

Transcending Frontiers through a Valorisation of Emotions: Affective Multimodalities as Co-Authored Films¹

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Abstract

Knowledge rooted in the suffering of the unfortunate flows from the margins to the centre where fortunate job holders are located. Such knowledge is then converted into data sets to be held captive as institutional intellectual property. This results in the reproduction of *unfair theory* cut off from its empirical origins. By going against the emotionally distanced ways of disseminating research and by posing the attention to the relational aspects of multimodality, and to the ethics of participation and collaboration, we look into the various ways of how we, as anthropologists, affectively engage in co-creating new narratives. Applying the methodology of *affective multimodalities* proposed by one of the co-authors (Tibet and Deeq, 2022), we highlight how the valorisation of emotions can drive and shape representations of people. We show how emotions can contribute to the transcending of frontiers within the making of more righteous anthropologies through co-authored films.

I rapporti di potere ineguali si riflettono nella produzione e nella diffusione di una conoscenza scientifica fondata sulla sofferenza di coloro i quali si ritrovano ai margini. Una volta acquisita e confluita verso il centro, tale conoscenza è trasformata in dati di ricerca che diventano una proprietà intellettuale istituzionale. Tali pratiche producono una teoria iniqua slegata dalle sue origini empiriche. Le autrici propongono di considerare le emozioni come forze trainanti nella ricerca antropologica, le quali hanno il potenziale di modificare rappresentazioni e narrazioni e, in ultimo, la realtà. Valorizzando le emozioni come fonte epistemologica nella ricerca etnografica e antropologica, puntiamo a dimostrare la loro importanza nella produzione di antropologie più eque. L'articolo si inserisce nel recente dibattito antropologico sulle multimodalità ed approfondisce la metodologia delle 'multimodalità affettive' proposta da una delle co-autrici (Tibet e Deeq, 2022).

Keywords: Affective Multimodalities in collaborative research; migration, Multimodal Anthropology

Parole chiave: antropologia multimodale, migrazioni, multimodalità affettive nella ricerca collaborativa

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Transhumanities Ask for a Multimodal Paradigm Shift

The authors of this paper met for the first time at a summer school dedicated to “*Challenging the sites of knowledge: medial and pluri-medial configurations and transformations*” that took place in Murten, Switzerland, in autumn 2019. The event was hosted by the TransHumanities platform² situated at the Graduate School of the Arts and Humanities of the University of Bern. The event gathered early to senior scholars from different European universities with the aim to foster an interdisciplinary dialogue on the diversification of the sites of knowledge generations, and the ways in which a variety of actors articulate and circulate knowledge in a context characterised by increased connections and technological developments. One of the leading questions of the summer school was regarding how to analyse the (co-) production of representations through audiovisual counter-narratives, in the context of cross-cultural and post-migration settings. As an outcome of these digital transformations, recent participatory information technologies appeared, and one of the effects they generated has been the contestation of the privileged position of scientific knowledge. This is particularly true when looking at the anthropological discipline the authors of this paper belong to.

Already in 1999, Mirzoeff affirmed that we live in the era of the visual screen, where human life is more visual and visualized than ever before. Nowadays, platform and distribution houses, as well as different social media have been multiplying visual landscapes, representations, meanings of and relations to the real. Yet, audiovisual productions shape not only representations and perceptions of people and places, but they also influence research practices. As a matter of fact, most recent anthropological and ethnographic research practices are shaped by technology-driven transformations of the 21st century. Besides ethnographic film and photography, scholars have acknowledged, *inter alia*, the role of smartphones, social media and digital networks (Westmoreland, 2017), both during fieldwork and in the creation of research outcomes. Hence, new anthropological frameworks have been recently proposed, to

² For more information visit: http://blog.wbkolleg.unibe.ch/?page_id=6759 (last access: 18/03/2022).

account for the changing practice anthropologists are engaging in, and especially as a reflection of the changes occurring in «the media ecologies» (Collins, Durnington and Harjant, 2017:142). To encompass these changes, Collins, Durnington and Harjant have proposed the term «multimodal anthropology» to comprise: «(1) the (relative) democratization and integration of media production; (2) the shift towards engagement and collaboration in anthropological research; and (3) the dynamic roles of anthropologists vis-à-vis both the profession and the communities in which they work» (*ibidem*). Through the notion of multimodal anthropology, they propose a new framework at the same time encompassing and broadening what “used to be called Visual Anthropology” (*ibidem*). Through a multimodal framework, different inputs and outputs both during and after the ethnographic experience are taken into consideration: diverse ways of collecting and restituting data through the body, the language, digital supports or direct practice.

