CHAPTER 1

IMAGINING: AN INTRODUCTION

Dara Culhane

IMAGE 1.1: Piano, Strathcona Community Gardens, Vancouver, Canada.

Credit: Dara Culhane, 2014.

Reality leaves a lot to the imagination.

—John Lennon

Sana is daydreaming in class again. She is trying to focus on what her professor is saying but there is some force transporting her to some other place, some other time. She hears him describing their term project...
What is ethnography? Whether you are new to this field, or, like the authors whose work you will encounter here, you already call yourself an ethnographer, you have likely been confronted by a multitude of possible answers to this question. In A Different Kind of Ethnography: Imaginative Practices and Creative Methodologies you will read about work designed to foster an approach to ethnographic methodology of the kind that our opening character Sana longs for.

The five authors whose work you will read about here are co-curators at the Centre for Imaginative Ethnography (CIE) (www.imaginativeethnography.org), a transnational research collective whose members include scholars, artists, artist/scholars, activists, and practitioners around the world. The CIE offers a space for exploring emergent ethnographic methodologies such as those that you will read about in this book. The work we offer you here interweaves experimental ethnographic writing (Elliot, Chapter 2), sensory ethnographies (Culhane, Chapter 3), sound studies and digital media (Boudreau-Fournier, Chapter 4), walking and image-making (Moretti, Chapter 5), and storytelling and performance (Kazubowski-Houston, Chapter 6). The five contributors to this book currently teach at Canadian universities, and our geopolitical research sites span Canada, Cuba, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, and Poland.

Imaginative Practices and Creative Methodologies are vital to our ethnographic research, our teaching, and our work at the CIE. We consider imagination and creativity as practices that we all engage in every day, that shape and are shaped by social relations, politics, and cultural formations that infuse lived experience. In each chapter of this book you will find participatory exercises that invite you to write in multiple genres, to pay attention to embodied multisensory experience, to create images with pencil and paper and with camera, to make music, and to engage in storytelling and performance as you conceptualize, design, conduct, and communicate ethnographic research. These exercises offer you a set of experiences with which to think ethnography critically and reflectively through practice, and to consider what differences it may make to act with ethical and political awareness around your own and others’ engagements with ethnography.

Most contemporary ethnographers would agree that the focus of ethnographic research continues to be what anthropologist Tim Ingold describes as "entangled relationships" among humans, nonhumans, and natural, social, and virtual environments. "The environment," Ingold writes, "comprises not the surroundings of the organism but a zone of entanglement" (2008, 1997). The methodology you will read about here flows from theoretical approaches that assume that ethnographic knowledge emerges not through detached observation but through conversations and exchanges of many kinds among people interacting in diverse zones of entanglement. This is what we mean when we refer to ethnography as a methodology of inquiry into "collaborative" or "co-creative" knowledge making.
The question, "What do ethnographers do?" animates this book, and the chapters demonstrate how answers are shaped not only by training in university and college courses in research methods but also importantly by the peoples and places where ethnographers work, by the objectives of particular research projects, and by the backgrounds and interests of specific ethnographers. Rather than step-by-step "how to do ethnography" instructions, this book offers you examples to read about, exercises to do, and questions to think with, which we hope will inspire you to imagine how you might practice ethnography imaginatively, creatively, and rigorously.

But what do ethnographers do? The venerable anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1998) famously wrote that ethnographers engage in "deep hanging out" with people as they and we go about living our lives. Ethnographers join others working, playing, caring for kids and kin. Perhaps we help out. We eat meals together; we attend ceremonies, social and sports events, parties, protests, academic conferences, professional association meetings, religious services, concerts, and much more. We listen to people telling stories about themselves, their families, their neighbors, and other researchers. We share stories of our own. These, of course, are activities that most everyone carries out in one way or another during the course of everyday life, and that researchers in many disciplines as well as anthropology also engage in. Quetzal Casteñeda (2006, 78) writes that what differentiates ethnographers are the questions and ideas we carry "to the backs of our minds." These questions and ideas come through multiple avenues. They are shaped by our own embodied, lived experiences and our entanglements with cultural beliefs and practices, histories and social/political relations, and academic theories and debates we learn when we are educated and trained in particular disciplines, interdisciplines, and transdisciplines.

