Telling the Stories of Youth: Co-Producing Knowledge across Social Worlds

Emilee Moore and Ginalda Tavares

Introduction

This chapter reflects on a process of collaboratively producing knowledge between a university-based teacher-educator | researcher (Emilee Moore) and a poet | researcher (Ginalda Tavares)[1] who came together through a Youth Spoken Word (YSW) poetry organisation called Leeds Young Authors (LYA) based in Leeds, UK. This process was embedded in a broader linguistic ethnographic project led by Moore, with the organisation as its focal site, which formally took place over a period of 20 months from December 2015 to July 2017. The ethnographic project emerged from an interest in understanding the socially and educationally transformative potential of YSW, as both a powerful artistic and pedagogical practice, and as a transnational youth culture connecting diverse young people across the globe. YSW organisations aim to empower youth to use their ideas, their words, their voices, their bodies and their emotions as catalysts for personal development, critical learning and social change (e.g. Ibrahiim, 2016; Yanofsky *et al.*, 1999). As a teacher-educator | researcher, Moore's goal was to learn from experiences and expertise developed outside of mainstream education in contributing to socially transformative pedagogical practices involving language in schools. Tavares was a teenage member of Leeds Young Authors at the time of the research.

One of the key conceptual notions framing the ethnographic research was that of translanguaging, as particular attention was paid to fluid practices that spanned oral, visual, embodied, and spatial modalities (Blackledge & Creese, 2017; Bradley & Moore, 2018; Li, 2017; García & Li, 2014). Poetry is a particularly interesting practice for studying such semiotic processes. As van Leeuwen (1999: 5) writes about poetry: '[...] things work differently. No hard and fast rules exist. Any bit of language you might lay your hands on could come in handy for the semiotic job at hand, whether it is grammatical or not, whether it represents a standard variety of English or not.' Following García and Li (2014), such fluidities provide new ways of thinking about language in contexts of diversity and are opportunities for transforming subjectivities, as well as social and educational structures. Through fine-grained analyses of multimodal data (e.g. Goodwin, 2000; Mondada, 2016; Norris, 2003), the research aimed initially to advance the theoretical and methodological bases of translanguaging studies and to offer a deeper understanding of how resources available in language, bodies, objects and spaces combine to construct meaning (see Bradley & Moore, 2018; Moore & Bradley, 2019).

However, as often happens in ethnographic research, the ethnographer's role quickly moved beyond that of simply 'researcher', to that of 'member' of the organisation, as the

needs of the youth and the organisation also changed. As part of this process, the ethnographer's understanding of what counted as knowledge production in the ethnographic research was also modified over time. Following authors such as Pahl (2014: 48), 'the way in which the collaborative space of inquiry that crosses the boundaries of arts practice, ethnography and education can open up new epistemological spaces, that in turn, listen to meaning makers' emerged as a possibility for enquiry. Taking the research in this direction did not deflect the focus from translanguaging, but rather translanguaging provided a robust and flexible lens that afforded new ways of seeing the dialogical production of knowledge and for engaging participants in the research in mutually beneficial ways. As a first step towards such co-production (McKay & Bradley, 2016; Pahl, 2014), in this chapter we describe a process of co-reading, co-interpreting and co-writing ethnography (Lassiter, 2005) we shared. We shall be moving between the first and third person in referring to ourselves, in order to take joint ownership for the text.

'Bleach'

Following the above introduction to the research that brought us together, we now introduce Gina's poem, 'Bleach'. We then present an overview of how our conversations began.

Bleach
A poem by Ginalda Tavares

This is the truth
I found lightening cream once
While scavenging for sweets
Or loose change at the bottom of my mother's bag
White cream
In a small white package

Even with a developing mind, I did not have to read the
Alpha hydraulic
Acidic ingredients
To know that
This was bleach

Prior to this
I had a problem with my melanin

Dark face
Light hands
Blackened eyelids
Due to scratching and skin rashes

'You're blik man'
'You're so black'
'Why you so dark?'
'You look burned gollywog'

I had a problem with my entire face
And used to cover it with long fringes
I'd long to be lighter like my Dad
And pray I never acquired my Mum's complexion

Through fear of feeling inferior
Beside, a lighter shade of black

I wanted to be light like Beyoncé
Like Tyra Banks
Because these days light is right
Too much melanin is displeasing

I still wanted to be Black
But not the shade of black that made me blend in
With the darkness

