Digitally performing duoethnography. Collaborative practices and the production of anthropological knowledge

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Abstract

The paper addresses three questions as they relate to shifting anthropological practices in the digital era. Firstly, it illuminates the ways in which ethnographic fieldwork practices have been enabled by digital technologies, affording to be more mobile, dialogical and co-authored by researcher(s) and informant(s) alike. Secondly, it untangles the concept of duoethnography in order to discuss the collaborative research possibilities made available by digital tools and applications, which inevitably inform the performance of our research selves and have the potential to greatly enrich and enlarge the scope of ethnographic fieldwork experience, often characterized by loneliness and isolation. Thirdly, it proposes the creative incorporation of unorthodox approaches, such as remix and design anthropology, so as to facilitate multimodal narration during the ‘writing-up’, especially with regard to research topics that pay particular attention to the affective, sensorial and performative aspect of human experience, as is the case of surrogate motherhood.

In order to elaborate on the three aforementioned aspects, the paper draws on the close collaboration between the two post-doctoral researchers of the project “Ethnography and/as hypertext fiction: representing surrogate motherhood”, implemented at the Department of Social Anthropology, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, and funded by the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation & the General Secretariat for Research and Technology. The project focused on the emerging social practice of surrogate motherhood in order to critically address digital ethnographic textuality, its overarching stake being the fashioning of fictional ethnographic ‘texts’ in a holistic digital environment, and therefore facilitating the non-linear reading of ethnography and its access by non-expert readers.
Is it any different? Ethnography in the digital era

One of the pressing questions that anthropologists who actively engage with digital media face sooner or later in their practice is the following: How different is anthropology today due to technological affordances? How deep and actually revolutionary are the cuts performed by what is termed digital ethnography and how are we to pose new questions and provide fresh answers for century-long preoccupations in our field, such as the politics of representation or the methodologies employed in gaining access to the other’s point of view? That is not to say that we are in any way obliged to make meaningful comparisons with the ‘previous phase’, the ‘canonical’ and ‘traditional’ forms of the discipline or the ‘dying practices’ of anthropology. However, faced with experimental examples and groundbreaking exaltations expressed in recent ‘manifestos’ and epistemological turns, we feel that for the digital turn to be meaningful and not just another buzzword, it cannot be limited to the transportation of old paradigms in digital forms, or to online observation and the handling of data. There has to be something more, right?

For the past two years we have been collaborating as post-doctoral researchers in a project entitled “Ethnography and/as hypertext fiction: representing surrogate motherhood”. In a nutshell, our work has focused on doing “conventional” fieldwork on surrogate motherhood practices in Greece and then we attempt to render the ethnographic narrative in the form of a digital artefact, a narrative space that engulfs all of the stories that we have collected and/or fabricated and which reflect the experiences of our interlocutors in multimodal ways. The experimental and multimodal aspect of our work discussed here has been principally invested on the artefact itself, access to which we consider essential in grasping the context and especially the various examples we refer to henceforth. Therefore, this is (unfortunately!) an article about multimodality and not a tangible example of multimodal writing practice. We seek to place collaborative ethnography along larger discussions about multimodality and ‘the politics of invention’ which invite fresh considerations of the pedagogy of anthropology, not so much in regard to institutional disciplinary canon, but mainly in relation to “the manifold ways of teaching and learning together that emerge during fieldwork, not always made visible, and which exceed the textual and conceptual domain” (Dattatreyan and Marrero-Guillamón, 2019).

Fieldwork practices, collaborative possibilities and ethical considerations have been at the core of our deliberations throughout this collaboration and there were many instances that the tools, the media, the applications and the gadgets subtly guided some of the decisions that we made as researchers and as ‘authors’ and greatly enhanced our sense of being, and working, together in, and after, the field. Therefore, we wish to make a case for the possibility of performing duoethnography by using all the technology currently available to

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1 For the recent discussion that we draw on, see Floridi (2015); Salazar et al. (2017); Günel et al. (2020); Whitehead & Wesch (2012). See also Udups, Costa, and Budka (2018) for a set of reflections that derive from the panel “The Digital Turn”, 15th European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) Biennial Conference, Stockholm, 14-17 August 2018.

