transmission and to produce research outcomes that can be understood both inside and outside the academia. It is not a problem of medium, of using writings rather than audiovisuals, live performance or any combination of them (i.e. through digital ecosystems). It is definitively a matter of mode: how do we shape the knowledges originated by our experience of shared research in an equally efficient way for all the implied subjects?¹ This paper, this dossier, the conferences we attended and the ethnographic documentaries we produced, respect modalities of knowledge transmission that are valid and effective for the international community of scholars. A conventional music video moves into a completely different modality, sharing another specific knowledge to a different target of people through music, photography and montage. If we really want to do research respecting the principle of co-utility, the challenge is to produce transmodal outcomes that are capable to transcend these sealed modalities of knowledge transmission.

But is it possible to make coexist the heart of the knowledge built through a complex process of co-research and co-creation into a peculiar audiovisual product such as a music video? We think yes and we are working on it.² Perhaps, neither the pioneering experiences described in this dossier nor the other we are aware of and that we couldn’t include here, has still produced thoroughly transmodal music videos. However, they are first steps toward them and we hope that collecting these accounts in a monographic number of *Visual Ethnography* can help achieving it.

¹ Our use of the term ‘mode’ is not the same that scholars like Collins, Durrington & Gill (2017) propose when they talk about multimodality (see also Dattatreya & Marrero-Guillamón 2019 and the paper by Leaha and Hilgenberg in this dossier). In the emerging field of multimodal anthropology the main focus is on the media ecologies in which we are immersed (also) as ethnographers, and ‘mode’ is referred as related to the public and collaborative use of different combinations of media platforms. In our case, the reference is lesser marked by technological interfaces. Here, we are not referring to the transmission medium, but to the way in which the knowledge is received and convey meaning, independently from the nature of its support.

² For example, Dario Ranocchiari with the postdoctoral project “Ethnographically grounded video clips as tools for the participatory research of activist practices” (UGR Fellows, Universidad de Granada) and the Diego Carpitella Grant by Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venice).

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FROM MUSIC-VIDEO TO MUSICAL VIDEO PORTRAITS COLLABORATIVE PRODUCTION OF WOMEN'S ETHNOGRAPHIES IN MOZAMBIQUE

Karen Boswall, *University of Sussex*

ABSTRACT

Following Independence in Mozambique in 1975, the newly formed National Film Institute conducted a study into the reception of the audio-visual material being produced and distributed throughout the country by the new generation of Mozambican film-makers. The study, published in 1984, concluded that, for a country with 46 different languages, and high levels of illiteracy, one of the most effective cinematic languages their new generation of local film-makers could use was one drawing extensively on the language of music. Films based on images and music could transcend the cultural and linguistic barriers of the colonially divided nation. Soon after this study was published a civil war brought the training of young Mozambican film-makers to a grinding halt and the report on effective cinematic language for social change was all but forgotten. Only now, as peace and economic growth are bringing relative stability to the country, the next generation of Mozambican film-makers have returned to the language of the music-video as a means to inform, provoke and protest. In this paper, I reflect on how young Mozambican film-makers drew on this rich legacy of musical film language in the collaborative creation of a film series entitled "Fala Minha Irmã (Speak My Sister). I explore the collaborative methodology of the research and production of these six films, assessing the impact of the existing knowledge of the language of the music-video and the intimate connections between the film-makers and their protagonists had on the films and their diverse audiences.

KEYWORDS

Mozambique, film, participatory, music, women

Bio

Karen Boswall is a filmmaker and visual anthropologist. She lived and worked in Mozambique as a journalist and documentary filmmaker between 1990 and 2007, focusing in particular on issues of conflict-driven migration and internal displacement and post-conflict reconciliation, resettlement and reintegration. Her award-winning films and BBC radio documentaries explore the spiritual, cultural and environmental worlds of individuals, families and communities both during and after the war in Mozambique. Upon returning to the UK in 2007 she taught Visual Anthropology and Film and Television at the University of Kent (2008–2009) and Canterbury Christ Church University (2010–2014). She began investigating the impact of forced migration on Syrian refugees inside and outside camps in Jordan in November 2013, gathering testimonials from the women and young girls living outside of the camps in the northern town of Irbid. She is a CHASE scholar, at the University of Sussex completing her doctoral research into collaborative music research and film production in Mozambique.

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FALA MINHA IRMÃ (SPEAK MY SISTER)
6 MUSICAL PORTRAITS OF MOZAMBICAN
WOMEN

www.falaminhairma.org

Eu canto uatu,
Meu nom é Niassa,
Não tenho nem vergonha
De seres assim tão pobre
Não tenho nem receio
De seres assim tão fragil
Niassa wo wo, Niassa
Niassa lé lé lé mama wo wo

I sing to you
My name is Niassa
I'm not at all ashamed
Of being so poor
I'm at all afraid
Of being so fragile
Niassa, wo wo, Niassa
Niassa la la la mama wo wo

Extract from Niassa (Massukos 2006)
Authors' translation

The unofficial anthem of Mozambique's northern province of Niassa is carried on the air as the sun falls behind a large baobab tree. Shifting between Portuguese, Ciyowa, Makhuwa and Cinianja,¹ the four main languages spoken in this part of the country, the familiar melody reaches the bar where, beer in hand, young men stand transfixed by the images of sexy young Brazilians on the small TV screen. A voice interrupts the music, speaking in Portuguese. Only when repeated in Cinianja do most of those ending their day in this lakeside town learn that they are about to be treated to a film show.

"Hello people of Metangula. *Mulibwanji, Mulibwanji*.² The National Festival of Culture has arrived. Come and listen to the songs of the fair ladies of our land. Come and watch six new musical films from around Mozambique. We're here from Maputo, Inhambane, Beira, Quelemane and Lichinga and we bring our films with us. Speak My Sister, Sing My Sister, Dance My Sister. The first film is about to start."

Narciso Lufagir (Anakanga) Presenting the film series

Fala Minha Irmã. Metangula, Niassa, Mozambique. July 2018

Jazzy rhythms from the south are now carried on the sweet-smelling smoke of the charcoal barbecues, past children pushing wire cars through the dirt, to the women at their sewing machines finishing the last order in the fading light. The crowd move towards the unusually crisp sound of the speakers and see a large screen where a young girl is walking between the trees in school uniform to a light syncopated rhythm and a woman's soft singing. It's as if she is whispering her message to the audience. While those gathered to watch the first film of the night do not speak the Tsonga³ language of the girl on screen, the music and images convey its meaning.

¹ Spoken across colonial and regional borders, Mozambican languages do not have standardised spellings. Cinyanja, is also known as Nyanja or in Malawi Chewa or Chichewa, Ciyowa, is Xiyau, or Yawa; Makhuwa, Macua or Ximacua.

² Mulibwanji: a greeting in Cinyanja, used across the region.

³ Tsonga is a group of Bantu languages spoken in the south of Mozambique, the dialect spoken in Gaza is often also referred to as *changana* or *Xichangana*, (pronounced shangana).

The film was made by four young Mozambicans from the southern province of Gaza, where they researched and shot the film, *Nenha* (Bahule 2018)⁴. Here, most adult men work in the underpaid migrant labour markets of South Africa. The film is a portrait of the three generations of women they leave behind, who sing and dance a local dance called Xingomana and share their relationships with the land, with men and with the dance. Those in the audience unable to read the Portuguese translation on the screen, will miss little of the film's message, much of which is communicated through the song and dance.



VIDEO 1: [Opening sequence of *Nenha* \(Bahule 2018\) 1 \(5'59''\)](#)

The films that follow *Nenha* in the lakeside screening comprise a series of musical portraits called *Fala Minha Irmã* (Speak My Sister), six first films of a new generation of Mozambican film-makers that celebrate the creative voice of women from different corners of the country. All include an element of ethnographic and ethnomusicological research into the musical genres and dances they portray. The films feature various musical styles, from Tufo, a women's musical tradition from the north, to revolutionary hip-hop from the southern capital, Maputo. The series was made with two main objectives: first, to use the moving image to bring more voices of Mozambican women to others across the country, and second, to provide opportunities for men and women passionate about working with the moving image to develop their research skills, methodologies and authorial confidence through practical experience. All make extensive use of musical sequences and minimal use of the spoken word while addressing themes that range from overcoming the trauma of childhood sexual abuse through dance to managing marital relationships while living as a female musician in Mozambique. For five months, thirty young students had been researching, filming and editing these musical portraits in preparation for the bi-annual National Festival of Culture, held this year in the northern most province of Niassa. The theme of the film series was in response to the 2018 festival motto 'Culture promoting women, identity, and sustainable development'. For myself, as both director of the project and visiting researcher, I was exploring the potential of locally produced musical documentaries to empower and provoke discussion around gender equality for both audiences and for knowledge-makers of the future.

⁴ 'Nenha' can mean 'strength', 'determination' and 'vitality', or 'victorious' or 'heroine'. In this revolutionary song, the double meaning is intentional. No author is ascribed to this song, but it's thought to have been taught to communities by the nation's first 'heroine', president Samora Machel's first wife, Josina Machel.

I was interested in the reception of our collaborative efforts within the diverse audiences we aspired to reach, as well as the impact that researching, producing and distributing these films had on the young film-makers themselves. Could a more gendered creative process and subject matter have a lasting effect of the knowledge producers of the future? And what contribution could the language of music and moving image make to this? I hoped music would serve as a creative entry-point to explore the given theme of gender and identity. It offered a more poetic approach to a theme that had, by 2018, become associated more with a donor-generated cultural agenda than with the stories, laughter and life of actual individuals⁵. 24 of the 28 film-makers involved in *Fala Minha Irmã* had already made at least one music-video. However, few had recorded audio, spent any time conducting research or explored any other creative techniques in the audio-visual representation of others. By making musical video portraits of women, the film-makers had one foot still firmly in the genre they were familiar with, while exploring another and engaging with real people and real stories. *Fala Minha Irmã* also gave young male film-makers an opportunity to work alongside women behind and in front of the camera, and to explore alternative portrayals of women than those found in most Mozambican music-videos⁶.

In this paper, I will explore the role the audio-visual language of the music-video played in the making of and reception of the *Fala Minha Irmã* film series. I will start with a contextual overview of the role music has played in local audio-visual production, both during the revolutionary ‘heyday’ of Mozambican cinema in the 1980’s, through its subsequent ‘reinvention’ (Azevedo, 2017) in the 1990’s and the films of the new ‘music-video generation’. I will summarise the rationale and methodological approach to the production and distribution of the *Fala Minha Irmã* film series in the context of my own position within Mozambican film and music/music-video production. I will look at the creative choices made by the film-makers during the production of the film series and the lessons learned by studying the reception of these films in the initial phase of their distribution. In essence, this practice-led research aims to draw on feminist theory in its contribution to the eventual decolonisation of audio-visual production in Mozambique and to call on the language of music to do that most effectively. Can future, gender-conscious production be informed by the creation of a new genre that re-appropriates the audio-visual language of the music-video, the documentary and the ethnographic film into a genre suitable for the Mozambican context; the musical video portrait or ‘videoclip-retrato’?⁷.

Mozambique, its cinema, its music and me: from the revolution to the next generation

Mozambique’s coastline stretches over 3,000 km’s between its border with South Africa in the south and Tanzania in the north. In this long and culturally diverse country, 43 different languages are spoken⁸. Upon independence from Portugal in 1975 the new government wanted to encourage united collective involvement in the realisation of their utopic socialist vision throughout the country. With little access to education under the colonial power, much of the population, particularly the women, didn’t speak the national language of Portuguese, let alone read or write it, so a united language of communication was essential. The non-verbal, affective languages of film and music were chosen as they could transcend the verbal communication barrier. Songs had been used as a powerful mobilisation tool during the liberation struggle and upon independence the language of moving image was added to this. Just five months after the Mozambican liberation front FRELIMO were settled in government in the capital city, the National Film Institute was created with its slogan ‘delivering to the people an image of the people’ (Grey, 2020, p127)⁹. The films were screened out in the open, taken from village to village

⁵ In Mozambique, responding to the donor agenda is sometimes the only way artists can finance their creative activities. Consequently, many films, musical compositions, plays and artistic works are responding to an externally imposed agenda and may lack the poetry and passion exhibited when artists follow their own creative inspirations.

⁶ Film-making has traditionally been a male domain in Mozambique, reflected in the current reinforcement of gender stereotypes in Mozambican music-videos. Although these have long served as the voice of protest among the younger generation, especially in hip-hop (see Boswall, 2019a), they still tend to be presented from a male perspective.

⁷ In this paper I assume a broad definition of the term ‘music-video’, implied in the term ‘videoclip’ used in Mozambique that doesn’t carry the same commercial connotations. Here the focus is on audio-visual communication through music and moving image, and not the role of the genre to promote the work of a particular artist.

⁸ This most cited figure see (<https://www.ethnologue.com/country/MZ>). The exact number of distinct languages is nevertheless disputed.

⁹ Over the first decade after independence, 119 short documentaries, 13 long documentaries and feature films were produced

in a fleet of vans that formed the mobile cinema unit of the ambitious nationalised distribution plan. Rural communities who had never seen moving image before gathered under the stars to see what was going on in the rest of their country. Often the distorted audio from the loudspeakers would compete with the nocturnal calls of the crickets and frogs, plus the rumble of the generator and the excited murmur of children. The refined accents of the Portuguese voice-overs were difficult to make out, even if the audience did have some grasp of the Portuguese language, so creative solutions needed to be found to reach the widest audience. What resulted was a cinematic precursor to the music-video. Revolutionary songs and dances were incorporated into the early newsreels, while in the documentaries and features more creative musical solutions were found. Come 1981 three Mozambican films were released that became known for their effective use of music and image; *Pamperi ni Zimbabwe* 'Onwards Zimbabwe' (Costa & Henrique 1980), *Música Moçambique* 'Music Mozambique' (Fonseca e Costa 1981), and *Canta Meu Irmão - Ajuda-Me Cantar* 'Sing My Brother, Help Me To Sing' (Cardoso 1981). The first two were co-productions with Angola and Portugal respectively, while the latter was one of the first films to be made independently by Mozambicans at the National Film Institute, trained through a series of national and international initiatives in the first few years after independence. It takes the *Festival da canção e da Música tradicional de Moçambique* (Festival of Song and Traditional music) as its starting point and follows some of the artists back to their places of origin in eight of the ten provinces of Mozambique¹⁰. It seems no accident that in one of the first independent films from Mozambique, music and dance are placed at the heart of the nation's audio-visual self-representation. Images of Mozambicans going about their daily lives are woven together with musical performances in the community, a few short interviews with some of the musicians and sparse, poetic narration, in what could be described as a series of musical film portraits.

Canta Meu Irmão - Ajuda-Me Cantar, (Cardoso, 1981) served as an important musical, cinematic and methodological reference for the *Fala Minha Irmã* film series. Although much about it reflects the 'patriarchal attitudes' that 'have not vanished with the coming of a new society in Mozambique' (Urdang, 1989 p28), it is inspirational in its use of music and image and an important part of the struggle across Africa to decolonize audio-visual production.¹¹ Sadly, Mozambique's early successes towards the Pan-African goal of self-representation were short-lived. Shortly after independence Mozambique was embroiled in a crippling civil war, and by the late 1980's, film production of any kind was all but impossible. The tragic death in 1986 of the first President Samora Machel¹² - one of the greatest advocates of the importance of the moving image for self-realization - marked a shift in priorities for the struggling Mozambican government. The Mozambican government abandoned its revolutionary ideology and socialist policies, and drastically reduced public sector funding to the cultural sectors, Film production limped along until 1991, when a devastating fire at the Film Institute accelerated the transition from nationalized to privatized audio-visual production. By the early 1990's televisions were now found now in bars, cafes, and sometimes in people's homes. Some of the technicians trained at the film institute moved to secure jobs at the national television station TVM, which began to fill the gaps between the news and Brazilian soap operas with popular and cost-effective in-house music-videos. With the state no longer able to bankroll the nation's longer-form film production, the now independent film-makers turned to international broadcasters, development organisations and film funds to finance their productions.

In this second, market-driven chapter of Mozambican cinema, despite the shifting ideologies and enforced new objectives of international funding sources, music continued to play an important role in much of the nation's audio-visual production. Two directors who started producing their films independently at this time were Licínio Azevedo and Sol de Carvalho and both continued to recognise the importance of music for their national and international audiences. Azevedo was a pioneer of the

and taken to all corners of the country in mobile film units alongside 395 editions of the weekly newsreel 'Kuxa Kanema' (Andrade Watkins, 1999, p188).

¹⁰ For more on these musical films see Grey, 2020 p186-189). Jean Rouch also made a film at the first National Festival of Music and Dance in 1978 entitled *Unity in Feasts* (1980) For more on this and Rouch's work in Mozambique see Diawara 1992 p 96).

¹¹ Much is written on the successes and failures of the decolonisation of African cinema. See, for example Manthia Diawara (1992) and Kenneth Harrow (1999).

¹² See *Samora Vive* (Vuvu, Chabela, Albuquerque, 1997) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7j6vo1NLgCQ>

use of video for broadcast quality films. In 1986 he made the first Mozambican music-video.¹³ His early films for international broadcast also used music (both diegetic and non-diegetic) to complement, inform and drive the narrative.



VIDEO 2: *Árvore Dos Antepassados Tree of Our Forefathers* (Azevedo 1993)

Opening Musical Sequence Musical Direction, Arrangement and Sound Design, by Karen Boswall
(With kind permission from the producers Ebano Multimedia Lda)

Sol de Carvalho's films were less international in their outlook. Sol always considered his main target audience as "precisely those from whom I heard the stories" (Carvalho, 2020).

His musical fiction film *Muihipiti Alima* (Carvalho, 1996), set on *Ilha de Mocambique* demonstrates his understanding of the importance of music in reaching this audience. Here, members of a musical group face the stigma of illiteracy and take the decision to learn to read and write. The film was scripted, scored and filmed in collaboration with the musical performers who played themselves in the film.¹⁴

¹³ See "Melancolia" by Jose Muchavele (Azevedo, 1986).

¹⁴ As a local production for local audiences, collaborative methodologies were being developed within the revolutionary decolonial context of Mozambican film production. The script was developed during a prolonged period of collaborative ethnographic research and participatory methodologies of self-representation and self-reflection were explored throughout the production. *Muihipiti Alima* (Carvalho, 1996) could therefore also be described within the anthropological and some would argue, more colonial framing of 'ethno-fiction'.



VIDEO 3: *Muihipiti Alima* (Carvalho, 1996)

Opening Musical Sequence Sound Recorded by Karen Boswall
(With kind permission from the producers Promarte Lda)

These were two of the early Mozambican films I worked on as musical director and sound designer that changed my own perspective on non-fiction musical film language and participatory production practices. I worked with the first generation of Mozambican film-makers for the next fifteen years and eventually took this collaborative methodology into the production of my first music-video.



VIDEO 4: *Recomeça (Begin Again)* Timbila Muzima, Karen Boswall (2006)

The conceptual and methodological approach to *Fala Minha Irmã* was based on my experiences working on these films and the collaborative approaches that I subsequently continued to explore in my own work. This was combined with my curiosity in a parallel world of moving-image production that had begun to exist in the 1990's; the world of the Mozambican music-video. After many initiatives to decolonize Mozambican audio-visual production,¹⁵ it was eventually in the production of independent

¹⁵ Among others, there were two oft-cited and ill-fated interventions between 1978 and 1979, by the French avant-garde film-maker Jean-Luc Godard, and the French anthropologist and film-maker, Jean Rouch. See Diawara, 1992, Cardosa, 2003, Grey, 2020).

music-videos that moving image production was truly in ‘the hands of the people’. Cameras, microphones and editing equipment had become affordable and music-video production became an effective and self-sustaining training ground for the next generation of Mozambican film-makers. Here, film-makers were autonomous and self-reliant - key objectives of early Mozambican revolutionary cinema. In addition to the music-videos produced in-house by the national broadcaster, in the early 1990’s independent videos begun to be produced, largely by children of the urban elite, who had access to basic camcorders and improvised VHS tape to tape editing. They were not influenced by the cinematic language of the Italian Neo-realism, French New Wave and Latin American *Cinema Novo*, as the revolutionary intellectual generation before them had been. The starting point and inspiration for this young generation was the African and Black American music-video. They wanted to make a difference, to reflect on and shape their world, and they want to do it their way. They copied the videos of North American hip-hop bands such as Wu-Tang Klan, who struck a chord with the young Mozambicans looking for the voice of their generation. For some this led to successful careers in music-video production, commercials, and eventually documentaries and feature films.¹⁶ Their success offers hope to the next generation, that they too can find their cinematic voice through the language of the music-video. *Fala Minha Irmã* took them further on this journey.

The project *Fala Minha Irmã* and its collaborative methodology

The methodological approach to *Fala Minha Irmã*, was devised collaboratively, first with the institutional partners, the state university of the creative arts (ISArC), and Mozambican Film-makers Association (AMOCINE) and later with the participants. At its heart is the recognition that with a smart phone or small digital camera and access to the internet, the powerful language of moving image is finally accessible to all. Yet, despite increased access to the means of production, and a broader understanding of the long-term impact of colonialism and other institutional hegemonies, the long established and sometimes seemingly insurmountable power paradigms of class, race and gender remain. With *Fala Minha Irmã* we wanted to contribute to the development of viable intersectional and decolonial approaches to audio-visual production in Mozambique and beyond. In essence, *Fala Minha Irmã* continues a long-standing Mozambican revolutionary tradition of transformative audio-visual production and distribution, which as part of its decolonial methodology has generally incorporated participatory research and production techniques but has, as yet, remained predominantly patriarchal in its outlook. We wanted to contribute to the development of sustainable, de-colonial approaches to audio-visual production, and to do so from a feminist perspective.

Key to the eventual success of the initiative was effective institutional partnerships. The *Instituto Superior de Arte e Cultura* (Higher Institute of Art and Culture) or ISArC is a young state university opened in 2008 and offering a degree in film theory and practice since 2014. Although desperately under-funded and poorly equipped, the course offers sustainable solutions to some of the historic obstacles to representative film production in Mozambique. As a state university, its students can access the government bursary and scholarship schemes attracting young passionate students from all over the country who previously thought film making was not for poor people like them, now have access to a four-year combined theory and practice degree course which ‘provides training in cinematographic and audio-visual production and direction’.¹⁷ Targeted course promotion has also introduced more women to a historically male discipline. The second institutional partner, the Mozambican Film-makers Association, (AMOCINE), has worked to support Mozambican film production and distribution since the early 90’s and provided invaluable technical and logistical support and advice. Some of this came in the form of stories from the Association president Gabriel Mondlane. He remembers all the previous attempts to decolonize Mozambique’s audio-visual production, the international advisers, projects and experiments going back the heyday of the National Film Institute. Gabriel’s good-humoured, wise and irreverent determination to keep searching for solutions to the intersectional challenges to decolonial film production informed many of the eventual methodological choices behind the research. Another key to the success of *Fala Minha Irmã* was the partnership with the National Festival of Culture. Film

¹⁶ *Resgate* (Fonseca, 2019) is the first Mozambican feature to be independently financed and distributed. Now available on Netflix USA.

¹⁷ See <http://www.isarc.edu.mz/>

students from ISArC had traditionally gained work experience at the bi-annual festival and the festival theme for 2018 was ‘Culture, promoting women, identity and sustainable development.’ I was excited by the possibilities this created for embedding a gendered approach to each phase of the research project. It took some time to finalise the details of the partnerships, not least due to national budgetary crisis that limited the scope of the project¹⁸, however, in March 2018, I was finally in a room full of film, cultural studies and cultural management staff and students in an animated group planning discussion. By the end of the first meeting, we had agreed:

- The festival theme would serve as a creative entry-point for proposals for an individual or group video portrait of around 10 minutes in duration.
- The students would conduct independent research on their own subjects. I would be supporting them, while also conducting my own research on the process.
- The students would have two weeks to conduct preliminary research and develop their ideas before submitting their proposals
- 5,000MT (€70.00) would be available for each proposal selected to cover costs of local travel, food and consumables. Only projects that could be completed within these financial restrictions would be considered.
- A jury made up of producers, distributors, trainers and researchers would select the proposals that would go into production.
- Filming and editing equipment would be made available from ISArC and AMOCINE¹⁹
- A series of open masterclasses would be offered in all aspects of film research, project development and production during these two weeks.
- Continued technical training and project development would be offered during each stage of production.
- Proposals from mixed teams of men and women would be well received.
- The students would also assess the reception of their finished films amongst the communities where the films were shot, among diverse urban audiences of Maputo and in Niassa during the Cultural Festival.
- The series would be called *Fala Minha Irmã*, “Speak My Sister”.

This meeting marked the beginning of many new discoveries over the following months and form the focus of the rest of the analysis below. Six musical portraits were selected. 28 young first-time film-makers took part, sixteen men and ten women from eight of the ten provinces of Mozambique. All proposals were based on aspects of musical expression. This gave participants the opportunity to build on the existing knowledge and experience of music-video production. Time needed to develop relationships of trust was reduced as all portraits selected were of individuals or groups with a personal connection to the film-makers portraying them. All participants were taking part voluntarily, in their own time, with no pressure from the university to satisfy assessment objectives. Participants began with some theoretical understanding, limited practical experience and unlimited enthusiasm to put their theory into practice and learn from this opportunity.

¹⁸ In 2018 the festival, due to take place in Niassa, the poorest and most remote province of Mozambique, was going to cost a lot more than previous festivals. However, due to a spectacular and ongoing corruption scandal, international donors cut funding to any government initiatives. For more on this financial crisis of 2016/7 and donors’ response, see: Tvedten & PICARDO (2018) and Hanlon (2017).

¹⁹ All films were shot in Full HD on domestic DSLR cameras. Separate sound was recorded on small Zoom recorders and external microphones, and resynchronised in post-production. Tripods were also provided, introducing optional techniques new to the film-makers.



IMAGE 1: Lourdes Rubaine, fourth year film student, radio producer from Niassa, taken during camera training at AZGO international music festival, Maputo 2018



IMAGE 2: Crew at ISArC university campus filming the interview for *Stella* (Mulla, 2018) From right to left, Samo Mulla (Director)²⁰, Francisco Valia (Producer), Maltonato (Editor), Percia (Sound), Stella Protagonist

²⁰ Most of the films in the series were authored collaboratively. Although a director and producer were identified and named for each film, and took more creative and conceptual responsibility during the production and post production of their films, these were collaborative efforts.



IMAGE 3: Crew making '*Ritmo Arte Poesia Vida*' Rhythm, Art, Poetry and Life (*Lampião*, 2018) From right to left, Guiggaz M Black (composer, performer & activist), Gabriel Pita (Lighting), Alexandre Pita (Producer/Sound Recordist), Lutegardo Lampião (Director, Camera)



IMAGE 4: Alzira Guetza, fourth year film student, community arts activist from Maputo filming at the National Festival of Culture, Niassa

Researching and filming six films in time for the Festival in July 2018 was an ambitious objective.²¹ The logistical and technical challenges that beset any film production were exacerbated by the harsh conditions of filming in Mozambique. Nonetheless, five of the six films were completed in time for the festival and seven of the thirty students accompanied them to Niassa, screening them in rural and urban contexts. The students later replicated this distribution model in both Gaza and Maputo province.

²¹ The partnership with ISARC was finally confirmed in December 2017 and with AMOCINE in January 2018. The academic year begins in Mozambique in late February and the National Festival of Culture was due to take place in Niassa in July 2018. This determined the tight timescale of the project, between March and August 2018.



IMAGE 5: *Fala Minha Irmã* on the road in Metangula, on the banks of lake Niassa



IMAGE 6: Before a community screening in Lipende, Niassa



IMAGE 7: The *Fala Minha Irmã* film-makers take *Pandeiros da Mafalala* (Tamborines of Mafalala) to the community of Barrio Mafalala, Maputo where it was filmed. From right to left: Angelica Novela (Director of ISArC Film Department), Alice Cunha (Sound Recordist) César Vitorino (Director)

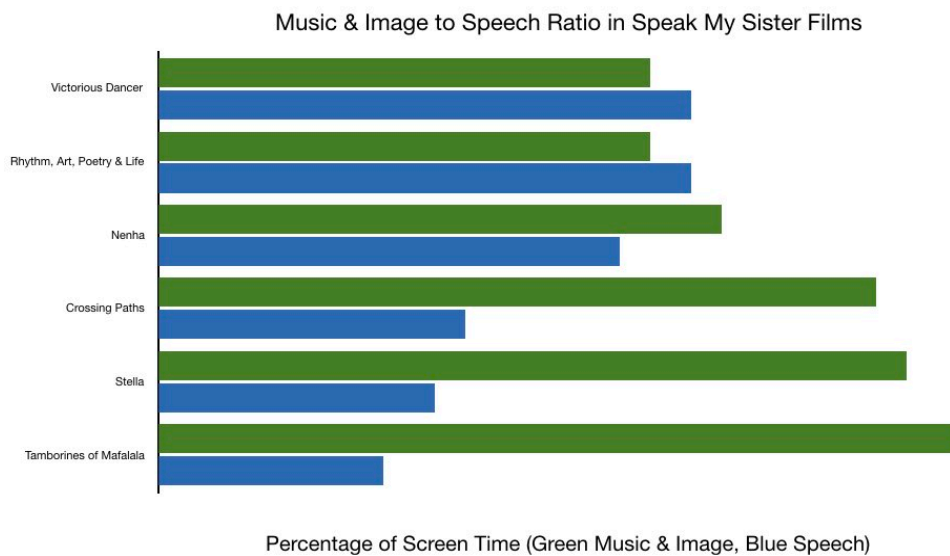


IMAGE 8: Setting up the projector in Barrio Mafalala, Maputo. From right to left: André Bahile, Narciso Lufagir, Clemente Horácio, Alice Cunha

Fala Minha Irmã: the films

The *Fala Minha Irmã* films are between 9 and 13 minutes in length and represent Mozambican women from across the country's social and geographical divides. The protagonists range from university educated young women living and working in Maputo in *Rhythm, Art, Poetry and Life* (Lampião, 2018), to illiterate migrant women living in the capital's historic poor migrant neighbourhood in *Tamborines of*

Mafalala (Vitorino, 2018).²² Five of the six portraits are in Portuguese. The sixth, *Nenha* (Bahule, 2018), was filmed in *changana*, a language spoken in the south of Mozambique and subtitled in Portuguese. Despite not being conceived as music-videos, due to the background of the film-makers and the nature of their subject matter, each film in the series employs the visual language generally associated with the music-video genre. For example, in five of the films, images of the musicians in recording studios, rehearsals, or in performance are intercut with shots of them going about their daily life. The montage sequence in *Tamborines of Mafalala* and the single unedited hand-held shot for the choreographed rape scenes in *Victorious Dancer* are other such examples of the influence of the visual language of the music-video in these films. In the sound-track too, the sync sound is removed entirely from some sequences, a device generally associated with music-videos and avoided in documentaries or ethnographic films. All films in the series also make sparing use of speech throughout, choosing instead to let music and image tell the story.



Rhythm, Art, Poetry and Life, is one of three films in the series that draw more directly on the language of the music-video. It opens with a fast-paced, minute-long pre-title sequence built on a pumping bass and drum beat and a celebratory MC who calls the audience to attention in the local African language of *changana*. A young woman with braids, shades and attitude (Guiggas M Black) leaves her home on her way to work. She greets young girls playing in the street with smiles and kisses, before meeting her equally vibrant friend (Enia Lipanga). They walk through the sandy streets of Polana Caniço²³, and into the recording studio. After the title sequence, a series of short, spoken introductions from the band members temporarily break with the music-video conventions before powerful free-style performances from Guiggaz M Black and Enia Lipanga produce a musical introduction to their own feelings about gender inequality. Lampião's hand-held camera fluidly follows the artists' movements, as shots of women training to be electricians, plumbers and other traditionally male occupations are intercut with spoken-word performances and interviews. The editing style has a youthful confidence that breaks every rule of

²² I use English translations of the films in this paper. These are my translations of the original titles and most are literal translations. However in the case of '*Pandeiros da Mafalala*' (Vitorino, 2018), I used poetic licence and translated *pandeiro*, as 'tambourine'. Tufo does in fact use a frame drum without metallic resonators.

²³ Polana Caniço is one of the city's historically black urban residential neighbourhoods that grew up in Maputo during colonial times to house the workers of the white residential neighbourhood of 'Polana Cemento'. It now has houses made of cement, as opposed to the 'caniço' or thatch in the name, but still no paved roads.

continuity and narrative construction while conveying all the vitality and revolutionary power of these young women.

A conscious choice is made by the film-makers to provoke and politicise their audience instead of lamenting the hardship and the challenges they all faced and continue to face. The familiar language of the music-video invites the viewer into questions around gender inequality. However, Lampião chose not to include the parts of the intimate conversations he filmed where two women share experiences of violence and the impact of these on their life decisions. One had grown up in an abusive environment; another had married into one. However, these testimonies didn't make it into the film, instead, the drummer, Tauzene, harshly criticises women who are 'sitting at home with nothing to do and think that life is easy' (Tauzene, 2018). This is not the victimised image of Mozambican women international audiences are used to. It is a home-grown message from young Mozambican women impatient for change. They understand the difficulties everyone faces, yet are intolerant of the apathy of their young urban audience. "Wake Up" the band's founder Guiggaz says direct to camera at the end of the film, "There are all sorts of activities men do that we can do too. Let's do whatever we dream to do. There's something inside us all. I was born to do something and I know what it is. You have to discover what you were born to do" (Guiggaz M Black, 2018).



VIDEO 5: [Rhythm, Art, Poetry and Life \(Lampião, 2018\)](#)

The film-makers behind *Crossing Paths* also use their film to provoke its urban middle class audience out of complacency. The husband-and-wife team sit in the recording studio working on a new song that shames the young 'city boys' who 'sit and do nothing' as others suffer.

*Hey boy, help put this sack of cassava on my head to sell and stop the pretence,
because the rain is coming, and you city boys still sit and do nothing
You appear with your trendy clothes on television and say we have no vision,
but then you don't produce, you don't study, why?*

Extract from 'As formas de viver' (Ways of living) by F.t and Black Rose, featured in *Crossing Paths* (Sive, 2018) (author's translation)

The editing techniques in this film follow a clear narrative. The couple start their day at home, to a sound-track of their own recordings, before making their respective journeys to work. Black Rose is a

carpenter specialising in sound-proofing recording studios and F.t a hospital administrator. The director, Castigo Sive, was very keen to present a more ‘feminine’ image of women involved in hip-hop. He wanted to portray hip-hop artists living a life the audience would find familiar and respect. “Just because they wear trousers and speak their mind, people think women in hip-hop are all lesbians” he told me (Sive 2018). F.t and Black Rose share their friends views, not only on the perceived sexuality of female hip-hop artists, but also the unnecessary sexualization of women in most music-videos. They want their video to contribute to making hip-hop accessible for the more conservative mainstream audience. They go to great lengths to show F.t humbly dressed in the colourful cloth known as a *capulana*, the traditional working attire of women across Africa.²⁴ She sweeps the yard, washes up and hands her husband his breakfast before they both go out to work. Sive also shows F.t as an autonomous woman however, chatting with her husband in front of the television, and composing songs with him on the sofa in the recording studio. When they carry a heavy sack together across the busy street, it is as if he is saying they work together as a couple and together share the burden of more than the sack they carry. Some of the young audiences of the series may identify more with the radical and proactive attitudes associated with western feminism reflected in *Rhythm, Art, Poetry and Life*. However *Crossing Paths* attempts to contribute to alternative ways of representing women in hip-hop. In doing so, it could be viewed within the decolonial discourse which Obioma Nnaemeka describes as ‘Nego-Feminism’. This is an African feminism where ‘nego’ stands for ‘negotiation’ and ‘no-ego’, based on the ‘shared values of African cultures’ of ‘give and take, compromise and balance’ (Nnaemeka, 2004, p377). The *Nego-Feminists* Nnaemeka describes, which are both African women and young African men, know when, where and how to ‘detonate, or negotiate around patriarchy in different contexts’ (ibid, p378). In the case of F.t and her self-representation in *Crossing Paths*, she is negotiating a patriarchy where women are criticized for wearing trousers, so she puts on her *capulana* and stands at the washing up bowl before she reveals herself in a recording studio. Then, Sive argues, when she speaks her mind about other aspects of intersectional inequality, such as the disconnect between rural and urban, she might be heard.



VIDEO 6: *Caminhos Cruzados* ‘Crossing Paths’ (Sive, 2018)

The Nego-feminism of the Tufo dancers in *Tamborines of Mafalala* takes a different form. They choose to celebrate their beauty and autonomy through confident self-representation. Although the group’s ‘Queen’, or ‘*rainha*’, Zaquia Rachid, explains how she was taken out of school to care for her father

²⁴ The *capulana* is a coloured cloth worn by all Mozambican women around their waists, their shoulders or on their head. They use it for carrying children, water, firewood and belongings. Old ones are worn at work and new ones at social occasions. *Capulanas* are always part of a wedding dowry and often used in songs and poetry as a metaphor for Mozambican women’s versatility, hard work and pride.

before she learned to read and write, she is more interested in sharing what she has achieved than her suffering along the way. This is reflected in Vitorino's montage sequence that weaves together beautifully shot images of the 16-piece dance group dressed in their colourful capulanas and head-dresses, proudly painting their faces with the traditional white *msiro*²⁵ masks and travelling to different political, community and touristic events around the town. The short interview clips of the husband-and-wife team behind the group reinforce this careful feminine negotiation of power, celebrating not only the women's beauty, but also the resilience and determination of all those who enrich the community through music.

One objective of *Fala Minha Irmã* was to provide an opportunity for interdisciplinary ethnomusicological research between young cultural researchers and film-makers. Tufo is a much studied and celebrated dance from the north of Mozambique. Brought to Mozambique Island in the north of the country by Arab traders in the mid-19th century, it was secularised and popularised in the 20th century. It is now rare to find men dancing Tufo. Instead, the dance became an iconic part of the nation's cultural heritage, a symbol of Mozambican women's beauty and a celebration of its rich and diverse cultural identity.²⁶ However, despite having conducted in-depth research about this history and the social practices associated with this celebrated musical genre, only one passing reference is made to this in the film. Instead, the women's smiles, radiant and laughing, are juxtaposed with contrasting images that reveal the harsh conditions they live in. The film tells of the modernisation and adaptation of this women's song and dance tradition in the modern, cosmopolitan capital city through images of a torn plastic bag melting as it lights the charcoal stove, or the few coins received at the end of a performance for tourists, or party political campaigns counted in candlelight at the end of the day.



VIDEO 7: *Tamborines of Mafalala* (Vitorino, 2018)

Ethnographic films for Mozambicans by Mozambicans

"I was in a context with people who communicate in the same way when it comes to music but communicate in a different way when it comes to language. Speak My Sister showed me that music had a power. It opened up a place where I could reflect on how music can function as a vehicle to tell stories and to bring about

²⁵ Msiro is a paste made from a tree bark traditionally used as a face mask by coastal and island women in the northern Mozambique and through to be part of the secret of their legendary beauty.

²⁶ See Hebden (2020), Boswall (2019), Arnfred (2011) for more on Tufo.

change”.

Andre Bahule 2019

(From a recorded interview. Author's Translation)

An element that unites the six films is the participatory approach used in the representation of the protagonists. While *Lampião* (*Rhythm, Art, Poetry and Life*) and *Sive* (*Crossing Paths*) worked with musicians active in their own creative world of hip-hop, *Guetza* (*Victorious Dancer*) and *Mulla* (*Stella*) chose to focus on friends and colleagues from other departments in the university. Their films were developed collaboratively alongside their subjects who creatively and conceptually contributed to decisions made around their own representation. Times were agreed for each ‘shoot’, during which time the protagonists were given the creative space to ‘perform’ themselves going about their daily activities, singing, dancing and in formal interviews. This collaboration led to a familiarity around the camera which translates onto the screen.



VIDEO 8: [Stella \(Mulla 2018\)](#)



VIDEO 9: [Bailarina Vitoriosa 'Victorious Dancer' \(Guetza, 2018\)](#)

The teams behind the films *Nenha* (Bahule 2018) and *Tamborines of Mafalala* (Vitorino, 2018) on the other hand, worked with larger musical groups they had only previously encountered at cultural events and wanted to explore further. In both cases, the film-makers shared a mother tongue with their protagonists and grew up living in or visiting grandparents in similar environments. The home of the group leader was also the rehearsal space in each film and each were shot over a period of time when the film-makers were based at this house, developing their relationship as they filmed. The film-makers cooked and ate with their subjects, observed, and filmed their activities and conversations, learned their songs and their dances, and at key moments during their time together, conducted formal interviews. *Tamborines of Mafalala* was filmed over three weeks on days agreed with the group, while the film-makers of *Nenha* stayed in the house of the band leaders during an intensive four-day filming period. The film-makers began with a series of research questions they hoped to answer, and as more appeared over the course of the filming, they followed them up adapting their plans accordingly. They continued to learn as they reviewed and edited the material, adapting the original argument of their films and the narrative structure as they edited. Both then screened the first edit to the community and made alterations and adjustments based on the feedback. These ‘participatory’ and ‘shared’ methodologies were named and described by the North American and European ethnographic film-makers of the 1960’s, 70’s and 80’s, such as David MacDougall (1998), and Jean Rouch (Feld, 2003). In the case of *Fala Minha Irmã* however, the Mozambican researchers and film-makers were communicating over a generational rather than a cultural divide.

The film-makers of *Fala Minha Irmã* found six different, creative ways to explore issues of gender inequality in their society; new methods of representation, new recording and editing techniques and new ways to communicate with others through music and dance. Their search for stories around the festival themes of women, cultural identity and sustainable development led them to share stories of extraordinary women they may otherwise not have considered. Through their familiarity with the music-video, they were able to find an entry point for this research. Not only did they reflect on their own perception of women’s representation and gender equality, they could now also start calling themselves film-makers and look toward their next films with this in mind.

“*Fala Minha Irmã* came at the right time, because we young people, we want to be able to tell our own stories and this experience woke us up to the fact that we can. Now we can say “I’ve made a film” “Would you like to see my film?”. To the uncles and grandfathers of cinema, we can now say we have arrived, we are coming with all we’ve got, so open the door and let us in!”

Andre Bahule 2019

(From a recorded interview. Author’s Translation)

The audience reception also inspired these young film-makers. When projected onto the side of the crumbling wall in Niassa or against the black curtains of a downtown theatre in Maputo, the film-makers were able to join their audiences watching their film on the big screen. Afterwards they were able to talk about their films with them. The feedback they received gave them confidence in themselves as film-makers and in their contribution to the continued efforts towards women’s equality. At screenings in the rural villages and towns of Niassa and Gaza, the film-makers learned from their audiences what had impacted them the most and how effectively the musical sequences in the films had communicated meaning, bridging the ever-present language divide found across Mozambique.

“ You showed us that nowadays a girl is worth something, a woman too.
Now women have a voice. In our time, women weren’t respected.
I’m so happy thinking about the film ..., because
I’ve never seen anything like it before ... I thank you so much.”

Comment in changana from audience member Cecilia during after screening feedback
Nwajohane, Gaza, Mozambique (Author’s translation)

“These women are something else! I have to thank you from the bottom of my heart for bringing these films to us. We’ve never seen anything like this.”

Comment in Nyanja from audience member Julia during after screening feedback
Metangula, Niassa, Mozambique (Author’s translation)

Comments and conversations after the screenings generally went through translators, and the film-makers were able to learn for themselves the impact the audio-visual language of music and image had on their audience, as those who had analysed the reception of the revolutionary films had a generation before.

It’s time for succession: rethinking ethnographic filmmaking in Mozambique

“Mozambicans should be able to tell our own stories, and stories that we identify with as Mozambicans. I want to look at the screen and know ah! This was made by a young Mozambican man, this was made by a young Mozambican woman”

Andre Bahule 2019
(From a recorded interview. Author’s Translation)

My decision to support Mozambican film-makers in the production of *Fala Minha Irmã* engages with a discourse around representation found at the heart of the study and practice of ethnographic, African and indigenous film. It began as soon as it was possible for people to represent themselves and others through moving image. Colonised people were seen by the world through the eyes of those who had the cameras, the post-production facilities and controlled distribution. Until African countries began to gain their independence in the 1950’s, this was invariably the colonisers. Then in North Africa, later West Africa and eventually Southern Africa, indigenous film-makers negotiated different approaches to exercising their right to self-representation through the moving image. However, when the *Fala Minha Irmã* films were made, over forty years after the country began its own national film production, most Mozambican men and women are still being represented in moving image by people who come from other parts of the country and other social backgrounds, don’t speak their language, and more often than not are still white and male.

Struggles for the decolonization of indigenous or more specifically African film have borne some fruit over the past half-century, but in a time where even the word decolonisation has been reduced to a buzzword within western academy, is it moving too slowly? In 2019 three Mozambican feature films were released to great acclaim.²⁷ Each of the film-makers, light-skinned men from Maputo who had been trained abroad, were nevertheless navigating the representation of others in different ways. Ethnographic film-makers have also been evaluating their representation of others over the same half-century, the discourse often revolving around the importance of reflexivity on and off-screen. Many ethnographic films began to be presented in the first person, the positionality of the author often becoming the focus of the study. The question as to whether, in their representation of others, or ‘The Other’ (Barnouw 1993:255), the ethnographic film-maker should be “speaking nearby” (Minh Ha 1983) or “speaking for, speaking with or speaking alongside” (Ruby, 1991) could no longer be ignored by film-makers. As early as 1993 Peter Loizos argued that the ‘logical outcome’ of reflexivity in ethnographic film was “films made by the people themselves” (Loizos 1993:13). The same argument had been made by the French anthropologist and visual ethnographer Jean Rouch, in 1961, “When all is said and done, neither Rogosin, Graham or I will ever be Africans and the films that we make will always be African films by strangers it’s time for succession” (Rouch (1961-62) 2005:77). *Fala Minha Irmã* is my response to this call and my contribution towards the succession of the next generation of Mozambican film-

²⁷ See Sol de Carvalho (2019), Joao Ribeiro (2019) and Fonseca (2019).

makers, an intersectional Mozambican audio-visual ontology, epistemology and aesthetic. In questioning my representation of others and working closer and closer with my subjects, my evolution as an ethnographic film-maker has followed a 'evolutionary trajectory' similar to the genre itself.²⁸ I wanted to see what would happen if instead of authoring one film, I supported Mozambican film-makers to research, film and distribute six of their own. I was no longer the author, I didn't accompany the film-makers during their research, or when they filmed. I only occasionally sat with them as they edited. I could see my influence here and there, most notably in the emphasis on women's stories, in the films' musicality and creative use of sound, but also in the ethnographic methods used and the role of music as a methodological tool, providing a common starting-point to address larger issues, recognizing the role music plays in communicating beyond the verbal. Yet, these were not my films, as the film-makers proudly noted at the screening described at the start of this article, these were "Mozambican films, by Mozambicans, for Mozambicans", a dream of the decolonial knowledge-makers of the revolution. *Fala Minha Irmã* however, went further than this. The films were by men and women from the same race, the same class, the same language group, and in some instances the same gender as those representing them.

There is still a long way to go. Only in making films and trying out new techniques, can the next generation find their individual cinematic language, creative voice and realise this dream of truly intersectional succession. Although this was a small study and much more could be done to expand this research, *Fala Minha Irmã* has demonstrated that there are ways, even with limited time and funds, that the next generation of Mozambican film-makers can develop their audio-visual language in a sustainable and affordable way, and that the exploration of the music-video can play an important role in this.

This research also sought to address questions around the role of women in Mozambican audio-visual production, both behind and in front of the camera. In many ways this is perhaps the greatest challenge to the next generation, as they are unable to build on the work of those who came before them. Questions of power, poverty, class, education and cultural identity were addressed in Mozambique's revolutionary films and a cinematic language was developed to bridge some of these divides, but still, the films were made by men, and the representation of Mozambican women was done so from their perspective. *Fala Minha Irmã* not only puts the Mozambican 'sister' on the screen, it addresses some of the obstacles to putting her behind the camera too. Taking its cue from the women who communicate their concerns through music and dance in the films, it too found a musical approach to this next all-important challenge.

