2 "Writing with my professors"

Contesting the boundaries of the field
in the Global History Dialogues Project

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2.1 Introduction[1]

"Partnering with higher [education] institutions and professors has its own opportunities and limitations" (Gerawork Teferra, email correspondence, 2020). This is Gerawork Teferra, a resident of Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya and a former participant in Princeton University's Global History Dialogues Project (GHDP). The GHDP is a roughly six-month-long course in research methodology during which learners design, conduct, write, and present original global history research projects.[2] The GHDP has also become a space for experimenting with collaborative writing and publication between teaching staff and learners. Following the completion of the course, two members of the teaching staff – Kate Reed and Marcia Schenck – engaged in various

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1   We would like to thank all co-authors for their continued engagement with us throughout the preparation of this paper, including the submission of further reflections, questionnaires, and feedback. None of this would have been possible without the Global History Lab at Princeton University, particularly Professor Jeremy Adelman and his continued generous support of the GHDP. Many thanks also to the University of Potsdam's central research support division for its financial contributions to the GHDP. We would also like to acknowledge the helpful comments of the co-authors of this project and the editing of this contribution by Louise Thatcher.

2   See: https://ghl.princeton.edu/global-classes/course-2-global-history-dialogues, accessed July 21, 2022. The learners in this course come from twenty-five partner institutions and range from students with high school diplomas to those studying for the MA. They come from different disciplinary backgrounds.

co-writing and co-publishing projects with a group of former GHDP learners, including Gerawork Teferra, Muna Omar, Mohamed Zakaria Adballa, Ismail Alkhateeb, Phocas Maniraguha, and Richesse Ndiritiro, all of whom have shared reflections for this chapter, too. These collaborations resulted in the publication of an anthology containing edited versions of the GHDP research papers, as well as two fully co-written book chapters (Abdalla et al. 2021; Reed/Schenck 2023).

The GHDP provides a unique vessel to explore the dynamics at play in collaborative writing with persons from "the field." In this chapter, we consider how anthropologists and theorists have conceptualized the field, and then turn to how these notions are complicated by co-authoring projects that bridge the archetypal field-academe divide in pursuit of a more horizontal, democratic, and open process of knowledge production. Taking the GHDP as a case study for the challenges and limitations inherent to any such project of inclusion, we discuss the kinds of labor mobilized by those within academic spaces to draw historically excluded authorial voices into academic conversations, before considering the perspectives offered by GHDP students on the power imbalances, opportunities, successes, and failures of this approach.

Thinking about ways to decolonize academic knowledge production, the philosopher Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò suggests that knowledge is legitimized and objectified through the "conversation rooms" within which it is articulated (Táíwò 2020). Some rooms are more powerful than others, and membership in these rooms can elevate the speaker's status and the legitimacy of the knowledge she produces. If we think, as Táíwò does, of academia as taking place in such a conversation room with particular norms and cultures of speaking and membership, we can think of the traditional notion of the "field" as all those locations outside the academic conversation room. Anthropologists Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson have called this traditional notion of the field the Malinowskian archetype, which rests on the spatial separation of "the site where data are collected from [and] the place where analysis is conducted and the ethnography is 'written up'" (Gupta/Ferguson 1997: 12). This distinction manifests spatially, as well as in relation to modes of writing: writing in the field is considered scattered and raw, while writing at home is considered "reflective, polished, theoretical, intertextual, a textual whole" (ibid.) associated with rooms in which "theoretical conversation with others of one's kind" (ibid.) takes place, such as the academy or the library.

As scholars within the anthropological discipline have reflected most critically, this distinction is deeply flawed. Writing about African anthropology, Lyn

Shumaker argues that "the field is not simply a source of data that is then organized in the mind of the researcher to create theories. Instead [...] the field [is] a constructed and negotiated space that through its very structure produces knowledge" (Schumaker 2001: 255). Others have gone further, arguing that the field is not spatially bound, but rather "a state of mind" (Hyman 2001: 1). Despite the well-established problems with binary notions of field/academy, the "field" as the Other of academic conversation rooms continues to be a prevalent heuristic that shapes academic knowledge production. Writing collaborations such as the one discussed here unsettle this logic. In the case of the GHDP, the teaching staff could be considered as firmly inside the traditional academy, holding paid academic positions at well-funded universities in Europe and the US.[3] The former GHDP students with whom we co-authored, on the other hand, researched and wrote from vantage points anchored in various contexts of displacement across Africa and the Middle East.[4] In the writing collaborations, GHDP students produced *and* analyzed, discussed, and wrote up their results in the "field". We also turned the course and the experience of writing, publishing, and co-authoring into a field of study itself, observing and reflecting on the experience. The plurality of fields in our contribution thus underscores that fact that the data on which we base our analysis were collected in different physical and intellectual spaces that transcend a simplistic notion of Kakuma refugee camp as the field and Potsdam University as the academic space.