2 The paper draws on the research project “Ethnography and/as hypertext fiction: representing surrogate motherhood” (HYFRESMO, 2018-2021), implemented at the Anthropology Department of Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences (Athens, Greece), and funded by the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation & the General Secretariat for Research and Technology.

3 We urge the reader to spend some time navigating through the ethnographic and reflexive material included in the ethnographic artefact (link here). For further discussion on the artefact’s properties in regard to representation and fabrication see Apostolidou (forthcoming); for a detailed discussion that ties the artefact to the ethnographic material that came from fieldwork see Daskalaki & Apostolidou (forthcoming). Note that we take artefact to denote an object of cultural or historical interest made by a human being.
anthropologists, and making use of the relevant theoretical discussion about multimodal ethnography; this approach proved to be especially suitable to our case, as we have been studying a practice that is acutely characterized by a dual relationship: that between a prospective mother or father and the surrogate who carries the(ir) fetus (cf. Apostolidou, Daskalaki and Niari, 2020). Collaborative ethnography, an approach that is more often than not an interdisciplinary affair, affects the performance of ethnographic self and its engagement in a collective manner, and involves a series of distinctive gestures such as personal memory and archival data; self-observational, self-reflective, and self-analytical data; and conversational and interactive data. Researchers from a wide range of disciplines identify a spectrum within this trend, which ranges from duoethnography to collaborative autoethnography, depending on the size of research teams (in pairs or with three or more members), the extent of collaboration (full or partial), and the modes of collaboration (sequential or concurrent) (Chang, Ngunjiri and Hernandez, 2012). The distinction between the two has to do with the research focus (i.e. the self in the case of autoethnography) as well as the principles and channels of collaboration enabled between the two ethnographers. In the present paper, given its limited scope, we concentrate on the aspect of technical affordances and means available to digital ethnographers (Dicks et al., 2005). We place an emphasis on the generative properties of multimodality granted during fieldwork, analysis and write-up in order to join the discussion about the significant implications that multimodal technologies have for the constitution of subjectivity and the production of anthropological knowledge (cf. Pink et al, 2016; Papailia & Petridis, 2015).

Furthermore, although collaboration has long been acknowledged as a celebrated “ethically conscious” in-field perspective (Fluehr-Lobban, 2008), greatly enriched by feminist and postmodernist efforts to re-center ethnography along more dialogical lines (Leavy and Harris, 2019), it has rarely expanded its meaning to register the collaboration between anthropologists⁴. There has always been an implicit ‘I’ behind ethnographic authorship, one which at best needs to be gently blended with the field interlocutors' discourses. In a field that is historically characterized by lonely ventures to distant territories which culminate with a monograph (with an emphasis on the mono-), we wished to use media technologies in order to venture into a more collaborative and shareable research endeavor. In our experience, such a task requires an active engagement with new modalities of writing (eg. podcasts, moving images, coding, etc.) and collaborating is immensely facilitated by participatory research technologies, especially through digital and visual methods (Gubrium and Harper, 2009), which have been gradually gaining ground in the practice of anthropology. The very idea of a solo anthropologist, departing to record reality on her own, is somewhat dated since interdisciplinary work and collaborative models of learning, reading and writing have emerged forcefully over the past twenty years. Recent fieldwork practices are not only faster, simpler, richer and more dialogical but lead to a higher degree of collaboration –indeed often imposed– between anthropologists and other scientists, but also between anthropologists themselves. Such approaches usually serve a double purpose: they employ “co-laboration”, as a primarily epistemic mode that supports researchers delving into other disciplinary areas in order to gain insights and techniques they would then ‘bring back’ to their own field; and “collaboration”, as the political choice of working together with other researchers as a primarily ethical, engaged and public mode of anthropological research (Niewöhner, 2016), especially as regards creative, experimental or art-related projects (Travlou, 2014; Gatt, 2018; Varvantakis and Nolas, 2018). This growing tendency has already worked in favor of the

⁴ For a rare such approach in the Greek example, see Danforth and Van Boeschoten (2012).
solidification of the political as well as epistemological gravitas of a public, engaged and motivated research practice (Lassiter, 2005, 2008; Kuper and Marks, 2011).

