ACCOUNTS OF A CRITICAL ARTEFACTS APPROACH TO DESIGN ANTHROPOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to contribute to a discussion of what design anthropology brings to the deployment of critical modes of engagement and artefacts in design. And, conversely, discuss how this specific framing of design anthropology may add to its disciplinary potential. I propose to do this by discussing how design provocations and critical artefacts, as transitional devices, and at different stages in a design process, can evoke a critical stance or render intrinsic controversies visible, while turning the artefacts into objects of mediation between heterogeneous assemblages of stakeholders, contexts and concerns.

By framing design anthropology within a distinctly critical approach to design, this paper furthermore brings into question the value of ethnographic inquiry as merely implications *for* design, and goes on to suggest a richer and more interventionist application of anthropology with specific relevance for the scaffolding and articulation of a critical stance *in* design.

INTRODUCTION

The intension of this paper is to tread pathways through the emergent field of design anthropology to point out a position from which to launch a critical stance in design. Following Bruno Latour's seminal article: "Why has critique run out of steam?" I claim that the interstices between design and anthropology[1] produces a new territory for critical and speculative practices within design. For the time being this might be a 'terrain vague'[2] of potentially critical practices. Thus, it is the aim of this paper to delineate propositions on what might characterize such practices and how they might relate to other critical practices in design.

In keeping with the developing state of the field, a broad definition of design anthropology could be that suggested in the following quote:

> Design anthropology tries to combine making sense of what is there with remaking what is there into something new (Sperschneider et. al 2001)

Design anthropology, in this understanding, is related to what Jacob Buur, following Christopher Frayling, has divided into anthropology *with* design as opposed to *of* or *for* design. A more fitting depiction of the relation between the two fields would be to describe it as a 'piecing together', or bricolage of its own

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1 The focus in this article is on design anthropology, as but one example of an articulated interest in design coming from the social sciences. It should however be pointed out, that this article also draws inspiration from other areas of the social sciences, most notably STS.

2 The idea of a 'terrain vague' denotes a vacant piece of lands in urban zones; abandoned areas, obsolete and unproductive pockets of space without specific functions or limits. The notion, here admittedly in a more metaphorical sense, contains both the lack of something as well as the potential for something new – in this case a different kind of criticism.

(Sperschneider et. al 2001). Thus emphasizing 'a bringing together' or mutual exchange of tools, theories and methodologies with respect to the uniqueness and complexities of a specific and dynamic situation, and the double perspective of making sense of and remaking what *is* into something new.

This definition of design anthropology also brings to mind a central schism in design between tradition and transcendence (Ehn 1988: 129). It is tempting to align ethnographic accounts solely with a more profound understanding of tradition and existing practices, while leaving the task of transcending in the sense of going beyond the present by exploring and giving form to possible futures to design. Inhere lies a risk of widening the gab by reifying stereotypical conceptions of the respective disciplines. But as design can be deployed to either sustain or break traditions, this paper suggests that ethnographical practices in a similar fashion can make a contribution to traversing existing boundaries by bringing issues of concern to light and pointing out alternative realities.

Central to the interest in design anthropology taken here, is that the most promising intersection between design and anthropology is to be found in the possibility of design as a *problem-setting* practice. (Halse 2008: 19).[3] It is arguably a limited area of design that concerns itself with problem-setting as opposed to finding optimal solutions to a priori articulated design problems. But it is, never the less, in this limited area that we find the most suitable grounds for the explorations of a critical stance in design.

The first part of the paper briefly outlines orientations within the field of design anthropology based on a conception of anthropology as an interventionist practice.

In the middle sections of the paper the specific implications for design understood as a critical practice is examined, by explicating and discussing different modes of critical engagement.

The third part of the paper contains an analysis of how the use of ethnographic accounts and data can function as design provocations and thus contribute to the insertion of a critical stance at different stages of a design process. This is exemplified by projects conducted by a team of design researchers from the SPIRE centre, University of Southern Denmark, described and analysed by Jacob Buur and Larisa Sitorus.

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3 It is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt to draw up a full description of design anthropology as an emergent field. For a thorough a thought-provoking account of the issues that needs to be addressed to bring together design and anthropology see the dissertation by Joachim Halse: Design Anthropology: Borderland Experiments with Participation, Performance and Situated Intervention (2008).