At the same time, our writing collaboration underscored that the Malinowskian field continues to exist as a powerful heuristic that underpins modes

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3   Marcia lives in Germany, where she is a tenure-track professor of Global History at the University of Potsdam. Kate is a PhD student in history at the University of Chicago, in the USA. Johanna is a postgraduate student at Oxford University in development studies and living between South Africa, Germany, and the UK.

4   Mohamed and Gera lived in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya at the time of writing, although Mohamed was recently resettled to St. Louis, USA. Mohamed holds a degree in public administration and Gera holds a degree in development economics and advises tertiary-level students in the camp. Richesse lives in Kigali, Rwanda, and is involved in several projects to expand access to higher education for refugee learners. Muna currently lives in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, though for much of the period discussed here, she resided in Sana'a, Yemen, where she worked with NGOs and women's empowerment projects. Samson works as a nutrition nurse in Nairobi; for the period in question, he lived in a camp for internally displaced people in Juba, and before that, in Kakuma camp.

of academic publishing and knowledge production. The distinction between "field" and academic conversation "room" characterized the barriers that our co-authors experienced during the writing and publishing process. Their experiences bring to the fore the material and immaterial boundaries that constitute academic rooms and the ways in which they work to exclude and silence authors writing from the "field." In our efforts to overcome these barriers, we reflect here on the kind of labor and resources that we, as collaborative writers, needed to mobilize to break into these rooms. Unsettling the firm boundaries between "field" and "academic rooms of conversation," we argue here, requires a critical reflection of the modes by which academic rooms work to remain exclusive spaces. In Walter Mignolo's words: "it is not enough to change the content of the conversation...it is of the essence to change the *terms* of the conversation" – to change the rooms in which our co-writing conversations take place (Mignolo 2009: 162).

In the GHDP, our strategy entailed initially putting into place the infrastructure for an emancipatory pedagogy that focused on conveying the tools and methodology for students to become *researchers in their own right*, rather than being limited to the role of research participants. GHDP learners produce original works of research, with varying degrees of support and collaboration. The publication of these works on the Global History Dialogues Website (*globalhistorydialogues.org*) relies on the mediating labor of the teaching staff. The publication of select works in the framework of academic publishing relies to a more significant extent on the labor of former teaching-staff-turned-editors, who edit and discuss the work, which includes co-working on aspects of the substance and format of the texts, even for single-authored pieces. Co-authored pieces, in which all participants are co-researchers, similarly rely on that work. As Gerawork's comment at the beginning of this chapter suggests, co-writing as a form of relationality is always shaped by power imbalances and by opportunities and limits that look very different for the different parties involved. In the case of the GHDP, the efforts of those co-researchers based within academic institutions to mediate between those co-researchers outside of those rooms and the publishing industry itself in part re-produced the terms of the academic conversation and the power imbalances inherent to it. While making use of formats that opened up academic publishing to non-traditional contributions, those situated within academia continued being better connected and more familiar with editing procedures and expectations of what constitutes a publishable text. From the perspectives of co-researchers based outside of academia, this was not necessarily a drawback. Their motivations to join the

collaborations were diverse, ranging from professional aspirations to personal passions. This diversity of motivations points to the necessity for an ongoing search for spaces that welcome epistemic diversity.

In the following sections, we discuss briefly Táíwò's approach to decolonial academic practice, before discussing in more detail the above argument. The fields which furnish the data for our discussion are Kate and Marcia's experiences teaching the GHDP and collaborating as co-authors and editors with GHDP researchers. Furthermore, we build on a group interview, written questionnaires, and email and WhatsApp conversations between the GHDP researchers and Johanna Wetzel to illuminate the experience of collaborative writing. Throughout the chapter, we endeavor to be transparent about how our positionalities have shaped our reflections. Most importantly, our interactions with the research participants were shaped by the teacher-student dynamic inherent in the GHDP's set up. Power imbalances also surfaced intersectionally along lines of gender (most GHDP researchers are men; the three of us are women); mobility (all GHDP researchers experienced displacement while we are globally mobile); race (most GHDP researchers are Black or of color; the three of us are white); education (the GHDP researchers have in their majority not attended traditional universities; the three of us have) and access to social services and resources. Finally, our reflections are informed by an insider perspective as well as an outsider perspective. We have all been involved in designing, teaching, and redesigning the GHDP at various stages. While Marcia and Kate were part of the collaboration discussed herein, Johanna has not worked with the graduates in question. All three of us are emotionally invested in the success of the project and our varied relationships with current and former participants in the course. This entails critically seeking out ways to adapt and improve the course, while remaining equally attentive to the ways in which it creates opportunities for its participants, as well as the ways in which it limits them.

