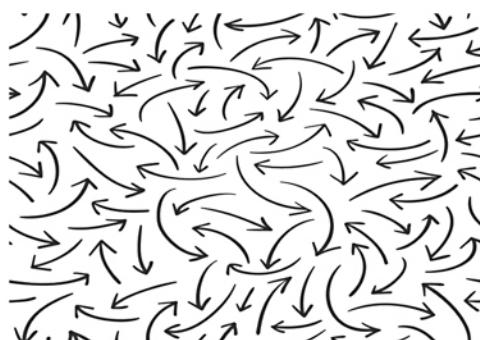
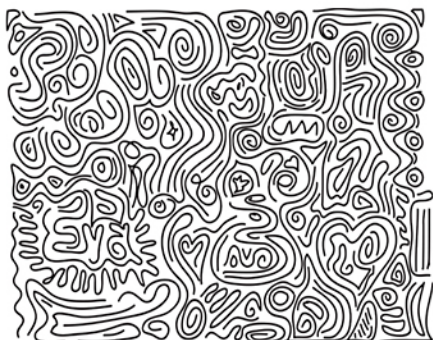
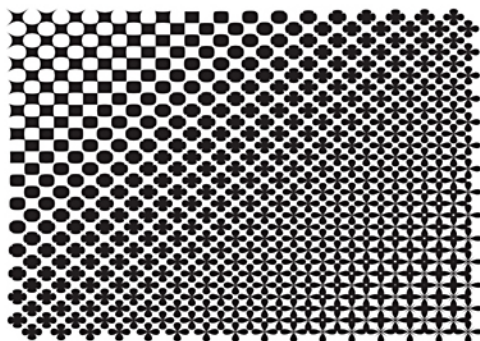
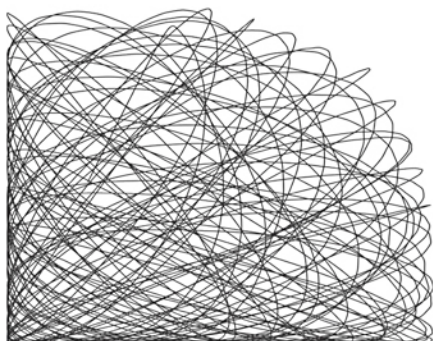


Qualitative Research

Challenging the Orthodoxies
in Standard Academic Discourse(s)



Edited by

**Sandra G. Kouritzin • Nathalie A. C. Piquemal
Renee Norman**

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

“I commend and celebrate the editors and authors for a remarkable book that engages the reader’s imagination, heart, mind, spirit, and body. Out of creative and courageous commitments to challenging orthodoxies by living and writing research that is personal, political, and poetic, these scholars invite the kind of vigorous dialogue that will continue to promote creative possibilities for inquiry in the social sciences.”

Carl Leggo, University of British Columbia, From the Foreword

Evocative and provocative, this book presents the points of view of scholars in the social sciences who used non-standard methods or writing practices to challenge the “research-as-usual” paradigm in the academy, while at the same time meeting the demands of quality and rigor set by their university examining committees and ethical review boards. The intent is to encourage new researchers who are also considering such a path. The authors discuss their lived personal experiences within and against traditional academic research and writing traditions, as well as their struggles and eventual successes. Chapters are written in dramatic form, in dialogue, in story, and include poetry, vignettes, testimonials and autobiographical accounts. Collectively, they form a unique, distinctive situated polyphonic case study of research in the social sciences from several perspectives, challenging the orthodoxies.

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Renee Norman is Professor in the Teacher Education Program at the University of the Fraser Valley.

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This book is dedicated to all the graduate students and academics who, by choosing to engage in non-standard research, have chosen a path that might generate uncertainty, vulnerability, tension and ambiguity as much as it might generate positive personal, academic and social change. And to the memory of Valerie Chapman, who also challenged the orthodoxies.

Contents

Foreword: Forward Researching CARL LEGGO	ix
Preface	xv
Acknowledgments	xix
1 Introduction: Pivotal Moments SANDRA G. KOURITZIN, NATHALIE A. C. PIQUEMAL, AND RENEE NORMAN	1

Part I

The Doctoral Journey: Reflections on Disruptions and Interruptions

2 Finding the Stories, Telling the Story: Narrative in the Academy MARION CROOK	13
3 Collaborative Inquiry as Illuminated Manuscript MICHELLE FORREST, MIRIAM COOLEY, AND LINDA WHEELDON	27
4 Entangled Lives: Inquiring into the Negotiation of Relational Stories to Live By in Doctoral Studies and Research JANICE HUBER AND KAREN KEATS WHELAN	45
5 The Chaucerian Dissertation Model That “Got Away” SANDRA G. KOURITZIN	67
6 Transcendence: The Journey from Hard Data into Artistic Depiction—Theatre as Representation MATTHEW J. MEYER	83
7 Afternoon Tea at Su’s: Participant Voice and Community in Critical Feminist Ethnography SUHANTHIE MOTHA	103

viii • Contents

8	Altered Landscapes: Not the End of the Journey RENEE NORMAN	121
9	Whose Story Is It Anyway? NATHALIE A. C. PIQUEMAL AND NORMAN ALLEN	135
10	Drinking U.S. Water: Flowing Narratives of a Traveling Korean Woman Researcher in U.S. Higher Education JEONG-EUN RHEE	151
11	Integrated Inquiry: Transforming Multiple Research Perspectives BERNARD W. ANDREWS	169

Part II

After the Journey: Reflections on the Afterlife of Research

12	Re-membering Michael: Emotionality, Vulnerability, and the Research Process KARYN COOPER	183
13	Questioning as a Pedagogical Tool in Teaching and Research KARYN COOPER AND SUSAN LONDON MCNAB	199
14	Who's Afraid of Virginia's Daughters? Writing, Research, and Relations ERIKA HASEBE-LUDT	217
15	Teaching and Learning Qualitative Research: Educational Space as a Fluid LYUBOV LAROCHE AND WOLFF-MICHAEL ROTH	229
16	Narrative Inquiry and the Discovery of Self within the Academy YOLANDA M. WATTSJOHNSON	247
17	Getting Away With "It" WANDA HURREN	263
18	Conclusion: Valediction, Requiem, and Invocation for Research(ers) SANDRA G. KOURITZIN, NATHALIE A. C. PIQUEMAL, AND RENEE NORMAN	267

	Index	269
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Foreword: Forward Researching

CARL LEGGO

I commend and celebrate the editors and authors of *Qualitative Research: Challenging the Orthodoxies in Standard Academic Discourse(s)* for a remarkable book that engages the reader's imagination, heart, mind, spirit, and body. Out of creative and courageous commitments to challenging orthodoxies by living and writing research that is personal, political, and poetic, these scholars invite the kind of vigorous dialogue that will continue to promote creative possibilities for inquiry in the social sciences. This book represents a vital, organic, and holistic engagement with experience, full of breath and inspiration. Ronald J. Pelias (2004) calls for "a scholarship that fosters connections, opens spaces for dialogue, heals" (p. 2). I know no book that responds to this need more eloquently and compellingly than this one. I especially commend the editors for their enthusiastic commitment to collective truth-seeking, and in this spirit I offer the following ruminations as contributions to an expanding network of dialogical, even ecological, connections.

In *Lost in the Land of Oz: The Search for Identity and Community in American Life*, Madonna Kolbenschlag (1988) observes, "we know that social institutions like the Church, the corporation, the local schools, exist to enable human flourishing, but we experience deprivation within them" (p. 8). She proposes that "the refusal to relate is the sin of our times: the refusal to recognize and respect another's existence; the refusal to speak, to negotiate; the refusal to confront; the refusal to touch one another and cherish the flesh of the 'other'" (p. 41). As Kolbenschlag declares, "the challenge to both men and women is to invent new myths. People are changed, not by intellectual convictions or ethical urgings, but by transformed imaginations. We must begin to live out of new myths" (p. 179). Like Kolbenschlag, the authors called together by Kouritzin, Norman, and Piquemal seek research that acknowledges how "story is a search for community" (Baldwin, 2005, p. 224).

These scholars are an integral part of a vital and energetic circle of researchers and educators who are seeking to spell out scholarly and creative connections among the academic discourses of diverse social sciences, qualitative research, narrative inquiry, poetic inquiry, and critical pedagogy. They are all in the vanguard of contemporary and innovative scholarship and practice. They know that "breaking silence changes the world" (Baldwin, 2005, p. 87). They demonstrate compellingly a comprehensive knowledge of a wide range of interdisciplinary traditions and practices, its movements and developments, and an effective way of drawing out connections among influential writers and ideas in order to promote both scholarship and pedagogy that are creative, democratic, humane, and ethical.

In *Pedagogy of the Heart*, Paulo Freire (1997) presents a cogent defense of his writing: “I refuse to accept a certain type of scientific criticism that insinuates that I lack rigor in the way I deal with these issues or the overaffective language I use in this process” (p. 30). He adds: “I am a totality and not a dichotomy. I do not have a side of me that is schematic, meticulous, nationalist, and another side that is disarticulated or imprecise, which simply likes the world. I know with my entire body, with feelings, with passion, and also with reason” (p. 30). Research needs to be holistic. A graduate scholar asked me recently in a course focused on narrative inquiry, “What does all this writing, especially poetry and stories, have to do with research?” I responded with a few thoughts about the inextricable interconnections between writing and research, but now I look forward to sharing this wonderful book with that student, and many other colleagues, too. *Qualitative Research: Challenging the Orthodoxies in Standard Economic Discourse(s)* is especially inviting because the authors ask many bold questions and offer wise responses that vibrate with a keen tentativeness, a tensile resonance even. These researchers challenge practices, attitudes, and views that are too seldom questioned, and in their challenges, they open up possibilities for revitalizing the place of the personal and the heart in our academic work. This book is significantly about listening to people, attending to their stories and experiences, acknowledging their creative, pedagogical, and humane energy. The etymological root of “scholar” is “learning in lingering,” and this book invites the reader to linger, to question, to explore new possibilities of connections and understandings.

The word *enthusiasm* means *inspired by a god*. We live in a world that is afraid of gods and goddesses, of wonder and mystery, of the heart and spirit. In the ancient world there were nine Muses with delightful names such as Calliope, Erato, Melpomene, Thalia, Polyhymnia, and Urania. They were all goddesses who inspired with enthusiasm the musicians, dancers, orators, storytellers, actors, and poets of their time. Our research needs the Muses. Walter Brueggemann (2001) claims that “we might say rightly that singing a song does not change reality” (p. 18). But he then argues eloquently that “the evocation of an alternative reality consists at least in part in the battle for language and the legitimization of a new rhetoric. The language of the empire is surely the language of managed reality, of production and schedule and market. But that language will never permit or cause freedom because there is no newness in it” (p. 18).

In *Becoming Human*, Jean Vanier (1998) observes that “we have disregarded the heart, seeing it only as a symbol of weakness, the centre of sentimentality and emotion, instead of as a powerhouse of love that can reorient us from our self-centredness, revealing to us and to others the basic beauty of humanity, empowering us to grow” (p. 78). When I was a student in school, I often spoke about “learning by heart.” I spent most of my time committing definitions, dates, facts, and formulae to heart, storing them in memory like a squirrel stores nuts for the long winter. What would my research be like if I acknowledged the heart as “a powerhouse of love” that enthused and energized all my searching and becoming? I now seek Vanier’s (1998) experience of “heart-memory” (p. 101).

The scholars in *Qualitative Research: Challenging the Orthodoxies* remind us that we are awash in stories. I agree with Thomas King (2003) that “the truth about stories is that that’s all we are” (p. 2). We live stories all the time. We attend to the stories of others. We linger in the stories of dreams, imagination, fantasy, and memory. We hear stories from friends and strangers; we view stories on TV; we understand the past in terms of stories, just as we seek to understand the future in stories. We explain our actions in stories, and we tell the same stories over and over at family gatherings. Our spiritual beliefs, our sense of national identities, our accounts of emotional and psychological needs and desires are all woven through and through with stories. And just as Rabbi Avraham Soetendorf (2000) claims, “my personal story is a universal tale” (p. 14). But in spite of the pervasive prevalence of stories in our lives, most of us have great difficulty telling our stories. Most of us have little confidence about our abilities as storytellers. Where does this lack of confidence come from?

In *All about Love: New Visions*, bell hooks (2000) acknowledges how difficult it is to talk about the heart: “Taught to believe that the mind, not the heart, is the seat of learning, many of us believe that to speak of love with any emotional intensity means we will be perceived as weak and irrational” (p. xxvii). Not only are many of us afraid of the heart, but like Martin Amis (2000) we are often confounded by how “experience . . . outstrips all accounts of it—all ulterior versions” (p. 158). Experience cannot be exhausted, only narrated with attention and intention. The authors in *Qualitative Research: Challenging the Orthodoxies in Standard Academic Discourse(s)* are always revealing glimpses of shapes and connections, like constellations of light, but they hold fast to acknowledging how mystery remains at the heart of interpretive research. They understand how the etymological root of “interpretation” involves the experience of “standing in the midst of something.” They are not hoping to exhaust the meaningfulness of experience, to claim a clear understanding, to consume experience and spit out a kernel. Their research is part of a living experience of testimony, full of truth-seeking and vulnerability and heartfelt engagement. Like Freire (1993), they understand that “the role of a consciously progressive educator is . . . to stimulate doubt, criticism, curiosity, questioning, a taste for risk taking, the adventure of creating” (p. 50). Their stories invite us to engage in researching our daily experiences by writing creatively and narratively and poetically about our lives, to research our lived experiences in order to pursue vibrant possibilities of transformation.

Qualitative Research: Challenging the Orthodoxies in Standard Academic Discourse(s) is a book about language, the power of storytelling, the integrity of personal and professional identities, the inextricable weaving of writing and research. Above all, it is a book full of questing and questioning. In *Anne Sexton: Teacher of Weird Abundance*, Paula M. Salvio (2007) asks: “What does it mean to bring into the classroom dimensions of our lives for which there is such little public acknowledgment? Why might this matter? How can we incorporate the personal into teaching without slipping into demand, confession, voyeurism, or unrefined reflection? How do we make our classrooms a space for the enuncia-

tion of something other than predictable retellings of socially inscribed stories of failure and success?” (p. 4). The authors of *Qualitative Research: Challenging the Orthodoxies in Standard Academic Discourse(s)* represent compellingly how in writing our stories about experience we can never contain the multiplicity of possible interpretations. Instead, we offer our representations, and invite readers to make sense out of our stories. Instead of trying to close down understanding, we need to focus on opening up possibilities for wide-ranging connections, questions, and insights. Like Arthur Frank (2000), I “believe in stories more than in principles” (p. 231). So, I draw these ruminations to a temporary close with a poem that I trust resonates with the courageous and creative questing of the scholars, researchers, educators, and writers that have convened together in this evocative and provocative book.

Twelve Riffs for a Guitar with No Strings

1

I once saw the full moon pinned
just over the Empire State Building,
a circle like God’s mouth, an O full
of surprise.

2

I will write as if no one will ever read
my poems; I will not write for others
because I will be too eager to please.

3

I just finished breakfast in IHOP,
and I am caffeinated, content, and contained,
like I imagine the Cleaver family spends
their days after the TV is turned off.

4

I hear the languages of winter, especially
steeped mint tea on a windswept day,
and try to translate what I hear
like love letters that never arrive.

5

Like electrical circuits
my nerve endings are overloaded.
So many tales full of details,
my life wagged by the tails in details.

6

I cannot eat all the foods I want,
or read all the books I want,
or write all the poems I want,
or count all the ways of love I want.

7

I am facing the loss of my myths,
dangerous, like losing mitts in winter
where survival depends on warm words.

8

Once taut, steeled with wise words,
I am broken, empty, full of fear,
like living in a radioactive zone after a spill.

9

On my back in the Caribbean Sea,
suspended in salt waves, the sky is
a hallowed hollow where I will fall
unless I cling to the memory of you.

10

She told the hair stylist, Dye
the blond streaks out of my hair.
Why did you get streaks?
I was going through a bad time.
The hair stylist said, Our hair
bears the heart's story.

11

Before Valerie died, she reminded me
how I once advised her, Learn to sit
for an hour on a bench and do nothing,
and know love is the answer to all
the questions. Good advice, even
if I don't practice it.

12

Seagulls carry mussels and sea urchins
in land from the edge of the ocean
and drop them on rocks for a picnic
like I need to break my poems open.

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Preface

The primary purpose of this book is to present the points of view of academics in the social sciences who challenged the “research-as-usual” paradigm of the Master’s or doctoral thesis, and/or dissemination of the “findings” from academic research. The intent is to encourage new researchers who are also considering “challenging the orthodoxies” in academic research. Each chapter discusses the authors’ lived personal experiences within and against the academic research and writing phenomenon, as well as their struggles and eventual successes.

Individually, the chapters vary in style and in intent. Collectively, the chapters discuss challenges in (a) the conceptualization, (b) the “doing,” (c) the writing up or writing down (Wolcott, 1990), (d) the “afterlife,” and (e) the “living with/in” of academic research. Topics include autobiography, biography and life stories, confessional and testimonial research, poetic, artistic, dramatic, and multimedia representations, redefining ethics for narrative and postmodern or post-structural approaches to research (especially those with living subjects), crossing the border between personal/private and professional/public lives, rethinking the audience and reader response, negotiating the system and relationships within the system, “border” research and interdisciplinarity, meeting and transgressing standards, and reflection on reflection.

This book is distinctive and unique because it represents its subject; that is, not only is the topic challenging the orthodoxies in academic research and writing, but the chapters in the book themselves challenge those orthodoxies. Chapters are written in dramatic form, in dialogue, in story, and chapters contain poetry, vignettes, testimonials and autobiographical accounts. All of the contributing authors have successfully managed to engage in non-standard research and “risky writing” practices, while at the same time meeting the demands of quality and rigor set by university examining committees and ethical review boards. In keeping with practices established by the editors and contributors who worked in conceptualizing this project, the book is intended to be “invitational,” by which we mean readable. Together, the chapters therefore constitute a situated polyphonic case study of research in the social sciences from several perspectives, challenging the orthodoxies.

We realize that the term “challenging the orthodoxies” has, since the publication of Sol Cohen’s book, itself become an orthodoxy. However, we remain grateful for this term, which describes best what we do.

TABLE 1 Key issues in chapters

Title	Author	Research approaches/ key concepts
1. Introduction: Pivotal Moments	Sandra G. Kouritzin, Nathalie A. C. Piquemal, and Renee Norman	Overview of themes
PART I		
2. Finding the Stories, Telling the Story: Narrative in the Academy	Marion Crook	Research within indigenous communities; using a novel format for dissertation research; academic vs. fictional voices; use of poetry within research; landscape as character in novel
3. Collaborative Inquiry as Illuminated Manuscript	Michelle Forrest, Miriam Cooley, and Linda Wheeldon	Collaborative research and presentation; dramatic presentation; visuals in research; time, space, physical geography
4. Entangled Lives: Inquiring into the Negotiation of Relational Stories to Live By in Doctoral Studies and Research	Janice Huber and Karen Keats Whelan	Storyed lives; collaborative research; relational inquiry; dialogic and poetic presentation; resistance to traditional academic landscapes
5. The Chaucerian Dissertation Model That “Got Away”	Sandra G. Kouritzin	Invitational research writing; doctoral dissertation journey; audience, who are we writing for?; vulnerability; language loss; motherhood; gatekeeping
6. Transcendence: The Journey from Hard Data into Artistic Depiction—Theatre as Representation	Matthew J. Meyer	Theatre as Representation; detailed process for developing dramatic representation
7. Afternoon Tea at Su’s: Participant Voice and Community in Critical Feminist Ethnography	Suhanthi Motha	Critical feminist ethnography; support systems within research; validity, truth, and accuracy; ethics and politics of voice

8. Altered Landscapes: Not the End of the Journey	Renee Norman	Women's autobiographical writings; narrative and poetic inquiry; feminist literary criticism; arts-informed dissertation
9. Whose Story Is It Anyway?	Nathalie A. C. Piquemal and Norman Allen	Collaborative research, Native American culture and spiritual understandings; relational consent, centrality of location, physical spaces within research
10. Drinking U.S. Water: Flowing Narratives of a Traveling Korean Woman Researcher in U.S. Higher Education	Jeong-eun Rhee	Transnational identities within research; poetry; postcolonialism; traveling subjectivities
11. Integrated Inquiry: Transforming Multiple Research Perspectives	Bernard W. Andrews	Researcher as composer; metaphor; sonata format

PART II

12. Re-membering Michael: Emotionality, Vulnerability, and the Research Process	Karyn Cooper	Autobiographical narrative; hermeneutic inquiry; emotional and vulnerability within research; issues of difference
13. Questioning as a Pedagogical Tool in Teaching and Research	Karyn Cooper and Susan London McNab	Narrative inquiry and hermeneutics; practitioner research; ethical issues in teacher research stories
14. Who's Afraid of Virginia's Daughters? Writing, Research, and Relations	Erika Hasebe-Ludt	Interpretive inquiry; pedagogical and personal; inclusivity; ethical research; hermeneutics; intertextuality; motherhood
15. Teaching and Learning Qualitative Research: Educational Space as a Fluid	Lyubov Laroche and Wolff-Michael Roth	Interpretive inquiry; superimposing spacetime; blurred boundaries; fluid space; research as lived experience
16. Narrative Inquiry and the Discovery of Self within the Academy	Yolanda M. Wattsjohnson	Power and authority; "blackness/whiteness"; narrative inquiry; reflective practitioner; race, teaching and voice; autoethnography
17. Getting Away With "It"	Wanda Hurren	Non-standard approaches; conceptual research; geography; map-poems; gatekeeping
18. Conclusion: Valediction, Requiem, and Invocation for Research(ers)	Sandra G. Kouritzin, Overview Nathalie A. C. Piquemal, and Renee Norman	

The table above is included for ease of reference. Each chapter is listed, along with the themes that each author(s) addressed. The list is by no means exhaustive; we encourage users of this book to create their own lists of themes.

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Acknowledgments

We thank Naomi Silverman for her support, encouragement, and patience, and for having the audacity to believe that this book could make a valuable contribution. We would also like to acknowledge the commitment of each of the contributors to this book, specifically the patience of some toward the hardships of others, who, despite and through illness and grief, have found the courage to persevere. In short, it is the dignity within each and every one of the contributors that we wish to acknowledge.

1

Introduction *Pivotal Moments*

SANDRA G. KOURITZIN, NATHALIE A. C. PIQUEMAL,
AND RENEE NORMAN

It is a rainy February day in 1996 when a small group of graduate student friends gather in the Ponderosa cafeteria (now defunct) at the University of British Columbia to compare stories about working within university constraints while trying to do different forms of research in their dissertations. Sandie (Sandra) has asked for this coffee time because she plans to make a proposal. In attendance are Garold Murray, Erika Hasebe-Ludt, Renee Norman, and Sandie Kouritzin, doctoral students in Language and Literacy Education. If we lean forward and listen carefully, maybe we can overhear. Sandie, five months pregnant and still suffering from morning sickness, miserably trying to choke down a cup of tea with lots of milk and sugar, suggests, “we should put together a book about our experiences, a guidebook for people who are trying to do things differently, a book of stories.” Renee, the voice of wisdom, responds, “maybe we should get through the process ourselves first.” It is agreed that this is a conversation that needs to continue.

On a hot summer day in Nevada in 1997, Nathalie and Norman, sitting on a wooden bench enjoying a gentle breeze after the weekly sweat-lodge, share a moment of silence and peace, both contemplating the power of the prayers and the songs that they had just finished taking part in. Nathalie was in the midst of data collection for the purpose of a doctoral dissertation that explored the ethics of researching Native knowledge. Norman, her main co-researcher (or, ethnographically speaking, “key informant”), had suggested that this inquiry be guided not only by the voices of research participants, but also by experiential and relational inner voices that the two of them would sometimes experience on days such as this one. Norman finally breaks the silence and says, “A lot of thoughts related to the project came to me while I was in there.” Nathalie nods an agreement and says, “Yes, I know, but it might be a challenge to address some of these experiences in a doctoral dissertation.” Norman smiles and responds, “It challenges the mainstream’s conventions of research. You are right, you might want to be careful about that when you write your thesis.” Nathalie responds, “There might be a different avenue that might enable us to explore this approach, though.” They agree that it is a conversation that needs to continue.

Hard Chalk Café, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, 2001: Sandie and Nathalie, both recent transplants to Winnipeg, both hard-core caffeine addicts

struggling with their first years of academic life, both barely coping with a new and presumably friendly (yet hostile in a weatherly sort of way) environment, are planning their research lives. Talking about the research and doctoral programs that resulted in their becoming colleagues, they agree that the University of Manitoba is less sympathetic to research which challenges the orthodoxies than the institutions where they completed their doctoral programs. Sandie recalls the conversation held earlier with Renee and company, and suggests that “maybe the time has come.” Nathalie agrees wholeheartedly. They discuss the chapters they might write, the chapters others might write, the lessons learned, the support received and not received, and how to proceed. They agree that this is a conversation that needs to continue.

This book came about because of such conversations—ones held during annual conferences, in online discussion groups, and during informal networking—about the lack of information available for graduate students who were not doing standard, five-chapter dissertations in a specific discipline using generally accepted research methodologies. It grew out of conversations which expressed dissatisfaction with the status quo, and dialogues about challenging the orthodoxies. According to *Wikipedia*, the word *orthodoxy* originally comes from the Greek word *ortho*, meaning “right” or “correct,” and *doxa* meaning “thought, teaching, or glorification.” Despite, or perhaps because of, the association with religion, we embraced the idea of the status quo in academic research being an orthodoxy, understanding that, in keeping with the definitions we found, the word *orthodoxy* enfolded a notion of governance, the nuance that orthodoxies are overseen by some external, hegemonic body, in our case the written and unwritten rules of standard academic research and writing, the norms and traditions of graduate student committees and their guardians of form, the external committee members appointed by the university from within the institution and outside the institution.

When graduate students (and faculty) use biography, testimonial, life stories, portraiture, poetry, artistic expressions, video and multimedia, and creative writing to represent data that comes from autobiographical, literary, walkabout, graphical, dream, or other non-standard research methodologies in dissertations and research reports that are to be judged by standard definitions of rigor, that are judged in terms of academic orthodoxy, they experience tension and uncertainty. Moreover, graduate students challenging the boundaries in academic research and writing may have young and inexperienced faculty as major advisors, because those faculty members are more willing to support non-traditional research. In short, those engaged in “doing research differently” in the academy are often young, less experienced, and themselves subject to (overt or covert) external hegemonic bodies, often unidentified, often taking the form of rules, procedures, policies, and formats.

We therefore realized that graduate students “doing research differently” and their advisors needed support in their work. We noted that when challenging the orthodoxies in the traditions of doctoral studies became the topic of panels and presentations at conferences, attendance and response were overwhelming. At one such conference, we put out a call for papers about doing research differently,

asking for narratives of experience, and advice. As students and junior academics, we would have been encouraged during our own initial work to know that there is a community of scholars who are breaking new ground in terms of academic research and writing. Such a community of individuals who found supportive, encouraging advisors can convince us of the value of our own work. We often found that no sooner had we broken through the crust of ice on the top of the snow in terms of employing marginalized, little described, misunderstood, and so-called “fluffy” methodologies, and/or risky writing practices, than we were turning to find other researchers following close behind, trammeling larger chunks of surface ice, and morphing footprints into paths. This brings to mind some advice Patti Lather, wearing angel wings, gave to a group of graduate students, over a few drinks, in 1995. She said that you might not be able to completely change research paradigms or do the kind of research and writing that you want to do because of the constraints of graduate programs and the biases of advisors, but that it would be possible to “blur the edges” a little, while still being pragmatic in terms of playing by the rules. But blurring the edges, like breaking through the ice covering snow, is cumulative; in the end, you have a smudge, and it spreads.

In the introduction to her book *Inside Stories: Qualitative Research Reflections* (1998), a book which began this series, and inspired this volume, de Marrais writes that “In my experience in a doctoral program in Educational Foundations at the University of Cincinnati, I learned that qualitative research was the norm and that statistics was a course merely to round out the program. I was naively surprised to find myself in a different world—one where quantitative reigned supreme and qualitative was quite suspect” (p. x). De Marrais was, in one sense, describing what has often been referred to as the “exiled from paradise” syndrome, in which graduate students leave universities where their work is valued, where there are multiple resources (including well-stocked libraries), and assume positions in more conservative institutions. Such graduates assume that, because they were respected in what are often larger, more prestigious, universities, they will also be respected in their new faculty homes. Many find that they must establish what they believe in, as de Marrais did, building a qualitative research program and thereby challenging the orthodoxy of the quantitative paradigms.

