Bootlegged: Unauthorized Circulation and the Dilemmas of Collaboration in the Digital Age

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Recent innovations in digital technologies have exponentially increased the opportunities for collaborative ethnographic filmmaking between anthropologists and our interlocutors. In this article, I focus on a relatively unexplored aspect of these emergent forms of collaboration: the unruliness of circulation in the digital age. I draw on long-standing anthropological debates about controlling the dissemination of taboo cultural motifs to consider how the rapid and promiscuous circulation of digital images and video intensifies these concerns. Reflecting on my experience of collaborative video production with Cuban sex workers and the subsequent unauthorized circulation of these politicized images outside of Cuba, I show how an inability to control distribution presents pressing concerns regarding consent for a growing cadre of anthropologists working in digital mediums. [circulation, Cuba, digital, ethics, video production]

Introduction

"I want gays around the world to see my life, to see how we live in Cuba, but I don't want to show up on CNN," Diosa said. "I have a *travesti* friend who ended up on CNN saying things about the Cuban government. No, no, no, that would be suicide."[1]

"Of course not," I assured her. "I would never sell this footage to news outlets or use it in a politicized way." We were sitting in Diosa's cramped, scorching living room during an August heat wave in Havana. I had spent the day filming scenes that Diosa, a 22-year-old *travesti*, had devised—a typical Saturday of her cooking, cleaning, and walking to the market.[2] She had proudly paraded me around the neighborhood to show her friends the making of "her documentary." Now she was donning her tight jeans and off-the-shoulder top for work in the sex trade and this process inspired a conversation about whether or not I should film her as she spent the evening flagging clients. She was concerned about how my presence might affect business and I was worried about how the Cuban police could use these images against her in a context in which prostitution and filmmaking without state permission were both criminalized.

A year later, I completed the resulting documentary *Luchando* (2007), which chronicles the lives of Diosa and three other sex workers in Havana's queer *ambiente.* The film made its way around the film festival circuit[3] and I fought to keep my promise to control the use of the footage. I traveled with the film to discuss the importance of collaboration in its production, detailing the conflicts and confluences of perspective with my interlocutors. To my producer's disappointment, I passed on two distribution offers because I wanted to confine the audiences to those vetted by my collaborators who participated in the film—academic and film festival viewers. Given my goal of keeping the footage from becoming part of a decades-old propaganda battle between the United States and Cuba, the Miami festival screenings were especially challenging. I turned down appearances on television talk shows and radio programs hosted by conservative Cuban American journalists who were eager to politicize the existence of prostitution in Cuba. On their programs, they often implied that Fidel Castro had starved the island to the point that men were forced to have sex with other men to earn the money to survive. After brief conversations with their production staff, it quickly became clear that they wanted to use my film to support these implicitly

FIGURE 1. Still from *Luchando*. Diosa faces hecklers on the street.

FIGURE 2. Still from *Luchando* used as the bootleg DVD cover.

homophobic and reductive narratives of Cuban erotic economies.

Given the care I took with the film's distribution, I was shocked when three years later I received an e-mail from a Miami lawyer requesting payment on Diosa's behalf for proceeds from the sale of the documentary. In keeping with our original agreement, I had never sold the film and there were no profits to distribute.[4] A frantic phone call to the attorney revealed that since the film's release, Diosa had moved to Miami. She had walked into a bodega and seen pirated versions of *Luchando* for rent on the dusty shelves next to bootleg copies of Cuban soap operas. My producer and I began calling every bodega in Miami, asking if they had a copy of *Luchando* we could rent or buy. "We have four copies," a teenage boy said on the phone, speaking Spanish with a thick Cuban accent, "but they're all rented. Try back in a few days."

I had taken every precaution possible to protect the festival copies, but DVDs were somehow available for purchase from an online distributor who sold Cuban films otherwise unavailable outside of the island. A quick search online revealed that a bootleg version of *Luchando* was featured on his Web site for $19.95; a still taken from the film's Web site was used as the cover of the DVD. A heated argument with the unauthorized distributor ensued, in which he tried to convince me that I was a Cuban filmmaker (I am not) and that

because of the embargo restrictions on commerce between the two countries, copyright laws did not apply to work that I had created. After I threatened a lawsuit, he agreed to remove the film from his Web site. Along with our attorney, my American producer and I sent a flurry of cease-and-desist letters to the bodegas carrying the film. The project had never made any profits, but I told Diosa's lawyer that I was happy to give her money out of pocket. He explained that this offer would "cut him out of the deal" and refused to give me her contact information. Then, months after I had managed to halt the unauthorized distribution of the film in Miami, a student of mine discovered it on YouTube with two pages of viewers' comments. My attorney contacted the man who had posted it, but my attempts to police *Luchando*'s circulation began to feel futile.

