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DOSSIER: REIMAGINING AUDIOVISUAL ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

The visual discourse as a vehicle to communicate ethnomusicological research: Sharing academic knowledge in *Encomendação das Almas*

El discurso musical como medio para comunicar la investigación etnomusicológica: compartiendo conocimiento académico en *Encomendação das Almas*

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Abstract

This research focuses on the visual discourse in ethnomusicological research; the challenges arising from the sharing of academic knowledge to the non-academic community and the visual discourse as a platform for dialogue in the musical performance *Encomendação das Almas*. This article aims to bring to the discussion the process of elaborating a documentary film, its impact on the field as well as understanding the dynamics arising from dialogues between “bottom up” practices and the “top down” actions of the local cultural agents. The *Encomendação das Almas* is a musical practice that occurs at midnight, in the villages of *Idanha-a-Nova* during Lent. This proposal will try to answer the following questions: What is the role of the ethnomusicologist in the elaboration of a documentary film? What is the impact of the film on the field under study? How can visual discourse strengthen a bond with both the field and academic community?

Keywords

Visual discourse, Musical performance, Documentary film, Heritagisation, Portugal.

Resumen

Esta investigación se centra en analizar el discurso visual en la investigación etnomusicológica, los retos que surgen al compartir el conocimiento académico con la comunidad no académica y el discurso visual como plataforma de diálogo en la actuación musical *Encomendação das Almas*. Este artículo pretende aportar al debate el proceso de elaboración de una película documental, su impacto sobre el terreno y la comprensión de las dinámicas que surgen de los diálogos entre las prácticas “de abajo arriba” y las acciones “de arriba abajo” de los agentes culturales locales. La *Encomendação das Almas* es una práctica musical que tiene lugar a medianoche, en las aldeas de *Idanha-a-Nova* durante la Cuaresma. Esta propuesta intentará responder a las siguientes preguntas: ¿Cuál es el papel del etnomusicólogo en la elaboración de una película documental? ¿Cuál es el impacto de la película en el campo estudiado? ¿Cómo puede el discurso visual fortalecer un vínculo tanto con el campo como con la comunidad académica?

Palabras clave

Discurso visual, interpretación musical, película documental, patrimonialización, Portugal.

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Introduction

There are two places from which we can think of using this visual and audible register. One is the place of documentary as a historically defined cinematographic genre with borders with fiction, with experimentation, with television, with reporting... these are very fluid borders. But this idea of documentary as a place of rhetoric, of producing a true rhetoric, I think is very important as a basis for thinking about our discourse.

(Alves Costa 2020)

This article focuses on documentary and visual ethnography as methodological tools in ethnomusicological fieldwork. Based on this discussion, the possibilities, and methodologies for the use of image and sound will be explored as discourses to think about academic research but also as mediators of communication between researchers and “investigated”, assuring the borders are diluted with their use (Pink 2013). Considering that, in ethnomusicology, the researcher has a commitment to the field, this chapter aims to consider “giving back” (Schippers 2015) as an integral part of this area and re-evaluate academic writing (Mahon 2014) with the search for a discourse that, although not generalised, is intended to be democratic. This contribution aims to discuss the process of making a documentary film, its impact in the field, as well as to understand the dynamics resulting from these dialogues. I thus considered visual ethnography and documentary cinema as a tool of “exchange” between the holders of the tradition and the researchers. According to Mahon, it is also a democratic way of presenting the results and promoting the discussion of the researcher's work, which will thus be able to circulate outside the academic “sphere” and be of use for both academic and non-academic readers:

We should also think about the politics of writing: (...) Do we hope our writing will circulate outside of ethnomusicology, outside of music studies, outside of the academy? (...) Should we use language and formulations that have academic currency, but that may be inaccessible or completely unappealing to nonacademic readers? (...) We need to think strategically about the venues we choose and the voices we use (Mahon 2014: 332).

I will write supported by specialised literature on cinema, documentary cinema and visual anthropology, adapting it to the operationalisations of ethnomusicology. I will also write from my own personal experience as a director and sound operator in several documentary films, specifically

*For Whom You Have There*¹, a film about the performance of the *Encomendação das Almas* in Penha Garcia, Portugal, produced and premiered in 2017.