Yet qualitative research alone does not always challenge the orthodoxies in research in the social sciences. With that in mind, the primary purpose of this book is to present the points of view of academics in the social sciences who challenged the “research-as-usual” paradigm of research, and/or the doctoral thesis, and/or dissemination of the “findings” from that research. The intent of the book is to encourage new researchers who are also considering “challenging the orthodoxies” in academic research, meaning engaging in work that acknowledges the interdependence of, and connection between, the observer and the observed, work that is skeptical of notions of objectivity and researcher distance. Each chapter discusses authors’ lived personal experiences with/in and against academic research and writing, of attempting to uncover emerging, feminist, and non-Western ways of knowing in educational research. The chapters thereby challenge the orthodoxies in Western epistemologies by questioning and confronting knowledge production

and analyzing taken-for-granted assumptions in order to garner a more informed view of what it means to be an academic and a human being. Together we discuss and represent work that tries to bring forward marginalized and subjugated voices, including those “other” voices of the authors/researchers themselves, their voices as mothers, sisters, wives, teachers, siblings, victims, and even their voices from those uncomfortable moments when they recognize themselves as oppressors.

Accordingly, many of the chapters address the issue of “positionality,” meaning that the authors situate themselves relationally, socially, personally, and politically in their research. Many authors position themselves not only in relation to others (be they their students, colleagues or research participants), but also in relation to their own sense of identity (ethnicity, gender, native/non-native), and they do so not incidentally or implicitly, but purposefully and explicitly. Many of the research stories told in this book express a holistic dimension, in that the authors position themselves not only conceptually, but also emotionally, spiritually, and physically. The stories that both researchers and participants tell about themselves and in relation to one another embody the social, emotional, and political way in which they understand the world. They embrace the inter-subjectivities of research.

On a personal level, telling and reflecting on relational experiences can be emotionally charged because, as many authors illustrate in this book, often expressed are feelings of ambiguity, disconnectedness, and self-doubt. Qualitative researchers committed to researching differently make themselves vulnerable and invite others (research participants and readers) to make themselves likewise vulnerable on different levels. Such exposure can be not only frightening, but also the means by which both researchers and participants empower themselves. While working through such feelings can be rewarding and empowering, the process leading to it can nonetheless be difficult to negotiate. Stories of experience enable researchers to be reflective practitioners, meaning that they are able to reflect on theories and practice, to generate their own knowledge, and to implement changes for themselves as well as for others.

Additionally, researchers who take up postmodern notions of how knowledge/power is constructed/represented through discourse acknowledge both the power and the inadequacy inherent in language. This makes spaces in research discourses for such strategies as questioning, playfulness, and self-aware reflection, which can interrogate and complicate stories of experience in important ways. At the same time, the issue of re/presenting voices in research undoubtedly carries an important ethical dimension, in that in building a sense of community, both researchers and participants make themselves vulnerable by exposing and exploring their stories relationally. When voices and experiences intersect, new meanings and new stories are created, which means that researchers need to be aware of the potential emotional impact on such methods for research participants. Consequently, researchers need to pay close attention to the aftermath of the research, paying attention to how research texts shape participants’ lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) and, often, how those lives change the texts.

On an academic level, qualitative researchers committed to challenging the orthodoxies have to endlessly defend the scholarly nature of their work to those who demand answers to issues of objectivity, validity, reliability, and generalizability, the means by which researchers exert control over the accuracy, stability, and consistency of the research process, and thus establish that their research has met standards of rigor. Collectively, the research described in this book is also rigorous and painstaking, but not amenable to terms such as these which are used in quantitative research methodologies, or even to terms associated with qualitative research done in a positivist paradigm. Many qualitative research methods rely on their own criteria such as transferability, resonance, adequacy, or authenticity, which have reworked or replaced the terms associated with quantitative research by acknowledging the role of the researcher, and the role of power/influence in research (e.g., Lather, 2001). But there has also been a welcome stream of innovative and alternative qualitative research methods developing which resist any language of accountability. The fact that qualitative researchers are often placed in a situation in which they have to defend themselves suggests that they work within a framework that has not yet been fully accepted as scholarly.

To counter this, the research stories here are stories of empowerment; by telling them, the researchers take ethical stances in exploring, questioning, affirming, and confirming who they are, what they stand for, what their motives are, and how their own positionalities shape the construction of their research stories. Such ethical stances are powerfully expressed through research as an embodied experience, research that emerges out of concerned engagement and develops in the process of negotiating the relational tensions and ambiguities that are inherent in research relationships. Taking such ethical stances is undoubtedly challenging as doing so often propels researchers yet further into positions of personal and (more related to the scope of this book) academic vulnerability.

Finally, most of the chapters in this volume involve narrative writing, meaning that in addition to breaking out of standard academic discourse, the authors position themselves in relation to their inquiry and in relation to others (colleagues, participants, students, etc.) in a way that leads to deeper relational understanding. A particular strength of such methods is open-endedness. Rather than looking for factual information, researchers and participants are invited to share thoughts, memories, histories, and feelings; then the writing can be reflected upon and analyzed for patterns, recurrent topics, and relationships. As such, it is not merely the experience that is of significance, but the making sense of experiences in relation to one's own history and in relation to one another. The voices expressed in such research are reflective and intersecting.

Although we view the chapters in multiple ways, this book is divided into only two sections, in order to divide chronologically: (a) process and choices in research, and (b) the afterlife of researching in alternative ways. Individually, the chapters vary in style and in intent. Collectively, the chapters discuss challenges in (a) the conceptualization, (b) the "doing," (c) the writing up or writing down (Wolcott, 1990), (d) the "afterlife," and (e) the "living with/in" of academic research. Most of our contributors are educational researchers involved in a wide variety of

disciplines relevant to the broad field of social sciences, including Indigenous education, science education, ethics, language education, international and intercultural education, teacher education, culture and identity politics, art education, music education, educational administration, and anthropology. Topics include autobiography, biography and life stories, confessional and testimonial research, poetic, artistic, dramatic, and multimedia representations, redefining ethics for narrative approaches to research (especially those with living subjects), crossing the border between personal/private and professional/public lives, rethinking the audience and reader response, negotiating the system and relationships within the system, “border” research and interdisciplinarity, meeting and transgressing standards, and reflection on reflection. As a result, the chapters constitute a situated polyphonic case study of research in the social sciences from several perspectives. Questions which highlight important points and issues are posed at the end of each chapter.

Many of the chapters can be viewed through multiple lenses. We therefore invite readers into the chapters of this book through our eyes, reminding readers that this is only one possible vision.

Part I: The Doctoral Journey: Reflections on Disruptions and Interruptions

Crook’s “passionate inquiry” explores the lives and education of students in a northern British Columbia, Canada, community and is realized through the medium of a novel. In this chapter, Crook writes compellingly of her process of research and writing, of her own doubts and worries, and of the role fiction can play in uncovering truths, re/presenting stories, and contributing to research and understanding.

Fusing images with text, with poetry, with story and through collaboration with one another, Forrest, Cooley, and Wheeldon describe video and audio representations of re/search which intersect with one another spatially and visually, enabling audience engagement at a variety of levels, also transcending traditional research stories.

Using narrative inquiry with special attention to issues of vulnerability and ambiguity, Huber and Whelan explore how their identities evolved in the living and telling of their research. While reflecting on their own experiences in research and establishing a link between identities and inquiries, the authors establish the need for relational spaces in universities. Huber and Whelan’s voices in research are represented through personal, relational, and intersecting narratives, expressing moments of interconnection, moments of coming together, and moments of differing positionalities. The textual representations are shaped by both aesthetic creations and sensory re-presentations, thus inviting the reader to become part of this process of understanding research as “stories to live by” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

Kouritzin approaches vulnerability somewhat differently in her chapter, speaking to the vulnerability of being a graduate student, the vulnerability of having multiple miscarriages during a research project concerned with loss, the

vulnerability of her “subjects” stories. In doing so, she invites us to question who we are writing for, introducing a different concept of audience than is usual in standard academic texts.

Introducing *Theatre as Representation*, Meyer explains the processes and theory behind representing data which allows multiple layers of data interpretation—from directors, from actors, from the audience(s)—and allows us to see how theatre can illuminate data in ways which transcend traditional research stories.

Motha’s reflective and narrative chapter explores her ethnographic study of English as a second or other language (ESOL) teachers’ practice and philosophy. Motha looks back at her doctoral work and discusses the processes she used, recalling the emergence of the afternoon teas which made a space for teachers’ stories. She also calls into question some of her own and others’ ideas about representation, voice, objectivity, and power relations.

Norman presents a hybrid chapter that interweaves narrative and poetry into an autobiographical discourse which chronicles some of the struggles of re/researching and writing differently and creatively in the academy. Norman writes about the process of being a mature Ph.D. student, a mother, and a writer, and of the challenges and contradictions of this journey.

Piquemal and Allen’s chapter offers an understanding of research processes as shaped by the interacting voices of two co-researchers, meaning how these researchers position themselves both in relation to the inquiry and in relation to their life stories. The authors explore ways in which their life experiences have shaped who they have become as researchers, with special attention to the ethical dimension of relational research. In Piquemal and Allen’s chapter, the process and ethics of the research are guided by holistic lived experiences through which the researchers explore the ethical and cultural ambiguity they experienced in cross-cultural research, with special attention to the negotiations between the demands of the mainstream culture of the university and those of the culture of the traditional Native circle to which they belong.

Rhee uses critical auto-ethnography to explore how doing research is shaped by how she relates to the “Other” as part of her own cultural identity. In doing so, she explores issues of transnational identities, traveling subjectivities and situated ethnography.

Andrews’ chapter frames research methodologies historically and challenges the norms of research and writing by following musical conventions rather than standard writing conventions.

Part II: After the Journey: Reflections on the Afterlife of Research

Using autobiography, Cooper challenges the demand of conventional research for emotional distance by exploring the impact of her brother’s story on the development of her identity as a researcher, thus establishing a relationship between emotions (the social and the personal) and motives (the political) in research.

Using narrative and hermeneutic methods, Cooper and McNab focus on students' stories as well as on their own stories to create a polyphonic classroom and research community, thus moving away from traditional approaches that require the teacher to act as the expert. While exploring teaching practices that support social justice and equity across the curriculum, the authors of this chapter give the reader an example of how different voices may coexist, connect, and interact in narrative research.

Hasebe-Ludt emphasizes the notion of "embodied pedagogy" by exploring the relationship between mind and body in research, and by fostering life writing to enhance awareness of language and how we use it. Hasebe-Ludt "writes in a new key" to make sense of our wor(l)ds and open our selves to other wor(l)ds.

Laroche and Roth's chapter is the product of two distinct stories which converge during an interpretive inquiry (qualitative research methods) graduate course. There they explore new ways of conducting scientific research about real-life issues in a community. They describe how they worked collectively and collegially with students to create a collaborative learning environment which is open to fluidity, metaphor, and interconnection.

Wattsjohnson's chapter shows that the telling of stories in relation to others people's voices (her students) is a way to reaffirm her teaching stance, to reflect on her pedagogical practices, and to modify them accordingly.

Hurren's chapter takes a tongue-in-cheek approach to rejecting standard academic discourse (represented by the acronym S.A.D., or sad), and embracing vulnerability, representation, and development of an academic community within and against the current community.

This book is distinctive and unique because it represents its subject; that is, not only is the topic challenging the orthodoxies in academic research and writing, but the chapters themselves challenge those orthodoxies. Chapters are written in dramatic form, in dialogue, in story, and chapters contain poetry, vignettes, testimonials, and autobiographical accounts. All of the contributing authors have successfully managed to engage in non-standard research and "risky writing" practices, while at the same time meeting the demands of quality and rigor set by university examining committees and ethical review boards. In keeping with practices established by the editors and contributors who worked in conceptualizing this project, the book is "invitational," by which we mean readable. Academic writing usually presents theory and invites readers to apply that theory to their own practices, meaning that readers "story" the theory. This book presents stories with a pedagogical intent, inviting readers instead to theorize the stories.

In presenting and re/presenting stories, and stories about stories, chapters in this book interweave writing forms (including literary and artistic ones) not usually part of orthodox academic research and writing, requiring that readers confront an alternative way of regarding research. The research is the writing. The writing is the research. Literary devices and techniques hitherto unnoticed take on importance in shaping and presenting the text of stories, and become an integral part of them. Writing is layered and can be peeled away to display not only what is said, but also what is silent and between the lines. Far from rendering research in this

vein as unreliable and therefore flawed, such innovative methods embrace the subjectivity and ambiguity of the human condition, calling attention to the limits of research.

As educators and teacher educators, we often speak of the “teachable moment” in education, widely perceived to be that dramatic moment of epiphany when the windows to the students’ intellects are uncovered and small beams of light pierce the darkness. What we hear about less often, if at all, is the researcher’s pivotal moment, not an epiphany with drum rolls and cymbals clashing, but a moment of complete and soul-harrowing humility in the face of who we are, what we are doing, and what we have wrought.

Therefore, we feel we must issue a cautionary note. Challenging the orthodoxies is not for the faint of heart. We who challenge the orthodoxies are suspect. For example, we have had our work described as “basically a fishing expedition to find out something on a wide range of interconnected topics, using unstructured interviews” in which “there are serious problems with reliability and interviewer bias,” and “serious validity and reliability problems.” However, these descriptions may well be the most fitting *definition* of any research methodology which challenges the orthodoxies. Much research challenging the orthodoxies allows researchers to see how participants make narrative, intuitive, and personal connections between interconnected and yet unconnected topics, without imposing an agenda upon them.

We hope that this book supports, teaches, and inspires, and we look forward to what may follow this text that is really only a representation of many significant challenges to the orthodoxies of research and writing in the academy.

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I

The Doctoral Journey

Reflections on Disruptions and Interruptions

2

Finding the Stories, Telling the Story

Narrative in the Academy

MARION CROOK

In a small town in the northern Coast Mountain area of British Columbia there is a high school with 501 students. Here 80% of the students are First Nations (Native Americans). Only 46% of all students who enter grade eight graduate. That information was the only quantitative piece I needed to launch me into a passionate inquiry into why students in this northern community could not get a high school education.

For many years I had been a professional writer who investigated problems of teens and then wrote and published books about those problems. I knew I could find out from the teens how they saw their chances for graduation, and write about it. However, I was now a Ph.D. student, one of those who had protocols, expected avenues of study, and rules and regulations about research.

Narrative was my first love. I had been listening to and collecting stories from teens for years, taking their stories and translating them into my own narratives about the issues that concerned them. It was a process that was comfortable, a way I came to understand their point of view and see the world from their perspective.

My concerns around education in this northern community were personal as well as academic as my youngest son is Aboriginal and a member of the Gitksan Nation. I had watched racism from behind his shoulder as he experienced the school system in another community. I had seen how prejudice worked and was suspicious that prejudice, racism, and colonialism were at the basis of the high drop-out rate here. But the teens might tell me something else. I could not know from my history or experience what they were experiencing. I had to ask them and listen to what they thought was important.

“Write this as a novel,” my advisors said. I was excited by this suggestion and, once it was a possibility, I was obsessed with researching and writing my thesis that way. My Ph.D. committee was enthusiastic, but I had a niggling feeling that I was the canary being lowered into the mine. I had never read a Ph.D. thesis that came close to a novel. My committee assured me that it had been done before—once.

I had done research in the past that put me into the communities that I was researching, listening to the stories of the people, learning piece by small piece about their lives, expanding my own knowledge as I heard the stories and trying to translate these stories into fiction and non-fiction. Publishers like to keep the genres straight, and while they like stories in non-fiction text, they like the writer

to be clear that the book is non-fiction. Inviting me to take my research and translate it into fiction in order to present the facts is the basis of any fiction writing, but this thesis had the added moral imperative to adhere to the real-life issues and accurately reflect the reality of the situation. Publishers would not be happy with this. The academy might not be happy either.

However, if the purpose of the research was to find out the underlying problems teens had in getting an education, and communicate those findings to the readers, fiction was an efficient way to do it. As a fiction writer I knew that truth was often better served in fiction than non-fiction. I had published ten novels and 12 non-fiction books. I had always tried in the research process of writing those novels to find out what was behind the issues. Wolcott (1990) discusses “trying to get it right” in Eisner and Peshkin (1990). Like Wolcott, I was not so much concerned with the ability of an objective researcher to replicate my work around the issue of education for these teens. I was concerned about trying to understand what the view looked like from the teens’ position, and to honestly portray that. I wanted to be able to see what it was that they saw, what mattered to them, what participants in my research thought about the subject matter and why they thought that way. I knew that I would not find a whole truth; I would find bits like puzzle pieces. I would take those pieces and form a picture, all the while knowing that there were probably important pieces hidden from me. Perhaps someone else will take my picture and add the hidden pieces and change the picture so that we all contribute to understanding. My work would then be important, but not necessarily a stand-alone final picture of the situation. I will probably always learn more about the subjects I research. My advisors were offering me a chance to use my way of representing “truth” in the powerful media of fiction. I couldn’t resist.

In my education department at the university I had to first present three comprehensive exams, that is, three extended essays on theory, methodology, and implications for teaching. This was definitely non-fiction, and typically academic.

I was typically academic in that I consulted the work of others to find out if my view of the problems had support, and if there might be something else I could consider. I studied the work of the feminists who understand that women look for knowledge in relationships and that understanding relationship leads us to understanding why phenomenon occurs (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1969; Ellis, 1997; Mulqueen, 1992; Roman, 1992). I looked at the nature of stories as it leads us to understanding (Bruner, 1987; Cohan & Shires, 1988). Kerby’s work (1991) on the importance of narrative in developing self made me understand the psychological importance of stories, and Storm (1972) gave me one cultural view on the importance of stories.

I looked at the importance of stories as a way of teaching (Archibald, 1997; Bellanger, 1997; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Crook, 1995; Leggo, 1995; Noddings, 1984; Wolcott, 1990). I looked at indigenous women’s need for stories (Allen, 1992), and L. T. Smith’s (1999) work on the role of colonization on indigenous people. I studied the effects of racism and prejudice on learning and the notion that to succeed in a “white” school system, students are asked to negate “being Indian,” a problem the students of Hazelton assured me faced them (Aronowitz & Giroux,

1991; hooks, 1994; G. H. Smith, 1999). I looked at how stories influence curriculum and read the works of Kincheloe (1997) and Aoki (1996). I studied the work of Tierney and Lincoln (1997) and Van Manen (1990), and reaffirmed my belief that knowledge comes through the researcher, and is influenced by the experience, understanding, and skills of the researcher.

I had a great tension within me between my need to embrace the academic voice on the issues I was studying and my belief that my own research would be more vital and more accurate, and more truly reflect the students' lives, than anything I could read. The above list of references shows my concern that my research needed to be grounded in the past before readers would be comfortable trusting it. This is the discipline of academia that I have not been able to shake, in spite of the great encouragement I have had from my mentors to rely on my own perceptions, research methods and results, and my ability to communicate those. I still felt I needed to point out how many theorists agreed with me. Finally, I had to understand that although the academic references were interesting to read and helped shape my perspective, they did not belong in the novel. If I wanted to allow the students to speak in this novel, I had to give them the space, and that meant leaving the theorists out.

Academic readers of the completed thesis did embrace this idea, as my thesis was shortlisted for the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies dissertation award the year I presented it.

The process of research and writing was a long one. The protagonist had come to my mind early in my research—Trudith Robinson, 19 years old in grade 12. She sat up there in a pocket of my head commenting on all I saw, asking questions, making suggestions. What I heard, saw, and speculated on in the community sifted through Trudith's point of view. Because I was constantly viewing the community and the school system the way Trudith would see it, I was able to find information that I otherwise might have ignored. I saw the culture, the physical landscape, and the social situation from her point of view.

The landscape—something I had not considered before I started the research, other than the idea that the town was a very long way from the city of Vancouver—became much more important as I stayed in the community and saw it through the eyes of this young woman. The mountain was real, and symbolic. It became a character in the story and so became one of the challenges to education that students must combat or come to terms with. The geography, the presence of the mountains, the distance from big cities, the severity of the winters all seemed to play a part in the way in which students got their education. At first I did not notice it very much. Of course, I was impressed with the majesty of the mountains, particularly Stik'yoodinhlx, but it wasn't until I stopped to pick up a hitchhiker and drove him up the hill from the village that I realized that I had acclimatized myself. In the winter, when it is cold, it is unconscionable to let a person walk when you have a warm car. I never pick up hitchhikers in the Vancouver area; in this community, I was different. If I had changed that much in a few days, how did the country affect the students who lived there? That question, I did not ask directly. What I did was try to observe and convey in the novel the sense, the emotional tie that people have

to the land, trying to make the reader aware of the geography, and its influence. The mountain seemed a symbol of all that kept the young people from leaving.

I could have written in a report that students in this northern community feel oppressed by the mountains, particularly the mountain *Stiik'yoodinhlx*, and the distance from cities which represent a new life, opportunity, and a career. I could have stated that students have dreams that they see taking place a long way from their community, but see no way of realizing those dreams.

Instead Trudith tells the reader how she feels about the landscape:

One day the mountain will move over me, snuff out my life, obliterate me. It looms above as it has done since long before I was born, an imposing presence, a guardian, a menace, a fate.

“When the rocks roll down the side of *Stiik'yoodinhlx*, someone dies,” my granny said. And, after the loose rocks tumbled down the side in a tiny avalanche, always someone died.

Stiik'yoodinhlx. The word rattled in my thoughts with the guttural punch of the *Gitxsan* language. “*Roche de Boules*,” the map says. And *Rock de Bull* is what the people call it. A French name for the English map, but *Stiik'yoodinhlx* is the *Gitxsan* name that gives us in our language the powerful, relentless heart of the mountain.

It will come one day, inch by inch, creep over my legs, trap me, spread over my body and crush my head into the gravel and dirt. Grind me into pebbles, dust to dust. Absorb me the way it has absorbed my ancestors.

The graveyard is across the valley on a small plateau above the town. From the graves of the dead, the monuments to spirits, families and Clans, you can see the Seven Sisters, the range of mountains to the south-west, and *Sik'idt'ox* and *An T'am'hlxw*, the mountains to the northwest. They seem to be normal mountains, put there by the Creator eons ago to keep our valley dry in the winter and hot in the summer. Average, usual, rocky, granite mountains. But the Creator hurled *Stiik'yoodinhlx* to the edge of our town to control us.

While both ways of relating the information give the same information, the narrative, the story of Trudith, pulls the reader in and lets the reader understand Trudith's point of view. I hope this demonstrates that a reader will care more about the problems of a student if they can relate to that student, and they will relate more intimately if the writer can bring the student alive to the reader. Fiction can do that much better than non-fiction.

Part of my skills as a writer included interviewing and listening for the stories people told me, but part of my acceptance in the community came from factors which are not discussed in academia. I am a grandmother, and, in this community, grandmothers are given respect. I am the mother of one of the band members and so any children of his, my future grandchildren, may attend this school. I had been a public health nurse and I am still a nurse who has done work in teen suicide and eating disorders. This was an obvious background in social problems that the

professionals in the community found reliable. As well, those years in public health nursing gave me some skills in approaching communities. These attributes were of great help in obtaining the stories I needed to write the novel; they are not attributes that the academy necessarily recognizes.

The other aspect of the research that was advantageous to me and which is seldom discussed in literature was the friendship I received from several of the women in the community. That was wonderful and unexpected, and very influential on how I saw the teens' problems. Friends made suggestions, introductions, and gave me cultural experiences that I would never have managed by myself.

I believe that when you go into a community to do research, you should offer some skill or service, so that the community gets an immediate benefit from your being there. I traded creative writing instruction with the students for their time and information about education; I offered my books on suicide prevention to the professional community and was available for any assistance they wanted. I did spend one evening with the drug and alcohol worker and the RCMP (police) officer searching the town for a young man they thought was considering suicide, so I know what it is like to be out in the biting cold of a November night worried and feeling responsible. If a researcher wants to absorb the "truth" of a situation, he or she must be willing to be vulnerable, and to be part of that community.

Because this community is so distant from my university—about 1200 km (750 miles)—I stayed for four or five days every time I traveled there. I lived at a bed and breakfast on the Reserve (land controlled by local Aboriginal Nations) and researched in the high school and in the community. I made a deal with the students in the high school. I'd trade them 40 minutes of creative writing instruction for 40 minutes of discussion around their experiences with schooling. We did this exchange eight times. I listened to a youth committee in the local Band Office (the political arm of the Aboriginal Nation) talk about their view of schooling and their assessment of prejudice in that system. I talked to nurses, drug and alcohol workers, teachers, the assistant school superintendent, the native education principal, my son, and his friends. I kept a journal of my experiences and conversations, and my reflections on those. I shadowed a student for a morning and accompanied her to all her classes, trying to see her day as she saw it.

Because I was researching in a culture that was different from my own, I needed help. The grandmothers nudged me and sometimes commanded me to be sure to interview this person or that, to attend this celebration, but not that one.

It is daunting to begin a novel. I am never sure that I can finish it, but I did reach a point where I felt I had gathered enough information, and Trudith was hammering away in my head demanding her story be written.

When I spoke with students in the high school, they talked of ambitions that had no representatives in their town: actors, interior designers. Trudith, for some reason, appeared in my mind with the ambition to be a travel writer. She wrote a poem about this.

Write what you know, Ms Macmillan said.
I will not.

I'm not going to write poetry
about the close, gray sky
the dense air, pushing on my head
the looming rocks, gray monsters
disappearing into steel gray rivers
and flat gray soil.

I'm going to write about
magenta bougainvillea cascading down
whitewashed walls.
Sand beaches warm yellow with captured sun
green palms etched against
cobalt skies,
braying donkeys with fiery red and tangerine blankets on cobbled streets
overhead multicoloured washing hanging window to window
flapping at the scarlet plants potted on the sills.

I'm going to write about
turbaned merchants
hawking pottery, rugs and silver
sitting under striped purple and green awnings
smoking deep black pipes, stirring dusty pods
chanting in lilting accents prayers to foreign gods.

I'm going to write about
deep green rivers in southern jungles
slipping between tall, willow-green plants
floating tufts of white seeds.
Parrots, flying prism colours
through aerial plantations.
Snakes slipping into ferns
pouring through rippling skin
rich brown with fire-orange slashes
disappearing into the rustling grasses.

I will not write about
snow,
the enclosing mountains,
the village,
or
Stiik'yoodinhlx.

I am not sure if anyone could write a novel as a thesis if they had never written a novel before—possible, but very difficult, because learning the form of a novel is a skill that takes time. It is not a skill that is taught in graduate school, so, unless the writer has had experience with this form, he or she might be bogged down in the structure of a novel. Because I had written so many novels previously, I didn't

have to think much about *how* to write a novel. I also had a group of fellow novel writers who could read my work and make suggestions.

Typically, writers are a mass of insecurities. Mine came out in the conflict I felt between writing the novel as it came from the community, and writing a thesis to please the academy.

I was so intimidated by the academic community that my first draft of the thesis had 150 pages of academic background which, my advisors said, only got in the way of the novel.

“If you must have it, cut it down,” they said. “Let the novel tell the story.”

I was worried that I was challenging the academy by submitting a novel. I felt I had to give readers some indication that I understood the theory behind the problems of education I found, but I could not inflict that kind of didactic prose into a novel. It would ruin it.

Within the novel *Moving the Mountain* are the insights the students gave me in the stories they told. I have taken their narratives and transformed them into another narrative. Readers can enjoy the novel, appreciate the characters, and come to some understanding of what life is like in this northern community, or readers can study how a school curriculum does or does not serve its students. They can ask themselves what is useful about the way these students interact with the curriculum. What is difficult? What changes could teachers and administrators make so that students can live a curriculum that serves them?

The story contains an emotional and perhaps even spiritual aspect that is not usual in studies of education. Such a story is more likely to satisfy the medicine wheel approach of mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional balance that underlies the way of life in this community. While it might misrepresent students, it might also hold a more accurate assessment of their lives. I did make the selection of what was important on the basis of what they said was important, and also based on my own desire to see social justice for these students. The novel held the concerns of the students in the lives of the characters, particularly in the life of Trudith. Because it was a novel, the characters did some selecting and emphasizing of their own. I wouldn't say I was in complete control of them at all times.

I could have planned the novel differently. I could have created many students as multiple main characters who could have given different views, but it would have been difficult for a reader to care about any of them. The value of creating one character who holds the attention of the reader and who carries the problems of the culture she represents is in the ability of that character to make her concerns matter to the reader.