I start with this story of my failed efforts to control *Luchando*'s distribution to illustrate how ethnographic video circulation is increasingly rapid and promiscuous. This intractability in a moment when the reproduction and circulation of ethnographic media are faster and easier than ever before presents a fundamental, yet relatively underexplored emergent component of contemporary ethnographic filmic collaboration. In this article, I trace the cultural biography of *Luchando*, focusing on the politics surrounding the circulation of anthropological representations of Cuban sex workers outside of Cuba to elucidate how the changing landscape of anthropological digital media distribution

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demands new collaborative strategies.[5] I maintain that long-standing discussions of how best to cooperate with our interlocutors—particularly those whose marginal status makes them especially vulnerable—are given new life in an age when the unauthorized reproduction and circulation of stills and clips are escalating at a dizzying speed. By focusing on how ethnographic media circulate in specific political and social contexts, which are historically contingent and shifting, I argue that the traditional agreements of informed consent that have governed the production of ethnographic film fail to address these emergent dynamics of circulation.[6] Rather than argue for a singular solution to the issues of unruly dissemination, I offer suggestions for collaborating to create plans for circulation that continue recent discussions about visual ethics and vulnerability (e.g., Banks 2001, 2007; Gross et al. 2003; Perry 2008; Perry and Marion 2010).[7]

My emphasis on the unrestricted and unauthorized circulation of ethnographic media, especially that representing marginalized subjects, complements and shadows ongoing discussions about the potential for digital production to broaden collaborative opportunities and enrich ethnographic encounters. Since the inception of the field, visual anthropologists have debated the ethics of visual representations (Asch 1992; MacDougall 1992, 1997; Rouch 1995; Ruby 1991, 1995), often weighing the risks against greater opportunities for collaboration and the reflexivity it can afford, including shared copyright and royalties (Elder 1995; MacDougall 1975; Pink 2006; Poole 2005). People's ability to tell their own stories with inexpensive video cameras, editing software, and more recently smartphone cameras has shown significant potential to transform ethnographic epistemologies (Ginsburg 1991, 1994; Jackson 2012; MacDougall 1975; Ruby 1995). Digital advances in circulation emerging over the last few decades likewise reshape the coproduction of anthropological knowledge in relatively underexplored ways. The case of *Luchando* illuminates how the democratization of media circulation, such as personal computer DVD burning, YouTube streaming, and inexpensive online distribution, presents new capacities for ethnographic collaboration while also creating obstacles to guaranteeing the protection of our interlocutors.[8]

Questions about control over the circulation of images have long been central for anthropologists working with indigenous communities that restrict the viewing of certain cultural motifs. Anthropologists have dealt with restrictions on photographic images, film representations, drawings, and paintings that should not be seen by certain individuals and could potentially come back to community members and cause unintended harm (Barclay 2005; Myers 2002, 2011). The global reach and rapid speed of digital media, as well as its everlasting afterlife in virtual worlds, have changed the frame and terms of these engagements. Images and video are more likely to be seen by uninitiated audiences, for example, and it becomes impossible to destroy representations of the deceased. These contemporary realities necessitate entirely different modes of engagement with the digital than those imagined by First World software designers (Christen 2006, 2009; Cohen and Salazar 2005; Ginsburg 2008; Srinivasan 2006). Digital projects that recognize these ontologies, often collaboratively built with anthropological allies (cf. Deger 2006; Elder 1995; Geismar 2009; Srinivasan 2006), are exemplary models of how the cultural ethos of "visibility" as a supposedly empowering mode of performance can be explored, interrogated, and indigenized. The same technological advances that make self-generated and collaborative media possible also potentially undermine our ability to manage the afterlife of files as we experience a cultural shift from understanding media representations as proprietary objects to seeing them as fetishistic ones with life trajectories of their own.

