

A tale of grappling: Performative duoethnography as expanded methodological thinking

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Abstract

This article is a tale of two researchers, teachers, and artists grappling and playing with duoethnography. By expanding the methodology, we aim to bridge duoethnography into pedagogy. Grappling with the methodological to pedagogical bridge, we found that intertwined performative aspects of doing a duoethnography could challenge our knowledge production and roles as researchers and the current and more dominant practices that we operate within. We engage with a performative paradigm (Bolt, 2016) and lean on relevant theories from new materialist feminist thinkers such as Karen Barad (2003, 2007), Lenz Taguchi (2009, 2012) and Tami Spry (2011, 2016), while dialoguing with Joe Norris and Richard D. Sawyer's (2012) tenets of duoethnography. Our embodiment of these tenets, intertwined with our theoretical positioning, allows our investigation to expand into a performative duoethnography. As an end, we propose duoethnography as a critical performative pedagogy (Pineau, 2002) and offer this article as a playful impulse connecting methodological considerations with pedagogy.

Keywords: duoethnography; new materialism; pedagogy; performative duoethnography; performativity

Prelude

The two of us together in this twilight borderland

To the reader:

This 'Prelude' opens with a line from the poem "Dialectic Lullaby"¹ by Norwegian Professor of psychology, Ragnar Rommetveit (1924-2017). Runa (PhD Candidate in Music Education) thought of this poem in the early days of developing this article. The poem spoke directly to her about the relationship with her co-author and supervisor, Rose (Professor of Arts Education) and their shared experiences with the methodology of duoethnography. At the same time, inspired by the work of Esther Fitzpatrick and Sandy Farquhar (2018) where they used images as a starting point for a duoethnographic investigation, Runa and Rose thought of this poem as one of their impulses and points of departure. Therefore, we offer lines of this poem throughout the article, as a rhythm in our text - a pulse of sorts, propelling our process. We hope that this article can be an impulse for you, the reader, as well.

Introduction: A tale of grappling

This article became a tale. As researchers we both seem to come back to stories, time and time again. But this is not only a story of the past. It is also a story of the present. It is a story of living and doing. This is the tale of two researchers grappling with, playing with, and moving with the methodology of duoethnography.

We, Runa and Rose, are two women. Two teachers. Two academics. Two artists. We come from two different geographical locations, Norway and New Zealand, and we also have our artistic 'homes' in two different disciplines – Runa in singing, and Rose in dance. Between our similarities and differences, we have found a dialogue dwelling around the idea of how duoethnography might bridge with pedagogical practice. Grappling with this idea, we found that the process and performative aspects of duoethnography could challenge our knowledge production, our roles as researchers, and the dominant practices and approaches of our teaching, research, and artistic work.

This article explores how a performative duoethnography can be understood as an expanded way of methodological thinking - not just a framework or a tool, but how it can expand into pedagogy and can be lifted into pedagogical practice. The purpose of such an article is to offer impulses for the reader to think about how methodology can be playful, dialogical, and involve risk taking, and how such methodological considerations can connect with pedagogy. The entanglement of theory, method, and discussion in this article reflects our philosophies of teaching. We see that there are no fixed borders between theory and practice, and, as Norman Denzin (2018) explains, there is no separation between the ethnographer, writer, performer, and the world, they are intertwined and

¹ *Dialectic Lullaby* is an unpublished poem found through the personal notes and archives of Ragnar Rommetveit. It was shared with Runa by a colleague.

entangled. Therefore, this article takes a winding approach, weaving identities, theories, and practices.

We use Joe Norris and Richard D. Sawyer's (2004a, 2004b, 2012) tenets of duoethnography as a framework for this article, which we purposefully interrupt with 'stop moments' (Fels & Belliveau, 2008). These stop moments are moments that have piqued our interest and are understood as moments where change or challenge took place. At the same time, a stop moment can be seen as "[...] a moment of risk, a moment of opportunity that calls us to attention ... it provides a way to focus on the learning that emerges" (Fels & Belliveau, 2008, p. 36). We draw in these stop moments as locations for reflection and action, together with theoretical and methodological considerations. To challenge us and our views of duoethnographic research, we engage with the positioning of a performative paradigm (Bolt, 2016), and apply relevant theories from new materialist feminist thinkers such as Karen Barad (2003) and Lenz Taguchi (2009, 2012). We purposefully add challenges and critiques to our performative duoethnography as a precursor to the conclusion we offer to this article. As an end, we propose a critical performative pedagogy (Pineau, 2002) as a way that such methodological and theoretical thinking could be applied by those engaging in similar practices in a variety of disciplinary contexts.

We clearly align ourselves with Norris and Sawyer (2012), the founders of duoethnography, but also with other duoethnographers such as Aerial A. Ashlee and Stephen John Quayle (2020), Rick Breault (2016), Hilary Brown (2015), James Burford and Catherine Mitchell (2019), Esther Fitzpatrick and Sandy Farquhar (2018), M. Francyne Huckaby and Molly H. Weinburgh (2015), Judith Mair and Elspeth Frew (2018), Kakali Bhattacharya (2020), and Richard D. Sawyer and Tonda Liggett (2012). Our senses became heightened to the idea that sticking too closely to the terrain of one methodology can be a risk, and we became aware of other scholars working and grappling with the same issues as us – though not framing their work as a duoethnography. Therefore, we engage with scholars such as Maggie MacLure (2018), Mirka Koro, Maggie MacLure, Jasmine Ulmer (2018), Jasmine Ulmer (2017), Camilla Eline Andersen, Hanna Guttorm, Mirka Koro-Ljungberg, Teija Löytönen, Jayne Osgood, Ann Merete Otterstad, Teija Rantala, Pauliina Rautio, Anita Välimäki (2017), and Anne Beate Reinertsen and Carmen Blyth (2021). We acknowledge that the scholarship we draw on comes from diverse contexts and has been written by authors who might have very different experiences and worldviews. However, the existing theoretical and methodological work we have chosen to engage with resonates with us and has propelled us to do the work that we do in this article.