Taking as given that "knowledge is power," the political potential of ethnographic methodology lies in deepening our understandings of the micro-political, relational processes involved in knowledge co-creation (Biel 2013). Investigating how these embodied processes move through zones of entanglement offers us insights into power at work and leads us to understand methodological questions as epistemological ones. How do we know what we know? What knowledge and whose knowledge counts, and why?

Like the complex and ever-changing ways of life we study, our ethnographic research practices too are entangled with historical/political/cultural processes and thus shift and change over time and across space. We turn now to a brief introduction setting out how A Different Kind of Ethnography develops from critical traditions in anthropology and engages with contemporary debates about ethnographic methodology, where it has come from, where it might be going, and why it matters.
to invigorate contemporary anthropology. A critical tradition of work by relatively marginalized twentieth-century anthropologists like Zora Neale Hurston, Ella Deloria, Ruth Landes, and many others constitutes an alternative canonical lineage through which many contemporary ethnographers now trace their disciplinary ancestry.

The 1986 publication of Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography, co-edited by historian James Clifford and anthropologist George Marcus, is often pointed to as marking the beginning of the contemporary critique and reconstruction of anthropology. The authors of Writing Culture argue persuasively against a historical anthropology modeled on the natural sciences and informed by positivist social theories that had dominated the discipline since the late nineteenth century. They critique conventional publications that emulate the monologic, authoritative style of a scientific report written by a presumably neutral and detached observer. Contrary to the positivist model, the contributors to Writing Culture argue, anthropologists and people they work with engage in a dialogic process of knowledge co-creation and circulation. Texts created by ethnographers therefore emerge from conversations and exchanges among researchers and collaborators who are active agents engaged in studying their own and other's cultures, histories, and epistemologies. This process is significantly shaped by the relationship between researcher and research participant or collaborator, which is, of course, entangled in diverse and complex histories and politics. Ethnographies, Clifford and Marcus argue, are more productively and appropriately written and read as literary works employing rhetoric, writing styles, and authorial strategies that share more in common with novels than with laboratory reports.

The critiques of institutional structures and disciplinary canons that have occupied contemporary anthropological thinking have focused on relationships between ethnographers and research participants, on the politics of representation and the limits of conventional textual forms, and on questions about the public relevance of anthropology. Research participants now demand ethical engagement with scholars in research projects. Many expect equitable distribution of the benefits of research and the right to refuse participation they deem potentially harmful or irrelevant to the best interests of their communities. This in turn has brought forth demands for inclusion and recognition of the analytic value of embodied, affective, and experiential knowledge, and critical, subaltern analyses. The world in which we live and work is changing, and so too must the ways we love and work.

Reflecting on shifts that have taken place in the 25 years since the publication of Writing Culture, George Marcus noted a proliferation of experimental texts and ethnographic films; increases in collaborative projects involving anthropologists, scientists, humanities scholars, artists, artist/scholars, and activists; and an exponential growth in development and use of digital technologies. He writes that "the most lively contemporary legacy of the 1980s Writing Culture critiques now lie[6] outside, or beyond, conventional texts but, rather, in the forms that are integral to fieldwork itself" (Marcus 2012, 47). Indeed, in their introduction to Theory Can Be More Than It Used to Be—a companion volume to Fieldwork Is Not What It Used to Be (Faubion and Marcus 2000)—Boyer and Marcus (2015, 3) explain that "both works are methodological reflections, soundings of how the classic norms and objects of anthropological research and training have become unraveled and reordered in the late 20th and early 21st centuries." They go on to argue that paying analytic attention to methodology as processes of knowledge co-creation facilitates ethnopolitical critique. That is, researching how we come to know what we know clears paths for ethnographers and collaborators to take often-marginalized forms of embodied, affective, imaginative, and creative knowledge seriously and, in this way to challenge and transform social theory "from the bottom up" by intervening at the site of its production.