Later on in life
I learned
I was to love
Dark skin

And I grew
And noticed
Not a single blemish
Or spot
On my mother's face

Her skin is dark

Rich

Exotic

A rare pigmentation

She is a live creation

Skin that held

The freshest

Of deep rooted soil

Mixed with scorching sun rays

And blackberry juice

She

A very own

Walking

Africa

I love black skin

I love my skin

Skin that is blemished

Skin that has various shades and tones

Skin that has been whipped, torn and scorned

Skin that holds herbs, spices and wise tales

Black skin

Black skin that is beautiful

We, Gina and Emilee, first met on January 12, 2016, when Emilee started attending LYA's weekly writing sessions. Presenting herself as a university-based teacher-educator and researcher, Emilee told the attendees she was interested in how young people communicated with and beyond spoken language. She observed the sessions, took notes, and spoke up at times, conducting classic ethnographic participant-observation (e.g. Shah, 2017).

As weeks and months went by, it became clear that a lot of the poems written by Gina and the other poets in the group were about what it is like to be a teenager in Leeds and about social and political issues of concern to them. In particular, the youth often wrote about racism, as Gina did in her poem, 'Bleach'. This was the poem that Gina auditioned with, on

February 23, 2016, for LYA's poetry slam team, and that Emilee later told Gina she was interested in analysing. This text is part of a joint analysis. Gina's reasons for writing the poem and Emilee's reasons for wanting to use it in her research will become clearer as this chapter unfolds.

Just as Emilee started to consider how she could analyse Gina's poem with the knowledge and toolkit she had accumulated as a university-based researcher from fields such as Ethnography, Interactional Sociolinguistics, Literacy Studies or Multimodality, a colleague (Jessica Bradley) circulated an article published in the *New York Times Magazine* (Lewis-Kraus, 2016). The article discussed the controversies over Alice Goffman's book, *On the Run*, in which Goffman presents an ethnographic account of the lives of young black men in Philadelphia, USA. Goffman was strongly criticised for failing to account for her positionality as a white academic in writing about people whose lived experiences as Black youth were quite different from her own.

The article dealt with an issue that has long been discussed in ethnography and in other research traditions, being that of representation (e.g. Van Maanen, 1995). The more Emilee learned from Gina and the other young poets through their writing and conversations, the less capable she felt – as someone who was not from Leeds (Emilee is originally from Australia, has lived for many years in Catalonia, and at the time was a visiting researcher in Leeds), was no longer a teenager, and had not been the target of racism– to adequately represent the meanings the young poets were trying to transmit through their creative practice.

'Storytelling Rights' and Collaborative Ethnography

At about the same time, Emilee was reading Amy Shuman's (1986) book *Storytelling Rights: The Uses of Oral and Written Texts by Urban Adolescents*. In the book, Shuman presents her research in an urban US high school, focusing especially on fight stories told by girls. One particular fight, involving a stabbing, was covered in the local newspaper, and the way the fight was represented caused the girls who were involved and witnessed it enormous anger. Basically, Schuman (1986: 123) concludes from the incident that '[outsiders had] no right (no entitlement) […] unless they told the whole story'. Furthermore, she claims that 'The question of what constitutes the 'whole story' involves the relationship between recontextualisation and entitlement' (ibid). For Shuman, an adequately recontextualised story 'provides whatever contextual details are necessary' (ibid), while entitlement is 'based upon a continual process of building shared understanding' (ibid: 152).

Ethnographic approaches foreground subjectivities –or the contextual details that we and our participants see as relevant for reaching understandings from our particular positionalities, and *inter*subjectivities – or shared understandings between researcher and participants. Collaborative forms of ethnography also afford shared processes of material

practice, including co-reading, co-interpretation and co-writing of ethnographic texts (Lassiter, 2005), and co-production (McKay & Bradley 2016; Pahl, 2014), including with artists. Collaborative ethnography frames how Emilee decided to approach the analysis of Gina's poem, and this chapter is the outcome of an initial experiment with how that might work in practice, and what the potential of that process might be for us both.

Co-reading, co-interpreting, co-writing

When we decided to write this chapter together, we met up at the university coffee shop, and we recorded our first meeting. We did not know what our collaboration would involve exactly, just that we wanted to do something together. Our starting point was Gina's poem, 'Bleach'. The following (Fragment 1) is an extract from that first meeting, when we are discussing what brings us together, the prior experiences and expectations we have of doing qualitative research, how to work together collaboratively to tell the 'whole story' about Gina's poem, and how to each benefit from that process. Gina is represented in the transcript as GI. Emilee is represented as EM. The transcript employs a reduced set of Jefferson's (2004) conventions[2].