Considering the documentary film as a resource to complement ethnomusicological research, in this article I aim to understand the challenges inherent in film production (Grimshaw & Ravetz 2005; Ruby 2007); understand how it can become not only a means of disseminating and archiving traditional practices, but also of academic study and analysis (Adamo 2010); and to contribute to the reflection of the role of documentary cinema and visual ethnography in a perspective of artistic production, combined with academic research. Thus, the discussion of this chapter is based on the process of capturing, directing and editing a documentary short film on the performance of the *Encomendação das Almas* in Penha Garcia from the images shot in 2016 and 2017.

In this process, I considered the making of the documentary as relevant due not only to the photographic possibilities of the performance, that is, its visual expressiveness, but also to the discussion it generated and generates around the “arrival” of a relatively new domain to the sphere of ethnomusicology. According to Pawels in the *Sage Handbook of Visual Research* (2011), visual research may be an “intermediate stage” of a research project, or even a scientific final product:

A number of key modes of visual research (including image production) begin with the primary reality from which the social scientist selects events and phenomena to be visually recorded and processed as an intermediate phase in a research project, or as a proper scientific end product (Pawels 2011: 7).

Visual ethnography and documentary film had great relevance for me as a researcher during my academic journey. I had already participated in some video and audio recordings and in a documentary film as a sound operator but never as a director of a documentary film about a musical practice that is central to my research. The relevance of this experience with the moving image as an integral part of my investigation was part of a process of learning and discovery. These processes gave me the opportunity to reflect on my role as a researcher in the field and in what way is video recording an investigation tool. From this process some difficulties and challenges emerged, both ethical and technical, and opened the discussion to various themes, which I will try to address later. This proposal will seek to answer the following questions: What is the role of the ethnomusicologist in the making of a documentary film? What impact does the film have on the field? How can the visual discourse strengthen a bond between the field and the academic community?

¹ Original title: “Por Quem Lá Tendes” can be seen through the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyF2Eki9DI4&t=>

Part 1. Introduction to *Encomendação das Almas*²

This research includes the study of the *Encomendação das Almas* (literally, the Commissioning of Souls) in the municipality of Idanha-a-Nova, Portugal. The main argument that supports my research is that this musical performance converges in a non-conflicting way between three main pillars; religious expression, an activism by the different villages' population for the local traditions and the tourist exploitation of the local culture perpetuated by the autarchy and local "decision makers".

During Lent, starting in Ash Wednesday and ending in Easter Sunday, the *Encomendação das Almas* musical performance is part of the so-called "Easter Mysteries in Idanha-a-Nova", a group of "religious manifestations" (as said in the tourist brochure edited by the autarchy) that occur in all the villages of the municipality. The *Encomendação das Almas* is performed on Fridays with special predominance on the last three Fridays before Easter. The main characteristic of this musical performance is that the people who participate in it, walk in complete silence, and make stops in high places, where they sing in unison and pray. By doing so, they believe they are guiding their deceased loved ones from purgatory to heaven. Although in the different villages of the municipality the musical performance has the same designation –*Encomendação das Almas*– the research I developed allowed me to know that locally this musical performance varies from one village to another, in the number and gender of participants, the hour it starts (even though it is always at night) the number of stops and also in the melodic structures of the chants, as well as in the lyrics.

Part 2. Visual Ethnography as approach, method and discourse

In Part 2 I will approach the intentionality of the study of "social sciences" through a visual approach, whether they are photographs, videos, or in this case, films. According to Pawels (2011), there are some events or activities that society offers and that the researcher studies that have processes and dynamics that give "important aspects of human organisation". In effect, these processes benefit from a visual approach in order to capture, both for the researcher and for the communities, their richness and complexity, as well as their development and transformation over time and space:

'Rituals and other highly prescribed activities' in a society offer very condensed information on important aspects of human organisation. Depicting these processes may also benefit from a visual approach, because of its ability to capture the richness and complexity of the event, its capacity to cope with the semiotic hybridity (different types of signs and orders of signification) of the depicted including its cultural specificity, and development over time and space (especially when using continuous visual recording techniques: film or video) (Pawels 2011: 9).

² This article is the result of the investigation I conducted in the framework of the PhD in Ethnomusicology in the Department of Communication and Art at the University of Aveiro. Integrated in the Foundation for Science and Technology project "EcoMusic - Sustainable practices: a study of the pos-folklorism in Portugal in the 21st century". This investigation led to my PhD thesis: The "Easter Mysteries" at the centre of a constellation: dynamics of heritage, revitalisation and affection in Idanha-a-Nova, accessible here: <https://ria.ua.pt/handle/10773/35270>.