At times, I have wondered whether *Fala Minha Irmã* was a personal response to my own burden of the privilege of authorship (Behar 1995:7) and that the root of my decision to look for viable ways to enable Mozambican authorship came from what Ruth Behar describes as 'women's anxiety of authorship' (1995:16). "We struggle to make ourselves heard and to convince ourselves that our writing in a time of increasing poverty, racism, inequality, xenophobia and warfare still somehow matters" (ibid). If anything, however, my perspective as a woman has informed my commitment to contribute to a more gender-conscious representation of Mozambicans by Mozambicans. The still ever increasing poverty, racism, inequality, xenophobia and warfare, contribute to my finding appropriate methodological responses to these problems. Through *Fala Minha Irmã*, I was, in part, responding to my evolving anxiety of authorship, but within the context of long struggle for the decolonization of African representation and a belief that, "it's time for succession." I was able to support a feminist approach to that succession, and my ally in this challenge was music.

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FABRIK FUNK: THE FABRICATION OF THE EVERYDAY REALITY OF A DREAM

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ABSTRACT

Fabrik Funk (2015), an ethno-fiction co-directed by the authors of this article, was shot in Cidade Tiradentes, a popular neighbourhood on the outskirts of São Paulo, considered by some of its residents to be the ultimate “funk factory.” The film tells the story of Negaly, a young woman who dreams of becoming a famous funk music MC. This article approaches ethno-fiction as the fabrication of the everyday. Producing an ethno-fiction encouraged the authors to reflect on the tensions arising between contrasting concepts such as real and imagined, documentary and fiction, familiar and exotic, and self and other. In Fabrik Funk, music videos act as bridges, connecting what is real to what is imagined or desired by Negaly, the main participant. Through an analysis of three musical sequences borrowed from the film, the article reflects on how music videos shift the cinematic narrative away from events happening in the real world, and towards a state associated with dream, imagination, desire, and hope.

KEYWORDS

ethnofiction, music video, São Paulo, visual anthropology, funk, music, collaboration

BIO

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Introduction

The film *Fabrik Funk* (2015), an ethno-fiction co-directed by the authors of this article, was entirely shot in Cidade Tiradentes, a popular neighbourhood located in the outskirts of São Paulo.¹ With more than 300,000 inhabitants, this neighbourhood is one of the biggest social housing projects in Latin America. The film tells the story of Negaly, a young woman who dreams of becoming a famous funk music MC.² At the time of production (2014), the performers appearing in the film were young people who lived in Cidade Tiradentes and who were involved in the funk scene. In this article, we refer to them as actors and/or participants. Daniel Hylario, a cultural promoter, hairdresser and activist who lives in the neighbourhood, joined the anthropologists in co-writing the script and co-producing the film, in addition to performing in it. The short-length film is accessible in Portuguese (original version) with French and English subtitles on the website of the Laboratory of Image and Sound in Anthropology (University of São Paulo), and in Portuguese on the Funk TV YouTube channel.³

FABRIK FUNK ENGLISH VERSION LINK:

<https://vimeo.com/121777735>

The *Fabrik Funk* project emerged from as a desire to develop a collaborative work (first and foremost between the three authors) to comprehend a youth popular culture flourishing in São Paulo. Our aim was to create an ethno-fiction that would speak to these same young people. During the production process of the film, we further interrogated ourselves on the potential of fiction to address how anthropologists construct a sense of the everyday of research participants. Producing *Fabrik Funk* became our ethnographic enterprise; it enabled us to investigate, from various angles, the funk phenomenon in the outskirts of São Paulo.

In this article, we discuss the issue of ethno-fiction as fabrication of the everyday by reflecting on the role played by music videos in shifting the cinematic narrative away from events happening in the real world, and towards a state associated with dream, imagination, desire, and hope. Producing an ethno-fiction forced us to reflect on the tensions arising between contrasting concepts such as real and imagined, documentary and fiction, familiar and exotic, and self and other. It enabled us to understand and articulate these concepts not in terms of binaries, but rather in terms of continuums. In *Fabrik Funk*, music videos act as bridges, connecting what is real to what is imagined or desired, and connecting by the same token with the dreams of Negaly, the main participant. The music videos create a continuum between these apparent binaries, contributing to the emergence of the storyline of this ethno-fiction.

Fabrik Funk is both a musical film and a film about music, which means that music plays an important role in defining both the film's aesthetic as well as its content. In order to examine the different roles music videos may play in a film, and their specific connections to the reality and dreams of the participants, we explore three main musical sequences borrowed from the film. First, the music video of the upbeat song "Mais Mais da Quebrada" by MC Negaly is used in the film to contrast with the character's harsh everyday life, and to play with ideas of dream and imagination. Second, a behind-the-scene clip in which female actors audition to dance in a music video highlights issues of gender in addition to displaying the background reality of the fabrication of the funk culture. Many young women dream of participating to a funk music video, but Negaly realizes at the audition that she would prefer to become a MC. Third, a short instrumental scene during which an original music video was composed stresses a change of mood in the narration of the film, accentuating the challenges met by the main performer to fulfil her dreams and break with gender stereotypes associated with the funk music scene. This third example acts as a musical moment that encourages the viewer to pause and empathize with Negaly. When taken together in chronological order, the three music videos construct the main narrative arc of the film: from the first revelation of Negaly's dream, to the challenges met, and finally, to the realization of what she really desires to achieve. The music

¹ Rose Satiko Hikiji and Sylvia Caiuby Novaes are funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development – CNPq and received grants #2013/50222-0, #2016/05318-7, #2018/21140-9 from São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP).

² MC means Master of Ceremonies and refers to a singer / rapper.

³ The full version of the film is available on LISA's Vimeo. English Version: vimeo.com/lisausp/fabrikfunkeng; Original Portuguese Version: vimeo.com/lisausp/fabrikfunk; French Version: vimeo.com/121590835. *Fabrik Funk* is also available on the Funk TV YouTube channel, run by producers based in Cidade Tiradentes, and who are also protagonists of the film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyT0uHADjdo>

videos give shape to the “reality of a dream”; they reflect the dream of a young female MC whose hope is to succeed in the “funk world”.

Ethno-fiction

The cinematographic work of Jean Rouch was a key source of inspiration for the production of *Fabrik Funk*. Most notably, his films *Moi, un noir* (1958), *La pyramide humaine* (1961) and *Jaguar* (1967) encouraged us to think about the crossing of boundaries between cinematic genres, especially in terms of playing with the notions of reality and dream. These films are described as ethno-fictions, a term that was not used by Rouch, who, rather, suggested “cine-fictions” or “science fictions” to describe these specific films (Henley 2009:74). An anthropologist-filmmaker, Rouch understood cinema as a way of sharing anthropology, not only with his colleagues, but also with the participants who took part in his films. Reflecting on the duality of being an anthropologist-filmmaker, Rouch never accepted the strict separation between art and science. He leveraged the imagination and drew on his adventurous and subversive spirit to challenge the stability of conventional dichotomies such as white/black, irrational/rational, rural/urban, truth/fiction, Africa/Europe, disrupting the boundaries between art and science, documentary and fiction, and real and imaginary. His cinema destabilizes oppositional rules and offers audiences the possibility to imagine his vision of anthropology outside the confines of dichotomies.

Following the footsteps of Jean Rouch, Johannes Sjöberg (2008b:232) defines ethno-fiction as a genre that relies on a shared anthropology, one that adopts a spirit of collaboration and reflexivity, and uses elements of improvisation to guide the actions of performers. Similar to films “inspired by a true story,” which intrigue viewers in part because they are based on events that supposedly really happened, ethno-fictions allow anthropologists to extrapolate on the everyday by building a story that stimulates viewers’ imaginations and that creates a connection—often through the characters’ performance—with viewers’ own memories, emotions and personal experiences. In *Fabrik Funk*, participants were asked to play a role that spoke to their real lives, but was not an exact replica of them. The act of performing a role that was close but not identical to their own, involved a form of performance that demanded both a detachment from and a close reflection of how the participants perceived themselves. The participants’ improvisational work was key to our exploration of how ethno-fiction can become a powerful tool to portray their everyday, a concern that has been repeatedly discussed in relation to ethnographic writing since the crisis of representation in the 1980s, but that has yet to receive in-depth attention in relation to the visual (Calzadilla and Marcus 2006; Marcus 2010).

Similarly to Geertz (2000:15-16) who defines anthropological writings as interpretations and fictions that are made and fashioned, we approach the process of producing an ethno-fiction as an act of fabrication. We understand fabrication as a creative process that *carries on* (see Ingold and Hallam 2007), which implies that the anthropologists and the participants are in a constant state of creation and improvisation. Bruno Latour (2005) suggests that fiction is a solution for making visible the traces left by objects on social relations. He argues that in this sense, sociologists have much to learn from artists (ibid:82). We believe that fiction also encourages anthropologists to question some components of Brazilian culture, i.e., the ways in which objects, humans, places and thoughts can be purposely assembled to give shape to the social and aesthetic dimensions – in our specific case, associated with the Brazilian funk culture.

Furthermore, the term “fabrication” accentuates the fact that *Fabrik Funk* emerged as a process of assemblage and cinematographic montage that is also marked by a creative and improvisational process. Finally, fabrication refers to the title of the film *Fabrik Funk*—the funk factory—which in the film is a reference to Cidade Tiradentes, the neighbourhood where the film’s characters come from and where the film was shot. In order to expand on the idea of ethno-fiction as fabrication of the everyday, we explore not only the ways in which the actor-participants create other selves when portraying their own lives, or something close to their own lives (a position we developed in Boudreault-Fournier, Hikiji and Caiuby Novaes 2016(a); 2016(b)), but also how music videos contribute to bridging the narrative of the film from a setting based in real life to one that addresses important dimensions associated with imagination and

dreams. In this sense, the music videos transport the viewer from the real world as lived by Negaly in the film, to an imaginary one that speaks to her dreams and hopes.

Fabrik Funk

The first people we spoke to in Cidade Tiradentes in order to undertake the ethno-fiction project were Negro JC and Montanha, who are the owners of the production company Funk TV, and are also video directors, and at that moment key actors in the audio-visual market associated with the funk phenomenon. Some of the music videos produced by Funk TV have received millions of views on YouTube, which is the main source of revenue for the production company⁴. Both directors are extremely knowledgeable about what cultural products people consume the most, and about what is emerging among young people. Various conversations with the directors in the Funk TV headquarters deepened our knowledge associated with funk music, from musical and social dimensions, to gender, fashion, and ideology. According to the directors, “all the boys [from Cidade Tiradentes] dream of becoming MCs” which explains in many ways why the neighbourhood became something of a “funk factory.”

After learning about our ethno-fiction project, Negro JC and Montanha recommended asking one of the artists they represent, Karoline (alias MC Negaly), to be the main participant of the film. MC Negaly was at the time the host of the TV program *Visita*,⁵ a kind of talk show broadcast on the Funk TV YouTube channel that covers topics related to funk music in São Paulo. To our knowledge, she is also one of the few female MCs to acquire a significant level of fame in Cidade Tiradentes. At the time we met her, she was performing her best-known songs at various local events, private parties and happenings. It was during a recorded interview we held with Negaly in the Funk TV studio that we introduced the film project to her, and she immediately agreed to play the role of a young girl who dreams of becoming an MC.

Previously, we had organized a potential cast for the film through a series of short meetings between Daniel, a local activist, thinker and close collaborator, and the three anthropologists. When we began thinking about the film's storyline, we did not necessarily have a preference regarding the gender of the main character. However, after hearing about Negaly from Negro JC and Montanha, and then meeting her, we were convinced that telling the story of how she became an MC in a male-dominated industry would be extremely appealing to us and to various audiences. Based on what we knew about Negaly from Negro JC, Montanha and Negaly herself, the three anthropologists and Daniel crafted a general storyline based on eleven scenes, each with its own main theme and shooting location. Negaly's life story provided the general arc of our film and we worked on the script that would reflect some of the past challenges and successes she encountered during her journey to become a MC.

This work resulted in the following storyline for *Fabrik Funk*: a young woman, Karoline, works (like so many others living in the urban outskirts) for a telemarketing company pervaded by the noise of operators all speaking on the phone at the same time. The work, which is dull and monotonous, does not require any professional qualifications. Karoline's morning commute to her workplace is more than two hours long. She feels bored and disillusioned. Her dream is to become an MC. After hearing that Funk TV is auditioning female dancers for the next music video of a local MC, she decides to introduce herself to the production company. However, before auditioning, she realizes that dancing is not what she wants to do. Friends at a hair salon encourage her to follow her dreams, whatever they might be. After deep reflection, Negaly decides to take the bull by the horns and record and distribute one of her own funk music compositions.

Being a woman in the male-dominated funk industry is one of the central challenges the film addresses. However, the film also deals with conflicts between different generations and different lifestyles: clashes occur over musical taste (aside from funk, the film's participants listen to samba, pagode, gospel and rap), leisure and consumer habits, forms of communication, and the dreams and utopias of different generations – which are portrayed through Karoline's conflictual relationship with her mother. Overall, and as discussed

⁴ For example, the song "O gigante acordou" (2013) by MC Daleste, young funk musician who was murdered in 2013, during a show inspired the social movements of June 2013 in Brazil, and had over 21 million views on the Funk TV channel. The clip is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3tavFBcH4E>.

⁵ For instance, she hosts this program available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gl6jEzgilDw>. The video was first posted on November 2014 and viewed more than 360,000 times.

further below, the three music videos work in tune with the film's storyline in building bridges between the main protagonist's reality and dreams.

Funk music in Cidade Tiradentes

In the 1970s, North American funk music became popular in Brazil, along with disco music. Funk was a social genre, played at house parties and listened to among family and friends. Over the 1990s, funk carioca, a Brazilian funk distinct from its US counterpart,⁶ emerged in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, populated in large part by Afro-Brazilians. It has since gained significant ground: impressive performance stages are built in the middle of the street; "rolezinhos"⁷ take place in shopping centres where funk is sung loudly by hundreds of young people; and "fluxos"⁸ block the streets of the outskirts and emit the sound of funk. At the time of producing *Fabrik Funk*, a subgenre of ostentatious funk (funk ostentação) was already perceived as somewhat of a musical trend of the past by the young people we spoke to. A new style more in vogue, called "putaria" ("bitch style"), characterized by overtly sexualized lyrics, was emerging.

At the time of shooting *Fabrik Funk*, the scene was characterized by extremely young MCs—between 10 and 20 years old. The most famous ones could play up to six concerts a night in different private and public venues. Even with only two original recorded songs, they could fill out a twenty-minute concert with their own and other MCs' most successful samples. Concerts usually took place between Thursday to Sunday nights, both in the outskirts and downtown.

In well-equipped home studios, a legion of young MCs recorded songs, which were mixed by DJs, uploaded to YouTube, and played loudly in the neighbourhood via loudspeakers in cars. Some videos were hugely successful, generating millions of views and ensuring a good turnout for the MC at the funk dances, or *bailes*. For instance, the video "País do Futebol" by MC Guimê, first recorded in a home studio, was viewed more than eighty-nine million times,⁹ reflecting the fact that many people in Brazil considered it to be the unofficial musical theme for the opening of the World Cup in the summer of 2014. Payments for concerts are often negotiated in terms of how many views an MC garners on YouTube.

Consumption is a dominant theme associated with the funk phenomenon. According to activist and local producer Daniel, this music, which is sung and danced to by people of all ages, becomes a "means of integration into the world" for the poor classes. Indeed, consumption can be understood as a form of symbolic power for the working classes.¹⁰ In a context in which consumption goods are tied to identity formation, a range of brand products are highly desired and fetishized. Some are luxury products, which most dream of owning, but few—including some MCs—can actually acquire (for instance Audi, Captiva and Hyundai cars, and Hornet and Hayabusa motorcycles). Other coveted products that are still expensive but somewhat more attainable, even if they represent two months' salary (like the "Mizuno mil," a type of running shoe that is part of Brazilian teenagers' imaginary) become obsessions for young consumers. In an article on ostentatious funk, Barbosa Pereira (2014) draws attention to the importance of the imagination in connection with new communications technologies for understanding this genre. Ostentatious funk invites listeners to imagine themselves otherwise, not necessarily as belonging to another place or country, but rather "as belonging to another social class, in another sociocultural context, in another material reality, in another world of consumption" (2014:8; our translation). In many ways, dreams of consumption echo Negaly's desire to become a famous MC; her success in the funk industry would allow her to purchase consumption products that would otherwise be inaccessible. In contrast to rap culture, which tends to situate itself within the ghetto and reaffirm a marginal identity, funk incorporates the outskirts' inhabitants into dominant value systems, and forges an identity that is articulated in relation to the dominant classes.

⁶ Palombini (2010) has investigated funk in Rio de Janeiro and discussed its relation with African North-American music. He also provides a description of the emergence of black pride in Brazilian popular music. Freire (2012) and Pereira (2014) draw a link between "funk ostentação" in São Paulo and imagination, consumption and new technologies. Hikiji (2015), for her part, takes stock of the tensions between funk and rap in the outskirts of São Paulo.

⁷ For more on the "rolezinho" phenomenon, see Pereira (2014) and Pinho (2014).

⁸ Spontaneous meeting without any pre-arranged appointment during which thousands of people meet up around cars equipped with loud music systems.

⁹ 89,178,937 views as of July 4, 2020 at this address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWnS2dIDgQA>

¹⁰ According to 2013 data from the Instituto Data Popular (Alvarenga 2015), class "C" families (with monthly revenues per capita from 320 to 1120 Brazilian reais, mainly associated with professional occupations related to beauty services, banks, stores and supermarkets, including commercial representatives, vendors and customer service agents) spent more than 1.17 billion Brazilian reais in 2013, which equates to 58% of the credit movements in Brazil.

Consumption becomes a way to create a sense of equality with privileged social classes, or at least to move closer to equality.

Fabrik Funk: Imagining everyday life

Ethnography can be considered as an act of performance (Calzadilla and Marcus 2006:98), a symbol of the social imaginary, a *mise-en-scène* (Calzadilla and Marcus 2006; Marcus 2010). The ethnographic truth, to echo Gonçalves (2008), is created through associations, connections and relations that anthropologists observe and consider relevant to the understanding of a social phenomenon (i.e., familiarization). The *mise-en-scène* of ethnographic fieldwork implies bringing into play elements, objects, people, events, places and artefacts with the intention of furthering analysis of a social phenomenon (Marcus 2010:268). The notion of *mise-en-scène*, which Marcus borrows from theater and cinema, can be applied to the process of creating the everyday through ethno-fiction, as we did through the production of *Fabrik Funk*. Music videos contributed to the fabrication of the everyday in adding sensorial components such as visual effects, sounds, feeling and vibes. They became another mean of connecting with the lives of the young people who identify with funk music, in addition to conveying emotions, and, as we will discuss later regarding the three examples we highlight from *Fabrik Funk*, to emphasizing the transition from the real to the dreamed and the imagined worlds. Anthropological knowledge is there constructed not by description, but by a form of acquaintance, to use MacDougall's words (1997:286).

The process of creating the film's storyline enabled us to identify key components of funk, as well as of the lives of those who identify with this music. Without detaching ourselves from the "real," our intention was to represent the funk phenomenon, as it is lived today in the outskirts of São Paulo, by creating an atmosphere, as well as a story, that would be representative of a possible and realistic situation. The log line, "The reality of a dream," that we adopted to promote the film proposes this juxtaposition of the real and the imaginary, not as a dichotomy, but as two complementary entities along a continuum. "The reality of a dream" encouraged us to think in terms of desires and fantasies without abandoning the real or the imaginary. More specifically, drawing closer to the imaginary enabled us to generate a new interpretation of the lived experiences and expectations of the participants with whom we collaborated.



IMAGE 1: Poster of *Fabrik Funk*. <https://vimeo.com/121777735>

Daniel and the other participants became barometers of the realities in the outskirts. They revealed common practices in terms of language, attitude, social relations, thoughts, etc., that characterize the lives of young people in São Paulo today. In *Fabrik Funk*, the lives of the characters played by the actors are similar to their own lives to different degrees. All of the MCs appearing in the film were MCs in real life. They were

key actors in the funk industry. They composed the songs that they performed in the recording studio and in the music videos that are shared on YouTube.

Through conversations with the participants before, during and after the production of the film, we deepened our understanding of the youth culture associated with funk music. It became clear to us that producing an ethno-fiction meant more than engaging with a cinematographic genre; it constituted a methodological approach based on collaboration and participation (also Sjöberg 2008a, 2008b). For instance, after deciding that we should include a scene of Negaly recording a song, we asked her where we could find a recording studio. In minutes, we walked to the DJ Bruninho Studio FZR, one of the home-based recording studios used by some of the main MCs of São Paulo to record their singles. Without any obvious external signs or advertisements, the well-equipped studio was located at a few meters from Negaly's house. One phone call sufficed to organize the recording session for our film. The logistics of organizing the shooting of the scene revealed numerous spatial and technical aspects of this kind of music scene: the local availability of audio recording and editing equipment, the possibility of building a musical recording studio in an auto-constructed house located in a poor neighbourhood, the musical knowledge necessary to produce this kind of music, and the impressive knowledge of young people who know how to manipulate its musical, technical and spatial elements.

As we moved along the production of the film, we explored the funk music scene in ways that allowed us to better grasp its multiple dimensions. The production of the film generated various occasions to pause, learn, and converse about not only funk music and life in Cidade Tiradentes, but also about our (the anthropologists' and Daniel's) respective socio-economic backgrounds, thoughts, stereotypes and expectations. Towards the end of shooting the various scenes of the film, we were wondering how to come up with a finale. We knew that according to the general arc of the film, Negaly's mother would end up inadvertently listening to one of her daughter's songs and feeling proud about it, suggesting a change of perception and a new appreciation of her daughter's passion. We also knew that she would hear the song playing from the stereo of a passing car – a mode of music dissemination quite common in Cidade Tiradentes, especially among funk aficionados. What we did not yet know was how to stage the specific event of the mother hearing the song. Would she be shopping, cooking, or sitting in her living room? Would she be alone? As we shared our ideas with the actors and neighbours, someone spontaneously suggested that the mother could be standing at the window chatting with one of her girlfriends who was passing by. Everybody from the neighbourhood agreed that this was the most plausible situation and that it simply made sense as an occurrence for people living in Cidade Tiradentes. This contribution, which the three anthropologists, from different backgrounds, might not have thought about as a possibility, exemplifies more than just a detail about how to end a film. It reveals the social side of the “funk factory” where many MCs have lived all their lives.

Despite the fact that the general arc of the film – made up of 11 scenes – emerged from conversations between the three anthropologists, Daniel and Negaly, the script was simple enough to allow the actors-participants to appropriate the story and to improvise it according to their own perceptions and understandings of the context in which the storyline was taking place. For instance, the script of scene #6, called “Funk TV,” included the following details:

Negaly enters the Funk TV headquarters. She walks beside an in-progress recording of a Funk music video that shows some sexually suggestive moves. In the hallway leading to the studio, she meets the other women, “paniquete” style, who are also auditioning for the music video. The “paniquetes” look at Negaly up and down, with a condescending look on their face. Sad, Negaly decides to leave.

At the time of shooting, little went according to the script. Each scene was adapted according to input from the participants/actors, and the people who happened to be in attendance (for example, other employees in the Funk TV headquarters, a neighbour who happened to be there, etc.). We never wrote the dialogue between the actors in advance, instead inviting the actors to improvise the dialogue and to change and adapt their performance as they wished.

Three music videos

The three case studies explored below provide concrete examples of how the music videos inserted in the narrative of the film contributed to the fabrication of the everyday by bridging a portrayal of the life of the main participant with one of her dreams and hopes.

1- *The dream*

Fabrik Funk begins with Negaly working as a telemarketing operator in São Paulo. Her conversation with customers is interrupted by parallel exchanges Negaly has on her phone and on social media. We decided to develop the theme of consumption and brand fetishism in this first scene because of its key presence in funk culture. Observations, discussions and media posts we collected during the shooting of the film inspired the content of MSN dialogues. Creating the MSN exchanges required a constant balancing act between on the one hand integrating our ethnographic research into fiction, and on the other, associating and connecting different components to create what we thought an MSN conversation between two young people would look like.

After the opening scene at her workplace, Negaly embarks on her long commute home –a common phenomenon for people who live in the outskirts and work in the city centre. During the two-hour bus ride, Negaly feels bored, falls asleep and dreams of being a MC. Her dream takes the shape of a music video in which she is the main MC. In the music video, Negaly sings, dances and is obviously in her element, surrounded by funk cultural referents, including the fetishism of consumption (cars, clothing, accessories, phones, etc.).

With MC Negaly's approval, we inserted in the film the already-existing music video of her song "Mais Mais da Quebrada," published on the Funk TV YouTube channel in 2013. By mid-2020, this music had been viewed more than 86,000 times on Youtube, and more than 110 viewers had left comments –largely positive ones, emphasizing the talent of this young female artist.¹¹ The cinematic technique of inserting already-existing music clips has been used by Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji in her short- and medium-length feature films *From over on the East Side* (2010) and *Art and the Street* (2011, see Caffé & Gitirana Hikiji 2019),¹² as well as by Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier in her medium-length feature film *Golden Scars* (2010).¹³ We found this device to be very effective for connecting with the participants of the film by using an aesthetic that is associated with the funk world and industry. The scene ends with Negaly waking up and getting off the bus. The music video provides a visual and musical device to represent what Negaly dreams of achieving, a dream that contrasts with a life that does not satisfy her. This is achieved using the visual and sonic aesthetics that permeate the funk music scene.

2- *The backstage of reality and the clash with the dream*

When we arrived at the Funk TV headquarters to shoot scene #6 (see script #6 reported above), we explained the general storyline of the film to the two young women who played the roles of the dancers, as well as specifying the gist of scene #6 and their roles in it. More precisely, we explained that for the scene, they were supposed to dance as if they wanted to be selected for a funk music video. We told them that they could practice in the hallway of Funk TV while we set up our recording gear. We asked Negaly, the main character of the film, to observe the young girls with a suspicious look on her face. In the film, this is the moment she realizes she is unwilling to audition because she feels uncomfortable. Through the backstage perspective of producing a music video, and the fabrication of what an audition for female dancers might look like, we show the clash between Negaly's hope of entering the funk music industry and the reality it may entail.

The production of this scene was especially useful for revealing the gendered power dynamics of the funk industry. The instructions provided to the participants before shooting the scene were sufficiently broad for them to be able to improvise the rest of the scene based on what they thought their characters would do and say in a similar situation. Scene #6 is probably among the most powerful in the film because of the sensuality that emanates from the performance of the dancers, a sensuality that is a key characteristic of the funk universe. The actors, initially shy, expressed through their dance an embodied knowledge of funk music and culture, which is governed by explicit and sensual images of female bodies. In this scene, Montanha,

¹¹ Date of the viewing: July 4, 2020. The song "Mais Mais da Quebrada" was composed and interpreted by MC Negaly and recorded in the DJ Bruninho Studio FZR. The music video is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhDc0_c_L_U.

¹² *Lá do Leste* (From over on the East side) is available here: <https://vimeo.com/57393706> and *A arte e a rua* (Art and the Street) is available at this address: <https://vimeo.com/57370633>.

¹³ *Golden Scars* is available here: <https://vimeo.com/69532639>.

one of the directors of Funk TV, played the role of a video director who encourages the sexual references made in the lyrics of a song by MC Mini. His song “Doida De Tequila” (2014; Crazy about Tequila),¹⁴ which already existed before the production of the film, associates female sexuality with the consumption of tequila. Montanha suggested that we use this song because it was easy for him to contact MC Mini and ask for his participation in the film. When he played his character, Montanha, who had already produced various music videos, opted for a posture that reinforced the erotic essence of the song: behind the cameras, he coaches the young girls by asking them to sensualize their movements. We did not ask Montanha to adopt this controversial attitude (from the anthropologists’ point of view), but he thought it fit well with the storyline and the idea of the scene—mainly, the idea that Negaly would decide not to audition. Indirectly, the performance of this male producer looking at young women and directing them to dance sensually speaks volumes about how women are treated in this music scene. Montanha decided to adopt this attitude on his own, which taught us about the misogynist arrogance towards women in this music industry that is not often referred to in the public discourse. The character adopted by Montanha during the shooting of the film was very different from the person we had come to know. Yet, when we turned on the camera, his character took control of the scene both verbally and physically, and this shift revealed some of the power dynamics present in the production of funk music and music videos.

3- Realizing the dream

In several scenes of the film, Negaly wears a T-shirt displaying the words “Follow the Black, Never Stop Dreaming.” In the middle of her t-shirt, there is a plain black figure of Minnie Mouse between both ears. Negaly decided to wear this specific T-shirt for the shooting of the film. She wears it in a scene when Daniel, who plays the role of a hairdresser and friend of Negaly, tries to cheer her up after she comes back from her failed dance audition. He tells her that she has to follow her dreams, a piece of advice we did not explicitly include in the script but that came up spontaneously when we shot the scene. Daniel shows Negaly the tattoo of Angela Davis he has on his arm. He tells Negaly that Davis represents an inspiration for him in his life; she is a woman who struggles for the rights of Black Americans. This was also an unexpected addition to the script.

At the time of the film’s editing, Leo Fuzer, the editor from the Laboratory of Image and Sound in Anthropology at the University of São Paulo, who worked on *Fabrik Funk*, chose to include a close up of Negaly’s T-shirt, to accentuate the idea of pursuing a dream suggested by Daniel. The music composer Ewelter Rocha, who worked on the original soundtrack of the film, mentioned that Negaly’s T-shirt inspired him to write a song that would reflect the idea of realizing one’s dreams. This song created the atmosphere for the editing of a simple but effective music video, a type of musical transition that emphasizes the difficult period Negaly is going through.

In contrast with funk musical and visual aesthetics –quick rhythm, jumping images with special effects – this short musical transition is characterized by a calm instrumental composition (piano, no voice) that pushes the viewer to connect with Negaly at an emotional level. The failed audition and the advices she received from her friend in the hair salon, to pursue her dream despite the challenges and obstacles she may meet, pushes her to think about her life and what she wants to accomplish. Standing on a hill, she looks at her phone, fixes her hair, and contemplates the urban landscape of Cidade Tiradentes. The music video offers a moment of deep reflection and pause, but also of transformation and rebirth. It brings the viewer closer to Negaly’s dream, and to her decision to pursue a career as an MC in the funk industry. It further creates a shift in the narrative of the film: after this moment of contemplation, Negaly decides to actively pursue her dream of becoming a famous MC in the funk industry.

Conclusion

During the production of the ethno-fiction *Fabrik Funk*, we moved beyond an understanding of reality and fiction as opposites. The use of music videos at three specific occasions during the film played an elemental role in shifting events happening in Negaly’s “real” life to dreams and hopes located in the imaginary realm. The music videos expressed, sometimes in antagonistic ways, the main participant’s hopes

¹⁴ The song is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GVwBcKDtx4>.

and desires within a musical context that characterizes the funk music scene in São Paulo. As such, they destabilized the binaries between the actual and the imaginary world.

Furthermore, the music videos in *Fabrik Funk* helped fabricate an ethnographic reality that extends beyond the storyline of the film. The production of the ethno-fiction in combination with the music videos contributed to a more in-depth comprehension of various elements, including aesthetics, that compose the funk scene. While working on the production of the film and the music videos, the anthropologists were constantly stimulated by new elements and vibes that allowed them to better grasp the dynamics at play in the funk factory. In a similar way, Eugenio Giorgianni (2017) argues that making a music video with young musicians living in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, generated a common ground that facilitated bonding with the participant-collaborators. In addition to strengthening his relationship with them, crafting the video became a creative way to stimulate a dialogue about the musical ecology of Goma, including the networks of music production, consumption and dissemination. The production of the music video kindled discussions of topics that were not necessarily sonic nor musical, but related to other spheres of the social world in which the musicians lived.

In addition to the three case studies developed above, the directors occasionally used photographs taken by Sylvia Caiuby Novaes, one of the director-anthropologists, to create a form of rhythmic transition from one scene to another. The photographs appear on the screen with background music to give the impression that a series of photos are being taken on the spot (the sound of a camera shutter accentuates this effect). These series of shots simulate the imaginary presence of fans and paparazzi who would take photos of our protagonists. They accentuate the sense of stardom associated with the dream of success in the funk industry. Significantly, the role of the three music videos mentioned above goes further than transitioning one scene to another. In enacting “the reality of a dream”, they contribute to the story of the film. They help reflect on how the fabrication of everyday life implies the inclusion of hopes and desires. With their contrasting vibes and rhythms, they allow for the mise-en-scène of another possible world. In the case of our ethno-fiction, the music videos fabricate the funk factory, not only its lived everyday life but also its dreams and hopes for a better tomorrow.

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FILMING PAPOULA. MULTIMODAL ETHNOGRAPHY AND EXPERIMENTAL COLLABORATIONS

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ABSTRACT

In august 2018 the authors worked with Kasper, an emerging pop artist from Brazil, to co-create the music video Papoula. The article explores the experimental collaborations that took place during the filming of the videoclip and the reflexive interactions that happened during the multimodal 'writing' process. For that reason, the article is experimental in form, curating and mediating between various multimodal texts: the written word, timelapse animations, photographs and audio recordings. These multimodal dialogical forms of representation describe the web of interactions, encounters, negotiations and frictions that occurred during the creation of the videoclip. The article also explores the idea of space regarded as a 'fieldwork device', space becoming a locus of entanglements between human and non-human agencies. The artist's home and studio (The Kasper Factory) converts into a 'factory' of audio-visual creation during the videoclip production but also into a laboratory for anthropological experimental collaborations. The dynamics of the text fluctuates between the voices of the authors, as anthropologists and their experiences as artists involved in the production of the music video. In this way the article reveals the processes of creation of a music video and the 'anthropological inventions' through a multimodal discourse that takes the form of a collaborative roleplay, having important methodological, epistemological and political consequences.

KEYWORDS

music videos, experimental and collaborative anthropology, multimodality, space

Bio

Mihai Andrei Leaha is a Romanian audio-visual researcher and filmmaker, working in South-America. His films have been shown at various film festivals and won prizes. As a member of the CVA and other organizations, he is involved in curating, promoting and programming ethnographic films at various conferences of festival events. He taught visual anthropology in Cluj and São Paulo, and organized conferences and workshops on visual and multimodal anthropology in Romania, Brazil and Peru. He is currently doing a postdoctoral at the University of São Paulo, researching on the DIY electronic music scene in São Paulo.

Katharina Hilgenberg is a German anthropologist and independent filmmaker based in Brazil. She graduated from the Freie Universität Berlin and has done fieldwork with Pentecostal missionaries in indigenous communities in the northern region of the Brazilian Amazon. Since 2018, she lives in São Paulo, where she works on various artistic and documentary projects.

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Acknowledgements

This article and research is part of Mihai Andrei Leaha's postdoctoral project entitled "The Embodiment of Experiences of Local Music Participation: An audio-visual research of the local DIY music Scene of São Paulo" and is part of a larger Thematic Project: Local Musicking – new pathways for ethnomusicology financed by (FAPESP) Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo.

VIDEOCLIP *PAPOULA*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYGBhhAtZhI>

I. Introduction

The videoclip that you've just seen, as well as this article, is a result of many kinds of 'experimental collaborations' (Estalella and Sánchez-Criado 2018). In 2018, Mihai was invited by Kasper, an emerging Brazilian pop-musician and audiovisual artist to film the music video for his pop song, *Papoula* (the title translates into poppy flower). Mihai met Kasper during Blum, one of São Paulo's iconic electronic underground parties that, at that time, Mihai had recently begun to research. Eager to establish collaborations and relations that would ease his access into the field, he gladly accepted the invitation to use his skills as a trained cameraman and help make Kasper's dream come true. That night, the Romanian anthropologist and filmmaker also met Katharina, Kasper's good friend who was in charge of the future production of the videoclip. He soon learned that in addition to collaborating with Kasper on documentary and fictional audiovisual projects, she was also trained in anthropology. This encounter seemed to us not only a great opportunity to collaborate in the production of the music video, but also to reflect together about the whole process and maybe to make a film or write something together. The film never happened, but this article tells the story of this encounter and how, through collaboration and reflexivity, we've experimentally and dialogically created a multimodal ethnography of the process of making a music video 'as artists', while reflecting on it 'as anthropologists'.

The authors of this paper played a number of different roles in this process. Besides both being anthropologists, collaboratively analyzing our experiences based on fieldwork practices: Mihai was the cameraman of the clip and Katharina the producer, set designer and one of the actresses. Katharina was also Kasper's roommate, artistic collaborator and a Kasper's dear friend while Mihai was the lighting technician and, in the end, became the co-director of the clip. While this is not a usual fieldwork situation that uses participant observation as its core method for doing ethnography, it is an analysis of art-making as active collaborators in the videoclip's 'musicking' (Small: 1998) which started as a video production and has resulted in this analysis. As Christopher Small noted, musicking can be seen as "any form of musical engagement" (1998). In Small's opinion, 'to music' is a verb and describes dynamic encounters that take place in a physical place and a specific social setting. We find the concept of musicking useful in our analysis, mostly because of its openness towards processes and encounters related to any kind of musical activity. Paraphrasing, we were not involved in the making of a videoclip but we were 'videocliping' - in an entanglement of various agencies, processes and trajectories. Regarded in this way, musicking opens up our laboratory of experimentation and collaboration towards the dialogical forms of research (Fabian 2014). Going even further, wouldn't this mean that engaging with these processes in writing is also musicking? We are, after all, interacting with this 'videoclip-making' process in so many ways, first as co-creators, then as anthropologists. By writing about this process as a form of musicking we enable ourselves, through reflexivity, to analyze our collaborative and experimental practices and interactions as co-creators, inhabitants of the same space of production and last but not least, anthropologists.

There are various degrees of collaboration and experimentation in our particular research practice that will be reflected in the discussions: format, structure, and various modes (of communication). It is a programmatic but experimental way to deal with different voices expressed in many types of texts (evocations and reflexive thinking; engagements with theory, abstractions etc.) and audio-visual (video, timelapses, photography) materials that we intend to curate and to put into dialogue. Adolfo Estalella and Tomás Sánchez-Criado point out three modes of experimental collaborations (2018). The first mode is inspired by Fabian's dialogic forms of research (2014), and actually refers to how anthropologists employ various modes of participation in the field that would empower our interlocutors. This mode pays attention to the flow of fieldwork information and the way anthropologists produce them, focusing on the dialogic as a generic alternative to the centrality of participant observation (Marcus 2018). The second mode of collaboration is concerned with the problem of representation and asks further how we co-produce together with interlocutors, anthropological knowledge and representations? As the two authors observe, this mode focuses on "mutual advantages of co-laboring, elucidating and controlling"

and “highlights the capitalization of information” (Estalella and Sánchez-Criado 2018: 10). This is based on older epistemological anxieties contested with questions about ethnographic authority, addressed in volumes such as *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus 1986) or *Picturing Culture* (Ruby 2000) this mode underlines problems of textual and visual representation in the production of anthropological texts or films, and invites researchers to be more reflexive and in this way politically aware about their own modes and means of production. The third mode of collaboration proposes an even more radical rupture with the classic methods of doing ethnographic fieldwork and uses experimental collaborations as “a form of engagement that entails field interventions through material and spatial arrangements that enable the articulation of inventive ways of working together” (Estalella and Sánchez-Criado 2018: 20). As a consequence, experimental collaborations could reformulate the notion of fieldwork itself in contemporary anthropology (Rabinow 2008). The field is not just a location for the production of empirical data, that requires long term observation, but, a joint problem-making site, where we are practicing different / divergent forms of being in the field with others. In this sense, the fieldwork becomes a device, a locus of experimentation where we share the construction of anthropological knowledge and its representations with our epistemic partners and not our interlocutors (Marcus and Holmes 2005; Estalella and Sánchez-Criado 2018: 20).

Our own experimental collaborations touch upon all three modes of collaboration and our article intends to address them by evoking them reflexively. First of all, we use the first mode by describing our negotiations in the field in an autoethnographic manner, from the point of view of the roles we played in the actual production of the videoclip. The narration is an auto-ethnographic account informed by post-fieldwork notes or memories of an ethnographic present that offer glimpses into our processes, frictions and negotiations in the field. By sharing, discussing and commenting upon these collaborations, we are actually operating from the perspective of what Heewon Chang and collaborators call 'collaborative autoethnography' (Chang et al. 2012). Throughout the text these passages will appear in italic.

An important stake of this article is a formal and representational one. Therefore, we will address the second mode of experimental collaboration by reflexively focusing on the article's representational strategies. We intend to experiment with ethnographic discourse by juxtaposing our written accounts (as reflected in collaborative mode 1) with the audio-visual material we will curate in the article. We will reflect upon our musicking experience by putting photographs and videos together in a multimodal discourse based on our own evocations, combining these with our reflexive and theoretical accounts. As a convention, we will treat each of these elements as voices that communicate together in a dialogical and multivocal form, while assuming the messiness of the writing process and the points of indetermination between each element. This mode is methodologically inspired by recent developments in digital and multimodal anthropology (Pink 2011; Laplantine 2016; Collins and all. 2018; Dattatreya and Marrero-Guillamón 2019) that reaffirms the role of reflexivity and collaboration in the context of new media ecologies. In practice, our text will combine various audio-visual materials created by us or by other collaborators and juxtapose them with our own reflexive involvement in the process of music video production.

Inspired by the third mode of experimental collaborations, we will treat our fieldwork as a laboratory, a locus of experimentation, a reflection about trajectories and entanglements between human and non-human agencies that intertwine and inhabit it. These collaborations will be reflected in a section on the role of space as a laboratory of creation and experimentation. Our approach is inspired by Rabinow's concept of 'assemblage-work' which is preferred to that of 'field-work' (2008). The author notices a shift in contemporary experimental practices that moved into the arena of various new environments, virtual, or media 'laboratories'. As a result, the object of study of the anthropologist has shifted and is no longer focusing on a community placed in a single locality with fixed coordinates but rather on an assemblage of people, places, objects, concepts and agencies of any kind. The anthropologist's role would be to mediate and to put together all these elements (Rabinow 2008: 1-11). In our process of assemblage, we will treat the space of musicking, as a fieldwork device, a site of entanglements and trajectories that forms the locus of our experiments, artistic as well as anthropological.

We will share our different experiences of the space, our memories and feelings regarding the building and dismantling of the filming set, which was also KH and Kasper's home and tell the story of a trajectory that accounts for the interaction and entanglements between human and non-human elements (Ingold 2010). Reflecting upon the idea of space, as a 'devised fieldwork' (Estalella and Sánchez-Criado

2018) leads us to an experimental position where we can treat all inhabitants of a space as trajectories. Moreover, we will try to answer, through our reflexive evocation and photographs, what is the multisensorial and vanishing characteristic of a space and what is the connection between the intended meaning of the videoclip, the space and the political implications.

In our discursive proposal, a multimodal environment allows us to add the hat of a curator, that invites other peers to affect, conclude and contribute to the trajectories of technologically mediated collaborative practices (Leaha 2019). Assuming the messiness of the anthropological account is also part of our methodology of narrative ruptures, indetermination points and multimedia storytelling. One can't always find a smooth, linear, clear line between various ethnographic accounts but the readers are invited to create their own paths and traces and sometimes read between the lines. In this way, our text is not only a collaborative and experimental discursive strategy, but an invitation to a different reading experience, where the act of reception is an active and politically significant mode of reading/viewing that is constructed subjectively. Participating in a musicking process such as a music-video, not only as anthropologists but rather together with all the other roles we played, positions us in a very meaningful position as co-producers of collaborative experimental and shared anthropological knowledge production.

II. Filming processes. Improvisations, collaborations and reflexivity.

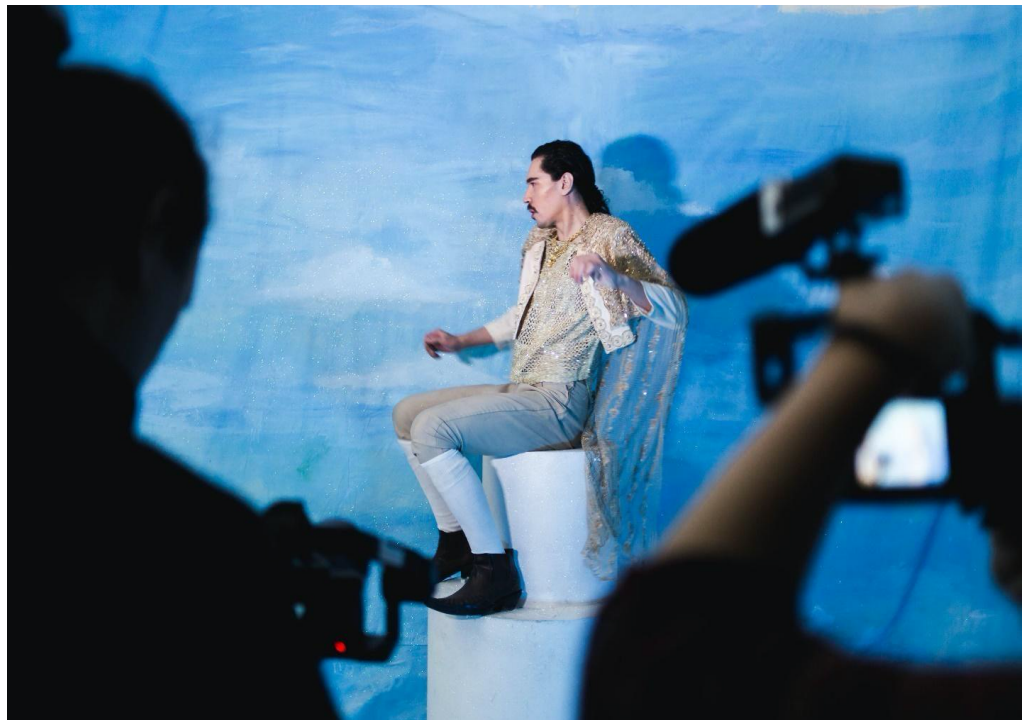


IMAGE 1: *Kasper while filming a scene of the music video.* Photo: Marcelo Paixão.

In what follows, we will use multimodality as a discursive practice that engages various media, while representing shared degrees of authorship, curated in a co-produced and dialogical manner. We will evoke our own ethnographic descriptions and curate various other contributions: the depictions of Tiberiu Mihai Cimpoeriu, the author of timelapses, the voice of Kasper as recorded in a conversation with MAL, the photographs of Marcelo Paixão, the set photographer and various non-human agencies (the set, the camera, various objects at the Castelo). All these elements will be treated in a dialogical manner, the voice of the anthropologist, executive producer, set designer and the talent (Katharina) will dialogue as much with the co-director, cameraman and anthropologist (Mihai) as with the artist Kasper. It proposes a further dialogue through the reflections on collaboration of the anthropologists and with Katharina's affective reflections in regards to her closest friend, Kasper. We believe that by assuming this

reflexive approach one can add various layers of meaning in answer to questions around the role of the anthropologist in the context of collaborative and experimental content creation.

Our first invitation is to watch this timelapse that shows some of the backstage moments of the creation of our music video. One can see here most of the team of the videoclip and part of the actors. It is a mute clip, as it is made from a multitude of photos stitched together in post-production. The camera was panning slowly with the help of a motorized head catching the physicality of the set, the pauses, the tiredness of its inhabitants but also the trials and errors of this kind of intense studio work. What Tiberiu managed to capture with a technique that is based on chance, considering that the author did not have a viewfinder to see what he was doing, nor had any control of what will happen in front of the frame, is a silent conglomeration of human and non-human elements dancing together on the music of improvisation.