The concept of multimodality in anthropology marks therefore a paradigm shift, as it includes these new technologies and media tools into its research practices (Collins et al., 2017; Nolas and Varvantakis, 2020). Following these digital transformations, the *American Anthropologist* journal further stresses the «political potentials of multimodal anthropology, as it offers the discipline a means to collectively and sensorially reckon with our past, present, and imagined future amidst enduring capitalist inequities; racist, caste and sexist normativities; and global ecological decay»³.

Within these premises, the authors of this paper explore how they go against the emotionally distanced writing up of research outputs, and reframe reality through visual representations by visibilising their research participants as partners, co-researchers, co-authors and as active contributors to their own representations. Previous endeavours in anthropology already considered the centrality of collaboration to the practice of ethnography, yet, as Luke Eric Lassiter (2005) highlights in the *Chicago Guide to collaborative Ethnography*, «[...] realizing a more deliberate and explicit collaborative ethnography

3 «Multimodal Anthropology section competition» (2020), text available at the site : <https://www.americananthropologist.org/online-content/multimodal-anthropologies-section-competition>, date of consultation: 08/11/20, last access : 20/03/22.

implies resituating the collaborative practice at every stage of the ethnographic process, from fieldwork to writing and back again». The author also stresses that, despite different forms of collaboration have been integrated in the ethnographic practice and writing, «these collaborations have generally remained veiled, marginalized, or only briefly heralded in larger discussions of ethnography» (*ibidem*).

By posing the attention to the relational aspects of multimodality, and to the ethics of participation and collaboration, we look into various ways of how new narratives and discourses emerge. This paper brings together current developments in (visual) anthropology and research conducted by the co-authors in the past years (Tibet and Deeq, 2022; Moretti, 2014). Through a comparative conceptual lens, we critically reflect on wider mainstream media representations of migrants and borders through co-creative representations. Applying affective multimodalities (Tibet and Deeq, 2022) as the major methodology, the paper highlights how the valorisation of emotions in anthropological inquiry can drive and shape representations of people in their complete wholeness. In so doing, we hope to show how multimodalities and emotions can contribute in reshaping frontiers and therefore in crossing multiple boundaries by building alliances and by going beyond categorical representations.

Affective Multimodality as an Epistemological and Ontological Field Work Tool

Anthropology institutions situated in the West are hosting research projects looking at the burdened lives of those living on the margins, more than ever before. A lot of international and national level funding is being granted to study the most pressing and emotionally challenging issues from child migrants escaping wars, to people subjected to trafficking, sexual harassment, enslavement, torture, disenfranchisement and violence in general. The nature of such work requires anthropologists to work closely with those who experience such unfortunate realities. Hence, emotions are an essential part of conducting such fieldwork. Emotions mediate our relationships with the people we work with. This is a two-way process: we build ties and bond with those we try to understand. We, as scholars (and human beings), are in need to establish relationships before we

can even attempt to understand the world views, cosmologies and life views of “others”.