Fragment 1

```
1.   EM: I'm doing re- so I'm doing research about you guys
2.       right?
3.   GI: hm. (.) and how we-
4.   EM: and so: the normal way of (.) doing things in
5.       academia right? (.) I think we spoke about this
6.       before (.) normally what university researchers do
7.       (.) is they go and they collect the data
8.   GI: yeah and [then they like]
9.   EM:          [and may:be]
10. (.)
11. GI: just process it without actually (.) sitting down
12.     with the
13. EM: yeah
14. GI: researchee?
15. (.)
16. EM: exact- yeah. [so it's like]
17. GI:             [finding out] like kind of (.) first
18.     hand data really.
19. EM: yeah. (.) so it's like (.) it would be my
20.     interpretation [of]
21. GI:                [of] you. whereas [this is our-]
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22.  EM:                                    [a story] you've
23.       produced really [yeah?]
24.  GI:                  [yeah.] (.) oh yeah.
25.  (.)
26.  EM: and so the idea is to do that differently. (.) °you
27.       know?°
28.  GI: [so that the person can actually tell]
29.  EM: [we can tell the story together]
30.  GI: yeah.
31.  (..)
32.  EM: and then also in telling the story what do you get
33.       from that? (.) you know what I mean?
34.  GI: yeah.
35.  EM: because I get- this is my job so I get something from
36.       it ((laughing) [no matter] what you know?)
37.  GI:                 [yeah.]
38.  GI: but then (.) as a young person (.) you get your
39.       voice heard.
40.  EM: yeah. (.) what would you want from this? (.) I mean
41.       what would you want from resea:rch? (.) [what would
42.       you-]
43.  GI:                                          [just for it]
44.       to be looked at in a different way because (.)
45.       actually doing sociology in ehm college it was like
46.       was learning about the research and primary data and
47.       secondary data and (.) and all kinds of things that
48.       like so the researcher would just go and watch
49.       someone and they'd be like well the person's acting
50.       like this because I think they're acting like that
51.       for a reason [but it's like]
52.  EM:              [yea:h]
53.  GI: you haven't really gone and asked the person. (.) so
54.       I think it's just about like recognising what the
55.       person is actually meaning so like you know [when
56.       you-]
57.  EM:                                              [yeah]
58.  GI: you know when you're doing poetry
59.  EM: yeah
60.  GI: and you write something and then someone's
61.       interpreting it in their own way which [is okay]
62.  EM:                                         [yeah]
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63.  GI: but then they don't think about how what you actually
64.      [meant]
65.  EM: [what it] meant
66.  GI: what the meaning is behind
67.  EM: yeah
68.  GI: your poem or your line or [a word]
69.  EM:                           [yeah]
70.  GI: [so]
71.  EM: [so] that's what I thought we'd do together
72.  GI: yeah.
73.  EM: so we'd interpret your poetry (.) but we'd also
74.      negotiate what we want from it (.) and we'll try and
75.      (.) [get-]
76.  GI:     [work] it.
77.  EM: yeah?
78.  GI: yeah. that sounds good.
79.  EM: ((laughing) yeah).
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What is interesting in this fragment is how we dialogically construct the parameters for our shared research practice, and we begin to distinguish our practice from that of 'those other researchers' and 'those other researchees'. The way we build those categories together, and in particular the way the categories change over the two minutes that the fragment lasts, is summarised in Figure 1. Emilee modifies her research goal from 'doing research about you guys' (line 1), to 'do[ing it] together, so we'd interpret your poetry, but we'd also negotiate what we want from it' (lines 71-74). The aspiration is to alter the practices of other researchers, who position researchees as passive subjects according to the categorisation constructed in the dialogue, and other researchees, whose voices remains unheard. In sum, in the conversation we agree to tell Gina's story together, in a way that is beneficial to both of us.

Those other researchers	Our shared research practice	Those other researchees
	'I'm doing research about you guys' (line 1)	
'they go and they collect the data just process it without actually sitting down with the researchee' (lines 7-14)		
	'first-hand data' (lines 17-18)	
'it would be my		

interpretation' (lines 19-20)

'our story' (line 21)
'a story you've produced really' (lines 22-23)
'the idea is to do that differently' (line 26)

'we can tell the story together' (line 29)
'in telling the story what do you get from that?' (lines 32-33)
'this is my job so I get something from it no matter what' (lines 35-36)
'what would you want from research?' (line 41)
'for it to be looked at in a different way' (lines 43-44)

'the researcher would just go and watch someone and they'd be like well the person's acting like this because I think they're acting like that for a reason' (lines 48-51)

'It's just about like recognising what the person is actually meaning' (lines 54-55)

'you know when you're doing poetry and you write something and then someone's interpreting it in their own way which is okay but then they don't think about how what you actually meant, what the meaning is behind your poem or your line or a word' (lines 58-68)

'that's what I thought we'd do together, so we'd interpret your poetry, but we'd also negotiate what we want from it' (lines 71-74)

Figure 1: Constructing our shared research practice

The Learning Potentials of Boundaries

We are also interested in how we are both learning in this process of co-reading, co-interpreting and co-writing, and what sorts of dialogical settings support our collaborative knowledge building. As we both come into our shared research practice from different social

worlds, the notions of boundary crossing and boundary objects are useful ones. These notions emerged in the cognitive and learning sciences and have more recently been incorporated into studies of language and discourse, coinciding with an increasing interest in objects and materialism, and how they impact talk and meaning making (e.g. Budach *et al.*, 2015, following Latour's Actor Network Theory, e.g. Latour, 2005). Following Akkerman and Bakker (2011), boundary crossing is the activity of going into a territory in which we are less familiar and feel less qualified, combining our repertoires of skills and tools from different boundaries of practice to achieve hybrid situations and understandings. Boundary objects are objects that '[…] both inhabit several intersecting worlds and satisfy the informational requirements of each of them' (Star & Griesemer, 1989: 393), thereby facilitating boundary crossing. Budach *et al.* (2015: 393) describe boundary objects as those which '(a) are able to move physically across contexts; and (b) are endowed with the ability to carry meaning'. They go on to claim that:

> Studying boundary objects, we argue, can enable the researcher to understand social processes in a more nuanced way. This is the case when the object-focus helps to identify meanings that occur simultaneously or are intersecting with each other, in one space or across spaces. Objects, then, become the reference point around which social meaning crystallizes, either in relation to a particular feature of object-design or as a form of human-object relation. Human-object relations, then, can prove a very fruitful lens to understand about broader social relations and issues of power. (Budach *et al.*, 2015: 393)

Inspired by these theoretical contributions, we present a second fragment from our first meeting, in which the way we define and begin to cross boundaries, and the significance of Gina's poem for this crossing, is clear. The fragment begins with Emilee bringing up some of her concerns about her difficulties in interpreting Gina's poem, 'Bleach', taking into account the subject position she constructs for herself in the interaction as a foreign, white, university-based researcher.

Fragment 2