<https://vimeo.com/368614112>

Timelapse of the filming of the music video showing backstage. Made by Tiberiu-Mihail Cimpoeu (Assistant of Photography – among the many roles he played in the filming of the music video)

“After everything had been set up, we had infinite possibilities of rearranging the scenography, to construct frames. Obviously, we already had scripted what it would more or less look like but when the scenography was up we could play with ideas of how would this work here or there by adapting to the technical possibilities, so that, for instance, the walls wouldn’t show in the image. Sometimes there were people holding up plants in the background. The technical part was a bit stressful. Like, everything was beautiful and enchanting, but the light, bad. So that was our job, the transformation of the elements which had to be done by the technical assistants and the co-director - because, you know, I’m crazy! You can envision things in a certain way, but real life is a different story.” (Kasper in a conversation with MAL)

We all had to cope with the ‘craziness’ of Kasper in both stimulating and challenging ways. On the one hand, this craziness meant creativity and assumed a sort-of mutual membership of a laboratory of experimentation and creation where all of us could play their parts. That created a good atmosphere to work in and people related easily with one another. The pact was that we were all there to create something ‘beautiful’ as artists. The crew was quite small but diverse and quite international (Romanians, German, French and Brazilians as actors, technicians, designers, creative and auxiliary personnel and Kasper, the star). This mixture could have been a disaster, but we believe that what saved the set was specifically this creative improvisational method that we all adhered to, in spite of all our differences. Surely, not everything went smoothly on set, as sometimes, improvisation also means confusion. There were plenty of frictions between the two directors, Mihai and Kasper and at times, the whole process seemed to get out of control. Mihai didn’t speak Portuguese very well and it was hard to communicate what he actually wanted to happen on set. Kasper, on the other hand, wanted everything to happen the way he envisioned, although this vision was not quite palpable. Nevertheless, we all had to be inventive and find solutions, improvise, collaborate and experiment. The greatest challenge consisted of arranging the elements that had been ‘thrown together’ inside the place of the studio. The participants, the scenography and the technological elements such as lights and the fog machine had to be arranged in such a way that the camera could capture an immersive image, transcending the forms of the constituting elements, transforming them into a distinctly new, mediated reality. This work was about translating an artistic vision so that it could be shared collectively, while adapting it to technical limitations through the process of improvisation and play. During four days of shooting, collaboration became the key in the creation of the immersive filmic reality of the music video. Our small team was posed with the challenge of creating immersive frames out of a chaos of materials. By adapting pre-scripted notions within the technical possibilities, we were creating the cinematic reality of the world of *Papoula* through experimentation. Katharina evokes this process in a fieldnote:

“The images had been so well constructed inside my head during weeks of conversations that they had become so normal and real to me that it almost came as a surprise that other people didn’t share them (yet). Besides the translation of the artistic vision for the clip, linguistic barriers needed to be navigated.

Equivocations were inevitable and the first day of shooting was dominated by messiness and conflict. I had taken on a double role as an observer behind the camera and the head of production that was constantly asked to organize something, provoking a conflict of interest that had to constantly be navigated. I was also the only person who knew how the huge, green structures could be moved and had to take care of the arrangement of plants inside the frame. In addition, Kasper relied on me as a translator, in linguistic as well as artistic terms. I had to take care of hosting the production team, preparing food and drinks and maintaining some kind of order in the space. All of these roles were almost mutually exclusive, but it was the thrill of the immense freedom of the project, that we could take on any role we wanted.” (Katharina)

The independent conditions of filming the music video enabled us to play various roles in the production process. Nobody involved was remunerated and we were proud of it. Kasper’s inspiring promotion of freedom of creation was of higher value. Being a no-budget production, as Katharina describes it, one had to assume more than one role in order to make things happen. In this case, we weren’t there as anthropologists, we were there to realize these other roles. We needed no ‘alibi’ of being anthropologists in order to motivate our presence in the field. We were also not in the situation of many researchers that offer a videoclip as a reward for the interlocutors, as a way of giving something back. From the very beginning, we were plunged into a situation of creation and collaboration that required artistic and technical exchanges. That was our fieldwork, a laboratory of creation where we played different roles, not as anthropologists in the eyes of the others. Ours was an ‘in-depth’ as opposed to a long-term one (Pink 2018). We were immersed in the field by being part of it, by playing key roles. In this way we became our own interlocutors. We are having a discussion right now, in writing, in an ‘ethnographic present’, a hermeneutical process of going back to the fieldwork and back again to our writing (Hastrup 1992). Surely, this is a process that all the ethnographers’ practice. Nevertheless, our field situation was different as our ‘role’ in the field was not that of participant observers. ‘Roleplay’ in the theatre is associated with historical re-enactments or with character switching in ‘Commedia dell’Arte’. Today, roleplay can be associated with videogames or with processes of impersonation in psychology. The alibi for our presence on the set of *Papoula* as anthropologists, was that of cameraman, co-director, producer, actress etc. These were all the roles we ‘played’ there. We had inverted the game somehow and gained our knowledge by playing it alongside our ‘epistemic partners’.

Katharina speaks about her role as an actress in the videoclip and the deep immersion she had in the field and the transformation processes involved:

“Switching sides, from the backstage to being a model on set, was one of the most significant moments of the shot, as it added yet another perspective, making this first experience on a film set one that incorporated almost any possible position in the production process. I remember being very nervous, but over the course of the shooting that feeling was eclipsed by something as banal as the tiredness of my arm. Perhaps, then, my wish to become part of the world of *Papoula* actually led to the deconstruction of the last space of mystery that I had about the clip – the way it felt to be in the picture. The creation of an air of beauty and ease demanded hard and exhaustive work, not only from the production team but also from the actors. The ‘reality’ ‘of the film I was looking for changed its face drastically as I was experiencing being inside of it, putting into question many of the assumptions and illusions I had nurtured growing up in a world obsessed with pictures. Perhaps the ‘reality’ I was looking for exists only in the act of watching, listening and feeling - but probably the way I watch, listen and feel any filmic image will be forever changed by my experience on set and especially in front of the camera.” (Katharina)

Through our musicking, we soon discovered the nuances of experimentation and collaboration in the process of filming. We were inventing everything together. This trajectory of role-playing made us reflect auto-ethnographically on the possibilities of being the other, assuming our experiences and the different roles we played, as an othering device and thinking about ways to communicate them. As Mihai evokes here:

“Being there was surprising from all points of view. On one hand the place had the feeling of the backstage of a fashion show. All these people I didn’t know were coming and going in a rush of leaving their own artistic mark on the videoclip. I painfully felt that often I had to shrink all that energy into one image and somehow put order in it. Kasper, Katharina and Ellias Kaleb have provided all the artistic ingredients:

studio, story, setting, artists, movement, dance, colors etc. but I had to be the one to fill in the puzzle. The place was apparently big but certainly small for my lens. I soon realized we would need to adjust framing, or add scenographic elements to cover the walls, floors and imperfections that could have disturbed the viewer, ponging into the world of Papoula. In the end Kasper and I decided would be best for us to show the imperfections of the setting as a political take against ‘perfect’ videoclips. It is like showing the frame of the production, assuming the indie, ‘undergroundness’ of it all. Actually, during production, all the process had the feeling of being unprofessional, people were late. The smoke machine did not work, I had to do the lighting too, and all seemed to add up and prolonged beyond the limits of acceptability. It was at that point when I became an anthropologist again and took the situation as an opportunity to reflect, take notes and make connections between my role as an anthropologist and my role as a filmmaker/artist in the process of production. I became my own interlocutor; I was answering questions that only I knew how to ask and only I knew how to answer because I wasn’t only playing a role, I was co-directing the videoclip – giving life to it.” (Mihai)

Although, admittedly fascinated and proud of our artistic product and its making, we are far from idealizing it or our experimental collaboration. In reflexively discussing the limits of our method and understanding of the fieldwork processes we also reflect upon the frictions, negotiations and tensions that might arise from this intimate musicking process. In discussing collaboration and intimacy in anthropological practice, Sarah Pink noticed a tension that comes from the word’s historical meaning, not only as a positive, working-together sense, but also as traitor. “To collaborate means to step out of line [with the core conventions, practices and discourses of anthropology] and could perhaps lead to accusations of being a traitor of one’s discipline” (Pink 2018: 205). The effects of our deep collaboration are succinctly expressed by Kasper when describing his experience of living and creating with Katharina. “It’s like letting a spy into your private universe”, says Kasper with a laugh on his face. Further on Katharina reflects upon her own dilemmas in regards to collaboration:

“Kasper might not perceive me as an anthropologist when we were sharing a moment as friends, and neither would I think of myself in that position at all times. And besides anthropologist and friend, I was alternately putting on roles of producer, documentarist, model, photographer, writer, translator and even mother, to only name a few. There were, however, times when my role as an anthropologist became explicit, thus creating the role of the spy - an intruder, even a traitor, a person that cannot be trusted. It was understandably strange watching this part for the first time, but I do understand what Kasper is saying. Ever since we met, we have been almost inseparable, sharing all the highs and lows of each other’s life. If this involves a lot of trust in terms of friendship, it becomes even trickier when one of the parties takes on an explicitly observing and analyzing role towards the other’s life, having access to all sorts of very intimate information. It is nothing unusual for relations of friendship to develop in a field where researchers get so close to their informants, but in my case the roles are inverted - I was first a friend and then a researcher, although the intensity of each position fluctuates.” (Katharina)

The collaborative environment invites a multiplicity of perspectives which add a thickness to the documentation of the creative process. The curation of these media is an ongoing process more than one year after the shooting, continuing to add new meanings to the spatio-temporal event filming the clip, of which this article is but one piece. For us, as anthropologists, these collaborations had some important methodological consequences. Jay Ruby (2009) advocated for reflexivity as an ethical necessity for anthropology, proposing a shortening of the distance between the producer of the message and its receiver in the communicational act. In practice, multimodality as a curational method, takes into account and plays with all the elements of the communicational act. As Mihai said in an analysis of a previous collaboration: “I see multimodality as a return of reflexivity and collaboration practices. Moreover, I believe that the most important aspect of the idea are the political implications of our modes of doing ethnography. In the new and complex media environments, the voice of the anthropologist cannot remain solitary, nor politically unaware” (Leaha 2019: 146). Furthermore, the collaboration of two anthropologists in the production of the clip and our subsequent ‘anthropologizing’ of our experiences as collaborators and roleplaying is a reflexive exploration questioning the limits of traditional ethnography and an experimenting with forms of multimodality and invention. As Dattatreyan and Marrero-Guillamón observe in their recent article about multimodal inventions (2019), there is a certain political understanding related to the idea of invention, which challenges the method of working with

pre-existing 'research questions' very dear to anthropological work. "Multimodal inventions are not constructed around a pre-existing 'thing', 'idea', or 'practice' to be represented. Rather, they enact encounters in which the unexpected, the unforeseen, and the otherwise may be coproduced." (Dattatreyan and Marrero-Guillamón 2019: 224). Moreover, the idea of invention, the authors explain, is relevant to the idea of multimodality as it recognizes that (most) interlocutors transform themselves into skilled theoreticians and that the anthropologists are maybe not the only ones that are 'anthropologizing' about the world. In this sense, the authors reevaluate the relationship between knowing and being in anthropology. The politics of invention in a very complex and commonly shared media ecology where our interlocutors also become content creators, demonstrating the need of new anthropological practices that engage with these environments. Multimodality, as a new way of thinking and engaging with these environments, calls for a reconsideration of the relationship between knowing, being and representing.



IMAGE 2: *Picture with Mihai sleeping on the set on the last day of filming, before the last scene. Exhausted, sick and in love, definitely not an anthropologist. Photo: Marcelo Paixão.*

III. *Papoula* – Space of creation and creation of space



IMAGE 3: Collage showing Kasper ‘dreaming’ in the Castelo, during the shooting of the music video and storyboard. Photos by Katharina and Marcelo Paixão, assembled by Katharina.

This being the case, if I were asked to name the chief benefit of the house, I should say: the house shelters daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace. (Bachelard 1994: 6)

“The first time I came to the Castelo it was late, but when the Uber entered the streets close to our destination, they were filled with the movements, lights and colors of a bustling street market, so busy that our vehicle could hardly pass. The car stopped in the middle of an arborous square full of stationed trucks loaded with fruits and vegetables, the air heavy with the smell of rotten fruit. Fat rats crisscrossed the streets. We walked up towards a large four storied art-nouveau building. It might not have been such an impressive site in Paris or Hamburg, with its flaking facade, but in São Paulo, a city of hyper-verticalization and brutalist forms, moreover in this despite the market dark and abandoned area, the delicate motifs of flowers on its heavy iron door and a small rooftop stone tower justified its baptizing as ‘Castelo’. The space inside was beautiful and raw, alluring and sinister at once. The apartment had apparently been used as a storage area before, so that most internal separations were broken down, giving it a studio atmosphere. High ceilings and wooden floorboards gave the space a bourgeois charm. The guests were dispersed on the floor of the living room, or, as Kasper calls it, ‘Studio A’, whose generous windows ‘view overlooking the square is towered by one of São Paulo’s landmarks, the BANESP building, at night illuminated in shifting colors.’ (Katharina)

Our different experiences of the space, our memories and feelings regarding the building of the musicking event of *Papoula* tell an autoethnographic story of a trajectory that accounts for the interaction between human and non-human elements. We ask how place affects our collaborations and itself becomes a collaborator in the making of our music video. In describing the voice of the place we’ve chosen to describe the trajectory of ‘architextural’ (Pallasmaa 1996) elements, and look at them in their becoming, being verbal rather than nominative, dynamic rather than fixed (Ingold 2010). According to human geographer Doreen Massey, a place can be regarded as a spatio-temporal event containing a ‘constellation of processes’ rather than a just a fixed geographical, physical area (2005). Massey’s ideas

develops the concept of place as an entity in movement opposed to fixed, static or inert constructions. Our aim is to interweave ethnographic description, memories, personal reflections, stories and pictures into a thick account of our highly subjective experience of the home and studio on Parque Dom Pedro II which Kasper had affectionately named Castelo, keeping in mind the question of how non-human actors shaped the production of the music video *Papoula*. The 150 square meters worth of space were carefully, although not always successfully, veiled in order to create the immersive mood of the music video. A polyphonic space itself, the Castelo was a studio, known as ‘The Kasper Factor’ and a home to Kasper and Katharina, and a place for parties and artistic encounters that affected all its visitors.

As we took part in the process of making the music video as co-creators, as artists, filmmakers, producers and actresses, our interaction with the materiality of the clip was direct and transformational. This was especially true during the process of pre-production and the construction of the scenography, where the artistic space of the Castelo became a laboratory of materials. The process of learning and experimentation that took place in this space constitutes it as an ethnographic para-site (Estateella and Sánchez-Criado 2018; Marcus 2018). Besides the collaborations with human beings, which we have already analyzed, other types of agencies transformed the process of musicking, especially the place of the Castelo and materials of scenography. Social acts do not happen in a vacuum but are rather woven together with a multitude of voices whose modes of action are perceived as incommensurable with the traditionally conceived social ties, but therefore not less important. Non-human actors lend stability and durability to social interactions, which, by themselves can be considered inherently fragile and constantly shifting (Latour 2005: 64). For Latour, there is a simple question in order to establish if a thing or being can be called an agent: “Does it make a difference in the course of some other agent’s action or not?” (ibid. 2005: 71). We will try to exemplify this through our autoethnographic and reflexive account of how we entered into experimental collaborations not only with human but also with non-human agencies.

III.I. The Castelo



IMAGE 4: Collage of the Castelo and the surrounding area. (Photos and collage by KH)

In early 2018, Kasper returned to São Paulo from his tiny rural hometown in Rio Grande do Sul, where he had produced nine songs of his first pop album *Technocolor*. Via online platforms he had found and rented a space in the historical center of the city, near the famous shopping street 25 de Marco, the ‘plastic paradise’ of Brazil, where countless shops sell all the flashiest artefacts of late capitalism, from cell phone cases, over plastic flowers and falsified luxury goods, to carnival costumes - “you can’t go more

pop that that", as Kasper says. In this part of the center, known as Parque Dom Pedro II, a historically commercial area, lies, to the other side of the Castelo, the Municipal Market. While the busyness of the shopping street ebbs down at night, the area around the market turns into a lively fair of fruits and vegetables that goes on from dawn until sunrise. Popular representations of the area around Parque Dom Pedro tend to characterize the activities exerted here as 'irregular' or 'illegal' (Freire da Silva 2014: 14). The heterotopic space of the Kasper Factory invaded the fabric of the area with unprecedented symbolic meanings, provoking friction and wonder. Uncommon bodies, performances and practices were inserted into a neighborhood mostly made up of people working in the informal sector of the surrounding markets and not especially familiar with references of self-expression pertaining to the artistic underground. Kasper, as a gay man with an extravagant fashion style and Katharina as a very light skinned and blonde, obviously foreign woman and their numerous eccentric guests received a heightened attention, in positive or negative and solely curious ways. The existence of the Kasper Factory in Parque Dom Pedro II was a provocation by being openly and extravagantly gay, in a country which counts one of the highest murder rate for LGBTQ people worldwide (Michels 2020) and during a time when a growing conservatism spiked with waves of open homophobia prepared the ground for the election of the ultra-right wing president Jair Bolsonaro in late 2018. Beyond commerce, the area is notorious for prostitution and its dark and unsafe streets. Living in this area "required a lot of courage", as Kasper recalls. Despite, but also because of these factors, he had chosen this place as his art studio and calls it 'The Kasper Factory' in an homage to Andy Warhol's famous New York Studio: "My production company for art and creative content, or simply a place to get really drunk and imagine yourself as who you already are." The Castelo was, first and foremost, a place of daydreams – of imagining ourselves as the deepest expressions of our psyche, at once fantasy and more real than reality.



IMAGE 5: *Kasper and KH in the Castelo, March of 2018. Papoula would be shot in this room five months later. Photo by Andi Otto.*

While the Castelo was a home to Kasper and Katharina during six months, its quality was not that of a private space but rather fluctuated unexpectedly between openness and closeness, such that its face was always changing but continuously empty and ever more chaotic and devoid of comfort. For months, it was a place for after parties, where people passed by, made music, drank and took drugs, slept on the

floors and left again. Artists left their marks on the walls without us ever knowing their names. The place was an event in the literal sense of the term, frequented by people associated with the scene of underground electronic music parties (Leaha 2019; Teixeira Braga 2018). The continuing disobedience of rules and cultural codes, like hosting a party with a huge, professional sound system in a residential building, led to conflicts with the other inhabitants of the building and finally Kasper's expulsion from the Castelo. As he remembers it:

"Of course, the police arrived - and I went down to talk to them dressed up as Peter Pan. So, I closed down / was evicted from my own studio for being a terrible tenant, I was even called into court because of the party. But I always took these things lightly, I don't take this institutional part of life very seriously. I take some inspiration from punk culture - to do things DIY style and not to give any fucks." Kasper

The other inhabitants had rebelled against Kasper, the 'unexpected neighbor' which the 'chance of place' (Massey 2005: 151) had set down next to them. The 'throwntogetherness' of place always confronts us with the challenge of the negotiation of multiplicity (Massey 2005: 141) and Kasper's answer to being confronted with antagonistic institutions was one of unbothered surrealism – dressing up as Peter Pan, the boy who never grows up. Although Kasper had planned to develop a long-term project in the space of the Castelo, he took the expulsion lightly. The negotiations of place thus produced a number of possibilities as well as antagonisms in our encounter with humans and objects. The Castelo was not an easy place to live, rather it felt like it in some way, perhaps as a result of being empty for so long, showed a resistance to being inhabited. On the other hand, Kasper experiences place as a canvas for artistic expression: "Every place I go to, I will create my universe".

The particular configuration of this universe created during the production of the music video will be the topic of our discussion in the following part. We have thus far analyzed our trajectory through the place – the building called the Castelo and the surrounding area – and shown how its specific configurations influenced its becoming to a temporary artistic space as well as its dissolution. We will now look more closely at how the place and as well as objects contributed to the artistic process of the making of the music video, which was the final project undertaken in the Castelo during the last month before the date of expulsion.

III.II. The set that constructed itself. Interactions with non-human actors during the pre-production



IMAGE 6: *The set of the videoclip in various stages of pre-production. Pictures and assembly by Katharina.*

"I think that one thing leads to another. Just like any action has a consequence, I believe that *Papoula* is actually a consequence of costumes, a consequence of encounters of people during exactly that period of time." Kasper

The process of pre-production of the video clip was intimately linked to life in the Castelo, shaped by significant coincidences and negotiations of ‘throwntogetherness’ (Massey 2005), our interaction with the environment and the ‘meshwork’ (Ingold 2010) with non-human actors: from the Castelo itself over costumes to construction materials like fabrics, paint, wood, foliage and much more. The choice of aesthetics and storyline in the creation of the universe of *Papoula* originates in a series of encounters of Kasper’s artistic imagination with places, people and objects, as he is completely aware of. It is interesting to note Kasper’s ‘anthropologizing’ in the above quote, which illustrates to what extent he shares the same conceptualizations of space as we do. His perception of space, as a process of encounters and interactions with people and objects underlines the epistemic partnership which pervades our experimental collaborations (Estalella and Sánchez-Criado 2018) and we, as anthropologists, follow the lines of thought of Kasper, the “para-ethnographer” (Marcus 2000), by connecting them to theoretical discussion, while reliving our personal experiences as collaborators, video makers and artists. These elements will be assembled in the following accounts as we follow the construction of the scenario that takes the form of an assemblage (Rabinow 2008) of Katharina’s memories, reflections and visual accounts.

The Castelo forms the background of our ethnographic ‘para-site’. The fact of living in a studio had an important impact on the choice of creating a scenario instead of shooting elsewhere or using a green screen, or CGI (computer generated images) commonly used in videoclips in order to virtually create scenography without constructing it in ‘real life’. Firstly, the place offered the possibility of creation due to its large size and relative emptiness. Secondly, because we chose to create the clip inside the house we lived in, instead of a rented studio, we could work for as long as we wanted and on our proper schedule. Thirdly, the surrounding area is a haven for decoration articles, construction materials and randomly found articles, which facilitated the production immensely. Some of the only pieces of decoration inside the Castelo were images cut out from collection catalogues of eminent art museums. We co-inhabited the space with these paintings and their world seemed to extend into our reality.

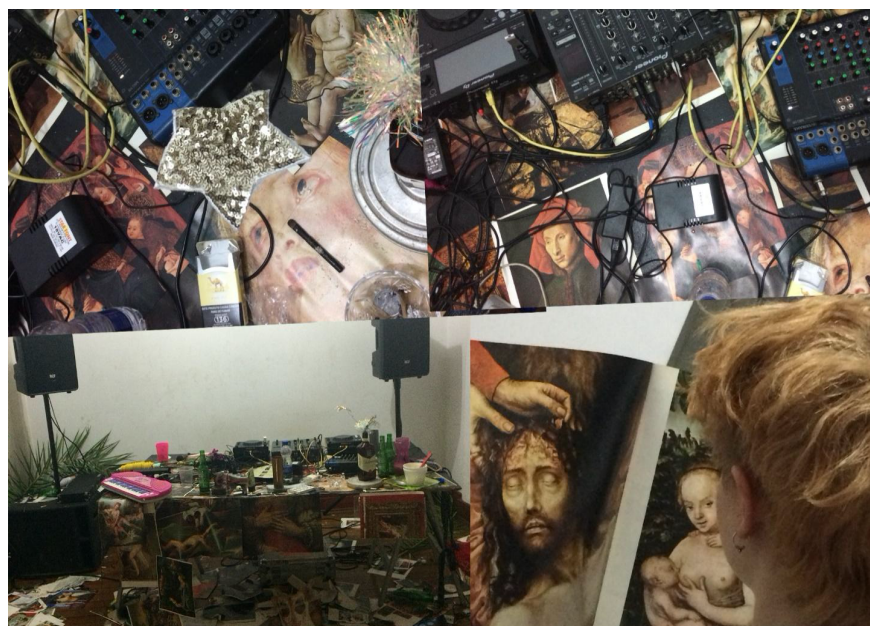


IMAGE 7: Decorations of a party in the Castelo. Pictures by Kasper.

Kasper describes how he came up with the idea for *Papoula*: “in the first discussions about the artistic direction, I already had this image in my head, when I heard the song, which kind of took me to the atmosphere of a fairytale, a really lucid world.” These inspirations converged with the images we were living with to form the distinct mixture of references to renaissance paintings and old film adaptations with their specific aesthetics of on-screen theatre plays - specifically *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), which includes a reference to poppies. The first items of production we assembled were parts of the costumes,

which were curated in second hand bazaars already with the aesthetic of renaissance painting in mind and integrated with some essential pieces Kasper already owned: the cowboy boots and hat, the orthopedic belt which he had already used in another performance, and pieces Kasper had designed and produced together with his mother, a modelist. The production of the large constructions of greenery, which Katharina oversaw, were made possible by the abundance of cardboard in the surroundings, of which we bought a big chunk cheaply from a collector working in the streets, and the lucky coincidence of finding a large amount of cut branches in squares around town. The construction of the scenography was a very intuitive and somehow chaotic process – none of the people involved had ever done anything like that before. We therefore began by assuming that anything was possible. In our exploration of materials and textures, we entered into a different mode of collaboration, which we dare to describe as a laboratory of dreams. Katharina had never worked with wood before and in the construction of the forest-structures acted solely on intuition and eyesight. We were in a constant process of experimentation and elaboration of ideas, of which Kasper presented a multitude in endless monologues, ever-changing in form. Katharina's part was to filter out those ideas I thought viable, and interesting to create, and go on creating until the date of the shooting arrived in an open-ended process. The space of the Castelo became a laboratory where we constantly interchanged ideas and inspired each other in our interaction with the materials.

While the set of *Papoula* was beginning to take shape, we continued to live in the Castelo, now being transformed into a film set. “There was no end to it”, Kasper recalls:

“I was living in that forest, between paint and plants and fabrics for almost a month. [...] Everything had its proper life: the leaves went dry, so we painted them green. I was the God of a place I created – a place of infinite possibilities.”



IMAGE 8: *Textures and raw materials of the music video as seen during pre-production. Pictures and assembly by Katharina.*

It was an intensely sensorial experience: the smell of dry grass, of wet paint, the sound of walking on leaves inside of an apartment, of inhabiting a space created for fictional characters, some of which would never come into existence but whose presence could already be felt. Latour cites the artisan's workshop as one of the few privileged spaces in which the study of objects is facilitated by the fact that there, they “live a clearly multiple and complex life through meetings, plans, sketches, regulations and

trials” (Latour 2010: 80). In the studio, the processes of developing the set design exemplifies clearly the multiplicities of objects, which transformed by labor and imagination of artists, and placed together in a poetic context take on significances that have no prior connection to their materiality – thereby, as Kasper puts it: “giving life to inanimate objects”. Thus, specific colors of paint applied on linen by means of brushes will be recognizable as a sky; foliage stapled to cardboard fixed on wooden poles become a forest. During the process of this decontextualization, objects become our interlocutors as we inquire by way of experimentation and contemplation about their characteristics: how much weight does a nail hold on a wall? How long does a leave stay green? How does the material of this piece of fabric reflect light? Latour states that “there exists no relation between ‘the material’ and ‘the social world’, because it is this very division which is a complete artefact” (Latour 2010: 79). Objects were everywhere – sometimes randomly thrown, sometimes elaborately arranged, and mostly in our way – as we went on somehow living our daily lives, so we adapted our living space accordingly, moving mattresses and other private objects to make space for ever larger constructions. These memories, however, continue to shape the friendships created in the Castelo – in a Latourian sense lending a stability to our social ties by the shared experiences which were mediated by the place of the Castelo.

Thus far, we have discussed the video clip in its materiality, as it shaped our experiences, interactions and social relations, as well as making up an emotional atmosphere, in order to account for the agency of non-human actors in the act of musicking. We focused our attention on the dissection of the agency of non-human actors on the process of pre-production, aware that, as Latour (2010: 80) notes, once in place, objects tend to disappear from view – ever more so as our case study concerns an audiovisual work whose materiality has vanished.

Having moved out of the Castelo two days after the end of the shooting, the place that had given life to Kasper’s artistic world was no more, and in some ways, it felt like *Papoula* was set free from physical confinements. Its material existence was already only a memory, its raw material not yet transformed into the final product that would then be shared with the public and take on a new reality in a virtual space. It is here that the clip takes on a life on its own and develops its proper agency, which will be discussed in the following section.

IV. 'Poppy power'. Political implications and effects of Papoula

In its final form, the music video enters into an encounter with new forms of agency – its viewers and recipients and the institutional context of the music industry, as well as societal and political institutions, beliefs and prejudices. In the following we will consider the effects of the music video in its distribution stage, its receptions and a limited range of its possible interpretations.

The elaboration of a consistent audio-visual universe was only possible by transcending space – the place where *Papoula* was shot is not recognizable: “One thing I love about this clip is how you can lose yourself in it. Someone who didn’t accompany the process has no idea if the space is gigantic or really tiny – you don’t recognize the Castelo” said Kasper. When a viewer on YouTube comments: “I only want to live in that world”, he does not mean the actual physical place of the Castelo but rather a poetic audio-visual world which the video clip evokes. For Kasper, the clip captures the essence of his lived experience in the artistic scene: “You can see the underground in the clip – in the diversity of the casting, including Bianca Della Fancy, a drag queen whose work I admire a lot, and Ilunga, an amazing black singer and performer – and putting these bodies into a fairy-tale world represents exactly what kind of reality we live in: a world of love, a celebration of the freedom of expression that is light and intense at once. See this as a political act”.

He believes that his song is a form of activism, or more likely a subtle activism: “In the political context of today’s Brazil, following an election dominated by a discourse about weapons, violence and disrespect I couldn’t have made a stronger political affirmation then making a song about flowers. I use other weapons – nothing is more delicate than a flower that opposes weapons” (an old flower power argument of pop music, of which Kasper is very much aware). The scenography and performance of the clip constructs the image of a romantic and sensible man, contrasting the traditional norms of masculinity of the highly patriarchal Brazilian society (De la Dehesa 2010, Michels 2020). “One cannot live with fear”, says Kasper. For a young gay man who openly exposes his sexuality, most visibly by his ways of dressing, Brazil has turned into an even more difficult and dangerous place to live after the election of Bolsonaro. Thus, the fantasy world of the video clip is supposed to be a place of escaping a

sometimes-grim reality, a vehicle that could transport the viewer/listener into “the world of dreams” as Kasper affirms. The sensitivity evoked by the materials, lights and colors chosen for the clip contrasts the brutalist forms of the city it originates in, São Paulo: a place full of concrete, cars, plastic, falsification, drug addiction, prostitution, rats and rotten vegetables. It is not, however, an escape to nature either. While foliage plays a big role in the scenario, compared to the reality of the lush jungles of Brazil the constructed forest of the videoclip leaves the viewer with an uncanny feeling. There is an element of uncontrollable intensity in the love for the flower, which borders on obsession, culminating in the final scene of the clip which shows the character in a state of rage, surrounded by red colors in a deconstructed scenario, breaking angels, boxing the decor, ripping out the flower and falling to the ground. The poppy is, of course, the plant from which opium is produced.

The music video is not per definition an act of activism but, in the first place, a tool for promoting Kasper’s work. Even the independent forms of production, the collaborations and the DIY constructions are not per se revolutionary in the post-fordist stage of capitalism. “The aesthetic strategies of the counterculture: the search for authenticity, the ideal of self-management, the anti-hierarchical exigency, are now used in order to promote the conditions required by the current mode of capitalist regulation” (Mouffe 2007:1). The clip does not primarily intend to make a political statement, but is rather a form of creative self-expression: “A way to show a part of my world to people”, as Kasper put it. In his personal quest for fame – he admits carefreely to his ambition of winning a Grammy and becoming a cultural icon – controversy and rebellion are as much an expression of his lifestyle as proven ways to success in the music industry, mimicking strategies of his biggest idol: Madonna. We agree with Mouffe, however, that artists can be critical even and especially when engaging with existing institutions “by creating a multiplicity of agonistic spaces where the dominant consensus is challenged and where new modes of identification are made available” (Mouffe 2012: 1). More than ever, cultural institutions and artistic practices shape identities and new forms of media have opened a stage for new artists to emerge, which challenge traditional forms of representation. As a counterpoint to the violence and repression experienced by queer people in Brazil, artists like Linn da Quebrada, Liniker, Jaloo and, most prominently, the drag queen Pabllo Vittar have celebrated national and international success. Their presence in an institutional context has a potential to challenge what is considered as the ‘common sense’ of society, which is obviously never a manifestation of a ‘natural order’ but the result of sedimented hegemonic practices at a given moment of time (Mouffe 2012:1). In this sense, a music video like *Papoula* can stimulate and inspire new forms of identification and Kasper consciously assumes this position: “I have a huge responsibility, I want to entertain people and make them see things in a different way”. In *Papoula*, this is explored by appealing to the romanticism of flowers and the diversity of the underground and by exploring the enchantment of love and beauty until the limits of alienation, insanity and self-destruction.

V. Conclusions

In the case of this particular collaborative situation, the notion of ‘ethnographic fieldwork’ transforms into a participative performance of musicking, where anthropology happens in the ‘back of our heads’, in writing, during an ethnographic present (Hastrup: 1992). This permits us to think, not only ‘alongside’, but reflexively about the various interactions and frictions that occurred during videoclip production and beyond. In this sense, we argue that this intimate musicking becomes a collaborative experience where others, objects, spaces and ourselves, become the subjects of our own research. This process could have important methodological consequences, changing the way we think about fieldwork practices. As Sarah Pink observes, by using experimentation and collaboration, the notion of long-term fieldwork could be replaced with in-depth fieldwork where we can learn from each other in the field (Pink 2018).

During the production of the videoclip, the Castelo was transformed into a laboratory and ethnographic para-site (Holmes and Marcus 2005). The intense artistic exchanges that took place between human and non-human agencies formed the basis for our reflections about these experimental collaborations which provided a ground for learning, artistic expressions and finally, our auto-ethnographic reflections formulated in a multimodal manner in this article. Our text follows closely our process of roleplay. We assume that the hats we wore in our role as anthropologists are inseparable from all the other hats we wore before, during and after the production of the music video. Our writings are not only inspired by, but became an actual part of the universe of *Papoula*. In some way, this is a cathartic act. Through being reflexive about our positions in “our para-sitical field”, we evoke these memories in

ourselves, shape and transform them, and strengthen our bonds with our collaborators. This dialogic process of becoming ‘epistemic partners’ is also a political act, where ethnographic authority is questioned and shared.

This mode of writing includes, however, a necessary process of selection and trimming that puts us in the position similar to that of a film ‘monteur’ (Marcus 1995). We have to decide to follow some stories and neglect others. To give just one example, the editing process was not discussed here, although it surely played an integral part in the formation of the final product. We have chosen, instead, to focus on the encounters, entanglements and experimental collaborations that happened in the artistic laboratory of the Castelo before and during the shooting. In this way, preserving the centrality of space, seen as a fieldwork device and as a locus of encounters. Moreover, the montage of our multimodal text, does not follow linearity or chronology for that matter. This could be misleading but we have chosen to do this favoring the flow of our ethnographic consciousness, as reflected in our assemblage of text and images. We also acknowledge that images, texts, sounds and other multimodal elements put together in one text, inevitably creates feelings of rupture, and lack of continuities in the narrative. But, as Mihai mentions in another place, “the multimodal discourse is inevitably inflicted with points of indetermination” (Leaha 2019). Switching between text, to audio and back to pictures or moving images again, asks from the reader a more embodied experience, where knowledge is not only communicated through words, but emphatically and corporeally, through moving images or evocative literary texts. When MacDougall was accusing anthropologists for the evacuation of human being from the text (2006: 45), he was not blaming the text itself, but rather its “scientific style” that, unlike “good literature” fail to address human sensorially and fluctuating consciousnesses. Images and sound are better at addressing the humane side as the other concludes. In the context of today’s new media ecologies and technical possibilities offered by various multimedia platforms of publication, the multimodal ethnographer must learn how to write again. It requires an effort of putting together, different, and otherwise conflicting medias, crafted by them and/or others, but more often crafted together. We hope that through collaborative practices, reflexivity and invention could ease the epistemological boundaries of our discipline.

Filming the music video *Papoula* offered us such an opportunity. By being co-creators of its universe, we were actively participating in the ethnographic worlds we were trying to represent. This experience was intense and immersive being a dialogue between our embodied experience of space, an entangling of human and non-human elements that revealed itself through its modulations and sensory feel (Laplantine 2016). Our text tries to express this lived experience and make sense out of it: through videos, still photos, music, reflexive literary texts as well as anthropological reflections. The messiness of this presentation is important. We trust it resembles our own lived experience during the co-creation of this music video.

Lastly, we wanted to give a brief outlook on the ‘afterlife’ of the videoclip and the collaborations surrounding it. The result of one of these is certainly the present article, which takes Mihai and Katharina’s engagement with the music video to the present moment of writing, almost two years after the production. Another event in which *Papoula* engaged us was its nomination for the Music Video Awards in the category ‘Best Costume’, which took place in December of 2019 at the Museum for Image and Sound in São Paulo. To this date, Katharina and Kasper continue to collaborate on audiovisual projects. Together they shot Kasper’s second music video, *Technocolor*, during their trip to Europe shortly after the realization of *Papoula*. The release date of the clip was delayed due to the COVID 19 pandemic. They are also editing a music film composed of documentary and fictional scenes ranging from scenes shot in the Castelo to Kasper’s recent shows in São Paulo venues.

We invite the reader to listen to Kasper’s *Technocolor* as a multimodal experiment. One can treat the song as if it would be a music that accompanies film credits.

Link to the music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLItJNLTIOg>

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UNSPITTABLE: LONG-FORM ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSIC VIDEO AS CINE-ETHNOMUSICOLOGY RESEARCH-CREATION

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ABSTRACT

Cine-ethnomusicology, the cinematic study of music culture, is an emerging discipline in ethnomusicology. Benjamin Harbert, a leading figure in this movement, has called for a critical cinema of music to blend ethnomusicology and film studies. In response to this call, I forward the long-form ethnographic music video as a research-creation model that combines ethnographic filmmaking with music video production. This article introduces a three-assemblage ethnographic production model and uses the making of *Unspittable* (2019) as a case study.

KEYWORDS

music video, ethnographic film, ethnofiction, three-assemblages, research-creation, phenomenological ethnomusicology, Alberta, Canada, DIY musicians

Bio

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Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the Social Science and Humanities Council of Canada for generously supporting this research the MacEwan Office of Research Services and the MacEwan Faculty of Fine Arts and Communications for research funding and support.

Prologue

This article was initially drafted and reviewed before the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, by five police officers, including Derek Chauvin which energized the subsequent Black Lives Matter protests around the world. Here in Edmonton, Alberta, 15,000 people gathered to powerfully acknowledge that Black and Indigenous Lives Matter in Canada and that the long history of oppression perpetrated by colonial and racist governmental practices must end. On my final morning of editing, I received word that William Gladue, a member of the local Indigenous Hip Hop group Collective Conscience discussed in this article, had died overnight. While in this article, I write for professional ethnographers and filmmakers about the technical work of making ethnographic music video, I do not want to lose sight of the practical work of solidarity that motivated this project and others like it. Unspittable was a joint project in ethnofiction, an attempt to share the lived realities of inner-city youth in Edmonton, the forced demand of capitalism to “hustle” and the joy and solidarity that rhythm brings. The moments of joy are fleeting. The struggle, while fictionalized, is real. I believe that white academics must find ways to amplify the voices of Black and Indigenous people. The long-form ethnographic music video is, therefore, a creative political project. I hope that the reader will understand that working through the technicalities and theories in this paper is a kind of ethico-aesthetic labour required to create new ways of knowing and feeling each other—a new way of breathing together.

“Only an act of language escaping the technical automatism of financial capitalism will enable the emergence of a new life form. Only the reactivation of the body of the general intellect—the organic, existential, historical finitude that harbors the potency of the general intellect—will enable the imagination of new infinities.”

(Berardi 2018: 31)

Introduction

The long-form ethnographic music video is an experimental method to mix ethnographic film and music video production. It builds on a growing area of music video research (Arnold et al. 2017, Beebe et al. 2007, Burns and Hawking 2019, Frith et al. 1993, Keazor and Wübbena 2010) that focuses on productive modes of analysis. Still, there is little written about production and research-creation (Richardson 2019). Books on the creation of music videos have been written by artists who have, understandably, little interest in contributing to cultural studies (Esrich 2009: 147). The emerging area of cine-ethnomusicology has much to offer in this regard as it develops what Benjamin Harbert has called a “critical cinema of music” (Harbert 2018, 246). Cine-ethnomusicology, as conceived by ethnomusicological filmmakers, may forward research-oriented production methods that resonate with the aspirations of research-creation (Cumming 2012; Kerrigan 2016; Stévanec 2018) while also providing a critical engagement with digital cinema. Music video research-creation reorients ethnomusicological fieldwork, a move that transforms the traditional anthropological idea of “the field” as an identifiable geographical location, to a posthuman field.

There are multiple ways that this new field might be understood. My approach is a triptych of assemblages: territorial, production, and screen. In the most common sense of the term assemblage is a collection. Expanded philosophically by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in “A Thousand Plateaus” (1987), an assemblage is a self-creating unit; it is autopoietic. Manuel DeLanda in “A New Philosophy of Society” (2006) and “Assemblage Theory” (2016) suggests the study of units of social bodies as a technique to understand collective and constant becomings. The assemblage is a way to dissolve the structure: agency binary and has a great deal in common with Abu-Laghod's (1991) “ethnography of the particular” and Gullion's (2018) “diffractive ethnography.” I use assemblage to recognize complex posthuman becomings at each step or stage of the production process, especially as in my case, where there is a single body (my body) doing the research, co-writing, filming, editing, sound mixing, colouring, and publicity and then also conducting research on the entire process and writing articles.

In my model, the territorial assemblage is constituted by traditional fieldwork practices that move and evolve with the discipline, in my case, ethnomusicology (Stone and Berger 2019). The production assemblage draws together screen production research methods (Batty 2018) to engage with the technical and technological issues in music video creation. It is not strictly technical, however, as there is an existential urge to create that motivates the becoming of the production assemblage. There is a leap

between the territorial and production assemblage, where the researcher becomes an artist.¹ The screen assemblage draws on film studies and expands the older anthropological shared anthropology in ethnographic film theory, where the film is shared with the featured community. There are rich possibilities here to study both the reception of the film from insider and outsider positions, but also to engage in a cultural study of the circulation of screen objects as they traverse digital networks and find audiences at film festivals, through YouTube distribution, blogs, arthouse cinemas, and other digital streaming platforms.

Despite the re-orientation of "fieldwork" music video production is not divorced from the main concerns of ethnomusicology or primarily phenomenological ethnomusicology, and its commitment to the study of musical meaning in its broadest sense.² And this is especially true of the long-form ethnographic music video, where the intent is to blend ethnographic film with the music video. The three assemblages model provides a holistic approach to the study of music videos where findings from the work of each assemblage shed light on the other two. In this essay, I use the making of *Unspittable* as a case study.

Part One: *Unspittable* as a music video and the new questions it poses for cine-ethnomusicology

Link to the trailer: <https://vimeo.com/376051031>

Unspittable (2019) is a 32-minute ethnographic music video comprising ten scenes and five pre-recorded songs and three live musical performances.³ Covering a vast range of *Unspittable*'s music (the film's title is taken from the name of the hip-hop group), the film is a series of music videos held together by sections of short dialogue. The film does not follow a conventional storyline, nor does it linearly move through time (to be discussed in section two).

The film

The film opens in black with *Unspittable*'s music. Andrew Cardinal (Amplify) is silhouetted in the snow, smoking a cigarette outside a club. Amplify enters the club, drinks a few beers, and socializes with group members, friends, and fans, he sits alone deep in thought. After a short cut to black, we see Andrew waking up on a sofa. He explains to his cousin, who had just woken up on a nearby sofa, to meet up with Charles (Repression) to share a new beat. The scene ends with Amplify explaining to his family that he will be back later in the day and asks his dad, "should I chug this beer before I go out of the yard," his father responds that he should because he does not want to get arrested. Amplify retorts "eventually, I will...but not today right", his mother responds, "not today." Music begins, and the scene ends with Amplify lighting a cigarette, ignoring his parents' warning leaves the backyard beer in hand. A city montage is interrupted by Amplify walking down the stairs into a basement where he is greeted by Repression and introduced to Niko.

Scene Three is a live performance to the new beat Amplify has sent to Repression. Amplify makes fun of Repression as he struggles to find and open the music file on his broken laptop. Concluding with a commitment to creating the new group *Unspittable*, we return in Scene Four to Andrew sitting thoughtfully at the club. Several friends join him, and we learn that the reason Amplify was sitting alone

¹ In a forthcoming article, I have written about "the leap" between the assemblage where the body metaphorically leaps between social science language of concepts to the affects and percepts that constitute the regime of art production. I think of it as the hyphen between researcher-artist or artist-research. The hyphen both joins these words while it also hides the existential work of a single body moving back and forth between two worlds, trying in vain to bridge the often-contradictory demands while struggling against the self-criticism, and sometimes professional criticism, that one is not entirely either.

² "musical meaning includes the affective or stylistic valence that listeners or performers may find in music; processes of coordination and communication among participants in a performance event; the positioning of performances or works in terms of formal or generic systems; the negotiation of identity through music; and, in its widest sense, any ascription or discovery of significance in music or music-making" (Berger 2015) accessed online: <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935321.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935321-e-30>

³ *Unspittable* (2019) will be soon available to stream at www.michaelbmacdonaldfilms.ca.

is that he almost got in a fight with a young white man at the club. Supported by friends, they make up. The young white man says “I’m sorry now that I know your face you wouldn’t get that look from me, like I’m going to beat you up” while a female friend retorts to the young white man “He wouldn’t beat you up, you’re too white.”

Andrew is alone again, this time backstage at the club. Music starts, and he and the rest of *Unspittable* engage in play fighting. After a short cut to black, we follow Amplify in Scene Five, making his long journey to the Edmonton Inner City High School, before returning to Scene 06, where we rejoin Amplify alone backstage. After a couple of short shots, we find Amplify deep in thought.

Scene Seven opens with Niko driving an old pickup truck into the city in winter. He meets up with Amplify and Repression, and they drive around the city, trying to find the promoter that owes them money. They stop and buy some charity hot dogs where Niko comments about them being “a bunch of brown people at a tool store eating dogs” to the hushing of Amplify and Repression. After spitting to a track in the truck there and learning from David that he has not seen the promoter, there is a quick cut to Scene Eight where the group drives around looking at houses imagining the house that they would like to have someday when they “make it.”

We rejoin Amplify alone backstage dancing to music performed off-screen, and presumably onstage. There is a kind of mania to his dancing that is suggestive. The film closes with *Unspittable* performing live.

A music video?

Initially, it may strike the reader as unusual that I call *Unspittable*—a thirty-two-minute short film—a music video, but there are plenty of examples of long-form music videos. I position *Unspittable* in a history of music video films that would include the early experimental music works of Dudley Murphy, the rock and roll music films of the late 1950s, and the “documentary” work of Les Blank among others. I use the scare quotes around documentary because when Les Blank was asked about his documentary music films, he hesitated and said his music films were “more like a little opera of some sort...operetta” (Blank 2013). Of course, Blank’s music films pre-date the development of MTV by decades so it is understandable that he would not have access to the idea of the music video. Even today I feel I have to justify my thirty-two-minute film as a music video. Though widely accepted that the music video has moved from its ‘original’ commercial function into a “more dynamic circulation of the music video” (Manghani 2017: 23), it is emerging as an art-form supported by a network of film festivals around the world. Blank’s insistence that “my films are more pieces of music than film documents” (Blank 2013) poses fascinating historical reconsideration and ontological questions for music video studies. Do we, for instance, submit to the hegemony of MTV or re-historicize music videos going back to the early experiments in music and the moving image?

Even in this expanded model, Blank would stand apart because his music films are ethnographic in origin and creative works of discovery that echo Andre Bazin’s (2011) claim for neorealism and the successive generations of new wave cinema that deal with music.⁴ Blank’s distance from documentary has to do with his engagement with music. It seems to me that Blank is more concerned with the experience of his operettas than the ‘say-able’ so valued in the documentary form.⁵ Laura Marks (2000) points out, through Deleuze, that what the “optical image does is ‘finally see’ what has not been encoded in discourse—and finally hear it as well” (200). Blank’s ethnographic operettas let us *seehear* a musical world, a potentially rich model for cine-ethnomusicology. But what does it mean to *seehear*?

