



Dramatizing Ethnographic Fieldwork. Collaborative Laboratory and the Act of Intervening

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Abstract

What does it mean when an ethnographer intervenes in the public sphere or when a dramatist or theatre director conducts ethnographic research? What are the possibilities and values of such collaboration, and how might it be turned into engaged activities? In the following article, we attempt to answer these questions by drawing from our pedagogical experience in a joint effort of running and supervising a collaborative laboratory for students of anthropology and theatre academy (directors and dramatists). The outcome included thirteen interventions, understood as immediate social actions performed in the public space. Our aim is to engage critically with our teaching experiences and collaborative research efforts, as well as to problematize the potential of the drama-based approach to ethnographic research. We argue that the form of collaboration between ethnography and performative arts has transformational potential with new possibilities in methodological and pedagogical approaches. The interventions performed in the public sphere reaches broader audiences and enables a critical and engaged understanding of different social and cultural practices.

Keywords: collaboration, intervention, dramatization, anthropology

Difficult Beginnings

A room in the basement of the Academy of Theatre Arts in Cracow slowly began to fill with the lab participants. Immediately after entering the room, a larger group of anthropologists sat on ‘the left,’ while the smaller group of theatre directors and dramatists occupied ‘the right’ site of the room. The atmosphere was tense as the students started to lay out their prejudices and doubts about the collaboration. The anthropologists seemed to be more interested in working with their theatrical counterparts. They treated it primarily as an adventure, not knowing what opportunities it could bring to them. The students of the theatre school showed some superiority and distance. They gave the impression that they were not interested in cooperating with anthropologists. The ‘us’ and ‘them’ divide was felt even stronger, when both groups began to justify their positions as experts, possessing exclusive knowledge within specific disciplines and work areas. The two of us were sitting in silence, observing and listening to the ongoing discussion between the groups. We knew that this clash of worldviews, attitudes, and approaches was a challenge, but also a promise of dynamic negotiations. Soyini Madison (2005, p. 35) defines this as “a meeting of multiple sides in an encounter with and among Other(s), one in which there are negotiation and dialogue toward substantial and viable meanings that make a difference in Others’ worlds”.

For us it was an exciting start of a year-long research laboratory aimed at exploring and problematizing masculinities using anthropological and theatrical perspectives. We followed Saldaña (2005, p. 29), where “both disciplines, after all, share a common goal: to create a unique, insightful, and engaging text about the human condition”. Hence, our encounters in the basement room, not only with students of anthropology and the theatre academy, but also with ourselves, was thought to be a form of the process “involved in constructing, acquiring, and transforming knowledge” (Pelissier, 1991, p. 75). Our lab was made up of performing arts students with no experience in ethnographic methods and theories of anthropology, and anthropology students

with little or no experience with theatre and performative arts. For a year, we have tried to exchange, swap, and negotiate methods, experiences, research strategies and ways of parsing the everyday life. We assumed that an interdisciplinary laboratory would develop a new ‘shared meaning of learning and teaching’ by encouraging dialogue amongst a diverse student population (Lodge, 2005, p. 132). Our interdisciplinary, collaborative pedagogical experiment ended with public ‘interventions’, which drew on the processual nature of the research experience (Chapman & Sawchuk, 2012) and concerned various forms of masculinities presented/performed by each student.

In this article, we present the ‘backstage’ of the collaborative laboratory research process and discuss significant epistemological and methodological issues related to the performance-based approach in ethnography (Alexander, 2005; Conquergood, 1985; Denzin, 2003b; Madison, 1998). This concerns an anthropological, performative, and imaginative understanding of fieldwork and problematizes research concepts, data including:

“the construction of a personal voice; development of self-reflexivity in relation to an issue or research problem; writing and analyzing fieldnotes; the ethics of field research and writing practices; and a narrative focus on examined accounts of experiences in one's own life”(Goodall, 2000, p. 9).

