

These people who get into everything

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In one of the texts that you will read in this book, called “From the subsoil to the podosphere – *Conversa da Kata*”, the authors say that “anthropologist meddles in everything”. This is also the way we journalists like to talk about ourselves. Just like anthropologists, we are hungry to know what we don’t live, or what we live, but we don’t notice. We have a habit of going around the world looking for stories and never turning off our eyes and ears. Every scene matters, every dialogue matters. The brightest we can find is often hidden in the ordinary.

The pages that follow show anthropology students and researchers immersed in the task of understanding a new medium, a new language, and learning how to pass on the many stories they have known and lived in the field. These are groups that have ventured into the production of podcasts and, as a result, ended up discovering more about their research topics, their colleagues and their profession, in addition to experiencing the challenge of speaking to a larger audience than that usually reached by academic productions.

At the other end, these discussions and narratives were able to reach other departments, other universities and people who did not even know exactly what anthropology does and how it is done. If in the trailer for *Mundaréu*, one of the projects presented in this book, the producers play with the question “Anthropo... what?” – that they must have heard a number of times along their paths -, these *podcasts* arrive precisely to offer answers. Not with a dictionary explanation, but with stories and dialogues that reveal the heart of anthropology.

Relatives and friends of those behind the microphones won a passport to look behind the scenes of anthropological work and to learn more about the issues and communities studied in the area. Representatives of these communities studied, including people who participated in the research, are invited to re-listen, on podcasts, to their own stories and to better understand why they are so dear to researchers.

Telling science stories is, first and foremost, storytelling. We need good characters, thought-provoking scenes, well-constructed scenarios and a narrative arc that transforms, which has a before, a during and an after. They are all ingredients scattered throughout everyday life, but you have to know how to find and count them. Above all, the predisposition to get involved in everything is mandatory, not to be content with just the surface, the skin of things.

In the case of podcasts, there is the fact that these narratives must be designed for the ears. The songs, scenes and soundscapes must transport us to another time and another space. Voices must sound intimate, familiar (would you let a stranger talk in your ear? Yeah).

It may seem like a simple task at first, but the truth is that it is an uncomfortable, painful process. Physically painful. It makes my belly knot, something between disgust, dread and the fight for survival. “Gut churn” were the words used by Mikel Elcessor and Jad Abumrad, when recalling the founding of Radiolab, an American science program broadcast on radio since 2002.

Abumrad describes this sense of life or death as an essential part of the creative process. Between breaking through the labyrinths of editing software and dealing with the awkwardness of hearing and rehearing your own voice, at the end of the day, we are forced to choose just one of the zillion ways to tell a story or explain a concept. This process begins in the head, of course, but is decided in the gut.

It is the body that alerts us when a choice works or not. What you feel, when the story flows unimpeded from the teller to the listener. That is filled with pleasure, when the pieces of the narrative finally fall into place and calm our desire to see the world through different eyes, understand other lives, feel other things, know other times and places. It’s in the body that we satisfy the hunger to get into everything — even if it’s just for a moment, until it comes back stronger.

With each chapter, this book will satiate you with stories and new perspectives on anthropology. The respective podcasts, which you can listen to in between readings, will introduce you to voices, dialogues, sounds, scenes and scenarios that, together, bring us a new way of listening to the world.

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