For some time, we have both worked within autoethnographic spaces (see for example: Martin, 2016, 2019; Jenssen, 2021). Autoethnography embraces the significance of exploring the self to gain insight and understanding of Others, and that this engagement of self and Other gives potential to understand broader cultural concerns and phenomena (Adams et al., 2014; Chang, 2008; Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). We are now, in writing this article, challenging ourselves by stepping into the space of duoethnography - a collaborative methodology where two or more researchers engage, share, and draw from their life experiences to provide understandings of a

social phenomenon (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). Duoethnographies often contain a script from the dialogue between the two researchers (Breault, 2016), as part of the ‘data’ collected, though this is not always a requirement, because there is no single way of doing duoethnography (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). Our duoethnographic meanderings began months before we even thought about writing an article together, and well before we became conscious of the methodology that was being formed. We folded in and out of each other’s stories and experiences. When one of us had a moment or story to reflect on, the other would so often say, “that makes me think of the time I...”. As a beginning for this article, we wrote auto-narratives. From the auto-narratives we investigated each other’s stories. We dialogued but understood that there was ‘more to it’ than a bouncing ideas and comments back and forwards. Then, there was no longer a need to include the narratives in this article - they had served their purpose, and the article itself became duoethnographic.

Therefore, throughout this article we show occasional small slices of our conversations. Entangled with this conversation, we share drawings from Ingvild Blæsterdalen². After having informal chats with Runa about the experience of working with duoethnography, Ingvild sent Runa sketches ‘storying’ what Runa had shared. In the process of building the article, we experienced that our conversations were eventually completely intertwined with theory, stories, and methods. Due to these intertwinements, many excerpts from our conversations were phased out, and gradually the article shapeshifted into the discussions about the method – and perhaps that is also why we finally acknowledge that the method of duoethnography can be considered an ontology. A quick look at some of the comments shared between us show how we experienced the unfolding into something more than an application of the method of duoethnography. Below we share a slice of dialogue from one of our conversations when developing the article, which we experienced as a stop moment:

Runa: I have a suggestion that I take out the auto-narratives. I don’t feel we need them anymore. They are somehow disturbing our conversation. They are living a life ‘outside’.

Rose: Yes, yes! I experienced a tension with the auto narratives, feeling that they served as a way for us to get into the article - a way for us to get to know each other more, the places and experiences where we come from. But maybe we don’t need them. Maybe they are not a ‘thing’ anymore.

Inspired by Ashlee and Quayle (2020) where they highlight and embody the tenets of duoethnography (Norris & Sawyer, 2012), we purposefully decided to use Norris and Sawyer’s tenets as a guide and frame for our work in this article. We felt a need for something to ‘hold onto’, a plan to stick to, and the tenets offered this. However, ‘sticking to a plan’ was quickly a

² Ingvild Blæsterdalen is a Norwegian cartoon painter, musician, and violin teacher. Her work often engages with humor, exploring daily encounters of everyday life while also seeking a deeper understanding of people and being in the world.

challenge. In a moment of frustration and tension, working on the tenet of “Disrupting metanarratives” (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 15), where the voice of both researchers should stay strong and not rest on one of the researcher’s story, Runa experienced a stop moment, and wrote in the article draft to Rose:

Now I am almost answering the tenets, just to fulfil them. That can be a challenge in duoethnography (though Norris and Sawyer write that these tenets should be seen as guidelines, not steps), tweaking the process to fulfil some tenets. Isn't that the thing with this methodology? There is no recipe. You can 'play' with it. This is our purpose with the article. We encourage the readers to grapple with multiple auto narratives and dialogues, to resist one conclusion or one voice.

Rose answered:

Interesting! I wonder if there is space for these tenets to be 'played' with, as in, do we 'stick' to them, or do we see and suggest them in another way? Yes, so here I see you want to dialogue in relation to the tenets...

So, we played with the tenets. We made a mess, we tested out possibilities, and then we sought to refine our work. Along with Norris and Sawyer’s (2012) tenets of duoethnography, we considered Breault’s (2016) recommendation for duoethnographers to create an integral methodological core without becoming prescriptive. Therefore, we anchor ourselves in the methodology of duoethnography, but at the same time we have looked for opportunities to stretch and expand the methodology. Our desire to stretch and expand has taken us into a performative duoethnography. In the following section of the article, we invite the reader into our duoethnographic experience. We lean into theories and concepts that allowed us to view the methodology as pedagogy and position our duoethnography in a performative paradigm. Maybe it was our being as “performance sensitive ethnographers” (Conquergood, 1991, p. 187), embodied through our artistic lives, that led us to dive into the notion of performativity? But, we dived into performativity, headfirst, so to speak.

The force of performativity within duoethnography

We need the performative paradigm because we take the view that other approaches cannot capture what we hope to be able to share, experience and challenge!

Rose, answering Runa in a conversation discussing different theoretical worldviews when developing the article.

Leaning on the work of Barbara Bolt (2016) that “performativity is not first and foremost about meaning. It is about force and effect” (p. 139), we engage with performativity where performative acts do not describe something, they *do* something, and “this ‘something’ has the power to transform the world” (Bolt, 2016, p. 137). Positioning ourselves in such a way, we see that the notion of ‘performative’ needs to be understood in terms of “the performative force of the

research, its capacity to effect ‘movement’ in thought, word and deed in the individual and social sensorium” (Bolt, 2016, p. 129). In our article we do not expect to provide answers or be able to ‘settle’ duoethnography from a performative lens. Rather, we seek new entrances through duoethnography to view the world – to see how our past stories inflect the present in different layers of our work.

Tenets: Potentials and openings

Runa in the comment box to Rose: *“Duoethnographies portray knowledge in transition, and as such, knowing is not fixed but fluid. Truth and validity are irrelevant. What exists is the rigor of the collaborative inquiry that is made explicit in the duoethnography itself”* (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 20). Rose, *this is SO performative.*

Rose: *It is! Gosh, that really does capture things. I think it has propelled us, that we are not looking for a truth, rather than we are situated in a time and place and things move, change, shift, and our stories also move and shift as does our relationship to them...*

In the following sections we offer how we have embodied the tenets of duoethnography, while weaving, reading, and thinking with theory (Jackson & Mazzei, 2017). With performativity as a force, we seek to see the duoethnographic tenets as foundations, potentials, and openings for our work. We seek to create a dialogue to bridge expanded methodological thinking into pedagogy.

