

wherein experiencing difficulties meant that mothers felt a deep sense of embodied failure to mother adequately.

Throughout the book, Tomori remains committed to uncovering the socio-economic inequality that exists among mothers in America based on class and racial stratification. In the present, breastfeeding is publicly valorized, as evidenced by the litany of public health campaigns and mainstream media coverage of breastfeeding controversies, but few supports exist that make it possible for *all* women to carry it out, especially within the most “private” of settings—nighttime. When viewed from this lens, the moral imperative to breastfeed not only is damaging to mothers who choose not to breastfeed their infants but also essentially dooms breastfeeding mothers who do not have the privileges of white, middle-class families to fail when they do attempt to breastfeed.

Tomori concludes by suggesting that breastfeeding advocacy that includes recommendations for safe co-sleeping is key in providing effective breastfeeding support in the United States. Safe options for co-sleeping acknowledge that nighttime breastfeeding is an integral part of the practice of breastfeeding and that until prevailing authorities like the American Academy of Pediatrics abandon their prohibition of bed-sharing, countless American families will continue to face moral anxiety as they struggle to find ways to feed their babies during the night while conforming to dominant cultural norms shaped by capitalist ideologies and temporal regimes. While Tomori’s research clearly shows that parents do not wholly conform to the dominant norms, it also reveals that these norms remain pertinent in shaping parents’ long-term decisions on where their baby sleeps. These parents are engaged in a continuous and careful negotiation between linear clock time and learned cultural norms and the relational, embodied rhythms of breastfeeding and infant sleep (209). To remove the need for this negotiation would ease the moral burden of breastfeeding parents.

Tomori cautions that the rhetoric of “choice,” feminist or otherwise, is not useful. In addition to erasing the structural barriers to breastfeeding from view, this rhetoric mistakenly oversimplifies the “choice” to breastfeed, placing it in stark opposition to the “choice” to not breastfeed. The reality, as exemplified by the struggles endured by Tomori’s participants, is that the practice of breastfeeding a baby is not a choice freely made by parents. Complex cultural factors influence each family in a myriad of ways, and the outcomes are always the result of careful negotiation. What could yield more fruitful results would be changes to the biomedical approach that embrace the social dimension of breastfeeding and infant sleep as well as changes to social policy that acknowledge how economic inequalities create significant barriers to successful breastfeeding. Tomori points to sexuality as an area pertaining to breastfeeding and nighttime sleep that remains unexplored in the literature but that is likely to play a key role in furthering our understanding of how and why parents choose the breastfeeding and sleep strategies they do.

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Since the 1980s “collaborative,” “participatory” and “community-based” approaches have proposed new ways of envisioning ethnographic fieldwork. Today anthropologists and students alike are encouraged to adopt these trendy approaches, often perceived as more inclusive than conventional ways of conducting fieldwork and as challenging—and even eliminating—power relations between researchers and participants. Their ultimate goal is to empower and give agency to the people anthropologists work *with*. This vision of collaborative research is attractive and indeed full of promise. Yet, in developing a specific case of collaboration, anthropologist Magdalena Kazubowski-Houston in her book *Staging Strife* successfully suggests that this vision of collaboration is utopian and that it is time to look at these approaches from a critical perspective.

Kazubowski-Houston was born in Poland, and she studied theatre before becoming an anthropologist interested in the potential of performance as a methodological approach in anthropology. Committed to the aesthetic of Poland’s avant-garde theatre, she developed, with her husband, an acting methodology they called “illustrative performing technique,” a theatrical approach that relies on the grotesque, improvisation and bodily expression and that aims at “politicizing the audience” (9). In 2001 Kazubowski-Houston left Canada with her family for her hometown, Elbląg, to develop an approach combining her skills in theatre and her interest in anthropology to work with Roma women and help them improve their lives. The idea behind Kazubowski-Houston’s project was to co-create a theatre play to provide a space where Roma women could tell their stories, so that issues of racism could become public and could subsequently be addressed by the general population. In other words, Kazubowski-Houston believed that her project, using a combined performance ethnographic approach, would constitute a form of consciousness-raising about violence for the researcher, the participants and the audience. Her goals were significantly altered when she began fieldwork. *Staging Strife* is a reflexive account of the multiple power dynamics that emerged during Kazubowski-Houston’s ethnographic research among Roma women in Poland. The book encourages us to think about how fieldwork encounters

challenges to the anthropologist's methodological and theoretical assumptions.

Two months after she arrived in Elbląg, Kazubowski-Houston had established contact with nearly all Roma families in the city. During her visits at their homes Kazubowski-Houston began to build rapport with the Roma women, taking part in discussions about their problems (including violence, harassment from Roma and non-Roma people, poverty and discrimination) and their expressions of hope. In spending time with them, she learned about their lives but also about the various power relations that defined her interactions with them. These women became the co-authors and co-directors of the play, entitled *Hope*, which addressed the theme of violence encountered by Roma women in their everyday lives.