Also flourishing now are interdisciplinary collaborations among anthropologists, artists, and artist/scholars animated by shared critiques of their respective disciplinary histories, by excitement about new possibilities that such collaborations invite, and by visions of possible futures (Schneider and Wright 2006, 2013). Roger Sanui writes of artists who conceptualize their work as social practice and who share questions and commitments with many contemporary anthropologists as follows: "Stepping outside the gallery space, these artists have proposed explicitly social and political forms of work. The aim of their projects is not just to enact social relations, but to intervene in actually existing contexts—to have a social and political effect" (2015, 11). At the same time, anthropologists, following the work of disciplinary predecessors like writer Amitav Ghosh (1994), filmmaker Jean Rouch (Stoller 1992), performance theorist Victor Turner (Turner and Schechner 1988), and others, have been taking up creative writing, photography and filmmaking, sound and music, visual arts, performance, exhibition, and installation as expressive and communicative forms more attuned to the complexities of representing ethnographic research materials and fieldwork experience. While anthropologists have conventionally considered the artistic products created by research subjects as objects of study, many contemporary anthropologists and artists are turning their attention to creative methodologies, to articulating ethnography and artistic practices in the process of research, and to ethnographic knowledge co-creation. In this new and emerging work, artistic practices and ethnographic methodology are integrated into research design, practice, analysis, and development of products for communication with diverse publics. In his analysis of research-based work by three contemporary Lebanese artists, anthropologist Mark Westmoreland argues that the "generative possibilities
enabled by crossing disciplinary boundaries between art and anthropology” (2013, 723) are to be found in shared commitments to inquiries into sensory, embodied, affective experience that critiques “both what constitutes knowledge and how it is acquired” (738).

Recognition and support of innovative work at intersections of anthropology, ethnography, and art is evidenced by the journal *Anthropology and Humanism*’s longstanding annual ethnographic fiction and poetry contests, and new developments such as Ethnographic Terminaria. Since 2009, this has been an installation at the American Anthropology Association annual meetings that describes its objectives as follows: “No longer content to theorize the ends of the discipline and possibilities of new media, new locations, or new methods of asking old questions, Ethnographic Terminaria is working to develop generative ethnographies that do not subordinate the sensorium to the expository and theoretical text or monograph” (Ethnographic Terminaria, n.d.). Ethnographic Terminaria has created a lively space for anthropologists to showcase the creative possibilities of social research that escapes convention and pushes boundaries by playing with new media, graphics, the acoustic, material art forms, and photography (see Brodin et al. 2011).

In the chapter by Alexandrine Boudreaule-Fournier (“Recording and Editing,” this volume) we see how such conventional methods can be transformed and strengthened with new sound and image technologies, and how what we know is related to our modes of attention. When we record sounds or images, we develop a fine awareness of the sonic and visual worlds that surround us; this implies that we become more fully aware of the sounds and sights that we often take for granted. The “cinematic imagination” forces us to imagine the world visually and cinematically, one that plays out when filmmakers record images and sounds as well as when they edit a film; it is also engaged when people watch or listen to audiovisual or sonic media. Collaborators working with Cristina Moretti (“Walking,” this volume) narrate walking tours they create to explore questions about their relationship to the city of Milan, Italy, where they live. Randia, an elderly Roma woman, and Magdalena Kazubowska-Houston (“Performing,” this volume) together create a performance script that interweaves Randia’s life stories with a fictional fairy tale.

