

Agnieszka Chwieduk

Prof. UAM Dr Hab., philologist (French and Romanian) and social anthropologist, works at the Institute of Anthropology and Ethnology, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań. Her academic and research interests include three areas: medical/psychiatric anthropology, migration studies, localism and processualism in teaching and qualitative research: performativity, participation, Emic Evaluation Approach, dialogicity/negotiation in situations of difficult access to groups (totalizing spaces, small communities). Her most recent exploratory experience is on migration/detention in Guarded Centres for Foreigners in Poland (2018–2019), as part of the *Spaces of Detention project: formal, logistical, and socio-cultural aspects*. Her earlier projects were related to issues of ethnicity, identity and locality in a unifying Europe, among others from the areas of Romania, France (Alsace) and Poland. She is author and co-author of three monographs and 43 articles and reviews and co-editor of the journal LUD, the leading Polish periodical in ethnology and anthropology.

Some comments on the usefulness of the field diary: An anthropological perspective and practice

This text arises from my meeting with students of M. Abakanowicz University of Arts in Poznań; as an anthropologist, I discussed the subject of the research diary (hereinafter: RD), also known as the field diary.¹ Current practice shows that the diary is an indispensable tool in empirical research. We were interested in the questions of what the RD is, what its aetiology is, what are the benefits of keeping it, and whether (how?) it can be meaningfully used in different kinds of projects related to the study of the social world. The subject itself and the inspiration left by this uncommon event have given me the pretext to propose a kind of guide to the RD which would summarise the answers to the above questions. I address the following reflections mainly to the participants of this workshop, but also to anyone interested in recording the results of their own research with the use of elements of social science research tools.

I. The idea of a research diary

Definition. The research diary is one of the most intriguing forms of written texts and its history is closely linked to the stabilisation² of the parti-

» 1 The name "field diary" or a "researcher's diary" is discretionary among ethnologists and social and cultural anthropologists. See A. Deredas, A. Piotrowska, *Dziennik terenowy. Zapis stawania się badaczem*, [in:] *Nie tylko o wsi... Szkice humanistyczne dedykowane Profesor Marii Wieruszewskiej-Adamczyk*, ed. D. Kasprzyk, Łódź, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2013, p. 263-285.

» 2 J. Clifford, *Kłopoty z kulturą. Dwudziestowieczna etnografia, literatura i sztuka*, transl. E. Dżurak et al., Warszawa, Wydawnictwo KR, 2000, p. 34-35.

participant observation method. It is now accepted that its purpose is to record the research process concerning (mainly) social phenomena and to provide feedback for scholarly reflection.

First, it combines a literary layer with a narrative that meets the requirements of a scholarly text. It is reminiscent of a memoir and a kind of scholarly essay, where original associations are as important as the precision of the argument. Second, it is a statement testifying to an experience that is performative (research in action³) and produces unpredictable outcomes. Third, it serves to archive a variety of data obtained from the “field” understood as entering into interactions with research subjects/partners. Fourth, it does not have a pre-established single form, which means that it is not the form that is decisive for its meaning, but certain elements that make it an essential resource of knowledge, necessary for making and verifying scientific hypotheses.

The above definition requires some additional clarifications that contribute to the semantic context for the main theme.

Relationship to the participant observation method and the idea of looking. (1). The diary, because of its aetiology, is closely related to ethnographic participant observation⁴. As such, it documents its course. It has itself become an important qualitative method thanks to the experiences of socio-cultural anthropologists, who are still developing a version of this method, outlined in a systematic way by Bronisław Malinowski. Nevertheless, the renowned anthropologist should not be seen as the founding father of this method, but rather as the scholar who ensured its transparent description⁵. The method combines a variety of techniques: it is the anthropologist’s long-term interaction with people, on their terms. The researcher shares everyday life with these people and interacts with them very frequently. This enables him or her to use a range of techniques to explore their perceptions, discourses, memories (various types of interviews, projection experiments), group routines and behaviours (e.g. non-participant observation, i.e. the researcher is not directly involved in the interaction with social actors). The term ‘participant’ itself has come under a lot of criticism. Nevertheless, it is an apt metaphor for the researcher’s coexistence with those he/she is researching; during this time the scholar is reliant on their conditional behaviour towards him/her, in line with their inherent norms. This results, on the one hand, in the researcher’s unique alienation with specific psycho-somatic effects and, on the

» 3 For example: M. Szymańska et al., *Badania w działaniu w praktyce pedagogicznej. Wybrane przykłady*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Ignatianum, 2018.