Preparing our joint lab project, we kept in mind Norman Denzin’s assumptions that the performance approach “consist(s) of partial, plural, incomplete, and contingent understandings — not analytic distance or detachment, the hallmarks of the textual and positivistic paradigms” (2003a, p. 193). By presenting the individual stages of our project, we reflected on the teaching and learning process, as well as the interventions themselves, in which students of anthropology and theatre academy presented their research experience. We aligned our annual laboratory project with Low & Merry (2010, p. 208), where teaching and public education “constitute another form of engagement”. We tried to show that the combination of drama, performance, and ethnography in the educational process can allow teaching and learning to become an engaged activity based on dialogical interaction (Marchand 2012). Further, that the form of collaboration between ethnography and performing arts creates not only new opportunities in the methodological and pedagogical approach, but also a transformational potential in communicating research results. Our interventions in public space change static and normative protocols for presenting scientific research results in Poland. In doing so, they are ideally suited for debates on involvement, conceptualization of ethnographic field research, and ethnographic research methodology (Songin-Mokrzan, 2015). Dramatized ethnography may be a way to reach out to the community outside academia to allow a more critical, intimate, and committed understanding of various social and cultural practices and highlight their greater complexity (Conquergood, 2002). In addition, a staged re-telling and/or re-embodying of ethnographic notes and/or data (Alexander, 2005; Lester & Gabriel, 2016) allowed us not only to problematize masculinities, but also to launch students’ skills, talents, and creativity. Since the first meeting, we have been constantly wondering how to work through the mutual strangeness and distance of both groups. Is a collective possible? What can be the profits from cooperation? ‘Difficult beginnings’ certainly meant that we had to negotiate and consider different strategies for running our collaborative laboratory. The students in the field studied broadly understood masculinities. However, for us, the research collaboration became fieldwork in itself. We derived our own ‘confessions’ concerning the shadows, predicaments, and successes of our collaborative project.

It must be emphasized that we are not experts on the art and drama-based approach to ethnographic research. Instead, we would like to present how one can act in the context of the Polish academy with a hybrid ‘academic identity’, combining university research with theatrical practice. Grzegorz Niziolek is a theoretician and practitioner. He deals with theatre from the perspective of cultural studies, especially affective, memory, and queer studies. At the same time, he is a curator of interdisciplinary theatre projects, festivals, exhibitions, editor of a theatre magazine, and also works on performances as a dramatist. Magdalena Sztandara is an anthropologist who for many years conducted ethnographic research on activism and disobedience of women in public space. She collaborates with theatre by organising workshops and educational projects, and teaching field methods. Our collaboration was our first joint project.

‘Doing’ performative ethnography in the context of the Polish academy

We had been discussing a joint laboratory for anthropology and theatre academy students for quite a long time. The idea for the project stemmed from the lack of this type research and educational projects in Poland. To a large extent, it is associated with the hierarchical and institutional distinction between universities and art academies. Until recently, there was a perception that theoretical knowledge conflicts with the spontaneity of artistic activities, and that they are separate areas of academic activity and creativity. In the case of socio-cultural

anthropology, its status in the Polish academy is still not very clear or obvious. This relates to historical and systemic conditions in Poland (the expulsion of anthropology/ethnology from universities in the Stalinist years and its limitation to material culture of rural areas) and the 'quantitative return' that caused anthropology to lose its core ethnographic method (Kaczmarek, 2014). Further, advocating for the neutrality of the scientific view of the world continues to maintain debates on the possibilities of political or social engagement in Polish anthropology (Baer, 2014). Despite the slow but visible changes in the "aesthetic assumptions of performance and the methodological and theoretical ambitions of research" (Mienczakowski, 2001, p. 468) in teaching programs of anthropology at some universities in Poland, research-creation projects are not granted an appropriate amount of academic 'weight' (see Leavy, 2009; Chapman & Sawchuk, 2012). The tendencies to antithetically perceive the relationship between science/anthropology and activism/politics are at odds with theatre, which in Poland is politically engaged.