Currere: From self-interrogation to a performative ‘we’

... our boat drifting along on a sea of dream.

From the first time we met, stories have been a core of our relationship and work – framing our dialogue and acting as impulses. With stories propelling us forward (and sometimes backward), we ask ourselves: Why do we need our stories? What do they tell? What do they bring into our research? How can they challenge and transform us? How can they tell us something about the present? *Currere*, the first of Norris and Sawyer’s (2012, p. 12) nine tenets of duoethnography, therefore resonated well *in us*.

Building on William F. Pinar’s (1975, 1994) concept of *currere*, which views life history as curriculum, “*currere* is an act of self-interrogation” (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 13). In duoethnography the researchers are the site of research and “use themselves to assist themselves and others in better understanding the phenomenon under investigation” (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 13). Together we investigate how expanding the methodology of duoethnography into a performative duoethnography can open spaces for thinking of this methodology as pedagogy. We do this by dwelling around each other’s stories as a site “to better understand oneself and the world in which one lives” (Norris & Sawyer, p. 13).

Like Tami Spry’s (2011) creation of a Performative -I, duoethnography is less concerned with the self, and more with the co-construction in the relation of the self/other/we, and “it is, ultimately, not about the self” (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 13). Expanding on this thought we create a

performative “we” are resting on Spry’s argument that maybe there is no performative -I, but instead “a willful embodiment of ‘we’” (Spry, 2016, p. 99). We argue that it is in the “coperformativity of meaning with others” (Spry 2011, p. 39) that we find ourselves as performative duoethnographers. In duoethnography we are intimately connected, through and in our stories. MacLure (2018) uses the word “intimacy” (p. 233) to describe how attending to the flesh and materiality of the researchers can consider each instance of our ‘data’ – non-human and human. Our view of currere includes our intimate relationship with human and non-human entities, and as such, a ‘performative we’ expands our understanding of what life history as curriculum entails. As researchers we do not rise above our data – rather we dwell with and are intimately connected to it (MacLure, 2018; Koro et. al., 2018). In this drifting and dwelling with others, trust and ethics is required.

Trust and ethics: Empowerment and agency

You seeking comfort in my big and – you trust – strong hand.

Trust is a vital element in duoethnography (Norris & Sawyer, 2012), and it is considered a prerequisite between the co-researchers (Breault, 2016). Duoethnography is about trusting the Other, but also trusting oneself to let go (Brown, 2015) and ultimately moving and transforming. But where does this trust come from? We experienced vulnerability. We listened to each other, and we feel that we created a deep trust, from within. Rose reflected on feeling trust, writing after a chat on Zoom:

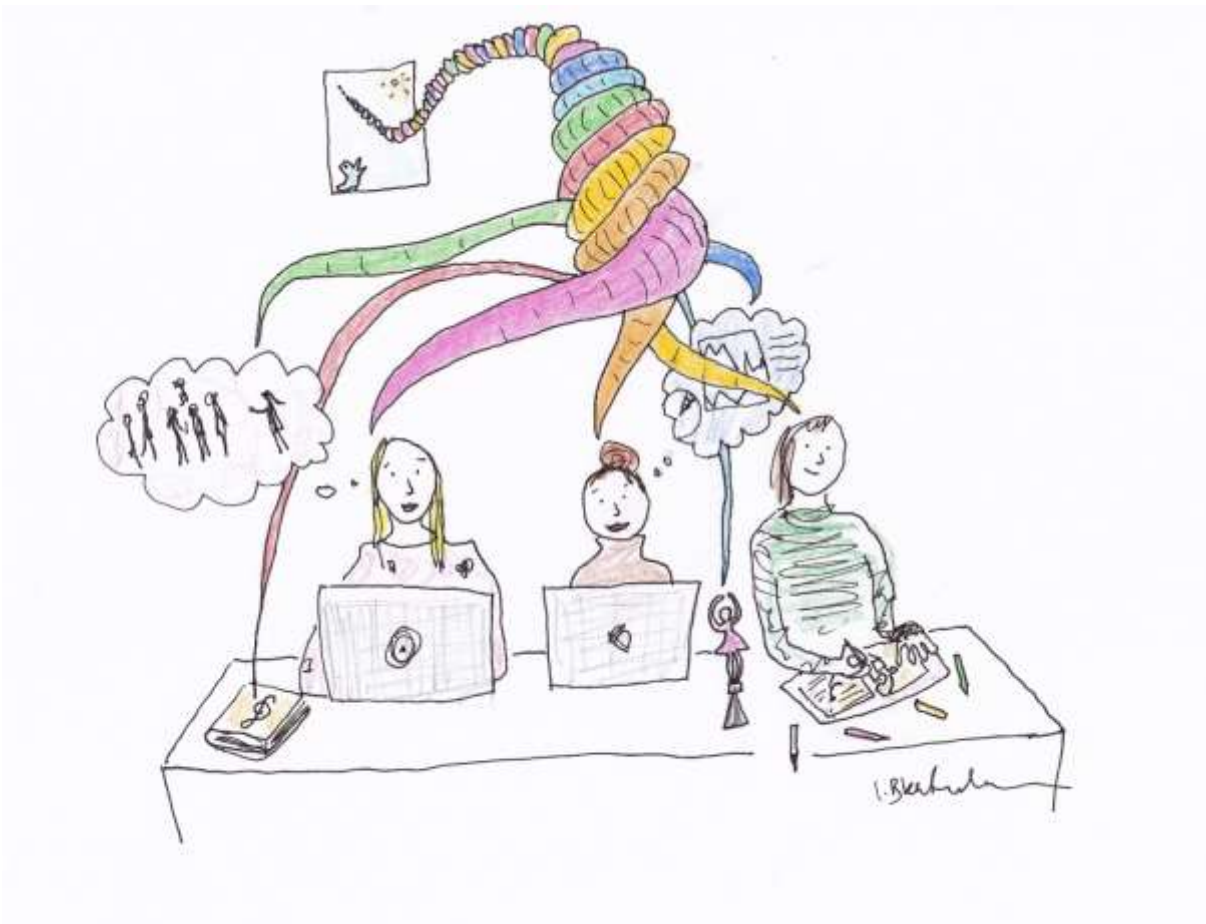
I feel trust, trust is a feeling for me. But it is also based in actions, in my experience they go together. E.g., I trust Runa because I feel I can, because I feel a connection to our ways of being, but I also trust her actions, that she will follow up in action.