Lastly, this perspective is further elaborated in relation to 'a critical artefact methodology' (Bowen: 2009) as an ample attempt to stratify the critical firmly within the bounds of a participatory design process.

ORIENTATIONS WITHIN THE FIELD OF DESIGN ANTHROPOLOGY

It has been suggested that anthropology has something more to offer then ethnographic methods already widely utilized in design practices and research. That anthropological thinking provides means by which to "recast assumptions and processes through conceptual juxtapositions and ethnographic alternatives" (Leach 2010b). This proposition offers a notion of anthropology as a creative discipline that can actively move between positions of description and actions (Gunn 2010).

A case often cited to exemplify the qualities of fieldwork is the project done by anthropologist Susan Squiers on breakfast habits in American families. In contrary to initial marked analysis with focus groups where people spoke of the importance of eating breakfast, a subsequent field studies showed how people were not actually hungry and most families did not have time to sit down and eat breakfast. This ethnographic insight led to the development of a new type of product, 'Go-Gurt'; a nutritious dairy-product in a tube, to be eaten on-the-go (Squires 2002). What I find peculiar about this example is two things: First, the apparent seriality of the process and how one insight about the eating habits, seemingly frictionless, is substituted by another and finally resolved in a product that fully answers the quest for the most profitable product. But what about the importance of social interaction and rituals associated with eating together as a family?

Second, I find it even more interesting that this example is brought to the fore as a successful example of anthropology in the service of design; an anthropology for design (Vangkilde & Jöhncke 2010).

What seems to be absent here is interpretations of the flow of social discourses and perhaps more importantly moments of critical reflections folded into the different layers of knowledge (marked analysis, field studies) and actions (design proposal). There is, as pointed out by Franqoise Brun-Cottan, a "risk in helping industry commodity results of ethnographic studies into goods and services" (Franqoise Brun-Cottan in Cefkin 2009: 159). The risk is evident in trying to accommodate a multitude of sometimes conflicting interests and agendas. The trustworthiness of the relationship with participants may be jeopardized by the way the recipients of ethnographic data (designers, companies, agencies) choose to make use of it. A crucial aspect of the ethnographers work thus becomes translations and co-constructions of corresponding frames of interpretation between different agents and conflicting interests and relations of power.

My interest in this paper is not as much with explicating the potential ethical risks in doing corporate or design

ethnography. In a somewhat more constructive vein, it is interesting to conceive of design anthropology as an interventionist practice. What if the anthropologist through field studies can make information available (Latour 2005, Leach 2010a) and offer interpretations that addresses not only the different actors individually, but collectively, and thus intervene directly into the collective social reality by making differences apparent and perhaps conjuring up new possibilities. In the last part of the paper we will return to an example of how ethnographic knowledge can produce difference when reinserted into the design process as provocations.

Suggesting to look at anthropology as an interventionist practice in relation to design, brings into question the affinity to a action oriented approach to design, which has influenced the early Scandinavian PD tradition. While action research more recently has been taking up by critical ethnography (Madison 2005) – the explicit political motivation is somewhat different from the ethos of the interventionist practice.

What is foregrounded here is rather the call made by proponents of what has been termed 'the critic turn' in anthropology "away from the slow reliance upon pre-existing explanatory models and towards a presentist orientation that emphasizes connections, nodes and experimentation" (Hunt in Clarke: 2010: 38). In this reorientation design present a significant challenge in that it is not only contemporary and present, but also directed towards the future. The contributions made by ethnographic engagement in this process, will thus have a direct effect on the design outcome – and can accordingly no longer claim to be merely preoccupied with the production of anthropological knowledge according to established categories

DESIGN AS CRITICAL PRACTICE.

If we take design to be a modern enterprise in the cross field between technology and art (Flusser: 1993) and imbedded in systems of mass production and distribution between culture and capital (Mazé and Redström 2007), the following quote can be said to express a foundational difference between production design and related disciplines, such as architecture and art:

> Because product design is thoroughly integrated in capitalist production, it is bereft of an independent critical tradition on which to base an alternative (Thackara, 1988: 21).