A real student could have carried the concerns of the students also, but an imaginary one had many advantages. To begin with, an imaginary student does not need to sign a consent form and cannot withhold consent. She won't move away in the middle of the study, leave school, or change her mind about participating. The vision of my chosen real participant deciding that she was no longer interested in the project after I had worked for a year on it (a vision proposed by one of my research advisors) stimulated a long look at a central figure who would stay loyal throughout the project: an imaginary protagonist would do that.

To some extent an imaginary protagonist freed the teen participants to be honest with me and offer their opinions, for those opinions would not be attached to identifying information or under their names; the character would be responsible for those opinions.

This imaginary protagonist had the advantage of being flexible, able to incorporate many ideas into one personality, and could be an attractive and interesting personality. She could be as vocal as necessary, and as argumentative as needed.

The limitation of an imaginary character is most probably in the minds of the readers, who may not see an imaginary character as credible. Garner (cited in Saks, 1996) raises the question of this credibility when he says that “in a novel you can say what you want, and you are judged by how effectively you say it without any particular regard to the truth value” (p. 403).

While this may be a common opinion, it ignores the need to have such a character resonate in the minds of the reader with “truth.” In some ways an imaginary character needs to be more believable, more consistent, more psychologically integral than a real person would be. An imaginary character embodies our notions of truth, perhaps more clearly and profoundly than real people do.

In his response in this same article, Eisner suggests that fiction allows the reader to more clearly understand something, and that the purpose of the writing is to ensure that understanding. Saks suggests that all knowledge is to some extent mediated by the researcher, that there is no such thing as “immaculate perception” (p. 405), and that the language we choose to describe something helps shape what we see. The choice of an imaginary character, then, may not be very far from the way in which the researcher might choose to describe the real participants, and I maintain that it should not be very far away in order to most accurately reflect what the participants view as the situation.

On the other hand, Geertz (1988) reminds us that all knowledge is fiction, that is, all knowledge is constructed. So taking the stories of teens and shaping them into the story of one fictional teen may only be efficient, and not delusory.

An imagined story may contain a clearer picture of reality than the reported stories of the students, because the researcher may be able to give to the readers the back-story, the complex layered lives of the characters, and the human drama that all the informants live with.

There is also the question of whether generalizing from one story would be useful, or accurate. The generalization may not be accurate if readers tried to apply it to a different community and a different school. It was not my intention to produce a document that could be used as an instruction manual. My purpose was to allow the reader to enter into the life of the characters and consider what options they had around education, how they might deal with them, and what teachers, parents, community workers could do to make those choices wider and more possible. In other words, the characters should act as a stimulus for the reader’s own ideas and actions.

I have taken the many comments and ideas of the students, and set them in the minds of the characters, then let the characters speak in their own voices. Or, in

some instances, I've taken dictation from the characters who speak of the concerns the students raise. With this method the students are fairly represented as their ideas and concerns become part of the ideas and concerns of the characters in the book. Occasionally, the character speaks a direct quote from a student. This allows an academic verisimilitude that novelists generally ignore, but here seems to be both appropriate and necessary.

I sent the draft of the thesis to the principal of Native Education for the District. She read it and made comments. I sent it to the students at the high school so they could read it and comment. The librarian said they checked the front to make sure their names were there in the acknowledgment page, but they didn't send me any comments.

The people from the town who read the novel told me it showed that I had understood. However, I was still leery of the academy and insisted on the prologue which explains in academic terms what I was doing, and an epilogue which explains, again in academic terms, the implications for teaching. It was not only that I felt I had to make sure no one could fault me as an academic—which was part of my motivation; I also felt that what I wrote in the prologue made the novel stand out, something like a chain that held the diamond. The novel was supported by the other academic work I had done, and I wanted my thesis to reflect all my work.

My purpose in researching and writing the thesis was to make a difference in the way the students experienced education. I hope the novel will do that. Because the novel carries with it the emotional climate of the problems, readers get a holistic view of the situation and absorb both the bare facts and the emotional response of the students with them as they read. So the novel is hard to forget, much harder to forget than an “academic” paper would be.

Still, I couldn't resist putting the recommendations from the students in the epilogue. It is didactic and covers 11 points that the students thought were important as well as ways in which I thought the changes the students wanted could be carried out. This is what the students thought would help their education—just in case anyone missed what the characters had to say in the novel. Even so, I am sure that the points in the epilogue will be filed and forgotten, while Trudith's worries, concerns, and responses to the injustices of the school system will be remembered.

I received a great deal of support from the people of the community, and when I sent the thesis back into the community, the assistant superintendent of the School Board asked if she could reprint the thesis and ask the teachers who were meeting to discuss curriculum in the high school to read it before that meeting. I was humbled that someone who knew so much about the situation thought what I had to offer would add to her ability to make a difference. I want this thesis to help teachers see more clearly what their students need, and the assistant superintendent was using my work as I wanted it to be used.

I say at the end of the thesis that I'd like readers to carry Trudith with them into every meeting they attend and to think of Trudith every time they made a decision that might affect a student like her. That way my thesis is ever-living,

ever-influential, ever-working to make a difference. I also have visions of the novel in mass-market paperback in the hip pocket of every high school student in the north stimulating their faith in themselves, and bolstering their belief and demand that a high school education should be possible for them.

The reader of the novel slowly comes to understand the complexity of education for students in this small northern town as Trudith comes to understand the complexity of education in her own life. At the end of the novel Trudith and her friend Betsy dance in a meadow at the base of the mountain.

“What are you afraid of, Trudith?”

I glanced at the mountain top again and then back at her. “What I’ve always been afraid of. That it will hold me here.”

“It doesn’t work like that,” Betsy said. “It stays here, but you can go.”

“But always come back,” I murmured moving a little, in the same rhythm as her feet, not thinking about what I was doing very much, just letting my movements match hers. “It wants you back.”

“Hey, Trudith. That’s what home is all about. You can leave.” She spun away from me; I turned away from her coming back to face her as the dance dictated.

“You take it with you,” she said. “The same way I take my mom with me, no matter where I am, the same way you’ll take me with you, no matter where you are.”

Into the heavy air came the sound of the drum. Kevin stood at the edge of the woods beating slowly on a log with a stick, a thick thudding sound. He began his song. His voice rose over us, and took control of the rhythm. His beat followed, increasing with the intensity of the song, and then held steady while we danced. He sang to us his voice moving over the snow, then up and over the clearing past the sharp edge of the crevasse over the trees and up the mountain. He sang in Gitxsan. I didn’t understand many of the words. Something about the village, the community and the Clans. Something about together and family. It was the best song for the moment. It talked about the love I felt for both Betsy and Kevin. I spread my arms and dipped to the rhythms. I sang an echo of Kevin’s song, a few chants into the pause he allowed before he started again. Betsy and I danced—dipping, swaying, stamping the snow into the ground in that meadow, stamping our roots deep into that ground. The mountain watched and listened.

Kevin sang for a long time; we danced as if we would never tire.

It started to snow. First a few delicate flakes drifted past us seeming to swirl with the dance. Kevin drummed on. Then the flakes came thicker, heavier. Kevin banged a final beat.

“Move it!” he yelled. “It’s really going to storm!”

Betsy and I laughed aloud, then whirled toward the trail and ran for the vehicles.

Kevin had the engine going when I ran up to the car.

Betsy was right behind me and had her keys out. She quickly opened her truck door open. She stopped jumped back to the ground and caught me before I stepped into the car. “We are friends forever, right Trudith?” she said, and hugged me hard.

A sharp pain sliced through my newly healed collar bone, but I hugged her back.

The hug was worth the pain.

“Forever, Betsy.” We were both crying.

“See you at school tomorrow?” I asked.

“Hey, for sure,” Betsy said. She started to leave and dashed back. “Hey Trudith, you know I’m not going to graduate?”

“Aaghh!” For a moment I heard Granny in my voice. “My chances aren’t too good either.”

She grinned at me, and ran to her truck.

We made it out before the snow blocked us off the highway. Betsy turned toward the mill and Kevin and I headed back to Hazelton.

“Kevin?”

“What?”

“It’s stopped snowing.”

He turned off the windshield wipers as they started to squeak. No snow streamed past us; it was clear. I looked up. Stars. I turned to look back at the mountain. In the starlight I could see clouds wrapping the peak and falling halfway down the mountainside. It was snowing there, not here.

Kevin glanced at me. “It happens like that sometimes.”

“Right.” It happened like that sometimes. It wasn’t magical or weird. It was just weather. Mountains attracted clouds. That’s all. The sudden warming of the air, the snow falling like a benediction on our dance and the increasing ferocity of the snow storm warning us away. Just coincidence. Sure.

The broad curve before the Hagwilget Bridge was slippery. They must have had snow tonight, not much, just enough to make the roads slick. The bridge itself over the deep canyon was safe. The open grill construction allowed the snow to fall through and let the tires grip easily. We slid a little turning toward my house, but Kevin’s car has front wheel drive and handles the snow without too much trouble.

Mom stuck her head out the door, saw it was me and popped inside again. I kissed Kevin good night quickly. His mom would worry if he wasn’t home soon. Even a brief snow storm made people anxious.

I stood on the porch and looked toward the mountain. The clouds had disappeared and the mountain was a dark presence against the dark sky. I couldn’t see it clearly, but I knew it was there, secure, solid, protecting, not brooding tonight.

I opened the door and grabbed Bozo’s collar in a conditioned reflex as he tried to bolt. “Inside, Bozo. Everyone is going to stay inside tonight.”

I glanced at the door to Mom’s room. The light was off. She must have dived back into bed as soon as she knew I was home. I pulled open the fridge

door and helped myself to an apple. When I closed it, I noticed a note held to the door with one of Troy's Minor Hockey magnets.

"Trudith. Your results came back on your first math exam on the correspondence course. Congrats. A 77%. Pretty freaking good! Mom."

I grinned. It might take me a long time, but I was going to get there. I was going to wander on different mountains, maybe the Dalmatians, maybe the Himalayas. I'd write my articles and send copies back to Mom and Granny. And one day, years from now, I'd sit in the feast hall with all the other grannies and talk about the politics of the Gitxsan Nation, criticize the local chief and watch the children to make sure they learned. The mountain would still be here, watching us all.

Excerpts from the novel *Moving the Mountain* appear here with permission of the author.

Questions

1. What does the novel form allow for in presenting research? Comment on your own emotional and intellectual responses to the novel excerpts in this chapter, in light of what you consider.
2. Think about how Crook justifies her research method and her use of the novel form. Elaborate on these reflections and discuss the contradictions that are part of this justification.
3. Crook writes: "I had a great tension within me between my need to embrace the academic voice on the issues I was studying and my belief that my own research would be more vital, more accurate, and more truly reflect the students' lives than anything I could read." Write about this tension.
4. How does the landscape become important to Crook's research? What difference would landscape make to other research you have done or read about in this book?

About the Author

Marion Crook started her academic career with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Seattle University and came to writing through experience in the Cariboo country of British Columbia as a public health nurse and in that capacity heard the stories of the many people. She left nursing to write novels for young people, many of those novels set in the Cariboo (*Summer of madness* (1995) Victoria: Orca Books), and then to write non-fiction books, usually for teens around issues of importance to them such as suicide, eating disorders, and their views of being adopted (*Out of the darkness: Teenagers and suicide* (2003) Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp

Press; *The face in the mirror: Teenagers talk about adoption* (2001) New York: Plenum Publishing; *Looking good: Teenagers talk about eating disorders* (1992) Toronto: NCPress). She completed her Master of Arts degree in Liberal Studies at Simon Fraser University and her Ph.D. in Education at the University of British Columbia. Throughout this time she researched and wrote 25 published books.

Like many of the projects which have occupied years of her life, the story of education in a rural high school came to her slowly through reading, conversations with educators and parents, in films, and through casual conversations with teens. Then her son introduced her to the town where his birth family lived. Her own exploration, the interest of scholars, and the needs of the people in the town pressured her onto a full-blown research study, one which challenged the orthodoxies of writing in this research. The study felt inevitable, for the writing of stories was in her bones. In very short order, the research created the new life of the written word, and the experience, her own and others', fell into the story. The questions around education in this community compelled her to research. Research is finding out, and she had a need to find out. This story came about because the questions around why most teens in this town could not graduate were there. The novel form came about because the character of Trudith demanded expression and would not give the writer any rest until the novel was complete.

Crook presently teaches nursing students at Kwantlen University College, and researches fascinating ideas such as attitudes to crack cocaine addicts, and the notion of gang violence in the community. She continues to be led by an avid curiosity when she catches the scent of a new story, when she looks for research paths to new knowledge.

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3

Collaborative Inquiry as Illuminated Manuscript

MICHELLE FORREST, MIRIAM COOLEY, AND
LINDA WHEELDON

Phase I in Which the Reader Is Introduced to Stories within a Story

The scene is a lecture hall at a scholarly conference. At the front of the hall are three television monitors and three video recorders on trolleys arranged in a slight arch facing the viewers. Two or three people are already seated looking at their conference programs. Others gather in small groups discussing, chatting, and generally enjoying being with colleagues they haven't seen for a while or with whom they are sharing interests for the first time. Others are filing in. One person is standing at the entrance, reading the program, looking at the set-up at the front and apparently trying to decide if this is where s/he wants to be. It is not immediately apparent who will be giving or chairing the presentation. A woman extricates herself from a rather lively discussion and steps to the front.

Chair: Welcome everyone. If you'll take your seats, please . . . It's time we began the next session. (*She waits for people to find seats and quiet down.*) Thank you. Without further ado, I will turn things over to our three presenters who have asked that we begin informally. (*From different places in the hall, three women get up and come to the front. Two position themselves to start the video installation. The other addresses the group.*)

Presenter 1: Thank you all for coming. We'd like you to simply watch and listen. (*She moves to the monitors and together the three women start the three videos, adjust the sound levels and then take seats in the audience.*)

For seven or eight minutes, the audience watch and listen to three apparently uncut video sequences: one of water lapping in and out over a seaweed-covered rock, one of a small sailboat moored in the middle of a cove blanketed in wafting fog and one of the moon rising almost imperceptibly over a cove as daylight slowly fades (Figure 3.1). The impression is that each video sequence is happening in 'real time'. Each of the three videos has its own sound-track mixing intermittent sounds of wind and lapping water, a flute playing as if to the wind, a dog barking in the distance and snippets of conversation and laughter among three female voices with a fourth female voice singing in the background (Chandra, 1994):

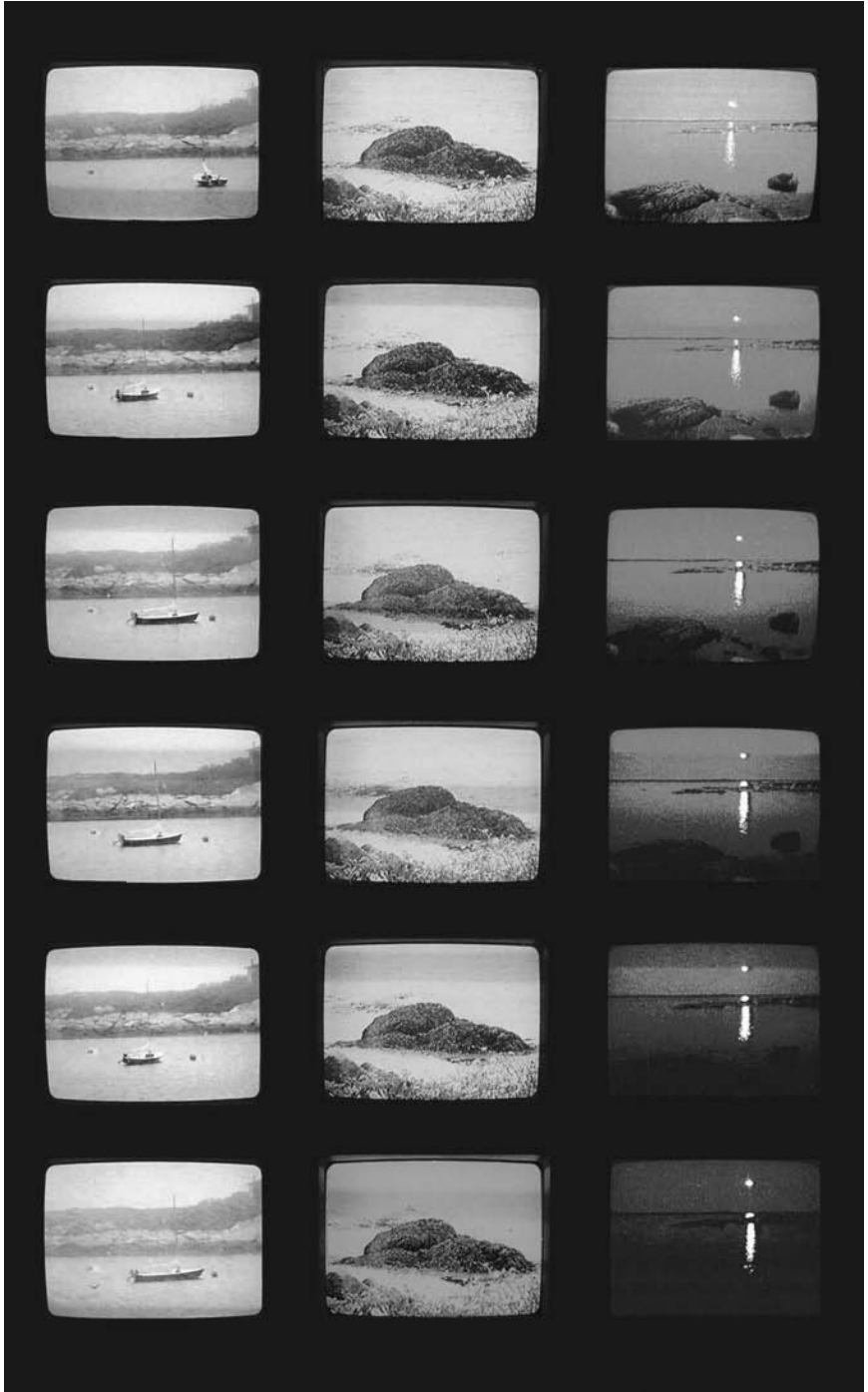


Figure 3.1

- Once I declared it as ‘my area’ I got nervous.
- No. Just go at it. What you bring to it is going to be your own thing.
“I’m gonna be; I’m gonna be-ah-be-ah-be . . .”
- When you’re finished, it’s your own process that creates something new. It doesn’t matter what you call it. Brand X. *(All three laugh.)* The generic . . .
- Dissertation!
- Applicable to all disciplines . . . *(picking up tone of an info-mercial)*
- At all times,
- Anyone can write it! *(Gales of laughter then they pause. Percussive singing heard in background.)*
- The robins around here are huge.
- They have to be *(laughing)*. Have you seen the seagulls? *(All three laugh.)*
“With the grace of an animal . . .”

At this point in the videos the three presenters nod to one another and slowly move to the front where each turns the sound down slowly on one monitor. The video images continue to play. The presenters turn as if to address the audience.

Presenter 2: (smiling) Could you please share with us your responses to what you’ve just seen and heard? (There follows a rather awkward pause of several seconds that feels much longer. The presenters wait patiently, apparently not disturbed by the silence.)

Chair: (tentatively looking around the room to see if anyone else is about to speak up first) Well, I . . . ah . . . thought we might be in for something a little different here. To be honest, I didn’t know what to think and after a few moments, when I realized that nothing was going to happen, I began to get . . . (hesitates as if concerned about how best to say what she actually felt) . . . well, I found it . . . boring. (She laughs rather nervously as she says this last word. Others laugh in response, as do the presenters. This breaks the tension as several hands go up at once. The session continues.)

In the scene above, the video installation, “Ockham’s Razor: (1) (1+1) (1+1+1),” represents the beginning of our collaboration as scholars and artists in the field of education. It has been installed and presented at scholarly conferences much as depicted above. We work according to a guiding principle: the value of the collaborative process in its capacity for inquiry. With overlapping interests and a commitment to consensus in our decision-making, we have realized the complexity of deciding anything collaboratively. Our mutuality of commitment depends upon the bonds of friendship that have been tried, tested, and strengthened through this attempt at mixing art with inquiry, the personal with the professional. We try to be vigilant, in every aspect of our collaborative scholarship, to insure that one person’s set of interests does not dominate those of the others. Whenever we reach an impasse—that is, a point of decision where the only apparent alternatives compromise our guiding principle of collaboration—we impose a chance operation. By adopting chance as a methodology, we follow the example of John

Cage's aleatory compositional process. The term *aleatory* refers to depending on chance or the throw of dice [fr. L. *alea*, die] OED. The American composer John Cage (1912–1992) subjected his compositional ideas to chance operations in an attempt to escape the limits of his own tastes and intentions; to wake up to “the very life we’re living, which is so excellent once one gets one’s mind and one’s desires out of its way and lets it act of its own accord” (Cage, 1961, p. 12).¹ Each time we have invited chance into our work, we have discovered something interesting and peculiarly fitting to our purposes. The following describes just such an example.

We first met as colleagues and began our collaboration when we were all teaching in an education department at the same university. While “Ockham’s Razor” was still in its post-production phase, we were asked to participate in the university’s research showcase. The production was to be a computer compilation of individual slideshows, each consisting of three electronic slides presented in three minutes. We accepted the invitation to participate but then began to wrestle with the limitations of the format. If we transcribed split seconds from “Ockham’s Razor” into three still shots, we would lose the ambience of the moving video images with their interweaving sound tracks. How were we to incorporate this three-slide format into our work?

We also had to consider how our artistic medium would be perceived in an academic setting where the norm is to pronounce research findings. Since the process of collaborative inquiry is both the method and the subject of our research, art making suits our purposes. “Ockham’s Razor” represents our collaborative process by both demonstrating and constituting the findings of our inquiries. We are a sample group of one, performing our ongoing process. It takes us a long time and much conversation each time we introduce a new means of expression into our work. It must be more than a mere means or vehicle for reporting. Following John Dewey’s definition of “medium,” we strive to make the means or vehicle one with its effect, incorporated in its outcome, thereby transforming means into medium (Dewey, 1934, pp. 197–198).

Although not all art is about its own process, Process Art is an established practice (Lucie-Smith, 1984, p. 153). The “real time” quality of “Ockham’s Razor” is necessary to our reality of process approach to scholarship in education. The phrase “realism of process” is borrowed from Brydon Smith’s assessment of Michael Snow’s *Authorization*. Smith describes it as “a beautiful reconfirmation of one of Snow’s main artistic tenets since 1960, namely that the content of his art follows from the process of its realization. It is realism of process” (Smith, 1970, p. 19). Our work *is* the process of its unfolding as represented in the media, sounds, images, words, and ideas that accompany our time together. We made this point as best we could to the producers of the research showcase, asking that we be allowed to use three minutes of video footage instead of the prescribed three slides; but the format was fixed and we had to figure out what to do next.

We decided to experiment with a computer application that captures still images from video footage. There is a split second on one of “Ockham’s” three, hour-long video sequences when by chance the tripod screw slipped, causing the camera to

swing away from the shot of the rock in the water. To this point in the sequence there is nothing to imply to the viewer that s/he is indoors looking out. Then, suddenly, the window frame and curtain are in the picture. We lit upon the idea of trying to capture this key moment in the filming when chance intervened to re-frame this phase of our work. We hoped that by capturing this key moment of change we could imply in a still image the ideas of movement and transition representing collaboration.

Trying to capture an image with this computer application turned out to be a hit or miss process, not precise like professional film or video editing. Try as we might, we just couldn't grab the image we wanted and were about to give up when something very interesting happened. The videotape must have been moving out of pause mode when the application kicked in and snapped a shot *between the frames*. Eureka! We call it "Split Rock" (Figure 3.2) and it served our purposes better than the image we were aiming to capture. "Split Rock" was a new re-framing, one we had not intended or predicted but which foregrounds the very process we were engaged in at that time: the process of representing video in a static medium.



Figure 3.2

The title "Ockham's Razor: (1) (1+1) (1+1+1)" alludes to Dan Flavin's 1963 artwork *the nominal three (to William of Ockham)* which consists of six eight-foot white neon tubes placed vertically in the configuration: I II III. Not only does the physical configuration of the work provide a visual metaphor for our collaborative trio of individuals, its underlying aesthetic concepts also illuminate our intentions. In the catalogue to a Flavin retrospective, Joseph Kosuth (2000, npn) observes:

It [*nominal*] was its own self, as art, because Flavin took the subjective responsibility for it to mean that. [. . .] It showed art, Flavin's, or it showed nothing. Yet, in order to do this, in order not to be a crafted object or an attempt at formal invention, in order not to satisfy anyone's idea of what an artwork should look like, it needed to utilize the banal: the empty carrier of meaning of an office lamp put out of place.

The reference to William of Ockham (c.1285–1347) situates our work in the context where theory is understood to evolve from careful attention to the details of a phenomenon. Ockham asserted that all knowledge begins with direct sensory experience as the foundation of cognition and abstraction. His practice was to strip arguments to their bare essentials—to argue from the particularity of experience. William of Ockham and his principle of parsimony came to us by chance. Michelle saw *the nominal three* at the National Gallery in Ottawa and was struck by the following statement below the title of the work:

“Ockham's Razor” is based upon his original maxim: “It is vain to do with more what can be done with fewer.”

Ockham argued that reality exists solely in individual things, while universals are merely abstract ideas. Flavin reinforces this proposition by using only the minimum number of fluorescent fixtures needed to establish a series, that is, (1) (1+1) (1+1+1), and create a sufficient play of light and shadows on the wall behind and in the surrounding space.

When the three of us discussed *the nominal three*, we began to develop a language and imagery for identifying critical aspects of our work: the complexity within the sparseness of three and the assumption underlying our comfort in beginning from everyday sights, sounds, objects, and interactions. In this way a title was born, but we soon realized that a title naming William of Ockham led people to assume things that we didn't assume. It is generally believed that Ockham began what is now our concept of empiricism and, as a result, an allusion to him today may be taken to imply a belief in a form of materialism or realism and a view of modern positivism as the superior arbiter of knowledge.²

We chose to allude to William of Ockham because we were drawn to his anti-realist theory of universals: identifying universals with the acts of understanding themselves.³ As it turns out, the fact that this allusion may raise realist assumptions works in our favor. Engaging with the contingent and commonplace particulars of the video installation, with its absence of narrative or descriptive structure, the viewer who reads “Ockham” as synonymous with a materialist view of reality may be puzzled. If this piece represents Ockham's stripped-down world, what does it mean? Our allusion to Ockham accidentally sets up a Socratic irony: the viewer's knowledge is in apparent opposition to the particulars of the work. The viewer is thrown back upon the acts of her own understanding in the question, “Nothing is happening so how can this be research?” Even though as Wade Rowland puts it, “Ockham's razor sliced through the umbilicus linking material reality and human

consciousness” (Rowland, 1999, p. 152), their mutual dependence remains. The razor cuts both ways. The boredom and/or puzzlement our video installation effects provoke the viewer to question her own assumptions. As Feyerabend warns: “We must not demand that the process of learning be structured in accordance with the categories, laws and perceptions we are already familiar with” (1975, p. 272).⁴

Phase II in Which the Reader Glimpses New Stories and Possibilities for New Phases

This “paper,” with its images, descriptions of sounds and interwoven voices, its use of poetic and dramatic devices and its evocation of individual voices to follow, is our attempt at representing collaborative inquiry in this static medium of the book. The shifts and changes of this text mime those of our working relationships and thus illuminate this manuscript. We have purposely broken with the traditions of identifying different speakers because we find that the result of our collaboration is always more than the sum of its parts and that echoes of all are to be heard in the thoughts of each.

I must down to the seas again,
to the lonely sea and the sky . . .
(‘Sea Fever’, John Masefield, 1902)

Thinking is a social activity.
(Phillips & Burbules, 2000, p. 24)

We arrived at the edge of the sea. Waves arrived before, during and after. They delight us, as we delight one another. As colleagues in a school of education, we met and became friends. As the discourse of connection grew in stories about university politics, families, research concerns, pedagogy, and job searches, we saw our relationship as a site of exploration; to know each other and ourselves in new ways became a moment-by-moment unfolding. The conversations turned to research discussion, the making of art and how we could work together and make visible the collaborative process rather than the product of our collaboration. We saw how we took our insights for granted in that we did not record our sessions. The waves constant in motion, against a shoreline, become invisible. We saw that we must become more aware to note the passage of the multiple waves of shared insights. We were not strangers to collaboration. However, after experiencing the fertile ground of us working together, we wanted to create and further explore the process. We gathered to examine art making as a research activity at Terence Bay.

On the Garden Route between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, the ocean is our companion. Crossing through to the ocean at Great Brak one passes through rocks, marsh area and alongside a river, which frames the ocean’s edge. Here the sea can never be taken for granted because of the properties of the tide. The waves come

into the shore from the left, directly and from the right. At times there is a curious backwards wave that forms. Without vigilance, one is easily knocked losing ground and footing as a wave may intersect companion waves. Woven streams of water create a vortex of force and foam. Each moment is new and demanding.