Runa answered:

From our encounters of similarities, trust has grown. I’m not sure what came first, trust, respect, interest, curiosity. It felt intertwined. Intertwined into a strong rope, a safe line, a feeling of trust.

Rose replies:

I love the metaphor of a strong rope, a safety line.



Duoethnographies are conversations that positions the Other in dialogue, making the status one of equals, because we research ‘with’ and not ‘on’ each other. As duoethnographers, we do not examine the Other, rather, “we examine ourselves, partly through the perspective of another person” (Sawyer & Liggett, 2012, p. 646). As such, the methodology is ethical in nature (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). We experience the methodology to be empowering for researchers, and this is a similar experience that could be seen in how we as educators encourage our students to work together. With trust and ethics there is the potential to empower students and give them voice.

Similarly, the reader in duoethnography is an active participant in the knowledge production. The reader is “an unknown future partner” (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 22), not merely a recipient of our ‘truth’. When our article encounters the reader something new happens. All participants in the process are given empowerment and agency, leading to new actions as an ongoing process. As theoretical physicist and feminist theorist, Karen Barad (2007) explains: “existence is not an individual affair. Individuals do not pre-exist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating” (p. ix). The participating intra-active process is the pedagogical ethical stance in a performative duoethnography, where participants are given power over their own knowledge production and practices as a ‘way’ of be(com)ing in the world. A core aspect of Barad’s (2007) theory of agential realism is refusing the dichotomy of epistemology and ontology. She argues that knowing does not happen outside the world, from a distance, but with direct engagement in the world – in the entangled nature of knowing and being. Barad (2007) calls

this onto-epistemology. In this entanglement of being and knowing we see that our performative duoethnography is created.

Polyvocal and dialogic: From polyvocal and dialogical into intra-actions

You are a native, I am intruder in this borderland

Throughout this article we include occasional small slices of our dialogue, drawing out the performative, polyvocal, and dialogical conversation within our work of playing with and thinking through the tenets of duoethnography. We were especially conscious of the dialogical aspect of our relationship because of the power relations that exist between us that cannot be removed, being a supervisor and a PhD student writing together.

Our dialogue has not only been between us as researchers but has been with other materials and artifacts (Norris & Sawyer, 2012) – this text, the poem by Ragnar Rommetveit, comment boxes in the ‘review’ function of Microsoft Word, emails, online Zoom conversations, drawings, and photos. Not all elements are shown in this article, but they propelled us, moving our polyvocal dialogue into “higher forms of consciousness” (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 13) and what might be understood as an intra-active dialogue. Our creation of a performative duoethnography therefore resonates with Lenz Taguchi’s (2009, 2012) notion of an intra-active pedagogy, based on Karen Barad’s (2003, 2007) concept of intra-activity. According to Lenz Taguchi (2009, 2012), the learner and what is learned is entangled, there is no distinction between. The kinds of learning that can happen in a performative duoethnography cannot be planned, and it depends on what and who is ‘brought into the room’. Learning does not happen with repeating already established knowledge, but it is created in encountering knowledge (Østern et al., 2019). In intra-actions, something new is created and those involved create the ‘new’. The notion of intra-action made us realize that “everything is connected with everyone, always” (Ulmer, 2017, p. 837), human and non-humans.

Runa felt lost, asking herself: What does it mean in the performance of my everyday life, for example being a teacher? Runa wrote to Rose in a comment box:

In the last draft you suggested that we could search for stories from our beings as teachers. I have had some problems (or to be honest, deep worries), finding out what my contribution is, as a teacher. I have read so many impressive articles on how teachers use performance in the classroom, but in my own practice and teaching... I am ‘just’ the vocal teacher (though I really love that), the soprano. I make the students sing well, with a healthy embodied technique. Then, reading my own writing, searching my memories, I remembered this following story. You so often speak of the ‘feeling’, and this story really sits as a feeling etched in my body. I just wanted you to read it. I have called it “Diving into Ella Fitzgerald’s version of ‘Summertime’”.

I once knew a vocal student with an impressive voice and attitude. However, I always felt worried when she sang. A timbre in her voice disturbed me, as though the voice was living outside her body, struggling like a fight between the singer's body and the voice. I could almost feel my own larynx tensing after I listen to her at concerts. After some time I became her teacher. I was so looking forward to work and develop her voice. I started out, as I always do, searching for the core, searching for the organic part of the voice to work 'naturally' and to work with the body. Seeking a space for her personal timbre to shine. We worked from within the body, trying to let the tensions in her muscles go, opening yet finding a core to hold onto. Diving into Ella Fitzgerald's version of 'Summertime' I tried to let her find her own way. But she did not. Her voice did not respond in the way I expected. Her big voice was getting smaller and smaller. At the end of our lesson, it was like I was only hearing air - a breathy voice with no connection to the body. She lost control over her voice. She started to cry, and she could not breath. Giving her a bag to blow in, I ran out of my office to get her a glass of water. What had I done? I was almost panicking myself. I felt like one of those 'old school' teachers breaking the student down to build her up again. I returned to the room still not knowing what to do. I sat down beside her on my grey sofa. Silence. Then she started to tell me about her younger brother, who had Down Syndrome. How deeply she loved him and was fighting his fight to find his place in school and in society. They both loved listening to jazz, especially to Ella Fitzgerald's version of 'Summertime'.