```
1.  EM: we're from different places (.) obviously: you know
2.      I'm- you're an insider in th- the poetry community
3.      and I'm not
4.  GI: hm
5.  EM: but I'm an insider in the research [community] you
6.      know?
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7.   GI:                                    [oh yeah.]
8.   EM: so maybe we're speaking:
9.   GI: in different languages
10.  EM: in complimentary ways right? (.) because we're doing
11.      both of those things at the same time? (.) ahm: (.)
12.      you know I'm not from he:re (.) I don't have an
13.      African background ((laughs))
14.  GI: yeah
15.  EM: I don't have a Portuguese background yeah? (.) but I
16.      have a:
17.  GI: hm
18.  EM: my background is in Australia
19.  GI: yeah
20.  (.)
21.  EM: living in Spa:in (.) so I've got all of that.
22.  (.)
23.  EM: yeah (.) so (.) but I don't- do you think that
24.      that's anything that separates us? you know when we
25.      talk about [talking across cultures]
26.  GI:            [no because I think]
27.  EM: I don't think so.
28.  GI: no because I think it doesn't separa- separate us i
29.      think it might bring us like closer as people because
30.      in poetry you always have to research something.
31.  EM: hm
32.  GI: like (.) you can be asked to do a poem abou:t (.)
33.      post-colonial war [or something] like that
34.  EM:                   [hm:]
35.  EM: ((laughs))
36.  GI: and you have to go away and research [it]
37.  EM:                                      [yep.]
38.  GI: because we don't know anything about it.
39.  EM: yep.
40.  GI: cause it's sometimes it's like writing from
41.      imagination (.) [and then] there's writing based on
42.      facts
43.  EM:                 [hm:]
44.  EM: hm
45.  GI: and that's what research does.
46.  EM: hm
47.  GI: you know what I mean and (.) also you research-
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48. EM: that's true so you are a [researcher (.) that's true
49.     so true yeah.]
50. GI:                          [yeah (.) and then (.) s-
51.     and in terms of re]searchers researchers can be poets
52.     too because
53. EM: yeah.
54. GI: you don't always have to present your- (.) ehm: I
55.     think poetry's all about being creative and you don't
56.     always have to present your findings on a piece of
57.     paper
58. EM: hm:
59. GI: you know what I mean. (.) and- what- the way we're
60.     doing it now we're doing it quite vo[cal quite]
61.     visual
62. EM:                                     [hm hm]
63. GI: so that's poetry in itself it's quite creative and
64. EM: hm:
```

In the fragment, it is evident how Emilee, with Gina's dialogical support, initially sets up a lot of boundaries that she and Gina might be talking across in developing their shared research practice. She argues that she and Gina are 'from different places' (line 1), that Gina is an 'insider in the poetry community' (line 2), while Emilee is an 'insider in the research community' (line 5), that they are 'speaking in different languages' (lines 9-10), that Gina has an 'African background' (line 13), and a 'Portuguese background' (line 15), while Emilee has a 'background in Australia' (line 18), and has been 'living in Spain' (line 21).

In the second part of the fragment (from line 26), however, Gina very skilfully leads a dialogical reconfiguration of these boundaries. She argues that research and poetry, two practices that Emilee had constructed as being separately bounded to different social worlds, are in fact shared practices that cross over the boundaries set up in the interaction. According to Gina, poets are researchers and researchers can be poets. Therefore, the learning potential of crossing boundaries in this collaboration is not so much about Gina becoming a researcher, or about Emilee becoming a poet, but for Gina to learn to be a more university-type researcher, and for Emilee to become a more poetic one. The intersection of poetry and research is the point at which our shared research practice might emerge. Moreover, in terms of boundary objects, following Budach *et al.* (2015), Gina's poem is the material reference point around which shared social meaning might crystallise.

Developing Shared Social Meaning

In drawing this paper towards a close, we would like to come back to the analysis of Gina's poem, 'Bleach', which was what initially prompted our co-reading, co-interpreting and co-writing. In our first meeting, it was not Gina's edited written version of the poem that we worked with (i.e. the version that Gina chose to publish in this volume), but rather a rough and partial transcription of a recording of the poem as it was performed by Gina on February 23, 2016, when she auditioned for the LYA poetry slam team. We also had the video recording itself. These two material artefacts – the recording and the partial transcription – constituted our main boundary objects. The analysis we present will therefore not be of the entire poem as it appears in the written version presented at the beginning of this chapter, but rather we will focus on the first four stanzas, as they were the focus of our meeting.

Fragment 3