» 4 For example: M. Bukowski, *Obserwacja uczestnicząca*, 2018.

» 5 J.Clifford, *Kłopoty...*

other hand, offers a chance to understand the operating principles of the community in question (routines, discourses, structure).

Importantly, attempts to describe participation usually contend with the allegation of a far-reaching subjectivity of the view of the community that generates the use of this method. Usually, too, if they defend the sense of the method, they are burdened with the myth of scientism. Meanwhile, participant observation, as the only research strategy, allows one to be with people in the conditions which are natural to them, which is fundamentally unpredictable and, as to its course, unrepeatably, in order to establish with laboratory precision the “essence of behaviour”. It is therefore an area of exploration of everyday practices as a means of group survival. The researcher, through clearly established conditions for obtaining information, taking into account areas that are inaccessible to him or her, uncovers the rules for generating the meanings that people attribute to their reality because of the ontological-epistemic system they profess as well as the social structure they have founded and reproduced in order to exist.

As a method, participant observation is therefore a controlled way of being with Others and draws on the natural property of humans to consciously perceive reality, which ensures their survival. However, it differs from this innate activity, like any observation understood as a method, in its purposefulness, focus, systematicity, and order, all of which derive from prior reflection on its meaning and, as such, are subject to conclusive reflection. These key distinctions are illustrated in Table 1. It compiles the main differences between the types of observation described above. It should be specified here that, in the case of participant observation, its specifics have been laid out in a number of publications related to qualitative studies and the conduct of anthropological research⁶.

» 6 D. Silverman, *Prowadzenie badań jakościowych*, transl. J. Ostrowska, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN 2009; M. Hammersley, P. Atkinson, *Metody badań terenowych*, transl. S. Dymczyk, Poznań, Zys i S-ka, 2001; P. Atkinson, M. Hammersley, *Ethnography and Participant Observation*, [in:] *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. N.K. Denzin, Y. Lincoln, Thousand Oaks (CA) – London: Sage Publications, 1994, p. 248-261; M. Bukowski, *Obserwacja uczestnicząca* (2018); M.V. Angrosino, *Badania etnograficzne i obserwacyjne*, transl. M. Brzozowska-Brywczyńska, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2015; H.W. Penn, *The Evolution of Ethnographic Research Methods: Curiosities and Contradictions in the Qualitative Research Literature*, “Reviews in Anthropology”, vol. 35, no. 1 (2006), p. 105-118.

Two types of observation – differences						
Observation in life	Spontaneous	Chaotic perception	Daily	Necessary	Discretionary	Widespread
Observation as a method	Systematic	Dedicated perception	Experimental	Necessary	Dedicated	Exceptional

Table 1.

Fundamental differences between observation in real life and observation in research.

Source: own elaboration

In its essence, the participant observation method arises from an idea of looking and watching someone or something, which in fact privileges the sense of sight. We find this convention of understanding us in the world in the past, for example in mythical stories such as that of Actaeon, in which an image restores identity to those who have become lost:

The Actaeon myth: “During a hunt, Actaeon lost his way and found himself at a stream, where he saw nymphs bathing, including Apollo’s sister, the virgin goddess Artemis. She interpreted the hero’s carelessness as a sign of insolence and, using a stream of water, turned the man into a stag. The astonished Actaeon had to flee from the dogs that were pursuing him. And these, having failed to recognise their master in a new body, tore him to pieces. After their loss, the animals suffered greatly, unable to find their owner, until a statue faithfully representing Actaeon was made”⁷.