Dialogue, collaboration, ethical engagement, imagination, and creativity have become keywords in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century anthropology and ethnography. Contemporary ethnography demands ethical accountability and collaboration in relationships between researchers and research subjects, and political responsibility to communities where research is carried out. Indigenous and feminist anthropologists, in particular, are actively recreating conventional theory and methodology (Smith 1999; Davis and Craven 2016). Environmental anthropology has emerged as significant in recent decades as anthropologists document and reflect on the impact of climate change, oil-based capitalism, and environmental disasters like Hurricane Katrina and the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster (Kottak 1999), and a vibrant field of critical public anthropology demonstrates why ethnography matters in the contemporary world (Fassin 2013; Morris 2015).

Thinking about ethnography in these terms leads us to pay critical attention to the relationships between and among researchers and research participants, and this in turn has sharpened our intellectual and political commitments to reflexivity and to analyzing relations of power and questioning how these shape ethnographic research. It has become common and expected practice for researchers to take an analytic account of similarities and differences between themselves and research participants, such as those structured by race, class, gender, and sexuality, and to ask how these political positions may shape research relationships. Dana Culhane’s chapter explores how sensory ethnography demands new practices of “sensory embodied reflexivity” in order to take theoretical/methodological account of how ethnographers and collaborators are embodied, feeling, imaginative, and creative beings (Katzman 2015; Green and Hopwood 2013). Magdalena Kazubowska-Houston recounts her process of writing a fairy tale, “Frideswicence,” based on her research relationship with Randia, an elderly Roma woman in Poland, and her work to adapt it for the stage. By detailing how she thought through the challenges of this process, Kazubowska-Houston allows the reader to accompany her through the ups and downs of their co-creative journey. One comes face-to-face with the surprises, promises, risks, and difficulties that she and her collaborator encountered in trying to convey their stories and in negotiating the tensions between ethnography and fiction, research and art, anthropologist and interlocutor.

**A Different Kind of Ethnography**

“Ethnography,” in our usage, refers to a methodology: embodied, affective, relational processes of knowledge co-creation, and re-circulation that develop from, elaborate and enrich, and challenge and subvert conventional ethnographic methods such as participant observation and observant participation, interviewing, documentary and archival research.

—Centre for Imaginative Ethnography, “Welcome to CIE” (www.imaginativeethnography.org)

The three methods conventionally considered to form the core of ethnographic research practice are participant observation, interviewing, and analysis of documentary, archival, and scholarly literature. Participant observation, as conventionally practiced, imagines "the ethnographer" as a person who
travels from their own community to another, conducts fieldwork focused on "observations of X group," and then returns home to analyze and communicate the findings—most often to other scholars. Privileged emphasis is granted to "observation" as a source of valid knowledge, with "participation" signaling that the ethnographer's authority rests on having "been there" (Clifford 1983). Rich, careful, and thorough descriptions of what people do and say; when and how they do and say it; and with and to whom; and the consequences of all these continue to be fundamental to ethnographic practice, but how ethnography is carried out and which theoretical insights shape our thinking about it change our understandings of both the practice and the knowledge created.

In 1991, Barbara Tedlock proposed changing the term "participant observation" to "observer participation." This shift in terminology indicates a critique of theories that position researchers as active, observing subjects and research participants as passive, observed objects. Tedlock's reformulation also recognizes the growing number of "insiders" conducting ethnography within what they identify as their own communities, networks, and organizations. The kind of ethnography that we are interested in here is particularly attuned to how bodily and affective experiences are part of ethnographic practice. Performance ethnographer D. Soyni Madison (2006, 401), for example, writes, "Something happens differently when your body must move and adjust to the rhythms, structures, rules, dangers, joys and secrets of a unique location. Ethnography is as much, or more, about bodily attention—performing in and against a circumscribed space—as it is about what is told to you in an interview." New forms of ethnographic writing, she maintains, take seriously the ordinary smells, sounds, and sights, as well as the extraordinary.