```
1.   GI:   this is the truth.
2.   (..)
3.   GI:   I found lightening cream once:, while scavenging for
4.         sweets:
5.   (.)
6.   GI:   or loose change at the bottom of my mother's bag.
7.   (.)
8.   GI:   white cream in a sma:ll white package.
9.   (..)
10.  GI:   even with a developing mind I didn't have to read that
11.        alpha hydraulic acidic ingredients to know that this was
12.        bleach.
13.  (.)
14.  AI:   [((clicking fingers))]
15.  GI:   [prior to this]
16.  (.)
17.  GI:   I'd a problem with my: melanin.
18.  (.)
19.  GI:   dark fa:ce light ha:nds blackend eyelids.
20.  (.)
21.  GI:   due to scra- scratching and skin rashes.
22.  (.)
23.  GI:   ((stylised) you're blik man.
24.  (.)
25.  GI:   you're so black.
26.  (.)
27.  GI:   why you so dark?
28.  (.)
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29.   GI:   you look burned gollywog.)
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One of the reasons that Emilee chose this particular poem to bring to the discussion with Gina was the impact that the words had had on her during Gina's audition. Another reason was Emilee's interest in translanguaging that we mentioned in the opening of this chapter. The latter curiosity meant that several aspects of the recorded poem stood out to her. For example, she noticed the non-verbal communication between Gina and her peer, Aida, in lines 14-15 – Aida shows her appreciation of Gina's words by clicking, as Emilee's ethnographic work with the YSW organisation revealed was a typical practice. Lines 23-29 stood out to Emilee especially – she was fascinated with how Gina brings in multivocality, or the coming together of multiple voices (Bakhtin, 1984), to express a meaning that she might not achieve otherwise. Gina stylises her voice, using a different speech variety than in the rest of the poem to mark reported speech ('you're blik man', line 23). Such use of different speech varieties was common among the young poets in their performances and formed part of their translanguaging repertoires. In Gina's poem, it also seems to index something that had been said to her by an unidentified other. Returning however to the problem of representation and of telling the whole story of the poem, this is where Emilee's analysis was insufficient without Gina's co-interpretation.