The finale of the story is about the keeping of the self and self-recognition. The dogs ‘regain themselves’ by reclaiming the image of the master, and thus through the figure of repetition. From an anthropological perspective, myths, including those from the ancient Mediterranean, can be treated as “stories about sacred things, i.e. the most important texts for a given society, not always associated with a particular cult, having a permanent structure and resembling a political ideology”⁸. In this convention, a sacred thing, a certain cultural trait, is the idea of the image as a reflection and a freeze in consciousness of the dynamically passing

» 7 K.T. Witczak, *Co się dzieje na drugim planie? Literacki voyeryzm*, “Pro Arte”, no. 2 (130) (2016), <http://proarte.net.pl/co-sie-dzieje-na-drugim-planie-literacki-voyeryzm/> [access: 05.09.2022].

» 8 P. Fabiś, *Zawsze błędzić pośród wiatrów. Antropologiczne studium ewolucji strukturalnej westernu filmowego*, Poznań, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza, 2020, p. 9 ff.

present. This was provided in ancient Greece by mirrors known in everyday use, but also by written histories. In this sense, the image was a repetition of a lost reality, in a situation when the real yet elusive 'here and now' (Greek *kairos*), were imitated and re-lived as 'past'. It is worth noting that the idea of the image is that it only retains the important people and events that give subjects their identity. This cultural element, important in Western mentality, is also revealed in the sources of the methods used by the social sciences.

Nowadays, although many qualitative researchers turn to participant observation in a variety of case studies, anthropologists/ethnologists are given priority in understanding its potential because of the idea of the image. This is because they developed it in the study of communities radically different from those of the Western European cultural circle to which they themselves belonged. This raised serious cognitive questions. For example, whether anthropologists were able to transcend their own ethnocentric conditioning, including their bias⁹. For them, this meant contact with something extremely important, a reality mediated not only by little-known ethnic, indigenous languages, but also defined by ontologies, epistemologies and ethics so different from those to which they were accustomed that information about them should be recorded as evidence of their existence. In this experience, the sense of sight proved crucial¹⁰. The eye, like the binoculars of a microscope, recorded, in the researchers' view, everything in a manner adequate to reality, whatever they saw as typical of a given reality and at the same time astonishing or exotic. This approach was a manifestation of the cultural fetishization of the idea of the image, accessible also through the sense of sight, as the primary means of experiencing the world. Its role was reinforced in the Western world, drawing on behaviours such as voyeurism or common peeping. In this context, over time, the diary became an essential part of the anthropological process of cognition, which assumed that the image of reality, which was the result of objective perception, led to the formation of an important image of the Other 'in the mind of the researcher', which was then updated in the written narrative.

The sheet of paper, which today can be replaced by a mobile phone with a 'Notes' or 'Voice Recorder' feature, soon became the confidant of a whole range of insights that were in fact part of the researcher's long-term, bodily immersion in a different, fascinating and daily discovered re-

» 9 W. Kracke, *Encounter With Other Cultures: Psychological and Epistemological Aspects*, "Ethos", vol. 15, no. 1 (1987), p. 58.

» 10 M. Kołodziej, *Refleksje na temat patrzenia w antropologii*, [in:] *Patrzenie i widzenie w kontekstach kulturoznawczych*, ed. J. Dziewit, M. Kołodziej, A. Pisarek, Katowice, Uniwersytet Śląski, 2016, p. 46; see also J. Fabian, *Time and the Other: how anthropology makes its object*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2014.

ality. (2) The journal mainly collected the effects of this resourcefulness. It consisted of documenting what is 'routine and obvious' in the Others in order to show, after analysing the data, how the most important principles of their social life are produced. This type of research procedure proves to be challenging in that the researcher is completely dependent on the unfamiliar conditions that the everyday life of the Others imposes on him or her. This way of discovering the foundations of social life generates numerous failures. The diary thus reflected the researcher's helplessness in the face of an unfamiliar world, often coupled with the monotony of solitude. The time of research only revealed the state of limbo between what is known and assimilated by the senses and the intellect and what the senses and the intellect cannot cope with. It highlighted difference as a fundamental category of thinking about human communities. (3) The diary played here the role of a document attesting to its authenticity. Furthermore, its construction reflected the anthropologists' reflection on their own (ethnographic) writing and the production of knowledge¹¹ about the Other.