We are thus also attentive to the ways in which our own writing practices and ways of knowing are shaped by the affective and the sensorial. For instance, Demielle Elliott ("Writing," this volume) discusses how different forms of writing—poetic, satirical, fictional—can force us to know the world in different ways through unique engagements with the sensory world around us and with our research collaborators. Writing poetically demands a different sort of attention to the world. Dara Culhane's chapter ("Sensing") describes how paying close analytic attention to polysensory experience challenges the conventional Western sensory hierarchy that recognizes only five senses, conceptualizes each as separate and distinct, and considers sight as the privileged source of legitimate knowledge. This is evidenced, for example, by the English expression "seeing is believing" and legal recognition of "eye-witness accounts." Academic conventions reflect this culturally and historically specific approach to knowledge where sights, sounds, and text are privileged, whereas dynamic interactions among sounds, tastes, odors, touches, senses of place and of belonging and exclusion, and the extrasensory are often ignored or dismissed as irrelevant to social life and the study of knowledge. To take sensory experience, like imagination, as significant in knowledge co-creation constitutes a practice of epistemological and political critique.

Like bodies, feelings were not historically considered to be sources of reliable, valuable knowledge. The contributors to this volume approach affective scholarship as a way to tease out the imagination in social lives, following Sara Ahmed's (2014) proposal that theoretical concepts are most generative when they are embodied, lived, and "sweaty." For instance, Cristina Moretti's chapter ("Walking") considers the ways in which walking can be an ethnographic methodology, one that confronts us with traces, memories, and puzzles that jar our habitual ways of thinking and researching, and that demand different ways of both walking and writing. She shows how guided city walks can draw upon public space as both an object and an embodied site of engagement and inquiry. Alexandra Boudreau-Fournier's chapter ("Recording and Editing") demonstrates how the development of our "sonic imagination" forces us to listen to and to contend with silences, noises, and voices in our ethnographic
imaginary practices

Argued over for centuries by poets and philosophers, imagination has been in equal measure extolled for its world-shaping power and disparaged for its potentially duplicitous trafficking between reality and illusion.

—Stuart McLean (2007, 5)

"Imagination" is a word we all use, often. It stands for activities we all do, frequently. Yet, as you know from your own lived experiences, "imagination" resists fixed definition. Imagination itself, as a concept, evokes a wide range of ideas and responses. For one, it might conjure a memory of an encouraging voice: "Use your imagination!" For another, it might evoke a warning: "Don’t let your imagination get the best of you!" And yet another might associate it with fear: "You cannot imagine the horror!" Filmic images of mutilated bodies, aliens, monsters, and zombies flash across screens in cinemas around the world, sparking our imaginations. So, too, do paintings of pastoral scenes hung in silent, atteristic art galleries, transporting their viewers to other times and places, as might stone tools encased in glass display cabinets in musty museums. If asked to represent and communicate individual experiences of what we call "imagination," some of us might recite lines of poetry, hum beats of music, or execute a dance move. Some might snarl about glossy billboards that pollute public spaces and prey on our imaginations, promising us happiness if only we buy this or that shiny new thing. Others might refer to stories—whether told in books, TV shows, or chance encounters with a stranger—that ask us to imagine what it might feel like to be incarcerated, violated, and hungry; to be free and well fed; to be in love; to die alone. Perhaps, like Sana, our imaginations dance with unconventional fonts, wild margins, images of oil spills, radical research, and hip hop music.