Anthropological knowledge production of all kinds is embedded in sets of social relationships (the professor, the post doc, the PhD student, the research partners). Anthropology epistemology is itself relational – in the sense that knowledge is collaborative, dialogical, and gained by way of relations, and that (in consequence) «the relationships between researchers and their collaborators become a property of the object of inquiry itself; that is, the relation between the “knower” and the “object” of necessity bends back into the perception of the object itself and is cemented in writing» (Hastrup, 2004: 456). Hence, both as the subjects and objects of knowledge within the institutions of neo-colonial learning, we ask whose knowledge are we working with: our own or that of our research partners? And to what purpose? One needs to ask: whose intellect is the source of knowledge? Who do we mean by the intellectual and to whom do we assert the term? The research partner is in some respects the expert in the field. She is an interlocutor from whom we learn the nuances of a language and culture. She is often the gatekeeper to networks we otherwise would not enjoy. On the other hand, our privileged location calls attention to how she is viewed as lacking expertise – be it requisite educational qualifications, appropriate institutional affiliations, or access to funding.

Knowledge converted into anthropological language is utilized as a source of prestige and recognition. The result opens its way to the creation of new projects. Numerous new vacancies are marketed from institutions situated at the Global North asking to work on the Global South. Western scholarship is a product of an educational system based on Cartesian divisions between “rational thinking” versus “emotions”, these latter often associated with “irrationality”. Such binaries are being challenged in today’s reformations of fieldwork, particularly for those working on issues related to vulnerability. Throughout the history of Anthropology as a discipline, un-empathetic approaches to vulnerable subjects have been documented to have negative and even dangerous effects on a personal, societal and policy level. As Anthropologists instrumentalized “the ethics” and the “impact value” of the science itself for intellectual benefit, they have been criticized for being “insensible”, “unemphatic”, “biased”,

“doctrinated”, “colonial”, “cynical”, “hostile”, “discursive”, “categorical”, “exclusive”, “racist” and “ethnocentric”. Hence, while anthropology has long since sought to question the need of ‘cleaning’ theories and methods from emotionality, it has not yet approached it as a transformative tool. In this paper, we rather engage with how emotionality can transcend the road to scientific knowledge, honest intellectuality, and transformative research. We therefore adopt multimodality as an epistemological and ontological fieldwork tool from moving beyond the discursive to the affective, the apathetic to the empathetic, from the colonial to the decolonial, both in terms of theory and methods.

Is the language of research participants and partners only made knowledge once it has been translated for the anthropologists’ readership? If so, we must ask who we are producing knowledge for. “Do we”, as bell hooks puts it (1989: 15), «position ourselves on the side of colonizing mentality?» Or is our co-produced knowledge put «towards that revolutionary effort which seeks to create space where there is unlimited access to the pleasure and power of knowing, where transformation is possible?» (*ibid.*). Following hook’s (1989) language as a place of struggle, and Spivak’s (1998) unlearning proposition, we highlight our experiences of “unlearning one’s own learning” as we intend to explore the idea of unlearning one’s privileges and learning in terms of ethics by seeing with new eyes.

In Hymes sense, we argue that anthropology needs to lose itself to find itself again (1974). Observing a movement towards claiming ownership over the making of new scientific languages within and beyond the discipline, we believe, there is a growing necessity for not working from one single expertise. Hence, with a firm belief that theory could itself contribute to practical political change and social transformation, we work towards non-hierarchical, personal, political and even sentimental co-authored papers written through reflexive and interpretive techniques together with radical innovations and participatory working methods.

Becoming Allies Through Affective Multimodalities

In her long-lasting PhD and Postdoctoral work, Tibet brings *affective multimodalities* as a conceptual methodology forward, by making use of a wide array of storytelling methods of performativity and affection. Inspired by the decolonizing

pedagogy of Paulo Freire, Gayatri Spivak, Frantz Fanon and bell hooks the major aim of the methodology is to enact global transformation to liberate humankind from the prevailing forces of global inequalities and therefore transcend those from apathy to empathy, and from neutrality to action. The guiding objectives of the methodology are: 1) to stimulate boundary-crossing dialogue, innovative thinking and regenerative action, 2) to build alliances that reinvent our scholarship into becoming more co-creative and participatory. Based on the conviction that equity is about sharing resources and decision-making power, our papers' theory of change encourages: the building of alliances for a more participatory and engaged scholarship, as we build on the many ways on how scientific engagements with people among marginalized groups could organize mutual help and act in making and unmaking of unity, solidarity and possibility. An informative, entertaining and therapeutic way of a catalytic space of knowledge co-creations, is therefore on the constant making.