Extrapolating the lessons learned from collaborations between anthropologists and their indigenous interlocutors, I turn to the piracy of *Luchando* to provide a concrete example in which the unauthorized distribution of ethnographic media can endanger the fragile bonds of cooperation and trust between anthropologists and subjects, while also depriving politically marginalized and economically disadvantaged communities of royalties.[9] The unruly circulation of *Luchando* shows how the reach of distribution continues to intensify with significant implications for anthropological collaboration and practice.[10] In mapping the multiple and unintended life trajectories of *Luchando*, I show how advances in digital technology have expanded the possible meanings and potential of ethnographic film by making it more affordable and accessible but also by increasing the stakes and responsibilities that anthropologists hold in this changing milieu.

The *Mise-en-Scène* of Production

Given the anonymous nature of online social worlds, it is difficult, if not impossible, to discern the specific identities and practices of those who pirated *Luchando*. Pirates most likely obtained the film from unscrupulous festival staff or videotaped it during a festival screening. Nevertheless, it is possible to analyze how their actions

reflect broader structural factors and cultural assumptions that inform the circulation of media, which is not an ephemeral flow of self-propelled, "free" information, but is shaped by sociopolitical dynamics. Not everyone lives in the same "digital age," and it is important to contextualize the dissemination of ethnographic media within these uneven sociopolitical realities (Ginsburg 2008). Attention to the slippery nature of circulation necessitates consideration of geopolitics, which fueled appetites for images of Cuba, including *Luchando*, among the Cuban diaspora and non-Cubans alike.

The digital divide between Cuba and the United States was acute at the time of my research in Havana between 2001 and 2007. With few exceptions the Cuban government did not allow Internet access, and citizens needed special state permits to acquire Internet access in their homes. There was a significant black market in e-mail correspondence in which one person with access to e-mail would charge people to send and receive messages on their behalf. Similarly, cell phone use was prohibitively expensive, with a 10-minute phone call costing a week's worth of salary in a state job. Cubans were also required to have foreigners cosign to acquire cell phone contracts. Video equipment such as cameras, DVD players, and laptop computers could not be brought into the country. Television programming and cinemas were heavily censored and monitored by government agencies. A handful of Cubans smuggled in cable antennas and accessed outside cable networks, but it was considered extremely risky and the government often cracked down on homes with hidden antennas. Despite these restrictions, a significant Cuban blogosphere emerged beginning in 2007, as Cuban bloggers used surreptitious means to publish their work and quickly rose to international prominence.[11] While few Cubans on the island could access these blogs, their existence attests to the ability of digital information to circulate despite government sanctions. The rise of the Cuban blogosphere also helps to counteract a problematic notion that the digital divide indicates that certain places exist in an anachronistic time, not contemporary with our own (Ginsburg 2008:131).

These battles over access to information and technology were part of the post–Cold War transformation of Cuban society, which opened the island to capitalist foreigners, incited massive waves of Cuban migration, and fostered a global market for Cuban cultural commodities and images. After the loss of Soviet subsidies in the 1990s, Cuba entered into an unprecedented economic crisis and the Cuban government turned to international tourism as a development strategy to salvage the economy. As the island opened to capitalist foreigners for the first time since the 1959 revolution,

journalists, photographers, and scholars descended on Havana and incited an "image boom" of documentaries and photographic volumes, first from Europe— primarily France, Italy, and Spain—and later from the United States (Dopico 2002:464). A representational regime began to coalesce in the 1990s that framed Cuba's reentry into the global capitalist markets through tropes of dystopic decay, couching it as a country "frozen in time," and through the overtly sexualized images of black Cuban women's bodies, which served as "proof" that Cuba had slipped into its prerevolutionary state as the "brothel of the Caribbean."

Beginning in the 1990s, major U.S. news networks including ABC, CNN, and NBC likewise focused on the rise of Cuban sex tourism as an emblem of late-socialist demise. The fact that sex work, rather than other emergent tourist-Cuban relationships, formed the central imagery of these accounts was significant because it overlaid gendered and raced assumptions about power onto stories of Cuba's post-Soviet transition. The *mulata* sex worker and white male sex tourist offered a familiar shorthand for political economic narratives that presented Cuba as vulnerable, destitute, and exotic and Western capitalist nations as powerful, affluent, and white. More than symbolically suspect, these reports were often deceptive. Cuban women hailing taxis, sitting in city parks, or dancing at nightclubs were presented as sex workers summoning clients without any evidence that the women were in fact linked to erotic economies. Moreover, the presence of homoerotic relations that might complicate the perspectives of dominant heteronormative and racialized narratives was duly erased. These American representations of Cuban erotic labor fingered the communist government for the rise of sex tourism rather than the evacuation of state services as Cuba adjusted to a global capitalist economy at a moment in which the U.S. government claimed victory in the Cold War.