According to Banks (2001), the argument that the “social sciences are ‘disciplines of words’” and that there is no space for the image, except as a “support” must be deconstructed (Banks 2001). Indeed, the popularity of visual anthropology has been gaining more relevance, both in terms of academic publications and specialised courses at universities. Adamo (2010) reinforces the methodological importance of audiovisual documentation as a tool for ethnomusicological research. However, in the author's view, the ability of these audiovisual documents to transmit information and knowledge must be analysed. Banks maintains that place, sound source, physical behaviour, the relationships between the performers, and the relationships between the performers and the public, which can give us the social context of the performance, are the information that the researcher will be able to assimilate and interpret through the images that can sometimes go unnoticed during fieldwork.

But before delving into how we can communicate our work visually, it is necessary to talk about the ethnographic process and how it is part of our research work. James Clifford stresses that the ethnographic process is a method for understanding the system of meanings or the way a culture of a given community is structured. In this sense, ethnography reframes and innovates because the field itself is also constantly changing and transforming. Ethnography is thus part of this process:

Ethnography is actively situated between powerful systems of meaning. It poses its questions at the boundaries of civilisations, cultures, classes, races, and genders. Ethnography decodes and recodes, telling the grounds of collective order and diversity, inclusion and exclusion. It describes processes of innovation and structuration and is itself part of these processes (Clifford 1986: 2-3).

Being part of this very process of structuring a given community, ethnography is a key tool for the work of researchers, and consequently important for the visual discourse and process, whether through a film or through visual ethnography itself. The same author also affirms the essential characteristic of ethnography as being able to separate a set of behaviors from the oral and ritual sphere, decontextualising them: “It is a process through which unwritten behaviors, speech, beliefs, oral tradition, ritual begin to be configured as a corpus, a potentially significant set separate from the immediate discourse or the performative situation” (James Clifford, 1998 cit. in Pestana and Ribeiro, 2014: 36).

With visual ethnography, the researcher could have a tool that allows him to observe and interpret a performance with a critical eye: “a willingness to look at common sense everyday practices – with extended, critical and self-critical attention, with a curiosity about particularity and a willingness to be decentred in acts of translation” (Clifford 2000: 56).

In this process, fieldwork as a context that, as Cooley and Barz refer, “makes academics social actors within the cultural phenomenon they study” (2008: 4), requires a critical stance. In fact, the field work that I tried to develop is based on a way of approaching the reality under study, which also includes two-way observation (researcher/collaborators in the field, with a face-to-face

interaction), the experience of musical practice and of local social life and complemented with audio and video capture. In this sense, according to Pawels, the content of visual ethnography may be an “objectifiable” content that will have its archival importance, but it may also itself (the filmed content) be the focal point of the investigation: “The content or that which is depicted is an important source of data, and for most researcher-generated visuals the focal point of analysis” (Pawels 2011: 11).

Grimshaw and Ravetz (2005) explore the concept of “Visualising Anthropology” by discussing in depth the implications that the adoption of visual discourse for ethnography may have in contrast to literary discourse, as well as the challenges that researchers may have when they are carrying out fieldwork, namely within the limits of participant observation. Addressing participation and observation, film critic and theorist Bill Nichols divides the documentary genres into Poetic, Expository, Reflexive, Observational, Performative and Participatory. The latter, clearly aimed at the social sciences and their methodology, is closer to what this article refers to, dealing with the experience of the field and fieldwork, leading the author to participate “in the lives of others”:

The social sciences have long promoted the study of social groups. (...) Such research usually calls for some form of participant-observation. The researcher goes into the field, participates in the lives of others, gains a corporeal or visceral feel for what life in a given context is like, and then reflects on this experience, using the tools and methods of anthropology or sociology to do so (Nichols 2001: 116).

Indeed, the work of the ethnomusicologist, whether working with video or not, is to be present. In my specific case, not being an inhabitant of the village, in certain aspects it was positive. In that way, I had a “detachment” in relation to the observed context, without ever forgetting the “immersion” in the field. Nichols addresses the issue of “being present” in both participation and observation, and I consider it to be central to thinking about our positioning and our view as researchers (observational and critical view), filmmakers (view through the camera's “lens”) and interlocutors (ethical view):

‘Being there’ calls for participation; ‘being here’ allows for observation. That is to say, the field worker does not allow herself to “go native,” under normal circumstances, but retains a degree of detachment that differentiates her from those about whom she writes. Anthropology has, in fact, consistently depended on this complex act of engagement and separation between two cultures to define itself (Nichols 2001: 115-116).