Our collaborative process intersects our data over and again, surprising us until we can take nothing for granted as the multiple experiences collect and change each moment. As researchers we found little to describe the experience of working together.

Unlike the classic empiricists and rationalists, who did not examine “the fact that researchers belong to a community” (Phillips & Burbules, 2000, p. 24), we were drawn to understand this. To know what is known is a process shared and “gets transformed from my personal belief to knowledge when it is socially legitimated” (Harding, 1993, p. 65). We became a research community. This choice interrupted the orthodoxy of the traditional research paradigms in which there are primary, secondary (and on) researchers. We sought to step away from pursuits of credit and individual authorship: the solo artist. Multiple voices liberate knowledge from ownership. Our group process rose and fell like a tide at times over our most recent formation, our sand castles, or like the sailboat of our video, moving, circling imperceptible in the stillness.

What is necessary in pursuit of the collaborative moment? What qualities of person are necessary for the engagement? How does one prepare to befriend the unpredictable moment? What does it take as academics to exist in “collaboration, the chaos of multiple logics” (Byrd & Owens, 1998, p. 48). Two possible aspects of engagement might include a political stance in which there is equity in who voices the knowledge(s) preserved alongside a willing practice to dismantle hierarchies and a commitment to face the interpersonal sites with authenticity.

In-site collaboration is a playful analogue for the reflexivity required to fulfill the commitment to equitable engagement. As we filmed our videos, we found ourselves less interested in a produced event than in a record of the unfolding events. The dog barking became recorded alongside the conversations between and among us, the clinking of glassware and cutlery as the lunch table was set and cleared as melodic as Michelle’s haunting flute. To value each moment, each intersection, becomes a methodology in which awareness replaces narrative, sensitivity to each contribution overrides exposition and individual voice matters equally with the chorus.

As a community of scholars we sought to promote each other and our site of collaboration. Our association is positive and our relationships are our bond. To work together required the development of trust. To be positive and personal suggests one does not intend to do harm. Without evidence of warmth and connection there is a removal of trust. We sought to develop a fully positive personal relation in which, because we trust one another, we can think and feel and act together. Only in such a relation can we really be ourselves (Macmurray, 1961, p. 150).

To share ourselves is an act of trust requiring authenticity and genuine engagement. Carl Rogers embraced genuineness as the most significant condition for

a successful relationship with another. He writes that by being open and transparent as the helper, the client can unburden. The open, transparent site of the therapeutic relationship allows us to unburden ourselves because the withholding of self is less likely when the other is being genuine with us. Instead “we feel trust and willingness to expose ourselves” (Kahn, 1999, p. 43). While art making is not first a psychotherapeutic engagement, there is a correlation between the genuine moment in a therapeutic relationship and the creative flow of expression; this is sought and valued in communities of authentic engagement and trust.

As we explore ourselves, one to other to another, the subject/object distinctions of research collapse. The interplay of ourselves as artists, educators, and women allows us to be subject and object, intimately in the places of our researching. “As [we] zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition” (Ellis, 1999, p. 673). How do we apply our methodological stance to the formulation of our presentation, as our intimacy becomes data? How we determine what to display offers opportunities to examine more than that which we might think is beautiful, well produced or of interest. We co-create the art, working to acknowledge the moments of unfolding which are significant whether stormy or calm. We question each other. Is it safe to share our stories, the disagreements about presentation, the struggle to allow chaos, the varying abilities, the boring moments? Collaborative work offers an opportunity for the individual separateness to be shared, to become more (Byrd & Owens, 1998, p. 48), threatening our comfort, as we intend an awareness, to become more awake, open, groundless, and exposed.

Prairie, Summer

The Great Plains landscape is an elemental one. . . . The landscape is so huge that our imagination can't contain it or outstrip it, and the climate is concomitantly arbitrary and severe.

(Sharon Butala, 1995, p. 88)

I am driving west from Winnipeg across the prairie, or at least what used to be prairie before the benefits of asphalt and surveyor's transit. My daughter and I drive in the sweltering heat and humidity of early August toward my mother's home. There is no air conditioning and eventually we resort to pouring water over each other for a few moments of relief. She drives. Contemporary jazz plays on the CD player. It is too hot to talk, but the silence is easy between us. Actually, I realize that I crave this chance to be alone with my thoughts on this broad, solid plain. I need to be, to let myself be, in this place and she is content to let me be there, silent. I feel oddly settled and agitated at the same time in this landscape where, as Sharon Butala says, “the line between fact and dream is so blurred,” a space of “sky and land, that is all, and grass, and what Nature leaves bare the human psyche fills” (Butala, 1995, p. 88).

So we travel across the surface of the earth—the space of sky and land in the colors of midsummer. The prairie is no longer the vast meadow of wild flowers that

so amazed CPR surveyor Sandford Fleming, who in 1872 “beheld a sea of green sprinkled with yellow, red, lilac, and white” (Redekop, 1998, p. 3),⁵ but the prairie is still blanketed in color: the blue-green sheen of oats coming into head, the dull soft green on wheat fields, brilliant yellow canola in flower, and the hazy blue of flax just in bud, not yet its full vivid blue. How familiar and secure this all feels. The heavy black soil is so simply and profoundly *Earth*. The quintessential prairie scene is complete as a miles-long freight train runs parallel to us before we gradually pull past. My eye follows its line toward the horizon and I can no longer resist the sky. That is where my thoughts really want to be, seduced by the phenomena of vast clear space above a horizon line “that is sometimes so clear and sharp that it is surreal . . . blending into mirages and the realm of dreams and visions which wavers just on the other side of the horizon” (Butala, 1995, p. 88).

On that first sighting, Fleming had declared, “The half had not been told us! As you cannot know what the ocean is without seeing it, neither can you picture in imagination the prairie” (Redekop, 1998, p. 3). The poignancy of the sea/prairie analogy seems obvious but it plays like white sound someplace in my head, now that I live nearer to the sea than the prairie. Location is more than the geography, but how can I understand my existence in either one place or the other? I indulge in the sensation of being absorbed into the sky, into imagination, into the fluctuating pixels of memory and ideas that form and reform into images, like the cloud formations toward which I am traveling, like the (1+1+1) videos.

I have not seen my mother since last Christmas and when eventually we arrive at the farm I am relieved to see that she has recovered so well from the health crisis of the past spring. The heat is enervating and we sit and talk with fans at full force as the worst heat of the day recedes. Our lethargic conversation ends abruptly with the first ominous rumble of thunder. We step out onto the patio to be confronted with immense dark clouds moving toward us with incredible speed. The top edges of the rolling pillars are starkly white, their underbelly forebodingly black, and in the spaces between are patches of startling acidic blue. The sunlight turns sour. Goopy gray-ochre iridescence sweeps over us as thunder crashes simultaneously with the shards of lightning that streak through the clouds. Soon, horizontal sheets of water are being driven by wind that bends and tears the trees and everything else before it.

Art/image making is recreating a space for dreams and visions. I think of works of art, such as our videos, as the tracing marks of ideas happening—the materialization of imagination and intellect. The pleasure of creative experience is the exhilaration of play, the electricity of ideas loose in the air—the illusive, fragmentary capturing of image and sound on magnetic particles, revealed in pixelated moments of light. Imagination “permits us to give credence to alternative realities” (Greene, 1995, p. 3), and is “about openings, about possibilities, about moving in quest and in pursuit” (p. 15). Laughter. The challenge of ambiguity. Ambiguity and absurdity. Extremity, simplicity, complexity.

they are tight and formal but very ethereal. sensitive. fragile.

see through mostly.

not painting, not sculpture. It's there though.

...

everything, but of another kind, vision, sort.

from a total other reference point. Is it possible?

I have learned anything is possible. I know that.

that vision or concept will come through total risk,

freedom, discipline.

I will do it.

(Eva Hesse in Lippard, 1992, p. 165)

The three video images that play in my mind's eye depict a single location although the shifts of time/tides/light open huge gaps across which the eye, mind, and imagination are obliged to pass—literally in the experience of simultaneous viewing, figuratively in the quest of accumulating the details with which to construct a perception of the spatial phenomena of the location. Some connection to the geography of the location is perhaps a viewer's initial orientation, a way in. But then where am I?

As a viewer, I move my attention from one image to the next but there is a moment at which I must disconnect from one in order to be with the next. That is the moment of vulnerability into which memory, anxiety, questions can intrude and put at risk any hope of an easy landing in the imaginary space of the next image. In that “dialogically agitated and tension filled environment of alien words, judgements, and accents” (Bakhtin, 1990, p. 103) I pick up baggage in mid-air. Drawn to watch the electric dance of light across the screen, I am exposed to the long-distance waves from other places, other sounds, and other spaces.

Why is it that these images continue to be so seductive for me? Perhaps it is the electric dance of light across the screen that compels me. Perhaps it is the memory of the hospitable, energized moment of their recording—while the three of us talked and laughed, and lunched. Perhaps it is the enigmatic quality of the images that are represented there—the gentle passing of time across the coastal landscape. Perhaps it is the landscape itself, one that is so new and awesome to me. Is it simply my curiosity about this new place to which the events of my life have brought me, not really by my choice, but certainly not against my will? I willfully entertain the daily play of ground and sky, the intervening mirage, and the moments in between, in the air, risking change. Vast and at once exquisitely spare and intensely detailed, the sea, the prairie, the sky are spaces of the imagination that is both abstract and visceral. Stillness always in flux. The evident obscured, then glimpsed. Presumption disrupted and reinstated.

As we watched the original tape and discussed our responses and reflected on the experience that we had shared, it became clear these simple images were remarkably seductive to us, and that the event of their creation embodied complex questions about learning, creativity, and art making for all of us. Our engagement

with chance operations—a willingness to let something happen without predetermining and controlling its outcome—freed each of us to consider the aspects of the work that were most provocative for us. For me this was first the pleasure of viewing and reflecting upon the gentle scenes depicted in the images. I then considered them in light of my previous artwork about the impact of place and location on identity formation. Lucy Lippard has remarked that “each time we enter a new place, we become one of the ingredients of an existing hybridity, which is really what all ‘local places’ consist of. By entering that hybrid we change it; and in each situation we play a different role” (Lippard, 1997, pp. 5–6). The validity of this remark was clear as I watched these quintessentially Atlantic coast scenes in the electronically illuminated format. What is this hybrid relationship for those of us who “come from away” to live and create in any new place?

Our collective knowledge of this place is ancient, chosen, and transient. I am seduced by the timeless forces of this new place. Perhaps it is true that “each time we enter a new place we become one of the ingredients of an existing hybridity” (pp. 5–6), but having only recently arrived, I felt that I could stand only on the surface of this ground—until an aeroplane fell from the sky.⁶ Our interest is in the meanings that evolve from the places that we inhabit—the aesthetic locations of human experience—the specificity of geography and landscape that shape culture, identity, dreams, and politics. Our challenge is to represent the sites and spaces of imagination.

From the outset we understood all artistic production as a collective action, not the unique property of one individual creator. Bourdieu cites Becker’s view that works of art are the “result of the coordinated activities of all the people whose co-operation is necessary in order that the work should occur as it does.” Our ongoing intention has been to follow through the perspective voiced by Bourdieu when he asserts:

Consequently the inquiry must extend to all those who contribute to this result, i.e. the people who conceive the idea of the work . . . the people who execute it . . . the people who provide the necessary equipment and materials . . . and the people who make up the audience for the work.

(Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 34–35)

We consider our engagement with those who become audience for our work a vital aspect of our research. As we watch “Ockham’s” tidal ebb and flow, the wafting fog, and the rising moon, we consider also our engagement with those who are forever one with that place.

Terence Bay, November

The waves crash in lazy patterns, repeating a loose and unpredictable rhythm, rolling in as if by indirect force, as if following a course determined at another time and place. A storm at sea finds its end in the curve of this harbour where the whipping gale is now a mere suggestion.

A full rainbow from one horizon to the other capped the mouth of the bay yesterday evening as daylight savings were spent for another year. This morning the sun tries to break through—to *break through*: a funny expression for discovery or progress. A thick front hangs just off Tenant Point. The dark fluffy ceiling appears to be moving nearer, into the cove, but a stiff nor'wester keeps it fixed just off shore creating that wonderful *god-is-speaking* effect. Rays stream down in fan-shaped stretches.

A red-breasted merganser surfaces in the face of the surge. It catches her. It seems she waits too long; she'll be crushed as it breaks. With a darting move she is around a big rock and into the calm eddy on its lee side. She stems off disaster effortlessly, always risking the wake of a storm when the bottom is turned up to her taste. Her ruddy crested head and flirting moves remind me of a *commedia dell'arte* harlequin, trifling with seriousness.

Sitting at the tide's lowest ebb, I mistake the surf breaking way out on Flatroof Shoal for a sail keeled into the wind. That distant surface seems higher than where I sit. I am at the mean point between everything the sea can become and what it's been. I watch the earth curve away and fold beyond the black lip of distance onto someone else's high-water mark.

Experiencing a process piece amounts to witnessing the . . . procedure unfold. Now the scaffolding stands alone, bare and exposed and unyielding, shorn of its traditional, ingratiating façade.

(Schwartz, 1997 & 2000, npn)

Phase III in Which the Reader Returns to Phase I Where Nothing Is Still Happening

As the session closes, the presenters turn up the sound on the three monitors. The tide has reached the rock's high-water mark. Fog has almost obscured the sailboat. The moon has risen high above the cove, its path across the water illuminating every ripple.

- Do you want to check and see that I'm not obstructing the view?
- You couldn't possibly be obstructing the view.
- Yeah. There you are, every bit of you. (*All three laugh.*)
- We can rearrange the shot if we want to.
- I like that Bill Viola thing of just sitting and watching something do what it does. (*A rather long pause*)
- And now we are mute.
- We do what we do. (*Laughter again.*)
- We don't often quiet down, so (*becomes formal as if speaking to audience*)

I hope you enjoyed that moment of silence.

“Tak-a-tuk-a-ta-dim?
Tak-a-dim-tuk-a-dim.”

(Chandra, 1994)⁷



Figure 3.3



Figure 3.4

Questions

1. The authors write that research involves the following: “The pleasure of creative experience is the exhilaration of play, the electricity of ideas loose in the air—the illusive, fragmentary capturing of image and sound on magnetic particles, revealed in pixilated moments of light.” How does this notion of research requirements compare with what you have read about research in the past?
2. How do the images and resonances of time, space, and physical geography and their impact on knowledge creation in this chapter compare with those in Piquemal and Allen’s chapter (Chapter 9)? Do you find these arguments have resonance with your own approach to research?
3. Is research also an artistic creation, not owned by anyone, the product of all research which came before it and leading to all research after it? How does this notion of research “fit” with academic guidelines and the rules of copyright?
4. How might Ockham’s axiom “it is vain to do with more what might be done with fewer” relate to research with human subjects?
5. The “nominal three” is an image which seems to recur in research. More than any other number, it appears, researchers “find” three categories, or report on a trinity of conclusions. How does this reflect your own notions of research? What is it about the nominal three that makes it so appealing?

About the Authors

The (1+1+1) Collective originated at Acadia University in 1998 when three women, who then worked together in the school of education, said, “Let’s make a video!” In spite of the distresses and dilemmas of life, and the distances that now separate us, we continue to revel in the joy of “the electricity of ideas loose in the air,” and to indulge our desire that the world should be so much more than the narrow slivers that most of us are offered. We use a group name to challenge unquestioned assumption within scholarly publishing; namely, that collaboration necessarily entails a “lead” or “head” researcher. We list our names in alphabetical order. Our decisions are made by consensus and, when consensus proves difficult or impossible, we use a chance operation. *The (1+1+1) Collective* are Miriam Cooley, associate professor of Art Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta; Michelle Forrest, associate professor of Philosophy of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University; and Linda Wheeldon, lecturer in Foundations and Counseling Education at Acadia University.

Notes

- 1 For more on John Cage, see Perloff & Junkerman (1994).
- 2 Bryan Magee (1998) says of William of Ockham (1285–1347): “He believed there was necessity in logic but not in the natural order of things. In nature even unbroken regularities are contingent; they need not have happened. We cannot reach knowledge of the world purely through logical argument or speculation; we have to look and see how things are. Ockham opened the path to empiricism, the path we think of as ‘scientific.’ The principle of Ockham’s razor: of two alternative explanations for the same phenomena, the more complicated is likely to have something wrong with it and therefore, other things being equal, the more simple is the more likely to be correct. Therefore in working out an explanation we should assume the minimum we need to assume. Entities should not be posited unnecessarily.” The qualifier “other things being equal” is crucial here. “Einstein hit the point brilliantly when he said: ‘Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler’” (p. 61).
- 3 Flew (1979) explains that Ockham first drew from Aureolus’ concept of *ficta*, that is, of entities with only intentional being, but later rejected this in favor of Walter Chatton’s identification of universals with the acts of understanding themselves (p. 374).
- 4 Feyerabend goes on to say: “It is just such an ‘unprejudiced’ way of learning that a field study is supposed to achieve. Returning from the field study to his own conception in his own language, such as English, an anthropologist often realizes that a direct translation has become impossible” (pp. 272–273).
- 5 Sir Sandford Fleming: born Fife, Scotland 1827, died Halifax, Canada 1915, pioneer, surveyor, inventor, railway engineer and originator of standard time.
- 6 We were struck cold using chance operations to create “Ockham’s Razor: (1) (1+1) (1+1+1)” when Swissair Flight 111 crashed into the sea seconds from our local place of collaboration.
- 7 In her liner notes to *The Zen Kiss*, Chandra writes that in the *Speaking in Tongues* pieces “I’m breaking up patterns and throwing you off the beat, being as mad and chaotic as possible, yet I’m also keeping you hooked using the psychology of the rhythm. I have started to build in other percussive elements . . . anything that will get you to question the nature of these percussive syllables rather than accepting them because you think they’re traditional. . . . It’s a very playful process to chop up rhythms and stick them back together. It’s almost like giving a voice to the chatter that goes on in your mind.”

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Entangled Lives

Inquiring into the Negotiation of Relational Stories to Live By in Doctoral Studies and Research

JANICE HUBER AND KAREN KEATS WHELAN

Prologue (fall, 2006)

In the spring of 1996, we, Karen and Janice, each requested leaves of absence from our shared school board to enable us to undertake doctoral study and research. Our decisions to pursue further graduate study were influenced by the growing tensions we experienced as classroom teachers working alongside diverse children and families in a provincial context shaped by an increasing push for standardized curriculum and achievement. In the years leading up to our doctoral studies, a space that was vital in sustaining our work as teachers was a teacher research group brought together through Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly's program of research into teacher knowledge and professional contexts (see Clandinin, 1986; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). In the spring of 1996, Jean and Michael received a grant to extend their earlier work through a focus on "stories to live by," a narrative way to understand the connections among teachers' knowledge, contexts and identity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). We both very much wanted to participate, and were privileged to do so, alongside Jean, Michael, and other researchers inquiring into teacher identity (see Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

In time, our doctoral research drew us into relationships with both a group of three teacher co-researchers and four principal co-researchers with whom, similarly to Hollingsworth (1992) and Miller (1990), we engaged in collaborative conversations as a way to explore questions of what might be otherwise if at the heart of educational institutions and processes was ongoing attention to experience and inquiry.¹ Midway through the approximately 18 months during which we engaged in research conversations within each group of co-researchers, we, Janice and Karen, began a complex process of co-authoring 14 papers which form our collaborative doctoral dissertation (see Huber, 2000 or Whelan, 2000).² This chapter, "Entangled Lives: Inquiring into the Negotiation of Relational Stories to Live By in Doctoral Studies and Research," was written from our second co-authored paper. Unlike our 13 other papers, this chapter turned our inquiry toward questions of our relationship, that is, toward an exploration of some of the external and internal tensions we experienced in trying to live out a shared dream of composing one collaborative dissertation.

In composing this chapter, Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) metaphorical description of a "three-dimensional narrative inquiry space" (p. 49) guided our inquiry. Their terms are:

personal and social (interaction); past, present, and future (continuity); combined with the notion of place (situation). This set of terms creates a metaphorical three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, with temporality along one dimension, the personal and social along a second dimension, and place along a third.

(p. 50)

The personal–social dimension points us inward and outward; inward "toward the internal conditions, such as feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50), and outward "toward the existential conditions" (p. 50). Moving backward and forward points us "to temporality—past, present, and future" (p. 50). Place "attends to the specific concrete physical and topological boundaries of inquiry landscapes" (p. 51). Composing our chapter by inquiring into stories of experiences in this multidimensional way was not a step-by-step or linear process, nor did we arrive at an ending point which gave us a list of certain findings or results. Instead, what took shape through our narrative inquiry was the momentary opening of spaces which called us to think hard about the deeply relational aspects of identity.

Over nine years have passed since we wrote the dissertation copy of what is now this chapter. Yet the tension which sits at the heart of this work—the deeply relational, temporal, contextual, and narrative negotiation of our identities, of our stories to live by, as we engage in inquiries indelibly shaped and reshaped through relationships with participants—is one that continues to linger not only in each of our, Karen's and Janice's, teaching and research lives but also in the lives and work of many teachers (see, e.g., Joshee, forthcoming; Ollerenshaw & Lyons, 2002) and researchers (see, e.g., Clandinin et al., 2006; Craig & Huber, 2007; Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007; Piquemal, 2005; Young, 2005). It is, we imagine, a tension that will, for some time, continue to linger.

Beginning to Compose Counterstories

You and i are close, we intertwine;
 you may stand on the other side of the hill once in awhile,
 but you may also be me,
 while remaining what you are and what i am not.

(Trinh, 1989, p. 90)

Trinh's words helped us to begin to inquire into our relationship, a relationship in which our thoughts and words, feelings and interpretations of ourselves³ have become entangled. Bringing an intense knowing of the other—knowing that is not smooth and predictable, but textured, knotted, and frayed by our difference—our entanglements have been necessary to the relational stories we composed

and recomposed during the unfolding of our shared doctoral research and dissertation. In knowing one another these ways, we have learned to expect ambiguity, uncertainty, and tension. Borrowing Trinh's (1989) thoughts on the multiplicity of identity, and the infinite layers living within and between selves, as our chapter unfolds we work to "unsay" the story of separate development shaping our institutional context (and at times, our selves), rewriting it with presence to "interdeterminancy," an awareness of the profound interconnection between self and other.

The visual representations through which we try to show our shifting stories to live by of relationship are not merely aesthetic creations. Our play with text is not unlike that of writers who have also tried to show, through their written or visual texts, something of the vital place of relationships in shaping and reshaping their inquiries or knowledge- or identity-making processes (see, e.g., Bach, 1998; Caine, 2002; Clark, 1998; Cushman, 1996; Godard, 1994; Pushor, 2000; Raymond, 2002; Steeves, 2000; Yancey & Spooner, 1998).

What we came to more deeply understand through our narrative inquiry in this chapter is that trying to textually represent the relational aspects of our experiences is one way to push against a dominant institutional narrative of what counts as academic text (and knowledge). Each draft of this chapter was guided by Nelson's (1995) sense of composing and recomposing counterstories as a way to reshape dominant cultural, social, or institutional narratives. Working to represent (and to continue to live and tell) a counterstory in the face of more dominant institutional narratives which privilege competitive, individualistic plotlines, we re-present and inquire into our relationship in multiple ways: words set in structured and unstructured form; poetry; story; fluid and unbounded text—alternative symbolisms constructed to show, as well as to inquire into, how our shifting identities and relationship intimately shaped the unfolding of our doctoral inquiry.

Awakening to Identity Enclosures

As our inquiry unfolded, Trinh's (1989) distinction between "I" and "i" became vital in reshaping our understandings of our relationship. Trinh moves beyond a limiting and self-contained understanding of identity—"I," to one which is fluid, relational, and ever-embracing of the multiple storylines that shape who we each are becoming—"i." Her work begged us to move beyond a bordered sense of self and toward greater wakefulness about ways in which lives leak one into another. As we read and reread Trinh's work, she inspired our following representation as a way to show something of our growing awareness of the differences between composing "I" and "i" stories to live by (Figure 4.1).

Making the above visual representation of our relationship helped us to begin to name some of the tensions we were experiencing as doctoral students. In making our "I and i" representation we were called toward new questions about why we felt so compelled to push against dominant narratives of composing academic lives and work which privilege separation and competition. Through this process of visual representation we became drawn toward wanting to more deeply

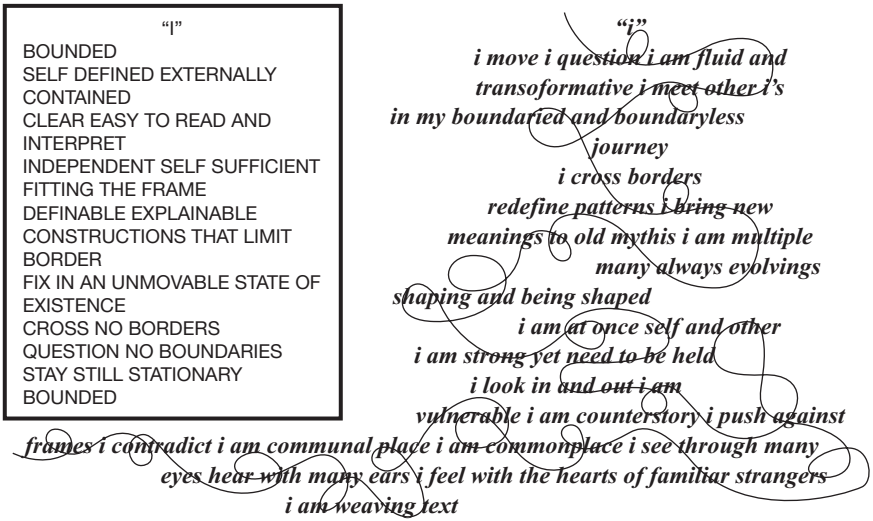


Figure 4.1 "I" and "i"

understand the multiplicity of each of our lives, the multiplicity of the stories we lived by and the spaces shaped in their meetings. In time, our growing awareness and acceptance of the infinite stories shaping our relationship supported us to experience something of what Anzaldúa (1987) described as “bordercrossings”, a never-easy or never-ending process of trying to meet, of trying to understand, the experiences known in someone else’s life. In his work, Clark (1998) framed his understanding of this social process of knowledge- and identity-making, as “travel:”

It is only when . . . [she] . . . travels “humbly away” from the certainty and control of identity that is enabled by . . . [her] familiarity with elements of a home territory that [she] . . . can recognize in [herself] . . . a commonality and, more importantly, an interdependency with others whose lives and home places are very different from . . . [her] own.

(p. 14)

It was in this way that attending to our childhood landscapes became an important thread in our inquiry. As we told, wrote, and inquired into stories we carried of our childhood landscapes, we began to recognize that particular storylines which had been initially nurtured there were woven into the stories we continued to try to negotiate on multiple other landscapes. These storylines, shaped through our experiences lived on our childhood landscapes, became interesting puzzlements for us. Returning, through memory, to these early landscapes created openings from which we began to look toward new understandings of ourselves.

Exploring Storied Fragments of Experiences on Childhood Landscapes

The narratives we shape out of the materials of our lived lives must somehow take account of our original landscape if we are to be truly present to ourselves.

(Greene, 1995, p. 75)

In the narrative inquiries we each engaged in as we wrote proposals for doctoral research, we both explored ways in which our childhood landscapes shaped the stories we lived by as teachers (see, e.g., Huber in relation with Keats Whelan, 2001; Keats Whelan in relation with Huber, 2001). Figure 4.2 was composed from this earlier writing.

As we began to lay our earlier writing and, in particular, these newly composed fragments of our childhood experiences side by side, shifting, forward and backward, past and present (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), we became drawn toward understanding something more about the differences and similarities within and between our childhood landscapes. What first came forward in this inquiry were ways in which our earlier experiences were shaped by particular physical

As each day drew to a close, our evening meals, whether they occurred in the fields or around our kitchen table, added another richness to how I experienced my girlhood within a rural landscape. When meals were eaten in one of the fields, my dad and neighbours with whom he was working, stopped their work. Leaving their equipment idling, the rhythms of their motors echoed toward us as we gathered together to eat. The memories I carry of these mealtime gatherings are those of listening to the stories circulated among neighbourhood people and my family members. Many of the stories shared in this communal space focused on earlier people who lived within our rural landscape and the ways they negotiated themselves and their livelihoods within the context of the land and surrounding community. Three of the storytellers who commonly gathered there were men who came to Northern Alberta having immigrated from England, Finland and Norway. Even though I had not yet been to any of these places, as I listened to the stories they shared, my mind painted clear images of these distant places. These stories, and the stories my family told and continued to tell as we gathered together, although never recorded in writing, stayed with me. They are stories inextricably linked to the particularities of my rural family and community landscape – stories told and shared that shaped my childhood stories to live by.