Affective multimodalities can thus be seen as a horizontal methodology driven by ethical ideals of equalizing the flow of power relations (Tibet and Deeq, 2022). In this perspective, we consider the research participants as allies in the co-production of knowledge, by also recognising them as potential co-writers, co-scripters, co-ethnographers, co-narrators and co-authors. To illustrate what we mean by the overall co-partnership; the making of *Ballad for Syria*⁴ (2017) would serve as a good case study.

The film delves into Maisa's own personal story and her longing for her loved ones as she tries to make a place for herself in the world of the displaced. Her family is still in Damascus, Syria, Maisa's true love and fiancé is in the Netherlands. As of the current EU-Turkey border regime, for them to reunite is very challenging. Not giving up, Maisa works hard for her vision to transform the borders. By building a multicultural community that is The Istanbul Mosaic Oriental Choir, a diverse family that sings together, Maisa believes through music and love one can

⁴ *Ballad for Syria* (2017), an award-winning documentary film by Eda Elif Tibet and Maisa Alhafez, has been nominated for the best ethnomusicology award by the Royal Anthropological Association and has been an official selection at the Society for Visual Anthropology's film festival. Official website: www.balladforsyria.com (last access: 23/03/2022).

heal the wounds of her people and children. Our work serves to what Renato Rosaldo calls a remaking of cultural analysis, and a reworking of anthropology similar to what Arturo Escobar talks about: anthropology other/wise – i.e. by taking the minorised, marginalised, indigenised seriously, we bring in the participatory ethics as the most democratizing and de-colonial way of a humanities' understanding and enactment (Harrison, 2016: 6):

«To the extent where one truly recognizes people's full humanity, that should also mean to recognize their wisdom, their intelligence, their capacity to produce forms of knowledge that include potentially powerful interpretations and explanatory accounts of the world, which give us the clues to then create strategies to change the world»

Following Bhabha's recognition of people who can formulate critical and social theory both through courageous action and through thought, our visual anthropology work also builds on Rouchs' understandings in narrating shared ethnography that reveal a personal approach to history and memory. Our aim in co-directing a personal narrative of the way displacement has been experienced by Maisa Alhafez has not been to represent an entire society or group of asylum seekers in seek of what the truth has been, but it has been to use the medium of cinema as a transformative tool that showcases sisterhood and solidarity in blurring the boundaries and overcoming the hierarchies between the so-called "different people" and "different nations". Our experience of co-creating this film has made us realize that difference among humans is all made up, it is a colonial capitalist project of borders. As Maisa rightfully says during our conversation:

«What hurts and troubles me the most is when I have to go through an awful hell of processes and procedures to be able to gain a Schengen Visa to meet my loved ones, whereas people from all around the world are freely able to travel to Syria to fight and war in my home country»

A feminist critique is being brought about here in the co-creative piece of transcending these boundaries through participatory film work in re-storying and reshaping Maisa's and therefore her closest circles' realities in accessing love, well-being and

safety. Our aim was to transcend borders, and for that as the first step, hierarchical positions of the filmmaker and the one who is being filmed had to be eliminated, we therefore directed and narrated it together. Hence, our intention in making this film has been firstly to transform such power structures. Our vision has therefore been: "Transform one person, transcend yourself and so transform the world". Following Deleuze, we undertook an ethnographic effort to illuminate the singularity of human becoming, as we documented on how new intersections and imagination can sometimes propel unexpected futures against all odds. It is particularly the ending scene of our film that sheds light on how each and every one of us has the potential to speak like Jean Rouch, of whom Maisa has never heard of before:

«I feel like your camera is now like a mirror, when I tell you my pain. I feel it reflects something into your life. I feel you are very similar to me. And see ... so this is not only the music. It's art, photography and films. All these things that make people closer to each other can make this mirror. Can make this copying. Getting close. You find your life maybe changed after we met. You get affected by me, I get affected by you. This is the mixing»