It is also important to talk about the impact of interdisciplinarity in the academic research. I consider that interdisciplinarity depends not only on the discourse and the approach we take in the field work, but also on the people with whom we surround ourselves. I considered that, in the case of the visual ethnography carried out and for academic research (a fact that I would discover later), it would be beneficial if I contacted and worked with people from areas different from what I used to, in this case documentary cinema and multimedia communication. Indeed, as Mahon puts

it: “Many of us already work in an interdisciplinary mode. Indeed, ethnomusicologists are voracious borrowers of ideas and approaches from other fields” (Mahon 2014: 331).

In fact, and according to Catarina Alves Costa reporting on the case of Anthropology, documentary cinema or visual anthropology are territories that merge with the domains of Anthropology or Ethnomusicology and not small “accessories” or mere “attachments” of a larger investigation:

On the other hand, I would say a visual anthropology that is increasingly not a territory within anthropology (...) but in the sense of an anthropology that incorporates the visual universe and the sound universe as part of culture and society. And when incorporating you will also have to adapt your methodology and your thinking... (Alves Costa 2020).

Part 3. Filming Musical Performances in Idanha-a-Nova, Portugal

The process of making the documentary film *For Whom You Have There* came about following an exhaustive audio and video recording, together with the director João Valentim, of various performances in various³ locations in Idanha-a-Nova. Later on, we decided to concentrate on the village of Penha Garcia and the performance *Encomendação das Almas*, because it was one of the villages where I had the most cemented relationship, both in terms of contacts and family connections (my father was born in Penha Garcia). The *Encomendação das Almas* was chosen because it is one of the most important religious performances in the village, and with a pictorial potential because it takes place at night and also has an emotional dimension that could "elevate" the film.

My relationship with cinema, in addition to being a film enthusiast, is related to my degree in Art Studies where I attended Film Critique, History and Aesthetics of Cinema and Portuguese Cinema, among others. During the pre-production of what would later become the film, I was assisted by the director João Valentim both in capturing the image and later in the editing room. Through my experience, I was able to identify some challenges that I went through, both technical and ethical.

With regard specifically to technical challenges, I came across the fact that I am studying a performance that occurs during the night, which makes the shooting process difficult; and having to learn to work with a colleague with different methodologies and ways of act on the field. This last challenge, through several conversations prior to the field trips, was to seek, as a team, to try to analyse the context and understand how we would be less intrusive during the performance, as it is related to the cult of the dead and therefore, something “sensitive” (the cameras could inhibit the participants). To make this ethnography, we accompanied the group of women over the course of one night out of three that year. Initially, the image and sound recording was carried out from the

³ In the villages of Idanha-a-Nova, Ladoeiro, Monfortinho, Monsanto, Penha Garcia, S. Miguel d’Acha, Rosmaninhal, Proença-a-Velha, Salvaterra do Extremo e Zebreira.

perspective of preservation and documentation. The aim of filming the ritual was to be used to support the writing of my PhD thesis; however, while on the field and also later when we saw the images after they had been filmed, it was decided that they had enough potential to be made into a documentary film.

Another pressing issue was the discussion between researcher and director regarding intentionality and the context in which the film would be integrated and shown. What is the purpose of visual products? As memory aids to later write a more detailed article on performance? Or as "raw" footage for editing a movie? As a researcher, there was always a sensitivity to the field and personal and ethical investment in keeping the documentation organised and legible to my research. As a director, the consideration of the film as an "artistic production" was more present, the desire to make cinema. In this way, this "argumentation game" not only between the two actors (researcher and director) but also with the people portrayed was challenging.

The ethical challenges were also faced when I was on the field, namely in the fact that I was carrying out ethnomusicology fieldwork, observing as a public (sometimes our team was the only one present to observe) and at the same time being at a distance, creating a division between what was being filmed and the investigator, having the camera as a barrier:

From the outset, filmmakers who work observationally are forced to confront issues about participation and power. One common misapprehension is the techniques associated with this approach are necessarily distancing, making participant observation a contradictory idea (Grimshaw & Ravetz 2005: 8).