If this, essentially modernist, tradition of design still holds true in a vast majority of design practices today, critical cultures within design has developed in a number of different contexts since the 1960s. On of the most prevailing examples in the last decade is what is often labelled as *critical design*. More a position or attitude within design than a methodology, critical design uses speculative design proposal to challenges preconceptions and raise questions an debates about complicated issues (Dunne & Raby). Critical design

borrows heavily from art in terms of the strategies it employs. As a modus of design research this approach has been described as *Gallery* (Koskinen et. al 2009); a mode of design experimentation, opposed to the strategies based on, respectively the natural (Lab) and social (Field) sciences: "This format implies that the design experiment, be it a model, a prototype, or a performance, is the final presentation of the work and its process" (Koskinen et. al 2009: 16 (35)). According to Dunne, the design artefacts on display become a "form of social research to integrate aesthetic experience with everyday life through 'conceptual products'" (Dunne 1999: 29). With a few exceptions, one of which I shall return to shortly, it could be contested, that critical design is engaged directly with the experiences of everyday use. And by the same token it should be questioned what practices of use is afforded by the critical artefacts and the highly controlled spaces in which they are displayed. The use of the products is tried out in the imagination of the visitor, or "conceptual consumers" (Dunne, 1999: 78). What is absent in this equation is the impact of complicated and dynamic real life situations and unpredictable flows of social discourse. The lack of situated interaction has substituted the messiness of the users own authentic life worlds with that of a forceful and thought-provoking statement in a form imitating the traditional artwork on display.

One exception to this formula is the project PLACEBO in which the conceptual design is taking beyond the Gallery by placing a series of designed artefacts in the homes of people as means to investigate the experiences of living amidst electromagnetic fields in their homes.

Figure 1: The "Placebo Project" (2001) consists of a series of eight prototypes devised to investigate peoples' attitudes to and experiences of electromagnetic fields in their homes. Made by Anthony Dunne and Riona Raby. Photo: Jason Evans.

The series of artefacts in project are not the end result of the investigation in it self, but rather means by which the design investigation is performed. Only in the encounter with real people in everyday life situations and places, is the speculative functionality of the objects realized to the full by questioning there relationship to the electromagnetic fields and making visible, that which has hitherto been invisible.

I will return to the question of what characterizes this type of design artefacts. For now it suffice to say, that these objects maintain openness for interpretations, beyond the control of the designer. In broader terms, this entails a type of design practice that "shifts from deciding on and communicating an interpretation to supporting and intervening in the processes of designer, system, user, and community meaning-making" (Sengers and Gaver in Redstöm 2008: 412).

As pointed out by Redström (2008: 416) "(…) acts of defining use through use (as opposed to the definition of use through design) essentially happens after design", or as it is mostly the case in user-centred design, as instantiations of an iterative design process, bringing the design object successively closer to a finished product. The artefacts of the PLACEBO project differ in this respect, since they are finished, as 'thing-design' (Redström 2008: 412), at the very beginning of the process. Paradoxically, it is the fixed form but indeterminate function that makes the artefacts perform as instigators of interpretations and reflections among the users.

In lieu of the initial definition of design anthropology, combining sense making and remaking what is there into new things (Sperschneider et. al 2001), the PLACEBO project employs a sequential and linear approach, where the dual faculties, that of designer and ethnographer, can be distinguished and aligned with the different stages of the process[4]. What sets this project apart from the more general use of ethnography in design is the order and use of the different faculties. Instead of field studies utilized as a tool for data collection, it is the designed artefact that provides the means for an intervention into reality. The end result, apart from putting the project on display in terms of Gallery[5], becomes that of the subsequent interviews with the people who had adopted and lived with the artefacts in the homes.

I will return to a number of strategies that utilize different forms of design provocations as an intrinsic critical stance in user-oriented design processes, but before doing so, the next section outlines a comparative categorization of different types of critical engagement in design.

MODES OF CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT

We have in the previous section discussed critical engagement as a specific design practice, and thus a position in design employing a specific set of designerly means. In a recent paper, Carl DiSalvo (2009) has devised a useful categorization of these means into two modes of engagement, namely *projection* and *tracing*. In the following I will extrapolate the notions of projection and *mapping* (closely related to Disalvo's notion of tracing)[6] as two distinctively different approaches to what the critical entails.