The vertical montage

In an interview with Les Blank, Benjamin Harbert asked, “Is there something about making a film that reveals music in a unique way?” Blank’s response is worth analyzing in some detail as it will lead us into what makes music video production a unique form of music filmmaking.

⁴ Here I am thinking about Jean Luc Godard’s “Sympathy for the Devil,” a work of ethnographic observation of the Rolling Stone’s recording session that Godard sets against a series of dramatic vignettes.

⁵ One might hear in this Foucault’s observations about discourse (1972; 1977; 1980; 1994) or Ranciere’s politics of aesthetics (2000; 2005; 2007; 2010).

It brings out of the music elements you wouldn't hear if you just listened to straight music. As soon as you play a visual against a piece of music, everything changes. The music changes. The visual changes. *A third entity comes into being*: a fusion of the music and the visual. I like it when that happens. The result is a different kind of notes or chords . . . I don't know what you'd call them even. But they are a fusion of music and visual shown in a new, fresh way. (Les Blank 2013, emphasis added)

Blank's comparison to opera and his notion of "a different kind of notes or chords" is suggestive in two senses. First, because it is tempting to recall Wagner's idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, that is the aesthetic drive to bring together all art forms. This notion that undoubtedly influenced early filmmakers (Birdsall 2012: 141-72, Warshaw 2018). Blank, though, never suggested such lofty goals for his films. It is far more likely that what he is reaching for is something else, a way to make sense of the complicated feelings associated with the experience of aligning moving images and music, an experience that is more and different from both the visual images and the musical score. Eisenstein, the great Russian filmmaker and theorist, called this vertical montage (Afra 2015; Eisenstein 1949; MacLean 2012, Warshaw 2018). While Eisenstein's theory of horizontal montage is quite well known, his idea of vertical montage is much less developed (often unmentioned), it is perhaps an editing theory that was waiting for the music video.

In his essay "The Fourth Dimension" he wrote:

And yet we cannot reduce aural and visual perceptions to a common denominator. They are values of different dimensions. But the visual overtone and the sound overtone are values of a singly measured substance. Because, if the frame is a visual perception, and the tone is an aural perception, visual as well as aural overtones are a totally physiological sensation. And, consequently, they are of one and the same kind, outside the sound or aural categories that serve as guides, conductors to its achievement. For the musical overtone (a throb) it is not strictly fitting to say: "I hear." Nor for the visual overtone: "I see." For both, a new uniform formula must enter our vocabulary: "I feel." (Eisenstein 1949: 70-1)

New Questions

Eisenstein's "I feel" centrally resonates with phenomenology, of course, but the notion of editing for the "overtone" is more suggestive than instructive.⁶ Even though the overtone montage has never really become part of music video technical language, reference to the experience that Blank and Eisenstein identify none-the-less appear in other books. In her 2009 book "Making Music Videos," Laura Schwartz suggested that aligning music and moving image brings out a "third dimension" (151). Whether we call it a new kind of "chord," an "overtone," a "third dimension," or "fourth dimension" matters little at this moment. What is essential is that there is an emergence of some kind of Gestalt, or an affective experience of meaning (Zwicky 2019) that emerges from the filmic environment.⁷ I want to highlight two things from this discussion that will be used in the autoethnography. One, that vertical montage—the aligning of moving images with music—is a technical procedure I utilized in the production assemblage to realize, two, an affective experience of life in the city.⁸ While the former can be transcribed (Haverkamp 2012: 2), the latter is an experience that requires further phenomenological ethnomusicological research. I believe that these are some of the new questions posed by the music video's posthuman field and that artist-researchers have the skills and experience to lead this work. In the case study below, I use autoethnography to begin to deal with these new questions.

⁶ There is a suggestion here that the vertical and horizontal montage work together to produce tonal and over tonal montage, and while we might not know what to do with these ideas immediately, I cannot help but feel the resonance with Blank's "chords" which surely suggests vertical and horizontal montage techniques.

⁷ perhaps. As Turino (2014) has noted, the Peircean ontology of firstness, secondness, and thirdness offers phenomenological ethnomusicology a firm basis for non-representational analysis. Deleuze has similarly noted the value of Peircean semiotics to film studies (cinema 1) and Bergson (cinema 2) for the study of the experience of time, which Eisenstein hints at in the title of the work (The Fourth Dimension).

⁸ Two things that will have to await a further project are worth emphasizing because they establish a kind of background for my work. The first, Blank's use of musical language to understand his own creative practice invites an ethnomusicological exploration in the musicality of Blank's editing practice. The second, Blank's metaphor of "a different kind of notes or chords" is remarkable in this sense that both he and Eisenstein, filmmakers separated by time and geography, use this idea of stacked tones (chordal or overtones) to try to explain the experience that occurs in the editing room when music and moving images are put together in a particular way.

Part Two: autoethnography of the three-assemblages

Territorial Assemblage: Edmonton Hip Hop Culture

I began my extended fieldwork with the Edmonton hip hop scene in 2011 (MacDonald 2016). It began quite accidentally. I was preparing a postdoc project on gentrification and the impact of artistic scenes. I was attending a series of community meetings as part of a planned 'revitalization'. I was following the discussions with some interest because the proposed area had become well known as a community where local artists could still afford to buy homes. There was concern amongst my artist friends that this 'revitalization' was a code word for city-supported gentrification that would result in artists getting pushed out. This was of considerable concern because many artists had recently relocated due to a string of other gentrification projects. While at the meeting, I began a conversation with a local hip hop artist and community activist who suggested that covering these meetings would not lead me to the real story and that there was a considerable hip hop community in the neighbourhood through which I might view real impacts of gentrification. I began to be introduced to members of the local hip hop community, and through these conversations, a new focus emerged, a community engagement project on hip hop pedagogy.

Over the next six or so years, as documented in my book *Remix and Lifhack in HipHop* (MacDonald 2016), I was a partner in an inner-city drop in program called Cipher5.



"We, at Cipher5, study HipHop knowledge,
self healing and the HipHop elements
as a path to self mastery, a path
to the higher self."



THIS TUESDAY!!!
BOYLE STREET PLAZA . 9538-103A AVE

IMAGE 1: Chiper5

Cipher5 was a weekly meeting that brought several generations of hiphoppas together to share skills, develop kinship, and provide existential support (Pearson and Yazdanmehr 2014). In time Cipher5 became networked with the American Temple of Hip Hop.



IMAGE 2: Cipher5 becomes recognized as the first Temple of Hiphop Canada.

This led to three conferences on hip hop as critical pedagogy and brought together international hip hop scholars and activists to discuss pressing issues of racism, crime, educational opportunities, and activism.



IMAGE 3: Presenters at the first international Hip-hop Kulture conference at MacEwan University (left to right): Jianda Payza, Hodari Davis, Andre Hamilton (Dre Pharoh), Thomas Alvarez III, Michael B MacDonald, prof. Awad Ibrahim.

The conferences helped some members of the local community get connected internationally. They seemed to provide Cipher5 with a broader perspective culminating in two short films, *Megamorphosis* (2015) and *Letters to Attawapiskat* (2016), which kicked off a letter-writing campaign intended to support youth in the remote community of Attawapiskat First Nation in Northern Ontario, Canada.



IMAGE 4: The film premiere of *Megamorphosis* and *Letters to Attawapiskat*

Cipher5 led to some success with the inner-city youth and certainly built up a vibrant social network, but I was consistently unhappy with what I was reporting in my articles. I was writing for academics and, as such, used a language and a means of knowledge mobilization that was not meant for the youth I was working with, nor could be accessed by them because it was hidden from public view through library paywalls. Second, the narratives that were being reported, while valid testimonials, often felt like scripts used in hip hop, a form of urban discourse. Hip hop culture was consistently described as emancipatory and transformational but over the years, I saw little evidence that much was changing in the lives of the youth (self-sufficiency/economic stability). From my perspective, many youth were spending the majority of their time moving from youth activities to youth drop-in centres making beats and spitting rhymes. While these are important activities, it was like watching a rigged game where their circuits of movement around the city became mazes, making it difficult to leave. And the weight of that time, the years that began to pass by, the existential experience of time itself started to become an important aspect of my research, but I could not find a way to represent it in print.

Further, the narrative of emancipation seemed to come with a commitment to industrialization, perhaps the neoliberal dream of hip hop culture, that if one could become 'good enough' they would 'break' and would achieve economic success. But having come from the music industry before attending graduate school, it appeared that inner city youth were not in the music business from the perspective of what little music industry there is in Alberta, Canada. I did not see ways that they could access the professionalization they dreamed for. The ideology of emancipation through popular economic success would continue to elude these youth, through no fault of their own, and year after year youth were 'aging out'⁹ of the inner-city youth programs that were providing music production space. After aging out they were now 'adults' without much in the way of employable skills, and no closer to music industry success. Alcoholism, drug use, violence, prison, homelessness, and gang membership was taking away whatever gains we thought we were making with Cipher5. (Cipher5 and religiosity) But still, even in the face of mounting evidence to the contrary, the discourse did not change; those who were unsuccessful were so

⁹ Youth programs are able to provide services to a particular age group defined by the operating charter of the organization. Aging out means that you are now too old to access the services. There is no graduation process, and often these drop-in centres are emergency front line crisis centres that are not designed to provide certifications for the youth that use them.

because they were not ‘good enough’. Never was the discourse of hip hop success challenged. Though it felt to me that the game was rigged against them, they did not see it, or at least did not publicly admit it.

I wanted to make an educational product that would help members of the hip hop community self-reflect on their struggles and their distance from the music industry, despite their efforts and their desires. It was the realization that the discourse of hip hop in the context of colonization and neoliberalism further entrenched problematic social relations that were ‘un-seeable’. These Hiphoppas proved themselves to be very articulate about historical and social forces (MacDonald 2020b) especially aware of some forms of colonization and saw, as I do as well, the power of hip hop as a form of decolonization (MacDonald 2020a). It seemed likely that if I made a film focused on the struggles of keeping a hip-hop group together, it would work as a form of critical pedagogy of popular music (MacDonald 2020b). At the time of this observation (2016) I was working with an Indigenous hip hop collective called RAW (Rebels at War) Nation and we began to embark on a documentary project that had great potential.



IMAGE 5: RAW Nation

Andre Hamilton (aka Dre Pharoh) and I began meeting with members of RAW Nation on a documentary project that was to be called *Hip Hop: A New Civilization*. It was going to be a documentary of the founding of RAW Nation voiced over by Hamilton. The idea behind the film was to document the way Indigenous youth use hip hop as a kind of neo-traditional cultural practice, what Hamilton called new tribalism (MacDonald 2020b). RAW Nation was comprised of three Indigenous hip hop groups: Collective Conscience, RAW by Design, and Knights of Valor.



IMAGE 6: Andre Hamilton (aka Dre Pharaoh) reading the City of Edmonton Declaration of Hip Hop Week at Hip Hop in the Park.

I first heard Collective Conscience (CC) around 2014 when members began attending Cipher5. When I first saw them perform, it was the most exciting moment I have yet had in hip hop. It was as if I was seeing the Wu-Tang Clan in the early 1990s. I followed them as much as I could and began trying to figure out how I could support what they were doing.

CC came together at iHuman, an inner-city arts-based youth drop-in centre, and were central to a group of urban Indigenous youth who came from different reserves all over Treaty 6 & 8.¹⁰



IMAGE 7: The 'old' iHuman Youth Society

¹⁰ Treaty 6 was signed between the Crown and Cree, Assiniboin, Salteaux, and Chipewyan people in 1876 and covers parts of present day Alberta and Saskatchewan. Treaty 8 “encompassing a landmass of approximately 840,000 kilometers, is home to 39 First Nations communities, including 23 Alberta First Nations, 3 Saskatchewan First Nations, 6 Northwestern Territories First Nations, and 8 British Columbia First Nations” <http://treaty8.bc.ca/> (accessed Nov 1, 2019)

They were well-liked and often included in shows hosted by local leading hiphoppas Kaz Mega and iD.

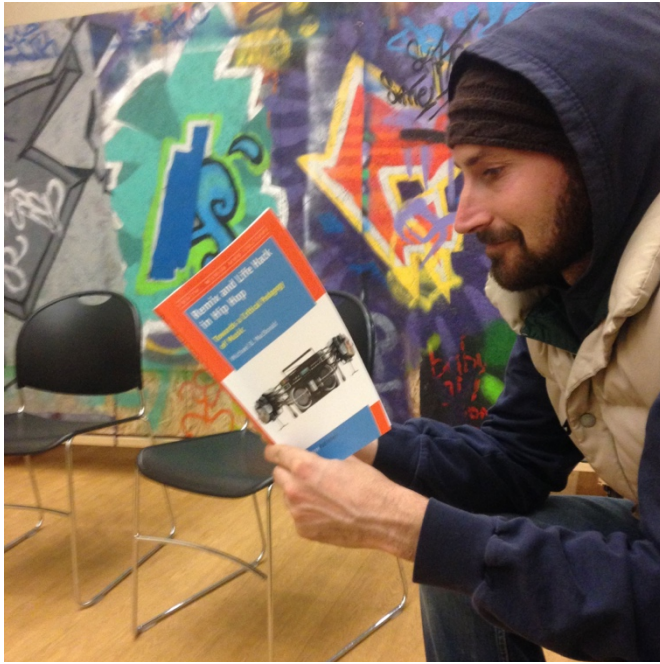


IMAGE 8: iD reading *Remix and Life Hack in Hip Hop*.

But interestingly, shows that members of CC put on were usually not attended by many non-Indigenous heads, with a few notable exceptions like DJ Dice, who is a go-to DJ for much of the community, a mentor for CreeAsian (Pearson and Robinson 2018)—now a dancer for the world famous A Tribe Called Red—and a colleague of Rex Smallboy, the founder of renowned Indigenous hip hop group War Party.



IMAGE 9: DJ Dice (left) and CreeAsian (center).

In 2014 I first came up with the idea to shoot a documentary about RAW Nation. They had just formed as a unit and I had been talking with local Indigenous music promoter and emcee Curtis Red

Rock about it – he was interested and we set up a meeting in the spring of 2015. By the fall of 2015 however RAW Nation had broken up and its members were dispersed.

In March of 2016 I began meeting with DeeJay (from Knights of Valor) and Amplify (from CC) about making a documentary about urban Indigenous youth and hip hop. Since my 2014 experience at the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation public event in Edmonton I had been thinking about Hip hop through the frame of truth and reconciliation, but I was having a hard time imagining what it would look like.¹¹ It reminded me of the opening track of the War Party album *The Resistance*, an album that features Public Enemy's Chuck D who connects Indigenous hip hop to the origins of hip hop's African American struggle for liberation. But this connection is largely 'un-sayable' illustrated in its absence from most hip hop narrative.

Later that month Curtis, DeeJay and Andrew let me know that RAW Nation was going to re-form and that they were going to have a meeting and would float the idea of making a documentary. I was very pleased and began to think more deeply about hip hop as creativity, truth and reconciliation. By this time however, Hamilton had fallen back into drug use and was no longer involved in the research. A week later I sent a Facebook message asking Curtis about how the meeting went, in response he invited me to a BBQ at Dawson Park, 5:30pm on Saturday April 2nd, 2016. I picked up hotdogs, a bottle of root beer, mustard and two bags of chips and headed out to the park.

I did not know where Dawson Park was and tried to use my iPhone GPS. I was not successful. I ended up parking at a set of stairs that seemed to go to where I thought the park should be. I jumped out of my vehicle and headed down to the stairs remarking as I went at how lovely the view was from this set of wooden stairs but also how much garbage there was along the side of the stairs. It was curious how many police officers I see around this part of town but how much garbage there is everywhere. Why does the city let such a mess pile up? Certainly, there must be a branch of city workers who do this sort of work so why does it seem that every time I am in this part of town, just north of a really fashionable neighborhood, there seems to be so much squalor.

I descended the stairs and took a right up the hill thinking that I saw what might be the park, but I also saw a few youth, one of which I recognized as Andrew Cardinal. I greeted him and he introduced me to his friend and his girlfriend Dakota and his new baby. I admitted that I had no idea where the park was and he said it was down the hill. We walked together and chatted. A car honked their horn as we walked toward the park and a group of Indigenous youths were hanging out of a window waving, all headed towards the BBQ.

On our approach, there were three obvious groups around the parking lot of the park. A biker club with matching leather vests and back-patches were standing in a circle. Next to them was another circle of very joyful Caribbean people enjoying the lovely evening and cooking and dancing in the park. We headed towards the covered BBQ area and saw RAW Nation and friends, totaling about 30 Indigenous youth, some with babies and strollers, others with skateboards. I saw Curtis' pregnant partner putting wood into the BBQ pit. The smoke was heavy, but it was really nice to smell burning wood. It had been so long since it felt like summer.

¹¹ <https://globalnews.ca/news/1232599/national-truth-and-reconciliation-event-comes-to-edmonton/> accessed October 29th, 2019.



IMAGE 10: Gary Moostoos (left).

Gary Moostoos, a Cree elder that does a lot of work with inner city organizations asked everyone to get together in a circle. Gary asked for a lighter and lit up some sage. He asked if anyone had not smudged before. A few of the youth put up their hands. Gary began explaining why we smudge:

When we wake up in the morning we wash. And this washes our outer body. Smudge is the way to wash your inner body. It is about cleansing and cleansing is about health and clarity. This is how we look after ourselves, and treat ourselves as we walk our journey.

The longest trip that we will take in our lives is from our head to our heart or our heart to our head. We can walk through life feeling the world with our heart but not having an open mind. Or we could also walk through life engaging with the world only through our minds but not with our hearts open. Either way is only half.

When we hear the world we need to do it twice – that’s why the creator gave us two ears. When we see the world we need to look twice – that’s why we have two eyes. When we speak we need to do it consciously because we only have one mouth and we do not get a second chance. Our words can hurt – and we need to speak without hurting people. To do this we need to be clear about what we understand of the world.

We also need to recognize that the world we live in has many parts, some that we can’t see. We are just passing through this world, just passing through this territory. It’s necessary that we recognize that we are here, in a place that many generations have lived and that these energies are still here and we need to recognize them. They have an impact on us.

When we go to the mall for instance – and we have an entire day planned – but we are exhausted in 20 minutes. It’s not because we exerted a full day’s energy but because we observed other people’s anxieties. We need to guard against this. I put sage in my shoes to keep the negativity out.

He explained that we smudge our heads to clear our minds, our eyes to see clearly, our ears to hear clearly, our mouth to speak clearly, our hands to work with purity, our hearts to feel, and our feet to walk with intention and direction.

When the smudge went around we began introducing ourselves. Given name, emcee name, and who we are and why we’re coming to the circle. Each emcee said their piece. The circle started in the west. I

was in the east standing next to Donovan. It's only looking back at the photos that I realized that I had actually met all of the members of *Unspittable* at this circle. Although they officially did not yet exist as a collective they had already begun to spend increasing amounts of time together and collectively participated in the Indigenous cultural events together. I should say that two members of *Unspittable* are indigenous (Andrew and Colton).



IMAGE 11: Charles (Repression) and Colton (Niko) (right side of the photo).

The smudge now came to me and I introduced myself. To my unpleasant surprise, youth in the circle started clapping. I was instantly uncomfortable because it was clear to me that I was being applauded because I was the white professor and, besides the elder, the only participant over thirty in the circle. I read this as an expression of a power inequality. I really wanted to dissolve it so I made a quick and awkward joke: “Why are you clapping? Are you surprised that the white guy remembered his own name?” And then I softly asked them not to clap because we are trying to undo the power differences of colonization.

I explained that I came from Cape Breton and that I worked in the music industry for many years and that I left the music industry to go to grad school because I felt that I had lost the heart-head connection that music once allowed. That I decided to study what music does for community and that for the last 10 years I’ve been doing that. For the last five years with Cipher5 and the publication of a book on Hip hop in Edmonton. And that with the support of MacEwan University, I want to make an album and a documentary about RAW Nation and that I ask for the community support in this project. Finally, that it seems to me that hip hop is a form of truth and reconciliation and that what RAW Nation is doing is historically important. Over the course of the BBQ I had conversations with many of the youth and elders and received enthusiastic support to move ahead with the project.

Unfortunately, RAW Nation once again collapsed in the fall of 2016. But by that time, I had already developed a closer relationship with Andrew Cardinal (Amplify) and he agreed to continue the work with me and that we would make a film about his new project, *Unspittable*. We began getting together regularly to work through ideas in a process we called “the Relationship Map” and then began writing scenes for the film.



IMAGE 12: Michael B MacDonald (left) and Andrew Cardinal aka Amplify (right).

Production Assemblage

The relationship between ethnography and screen production is not yet well understood (Berry 2018), and my introduction of the three assemblages is an attempt to move this discussion forward. Ethnographic methods are an accepted form of research, even if they are undergoing transformation (Guillion 2018). Creative practice research and its relationship to ethnography however, while accepted in Canada as research-creation (Stévanec 2018), still requires a significant amount of explanatory work before it is widely accepted. It is my feeling that a long-standing divide between those who have theorized ethnographic writing and those who have theorized ethnographic film may be at the root of this issue. While there are some excellent examples of ethnographic film theory (Barbash 1997; Crawford 1992; Grimshaw 2008, 2009; Jenssen 2009; MacDougall 1998, 2006; Rouch 2003; Ruby 2000; Russell 1999; Stoller 1992; Walley 2015), these authors have rarely endeavored to theorize the translation of ethnographic field work into creative practice, and nowhere is there an engagement with the music video. This understanding must emerge from creative practice, from the use of a camera, recorder, and editing suite. This kind of research of discovery through creative practice locates this phase of the study firmly in screen production research, where theory emerges from the practice of making film documents, in this case ethnographic music video. As I will explain later, the screen assemblage becomes a way of testing the work that occurs in the Territorial and Production assemblage. Flanked on one side by ethnography and the other by audience reception, the production assemblage is an incredibly creative space that opens on either side to two very well studied areas. But I believe screen production has the potential to disrupt current ideas in both ethnographic practice and film studies.

Screen production in cine-ethnomusicology introduces both philosophical and methodological questions. For instance, the ethnographic observation above includes both textual and photographic components that were all used as tools to help me entangle myself (and you, the reader) with the ethnographic field. Moving this first phase of observation into the field of ethnofiction is a leap that continues or extends the ethnographic encounter. A leap that is made collectively as both Andrew and I begin to turn reality into a story. Ethnofiction methods were developed in the 1950s by French anthropologist Jean Rouch, who used filmmaking “as a visionary form of political engagement” (Jones 2005: 118). I should say at the outset that this move will pose more questions than provide answers because ethnofiction “was never conceived as a genre, a theory or method” (Sjöberg 2008: 230). In fact, Rouch himself dismissed theory making about his ethnofiction films: “If you start making theory about my films you are losing. You should just follow the movement. If there is a theory, there is no longer improvisation and creativity” (Yakir 1978: 10). Instead of theorizing ethnofiction, I seek to explain through autoethnography what I am doing for myself and to the communities with whom I am working because I believe it is scholarly, ethically, and politically essential.

In this production assemblage phase, the ethnography does not stop, but creates further entanglements in different modes but must also leap from one regime to another. Each leap helps identify a new working space and a way to generate layers of recursion. As I leap from the ethnographic fieldwork to the process of co-writing the screenplay we are together generating new kinds of analysis. I have used leap instead of continuation, because continuation suggests an unproblematic ongoing-ness. When the activity moves from participant observation to screen production it is not so much a continuation of the same kind of activity but a shifting of position. And at the same time, unlike my screen writing partner (Andrew), I remain an ethnographer keeping notes about the screen production process, even as I begin to think and act as a filmmaker. If I was to sketch this out in a graph it could appear this way:

$$\begin{array}{cc} \text{[Ethnographic assemblage]} & * \text{ [production assemblage]} \\ \text{[concepts]} & * \text{ [affects and percepts]} \end{array}$$

Perhaps the hyphen in artist-research hides the gap between two regimes of discourse that must be traversed? This is a provocative question that I will return to in a latter essay.

The Relationship Map

The first step in this translation was to work with the members of *Unspittable* to sketch out possible directions for the ethnofiction. In the beginning, Unspittable wanted to make an Edmonton-based *8 Mile* that followed the trajectory of their group's creation and culminated in their ultimate success at a big concert. They were very enthusiastic about this idea and had lots of great scene ideas. But I reminded them that the film we agreed to make would be based on their real experiences, not on ones that we imported from fiction film. To begin the process, they agreed to make a storyline of their friendship and music relationships leading up to the forming of Unspittable. We met again after a few weeks and went over their storylines. We agreed that the film should start with their first meeting and we set up a plan for a day of shooting.

The Relationship Map also allowed us to sketch out the parts of the city that were important for the group, the locations of high schools, training facilities, recording facilities, coffee shops where they would meet as well as bars and performance locations. We talked about the role transportation plays in their lives and the location of recording equipment. The map grew from the three individual timelines into a framework that I was able to utilize in conceptualizing the story. I was further able to lay out their narratives over the ethnographic work that I had completed. I began to see that the narratives that were developing for the film looked nothing at all like the narratives which were included in *Remix and Life Hack in Hip Hop* (MacDonald 2016). For example, a chapter in the book was an oral history of Edmonton hip-hop compiled from interviews with local hip-hoppos. This compilation suggests a collection of data that legitimates a coherent history of Edmonton hip-hop. However, upon working with the members of Unspittable on the production assemblage, it becomes evident that although they may be operating within the Edmonton hip-hop scene, their experiences look very different from the official narrative of Edmonton Hip-hoppos.

Improvisational Filming

A few days before the first filming day, Andrew called me and asked to change the original plan, that he wanted to start the shooting at his place because he wanted me to see the sofa he uses as a bed. He thought that dramatizing a home life that was typical of many of the youth in hip-hop would help people understand more about where they were coming from and what they were rapping about. He also explained that what had happened originally, is that he called Charles and told him about a new beat he had just finished and that he wanted to drop by his place so they could listen together. When he arrived at Charles' place, Colton was there and they got to know each other while spitting to the new beat.

So, I picked up David Chung, a member of Cipher5 who had interest in learning how to do audio recording and we made our way to Andrew's house. He invited us in and I met his family and we discussed what we wanted to do. One of the former members of RAW Nation was also there to see what we were doing and agreed to be in the opening scene. I had Andrew explain to me what he wanted to

do with the scene and I worked out the blocking with David. Blocking is the theatre word for the intended movements in the scene. In cinema, there is the blocking of the actors but also the movement and focus of the camera. And because we were working in an improvisational form it was important for David and I to figure out how to move around the rooms of the house without getting in each other's way, or in the way of the onscreen action. During this period, I was also giving David lessons on how to hold the microphone and boom, what he should be listening for, and how to read the screen on the audio recorder.

After all of this preparatory work was accomplished we ran the scene three times, recording each take. We reviewed them together and talked about what was good and what could use improvement. We ran the scene a fourth time and this time Andrew came up with a completely different performance that included his family members sitting around the kitchen table. I suspect that the spontaneity came from his increasing comfort with the camera and also his recognition that he had control over the development of the story. The outcome was terrific.

We moved onto the second scene where Andrew enters Charles' home. Once again we worked out the blocking and shot his descent down the stairs a few times before settling into the main part of the scene when Charles downloads the new beat and starts playing it. As you can see in the film, Charles' computer was in terrible shape. The screen was busted and he had to guess where most of the desktop files were because so much of the screen was unusable. Andrew began making fun of it, and him, for having such a busted computer.

In these examples I began to see a major difference between the work that emerges from ethnographic writing and ethnographic filming. In writing it is much easier to ignore movement and non-human elements where in cinema they are just simply there, part of the onscreen world and are not separate from the humans that move through the space. The computer became a central figure in the opening part of the scene and as the scene progressed it was a four-part ensemble that came into view, the three Hiphoppas and the computer.

I went home after shooting and spent the weekend working on a first draft. I sent a long version of the draft to the group so they could see what I was trying to do. They responded very quickly and enthusiastically. It seemed to me that they understood what I was wanting to do. Over the next year, we shot a variety of scenes as their lives were changing. Charles moved into a new apartment, Colton moved out of town, Andrew changed schools. All the while we kept shooting small scenes and coming up with more and more scenes. But a story was eluding us. In one writing session we decided to put a story together. I wrote an introductory blurb for myself in my notes before my meeting with the group. Below is the scene breakdown we decided to try.

Unspittable: a HipHop ethnofiction, February 2017

Modernity, semiocapitalism, and urban music are nestled into each other like Russian dolls. For young Hiphoppas like *Unspittable*, making music is a quest through frozen and sometimes dangerous streets, constantly trying to get oriented in a world that feels directionless and futureless.

Fade In

Scene 1

The snowy sidewalk is lit up by the light of The Forge. Andrew walks into the shot and we follow him into the show. The boys connect and hang out in a booth. The show is followed by a cipher.

Scene 2

While working with Kaz, Andrew calls Charles to find out how much money they made at the show this weekend.

Scene 3

Charles goes about a lonely day at school until Andrew's phone call adds more anxiety.

Scene 4

Colton tries to stay out of trouble in the country until an alarming message from Charles requires the long drive into the city.

Scene 5

The boys meet downtown and start looking around for the promoter. They run into another hiphoppa who heard that the promoter lives on the west side. They drive out and try to find his house. With no luck, they visit David who agrees to keep a look out for them. But David thinks the promoter now lives on the south side.

Scene 6

The boys take a break in a rich neighborhood where they smoke pot and talk about the houses they'd like to live in after they make it.

Scene 7

Finally arriving at the south end they meet up outside a Tim Horton's with Aiden, only to find out that no one seems to know where the promoter is. He tells them about a party on the north side.

Scene 8

Party on the north side. Guys spit freestyles at the party.

Scene 9

The party winds down and amid beer bottles and booze, the guys start to plan for tomorrow, but the conversation soon moves to why they are even bothering to be hiphoppas. Colton gets a text from a girl, Andrew and Charles watch him drive off.

Fade to Black

A series of events made it impossible to shoot this entire story. Before we gave up on it, we had filmed a series of scenes that showed a great deal about how youth live in Edmonton's hip-hop scene. As I was working through the shots something about the opening blurb kept nagging at me, it felt like there was something there that was pointing to an important observation that had yet to emerge in my thinking. I would now call it, following Eisenstein, an overtone.

When I wrote "trying to get oriented in a world that feels directionless and futureless" I was making a claim about relational and temporal experiences of life in the city. When I began to look back through the footage I realized that the scenes are happening in a chaotic relationship, always in the city, approaching the city, but from where and in which direction we are traveling is never clear. The frame is often very tight and at times challenges the limits of focus, giving a sense of being closed in. The temporal aspect of the scenes was quite informative. There was always so much time passing without resolution. Even when there was movement in a vehicle there was stillness, and a sense that the scenes were not moving anywhere necessarily, there was little forward momentum, at least to some conclusion. I had a difficult time bringing these two experiences together until I learned about Deleuze's idea of the time-image.

The Time-Image

Deleuze's cinema books are organized by two types of images: the movement-image and the time-image. Time-image films are dependent on what Deleuze calls a 'direct image of time'. A time-image film does not move towards conclusion through a series of resolution (S-A-S) like a movement-image film, it is instead an experience of duration. Deleuze remarks that the time-image liberates thought from the mechanization of the movement-image films (from the necessities of linearity and resolution). It would have been interesting for Deleuze to grapple with the music video.

Memory is an important aspect of time-image films, what Bergson called 'pure sensation'. Time-image films "chart the various journeys of their characters in terms of their insertions into sheets of past, their attempts to plunge into and relive the past" (Rushton 2012: 146). Making *Unspittable* a time-image film allowed me to go back to the live performance footage that I filmed as Scene One of the above script and then work all of the other scenes into the film as memories, or perhaps folds. I looked through the ample footage I filmed at the live performance and found a number of moments when Andrew seems to

be in his own head. I used these moments to cut away to older scenes. The intention was to curate an experience that was open to the viewer where they can decide if these are Andrew's memories, fantasies, or projections into the past. As Rushton has remarked, summarizing Deleuze:

in the time-image, there is no longer merely confusion between the real and the imaginary 'in someone's head'; instead, the indiscernibility between the real and the imaginary, the present and the past, the actual and the virtual, becomes an objective 'fact'...when this occurs, what was virtual now becomes actual while what was actual correlatively becomes virtual: the actual and virtual become entwined to the point where we can no longer tell which is which. (Rushton 2012: 89)

Vertical Montage

The entire film is held together by *Unspittable*'s music which converts the ethnofiction into an extended music video, which I may call, following Deleuze, the music-image. Like Blank's films, the film's subjects appear twice, once in the visual component and once in the film music. This produces a kind of doubling, perhaps a holographic presence, or as Deleuze calls a crystal image. Throughout the film we see members of the group involved in making music or moving through the city to a soundtrack of their own making. The music adds a further level to the time-image, the vertical montage, where the relationship between the filmic action and the music blurs the virtual-actual in the same way that the time-image elements do. Therefore, the musical time-image film is a form of music video that may shed light on Eisenstein's ideas of vertical and horizontal montage and the experience of these montage techniques may be experienced as tones and overtones.

Screen Assemblage

In the production assemblage, the experience of duration became more important than anything that had previously occupied my thinking. Communicating the experience of duration, movement without direction, story without climax or conclusion, and the overtones of Edmonton life for young Hiphoppas communicated my experience of the ethnographic work more powerfully than the experiences I wrote about in *Remix and Life Hack in Hip Hop* (MacDonald 2016). The film turns time and the city into percepts and affects. The percepts of the urban form over time release bodily intensities (affects). The opening thick kick drum as the opening titles begin, the sounds of voices against the blackness of the screen, the muted colours of a dirty winter city, all affected me when I was setting them to *Unspittable*'s music. The non-representational parts of my ethnographic work began to appear onscreen, not in the form of explanation but in an actualization of the affects of duration (Del Rio 2008) that I tried to make notes about. In the form of an ethnographic music video, duration becomes a substance that is both experienced and coded by the viewer (Turino 2014).

I have screened *Unspittable* four times for different audiences. Two of the screenings were in conference environments and did not provide an opportunity to engage the audience in discussion. However, two screenings at my home university provided an opportunity for me to get feedback from students studying ethnomusicology. While I have some early remarks on the screen assemblage, I am in the process of a full-scale study on the screen assemblage, so please read these closing remarks as tentative.

At the conclusion of both screenings the student audience was quite silent. They were expecting to see an ethnographic work that was much closer to documentary than to music video. I believe they were expecting a work of representative ethnography, not one in which the non-representative plays a central role. Instead of asking about film details, the post-screening conversations were focused on my intentions. Students were interested in who the film was made for, and when I replied that it was made for music students, they wondered why. I explained that I wanted to make a film that music students could watch in order to appreciate the musical practice of youth who are clearly exceptional musicians but for whom music school was not a possibility. The conversation moved from the details of the film process to the political consequence of the film, the ways that colonization and capitalism reduce the possibilities of young people to engage meaningfully in economic circulation. Students were 'unsettled' by the feelings they had watching the film. While nothing bad or shocking happens in the film they felt an overwhelming 'dread' and 'darkness', some students described their experience as 'hopeless' while others 'enjoyed'

seeing a film that showed the reality of a city in winter, with dirty snowbanks and dirt-covered vehicles, the coldness that caused people to huddle in small spaces during the darkness of winter.

But a discussion led by one Latino student stood out to me. This is a student who had been very quiet in the class up until this point. He rarely participated in class conversations until after the screening of the film. He explained to the class that the world of the film was very familiar to him. A great number of aspects of the housing, neighborhoods, clothes, modes of address were all common and he felt that it shed light on a part of Edmonton life that is unknown to most people, including all of his student colleagues. He felt that watching the film together with his fellow students, who had come from very different backgrounds from him, was an opportunity to explain his experience of the city and he helped his fellow students understand the kinds of limitations that are lived by the community featured in the film. He opened the conversation onto new vistas, drawing connections between colonization, and economic exclusion together with hip hop, and how he has to navigate these exclusions at the university as well. The feelings of being stuck, or running around in circles in the city were aligned with his experience. The conversation became a vehicle by which students from different backgrounds could relate, or in the case of most of the student viewers in this instance, not relate to what was depicted onscreen.

Conclusion

In previous articles, I have written about the role of ethnographic music film as critical pedagogy (MacDonald 2020) and the conversation following this screening further supports this view. In the article titled *Thanks for Being Local: CineMusicking as a Critical Pedagogy of Popular Music* (MacDonald 2020) I explain 'CineMusicking' is an approach to ethnographic film production as a form of critical pedagogy by illustrating the ways that an ethnographic starting point provides a new way of studying the role of music in youth culture. Using cinema to show the way systems operate within more systems allows the filmmaking team (ethnographer and youth) to document the mediation, the individual instances of the entanglements that constitute individual lives in their existential, social, and environmental registers. Macro-sociological discussion of youth culture risks obscuring real lives as they are lived. Cine-ethnomusicology provides an opportunity to reorient the study of popular music from a historical and critical theory orientation to an existential one. When this shift is done with a camera, the outcomes of the ethnographic research become content for a critical pedagogy of popular music. The long-form music video may become a powerful teaching and research tool as cine-ethnomusicology develops.

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TOWARDS AN ANTHROPOLOGY WITH FLOW: STEPS TO GO BEYOND THE 'ONTOLOGICAL TURN'

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ABSTRACT

The work explores and discusses a key argument of the 'ontological turn' in anthropology: the call to go beyond cultural relativism, 'taking seriously' the ontological assumptions of the collectives under study. While this idea has been fruitful in problematizing modern dualisms that are one of the foundations of contemporary social theory, it has derived -in many of its developments- into an intellectualism of philosophical imprint and certain conservatism centered (still) on the written monograph. This inhibits, or at least reduces the radicalization of the apertures proposed by the 'ontological turn'. Through the lessons arising in a research experience with young rappers in a Mapuche community in the coastal area of Valdivia (Región de los Ríos, Chile) between 2017 and 2019, we see the relevance of literally becoming engaged in the practices of the inhabitants of the territories where the ethnography takes place. The focus is centered on following the course of actions involved in the construction of a rap video clip dealing with environmental and territorial issues, highlighting the yield achieved methodologically -and not strictly conceptual- entailed by 'taking seriously' the ontological assumptions of others and the creative manners in which they perform their worlds.

KEYWORDS

Chile, Mapuche, rap music, ontological turn, music video clip

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Acknowledgements

This work has been sponsored by the Project Fondecyt N° 1201373 and the Millennium Nucleus on Energy and Society both funded by the Chilean Agency of Research and Development (ANID).

I. Introduction

“*Flow* is the way you follow a rap beat with your voice. Everyone has their own *flow*”, explains the Mapuche Lafkenche¹ rapper Jakase Mc². He was part of a group of young rappers who join a project centered in the making of a rap³ video clip dealing with the different environmental conflicts faced by the coastal communities of Valdivia, in the central southern area of Chile. This area has begun to be called Wadalafken Mapu by Mapuche Lafkenche inhabitants, many of whom view developing or latent extractivist activities as a threat upon their territory. The video clip project was led by the Mapuche leader and rapper Gabriel Troncoso Michillanca of the Lof Michillanca of Los Molinos -located within the Wadalafken Mapu-, who conceives and practices rap as a form of defense, insofar as it is a way of spreading information on different levels (local, national and global) that allows the inclusion of people - who have an affinity for this music genre- in territorial guardianship. Between 2017 and 2018 the different phases leading to the video clip titled “Nuestro Territorio” [“Our Territory”] were conceptualized and developed in the community *ruka*⁴ (see image 1) which to date has been viewed over 25,000 times on its fan page.⁵



FIGURE 1: Exterior of *Ruka* Lof Michillanca community of Los Molinos. Source: Pablo Rojas Bahamonde, 2017.

¹ The Mapuche (‘people of the land’) are the most numerous indigenous group in Chile. In the area under study the term ‘Lafkenche’ (‘sea people’) is added since they inhabit the coastal areas. It is worth mentioning that in the Mapuche language, *mapudungun* (‘language of the land’), the ‘s’ is not used for the plural form.

² From here on, except for Gabriel Troncoso Michillanca and Miguel Montaña Pichún, we will use the rapper names for those who appear in the video clip.

³ Access link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTfzTgA4Gag&t>

⁴ The *ruka* is the traditional Mapuche dwelling. Currently it is not used extensively as a residence. But for varied cultural actions and political organization (see Carmona 2017).

⁵ Access link: <https://www.facebook.com/proyectorapmapucherural2017/videos/1979384875442284/>

Our insertion as ethnographers began with the aim of investigating the way Mapuche groups were confronting the possible installation of an eolic power plant in a forest conservation area⁶. It then became a theoretic, experiential, and experimental voyage. While we relied theoretically on the ‘ontological turn’ (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017), the position of taking this perspective ‘seriously’, in other words, of radicalizing its assumptions, led us to attend to its limitations and to discern possibilities for broadening its imaginative spectrum and the practices conventionally established by its practitioners. We became involved in a world that was unknown to us, that of hip hop, having to immerge ourselves in the flow of actions of our new acquaintances until ‘the very end’. From there on the investigation took on an experimental imprint, the main product was a video clip, one of the genres manifestations held in high esteem by our hip-hoppers and increasingly used by different rappers around the world due to easy access to technology. Therefore, this article corresponds to a side product serving as a chronicle of our lived experience, as well as of the lessons that seem relevant to share. The results emphasizing the lived experience also may be read as a critical review of the ‘ontological turn’, as it points to some of its rich possibilities that have not yet been entirely explored.

The ‘ontological turn’ corresponds to one of the most vigorous and debated theoretic perspectives in current anthropology. It emphasizes dimensions referred to being and to the nature of reality in its investigative approach (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017). Its core is the knowledge built around the problematization of modern dualisms, especially that of nature and culture (Descola 2013; Viveiros de Castro 2011). Furthermore, it concedes special importance to the task of conceptualization, ideally, around the relation with ‘radical alterity’ and sustained by ethnographic undertakings (Holbraad 2014).

One of the main features of this perspective is the critique of cultural relativism⁷. In other words, it is understood that modern ontological assumptions present in the areas where anthropological knowledge is conventionally produced -Descola’s (2013) ‘naturalism’ for example- hinder the understanding of collectives having other assumptions. From the works on this perspective, the concept of nature as a universal and common backdrop of singular cultural perspectives is questioned from findings in the field (Viveiros de Castro 2011). However, more than invalidating modern ontological assumptions, what it seeks is its relocation, building a theoretical space for better comprehension of those collectives not situated in them⁸ and an empiric, non-relativist, affirmation of plural, interwoven realities (De la Cadena 2015, Blaser 2009).

Another main guideline has been the adoption of the ethnography as an instrument for theorization. In other words, its use has been underlined not only as an approach to fieldwork or a strategy for textual representation. The main point is that it has sought to reformulate its statute within the investigative process: for a subsidiary and instrumental position *under* established theory erected at a privileged moment in the construction of knowledge and a motor of the anthropological discipline. As stated by Holbraad,

The central movement of this ontological turn is just that: a permanent intent to turn the relationship between ethnographic material and analytical resources on its head. Instead of treating the ethnography as the object of analytical concepts and procedures, the ontological turn treats the ethnography as its *source*. Thus, the ethnography has become the foundation, not merely in the field, upon which anthropology renews its resources and an intellectual project [cursive in original and our translation]. (Holbraad 2014: 132)

Although the perspective of the ‘ontological turn’ has radicalized the anthropological exercise, creating theoretic conditions to overcome modern divisions in analysis, prioritizing ethnographic undertakings, it has important limitations that must be attended to. For reasons of analytical focus and space we are interested in discussing two⁹: on one hand, the emphasis on conceptualization destined to capture the complexity and singularity of studied groups has derived in a strong philosophical and abstract imprint, and on the other, as a concrete result of ethnographic undertakings, the written

⁶ This Project was called Parque Eólico Pililín, by a Spanish corporation called Acciona. The main affectations were associated to impacts produced by the installation of 17 aero generators in a hillside forest of high cultural and biological value, as well as 22 kilometers of power lines. The project was presented in 2016 and retired in 2018 due to local and regional opposition.

⁷ Has become common sense in anthropological discipline since the influence of Franz Boas in the North American academic field (see Stocking 1966)

⁸ For proposals of “middle-range” (Merton 1959) see the “four ontology model” of Descola (2013) the “Amerindian Perspectivism” of Viveiros de Castro (2011).

⁹ Other critics may be found in Besire and Bond (2014) and Reynoso (2014)

monograph persists as a predominant and paradigmatic product, centered on representational attributes of experience¹⁰. The result has tended to disregard concrete practices and the creativity of social actors, reducing possibilities of opening new opportunities to ethnographic work.

In this body of work, while we subscribe to the ‘ontological turn’, we intend to take steps to explore beyond it. We state that a central aspect of anthropological work, and within it the ethnography, is -as sustained by the main proponents of the ‘turn’- to “take seriously” the assumptions about reality sustained by others. Nevertheless, it is not circumscribed *only* to an intellectual level and therefore engrossed, not only with conceptual and/or representational preciousness, but also methodological¹¹, experiential and experimental. Therefore we understand researchers insertion in the practices and creations of the people with whom we work, to paraphrase the main proponents of the ‘ontological turn’ (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017), to the ‘last consequences’. That is, from the steps before the research itself to the materiality of the final products, its dissemination and even its extension towards new relations that affect and disaffect those who participate in the process. At this point, the theoretic-methodologic dialogue opens before -or alongside- philosophy, to a wide range of proposals that problematize the division between researcher/researched and/or the univocality of the research results, which are preeminently written.

The allusion to ‘an anthropology with *flow*’ synthesizes our argument with the case we will treat as material for thought and involvement: the process of making the hip-hop video clip “Nuestro Territorio” [“Our Territory”], developed mainly in the Lof Michillanca community of Los Molinos. Although it took place between June 2017 and December 2018, our comprehension involved background work that took place between 2016 and 2019 in the coastal area of Valdivia (Wadalafken Mapu), located in the southern Región de los Ríos, Chile. In keeping with Mc Jakase’s definition of *flow* we strive for anthropology where one of the main characteristics is a close link to the practices and interests of the place and is modeled -literally and concretely- on the singularity and creativity of the people that inhabit it.

In the following chapters we divide our experience in two moments: the first, after presenting the background of our principal counterpart (turned into creative partner) and the area under study, we expose the four phases of making of the video clip: i) reflexive workshops for writing the lyrics and audiovisual script, ii) building the song, iii) building the audio visual content and iv) dissemination. In the second half of this work we propose two lines of analysis: one *within* the ‘ontological turn’, from a political ontology perspective, another wondering *beyond* it, through the problematization of the researcher/researched dichotomy and written text as the paradigmatic and previously established product of the ethnography.

II. The coming into being of a video clip

In this section the process of building the video clip is described. First, information about the “constructive negotiation” (Clifford 1988: 41) established with Gabriel Troncoso Michillanca for the joint endeavor is given, as well as his biography and historical-political background of the area where the community he is leader of is located. Following that, the four phases for the making of the video clip are presented.

Gabriel and the Lof Michillanca video clip

We met Gabriel Troncoso Michillanca in the context of a meeting of local Mapuche Lafkenche communities that took place in his community’s *ruka* on the 11th of March of 2017. We spoke briefly during breaks in the program. We explained our research objective, involving the social opposition to a wind farm project in the area and our interest in building a relevant product for the people who

¹⁰ Other formats are used, but they are subservient to what has already been exposed in written form. For example, the exposition ‘La fabrique des images’ (2010-2011) in the Quai Branly (Paris, France), who’s commissar was Descola, or the photography exposition ‘Variações do corpo selvagem’ (2015) at the SESC (São Paulo, Brazil) by Viveiros de Castro.

¹¹ Furthermore, it is fundamental to state that we do not understand methodology as a series of standardized previously established steps, but as a group of decisions that implicate the situated definition and eventually the creation of procedures in consideration with the context and purpose of the study.

participated, that was not necessarily in written form. He told us that he had been raised in the suburbs of Santiago¹², the capital of Chile, and it was there, along with his friends, that he had grown to love hip-hop¹³. Especially one of its expressions: rap. That is why, since his return and permanent settlement in the community in 2010, he has always wanted to condition a rustic building on the property for a music studio. “For me rap is a tool for the struggle” was one of the phrases he pointed at us that day. When asked in what sense he explained: “rap is a way of spreading information about what happens in the territories and it makes more people, especially young people, join the defense. For example, I know many *peñitos* [young men] from here, including neighbors of mine who are not involved and don’t know what’s happening, but they’re rappers or they like rap a lot. So that way, with music, they could see what’s happening and contribute”. He commented that, besides the environmental conflicts that affect the territory in general -and that were the thematic focus of that day’s meeting-, there was a specific concern with land claims in his community.