Along with the development of the discipline and the progressive westernization of many non-European communities, anthropologists were discovering Otherness 'at home', within their own societies. The intensity of researchers' experience was certainly compounded by the consciousness developed by older generations: familiarity could be deconstructed in 'otherness/foreignness' terms; one looked at one's own societies as one had previously looked at non-European groups, developing arguments for the proposition that each society and group is a construct (a conventional reality) in a multicultural world. (4) In this dimension, the Diary continued to be a trusted document in which scholars wrote down the effects of their observations of differences between social groups, classes, creeds, ideologies, and values.

Conclusion. In light of the above, we may conclude that the research diary is part of a unique method of discovering the cultural diversity of the world, i.e. long-term participatory observation, which for a long time engages the researcher in the unfamiliar everyday lives of the Others (ethnography). As such, it has the status of a document testifying to the researcher's resourcefulness as to the ordering of the data acquired in the context of people's natural, routine behaviours, showing the outcomes of the process and the authenticity of anthropologists' experiencing the difference seen as a category of a scholarly description of the world. In this sense, the content of the notes full of relevant descriptions of micro-situations ('details') help to operationalise it, protecting it from the allegation of being merely anecdotes, to which everyday experience is easily reduced.

» 11 J. Bielecka-Prus, *Persona anthropologica w terenie badawczym. Analiza wybranych narracji etnograficznych*, "Dialogi Polityczne", no. 29 (2020), p. 46.

The history of the discipline's headway thus shows the context in which the idea of the research diary materialised. Over time, it has become a routine tool for recording the research process and as such it can be further deconstructed.

The upside of keeping a research diary

A research diary,¹² a text penned by a particular author, illustrates the research of an anthropologist at every stage of a given project: from the moment of defining the research questions to the time of writing the final work (report, article, essay, research note). It reflects the individualised perspective of researchers on the situation in which they are participating. As such, it is a document that archives information and, as such, we can venture a certain catalogue of benefits of keeping it, in line with David Silverman's suggestion.¹³

It contains (ethnographic) data. These include descriptions of events, quotations and their interpretations (e.g. using a projection technique such as ethnographic drawing and using tables to map social actors).

It reflects the reasoning process. It enables the reader to gain insight into the researcher's reasoning process, in a way that is independent of the intention with which the process was documented.

It offers insight into the process of making conclusions. The reader has the opportunity to gain insight into the inferences made by the researcher. Descriptions of ethnographic facts can thus be subjected to a double insight: by the author during and after the exploration, and by outsiders; researchers can thus use the diary to objectify their assumptions and hypotheses.

It facilitates the researcher's reflection (self-reflection and self-ethnography). The content of the diary is subject to reflection, trigger

» 12 Much of the information on the diary used here is intended as guidance. It was compiled by me in collaboration with Prof. UAM, Dr. Jacek Schmidt. Conducting field exercises in ethnographic research methods together for many years, we prepared teaching aids for ethnology students at the Adam Mickiewicz University Institute of Anthropology and Ethnology, Poznań. These include guidelines for keeping a researcher's diary, to which I refer in this and the following sections of the article.

» 13 D. Silverman, *Prowadzenie badań jakościowych*, transl. J. Ostrowska, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2009, p. 300.

memory and is a pretext for its verification and for the correction of research plans.

It helps to plan field activities. For example, it helps to verify numerous contacts, to establish priorities for their acquisition and for ongoing work.

It helps rationalize time management. It proves researchers' involvement in relations and prevents falsification of their work in the field. It therefore boosts effective use of time for particular activities. Participation is never permanent. People who have experienced the effects of living in a particular community know this well. Exploration proceeds at varying pace, is full of "acts of God" and depends to some extent on the researcher's mood.

It inspires new ideas. As a text, it triggers reflection on the sense of research at a given time and thus fosters problem solving.