PROJECTION

Projection refers to the "representation of a possible set of future consequences associated with an issue" (Disalvo 52: 2009). Projections are based on knowledge propositions and give an indication of a possible direction and outcome of the future development of an event or issue. The form of projection in design is traditionally practiced through the use of scenarios. But what sets the critical use of scenarios apart is, that the interest lies with the possible consequences and not with the causes of actions with which the scenarios can become materialized (Ibid.) This difference can be summarized as the distinction between *predictive* and *prescriptive* scenarios (Disalvo 2009, Margolin 2007). Where the prescriptive envisage scenarios that emphasize how to get to the desired future situations, predictive scenarios, on the other hand, make suggestions as to that might happen.

As a specific style of future predictions critical design scenarios, in the tradition of Dunne and Raby, are simultaneously extrapolating and projecting state of the art scientific research (Disalvo 52: 2009) and embodying a certain mood best described as *Noir*[7]. In other word, the style of scenarios often, if not always, foretells a slightly disturbing, but for the same reason captivating, fiction – invoking what Dunne & Raby elsewhere has described as *complicated pleasures*[8]. To invoke a response critical design is utilizing highly elaborated design skills and formats (models, photos, video) in creating visually stunning representations, that

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[4] The distinction proposed here is not grounded in considerations of the disciplines involved in the actual design process, and merely an appraisal of the project as example. In fact Dunne and Raby, makes it quite clear that the project in not bound to any kind of academic disciplines and scientific rigor: "although aware of ethnographic and anthropological methodologies, we chose to develop a more informal process in this case" (Dunne and Raby, 2001: 75). It is sense this approach challenges clear disciplinary dichotomies, and thus can be seen as the designer becoming ethnographer. I will, however maintain that collected ethnographic data (interview with informants) is subjugated to anthropological interpretations.

[5] The project is thoroughly described and documented in the book Design Noir, by Dunne & Raby. The notion of Gallery (Koskinen et. al 2009: 16), in this respect, is extended to the form of a book.

[6] Though mapping and tracing might be seen as descriptions of quite similar activities – the use of mapping here, is due to its stronger emphasis of some or other form of representation. This is important, since it inserts a difference in the sense of a dichotomy between map and territory; simultaneously movement (tracing) of the unfolding events and representation of the same on a different strata (e.g. as map, account, mock-up etc.). It is through this 'making differences in action', that a space of resistance and reflection can be established.

[7] The notion Noir is described in the book Design Noir (2001) with a deliberate reference to the Film Noir genre that, according to Dunne and Raby, emphasizes the existential moments in life. The notion of Design Noir points to design objects that dramatize dilemmas and let us enjoy the wickedness of the embedded values (Dunne & Raby: 2001)

[8] Complicated pleasures, in a notion Dunne and Raby adapts from English novelist Martin Amis, to describe the confliction emotion brought to the fore by experience that are equally found to be repulsive and fascinating, e.g. genres as horror.

make the future depicted seem plausible precisely because the aesthetic (and stylistic) choices appeal to a contemporary sensitivity in design.

An example of this style of future projection in evident in the project by James Auger and Jimmy Loizeau entitled "Carnivorous Domestic Entertainment Robots" (see fig. 2). The project explores how a speculative rearrangement of robotic forms and functionality, in a domestic setting, can challenge our common perceptions of robots. The project consists of a series of five prototypes developed around an existing technology of biodegradable full cells and has deliberately been styled in a "contemporary fashionable design aesthetic"[9].
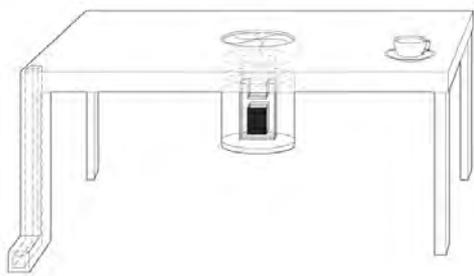

Figure 2: "Mousetrap coffee table robot" (2009). The prototype combines a microbial fuel cell that powers an iris through which to trap mice that have crawled unto the coffee through a hollow leg in search of food. It is one of five prototypes in the "Carnivorous Domestic Entertainment Robots" project made by James Auger and Jimmy Loizeau. Engineered by Alex Zivanovic.