More specifically, the play, revealed little by little throughout the book, is about the life of Nadzieja, a 14-year-old girl who marries an older man she does not know. This play is about family tensions, poverty, mental illnesses, violence and abuse. *Hope* is in part Nadzieja's story, but it also echoes the lives of many other Roma women living in Elbląg. The play begins at Nadzieja's funeral; her family surrounds her body. As a theatrical effect, she stands up to introduce the play to the audience (only the audience can see her—the family members, played by the other actors, do not acknowledge her standing up). Nadzieja describes *Hope* to the audience as the result of a collaboration between Roma women, actors and an anthropologist, the result of a process called ethnographic theatre. The full script of the play is included at the end of the book, providing the complete content of the work.

How did they create the play? Together with the Roma women, Kazubowski-Houston co-created the scenes and developed the characters. To deepen the dialogues, she used exercises of improvisation during which the Roma women acted and expressed themselves as if they were the characters. Kazubowski-Houston ended up developing some of the scenes based on her previous recorded or observed discussions, as well as interviews she conducted with the Roma women at their homes. The incorporation of direct excerpts from dialogues reminds the reader of the script of a play, but, more importantly, it gives a concrete sense of the intensity of the challenges encountered by Kazubowski-Houston. In addition to a series of obstacles including financial constraints, internal politics and illness, the challenges increased significantly when the Roma women began rehearsing with a non-Roma group of actors (the Roma women did not want to perform the play publicly), who also wanted to have their say in the play.

The power mechanics between the two main groups (the Roma women and the actors) and Kazubowski-Houston were complex and evolved throughout the process of creating and staging the play. As soon as the Roma women began to comment on the performances of the actors, tensions between the two groups escalated. Kazubowski-Houston acted as a discussion facilitator during the pre-rehearsal meetings and a mediator with the Roma women, trying to restore and maintain their trust in the actors and the project. Prejudices about Roma and non-Roma people complicated the relationship between the two groups. Keeping the group together became a key concern for Kazubowski-Houston.

Kazubowski-Houston's intermediary position between all the participants and the tensions she felt as she sought to satisfy and mediate everybody's interests, perspectives and

obligations is what she refers to as the "Faustian contract" (borrowing from Peter Loizos' [1994] use of the term). This corresponds to a balancing act, to the unspoken contract that binds the anthropologist to the participants, and to what each expects from the other. Kazubowski-Houston refers to the Faustian contract as a perfect description of her position during fieldwork, trying to negotiate different perspectives, backgrounds and interests. She writes, "I was continually struggling to find the centre line" (147). She was in a precarious situation, to the point of becoming "a juggler of power" (147), constantly fearful she would lose the production, her fieldwork and her research.

Kazubowski-Houston had to negotiate with divergent conceptions of theatre, how rehearsals should take place and what the play should be about and should look like. For the Roma women, writing a play was about writing a soap opera script, while the actors favoured a more avant-garde and artistic approach to theatre. These different conceptions of styles, genres and aesthetics exacerbated the tensions between the Roma women and the actors, who became hypercritical of each other. Kazubowski-Houston adopts a reflexive approach. She admits that by not allowing traditional Roma dance performances in the play—an idea brought to her by the Roma women—she betrayed herself "as a Western bourgeois liberal" (139). These tensions persisted until the end of the process of creation and lingered even after the first performance of the play. *Hope* was performed at a cultural centre in Elbląg in front of the Roma women and a general audience.

Kazubowski-Houston destabilizes the reader with her sincerity and transparency. For instance, she writes about how Roma women anonymously told her that her project had not impacted their lives whatsoever for the future. It was not the project that brought them hope but Kazubowski-Houston, one of the Roma women told the anthropologist on the day she was leaving Elbląg. The same woman added that, in leaving, Kazubowski-Houston was taking their hope away. Kazubowski-Houston is not afraid of the critique. In using an auto-ethnographic approach, she pushes anthropologists to deeply reflect, in a sincere, open and challenging way, on how we conduct research and on what consequences our presence (and absence) will have among the people we work with.

This book is illuminating as it addresses issues that are still taboo in the discipline. *Staging Strife* is as much about the extremely rich potential of performance and ethnographic theatre in our discipline as it is about raising a critique of an idealistic view of collaboration. Now is the time to raise more of these critiques; Kazubowski-Houston does it elegantly and constructively, with nuance and with all the passion that drove her fascinating project. *Staging Strife* will attract the interest of anthropologists and students. It will certainly become a standard reference to discuss the challenges of collaborative research in anthropology today.

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