Conclusions. D. Silverman's suggestions and my comments on them should be first of all referred to the ideal use of the tool. The above diagram is thus a proposal for a conscious, yet responsible and comprehensive approach to exploration and its documentation. This is because the formation of the RD is entangled with the researcher's attitude towards the written text and as a result is conditioned by ideas about it: how I see myself as the Author of the text and what my approach to systematic work on the text is. The aforementioned benefits depend on these two variables to the highest degree.

At the same time, it must be strongly emphasised that the primary benefit of RD creation turns out to be its role of attesting post factum, when the effort of exploration is completed. It provides not only its evidence, but also the context for the iconographic material (films, photographs). However, it stems from the quality of the ethnographic data it contains. Their strength is not only their diversity, but mainly the focus of the description on micro-events, filled with a variety of details from the practice of everyday life that are not easy to potentially confabulate. One could say that the RD makes real and fleshes out the sense of what coexistence and interaction is in practice. A lack of integrity in this field results in the trivialisation of the scientific experience and leads to ethical abuse; a vision of a community/issue which is supported by flimsy ethnographic data is an inadequate labelling of reality (misrepresentation) and of the people whose trust accorded to the researcher is thus challenged.

II. Diary as text – towards a deliberate creation of a document

The usefulness of the RD as a document depends on the awareness of what it consists of as a text. In the context of the discussion so far, it is worth posing a problem here, returning to the question of the definition of the diary: is it ultimately a personal document or a public witness to the research process?

The experience of teaching this form of expression indicates that most (anthropology) students first identified it with the very personal experience of keeping a diary. In their view, this consisted of several elements: the spontaneity of the writing, in which the intimate nature of the content is more important than grammatical, orthographic and stylistic correctness, and the sincerity and secrecy of the message focuses on the real and imaginary experiences (fantasising) of the Author. It can therefore be summarised that keeping a diary is not just about the text, but about the right attitude towards it. The attitude must be very demanding since the record is supposed to be secret; this means that the only reader is the Author him- or herself. This issue relates to the case of B. Malinowski. After the publication of his memoir *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, it became clear that this respected scientist, who inspired anthropologists to conduct methodical field research, had his other, less interesting 'self'. As Grażyna Kubica states, his notes "were intimate in nature and (...) aimed at self-work and self-analysis"¹⁴. However, as such, they both contributed to the debunking of the myth of the impartiality of ethnographers during their fieldwork and are still today linked directly to the category of autoethnography, through which anthropologists consciously unveil entanglements in 'field relations' in order to illustrate their transparency of action, cultural barriers and mode of data acquisition. This is exemplified by Paul Rabinow and his book *Reflections on Field Work in Morocco*, especially the afterword to the book by Pierre Bourdieu¹⁵.

One could say that the publication of B. Malinowski's private notes paved the way for the deconstruction of the performative experiment of field research, in which the anthropologist/researcher is first a human being encountering other human beings and then, given the rules governing academic thinking, translates this experience into the adequate language of the discipline.

In effect, writing a field diary means being aware that its content is fundamentally hybrid in nature; what is private becomes public to make

» 14 G. Kubica, *Wstęp*, [in:] B. Malinowski, *Dziennik w ścisłym znaczeniu tego wyrazu*, ed. G. Kubica, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002, p. 26.

» 15 P. Rabinow, *Refleksje na temat badań w Maroku*, transl. K.J. Dudek, S. Sikora, Kęty, Wydawnictwo Marek Derewiecki, 2010, p. 136-138.

'privacy a tool for knowledge of the Other'. In practice, this involves an autonomous decision on the part of the diary author about what he or she wishes to reveal about himself or herself in order to make his or her record a scientific argument. The decision is aided by an awareness of the complex construct, i.e. the diary text.

Three levels. As such, it has three layers: interpretive, rhetorical and substantive, regardless of what form the text takes, such as a continuous multi-layered narrative or a concise note in the form of a catalogue list with information. Their meaning is explained in Table 2 and accompanied by questions that reflect the practicalities of creating this document. Ultimately, the production of the diary serves to tie in the text the subjectively perceived reality with the effects of the methods applied by the researcher while maintaining the discipline of credibility, reliability and transparency. Being amazed with the world of the Other is thus transposed into elements closely related to the person of the researcher-author and how she/he perceives reality and how she/he conceptualises this experience using specific scientific methods and scientific interpretation. It could be said that the diary text captures a vital tension in the interactions during the research. The researcher, by his very presence, reveals the principles, norms and values of the explored world (group), but she/he also turns out to be an actor provoking this process. A deliberately kept diary illustrates this process and as such becomes an argument for the intersubjectivity of qualitative research.