This was a stop moment. But this time, the stop moment did not only stop. It continued. First, with action from Rose in her response to what Runa had written. Rose wrote:

Runa, this is such a special story. I think what is revealed here, is that we ALL have stories. Your stories matter, my stories matter, the student, her story mattered because that is what gave your insight to why there might have been struggle, why she wanted to sing that song, and why as a teacher you only could understand what was going on when you gave space for dialogue.

Our stop moment over Runa's narrative, was revealed with new action, an intra-action. At the same time Runa's narrative reminded us that the stories we bring into spaces for learning matter, and they have the power to transform us. We are not alone in such thoughts, as others have also explored how stories and learning have significance and can offer transformative potentials (see for example: Barlett & Chase, 2013; Bron & Thunborg, 2017). The force of the performative was in Runa's everyday teaching with vocal students - through music, through the body, the soundwaves, the gaze, the breathing, and flow, even the smell in the room. She could see the roles of student and teacher switching. Now she was the student waiting for the reaction on her actions, from her supervisor – from Rose.

A duoethnography offers at least two ways to see the same issue, facilitating a viewing and reading of each other with space for a dialogic conversation. But a duoethnography is not only a

dialogue between the researchers. We invite the readers to enter an intra-acting relationship with the Other and with the self, and with artifacts. This intra-action produces complex and multi-layered texts, that are performative, involving in the body of the participants, in their being in the world. The reader intra-acts with our work within their own world(s). Therefore, readers can enter and grapple with the openings this performative duoethnography makes visible, and within this we see that the methodology provides opportunities for a polyphony of voices.

Difference: Or even diffractions

The two of us together in this twilight borderland

The difference between duoethnographers is not only encouraged, but expected, as “through the articulation of differences, duoethnographers make explicit how different people can experience the same phenomenon differently” (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 17). Difference was challenging for us, as we felt sameness in between our cultural borders and experiences.

We had to confront the questions: Is the embodiment of sameness so strong for us that it is foreshadowing something? Runa wrote in a comment box:

How to find different perspectives within a topic that we find deeply familiar?

Embodiment of difference. This is what I experience we do Rose!

Rose answers: YES, there is a difference in how we embody this sameness (and it highlights that sameness and difference are coexisting...).

And what are differences? Mohanty (1989) led us on a more porous thinking of the concept of difference noting that “difference seen as variation rather than as conflict, struggle, or the threat of disruption, bypasses power as well as history to suggest a harmonious, empty pluralism” (p. 181). Mohanty’s view made sense to us, and the difference we came to see was that there were small differences, or what might even be considered as micro-differences, differences that might in the first instance appear as hidden or obscured, but no less important.

Through this consideration of difference, we asked each other: Why are differences important in research and pedagogy? In our exploration of difference, we stepped into Barad’s (2007) concept of *diffraction*, which she explains as an approach “[...] of reading insights through one another in attending to and responding to the details and specificities of relations of difference and how they matter” (Barad, 2007, p. 71). Working with a performative duoethnography is an entangled relation to the Others difference. We are searching for moments of difference to see how and why these differences – or using Barad’s concept *diffractions* – matter. Barad (2007) writes that “a diffractive methodology provides a way of attending to entanglements in reading important insights and approaches through one another” (p. 30). Understanding the Other through diffractions – dwelling on each other’s differences is at core in our performative duoethnography. By reading each other’s embodiment, through sharing stories, we intra-act, and we diffract. Our stories are not mirroring the past. After we encounter each other as obstacles, we change - the

stories change into the present. However, change does not happen in the same way, we change differently because we read differently - from our situated knowledge and positions.



Diffraction is concerned with difference that makes a difference. Consequently, diffraction allows and gives space for reflection. Diffraction is focusing on *how* differences are made, how the relations of difference matter to each other, as in an ongoing flow of intra-actions (Barad, 2007). Because differences are not always opposites or compartmentalised, differences can be a space of unknowing (Bresler, 2019). This idea of unknowing is familiar to us coming from the arts - as artists we never entirely *know* in our arts practices. Spry (2016) suggests that Barad's methodology of diffractions applied to autoethnography "develops the relationality to otherness in autoethnography beyond a representation of differences" (p. 41). Rather than seeking difference as a representation of polarities between us, between self and Other, diffraction is "to study the entangled effects differences make" (Barad, 2007, p. 73). Bringing this into pedagogy, difference matters, because we can draw on difference and give students, teachers, and researchers agency to act with difference. We encourage an embrace and unpacking of difference in learning spaces. Then we see that difference will not lead to an exclusion of the Other, but as an inclusion. As such, the methodology of duoethnography not only juxtaposes the voices of the participants, but it

juxtaposes each other's differences, keeping the text open for the reader. Readers can form their own synthesis through their own diffractive reading.

In our duoethnographic work we explore new ways of *performing* in and through duoethnography. Bolt (2016) writes that the performative paradigm operates according to repetition of difference, that this is the generative potential of artistic research. From Barad (2007) we learned that creating knowledge happens in the creation of new patterns – in diffractions. If we view pedagogy as performative, then we should encourage difference. Investigating differences enables us to think critically, and like in art, we *need* differences in pedagogy. We need more than representing dominant cultures and dominant paradigms, we need to disrupt performed habits as researchers and educators (Andersen et al., 2017). A performative duoethnography can be understood as pedagogy – where the curriculum includes *currere* and recognizes the relation between knowing in being – a holistic, relational, dialogical, polyvocal, critical performative pedagogy, where human and non-human intra-act, and are given empowerment and the *agency of voicing*.

We argue that this is the potential of performative research more broadly, not only within research but in education, as method and as pedagogy. As Barad (2007) writes, “we don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are of the world. We are part of the world in its differential becoming” (2007, p. 185). We remind ourselves that knowledge and being are not dichotomies and separate entities, but we learn by being, being influenced, and influencing that world we live in (Barad, 2007; Lenz Taguchi, 2009). Valuing the performance of difference in research and pedagogy can disrupt the dominant conversations of learning and the creation of knowledge.