**Duoethnography: mobility, reflexivity, collaboration**

Duoethnography is a qualitative research approach that has recently gained ground in digital humanities, in which researchers collaboratively produce a dialogic text in their own voices (Sawyer and Norris, 2013; Norris, Sawyer, and Lund, 2012). Central to this is the account of personal histories as they relate to a phenomenon of importance and the interweaving of the ethnographers’ and the research participants’ stories. Yet, not every written dialogue between two researchers on a topic of importance is a duoethnography; a duoethnographic text adopts a dialogical format, but it is rarely a script of any actual dialogue. The final text is often the result of purposeful juxtaposition and intertwining of stories that could have initially been told separately and then synthesized. The final outcome of the ethnography not only presents multiple views on a phenomenon but also presents them in development, in an attempt to bring together informants’ perspectives and ethnographers’ motives, dispositions and experiences. As noted, “duoethnography invites the researchers to reflect upon and reconceptualize their past experiences and views. In this way, the researchers put themselves in a vulnerable position but simultaneously get room for exposing their personal research journeys and learning” (Zazkis and Koichu, 2015).

Thus, our work falls mainly in the realm of this emerging form of inquiry in which two participants interrogate the cultural contexts of autobiographical experiences in order to gain insight into their current perspectives, and they most commonly explore themes such as race, gender, pedagogy, professional practice, or sexual identity (Breault, 2016). Especially on occasions where the researchers share the same gender and work on issues that touch upon feminist critique, the approach of collaborative authorship, inter-textuality and co-labor frames current practices in a broader historical perspective (Pender, 2017). More specifically, in making a research-based choice about the kind of experimental methodology employed (cf. Daskalaki and Apostolidou, forthcoming), we have adopted the duoethnographic approach in order to address experiences of our own understandings of motherhood, our conceptions of kinship and fertility and we have consistently tried to creatively engage in a dialogic form upon the incoming fieldwork data (Fischer and Vassen, 2011). Either portrayed as a rhizome or as a jazz improvisation, the duoethnographic method is perceived as a grounded, interconnected, and somewhat symbiotic process that does not, however, put the collaborating actors/authors in center stage. As Norris and Sawyer underline, “duoethnographers are the sites of the research, not the topics. They use themselves to assist themselves and others in better understanding the phenomenon under investigation” (2012 p. 13). This is precisely why we employed our own experiences, memories and positionalities towards the creation of the artefact and we have chosen to provide evidence of this reflexive collaboration in a separate space in the navigation through the artefact entitled ‘Ethnographer’s space’ (eg. central image the ‘entrance’ to this section in Figure 1), where we also present ourselves in playful, self-sarcastic and non-textual ways (for example Figure 2) or attempt to visually ‘portray’ the fieldwork and analysis processes we engaged in.
A main challenge in this work is keeping communication channels open based on mutual trust and respect and try to maintain a non-hierarchical modality of working together (Chang, Ngunjiri and Hernandez, 2012, p. 62) and resolve the tensions that arise from collaboration in an inventive and creative manner (Scicluna, 2015). The duoethnography in our case often took the form of an ongoing virtual monologue, which proved to be a highly illuminating technique during fieldwork and the preparation of data-based fictional tales, which were later incorporated in the digital ethnographic artefact.