We take the multiple meanings and perpetually generative nature of the concept of "imagination" as its unruly potential—not as errors to be corrected by theory or as obstacles to be overcome by practice. Our use of this term follows anthropologist Stuart McLean's (2007, 5) description of imagination as "an active component of experience and perception, engaged in a constant interchange with the material textures of the existing world." The authors in this volume show how attention to the potentialities of the imagination can force an alternative rendering of social lives, one that accounts for the forgotten, disappeared, hidden, and lost. Cristina Moroni's chapter in this volume, "Walking," shows us how she and her collaborators, who include long-time Italian-born residents and newly arrived immigrants, "co-imagine" diverse pasts, presents, and futures by creating walking tours, together, in Milan, Italy. Dara Culhane challenges us to imagine ourselves as multisensory, embodied,
They critique much contemporary work for considering imagination as overly instrumental, focused on how it serves functional roles in peoples’ lives, and/or as overly romantic, considered only in terms of its positive features. They argue instead for an approach that focuses on “the social and material means by which particular imaginings are generated” (6). The work you will read here focuses on the potential of imagination, but we do so mindful of anthropologist Jamie Sara’s caution (2009, 59): “If we really believe that imagination is to be one of the mediums of ‘another world’, then we are over-law in investigating how it is under-girding and reproducing the one in which we currently find ourselves.”

Philosophical debates about how “imagination” may be understood are important and currently attract a good deal of scholarly attention and energy. As ethnographers, we pay close, critical attention to what people we work with call “imagination” and to the projects they take up in its name. In other words, we look for the meanings of imagination less in abstract philosophy and more in how these meanings emerge in action. The “doing” of imagination is what we call “imaginative practices.”

The current shift of attention to methodology is also evident in studies of imagination. Anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano (2004, 1), for example, writes, “anthropologists have been less concerned with imaginative processes than with the products of the imagination.” In this book, we turn our attention precisely to these processes, inspired by current work on imagination in anthropology; Andrea Muehlebach, for example, explores relationships between precarity and the ethical imagination as she asks “what the task of ethnography is now that ‘things are falling apart, again’” (2013, 297). Tine Gammeltoft (2014, 117) investigates “how people’s fantasies, fears and imaginings blend with the workings of state power” in her ethnography of disability experience in Vietnam; and Didier Fassin (2014) analyzes the play of imagination in life storytelling transgresses conventional boundaries between ethnography and fiction.

In this book, and in our work as a whole, we treat imagination as a social practice, integral to relationships among people(s) and between people(s) and the cultural, political, and ecological environments with which we are entangled. We approach the imaginative as “anticipatory” (Crapanzano 2004, 20) or like “ellipses” (Berlant 2014), both characterized by uncertainty, an expectation not yet fulfilled, a not knowing that is liberating in its potential and possibility. The imaginative realm is not limited to representation as images, text, dreams, or memory that confines its interpretation to object or subject. But when approached as a process or practice, as something relational and productive, imagination leads to new spaces of inquiry, spaces that are dependent on the collaborative nature of anthropological knowledge. Such an approach situates imagination as a pedagogy, and one with the potential to open up and to make visible the unknown.
Creative Methodologies

Treating creativity as a social and cultural process ... [brings] ... into critical focus the limitations entailed in conceptualizing creativity as a form of invention exercised by the autonomous individual ... - Tim Ingold and Elizabeth Hallam (2007, 20)

Like "imagination," "creativity" invokes ideal, practices, desires, and forces; it defies a single, fixed definition. Like "imagination," "creativity" is a common word that we see, hear, and speak frequently, and it is hard to define with words alone; it is always more, but never less, than what language can represent. Like "imagination," here "creativity" is a process, valued in its mundane as well as spectacular manifestations, practiced in diverse ways by experts and amateurs, sometimes in extraordinary activity and sometimes in the ordinary demands of human survival.

"Creativity" can include, but is not limited to, what we generally consider making art: painting, drawing, filming, weaving, sculpting, carving, singing, dancing, making music, and performing. Yet, creativity can emerge in ordinary places or mundane practices too. Don't cook being creativity to feeding people every day, as well as to preparing gourmet feasts? Don't we all bring creativity to how we dress and adorn ourselves, to how we furnish our homes, to how we balance (or not) our budgets, to how we express our feelings about other people, events, the future? How then might we bring creativity into our ethnographic research?