Disrupts metanarratives - Humble listening disrupting the status quo

where one and one don't make two

By being polyvocal duoethnography challenges and potentially disrupts the metanarrative of self at a personal level by questioning beliefs (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). Juxtaposing our voices readers can witness stories and meanings under construction through taking part of the dialogue between us, and importantly, no representation holds supremacy (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). In our conversations we have encouraged and challenged our perspectives. From within our dialogue, rather than 'after' a conversation or sharing a narrative, we discussed and analysed our experiences 'through' and 'alongside' as they happened, constantly aiming to disrupt metanarratives. We listened and we asked each other critical questions without 'interrogating' each other. Investigating these moments of action (but maybe more importantly what happened after moments of action) caught our attention. Not as a period of time as such, but rather as a hyphen. Not as a polyvocal dialogue, but as intra-action, reading diffractively.

Runa writing to Rose in the comment box:

As Francyne et al. (2015) explains, we experience that differences are not about finding polarities, but one of intersectionality and interstanding. Or is it even intra-action?

Rose: YES! Action AND interaction – that it is between, back and forth, but also that there is a reciprocity, it is not a one-way street for either of us (I think anyway).

In this way we could unpack and stretch the tenet concerning *disrupting metanarratives*, where we try to challenge assumptions. Juxtaposing stories we sought to create a third space (Bhabha, 2004) inviting us and the readers “to add and rethink their stories to the ones being told” (Norris & Sawyer 2012, p. 24), finding a more porous border between theory and practice, methodology, and pedagogy. Norris and Sawyer’s (2012) tenet of disrupting narratives can be an entrance for such thinking. The stories of the performance of everyday life, as teachers, researchers, and artists can be a source of knowledge to draw from and expand into.

Bridging our performative duoethnography into pedagogy, we invite the self, the Other, and the reader as participants. We do not advocate for having the perfect ‘answer’ or a single ‘truth’, but we offer our expanded methodological thinking as a possible stretch into the pedagogical practices of Others. When teaching students in arts education we experience that it is impossible to separate students from their life history, *currere* –just like in a duoethnography where separating the researcher from the researched is impossible, and separating the reader from the text is impossible. As duoethnographers we see how this ‘connectedness’ remains in the body, long after the teaching or research happens. The blurred lines between self and Other also offers something for education. It takes away the line between theory and practice, between the past and the present, perhaps allowing students to understand self in relation to Other in the context performative research where “the distinctive qualities of practice-led research is its propensity to disrupt the status quo and produce research that is novel both in its contribution to research and in its very nature” (Bolt, 2016, p. 185). Doing a performative duoethnography can open spaces where those involved can begin to conceptualize who they want to be in relation to Others. By listening with humbleness to Other’s stories, those participating may understand the Other, and those involved can disrupt their own metanarratives. Readers and listeners can critique the relationship between personal and cultural narratives – and potentially perform differently than the norm. The expanded methodology can disrupt status quo. Disrupting metanarratives is an ethical entanglement of and with different voices – where new perspectives and entrances can be made and be disrupted again. Potentially this might lead to transformation and change.

Dialogic change and regenerative transformation: Creating an unsettled performative ‘we’

Our boat is drifting ashore

Using our past stories to inform the present and by retelling our stories to each other, we gained new meaning in reading the Other’s story and listening to how the other responded to that story. But, in this process have we changed? We can say that we experienced a deeper awareness of the

embodied and dialogical research process of the method. Very often, we just listened. However, listening is not an innocent or passive act. From our artistic lives we had both, in different cultural contexts, been silenced and labelled. We believe we had an awareness of trying not to 'label' the Other, or the self, when listening.

Runa had never thought of the methodology of duoethnography as a pedagogy. But feeling her transformation into a researcher, within the conversations and dialogues with Rose, she changed. We both changed. Through writing, feeling our dialogue form in a dissolving space, where we could think out loud in conversation with each other, where theories were set in motion, and connected and disconnected into embodied experiences from the past, we saw the present. We saw that what we do with our teaching was not far away from our research. It was there, hand in hand, through our performance in everyday life. Our past stories were what led us into the notion of the methodology and pedagogy. We saw that our past stories informed the present, and that our present pedagogical stories were already in transformation.

Duoethnography attempts to "turn knowledge into "an act of unsettling its own natural condition" (Norris & Sawyer, p. 18). This unsettling leads us back to Spry (2016) and "the unsettled -I" (p. 163). The unsettled-I is a "continued development of the performative-I, emerging from a profusion of qualitative research where, as Goltz (2011) contends, "I have come to understand that 'I' cannot tell my own story. 'I' can craft a story, but the story will always be limited, fallible, and requiring of forgiveness for what 'I' do not know" (p. 392). Creating a performative "we" is perhaps not enough; we need to stretch even further into a suggestion of a performative and unsettled 'we'. It is in the unsettled that the performative force lies. In our performative duoethnography we rely on, and we trust in, the notion of performativity. In pedagogy we could benefit from relying on performativity – of the constantly changing and transformative knowledge (Bayley, 2018; Østern et al., 2019; Østern & Knudsen, 2019). With performativity we can learn to think differently. We can be open to the unfamiliar and that can bring us into change. However, to do that we need to leave our own territory – drifting into the borderland of the Other. Making us understandable for the Other, making a porous border for the reader, our audience.