Indeed, Emilee initially understood the second voice that Gina brought into her performance of 'Bleach' to be that of someone in particular – a certain person that had spoken to Gina at a specific time, in a specific place. Emilee was interested in knowing more about that event, and the others that Gina's poem makes reference to (e.g. finding skin lightening cream in her mother's bag), and a lot of Emilee's questions in our meetings probed into this aspect. The following extract from a longer stretch of conversation during our first meeting point exemplify this. The fragment begins with Emilee asking Gina where her poem comes from, and what she is trying to say with it.

Fragment 4
```
1.    EM: where does it come from?
2.    (.)
3.    GI: it's real.
4.    EM: what are you trying to say with it?
5.    (.)
6.    GI: that we are all beautiful and we shouldn't have to change
7.        our skin colour to
8.    EM: hm hm
9.    GI: fit in with someone else's perception of what's beautiful
10.       and what's not.
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11.  EM: hm.
12.  GI: °you know what I mean? it's like°
13.  (.)
14.  GI: it's like you always follow your parents' examples and then
15.      you find your mother with that kind of cream you're like
16.      (.) so (.) what does [this mean? (.) if she's trying-]
17.  EM:                      [when did it happen?]
18.  GI: yeah (.) if she's trying to change that (.) her skin (.)
19.      then why- why- (.) am I trying to change mine?
20.  EM: hm
21.  GI: like I mean like I'm uncomfortable in my skin so
22.  EM: hm
23.  GI: you know (.) yeah (.) that's what it's just trying to say
24.      like (.) be happy (.)
25.  EM: hm
26.  GI: and just appreciate whatever skin colour you've got
27.  EM: hm
28.  GI: or skin tone (.) there's no point trying to change it I
29.      mean
30.  ((approximately 4 minutes omitted))
31.  EM: so what happened on Twitter?
32.  (.)
33.  GI: so it's like they had this whole light skin versus dark skin
34.      thing.
35.  (.)
36.  EM: oh really?
37.  (.)
38.  GI: yeah and it's like oh light skins are better than dark skin,
39.      (.) light skin people- (.) it's like (.) they say light-
40.  EM: who started this?
41.  (.)
42.  GI: I don't know like you know people. (.) just random people.
43.  ((approximately 4 minutes omitted))
44.  EM: and then what else did you- (.) look the part that I thought
45.      was really interesting (.) is here. (.) Because I'm looking
46.      at linguistic stuff
47.  GI: hm hm
48.  EM: and here you changed voices?
49.  GI: hm hm
50.  EM: and then when you guys do your play (.) you know your
51.      sketches?
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52.  (.)
53.  EM: like ((laughing) who are you being?)
54.  (.)
55.  GI: ((laughing) somebody else)
56.  EM: somebody else?
57.  GI: well that was actually real (.) that happened.
58.  (.)
59.  EM: it happened?
60.  GI: so it's someone's voice (.) someone else's voice who- that
61.      said that to me.
62.  (.)
63.  EM: somebody said that to you?
64.  (.)
65.  GI: yeah. (.) well a few people actually.
```

Gina begins by explaining the overall meaning of the poem to Emilee. In lines 12-16, she refers to one of the events mentioned in the poem, being the discovery of lightening cream in her mother's bag. In line 17, Emilee searches for more information about the event, wanting to know when it had happened. Gina, in the following line, does not answer Emilee's question, but rather acknowledges it with a 'yeah', before continuing to explain the meaning, rather than the details, of the event, until line 29.

In the next part of the conversation, from lines 31-42, Emilee returns to a point made by Gina in the talk omitted in the fragment for reasons of space, being that the discourse around dark and light skin circulates through Twitter and other forms of social media. In line 40, she insists on gaining more detail about this, asking Gina who had initiated the Twitter thread. Gina responds in line 42 by telling Emilee that she cannot identify the circulating discourse with a particular instigator.