Conceptualising the project, we had numerous fears and uncertainties. One of them concerned possible tensions and the division into 'us' and 'them' in the form of evaluative judgments resulting from the differences in educational programs. Thus, a situation of misunderstanding at the first meeting was a bit unpleasant and disappointing, but ultimately, not so surprising. In the case of anthropology students, their distance to collaboration can probably be explained by teaching programmes in Poland, which often do not introduce alternative opportunities for communicating research results to a wider audience in a transgressive, performative and suggestive manner (Lester & Gabriel, 2016; Saldaña, 2005). Furthermore, students' ethnographic field practices are usually limited to conducting a specific number of questionnaire interviews as part of several-day 'field excursions' (Kaczmarek, 2014). In the case of theatre students, misconceptions and distance may be associated with the still-dominant paradigm of art, based on ideas of autonomy of artistic activities to other social practices, and overestimation of intuition as the basis for creation. In the Polish tradition, strong romantic patterns persist, according to which the artist's imagination surpasses all other ways of learning about reality. The theatre students, above all, wanted to work on their own experiences and ideas and did not see the need to go out to the field to learn about social practices. There was probably also a fear of the domain of discursive knowledge that threatens the spontaneity of artistic acts. These fears and uncertainties are somewhat puzzling, considering Turner's (1979, p. 80). proposal not only to "read and comment on ethnographies but to actually perform them".

Starting with Turner and Richard Schechner's explorations of performance, performance-studies scholars and anthropologists have employed performance in different ways: as a form of ethnographic process, which includes representing and communicating ethnographic data (Denzin, 2001, 2003b; Mienczakowski, 1995, 2000, 2001; Saldaña, 1999, 2003; Schechner, 1985); or, as a form of ethnographic participant observation, which addresses research questions either by developing a theatre performance or by staging a performative event in collaboration with research participants (Conquergood, 2002; Culhane, 2011; Kazubowski-Houston, 2010; Madison, 2005, 2010). Currently, much is being written about the cooperation of theatre, art, and social sciences within 'blurred species' (Geertz, 1973) and the implications of this cooperation in research-creation projects and educational practices (Conquergood, 1991; Denzin, 2001, 2003a; Goodall, 2000; Mienczakowski, 1995, 2001; Saldaña, 1999, 2003; Leavy, 2009; Beeman, 2002). According to Saldaña (2005, p. 10), "examples of qualitative, ethnographic and autoethnographic works presented in a dramatic form have grown exponentially over the last decade and include a variety of content from many areas". Performance is thus an integral part of anthropology, because it has potential to be participatory, collaborative, and empowering. It can politicize diverse audience members (within and beyond the university) by engaging them empathically and critically in the issues being presented. Although these approaches are not new, 'doing' performative ethnography still seems to be challenging. Ethnography is an inherently slow process, and these new approaches require an even greater investment of time. In addition, performative ethnography, much as theatre and performance, remains an exclusive form of engagement. Thus, the question is how to prepare a research and educational project based on the traditions of drama- and art-based approaches, and grounded in critical ethnography (Conquergood, 1991; Madison, 2005)?

Behind the Scenes

The preparation and running of the annual project required detailed discussions not only about the logistics of classes at two different spaces (the university and the academy), but also the teaching and learning process and methodology itself. The formula of the laboratory assumed an in-depth process and dialogue to broaden the platform of cognition and knowledge between young anthropologists, theatre directors, and dramatists. For the students of the theatre academy, it was a drama seminar, implemented in the second year of study, which served

as the development of interdisciplinary attitudes. The seminar usually ended with various forms of intervention in the public sphere to go beyond routine directing practices. The ethnographic laboratory was compulsory for the second-grade anthropology students. It was a specific, intensive, and a year-long course focused around a broadly defined research problem. Students chose to participate in one of several research groups and conceptualised their own specific topic.