Level	Meaning	Auxiliary question to the author
<u>Interpretative</u> , or "pre-text" – the author's attitude before and during the research	individual way of perceiving the world	What do I know about a particular area and 'the world' before I started my research?
	acquired substantive knowledge	What do I know about a particular phenomenon from the literature?
	affective assessment	What guides my assessment of the situation?
<u>Rhetorical</u> , or text – the author's attitude to their own way of writing	individual writing style	Mood or reflection on a particular event.
	individual narrative	What is my writing style, what do I like?
	dependence of style on the notation situation (e.g. slackening of linguistic correctness)	What is worth choosing: speed of recording to preserve the details of the message, or correctness of style at the expense of detail?
	dependence of style on the research context (e.g. acquiring the style of the persons I study)	Why am I doing this and what purpose does it serve?
<u>Substantive</u> , – or text as the effect of aiming at getting to know the Other	events as cognitively significant moments of experience: – description of interaction ("action-reaction") – transcript of quotes/conversations/transcript – description of the event space – drawing of situations/relationships/hierarchies in the group – own and acquired iconographic material	What has happened? What have I noticed?
	reflection on the experience (as a result of being in the state of difference)	What follows from the events?
	self-ethnography as a description of the group involving the researcher's ego:	What to change in the approach to the group?
	– aiming at the OTHER by "I" [ego]	What to research for the future – a plan.
	– aiming at "I" [ego] due to group norms/values	How does the group situation and being with the group affect me?
	– self-reflection as reflection on events	Which experience, important for me personally, points to the Others?

Table 2
Own elaboration

What should a research diary contain?

Suggestions

It should be borne in mind that the diary understood in this way is a document that testifies to the reliability of the research/empirical activities in the field. This is related to its specific content, without which it remains of little use in proving the hypotheses put forth.

In view of this, in its substantive layer, it should first and foremost contain (1) *information about events* which the researcher initiated himself or in which he participated spontaneously. The basic difficulty here turns out to be the timing of the recording. Ideally, it should occur immediately after the experience in question. In practice, however, this does not always prove possible. It is therefore useful to refer to the head notes technique, i.e. remembering events through body memory, in which the perception of signals arriving not only through sight, but also through touch, hearing, smell, taste, and emotions triggered during the experience. Furthermore, the RD should contain the following: (2) *information about motivation, expectations and ideas* of the researcher concerning the study and its assumptions, which is related to the work of the interpretative layer (see Table 2); (3) *description and evaluation of the course of each study* („going into the field”), with such vital elements as: establishing contact with the studied environment, persons selected for the study, ways of the researcher’s self-presentation and the topic of the study conducted, time and place of the above activities, evaluation on the perception of his/her person by the studied environment in the context of self-reflection and autoethnography (cf. Table 2); (4) *a description and evaluation of the social situation of each study*, with the place (its influence on the study and its results), the chronology, the presence of third parties with their influence on the subject and his/her statements (what were they doing?), (5) *the general attitude of the subject towards the study* situation itself, the topic and the researcher. A separate issue is to be aware of (6) *the relevance of non-verbal behaviours*, such as gestures, facial expressions and emotions shown, which may have influenced the course of the study or may be important for the appropriate interpretation of the research participants’ statements. This type of behaviour should also be included in the recording.

A separate set of information is to concisely record (7) *reflections on the research tool* (such as effectiveness and possible improvements), (8) *the sense of the empirical data obtained* – their quantity, quality (especially in terms of their relation to the research topic or research hypotheses) and possible gaps that need to be filled in, and (9) *the time spent on the field effort*. These three issues sustain the research process

by illustrating its dynamics, the relevant difficulties and the sense of the research effort. In this respect, the diary is a self-monitoring tool during field empirical research.