I am warmed by the memories of those lazy Sunday afternoons when my family; my two brothers, my sister, my parents, and I, would arrive home from church and sit down together in the living room to listen to our favourite records. My dad would often dance some silly Maritime jig and make us all break into laughter. I can still picture myself lying in the patches of sunlight that streamed through our large living room window onto the soft shag carpet. It was in the safety and comfort of this setting that I remember the sharing of stories taking place. Sundays became a day to 'catch up' on the week gone by, and to wonder out loud about what might lie ahead. The exchange of stories often centred around school as both my parents were teachers. School stories, shared by all, took on a place of importance in our home, and our family life moved to the rhythm of the school year. This rhythm carried naturally into our summer months, allowing our family time to travel together, the six of us crowded into our station wagon. With our sailboat, the Godolphin, trailing behind us, we headed out for adventure to the beaches and oceans of the east and west coasts of Canada. My childhood memories are filled with long ferry boat rides where my mother read our favourite books to us, the sound of ocean waves, the early morning call of the seagull, and with family stories shared within the closely knit quarters of our sailboat home on the sea.

Figure 4.2 Fragments of experiences lived on childhood landscapes

landscapes. Yet while our attention could have remained focused solely on this aspect of our early lives, in trying to see past our stories in new ways (Greene, 1995) we began to see how they “reveal[ed] the inner life of a girl inventing herself—creating the foundation of self-hood and identity” (hooks, 1996, p. xi). We saw, for example, that the “web of memories” creating our understandings of relational identity was first shaped by particular relationships with people in our early lives (Silko, 1996, p. 43). Common markers that stood out for us as we traced these fragments of memory were the strong sense of belonging and of storytelling which we each remembered as qualities of our childhood experiences. We also saw that, for each of us, our childhood landscapes held a “special regard for telling and bringing together through the telling” (p. 58). In this way we realized that these early communal spaces, shaped through storytelling and connection with others, became roots of stories that we were each continuing to try to negotiate in our work alongside children and families and that we were presently trying to negotiate on a university landscape.

This process of childhood “rememory” (Greene, 1995) helped us become more thoughtful about why we felt so determined in our need to work in relation to compose one collaborative dissertation. These intersections between past and present, and within and between one another, were entanglements that helped us to see that trying to hang onto the negotiation of relational stories to live by was a matter of deep and real urgency; an urgency not only connected with wanting to be meaningfully engaged in doctoral study and research but also an urgent pushing against not falling into the more dominant institutional narrative of competition and working in isolation. We saw, as well, that in so many ways our conflict with this dominant narrative lived in the background of our initial desires and decisions to undertake doctoral studies.

Exploring Shifting Understandings of Our Relationship

Thinking about how we might show the temporality of our relationship over a previous ten-year period across shifting social and physical contexts, we recognized there was no one complete or unified story which could define our evolving selves and relationship. It was in this way that we became drawn toward trying to show something of our relationship across time and place through vignettes, fragments of storied memories which, like ourselves, have no definite borders: “fragments that never stop interacting while being complete in themselves” (Trinh, 1989, p. 143). Our use of regular and italic font was one way to show our individual tellings of our relationship. As we played with different ways of textually laying our stories alongside one another, the images and feelings we experienced deepened our awareness of the complexities of trying to compose relational stories to live by.

Home—Spring, 1995

I hear the back screen door opening and know that when Karen sees me standing at the kitchen sink, she will ask how my day was. Even though I try to control my voice, I am unable to. Becoming shakier with each word

I speak, my emotions spill forth as I wonder, “Am I going to spend the rest of my career feeling so alone? What’s wrong with me?” Karen does not back away from my frustration, but instead comes to stand beside me. Gently, she says, “You’re not alone, Janice. You have 24 children in your classroom who love you. You’re there for them.” Her words shape a space for me to share my story of a staff meeting that afternoon in which the conversation became increasingly focused on moving away from multi-age classroom groupings and toward grouping children according to ability as determined by standardized achievement tests. Conversation with Karen helps me understand something more about why I feel so troubled, why I can’t let go of the passions that arose within me during the staff meeting. As Karen listens and responds, I am able to reshape my understanding of this afternoon, shifting from a sense of hopelessness toward a sense of insight.

Home—Fall, 1995

It has been a difficult day and I am weary and drained of emotion. I enter quietly through the back door and head down to my basement suite. I feel a need to be alone, to get my head around the events of the day. What do these parents expect of me? I can only give so much to them, to their children. My inner thoughts swallow me into greater despair. Finally, I drag my tired bones off the couch and climb the stairs in search of a glimmer of hope. I find Janice. “What’s wrong?” she asks, sensing my distress. I share with her my story—a troubling parent, a difficult child, my own inner struggle. She hears my words, receives them as they come, and offers back her own understanding. It is a space of comfort that brings me renewed hope to face the next day.

University—Winter, 1996

We have been here for two and a half months. This is not how I anticipated this journey. Why do so many people keep asking us about being seen together? What troubles them about our relationship, that they feel the need to tell stories away from our ears—stories about hearing only one voice—stories that label and define us as inseparably dependent? What do such comments mean, about us? About them? I sense a border building between Karen and me. Am I just imagining it? I wonder if Karen feels it too. Where is this coming from? Being connected with others is what drew me back to this university place . . . it is central to why I am here . . . I need to talk with Karen about how I am feeling . . . I need to hear how she is feeling.

University—Fall, 1996

My arrival at the university is filled with uncertainty. Did I make the right decision in coming to this place? My first weeks in my new surroundings leave me feeling isolated and dislocated. Single office cells, empty hallways. Where was my community? Where did I fit in? I shared my feelings with Janice. She knew, she felt it too. We decided it was important to shape a space for ourselves. It was a Sunday afternoon and Janice’s parents were in town.

We decided to make a day of it; even the dog came along. We headed over to the university with colored paper and treasures to decorate our new office space. We moved our desks side by side, a symbolic gesture of how we wanted to live in this place. We shaped a personal space for ourselves, a home base to ground us and to allow us to position ourselves in a way that made sense to us on this new landscape.

Home—Summer, 1994

I have not seen Karen for almost a month. It's so good to be sitting here having tea. Our stories tell of the places, people, and things we've experienced over this summer break. I love to hear Karen's stories of her sailing trips with her family. In her stories, I hear stories of myself and my family. Sometimes I need her to tell me one of her family stories so that I will feel closer to my family, who live quite far away from our city. Tonight, these stories lead us back to our shared work as teachers. We wonder what the year ahead will hold. We wonder about the children we will be working with. We begin to explore the possibilities for planning a year-long key idea together. Our excitement builds. "Imagine what we could create with our children," we say. "Let's explore a garden metaphor."

University—Winter, 1997

Our collaborative work, planning for the experiences we shaped with children, was so rich and exciting. Do I really believe we will be able to achieve the same level of sharing at the university in our work together? It is our first collaborative working day we have set aside especially for us. Janice and I travel down the hallway on the sixth floor to a room that will provide us a private, uninterrupted working space. We come loaded down with books, transcripts, reflections, observations, and questions. We spread them out across the table and begin. As I sit in this space I am reminded of our many cooperative planning sessions which took place around the kitchen table. I am filled with a warm and familiar feeling as we share our talk and wonder, our laughter and thoughtful silences. Yes, we have managed to carry this space with us.

School—Summer, 1992

It is a late June afternoon, the last day of our school year together. Janice sits beside me on the sun-warmed cement encircling the playground. We watch and listen as the children, whose lives have been so intimately interwoven with our own, laugh and play around us in the sand and the sun. I glance over at Janice and wonder what she is thinking as she sits beside me in her quiet stillness. Is she too thinking about the many conversations we had, thoughtful reflections which took us to different levels in our understanding of this group of children and of each other? Perhaps she is remembering back to our shared moments in the classroom and the connections we were able to make together. I want to reach out to her and reassure her that this is not the end, that there is no need for sadness. Yet I too am filled with an

overwhelming feeling that something very precious, very different, is coming to a close.

School—Summer, 1992

There was no need for words. Sitting beside Karen, I could feel that our relationship would continue in so many ways. Inwardly, I knew that our year-long inquiry around children's voices in curriculum making and assessment helped me to retell stories of my early teaching years where standardized achievement tests and curriculum left me feeling uncertain and deeply troubled. I knew that our thoughtfulness about children's voices and how our knowing as teachers is tightly intermingled with children, would forever live in me as I continued to teach.

University—Winter, 1994

We have been invited to talk about our collaborative relationship as M.Ed. students and as teachers at a research symposium at the university. We gather in a small classroom with the desks formed into a circle for conversation. There are professors and researchers all around us. I feel nervous and somewhat intimidated in this foreign place, but I want to speak well for Janice as this is her community. I want these people to understand as we have come to understand. I want to provide insight inside our experience. When it is my turn to speak, I am caught by my emotions, which well up from somewhere deep inside. I find it difficult to bring words to the experience. We were teacher and researcher, researcher and teacher, living side by side, shifting places. I look out at the people who surround me in this institution of higher learning; some look skeptical, some nod with understanding, others appear disinterested. I turn to Janice. In her eyes I see recognition. We have lived this research relationship together, it is a part of us now. It fills me with strength.

As we initially wrote these stories of our experiences, it felt natural and comfortable to allow those memories which called to us to come to the foreground. As we shared our written stories back and forth we felt a strong desire to respond to one another's stories. As Royster (1996) described, "individual stories placed one against another against another build credibility and offer . . . a litany of evidence from which a call for transformation in theory and practice might rightfully begin. . . . [Our] stories in the company of others demand thoughtful response" (p. 30). Becoming attentive to the necessity of this response, to the stories we told of ourselves, the stories of self others shared with us, and the transformative process experienced through the telling and retelling of stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998), brought us to another edge—a space to inquire into the shifting stories of our relationship. By creating our text in this way, we wanted to show something of how relational "i" storylines were woven into the relationships we negotiated as friends, teachers who engaged in long-term collaborative planning, co-researchers and co-teachers in a shared classroom place—living within shifting places of home and work.

Yet while inquiring into these stories helped to illuminate our shifting understandings and living out of relational stories to live by, it also drew us toward inquiring into stories of our relationship which were harder to tell. Reflecting on these harder-to-tell stories invited us into another terrain of possibility and meaning making. For example, not so long before beginning doctoral studies we storied our relationship as something we had difficulty explaining and which we felt others had difficulty understanding (Whelan & Huber, 1994). At that time, the metaphor we drew upon to try to describe our relationship was one of living inside “a glass-encased world.”

Engaged as we were in the midst of inquiring with teachers and principals into their evolving stories to live by, as we reread the paper in which we drew on a metaphor of living inside a glass-encased world, we wondered how this metaphor might connect with the many wonders shaping our present inquiry. As shown in Figure 4.3, this metaphor posed an important dilemma for us—it left us in a position of looking out and trying to explain in words and images what we knew we had discovered in a relational way. But it also left us feeling as though others might see us as closed off and separate from them. We did not want our relationship to be viewed as something uniquely exclusive. As Trinh (1989) had taught us, to encourage such thinking would only contribute to the ideology of “specialness” we were trying to dispel. In this way, specialness created an identity enclosure, “a division—between I-who-have-made-it and You-who-cannot-make-it” (Trinh, 1989, p. 86).

As we continued to inquire into the metaphor of living inside a glass-encased world, the tensions we experienced with our former use of this metaphor opened up new inquiry possibilities. We realized that, from each of our beginnings, our valuing of relational stories to live by had been enclosed within a more dominant narrative which valued individuality, self-reliance, and independence.

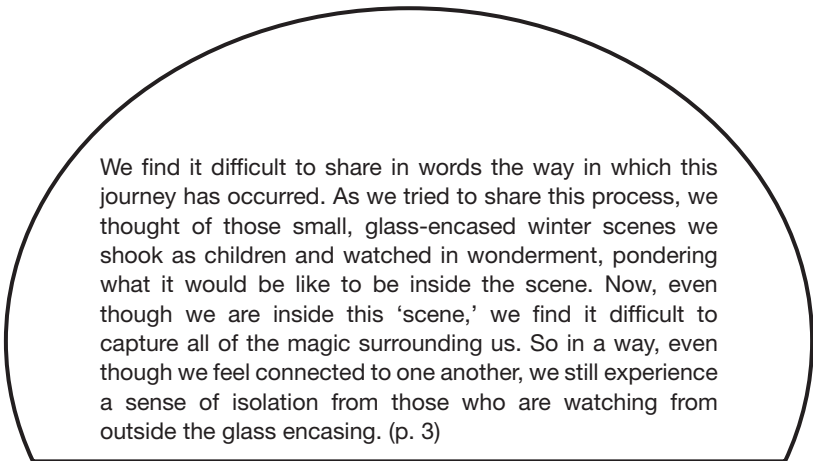


Figure 4.3 Living inside a glass-encased world

The central plotline threaded into this dominant narrative was, as described by Trinh (1989), one of “i am tolerated in my difference as long as i conform with the established rules. Don’t overstep the line” (p. 87). In our past experiences as teachers and co-researchers we had often experienced difficulty explaining to others our relationship and the relational knowing (Hollingsworth, 1992) it shaped. Sometimes when we had tried to describe our relationship to others we had noted the awkwardness we felt and we also sensed an uncomfortableness in the person or people with whom we were sharing. Becoming more thoughtful about identity enclosures—such as “living in a glass-encased world”—we wondered if our and others’ dis-ease might have been shaped because in the process of trying to describe relational stories to live by we were simultaneously rubbing up against the powerful identity enclosure shaped by dominant institutional narratives of competition and isolation. We also wondered if our and others’ dis-ease might have been shaped, as well, through our difficulties in describing the temporal, complex, and, at times, tension-filled experiences which shaped our evolving relationship across time and place. Trinh’s work nudged us toward inquiring into these much more complex questions of our relationship, and, as we began to lay stories of our relationship alongside the work of other feminists such as Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule (1986; see also Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997), Aurde Lorde (1984), Maria Lugones (1987), Nel Noddings (1984), and Minh-ha Trinh (1989)) who situated identity not as separate and unique, but as interconnected and relational, we moved toward further unravelings of our earlier metaphor of living inside a glass-encased world. Awakening to these new ways of understanding identity, ways in which difference was not reduced to “uniqueness or special identity” (Trinh, 1989, p. 95), significantly reshaped our ongoing inquiry into our relationship, particularly as we laid Anzaldúa’s (1987) notions of a “borderspace”⁴ and “mestiza consciousness” alongside our stories.

Inquiring into Possibilities for New Mestiza Stories

Through Anzaldúa’s (1987) understanding of her self as a mestiza, we learned both a new language and less smooth, more complex ways in which to further explore our evolving stories to live by and relationship. Anzaldúa described *la mestiza* as a new consciousness where

[there is] a conscious rupture with all oppressive traditions. . . . She communicates that rupture, documents the struggle. She reinterprets history and, using new symbols, she shapes new myths. She adopts new perspectives. . . . She strengthens her tolerance (and intolerance) for ambiguity. She is willing to share, to make herself vulnerable to foreign ways of seeing and thinking. She surrenders all notions of safety, of the familiar. Deconstruct, construct.

(p. 82)

Anzaldúa's *la mestiza* consciousness is a struggle of borders, both interior and exterior; a struggle she named as "above all a feminist one" (p. 84) necessarily transforming "I" into a relational self—"i". This transformational process was central to our experiences as doctoral students.

From the outset of our studies it was relationships that drew us to pursue further graduate work. We had not undertaken doctoral work in the sole quest of obtaining a Ph.D.; what drew us, instead, was the possibility of having sustained time to work alongside one another and the members of our teacher research group—Jean Clandinin, Annie Davies (see Davies, 1996), and Chuck Rose (see Rose, 1997). What we were unprepared for as we began to negotiate the landscape of our particular institutional setting was how disruptive our desire to live relationally would be for others who shared our university landscape. There were strongly established traditions to live by at our university—separate presentations and papers, separated office and desk spaces, doors shut to the outside world, and competitions for awards that shaped increasing silence and distance between us. The newly emerging borders, shaped through these dominant traditions, sliced through our relationship, momentarily separating our knowing of one from the other.

Shifting Identity: From "Specialness" to Difference

We have all been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignoring it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate.

(Lorde, 1984, p. 115)

Lorde's knowing of the "institutionalized rejection of difference" was a story we also struggled to make sense of as we negotiated our university landscape. There were many points of separation for us throughout our two-year journey as full-time doctoral students—many that were necessary departures of one from the other which brought new perspectives, new understandings. There was one separation, however, that was so invasive, so destructive, that it threatened our relationship in ways we could never have imagined.

The process of writing a research proposal is a daunting task for any graduate student; for two students trying to negotiate a relational understanding of the process, it became an impossible task—immobilizing our efforts, suppressing our relational imaginings. No longer were we defining our space—the university, with all its rules and codes, was defining it for us. Within our particular department, we were told that relational research was unscholarly; it would, most certainly, affect our chances for future academic positions. A relational dissertation was unheard of. It would never happen! Instead, we were expected—Separately, Individually—to "prove" ourselves academically worthy, our words held up against one another's to be compared . . . judged.

Tentatively, I approach him after class, a three-hour class on proposal and dissertation writing. My interpretation of so many of his words is that relational inquiry is somehow ‘less than’ more traditional research, where creating and adding to the stockpile of theoretical knowledge should be the exclusive terrain of the researcher. Feeling somewhat intimidated, although passionate about the possibilities of relational inquiry, I wonder about its potential, particularly within our profession where most research involves inquiry with other living beings. ‘Oh, I’d be pretty cautious with collaborative research,’ he replies, then adds, ‘You know, in most circles, collaborative research is not considered academic nor rigorous.’ He continues speaking ... something about how I better make certain ‘my’ advisor agrees with collaborative research and that the Faculty of Graduate Studies approves of the study. ... ‘Just so you don’t waste time doing collaborative work,’ he concludes, with a smile. As he is speaking, his words become increasingly distant from my world. Inside, I wonder if we will ever be able to negotiate a relational inquiry as two doctoral students within the landscape of this particular university department. What politics and power will border our imaginings? How will these plotlines impact others who have supported and shared in our struggles and dreams toward negotiated relational research contexts?

Figure 4.4 Being warned about academic, rigorous research

The tendency to dichotomize human experience is persistent, powerful, and pernicious. Dualistic categories are such an organizing force because they provide a simple classification system that allows even the most complex and elusive qualities to be compared and contrasted in bold, clear terms.

(Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997, p. 19)

We were not immune to the reality of this dominant classification system shaping the departmental landscape of our university—it was one we had lived for four long years in our undergraduate program. What took us by surprise were the ways in which we began to fall into this dominant narrative as well as our feelings of helplessness in attempting to push against it. In the beginning, “to refuse the mask, refuse the double-play of competence/performance, the binary of

opposites” (Dupre, 1994, p. 29), was too great a risk. Remaining silent, we started to believe we had no place to ground our relational knowing within our university context and, as these feelings grew, we felt little choice but to enter the competition—the race to candidacy.

We seldom traveled to university together anymore.

We seldom sat side by side, talking or wondering aloud.

Our writing became surrounded by secrecy and silence,
hidden away on shelves and in files at home.

Our evening phone calls diminished.

We, like so many other graduate students, were beginning to live the acceptable
story—

we were beginning to live alone.

I remember the phone call and the tearful words as though it were yesterday. “I can’t live like this anymore. What is happening to us? Why aren’t we sharing our writing? If our relationship goes on like this much longer, I don’t think I can take it. I didn’t come to the university to live this story.” Initially, these words hurt and drew forth an angry response. “You can’t just give up! We are in this together. When you say you want to leave the work, are you also saying you want to leave me, to leave us? What affects you, affects me.” This conversation, over the distance of the telephone, ended abruptly, without closure. Yet the words had been said, and in the saying, we had to face, with deepened recognition, a rupture in our relational knowing of one another.

I weave between moments of
disillusionment.

This is a “cover story”⁵

i say

A story we keep telling everyone,
including our selves. “Oh yes, we say,
“We’re doing relational research.”

Yet, the story we live is a separate one

–individual meetings

–separate writing

–little discussion of shared possibilities

Such a focus on “I.”

Feeling powerless in the face of this powerful plotline
i lose heart.

“Where is it leading?” I wonder.

This work means everything to me—i will not leave it.

Yet, living this competitive, disconnected Ph.D. story,
i feel too many contradictions.

in the border separating selves
on this landscape.

This script of separateness was not for us.

Hope came in sharing our vulnerabilities—
slowly removing masks
of certainty,
Speaking instead, knowing through story.

Separation shifted, embracing
—connection
—shared writing
—our knowing in relation
A process, held precious.

The identity enclosure, shaped by suffocating forces on our university landscape, was gradually shattered through processes which involved us in much self-facing (Anzaldúa, 1990; Lugones, 1987; Nelson, 1995). Beginning to construct new stories of ways of living on our university landscape, side by side, closely connected—we worked together and with others who shared our struggle to uncover oppressive traditions. In this larger relational space our courage grew to ask our questions out loud and to keep pushing to shape spaces on the landscape of the university where relational stories to live by could have a place.

Only as we emerged from this process could we see that our necessity to rework the distance which had begun to grow between us could be deconstructed, reconstructed, and reimagined, recreating space for understanding “identity in the light of what might be” (Greene, 1995, p. 77)—relationally. With intentions straining toward such a horizon, the notions of separation and distance insidiously duplicated on our university landscape called us in even stronger ways to come together and to give voice to what we were experiencing. This chapter was the beginning of documenting our struggle to negotiate relational “i” stories to live by on our university landscape and in writing research texts.

There we were, two . . . [friends] walking side by side,
transgressing a silent border
simply by being together.

(Behar, 1993, p. 240)

Unsayings

You try and keep on trying to unsay [the dominant story], for if you don't,
they will not fail to fill in the blanks on your behalf, and you will be said.

(Trinh, 1989, p. 80)

Drawing on Mary John's (1989) understanding of the notion of “sanctioned ignorances” as knowing “we cannot tell ourselves we know” and that “we have to

repress of ourselves in the process of becoming educated” (p. 340), Behar (1993) reminded us of the profound importance of asking hard questions about how our identities are shaped as we work to attain a university education. We have attempted to keep Behar’s challenge in the foreground of our inquiry in this chapter—moving across, within, and between stories. Answering with our own lives for what we have experienced and understood, internally and externally, while negotiating relational stories of self and knowing across landscapes has been essential to our inquiry and the text of this chapter. Making ourselves vulnerable through inquiring into our relationship, we understand far deeper some of possibilities and contradictions of relational lives and work; something more about the need to keep pushing; something more about the need to keep unsaying the dominant story.

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We want to recognize the relational context in which this chapter was written. Our knowing is a relational knowing that can never be reduced by a hierarchical ordering of names.

Questions

1. How might living and inquiring *in relation with* research participants shape the inquiries we undertake?
2. How do you imagine textually representing the multidimensionality of relational inquiry?
3. How might relational inquiry help to shape new stories of research and, as well, new stories of understanding the lives of adults in university classrooms and children and youth in public school classrooms?
4. How does the notion of “sanctioned ignorances” fit with your experiences of living on an academic landscape?

About the Authors

We first met in 1984 and spent four years together in a teacher education program. In 1991 our lives once again become entangled as we engaged in a year-long inquiry in Karen’s classroom where, alongside 21 children and families, we

explored narrative understandings of knowledge, curriculum and assessment. As this chapter shows, our life entanglements continued through our doctoral studies. Although we are presently separated by much physical distance, we still maintain close contact.

In part, our tensions as teachers intent on working and learning in relational ways with children, youth, families, and colleagues drew us toward doctoral inquiry. As we tried to show in our chapter, our early doctoral student experiences caused us to begin to attend closely to the space between us as an important place of understanding identity as *in relation*.

Nathalie Piquemal, a friend we came to know at the CRTED as doctoral students, asked if we might consider including one of our dissertation papers in this book. Now many years ago, as Nathalie first talked with us about this book, we were excited by her invitation and hoped our chapter might make a contribution to conversations around understanding how research and identity are relationally composed, conversations around the need for relational spaces in schools and universities and, as well, conversations around trying to represent the vital place of relationships in research within our research texts. These conversations of attending to spaces and ways of understanding and representing life in schools and universities, inquiry and identity-making, continue to be important threads in each of our lives and work.

Notes

- 1 For example, we wondered if, in a milieu which valued ongoing inquiry into experience, it might become possible, then, that the multiplicity of life experience entering onto and shaping school landscapes would be encouraged and valued. Might difference, within and between selves, become valued and explored? Might communal spaces become shaped in schools where even the necessarily contradictory, often tension-filled, stories of our experiences would be inquired into? Might leadership become a shared process drawing on the knowing voices of diverse children, youth, families, teachers, and a principal whose lives meet in schools? These questions continue to be part of the ongoing program of research begun by Clandinin and Connelly, in Keats Whelan’s current work alongside teachers, and in Huber’s current teaching and research.
- 2 Our collaborative paper-formatted doctoral dissertation is comprised of 14 co-authored papers—which have as lead authors individual teacher co-researchers (i.e. Sweetland, Huber and Keats Whelan, 2004), six on which Janice is first author and six on which Karen is first author. In order to meet the requirements for the completion of a Ph.D. as set forth by the faculty of graduate studies at the university where we undertook doctoral studies, we were each required to submit a dissertation on which our individual last name appeared on the spine and signature page. However, in laying each of these “individual” dissertation copies alongside one another what is evident is that the contents are the same but presented in reverse order. For example, the table of contents in Whelan’s dissertation begins with:

Chapter 1: Narrative Histories	
Exploring the narrative unfolding of self across time and place (Whelan in relation with Huber)	25
Connecting Chapter 1.1	
Living, telling, and retelling stories to live by: Negotiating the multiplicity of self across shifting landscapes (Huber in relation with Whelan)	58

The table of contents in Huber's dissertation begins with:

Chapter 1: Narrative Histories	
Living, telling, and retelling stories to live by: Negotiating the multiplicity of self across shifting landscapes (Huber in relation with Whelan)	26
Connecting Chapter 1.1	
Exploring the narrative unfolding of self across time and place (Whelan in relation with Huber)	53

- 3 We use "ourselves" to represent our understandings of the relational composition of our identities, our stories to live by.
- 4 Anzaldúa describes "borderspaces" as malleable, shifting, and unbounded spaces where we can explore the infinite layers living within and between people. We, Janice and Karen, do not claim to know the same borderspace Anzaldúa knows and wrote about. However, Anzaldúa's description of a borderspace significantly reshaped our understandings of identities as relationally composed.
- 5 Cover stories constructed by their authors to appear "certain" and "expert" in places of vulnerability are discussed by Clandinin and Connelly (1995).
- 6 The Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development (CRTED) was established in 1991. In 2004, Pam Steeves, a friend and colleague from the CRTED, described it as a place in which people gather around a "kitchen table," a space which draws "people together ... providing a rich inquiry space for researchers to work collaboratively for the purpose of furthering knowledge with a central focus on the educational experiences of children, teachers, parents, student teachers and administrators" (p. 16). Further information can be accessed from the CRTED website at: <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/elementary/CRTED.cfm>

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5

The Chaucerian Dissertation Model That “Got Away”

SANDRA G. KOURITZIN

I must confess; I work with data. I love data. Interview data. Survey data. Journal entries. Fieldnotes. Statistics. Discourse analysis. Testimony. Documents. Analytic memos. Evidence. There is no data that I don't love, including my own data—letters to my mother, notes about my children's language development, textbooks from high school that I marked up, class and course notes, emails sent and received, reviewers' comments on my manuscripts, notices of successes and failures. I love collecting data. I love planning to collect data. I love reviewing data, analyzing data, marking data with colored pens, choosing data, CREATING data. I love storing data in plastic boxes in my office, and stroking the boxes when I feel in need of inspiration. I write nothing without data, except possibly thank-you notes.

I am not in the habit of thinking through ethical stances, political positions, teaching relationships, or collective values in order to write theory. I am often unable to remember my own life without data to help me out. Even in my most fanciful or most practical writing moments, I seldom write anything that I am unable to back up with evidence. This chapter, therefore, is not for readers who are able to find inspiration in intimacy with the sun, or the teardrops of a child, but for those who are, like me, in love with data, committed to bringing data to life, analytical to a fault, obsessive about documenting life experience, and who enjoy all writing processes, including those which are more anesthetic than aesthetic. I am not quite sure how I became obsessed with data, but it started before my doctoral studies.