Our collaborative laboratory consisted of sixteen students (five from a theatre academy and eleven anthropologists). The main theme was notions of 'masculinity'. The assumption was not to define 'masculinity' in any specific way, but rather to follow problems, stories, and people that emerged in the field. The process of formulating the topics was as free as possible to express the personal interests of students. We decided that topics should be flexible and adapted to the specific context and research case. Similar tactics accompanied the means of expression for final interventions. In other words, we assumed that if we allowed students to explore, question, and create freely, their engagement would increase.

Ultimately, our research project on masculinity/masculinities was supposed to function on three mutually complementary levels. The first level concerned theories and methods. In this case, we understood the performance and art-based approaches "as a pragmatics of *inquiry* (both as model and method), as an optic and operator of research, and as a tactic of *intervention*" (Conquergood, 2002, p. 152). The students' attention was directed towards a reflective, critical, sensual, interpretative, narrative approach to research process and different ways of knowing (Madison, 2005). The emphasis was on showing that ethnographic research and ways of knowing is grounded in active, direct involvement, intimate and hands-on participation, and personal relationships.

On the second level, we emphasized the "methodological implications of thinking about fieldwork as a collaborative process, or co-performance" (Denzin, 2003a, p. 191). We assumed that students of the theatre academy, despite the lack of methodological preparation, had experience with some form of 'research-for-creation', that involves an initial 'gathering together of material, ideas, concepts, collaborators' that is 'directed towards a future revealing' and collaboration (Chapman & Sawchuk, 2012, p. 15). Although Marcus emphasizes, that artists do not seem to care 'about the politics of the process of inquiry that they set in motion and what kind of unique knowledge it could produce', it can be a sample of what fieldwork is in anthropology (2010, p. 272). Practitioners of the theatre also have the skills that can make a significant contribution to participatory projects with ethnographers:

"The ability to analyze characters and dramatic texts that can be used to analyse transcripts of interviews and fieldnotes; stage design skill that enhances visual analysis of work settings in the field, space or artefacts; and the ability to tell stories in its broadest sense, which translates into writing engaging narratives and presenting them in action" (Saldaña, 2003, p. 230).

Based on this information we assumed that we would be able to form collaborative research teams working together on individual case studies. The last level treated "performances as a complementary form of research publication, an alternative method or way of interpreting and presenting the results of one's ethnographic work" (Denzin 2003a, p. 192). The topic, investigations, and research process itself, was to lead each participant to the structure of a final intervention involving some form of creative practice, such as video production and installation, performance, ethno-dramatization, film, sound work, or multimedia text. Using a performance model, we wanted to develop an approach that privileged a 'particular, participatory, dynamic, intimate, precarious, embodied experience' over the 'temporal, decontextualized, flattening approach of text-positivism' (Conquergood 1991, p. 189). The performative approach, which puts more emphasis on directness, engagement and intimacy, aimed to help anthropology students to go beyond positivist paradigms and shift towards inter-subjectivity and performative [auto]-ethnography (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Alternatively, ethnography could bring new tools to many stages of the theatre process. Starting from the choice of topic, careful observation of social life on a microscale, finding important and worth presenting phenomena in the sphere of everyday life, to critical self-reflection on such categories as conversation, observation, and encounter.

It is hard to resist the impression that the above-mentioned debates about engagement in anthropology caused indefinite and exaggerated fear among students. They were influenced by 'empirical and critical observation from a distanced perspective: "knowing that," and "knowing about"' (Conquergood, 2002, p. 146). The proposed laboratory as a pedagogical and methodological experiment was to not only work on these fears but to give them new tools of representations and research methods and help the students to leave the limitations of informative