Acknowledging that this poses an extra degree of difficulty in regards to ethnographic reflexivity, we employed a new way of working with fieldnotes, engaging mainly with audio and visual notes and experimenting with humorous, artistic, imaginary and creative content as we went along (Stalcup, 2011). As the project progressed, we bore witness to Bolter’s position that technologies of writing, and most importantly electronic and digital writing, do not simply reflect how we sing or how we define ourselves but, on the contrary, they participate in perpetual cultural redefinitions of self, knowledge and experience (Botler, 2006 [2001], p. 261).
We soon realized that both the collaborative component, as well as the highlighting of the sensory and the affective, were in accordance with our subject of study: i.e., the somewhat paradox and asymmetrical collaboration between two women in order for a child to be born. From the wide variety of digital methods for collecting data currently available in digital humanities, ranging from big data analysis to tweets and online archival work to mixing methods (Snee et al, 2016) we have chosen to seek those that allow for problematizing concepts of the sensory and the affective experience of ethnographer and her subjects in relation to new media embodied materialities; there is also a growing body of ethnographic studies that have attended to embodied and sensory experience of new devices, media and content (Pink et al, 2015). To that end, we leaned more on the side of visual duoethnography (Shields and Hamrock, 2017) in order to avoid the predominance of the written text and to accumulate material for the development of the digital ethnographic artefact. For example, we took pictures of ourselves, snapshots of our interviews, produced sketches of the positional relations of field interlocutors (i.e., intended father and surrogate or doctor and surrogates, fertility agency representative and prospective parents) and our own placement in these relational dynamics (Figure 3) and then we decided on a semiotic code for each significant theme we wanted to illuminate in our ethnography and systematically produced a multimodal representation of, and commentary about.

An indicative example comes from our analysis of the material living conditions that differentiated the various persons in the field and how this affected their choices, wishes and testimony about surrogate experiences as they were filtered through our own sociocultural positioning and counterpart experience. To that end we created the ‘Private space’ in the artefact, where we employed the semiotic code of architecture (Figure 4) in order to provide a sense of the material conditions of our interlocutors (Figure 5).
This space was then enriched with audio material and some textual material (from reconstructed interview excerpts or other data gathered through online and physical fieldwork) and was arranged by us in a navigation that would coincide with an argument (if written in a textual academic form). In this case, the ‘reader’ is not forced to follow its linear deployment (i.e. they could click anywhere in the digital space and come back to this space, having gained context and another aspect of the same phenomenon - or not). In many instances, we also used - or produced with online tools - snippets of songs or short videos that we felt were relevant or had been indicated by field interlocutors as such.

Also, whereas in our previous experience as researchers in the early 2000s, the research process previously had a somewhat linear escalation from analogue to digital, we are now faced with a more multi-centric process of collecting, analyzing and (re)creating born-digital material that may never exist in another form. Here, a distinction between digitized, born-digital, and reborn-digital helped us acknowledge how each of these types of digital material affects different phases of scholarly work in its own way. Therefore, we are not referring to hand-written notes, taped interviews and collected photos and magazine slips that were digitized after fieldwork in order to be analyzed. The very nature of the digital material was indeed a driving force on its own merit (Brügger, 2016), and we got to experience first-hand
how the available media and techniques allow for data collection to be more mobile, flexible, co-authored by researcher(s) and informant(s) alike.

Figure 6. Back to paper. Turning digital files into analogue notes sometimes helps

In our quest to incorporate all these affordances, we have employed a series of techniques that coincide both with the digital as well as with the duoethnographic orientation of this ethnographic work during fieldwork. Some examples include:

1. Keeping audio/oral notes and sending them to one another from mobile devices as fieldwork progressed. These were not written down, mediated by paper, but delivered merely through the live voice of the ethnographer, which was, among other things, perceived as part of her body and resulted in engaging more senses to the act of hearing thus becoming non-restrictive of imagination (Broadhurst and Price, 2017). At the same time, they were shared almost instantly and were, more often than not, part of a motion (recorded in the car, on foot, after an interview, on vacations), which brought each of us close to one another’s thoughts and daily experience.