A brief historical note is necessary. Until the advance of the Chilean Army during the second half of the XIXth century, in a process known as the ‘Pacification of the Araucanía’, the Mapuche people were relatively autonomous. Later the Chilean state granted them land consisting of 10% of the total territory they had previously inhabited (Mariman et al. 2006). In the case of the area where the Lof Michillanca is located¹⁴, this occurred in 1912. In 1974, at the beginning of Chilean dictatorship (1973-1989), the property Gabriel referred to that day was usurped through a fraudulent procedure (Correa 2015). Due to the precariousness of those times Gabriel’s mother had to migrate to the suburbs of Santiago de Chile, where Gabriel was born, raised and learned about rap.

His family began legal actions to recuperate this land in the year 2000, mainly settling on it and being turned out by the public force on numerous occasions. In fact, one of these oustings took place during the time the video clip was being worked on¹⁵. Meanwhile Gabriel settled on his family land permanently in 2010 and became a community leader. During the different actions for recuperating the property he has forged relations with other leaders and Mapuche groups in this and other localities, allowing him to be an insider to the different environmental problems in the area. A declaration at an event called “Defense of the Lafken Mapu” (Kiñe Rakizuam and Lof Michillanca 2017) where some of these issues were discussed, stated: “This advance [of extractive industries] takes place from the mountains to the sea, hydroelectric plants, forestry, mining, agro industries, cellulose, mega wind farms and salmon farming; projects that threaten the right to good living, the cultural identity as Mapuche Nation People”.

We met with Gabriel eight times in order to coordinate a joint action-research effort. It was decided that the idea of building a studio would be left for the future. Instead, we decided to draw up a joint proposal and apply for a small grant (USD 530)¹⁶ for academic extension offered by the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities of the Universidad Austral de Chile (UACH) in 2017. Finally, we received the grant for a project centered on building a rap video clip. The title was “Rural Mapuche Rap in the Context of Environmental Conflicts” under the responsibility of Gabriel Troncoso Michillanca and the first author of this article, the anthropologist Pablo Rojas Bahamonde. It is relevant to note another participant in this project¹⁷, a rapper from the city of Valdivia known as Tormento Vil Dos Mañas who was to be in charge of building the song and allowed the use of his technical equipment, as well as contributing with his vast experience¹⁸. Gabriel had met him at a gig where Tormento offered his support.

¹² Currently the majority of the Mapuche population inhabits urban areas, especially in the city of Santiago.

¹³ Hip-hop culture is composed, at least, of the following manifestations: rap, *graffiti*, break dance and *Djing*.

¹⁴ Although the community is registered under a different name in the Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena (CONADI)- a government agency centered on issues having to do with indigenous people, created through legislation in 1993 (see Vergara et al. 2004), throughout this article we opt for the name used by the people we worked with. “Lof” designates a level of sociopolitical organization present among the Mapuche before the ‘Pacification of the Araucanía’ for a group of extended family. It is also important to mention that the word ‘community’ has different meanings, it may refer to a Mapuche organization before the ‘Pacification’, one emerging after regularization by the Chilean state and/or one established by CONADI. Lof Michillanca is a combination of the first two.

¹⁵ See: <https://radiojgm.uchile.cl/con-ff-ee-y-maquinarías-pesadas-desalojan-y-destruyen-lof-michillanca/>

¹⁶ Used for transport and meals.

¹⁷ Originally there would also have been two students of journalism in charge of audiovisual work and three postgraduate students, who would help in the design of the workshops.

¹⁸ This included workshops for socially vulnerable youth and songs and records with other rappers as well as singles. This work may be consulted here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/1raperoto>

We would like to mention two of the many issues that emerged during the process of coordination. First, Gabriel exposed that there were two basic conditions for working together. First, there could be no situations that he termed as “epistemological extractivism”. He explained that from the very first, whatever we did must be useful for the people involved. This is associated to an extended problem within the Mapuche world, and indigenous communities in general, related to the instrumentalization and exploitation that many university students and researchers are accused of: “We make agreements with university people, we give them information, they do their thesis or projects and we never see them again, they don’t give back as much as a miserable piece of paper”, as another community leader stated in a conversation to illustrate this point. Also, there could be no censure or arbitrary editorial management on our part. Gabriel spoke of failed experiences with counterparts who wanted to project a stereotyped image of rural Mapuche life, as guardians of nature and possessing mystic ancestral wisdom.

It was decided that the construction of the video clip would take place in four phases described as follows.

i) Rapping

The workshops took place inside the *ruka* of the Lof Michillanca (see figure 2), and were about six hours long. The participants were also those who appeared in the video clip (here on after to be known as participants), as well as their family members and friends. The composition was as mentioned above, mostly Mapuche: Jakase Mc and Mono, both from Los Molinos, and Miguel Montaña Pichún, from the neighboring locality of San Ignacio; Gabriel Troncoso Michillanca (Siete Desobediencia) and his nephew, El Mapu, who had arrived from Santiago and were members of Lof Michillanca. Their ages fluctuated between 21 and 29. Two people from the Chilean world also joined: the Chilean rapper Tormento Vil Dos Mañas from the city of Valdivia and a ranchera singer known as Maura de Los Ríos from Los Molinos. Each workshop began by sharing a meal prepared by Gabriel and Pablo, in order to create an atmosphere of camaraderie and also due to the fact that some participants arrived after their working day.



FIGURE 2: Inside the Lof Michillanca community *ruka* during a rap workshop, source: Pablo Rojas Bahamonde, 2017.

The content of the first workshop consisted of an introduction of the participants and their motivations. Following, Gabriel gave a justification for the video clip, given the importance of creating awareness of environmental issues in the area, which he described in detail (see figure 3) Then, Pablo expressed the research framework and the four phases that had been thought out. Three agreements were reached: the creating of a Facebook account¹⁹ for the project, in order to share information about the different activities; that all the issues outlined by Gabriel could be touched upon, as well as other ones that may arise during the development of the project. Therefore, the subject matter would not be circumscribed to the eolic power plant project that our query had begun with. It was also agreed that swearing would not be used to reach a wider audience. Around these last two points, the participants discussed ethical-political aspects of rap that would guide them through the different phases, especially while building the lyrics. These consisted of the crucial importance given to the values of authenticity and autonomy. The first as understood as a critical and reflective exercise, in which each rapper is situated in a specific historic-political context, the lyrics should stem from that singular world view. Invariably, the narratives present in the music and/or audio-visual content was linked to their biographic narrative. Thus, for example, they expressed profound disgust with rappers who came from socially marginal backgrounds and who show luxurious scenarios in their videos, with no biographical references. The second point was the precedence granted to the individuality (not individualism) of the creative act. Advice or recommendation might be given, but no one would interfere with the characteristics of the lyrics or the manner in which the rapper might interpret them. “Rap is a piece of land where you plant what you want and tend to it however you like, whenever you like”, Miguel Montaña Pichun explained in that first workshop.



FIGURE 3: Conversation inside the *ruka* of Lof Michillanca of Los Molinos. Source: Pablo Rojas Bahamonde, 2017.

The following seven workshops followed a similar pattern. The rapper Tormento Vil Dos Mañas installed the equipment: a computer with a recording program, microphone, and speaker, with the

¹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/proyectorapmapucherural2017/>

volume of the beat²⁰ turned up loud, booming in the *ruka*. In this context the participants created; by writing lyrics in a notebook, making sounds out loud and having conversations with other members of the group. These actions took place seated, (see figure 4) or standing up, even walking within the *ruka*. After two hours of these activities the participants would congregate before the microphone to share their creations. All interventions were patiently recorded by Tormento Vil Dos Mañas (see figure 5). If deemed to be of a certain quality -where the most relevant opinion was that of the creator himself-, the intervention was inserted in the collective track, which was created during the successive workshops. Participants who had registered their work then helped their fellows. Finally, there was moment of collective appreciation in which the song was listened to at least half a dozen times, regardless of the state it was in. Each time it was reproduced there were comments, on possible improvements in quality or aiming towards the characteristics of the final assembly. Each work session concluded in a relaxed atmosphere, listening to rap music from the central-southern region of Chile. There would be talk about the characteristics of the video clip and invariably there would be collective freestyling²¹ around the open hearth of the *ruka*.



FIGURE 4: Writing during creative process inside *ruka* of the Lof Michillanca community source: Pablo Rojas Bahamonde, 2017.

²⁰ The beat was chosen and donated by *Tormento Vil Dos Mañas* in accordance with conversations that took place in the first workshop. It was unanimously approved by the participants, who found its intensity and aggressiveness adequate for the video clip they wanted to build.

²¹ The English slang word *Freestyling* is hispanicized to *freestylear*. Referring to the collective improvised, rhyming songs



FIGURE 5: *Tormento Vil Dos Mañas and Maura de Los Ríos inside the ruka Lof Michillanca.* Source: Pablo Rojas Bahamonde, 2017.

ii) Mixing

While the song was built and registered in the workshops in the *ruka*, the final mixing was done at the home of the rapper Tormento Vil Dos Mañas. Two components of the song's final version were recorded in a studio installed in his room: the part of El Mapu and the choir was recorded by the ranchera singer Maura de Los Ríos and the background vocals were done by her son Jakase Mc (see figure 6). The final assembly was done by the stated rapper who was assisted by a local dj, Dj Dramastralez, who *scratched* for the final version. The lyrics adopted an accusatory tone towards extractivist projects in Wadalafken Mapu and complicit agents who allow it, it included the *mapudungun* language as well as a type of slang associated with marginal and penitentiary environments known as *coa*. Our insertion in this phase and during the entire process was diffuse, which was extremely fruitful. Although we are not experts, we gave recommendations and appreciations, as well as organizing and intervening in different phases of activities.



FIGURE 6: Recording at *Tormento Vil Dos Mañas* home studio. Source: Pablo Rojas Bahamonde, 2017.

iii) Assembling

While the song was created, ideas for the audiovisual content were also developed during the workshops. However, there was a special session in the *ruka* for designing the script itself. It was agreed that the main argument for the visual storyline must be centered on their opposition to extractivist practices associated to corporations and the Chilean State. Three main ideas, with their respective locations and actions were established as part of the audiovisual record of the video clip. First was showing the manner in which local actors took responsibility for their future. The chosen location was the interior of the *ruka*, the actions to be recorded were those that took place during the workshops. Second, faced with the negative impacts associated to different extractivist industries, they wanted to show how the rhymes built by the participants guarded the territory. The chosen locations were specific points associated with extractivist projects, either latent, projected or in place and operational (see image 7); where the participants rapped. Third, they were interested in explaining about the work that went into the making of the video clip and especially about the participants' rhymes. The main locations were mostly other *rukas* in the area, as well as other situations and people within the territory that were propitious. The recording was centered on exposing interactions between the participants and local people (see image 8). Two UACH journalism students and Pablo were in charge of filming. The students were also in charge of the final assembling (including the song audio), closely followed by Gabriel and other participants who discussed the progress and proposed modifications. Later, a new participant with audiovisual experience finished the assembly and provided a fourth body of images. The locations of these images were places of scenic beauty and marine environments, some focusing on the scenery and others on marine productive practices. They had been filmed by this person, before the project and were included for aesthetics and to show productive activities that take place in the coastal area of Valdivia.



FIGURE 7: Mono rapping on a take associated with a salmon farming project. Source: Pablo Rojas Bahamonde, 2018.



FIGURE 8: Jakase Mc rapping in Los Molinos during filming of video clip. Source: Pablo Rojas Bahamonde, 2018.

iv) Flowing

The resulting video clip, titled “Our Territory” was presented in academic circles as well as social networks. Before being released it was shown at anthropology congresses (in Chile) and sociology (in Uruguay). The video was posted on YouTube on the 8th of December 2018 and on Facebook two days later. To date (April 2020) it has been reproduced 25 thousand times on the social platform, shared over 917 times and has 64 comments. This ‘viralization’ led to new actions and networking: there was an invitation to speak at an academic event organized by and NGO called Social Hip Hop²² in the city of Santiago in January of 2019. It was decided that Gabriel would be the one to present the work (see figure 9). It was there that an encounter with Emiliano Ríos, an Argentinean professor and researcher from the province of Entre Ríos took place. He had seen their work on Facebook and his interest led to the Wadalafken Rap Workshop being included in his doctoral thesis, centered on building a full-length video on Latin-American indigenous rap music²³.

The director of the NGO Social Hip Hop invited Gabriel to join the organization and start a Mapuche branch in southern Chile. The first activity derived from this invitation was the organization of a Hip Hop event in the city of Valdivia called “From the Street to the Territory”. Some of the activities fostered by the gathering were: a discussion group, similar to the one that had taken place in Santiago, the presentation of a novel about Hip Hop and urban Mapuche youth and a rap gig with groups and exponents from throughout Chile²⁴. Income from inscriptions for the event was used to finance legal defense for recovery of the Lof Michillanca territory in Los Molinos.



FIGURE 9: Gabriel Troncoso Michillanca at discussion on “Social Work from Hip Hop”. Source: Camilo Rojas Bahamonde, 2019.

²² This non-profit NGO is based in Santiago and functions with self-financed projects as well as grants from public funds.

²³ For more information: <https://prensaopal.cl/2020/04/19/estreno-conexion-originaria/>

²⁴ See: <http://www.masretorno.cl/2019/04/30/academico-de-la-escuela-de-arqueologia-uach-aporta-con-trabajo-antropologico-a-cultura-del-rap/>

III. Of rappers, ontology and ethnography

The political ontology of Lafkenche rap

We perceive 'political ontology' as a theoretic perspective that operationalizes and delves into proposals of the 'ontological turn' in asymmetrical power contexts. It may be understood as a 'medium range' theory (Merton 1959), centered on inquiring into conflictive situations where actors or collectives who mobilize different ontological assumptions are involved. As a field, it is still under construction, at its main proponents find empirical sustenance in Latin America (Blaser 2009; De la Cadena 2010, 2015), researching situations of conflict derived from extractivist activities. One of its main ideas is the exploration of the "negotiations involved in bringing into being the entities that make up a particular world or ontology" (Blaser 2009: 11). It is based on one of the main arguments of Science and Technology Studies referring to the generative power of practices. As stated by Mol (1999: 75): "reality does not precede the mundane practices that we interact with, but is formed by these practices". This has allowed delving into the manner in which specific collectives 'perform' certain worlds, with the respective entities and practices that are part of them.

The first element to consider in the case under study is the way in which the environmental conflicts were conceived. Initially the idea was to focus only on an eolic power plant project, but a wider, critical view of the territorial reality was 'imposed' in the workshops. A defining moment occurred during the first workshop when Gabriel presented the conflicts within the territory, leading the participant to address them in their entirety, marking the antagonism towards corporations and the State. This is correlated to the experience of the local leaders, one of whom is Gabriel himself, who face a variety of issues that are interrelated. A second element was problematizing indigenous and specifically the Mapuche experience. Rather than seeing it as unmoving, in the manner of essentialist perspectives, stemming from certain academic trends (as 'ecological native') or from the State²⁵, the work was constructed and shows a dynamic, urban -in spite of being positioned in a rural setting- and open to alterity way of being Mapuche (see Course 2011; González 2015). Furthermore, their own conditions of possibility demonstrate it: the presence of participants from the Chilean world in all stages, especially illustrative is that of the Chilean rapper Tormento Vil Dos Mañas. Besides being a central figure in building the song, he participates with a stanza of his own, that was, nevertheless, created within the setting of the workshops. The third element is the problematization of the human as a unit for analysis of politics. The work includes nonhuman entities widely consigned to the ethnographic corpus of the Mapuche people, such as the *alive* [ancestors] and *Ngenechen* [General deity] (see Moulian 2012, Ramírez 2006 and Rojas-Bahamonde 2016 on relevance). This does not imply that all things Mapuche should be relegated to a closed category (as exclusively linked to an animist ontology, for example), but as related to other forms prevalent in modernity. In other words, the relation between human and more-than-human beings did not annulled other linkages, but rather increase the complexity of the 'composition of worlds' (Descola 2014).

Based on the latter, before a static and dichotomic being Mapuche, and a mechanical, modern and inert nature, or circumscribing environment, what is configured instead, is a centrifugate *mapuchidad* (Course 2011), constituted in relation to alterity and positioned in a complex territory. This does not imply the omission of the existence of specific actors -incarnated in corporative actions of both the state and companies- conceived as a threat.

Experimenting the flow of ethnography: steps to go beyond the 'ontological turn'

Pushing the 'ontological turn' towards zones that have not necessarily been traversed, implies the imaginative exploration of a central component of anthropology, such as ethnography. This exploration may take the form of a problematization that interrogates 'the nature and the being' of itself. Other forms of conceiving it and practicing may emerge during this transit. Specifically through the criticism of a dichotomy that is not especially problematized and the conventional manner of considering results and evidence.

25 According to legislation: Ley Indígena 19.253 of Chile passed in 1993. Specifically, paragraph 2, article 2: <https://www.leychile.cl/Navegar?idNorma=30620&r=1>

The former refers to the researcher/researched dichotomy. A ‘minimum’ definition by an academic authority from the United States may be useful. Sherry Ortner proposes: “Ethnography of course means many things. Minimally, however, it has always meant the attempt to understand another life world using the self-as much of it as possible- as the instrument of knowing” (2006: 42). The intention of citing this definition is to highlight that, even at its ‘minimum’ it implicates suppositions that narrow other possibilities for conceiving it and practicing it. Specifically, it reproduces the researcher/researched dichotomy.

Ethnographic undertakings -as stated by Kopenawa and Albert (2013: 430-431)- is configured as a “pact”, whose foremost “imperative” of commitment between researcher and subject of research is that the researcher evidently must scrupulously do justice to the “conceptual imagination” of their hosts. This is relevant inasmuch as the destabilization of the researcher/researched dichotomy cannot proceed from an attitude where the relation of power involved in the production of knowledge is obviated or invisibilized. On the contrary, this relation is negotiated and the positions and interests between those involved are made explicit, considering the quality of the investigative process, including the products that are to be created in a relevant manner.

In the course of our work, this involved channeling and catalyzing the motivations and abilities of our local counterparts from the beginning to the very end. It implied –methodologically- ‘taking seriously’ the call to -conceptually- ‘take seriously’ the alterity proposed by the ‘ontological turn’. This call synthesizes the central guidelines of that perspective, especially mentioned by Viveiros de Castro (2011a)²⁶. Its aim is to radicalize the anthropological exercise and the ancestral preoccupation about overcoming ethnocentrism. The main point is that from the early approach the ethnographer must consider, systematically and emphatically, her/his own premises about the reality of the worlds that s/he becomes part of, as well as the search for adequate conceptualizations of them. This means positioning the modern dichotomy between nature and culture as a possibility, among others, of organizing the entities inhabiting the world. The local counterpart references are not circumscribed to (mere) ‘beliefs’ or ‘world views’, but are decisive clues which must be followed from ethnography, becoming the mechanism to undertake the exploration of these possibilities.

Nevertheless, we made this invitation, literally heading towards practices and creativity concordant with alterity. In other words, modifying the ‘nature’ of the ethnographer and ourselves, as ethnographers, to the point that we allow ourselves to be dragged, experimentally and concretely through the world of our counterpart. Our place in all of this became diffuse, however, highly challenging and fruitful. With no previous experience in the world of hip-hop, we became involved in each of the four phases. A crucial point was the commitment that the main product would be the video clip and, therefore building it would begin ‘at the first moment’. Therefore, there is a non-representational dimension, of lived experience, that is never fully included in textual analysis (or audiovisual). Still, its generative/creative/affective power is recognized and carried out in ethnographic praxis.

This became coupled with the absolute protagonism of our creative partners, incarnated in the participants of the video clip at all stages. The passive, secondary and intermittent figure of informant within an investigation was dissolved. What emerged was a figure close to that of ‘epistemic partners’ (Holmes and Marcus 2008: 83): active, highly motivated and had a vast knowledge concerning the construction of the research main product, as well as being committed to its purposes. The problematization of the researcher/researched dichotomy, and replacing positions, may have reached its most illustrative point when Gabriel himself presented the project at the NGO’s academic event. And later becoming part of it, coordinating a group within the framework of said NGO, based in the locality of Los Molinos. It is relevant to mention that there is a recurring trope in ethnography, about the transformation of the researcher, but there are very few cases (and/or attention paid to them when they occur) in which it is “the other”, the epistemic partner, who change, those who- conventionally- are only providers of information.

The second problematization corresponds to the aesthetic conservatism centered on the written monograph for presenting results. Since the classic *The Argonauts of the Western Pacific* by Malinowski in 1922, the written monograph has become the fixed paradigmatic product. It has maintained its predominance in spite of critical reformulations suggested in the face of historic world processes occurring in the 1960’s (Hymes 1969; Asad 1973), the emergence of works in conspicuous areas, such

²⁶ See Willerslev (2013: 41-42) and Holbraad and Pedersen (2017: 184-194), among others.

as the audiovisual (from the classic *Nanook of the North* in 1922 and the vast works of Jean Rouch), the critical reformulations to textual conventions (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Geertz 1988), the use of a variety of mediums and digital platforms with a strong ethnographic component and the use of a variety of inter and transdisciplinary approaches, among other experiences.

Currently, within the ‘ontological turn’ the predominance of the monograph is sustained. For example, a recent written monograph (Kopenawa and Albert 2015) is read by its main proponents as a work that “rearranges, inverts and renews the anthropological discourse on Amerindian peoples *redefining its methodological conditions and pragmatic enunciations*” (Viveiros de Castro 2015: 12. Our cursive and translation). One of the main obstacles is the central statute granted to written evidence by academic financing entities (Rojas-Bahamonde et al. 2015) and, related to this, the manner in which the practitioners *habitus* are ‘molded’ and constitute criteria of authority in the academic field (Bourdieu 1988).

Methodologically speaking ‘taking -alterity- seriously’, in the sense that we mean, pushes the ‘ontological turn’ to explore other ways of undertaking the ethnographical exercise propitiating other theoretic-methodological dialogues. In other words, if each territory has its own particularities and its inhabitants have certain motivations, interests and abilities, the ethnography is never determined *beforehand*, but -literally- until it conforms in/with the encounter of these territories and inhabitants. Consequently, the conversation with perspectives that problematize and may process the possibilities of this ‘encounter’ –interpellating the researcher/researched division and/or the univocality of the created products, especially written evidence- becomes necessary and fruitful. The cartography of options for this conversation is broad and interdisciplinary. Among other: the pedagogic praxis of Freire (1967, 1970) and the action-research of Fals Borda (1979), the reciprocal (Lawless 2000), collaborative (Lassiter 2005, Holmes and Marcus 2008), feminist (Lamas 2018, Schrock 2013), queer (Rooke 2009), experimental (Estalella and Sánchez 2016), engaged (Low and Merry 2010) and militant ethnographies (Scheper-Hugues 1995). Also, the challenging links and interventions established between anthropology and disciplines such as design (Pink et al. 2016) and topics like the future (Salazar et al. 2017).

Based on the territorial particularities and the expertise and objectives of the people we work with, to “take seriously” in our ethnography implied considering other products -beyond the conventional written evidence- of the ethnographic undertaking. The process of building the video clip, besides destabilizing the researcher/researched dichotomy, made the academic emphasis of the results and consequential limited reach of the resulting knowledge more complex. In other words, it allowed transit in and out of academic circles. It is relevant to mention the creation of links and new instances propitiated as the work was presented. This was based on a dynamic and virtuous correspondence on social media (especially Facebook) and the off-line world. The ‘social life’ of the work on social media networks has been remarkable (Rojas-Bahamonde et al. 2015) New possibilities arose, especially after the invitation by the NGO to present the work in Santiago. At that same event the inclusion of the Wadalafquen Mapu Rap workshop in a Latin American video clip was coordinated. Information gathered on social media was also relevant for validation purposes. Comments from other actors within the world of rap became material for evaluating what had been done. An illustrative example is a post by a member of a collective called Wechekeche Ñi Trawun, who are pioneers in cultivating rap in the Mapuche world (see Figure 10).



[Congratulations *pu peñi* [to all brothers]... *pu lamngen* [to all sisters]... great song... *lemorria* [greetings] from the *Pikum Mapu* [Mapuche Lands of the North] from your brothers Wechekeche ñi Trawün...]

FIGURE 10: Screenshot of comment of video clip “Our Territory” on Facebook. Source: Fan Page Taller de Rap Wadalafken Mapu

This ‘taking seriously’ the actions and creativity of our intermediaries came from a non-representational form of experimenting ethnographic work. Not because there was no audiovisual or written representation (such as, for example, this article), but because the value of experimenting social creativity, through performative and emerging action became more important than the self-imposed need to give a faithful account of a determined reality (Vannini 2015).

IV. Conclusions

The ‘ontological turn’ is currently a perspective of great relevance in anthropology. Its preoccupation with reality, the nature of being and the existence status of the entities that populate the world mark an original approach within the discipline. The endeavor to build theoretic conditions beyond modern dualisms -especially those related to the nature and culture dichotomy- and the preponderance of the ethnography. Nevertheless, aspects that narrow these possibilities are contained within its proposals. One of these is a strong philosophical imprint arising from the preoccupation with conceptualization; another is a certain esthetic conservatism derived from the centrality of the written text -strongly centered on manners of representation- as the paradigmatic product resulting from investigation. In this work there were two underscored planes where this ‘taking seriously’ unfolded. On one hand was the (original) invitation of the ‘ontological turn’, centered on attending the premises of alterity and with ethnographic emphasis on writing and the task of conceptualization. And, on the other, the manner in which we appropriate this invitation, submerging ourselves in the practices and creativity of our counterparts, to the point of coupling the ethnographic exercise to theirs. This exceeds the academic canons; in the resulting products, a rap video clip, as well as in the principle we sustain: the ‘nature’ of ethnography is only defined -at ground level- with people in their territories. Thus, the repertoire of possibilities that ethnography can assume becomes practically infinite.

Following the description of the phases included in its elaboration, from the first contacts to its dissemination, there are two aspects to highlight. On the one hand, attending to the analytical emphasis given by political ontology, we present the worlds that a *lafkenche* rap performs. On the other hand, and with the aim of contributing with steps beyond the ontological turn, the researcher/researched dichotomy was broached and openings were explored when written and strictly representational evidence was denaturalized in the deployment of the ethnographic work. These last two issues are widely problematized and debated within and without anthropology. We affirm that the radicalization of the postulates of the ontological turn, incarnated in ‘taking seriously’ the alterity, leads to rethink ethnography and experimentally following its exceedance, which emerges from the qualities and relations of the territories and their inhabitants.

This work invites further delving into, at least, three areas. First, the establishment of interaction, critiques and synergy that may occur between methodologic-theoretic perspectives that emphasize the engagement and the positioning in contexts of conflict and violence, such as action-research, the pedagogic critiques and various ethnographic collaborations. Secondly, the execution of a cartography of the ways in which the ethnography has been and is being modified (how and by whom) in the South as in the Global North. Lastly, linked to the previous point, is to nurture the field of studies of transdisciplinary inspiration, even while considering the manner in which perspectives, experiences and creativity of people ‘from below’ break in radically.

The rap video clip was possible due to the genuine stating of interests and engagement of researchers and local counterpart. It reveals the originality that the ethnography can generate when radically ‘taking seriously’ the creative practices of people. In this same manner possibilities are opened for them to broaden their view in their undertakings and purpose of territorial safeguarding. We conclude with a question: what *flow*, you as a reader, are able to ethnographically produce in/with the territories and people that inhabit the place you are immersed in?

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MUSIC VIDEOS AS A MODE OF RESISTANCE IN ALMERÍA'S INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Music and agricultural work have a long and varied relationship across cultures and throughout history. Activities such as planting, hoeing, herding and harvesting are frequently accompanied by song, while life in the fields has been documented, shared and passed on through varied musical forms. Agricultural songs range from joyous celebrations, odes to nature and the marking of seasons to those that offer biting social commentary, political critique and calls for resistance and revolution. This article explores the complex relationship between musicians and music production in industrial agricultural settings. It examines how the musical rhythms developed by Almería's agricultural industry's workers have evolved as the industry's modes of production have intensified and mechanised, and how music serves as a means to communicate and share worker's feelings and experiences, often leading to forms of connection, rebellion or resistance across time. By exploring how social and political context have been reflected through musical production, performance and the affective relations built around 'sonic images', namely "the set of postures, body movements, expressions, gestures inherent in musical creation" (D'Amico, 2015:2), it analyses the process of co-creating music videos with a local agricultural worker rock band, and how this uses new media to build on long standing popular forms of musical expression in the regional traditional agriculture. The article suggests localized musical production among workers serves to disrupt "comfortable [visual] boundaries and encouraging transgression of rules" (Mitchell 1992:223), but most importantly, to create empathy in shared feelings of social immobility and entrapment, creating affective bonds between the musicians and their audiences while recognising the role of the musicians as writers of intersubjective histories of the industrial reality.

KEYWORDS

music video clip, intensive agriculture, industry, DIY musicians, Southern Spain

BIO

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Introduction

“Hey supervisor, look at the clock,
Make no mistake, it’s already six, it’s already six.
If you make mistakes, make as you wish,
But right this minute, the workers leave”

Fragment of traditional picaílla song sang by women during the grape harvest, Padules, Almería (early 20th century)

Translation from Spanish by the author

<https://vimeo.com/66333088>

“Loosing control of my life,
Losing control of the situation
Losing control of my steps
Pulling out the animal inside of me
If this life is shit
And every time we have less patience
At the end, for sure, you will explode”

Fragment of ‘Perdiendo el Control’ (Losing Control) by Simulacro D.G. From their CD “Herederos Del Plástico” (Plastic Heirs). 2019, El Ejido.

Translation from Spanish by the author

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2LslxajuRk>

The ritual of labour involves a form of repetitive physical action and imitation that reproduces habitual practices and embodied movements over time and between generations but also forms a shared ground of experience, expression and resistance. The two musical fragments above, sang by agricultural workers in Western Almería, Southern Spain, separated by almost a century, offer a tangible instantiation of shared embodied experience as running through and re-enacted throughout the history of the region. It is a form of “kinaesthetic mimicry” whereby empathy is established through viewing and hearing an activity, which leads us to feeling and being transported into it, both imitating and projecting one’s feelings onto the observed gestures (Lipps, 1903:191). Whether through a moving figure, a story, or a popular song, kinaesthetic empathy offers a mode of sensorial engagement through which we feel, learn about and insert ourselves into the historical process itself, transforming our understanding. Repetition of smells, gestures, movements, sounds and taste, offer a means for relating and adapting to people, objects and environments, of living and placing ourselves inside the other’s non-verbal experience, and of obtaining knowledge through mimesis and kinaesthetic empathy.

As such, this paper draws on ethnographic encounters with a local rock band ‘Chotajo’, whose members are young workers in the agriculture industry. These workers were all participants in a larger research project on the agricultural industry. During the research an idea emerged that we should collaborate to make, produce and launch a music video of their song ‘Menos Animal’ (Less Animal). The process of making the video became a mutually defined method and activity for exploring local narratives of change, the social, cultural and political context of work and labour, and the kinaesthetic and affective dimensions of the music. These qualities of audiovisual research follow Mantle Hood’s filmic interactions “with performers, users, audience, community, and other art forms” (1971:21). The making of the video offered a collaborative mode of participation and ethnography for analysing the political and historical economy of El Ejido, understanding farmers’ and day-labourers’ embodied lived experience and for considering how different generations and their agricultural musical styles, might be used as an index of shared experience, social critique and technological change.

The two song fragments that open this paper show how the social critique of the traditional song becomes rearticulated and adapted to the tone and tempo of the current agriculture industry. The adaptation involves verbal similarities, but also the experiential reciprocity of bodily movement across generations. As Parviainen describes it “we do not arrive at the phenomenon of the other’s experience,

but at the experience of our own which arouses in us the other's gestures witnessed" (2003:154). The local rock band Simulacro D.G., whose fragment is compared to the *picaílla* song above, explicitly builds this link through its Album title "Plastic Heirs". It reveals the temporal continuation of a creative intention, associated to the agricultural productive plastic greenhouse environment across time. Despite the evolution in musical genres, the awareness derived from direct bodily interaction with the productive environment become constituent of the meanings shared symbolically through language, in this case through the contestation present in the region's musical lyrics. Their lyrics show social critique has been passed down through conceptual knowledge derived from verbal communication, but also through the embodied labour experiences of workers, providing empathic knowledge. The fusion between the conceptual social background and one's own bodily experiential histories has been defined by Varela, Rosch and Thompson as 'embodied minds' (1996), and by Stein as the "intuiting" act of knowing within others (1917:20). It draws both on the empathetic "capacity to understand and respond to the unique affective experiences of another person" (Decety & Jackson, 2006:54), and to our bodily experiential register, formed through a historical accumulation of sensorial experiences. This sensorial accumulation, as Marx defined, has been "a labour of the entire history of the world down to the present", including the 'five senses' and the 'human sense', "the mental or practical senses (will, love, etc.)", as well as, all efforts to numb and resist the numbness of the senses (Engels and Marx 1978:89). What we sense as humans today is therefore a consequence of our historical baggage and the relationships workers have built through history.

This study considers the usefulness of co-creating music videos in revealing labourers' as writers of an alternative popular narrative of the industrial reality, based on workers' feelings rather than verbal testimonies, consolidating them as empathy generating actors. It argues the kinaesthetic empathy derived from shared feelings of passivity and entrapment experienced in intensive agricultural labour, engender workers' 'counterappropriation' of their oppression, as revealed in musical production and its representation (Scott 1985:34). It defends musical creation as an experiential tool to reveal workers' unconformity through empathy in feeling, generating a type knowing from and as the others. Miles Davis in his 1964 live recording of 'So What' gives impressions to create paths of discernment and dialectic exchanges with the audience defining collectively what is to be said, rather than over explaining things (Szwed, 2004:264). Similarly, this article defends that the dialectic through recognizable feelings between musicians and audiences in localised musical productions disclose the intersubjective constructions of 'truth' that can help anthropologists understand workers' resilience and forms of subtle sabotage. Rather than considering co-creation as a transformative 'weapon of the weak' in Scott's sense, it considers the role of musicians as the 'project initiators' shaping the meaning construction in the production of 'sonic images', reproduced by filmmakers, anthropologists and audiences (González Flores, 2007; Myers, 2002; McWilliam 2009).

The first section will focus on the local context, its political economy and music as a practice of resistance across the generations. It will show how resistance and social critique is contextualized in the local musical history of Western Almería, using kinaesthetic empathy as a theoretical frame for understanding the sonic/bodily affective aspects of the music. The second section will explore the author's immersion in the local rock scene, exposing the musical-political project of the local band Chotajo. It will reveal the musicians' agency and will of expression, analysing how their lyrics and affective relations lead to subtle sabotage and forms of rebellion, as per an existing trope within rock and subculture. The third section will unpack the making of a collaborative music video with Chotajo, reflecting on the dialectic relationship to build a sonic image of the musicians' reality. It will also discuss 'visibility' as a significant contemporary capital and the importance for anthropologists to recover and understand the meaning and temporality of localized music production in a context of exploitation and precariousness for the understanding of the regional industrial reality.

Social critique through musical production in agro-industrial Western Almería

The archives of traditional music of Almería in Southern Spain signal to two types of traditional music created as a mode of resistance to abusive labour. The first one, the *palo flamenco* 'taranto' was an evolution of the classical 'fandango' a traditional variety of flamenco music, adapted to the social situation of the miners and with a character of social complaint (Cruces Roldán, 1993:78; Navarro García and Iino, 1989:13; Pacheco, 2019). The second type, 'canción de faena' (labour songs), 'picaílla',

or ‘canción de pique’ (resentment songs), were normally sang by women while working in the grape harvest (Torres Cortés 1996:89; Bonilla Martínez, 2007). Derived from traditional romance song, these were often satirical songs, sang in fragments by groups of women replying to each other in a sarcastic way across the patio where they cleaned the grapes (Campo Tejedor, 2016:718; Criado and Ramos, 1992:203). It was particular of these two music styles developed by the workers of mining and agriculture, that they eliminated the melismas, or vocal runs, of flamenco. Adopting, instead, a syllabic style following the phonological structure of words. As such, rather than harmonizing words, both Almerian ‘taranto’ and ‘picaílla’ songs, played with the cultural features of language and the speaker’s philosophy of life, to create intent and give contrast to the different social problems discussed in the songs. Substituting the emotions provoked by a change of notes in succession in the melismatic style, the syllabic approach, unveils the emotions provoked by a language’s own rhythm. This is revealing of a speaker’s prosody, highlighting the emphasis, irony, or cynicism, given to the words being sung. This way, workers entertained mordant exchanges of personal and social critique, similarly to today’s freestyle hip hop battles (Criado and Ramos, 1992:215). The objective was to keep critical with each other’s feeling without offending or getting offended.

Today, ‘taranto’ and ‘picaílla’ are no longer linked to the mine or to agriculture, instead they are reproduced by contemporary flamenco artist who advocate for their conservation in alternative ‘neotraditional’ music circuits such as the Union Festival (Torres Cortés 1996:92). Similarly, the current local rock culture lies outside mainstream production and consumption, relying on its situated local component both for the development of the lyrics, as for the circuits of representation and diffusion. The change of styles from picaílla to local or ethnic rock is not motivated by an increased labour precarity through the intensification of the agricultural industry, as both genres have served to denounce repression, exploitation and racism (García Salueña, 2017; Mota, 2017). Yet, the civil war and the dictatorship provoked “emptiness and rupture”, breaching traditions such as the transmission of picaílla rhythms at work (Torres Cortés 1996:91). The posterior professionalization of family farms as individual businesses dispersed family units along the different echelons of the commodity chain, decontextualizing traditional rhythms from their original environment. In this process, picaílla and taranto rhythms have been influenced and reshaped by global rhythms arriving to Andalusia, creating new forms of musical expression disseminated outside the work environment but preserving the same spirit of rebellion present in traditional tunes (García-Peinazo, 2019:77). An example of this is the Taranto-Rock fusion developed by the rock band from Seville, Gualberto, in 1975, through their song “Tarantos para Jimi Hendrix” (Tarantos for Jimi Hendrix, on: *A la vida, al dolor*. Gong-Movieplay S-32.645). This was an attempt to unite “two worlds”, flamenco and rock, one of the first incursions into developing an Andalusian rock music genre, which would slowly evolve into the delocalized rock scenes such as the one sited at Almería’s agricultural industry (García-Peinazo, 2017:149).

Another significant change is that the rhetoric of complaint of picaílla rhythms, allowing labourers to address a problem face to face with the supervisor, has become an unthinkable practice today, due to the risk of losing one’s job. Whether in the packaging centres, or working in the fields, it is uncommon for people to speak up, much less sing with a tone of irony. In the packaging centres, where now the majority of women work, the mechanic sounds of the packaging belt and calibre machines, unstoppable during the labour day, make the workers’ words unheard. Likewise, in the farms, where migrant and autochthonous workers carry out the seasonal labour, with precarious contracts and little stability, workers rather keep quiet of any critique. Be it in the form of songs or elaborate statements workers know that regardless of the injustice, the industry is not the place to speak up, as the risk of losing your job is very high. Workers keep to themselves. While working, they either doze off into their own thoughts, dreams and expectation of the future, or they put their thoughts to rest, overwhelmed by the workspace. They listen to the tunes of their choice using earplugs, or alternatively let a radio station choose for them, connected always to the exterior, rather than to the workers around. The workplace becomes increasingly more individualistic. Yet, the need of social cohesion and unity to fight for change, inherited through ‘picaílla’, also finds ways of emerging. Technology has allowed the younger generation to transcend the cultural capital of the town and introduce all types of global rhythms. Some of which, create the same creative conditions as ‘picaílla’, where slander, and anonymous sabotage are used to mock and contradict the public ritual order (Scott 1985:17). Only where everyday forms of resistance can take place does the industry’s control fall away. As such, cultural expression emerges differently, not anymore at the work place, but on little clubs, bars, and public spaces of the local towns.

Oppressed by the systemic increase of the space taken over by the greenhouses, which now surround the rural towns, young people turn to the urban space to escape the industrial reality of everyday work. In El Ejido, the town at the centre of 'El Campo de Dalías', the heart of the 'plastic sea', the streets are filled with murals and political graffiti tags. Hip-hop tunes and parcoure jumps are seen everyday in the park, and the local rock bar is full every weekend with those that want to disconnect. The rock scene is composed by early millennials, who fully experienced the crisis and remain hardly 'miserables' (earning less than 1000 Euros per month), while the hip-hop scene integrates the younger generations, still in secondary education. Yet, both this youth scenes share a common history of being the sons and grandsons of the early farmers who started working the desert land. They have seen how the industry provokes competition among relatives and friends, subject to the pressures of the industry. They have also seen their mothers and fathers work countless hours on the different stages of the agricultural process, performing self-exploitation to meet the family needs. Now, they live in the vicious cycle of taking temporary jobs in the industry to have enough money to get by, while they see their big life dreams slip away. For them, the labour space is mechanic and repetitive; it's where they are asked not to be themselves, putting their creativity on hold, to become one more unit in the production structure. Consequently, after work, they have to exercise their creativity, to remind themselves once again of who they are. Sharing anecdotes of how each has been mistreated at work, they know the industry's problems are systemic. As such, the music they produce reflects on the feelings and emotions of being trapped by the system. This is an example from local hip-hop group:

"We are birds flying around a perimeter,
We think we are free, but we fly in circles
We forget who we are, talking about benefits,
Fake appearances, with rats in the building
We consume immeasurably, finest clothes
I have a new car, but his has wings
Don't take out the sticker, leave it on
So they know it cost me a fortune
Let my neighbour and their sisters die of envy
I don't have anything to eat, but that's all right.
In your circus I'm another puppet handled by mice
Appearances with gallons
I'm another puppet, waiting for instructions"

Fragment of 'Títeres' (Puppets)
By JeroconJota & Sandra ft. Tercio.
Translation from Spanish by the author.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-ypdNOpJGM>

Switching traditional tunes for punk rock and hip-hop rhythms, lyrics about the social frustration lived in the region proliferate in the local underground music scene. Accentuating the syllabic style, like in the traditional protest song, the young musicians express their revolt against conformity. They show an intrinsic frustration of having been born at the heart of a production network that is set for collapse, if not by the exhaustion of its workers, then by the depletion of its natural resources, like water. Music production is, in this scenario, a vehicle to channel their individual reactions to the existing precarity. In the large Spanish context, pop, rock and hip-hop have been associated with libertarian and insurgent movements, "serving as a metaphor for the cultural transformation of the country" (Val Ripollés, 2014; 2017:1207). Within the structure of the music the history of global flows, of enduring colonialism and of globalization are unveiled, reimagined in a creative ways by the musicians and "reinterpreted according to their own specific cultural characteristics" (Val Ripollés, 2017:1206; Ochoa Gautier, 2003). The "aesthetic cosmopolitanism" reflected in the music offers a context to communicate the stories of human anguish in response to the current productive system and its labour conditions (Regev, 2013). However, rather than a vehicle for action, as was possible in traditional tunes, the current genres serve mostly to

channel the anger and need to rebel that young people experience. Testimonies rewritten onto verses draw on feelings rather than evocate factual evidence of their precarity. The described feelings and portrayed emotions generate empathy among the community of local fans, who find in the musicians gestures and screams an expressive mimicry of what they are personally experiencing in their daily movements and activities.

Bodily actions and expressions have previously been defined as form of subversion in transitioning agricultural settings. Aihwa Ong made reference to spirit possession in factories as a mode of resistance to the proletarianization, dehumanisation and loss of autonomy of peasant Malay women adaptation to corporate agriculture (1987:7). Likewise, Luis Rocca in Peru, made reference to traditional music as protest against slavery and exploitation (1985). These forms of corporal expression provide a space of contestation articulated between the worker and the local environment, confronting or avoiding to the inhabited culture. As Coessens and Ostersjo argue, artists “have to adjust themselves ecologically: space, perception and material linked to the expertise can resist or, on the contrary, enforce certain habits” (2014:333). The specific effect of audience and musicians subversion on “the existing structure of power remains a mystery” (Schiller 1989:149). Yet their shared empathy creates attachments that while acknowledging a continued oppression in agricultural labour, provide a way of processing the anger they cope with. In the case of Almería, these factors promote a continuation of a history of workers’ empathy expressing social critique through music. Which are today fostering the persistence of the local rock and hip-hop scenes and their production.

Stepping on manure and musical resistance

On a hot Saturday afternoon I exchanged my usual fieldwork trips to the greenhouses in the agro-industrial town of El Ejido, for an atypical rock concert in the area. We drove for twenty minutes through narrow pathways of plastic covered greenhouse structures, until we arrived at a stately ‘cortijo’, a traditional rural villa. There, the typical sound of tractors and crickets were faded by the sound of creepy screams, drums and electric guitars. Juanjo and Andrés from Chotajo band came down from the stage to greet my film partner, Benjamin and I. It had been a long way, we had helped them film the music video calling people to come see them perform that night and they were expectant, with a lot of adrenaline. Finally they were at ‘Extiercol Extreme Fest IV’, a small Grindcore music festival that gave them the opportunity of seeing friends from across the region, who find in hard-core rock a way of expressing themselves. As people started appearing from the greenhouse pathways, somehow they didn’t fit into the imaginary of the rural farmer. They could have been the audience of a punk gig in one of Manchester’s underground clubs, wearing black t-shirts from rock bands, tattoos, colourful wigs and piercings. Finally, Juanjo and Andrés got up the stage. At first, the audience had trouble moving, but soon they got active and the first attempts of making a mosh pit started taking place. With a guttural voice Andrés started:



FIGURE 1: *Chotajo and audience at Extiercol Extreme Fest* (Photo by Kaos Creative Studio, 2018)

We are searching for freedom
 Ignorant that she is searching for us
 She feels alone and we don't see her
 Society covers her with a rotten black cloak
 In occasions, she hides from us
 For being proud and foolish
 For being bitter and foolish

I live in a loop where I don't care about anything
 And nothing matters
 In which I'm not myself
 In which I'm nothing

If you want to offer me, come forwards, don't be afraid
 If what you want to offend me, you can't surprise me

Live, because less than nothing I cannot be
 Human, because less of an animal I cannot be

Read my lips, do not listen to my words
 Because they will fly away, and the essence will be left in my hands
 Look at my closed eyes; I will do it with mine wide open
 You smell it, the truth, act, attack, work

Take a deep breath with your closed nose and you will know
 It's your fucking demons, who won't leave you alone

Ignorant that she is searching for us
 She feels alone and we don't see her
 Human, because less of an animal I cannot be
 Society is in your mind
 Human, because less than nothing I cannot be
 Society is not present

With a hangover, attack, shoot

‘Menos Animal’ (Less of an Animal) by Chotajo, translation from Spanish by the author:

<https://vimeo.com/271826138>



FIGURE 2: *Andrés singing on stage* (Photo by Kaos Creative Studio, 2018)

Bringing his hand up to the front and drawing the sound up from the back of his throat, Andrés sang the verse ‘Society is in your mind’ shaking his head with his sunglasses on. They discussed the interiorization of societal norms. They also hinted to an absent freedom, hidden under a ‘rotten black cloak’, as well as, an absent society, when singing, ‘Society is not present’. They also point to the two characteristics that they all share, passivity and the feeling of being trapped. Here they referred to their dependence on the industry and the restriction of movement as a socio-political and existential condition. In verses like, ‘I live in a loop where I don’t care about anything’ or ‘In which I’m not myself, in which I’m nothing’, they hint to their means of evasion, but also their existential worries and subtle depression. They also talk about socio-political pressures, the need to act, but also the hangover when you can’t either attack or shoot. They feel trapped, not only by society and the industry, but also internally, by the ‘fucking demons, who won’t leave you alone’. A collective paranoia, that creates social suspicion, illustrated in the verse, ‘If what you want to offend me, you can’t surprise me’. At last, they sang about the ‘rotten society’ that surrounds their everyday life, sharing what one feels when they’ve been stripped from their freedom and can’t any longer recognize who they are. Singing to less than 70 people, Chotajo, like the other bands, were there to share their fears. They didn’t have any plan to actually change their situation, as the interviews I had carried out during fieldwork made clear. Everyone I talked with shared dreams of change, but the region’s reality made pressure tangible, due to the existing system of social dependence and domination imposed by the agricultural price system and lack of alternative employment (Martínez Alier, 1971). The majority’s view was of ideological unconformity towards the institutions in control of the industry, what Martínez Veiga refers to as ‘institutional density’ (2001). Yet the instability of their labour conditions and their lack of leverage to confront the magnitude of the commodity change made their inaction a constant. Instead, the musicians concentrated on collective emotions, showing their willingness to find others who feel the pressure and frustration, and who share

their fear of never achieving their future dreams. They were creating an economy of care through the roughest music possible, providing to the group a sense of love and comfort.