Audience accessibility: The reader as an active participant and part of an entangled intra-relating

...yet at this blessed moment privileged to share

Who are we writing for? Or more precisely, who are we writing *with*? As Norris and Sawyer (2012) write, “duoethnographies do not end with conclusions. Rather, they continue to be written by those who read them” (p. 21). We have asked ourselves: How can we make an entrance for the reader to participate in our work? We talked of *distance*. We sought to diminish the distance between writer and reader. We talked about *relationships*. We wrote stories and commented on them in our supervisor-PhD candidate relationship, often ‘outside’ the text, in comment boxes, in

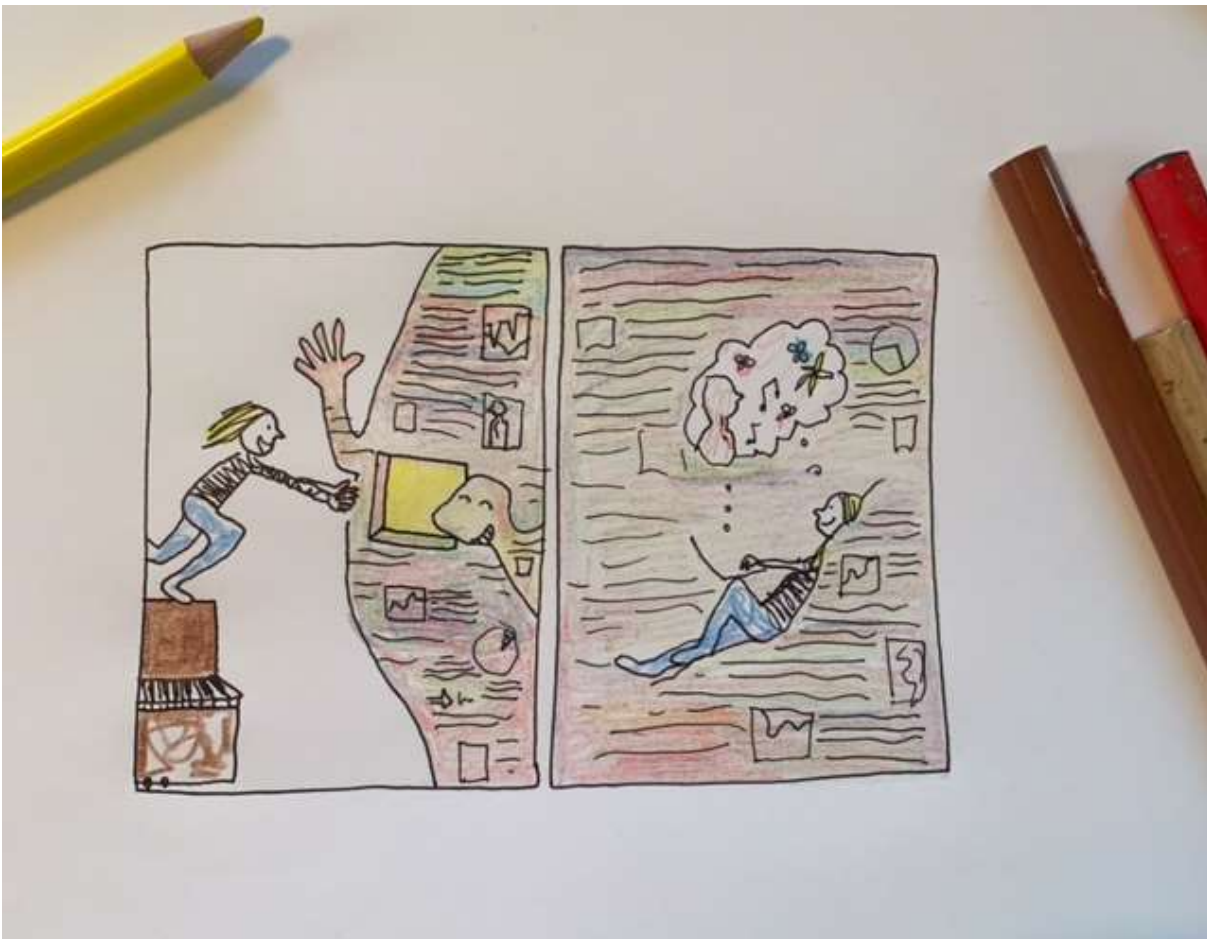
e-mails, not meant for an audience. By sharing our story of a performative duoethnography we sought to stretch out of how conventional academic articles might be formed by using poems, drawings, and material from our comment boxes to diminish distance.

In our relationship we have sought to diminish the distance between student and teacher and see the border between student and teacher as porous, like the border between methodology and pedagogy. A performative pedagogy reaches out to students, empowering and giving agency as *compassionate teaching* (Hendricks, 2019). The privileged moment of sharing stories to an audience, as a researcher, teacher, or student is *listening* to the embodied story of the Other with trust and empathy. Such an approach to the audience can diminish distance in research and pedagogy, where no participant claims a particular truth. But, within our grappling, we also ask: How can we trust a performative duoethnography?

Trustworthiness found in self-reflexivity: Reflexivity as listening

In your eyes, behind that beam

Through the transformative, emergent, and dialogic nature of duoethnography, “positivistic notions of truth and validity is redundant” (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 19). With rigour and with the *reflexivity of listening* (Kallio, 2021), we have tried to encourage the reader to witness our process of thinking and transforming. We acknowledge that our recalled stories are recalled in the present, and these stories are constantly intra-acting and changing. As a reader you have witnessed our conversation and maybe your story has been changing alongside this article, in turn portraying “knowledge in transition” (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 20) where knowing is not fixed but fluid. How well we have enabled each other to perform our stories as curreres, and how well we have enabled the readers to perform their stories, we cannot tell. But, inspired by Spry (2016) we have been seeking an intentional and reflexive embodiment of the relationality of an ‘unsettled performative we’ within a social context, within pedagogy. As the prelude of this article suggested, we offer this article as an impulse – empowering reader agency into a flow of actions and intra-actions with Others.



Again, we visit the work of Barad (2003, 2007) and remind ourselves that emphasis does not lie in knowing who we are, but rather who we want to become. The tenet of trustworthiness found in self-reflexivity helped us, or maybe it propelled and pushed us to seek a theoretical landscape where there are no ‘truths’. Our stories are of a particular time and place. Our stories can function as impulses, as feelings to be recognised. It is a way of valuing the *unknowing* that we so often experience in the arts and in education, because the *experience* of unknowing “has a richness, vibrancy and range of conflicting emotions that defy neat categorization” (Bresler, 2019, p.80). Therefore, our duoethnography becomes what Denzin (2018) describes as “the site of resistance, a place where performative -I’s confront and engage each other” (p. 55). *This* site, this stage, is what we seek - not solely as artists, teachers, or researchers, but with these identities and practices intertwined. As Spry (2016) explains, for the researcher this means how the material and socio-culturally constituted body also articulates being with Others. The quest of duoethnography is pedagogical by design, simultaneously methodology and a pedagogy. This practice allows us to not only report, but to critically unpack and expose the stories we carry, and as Wilson and Shields (2019) suggest, pedagogy also should do this – disrupt, diffract, and contribute to change.