Act One, Scene One

Graduate Advisor #1: You know, you seem quite bright, and your marks are high, so I think you could set a record for fastest completion of a Ph.D. ever in this faculty.

Sandie: I'm not exactly sure that I want to set a record for completion. I want to read widely, and learn as much as possible.

Graduate Advisor #1: That's wasting time. You want to get finished, and get on with it.

Act One, Scene Two

Sandie: I have been doing a lot of thinking about research methodology, and I think I need to work with a methodology that will enable me to educate

the participants in my research. I cannot do research in which I simply document the process of language loss in children, knowing in my heart of hearts that it has negative cognitive and social consequences, while I stand by and do nothing.

Graduate Advisor #2: You have absolutely no responsibility to educate your research participants at all. In fact, it will be detrimental to your research project if you get involved with your research participants because you will bias the results.

Act One, Scene Three

Sandie: My advisor seems to believe that I am in the Master's program, and I can't seem to change his mind because that's how he has it entered in his computer.

Graduate Advisor #3: It doesn't matter. You will need to change advisors because the advisor we assigned you is not tenured, and can't supervise Ph.D.s.

Sandie: I am aware of that, and I have already spoken to Meredith. She has agreed to become my new advisor.

Graduate Advisor #3: Well, actually, she has changed her mind.

Sandie: I'm sure there must be some mistake. She would have told me if there were a problem.

Graduate Advisor #3: She must have a reason. She probably feels that you aren't capable of finishing your degree. Whoa, no tears. Get out of my office if you're going to act like a woman.

Act One, Scene Four

Graduate Advisor #4: It would really be a shame if we were to lose you to another program.

Sandie: Thank you. But, I am unable to find an advisor who wants to work with me on language loss.

Graduate Advisor #4: If worst comes to worst, I'll be your advisor. We can't afford to lose students who hold fellowships; it doesn't reflect well on us.

Act One, Scene Five

Graduate Advisor #5: I am willing to work with you on one condition. You have to promise me that you won't have a baby. We lose too many good women academics when they have babies, and then they never get back to work properly.

Sandie: I promise. (*one year later*) I lied, but it won't be a problem.

During my Master's degree program, I studied Chaucer. I made the decision to do so because medieval literature had not yet become, to my way of thinking, "encumbered" by postcolonial, postmodern, post-structural, feminist, or Marxist critique—and because it was considered "hard" poetry, and because medieval literature specialists of my gender were rare. Although I did not describe myself as "post" anything, I was certainly not mainstream in terms of writing in the

humanities. I loved writing term papers and even essay exams. I loved long, labyrinthine sentences, analogies, poetic turns of phrase, titles, and extended metaphors. More than anything, within literary critique, I loved to create spaces for news items, statistics, and personal stories, things a social scientist might consider “data.” In a literary paper about the novel *1984* in which I used the jargon and statistics of psychology and sociology to suggest that individualism in the society of Big Brother should be considered deviant, I was rewarded for my efforts with the comment “this is wrong” (though my professor generously offered me a means to convert my grade to a better mark). Because this was one of many occasions upon which my “odd” way of writing was rejected, I decided not to pursue literary studies if it was going to be a closed shop. I spent five years thinking about alternatives while I pursued a different life in Japan.

When I began my doctoral research in Education, influenced by coursework on alternative forms of representation, I wanted to continue writing in the way that came most naturally to me. Initially, I wanted to use the *Canterbury Tales* as a template for my dissertation, but this desire was incongruent with doctoral funding applications, with some of my committee’s expectations, with the doctoral tradition in education, and with my research relationships. In the end, the dissertation as a document came to be more representative of the traditional dissertation than I had hoped, but it achieved the purposes I most wanted to achieve: it was informative, invitational, playful, analytical, polyphonic, and critical. It was considered “easy to read.” In fact, the external examiner on my dissertation committee commented that he could not put it down, a comment he said that he did not normally make about dissertations. My dissertation and its book form that I later published (Kouritzin, 1999) have never, to the best of my knowledge, been reviewed unfavorably (unlike a lot of my other published writing), and I know, from the reviews that I have read, that I represented the voices of the researched in ways that brought them to life as characters, subjects in stories, and possibly as living, breathing individuals as well.

There is nothing unusual in terms of the *structure* of my dissertation as a text; it has six chapters, approximately the usual in most dissertations, as well as: introduction, literature review, methodology, two forms of analysis in two different chapters, and a conclusion. In terms of structure, it deviates from this standard form only in that it begins with a prologue (a researcher tale starting “Once upon a time”) which explains my personal investment in the research project, and in that the chapters are punctuated by “interchapters,” each one a parody, a vignette, an analogy, all of them some form of commentary on the topic or on standard notions of the dissertation text. Each of the interchapters is no more than two or three pages long, but each represents some of the most difficult writing I have ever done. Structurally, my dissertation also contains “readers’ guides” at the beginning of each chapter, memos to readers about things to keep in mind, followed by an executive summary of the chapter for readers without patience or time. These structural additions are not original, nor particularly unique.

Apart from structure, my dissertation is unique in three respects: it is written about a topic which was widely believed to be nonsense at the time; it is based on

a methodology which is suspect at best, vanilla fluff at worst; and it is written from a deeply personal perspective which includes my own experiences of loss, a form of representation that can be considered creative writing, or even ego ethnography. In short, my dissertation tells tales (creative writing) based on the life stories (vanilla fluff) of adults who had lost their first languages during schooling in Canada (nonsense—it never happened) while also presenting the reflections and ruminations of a developing researcher (ego ethnography). I therefore had to make choices, using a standard structure as a counterweight to what was unusual or unique, balancing what lends legitimacy against what limits legitimacy, and maintaining a precarious balance between what pleased me, what pleased my committee, and my perception of what would please a reading audience.

As a result, I have chosen to tell the story of how I came to write this research project in the form that it now assumes, and to explain the reasons why it did not assume the form it was intended to have. In this way, my own role in this project can be kept apparent, constantly reminding us that the writing of a dissertation is a social activity, one bounded by institutional needs, committee meetings, and tradition, and is thus the collaborative product of a series of encounters with people and policy. Choosing the kinds of stories we write in dissertations are not spontaneous decisions; the doctoral culture has a major role to play in determining the kinds of stories to be told, the storytelling, and the story writing.

Taking the Plunge: Changing Roles from Professor to Student

In the beginning, language loss was not my interest. My statement of intent on applying to the doctoral program in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) education grew out of my work as a university professor in Japan, and was concerned with whether and how to teach literature in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, as well as with compiling a concordance of teaching texts arranged under a variety of different categories: grammar, function, notion, task, and activity. Then I returned to Canada, and began doctoral studies coursework at the University of British Columbia. From the very first class, something in me reacted to my courses in English as a Second Language (ESL) theory and practice. I couldn't put my finger on what was wrong, but I felt there were misguided assumptions and presumptions about how ESL students were being educated in public schools. My discomfort grew with each succeeding class but I could not name it. I actively searched for others who felt similar distress and tried again and again to piece together what was wrong. My unnamed reaction crystalized in a moment when I read Wong Fillmore's (1991) article "When learning a second language means losing the first."

I began to make the connections between what I was feeling, the research on first language loss (see Kouritzin, 1999, preface), and the problem with how we teach ESL in schools. I soon realized that a more compelling question than "How do we take English and the curriculum and get it inside kids' heads?" was, for me, "Should we take English and the curriculum and get it inside kids' heads; what are the consequences?" In the search for more encompassing stories I found myself

looking to standpoint theory, which merely created more questions and anxieties for me, and compounded the layers and contexts that I thought were important. As I read about language loss, and then about bilingual education and the education of migrant students in Europe, I became politically motivated as well. I began to understand that all education is political, which led me to feminism, critical theory, post-structuralism, alternative ways of knowing, and holistic research methodologies. I noted in my journal:

So I have come up with an inexhaustible ocean of theory over which I must navigate my humble craft. I can see that there are different currents and types of waves in the ocean. I can see that in some places the ocean is blue, or green, or grey, but I don't know where these currents, waves, and colors are coming from; they are unlocatable. These currents and waves and colors are all coming from positions that I can't see, yet they constitute one ocean, and that one ocean is buoying me up. I am carried by some of the currents and must struggle against the others. I don't know how to part the waters so that I may walk to where I want to go.

What this rather clumsy metaphor is getting at is that I have to locate myself within a body of research that I don't trust. Applied Linguistics research and second language acquisition theory come from a positivist position, but more than that, they start with the notion that language can be broken down into bits, understood, and then put back together and remain understood. Let's try another metaphor. You can break a human body down into its component chemicals, and gain some facile understanding of the chemicals, and even pronounce the body worth \$1.02, but you cannot put those chemicals back together and breathe life into them. Language, like the body, is a living thing, yet theory in second language acquisition, in applied linguistics, is decontextualized.

(Researcher Journal, pp. 4–5)

It was becoming evident that I wasn't going to “set a record” for speedy completion of my doctoral program as my advisor was encouraging me to do. It also became apparent that my second advisor's approach to research (in which the researcher has no personal or professional responsibility to research subjects other than the accurate representation of the data they provided) and my own approach (in which I felt duty-bound to share any information that I had which could benefit the lives of my research participants) were irreconcilable. Ours was not to be a relationship that we could, even temporarily, endure. While thinking about my research topic and potential methodologies, I also began thinking about new advisors, and the kind of relationship I would need to have with my committee members. I knew I wanted to do more than contribute to the literature. *I needed to make a difference.* I wanted to change the world.

Methodology

After extensive reading of the language loss literature, completely ignorant as to what constituted an appropriate amount of research, and unable to talk to my second advisor (who seemed to have disappeared after realizing that our research interests were not compatible), I planned to (a) complete approximately 100 interviews with people who had lost a first language using a standardized interview schedule, (b) do ethnographic observations of language maintenance strategies at home with five or more families participating, and (c) interview approximately 20 elementary school teachers about their beliefs and their practices vis-à-vis ESL education and the maintenance of minority languages. I thought that this would provide a good, triangulated picture of the processes leading to first language loss or maintenance. I slowly came to realize that even more problematic than the amount of data this would generate were the assumptions underlying this research project-as-planned, assumptions common in the first language loss literature that I had reviewed.

First, by using a standardized interview schedule in order to interview those who had lost their first languages, I would be determining the scope and focus of the project in an a priori fashion. For example, if I asked, “How old were you when you immigrated to Canada?”, a link between that experience and eventual language loss would be established. In the extant language loss literature, a number of things seemed to be correlated with language loss—parental education, familial literacy, home language maintenance, age of initial English language use, etc.—but by including questions about these items, coincidental relationships may have become codified, hegemonic.

Moreover, the potential use of knowledge generated by a standardized interview format was worrisome. Many of the factors that seemed to be related to language loss were known as life history *variables*, but were in reality life events and conditions over which people had little or no control. I wondered what would be the purpose, other than identifying young people “at risk” of losing a first language, of establishing that parental illiteracy in the first language often led to first language loss. As I wrote in my journal,

Looking at variables such as age, gender, SES, first language, target language, length of exposure, etc. etc. and their contribution to language loss became problematic because first, there is nothing vary-able about any of these. . . . Wind speed is variable. The color of one’s socks is variable. Power relations which begin work on individuals during early childhood are not.

(Researcher Journal, p. 5)

I was worried to what use knowledge about the predictive ability of each of these “variables” might be put. In my worst-case scenarios I could see someone patiently explaining to a language minority student who had lost her/his first language: “Well, if you had come when you were twelve instead of when you were six, and if you’d only been born in a slightly higher social class, and if you hadn’t

spent two years in a refugee camp speaking pidgin Chinese, and if your parents were literate in their language . . . you wouldn't have lost your first language.” Or worse, I fretted, what if this information were used by immigration officials to screen new Canadians?

This, coupled with the realization that a standardized interview schedule would be extremely hard to prepare and interpret in light of the necessarily varied cultural backgrounds of the interviewees, led me to question the practicality of the survey method of data collection. I needed to put a human face on first language loss. Even during my later data collection, I discussed the pressure to do statistical research that I felt with an articulate woman writer who participated in the research. As I noted in my journal, she commented: “Isn't it funny how they would want to take a dissertation about language, about words, and turn it into numbers? Why would you want to do that?” (Researcher Journal, p. 26). I had no answer to that question. It seemed to me to be extraordinarily well put.

I then turned to the second method that I considered, an ethnographic study of language maintenance, and came across another problematic assumption. Studies of language maintenance have been completed, but an ethnographic analysis of the process of language loss would be complicated by a political dilemma that I could not ignore: after beginning with the assumption that language loss was a negative outcome (as I did), it would be unconscionable to study the process without intervention (my advisor disagreed). “You have no ethical responsibility to your research subjects whatsoever,” he said. “Why not?” I thought. “Isn't there something wrong with wanting to change the world only after having done research on it?”

When at last I turned to the final method, interviews with teachers about their beliefs and practices, I found that my reason for doing so was faulty. Temporarily blinded by research on educational factors leading to language loss, I assigned partial blame to the schools and decided to explore it. Moreover, interviewing teachers about their beliefs and practices was only one half of the equation; reported beliefs and practices are not necessarily the same as teachers' real lived pedagogies, which are also influenced by pragmatic considerations, classroom participants, and institutional policies.

I also realized that I was beginning this research project with the assumption that first language loss was a bad thing. The more involved I became in searching the literature, the more I became aware that the answer to the most fundamental question “Is first language loss a negative experience?” had never been established. It became important to me to document the consequences, negative or positive, of first language loss, and to do so in a personal invitational manner. First language loss needs to be understood as a socially and individually constituted phenomenon, and also as an individual experience. Such understanding will enable us not only to validate or change our own views of the role of minority languages in public education, but also to more critically examine social systems, policy, and educational practice from the perspectives of those most affected by them. With the encouragement of friends, and influenced by such researchers as Delamont (1992), who pointed out that the collection of life histories has not been prominent in educational research (p. 110), I decided to employ a life history case study approach

in order to explore the intersection between first language loss, second language acquisition, public education, community influence, and cultural marginalization.

My stated rationale for using a life history case study approach was to bring more holistic approaches from sociological and anthropological fieldwork into the research on language loss. Nunan (1992) has pointed out that in second language acquisition, the domain of language loss research, the case study has been employed “principally as a tool to trace the language development of first and second language learners” (p. 78). I chose to be more influenced by Kirby and McKenna’s description of “partial biographies,” looking at first language loss from a subjective viewpoint, and thus “researching from the margins” (1989, p. 82), than by Denzin’s (1986, 1989) more traditional advice to seek accounts from experienced, authoritative observers (of the process of language loss). My unstated rationale was that this form of research suited my personality; I am nosy, the kind of person who likes to go for walks at dusk to look in people’s windows and see how they live.

I realized too that language loss had been a personal experience for my family and extended family as well, a personal investment I wanted the freedom to explore. In fact, if I were to add a personal footnote to my dissertation research, I would have to explain that one of the greatest frustrations of my life has been my father’s family’s failure to pass their first language, Russian, on to me. I wrote:

The methodology seems really common sense to me now, but what a long time coming. It wasn’t until the summer of my second year of doctoral studies, after reading oodles about narrativity and life history, that I began to accept the legitimacy of the form for research. I would have defended anybody’s use of such methodology, but wasn’t sure I wanted to do it myself. Through my comp[rehensive exam]s I learned how rich a methodology it could be. I also learned to put away my SLA bias for longitudinal, linguistic research which does not interest me and therefore which I would not be good at, and embrace something that feels more cooperative to me. It always bothered me, reading SLA studies, that life histories would be elicited from subjects and then studied for their form rather than their content. This doesn’t appeal to me at all. Although I’m willing to concede the importance of linguistic and discourse analysis in research, I have no interest in being a frontrunner in the field myself, nor do I wish to be integrated into the community of scholars who do this kind of work.

(Researcher Journal, p. 8)

It is clear to me, from the attitude[s] I struck in my journal, that I still felt it necessary to defend the legitimacy of life history research methodology, even as I planned to engage in it.

I also came face to face with the reality that being poised against my field instead of within my field was making me a bit of a pariah. Good marks, prestigious fellowships, and a good research reputation do not necessarily attract advisors, especially ones who may be wary of political advocacy and marginal

methodologies. One after another, advisors fell by the wayside, until the point at which I suggested I might leave the institution and take my awards with me. One professor, not even in my field, took notice, and began the search for an advisor for me. The result was one of the most rewarding and profitable research relationships of my life. By having an advisor (and later co-advisors) who was not in the same field as I was, I was in the position of turning to my advisor only for advice about complying with regulations and meeting protocols. Because they were not stakeholders (though I, as an individual, meant a good deal to them), the path was laid for the research to mean everything to me.

The topic of and participants in my research project evolved slowly. The original plan was for me to continue working by engaging in research with kids aged 12 to 18 in an alternate high school program where I was a volunteer and paid ESL teacher. The students were predominantly street kids, many of them abused, HIV positive, and without family support. Those who had families were usually involved in crime at home, particularly those from refugee families. About one-third of the students in the school were ESL students, and they were all what has been referred to as “semi-lingual,” meaning that they had lost their first languages but remained uncomfortable with both spoken and written English. As there were no teachers in the school with ESL experience or interest, I volunteered four mornings a week. The school had received funding to produce filmed life stories of street kids, and the school principal had asked me to work with the “illiterate” (meaning ESL) students in order for them to participate. We were going to write the life histories together, and learn literacy skills in the process. My dissertation committee worried about my safety. They worried about the truthfulness of stories from kids who routinely lied. They worried even more when one of our students killed his best friend over a \$50 loan.

Well into (about six months) our project, on March 6, 1995, I arrived at school only to find out that the entire ESL population of the school had been kicked out because they had defied (my euphemism for “pulled a gun on”) their regular English teacher. This issue was never resolved, and I was left with 100% mortality in my research project.

Because my research proposal had identified high school age subjects, I contacted the high school that “parented” the alternative school in which I worked, hoping to recruit new participants. After many tries, I managed to reach the principal of the school. My journal entry sums up the success of that discussion:

He assured me, however, that no one in his school would fit that criterion. He asked me what reason there might be for losing a first language and I mentioned several—early immigration, parental bilingualism etc.—and he said, “Well they’re just stupid.” . . . When I said I really didn’t think so, he said, “Oh no, you couldn’t write *that* in your dissertation, now could you?”

(Researcher Journal, February 3, 1996, referring to January 19, 1996)

On March 6, 1995, I noted in my journal my growing frustration with trying to work around teachers and administrators who kept expelling the ESL students in

the school for what I considered to be the failings of the teachers. On August 4, 1995, after frustrating myself trying to restart this research project, I noted in my journal that, with a new ethical review in hand, I would begin collecting life histories from adults who had lost their first languages as a stop-gap measure so that I would not waste time while I was waiting for student participants. In the end, my research-as-planned called for me to work on co-constructing life histories with high school students who were semi-lingual. My research-as-lived saw me construct retrospective life histories with people, primarily adults, who described themselves as having lost their first languages, and to continue collecting life history narratives until I reached what Bertaux calls a “saturation of knowledge” (1981, p. 37).

Re/presentation

The major difficulty in conducting life history studies is recruitment; however, a letter to the editor of a column in a major Vancouver newspaper resulted in more than 120 telephone, fax, and email responses from people volunteering to spend up to 25 hours discussing their language loss experiences. The subjects were adult; the majority were female, by a ratio of about 3 to 1, and they represented the diversity of population in Canada. Although initially I tried to take notes during each interview, I soon found this to be distracting for the research subjects. Not only is it necessary to maintain eye contact during life history narration, but also, in the recording of life histories, the telling is equally important to the tale.

Each life history generated approximately 80 to 100 pages of single-spaced, typed transcript, from which I extracted and pieced together a 10- to 15-page life story, written in first-person narrative, each with an introduction written in the third person. Because 21 life stories would be overwhelming, I decided to concentrate on five life histories to explore in depth, and to allow a thematic analysis in an additional chapter to summarize all 21 cases.

After choosing the five stories to tell came the difficulty of piecing together the narratives and the tales that wanted to be told. I still had Chaucer’s *Tales* in mind. I wanted to write poetry, but my committee was not quite prepared to go that far. A topic which politically did not exist (though it most definitely does now) was one thing, life history research methodology (barely credible) was another thing, but poetry was “pushing the envelope.” I would have to be content with prose. I wanted to write from the heart, to track my growth as a researcher, wife, miscarriage survivor, and mother-to-be and intersperse these ideas within the dissertation, possibly by separating the tops and bottoms of pages. In fact, the original ending of my dissertation read:

It is difficult for me to talk of the tears and friendships I shared over the last year of my life without sounding “hokey,” but I shall try to set it in context. I began my dissertation in the early stages of pregnancy, buoyed by thoughts of growing together, of expansion, and of giving birth in real and figurative terms. My earliest interviews filled me with optimism and with happiness, as

I realized that not only was I becoming a mother, but I was getting what I wanted in terms of “data” as well. But then, early in the second trimester, I found out that my baby had died; it was my fourth miscarriage. Hopes and plans that I had allowed myself to nurture were pried away as my wonderful natural pregnancy became a procedure. Sick, and sick at heart, I was unable to do anything more than contact the people I was interviewing (and those I was planning to interview later because I had given all selected participants a future contact date which needed to be revised) and explain to them what had happened to me. I asked that they give me a little time, and then we would resume. I slowly went back to work, but at a much less frenetic pace.

But it changed us. No longer was I the interviewer questioning the participants about their language loss. No longer were they vulnerable, exposing their own pain, and me invulnerable. I no longer represented the university and institutional authority; I became only too human. While once I had tried to make them feel comfortable and at ease, a guest in their homes who exuded confidence and dominated the atmosphere, I then became a little like a lost soul who could understand loss. Our relationships became gentler, kinder, and more caring, features that are lost in my constant clinical reference to “the subjects” throughout this chapter. Our “interviews” became inter-views, which I explained in this way in my Journal:

And there is another thing. I think that interview is a word that needs to be reclaimed. Instead of labeling these things “conversations” as [a peer] did in her presentation . . . and as I have heard other people do, I am going to argue that “interview” is the more honest word, containing within it the notion of negotiated glimpses (views) between speakers.

(Researcher Journal, September 23, 1995)

And then came healing times for me. I was told the reason for the baby’s death, and it had nothing to do with how hard I had pushed myself. I became pregnant again, against medical advice. The people I was interviewing were interested in my life, and they asked me how I was, what I was feeling; they cuddled me. I was so afraid; I was so sick; I was so vulnerable that every vestige of power I may have had as a researcher was gone. So they helped me. They told me stories and they made me laugh and made me cry and, in so doing, they ensured that I would never knowingly misrepresent them, that I would always try to be responsible. I asked my storytelling friends how they reacted to the description of my research project that had been published in the newspaper, and they told me, almost to a wo/man, that they had read it, and then immediately gone to the telephone, even without thinking about it. They had wanted to talk about their loss. They had hoped to find some answers, or at least discover what other people had said. They told me that just expressing themselves had helped them, had brought some little bit of comfort and healing. As it did for me.

But telling this story was a little bit too much for my committee. Instead, in prose, I began by printing all of the transcripts for each story. Then, using the first transcript as an outline, I began to cut and paste excerpts from succeeding transcripts into the first interview transcript, ensuring that I maintained the chronological integrity of the narrative form as set forth by each subject. In other words, I chose to use the chronology that each subject adopted, assuming that the individuals had told me their stories in a form that was “right” for them, right in both informational/historical and emotional content. In this way, I hoped to capture the different ways in which different narrators told their stories, and to reflect the “individual talents and interests” (Cruikshank, 1990, p. 19) of the subjects.

I next began to edit by taking out all “uhms” and “ahs” and the false starts that interrupted rather than revealed. For the most part, I eliminated run-on sentences, ensured that the verbs were in agreement, and generally “tidied up” subjects’ oral performances, because to have left their grammar uncorrected would have run the risk of rendering my research subjects “picturesque” (Burgos-Debray, 1983). Failure to do so would also have called unwarranted attention to the text when often subjects’ errors were more reflective of oral performance monitor lapse than of poor language usage. This would have detracted from the important stories the subjects had to tell. Next, the bits had to be “knit” together so that there was some connection between the parts of the narrative, particularly in places where my questions had prompted an explanation or clarification. When doing this, I generally added no more than three or four words to any section, but this is the part which would have most benefited from using the same process, with poetry rather than prose. Luckily, I have since been able to publish the poems that I wrote in my “real” dissertation, the one that got away (Kouritzin, 2006).

Methodological postscript

This account of the methodological considerations in my dissertation project would not be complete without acknowledging the subjects’ views of their roles in the process. Although I tried to keep the interviews as open-ended as possible, trying not to influence the resulting narratives, this was often an unrealistic expectation on my part. Approximately one-quarter of the subjects seemed to have fairly strong opinions about immigration, language education, the rights of minorities, and they very much wanted to express those opinions. There were times when I felt strongly that despite researchers’ concerns that we are using our “subjects,” we are sometimes, in fact, being used by them. If doing research is a political act, so then is participating in the research process.

Act Two, Scene One

Graduate Advisor #6: I am offering to be your advisor. I am not in your subject area, but I am willing to learn.

Sandie: Thank you. I won’t let you down.

Graduate Advisor #6: We are beginning a long process together. There may be times when we don’t agree, and there may be times when we feel angry

with one another. I want you to know now, and to keep in mind always, that I have a great deal of respect for your mind. I think you have what it takes to be a very good academic, and I want you to remember that, even if I forget to tell you sometimes.

Final Acts

External Examiner: This was one of the finest dissertations that I have read in my 20 years of academic work. I could not put it down. It should be published nearly as is.

Canadian Association of Curriculum Studies Representative: We are happy to inform you that you have won the Outstanding Dissertation Award for the calendar year 1998 for dissertations of 1997.

Naomi Silverman, editor, Lawrence Erlbaum: We will be pleased to publish your book.

A tribute to martyrs

I am now a graduate advisor. As an advisor, I encourage my students to write from the heart, to do things differently, to find topics which are important to them personally as well as professionally, but not all of my students. Not all of my students come to graduate studies with the desire to “do research differently.” Some of them have burning research questions, pushed aside during years of classroom teaching practice. These students would explode if they could not focus on their research questions, and share the answers in straightforward ways with their colleagues. They are the students who do not need me as an advisor; my job is to “give them their heads” and hold onto the reins. For those students who are more interested in process than product, however, I feel there are important things to keep in mind, things I share with my own students, and which I share with you.

Think about who you are writing for. By this question, I do not mean think about the audience of the article or the dissertation, or who you think will be reading your writing; that is the answer to a different question: “who are you writing to?” Instead, consider who you want to honor in your writing. Are you writing for yourself, to please yourself? Are you writing for yourself, as a means to an end, to please others or to gain some form of recognition? Are you writing for posterity? Are you writing for the research participants? Are you writing for a group you view as marginalized and/or oppressed whom the research participants may or may not represent? The answers to these questions, I suggest, must determine how we write in academia. If you are writing for the research participants or for a marginalized group, those views and voices must assume priority. The data is artifact. If you are writing for posterity, political positions must be foregrounded. The data is testimony. If you are writing for yourself, to please yourself, then the critiques of others should not matter. Data is supple. If you are writing as a means to an end, then personal pleasure in the process takes a back seat. Data is evidence.

Once you have answered these questions, it should be possible to draft an outline of the thesis or dissertation, how many chapters/subheadings, what each chapter will look like, how many pages it will probably be, or whether, in fact, this is the

structure you will even use. You will then need to answer the question “how much pain can I stand?” because this will also determine the writing form(s) you will choose. There are really two forms of writing with data: you can research the story, or you can story the research.¹ When you choose to research stories, you use data as illustrations of points you want to drive home. Your voice is the dominant voice. You present an argument, and ask the readers to “buy into” it by reading the supporting evidence in the same way that you have. When you choose to story research, you allow the data to become the dominant voice, and you, the author, stay behind the scenes. It is tempting to think of this as more honest, to view this as letting the data speak for themselves, but in point of fact it is yet another layer of interpretation added onto researching stories. After you decide on the argument you want to make, you create a web of words in which your readers will become enthralled and be unwilling or unable to escape your artifice.

Which leads to a final warning I give my students. You have to know it will take much longer to write in innovative ways, not less time. It is the same difference as between making chocolate chip cookies with your five-year-old according to the recipe on the back of the package, versus allowing your five-year-old to discover the chocolate chip cookie method on his own from a set of ingredients you have placed on the kitchen counter. In either case, through instruction or discovery, the result must be a good cookie. Bad cookies don’t get eaten. In the same way that your five-year-old’s use of every ingredient in equal measures can result in really bad cookies, writing differently can result in really bad writing. It is easy to write first-person rhetoric, essay-style, on a soapbox. It is easy to allow your way of writing to determine your conclusions, to find ways of representing data which support a priori assumptions you had before you started preparing to plan to collect data. It is easy to begin with the notion that “I want to write like Carl Leggo,” but not if you do not understand the work it takes to write like master writers. We all start with a good story, our own story, and in that story we are heroic, brave, insightful, and never wrong. When we challenge the orthodoxies of academic writing, it becomes hard to leave that self aside; that self is so much more interesting to us than any other self. That self gets in the way.