Even though we talk about participant observation, informal and unstructured interviews, we, as anthropologists, need to do lots of other things in order to conduct a robust ethnographic study and analysis. Ethnography is much more methodological than anything (Harrison, 2016: 9). And there needs to be room for improvisation as we gain our information from lots of different locations, channels and intersections, to leave them out from the analysis or discussion would just not be right as advocacy work is very often embodied and part of our lives, perhaps even the centre of our lives where one could be finding the most meaning in such dedication. Particularly if one is in the midst of things long enough, witnessing to enormous societal changes during the course of the field work, there is nothing but to accredit every struggle, challenge and ways out, particularly in not to fall into a reductionist and positivist account of an ethnography that is only expected to be based on observation or interpretation. That kind of ethnography is outdated and an impossible one to realize in today's transnational global world, as it would only be lacking the flavours and colours of life. This approach includes going

beyond the binary oppositions: «things out there and theory in here, or institutions here and actions there» (Bhabha, 1992: 66).

These efforts of both co-creating applied research that is informing policy making and performing policy making through academic publications, artistic performances and exhibitions are all done in Spivak's terms: in the name of learning affirmatively to sabotage the conventional disciplinary learning and limitations, so that we could use it for those who did not have the right to access or participate or benefit from the extensive knowledge that is being produced by a network of people who are holding powerful positions. In Spivak's terms, affirmative deconstruction is what she calls as the affirmative sabotage is to turn knowledge around and use it against the grain in order to learn how to share with those who yourself have damaged or could have damaged. Following Gyan Prakash's discourse that is «to force a radical rethinking and reformulation of forms of knowledge and social identities authored and authorized by colonialism and western domination» (Gyan, 1995: 8). Hence, building alliances for affirmative deconstructions through affective multimodalities is our proposition to a more decolonised manifestation of what Anthropology could potentially become.

Throughout the next subchapter, we discuss a first encounter with collaborative film-making in anthropology which laid the ground to embryonal reflections about collective affective practices in the field, from data collection to production of research results.

Co-Authorship and (Affective) Multimodal Creations: Beyond Categorical Representations

When co-author Federica Moretti was doing research in Brussels to shoot a short documentary film, together with fellow future anthropologists Céline Dewez, Madara Kanasta and Anna Rogava (2014) in the frame of a visual anthropology class, ethical questions and categories emerged. At that time, the Ebola outbreak was shooting West African countries since December 2013. Undocumented migrants from Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia were asking for subsidiary protection on the ground of health issues. This protection is usually given to a third-country national who would face a real risk of suffering

serious harm as defined in Art. 15 of Directive 2011/95/EU. Yet, the category of serious harm does not encompass epidemics. They thus faced the imminent risk to be sent back to these countries, and be caught into the spread of the virus. With the help of an association from Brussels, undocumented people from Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia gathered together to ask for special protection measures, on the ground of the epidemic. After several months of occupation and mobilisations over the winter, the struggle did not result in what they expected, and they were not granted special protections.

We followed these revindications and made a short documentary out of these events – *[un]DOCUMENTED* (2014). As the protagonists were all undocumented people, we were deeply concerned about the possible harming effects our visual production could have caused. We thus shared our worries with them and, as a reply, we got a firm will to be shown in their whole beings. They even entrusted us with some videos they shot with their phones, which we decided together to integrate in the short documentary, as they showed the collective efforts they were making to achieve their objectives. During this fieldwork experience, a discussion we had with one of the people involved made us reconsider our position as fledgling anthropologists, and the ways we apply categories while doing research. One of the people we were working with firmly said that «*personne ne nous voit, on est invisible. Avec ces revendications et votre vidéo, on a finalement des visages. On est quelqu'un. Mieux vaut être quelqu'un en prison que personne dans la rue*»⁵. This sentence struck us. The conversation went on and disclosed the feelings of misrepresentation the people we were working with were experiencing. Through these mobilisations, they wanted to show that, rather than being *anonymous migrants*, they were *active people working together* to be recognized as human beings unwilling to return to a country where they would have risked to die for illness. In addition, these revindications and the short film acted as a counter-stigma. In fact, they reported the difficult situation they were experiencing as they were associated with

5 «*Nobody sees us, we are invisible. By protesting and thanks to your video, we can finally have faces. We are someone. It is better to be someone in prison, than no one in the street*». Our movie started indeed with a similar quote: «*I cannot afford to hide. If I want to fight, I have to show myself. I am not afraid*» (Dewez, Kanasta, Moretti, Rogava, 2014, min. 0:05).