As U.S. media outlets focused on the rise of the sex trade as a way to attack the policies of Cuban government officials, tourist erotic economies became controversial in Cuba. Cuban socialist programs had largely eradicated the sex industry in Cuba by the early 1960s, so its return in the 1990s was especially fraught. While journalists and government leaders in the United States, including President George W. Bush, blamed Fidel Castro and his government for the rise of the sex trade and promised to end prostitution by bringing democracy to Cuba, Cuban officials and pundits blamed Cuban women for the rampant nature of sex tourism. The prevalent trope of the white tourist and *mulata* sex worker became a symbol for the weakness of Cubans to maintain their loyalty to socialist principles in the face

of hardship. In the Cuban press, academic accounts, and society at large, many Cubans described sex workers as antisocial, materialistic, and delinquent.[12]

Contesting from Within: Making *Luchando*

My own presence in Havana was part of this postcommunist moment in which the island opened to capitalist foreigners and their cameras. Likewise, my attraction to the stories of sex workers in Havana's queer nightlife was, in part, motivated by a desire to disrupt dominant narratives of Cuban prostitution that were becoming omnipresent—from special reports airing on major news networks to photographs in artistic volumes and galleries. Shooting from 2003 to 2004 and again during 2007, I used a process that Jose Muñoz (1999) describes as "disidentification": I set out to resignify popular gendered, sexed, and raced representations of the Cuban sex trade not by abandoning them but, as Stuart Hall (1997:274) describes, by "contesting them from within"—by taking dominant images as a principal site for creative intervention. Constant negotiation over the direction of *Luchando* was therefore a cornerstone of production because it enabled sex workers to speak back to these mainstream representations in ways that I could not have scripted when I began filming. The four protagonists used the filmmaking experience to highlight different aspects of their lives that challenged prominent misconceptions about sex workers. Collectively, my protagonists counteracted these accusations through their interviews and through particular scenes that they suggested shooting. In their

FIGURE 4. Still from *Luchando*. Masciel braids a French tourist's hair for one dollar.

scenes, they emphasized the difficulty of finding well-paying employment, their hard work ethic, and the responsibilities of family and children that they shouldered.

Given the conditions of extreme poverty that plagued my interlocutors, finding a fair system of payment seemed critical. The Harvard Film Study Center had provided a modest amount of funding to cover equipment and costs and I chose not to pay participants directly for their participation, a system in which they might "earn" a fixed amount for each day of shooting. Per diem payments often leave subjects feeling as though they are "acting" for the camera and tend to place the filmmaker in a position to direct them (Taylor and Barbash 1997). Instead, I developed ongoing systems of reciprocity more typical of relationships and friendships between foreigners and Cubans in which I would pay for food, drinks, and taxis; give money and gifts when requested; and then provide a substantial sum of cash before I left the island. These systems of reciprocity are much more amorphous and long-standing, continuing even today for those participants who can be reached.[13] While never made explicit during shooting, I assumed that should any money be made from the film, unlikely in the case of restricted distribution, all royalties would be divided among the protagonists.

In editing the film, I similarly used storytelling techniques that encouraged viewers to experience the sensorial world inhabited by the protagonists, such as eschewing voiceover narration and favoring long takes (MacDougall 2003:116; Taylor 1996:76). I immersed viewers in the daily lives of the protagonists, introducing their families, lovers, and mundane routines, to show their humanity and counteract sensationalist representations in popular media that reduced sex workers

FIGURE 3. Discussing the direction of a scene while shooting Diosa.

to their experience in the sex trade. The film showed how *luchando* or struggling encompassed erotic labor, but that these men, women, and *travestis* also participated in a range of economic activities through which they could make ends meet. In editing their stories, I also aimed to reflect the participants' intentions rather than sanitize their stories to make the characters more sympathetic to an international audience. If a participant wanted to portray himself as a womanizer, for instance, I respected his performance for the camera and allowed that to guide the story rather than present the protagonists as victims or one-dimensional heroes. Questions of sexual identity and desire were likewise left open in their complexity, rather than explained for audiences.