In the end, challenging the orthodoxies in qualitative research and in the writing of academic texts is more about being true than about being truthful. Being truthful is important in the sense that lying is unethical, but being true—to yourself, to the data, to the textual forms, to the research process—is the greater responsibility.

Questions

1. This chapter suggests that researcher vulnerability is important in the research process. How would you draw connections between the vulnerability of being researched, the vulnerability of being a graduate student, and the vulnerability of researcher disclosure?

2. This chapter begins and ends with short vignettes. What ways can you think of to challenge the orthodoxies in terms of standard academic discourse while at the same time still adhering to more orthodox forms of writing, and what is the effect?
3. How can we locate research projects from non-traditional paradigms and/or in non-traditional forms in terms of the traditional and standard research that exists?

About the author

Sandra (Sandie) G. Kouritzin is Associate Professor in Teaching English as a Second Language and Senior Fellow in St. John’s College. More importantly, she is “Mommy” to Hanika and Tyrone, who put up with having their mother work at her desk set up in their playroom, and who have grown accustomed to being the subject of her stories. She is also the wife of Satoru, an Amami Ryukyuan from the island of Tokunoshima, which her family recognizes as spiritually home. Sandie tries to challenge the orthodoxies in her research and writing by keeping in mind who she is writing for and why she does research, and then writing about it. For Sandie, the boundary between writing research and writing fiction lies in not taking liberties with data, in not altering the forms or content of her “subjects” words.

Note

- 1 I am grateful to Suhanthie Motha (see Chapter 7, this volume) for this way of framing the research we do, or don’t do.

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6

Transcendence

The Journey from Hard Data into Artistic Depiction—Theatre as Representation

MATTHEW J. MEYER

The following is the closing scene of my full-length play *Transitional Wars*. It depicts a large urban public school board in an internal power struggle portraying power-play micro-politics. This scene presents the final confrontations of its constituencies. It occurs late at night at the end of a very volatile closed (in camera) meeting of the school board steering committee. It is mid-March of the current school year. The characters are:

APPOINTED SCHOOL BOARD OFFICERS:

DG—Director General—Douglas Glasgow

DEDROTY (DEDR)—former Deputy Director General

DDG—Deputy Director General—Donna Deglee

ESD—Educational Services Director—Peter Donat

ELECTED SCHOOL BOARD COMMISSIONERS:

PRES (COM1)—President Leonard Peterson of the Board of Commissioners

VPRES (COM2)—Paul Kazankis

A visible ethnic, not racial, minority—Vice President of the Board of Commissioners

COM3—Ted Dowe, a black African Canadian (Finance portfolio)

COM4—Herb Thompson (Transportation portfolio)

COM5—Hugh Phearson (Buildings and Grounds portfolio)

Please note that commas are also used to indicate a pause in the dialog.

SCENE 6: The Crossfire

(all returning to their seats at the conference table)

PRES: Ladies and Gentlemen, let us continue. We'll turn to the revised Principal selection lists. Douglas—*(DDG distributes lists to all)*

DG: With George McCauley out for the remainder of the year, Glen Leister will take over at the Vaughn School and then will become Principal at Berlinder in September. We have problems at Ballston High with Julio Ortega, and Louis Coswell at Railway Station High. I hope, that by the end

of this evening, I will have more news regarding Mr. Kroosh at Revett High School. Unfortunately, I cannot talk about it at this moment due to some legal agreements.

COM3: I find this all very upsetting. Both Ortega and Coswell are two young Principals of color. I am really getting the feeling that there is a strong racist agenda going on here.

DDG: I assure you, Mr. Dowe, this is not the case. Lesley Smits, Regional Director for Ballston, has been working with Ortega for the past two years since he was appointed. Unfortunately, he is having many difficulties. He gets nothing in on time and vandalism is up 26% over last year. The Vice-Principals are also very weak. Ballston is in Mr. Peterson's ward and as he will attest, we have received countless complaints from parents and teachers.

PRES: I'm afraid it is true. My own contacts in the school corroborate the situation. Something must be done. I have received many, many complaints.

DDG: The Railway Station situation is not much better. We had great hopes for Coswell. Railway Station High is a very multi-racial school. Coswell is trying his best. I have spent much time with him since my appointment as Deputy Director General.

COM4: I see a major problem here. These are two principals from visible minorities. If we can't keep them both, I see some very negative reaction coming from these racial communities.

COM3: This is very true. Unfortunately, Coswell is really having problems. This is a school in my ward. As you know, Coswell is black. The school is about 30% Asian, 40% black and 30% everything else. It's a working-class first- and second-generation immigrant student body. Everyone is defensive about everything. There are lots of violent acts and broken homes, which is unfortunately typical of this part of town. When Coswell sides with the non-blacks, he's referred to as "anti-brother" by the black students. When he sides with the blacks, he's attacked for "favoritism." He's caught. He doesn't have it. He has a heart of gold. He cannot take strong stands. I understand his position. But I can only hold his hand so long. I have another concern, and I'm sure it's not just simple paranoia on my part, but if he really blows this position, it may set back a lot of things race-wise in the school and in the ranks.

VPRES: As a member of an immigrant community, I am very concerned. The changing face of much of our community requires administrators who serve both as leaders and as role models. I really do not want to see these Principals go.

COM5: As much as this may hurt the efforts of this board with its affirmative action program, the safety and security of the schools and students must take priority. Doug, what do you propose?

DG: We've given this a great deal of thought. Donna and Peter have come up with the following plan. Donna, please explain.

DDG: For the remainder of this year, we keep it as is, monitor closely and continue to support them. Next year, if we take, let's say Greenfield, out of Islip Middle School and made him a high school Principal at one of the more stable schools, we can then move someone like Timmons over to Ballston or Railway Station. We do have a number of middle-range VPs who could move up to Principal for the rest. There may also be some elementary principals who may be interested in moving up. If some applied, we could conceivably move them into the more stable high schools and those existing principals over to the more challenging schools. Don't forget, we still have two more retirements, one resignation, plus these others we have to deal with.

DG: The only hang-up with that is that most principals will not move without a bit of coercion, especially into replacing Ortega or Coswell. The collective agreement with our administrators permits them to stay where they are in most cases if they have over ten years' experience.

COM4: And what about them? If we move those guys out, what do we do with them without embarrassing them and getting both the minorities and the press off our backs?

(ESD returns and passes a paper to DG)

DDG: (*Studies the paper for a quick moment and puts it aside*) That's true. However, there may be some alternative positions here at the head (central) office. For example, let's say we created a special project for multi-cultural and multi-racial secondary school integration and put either one of them in charge of it. There is some grant and special projects funding available—at least for one year.

COM3: Yes, I'm sure we can loosen up some funds somewhere—with retirements.

VPRES: That may work. But most people would see this as burying them in the Board Office. You know, taking care of our own. It's politically dicey. Let's just leave them where they are and bring in additional support staff for them.

DDG: The parent committees in these schools would storm the Board and you know it. We do have some elementary schools with high multi-racial populations. Maybe we could help them along by putting them at that level. In that way they would remain principals, but at a junior level. The only catch would be the transfer situation of the existing principals.

DG: This also means we'll need an additional two or three to the five we already need for Vice-Principal. However, there are always many candidates for these positions.

COM3: This is a horrible trade-off theory. Demotions—it makes every member of a minority community appear weak.

DG: The alternative in keeping these administrators in place would be catastrophic. We will work with this scenario for the moment. The other appointments on the list in front of you may change a bit with these new possibilities.

PRES: Is there anything left to discuss?

DG: Yes, I am now in the position to inform you more fully of the Kroosh affair resolution.

VPRES: (*Surprised, defensive and ready to fight*) What! Why didn't you say so earlier in the meeting?

COM3: (*Very angry*) How can you make a decision regarding a Principal in my Ward without first informing me?

PRES: Order, order. I am sure Douglas will explain it all.

DG: Earlier this week, Peter, Christian McFarley, Regional Director for Revett and I completed our investigation of the Revett incident in consultation with our legal consultants. We concluded that Kroosh used inappropriate behavior and language toward his female faculty members—not only for this incident, but for a number of incidents which came to light over a many-year period. After deliberation and consultation with our legal counsel, our recommendation was that Kroosh be removed from the position for the remainder of the school year. It was also suggested that Kroosh participate in some behavior modification in order to be eligible to serve as an administrator in some capacity for the following year. He would come and be given some type of special project at the Board Head Office without loss of pay or seniority.

COM3: (*Losing composure*) This is completely out of the question! You have no power to do this. This time you've gone too far!

DG: Allow me to continue. To the teacher's union, Principals' Association and the parent body of Revett, this was acceptable. The meeting with Kroosh was not easy, but as a true professional, he reluctantly accepted the decision and agreed to all the terms. On his own, he clearly stated he would formally and publicly apologize to the involved teachers as well as to the Revett School community at the appropriate opportunities.

COM4: I cannot accept this. How can we as a Commission sit here and accept this decision and not support one of our finest Principals?

ESD: He is an excellent Principal in most respects. Unfortunately, during the hearings, he received virtually no support from any teacher, administrator or parent group on this issue of his male chauvinism beliefs and comments toward staff. It was only you, Mr. Dowe, that showed support. Kroosh was taken aback by the process and the lack of support. The investigation was incredibly thorough.

DG: I must apologize for not informing you earlier this evening. However, Mr. Kroosh, after hearing the decision, wanted some time to seek advice from his legal counsel. He's a professional and knows he still has a future with us. We had all agreed to give him some time to consider all the implications of the ruling as well as the other parties involved, who, I am very pleased to say, will not take this any further.

COM5: With this decision, can Kroosh be eligible for a future administrative position next year?

DDG: He will be eligible, but we have to be sure that he is capable of changing this one area of his behavior.

COM4: This is most distressing. I feel that this is an arbitrary, cold and totally unfair ruling making Kroosh a scapegoat for some feminist right-wing radical loudmouths. This must be investigated further. I strongly propose a Board resolution reversing this ruling.

VPRES: I demand your resignation, Glasgow. This is the straw that has broken the camel's back. First your forced resignation of Dedroty and now this.

(silence and pause)

Pres: A moment please. Mr. Kazankis, Mr. Thompson, I petition you to withdraw your request and demand. This is not within the jurisdiction of the Board.

COM3: Everything is within the jurisdiction of the Board.

DG: Mr. President. If I may . . . I have only a few words to make on behalf of our ruling, regardless of your "jurisdictional threats" toward both my staff and me. First, the running of all matters concerning the management of personnel comes under the jurisdiction of my office as stated by Board policy and my contract. Therefore, you cannot, without a nasty legal challenge in this matter, touch this incident. All due-process protocols were followed upon agreement of all involved parties, all unions and associations. The ruling was discussed and prepared by our legal department. You were all made aware of the proceedings. There was nothing hidden as it was in previous investigations. All parties agreed to the final decision. The matter is closed. Second, we have averted not one, but two major legal "work-to-rule" incidents that, if they had occurred, would have been a public relations nightmare. If you decide to take this any further, you are tempting fate. And rest assured, at the next school board elections, the teachers' unions will make sure the third of you who will be running for re-election in June who do not support this position, will be targeted. It will be very, very messy. Please, for the sake of this School Commission, accept this decision.

PRES: I concur with the findings and am also in agreement with Douglas on his legal position. Reconsider your stand, Mr. Kazankis.

VPRES: *(After a few moments, realizing he has lost)* I withdraw the motion. *(Gets up and turns to some direction)*

COM4: Then, I withdraw my motion as well.

PRES: This meeting is adjourned.

(as people begin to leave, COM4 passes DG and says in warning tone)

COM4: This is not forgotten!

Fade to black and end of play.

Research is a quest for answers to specific queries. Whether inductively or deductively inspired—research is a journey to unveil findings from a specific

course of data collection and analysis. The primary purpose of a play (a theatrical performance piece) is to provoke its viewers. Every play is subjective by design and is expected to have its viewers react in some manner. Regardless of the reaction—positive, negative, or marginal—every viewer finds some element of the viewing experience to ponder. This may come during the viewing itself or minutes to days after. If I (as the researcher-playwright) have been true to the spirit of the data and have composed a workable script, then the production of the piece will be successful in provoking an audience. Such was the intention of this project—the contrived dramatic piece *Transitional Wars*® (Meyer, 1998)—to provoke its designated audiences of senior-level school board administrators, school members, and educational administration students to question their own praxis by placing them in a non-confrontational status as a non-participatory “armchair dilettante-like” critic. This play was inspired by a qualitative research project based on detailed interviews with in-service school board administrators, school principals, and vice principals. I call this type of data depiction *Theatre as Representation (TAR)*.

The purpose of this chapter is primarily to address the area of transcendence—the path of how the research findings led to and inspired the creation of a dramatic or theatrical performance “piece” (as in a play or dramatic work). This path will discuss the project’s initial background and the various development steps leading to its final script and public presentation.

Project Background

In the early 1990s, as an educational administration Master’s degree candidate, I lived in seemingly two foreign realms. In the first realm—the world of academia—as a graduate student, I found myself laboriously (at times) studying case studies, statistics, and theories of organization, leadership, educational change, and supervision. Simultaneously and translucently in the second realm, I was a full-time middle and secondary teacher in drama and performing arts department head living the daily adventures of the real world. I was amazed—most of the time—how these two realms of the education universe seemed more as a very, very long railroad track of two parallel steel rails—rarely crossing. Toward the conclusion of my Master’s degree, I was given the opportunity to bring some components of these realms together in the one-act dramatic play “The Marginalization of the Principal” (Meyer, 1992) that portrayed an independent school’s board of directors and faculty in a power struggle while searching for their future senior administrator. This study could have been written in the prototypical “case-study” format, which, more than likely, would have put the vast majority of its readers into a quiet slumber, as do many case studies. However, in the dramatic scenario format, and when presented to audiences as a quasi production, it provoked its viewers into challenging their own issues of power and domination. It instigated a dialog that stretched and expanded its viewers’ realities of administration.

In the mid 1990s, my doctoral work took this medium (Theatre as Representation—TAR) and expanded it exponentially both as grounds for scholarly endeavor

and as a teaching tool for in-service and pre-service school administrators. This chapter will chronicle this journey. The project focused on senior school administrator executive succession (see Carlson, 1972). The research program was to study the appointment protocols of secondary school principals in several Montreal Anglophone public school boards (before their amalgamation in 1998). At the time, the Anglophone school boards were riven with wondrous internal micro-political wars. This was complicated with the precarious political puppet strings the Provincial Ministry of Education has over all provincial school systems regarding enrollment of students based on each student's mother tongue and religious orientations. Since all school funding in Quebec is administered through the Quebec Ministry of Education, enrollment is a critical survival element of any local school board. Hence, local, especially Anglophone, school board members and system administrators were all always more concerned with their respective board's survival than anything else.

The project was in two parts (Meyer, 1998). The first part was to research and report the machinations of the official and unofficial principal appointment protocols. The second was to write, produce, and evaluate a full-length dramatic work that would serve as a senior-level administrator professional development tool¹ that would not overly encroach into the time of in-service school administrators. After researching and studying the social sciences' research and reporting methods, I pursued what I was to call *Theatre as Representation* (TAR) and formally defined it as follows:

TAR is a research methodology that leads to the creation of a dramatic work (also known as a "dramatic piece" or simply "the piece"). Such a dramatic piece is conceived from hard data (which I define as the actual word-for-word interview transcription) derived within a qualitative research paradigm stemming from a "real-life" field problem or challenge. The data findings, derived from detailed interviews from field practitioners, would then transcend into a dramatic piece. This dramatic work's *raison d'être* has three goals. One—to be viewed in a live presentational format performed by actors; two—to be presented to working field administrators in a passive non-threatening venue setting; and three—to serve as a provocation vehicle for each viewer to question, compare, and contrast his or her beliefs, protocols, and the like as viewed with the contents of the dramatic work.

TAR scenarios would likely fall under the ethno-drama/theatre genre but not quite the same as typified by such scholars as Mienczakowski (1996, 1997) where actual real-life texts are used as script; or Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer's (1995, 1998) construct of readers' theatre, which employs a more traditional responsive presentation format where pieces or selections of various texts are thematically related; or Saldaña's (2003) use of storylines with their significant life-artifacts as a dramatic form. TAR is primarily a professional development tool whose context is inspired by data (interviews), presented as a theatre-like production to give the aura of authenticity, and whose storylines are skewed to provoke

definitional and potential decision-making strategies for the targeted viewing audience. The storylines are not obligated to represent faithfully the actual data content.

The first part of the project was steady, tedious, and uneventful. The second part of the project—to create a dramatic work—not only was challenging, but also pushed the envelope, so to speak (at the time), in the educational administration field of research data delivery. The play had to successfully reflect research findings and, second, to capture the spirit, honesty, and energy of the interviewees. There was the immediate question: how does researcher-playwright (me) get from the findings to the creative work?

Data collection, analysis, and then to transcendence

The findings themselves were derived in a typical grounded theory qualitative research paradigm. Data was collected from the interviews of senior-level administrators from three school boards in 1996–97. The interviews were transcribed, factored, and analyzed. This grounding of the data was cathartic. The physical act of reading simultaneously with the aural sensation of the interviewee emotions and attitudes exposed the human side of administration. After countless simultaneous listening/readings, the data was first reduced into nine distinct “areas of reference” databases and then into four broad-based groupings that I labeled *spheres of infra-influence*: 1 principal selection characteristics, procedures, requirements; 2 personal goals; 3 politics; 4 ethics and politics.

Each of these is made up of clusters of factored data rooted from one sphere but in some way is influenced from factored data from another sphere, hence the “infra.” Metaphorically, it acts much the same way siblings factor within families; they are independently dependent on each other. A rules-of-inclusion adaptation was employed to reduce the data into categorical theorems. From the eventual 21 rules of inclusion findings, there evolved the key finding, “constituent power basing and power play politics among governing organizational constituent members is *the* issue in executive succession” (Meyer, 1998, p. 165). This finding is fairly consistent with much of the established research on power (Morgan, 1986) and micro-politics (see Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991; Blase & Anderson, 1995; Hoyal, 1986).

Then what?

With the findings deduced and the first half of the project near completion, the script formulation was forged. Early on in the interview process, as I listened to the respondents, images of characters and stories began to formulate. I sketched out potential storylines, scenes and characters. As the findings became clearer, so did the plot elements. Such topics as politics, power, and control (or the lack of), “big people” vs. “little people” conflicts, racism, and historical linear evolution of the phenomena swam through my head as I wrote the script. Like an omnipresent mist, the one ultimate question permeated each thought—how do I get from the data and findings to the script and then bring it to the stage successfully? This quest’s resolution was fully realized during the final rehearsals of *Transitional Wars*

as I watched the actors on stage playing out the sub-themes of power–conflict and power–struggle. As in all productions, mystically the production took on its own life. In primordial-like queues, the themes transcended from the written word into breathing personas of the characters.

I manipulate a transcendence concept to encapsulate this journey. Its use is intended to take the data beyond the characteristic endpoints of conclusions and summary statements of research. For me, the collected hard data served as the inspirational “creative” ignition sparks to delineate the findings in the three-dimensional art form of a “live” theatre piece. With each gestation stage of the script (see following), the findings had to continually metamorphose. This occurred in each script reading (and subsequent revision), rehearsal, and finally with its actual performance before a live audience. Transcendence is the ongoing, evolving use of findings. It takes on an almost spiritual metaphysical intonation. Transcendence is the state of “Ku” between the science of data and the art of performance. “Ku” is defined as a “fundamental Buddhist concept, variously translated as non-substantiality, emptiness, void . . . entities have no fixed or independent nature because phenomena arise and continue to exist only by the virtue of their relationship with other phenomena, they have no fixed substance” (Matsuda, 1983, p. 237). Richard Causton (1995, p. 80) explains “Ku” as being “applicable to those matters which we know to have a certain continuity but which only appear when the conditions are right. To all intents and purposes, the rest of the time they do not seem to exist at all.” Phenomenon when in a state of “Ku” is in a form of latency where we know something exists but we cannot see it until something triggers it to become visible. Causton gives the following example:

We may take it for granted that coal can be burnt . . . and that a cherry tree blooms in the spring, because we have probably all had some direct experience of these events. Imagining for a moment that we have had no such experience, if we encountered a cherry tree in winter, we would most likely think it is dead, as that is what the evidence of our senses tells us; if, having been convinced that it was alive, we then decided to dissect and analyze it, we would find nothing to suggest that it would be covered in flowers in spring: those flowers at the moment do not exist. And yet they do, in “Ku”, waiting for the right time and conditions to appear.

(p. 81)

A comparable situation emerges in transcendence. A researcher has hard data. The data analysis tells the researcher of certain clear results along with unanswered questions, doubts, and other phenomena that have no lucid explanation but, yet, the researcher must search for them. The playwright looks at the same hard data and interprets the solid fact conclusions, the doubts, and the rest as “equals” and creates the conditions for clarity to appear. The script is the initiatory vehicle. Subsequent human voices and interactions (from the actors and staging) finalize and purge *the clear* and *not so clear* data findings into physical (three-dimensional) and psychological interactive representational realities. The bridge between the

data, its artistic and creative interpretation, and then into representation, lies in the state of “Ku.” Playwriting, as with many creative endeavors, is an act of the body, heart, and mind. There exists no absolute model for a playwright to foot his/her aesthetic modus operandi. Some playwrights go through excruciating research and some do not. Others get inspired from a conversation, or an observation, or a spiritual epiphany. Something or someone inspires the playwright to bring life breath to his or her work.

Initial motifs

The research literature and my own experience as an educator led me to the project’s central concept that inevitably all school decisions (made by administrators) are first considered by their political parameters before they are considered from the moral or caring parameters (see Beck, 1994). The findings substantiated this belief. As a playwright, my life became more complicated. Absolute truth and proven data are not totally essential for composing a script. Therefore, I was required to create some “stands” and what became the eventual “stakes”² for the piece. Throughout the research process and with every interview, I felt a certain collective yearning from almost all the respondents to say that, as working administrators, politics is *the* issue in education, not pedagogy, not theory, not students, not teachers, and not language of instruction. Ethics and morality are latchkey elements in the administration “game.” This “game” consists of and *is* the ins and outs of decision making.

For the sake of this project the term *decision* had to be defined. I defined it in terms of an evolving concept:

A *decision* is an end product proposition, or response, to an issue which directs a workable conclusion to a problem that hopefully satisfies *some* of the needs of *all* involved constituent groups and *most* of the needs of the *more* powerful constituent groups.

Constituents who have the most “muscle,” real or intended, win their stakes more times than they lose the stakes. Many decision-making rules, guidelines, and protocols are in fact molded not by the needs of students or education, but solely by the power brokers (some external to a school board) of the educational system—the politicians. Whether elected school commission or board officials, appointed State or Provincial Ministry of Education mandarins, university or CEGEP³ entrance requirements, and the governing provincial government elected ministers, school administrators have, it seems, little flexibility in many of their decision-making results.

Gestation Term 1—phrases and images

This told me as a playwright that the division of responsibility and power is not believed to be independent or equal (and not that it should be) among all constituents. I heard the respondents’ voices in my head and attempted to

understand them both as concerned persons and as dedicated professionals. I also made judgments on whether or not they were holding back information, being as cautious or as open as they could be. Artistic creation is founded on observation. I observed as much as I could—every gesture, the pauses between phrases, whether or not they looked at me while they answered questions. As they talked—did the respondent look away, focus or play with objects as they spoke?—I asked myself mental questions such as “Would I trust or not trust this person?” “Would I want this person as a colleague, a supervisor?” and so on. These are all subjective questions in search of subtexts and other hidden, or not so hidden, verbal and non-verbal mannerisms. A picture formed in my mind of the individual. It went through modifications and incarnations each time I read and listened to each interview’s audio-tape and transcription. Continually, this was scrutinized in tandem with the data findings. Mental and then written sketches of characters, scenarios, ideas, and thematic elements were forged. This, all together metaphorically similar to a stew, floated around in my head until, literally, I felt it was time to begin experimenting with thematic and storylines ideas. It was all in the “Ku” state.

Gestation Term 2—The Novella

My playwriting style requires me to first create a background narrative before attempting the script itself. This resembles a short story or novella. Here I can play with ideas, stretch characters, create situations, and develop dialog. I write a lot of dialog with minimal description, constantly referring back to the interview tapes and data findings to further develop perceptions and images. In retrospect, it was not my purpose to represent the data findings per se. It was to portray the characters in conflict with each other within the parameters of the moral and ethical dilemmas revealed and inspired by the data findings.

One of the challenges of dramatic production is that a script can be very “flat” in a silent reading, but immensely moving in production with live actors and accompanying theatrical production elements (staging, lights, in a formal performance space). Scripting has very little description. The advantage of the narrative is to allow the description to sculpt the elements of the play because it is not designed to be performed. Flatness is not an issue. Within this genre, I am writer, participant, and observer, easily putting my personal imaginative curve into each character. It is similar to playing a game of “sidewalk shrink” in which you simultaneously role-play both the patient and the psychiatrist. The novella went through three revisions (see Meyer, 1998, appendix 3). The novella was completed when I felt it was the right time for the script writing itself to begin. Again the “Ku” concept comes into use. This did not necessarily mean that any part of the novella would actually be used in the play. In the final script, I took a section here and there, a dialog from one section and placed it in another.

For example, the novella story began with the use of one villain type—the deputy director general, Dedroty. As the novella progressed, I believed it was important to have an “inside man” in the school commission who did the nasty

schemes for some of the more powerful school board members. This came forward from many of the interviewees. This worked well in the novella, but it was problematic in the script because this character was playing both sides of the fence (an appointed board administrator doing the “dirty work” for some elected board members). He took on too much importance within the story. I wanted the conflict to be strong between the director general (school superintendent) and Kazankis (a powerful board member) onstage. Dedroty required lots of stage time. It would detract from the real conflict and add more time to the action on stage. In the script he was fired at the very beginning of the play to present the first power conflict, which then permitted a strong female deputy director general to enter and support the director general. Now, the “power-playing” element was more realistic between the two opposing forces on stage.

Gestation Term 3—The Script

The initial script was based upon a sketched scene (for writing practice) I had written about halfway through the interviews. There was a particular incident involving one Montreal board-level administrator (at the time in one of the four Montreal area Anglophone school boards) who had been appointed, it was rumored, more due to his skin color than to either his experience or his leadership ability. Some of the interviewees believed it was more a politically correct-like inspired appointment. It was done far outside of the established hiring protocols for such a very high position. This candidate was believed to be “in favor” with some very powerful school board members of the time. His appointment almost caused an uprising with many of the senior board administrators regardless of their own racial or ethnic backgrounds. The appointment, according to at least five respondents, totally marginalized the school board, the supporting board members, and the public view of the school board itself. The history, in the spiritual sense, of this episode formed the essence of the scene. The piece itself grew from that incident. The script evolved outwardly from this scene, keeping in mind that the final script could only have a limited number of characters and a contained performance time of under 60 minutes.

Since I was dealing with a confrontation organism, so to speak, I chose for my time frame an actual school board closed meeting where “public relations” personas do not exist. In the initial drafts, it became clear that having one lengthy scene of arguing characters would resemble more a “talking heads” display. To avoid this, the piece utilized several distinct staging areas in the performance venue to permit certain groups of characters to assemble away from the rest of the characters or to allow a different time (hour or place) once the piece began.

It was also important for a few of the represented constituent character groups to be introduced outside of the confrontation scenes to the viewers. The audience would not receive a program notebook with detailed character descriptions and plot synopsis. They, like most viewing audiences, would be discovering these as they watched and synthesized the goings-on. In effect, the audience would have to work, as the actors would be working, simultaneously transforming and transmuting information onto multi-dimensional levels.

Because *Transitional Wars* was to provoke the audience members to question (agree, disagree, or whatever) the viewed element(s) that emotionally moved them, there was a clear subjective stand in the piece. I purposely chose the director general as the more altruistic leader, almost a bit too squeaky clean. He plays power politics very strongly, as witnessed by the opening scene, where he virtually forces the hand of his “bad guy” deputy director general. The content of this scene peripherally appears in reference several times throughout the piece.

The board vice president (Kazansky) gives the aura of being a sleazy character. However, he is a dedicated member of the school board. His political agenda has a rationale for him as for his supporters, but he is a political creature. “Power” and “power brokering” are true elements of any political organism. He is true to form regardless of the ethics of his positions. This is also true of the director general and his staff.

