

THE HITCHHIKER AS BRICOLEUR ANTHROPOLOGIST

Researchers engaging with spatial anthropology, spatial ethnography, or spatial humanities are drawing new methods from a wide range of fields such as autoethnography and gonzo ethnography. Malla, Kholina, and Jäntti's paper on Urban Hitchhiking as a method seems to respond to Law's observation that research needs to 'work differently if it is to understand a networked or fluid world' (Law 2004: 3). Law's concept of 'methods assemblages' questions how to develop methods that work in and 'know' multiplicity, indefiniteness, and flux (Law 2004: 14). Rather than having a 'fertile obsession' (Lather 1993) with validity, greater methodological eclecticism seeks to provide more concern for the character, nuance, messiness, and complexity of daily human life. While standard research practices often mean discounting many actions, interactions, impressions, experience, movements, symbols, beliefs, and practices to achieve consensus, Malla et al. react to a city full of complexity, with varying types of spaces, boundaries, networks, movements, practices, interactions, and meanings.

BRICOLEURS

In the course of their journeys, Malla et al. are able to fold new urban complexities into a method oriented to the embodied and embedded researcher. Seeking to avoid one-sidedness and partial vision, they search for 'how to employ a variety of perspectives and interpretations in the service of knowledge' (Nietzsche 1969 [1887; 1908]: 119) by diverging from named

methods. While the image of the hitchhiker is habitually represented in the media and popular culture as largely a detached, autonomous, rationalist individual, the authors rightly celebrate hitchhikers for their more emergent engagement with the world. Here, the researchers, rather than remaining outside the surrounding social environment, seek a more holistic approach to understanding the worlds of urban inhabitants. I argue that hitchhiker researchers here are Bricoleur Anthropologists, as they make do with 'whatever is at hand' to capture the complexity of the world. Their method developed out of respect for the complexity of the lived world and an understanding 'that there is far more to the world than what we can see' (Kincheloe 2005: 346). The hitchhiker as bricoleur anthropologist seeks to undertake an inductive approach to research by getting more involved, using creativity to respond to the detail of a situation. Crouch (2017) argues that bricolage is not just about 'getting by', but tackling situations in more detail they may assert, require, or happen.

Malla et al., in using hitchhiking as a method, combine multiple tools (e.g., diaries, photos) to extend knowledge beyond situated accounts of movement, practice, and meaning, to understand and explain lived experience. Employing a bricolage strategy, the use of different methodological tools helps them to seek out and piece together sets of observed and encountered practices and performances to make a solution to a puzzle (Denzin and Lincoln 1998). Their 'artisan-like inventiveness' (de Certeau 1988) pieces together everything

the subjects demonstrate, verbally and through 'practice performance', until the researcher can reveal a complete 'quilt'. In their journeys, they prove they are open to moments of occurrence, of potentiality and affect, atmosphere and becoming (Crouch 2017). Malla et al. do not simply tolerate difference but cultivate it as a spark to ignite researcher creativity. Indeed, bricolage is a fundamentally creative act (Wees 2017).

BRICOLAGE

The resulting bricolage can be a 'complex, dense, reflective, collage-like creation that represents the researcher's images, understandings, and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis' (Denzin and Lincoln 1998: 3). The approach by Malla et al. might be developed to include field notes, blogs, observations, interviews, photographs, historical texts, and academic literature, as well as intensive introspection (Jamal and Hollinshead 2001), so as to weave together sets of participated in and observed practices and performances. These can then be unpacked to uncover what has been dismissed, deleted, and covered up. It is only then can the bricoleur anthropologist move 'to a deeper level of data analysis as he or she sees "what's not there" in physical presence, what is not discernible by the ethnographic eye' (Kincheloe 2001: 686). As Okely (1994: 21) observes:

After fieldwork, the material found in notebooks, in transcripts and even in contemporary written sources is only a guide and trigger. The anthropologist-writer draws on the totality of the experience, parts of which may not, cannot be cerebrally written down at the time. It

is recorded in memory, body and all the senses. Ideas and themes have worked through the whole being throughout the experience of fieldwork. They have gestated in dreams and the subconscious in both sleep and waking hours, away from the field, at the anthropologist's desk, in libraries and in dialogue with the people on return visits.

A reflective, informed bricolage can help researchers move into a new more complex domain of knowledge production in the writing up process, gaining a new ability to account for and incorporate various dynamics into research narratives. As Malla et al. had no preconceived ideas to prove or disprove, the example of the 'the bread queue' describes bricolage as emergent writing developing from being pulled out of our comfort zones, our routine, and made aware of difference (Neile 2009).

LIMITATIONS

While Malla et al. use the role of the urban hitchhiker to get beyond one-dimensionality, they acknowledge the embodied skills of listening, learning, and interacting required. One difficulty of hitchhiking as a method is how to subjugate as much as possible all roles and possible selves except that of hitchhiker; a second challenge lies in not being overly infected with a scholastic point of view. Yet the researcher must have broad knowledge in order to recognise and be able to reflect upon not only the complexities and realities of the lived experience(s) of the participants, but also the researcher's role as co-creator. The authors acknowledge the method as an interactive process shaped by their own gender, but must also confront their personal histories,

biographies, social class, race, and ethnicity and those of the people with whom they interact. They also acknowledge both the risk and need to journey into domestic spaces, given the potential bricolage material to be found there. Such an approach demands that the researchers ask, 'What am I not seeing?' (Ong 2014), and stretch their imagination as well as their bodies. The answer to research is not to seek the 'truth' of a social world, but offer multiple perspectives out of respect for complex worlds. While other researchers may have the clock, the hitchhiker as bricoleur anthropologist needs time to develop a bricolage.

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