2.2   Voices, fields, and rooms in academic knowledge production

"Once upon a time scholars assumed that the knowing subject in the disciplines is transparent, disincorporated from the known and untouched by the geo-political configuration of the world in which people are racially ranked and regions are racially configured." (Mignolo 2009: 160)

Calls for decolonizing academic knowledge production are today a frequent intervention from critical, feminist, and postcolonial scholars in most disciplines, including global history (De Lima Grecco/Schuster 2020). There is a shared sense that text – published in academic conversations and written as research – has the capacity to both oppress and liberate its subjects. This idea was most influentially formulated by Edward Said in his foundational 1978 study *Orientalism*, where the term described the concepts, assumptions, and discursive practices that European scholars used in published texts to construct and produce knowledge about "the Orient" (Said 1978). Said's Foucauldian analysis of colonial discourse drew attention to the relationship between knowledge and power, and the ways in which "knowing the Orient" was integral to its oppression and domination by the creators of knowledge. His analysis further opened ways of understanding the contemporary academy, taken up most prominently by Gayatri Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988). Spivak's argument considers scholarly attempts (common in the 1970s and 80s) to remove researchers as experts or authorial voices in the text and thereby let subalterns "speak for themselves" (Spivak 1988). This practice, she argues, while well-meaning, does not solve the problem of representation in scholarly interpretation. Experience itself is constituted by representation, and scholarly analysis builds on interpretation of data. This stands in contrast to the idea of authentic, unmediated subaltern voices to be discovered in archives around the world, an idea that Spivak criticized and that had previously motived much history "from below."

One increasingly popular approach to this puzzle – who can speak about whom? And what constitutes de/colonial knowledge in the contemporary academy? – has come to be known as standpoint epistemology. It rests on three core ideas: that knowledge is socially situated, that marginalization brings with it some positional advantages in gaining access to certain socially situated knowledge, and that research programs ought to reflect these facts (Táíwò 2020). Standpoint epistemology begins from Said's and Spivak's reflections but adds to them the notion of positionality or social location/identity, namely that "a speaker's [social] location […] has an epistemically significant impact on that speaker's claims" (Alcoff 2022: 7). Practically, however, the application of standpoint epistemology has often invited what Táíwò calls practices of "deferral":

> "The call to 'listen to the most affected' […] has more often meant handing conversational authority and attentional goods to those who most snugly

fit into the social categories associated with these ills – regardless of what they actually do or do not know, or what they have or have not personally experienced." (Táíwò 2020)

Táíwò's criticism starts from the fact that knowledge does not get produced in a vacuum, but rather, institutional frameworks bring together certain audiences with certain speakers as "conversation rooms," some of which are more powerful than others in legitimizing and objectifying knowledge. Media and academia constitute two such powerful rooms. As he writes, "Being in these rooms means being in a position to affect institutions and broader social dynamics by way of deciding what one is to say and do. Access to these rooms is itself a kind of social advantage, and one often gained through some prior social advantage" (Táíwò 2020). If the goal of a decolonial knowledge production is then to break with colonial logics of representation in text, scholars need to not only look for collaboration (and interpretation) partners inside the rooms of which we are already part, but rather move beyond these rooms and challenge their very walls.

Thinking about collaborative writing through the double lens of fields in the plural and conversational rooms alerts us to the material and immaterial boundaries that constitute the terms of the academic conversation. The rooms in which academic conversation takes place are highly exclusive and are gatekept by actors and structures with strong incentives to keep them this way. Research also tends to be segmented between these rooms and the field, which is mined for data but not seen to contribute to its analysis or dissemination. Writing collaborations across fields have the potential to open new ways into these "rooms." They also have the ability to bring to light the mechanisms of exclusion by which academic conversations are maintained and speakers on the outside are silenced.

2.3   Training researchers in the Global History Dialogues Project

Michel-Rolph Trouillot has described how "conditions of production" in historical scholarship work to silence certain sources and voices in at least four ways: in the creation of *sources*, in the creation of *archives*, in the creation of historical *narratives*, and in the compilation of these narratives to create "*history* in

the final instance" (Trouillot 2015: 25). From its inception,[5] the GHDP aimed to build the infrastructure to train researchers by making the fundamental tools of the historian's craft available to those excluded from higher education, particularly in contexts of displacement and encampment.[6] Teaching applied historical research methods meant paying attention to theory as well as practice. The GHDP consists of thirteen modules and class workshops (each with a lecture, an interactive element, and a writing element), with topics ranging from introductions to "Global and Social History" to practical issues such as "Developing a Research Question," "Planning an Oral History Research Project," and "How to Structure the Research Process."

Importantly, the GHDP could never be an epistemic intervention alone. Indeed, the reasons for the students' marginalization as producers of historical knowledge were also material: living in a context with minimal access to such elementary things as computers and the internet, having limited or no access to higher education institutions, holding no valid travel documents, and lacking access to funding sources, the students' location, legal status, and immobility seemed to render them unable to visit archives, access documentary sources, or consult physical libraries. While this description does not capture the background of all GHDP students, it was true for the students who decided to become co-researchers and co-writers. In part to respond to the challenges posed by these circumstances, the GHDP focuses on teaching oral history methods, which hold the emancipatory potential to contribute to the creation of sources, archives, and historical narratives, without the need for such intensive access to university resources (Thompson 2017). Global history provides further advantages in accessibility by concentrating research projects on the global within the local and the translocal (Freitag/von Oppen 2010). The topics are joined under the umbrella term of border-crossing, broadly

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5   For more on Marcia's teaching experience, see Marcia C. Schenck, "From Campus to Camp and Back: Note from the Field from a Humanitarian Humanities Practitioner," AMMODI Blog, October 22, 2019, https://ammodi.com/2019/10/22/from-campus-to-camp-and-back/, accessed January 3, 2022.