ethnography (Fabian, 1990). As Fabian (1990, p. 6) underlines, “knowledge can be represented – made present – only through action, enactment, or performance”. Writing reports, articles for journals, or books, is an effective way to communicate to specialists. However, it does not reach a wider audience. Collaboration with dramatists and theatre directors was to give anthropology students new tools by engaging the performative dimensions as a means for communicating ethnographic reporting (see Castañeda, 2006, p. 76). Mienczakowski (2000) notes that “numerous written ethnographies remain unread, [but] performed research gains impetus, power and potential from its translation from text into movement, vision and sound”. The use of performed representation of ethnographic research was not aimed at finding a 'clever' medium that could replace an academic, scientific publication. Rather, we wanted to show that ethnographic constructions of dramatic scripts can be one of many alternate forms of presentation and representation of data from the field (Mienczakowski, 1995; Saldaña, 2005). “Unlike the well-edited research paper, live performances have ways of taking unexpected turns” (Gray, 2003, p. 255).

‘Launching’ the Collective

An essential element of our project was weekly comprehensive workshops lasting up to several-hours. They were considered to be a dialogic performance “struggl[ing] to bring together different voices, world views, value systems, and beliefs so that they can have a conversation with one another” (Conquergood, 1985, p. 9). We put great emphasis on the methods of participation not only in research but also as a medium in the didactical process. Both groups met regularly throughout the duration of the lab for critical discussion on the proposed literature, methodology, and research ideas. Through the whole process, we repeatedly held talks with students concerning the assumptions and objectives of the project, often modifying them based on student suggestions or directions taken during class conversations. The last weeks of the project were devoted to analyzing the whole fieldwork process and designing individual interventions.

In many cases the research projects concerned very personal and intimate experiences, so we introduced individual consultations, and stayed in contact with students outside of class hours (meetings, e-mails, telephones). This strategy allowed intimate conversations about fieldwork experiences. Some of the students' projects concerned non-heteronormative sexual orientation, race, family traditions, family illness, religious values, where they openly faced various circumstances impacting their identities. In one case, the project became a form of homosexual coming-out in front of parents, and it required special attention and support from us. The laboratory and research topics made students learn something new about themselves. For example, one of the student recorded conversations with his former partners, exploring their understandings of his skin color, whilst the other, discovered uncomfortable social reactions faced by her transsexual friend. From the beginning, we encouraged laboratory participants to keep fieldnotes. The fieldnotes included observations, reflections on reading literature, class discussions, research, cooperation or conflicts in research teams, and preparations for interventions crowning their projects. The fieldnotes had an open formula, including issues concerning the description, methodology, theory and personal reflections of the researchers. For some of the students, fieldnotes became a form of correspondence with us on sensitive topics that they did not want to address in the class space or during the individual consultations. From the beginning, the fieldnotes became a part of the whole process, including final interventions. Part of the agreement, however, was that students would choose freely which (and if any) fragments of the fieldnotes they would share with us during the research process and use for intervention.

In every meeting, we aimed to ‘launch’ the collective. First of all, we hoped to activate the collaborative research teams with anthropology and theatre students working together in small groups. However, breaking the barriers between them was the most challenging task for us and it required a lot of energy and effort. Even if during some classes these barriers were successfully overcome, they eventually returned. Grzegorz blamed theatre students for their dogmatic thinking about the position of the artist in society. Magdalena suspected that this was also related to the fact that very young anthropology students treated their colleagues from the theater school with a certain distance and respect. The main issue was the students' reluctance to go beyond their comfort zones and presumptions. We tried to suppress the dominance of any groups by alternating classes at the anthropology department or the theater school. We wanted to ‘launch’ the collective by adopting more democratic classes to disrupt traditional hierarchical relations between supervisors of the lab and students (Lodge, 2005). Both of us aimed to maintain more informal relations during the class to blur the academic power relations. This was driven not only by the experimental nature of the class, but also the topic itself, and meant that everyone had knowledge and experience in the explored area. From the very beginning, our meetings became for us a form of ethnographic fieldwork. During each class we conducted participant observation, which

included interaction between students and the process of collaboration. Furthermore, we observed student participation, keeping in mind that “we are people with (dis)interests, convictions, constraints, bodies, emotions, social relations, (re)actions and (lacks of) choices” (Marchand, 2012, p. 49).