A final remark should concern the structuring elements of the text. The dates and times of the entries, the division of the text into main sections and subsections, the marking of quotations with the authors of the statements and situations, the inclusion of drawings, photographs, the numbering of pages, the space set aside for one's own analysis. All of these minor formalities pave the way for the re-reading of the diary, necessary for the elaboration of the research outcomes.

Conclusions. The above catalogue is not exhaustive and may be subject to additions, preferably as a result of testing its usefulness in composing a field diary during field research.

Final conclusions

The proposed reflections on the usefulness of the field diary are a scientific outline, combining reflection on its place in field research, which is primarily the responsibility of ethnologists and socio-cultural anthropologists, with practical suggestions that universalise the approach to this document.

The entire text, although it has the character of a handbook, in fact encourages reflection on the meaning of describing the research process. This was done by referring to the idea of observation, its relationship with the method of participant observation, which has become a crowning characteristic of socio-cultural anthropology as a discipline. In this sense, the question of the diary has been a pretext for introducing the singular origins of its career in the methodology used by anthropologists. This constitutes a certain addition to the information that the reader may encounter when leafing through methodological manuals providing an overview of methods in qualitative research. Usually, what has bothered anthropologists for years in numerous theoretical texts is reduced to the slogan of 'doing ethnography'. In this respect, it is important to realise that the field diary has emerged as a certain convention for conveying experience because of its deep immersion in a completely different reality, unknown to researchers, which no one but them has tried to structure and describe. This means that the document attests not only to the very fact of doing research, but also to the reality in response to which it is produced.

As such, it also bears witness to the dilemmas of empiricists in their explorations of disparate socio-cultural conventions. Here, too, the complex nature of the document becomes evident. Its literary nature, linked to

scientific argument, makes it a *sui generis* statement. This framework begs a question of whether diary writing be taught? If so, what is learnable?

In response, what is proposed here is a definition of the document, a description of its function, its structure, and a catalogue of its potential content. All of this is done with the idea that it is ultimately guided by poetic licence. After all, the researcher him- or herself remains the sole tool which unveils a socio-cultural reality which has earlier been unacknowledged. For this reason, the comments on the construction of the diary are a contribution to the practice of it. Finally, I offer a few comments on the dilemmas of working with the field diary, prompted by my own field experience but are also close to many of my colleagues who practice, as I do, participant observation. First, the systematic keeping of a document always works to the advantage of the researcher, but it constantly interferes with the time that the researcher can devote to discovering new aspects of the reality under investigation. Second, regardless of the form of the diary, the fundamental idea of keeping a diary is the detail of the notes on events and the honesty as to how they reflect on them. In this way, there is not only a consolidation of the field experience, but also a dialogue with its meaning. This turns out to be invaluable for the subsequent research but leaves one with an ongoing dissatisfaction as to the resources gained, the research solutions applied, and the choices made. The performativity of the research, translated into the text, thus makes it a witness to our self-development due to the relational character of cultural practices, and this is never emotionally indifferent. Third, the diary text is multifaceted, but mostly in erratic ways. For the author, this means firstly the dilemma of selecting and choosing its fragments in terms of what has been well documented and what is attractive to the research topic. Fourth, the intensity of the field experience means that the description can be burdened by an excessive focus on the person of the researcher. Preventing this exaggeration requires practice and constant self-examination. The idea that the diary serves to infuse a research paper with arguments related to the research problem, rather than emotional vivisection, can be helpful.

The field diary is a text penned by a particular author, significantly personal, but ultimately aimed at communicating with the reader. This is what makes it as a private document with a public purpose, which calls for further analysis of its usefulness. ●

Agnieszka Chwieduk

© <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2750-413X>

DOI: 10.48239/ISSN1232668241208225

Bibliography

Angrosino M.V., *Badania etnograficzne i obserwacyjne*, transl. M. Brzozowska-Brywczyńska, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2015.