6   For a reflection on teaching history in a humanitarian emergency setting, see Marcia C. Schenck, "Geschichtswissenschaften ohne Grenzen: Wie Geschichtswissenschaft-lerInnen sich im humanitären Kontext engagieren," FluchtforschungsBlog, October 3, 2019, https://blog.fluchtforschung.net/geschichtswissenschaften-ohne-grenzen-wie-geschichtswissenschaftlerinnen-sich-im-humanitaren-kontext-engagieren/, accessed January 3, 2022.

defined.[7] The outcome of the first iteration of the GHDP was the production of original works of historical research by and with refugee and researchers from the Global South. The learners-turned-researchers successfully designed, conducted, and wrote up their historical narratives, which they ultimately presented to each other at the GHDP's digital student conference.[8]

The challenges we faced in this process highlight some of the mechanisms of exclusion at work in this initial stage of training for and producing original historical research. As Sarah Nimführ points out, it is not uncommon that "the technical equipment of the authors was principally responsible for the extent and nature of their respective involvement" (Nimführ 2020: 31). This was the case, too, with some of the GHDP researchers, particularly those living in conditions of encampment. Most researchers worked with smartphones, particularly as learning centers and internet cafés were closed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Internet connectivity proved extremely expensive and poor, and lack of access to software and institutional library subscriptions severely inhibited the research and writing process. Researchers often had caring responsibilities or worked multiple jobs in addition to undertaking research and studying. Leveling out these access inequalities required mobi-lizing resources and labor on the part of the teaching staff, and their attempts were not always successful. Prior to the pandemic, the Global History Lab at Princeton University funded students from the most vulnerable locations for transport to an education center with personal computers and for child care. During the pandemic, support changed to distributing internet vouchers and limiting our communication to forms that used less mobile data. Our strategies for removing or softening the impacts of these barriers, however, also shaped the research outcomes in more substantial ways. Supervisory communication needed, in some cases, to be reduced to the written word, limiting the amount of interaction and dialogue that could take place. With access to libraries so difficult, much of Kate's work included conducting liter-

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7   For an example of how the concept of border-crossing permeates student projects, see the conference program of the students' virtual final conference in September 2021, https://ghl.princeton.edu/events/2021-border-crossing-conference, accessed July 23, 2022.

8   For examples, see the 2021 and 2022 conference programs: https://ghl.princeton.edu /events/2021-border-crossing-conference and https://ghl.princeton.edu/whats-happe ning/2022-border-crossing-conference, accessed July 23, 2022.

ature searches on behalf of the GHDP researchers, thereby inevitably shaping not only the form, but also the content, of their writing.

Through the GHDP, we worked – albeit imperfectly – to subvert three moments of silencing in historical scholarship during the GHDP: the creation of *sources*, the creation of *archives*, the creation of historical *narratives*. But we had not permeated the fourth mode of silencing: creating "*history* in the final instance" (Trouillot 2015: 24), by disseminating the research in forms that would be recognized by the academic community, or in other words, speaking and being heard in the rooms of academic conversation.

2.4 Mediating between community researchers and gatekeepers of academic conversations

Collaborative writing and publishing appeared to us as one way to penetrate the rooms of academic conversation, making use of our insider knowledge and positionalities, firmly located inside of academic conversation rooms. Reflecting on the forms of labor and resources we mobilized in the process, we argue, can reveal some of the mechanisms of exclusion that keep the gates of the academic rooms firmly closed for those on the outside, and suggest strategies for overcoming or softening them.

The collaborative projects that we launched involved different kinds of co-writing and co-publishing, as well as different forms of mediation between the authors and the publishing industry. Firstly, Marcia's embeddedness in academic networks (and thinking) helped her seek out opportunities and funding for publishing the GHDP researchers' work. Marcia saw an opportunity to present several research papers at the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration's Bi-Annual Conference, titled *Disrupting Theory, Unsettling Practice: Towards Transformative Forced Migration Scholarship and Policy* and held in Ghana.[9] As a result, she was invited by Staci B. Martin, with whom she had collaborated previously, to initiate a co-authored chapter

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9   "History Dialogues: Applied Humanities in Emergency Situations," Disrupting Theory, Unsettling Practice: Towards Transformative Forced Migration Scholarship and Policy, University of Ghana, Accra (online), July 26–29, 2021; "Refugee Narratives: Perspectives from the South," Disrupting Theory, Unsettling Practice: Towards Transformative Forced Migration Scholarship and Policy, University of Ghana, Accra (online), July 26–29, 2021. Panel co-organized with Staci B. Martin.