2. The same is true for the countless emails and SMS we exchanged during the past 24 months, which, banal as they may feel, encapsulate a huge corpus of information, trivial and breakthrough moments as well as a personal record of our lives the form of text, recorded narrations, photos, videos etc., during personal and professional transitions in, not least of which was the recent lockdown (spring 2020).

3. We also created a shared online journal for field notes in the form of pictures, short videos, links, texts and photographs which proved to be very useful. The original content of the online journal cannot be shared because it involves sensitive personal information of field interlocutors, but anonymized information is included in the artefact in audio format (for some short examples, listen here, here and here).

4. Since part of our project was the creation of fictive ethnographic data, digital tools and media assisted us in experimenting with the creation of artefact-notes (sketches, visual notes, poems, hand-crafted artefacts etc.). We also maintained a repository of all the collected material that came from the field interlocutors and/or the fieldwork experience (meetings’ notes, photos, songs, papers, interview recordings and so on).

5. A pivotal component of digital facilitation during fieldwork was the skype interviewing that took place in several occasions and which familiarized us with new ways of being attentive to our interlocutors (facial expressions, home environment), and self-reflexive; this also gave us the chance to have a rich multi-site fieldwork experience (with informants residing in Russia, Cyprus, the U.S. and other cities in Greece) without ever leaving Athens.
6. Ultimately, along with Ilona Lasica and Maria Niari, valued members of the research team, we engaged in a long series of digital material creations and re-creations, telling and retelling of stories in various forms and mediations, which resulted in the (perpetually and intentionally half-finished) shape of the ethnographic artefact.

The main characteristics of the format of the material was mainly portable, online, multimedia, collaborative (often using web 2.0 tools), audio and fictive/artifactual to a large extent.

Figure 7. Shared online journal with multimedia content
Throughout this turbulent process we felt that this data collection orientation has greatly enhanced two significant parameters of anthropological work: the augmentation of collection and communication practices performed on-the-move and secondly, the different performance of the ethnographic self that is now recordable, instantly shared, sensorily enhanced and much more dialogical than in the near past. We have attempted to share these concerns through audiovisual renderings that emerged through discussion as to the optimal way this could be communicated to ‘visitors’ of our ethnography. For example, in Figure 8 we are visually commenting on our experience with interviewing a US-resident mother of two, who had worked with three surrogates and gave the interview to one of us (via skype or mobile phone, in seven consecutive meetings), as she was walking from her home to work every morning. One of us (both residing in Athens) took the interview, uploaded the file right after each session, and the other one listened, took written and voice notes and responded immediately before the next session was arranged. Usually, this would include a second round of comments uploaded in the fieldwork journal or sent directly to the other one. At a later phase, all fieldwork interviews, each of which followed a different route and employed different tools and communication techniques, were thematically analyzed and greatly contributed to the research topic but, equally important, to our experience of duoethnography.