In contrast to the exception described by the PLACEBO project, in the previous section, this project in not concerned with the real life experience of living with the robots it depicts or other kinds of mundane encounters. The focus in instead directed towards the dispersion through various media channels, in order to become noticed and generate debate. In this respect the project exemplifies the distribution of Gallery to various media platforms. But more importantly, the project points to the discursive nature of critical design as a prominent style of predictive projections that operates by differentiating its vision of the future from the mainstream, and thus obtaining a position from which to launch a critique.

MAPPING

Where critical design, as we have just seen, can be seen as related to the hegemonic traditions of critical theory, where the subject matter of interest is subjugated to critique through analysis produced from a distanced and privileged position, others have argued that these forms of critique "are incapable of taking the complexity of real objects seriously" (Ward et al. 2009: 2). For Latour, and other proponents of STS, another critical position can be located in the empirical attention to issues of

concern amidst a world of complex and irreductable realities (Latour: 2004).

Mapping, as a mode of critical engagement, can be seen as a designerly ways of articulating the matters of concern surrounding an issue, by drawing up an indiscriminating representation of the objects, people and events that influence the becoming of the issue over time. This implies a temporal difference in which mapping brings the past into the present, whereas projection brings visions of the future to life in the present.

Following the British design researcher Alex Wilkie, the mapping of controversies in and around an issue of concern, has a number of things to offer design: First, controversy can provide relevant, and perhaps previously concealed, topics of relevance for design. Second, controversies can open new perspectives on the people and things involved in a matter of concern. Third, the tracing of the different constituents of a controversial issue, can help to reveal how the paths to a future outcome is up for negotiation in the present, and thus still open to contestation and scrutiny through design proposals.

In regard to the initial, if brief, working definition of design anthropology, mapping (with an emphasis of mapping as the active process of map-making, i.e. the becoming of the map rather that the finished map in it self) constitutes a stage for *problem-setting*. The representations of problems and controversies surrounding an issue, in turn, produce new vantage points for subsequent design interventions.

As a concrete instantiation of mapping as critical engagement, Alex Wilkie has devised a workshop concept utilizing information collected from newspaper articles pertaining to a controversial issue.

In the fall of 2010 a workshop (see fig. 3) following this format was carried out as part of a course in design anthropology with students from The Danish Design School and Institute of Anthropology at the University of Copenhagen.

Figure 3: Beside newspapers, the mapping was carried out with conventional workshop means, e.g. drawings, text fragments and Post-It notes.

The workshop yielded some interesting results in terms of new ideas for design interventions. But moreover the workshop protocol and limited time span forced the two groups of students into a constructive meddling of anthropological and designerly faculties.

What characterise the two above-mentioned modes of critical engagement is that they both operate at a discursive level, which give prominence to more or less abstracted representations of reality. In the following section we will take a look at how an ethnographic approaches, more firmly grounded in reality, can contribute to a critical stance in a design process.

PROVOTYPING

As pointed out in the paper "Ethnography as Design Provocation" (Buur, et al. 2007), ethnography utilized as a tool for data collection and separated from the design process, limits the potential for challenging inherent assumptions in the conventional problem-solution causality of a design process (Anderson, in Buur, et al. 2007). In four design encounters (workshops) analyzed by Buur, et.al, ethnographic material based on field observations (video, transcripts of observed work practice, etc.) from two different projects were presented as different (but internally related) instantiations of design provocations:

1: ANALYSIS OF MEETING DIALOG

Recording and analyzing dialog from a meeting between groups of stakeholders in order to identify divergent temporal agendas, e.g. design requirements based on observation vs. future scenarios where technological advances makes experiences from a current practice redundant.

2: PRODUCT MOCK-UP

Building a product mock-up based on a design idea, in which the central concept specifically addresses the discrepancy identified in the previous step, and presenting the mock-up, along with other design concepts, for a mixed group of stakeholders. The mock-up provokes a discussion between groups of stakeholders, with the designers acing as facilitators.