in an edited volume titled *Global South Scholars in the Western Academy* (Martin/Dandekar 2021). This opportunity invited a critical reflection by GHDP graduates, as well as teaching staff, on their experiences researching from the margins of the academia – outside its institutions, stylistic conventions, funding mechanisms, and economy of knowledge production. The chapter addressed the possibilities and limits of "third spaces" in academia and the ways in which epistemological exclusion and material inequalities operate in tandem, preserving hierarchies of knowledge and authority. At the same time, the enthusiasm of some GHDP researchers to present their work more broadly led Marcia and Kate to consider compiling the graduates' research papers for publication. A colleague of Marcia's pointed her to a Canadian university press that was committed to epistemic diversity, resulting in an anthology of nine student-researcher essays (Schenck/Reed 2023). The anthology seeks to share the results of GHDP students' original historical research and in so doing, to question common assumptions about what it means to be a historian, and who can be the authorial voice of history. In addition, two graduates shaped their research into articles published in a special issue on African refugee history for the scholarly journal *Africa Today*, edited by George Njung and Marcia (Teferra 2022; Omar 2022). Bringing the GHDP researchers' original works into the rooms of academic conversation thus required making use of Marcia's established membership in these very rooms.

The collaboration process entailed editing and refining GHDP researchers' existing texts to conform to academic publishing standards. Mediation thus also worked through communicating the norms and culture of academic rooms to the GHDP researchers. Perhaps the most intuitive example is language editing. While Kate is a first-language English speaker, for many of the GHDP graduates, English was a fourth or fifth language. Beyond requiring correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling, academic publishers and peers expected certain stylistic and formal conventions which were both intuitive (by training) and accessible to Kate. In academic publishing with community researchers, "smooth[ing] language" is a labor (and point of contestation) that frequently underpins publications (Nimführ 2020: 31). It is however, as Kate remarks, also "a way to better understand what the papers were trying to say – because I would suggest an edit that was not true to the original meaning, and that would start a conversation about what the author meant and how to say it in academic English" (Kate Reed, personal correspondence, 2022). Reflecting on these imbalances, the GHDP researchers, jointly with Kate and Marcia, write: "No doubt, the voices of [GHDP] student-researchers have the

potential to change [the academic] conversation, to break it open and push it in new directions. Nevertheless, their participation remains contingent on a particular framing and phrasing, on their co-researching with scholars from and in the Global North" (Abdalla et al. 2021). In fact, as we will see in the next section, breaking into the rooms of academic conversations also meant encouraging a particular form of writing that came bound up with power relations, limitations, and glass ceilings.

2.5   "Writing with Professors": Limitations of the inclusion paradigm

Given the largely academic readership of this volume, our hope is that exploring the GHDP from our perspective first will spark discussion within academic conversation rooms about strategies for mobilizing the kind of labor and resources necessary to reconfigure – or deconstruct– those very rooms. Now, we will center the voices of our co-researchers from outside academic spaces to address the limitations and trade-offs we made during the process, as well as the opportunities and meanings that the GHDP participants derived from the co-writing process.

During our collaboration, Gerawork offered a thought-provoking reflection on the process, part of which we quoted at the beginning of this chapter:

"Partnering with higher institutions and professors has its own opportunities and limitations. There is power imbalance. Our professors' knowledge, research experience, exposure, their access to secondary resources have been ample opportunity to add value to our research. Now I completed my fifth or sixth draft with the support of my professors, when I read my first draft, I laughed at some of my crude generalizations and some of my arrogance. When I was taken away far by one side facts or associated emotions their question and resources provided has checked my facts and opinions. However, the high standard in language usage, word counts, citation styles, etc., have been among constraints for our community-based research. I think such problem arises because of mismatch of the objective of the research. Our professors wanted to see my research meet reviewers' standard and get published in their journal. On the other hand, my main research drive has been [to] make voices heard by whoever is interested." (Gerawork Teferra, email correspondence, 2020)

Gerawork's comment points to the necessity of shifting perspective towards the GHDP researchers' experiences researching, writing, collaborating, and publishing in academic conversation rooms. As they reflect in the collectively written chapter in *Global South Scholars in the Western Academy* (Abdalla et al. 2021), over the course of the project, the GHDP researchers entered into new relationships to research as a way of thinking, as a way of making sense of the world around them, and as an identity, locating them in a particular position within their social contexts. Through their role mediating and facilitating academic publication, Kate and Marcia attained an authority during the collaboration that came with a considerable degree of power over the shape and content of the GHDP researchers' texts. This power was mediated through trust.