An essential educational activity, to help 'launch' the collective, was an attempt to open a dialogical discussion about individual projects within the class. We tried to replace the debate with an engaged dialogue about students' thoughts, research findings, and ideas for the interventions. It helped them to consider different voices and understand that reaching a research goal strongly benefits from a mutual and collaborative effort. In addition, sharing and reading fragments of the fieldnotes aloud empowered anthropology students, and somehow aroused interest in their work among theatre students. This was the case of ethnographically insightful fieldnotes about a barbershop in Cracow written by one of our students, which showed artistic and literary potential. The effectiveness of this procedure concerned the disruption of the unspeakable simplifications and assumptions that only professional scriptwriters and dramatists have the skills to create works of artistic value and quality. By rupturing and problematizing these symbolic boundaries through the representation of professional interests and identities of individual groups, we shifted a focus to collaboration and research (Mienczakowski, 2001).

Three Floors of Interventions

The final stage of our project was to prepare an intervention and engage with the wider audience. The public space for our activities was three floors of one of the theatre school buildings in the centre of Cracow. We were aware that the concept of artistic activities in public space usually refers to the activities carried out in a specific public utility place. However, if we cease to think about public space as a physical place, emphasizing its public and common character, then public space can mean the common symbolic as well as material area. We assumed that our interventional projects were a form of action in public space because they were an attempt to transform and change the common concepts, stereotypes, or historical narratives about masculinity. Eventually, thirteen interventions have been shown, which created a genuinely polyphonic space and confronted different patterns and practices of masculinity/masculinities. The event was also an opportunity to hear the confessions and predicaments of the researchers participating in the laboratory, seeking to answer several important questions about masculinity, and non-masculinity, emotions, and brotherhood, power, norms, and rules, transsexuality, asexuality, or autobiographical entanglements. Daria, a dramatist and former student of Grzegorz, whom we asked for help in dramatizing interventions, played an important curatorial role. Her attempts to launch the collective resulted in an action, which we called 'confessions'. These were significant and dramatically constructed collective activities, produced from fieldnotes. Researchers read them in front of the audience, to reveal records from the field in their most raw form. By unravelling their feelings, thoughts, doubts, fears and successes of fieldwork, students activated the 'policy of subjectivity' (Fox, 2007). The 'confessions' included pre-judgments, disappointments, anxieties, discomfort, embarrassment, inappropriate behaviours and positionalities. They contained more information than ethnographies. In doing so, we not only wanted to make accessible and transparent what is usually hidden and personal in the research process (Jackson, 1990). We referred to Protokoll and the idea of the *Theatre of Real People* (Mumford, 2013; Martin, 2013). We assumed that revealing the details of someone's life in the public discourse bridges the personal narratives with the public. Telling a personal story becomes a social process and makes the lived experiences understandable and meaningful (Ellis & Bochner, 1992).

In their interventions, students incorporated many forms of creative work to produce knowledge about everyday practices connected with masculinity. On three floors, for four hours, the audience was traveling to the worlds of others through exhibitions, autobiographical dramas, ethno-dramatizations, visual and sound installations, board games and performative lectures. Theatre students in most cases referred to the ideas and practices of auto-ethnography. They worked on their own experiences, carried out conversations in a family or circle of people familiar to them, and used home archives. Carrying out auto-ethnography “encouraged them to dialogically look back upon themselves as other, generating critical agency in the stories of their lives” (Spry, 2001, p. 708). They chose a form of drama, performance, and video art that was close to them. One of the students, wrote a play about the problems of young gays associated with coming out in front of their parents. The drama was based on conversations with his peers and included the instructions on how to 'carry out' coming out. Further he turned to his father with a request to make illustrations for his drama, making the intervention both public and very personal. During the event, a copy of the drama was left for review, and everyone could send a copy of it to their e-mail account, from the laptop left next to it. Another drama student, created a very intimate video made of fragments of films shot in an amateur camera by her father many years ago. She intentionally chose clips that