In this case, as a researcher/director team, some obstacles to filming were found with some of the participants refusing to appear on the film by asking us not to film them. In other cases, we also noticed that the performance of some group members was being affected by our presence and mainly by the presence of the camera (looking at the camera which presupposed an "invasion" of their personal space). Among several examples, I highlight interpellations such as: "I don't want this to end up on Facebook" or "Is this for television?". The reactivity of people to the presence of the researchers or the camera is also part of the dynamics of the investigation and visual ethnography, it can motivate a total distance (the person asks not to be filmed), or it can strengthen the relationship of trust between the researcher and the group, since the camera is not "invisible", so ethically its legitimacy is not contested: "Moreover, researchers and their recording equipment being invisibles often questioned from an ethical viewpoint. It is therefore useful to assess the amount and nature of reactivity for each individual situation and the impact on what exactly we need to study (Pawels 2011: 9).

In the few cases in which people asked not to appear in the film, we have removed from the final product the images in which potentially people were portrayed who refused to appear. As it is a group, it sometimes becomes difficult not to film a specific person, but it was possible to adapt the frames so that the person did not appear or appeared, either from the back or in such a way that their identity was not perceived. To avoid any embarrassment with the camera or our position

as “outsiders”, we always promoted a small conversation with the group leader and with the rest of the members about the purpose of our work, how we were going to film and make clear their right not to want to give up their image as well as our availability to clarify any doubts. I also consider important to talk about the questioning of the destination of the images that we were capturing. In some of the villages, namely S. Miguel d'Acha and Rosmaninhal, the participants emphasised the desire to have the files after their editing, to remain as the group's estate or even to send and show to family and friends.

Returning to the challenges felt, being the *Encomendação das Almas* a religious performance, of the Catholic Cult, it has a very strong expression within the group of commissioners, because the members “believe that they are helping loved ones” or because “it is a practice of the church that's why we do it” (Int. Luzia Gameiro and Maria Prudência Marques), in which performance and religion are interconnected. However, it is used by the municipality for touristic purposes that can be interpreted for different reasons than the performers. Also, the fact that I am a male, from outside the community and not consistent with the group's feminine and compact character, was another of the challenges that were encountered. Turning our focus to the group of women from the village of Penha Garcia, the main actresses in the film, although there are reports from some informants that there were male practitioners, the group has been exclusively female for a decade now.

Returning from the field to the editing room, new discussions and exchange of ideas emerged, with the structure and artistic/academic decisions being the central focus. One of the most important discussions was related to the technical aspects that, according to João Valentim, were his main concerns. So, one of the issues was the decision to use or not to use artificial light in the filming. My problem was that this light could interfere with the performance of the female commissioners, but for the director, it would be much easier to work with the performance of the performers, but for the director it would be much easier to work on the colour correction of the film, making it more aesthetically pleasing. It was decided to use the existing light (from the electricity poles present on the streets) which gave the film much a more consistent photography with what it feels like to be present in the *Encomendação das Almas*, with the darkness being accepted.

Another issue was the importance of the order of the singing parts. Chronologically, it was decided to keep the order of the stops and chants, therefore, the film would be more fluid and “easier” to watch. Finally, the use of videotaped interviews and voice-over was also discussed, with the decision to remain in the film even though the conditions in which they were filmed had not been the best (low light, background noise, etc.). These issues would be overcome because there was a need for the public to see “face-to-face” these women who spend most of the film and the performance with their faces half-covered with black shawls. The voice-over was used only at a time when what is being said was very impactful and we were unable to film the person saying it. In this case, the sound of the person's voice (in this case the group leader), overlapped the image of the group walking, something that does not happen in the performance. Another moment of use of voice-over was the decision to start and end the film with the voice of Idalina Gameiro (singer

and performer of the *Encomendação das Almas*) to sing alone the *Encomendação das Almas* chant. These small “manipulations” that were consistent and complemented with the performance from beginning to end gave the film a “strength” that, in the eyes of the filmmakers, greatly diminishes the difference between witnessing the live performance and watching it on a screen.

In this way, these challenges made it possible to reflect on my work in the field as a researcher and as a director and motivated its resolution. After the fieldwork and seeing the images previously captured, I was thus able to consider them not as mere obsolete objects that would enter any external disk, but as a material whose usefulness would allow me to approach the community, starting from the idea that moving image would have more impact than a written document.