It is important to remember that the abstract, shared goal of bringing GHDP authors' work into scholarly conversations manifests differently for all parties involved. The GHDP researchers joined the publication collaboration voluntarily and for various reasons. Among those whom we were able to reach in writing this chapter, all thought of the publication collaboration as an opportunity to learn the skills of academic writing from their "professors." Muna, for example, reflects: "The biggest advantage [of joining the publication collaboration] is simply writing with my professors. Like I mentioned before, I have great respect for them, and just to have an opportunity to be part of their work is very amazing" (Muna Omar, email correspondence, 2022). Others, like Phocas and Richesse, imagine themselves as writers and saw the collaboration as an opportunity to grow and be recognized as such. Phocas shares, "I joined because I was interested, I thought, 'wow this is my opportunity to be writer, to be called a writer.' I was moved, I had much energy from that" (Phocas Maniraguha, WhatsApp voice correspondence, 2022). Likewise, Richesse observes, "I would like my life to be writing and communicating my philosophy and my ideas to others" (Richesse Ndiritiro, online interview with Johanna, 2022). Kate and Marcia embodied certain skills to the graduates, and gaining access to those proficiencies was an important motivation that shaped the way the graduates valued, incorporated, and received feedback and editing suggestions during the process. To Gerawork, however, who had at times divergent ideas for his writing, the authority held by Kate and Marcia by virtue of holding the material and immaterial access academic conversations, shaped also what he felt could not be written in these particular projects.

Promoting and facilitating the academic publication of the GHDP researchers' work meant endorsing some of the epistemic conventions of (Anglophone) academia, which caused at times frictions and (productive)

tensions. To Gerawork, who values the "skills of writing especially related to storytelling and ethnographic research [...] not as an academic exercise but as a tool to tell truth and solve problems" (Gerawork Teferra, email correspondence, 2022), the time spent doing menial formatting and style edits, unremunerated and in unfavorable technological circumstances, was not always justifiable. Additionally, being embedded firmly in their research fields, some of the GHDP researchers had built close relationships with their interviewees and shared a stronger sense of connectedness to their struggles, stories, and experiences than to an abstract academic audience. This is evident in comments from Ismail, who wrote: "I am not sure when. But next time, I would love to dedicate a whole chapter about each feminist activist I knew during my experience with I Am She" (Ismail Alkhateeb, email correspondence, 2022). Editing Muna's work, Kate remembers receiving peer reviewers' "constant requests [that Muna] write her papers differently, with more [Muna] and less quotation. Her embeddedness in her field was almost something that had to be effaced in some way in order for her to become an authorial voice [in the academic sense]" (Kate Reed, email correspondence, 2022). Richesse, on the other hand, remembers struggling with the challenging task of writing with a dual audience in mind, the academic audience comprising "the UNHCR or there in the US or UK or in Germany" that requires certain contextualizations and theoretical conceptualizations, and the audience in his research field, "the Rwandan community, Burundian community living together in Rwanda, not only as a refugee, but also as a family" (Richesse Ndiritiro, online interview with Johanna, 2022).

This balancing act between a researcher's embeddedness in her respective fields (academic and non-academic) can take the shape of interpersonal relations in collaborative projects. A similar observation was made by Nimführ when collaborating with Buba, a refugee author in Malta: "my academic and Buba's non-academic background clashed [and there was a] lack of understanding on the part of Buba regarding the structure of the paper and the numerous revision phases" (Nimführ 2020: 32). As Nimführ highlights, Buba's remarks and similar ones made by the GHDP researchers address a fundamental point of tension in collaboration projects with community researchers. This is best articulated through Gerawork's notion of differences in "objectives" and "audiences" for whom to write. Thinking further with Nimführ, while collaborative knowledge production is often thought to do "border work" (von Unger 2014: 9f.) by dissolving the separation between science and society, for researchers such as Gerawork or Buba, it also works to reinstate, rather than

dissolve, this demarcation. Furthermore, having published his own research not only in *The Right to Research* and *Africa Today* (Teferra 2023; Teferra 2022), as well as in several co-authored pieces (Martin et al. 2018; Reed/Teferra 2022), the fact that some of these publications "may not be accessible beyond the academic and researchers circle because of publishers' and editors' financial interests" distinguishes, rather than brings together, science and society.

Mobilizing labor and resources within academic rooms proved a crucial condition for making collaboratively written works of research speak in the academic realm. The strategies we chose, however, also limited GHDP researchers. By facilitating academic publishing, we inevitably endorsed this particular form of knowledge, audience, epistemic logic, phrasings, and rules over others. Doing so both reified and resulted from the same power dynamics that structure the GHDP collaboration and underpin the wider global economy of knowledge production. This questions the extent to which the "emancipatory effects" of collaboration can be found in "the master's tools ([which] will never dismantle the master's house)" (Lorde 2007). Nevertheless, dismissing these efforts would be too easy. Following Audre Lorde's famous phrase is an often-overlooked sentence: "This fact is only threatening to those who still define the master's house as their only source of support" (Lorde 2007). Thinking further with Lorde means being attentive to the other, unexpected ways in which the GHDP collaboration may have been generative of unexpected "sources of support" or "opportunities" to the GHDP researchers as well as the professional academics involved in the collaboration. The GHDP researchers found different individual meanings in the collaboration. It is through the very conversations that we have with each other that the GHDP, as well as the co-writing initiatives, continue to evolve and take on new forms.