Figure 8. Mobile ethnographic practices: Interviewing from a distance

Remix, design and ethical predicaments
In continuation of the problematics raised above about the politics of writing, we also have a methodological proposition about the handling and narration of the collected data, one which defies the linear and explicit form of narration we are academically accustomed to. In the multimodal rendering of ethnographic data, we found two concepts very useful in setting free the creative and de-authoring possibilities sustained by the digital turn, namely remix and design approaches. Remix is about the non-permanent information (i.e., text) and promulgates the temporal qualities of knowledge, following the genealogy of thought that fuses pastiche,
montage and bricolage in the humanities. As such it welcomes the subfield of design anthropology (the study of how design translates human values into tangible experiences) as a fruitful contribution to the de-textualization of the discipline. Clipart, memes, animations, scattered notes, digital scenarios, paddlets and other media were employed in the digital artefact in viewing remix as the anthropological use of popular culture language which legitimizes copy-paste practices and playful ethnography and provides an expressing medium for the embodied ethnographic meaning to occur from the researchers in unprecedented ways. More specifically, remix enables a range of creative routes without privileging any single method; it blends playful experimentation with critical interrogation; it values the continual shifts in attitude and focus inherent in the activity of continually moving, borrowing, and regenerating, while at the same time recognizing that quality is something found both in the making and the reception of the product. Also, it focuses attention on the unfinished or experimental mode of producing cultural knowledge with an awareness that one’s individual products will and should be remixed by others, which will refine and improve the product, or transform it to be useful for other contexts (Markham in Salazar et al, 2017, p. 227-228). In this hybridizing and sampling process, we found ourselves gradually engaging in graphic design practices, creating memes (Figure 9), generating visuals from interview excerpts, or creating infographics and posters (Figure 10) and visualizing arguments, in our effort to pictorially create arguments that derived from our readings or from fieldwork.

Figure 9. Meme created by authors as a visual commentary of transition to modernity

In following feminist approaches that focus “on the changing textual forms of scientific knowledge and the ways in which writing is one such emergent ‘tool’ in feminist studies, we view both theories and research strategies to create and collect material as equal factors to shaping knowledge” (Livhovits, 2012b) and we have therefore tried to contest the vertical and linear modality of the text.
To that end, anthropological engagements with design were very informative. “Design anthropology frequently presents itself not as a text but as a knowledge artefact—an object, video clip, or image—which is trying to do some kind of anthropological work” (Drazin 2012, p. 246). Furthermore, design anthropology illustrates that ethnographic observations “can be involved in design practices to foster mutually interacting relations and recast assumptions insofar as ethnographic fieldwork can be a form of engagement and part of transitional practices” (Gunn et al. 2013, p. 7). Among other things, design anthropology’s coupling with digital, visual and sensory methods, echoes Samuel Collins in making the case that as anthropologists we should take an ethical stance towards the future; as he argues “we need – more than ever – to revisit the idea that anthropology might provide material and critique for cultural futures, for the imagination of different lifeways” (2008, p. 8) and address this future-oriented stance as a political act, both disciplinary and personal.
We found that this ethnographic orientation coincides with the parables of the virtual that encompass movement, affect and sensation (Massumi, 2002), replacing the traditional opposition of literal and figural with new distinctions between stasis and motion and between actual and virtual. This approach tackles related theoretical issues by applying them to cultural mediums as diverse as architecture, body art, the digital art, and remind us that although the body has been the focus of much contemporary cultural theory, the models that are typically applied neglect the most salient characteristics of embodied existence—movement, affect, and sensation—in favor of concepts derived from linguistic theory. In the artefact discussed in this paper, we have attempted to address such alternative pathways combining art, text, voice, commentary and visualization, not for their illustrative and awe-ensuing potential, but because we deemed them adequate to the particular experience we gained as situated subject in our field of study. Another such example is our effort to place the discussions we had with each other within the corporeal agonies that we had witnessed from surrogates and intended parents (in private, medical, judicial or other contexts) by using a painting by Salvador Dali and “filling” each bodily drawer with our thoughts and voices within the fragmented body (a feeling that persisted throughout our fieldwork in regard to the stories we have been collecting). In this way, we tried to deliver the process of becoming ‘epistemic partners’ with field participants, which require modes of engagement which allow for reflection upon a shared intellectual purpose (Holmes and Marcus 2008: 82), thus unsettling the observational convention of ethnography and revealing other epistemic practices in fieldwork through “experimentation with the vocabularies in use” (Estalella and Criado, 2018, p. 10-11).