Part 4. Visual Ethnography as a communication discourse with interlocutors

The transversality of this film was proof of this impact of the moving image both in the way it functioned as a discourse and as a communication with the performers. In fact, several quadrants have validated, commented on and benefited from this film; the tradition holders who saw the film showed their liking and also their displeasure; the institutional bodies that integrated the film in the dossier for the application of the “Easter Mysteries” to UNESCO's list of best practices; and the circuit of film festivals and academic conferences in which the film circulated (Best Student Film Award at the Folk Music Film Festival in Kathmandu, Nepal; Viewing and discussion on the International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony in Tbilisi, Georgia; Viewing and Discussion in the Conference of the Study Group on Audiovisual Ethnomusicology of the International Council on Traditional Music, among others).

This challenge as a researcher and director of a documentary film in activating behaviours and knowledge according to the field where the investigation is inserted is present in Banks: “In some contexts people will actively encourage the researcher to create images, in other they will appear indifferent, and in others they will more or less politely tell her to stop or evade the lens”. (Banks 2001: 113).

The first situation happened to me with one of my interlocutors. In this way I will now present an approach and constructive comment that one of the performers had with me, when viewing, in her home, the final product of what we had filmed. In effect, I was asked to record the performance of the *Encomendação das Almas* “as she thought it was the real way”. Maria Nabais, locally known as “ti” Nabais, liked the film very much, said that it was beautiful, but that it did not represent the *Encomendação das Almas* that she sang when she was younger. Although this holder of tradition is an active member of the group for the *Encomendação das Almas* of Penha Garcia, she considers that the practice performed does not correspond, neither in melodic level nor in the content of the lyrics to the practice as it was done when she was young. In this way, she commented that she wanted to be filmed in order to have a document that would prove “her way of singing”. This collaborator considered that the film documentation could be favourable to the legitimation of a conviction that was different from that held by the organised group in which she is also a participant. This action by Maria Nabais is proof of an approach that does not limit the work

of the researcher, but rather enhances it, enabling the dissemination to new audiences, the narrowing of his relationship with the studied communities and a methodological tool for fieldwork. Indeed, this added value both for work in the ethnographic field and for its speech and communication is often given by the field itself, with the people with whom the researcher contacts and establishes a relationship, also feeling that they have to give their opinion:

Visual stimuli are provided by the researcher to gather factual information about the depicted cultural elements and — a very powerful and unique trait of the visual elicitation technique to 'trigger' more projective information with the respondents (their deeper feelings, opinions) (Pawels 2011: 12).

The film *For Whom You have There* was invited by the Folklore group of Penha Garcia to be exhibited at the Hall of Penha Garcia Parish Council on 29 September 2018. At the event was a big part of the population, with about a hundred people. There was food (sardines) and drinks, and the film was projected with great reception by the public. All the members of the *Encomendação das Almas* group were present, as well as some of their relatives and also some important people such as the local scholar Mário Pissarra, the Mayor of Idanha-a-Nova Armindo Jacinto and Paulo Longo, responsible by the Chamber of Culture and Tourism of the Municipality and programmer of the Raiano Cultural Centre.

After the film, I was also asked to show an excerpt of some recordings I made with “Ti” Nabais, Luzia Gameiro and Idalina Gameiro. After showing this short excerpt at the request of the intervening parties, the son-in-law of “ti” Nabais asked to show his own recordings of his mother-in-law, reciting some of her own poems. I consider it important to point out that these last two moments were not included in the event's program and were carried out spontaneously.

Part 5. Final Notes

It's important to emphasise that, through this work, visual ethnography has worked as another tool that could be beneficial to the community. When I talk about a mediating tool at the beginning of this article, I'm talking about the ability to minimise the objectifying action that research work can have, which presupposes that the community studied receives nothing "in return". In addition to this retribution, this filmic action could awaken ideas and opportunities in the holders of tradition for their own considerations about the dynamics of the practices and performances they carry out. These considerations and interventions develop participatory approaches between researchers and the community as described by Sarah Pink: "Other sociologists developed more participatory approaches, placing collaboration between researcher and participants at the centre of the visual research" (Pink 2013: 25).