were perceived as irrelevant by her mother and prepared a monologue about her depressive father. Another intervention, made by anthropology student, about scout traditions in her family was realized in the form of ethno-dramatization. It consisted of dramatized, meaningful choices of narratives collected during interviews, fieldnotes and memories. In this project, a professional actress, performed the role of individual family members sitting at the table, following student's instructions. For the time of intervention, anthropology student became a director, making comments, suggestions and directing the scenes of performance. It allowed the circulation of family tales, giving them new social meanings and relations, and became an opportunity to deeply re-evaluate family traditions. Other interventions, such as those devoted to the local football hooligans or the clients of the striptease clubs, resembled an 'investigation' of closed and hermetic milieus. At LABSY fuck PROJECT, anthropology students, formed a duo and performed extensive monologues composed of field recordings and excerpts of scientific studies on the subject of football fans. The other student of anthropology, explored masculinities in the 'men-only' barbershop and interrogated its clients' expressions of sexism, homophobia, racism and anti-Semitism in his audio-visual installation. In his ethno-dramatization, a theatre directing student, used anthropology students and actors to perform the script of recorded telephone conversations, making intervention a joint collaborative effort. In other dramatizations, anthropology students were physically absent, taking positions 'offstage' as substantive consultants (see Saldaña, 2005).

The interventions confronted different patterns of masculinity, stretched between patriarchal norms (often violent) and various non-normative experiences. Convergence of the 'autobiographical impulse' and 'ethnographic momentum' in those thirteen dramatized texts, ethno-dramatizations, and installations, revealed what is usually inaccessible to everyday observation and reasoning hidden in the depths of social life (see Turner 1982). On the one hand, such forms seem to be in contradiction with the 'purely scientific preference of the impersonal, unemotional, obscenely charming idiom of representation' (Spry, 2001, p. 723). On the other hand, all those interventions were not just subjective accounts of experience, but they attempted to reflexively map multiple discourses that occur in a given social space. They were multi-vocal and open-ended. In the interventions, we wanted to give the space and voice to people during the research as much as possible. Saldaña argues that while reflexivity is an important component of qualitative narratives, within the framework of ethno-drama, scientific commentary may serve to diminish the role of the heroes' stories. Thus, the research question should not be: 'What is this research about?' but, 'Whose story is it?' and 'Who's talking?' (Saldaña, 2005). Further, following Rimini Protokoll we played with the position of the observer and the observed (Mumford, 2013). Challenging the dominant subjects' observer position involves questioning, shifting and changing the position of the researcher-ethnographer and researcher-artist and viewers, as those who watch and observe. We wanted to create a situation in which the audience is forced to deal with the people in particular places in face-to-face encounters (Ellis & Bocher, 1992). In addition, the audience did not get information on where to go during the interventions or how to react to them. This was done to capture a sense of participation and discussion on themes that matter and that we are all part of.

Conclusions: Confessions of an Anthropologist and Theatrolgist

Dramatized ethnographies, or what Madison (1998; 2005) calls 'staging ethnography' created an 'active intervention', open to new 'possibilities' as 'performance(s) of possibilities' (Denzin, 2009). As part of our project, we practiced these possibilities in a broad perspective. Dramatized ethnographies became possibilities for anthropology students, because they enabled them to broaden their reflexivity and provided tools for producing knowledge through creative work. "In this sense, such creativity can be understood as a strong form of intervention" to contribute to the creation of knowledge in a manner different from the academic norm (Chapman & Sawchuk 2012, p. 20). According to Polish artist, Artur Żmijewski, the intervention resources available to a sociologist or anthropologist are limited. They can write a report, an article for a newspaper or a magazine, or prepare a book on the subject. Żmijewski defines the process of going beyond the blocking framework of social research methodology as a 'transition to action' (Slavoj Žižek's *passage à l'acte*, 2006). This 'transition to action' among anthropology students enabled them to experience how the discursive knowledge acquired during fieldwork and translated into performative and visual activities, gave them new transmission channels in the public sphere. These new techniques and tools enabled them to represent ethnographies and emphasize their narrative, sensual, embodied, participatory, confessional, impressionistic and non-representational values (Vannini & Milne, 2014). The interventions were a unique cognitive and practical experience for the anthropologists. Performative ethnographic practices not only strengthened the ability of ethnographic texts to elicit engaged responses from the recipients, but also allowed for a methodological repositioning of the researcher "from participant-observer actor to a "performative-I" subject(ive) researcher"