Atkinson P., M. Hammersley, *Ethnography and Participant Observation*, [in:] *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. N.K. Denzin, Y.Lincoln, p. 248-261, Thousand Oaks (CA) – London, Sage Publications, 1994.

Bielecka-Prus J., *Persona anthropologica w terenie badawczym. Analiza wybranych narracji etnograficznych*, "Dialogi Polityczne", no. 29 (2020), p. 45-61.

Bukowski M., *Obserwacja uczestnicząca*, 2018.

Clifford J., *Kłopoty z kulturą. Dwudziestowieczna etnografia, literatura i sztuka*, przeł. E. Dzurak et al., Warszawa, Wydawnictwo KR, 2000.

Clifford J., *Praktyki przestrzenne: badania terenowe, podróże i praktyki dyscyplinujące w antropologii*, transl. S. Sikora, [in:] *Badanie kultury. Elementy teorii antropologicznej. Kontynuacje*, ed. M. Kempny, E. Nowicka, p. 139-179, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2004.

Deredas A., Piotrowska A., *Dziennik terenowy. Zapis stawania się badaczem*, [in:] *Nie tylko o wsi... Szkice humanistyczne dedykowane Profesor Marii Wieruszewskiej-Adamczyk*, ed. D. Kasprzyk, p. 263-285, Łódź, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2013.

Fabian J., *Time and the Other: how anthropology makes its object*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2014.

Fabiś P., *Zawsze błędzić pośród wiatrów. Antropologiczne studium ewolucji strukturalnej westernu filmowego*, Poznań, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza, 2020.

Hammersley M., Atkinson P., *Metody badań terenowych*, transl. S. Dymczyk, Poznań, Zysk i S-ka, 2001.

Handwerker W.P., *The evolution of ethnographic research methods: Curiosities and contradictions in the qualitative research literature*, "Reviews in Anthropology", no. 35.1 (2006), p. 105-118.

Kołodziej M., *Refleksje na temat patrzenia w antropologii*, [in:] *Patrzenie i widzenie w kontekstach kulturoznawczych*, ed. J. Dziewit, M. Kołodziej, A. Pisarek, Katowice, Uniwersytet Śląski, 2016.

Kracke W., *Encounter With Other Cultures: Psychological and Epistemological Aspects*, "Ehtos", no. 15 (1) (1987), p. 58-81.

Kubica G., *Wstęp*, [in:] B. Malinowski, *Dziennik w ścisłym znaczeniu tego wyrazu*, ed. G. Kubica, p. 5-36. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002.

Lejeune P., Rodak M., *Laboratorium badacza. Rozmowa z Philippe'em Lejeune'em*, "Teksty Drugie. Teoria literatury, krytyka, interpretacja", no. 6 (2018), p. 200-216.

Malinowski B., *Argonauci Zachodniego Pacyfiku. Relacje o poczynaniach i przygodach krajowców z Nowej Gwinei*, transl. B. Olszewska-Dyoniziak, S. Szykiewicz, Warszawa, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1967.

Nowak E., Pawłowski R., *Możliwości zastosowania badań jakościowych w naukach społecznych*, "Obronność – Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Zarządzania i Dowodzenia Akademii Obrony Narodowej", no. 2 (6) (2013), p. 147-162.

Okely J., *Knowing without notes*, [in:] *Knowing how to know. Fieldwork and the ethnographic present*, ed. N. Halstead, E. Hirsch and J. Okely, p. 55-74, New York – Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2008.

Rabinow P., *Refleksje na temat badań terenowych w Maroku*, transl. K.J. Dudek, S. Sikora, Kęty, Wydawnictwo Marek Derewiecki, 2010.

Silverman D., *Prowadzenie badań jakościowych*, transl. J. Ostrowska, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2009.

Szymańska M., et al. *Badania w działaniu w praktyce pedagogicznej. Wybrane przykłady*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Ignatianum, 2018.

Witczak K.T., *Co się dzieje na drugim planie? Literacki voyeryzm*, "Pro Arte", no. 2 (130) (2016), <http://proarte.net.pl/co-sie-dzieje-na-drugim-planie-literacki-voyeryzm/> [access: 05.09.2022].