In the final extract of the conversation, from line 44, Emilee draws Gina's attention to the lines of the poem where Gina uses a different speech variety (as she also does at other times in the writing workshops, e.g. in performing sketches). In line 53, she asks Gina to identify whose voice she is using. Gina tells her that although the incident is real, it is not isolated. Rather, the voice indexes a recurring episode involving different people.

The extracts thus reveal a tension between anchoring particular lines and poetic resources used in the poem to specific times, places and people, and using those same devices for telling a bigger story. Through her conversations with Gina, Emilee came to understand that beyond narrating bounded incidents, Gina's poem employed those events to index how racism operates at larger scales. Gina's poem created an epistemological space in which Emilee began to understand how 'Whiteness' is an ideology that permeates education

systems, is reproduced through different forms of media, and that supports economic, social and cultural dominance of white people (Gillborn, 2008). In this way, our conversations around Gina's poem allowed insight into broader issues of power and social injustice.

As a Matter of Closing

This chapter aimed to sketch out how a translanguaging approach, which involved being open to opportunities for transforming subjectivities, as well as social and educational structures (García & Li Wei, 2014), panned out in one particular research process in a context of linguistic and cultural diversity. We have presented an exploratory description of how our collaborative ethnography has developed, and of some of the learning that this has afforded us.

As we mentioned in the opening of this chapter, in working together, we have sought more mutually beneficial way of telling a story than is perhaps typical of academia. Negotiating other ways of working as university-based teacher-educator | researcher and poet | researcher brings with it different challenges – among them, how to fit more collaborative and 'poetic' types of research into the academic structures that we have. To give an example, in research such as we are doing, participant anonymity as usually required by ethics boards would not make any sense at all and would only serve to silence Gina. Rather, publishing Gina's poems as part of a scholarly volume and giving her full credit for them in doing so, is a way of sharing the benefits of her research participation more fairly. The preceding sections have shown how, besides the creative merit of Gina's work, her poem is also material point of reference around which our shared research practice was able to develop.

As we do not have definitive conclusions to offer about this ongoing collaboration, we instead choose to end our contribution with a second poem in which Gina summarises, in her way, some of the themes we have discussed in this chapter. In the poem, she incorporates ideas and notions that circulated in our conversations, as well as others that form part of her knowledge repertoire (e.g. her learning about Erving Goffman's work through her A Level Sociology studies). Taking our collaborative work forward, a co-written poem to represent the research would be our next challenge.

Two minds
A poem by Ginalda Tavares

Crossing cultures
Crossing roads
Crossing styles

Crossing minds
No limits and no boundaries

When research collides with creativity and becomes one
There is ability for unity
Instead of opposition

Because poetry is like a piece of qualitative data
Holding quality, depth, reality

Some researchers tend sit on the opposite side of the glass wall
Than side by side in co-collaboration
The subject stays a subject
Nameless, anonymous

Unethically

Erving Goffman, a prime example of who got to know
Instead of just assuming
He studied the true person inside
Allowing the participant to participate

Creating validity, originality

Truth.

Understandably, there are reasons you keep people a secret
For ethical reasons
So not everybody is to blame

But who really holds the story-telling rights
Of one's life?

It's sometimes acceptable to:

Co-read

Co-write

And co-interpret

A researcher is a poet

And a poet is researcher

As the two are trying to find answers for life's questions

It's a sense of interculturalism and interconnectedness

But don't take my voice and lip-sync my words

Rather tell the world who this voice belongs to

Look deeper into building a shared understanding

Familiarity, a rapport that isn't just straight faced and unemotional

But creates a connection to your research or researchee

Make your research come alive and speak truths across the orb

because you are always an inspiration to somebody reading

Notes

1. Following Alexakos (2015), we use the symbol | in order to give equal importance to each of our dual roles.

2. The following conventions are used in the chapter:

Intonation:
        a. Falling: .
        b. Rising: ?
        c. Maintained: no symbol
Pauses:
        a. Less than half a second: (.)
        b. Between half and one second: (..)
Overlapping: [text]
               [overlap]
Interruption: text-
Lengthening of a syllable: te:xt
Volume: °soft°
Transcriber's comments: ((comment)) or ((comment) affected fragment)

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