Thus, and ending this article, I will go deeper into what Berger calls “social significance and the usefulness of our work” (Berger 2014), as a way to legitimise the important role of the researcher as in relation to his social and human action. I consider this a key issue for breaking the

one-way link between the different outputs of the Academy. The current approach at the Academy that assumes that the results of a given investigation must comply with a set of requirements and bureaucracies, a set that does not understand or equate working with people in the ethnographic field and the need to return materials, thoughts and results to the community. In this way, through this investigation, it was proposed to start the discussion not only around a shift in the methodology and output of the social sciences, but also to think about alternative ways of looking and communicating:

Within the past two decades, we have seen a shift in primary preoccupation of the visual social sciences from the production of visual materials (social documentaries, photo essays, ethnographic films/videotapes, PowerPoint presentations, interactive web-sites), often for pedagogical purposes (illustration, classroom teaching) to focus on explaining alternative ways of looking (Chalfen 2011: 24).

How can we minimise the impact of what we "withdraw" from the field? I think we can begin with the issue of writing academic discourse. One of the first situations I encountered when I arrived in Penha Garcia village in 2015 to begin my fieldwork was at the Café Central, where the owner promptly told me: "please do something that we can understand, I have several books here, I know how to read, but I do not understand anything that is here!" (int. Claro 2015). The use of video and documentary cinema as a tool for study, discourse and communication of results illustrates the potential that this mode of communication may have in the work of the researcher and the relationships that may be established in the field.

Interdisciplinarity may be a hypothesis to understand these dynamics. Considering that the doctoral degree cannot be achieved in co-authorship, I tried to deepen on this theme enough for the reader to have an initial framework of the potential that this discussion may have. There is an immense gain in the production of knowledge and in the dialogue with the interlocutors, as well as other scientific disciplines. According to Frodeman, in the *Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity*, interdisciplinarity refers to different approaches to knowledge, which are "worked on" by different disciplines, also academic and scientific: "Interdisciplinarity is most commonly used as a portmanteau word for all more than disciplinary approaches to knowledge, with the overall implication of increased societal relevance" (Frodeman 2017: 4). The issue of co-authorship with interlocutors and with director João Valentim does not refer to interdisciplinarity but to transdisciplinarity, in which the work together is with "non-academics". In this way, I consider that my study links all these aspects. We can try to think of the methodology of this work and more importantly, of the beginning of this discussion in Ethnomusicology as fluctuating between inter and transdisciplinarity because knowledge should not only be done in co-production with different scientific disciplines, but also in co-production with our interlocutors in the ethnographic field:

Similarly, transdisciplinarity has often referred to Hegelian-like syntheses of all knowledge—again, an academic goal— although today it is more commonly used to designate knowledge that is coproduced, where academics work with non-academic actors of one type or another (Frodeman 2017: 4).

Davis (2005) attests to this with the example of art history and the collaboration between scientists and artists: “In interdisciplinary pursuits, disciplines collaborate. Scientists and artists, commonly regarded as ideologically opposed practitioners, can intersect and contemplate their common relationships” (Davis 2005). Regarding transdisciplinarity, Davis approaches its holistic side, which aims to find new and innovative discourses through the combination of disciplines:

Transdisciplinary projects also have an agenda to explore common practices among disciplines, but with a more holistic approach. By transcending conventional notions of what appropriate activities within a discipline are, participants attempt to bridge disciplines in innovative ways. The result is that new commonalities are discovered among disciplines, which have implications for future innovative transvergent events (Davis 2005).

In fact, in order to rethink this new way of doing research, we must broaden our methods, concerns, approaches and strategies to be able to really do work with other colleagues who may be able to give us some input that we would not otherwise be able to have, as was my experience with director João Valentim. According to Julia Kristeva: “One can only benefit from interdisciplinary practices if researchers meet other researchers and learn to discuss both their competences and the outcome of their interaction, thus helping to expose the risks inherent in an interdisciplinary practice”. (Kristeva 1998: 6-7).

In this way, it was possible to verify that a methodological approach such as the use of documentary film became not only a support for preservation but also an active tool in the investigation, which allowed both the contact with other fields of knowledge and an approximation to the dynamics of the communities studied.

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Films

For Whom You Have There. 2017. Dir. António Ventura.

Interviews

Alice Mendes, March 2016.

José Claro, March 2016.

Luzia Gameiro, March 2016.

Maria Nabais, March 2016.

Maria Prudência Marques, March 2016.

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Cita recomendada

Ventura, António. 2023. "The visual discourse as a vehicle to communicate ethnomusicological research: Sharing academic knowledge in *Encomendação das Almas*". *TRANS-Revista Transcultural de Música/Transcultural Music Review* 27 [Fecha de consulta: dd/mm/aa]



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