FIGURE 3: *Chotajo performing* (Photo by Kaos Creative Studio, 2018)

The song came to a close with the audience excited, screaming, and running into each other, full of energy, in the improvised mosh pit. The audience empathized with the song, which placed humans as 'less than nothing'. They also showed pride of the animal side of being human, 'because less of an animal I cannot be', despite feeling ashamed of how societal norms are reproduced in our minds. As Podolinsky described, the industry is interested on the human "ability to transform 1/5 of total energy added by nutrition into muscular labour" (1983:176). The workers' condition as animals is what has allowed them to have a position in the productive environment. Strength, muscle, force, endurance, vigour and intensity are the non-spoken requirements to enter the industry. Whether harvesting, carrying vegetable boxes, pilling up pallets, digging holes or patching plastic, the characteristics that we share with animals are the ones that have allowed these workers to undertake their job. Yet, the agricultural industry and the social structure that surrounds it, doesn't just seek workers for the energy surplus derived from physical labour. The social pressure from family and friends to find economic stability leads workers to the accept precarious temporary part time contracts, while the social construction of progress and ambition gets imprinted like a backdrop in their minds, dissipating their aspirations to find better jobs.

The festival was a metaphor of the human/animal labour relations the industry's system of social dependence and domination. It had had started four years before. For the first two editions it was hosted in an empty plot of land belonging to one of the organizers. They would bring a truck full of manure and unload it on the plot, giving the name to the festival, 'Extiercol', meaning 'manure' in Spanish. The audience would stand on the manure pile and do muck mosh pits throughout the concerts. Given that most of the festival musicians and participants are tightly linked to agriculture, this represented a re-appropriation of the land through the rock culture that unites them. Stepping on manure hinted to their similarity with the sheep and goats that produce and spread manure in the greenhouses after every harvest. It also alluded to their ancestors, who worked the land carefully with their own hands and feet rather than with industrial machinery and rushed hard labour as they do now. With those steps, they were symbolically stepping over the industrial production system in which they take a range of precarious positions. Even today, without the pile of manure the same spirit remains.



FIGURE 4: *Juergas Festival 2018* (Official Juergas Photo, 2018)

Some months after, the summer festival season started, and the members of Chotajo invited us to go to the Juergas Rock Fest. It was a local festival taking place since 2013 in Adra, the neighbouring coastal town. Until then, I thought the local rock was a marginal phenomenon, sustained by the small group of people I had met in small festivals, like Extiercol, and at the rock gigs on small bars across Western Almería. Yet, the day ‘Juergas’ festival started, I realised my perception could not have been more mistaken. There were six thousand attendants with tickets for the main stage; the rest was open to the public. As the festival reshaped the urban space, you could see iconic scenes like grandmothers walking down the promenade at nine in the morning, meeting a group of rockers coming out of the *rave* and entertaining a philosophical conversation with them. However, the most surprising thing was not to see the encounter of different urban groups, but to see the dimension of the rock scene composed mostly by agricultural workers whose interest in rock music is overshadowed by the productive environment the rest of the year. The large majority of people at the festival were locals, yet the music we were hearing seemed completely foreign to the regional reality. Then I saw a video that made everything click. It was a homemade video posted in Youtube by one of El Ejido’s farmers. The video, shot with one hand while the video makers is driving, shows the amount of plastic waste on one of the paths of the local greenhouses. The beginning shows a deserted landscape with plastic leftovers, accompanied by the sound of a death metal song playing in the car. Then the person filming starts talking, denouncing the shameful situation of waste management and industrial loitering. Then he pauses with the metal song still playing and makes a reference to the music, breaking the fourth wall with the audience, asking, “What do you say about the music, it fits perfectly right?”. Then he says, “Gentleman, this is Spain!” alluding to ‘rotten’ society denounced by Chotajo and hidden by mainstream media and institutions. What takes place in that region is the closest we have to a Martian scenario. It is harsh, aggressive, exploitative, dark, and filled by metallic rhythms rather than natural ones. Even the new version of *Blade Runner* (Denis Villeneuve, 2017) opens with an apocalyptic song and an aerial shot of the greenhouses of El Ejido. However, what takes place there is not fiction, something that becomes evident with the music generated within the local rock scene. In this sense, the landscape in El Ejido, combined with the rock harmony played by its inhabitants becomes a ‘sonotopoi’, a space made of sound and a sound composing space, a type of kinaesthetic synergy that establish a singular relationship between sound and space. Out of the understanding of such sonotopic compositions workers’ build everyday forms empathy and affective bonds (García López, 2005:19).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ti8vZcEy_8c&feature=youtu.be

Campo de El Ejido, filled with trash near Santa M^a del Águila (Germán Moreno, 2.39 min)

The collaborative making of a 'rural-punk' music video

The idea of making a music video with Chotajo came out of the musicians' need to give visibility to their band. It was a tool to promote the band, inasmuch as it was a platform for them to have a say about the industrial activities in the region and their everyday forms of resistance. The band aimed to challenge the post-industrial messages agricultural corporations sell to consumers, visually replacing the genuine pictures of workers' life worlds with images of green pastures and smiling actors performing as farmers. Andrés wanted to shoot on the road going up to the Gador Sierra, a forest track serving as a firewall. Everybody in the nearby towns would go up there to get space and fresh air, looking at the huge mass of plastic greenhouses between the clearings of the forest, extending from the foot of the mountain to the sea. There, one could feel and see the dimension of it all, and the urgent need to speak up about it. The music Andrés was writing was a product of the 'plastic ocean' resting under us, and for him it was important to show it in its most extensive image. Similarly, Juanjo wanted to film in the '*cantera*' the stone quarry that was severing the mountain at the bottom of the Sierra. He was certain Arrioca S.L.'s production, operating the quarry to sell rockfill for the riprap layers at the base of local greenhouses, was not legal. The limits on greenhouse expansion had been established years ago, and he knew they were trespassing the limit and building on the natural park. For Juanjo, this was one of the most tangible examples of the laws that rule Western Almería, whereby the industry turns a blind eye to the destruction it produces, as institutions protect companies rather than the natural environment or existing regulations. This communication paradigm in corporate agriculture has been referred to as 'supermarket pastoralism' (Pollan, 2006), whereby industrial organizations build scales of participation with 'gradations of control', filtering the visions and claims of working communities (Bauwens 2014). The quarry stood as a reflection of the institutional ability to conceal both the sound of the machines cutting down the mountain and the citizens denounces against it, deploying what Clara Garí defines as "the acoustics of control", blocking the undesired sounds of the industrial environment by emitting the noise of desired green washed campaigns (2005:4). While the song lyrics did not address this topic, the illustrative intention of the collaborative music video was to make clear it was "not isolated from the relations of power that make up the greater social context" (Worcester 2012:92).

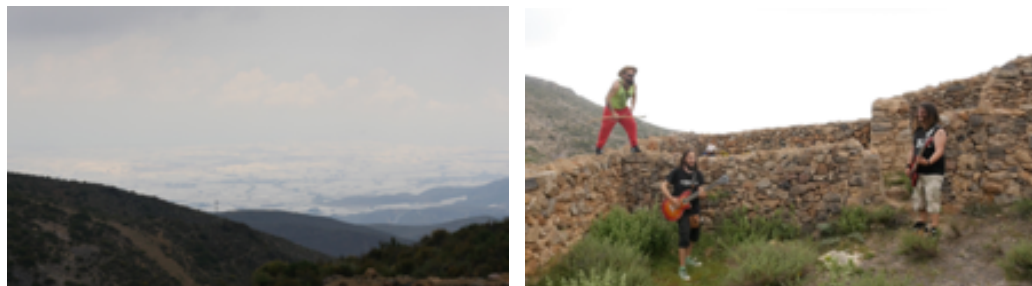


FIGURE 5: *Location of the first scene, Gador Sierra* (Shots from the music video, 2018)

In this process, Benjamin and I had the challenging role of acting as translators of their ideas, using our technical abilities to diffuse the message and give room to the empathy they sought. Relinquishing control is always a challenge in collaborative filmmaking, but as Sarah Elder concludes in her meaning-making study of montage with Yup'ic Eskimo communities, when we manage to give up control, "there is something greater to be gained" (1995:101). In this case it involved giving up our aesthetic vision as individual filmmakers to illustrate that which the musicians shared with their audience. We used an epistemological framework "that is collectivised/socialised and developed through the research process itself" as proposed by Shireen Walton on her research as curator of Iranian photobloggers, (2016). This involved piecing together the song lyrics and filmed locations with the 'sonic images': the corporality, sensoriality and empathy the musicians wanted to transmit. The result was inherently intersubjective as we were not addressing an objective truth or feeling. It became, as Andrew Irving suggests, "a process of poesis rather than mimesis as persons are not reproducing the past but actively re-interpreting it" (2007:205).

We shot the first scene on the ruins of an old house, representative of the effects of the crises on people's lives, with the white web of greenhouses on the background. As members of the 'Youth Without Future' Spanish generation, hit by the 2008 and 2012 economic crises, the musicians shared in that shot a combination of passivity and resignation to the regional unstable agricultural labour market, as a means of immediate survival (Val Ripollés, 2016). Juanjo and José mimicked their collective frustration, energetically playing their guitars inside the remains of the house with no sound coming out, as the instruments remained unplugged. 'El Pollo', on the farthest corner by himself, showed passivity by hitting the drumsticks on the bushes and flowers around him, mocking the viewer as his pretence play. Andrés, jumping around the remaining walls of the house, was the king of the scene. With the musicians and the horizon below his elbow, he wanted to show he could really crush everyone below with his words. As they expressed, their apathy has gradually built into indignation, forcing them to a huge "self-constructive effort" through a continued deployment of creativity, shared knowledge and collective re-invention (Ibid; Cruces, 2012:157). They have transformed into 'musical entrepreneurs' in Dayan's sense of the term, exposing as fake "what has been constructed as real by the established media" (2013:143). They showed a will to confront shared feelings of loss of sovereignty, weak democracy, market domination, and increase in social inequalities and political subordination from financial powers and large media corporations. All of which was articulated in the March 15th 2011 *Indignados* movement 'metanarrative of outrage' (Sanz and Mateos, 2011: 529). Their claims stand unaltered, contesting the continued logic of domination and oppression within the local agricultural industry. In this context, the music video served to illustrate and contextualise their lyrics, promoting their performance at 'Extiercol Fest', but also capturing "the spatial-temporal dimension of the musical process (rather than the musical product itself)" involving the musicians, their instruments and their creative intention (D'Amico 2015:2).

We ended up not shooting at the *cantera*, but then Andrés proposed to do a final take on the back of Juanjo's van. The van represented all those trips, festivals, nights under the stars; they lived through the years. It was what made them connected to other villages and their friends. It was what reminded them that anytime they could get on the road and run away, even if just for the weekend. We did two takes, but then it started raining and we decided to go back to the studio. At the studio, Andrés took off his shirt, fitted a farmer's hat, and got a stick with a rope tied to one end of the stick, traditionally used in the region to guide the sheep. He started shaking the rope as the shepherd guiding the herd of musicians. 'El Pollo' wore a white safety hat like the one used at the packaging warehouses, customized with tags and signatures, and two huge goat horns attached to each side. With full custom on, they started playing, revealing with the complex set of motor behaviours and refurbished agricultural objects, the sociocultural environment in which the social relations represented occur (D'Amico 2015:2). 'El Pollo' also put on a bandana that read, 'Juan Enciso your mayor', covering his mouth. It was a promotional bandana from the convicted ex-mayor of El Ejido, for embezzling 84 million Euros during his rule from 1991 to 2011. He wore it so nobody forgets about the corrupt people inhabiting the town, who are still protected by the regional administration. The aesthetics of the collaborative film, as in Gruber's community video ethnography, revealed critical views on political leaders and workers' agency, as they become the actors putting into question political power (2016). It was a collective and organic experience, where each of them would add something different each time. Andrés would dedicate words to the audience, Juanjo would perform a guitar solo, and 'El Pollo' would repeat one of the verses Andrés was singing, in an even darker tone. They would look at each other, find their moment and have their instant of rebellion within the song.

The musicians decided the editing of the music video would rely on a non-linear sequence of the various locations chosen, jumping back and forth, and creating a sense of simultaneously being in all places at once. They wanted the audience to feel addressed, communicating the message that their creative inputs at the studio were constantly in dialogue with the views from above and below the productive environment that they shared with them. As Bell and Kennedy suggest, they were crafting through images and sound a sense of being there, of being immersed in a shared environment (2007). We created transitions by intercutting frames of the video to come, on the last bit of each clip. This way, we would play with the music to create a flash between environments that accentuated the beats of the song. The resulting construction of place from different viewpoints, from Andrés' wide-opened mouth to his body above the field of greenhouses, showed the process of 'multilocality' in which the musicians found the local youth embedded (Rodman, 2003). It illustrated the rough feeling of life in El Ejido, where reality is not what it seems and moments of truth only appear in a flash. They were shaping place through

the dynamic interaction of body and landscape (Casey, 1993). This approach to audiovisual research brings the possibility to “empathetically imagine ourselves into the places occupied, the sensations felt by others...” (Pink, 2008:4). The feelings and emotions are not necessarily the same, but the illustration of emplacement and corporal movements give us a path for discernment.

When we first showed the editing to the musicians, for a second, we saw their frustrations come apart, as they envisioned themselves as true musicians living off their music and communicating an emotional path to help others on their daily struggle. The result was for musicians and filmmakers an exercise of collective thinking and being, a type of “knowing beyond the self” (Horst, 2016:7). Seeing the result, the musicians couldn't believe the transformation that had occurred between the dump reality of their rehearsing space and the dynamic and powerful atmosphere created on the video. For them, the video was an act of resistance, a window of hope guiding them and others through a creative and philosophical route that could free them from their physical entrapment to the agricultural industry. For anthropologists, filmmakers and ethnomusicologists, producing a video with our informants gives us an incredible opportunity to understand social dynamics from within. But, most importantly, it gives us the task of recuing these forms of expressions from being forgotten, by including them in the public discourse of the region, and reclaiming their space, as a relevant manifestation of the cultural subversion that emerges within the cracks of the industry.

The music video reached some of the people we saw among the crowd in Extiercol Fest, and it hit four hundred views in the first two months after being published on Vimeo. During this time, the group stopped playing. They just could not organise themselves to continue rehearsing. They kept saying it was just a phase, but so far, they have not gotten back together. Heinich (2012) observes three factors of influence when describing ‘visibility’: the widespread technical capability to produce images, the asymmetry, or lack of reciprocity among ways of visualization, and the social category or hierarchy dividing people that are visible or famous, and those that are not. Through the process of making the music video we had managed to overcome the challenge of visibility through our technical capability to produce images. The problem laid on the lack of reciprocity. They belonged to a generation that began sharing their music in mixed tapes, using their rooms to produce, remix and cut and paste their music (Yúdice, 2007:27). As creators of ‘2.0 music’, they used the internet as an exchange platform for their music, using channels like YouTube and Soundcloud as a sharing space with their community (Kusek, 2007). However, their inability to obtain reciprocity in the ways of visualization provoked an inter-relational inequality that led them to stop believing in their capacity to make their music seen. Trying to challenge lack of visibility through the making of the music video, the group ended up being trapped by the social hierarchies that legitimized the scales of vision. They kept consuming all their favourite artists’ music. Juanjo even joined Simulacro D.C., a similar regional rock band that he considered would showcase his production better. They even remained meeting as friends, but Chotajo as a band, was not able to overcome its own invisibility, even with the music video as a visual proof of their reality. The hierarchies defining them as non-visible and non-famous, ultimately impaired the continuity of the band (Heinich, 2012).

Conclusion

Despite the ephemeral life of Chotajo, the music video continues to be watched online. It remains a visual element that confirms the existence of the local musical subversion to the outer world. The set of images and unequalised sounds continue to put into question the agricultural industry's picture of a magical jungle where vegetables and people grow happily (Mitchell 1992:223). In this process, the musicians had become writers of an alternative popular narrative of the industrial reality. The collaborative design, as in Joana Roque de Pinho's photo collaboration exploring the idea of change with twenty-seven farmers in Guinea Bissau's Cantanhez National Park, expanded the view on local narratives of transformation (2016). This collaborative research expanding local narratives, also draws attention to the worsening of the living and working conditions of the young autochthonous population of Western Almería. The “downward filtering” of precarity, and the creative modes of resistance producing kinaesthetic empathy addressed through this paper, are novel to the extensive anthropological literature on the region, generally framed through the topics of migration, labour exploitation, the living conditions of racialized subjects and racism, marginalization, and ethnic violence (Checa, 2001:13; SOS Racismo, 2001:11; Calvo Buenzas, 2000:49; Rio Ruíz, 2002:84; Martínez Veiga, 1999a, 1999b;

Rodríguez García, 2002; García Castaño et al., 1998; Castaño Madroñal, 2002). The combination of improvisation and creativity in methods and outcomes, has given the possibility for new narratives to emerge, making of the young musicians, actors of change. This does not mean that they were actually changing things, but that they were engaging themselves and others with the possibility of change. Change in the direction of literature, but most importantly, change in terms of collective empathy. By embracing the idea of subversion they were planting a seed for it.

The music video served to do a 'monstration', in Dayan's meaning of the term. The language of monstration encompasses "(1) asserting or denying the existence of given interactions; (2) imposing judgment on their protagonists; and (3) displaying respect or disrespect toward them" (Dayan, 2013:148). Through the music video, the musicians were defining alternative forms of presenting reality, asserting their existence and the spirit of social critique present in the regional musical compositions across time. By showing the corporality of their music and illustrating their lyrics we were producing new judgements about the labour force, generating a sense of empathy between audiences and music producers. We were defining new forms of representation for the musicians and the surrounding reality, displaying respect for those coping with the industry. In communities that do not normally have visibility, this form of 'monstration' is a way of asserting workers' agency so that their message can co-exist side by side with the messages of institutional media, rather than being summarily dismissed. The music video leaves a trace of a collaborative endeavour to show reality on the terms of the younger generation inhabiting the region. The realisation here, is not about a given music genre fostering rebellion, but about the existence of alternative narratives to official discourses that foster unconformity and get revealed within the local youth scene.

The region makes global news monthly, denouncing the situation of semi-slavery feeding the European supermarkets, but news channels rarely include the views of locals, who live that reality everyday. The images that emerge from the industry, on the contrary, portray an idealistic picture of agro-tech revolution that leaves no room for alternative cultural expression. In this context, the simple existence of the music video serves as proof that the workers in El Ejido are not dormant followers. They are also active contestants. However, they are caught up in a different political economy than their parents and grandparents, whereby workers' problems cannot be voiced as openly as before. What once was a family agricultural region, today it is the largest global concentration of greenhouses and a technological hub of intensive agriculture, supplying vegetables across the world, all year round.

This paper has debated the importance of refocusing our industry ethnographies by showing local narratives of transformations, rather than informing about a trickle-down precarity. It has argued for the use of collaborative visualizing tools such as music videos to illustrate creative forms of expression, feelings and forms of empathy that emerge from marginalised narratives. In industrial environments, where oppression in the form of precarious work conditions, racism, high investment risk, and market pressure coexist, we have the responsibility to search for such subverted accounts. By doing this, we are placing workers' agency at the centre of the industrial debate engaging with the unsustainable pillars that uphold the productive structure. In this process, we are reminded that a rock music player, singing about the evils of the capitalist system and its effects on the intensive agricultural industry, can also be the person producing our supermarket tomatoes. Perhaps this way, we make consumers think differently about what they consume, and institutions take action about the labour illegalities embedded in the production process.

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Song: Títeres, Artist: Sandra, Tercio and JeroconJota, Released: 2017, Genre: Hip-hop
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Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ti8vZcEy_8c&feature=youtu.be

SIMULACRO D. G.

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CREATING PANTHEON-NATURE, COLOURS AND BELIEFS: A VISUAL NARRATIVE OF KALIYATTAM IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT

The core idea of this essay is to elucidate the process through which people create and worship local gods and goddesses in Kerala, India. By using a series of photographs, this essay portrays the life of the performers and the process of becoming gods in the traditional shrines of a vernacular religious system in Hinduism. The practitioners make use of the nature they live in creating the highly decorated deities. The materials in the costume reflects the natural sources in their own surroundings and intricate face drawings which symbolizes their world view. Most significantly, the beliefs system in the deities reflects the society itself.

KEYWORDS

South India, Hinduism, rituals, performance, sacred grove, theyyam, kaliyattam, caste system.

BIO

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Introduction

Religious festivals and rituals are mostly flavoured with appealing and intense colours and dynamic actions in addition to the sacred beliefs associated with the deities deified in them. The ritual of *kaliyattam* in South Indian state of Kerala is a best example that can demonstrate how religious system exists in the minds of the people as beliefs. Such beliefs are reflected in the *kaliyattam* through a series of rituals. Closely associated with the nature and the social system of the region the pantheon in the festival of *kaliyattam* and the deities generally known as *theyyam* is unique even within the Hindu religion for its exotic and localized characteristics (Gough 1958; Ashley 1979; Freeman 1991; Nambiar 1995; Koga 2003; Tarabout 2005; Chandran 2006; Vadakkiniyil 2010). The specialized performers of the ritual take the guise (*kolam*) of gods and goddesses and performs before the devotees in the ceremony. The beliefs system and the performance of the ritual actually reflects the social system, especially the caste based intercommunity relations in India through the dramatic ritual performance. The ritual makes use of specific colours in costume as well as in sacred objects which when added up to the performance gives a cosmic mood and achievement of divine blessing to the devotees. Through a series of photographs this work narrates how the communities creates the grand religious event that is a part and parcel of their life. The photographs reflect the actions of the performing group and their sacred activities.

The festivals, rituals and practices associated with the religion always gives a kaleidoscopic view of religious and aesthetic compositions. The Hindu religious system apparently offers the most of it and the diversity of this religion across the nation, varying through all India, regional to local levels is a striking euphoria for observers. Looking at the state of Kerala, the northern part of the state particularly is a distinct cultural area, not only when compared to the whole nation but even when compared to central and southern parts of the same state. The erstwhile Malabar is unique and regarding the religious beliefs and ritual practices the North Malabar has further distinction.

Three major aspects of the religious system are the traditional shrines in sacred groves which are generally known as a *kaavu* (Gadgil and Vartak 1976; Gadgil and Chandran 1992; Freeman 1999), the festival of *kaliyattam* and the deities *theyyam*. The sacred places of worship have a number of variation and we can see their connection with the nature as the beginning point. Regarding the religion, the earliest form of the belief system was of animistic type and the sacred places were nothing elaborate than a part of the nature, a tree bottom, where crude stones and occasionally sacred weapons of the deities like spear or trident are kept. This is the most basic sacred space called as a *kaavu*. The power of the deities is believed to rest on those simple items. A small cube construct called as *thara* is the next level sacred place, again one made with minimal material. Small rooms of roughly eight feet in dimension with tiled roof are the most common shrine, known generally as *palliyara*. Depending on the community ownership and the chief deity under worship, the shrines are known by different names like *ara*, *kottam*, *madappura*, *muchilodu*, *kannangadu* etc.

Now, the *kaliyattam* is the festival, a ceremony of a series of rituals happening at the shrine. Depending on the cycle *kaliyattam* are known with an adjective, a *perumkaliyattam*, meaning a great *kaliyattam* is one that happens at a time interval of at least twelve or more. By '*kaliyattam*' it means the event happening once in four years and likewise *ara-kaliyattam* and *kaal-kaliyattam* denotes the time gap of two and one respectively. In the present days every annual festival is known by *kaliyattam*. Regarding the meaning, there are two views one that the word is derived from the pan Indian Hindu goddess *Kaali*, who forms the large share in the myths of the *theyyam* deities. *Kaliyattam* as *Kaali'sattam* or the dance of *Kaali*. The dance is a key element in this highly performative ritual. The second explanation is that *kali-aattam*, here *kali* means play in Malayalam and therefore, 'play-dance'. Both affirms the major aspect of dance associated with the deity (Tarabout 2005).

The third and most significant element in the system is the '*theyyam*'. Etymologically, *theyyam* is derived from the Malayalam word *daivam* which means god and for the believers *theyyam* is nothing other than god. The physical form of *theyyam* is known as '*kolam*' and this is a unique feature, each *theyyam* having specific features in their costumes and paraphernalia. The number of *theyyam* in North Malabar is large and there exists anywhere between four hundred to five hundred different *theyyam* roughly.

The belief system

The beliefs in *kaliyattam* are associated with local myths. The myths are reflections of the society and at times the stories are extended to legends. The most striking feature of the pantheon is those *theyyam*

which has stories behind them of real human beings who once lived in the area. This happens when an individual meet with an abnormal death, usually assassination by a group or even a self-sacrifice due to opposing social conditions. Individuals who lived a virtuous life often get elevated to the status of gods. This deification of human is a key feature of *theyyam* belief system. To mention a few popular ones, a Brahmin virgin when ended her life after humiliation and excommunication from her highly patriarchal community by a group of male egoistic religious scholars became *Muchilotu Bhagavathi* and *Thottinkara Bhagavathi* (Ashley and Holloman 1982) was a lower caste lady who was murdered by higher caste people for reading religious books to escape from a miserable life. Purely mythical characters belong to supernatural and superhuman beings, evil spirits, malevolent or benevolent deities who acts as the guardians of lineage households of *tharavadu* or of villages. Ancestor worship is another aspect of the belief system which are done at the sacred places in *tharavadu* houses (Gough 1958). There are also themes like gender, knowledge, and basic human emotions like jealousy, ego, and pride that lies underneath the myths. Kadangottu Maakkam and Kathivanoor Veeran are examples for *theyyam* with such themes. Caste conflicts is a major theme in the stories of *theyyam*. The story of *Pottentheyam* and *Pulimaranja Thondachan* explains the violence and injustices against the lower caste Pulaya people and their struggle. In the past there existed a number of princely states in North Malabar where the economic relations were of feudalistic in nature. It also has history of colonialism and has went through nationalist and communist movements (Gough 1968; Radhakrishnan 1983; Kurup 1988; Menon 1997). The associated socio-political and economic changes had its reflection in religious sphere too (Kurup 2003). Leading figures in political and social resistances often get superhuman identity and may deified into the *theyyam* pantheon.

The social organization and the ritual

The caste system is the main feature of the society in India and in religious sphere the caste identity plays crucial roles (Miller 1954; Damodaran 2008). The Vedic Hinduism asserts the Brahmins, here the Namboothiri caste as the heads of the ritual activities and the remaining people except few communities who assists the Namboothiri priests in ritual matters have a specific lower status and position in the worship. The case of *theyyam* is different. The difference is not only in the gods and the pantheon but also regarding various roles too. The priests in traditional *kaavu* belongs to the community which owns the shrine irrespective of the caste, whether it is Nair, Thiyya or former-untouchable castes like Pulayan. The priests, known as *anthithiriyar* have minimal role in the rituals unlike that in the temple where the Namboothiri priest acts as the intermediary between the devotees and the deity who have no direct contacts.

In a *kaavu* the significance is for the *theyyam* and not sanctorum which is just a place where the sacred weapons of the deity are kept and the divinity is believed to reside. No idols are there like that in temples. During the rituals specialized performers, the *kanaladi* takes the attire of the gods and becomes the gods through a series of rituals. The devotees see *theyyam* as the god itself and can approach their gods directly, touch, converse and get blessing directly. That is, in this religious system a man becomes the god and make contact with the worshippers. Thus, this ritual involves human as divine beings and as common worshipper. Since every individual possesses caste identities the *kaliyattam* is an event of expressing the caste identity too.

The performance of the ritual

A *kaliyattam* normally happens for two or three days and depending on the festivities, number of *theyyam* and associated ritual it may go beyond three up to seven. All the participating groups, the organizers, ritual specialists, performers and ritual assistants gather around the shrine on the first day or a day before the actual commencement of the ritual. The duties and roles of each of the groups are specific, caste bound and hereditary in nature. The roles are often connected to the traditional occupations followed by various castes in the area. The *theyyam* performer, who are the key role players as the ritual specialists comes from the subaltern castes like Vannan, Malayan, Velan, Pulayan, Koppalan etc. (Kurup 1986). According to the Vedic Hinduist social classification these communities lies at the lowest strata, both in terms of social status and ritual purity. As the *theyyam* and *kaliyattam* are

a local system of dominantly folk religious type (Blackburn 1985) originated in this particular area it often defies the systems and procedures of Hinduism in religious activities including ritual hierarchies.

The right to conduct *theyyam* in any shrine is based on the hereditary birth right called *janmavakasam* in which a family possesses a complete right over doing the ritual, which is immutable. An astrological problem is done to find the right man to perform the *theyyam* from the family days before the *kaliyattam*. After the ritual of selection of the performer, he has to live in the specially made temporary hut called *koochu*. The performer take penance so that he can achieve a continence. The number of days of the penance and seclusion varies according to deities to be performed. Normally, for any *theyyam* three days of penance is required. In the case of *Muchilottu Bhagavathi*, which is considered as highly virtuous a twelve-day preparation is required. He will be having special food and avoid any external contacts. No women are allowed to come to this place. The performer will be visited by his assistants who are mostly his family members or relatives. Occasionally the masters of the performer who taught and trained them the rituals and gives advice regarding the ritual. The novice also practices the sacred hymns during this time.

The *kaliyattam* consists of various stages in which different rituals are conducted. Initial rituals at the shrine are done by the oracle or the priest. The *theyyam* performer starts their rites after taking permission from the divine presence in the shrine and also from his father and uncles who are usually his masters. The first stage in the *kaliyattam* is the *thottam* or alternately known as *vellattam* in which the main performer in basic costume recites the sacred verses (also known as *thottam*) in appraising the deity he is going to be performed. This also includes an elaborate narration of the stories behind the *theyyam* in a dramatic way with assisting singers and musicians. This stage is characterized by an entertainment element of the religious activities. After *vallattam* that last for one to four hours depending upon the length of the story of particular *theyyam*, the performer retreats to the *aniyara* to finish his makeup. The performer after adorning with elaborate paraphernalia and specific facial and body paintings comes before the shrine to perform the final rites by demonstrating the power of the *theyyam* through a dance. After the dance and various short propitiation rituals the *theyyam* starts to bless the devotees.

Unlike any other worship system in Hinduism (or even in other religions too) which has an intermediary priest of higher caste Brahmins between the devotee and the deity inside the sanctorum, here the devotees have direct contact with the gods and goddesses they worship. The deities are not sitting inside a secluded sanctorum but rather it stands with the people without any boundaries in between. The *theyyam* holds the hands of the devotee and converse with them to console and solve the worries of the later. The whole happenings are not just a matter of concern to the religious believers exclusively with the exciting spectacular performance and the festivities of the celebration the ritual transcends the boundary of religion and has become a celebration of whole cultural area of North Malabar. The *theyyam* is now a synonym to the district Kannur where the highest concentration *kaavu* and *theyyam* are seen. The emerging tourism industry and market driven economy also taps the possibilities of the exotic beauty of theyyam and the festival and it takes the *theyyam* out of the ritual context to secular spaces, as pure art form which are at time produces conflicts between hardcore religious believers and non-believers.



FIGURES 1 AND 2: The nature is an akin part of this religious system and the traditional sacred places are close to nature. The basic form in this, called as a *thara* is constructed close to a large tree and the sacred weapons of the deity are kept aside. A *kaavu* and the *palliyara* (picture 2) remains in silent during most of the time and becomes a centre of ceremonies and festivities during *kaliyattam* time.



FIGURES 3: Peepal and banyan trees have special significance in a *kaavu* and in many a case sap bearing trees are believed to be more sacred than others (*paala* and *arali*). Apart from being the locus of worship by keeping sacred items at the base of the tree, the canopy of such trees acted as the conventional *aniyara* too. The basket of costumes *pelika* is kept here and hang the dresses onto the tree. The performing group gather and starts their preparatory works here. It is at this time the group prepares the garlands, waist dress and other single use costumes out of flower and coconut leaf. The group discusses about various aspects of the ritual and performances during this time.



FIGURES 4: A typical scene from the shrine premise; children gather around and watch the activities closely with high curiosity and enthusiasm. It is a very common sight in the villages children playing by imitating *theyyam* and *kaliyattam*. Night time is crucial, majority of the rituals happening in the midnight or early morning. The contrasting colours of darkness of the night and the redness of the coconut leaf torches, which are the traditional light source parallels with the two key colours of the ritual, black and red. These two colours are symbolic not only to the nature of the rituals but also to the characters of the deities, fearful, ferocious and powerful gods and goddesses, through the beliefs.



FIGURE 5: At the *aniyara*, the performer lie down on floor and assistants gives the facial drawing (Ashley 1979). Traditionally all the colours were made using naturally available materials like coloured mineral stones (like for the red and orange colours *chayilyam* and *manayola* are used), plant parts like turmeric etc. The reduced availability and difficulties in procurement and preparation of pigments drives performers in choosing artificial colours for facial drawing and body painting. Instead of wood and plant fibres these days people use plastic sheets and threads for making ornaments. Devotees and enthusiasts even criticize this trend of moving away from tradition which arguably diminishes the association of the ritual with nature, the purity and sacredness of the divine beings.

Sharp and narrow lines are drawn with thin stick from coconut leaf and pots are made out of coconut shells. The shape and design distinguish one *theyyam* from another (also refer Figures 9, 19 and 20); the black drawing around eyes are representative of the nature of the deity and also the dots of white, black and yellow. While drawing, the right hand of the artist is usually supported by a finger of left hand- a custom followed while dealing sacred thing. The performer takes a nap to relax during the long drawing process of *mukhathezjuthu*.



FIGURE 6: Apart from the tree bottom special *aniyara* are made at specific corners in the shrine premise. Such an *aniyara* is the living space for the performers for the entire *kaliyattam* time, where they keep their things, sleep and also the preparation of the *kolam* happens here. The performer lie-down on a mat and the assistant applies the makeup. This is what is seen through the eyes of a performer during the time of getting makeup. At least three generations are seen at the *aniyara*; veteran elderly, performing adults and young boys. A continuous process of teaching and learning is an active part of the 'life in the *aniyara*'. An individual belonging to *theyyam* performing caste often starts their life as a *kanaladi* in the tender years of eight or ten, starting with those *theyyam* which are physically and mentally less demanding. After learning the sacred verses, mantras, and ritual acts, by fifteen or sixteen a performer step into a full-fledged *kanaladi* life.



FIGURES 7 AND 8: Putting makeup is a lengthy and laborious task which may take up to two hours at time labouring three or four assistants doing it.



FIGURE 9: A performer waits for the second stage of the makeup. Eminent performers will have continuous events during the season. Lack of proper rest makes them tired and the hot summer sun adds to this.



FIGURE 10: An assistant giving final touch to the *thalappali* -the silver ornaments with twenty-one pendants representing twenty-one gurus in *theyyam*. A *vattamudi* is the characteristic head gear of a *Bhagavaththeyyam*.



FIGURE 11: The sacrificial ritual of *gurusi* is a rite of appeasement of *theyyam*. A sorcerer (*mantravadi* as mentioned by Tarabout 2000) does the puja with long spells of sacred verses. The large pot filled with red water made out of turmeric and lime in front of the sorcerer symbolises blood which is given to please the ferocious and blood thirsty *theyyam*.



FIGURE 12: A war goddess *Vadakkathi Bhagavathi* during the initial rituals. The man waking before the *theyyam* carries *kalasam* -a decorated pots with toddy as a beverage offering to the *theyyam*. This is a common rite for majority of the *theyyam* and is done by men of Thiyya caste whose traditional caste bound occupation is toddy tapping from coconut palm. The same economic activity is sacralised in the ritual too.



FIGURE 13: The *Uchittatheyyam* performing its dance. A favourite goddess of women in the area, this *theyyam* is worshipped as a caring mother and protector of women and children. After the dance the *theyyam* moves to a nearby pyre on which she lies and play with the fire to demonstrate a protector mother's power.



FIGURE 14: Fire torches are an essential component of the ritual and for performance. Oil torches are attached to the *kolam* during the event to demonstrate the power of the deity, more the number of torches higher is the power of the *theyyam*. Though special protection armours with plantain parts are attached to the performer's body, the event often ends with serious burns, which could even terminate a performer's engagement in rituals. There are a number of *theyyam* which walk over, jump, and lie down over heap of burning coal during the dance, all as a display of the power of the deity on whom devotees rely on for their psychological needs.



FIGURE 15: The ritual is supported by music and songs of sacred verses. The indigenous drums, known as *chanda* (Groesbeck 1999; Groesbeck 2003) is the most important musical instrument to the beats of which the dance and acts of the *theyyam* progress. Together with other small instruments like *cheenikkuzhal* and *ilathalam* (a wind instrument and brass cymbals respectively) ritual assistants produce the musical background which when combined with the rhythm of brass anklets of *theyyam* produces a special mood in the minds of the devotees. The same draws people beyond the devoted worshippers for the artistic, aesthetic, and entertaining elements of the ritual. The dance of *theyyam* like *Maakkam* or *Kathivanoor Veeran* are so dramatic and at times involves even performance of martial arts (Zarrilli 1979) in the latter one, who is believed as a warrior hero.



FIGURE 16: A *valiyamudi* (one with long headgear) *theyyam* named *PorkkaliBhagavathi*, circling the shrine. This *theyyam* is a village deity at a Nair *tharavadu* and is believed to be an incarnation of the *ThiruvarkattuBhagavathi*, who is the chief goddess of the Kolathusawroopam, an olden day princely state to which the village is a part of.



FIGURE 17: Demonstration of the myth and the power of the deity is performed during the *kaliyattam*. Here, *Vishnumoorthitheyyam*, one of the most important and common gods in the *theyyam* pantheon which has connection with Vedic Hindu god Lord Vishnu is enacting the assassination of an evil spirit. Such themes are common in *theyyam* belief system and the devotees connect such acts of the *theyyam* to the destruction of enemies in their own life and they are being worshipped for the same reason.



FIGURE 18: Weapons like swords, bells and fire torches are key elements of identity of each of the *theyyam*. A war god pictured here, has a long beard and the body is covered in red water, red colour flowers *chekkipoo* and puffed rice, all giving ferocious image. There are deities which spread contagious diseases like small pox and also there are ones who cures such epidemics in the pantheon. A miserable life people lived in the olden days when such epidemics were common beliefs in divine beings and worship of them were the only option they had. Such past is reflected in the *theyyam* like *Vasoorimaala* -an evil spirit that spread small pox and *Puthiyabhagavathi* -a benevolent goddess who cures and saves the people from the wrath of the former. The white puffed rice on the body of *theyyam* symbolizes the marks of small pox.



FIGURES 19 AND 20: The *Muchilottu Bhagavathi* and war goddess in its complete form. Each of the elements in the facial drawings and decorations symbolizes the nature of the deity, like an elongated silver teeth named *ekir* and the tapering end of the black eyes representing the high power of goddesses.



FIGURES 21: Some *theyyam* are funny and entertaining in their acts in addition to being powerful creatures. *Gulikantheyyam*, a spirit of the Hindu god Lord Shiva is one such. Seen always in playful mood, this *theyyam* does whatever acts possible at the particular space to entertain the audience. Often playing with children who gather around the *theyyam* at this particular instant he climbed to a ladder kept near the shrine.



FIGURE 22: Coconut leaf is an essential ingredient in *theyyam*, as seen here in the case of a *Gulikantheyyam* who is almost entirely adorned with coconut leaf.

The *theyyam* communicates not only with the devotees but also with the oracles who are believed as representatives of gods. The later acts as a mediator between the divinity inside the shrine and *theyyam* outside the shrine. In a practical way the oracle who belongs to the particular community that owns the shrine represents the shrine authorities while the *theyyam* performer is independent, with traditional hereditary caste duties. These two may come in conflict as happened in one shrine, which in a way questioned the power and identity of the ‘*theyyam*’ or in other way the identity of the lower caste ritual specialist.



FIGURE 23: After the main rituals and dance a *Rakthachamunditheyam* bless the devotees. Devotees give money to the *theyyam* and in return they receive *manjalkkuri* -which is a mixture of powdered rice and turmeric as sacred gift of *prasadam* and blessing from the *theyyam*. Turmeric, having medicinal value is an essential component and is associated with gift of the *theyyam* who is a curer.



FIGURE 24: A performance usually lasts for three to four hours and here an exhausted performer after the ritual dance is removing his paraphernalia. They take rest for the remaining night and continue their work there after at different shrine in the next day. A performer passes through different stages in his religious and social life. As *theyyam* a young performer receives considerable attention from the masses, as a divine being but after one ends his life as a main performer, he slowly gets pushed away from the ritual arena. A veteran performer mostly leads a life in exclusion. The ritual is highly physically demanding and accidents are common of which that caused by fire being prime. The life of victims of such accidents will be more pathetic.

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**ALTARS, STATUES, MURALS:
'RELIGIOUS' VISUALITIES OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SANTIAGO DE
CHILE**

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ABSTRACT

This photo-essay is the result of a three-year research project aimed at exploring the visual culture of eight, State funded, primary schools in Santiago de Chile. It presents classroom altars, statues and murals as recurrent visual events within school life, that seem to challenge both traditional pedagogical practices and youth's connections with modern visualities. Thus, questions regarding the relationship between religious visual symbols and education are problematized.

KEYWORDS

Visual culture of schools, religious visualities in schools, elementary schools, everyday aesthetics, Chile

BIO

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Visual culture of schools

For the past 15 years, the visual culture of schools has consolidated as a research area that brings together anthropologists, sociologists, artists and educators looking to problematize the roles and meanings of visual phenomena in education. According to Prosser (2007: 14), the visual culture of schools refers to a 'scheme handed down by previous generations of teachers and authorities as an unquestioned and unquestionable guide to all observable events' that take place on school grounds.

For example, the building façade presenting the school name and other institutional symbols, cabinets displaying sports and academic trophies, historic pictures showing past cohorts and other significant people, hallway bulletin boards with daily information, classroom wall images with instructional guidelines, holidays and birthdays celebration posters, among others, constitute the everyday scenario of many schools worldwide and yet, their pedagogical rationale and visual implications are elusive to identify and discuss. In this sense, different scholars speak today about a 'visible yet hidden curriculum' (Porterfield 2017).

Moreover, research about the visual culture of schools allows framing a paradox within present-day education: even though we live in an extremely visual world where students have already become producers more than mere consumers of visualities, it is not clear whether schools have the ability –or the interest– to take advantage of those new visualities in favor of more critical, democratic, and insightful pedagogical experiences. In other words, there seems to be a gap between the visual resources that students have at hand, and the capacities that teachers, administrators and the school as educational institution possess in order to make the most out of those same resources.

Visual culture of Chilean schools

In Chile, recent exploratory studies have approached the visual culture of schools from multi-layered perspectives such as feminism in visual arts education (Montenegro 2019), students' interventions in art-based projects (Schwember 2018), the implicit pedagogical proposals of school facades (Errázuriz and Marini 2016) and the everyday visual aesthetics of school environments (Errázuriz 2015). All in all, these studies help characterize the visual culture of Chilean schools as comprising both continuities and discontinuities between extremely traditional educational practices and contemporary challenges:

On the one hand, Chilean classroom spaces still embody 'the' place for instruction. In there, students' attention is typically guided towards 'the front' –a whiteboard, a smartboard, a television, a set of learning objectives and routines printed on color letters– In addition, student participation in crafting their own visual environment is minimal and, when it does take place, it usually follows pre-made templates. Moreover, figures of prominent people such as national heroes, artists or politicians are limited to male characters, commonly closer to European heritages than to Latin-American or aboriginal backgrounds.

On the other hand, Chilean schools seem to allow for some degree of student-managed, visual production in outdoor spaces such as playgrounds or sports fields. These may take the form of mosaics, murals, graffiti or photo-installations that portray relevant and complex themes such as the risks of global warming, the need to confront social inequalities and migratory crises, among others. As discussed by Schwember (2018), when students are given the power to modify their everyday environment, they recognize their neighborhood, their families' traditions and their diverse ethnic origins as key dimensions.

Inquiring religious visual culture of primary schools in Santiago de Chile

For the past three years, the author of this photo essay has been registering the visual culture of eight primary schools in Santiago de Chile in a record that shows what teachers, students and administrators see on a daily basis. Throughout the process, classroom altars, statues portraying saints, and murals exhibiting religious messages emerged as habitual visual events.

This was unexpected. Fundamentally, because all of these eight schools receive funding from the Chilean national government which draws a constitutional separation between state and all religious organizations, and their students are increasingly non-religious (according to local statistics only 10% of youth participate in religious organizations (INJUV 2018: 79)). Thus, questions regarding the relationship between religious visualities and education have arisen, fundamentally concerning:

1. What do classroom altars, statues and murals reveal about the visual culture of these eight schools?
2. Are these objects a demonstration of obsolete colonial-based pedagogical practices or are they an opportunity to find new connections with youth?
3. Are these schools capable of challenging and refreshing the meaning of 'religious' visualities today?

Rather than pretending to solve these questions, the following figures problematize them, revealing the need to continue investigating relationships between religious visualities and the visual culture of schools.



FIGURE 1: This figure shows an archetypical classroom altar. The crucifix, an open book, a triptych, and a candlestick together with some dry flowers and the hanging rosary, all account for the 'must have' objects that schools present to students during class time.

Yet, nothing in this picture speaks explicitly about Chile nor schooling. This could be a hospital, a parish or a museum showing minimalist religious symbols from the XIX or XX century.



FIGURE 2: Less of a traditional altar, the elements in this figure are far more common in schools everyday life. One can only wonder about the origin of the trophy with the national colors stripes, or the purpose of such a small calendar next to it, or if anyone in the class will be capable of deciphering the escape route chart below.

Along this line, the actual content of the melamine cabinet that supports all these elements, and the reason why the broom and trash are located to the right, remain a mystery.



FIGURE 3: Strategically, this altar takes advantage of classroom lockers, remaining visible to all students at all times. However, it is worth noting that the constant opening, closing and locking of the metal doors may easily put at risk the tryptic and statue's stability. This fact could help students take special care when using their lockers.



FIGURE 4: When the altar grows –or the classroom shrinks– it is also possible to find hybrid visualities such as these. The altar table, including its basic elements, seems to evolve into symbiotic relationships that incorporate the images of Mary on top, the trophies on the right shelf and the instruction-oriented whiteboards to the left.



FIGURE 5: The location of large figures in common spaces poses peculiar challenges to schools. Perhaps to allow for direct eye contact or for safety reasons, they are usually placed on top of pedestals and next to walls. When located in indoor spaces they are sometimes cornered, what generates a feeling of ‘surprise’ to anyone entering the room.



FIGURE 6: In the case of this figure, the whiteness of the statue's marble together with the floor and wall's materiality contribute to an uneasy sense of 'detention' or 'suspense'. Is this statue inviting to stand by and linger under its spell? Or is it a phantasmagoric resemblance of someone who used to be significant for this school community but was 'deposited' here?



FIGURE 7: Outdoor locations present other dilemmas, as statues may become invisible within a turmoil of visual stimuli.



FIGURE 8: Yet, this hand-painted plaster statue emerges as a distinct visual figure, interrupting an oversaturated window. Surprisingly, even though the statue and the flowerpot are located in a hallway that connects two classrooms with the main playground, no damage from crushes or soccer balls is visible.