The dissemination of *Luchando* in festivals and academic contexts garnered widespread attention and more incisively counteracted dominant American representations of Cuban sex work than textual accounts, which would have reached a smaller audience, could have. The difficulty of filming in Cuba and the scarcity of Cuban-produced media available internationally fueled interest among Cubans living abroad and non-Cuban audiences. Through international screenings, my ethnographic research on Cuba and the lives of the film's protagonists traveled in ways otherwise unimaginable. A feature story about the film that suggested the complexities of Cuban sexual labor, for example, became the most read story of the day in April 2009 on the *Nuevo Herald*'s Web site,[14] a widely circulated news outlet that had previously politicized Cuban prostitution, even doctoring images to suggest that the Cuban government was "pimping" women to foreign tourists.[15]

While digital storytelling allowed Cuban sex workers to speak back to prominent representations in popular culture, these technologies also enabled the unauthorized distribution of the film as illegal DVDs on Web streaming sites, in the aforementioned bootleg video rentals throughout Miami bodegas, and on YouTube. Because of the U.S. embargo against Cuba, Cuban films were not subject to copyright laws in the United States and vice versa.[16] The online distribution company that pirated *Luchando*, Kimbara Cine Cubano Inc., had been deploying these immunities to distribute Cuban films and television shows that were not available for sale.[17] In ways that I never imagined, the illicit distribution of *Luchando* revealed that digital technologies enable anthropologists to reach wider audiences, increasing the impact of our work—but not always in a manner that we intend. This sea change in turn raises key questions about informed consent and how ethnographer and subject, author and collaborator imagine the afterlives of ethnographic media.

FIGURE 5. Setting up for a festival screening in Miami.

Consenting to the Unimaginable

Forms of collaboration in the production of ethnographic media pivot on the concept of informed consent, which ensures that a protagonist understands the broad-ranging implications of appearing in ethnographic documentaries. As Sarah Pink argues, an ethical approach to ethnographic media production calls for an understanding of how "visual meanings and notions of visual truth" are understood both by participants and audiences (Pink 2001:30).[18] With such notions of informed consent in mind, I was mindful of my collaborators' levels of visual literacy. Through a robust state-subsidized arts program, Cubans have been widely exposed to documentaries, both on television and in Havana's frequent film festivals. While my collaborators

FIGURE 6. The line stretching around the cineplex as spectators waited to see *Luchando* in Miami (photo by Sandra Dong.)

signed standard consent forms that allowed me to use their images in any way I saw fit in perpetuity, these contracts were a vehicle through which I initiated more detailed conversations about what was safe to show on camera and whom they imagined as their ideal audience. Through these ongoing discussions and by viewing the daily footage together, I felt that the resulting documentary reflected our mutual and overlapping narrative agendas. Yet we did not predict how the film would slip beyond my control in an age of inexpensive and easy reproduction and distribution through social networks and Web mediums such as YouTube.

Given the growing sophistication of pirating technologies for digital forms, agreements to limited forms of circulation are quickly becoming anachronistic. Anthropologists can use safeguards such as protected DVDs and anticopying software, but more useful are frank discussions about the potential obsolescence of these precautions. When stylistically possible, producers can include these dialogues with interlocutors about the risks and benefits of visibility within the work itself. When a producer includes reflexive moments in an ethnographic film or digital storytelling project, audiences will gain a better sense of how visibility was negotiated with the participants, thereby suggesting the stakes and local contexts within which the media was produced. In the spirit of orthodox *cinéma vérité*, using the camera to incite a discussion about how participants imagine the audiences for the work will reveal important information about sociopolitical and cultural realities of production. When too disruptive to the story or at odds with the style of the work, these discussions can also appear in DVD extras, on ancillary Web sites, or in textual supplements to the media.

If the possibilities of exposure in a media landscape that cannot be contained are too great, ethnographers can explore alternative forms of representation, which may provide some sense of either anonymity or control. For example, if revealing a person's identity creates a problem, ethnographers can work with audio material to create podcasts or use voiceover narration over images or stills that evoke the story. Media producers can take advantage of interlocutors' involvement with new media forms to curate their self-generated work. Piggybacking on contemporary forms of self-publicity, anthropologists can reframe and contextualize this material in innovative ways.