Figure 12. Voice notes in body drawers (from the artefact ‘Ethnographer’s space’).
Keeping ethical limitations in mind (Dobrick, Fischer and Hagen, 2017; Hewson, 2016), and stressing that innovation is about reflexivity as well as the introduction of new techniques (Tagg, Lyons, Hu and Rock, 2017; Nind, Wiles, Bengry-Howell and Crow, 2013), we argue that remix multimodality captures the performative work realized by both women in practices of surrogacy as they play out gendered, sexualized and national anxieties. Our own representational gesture coincides with recent approaches which are multi-sensorial rather than text-based, performative rather than representational, and inventive rather than descriptive (Collins, Durington, and Gill, 2017). Recent philosophical work on the senses that renders an embodied account of ethical relations, exposes that the possibility of self-narration, gives rise to passions such as desire, rage, love, and grief are bound up with becoming a subject within specific historical fields of power (Butler, 2015). Working with theories of embodiment, desire, and relatedness, Butler shows that, as with performative speech (Butler, 1997), primary sense impressions register this dual situation of being acted on and acting. Understanding, in this context, appears to be a matter of senses, emotions, and aesthetics, and design anthropology is most well-suited to address the subtle and contingent ‘nature’ of such concerns (eg. See Figure 13 for our rendering of the surrogate body as a topography of various economic, political, and emotional investments). In our view, multimodality does indeed necessitate and demand “a revelation of the collaborative nature of anthropology and informs the various media produced through these encounters” (Collins, Durington, and Gill, 2017, p. 143).

Figure 13. “The surrogate body” Cover image of the artefact and snapshots of various areas in the artefact that follow the visual theme of the surrogate/fetus body (created by the authors).
A concluding note: failure as a knowledge practice

This project is situated on an experimental and collaborative understanding of anthropology that pushes for the disciplinary expansion of the field. The two principal ways we have attempted to contribute to this discussion is the approach of duoethnography during fieldwork, and the design/remix stance during the 'write-up'. Among the ten key points mapped out by the Future Anthropologies Manifesto, which derived from the 2014 EASA and had a strong emphasis on digitally mediated practices and theoretical orientations, a principal component of opening up of scholarship reads: “We are stubbornly transdisciplinary and transnational: we collaborate, hybridize and compromise. We break boundaries and network without fear of incapacity or contamination (point 2); […] We understand and are understood. We foster a politics of listening attuned to a diversity of voices and we tell stories that are imaginative, illustrative and informative. We create and design a variety of materials and processes that are provocative, disruptive, adaptable and reflexive (point 7)” (Salazar, Pink, Irving, and Sjöberg, 2017).

Aligning ourselves with such perspectives, let us share, before we conclude, what feels like a point of failure on our part. From the beginning of our research, we delved into the reappropriation of the concepts of collaboration and experimentation in pursuit of alternative anthropological narrations and ethnographic methodologies. Such an anthropology, as Pink notes, “departs from not only its observational past, but goes further to untie the identity of the discipline from the long-term fieldwork method which guards the boundaries of ‘proper’ practice” (Pink, 2018, p. 204). Even though initially envisaged as an experimental approach that would break the boundaries between the experiences of researchers and informants and open up readership of ethnography to non-expert or interested parties, we hate to admit that disciplinary gatekeeping and standardization are far more persistent than we anticipated. That does not mean to say that there are no exceptions or note-worthy initiatives in this direction, as the journal on-screen and other such projects confirm. Nevertheless, be it from our long academic training and practice, be it from the presupposed distance between observer and observed or simply because the interest in narrating, writing, curating and authoring is the concern of the anthropologist (who desired, conceived and brought the work to term – to use an analogy from our object of study), the limitations of authorship appeared to us only slightly altered by all the technological mediations. We are probably imbued in the culture of explaining away doubt, and interpreting social interactions and structures that radicalizing representation proves to be harder than expected, even with the clear intention and strenuous effort to do so. De-textualizing and re-authoring anthropology probably takes a lot of work in unlearning the basic tenets with which we have nurtured as research entities and contemplating bodies. For the time being, for all the digital affordances of our time, some persistent and guilt-ensuing issues in anthropology still remain unchallenged. We still have a long way to go.
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