FIGURE 9: On the edge of a gigantic playground, to the left of a metal kiosk and framed by large palm trees, this statue seems to indicate a usual meeting point. This is reinforced by the shade the entire group offers and the color lines on the floor alluding to children's games.



FIGURE 10: A solid-looking pedestal raises this statue well beyond students' height. However, the plastic roof and the right hand gesture seems to provide a feeling of 'welcoming' which is emphasized by the lower sign reading 'Let children come to me'.

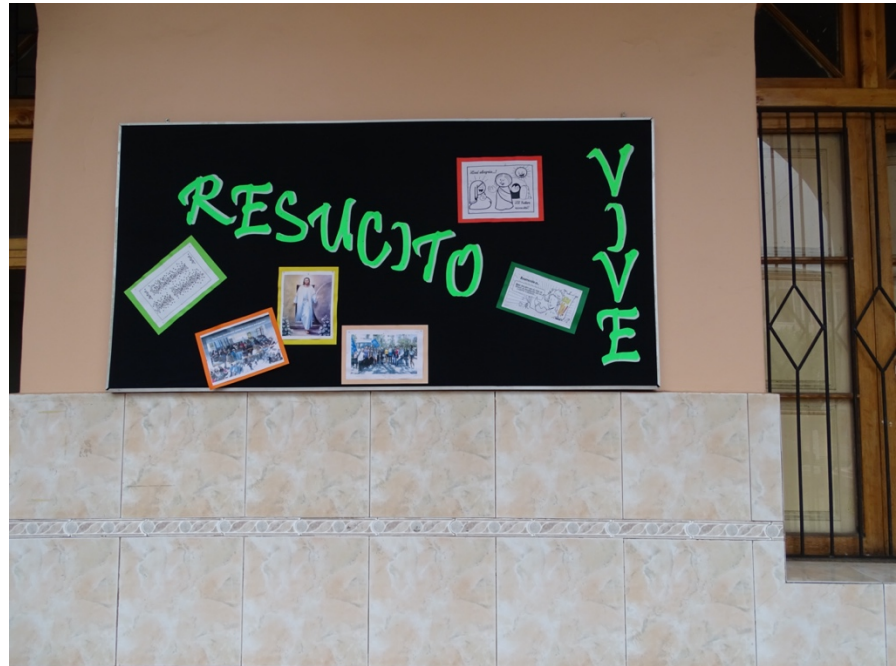


FIGURE 11: Besides from the strangeness caused by the text 'RESUCITO', literally 'He resurrect' written downwards, this hallway mural exemplifies the practice of adult-made images that try to capture students' attention. Certainly, two pictures in the lower end of this mural do portray students, but there is no evident sign of children's intervention in the production of the entire device.



FIGURE 12: These pre-modeled drawings echo that same practice. Rather than wondering what does Palm Sunday 'Domingo de Ramos' commemorates, the emphasis seems to fall on the different copies of the same image. It is not clear who got the chance to paint the central image, but it seems students only had the option to orientate their donkeys towards the left or towards the right. In addition, the reason why a donkey-less image appears to be floating on the right side of the board remains a mystery.



FIGURE 13: This mosaic has reduced religious symbolism to the least possible; just a tiny cross on the front of a small room. However, the presence of a young person holding the door to that place, surrounded by key representations of Chilean school life such as the soccer ball, the snowed mountain range and the national flag, among others, transform this image into a vivid example of syncretic relationships, which radiates student participation and everyday interactions.



The best day of my life
is today
seize the day,
thanks be to god
you are alive, breathe

FIGURE 14: A motivational statement, a first day of class welcome and a communitarian project, this mural has no pretension of becoming a religious sign whatsoever. Still, the continuity between ‘making the most out of the day’, ‘being grateful’ and ‘breathing’ speaks about a school that has made the effort to identify which are the key qualities that guide their educational project, merging transcendental references with everyday happenings.

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CAPE VERDE: SOCIETY, ISLAND IDENTITY AND WORLDVIEWS

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ABSTRACT

The archipelago of Cape Verde is unknown to many people. It is not their fault, especially when Cape Verde is located off the coast of West Africa and is not included in most commercial maps of the African continent. If we read a world map, our attention is seized by major countries, and the tiny nation pales into insignificance. We are missing out on the opportunity to learn about Cape Verde, which has the world's first creolised population.

KEYWORDS

Cape Verde; creole; island studies; Portuguese colonies; West Africa

BIO

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This photo-essay is the result of recent fieldwork in Cape Verde, which totalled five separate sessions and covered a majority of the nine inhabited islands.

According to official scripts, Cape Verde was discovered by Portuguese seafarers in the 15th century. Of the ten islands that make up the archipelago, nine would eventually have people living on them. Santiago was the first island to be settled, and São Vicente was the last. Given the Sahelian aridity and extremely unfavourable climate, food production was a perennial humanitarian and administrative challenge (Keese 2012; Bigman 1993; Patterson 1988; Carreira 1984). The most significant economic activity of Cape Verde was providing an entrepôt for transcontinental slave trade. The miscegenation between white Europeans and black Africans was at the basis of the formation of a creole population (Seibert 2014; Gibau 2005; Rodrigues 2003). A new creole language was also born out of these encounters. A unique biological, social and cultural experience took place in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

In the second half of the twentieth century, following forceful waves of African independence movements, Cape Verde likely declared severance from its former coloniser. By then, Cape Verde had already lived through many centuries of droughts and famines and witnessed the dispersal of an astoundingly high number of its *filhos de terra*, meaning sons and daughters of the land (Batalha and Carling 2008; Grassi and Évora 2007; Åkesson 2004). History explains why Cape Verdeans uphold a certain spirit of hard work and sacrifice. This is especially true in terms of agricultural labour. According to one perspective, the island nation of Cape Verde, which has the world's first creolised population and also the first African diaspora, "ought to be front and centre, at the cutting edge of contemporary scholarship of our globalised and diasporic world" (Gottlieb 2015: 2).

Cape Verde is made up of the *barlavento*/windward islands and the *sotavento*/leeward islands with some variations in skin colour and personal identification. *Sampadjudus* hail from the windward islands and *badius* from the leeward islands. "Cape Verdeans are chameleons," said a secondary school teacher in an interview. "They are like opportunists and change colour depending on the situation". He has *sampadjudu* (more European) parentage, but his ideas and values are *badiu* (more African). Even so, when there are football matches, for example between Guineans (from Guinea-Bissau) and Portuguese, *badius* will most certainly wear the Portuguese team's T-shirts and cheer for the Portuguese players. The teacher thought there is nothing contradictory in the allegiance. Elsewhere it has been observed that Cape Verdeans are people with a flexible culture and identity, who are situated between various worlds and between various civilizations (D. Santos 2017).

Under the given circumstances, the islanders have learned to be close to one another, to pool their resources together and maximise their advantages. This has had significant impact on relationships, family structures and community life (M. Santos, Torrão and Soares 2007; Silva 1996; Lesourd 1995). Basic words developed into a highly complex system of appellations and signals, and there are plenty of examples from fieldwork. For starters, *mãe* in Kabuverdianu (or Cape Verdean creole) means "mother" but may also refer to the "grandmother" who raised you up and cared for you in your childhood, depending on the context. Then, when a child calls *avó*, he or she may mean "grandmother", but it can also be a different relative who feeds him or her regularly. In one female informant's life – whom we shall call Lizzy – the "grandmother" is in reality a different wife of the grandfather, i.e., the stepmother of her mother (with all the negative connotations in the West and East), biologically unrelated but emotionally and physically the closest female family member to Lizzy. The woman combed Lizzy's hair, washed her, sang to her and told her stories, among other things. She was kind to a lot of children and *criou muitos netos*, meaning she raised many grandchildren from the local perspective. We should not be surprised by the fact that *avó* is sometimes great-grandmother; but considering the optimal relationship between the people involved, they prefer "grandmother" to "great-grandmother". *Tia*, which usually means aunt, causes even greater confusion for outsiders. If person A is much older than person B and cares for B as if B were his or her own child, A becomes B's "aunt". For *madrinha*, it is usually correct to translate to "godmother" based on the Catholic tradition. Despite this, a woman may be called "godmother" by many more children than her baptised godchildren in a community because she always kept her doors open so that others could come in for food, tea, coffee and snacks whenever they liked.

Rearing is far more important than blood in Cape Verde, where many biological fathers are distant from their offspring. Adjectives like "half" or "quarter" are rarely used to describe children from the same mother/raised in the same house. To take a real example, a man married a woman who already had a daughter from a previous relationship, out of wedlock. Later, another girl was born of the

marriage. Over two decades, however, the couple raised and educated the two girls like sisters, who call the man their “father”. As the man raised the first girl like his own, he is the socially and culturally legitimate father. No one in the community would question this father-daughter relationship. The older girl grew up into a young woman, married and had a baby son. This baby became the rightful “grandson” of the man who had raised his mother. The differences are elucidated here for analytical purposes, but in Cape Verde adoption and rearing are part of the normal course of events. In the old days, when Cape Verdeans had a lot of children, elder sisters acted as “mothers” of younger sisters. In one case, the eldest sister in a family grew up and started her own family, had a job and could not care for her children adequately. She invited her youngest sister, who was single, to join her in caring for the children. In this case, the aunt became a second “mother”, and there were two mothers who raised them up.

The above bears witness to the “anthropology of the everyday”. The confusing use of names in Kabuverdianu testifies to the constant structuring and restructuring of relationships in Cape Verde. Anthropologists consider relationships to be active, continuous processes in “a culture of relatedness”:

[...] biology does not everywhere have the kind of foundational function it has in the West, but that the boundaries between the biological and the social which [...] have been so crucial in the study of kinship are in many cases distinctly blurred, if they are visible at all.

[...] authors [...] use the term ‘relatedness’ in opposition to, or alongside, ‘kinship’ in order to signal an openness to indigenous idioms of being related rather than a reliance on pre-given definitions or previous versions. (Carsten 2000: pp. 3, 4)

Relatedness is processual. In Cape Verde, food is an important processual aspect of relatedness. This is not to say that food itself creates and maintains relationships and holds society together, but food helps to nurture and cultivate interpersonal relationships.

Cape Verde has preserved its creole language well. Not only do the islanders have their own oral traditions that teach the younger generation about the experiences of their ancestors and parents, but they also recycle old tales and create new ones with humour. Refer to the following Creole joke about a food episode:

Un mudjer sa ta preparaba pa poi katxupa na lumi pa janta. Nton e manda rapazinho kunpra sal. Mudjer dja poi katxupa riba ti ki dja sta pruntu, rapazinho ka txiga nel ku sal. Di tantu xatiadu k’e staba pamodi rapazinho k asa ta txigaba kul sal, e fla:

- Diabu, nho! Nen pa karu da nel.

Rapazinho sai de tras di porta ki inda ka saiba di kasa, fla-l:

- Mama, bu kre, N k bai go... Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!

[A woman was getting ready to cook Cachupa for dinner. She then told her son to buy salt. She attended to her stew and saw that it was ready to be served, but her son had not yet come back with the salt. She was wondering why he took so long to fetch the salt and got irritated. She said:

*- To the Hell with it. As if a car ran over him. * Even that would not take so long.*

Her son appeared from behind the door; he has not yet left home. Before he sped ahead, he told her mother:

*- Mom, if this is what you want, I will go at once... Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! *Imitating the painful cries of being run over by a car.]*

(Cabral 2016: 46-47, “*Katxupa sen sal*”, my translation)

The above joke somehow reminisces about a simpler lifestyle in Cape Verde, wherein it is very common for older women in a household to send children to do *mandádu* (meaning to do something that is ordered or asked for). Cachupa is a typical, local stew that traces its origin to old times when food was scarce. The inhabitants had to harness available resources (e.g., rain, soil, mountains and oceans) and follow a frugal but ingenious diet. Cachupa is for the present the national dish, and any mention of it “will quietly ‘flag’ the nation” (Cusack 2000: 214).

We may understand this as a form of national pride, i.e., Cape Verdeans’ collective triumph over natural forces, western colonialism and deterministic forecasts. The country achieved key successes and managed to rein in famine because public bodies extended direct support to the population in times of crisis. The roles played by the government, local and national institutions, quick and responsive political

actions, and effective channelling of financial and material resources proved to be far more effective than economic growth, expansion of the agricultural sector or acceleration of food production in combating famine (Drèze 1991). Studying Cape Verde has allowed us to comprehend the practical challenges in Africa and apply possible solutions.



FIGURE 1: Brava at dawn, 2019.



FIGURE 2: Santo Antão in the afternoon, 2018.



FIGURE 3: Mural, Santiago, 2019.



FIGURE 4: Agriculture, Santo Antão, 2018.



FIGURE 5: House, Santo Antão, 2018.



FIGURE 6: Girl, Santiago, 2019.



FIGURE 7: Boy, São Vicente, 2018.



FIGURE 8: Grandmother, Santiago, 2018.



FIGURE 9: Kitchen, Santiago, 2018.



FIGURE 10: Kitchen, Brava, 2019.



Figure 11: Restaurant, Santiago, 2019.



FIGURE 12: Restaurant, Santo Antão, 2018.



FIGURE 13: Cow, Santiago, 2018.



FIGURE 14: Mural, São Vicente, 2018.



FIGURE 15: Boredom, Santiago, 2019.



FIGURE 16: Play, São Vicente, 2018.



FIGURE 17: Clothes, Santiago, 2019.



FIGURE 18: Spring cleaning, Brava, 2019.



FIGURE 19: Football match, Brava, 2019.



FIGURE 20: “*Apanha-bola*” is an expression to describe the children who go and fetch a football if it flies over the wall, Brava, 2019.

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CCCP: CAMÉRA CORPS CHORÉGRAPHIE PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

La première considération est qu'il s'agit d'une conversation à trois: deux humains et une machine. La caméra n'est pas un élément neutre de même qu'elle n'est pas totalement dominée par l'opérateur; la caméra a son identité, même cachée; autrement dit, elle possède un «inconscient» optique, selon Benjamin, voire, selon Vaccari, technologique. Le cadrage fournit le lieu de l'expression de cette triple relation, celle qui se noue entre les humains et celle qui se noue entre ces derniers et l'appareil optique. La caméra impose le format du cadrage, les regards des humains définissent la profondeur du champ. Cette rencontre entre regards, corps et caméra a lieu à la fois dans un espace et dans un temps. Chaque sujet possède une partie du territoire, son espace stratégique; la «machine» relie ces deux lieux / territoires: celui de l'opérateur et celui du sujet. Commence un jeu de tactiques et de stratégies. Un jeu dans le temps est un jeu cinétique où le corps rencontre le miroir de la mémoire externe de la caméra. Parallèlement à la représentation du corps, le flux narratif lui aussi se développe dans le temps. Le corps se fait paroles et s'exprime lui-même dans le flux narratif dialogique. Le flux de la narration est un paysage composé de mots et de mimique, d'intonations et de gestes, un paysage où s'aventurer à travers la pratique de la dérive pour découvrir une voie suspendue, entre habitus et imaginaire, entre incorporation et vision, pour la découverte d'une histoire de vie/danse suspendue entre sujet et société. Cette communication s'appuiera sur les considérations théoriques décrites plus haut sur quelques exemples des implications pratiques des techniques de prise de vue.

KEYWORDS

camera, bodies, conversations, performance, visual anthropology

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Dire le corps : pratiques de l'entretien en danse, 25 26 juin 2019, Nice



FIGURE 1

Caméra Corps Chorégraphie Performance Ou comment raconter le corps dans une conversation avec la caméra ; je préfère au terme entretien celui de conversation.

Avant de vous parler de Caméra Corps Chorégraphie Performance, j'aimerais commencer par une digression et vous expliquer pourquoi je préfère au mot « entretien » le terme « conversation ». En réalité, ce préambule va nous mener au rapport entre mots et image, rapport fondamental dans le cadre d'une « conversation avec la caméra », et donc ces quelques mots serviront en fait d'introduction à mon propos.

Si je préfère utiliser le mot *conversation*, ce n'est pas par snobisme nominaliste, mais parce que ces deux termes expriment deux approches différentes de la relation entre les personnes en jeu ; cette différence réside dans l'asymétrie du pouvoir dans la relation qui s'établit entre les participants : pour faire bref, on pourrait dire que la forme 'entretien' vise purement à extraire tandis que la conversation est une forme d'échange dialogique. Pour mieux motiver cette prévalence dialogique dans la sémantique du terme conversation, je m'appuierai sur deux types d'arguments, l'un philologique/étymologique et l'autre littéraire.

Le premier donc se réfère à l'étymon du terme « conversation », dont la racine en latin *conversatio*, -*onis*, signifie « se trouver ensemble » de *cum-versare*, autrement dit « tourner ensemble dans un lieu » ; cette étymologie laisse affleurer la saveur péripatéticienne de la conversation, évoquant la mémoire des dialogues platoniciens, et l'élévation de leur propos.

En effet, il faut distinguer le simple parler de la conversation, "*Bisogna distinguere il parlar semplice dal conversare*" : c'est ce qu'affirme une encyclopédie italienne du dix-neuvième siècle, parue à Venise de 1838 à 1853, l'*Enciclopedia moderna e Dizionario italiano della conversazione*, dirigée par A. F. Falconetti. Et cette même Encyclopédie nous repropose un peu plus loin ce *conversare* dans la nébuleuse d'une sorte d'indétermination : "*quel che di indefinibile a cui s'è dato nome conversazione*" (1838-1853, vol VI, page 975) ce je ne sais quoi d'indéfinissable auquel a été donné le nom de conversation.

Indéfinissable, dialogue péripatéticien, la conversation échappe à toute définition nette et se fait

l'objet de représentations visuelles, comme dans les tableaux intitulés *Conversation Pieces, ou Tableaux de conversation, peinture de genre née aux Pays-Bas, qui s'est tout particulièrement développée en Angleterre aux 17^e et 18^e siècles*. Ces tableaux représentent des groupes de personnes en conversation et mettent en évidence le rapport entre corps et dialogue. C'est au moyen des images qu'ils représentent cette relation centrée sur la parole. Dans les *Conversation Pieces*, l'image du corps évoque la parole, la peint dans les contours des postures en la congelant et en l'extrayant du flux de la communication.

Faisons un saut de quelques siècles pour aborder la démarche opposée, à savoir la parole écrite en rapport avec l'image et avec la conversation, nous trouvons le roman d'Elio Vittorini intitulé justement *Conversazioni in Sicilia*.

Il s'agit d'une des œuvres les plus importantes de la littérature italienne du vingtième siècle. Sa première édition date de 1941, mais le roman été republié 12 ans plus tard, en 1953, selon la volonté de l'auteur, avec l'insertion d'un important corpus de photographies réalisé spécialement pour cette publication. Le texte du roman, qui a pour « forme mythique celle du voyage, et pour forme stylistique celle du dialogue », comme a eu l'occasion de l'affirmer Italo Calvino, s'enrichit d'une vision photographique : cette dernière toutefois ne constitue pas un simple contrepoint, elle forme un parcours parallèle de lecture dans lequel les corps qu'expriment ces dialogues constituent une forme d'évocation. « L'écriture et la photographie maintiennent un dialogue tellement ouvert et continu qu'augmente la puissance d'expression de la page ».

J'en ai fini avec mon préliminaire. Je voudrais maintenant passer à ma communication, et nous verrons que pour certains aspects cette dernière se trouve déjà présente dans les exemples que j'ai cités.

Entrons donc dans cette conversation avec la caméra et observons de l'intérieur comment elle se fait, sa pratique. Avant tout, il ne s'agit pas d'une conversation abstraite mais d'un dialogue fait de mots et de corps que la « caméra » mémorise, sédimente, unissant la parole à la voix, aux gestes, aux mains, aux yeux, aux jambes, aux pieds, aux pauses, aux actions.

Pour souligner l'importance de la dimension du corps, permettez-moi une brève incursion dans le territoire de la philosophie, où la corporéité de la conversation semble bien s'adapter aux dialogues platoniciens parce que

comme l'écrit Jacob Klein dans l'introduction à sa *Plato's Trilogy*, le caractère mimétique des dialogues impose aux lecteurs la tâche de relier étroitement ce qui dans le dialogue est dit, le logos, et ce qui en revanche dans le dialogue est fait, l'ergon : ce qui est dit est non seulement dit, mais aussi fait, tantôt par ceux qui parlent, tantôt par ceux qui écoutent, et les mots et les actions sont reliés de façon très étroite (Palumbo 2017 : 201).

L'espace dialogique présente donc une pluralité de dimensions, nous n'avons pas affaire seulement au flux verbal mais à un ensemble complexe d'actions ; c'est cette pluralité de dimensions que la caméra, ou pour mieux dire la présence de la caméra à l'intérieur de l'espace de la conversation tente de saisir et de mémoriser.

Toutefois, s'insérant activement dans la relation dialogique, la caméra structure le dialogue et l'oriente : elle crée une asymétrie. Mais, ce qui est encore plus significatif, la caméra crée à l'intérieur de la conversation une conversation autonome faite de mots et de gestes, de sons et de figures, mais aussi de représentations de gestes, de mots, de mouvements, prenant la forme d'une mémoire stable et partagée.

La présence de l'appareil agit au-delà des déterminations de chacun à l'intérieur de la scène sur base de ses logiques de représentation ; elle institue une géographie des relations modelée précisément sur la machine et sur les codes qui la modèlent. La question à se poser est : en quoi consiste cette absence de neutralité de l'appareil, voire, pour mieux dire, en quoi consiste l'autonomie de représentation de la caméra ; autrement dit, quels sont les codes qui la structurent et comment agissent-ils sur la scène et sur les corps ?

Dans l'appareil s'inscrit un code qui transcende la volonté de l'opérateur et du sujet, ce code agit indépendamment. Pour comprendre ce qu'est exactement ce code et comment il agit, je me référerai tout d'abord au débat sur la nature « idéologique » de la caméra qui a animé la discussion cinématographique en France à cheval entre la fin des années soixante et le début des années soixante-dix du siècle passé. Il est vrai que cette discussion concerne surtout le cinéma dans sa forme narrative,

alors que nous nous intéressons à la pratique de la vidéo-conversation : mais ce débat présente certains arguments susceptibles de nous intéresser.

Entre 1969 et 1972, parurent dans les revues *Cinétique* et les *Cahiers du Cinéma* de nombreuses interventions sur ce thème à partir d'une interview à Marcelin Pleynet, publiée précisément dans *Cinétique*.

Pour faire bref, je me référerai exclusivement à l'exposé que fournit de cette « querelle » dans *Tecnica et ideologia* Comolli.

Les problèmes soulevés furent :

1) le rapport entre l'image photographique, puis cinématographique, et la représentation picturale de l'espace tel qu'il est réglé par le code de la perspective du quinzième siècle ; rappelons que si cette perspective a dominé environ cinq siècles de peinture occidentale, elle n'était pas sans exceptions : voir à ce propos les travaux de Francastel sur la coexistence de divers systèmes de figuration. Ce que ce rapport met en jeu au niveau des idéologies, des représentations culturelles;

2) le rapport entre l'invention de la photographie et celle du cinéma, entre photo et cinéma : les homologues et les différences. Le problème de la naissance technique du cinéma;

3) la fonction déterminante de la caméra. Dans la réflexion sur l'idéologie de la technique cinématographique (Comolli 1982 : 22).

Pour ne pas dépasser le temps qui m'est imparti, je me concentrerai sur le premier de ces points de la discussion : comment la perspective liée à la projection géométrique a-t-elle fixé dans la représentation un canon abstrait et algébrique? en substance, on peut dire que le regard de la caméra fabrique le visible selon un système monoculaire fixe qui n'appartient pas à la vision humaine.

De nombreuses voix s'élevèrent pour s'opposer à ce point de vue dans les années quatre-vingts. Parmi elles, rappelons celle de H. Damicsh; ou, plus tard, le point de vue de J. Cray. Il me semble toutefois, du moins en ce qui concerne le premier point, que ces réflexions restent valables, à condition de les contextualiser.

Les formes sociales de représentation de l'espace forment un substrat implicite, ou plutôt inconscient, auquel il s'agit de conférer une visibilité afin de déconstruire ces conditions préalables, pour mieux comprendre leur action, non tant ou non seulement sur le spectateur (*spectator*) mais aussi sur l'opérateur (*operator*).

En d'autres termes, le regard humain subit une sorte de déclinaison, une courbure autour de l'axe de la projection géométrique incorporée à l'appareil qui se manifeste comme une forme spécifique de vision.

Sur le plan des pratiques, nous pouvons observer en effet que, comme l'expérimente directement quiconque fait de la photo – ciné – graphie, pour passer de l'image perçue à l'image produite techniquement il faut reformuler la perception visuelle dans la vision de l'appareil ; autrement dit, il s'agit de passer de l'œil à l'objectif, au format, etc. ; le regard de l'opérateur de la prise de vue doit se faire technique (monoculaire et fixe), entrer dans le code de l'appareil, le subir, choisissant l'angle et la profondeur du champ que le cadrage exige pour que ce que nous voyons prenne un aspect photographique.

Pour en revenir à Comolli, il est intéressant de remarquer que, dans un passage de *Tecnica e Ideologia*, il utilise pour définir la partie « invisible » du cinéma, le terme « inconscient », précisément comme le code inscrit dans l'appareil de prise de vue.

Privilégier l'appareil de prise de vue comme représentant de l'ensemble des appareils cinématographiques n'est pas seulement un fait de l'ordre de la synecdoque (...) : c'est surtout une opération de réduction (...) En effet sur le plan de la théorie cela reproduit et confirme la scission qu'on observe constamment dans la pratique technique du cinéma. (...) scission entre la partie visible de la technique cinématographique et sa partie invisible (...). Cette dernière refoulée par l'autre, reléguée généralement dans l'impensé, dans « l'inconscient » du cinéma. (Comolli 1982: 25)

Cet usage du terme « inconscient » nous amène à l'œuvre de Franco Vaccari et à son texte intitulé « *Fotografò e inconscio tecnologico* » (photographie et inconscient technologique), publié la première fois en 1979. Dans ces fécondes années soixante-dix du XXe siècle, l'artiste et photographe italien Franco Vaccari expose à la Biennale de Venise de 1972 une œuvre intitulée : *Esposizione in tempo reale n. 4*

(Exposition en temps réel numéro 4), dont je parlerai plus loin, œuvre qui puise, tout en le forgeant, dans l'horizon théorique de la notion d'inconscient technologique, usant des instruments de l'art pour l'exprimer.

Procédons dans l'ordre. D'abord j'examinerai d'où vient la notion d'inconscient appliquée à la photographie, ensuite ce qu'entend Vaccari par cette expression, enfin je reviendrai à l'examen de l'*Exposition en temps réel numéro 4*.



FIGURE 2

Tout d'abord, d'où Vaccari tire-t-il son usage du terme « inconscient » dans le domaine des systèmes de production d'images techniques ? il le trouve chez Walter Benjamin, qui a utilisé la formule d'« inconscient optique » dans ses textes consacrés à la photographie intitulés *L'œuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproductibilité technique* et *Petite histoire de la photographie*. Je cite :

Une technique très exacte réussit à conférer à ses produits une valeur magique qu'un tableau pour nous ne possède plus. Malgré l'habileté du photographe, malgré l'attitude calculée de son modèle, l'observateur ressent le besoin irrésistible de chercher dans l'image cette étincelle, même minime, du hasard... la nature qui parle à l'appareil photographique est en effet une nature différente de celle qui parle à l'œil, différente en particulier pour ceci, que l'espace élaboré consciemment par l'homme y a cédé la place à un espace élaboré inconsciemment. S'il est tout à fait usuel qu'un homme se rende compte, par exemple, de l'allure des gens, même en gros, il ne sait certainement rien de leur attitude dans la fraction de seconde où s'esquisse un pas. La photographie, avec ses moyens auxiliaires, avec le ralenti, avec ses agrandissements, le lui montre. Seule la photographie lui fait découvrir cet inconscient visuel, comme la psychanalyse lui a fait découvrir l'inconscient pulsionnel (Benjamin, 1936a : 62-63)

Donc Benjamin conçoit l'inconscient visuel comme une expansion des capacités de la perception humaine, une expansion dans le temps : l'image d'un millième de seconde qui congèle le mouvement en un instantané ; ou une expansion dans l'espace : qui permet une vision rapprochée ou élargit l'angle de la vision, nous offrant une image inédite pour l'œil. En somme, une production d'images qui dépasse les limites de la perception et déplace le regard sur des territoires inconnus, en modifiant la géographie du regard dans des lieux en dehors de l'espace et du temps humains. L'appareil apparaît à Benjamin comme un appendice qui augmente la perception de l'environnement mais reste ancrée à la subordination à l'humain.

En revanche, Vaccari inverse le rapport entre l'humain et l'appareil, dans la mesure où il conçoit l'inconscient technologique comme une capacité autonome qu'a l'appareil de produire un regard. C'est ainsi que Vaccari suggère de passer de la conception de l'inconscient visuel à celle de l'inconscient technologique, la polarité va donc se déplacer de l'humain à l'appareil (Vaccari 2001: 19)

Vaccari a été amené à élaborer cette notion de l'inconscient technologique au fil du temps. Bien que la publication de *Fotografia e inconscio tecnologico* n'advienne qu'en 1979, cette notion avait déjà fait son apparition dans ses œuvres dès la fin des années soixante. C'est en 1966 qu'elle paraît implicitement dans son livre photographique intitulé « *Le Tracce* », comme il le rappelle par ailleurs lui-même dans l'introduction de 1979.

À partir de la fin des années soixante, j'ai eu recours – écrit Vaccari – au concept d'inconscient technologique, il le fait pour expliquer les opérations esthétiques qu'il était en train de construire dans cette période.

Citons encore Vaccari, qui écrit : « Le concept d'inconscient technologique appliqué au moyen photographique m'avait donné l'occasion de saper mes conditionnements visuels et d'arriver ainsi à voir ce que je ne savais pas ».

La démarche de Vaccari, ne se place pas sur le même plan que la querelle qui a eu lieu en France sur l'appareil de la prise de vue dans les mêmes années. L'artiste italien ne se soucie pas de déconstruire le code et de repérer dans la perspective le substrat caché dans l'appareil ; ce qui l'intéresse, c'est plutôt de comprendre le système d'occultation du code, qui devient le système inconscient, et de le ramener à la surface pour instaurer une interaction.

Vaccari explique dans *Fotografia e inconscio tecnologico*, l'usage qu'il fait du mot « inconscient ». Il s'appuie, évidemment sur Freud et sur Lacan, mais aussi sur un passage de l'*Anthropologie Structurale* (1958, publié en italien sous le titre *Antropologia Strutturale* en 1966) contenu dans l'essai *L'efficacité symbolique* (1949) de Lévy Strauss, où l'inconscient est « toujours vide » et reste étranger aux images qui le traversent comme l'estomac aux aliments. En d'autres termes, l'inconscient vide de l'appareil est le code qui élabore les flux qui traversent l'appareil tout en restant étranger à ces mêmes flux et à leur contenu.

La structure de l'appareil est analogue à celle de l'inconscient, elle n'a pas de profondeur et reste étrangère aux flux qui la traversent (Vaccari 2001: 5) affirme Vaccari.

Il est clair que nous pouvons reprocher à cette conception d'un appareil toujours identique à lui-même de ne pas tenir compte d'un élément fondamental déjà pour Bateson et la cybernétique naissante des années cinquante ; nous pouvons dire qu'il fait l'économie de cet élément qui permet de dépasser l'appareil dans son expression la plus simple, à savoir la mise en œuvre à l'intérieur du mécanisme de la rétroaction (déjà présente dans la machine à vapeur) qui, avec l'ère de l'électronique et de l'informatique, est devenu désormais un élément omniprésent.

En effet, le feedback permet de régler l'appareil en fonction des flux qui le traversent, mais il faut dire qu'à l'époque de la chambre analogique, cette notion constituait un horizon encore peu fréquenté.

En réalité, Vaccari accorde son attention à la cybernétique, mais surtout à un autre type de rétroaction : il se réfère à la rétroaction que produit la caméra sur le sujet, ce qui est particulièrement évident dans le cas de l'œuvre présentée en 1972 (sept ans avant la publication du texte) à la Biennale de Venise, intitulée *Esposizione in tempo reale n. 4*. En effet, l'auteur utilise lui-même l'expression rétroaction (ou feedback) à propos de *Esposizione in tempo reale n. 4* dans un texte de 1985, pour distinguer cette œuvre des happenings et des performances qui pullulaient dans les années soixante-dix. Ses travaux, soutient-il, ne suivaient pas un itinéraire déjà programmé, ils suscitaient plutôt des réactions.

Esposizione in tempo reale était constituée d'une cabine de Photomaton, comme on en rencontrait fréquemment dans les gares de chemin de fer à cette époque, un individu se plaçait à l'intérieur de la cabine et déclenchait une salve de quatre clichés, qui ressortaient imprimés sur une bande de papier ; naturellement l'opération nécessitait l'introduction préalable d'une pièce de monnaie ; il est important de remarquer que cette action d'introduire la pièce de monnaie devait être accomplie aussi lors de l'exposition à la Biennale, *comme dans n'importe quel photomaton dans la rue* précise Vaccari.

Sur les murs de la salle quelques grandes inscriptions invitaient les visiteurs de la Biennale à laisser une trace de leur passage en se photographiant dans la cabine ; et en effet, chaque bande de quatre photographies allait se trouver placée sur les murs de la salle pour former un grand collage photographique qui remplit toute une paroi.

Vaccari avait également choisi de donner comme sous-titre à l'exposition la phrase *Photographie comme action et non comme contemplation* : l'artiste voulait faire coïncider le spectateur et l'opérateur, l'œuvre finale devait être constituée d'une sédimentation de ces actions esthétiques, de leur dépôt sur les murs de la salle. La réalisation de l'œuvre dans le temps selon Vaccari suit une sorte de loi d'évolution qui se tient en équilibre dynamique entre le système générateur, représenté par l'inscription *laisse sur ces murs une trace philosophique de ton passage*, et la pression de l'environnement, représentée par les photographies déjà exposées, par les bandes déjà consolidées et collées aux murs.

La mise en scène de ces bandes de clichés dessine donc la représentation du regard, non le regard de l'auteur mais celui de l'appareil.

On se souvient que de nombreux peintres ont mis en scène le regard. Parmi eux, *Las Meninas* présente un cas exemplaire. Le tableau de Velasquez, que Foucault a analysé en profondeur, nous fournit l'occasion cependant d'une réflexion qui nous ramènera au centre de notre relation sur conversation et corps, précisément en partant du regard. En effet, en ce qui concerne le célèbre tableau de Velasquez, nous pourrions dire que le regard mis en scène n'est pas celui du peintre ni celui du *spectator*, mais celui du miroir. Un miroir technologiquement évolué qui mémorise l'image et la restitue immédiatement à d'autres regards, regards gourmands, qui veulent se mesurer dans le jeu narcissique du reflet d'eux-mêmes. Le témoin de la scène n'est plus l'artiste/auteur mais seulement l'appareil avec ses dispositifs.

Revenons donc à notre conversation avec caméra et regardons l'objet caméra d'un regard différent, donc comme l'un des interlocuteurs de cette conversation.

La conversation donc advient dans ce carrefour des regards, carrefour entre des regards humains et le regard cristallisé de l'appareil, mais dont le sujet commun est le corps ; par ailleurs, le regard de l'appareil est étranger, ou mieux indifférent aux corps, tandis que dans leur réciprocité les regards humains se reconnaissent précisément dans le corps de l'autre.

Permettez-moi maintenant de me référer brièvement à Basaglia :

Le moment de la rencontre avec l'autre ne se réalise pas comme pure reconnaissance d'une matérialité constitutive de moi-même, mais comme un reflet de moi-même, point de départ d'un moi qui échappe : je reconnais dans l'être là de l'autre une expérience qui coexiste à mon être ici, expérience que je peux aborder

parce que dans mon être ici existent d'infinies positions, au point qu'elles peuvent amener mon être ici à la position de là (Basaglia 2007).

Toutefois, il ne s'agit pas de corps abstraits mais de corps situés dans un espace et dans une relation, la relation dialogique, dont le plan de projection, ou mieux celui de sa représentation, se trouve dans la caméra. Un plan qui n'est pas neutre à la manière d'un plan purement visuel, mais qui à son tour agit et structure la conversation, qui la dirige et surtout la mémorise en l'extrayant de la contingence. Dans une continuité de rétroactions qui concerne tous les acteurs en scène. La caméra active en tant que telle une volonté de représentation chez tous les autres sujets concernés, qui à leur tour agissent laissant à la caméra la tâche de rendre cette volonté de représentation permanente.

Le corps se prédispose donc à l'extraction de son image et si nous voulons jouer avec la profilée (j'utilise ce terme dans l'acception de Claudine de France de France, pas dans la même intention)

Les mots s'additionnent, ou mieux se multiplient, avec les gestes et les mouvements. Commence donc une sorte de « danse » où tous les éléments sont pris, choisissent, définissent le point d'où ils seront observés. Ce qui semble être une relation à sens unique, où l'opérateur choisit le point de vue à travers la position de la caméra, est en réalité un dialogue non verbal qui se déploie entre humains et appareil, un dialogue dans lequel chacun entre dans une structure narrative dont il construit, sans connaître le tout, une partie : comme une sorte de cadavre exquis où l'inconscient technologique de l'appareil œuvre comme catalyseur des imaginaires des joueurs. Le lieu que nous pourrions appeler le *setting* opère comme contenant du texte et donc lui sert de contexte et le définit ; il crée la géographie où se tracent les parcours narratifs faits de déplacements et d'investissements, de regards et de mouvements, dans une interaction continue de possibles lignes de fuites.



FIGURE 3

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QUEER ANTIRACIST VIGILANCE: PINKWATCHING ‘QUEER INVESTMENTS’¹ IN STATE RACIST VIOLENCE

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ABSTRACT

This article critically investigates the ways in which racialized queers (and their politics) are naturalized as abandonable and disposable vis-à-vis (predominantly white) queers who are regenerated as vital citizen-subjects (worthy of state protection) by focusing on the vigilant radical critiques of racialized queers to state violence. Specifically focusing on images from Toronto’s LGBTQ Pride parade, the author places a critical spotlight on the homo-nationalist politics of inclusion of LGBTQ into state formations of citizenship through antiracist queer protests against state racism and racism within the LGBTQ community. In so doing, the essay attends to a broader questioning of which non-normative subjects and populations are constructed as ‘too queer’ to matter within Western frameworks of gender and sexual intelligibility.

KEYWORDS

pinkwashing, homonationalism, pinkwatching, racism, Pride, Toronto

BIO

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¹ The term has been developed by Lamble (2013).

Introduction

This essay critically investigates the ways in which racialized queers (and their politics) are naturalized as abandonable and disposable vis-à-vis (predominantly white) queers who are regenerated as vital citizen-subjects worthy of state protection by focusing on the vigilant radical critiques of racialized queers to state violence (including the pivotal role of homonationalists in supporting such violence). In doing so, I attend to a broader questioning of which non-normative subjects and populations are constructed as ‘too queer’ to matter within Western frameworks of gender and sexual intelligibility. I specifically focus on homonationalism and pinkwashing in Toronto’s Pride Parade between 2010 and 2018, a period of accelerated political and critical vigilance by radical queers of colour (coinciding with a period of heightened state over-policing and neglect of racialized queer communities), challenging Pride as a vehicle for state-sponsored homonationalism. My investigation is in part anchored in an institutional ethnographic approach, focusing critically not only on the involvement of established state institutions within the Pride Parade (e.g. legal, police, military, business, media, etc.), but Pride itself as a quasi-state participant in nationalist projects of governance (through racist violence). I also focus on three moments of racialized queer protest – within the Pride Parade – by Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA), by Black Lives Matter Toronto (BLM-TO) and by the campaign ‘Until We’re Safe’ to deconstruct the performance of vigilance against murderous racist colonial violence. In addition to deconstructing the images of assimilation and protest, I also combine my own field notes of remembering, as a spectator-participant in the Pride Parades over the last two decades, as a way of noticing how the crowd of spectators have affectively responded to critiques of Pride (as a homonationalist project), through racialized queer protests within the Parade. This combination of institutional and spectator ethnography helps to unmap the affective economies of homonationalism and critical refusals of such to restage Pride as a space of political contestation.

On Pride as Homonationalism

The exceptionality of Canadian sovereignty is marked by its championing of sexual-gender liberation, especially as a ‘gay-friendly’ nation state i.e. a discourse of national exceptionalism which Schulman (2011) and others have termed pinkwashing. Puar defines pinkwashing as “the [state] practice of covering over or distracting from a nation’s policies of discrimination of some populations through a noisy touting of its gay rights for a limited few,” (2013: 33). The concept is integrally connected to Puar’s own concept of homonationalism, which as a neoliberal phenomenon, reflects the increasing assimilation of the LGBTQ community into citizenship through rights-based institutional reforms (e.g. rights to gay marriage, adoption rights, serving in the military, domesticity and consumption), in exchange for their depoliticization and silencing of critiques of state violence – especially state racism. Homonationalism is therefore a biopolitical process which brings some queers into national civic life through their collusion with the state’s investment in necropolitical projects which targets non-compliant queer others as disposable.

Moreover, under homonationalism, especially the mainstream white gay cis-male and lesbian sections of the LGBTQ community have pledged allegiance – as the ‘good gays’ – to the very state which once criminalized them, through their invested support for the punishment of other precariously-positioned queer and trans communities (e.g. racialized, undocumented, poor, sex working, etc.), marked as ‘bad queers’. In fact, Lamble (2013: 230-231) finds that “LGBT communities now partly measure their citizenship status on whether the state is willing to imprison other people on their behalf,” which “normalize [queer] punitive practices and naturalise the neoliberal carceral state,” specifically pivoted on the punishment of racialized queers (see also Dryden and Lenon, 2015). As such, sexual exceptionalism is a deeply racialized project which redraws the boundaries of exclusion, thereby re-signifying ‘good gays’ as emergent citizens (i.e. homonationalists) by constructing and fixing ‘bad queers’ the proper targets of punishment. In turn, vigilant critiques of the ways in which both the state and the mainstream LGBTQ community co-invest in discourses of sexual exceptionalism is termed pinkwashing (see Jackman and Upadhyay, 2014).

As a vehicle for state-sponsored homonationalism, there are five key co-constitutive components which assemble the homonationalist politics of Toronto’s Pride Parade, and which secure the Canadian state’s logic of ‘freedom with violence’ (Reddy, 2011): (1) corporate pride, (2) carceral pride (Russell, 2018), (3) global human rights pride, (4) multiculturalized pride, and (5) the masking of racialized

violence. All five manifestations of Pride, while they procure the fiction of sexual liberation, depend on ‘queer investments’ (Lamble, 2013) and complicities in punitive state violence. This is evident in the queer antiracist analysis of homonationalism as not only a biopolitical expansion of the state, but key to enhancing the state’s necropower as a defining modality of governance. Bassichis, Lee and Spade’s call for penal abolition (not reform) is based on their critique of homonationalism as expanding the policing powers of the state through increasing support, within the LGBTQ community, for “pro-police, pro-prisons, and pro-war” which has led to ‘police-enhancing legislation,’ (2011, 16). Similarly, Lamble’s (2013) rich and complex analysis of queer necropolitics as enlivening the carceral state, demonstrates the increased decriminalization and rights-based inclusion of LGBT communities, which coalesces with the strengthened criminalization of especially racialized queer populations who are targeted as undeserving of protection on account of their constructed radical alterity as ‘too queer’. Thus, for Lamble, punishment has become – under neoliberalism – the prioritized response to social problems, which are increasingly projected as racial problems. While punitive strategies involve the direct infliction of pain (e.g. through colonial occupation and murderous policing), Lamble also suggests that they also take the form of ‘socially-sanctioned deprivation’ – for example, the denial of police attention, the denial of formal citizenship status (as border control) and the denial of belonging even within the LGBTQ community to those deemed undeserving of protection, security and community. If homonationalism is deeply reinforcing of the carceral state’s punitive logic, then those ‘bad queers’ who either fall outside the state’s biopolitical prescriptions of normativity or refuse to comply with the strangulating conditions of docile citizenship (with requires allegiance to the expansion of state violence as freedom-making), are marked with a ‘death penalty’ or confined to what Lamble (2013: 244) terms a ‘caged life,’ which involves ‘biological, social, political and civil death.’

On Vigilance

The series of images from Toronto’s Pride parade demonstrate an emerging repoliticization of Pride through the rise of antiracist queer and trans politics that has helped to restage and undo the fiction of sexual citizenship through what Walcott (2017) terms as a ‘queer civil war.’ Focusing on protests – within the Pride parade - by Queers Against Israeli Apartheid against neocolonial and racist occupation, by Black Lives Matter Toronto against anti-Black policing and by the ‘Until We’re Safe’ campaign against the abandonment of racialized queer communities, I argue that these three protests represent a vigilant pinkwashing of homonationalism and its normalization of racialized punishment and violence. Their participation in and protest performances in the parade are refusals to be silenced and to be co-opted into the silencing forces of Pride, which itself “began in 1981 in response to a military-style raid on gay bathhouses by the Toronto Police Service,” (Greedy, 2018: 2).

One of the earliest critiques of pinkwashing in the Pride parade was staged in 2008 by the Toronto activist group, Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA), which critiqued “Israel’s use of gay rights to divert international attention away from the state’s violation of Palestinian human rights,” (QuAIA website). In advocating for solidarity with Palestine, the group raised critical attention to anti-colonial, anti-occupation and transnational queer politics, which entailed their refusal to support discourses of sexual exceptionalism that are being increasingly deployed to naturalize colonial occupation. As a participant group in Toronto’s Pride parade, QuAIA came under intense attack by state-supporting institutions, including threats by city politicians to defund Pride if QuAIA continued to march in the parade. In 2010, this led to the decision by Pride Toronto (the institutional entity responsible for organizing the parade) to ban the term ‘Israeli Apartheid’ on the basis of what it felt to be anti-Semitic language, though this still led to the punitive loss of financial sponsorship for the event. According to Kouri-Towe (2017: 188): “The temporary ban of the term ‘Israeli apartheid’ at Toronto Pride reveals a key function of homonationalism, whereby belonging is predicated on the coordination of sexual citizenship and nationalism.” QuAIA still marched in the parade, despite Pride Toronto’s censorship, and chanted slogans such as “Corporate Pride has got to go!” and “censorship has got to go,” (Spurr, 2015). Following the parade, the City of Toronto threatened to defund Pride Toronto, leading the then executive director to blame QuAIA for her resignation (as a result of the organization’s financial deficit). Following a brief absence in the parade in 2011, QuAIA returned as a marching group in 2012, although the Toronto City Council voted to fund Pride in conjunction with a motion condemning the term ‘Israeli

Apartheid,' (Spurr, 2015). While the group continued to march in the parade, it self-disbanded in 2015, claiming that it had managed to incite public scrutiny about the corporate pinkwashing of Toronto's Pride (in addition to pinkwashing Israeli homonationalism). Yet, Kouri-Towe claims that "QuAIA Toronto's success came at a cost: in order to defend the group's right to march, QuAIA Toronto's message shifted from opposing apartheid to demanding belonging," (2017: 189). This deflection of QuAIA's politics and the group's response to such are deeply reflective of the punitive costs of pinkwashing state-sponsored homonationalism.

The second instance of pinkwashing concerns the radical activism of the group Black Lives Matter Toronto (BLM-TO), which was founded by Janaya Khan and Yusra Ali in 2014 in response to the shooting of Jermaine Carby by Peel Regional Police, and the escalating violent policing of Black life i.e. anti-Black racism in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). In 2015 the group "crashed the police board meeting and shut down the streets" of Toronto (BLM-TO website) when Sudanese-Canadian, Andrew Loku was gunned down by Toronto Police Services. Later that year the group also participated in Toronto's Take Back the Night event (protesting sexual violence), where "hundreds rallied against police brutality and in solidarity with marginalized black lives, with particular attention to the lives of black individuals who are cis women, trans, queer, on the gender spectrum, with disabilities, and are sex workers," (Donato, 2015). As one of the honoured guests at the 2016 Toronto Pride Parade, BLM-TO staged a sit-in protest along the Yonge St. parade route, not only bringing a halt to the parade (which also included the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, interestingly just after the Canadian "Parliament's collective condemnation of the Boycott, Divest, and Sanction (BDS) movement against Israel and the occupation of Palestine," [Presnail, 2016]), but re-politicizing the parade as a space for speaking out against the anti-Black racism (especially police brutality) of both the state and the mainstream LGBTQ community. BLM-TO protested against the state's anti-Black policing, as well as anti-Black racism within Pride Toronto. The group said that Pride Toronto "has shown little honour to black queer/trans communities, and other marginalized communities. Over the years, Pride has threatened the existence of black spaces at Pride that have existed for years," (BLM-TO in Fatah, 2016). In so doing, Pride has helped to "divorce blackness from queerness," (Cole, 2016).