3: USE OF ETHNOGRAPHIC VIDEO MATERIAL

Ethnographic material in the form of video is presented to the participants of a workshop with the intent of staging a provocation. In groups, the participants are asked to draw up a scenario that identifies possible problems and solutions pertaining to the general theme of the workshop. In the following plenary discussion the scenarios are used to stage different positions among the participants.

4: ON-SITE MANIPULATION OF MUCK-UP

Another example of using design mock-ups to challenge preconceptions is a workshop where end-users (technicians) are playing with a tangible object in order to test how a design concept adheres to their future needs. The physical mock-up subsequently forces concept providers (engineers) to reconsider their software solutions in lieu of the technicians' bodily experiences.

The four examples show a rich potential for making use of ethnographic material at various stages of a design process. The most noticeable distinction between different strategies at work here is firstly, the reification of the ethnographical material into 'mock-ups as provocations' (Buur, et al. 2007) as evident in example 2 and 4. And secondly, the intentional reworking of data into ethnographic objects (videos, storyboards) followed be the scripted narrative of using these objects to develop discrete positions among the workshop participants, and stabilizing the subsequent discussion by means of the shared objects, example 3.

The discrepancy encountered in example 1 is similar to competing agendas found in the distinction between the notions of *prototyping* and *provotyping* provided by Preben Mogensen (1992):

Prototypes are "directed towards the future" and provides few concepts and techniques for understanding and handling the collective aspects (…) of current practice" (Mogensen 1992: 6).

Provotyping, by contrast, is concerned as much with the design of a new practices as design of new solutions, by "provoking discrepancies in the concrete, everyday practice to call forth what is usually taken for granted" (Mogensen 1992: 22).

While I tend to agree with the (cautious) definition of example 2 and 4 as provotypes (Buur, et al. 2007), I am curious as to why the quite obvious difference in agendas demonstrated, for example, by comparing the difference between prototype and provotype, has not found more substantial bearings with designers. Is seems that the 'making visible' of intrinsic power relations in a design process, has a blind spot when it comes to the agency with which designers themselves enters the scene.

In this section we have until now seen examples of how design provocations and provotypes can be put to use as an integral part of ethnographically informed design processes, and thus breaking away from the reduction of ethnography as a mere toolbox of methods for extracting data (Dourish 2006: 3).

A CRITICAL ARTEFACT METHODOLOGY

Simon Bowen (2009) has, in a similar vain, suggested what he calls 'a critical artefact methodology'. Based on the proposition of critical design, a critical artefact methodology supports a more instrumental use of critical artefacts in participatory design processes. As a concretization of critical theory in general, the function of critical artefacts is to 'emancipate' the designer as well as stakeholders by confronting them with a critique that lies outside their initial understanding and affords what Bowen calls a "synthetic social situation" (Bowen

2009: 80). This, in turn, provokes stakeholders to engage with the artefacts and "reflect on the limitations of their current understanding that consequently broadens their understanding" (Bowen 2009: 181).

In comparison to critical design as a mode of descriptive projection, this approach is more akin to a prescriptive projection understood as a means to a very specific end. That is; critical design operationalized as methodological component in a prolonged design process, rather than a discursive position from which to produce different interpretations and critical reflections. The end goal here is to design products better suited to the needs of the users.

A critical artefact methodology, shares an affinity with the ethnographical informed design provocations by focusing on the design encounter between designer and stakeholder and as part of a wider design process leading to improved design results. What sets the two approaches apart is that a critical artefact methodology put its emphasis on a 'design-led' process whereby the designer is observer, participant and instigator of the process, all at the same time:

> The 'social science' approach implies a view that 'better' products are designed in response to an understanding of stakeholders' existing needs. The 'design-led' approach extends this and recognizes that 'better' products might also be designed in response to stakeholders' future or latent needs (Bowen 2009: 81)

This criticism of ethnographic methods is based on the notion that a social science approach, with a step-by-step process of accurate descriptions and analysis, may yield interesting accounts of existing conditions, but not necessarily of future ones. The data and analysis resulting from this work is made available as rich 'implications' for design (Dourish 2006), but does not bridge the gap between the present and the future.