2.6   A way forward: Creating new rooms and welcoming epistemic diversity

Wrestling with mechanisms of exclusion in academia, the collaboration opened up opportunities for critical reflective conversation about experiences of researching, writing, and publishing polyphonic texts (Abdalla et al. 2021; Reed/Schenck 2023). In this sense, the collaboration brought "marginalized, different and alternative points of view" (Escobar 2007) in relation to the academic publishing industry into conversation with an academic audience interested in rethinking this very system. Co-authoring with a meta-reflective

objective provided a way to more explicitly link up the graduates' experiences navigating their relationships to their individual research fields throughout the publication process, with an academic audience interested in facilitating and decolonizing precisely this process. For Gerawork, for example, the limits and demands of academic writing made it difficult for his orientation to his research field to come through in his own research essays. On the other hand, in meta-reflective co-authored texts, the very polyphonicity of the text and the fact that disagreements could be made explicit "denaturalize[d] the researcher's voice as the sole authority of the knowledge produced" (Lugones/ Spelman 1983) and lent itself well to reflexive conversation, focused on process and experience and bringing together the voices of researchers who draw on different fields. On this, Kate observes: "It is much easier to understand something of Gera's perspective and relationship to his interviewees through the meta-reflections in the co-authored piece than it is in, e.g., his *Africa Today* essay" (Kate Reed, email correspondence, 2022). By using collaborative writing methods for a reflective purpose, we pluralized the field itself. Acknowledging that we each wrote from situated geographic and epistemic fields, we also shared a common research field in the form of the GHDP and our research collaborations. Concretely, digital conversations between co-authors, the shared Google documents, emails, and WhatsApp calls back and forth became our new field. This field was simultaneously a room where new conversations could take place. This in-between field/room was a mental and digital space to which we brought our relationships, our mutual trust in one another, and our knowledge about our strengths and weaknesses, as well as our technological and temporal limitations. We inhabited this digital space also as a by-product of setting out on our paths of co-writing a meta-reflective chapter about what we had been engaged in for about two years at the time. This new space expanded our practice as historians: the tools we used (in history, WhatsApp is not a common research tool) and the way we worked (history writing mostly consists of single author works, so collaboration is not something we are taught) were new for us. The final products we were striving towards, while published with reputable university presses and publishers, were also by their very nature pushing on the boundaries of historical scholarship.

Written co-authorship, then, was one step in a much longer process. It offered us the opportunity to reflect on the successes and accomplishments of the community researchers and the GHDP as a course. It also allowed us to bring into the open discussions about material and power imbalances and tensions that characterized the GHDP from its inception. Openly addressing these ten-

sions amongst our co-authors is a learning experience for all. Some things we can address (providing internet vouchers); others are beyond our reach (paywalls on secondary sources). Living with the unsolvable tensions and mediating them as best we can are important capacities to develop if we are to be able to move forward. One productive tension that emerged from our conversations is that to date, our formally co-authored work has been for largely academic audiences at the expense of focusing our attention on non-academic formats. Now that we have intervened in creating "history in the final instance" (Trouillot 2015: 25) it is perhaps time to address the emancipatory potential inherent in addressing non-academic audiences with historical research. As a first step in this new direction, we have shared a questionnaire with our team to collect ideas about the possible formats in which we can talk/write/share our research more broadly.

This is not to say that our collaborations have not had outcomes that go beyond academic publications: the *globalhistorydialogues.org* website does not have an explicitly academic audience in mind and the anthology, too, is written for an interested public. Nor is it the case that GHDP participants see no value in academic publishing. As Phocas notes, "I did research on the health field, the other [authors did it in culture], the other in refugees, so this book [*The Right to Research*, 2023] I said wow, we are going to make it and it is going to help. And I expected [the readers] to learn about different perspectives or people and they are going to love it" (Phocas Maniraguha, WhatsApp voice correspondence, 2022). The collaborative nature of the GHDP was also of value to participants. As Muna writes, "I got to learn about other topics that are as much important as mine and I believe what the other co-authors did was amazing" (Muna Omar, personal correspondence, 2022).

Understanding co-writing as a multi-stage process bringing together different fields and creating new rooms enables us to see transformations in how participants understand themselves in relation to the world as a constitutive part of the co-authoring process. Gerawork writes, "As I have been receiving dozens of comments when I was conducting research, I also now confidently give comments to students and [on] student-researchers' papers. On top of that, I also write independently and sometimes participate in conferences" (Gerawork Teferra, email correspondence, 2022). Richesse, similarly, believes that he has become more self-confident and capable of self-expression (Richesse Ndiritiro, online interview with Johanna, 2022). Teaching staff also experienced significant learning and growth as a result of the course and its ongoing collaborations. For Kate, for instance, teaching and

co-writing through the GHDP has been a formative experience in thinking about the complexities of engaged scholarship and university-community partnerships, as well as a crash course in academic publishing (Kate Reed, email correspondence, 2022).