One of the most radical demands of the group was that uniformed and armed members of the police services not be allowed to participate in future Pride parades. Uniformed and armed police officers have been a celebrated staple of the Pride parade for years and among them are "police chiefs who have defended carding, the police practice of street checks that criminalizes many young Black men, and chiefs who have failed to take seriously training and other measures to ensure that people experiencing mental health crises, many of whom are also Black, are not killed," (Mukherjee, 2016). Yet the mainstream media and queer media subsequently responded to the sit-in protest by redeploying anti-Black racism through the discursive construction of BLM-TO as "aggressors, outsiders and terrorists," (Greedy, 2016). Furthermore, Toronto Mayor John Tory, reiterated calls for police inclusion in the parade, interestingly at an Eid al-Fitr celebration, stating that: "We've come so far in relations between the police and the LGBTQ2S community, and the police have embraced Pride, Pride have embraced the police. I think to go backwards from there would be a backwards step for the whole community and for Pride," (Tory in Ward, 2016). This moment has continued to open up debates around police inclusion in the Pride parade and a wider vigilant pinkwashing of state-sponsored anti-Black homonationalism.

The third moment of pinkwashing surrounds the response by queers of colour, under the banner of 'Until We're safe' in Toronto's 2018 Pride Parade, to the murders of predominantly racialized queer men by a white male serial killer in Toronto. Whereas the BLM-TO protest politicized the state's racist over-policing of Black communities, this case focuses on a different angle of queer necropolitics where racialized queer – mainly 'brown' immigrant – bodies were left to die as a result of the neglect and social and political banishment by state institutions (police and immigration), which queers of colour have also advocated that the mainstream LGBTQ community must also be held to account for. Between 2010 and 2012, three brown men-Skandaraj Navaratnam (Sri Lankan, aged 40), Majeed Kayhan (Afghan, aged 58), and Abdulbasir Faizi (Afghan, aged 42)-went missing in the Toronto's Church-Wellesley Village, otherwise known as the gay village. The police investigative task force, named Project Houston, was not able to trace their disappearance. The three men were spectacularized in the mainstream media as being "all middle-aged, of similar-skin colour and immigration status", "active in the Church Wellesley area," (Syed, 2018) and "frequent users of gay cruising apps, such as Grindr, Scruff, and

Hornet,” (Dubro, 2018). A Toronto crime journalist wrote that “The suggestion of a serial killer has not been ruled out by police, however it remains extremely unlikely,” (Dubro, 2018), which probably led to their designation by police as cold cases. The further disappearance of Soroush Mahmudi, Selim Esen, Dean Lisowick, and Andrew Kinsman (who was white) in the gay village, was subsequently investigated by the police under a different but parallel investigation, Project Prism (2017) –only after the lone white gay victim (Kinsman) went missing. In February 2018, a white gay man – Bruce McArthur – was charged with the murder of all the missing men, their bodies found buried in planters which the accused, a landscaper by profession, had installed. Kirushnakumar Kanagaratnam (37) was also confirmed as one of the victims in April 2018.

The mainstream and queer media constructed Kinsman as a respectable gay citizen (undeserving of this violence), while the brown queer men were constructed as burdened by their transnational kinships and living ‘double lives,’ mobilizing a discourse of racialized homophobia (which further facilitates racist multicultural discourses premised on the notions of ‘terror by culture.’). Toronto-based writer JP Larocque (2018) claims that “the double marginalized status of these men in Toronto's Gay Village made them both the targets of a killer and lower priorities in the eyes of the law”. Larocque further explains that while the gay village is seen as a place of safety for mostly white queers, it double signals as a zone of fear for racialized queers. He argues that the gay village represents a “system that elevates white men while isolating men of colour, desensitizing them to forms of abuse, and leaving them vulnerable to attack.” In the critiques leveled against Toronto Police by the mainstream LGBTQ community, the primary narrative has been about the police disregard for queer death, pointing to the almost 10-year period it has taken to investigate these disappearances and the systemic denial that brown queer men could be targets of serial killings. Yet, this object of queer rage has itself deflected attention from the pivotal force of race in structuring these deaths and the City’s investigative rubric, also pointed out by Larocque. Moreover, the invisibility of race as informing the murderous possibilities for brown queer lives is shored up by the construction of McArthur as a lone psychopathic serial killer whose whiteness is disconnected from the public politicization of this case. It is this refusal to see the deathly force of racism in structuring the vulnerability and killability of brown queer bodies that I critically respond to in this photo essay.

On Witnessing: A Photo Politics

Section A

The Parade: Homonationalist Pride

Showcasing Corporate Pride (Figure 1): These image represents the corporatization of Toronto Pride, whereby financial institutions, beer companies, Google, queer dating sites, retail giants, etc. not only help to brand the queer consumer as legible within the nation-state, but in doing so, brand themselves as responsible corporate citizens who support inclusivity of and the extension of employment benefits to their queer identified employees. Building on Lisa Duggan’s concept of homonormativity, Toronto’s urban homocapitalism (i.e. the anchoring and extension of homonationalism through neoliberal capitalism) helps us understand how corporations are now cashing in on the ‘pink dollar’ as a neoliberal currency that is necessary for accessing respectable citizenship and has thus become a regulative force within the LGBTQ community. This is ironic given the impact of property inflation and gentrification on the Church-Wellesley Village, which has resulted in an accelerated erasure of gay clubs, bathhouses, community outdoor spaces, and coffee houses, being replaced by high-rise condos and upscale establishments (run and regulated by the Church-Wellesley Business Improvement Area - a municipal entity). The dissolution of the ‘gaybourhood’ has resulted in the expulsion of homeless queers, the structured eviction of queer seniors and pensioners, queer people with disabilities, the reinforcement of privacy and domesticity, and the selective management of racialized queers in relation to discourses of production and consumption. In fact, in 2010, “then-TD vice-president Scott Mullin wrote that while TD supports Pride Toronto, it had become harder to do so after Pride reversed its (short-lived and controversial) decision to screen all parade signs, a policy implemented in response to criticism over QuAIA’s 2009 contingent and its signs challenging Israeli policy towards Palestinians,” (Rose, 2017). Yet another example of the corporate regulation of Pride concerns the threats by the City of Toronto and

the Toronto Police Union to defund Pride - a state punitive measure - for critiques of homonationalism, predominantly by racialized queers, (constructed as non-compliant and thus undeserving subjects). Following BLM-TO's sit-in protest in 2016, one blog carrying the headline: "Pride Toronto lost \$1.3 million last year amid controversy," (Power, 2017) laid the blame for defunding on the BLM-TO protest. One Tweet also stated: "@PrideToronto suffers biggest financial hit since 2010 when group calling itself #QueersAgainstIsraeliApartheid was allowed to parade," (JaneBrown, 2017). This was also evident in the 2018 Pride parade, which was not as much a capitalist-sponsored pageant as in previous years, as punishment for BLM-TO's critique of uniformed-armed-police inclusion in the parade and demands for the removal of police floats. The message this sends is not only that racialized queer politics is 'bad business,' but racialized queers are projected as liabilities who threaten the very homocapitalist freedom enabled by Pride.



FIGURE 1

Carceral Pride: Throughout my participation in the Pride parade as a spectator over the past two decades, queer-identified members of the Toronto Police force have opened the parade, leading the procession on their rainbow adorned motorbikes and police cruisers (Figure 2). Russel (2018: 332) claims that "this new police image attempts to re-brand police as protectors and defenders of gay liberties and homonormative life," which they refer to as 'carceral pride.' I have noticed the consistent celebratory cheers of the spectating crowd to police inclusion in the parade. This is ironic given that the Pride parade emerged in response to police brutality and homophobia during the Toronto's bathhouse raids (dubbed 'Operation Soap') in 1981 and the police raid of The Pussy Palace – a bathhouse event for queer women - in 2000. Interestingly, a couple months after BLM-TO's sit-in protest, the police launched its Project Marie operation i.e. the police crackdown on cruising and 'consensual queer sex' (Kinsman, 2016) at Marie Curtis Park on the western edges of the City in 2016 using various forms of entrapment. According to Kinsman (2016): "this police campaign also provides another reason why Police Departments should not be marching inside our Pride parades and promoting themselves within the festival at Toronto Pride." Hence, the criminalization of queer life continues, despite the inclusion of 'gay-friendly' police in the Pride community. Yet Russel (2018) finds that the rebranding of the police as pro-gay is happening in a moment of intensifying public scrutiny of escalating police violence. BLM-TO's protest against the continued criminalization of Black queer and trans communities (e.g. through carding, racial profiling, racialized methods of detainment, etc.) points to Pride as enhancing the capacity of the state to police especially racialized communities. For Russell (2018: 335-36) this signals increasing "sexual investments in punitiveness" that seek to establish "social order through an always present threat of lawful violence."



FIGURE 2

Global Gay Human Rights Pride: According to Spade (2013: 98), “Gay [human] rights is operating to ‘pinkwash’ the *terrifying* expansion of racist violence, colonial occupation, and warfare...” In 2014 Toronto hosted World Pride, a global tourist event usually hosted by ‘gay friendly’ cities to promote LGBTQ travel, which has very little connection to queer politics. Yet, the event involved a clean-up campaign which aimed to remove ‘unwanted’ queer bodies (e.g. sex workers, homeless, poor people of colour, etc.) from Toronto’s downtown core with the aid of Toronto police (Chisolm, 2015) ironically at the same time it hosted a World Pride Human Rights Conference. For Chisolm (2015:17) this reflects a “model offered by the LGBT tourist industry that promotes an image of mobile cosmopolitan queer subjects whose travel destination choices are linked to human rights.” As part of global gay human rights advocacy, adverts of an ILGA world map depicting Western ‘gay friendly’ versus (predominantly) racialized ‘homophobic’ nation-states of the Global South were placed within the 2013 Pride event area, ‘locating homophobia’ (Rao, 2014) through an imperialist lens. This map – as public pedagogy - replicates a colonial civilizational discourse that paves the way for intervention and invasion. Such imperialist logic sanctions the homonationalist militarization of Pride, as seen in Figure 3 which conjures up the hypermasculine and coupled-figure of queer lovers, who now have the right to participate in the military operations as ‘citizen-soldiers’ and thus to wage violence, war and occupation in the name of LGBT human rights and sexual/gender freedom. As an image of the ‘white (gay) man’s burden’ i.e. “white western LGBT soldiers sacrificing their lives to save queer people of colour from their ultra-homophobic/intolerant nations,” the celebrated hypermasculine gay citizen-soldier depends on constructing the ‘backwardness’ and irredeemable homophobic primitivity of the Global South (Rahman, 2011) i.e. racialized homophobia. If white queer citizen soldiers help to pinkwash military violence within the West’s ‘War on Terror,’ it is the figure of the LGBT refugee who is deployed (many times as the Pride Parade’s Grand Marshal) as the ultimate end-goal of queer investments in the racist projects of war and occupation, projected as ‘necessary violence.’ Figure 4 also depicts the alliance of British (and European) with Canadian pinkwashing, as defining the exceptionalism of the allied Global North as a basis for underwriting and manufacturing mass consent for its ‘War on Terror’ - in the name of saving queers of colour in the Global South. Images such as these help to procure the image of Canada as ‘gay friendly’ (especially when in 2012, the then Conservative Government of Canada sent a mass email to members of the gay and lesbian community, positioning itself as the protector of LGBT Iranian refugees! [Kenny, 2012]), while they are not evidently critical of Canada’s increasingly surveillant and hostile immigration and refugee system, which continues to illegalize, detain and deport queer refugee claimants within Canada.



FIGURE 3



FIGURE 4

Multiculturalized Pride: The multiculturalization of Pride is aligned with Canada's official multiculturalism, which contains and erases racial difference through a nationalist discourse of culture. The legal-discursive formality of this state project helps to produce Canada as post-race and thus representative of an exceptional whiteness which has the capacity to tolerate racial difference (coded as culture). The multiculturalization of Pride – evident in the self-affirmative performances by ethnic groups in the parade – thus reinforce the notion that sexuality is increasingly a domain through which to deprioritize and neutralize antiracist politics, which aids the denial of racist violence by the nation-state. Racialized queer subjects become bioavailable through this discourse i.e. as assimilated into queer liberalism, yet who risk being politically and socially abandoned (left to die) if they spoil the multicultural fantasy by vigilantly speaking out against the racist impacts of (homo)nationalist multicultural governance. Homonationalism's collusion with official state multiculturalism therefore operates as a strategy of racialized containment i.e. celebrating racialized queer visibility on the condition that this visibility does not threaten the white settler supremacy of the Canadian nation state. Pride has thus facilitated this nationalist project of quarantining, containing and silencing (especially radical) racialized politics while it institutionalizes – through the discourse of diversity – a liberal politics of cultural

difference. This traces back not only to claims about state tolerance, but the citizen-capacity of white queers who can demonstrate their tolerance of racialized queers. Multiculturalized Pride therefore sets the limits of what forms of antiracist queer vigilance become legible and legitimate as Pride politic. Figure 5 demonstrates the inclusion of racialized queer groups – as unproblematically domesticatable into and compliant with the homonation – i.e. celebrating their cultural difference, while silencing critiques of a deeply racist imagination of queer community. Moreover, multiculturalized Pride activates discourses of racialized homophobia, whereby racialized immigrant and diasporic Canadian communities are projected as steeped in their ‘ultra-heteropatriarchal/homophobic cultures’ (which are supposedly at odds with secular Canadian values of inclusion and tolerance). The presence of racialized queers in the Pride parade thus serves to affirm the image of an LGBTQ community as having the capacity to police cultural parochialism and to discipline racialized queers into Canada’s compulsory secular life through assimilation. The banner (Figure 6) of the Salaam Canada’s – an NGO supporting people who identify as “both Muslim and queer and trans” (Salaam website, no date) – is instructive in this regard. While the group politics aims to resist homonationalism through its insistence that the categories ‘queer/trans,’ and ‘Muslim’ are not incompatible, its message of ‘Celebrating Culture, Liberating Tradition’ still reproduces Canada’s multiculturalized homonational discourse which depends on projecting queer and trans Muslims as burdened and terrorized by their (religious) culture, who come out and into secular citizenship by embracing the politics of Pride.



FIGURE 5



FIGURE 6

Section B

The March: on Radical Melancholia

QuAIA: 'Can't Pinkwash Apartheid'

QuAIA's banner during the 2012 (Figure 7) and 2014 (Figure 8) Pride parades impose a collective melancholia as a critical killjoy (Ahmed, 2010) response to (happy) Pride. Whereas homonationalism facilitates the bioavailable figure of the happy queer who is folded into citizen life, pinkwashing – as a killjoy politic – aims to hold queer citizens to account for their participation in and consent to state racist violence within and outside of Canada. QuAIA's 2012 banner – “Nothing Comes Clean with Pinkwashing” – aimed to incite public consciousness about the connections between pinkwashing, occupation and colonialism. The banner was very long (much longer than the banners of other participating groups), requiring many participants to hold it up. It was oriented to face the crowd, as a direct conversation with spectators and which made it difficult for spectators to look away. Most interesting was the grey melancholic colour of the banner – with Arabic and Hebrew writing – in deep contrast to the colourful and glittery banners of most other participant groups. I remember the loud silence that inflamed the spectating crowd when QuAIA approached, almost as if the parade presentation mirrored the anti-pinkwashing politic that was blamed (in mainstream mass and LGBT media) for spoiling Pride. I observed a similar crowd reaction to QuAIA's 2014 (World Pride) Pride parade banner ‘Can't Pinkwash This’ (using some of the same bannering display tactics as 2012), which shows the dramatic disappearance of Palestine under Israeli occupation (from 1946 to the present). The Toronto Transit Commission refused to place this map as a paid ad on its buses (i.e. a form of state censorship), signaling the Canadian state's refusal to acknowledge its own role in licensing the occupation of Palestine (through an insistence that critiques against the Israeli state are inherently anti-Semitic) (see Abunimah, 2013). However, embedded within QuAIA's politics was a demand for recognizing the human rights of queer Palestinians who also live under occupation and a pinkwashing of the Israeli state's “using the rights that it once opposed as part of its propaganda efforts to deflect attention away from its abysmal human rights record toward Palestinians,” (QuAIA, no date). In addition to the media critiques of QuAIA (and the debates about permission for QuAIA's participation in the lead-up to World Pride), the Toronto Jewish group, Kulanu, responded by promoting Israel “as a beacon for LGBT rights in the Middle East” (Hudes, 2014), thus reinforcing the pinkwashing rhetoric, which was received by loud cheers and applaud during the parade.



FIGURE 7



FIGURE 8

BLM-TO – ‘No Pride in Racism’

In 2016 BLM-TO marched in the Pride parade and like QuAIA, performed their queer anti-racist politics through a defiant melancholic register. Wearing all black (in contrast to other participants who dressed colourfully), group members held replicas of four coffins, mourning the (queer) Black lives (such as Carby and Loku) lost to racist police violence (and perhaps victims such as Sumaya Dalmar, neglected by Police investigation [see Ratchford, 2015]). The adornment of the coffins with flowers served to insist on the dignity of victims as a counter to the state’s racist criminalization and dehumanization of Black communities in Canada. Like the response to QuAIA’s participation, there was a resounding ‘hush’ from the crowd, suggesting the un-consumable and un-digestible reception of the group’s defiant anti-racism, anti-violence politic. As the group approached one of the main intersections along the parade route, it staged a sit-in protest where members spoke out against the City of Toronto’s anti-Black policing and the homonationalist collusion of Pride Toronto with this racist project (especially regarding the inclusion of uniformed-armed-police in the parade). Co-founder, Alexandra Williams, claimed: “We are not taking any space away from any folks. When we talk about homophobia, transphobia, we go through that too ... It should be a cohesive unit, not one against the other. Anti-blackness needs to be addressed and they can be addressed at the same time, in the same spaces...we made space for ourselves in a place where we have been erased,” (Williams, in Fatah, 2016).

While I was not standing near the site of the protest, it brought the rest of the parade to a halt. I remember the seething frustration and brewing anger of spectators around me as news of the protest spread – as a backlash reaction to critical killjoy politics. The moment reminded me of earlier parades when other groups - including the police and military - had slowed down the parade flow, giving spectators more opportunity to cheerfully indulge in their voyeuristic fetish of the state’s forces. The affective response of the crowd to the halted parade was not as much about the interrupted flow of visual consumption as it was about having to confront racism and feel the impacts of anti-racist critiques of homonationalism i.e. having to ‘see’ race (not culture). This vigilant prying open of homonationalist politics was met with widespread backlash from the mainstream mass and LGBT media, constructing BLM-TO as ‘hijacking Pride’ (Litwin, 2017), which mobilized already circulating discourses (of criminality) about Blackness as terror (in this case, terrorizing the (homo)nationalist fantasy of inclusion). BLM-TO’s activism not only placed critical spotlight on carceral homonationalist investments, but also inspired a wider critique of the white settler Canadian state’s right to exclude through ‘lawful violence,’ (Russell, 2018). This growing critique of state policing and the queer community’s investment in such, is evident in Figures 9 to 11 from the 2018 Pride Parade. Interestingly, the police (with the support of the City and the mainstream queer community) have constructed themselves as victims of intolerance, which secures a platform for defunding Pride (Loriggio, 2017) and more terrifyingly, for the re-normalization of institutionalized racist violence.



FIGURE 9



FIGURE 10



FIGURE 11

Until We're Safe – 'Defiant Hauntings'

Toronto was sent into psychic shock in early 2018, when the disintegrating bodies of eight predominantly 'brown' missing 'queer' men were dug up from landscape planters on the eastern outskirts of the city. Serial killer Bruce McArthur was arrested in January 2018, followed by an escalating public media scandal around the neglect of the Toronto Police to investigate the cases of the missing men as a serial murder case between 2010 and 2018. This included antiracist critiques of the police force's policing practices, whereby the investigation seemed to only be taken seriously when one of the victims happened to be a white gay man. The other victims were 'brown' and identified by the media as 'queer' or 'gay'. They were also immigrants, some with highly precarious citizenship status (e.g. their asylum claim had been denied by the Canadian Government). This particular case not only demonstrates the ways in which brown queers are made invisible within the LGBTQ community, but it forces critical scrutiny on the brutalizing effects of state immigration and asylum discourses on producing vulnerability and thus killability of brown queer subjects - marked as abandonable figures on 'death row' vis-à-vis respectable white LGBTQ subjects who are deemed worthy of state protection from the state's own violent drive to dispose of queer liabilities.

Following McArthur's arrest, Pride Toronto decided that the 2018 Parade would begin with a minute of silence (Figure 12) and designated Haran Vijayanathan (Director of the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention, one of the most vociferous critical advocates in the McArthur case) as the Pride Grand Marshal – itself a form of 'brownwashing' to cover up the racism *within* the queer community that structured the deaths of these brown men at the hands of a white gay man! Pride Toronto also announced that the parade would end with a campaign - 'Until We're Safe' (Figures 13 & 14) - "to mourn victims of alleged serial killer Bruce McArthur," (Nanowski, 2018). Campaigners walked quietly down the parade route holding up placards of the names of McArthur's victims to the beat of a silent crowd. It is interesting to note that what is loudly absent about 'Until We're Safe' is the prefacing phrase, 'None of Us are Safe'; and it is this dialogical response that the protest hoped to provoke in the minds of spectators. Furthermore, the campaign served to de-vitalize (i.e. a critical shutting down/stalling of biopolitical homonationalism and spectators' bioavailability) and drain Pride for its systematic forgetting of the state's criminalization and abandonment or racialized queers (which white respectable queers are now supposedly protected from). 'Until We're Safe' therefore represents a mode of haunting that refuses to consent to the expansion of state violence as a model of freedom-making.



FIGURE 12

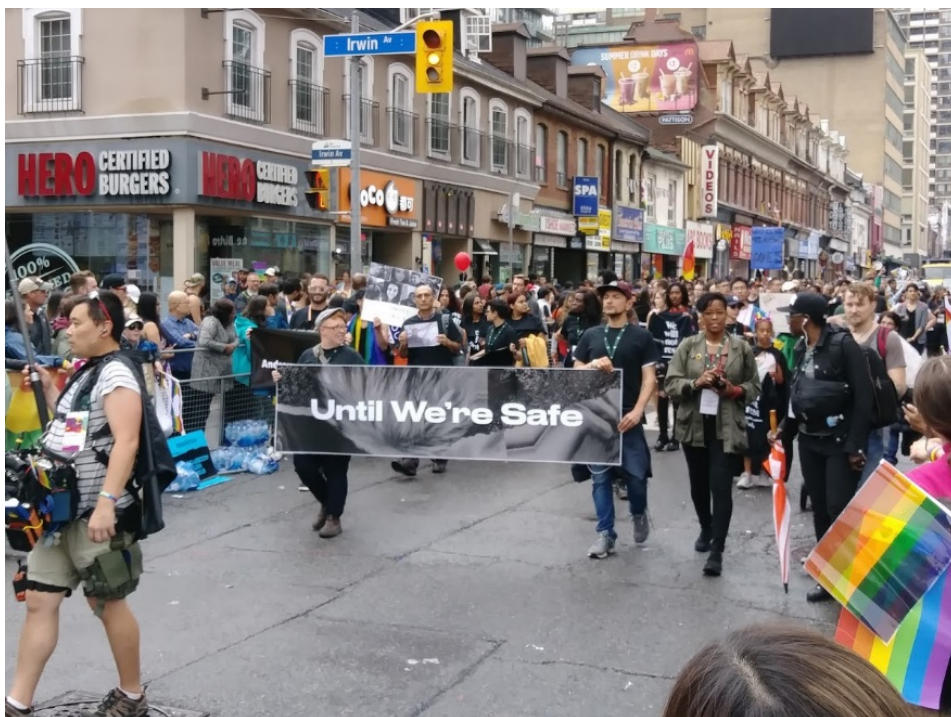


FIGURE 13



FIGURE 14

In contrast to the vibrant audio-scape (loud cheers) that characterized most of the parade, the crowd's response to this campaign was sheer silence. I see such (punishing) silence as affective investments in the refusal to hear and bear witness to state racism and violence and the cooperation of the mainstream LGBTQ community in such projects i.e. as a disavowal of simultaneously consuming and refusing the pain of others. The silence of the crowds cannot be misrecognized as empathy/sympathy (thus indicating the capacity of such subjects to feel such emotions for racialized queers who are cast as affect aliens (Ahmed, 2010)), but as a punitive response to the disruption/wounding of white Pride. Racialized queer protests, such as the 2018 campaign, are thus further 'criminalized' for imposing 'social hurt' onto proud citizen-spectators, who are no longer expected to bear this burden. Thus, I read this silence as an investment in the continued criminalization of racialized queers (and a refusal to see race), which stands in contrast to the cheerful celebration of the state's capacity for violence (e.g. police, military, coast guard, etc.). Thus, while the campaign aimed to politicize the deeply racialized construction of the McArthur case, the silent response of the crowd helped, in part, to restore carceral homonationalism (which naturalizes the killability of racialized queers).

This is not to say that the entire crowd consented to this re-making of violence as a mode of racialized control. In fact, one spectator (just opposite to where I stood) was holding a placard aimed toward the parade, which asked: "Where were the Toronto Police for Soroush Mahmudi, Dean Lisowick, Selim Esen, Andrew Kinsman, Skandaraj Navaratnam, Abdulbasir Faizi, Majeed Kayhan? #JusticeforLGBTQ." If 'Until We're Safe' was a defiant mourning of those who are rendered killable by (homo)nationalist politics, this placard brought critical scrutiny to police neglect and abandonment – as reflective of state necropolitics. In Figure 15, the spectator with this placard comes face to face with a parade participant wearing a gown made out of police tape, on which is repeatedly written "Police Line. Do Not Cross," and what looks like a police cap. The attired participant seemed to suggest that the categories 'queer' and 'police' are not incompatible, at the same time reinforcing the right to police (i.e. institutional backlash). This is especially interesting given that the police subsequently blamed the queer community for "not coming forward with more information," (James, 2018) to aid their investigation of the McArthur case.



FIGURE 15

On Reckoning

In the future of queer politics, how do we reconcile this space between queer anti-racist defiance/vigilance and homonationalist backlash? While it may be tempting to think that the problem of homonationalist Pride is its lack of intersectionality politics, we need to return to Cathy Cohen's (1997) notion of radical politics (often misrecognized as simply a call for intersectional analysis) which centralizes race as the primary entry point for thinking intersectionally. This is especially important when prioritized analyses of intersectionality (which might reify racial violence) re-anchor whiteness as the common denominator of legibility. We therefore need to understand the efficacy of homonationalism as not only rooted in a contained domain of sexuality *per se*, but as centrally premised on the unseeing of race.

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“S-PUNTI DI VISTA”: ADOLESCENCE AND VISUAL NARRATIVES IN THE PROVINCE OF MILAN

Erica Belli, *independent researcher*

Paolo Grassi, *Polytechnic University of Milan and University of Padua*

Matteo Spertini, *independent researcher*

ABSTRACT

These photos are the result of a workshop held at CPIA (Provincial Center for Adult Education) in Cinisello Balsamo (Milan), from March to December 2018. This work reflects on the imagery of twelve kids coming from different countries and backgrounds. Participants developed a path for research, narration and analysis of the contemporary overuse of images, taking their distances from it with the help of an alternative medium: disposable cameras.

KEYWORDS

Participatory photography, visual anthropology, youngsters, migration

BIO

Erica Belli is a photographer and educator with a degree from the Italian Institute of Photography (Milan) and a master in iconographical research (CFP Bauer, Milan). Her work concentrates on migration, marginalization and family, through a vernacular eye and analogical techniques, she tells us stories of the uneventful everyday. She is passionate about art therapy and believes in the contemporary need for a broader education on the meanings and uses of images.

Paolo Grassi (Polytechnic University of Milan and University of Padua) is a social anthropologist with a specialisation in development. He has also worked as a youth worker, a teacher, a project manager assistant, and a street educator. Over the past eight years, he has developed interests in issues relating to urban segregation, violence and marginality.

Matteo Spertini is a photographer and graphic designer who likes to tell stories with images and words. His work often concentrates on social, economical and geographical marginalization. He studied at the Academy of Brera (Milan) and has a master in documentary photography from the Kaverdash Photography School. In 2016 together with the anthropologist Paolo Grassi and the still-life photographer Christian Parolari, he published “Europe deports: Asylum seekers in the web of the Dublin Regulation” by Ombre Corte, Verona.

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Some call it “generation Z”, born between 1995 and 2012, smartphone in their hands. Born in an historical moment when the TV and the publishing industry was already on the rise of its decline, and social networks were boldly establishing as the new centre of media communication. The theme of expressing oneself through images (seen and produced) takes on a central role in the culture of teenagers and youngsters, regardless of their background.

The photos are the result of a workshop taking place at CPIA2 (Provincial Centre for the Education of Adults) in Cinisello Balsamo (Milan), between March and December 2018. The course wanted to reflect on the imagery of a group of twelve adolescents and youngsters age 14 to 24, coming from different countries (Ecuador, Egypt, Gambia, Nigeria, Peru, Salvador, Senegal, Sudan, Togo and Mali): a very heterogeneous group, pooled by the fact that all participants had the need to learn Italian and obtain their grade eight diploma (Diploma di Terza Media). Under the guide of Erica Belli, photographer and teacher and Matteo Spertini, photographer and graphic designer, and thanks to the scientific supervision of Paolo Grassi, cultural anthropologist and educator, participants developed a path for research, narration and critical analysis of the contemporary “hyper” use of images, taking their distances from it by using an alternative medium: a disposable camera. This kind of camera requires patience. The shots cannot be edited, deleted or filtered. The resulted narration is much more “honest”, less concise but more homogeneous in the language (everyone used the same kind of disposable camera). In this way, single work has become a collective project, a visual diary of a group.

The narration starts from the subjective choices of the participants, in response to simple “stimulating questions” (Where are you from? Where do you live? Who would you like to be tomorrow? Which objects better represent yourself?) The final result seems to underline the discrepancies, as well as similarities and converging lines, along their biographical trajectories. There are bedrooms and school rooms, urban landscapes, music and phones. Some comments, collected with the technique of photo elicitation, are addition to the images: “In 2030 I am in Turkey. I walk with a friend in a beautiful place” says M., an Egyptian girl. “I like calm places, where there’s peace. Because it is important to be able to relax”, adds E. from Bolivia. “Money is important, it has to be enough to go by and then, that’s fine” says O., 18 years old. “In 2030 I live in Paris, I have a wife, many kids, a good job and I earn good money”, keeps imagining a Malian guy. Some other comments reflect on the path endeavoured during the workshop: “I enjoyed photographing nature!”, “It has been as if looking better”, “It was interesting to look for the right framing, it is changed the way I look at things”. Photos reflect on the habits and personal stories of the participants. A Koran or an Andean purse, for instance, have marked some different cultural references.

These photos are an account that investigates in the plies of everyday life. They are an ethnographic account, if doing ethnography essentially means grasping the point of view of our interlocutors and formulating interpretations in a dialogical way. Regardless of the homogeneity of the artistic language, these photos try to challenge the monolithic category of “foreigner/migrant”. The facilitators of the workshop do not disappear from the final product, but they co-construct it, giving participants a direction, forming them on the use of the camera, on composition and editing of the photos. The teachers were involved in the social networks of the participants, thanks to the share of pieces of their imaginaries.



FIGURE 1: V. 16 years old, Peru.



FIGURE 2: M. 22 years old, Salvador.



FIGURE 3: 13. S. 21, Togo. An **automated teller machine (ATM)** is an electronic banking outlet that allows customers to complete basic transactions without the aid of a branch representative or teller. Anyone with a credit card or debit card can access most **ATMs**. I decided to take this picture because when I was little I always had in my thoughts to work in a bank. Often I asked myself how to become a banker? But in order to do it you need to be able to have secondary degrees and since I have not got them, in time, I became discouraged. Until this day I still try to always know how banks work and their importance.



FIGURE 4: M. 16 years old, Egypt. I love looking at the sky from my balcony, because it looks close to me. I even love its purity. I also like how those things on the roofs look like, and that bird.



FIGURE 5: 17. O. 19 years old, Mali. This guy is called I., he comes from Gambia and he is 29 years old. He lives in a emigration shelter, with many other guys in Cinisello Balsamo. He is a migrant, we met each other there. I shot this picture because living in community is not easy.

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ORETETI. CONNECTING HUMANS TO GOD

Lorenzo D'Angelo, *University of Reading*

ABSTRACT

This film explores the difficulties faced by a Maasai agro-pastoral community in Tanzania, as a time of climate crisis stimulates cultural and economic changes. Through the voice of Philipo, a young Maasai man, it describes the importance of a rain-making ritual. At the centre of this ritual is a plant that is sacred to the Maasai, the Oreteti. This is not a common plant in the semi-arid regions of East Africa. Often, it is found near water sources – particularly valuable for agro-pastoral communities, especially during drought. For this reason, the Oreteti is associated with the possibility of overcoming difficulties in times of crisis, as well as with fertility and women. It is no coincidence that women play a fundamental role in the rain-making ritual; without their presence and their prayers, it would lose its meaning.

The film bears witnesses to a crucial change in Philipo's community, a change that also affects the meaning and indeed the existence of the rain-making ritual. Much of Maasai cultural life revolves around pastoral rites and symbols. Indeed, the Maasai consider and define themselves as "people-of-the-cattle", although, over several generations, they have increasingly added activities such as agriculture to their livestock keeping in response to shifting economic and political circumstances. In Philipo's village, the arrival of the Lutheran Church and successive famines and droughts have accelerated processes of change. As Philipo himself points out, all of this, in turn, has had palpable effects on economic decisions and cultural choices as well as on gender relation. Ultimately, this changes the meaning of the Oreteti ritual itself.

In conclusion, we are presented with a reflection by a young Maasai on how his community can overcome current difficulties, given that connections between humans, and between the human and the divine, have been exposed to new meaning.

Keywords

Maasai, Tanzania, climate change, rain-making ritual, pastoralism, church, women.

Bio

Lorenzo D'Angelo is a senior postdoctoral researcher at the University of Reading interested in natural resources and extractive industries, environmental and economic anthropology. Lorenzo is co-founder and co-convenor of the EASA Anthropology of Mining network and has conducted field research in Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Tanzania. In Tanzania, his ethnographic research focused on agro-pastoral systems and climate change among Maasai communities.

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Lorenzo D'Angelo, *University of Reading*

Produced and directed by Lorenzo D'Angelo

Edited by Eugenio Giorgianni

Narrated by Philipo Kaai Laitayock

Camera operator: Baraka Danison

Filmed at Mkuru, Uwiro Village in Tanzania (January 2019)



Watch video with Italian subtitles here: <https://youtu.be/B6zxIYHUl9o>

Watch video with English subtitles here: https://youtu.be/rWr3_DpP5fE

THE BANQUET OF (CULTURAL) COMMONS

Raúl de Arriba, *University of Valencia*
María Vidagañ, *University of Zaragoza*

ABSTRACT

“...the absence of the motive of gain; the absence of the principle of laboring for remuneration; the absence of the principle of least effort. But how, then, is order in production and distribution ensured?” K. Polanyi (1944) tried to answer this question in *The Great Transformation*.

Cultural Commons are cultural resources shared by a community that, like other situations of collective action, also reproduce social dilemmas. In these cases, as indicated by Olson, rational, self-interested individuals could not act to achieve their common or group interests. In that sense, the tragedy of Cultural Commons would mean its disappearance due to free riding behavior.

However, many cultural commons are maintained over time because reciprocity, reputation, and trust can overcome self-interested behavior. The inhabitants of Villastrada (Italy) have achieved it for decades. Every summer, they work voluntarily to organize the festivities of this small village.

Keywords

cultural commons, social dilemmas, collective action, cooperation, social interaction

Bio

Raúl de Arriba is PhD in Economics and associate professor in Economic Policy at the University of Valencia (Spain) since 2000. He has written about international economic policy, pluralism and creativity in teaching economics and art and economics. He has been visiting researcher in Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (France) and Research Center in Political Science and International Relations (Portugal), among others.

María Vidagañ is PhD in Art Education. She is Bachelor of Fine Arts, and professor of the Department of Musical, Plastic and Corporal Expression of the University of Zaragoza. She has done research work on artistic education, audiovisual creation, research based on the arts and has some publications and communications on this subject. Her current lines of research are art education, audiovisual creation and art-based research.

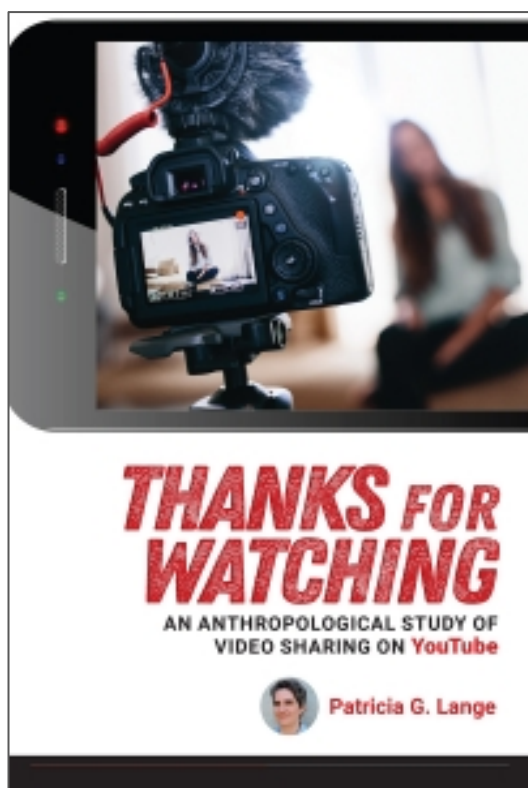
dearriba@uv.es
mavimur@unizar.es

JEL codes: B52, Z13, A13

Watch video:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/p6g005xcffnw6fz/The%20banquet%20of%20the%20%28Cultural%29%20Commons.mp4?dl=0>





Patricia G. Lange

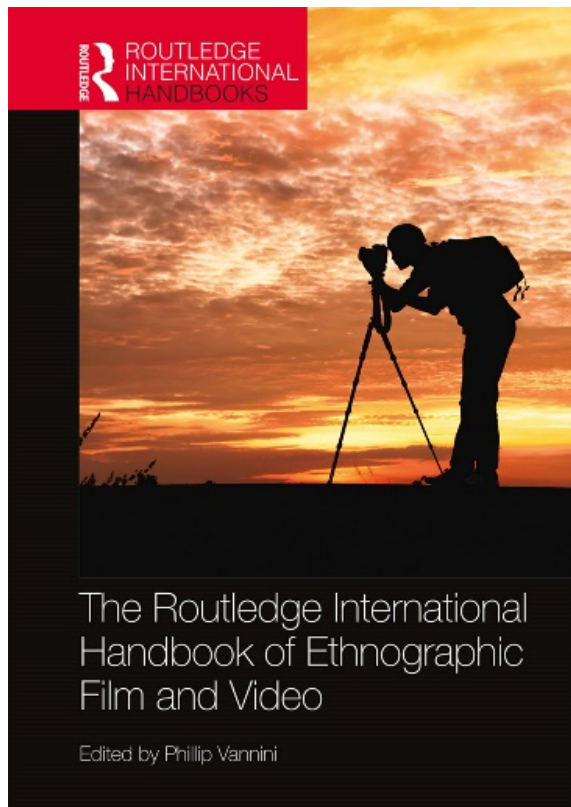
Thanks for Watching. An Anthropological Study of Video Sharing on YouTube, University of Colorado Press, 2020

Link: <https://upcolorado.com/university-press-of-colorado/item/3737-thanks-for-watching>

“In *Thanks for Watching*, Patricia Lange has written a theoretically sophisticated and nuanced ethnography of the social life of YouTube creator/consumers. With welcome clarity of thought, Dr. Lange takes on the pervasive and pernicious assumptions about online communities. Rather than create false dichotomies she invites us to join a conversation about how online and offline lives intertwine, how anonymous players can embrace accountability, and how technologically mediated interactions can build human relationships. She avoids focusing on extremes and celebrities, instead bringing 'a sense of empathy for everyday creators who are trying to have their voices heard and engage in civic dialogue.' This book is a pivotal work for communications theorists across multiple disciplines and will resonate with ethnographers who work with content creators, as well as anyone who has ventured into the worlds of everyday media creation.”

—Jan English-Lueck, San Jose State University

Patricia G. Lange is Associate Professor of Critical Studies at California College of the Arts (CCA) in San Francisco.



Phillip Vannini

The Routledge International Handbook of Ethnographic Film and Video, Routledge, 2020

<https://www.routledge.com/The-Routledge-International-Handbook-of-Ethnographic-Film-and-Video-1st/Vannini/p/book/9780367185824>

The Routledge International Handbook of Ethnographic Film and Video is a state-of-the-art book which encompasses the breadth and depth of the field of ethnographic film and video-based research. With more and more researchers turning to film and video as a key element of their projects, and as research video production becomes more practical due to technological advances as well as the growing acceptance of video in everyday life, this critical book supports young researchers looking to develop the skills necessary to produce meaningful ethnographic films and videos, and serves as a comprehensive resource for social scientists looking to better understand and appreciate the unique ways in which film and video can serve as ways of knowing and as tools of knowledge mobilization.

Phillip Vannini is a Professor in the School of Communication and Culture at Royal Roads University in Victoria, Canada.



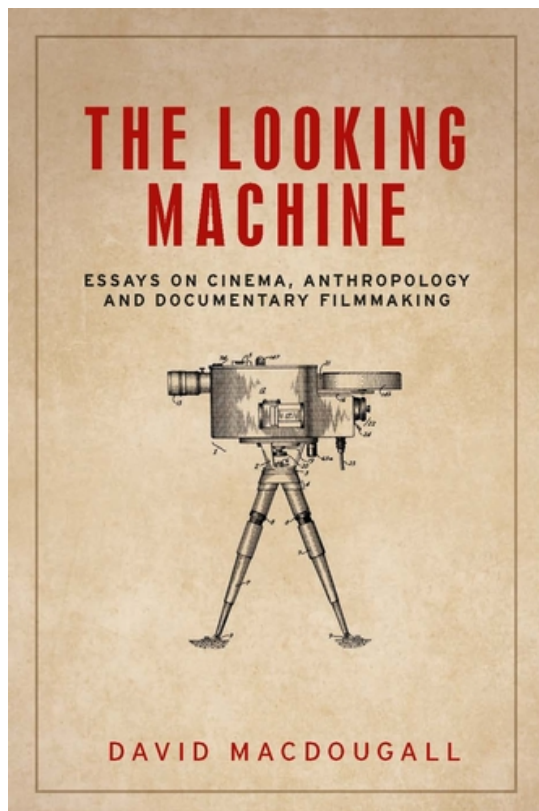
Paul Henley
Beyond Observation. A History of Authorship in Ethnographic Film,
 Manchester University Press, 2020

<https://manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk/9781526131348/>

Beyond Observation is structured by the argument that the 'ethnographicness' of a film should not be determined by the fact that it is about an exotic culture - the popular view - nor because it has apparently not been authored - a long-standing academic view - but rather because it adheres to the norms of ethnographic practice more generally. On these grounds, the book covers a large number of films made in a broad range of styles across a 120-year period, from the Arctic to Africa, from the cities of China to rural Vermont.

Paul Henley discusses films made within reportage, exotic melodrama and travelogue genres in the period before the Second World War, as well as more conventionally ethnographic films made for academic or state-funded educational purposes. The book explores the work of film-makers such as John Marshall, Asen Balikci, Ian Dunlop and Timothy Asch in the post-war period, considering ideas about authorship developed by Jean Rouch, Robert Gardner and Colin Young. It also discusses films authored by indigenous subjects themselves using the new video technology of the 1970s and the ethnographic films that flourished on British television until the 1990s. In the final part of the book, Henley examines the recent work of David and Judith MacDougall and the Harvard Sensory Ethnography Lab, before concluding with an assessment of a range of films authored in a participatory manner as possible future models.

Paul Henley is a Visual Anthropologist. He taught at the University of Manchester and he was director of Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology.

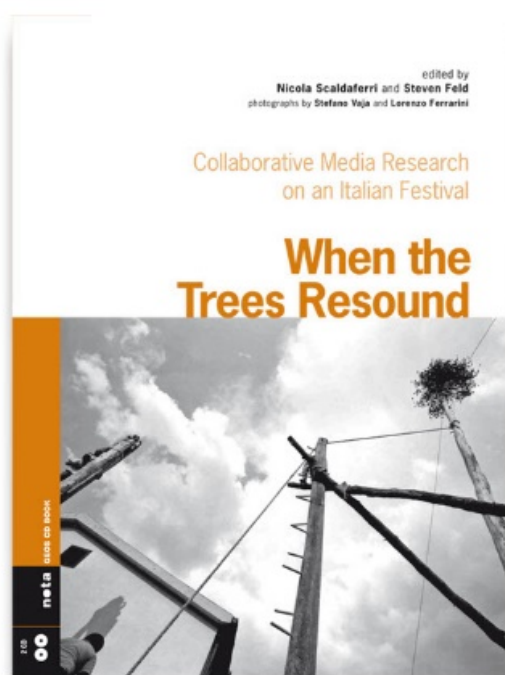


David MacDougall
**The looking machine. Essays on
 cinema, anthropology and
 documentary filmmaking**, Manchester
 University Press, 2019

<https://manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk/9781526134110/>

This new collection of essays presents the latest thoughts of one of the world's leading ethnographic filmmakers and writers on cinema. It will provide essential reading for students in cinema studies, filmmaking, and visual anthropology. The dozen wide-ranging essays give unique insights into the history of documentary, how films evoke space, time and physical sensations, and the intellectual and emotional links between filmmakers and their subjects. In an era of reality television, historical re-enactments, and designer packaging, MacDougall defends the principles that inspired the earliest practitioners of documentary cinema. He urges us to consider how the form can more accurately reflect the realities of our everyday lives. Building on his own practice in filmmaking, he argues that this means resisting the pressures for self-censorship and the inherent ethnocentrism of our own society and those we film.

David MacDougall is an Honorary Professor in the Research School of Humanities and the Arts at the Australian National University, Canberra



Nicola Scaldaferri and Steven Feld
When the Trees Resound, Nota, 2020

<https://www.notamusic.com/prodotto/when-the-trees-resound/>

The Maggio in Accettura – one of the most complex and significant festivals in the Mediterranean area – is here approached from a new perspective. The work revolves around the sonic aspects of the festival, neglected in the numerous ethnographies of the past.

This approach is paired with a methodology, elaborated by Nicola Scaldaferri and Steven Feld, based on dialogue and participation. The work's interdisciplinary perspective is evident in the presence of a dialogic essay and of two complementary CDs, one with a soundscape composition and the other documenting musical practices in Accettura.

The volume brings together the outcome of an intense teamwork, including a large number of photographs by Stefano Vaja – who contributes years of experience in this festival and his theoretical reflections – and by Lorenzo Ferrarini. Ferdinando Mirizzi's essay completes the frame with an analysis of the Maggio in Italian ethnology.

Giuseppe Filardi was fundamental in every part of this work, in his roles of historian, researcher and organizer, in addition to being Accettura's resident priest – hence embedded in the delicate workings of a festival that mixes an intense devotion for Saint Julian with new and ancient ritual and identity practices.

Fabio Calzia, Cristina Ghirardini, Elisa Piria and Guido Raschieri contributed to the documentation of the musical performances.

Nicola Scaldaferri is Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology at the University of Milan, Italy.

Steven Feld is a filmmaker, sound/performance artist, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at University of New Mexico