Traditional anthropological notions of informed consent must expand to include unanticipated technological futures. While once suffering from acute "iconophobia" (Taylor 1996), a growing number of anthropologists are deploying photographic images and video production in their research and circulating these objects in professional presentations, through social media, in film festivals, and on the Web sites of anthropological journals. Hence, rethinking the guidelines for circulating ethnographic media is all the more pressing given the increasing popularity of media making and anthropologists' continued focus on marginal and vulnerable communities who are most often the subjects, rather than the chroniclers, of their own stories.[19] Yet, at the same time, an ethics of visual and sensory research must remain informal and ad hoc, responding to the unique situations in which anthropologists find themselves, rather than relying on institutional boards and oversight committees. Institutional measures can lead to unproductive restrictions on anthropological inquiries and, perhaps more dangerously, to a false sense of security that can allow scholars to "avoid the more painful moral and political questions" inspired by our work (Fassin 2006:524).

Embracing Creativity and Crisis

For anthropologists working with communities that are criminalized and ostracized, questions of how to protect our collaborators from further stigma and legal prosecution have always loomed large. Today, it is all the more important to consider the consequences of these images going viral, as media finds its way through online social networks that can be used to implicate or exonerate. While piracy of artistic work, as Walter Benjamin (1968) points out, has been around for centuries, emerging alongside stamping, woodcutting, engraving, and etching, the rapid mechanical reproduction of filmic works presents new possibilities and challenges. Benjamin famously argues that as art becomes accessible to the masses, transferred from the museum wall to the popular cinema, people are able to become involved in culture and politics in new ways. For Benjamin, it is the absence of authenticity through the democratization of media that holds political potential. The political potential and, I maintain, the risks of increasingly rapid digital reproduction and circulation of media along new and at times unorthodox channels pose critical questions for anthropologists regarding how best to collaborate with our interlocutors in a world of unruly circulation.

The diversion of commodities from their intended paths is always "a sign of creativity or crisis" (Appadurai 1986:26), and in the case of bootlegging ethnographic video, it becomes a symbol of both. Just as the production of ethnographic media embodies specific sociocultural and historical realities, so, too, is the circulation of these media forms determined by concrete

elements such as infrastructure, formal and informal networks of distribution, and governmental policies. When analyzing local visual cultures, as Pink (2004) recommends, it is important to attend to how people understand and imagine the possibilities of circulation. How people imagine their "right" to bootleg, consume, or purchase these images likewise reveals useful insights about cultural imaginaries framing digital technology and information. Even the language our collaborators use to describe the dissemination of work—flow versus distribution or sharing versus selling—can help anthropologists to understand the shifting interpretations of media landscapes as they have become ingrained in everyday life.

The advantages of including audiovisual or sensory, in addition to textual, media in the production of anthropological knowledge are numerous, including reaching wider audiences, fostering new cultural epistemologies, and providing innovative forms of collaboration. Exciting new ethnographic work makes use of Web 2.0 technologies, such as Kim Fortun's "Asthma Files" (http://theasthmafiles.wikispaces.com/), which is an authored and crowd-sourced archive of text, images, and video that explore perspectives on asthma, and Christine Walley's multimedia "The Exit Zero Project" (http://www.exitzeroproject.org/), which features a book, a feature-length documentary, and an interactive Web site that collectively chronicle the historical, personal, and economic aspects of deindustrialization in Walley's neighborhood of Southeast Chicago.[20] Similarly, other anthropologists are reinvigorating the use of visual mediums, creating "photo-ethnographies" such as *Righteous Dopefiend*, coproduced by Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg, which documents the lives of drug users in the inner city through audio and black-and-white stills (https://slought.org/resources/righteous_dopefiend), or Lucien Taylor's sensory ethnographies, such as *Sweetgrass* (2009), codirected with Ilisa Barbash, and *Leviathan* (2012), codirected with Verena Paravel, which screen in prominent theaters and museum installations and have gained mainstream critical attention, raising the profile of contemporary anthropology in American popular culture.[21]

Given the power of these digital platforms to foster new modes of thinking, create accessible archives, and reach wider audiences, rather than being dissuaded from producing ethnographic media because of the unruliness of digital reproduction and circulation, I advocate reevaluating the promises anthropologists can make to interlocutors. In the case of *Luchando*, the illicit copying and dissemination of the film fractured my ties with Diosa, a key collaborator. Once in the United States, Diosa only reached out to me through her lawyer and to

date my attempts to locate her through mutual friends and Internet searches have proved futile. It is easy to imagine her feelings of betrayal lingered even with the knowledge that *Luchando* had been distributed without my consent and that I have not profited from the film's distribution. In thinking about the responsibilities that come with the possibilities of circulation, anthropologists collaborating to produce media can initiate honest discussions with their interlocutors that can, in many circumstances, become part of the story itself.