Ebola and, as such, avoided or pointed as the potential carriers (and plague spreaders) of this virus – by other migrants too. This latter aspect was particularly stressed during our field, as it implied the creation of a subcategory of the undesirable. In addition to being perceived and referred to as economic migrants by the media and the public, being fingered as plague spreaders added an additional layer which contributed in creating further hierarchical categorisations – and ultimately regimes of (un) desirability –, both outside and inside migrants' groups.

As a matter of fact, their pleas were filled with double-sided emotions. On the one hand, they were hoping to be granted special protection to stay in Belgium during the time of the epidemic and not fearing possible death. On the other, they had family and friends dying from the virus whom they could not help. They were experiencing an extremely painful situation as they felt powerless in regard to the people they cared for. By going into the street, occupying buildings, navigating through different social media and participating in our short documentary, they mobilized different media to resituate and present themselves as people with fears, hopes and contrasting emotions by countering administrative and widespread media representations of migrants as “welfareers” or brittle refugees. These multimodal affective interventions brought to the fore the importance of considering feelings in research. The role of emotions in qualitative research is actually not new, and it has been previously explored by authors like Sherryl Kleinman and Martha Copp (1993). In their book *Emotions and Fieldwork*, where they examined how fieldworkers' feelings in relation to the people 'they study', their work and their identity as researchers permeate the analysis. Then, the literature also acknowledges the emotional risk for research respondents (Bloor, Fincham and Sampson, 2010) and researchers (Hubbard, Backett-Milburn and Kemmer, 2010). More recently, new discussions include risk management debates – for both the researchers and the research participants –, especially brought to the forefront by the ethical clearances required by funding bodies (Iphofen, 2013). This approach, aimed at reducing the possible harm research can cause, may reinforce hierarchical imbalances and further people's invisibility. Yet, still little has been said about the interplay between researchers' and participants' emotions,

and the ways they relate to and inform research practices and outcomes (Tibet and Deeq, 2019), and especially in the ways they contribute in creating new media narratives that can generate counter-representations and challenge power structures. In reference to *[un]DOCUMENTED*, the co-creation of this visual narrative, by including our interlocutors and their media productions in our short documentary, was a transformative tool as it attempted to rebalance partial representations of people and events, by posing particular attention to their affective sides as powerful initiators of action.

Final Reflections

When we saw the call for contributions proposed by *Tracce Urbane*, whom editors invited reflections on the ways a multiplication of visual representations via social media, streaming platforms and documentary film festivals contribute in reframing reality, we decided to join forces and become allies to engage in a reflexive stance on our very own discipline. We are aware of the embryonal state of this article, but our writing was driven by the strong desire - as anthropologists, social scientists and human beings -, to contribute to the efforts also other scholars (Anderson, 2013; Brubacker, 2013; Dahinden, 2016; Podjed et al., 2020; Salazar, 2020; Salzbrunn, 2020) have been doing in reshaping and crossing multiple boundaries who are permeating academia and public debates, with a particular focus on migration and mobility studies.

In recent years, as anthropologists, we are more and more demanded to anonymize the people we work with, especially if they are considered as vulnerable subjects. This approach, aimed at reducing the possible harm research can cause, may reinforce hierarchical imbalances and further people's invisibility. Furthermore, these requirements obscure the fact that "much of the knowledge we co-produce with our interlocutors is embodied" (de Koning et al. 2019:171), and created through affective exchanges, as the documentaries discussed above - *Ballad for Syria* and *[un]DOCUMENTED* - showed.