In this book, as with imagination, rather than debate what creativity is, we focus on the work that creativity does, both in the world in general and in ethnographic research in particular. Working with creative methodologies, inquiring into imaginative practices—this constitutes A Different Kind of Ethnography. This combination of imagination, creativity, and ethnography has the potential, we believe, to deepen, complicate, and extend our inquiry into how people make, repair, and remake the world.

We are inspired by many creative projects that bridge the visual arts, theater, performance, film, sound studies, and critical scholarship. T.L. Cowan's experimental, activist, feminist performances draw on satire, burlesque, stand-up comedy, and queer theory to challenge gender, sexuality, and aging norms. Her genre-bending, multimedia installations are grounded in scholarly critiques and experimental art practices that seriously take up challenges of creativity and the imaginative. So too does the work of Max Liborzon, activist, artist, and sociologist, who uses (and transforms) historical drawings, experimental photography, dioramas, collages, multimedia installations, and more in her explorations of ecology, climate change, science, nature, and discid studies.

In film and sound, we see similar boundary-breaking work with Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Véréna Paravel's Leviathan (2012), an experimental ethnographic film of sound and sight in US fishing practices off New England. Dance ethnographers like Karen Barbour (2011), Theresa Buckland (2013), Dena Davida (2011), Judith Hamer (2007), and many others bring a wealth of experience to studies of movement and embodied knowledge entangled in histories and contemporary communities. Performance ethnographer Soyini Madison (2010) advances the political potential of performance in international human rights activism. Contributors to a recent collection edited by Alex Flynn and Jonas Timis (2015) offer critical analyses of how the transformative potential of performance is facilitated and thwarted in international and community development programs. All of these are transdisciplinary, exploratory efforts in which artistic and anthropological modes of inquiry inform and transform each other, contributing to a different kind of ethnographic practice.

Some of the authors here present their own efforts to combine art and anthropology. Alexandra Boudreault-Fournier discusses the creativity involved in montrage editing of sound and image in her chapter "Recording and Editing." For her, the process of recording and the editing techniques of montage together generate worlds in which spectators and listeners can re-imagined the places, events, atmospheres, and activities (among other things) that are represented in a film or a sound clip. In "Performing," Magdalena Kaszubowska-Houston draws into the fairy tale genre through a collaborative research project with Polish Roma. Denelle Elliott highlights how a little creativity in thinking might transform a pile of dirty dishes in the kitchen sink into ethnographic stories of fracking, depression, immigration, and more. Cristina Moretti discusses how a walk around Milan can give rise to creative storytelling, mixing narrative auto-ethnographic accounts with speculation about the lives of others in shared spaces. Dana Culhane's chapter on sensing explores how creative methodologies are engaged in evoking and representing sensory experience in ethnographic practice. In sum, while the kind of ethnography we propose builds on conventional methods like participant observation, interviewing, and documentary research, we do so with questions informed by new approaches to collaboration and with attention to relationships between theory and method that are conceptualized as problems in epistemology, all organized around the question, How do we know what we know?

Contributions to this collection emerge from contemporary work that takes as its starting point the premise that methodology and theory are necessarily dynamic, mutually constitutive—there cannot be one without the other—and irreducibly entangled. In critically analyzing the theory/method, methodology, and epistemology debates, we join with others across the arts, humanities, and social sciences who are challenging convention and developing relational
theories of epistemology that focus on intersubjectivity and subscribe to the idea that human beings are most productively understood as social beings who come to know what we know, about both ourselves and others, in and through relationship. We make each other up.

We write this volume in the tradition of anthropologists before us who have aimed to "destroy prejudices, open horizons, and promote creative thought and action" (Crapanzano 2004a, 3), and to encourage social and cultural critique that is attentive to the everyday and the extraordinary, the sensorial, the forgotten, the obvious, the messy. We build on these critiques by considering sensory, embodied and affective knowledge to be significant, by questioning conventional theoretical frameworks, and by working with critical approaches in reassembling, remaking, and rebuilding the discipline, by proposing A Different Kind of Ethnography.

References


Notes
1 See her work at http://dscowan.net.