Notes

1. *Travesti* identity for Diosa, like her peers, meant that she had been born a gay man and had begun living as a woman. I refrain from translating this term as "transgender" because in the United States, transgender often implies being born into the incorrect gender identity. At the time of my research, *travestis* did not seek sex-reassignment surgery.

2. During production, my methods of collaboration were inspired by Jean Rouch's notions of *anthropologie partagée* (shared anthropology), a process in which ethnographer and participants jointly create and critique visual representations of their lives. While the logistics of production prevented collaboration during editing, I sought to maintain my participants' intentions in the stories I constructed.

3. A literal translation of "*luchando*" is "fighting." Traditionally, the term has been used by the Cuban government to mean the fight for the Cuban revolution, but sex workers have appropriated the word to describe the struggle of sex work to survive.

4. See Tim Asch's (1992) article on the importance of sharing royalties with those who appear in ethnographic films.

5. Borrowing from Miller and Horst, I define *digital* as "all that which can be ultimately reduced to a binary code" (Miller and Horst 2012:3). Within their definition, they rightfully warn against the assumption that in a predigital era, things were not mediated and instead suggest that the digital has become another way in which contemporary personhood is constituted.

6. In this article, I draw on my experiences filmmaking in Cuba between 2001 and 2007 and festival and academic distribution between 2007 and 2009. My perspective is also informed by teaching a yearlong video production course for doctoral candidates in anthropology over the last six years through the Graduate Certificate Program in Culture and Media at New York University.

7. I join with these scholars who have discussed the emergence of new codes of ethical research within American anthropology since 2007 and, like many of these publications and forums, I utilize case studies as a methodological framework for investigating ethics and collaboration.

8 My analysis has likewise been inspired by recent scholarship suggesting that Web 2.0 technologies such as Wikis, blogs, and embedded videos form a new online landscape that, while providing user-generated content and connectivity, deserves greater critical attention (Coleman 2010; Shirky 2008; Weinberger 2007).

9 At first glance, media piracy might appear to undermine the corporate control of media, but it can just as easily support late-capitalist ideologies. Gabriella Coleman has suggested, for example, that some open-source sites and programmers can perpetuate forms of liberal Enlightenment thinking even as others suggest radical challenges to the injustices of capitalism (Coleman 2010:493). Piracy has been explored in great detail by anthropologists (cf. DeNardis 2009; Dent 2012; Larkin 2008; Sundaram 2007) and here I narrow in on its impact on ethnographic media circulation.

10 While issues of bootlegging predated these developments, with large markets of bootleg VHS tapes, for instance, their scope and speed have greatly intensified.

11 The most famous among the blogs is "Generation Y," penned by Yoani Sánchez (http://generacionyen .wordpress.com/).

12 For an important discussion of ethics in anthropological studies of urban gay life, see Hersker and Leap (1996).

13 I also hired a local Cuban producer who was well connected in Havana's gay networks and could offer advice regarding the politics of visibility.

14 See http://www.elnuevoherald.com/2009/04/29/437688/ en-miami-documental-sobre-la-prostitucion.html.

15 *Nuevo Herald*, July 27, 2006.

16 Cuban state television stations had been using these exemptions to broadcast American films and television series for years, including *CSI Miami*, *The X-Files*, and *The Wire*.

17 I had even made use of the Kimbara Cine's Web site to purchase a Cuban soap opera that I was writing about in my book.

18 While useful, this definition ignores the importance of audio, such as the overlooked but pervasive media format of radio.

19 Research projects have life histories and the current institutional structure for human subjects protocols focuses on informed consent, which is only one moment of interaction with a respondent (Brenneis 2006:539). While more nuanced than this bureaucratic model, anthropological guidelines for ethnographic film have likewise focused on moments of contact and collaboration with our subjects during production, but the afterlives of these images as they circulate and transcend and escape our control may prove to be just as central.

20 In a similar vein, media scholars such as Alexandra Juhasz (2011) are using YouTube to design innovative and experimental courses in digital storytelling. See http:// vectors.usc.edu/projects/learningfromyoutube/ (accessed February 28, 2014).

21 See, for instance, Lim (2012).

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