To circumvent this stalemate Bowen instead proposes to substitute the linearity of the step-by-step approach by the introduction of (critical) artefacts through which to create synthetic social situation (for instance in a workshop setting) and provoke stakeholders to new insights.

While this approach undoubtedly holds great potential it also places the initiative exclusively on the designer as the one both participating in and observing the unfolding social situation and observer.

With regard to the focus on the intersection between design and anthropology taken in this paper, this approach does not leave much leeway for a reinsertion of ethnographic material in the unfolding design process. More over, it rejects the potential of a wider anthropological register of knowledge to inform the current as well the future situations, in favour of "designers' visionary ability (…) to imagine (and

synthesise) solutions which stakeholders cannot (yet) recognise as relevant to their needs" (Bowen 2009: 31).

An underlying challenge encountered when attempting to bring together anthropology and design in novel ways is fundamentally related to different temporalities assigned to the two faculties, i.e. designers are preoccupied with the future, by 'making existing situations into preferred ones', to quote Herbert Simon, while anthropologists are studying the present in light of the past.

A crucial feat for design anthropology is to challenges this assumption, as it is eloquently done in the following excerpt from "Poor Theory - Notes towards a manifesto"[10]. I believe the description could apply aptly to design anthropology as well:

> Poor theory is conditioned by reflexive imbrication with probable pasts and arguments with/about possible futures, and thus comes to see the present, too, as heterotemporal.

In summery, a number of provocative methods and concepts, as discussed in the previous sections, provide exemplars of ways to integrate ethnographical fieldwork and (to some extend) anthropological reflections as means of questioning that, which is taken for granted in a design process. This challenges a more traditional conception of ethnography in design as purely methodological, and only employed to substantiate 'implications for design' (Dourish 2006). By the same token designerly methods, such as the a critical artefact methodology, can be criticized for rejecting the analytical and interpretive potential anthropology has to offer in understanding the present as well as future social situations.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have suggested that critical artefacts, provotypes and other types of design provocations enable a mediation and reinsertion of ethnographic accounts and anthropological knowledge of a much broader scope into a design process. And furthermore, that critical design of this kind, deployed at different stages of the design process, would enable a transgression of the linearity by which ethnographical materials traditionally has been utilized as mere implications *for* design. As we have seen in the different strategies for making use of design provocations (Buur, et al.), ethnographic material, through which the provocations are staged, already incorporate layers of ethnographic analysis and ideology.

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[10] The notion of 'Poor Theory' is conceived as part of an ongoing research project at the "he Critical Theory Institute (CTI), University of California Irvine. It is difficult to give a concise definition of Poor Theory, as it is precisely the playful, open-ended and explorative nature of the 'notes towards a manifesto' to present a collection of , tentative descriptions, but avoiding a clear-cut definition.

What differentiates the discursive modes of critical engagement, principally distinguished as modes of projection and mapping, from the examples of provotypes and critical artefacts outlined above, can be conceptualized, respectively, as a slightly altered conception of the notions *outside-in* and *inside-out* proposed by Mazé and Redström (2007). Outside-in, is here understood as a position from where to raise questions and challenge inherent assumptions through critical design proposals, artefacts and scenarios.

Inside-out, by contrast, is a process firmly based in the midst of the continually unfolding encounters between design and anthropology and functioning as a mediator between the different practices, actors, knowledge regimes and realities involved in a design process.

As proposed with the notion of *heterotemporal*, an underlying concern with the further development of design anthropology is to elaborate a more profound understanding of the complex interweaving of temporalities at work when the disciplines mergers. With regards to the critical perspective taking in this paper, one can argue that a central outcome in this respect is the production of multiple and competing realties, that criss-crosses the boundaries between 'possible futures' and 'probable pasts' to make visible what is emerging in the present.

In short, the primary aim of this paper has been to seek out exemplars of the strategy her, provisionally labeled inside-out, that explicitly makes anthropological knowledge, i.e. theoretical apparatus, analytical methods, modes of critical interpretation and reflection, available for a collective dialog of the design process by means of various forms of critical design.

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