2.7   Towards a conclusion

Feminist scholars such as Meera Sabaratnam (2011: 801) have called for "unsettling … where epistemic authority lies between 'researcher' and 'subject.'" In this chapter we have unsettled this division, just as we have shown that the traditional division between the field (as a site of extraction) and academia (as a site of interpretation and knowledge production) does not hold true for our co-writing initiatives. Rather, we have demonstrated that we form a new authorial collective as co-researchers, each participating from their own fields and united in the attempt to expand academic conversations. In this chapter, we have attempted to think through the scope and practicalities involved in co-authoring between people within and outside the academy, people living in their distinctive fields, people visiting the fields of the others, and people creating new fields of inquiry and interpretation in the interstitial spaces between traditional fields and academic rooms. We have argued that overcoming moments of silencing in historical knowledge production and diversifying research texts does not start or end with textual production itself. Rather, multiple forms of labor and resources enable the co-writing process, many of which remain hidden from the view of the reader of the eventual textual product. In the case of the GHDP, the first steps were setting up pedagogical structures to enable the sharing of tools and methodology through which learners from different walks of life would become researchers in their own right. This means, in turn, the production of relationships built on mutual trust, the teaching and practice of academic writing conventions and argumentative structures, the teaching and practice of source creation through oral history, and the facilitation of spaces in which to analyze research findings. The production of new historical narratives is built on these prior steps. To create "history in the final instance" the production of spaces and rooms where those narratives, and their narrators, are taken seriously is key. Secondly, in co-authoring for academic contexts, the role of mediators between the worlds of academic publishing and the worlds of community researchers was key in the GHDP. Success in publishing academically relied on collaboration with Kate and Marcia,

as professional academics embedded in networks that facilitated their access to publication opportunities and funding. Their training in speaking the expected academic language enabled them to navigate the conventions to negotiate between those conversant in academic conversations and the GHDP participants. This resulted in output that created conversations that contributed to shifting the academic rooms for which they were written.

Refugees, such as most of the co-authors of this project, are not in need of being "given a voice." Over the course of the collaboration project, however, it became clear to us that the cultures of knowledge production in academic conversation rooms favor—both implicitly and explicitly—certain ways of speaking and writing over others. This is a phenomenon that Achille Mbembe (2015) has referred to as "epistemic traditions" and historian Diana Jeater (2018) describes as the subtle modes through which scholars, particularly those from the African continent, are excluded from academic conversations. In other words, what is deemed to constitute academic texts shapes who is and who is not able to write and what they are able to say. This is reflected in the actual experience of co-writing. However much we, as professional academics, regarded ourselves as facilitating the entry of the community researchers' narratives into academic and public conversations, that facilitation always depended on both an unequal power relationship between ourselves and participants, and our willingness to nudge, edit, and shape their work to fit academic conventions (even if the results expand these very conventions). It is also reflected in the scarcity of spaces available to researchers trying to publish works that are written by a multitude of voices, rather than a single joint voice. Calls for inclusion of community researchers, in other words, often do not consider the ways in which material differences and other traditions of knowledge creation and forms of storytelling shape outputs. The negotiations involved in moving knowledge produced by community researchers into the spaces of professional academia are often rendered invisible to the reader of the final written product. Calls for collaboration of mixed author teams tend to downplay the power vested in those professional academics who are trained to think, write, and speak in accordance with the epistemic traditions of mainstream academia. How to overcome the gate-keeper role of professional academic publishing in both the research and publishing process is a structural discussion concerning an entire industry of knowledge production. Access to academic publishing remains a central inequality in any co-writing project, not least given an economy of academic knowledge production in which authors are paid little, if at all, for their research unless

they hold university positions, external grants, or other sources of income that are unequally accessible to (encamped) refugees and displaced people.

We do not wish to dismiss calls for inclusion of voices from the field out of hand; after all, we continue to engage with the GHDP and our co-authored projects. We hope to have shown all participating authors come to the co-writing process from their fields; in addition, the co-writing process becomes a shared field in itself. Bringing the different fields together allows for entering into existing academic rooms and expanding the conversations that take place therein. By offering an expanded understanding of co-authorship that includes the diverse forms of labor and relationality discussed here, we also hope to de-center the text as the locus of concern, focusing also on questions of process. What emerges from processes of co-authorship beyond words on a page? What processes are required for co-authorship to take place at all? Attention to process suggests that the temporalities of co-authoring matter. While a text may be static, its creation and reception are anything but. Much as the essays, chapters, and articles discussed here went through round after round of revision, so, too, have (and will) our processes of co-authorship writ large. To return to Lorde, neither the dismantling of the master's house, nor the construction of new sources of support, will happen overnight. They will require time, personal commitment from everyone involved, material and immaterial resources, and epistemic shifts. Co-authoring can engage all of these issues, albeit always in fraught relation with existing power structures and hierarchies. But texts can only do so much: as Táíwò (2020) writes, we face also the task of building new rooms, new houses, new ways of being.

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