By acknowledging the collaborative nature of knowledge production, the role that emotions play in this collaboration, and the ways various multimodalities in participatory action

research can create spaces of expression that go beyond text and discourse, the co-authors of this paper co-produce anthropological documentary films and multimodal media with those whom they partner and become allies with, so to overcome, transcend and nuance hierarchical boundaries. Though we propose to consider our field companions (Scott, 2009; Newman, 2020) as allies, we do not mean to deny or erase potential epistemic tensions which may occur in collaborative exchanges, both in the field as well as in the creation and circulation of research outputs. With these terms we rather highlight the necessity to join forces in research and the complementary role of the people we work with, even those with whom we are not necessarily affectively aligned with. By using the term “allies”, we highlight the reciprocal and generative aspects of ethnographic and anthropological exchanges which rely on mutual interactions.

Through a co-creative epistemological positioning on knowledge production in the field of engaged anthropology today, we critically engage with postcolonial discourse on how hierarchical categories of analysis can risk contributing to boundaries between “us”, as scholars, and “them”, as migrants (Brubaker, 2013; Anderson, 2013).

By going against the emotionally distanced writing up of research outputs and by posing the attention to the relational aspects of multimodality, and to the ethics of participation and collaboration, we looked into the various ways of how we, as anthropologists, affectively engage in co-creating new narratives and discourses. Particularly, following the recent technology driven digital transformations, we join the multimodal turn in anthropology as we acknowledge its collective and sensorial potential in enquiring capitalist-driven inequalities.

Merging academia, film-making and music contributed to a broad range of disciplines and theoretical approaches like participatory shared and self-reflexive methodologies. The making of the film *Ballad for Syria* allowed Maisa to analyse her own experiences and meaning creation on war, loss, trauma, past, present, love, community, place making, displacement, family, borders and migration. The film also allowed the audience to understand what it means to be away from family and see the injustice of how people were restricted from moving towards their loved ones,

but those who wanted to fight in Syria were able to transport in ease. With the creation and dissemination of the film, we believe we promoted a dynamic interchange between critical reflection, creativity and originality. Looking at Maisa and hearing her and her choir's voice, the culture defenders of the Syrian diaspora were represented the way they wanted to be. Our aim in co-directing a personal narrative of the way displacement has been experienced by Maisa Alhafez has not been to represent an entire society or group of asylum seekers in seek of what the truth has been, but it has been to use the medium of cinema as a transformative tool that showcases sisterhood and solidarity in blurring the boundaries and overcoming the hierarchies between the so-called "different people" and "different nations". We believe that bringing emotions to the centre, and linking them to recent developments in visual anthropology – i.e. multimodalities –, would prove important in at least two ways. On the one hand, in the attempt to "de-migranticize" (Dahinden, 2016) not only migration and integration research, but also public debates on the matters. On the other hand, to 'migranticize' research, by actively involving the subjects of our researchers into the process of knowledge production. This means to not only seeing them as interlocutors, but also as potential partners – allies – of our works. We believe these collaborations follow the recent developments in the anthropological and ethnographic practices, where experimentations with new methodologies and ways to disseminate research by using film, theatre and other art-based practices are at the forefront of the discipline (Schneider and Wright, 2010; Sansi, 2016; Elliott and Culhane, 2017; Salzbrunn, 2015, 2020). Nevertheless, affective multimodalities include to these experimentations an additional contribution: the affective side of research exchanges. By highlighting the affective side of doing research, we ask for the valorisation of emotions in our scholarship so that we can call for a more collaborative research environment, not only in the relationship between researchers and 'allies', but also within academia itself. In particular, affective multimodalities highlight how the valorisation of emotions in anthropological inquiry can drive and shape representations of people in their complete wholeness into shifting narratives and therefore reality. Yet, this approach could prove fruitful also beyond the anthropological

discipline, as it calls for a more affective way of doing research in the (social) sciences and humanities at large. Through this article, we aimed at showing how emotions as a valorised source for field research can contribute to the transcending of frontiers within the making of more righteous Anthropologies, through co-authored and co-created films.

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