(Spry, 2006, p. 341). This methodological (re-)location, as part of the research process and representation, involved textual forms, installations, critical reflexivity and ethno-dramatizations.

The possibilities were not one-sided. Engagement with anthropologists became an opportunity for theatre students to test strategies of artistic activity and broaden the spectrum of social experiences captured through the theatrical medium. Participation in the laboratory made them realize how broadly the text can arise and be understood in the course of the cognitive and artistic process. It is quite symptomatic, however, that the students of the theatre school chose personal topics developing in the field of auto-ethnography, using it as a process and product. They were probably apprehensive to explore a more radical intervention exceeding the individualistic attitudes supported at the academy. The material they collected was constantly subjected to various artistic transformations, rewritten, supplemented, and modified as part of the intervention. On the one hand, ethnography gave dramatists and directors particular tools to deconstruct well-established conventions for the presentation of otherness. On the other hand, it allowed rethinking of relations between such categories as orality, textuality, and performativity. In dramatic theatre, the text is the foundation of artistic creation, while in theatre created in the spirit of ethnographic exploration, there is a re-evaluation and displacement of these categories in the creative process. Ethnographic tools have given theatre students a new impetus and possibilities in the post-dramatic, engaged, and critical theatre. Self-reflecting on our educational process, it is worth taking into account not only the benefits, but also our effectiveness within the framework of critical pedagogy. Did our idea of a collaborative laboratory indeed lead to “the diverse performance perspectives of students....open the ethical dimensions of performance; and offer an embodied perspective on knowledge through performative encounters”(Rusted, 2012, p. 4)? It is worth pointing out that the ‘confessions’ contributed to some of the shadows of our cooperation that are definitely still to be re-worked.

Did the interventions ‘work’? Public interventions were to communicate specific knowledge to the communities studied by the researchers. At this level, we have not been able to implement our project fully, since many field collaborators and informants were unwilling or unable to participate in public presentation of our research projects. Did we manage to ‘launch’ the collective during our laboratory? Certainly not at the level of creating joint collaborative research teams. Ultimately, it was only possible to ‘launch’ it for a while at various stages of the process. Although the research projects were mostly ethnographic, some students of the theatre academy remained ironically distant, not entirely using their self-reflection on the methodology and research practices. However, one can also ask why should they? The goals of art should not be confused with the purposes of ethnographic research (Marcus, 2010). In a similar vein, some of the anthropology students preferred to stay offstage and not take an active part and perform the intervention. However, our goal was not to change the roles between anthropologists, directors and dramatists, but rather introduce a specific kind of embodied experience. We have learnt that it is crucial to put more emphasis on practical activities within the course, such as the exchange of fieldnotes, performing someone else's ethnographies, and deepening the mutual knowledge about disciplines (anthropology, drama, and theatre) through embodied experience. In retrospect, we had some idealistic assumptions and ideas about the collaboration. Yet, we both agree that these kind of endeavours have future potential. Staging ethnographies can become a powerful tool for understanding and reflecting on the worlds of others. It gives new ways of anthropological knowledge production and communication by representing people and places, and unravelling the dynamics of everyday lives. It is also important for directors and dramatists because it helps to develop their ethical and critical approach to otherness and its representation. Collaboration and performative ethnography might foster a mutually beneficial cross/inter/trans-disciplinary dialogue about otherwise unforeseen possibilities.

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