Methodology as pedagogy, or even ontology?

We embrace what happens by being in the world as part of our knowledge and learning as intra-actions. Through these intra-active moments, we experience that performative duoethnography embraces a diversity of knowledges, with entanglements of perspectives, where being and

knowing seem to exist in the same horizon. We do not seek sameness or uniqueness, but diversity. In this space of diversity and difference, we see that the melting between the epistemological and the ontological makes sense, and we argue that as educators we need to focus on both. As Lenz Taguchi (2012) writes, “we must create knowledge in the midst of our dependence on the world. We must try to understand the world while acknowledging and showing how we are part of the knowledge-creating process” (p. 45). Therefore, we must seek new ways of viewing the world disturbing more ‘traditional’ ways of researching and teaching, and we can rely on the force of performativity as a possible entrance – performing with difference. We seek a reflexivity that invites us to engage in the diversity of the Other, through showing our own transformation. Through our performative duoethnography we have been looking at ourselves in a ‘mirror’, but we also have been tempted to see what is behind this metaphorical mirror. Our biggest change over the process of developing this article is the experience that there is not a sharp boundary between research and life, practice and theory, methodology and pedagogy. Our performative duoethnography offer a space in between the boundaries. We see the connection of this in our everyday lives. Perhaps the ‘answer’ has been right in front of us all this time. As such, we believe the thinking of methodology as ontology is ethical, holistic, and reciprocal.

Challenges and critiques of stretching methodology: Making ‘something out of nothing’?

What can be shared between researchers in a duoethnography and what can be shared for an audience is an ethical challenge that must be considered carefully. Although we have not known each other for a long time, we found our relationship grew when working on this article. We have shared stories, but we have also left stories – as they were not meant for an audience, or at least not in this article. Stretching to pedagogy, applying duoethnography within our teaching practices has been an important concern for us and an issue necessary to talk about.

Sawyer and Liggett (2012) discuss the issues concerning representation, trustworthiness, and self-reflexivity doing a duoethnography. We have tried to be aware of such issues, especially because we present our stories, our ‘data’, as believable because of its embodied nature. Embodied knowledge is not value free or innocent. As teachers and researchers, we may think that we are doing our duoethnography in a “culturally neutral way” (Sawyer & Liggett, 2012 p. 647) but this is not possible. We have both been raised in and though cultural contexts and practices that hold particular worldviews that we carry in us. Even though we are seeking new ways to view the world, our constructed bodies never leave us. As Martin (2019) writes, these experiences and histories travel with us. However, while embracing this history, it is also our responsibility to create new patterns, in research and education.

Working on expanded methodological thinking within a duoethnography has indeed been valuable for us as researchers and teachers. But will others care and find such work valuable? Writing this article and involving theory from Barad (2003, 2007) and Lenz Taguchi (2010, 2012), we are no longer so worried “that the presence of our own voices might invite a reading of two selves which are stable and whole” (Burford & Mitchell, 2019, p. 40). We are constantly in transformation being in intra-actions with and within the world. We do not view ourselves or knowledge as fixed and

whole, but porous and fluid. We have tried within the limits of this article to show as transparently as possible our process of expanding a methodology. As Kinnear and Ruggunan (2019) eloquently suggest, “we do not offer conclusive objective findings, but rather suggestions for further scholarly exploration” (p. 2).

Coda

After grappling with the tenets of duoethnography with theories of performativity, intra-action, and diffraction, we returned to the poem of Ragnar Rommetveit. And of course, we returned to stories. Together we were reminded of a story shared by Runa in our duoethnographic conversation. Runa’s story, reflected on in conversation with Rose, speaks from the past, but has transformed and changed in the present of being in this performative duoethnography. Runa’s story intertwines with her performed life, with theory, and with the expanded methodology, the learner and the learned is entangled:

I come from a small island, Abelvær, with only 200 inhabitants, where strong winds and dangerous oceans surround us. My grandfather taught me how to swim in the cold water and waves at an early age. I learned the importance of deep respect for the ocean, the importance of sitting still in the boat, but acting if necessary. I learned to listen to nature. That my body was nature. Without listening nature would drown me. As a researcher and teacher I also need that skill. To sometimes sit still in the boat, to listen to the different voices, human and non-human that surround you. Our proposition and provocation of expanding a performative duoethnography into pedagogy, sits well within a critical performative pedagogy (Pineau, 2002) that disrupts, exposes, and critiques structures of injustice. If we seek a critical performative pedagogy, we seek a pedagogy that challenges and shifts power relations. We seek a space where everyone can come to learning spaces with their unique voice, full of timbre and colour – with their resources and opinions - and be able to raise their voices. To be able to do that, those of us speaking from privileged positions needs to be humble and listen more. Listen for voices seldom heard. We do not say it is easy. We have no recipe to follow that will give a perfect result. But, through our performative duoethnography, we have offered a suggestion for one entrance. We hope readers can find an impulse to grapple further in their own practices, because:

*The two of us together in this twilight borderland,
our boat drifting along on a sea of dream.
You seeking comfort in my big and – you trust – strong hand.
In your eyes, behind that beam
of light and delight from play under today’s sun:
a futile struggle against yielding to that night you shun.*

*But –
Lullaby – lullaby – lov,
our boat is drifting ashore*

*where one and one don't make two
but something mysteriously more*

*You are a native, I am intruder in this borderland,
with old and weak hands, stained and stigmatized by
adult disillusion and despair,
yet at this blessed moment privileged to share
that beam in your eyes, that residual of last
day's joy and hope for tomorrow's delight,
as I am sitting here, singing you into sleep tonight.*

So –
Lullaby – lullaby – lov,
our boat is drifting ashore
where one and one don't make two
but something mysteriously more

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