The transcendence from the data to script brought to light this human element of “collective” self-righteousness. This is especially present in situations where all constituent groups, independently of each other, believe that they each hold the power and influence of “the best” solution in decision making. Where everyone is “right” and no one is “wrong,” there may be confrontation where, intentionally or not, ideas and colleagues and opponents are caught in a crossfire and go down in what can be best described as “friendly fire.” This is one of sub-themes of Scene 6 presented at the beginning of this paper.

Gestation Term 4—“The piece”

The cold reading⁴ of *Transitional Wars* occurred on Wednesday evening September 3, 1997 at the Bhatla Studio at St. George’s High School of Montreal with readers and some others. After months of hearing only my voice in the different character roles, it was a revelation to hear the characters come alive. As expected, *Transitional Wars* began its next stage of transformation. For the most part, the story and characters held together satisfactorily. As the readers became more involved with their roles, I heard new personality sides of some characters. In the case of school board member 3 (a first-generation African Canadian), it had become clear that I had given him too shallow a persona. His perceived simplicity in fact was not correctly written. His composite persona, as derived from the data, was not solid enough to give him credibility as a board member who had presumably dealt with much racism in his life. The reader-actors emphatically raised this issue in our after-read debriefing. They were unanimous in the belief that even though the facts of the particular issue may have been correct in the data (the appointment of an unqualified person of particular ethnic background to a high-profile administrative position), that did not necessarily make a credible character as he was intended.

In its “cold read” rendition, the momentum of the power play between the board members and the board senior staff was too lopsided in favor of the director general. Not only that, it was inconceivable, it seemed too flimsy onstage. It was discussed at length. The conflict had to leave the targeted audience with more of a dilemma. In other words, because the defined “good guys” and “bad guys” were so

transparent, it was too easy for the audience to side against the board member. This resulted in an emotional lull and rhythmic anomaly in the pacing of the piece.

This became a quandary of sorts. The hard data, based on accounts of certain real elected board members, was not successfully creating a credible stage character. As a researcher, I asked whether I should faithfully believe in and solely be loyal to the data. Or, as the playwright, should I make it “work” for the theatre? How was this particular character to have more credibility without sizably altering the storyline as inspired by the rules of inclusion and the other findings?

Clearly, data alone is inspirational. Unfortunately, it is sometimes not enough to animate, enliven, and generate a credible character. I made the judgment call to expand the breadth of Board Member 3. The fault in the character creation was that the several real board members who the character was inspired from were, in truth, more politically astute than was presented in the script. Even the “incident” which inspired the “Tyrizo” appointment candidate was an actual event.⁵

There was a difference from board to board concerning who (the elected board members or the appointed board officers) wielded more power. In one selected board, the political posturing of the board members was very blatant: also, the director general was very weak (in comparison to the board members). In another board, it was the opposite. The piece’s DG was *purposely* designed to be almost superhuman. The cold read, with different real voices, clearly brought this script weakness into the open. I had to strengthen the fiber of Board Member 3, the candidate Tyrizo’s community service profile, and the need for both the vice-president and Board Member 3’s belief for Tyrizo’s appointment.

Further, the readers themselves in this Denzinian⁶ motivated-style debriefing after the read went into long discussions deconstructing and reconstructing the problems with both the character creation and the plot vehicle element (the Tyrizo image). In the revision of this character, more credibility was given to the unseen Tyrizo. Board Member 3 became more politically smooth and manipulative. The incident now gives the audience the opportunity to debate the merits of the candidate and the power playing of the combatants. As a provocation instrument, the piece, by heightening the debate between the “good guys” and the “other agenda-ized good guys,” can actually empower the viewer to take a stand on several key issues of defining real power, racism, and integrity. The turmoil can leave in its wake a threatening question: If everyone believes his or her side is “right” and no one is “wrong,” and everyone is still “fighting,” then how does an organization define its ethics and morality? This is the final challenge to the viewing audience at the conclusion of Scene 6 and the play.

The Performance and Afterwards

On the evening of October 19, 1997, the actors were restlessly awaiting the audience to fill the Bhatla Studio. We had sent invitations to a number of in-service administrators, teachers, some school board (various) members, and various others. Curious as everyone else, the members of my doctoral committee were in attendance. This performance was never part of the “doctoral defense,” so to speak,

but for me as a playwright and stage director, as is any production, it was in combat with the whims of an audience. The performance was introduced by my senior advisor, the late Dr. Geoff Isherwood (educational administration—organizational theory). My other advisors and mentors, Dr. Lynn Butler-Kisber (qualitative research methods), the late Dr. Clement Barnabé (educational administration-labor relations/personnel theory), and Professor Myrna Selkirk (theatre studies), were also in attendance.

This performance was billed as a staged reading of the play (a dramatized reading with theatrical elements). This format was used for its friendliness to the audience and so the actors would not be concerned with the numerous dialog line changes and memorization changes. The cast was a curious lot. Some were professional actors. Many were in the education field and had some theatre experience. A few were former school board administrators. The evening was divided into three general time frameworks. The first framework was the introduction of the evening and the presentation of *Transitional Wars*. The audience members, as they entered, were each handed consent forms and response form packages with the instruction “Please do not open until told to do so.” After all were seated, Dr. Isherwood welcomed the audience members, outlined to them the evening’s activities and also explained the data response collection procedures. The presentation of *Transitional Wars* then followed. The second time frame was immediately after the presentation, where the audience members were requested to complete their personal biographical information sheet, an “Immediate independent impressions” form, and Likert-like survey questionnaire. After this written data was collected, the audience members went to their designated “debriefing focus discussion group” areas for a 20- to 30-minute open-ended discussion debriefing, which was audio-taped.

The third time frame was a refreshment time followed by a plenary question-and-answer period which I hosted. Up until the plenary session, I had kept a very low, almost invisible profile to insure that responses would be as unbiased as possible, especially from those audience members who personally knew me (or of me). The entire evening lasted approximately two and one-half hours. The feedback to the event was most interesting, for reaction was to the play’s content, to the presentation of data as a theatrical place, and to the use of performing arts in the preparation of administrators. All three data frameworks yielded positive response, revealing that a strong majority of these respondents believed that the TAR construction provoked discussion on leadership and true administration issues and served as a successful professional development tool. The following was typical of the “immediate independent written response” element:

I enjoyed the experience and found it to be very insightful. Your play was right on in revealing the issues and the ways that school board commissioners and the school board administrators work. You certainly showed the dynamic tension that exists between them. . . . Also you demonstrated that theatre can be an excellent tool in the training and professional development of administrators, commissioners and others. This is particularly timely with

the advent of site-based management approaches from the MEQ [Ministry of Education of Quebec] . . . you have broken important new ground, re: doctoral studies as well as education studies.

(Meyer, 1998, p. 150)

The Likert-like survey (Meyer, 1998, pp. 153–155) revealed overwhelmingly that both the use of theatre and the piece itself successfully provoked thought and concern about current administrative practices and on the issues presented in the piece itself. Finally the focus group responses were also very supportive. From focus group 3:

“I was surprised at how political the whole thing was.”

“The politics of it all hit you.”

“Unfortunately, I can’t say that it surprises me . . . and political concerns are more important than pedagogical concerns. It’s actually dirtier than was on the stage.”

“I was totally impressed, I was totally involved with what was going on—the actors on the stage and having observed school board meetings it seems to me that it was very representative—it was very typical of the kind of interaction that goes on where everybody is trying to cover up their mistakes that have been made in the past—there’s never any planning or—how can we not let this happen again, and the students, although they were mentioned—really that was not as important as public opinion or political correctness or bandying back charges back and forth—charges of racism—everybody is defending their own bailiwick—looking after their own interests.”

(Meyer, 1998, p. 156)

Since that time, I have used the play (in whole and in parts) in my teaching of graduate courses in educational administration and have also presented excerpts at several conferences and in-services for administrators. I continue to create scenarios based on interview data. Clearly, as a research methodology and a data presentation medium, TAR is highly successful (see Meyer 2001a, 2001b). Both my graduate student class members and conference respondents have indicated (in response questionnaires and focus groups) that the TAR scenario brings a certain verisimilitude-like reality to an actual administration issue in a non-threatening participatory event.

Recapitulation

I believe that the creative playwriting act is more the “show” than the “tell” of idea presentation. In this framework, this form of the creative act operates in much the same way as any educative model does—to inform, to demonstrate, and to question normative and not so normative models of action (specifically power brokering and decision making). The playwright, to create and forge believable

characters and storylines, manipulates the data findings in tandem with the human and spiritual directions that sprout from the data analysis itself. Credibility for the dramatic work lies within the eyes and beliefs of the audience viewers.

The threshold between a body of knowledge and creative artistic act begins with the “Ku” concept. A series of data-based propositions, which are believed to be somewhat credible, institute the working tenets that lie in the “Ku” state. The creative artist initiates, more inductively than deductively, thematic and plot concepts from the “Ku” “mist” (of sorts). A presentational forum is formulated that can present them in a credible and construed manner with a certain degree of truth or notions of truth. The threshold is then a net of capillary-like links between the data implications and workable contrived themes and plotlines. After a working script has been derived, typical production parameters and elements can be designed, constructed, and programmed.

The amount of truth and reality required to make such a creative dramatic piece workable is the amount of truth and reality that makes the dramatic piece believable to its participants and its viewers. This inevitably comes to the keystone point of the scriptwriter’s view of the subject matter. It is a relationship within the self-imposed multi-dimensional boundaries of the piece. These boundaries are a seasoned collection of knowledge-known, knowledge-gained and the fusion of the two together. The consequence of this “knowledge soup” is an enlightened (hopefully), creative performance-based vehicle. In this instance, it is a dramatic representation. When presented, its resulting application is to leave a wise (as in wisdom) reflection apparatus for each successive user, viewer or participant. Not only is it shared in some dimension within all these constituents, but it evolves and regenerates. Laurel Richardson, a noted postmodern feminist scholar who has experimented with both poetry and drama in her research, links the aesthetic, political, and academic into a shared entity:

Knowledge is not appropriated and controlled but shared; authors recognize a multiplicity of selves within themselves as well as interdependence with others, shadows and doubles. Alternate selves are interwoven by common threads of lived experiences.

(1997, p. 166)

It is the “lived” and “shared” experiences that lie within the playwright that work together with both the participants and the viewers to create the critical link—transcendence. The hard data, laboriously collected, digested and defined, can only make sense and be of use if “the common threads of lived experiences” can successfully integrate with the realities of the both the playwright and his or her viewers.

Postscript

As previously mentioned, the most important finding of the research—that constituent power basing and power-play politics among governing organizational

constituent members is *the* issue in executive succession—was clearly shown throughout all the project’s stages. Its representational vehicle was *Transitional Wars*, a dramatic vehicle (employed as a professional development tool) whose purpose was to provoke discussion in educational administration and leadership from its viewing audience. Its content, characters, and “reality” were formulated and inspired from solidly grounded data using the constant-comparison qualitative research method. From the outset, a clear goal was to create a research engine that could take clear, hard, grounded data findings and “package” them in a way that would benefit those individuals who are in the top echelons of educational leadership at the field level.

It could be argued that the transcendence from data to an art phenomenon is by no means scientific. The “Ku” perspective is highly theoretical in terms of occidental thinking. Probably, many researchers would not look favorably on it, for it is simply too mystical. Yet when a person studies a work of art, listens to a piece of music, views a dramatic piece in performance, or is just emotionally moved by thought or vision, it is not questioned—whatever the “it” is. “Ku” serves as a symbiotic synergistic linking mechanism between the reality of the three-dimensional authenticity of the stage and the mystical world of the creative mind—and hence serves a window for self or constituent group reflection.

Questions

1. How critical is data validity if the data validity does not inspire a provocative artistic piece?
2. How valid is the “Ku” concept as an analytical and creation tool in research data delivery?
3. How would you parallel the gestation sequence of data; its analysis, and its manipulation in your own research protocol?
4. Meyer writes, “The amount of truth and reality required to make such a creative dramatic piece workable is the amount of truth and reality that makes the dramatic piece believable to its participants and its viewers.” How does this relate to conceptions of research more generally?

About the author

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Matt continues to work in theatre when possible, directing stage productions, hanging lights, and coaching young actors. He and his wife, classical dancer Louise Doré Meyer, support anti-violence movements in community and school education programs.

Notes

- 1 See Meyer (1998, 2001a, 2001b) for validation of TAR scenarios as administrator professional development tools.
- 2 A “stake” is defined as either what a character, player, or constituent must obtain to keep face or what the player will win or lose concerning the matter being disseminated or debated within/between involved constituents.
- 3 Collège d’enseignement général et professionnel or College of General and Vocational Education. This is a Quebec pre-university, post-secondary institution whose successful completion is a compulsory requirement for entry for a Quebec high school student to enter a Quebec university.
- 4 A cold reading is where the playwright and a handful of readers literally sit around a table and read the working script draft from beginning to end with little or no direction. Its purpose is to have the playwright listen to the voices of the piece.
- 5 The actual incident saw a marginally successful school principal (of an African-Canadian heritage) appointed to a very high school board administrative position. This appointee was considered virtually by all line (active in-service) principals and board-level administrators as a politically not educationally inspired decision.
- 6 Refer to “Denzin’s Six Steps to Interpretation” (1989).

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Afternoon Tea at Su's

Participant Voice and Community in Critical Feminist Ethnography

SUHANTHIE MOTHA

Introduction

Observational and interview data have always seemed to me to be mainstays of ethnographic work in education. In my early graduate school days, I remember reading the work of researchers I admire—Deborah Britzman (1991), Annette Lareau (2000), Signithia Fordham (1996)—passing in and out of the school communities they were learning about, observing, and interviewing along the way, and I carried these images with me as I embarked upon the first days of my doctoral dissertation study. Throughout the year-long ethnography, my hope was to hear and understand the voices of Katie, Jane, Alexandra, and Margaret, four first-year ESOL teachers, as I explored teacher knowledge embedded in practice. I asked: *What are meanings of knowledge, pedagogy, and identity in the context of becoming a language teacher?* I sought not only to develop my own meanings of the teachers' lives, but to explore how they thought about their lives. This goal took me on a complicated journey, one that called into question my ideas about the relationships among representation and voice, objectivity and objectification, power, humanity and the nature of being human, praxis, connection and community, context and situatedness, validity, agency, and the politics of telling other people's stories.

Alexandra, Margaret, Katie, and Jane were recent graduates of an M.Ed. in TESOL program at a large institution in the Mid-Atlantic. Philosophical, peaceful Margaret was the only ESOL teacher at her elementary school. Katie, who was Korean-born and adopted by a German-Irish family living in the United States, was a bubbly and energetic force at her well-resourced and high-income elementary school. Unflappable Alexandra, an adoptive single mother, was well suited to her racially and linguistically diverse middle school context. And the always busy, always cheerful Jane waitressed at night while teaching during the days at a high school whose students included a large number of linguistic minority teenagers and a high percentage of students receiving free and reduced meals.

Spradley (1980) has suggested that ethnography should rely primarily on observations, and as I set out to learn from these four women, I concurred. I was

attracted to ethnographic methods for their richness, their ability to talk to the situatedness of language learning and language teaching. Observations appeared to me as somehow organic; they seemed to offer a chance to see the teachers living their lives in natural, authentic contexts. I initially imagined myself quietly observing classrooms with a video-recorder, tape-recorder, pen and notebook, and that is indeed how I started out my study year, surreptitiously tucking myself into a quiet corner at the back of each teacher's classroom, silently scribbling and diligently avoiding eye contact with curious students in order to minimize my influence on classroom events. However, two things happened along the way: one relating to participant voice, and the other to community, both of which troubled my wholehearted commitment to an observational study. First, as I began my ongoing data analysis during the first few weeks of the study, I started to sense that my field notes and consequently my representation of my participants were suffering from a gaping absence of the teachers' voices. Instead, I had the impression that as I was telling the teachers' stories, I was interpreting their actions, cloaking their practices with my perspectives, and in the process appropriating their lives. My first effort to counteract this effect was to extend the length of my interviews, asking the teachers for detailed elucidations of classroom incidents that I'd observed, as if by gathering enough of their words to serve as a proxy for my own, I could somehow mitigate my own presence and diminish the volume of my voice.

The second important happening, also during the first few weeks of the school year, was that Alexandra and then Katie expressed a desire to meet with their former classmates. I hadn't written any formal gatherings or meetings into my dissertation proposal, but I did vividly remember missing my own graduate school peers during my first experience of public school teaching several years earlier. Imagining something reminiscent of the kitchen table conversations of the early feminist movement, I offered my home, which was a geographical midpoint among the four schools. And so began the afternoon teas, which we held about every two or three weeks throughout the school year. The five of us would sit on my family room floor, clustered around the coffee table, drinking strong tea and munching cucumber sandwiches and Sri Lankan *mas-paan* (meat-bread). We gathered together in the afternoon after the last school bell rang, sometimes rushing off to prepare lessons or put children to bed, more often talking late into the night. By the second semester of the study, the afternoon teas had grown into dinners, although we always drank tea as we chatted.

Alexandra, Katie, Jane, and Margaret were seeking support from each other out of personal need, but in doing so they claimed a space within the study. The afternoon teas transformed the study, which I had initially designed as a collection of four cases. I had intended to explore the experiences of four individual beginning ESOL teachers during their first year of teaching, following the portraits with cross-case analysis (Yin, 1984). However, with the afternoon teas an unanticipated element surfaced, the element of *community*. I was no longer exploring four cases of individual teachers but rather was now studying one group of four teachers, a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) of teachers who came

together and developed their meanings of teaching in a socially and culturally fertile context. As I became increasingly appreciative of the constructs supported by the afternoon teas, such as connection, legitimization of participant voice, community, and the sociocultural nature of identity construction, I simultaneously began to see some of the shortcomings of an exclusive focus on observations and interviews, both of which had initially formed the methodological backbone of the study. Observations and field notes did not adequately capture the participants' voices, and one-on-one interviews lacked the richness of community.

Mindful of Harding's call to rectify the androcentrism of research (1987) and Reinharz's (1992) suggestion that a feminist perspective on data analysis includes flexibility and creativity in format, I made the decision to modify commonly used qualitative research methods in order to foreground the afternoon tea transcriptions over all other data sources, including observations and field notes. I developed a methodology that accentuated the qualities that I believed to be well represented by the afternoon tea data, including the legitimization of study partner voice and power and a recognition of the ways in which teachers' ideologies and practices are shaped by their communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). I used constant comparative methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), as is popular in qualitative data analysis, coding all data by hand as a matter of personal preference. I started with line-by-line analysis because it is likely to be most generative (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). However, I then took a step that was designed to privilege the afternoon tea transcriptions. I first coded the data from the afternoon teas only, identifying important themes within the afternoon tea data. I then introduced other data only in relation to the themes that emerged from the afternoon tea data. This step was intended to establish the centrality of the teachers' voices in the context of the community of practice embedded in the afternoon tea context. I considered the afternoon tea data to form the basis of the study, and I tried to avoid always presenting observational data without concomitantly overlaying the lens of the teacher's perspective. In this chapter, I first outline my research framing. I then explain how the afternoon teas related to two threads that ran through the methodological decisions I made for my dissertation study: participant voice and community.

Research Framing

In situating myself in relation to the study, I pursued a fine balance between intrusive heavy-handedness and neutral invisibility: I did not want to frame this study as a hierarchical and even elitist intervention in which I, as a researcher, purported to know what Jane, Margaret, Katie, and Alexandra needed to do to teach well. Nor did I seek to witness my study partners' experiences and appropriate them for my own purposes as a detached and analytical observer. I faced the challenge, then, of positioning myself to neither direct nor exploit.

Wong's (2005) extensive work on critical dialogic approaches to teaching, researching, and learning was influential in the framing of my research. Wong (2005)'s critical dialogic approaches draw from theoretical sources as diverse as

Socrates and Confucius, Paulo Freire and Mao Zedong, Lev Vygotsky and Mikhail Bakhtin. Wong's work led me to Socrates' model of maieutic inquiry, in which wisdom is the humble assumption of one's own ignorance. Maieutic inquiry diverges from hierarchical understandings of the researcher role that have come to be accepted within most Western academia. Historically in the United States, researchers in education created knowledge in experimental settings and provided their findings to administrators, who used the information to influence and even control teachers' classroom instruction (Gitlin et al., 1992). The institutional dichotomy between research and teaching is made all the more disturbing when viewed in terms of the inequitable relationship that men and women have to power as it relates to knowledge within educational institutions, with researchers being traditionally male, while teachers even today are predominantly female. Critical dialogic approaches serve to challenge the teacher–researcher power structure, stubbornly enduring despite more recent recognition of its shortcomings (Fine, 1992; Lather, 1991; Motha, 2002; Wong, 2005), by listening to the teachers as experienced, knowledgeable practitioners. Without the hierarchy, the possibility arises for inquiry that is truly dialogic, in which learning is a two-way street (Wong & Motha, 2005). Wexler (1982) has criticized the dichotomy between empirical research and emancipatory pedagogy, but Lin et al. (2004) and Lather (1991) note the absence of strategies to integrate the two. Methodologically, I sought to address that gap.

Participant Voice

On many occasions, I sat in a classroom and recorded what I believed I was observing, only to learn with greater probing during a lunch break that my interpretations were inconsistent with the teacher's because I had missed a confrontation in the previous day's class, because I didn't understand the history with the student involved, because I hadn't been privy to a hurried and whispered conversation in the staffroom that morning, or because I didn't know about the phone conversation between the teacher and a parent the previous week. The value of a humanizing (Freire, 1998) contextualization became apparent to me as the classroom observations began to appear to be disconnected from the teachers' voices and constructions of meanings. I began to revisit my questions about what I was hoping to learn in the study.

Positioning Participants, Positioning Self

I found myself more and more troubled by methodological questions that related to power, representation, and relationship in ethnography. My misgivings stemmed primarily from dissatisfaction with the ways in which ethnography has historically positioned researchers in relation to participants, described by Behar (1997) in this way: "Somehow, out of [the] legacy born of European colonial impulse to know others in order to lambast them, better manage them, or exalt them, anthropologists have made an intellectual cornucopia" (p. 4). In a world in which the researched has traditionally been a cultural Other, preserving a strongly

delineated boundary between researcher and researched serves to reproduce the power imbalance between the two. There is a danger in traditional ethnography of the researcher being positioned as a consumer of participants' experiences, using them for her own purposes.

Part of my researcher positioning includes an interest in challenging oppressive practices (Motha, 2006a), advocating for social justice (Motha, 2006b), representing participants ethically, and embracing the constructs of relationship and connectedness. Villenas (2000) draws our attention to Behar's (1997) discussion of breasts in anthropology in order to highlight the tensions facing women ethnographers studying other women. Behar noted metaphorically that bare breasts usually belong to Other women, women being observed, women under that objectifying tool of power, the gaze (Sartre, 1957), while the breasts of female anthropologists remain concealed. She comments that in hiding their breasts from view, female anthropologists can come to believe that their breasts (or gender identity) are not important, and they can be seduced into embracing detachment, objectivity, and power-neutrality. I wanted to heed Cixous' (1976) caution to all women who write about other women: "don't denigrate woman, don't make of her what men have made of you" (p. 252). Particularly in the context of a history of "teacher-bashing" research (McLaren, 2000) conducted by (usually male) academicians on (usually female) teachers, it became important that I represent Katie, Jane, Alexandra, and Margaret's practice in a way that was respectful of them and simultaneously authentic.

I wanted to conduct research that was responsive to participant relationship and voice. Michelle Fine (1992) describes three possible stances that researchers can take: ventriloquy, voice, and activism. I think of *ventriloquy* as the most traditional form; in it the researcher–author pursues objectivity at its purest, claiming to be invisible, neutral, and objective. Fine tells us that ventriloquy "can be found in all research narratives in which researchers' privileges and interests are camouflaged" (p. 214). A ventriloquist researcher would present herself as having no political agenda or underlying ideology. This claim is problematic because all researchers have beliefs and leanings about their research, and even the most objectively projected statistical study is making a political statement in support of a quest for objectivity and the possibility of an absolute truth. In Fine's ventriloquy, "The author tells Truth, has no gender, race, class, or stance. A condition of truth-telling is anonymity" (p. 214).

It is the second category, *voices*, that is the most troubling for me because I find myself easily seduced by the idea that I can benevolently create a place for the silenced voices (and therefore knowledge) of beginning ESOL teachers. Fine cautions us that this stance is "a subtler form of ventriloquism" and that in adopting it, while "appear[ing] to let the 'Other' speak, just under the covers of those marginal, if now 'liberated' voices, we hide" (p. 215). I chose to privilege one data source over all others, the afternoon teas, because it was the data source that I believed to be closest to the teachers' voices. In doing so, I find myself flirting with the lines that bound the category that Fine names "voices." When I select excerpts from transcriptions and edit them, what I choose to include or exclude is integrally

linked to my research intent and my identity. To present the voices of the four teachers as untouched by my own ideas and leanings would be prevarication. My challenge, then, is to organize the representations of the teachers so that I achieve a degree of candor in locating myself as a researcher in relation to them. The afternoon teas, in particular, have both supported and complicated my attempts to strip ventriloquism from study partners' voices.

As a researcher concerned about social justice in the lives of linguistic minority children (Motha, 2006c), I sought to embrace Fine's third category of researcher stance: *activism*, referred to in her later work (1992) as activist feminist research. Activism "seeks to unearth, disrupt, and transform existing ideological and/or institutional arrangements" (p. 220). Whether or not the researcher chooses to share her stance, all research is positioned in relation to existing institutional arrangements, even research that claims to be neutral. Some researchers seek to reinforce institutional power, and others, including activist researchers, seek change and disruption. However, a desire for change in itself does not define an activist researcher. Rather, activist researchers are characterized by their acceptance of the "deep responsibility to assess critically and continually our own, as well as informants', changing opinions" (p. 41).

As I worked with my various transcriptions and field notes, it became apparent to me that different data sources afforded me different perspectives, and that the different sources were unequally related to knowledge and to power. I found myself becoming increasingly uncomfortable with and unable to escape from the objectifying nature of observations and field notes, and I began to realize that a pivotal site for the teachers' construction of meanings was their voices, rather than my record of observations. The afternoon teas in particular allowed me intimacy with study partners' voices. Observations are informative and very real in a positivistic sense, but they're experienced through the eyes of the observer or researcher. I believe that there was something about the afternoon teas that helped me to disrupt the researcher–researched hierarchy by creating a distinctive space especially for teachers' voices and in this way increasing the degree of authorship and authority in how their teaching was interpreted. In order to be positioned to tell about their teaching lives, they had to actually take themselves through a reflective process and make deliberate choices about how to present the events they described. Privileging the afternoon tea transcripts over other sources of data meant that the teachers chose which stories to tell and were active in the construction and (re)presentation of their professional identities. It was the teachers' interpretations undergirding this study. I was therefore working not only with my interpretations of what the teachers did, but with the teachers' own retellings of what they did. For me, the afternoon teas were a marvelous educational research tool because they allowed teachers to be the authors of their own experiences, a departure from a format in which researchers wrote teachers' lives.

Validity, Truth, and Accuracy

At the same time, privileging the data from afternoon teas brought to the surface complicated questions about “accuracy,” which I initially perceived to present a challenge to validity. My concerns began to surface during the very first afternoon tea. Throughout the year, there were times when I would sit in a classroom or at a parent–teacher conference and observe an incident, then listen to it recounted at the next afternoon tea. Teachers’ retellings were not always consistent with my field notes. Sometimes these inconsistencies were minor, as in the time that a teacher remembered a name as “Andrew,” although I had recorded it as “Anthony.” At other times the differences were more significant. At first I was concerned. That little positivistic voice in my mind kept asking: “What of the incidents I hear about but do not observe? Are they valid data? What if the teacher remembered incorrectly? Misheard?” That voice will never move out of my head, and in many ways it serves me well, keeping me questioning and reflecting on many of the cornerstones of qualitative research, but it is a voice that privileges my interpretation of events over that of study partners, and hence legitimates the historically embedded power imbalance between the researched and the researcher.

Triangulation has been suggested as a way of increasing validity in qualitative research (Wolcott, 1990). In this study, triangulation would have been quite possible. I could have compared the stories told by the four teachers with my own observations, the interviews with the teachers, and interviews with students and other teachers. However, triangulation serves our purposes only when we are seeking certain forms of knowledge, usually those that are considered to be more objective and less connected to individual, personal experience. Throughout the year, it served me to repeatedly revisit the question: What is the purpose of my research? I was less interested in whether study partners told the Truth and more concerned with how they made meaning of their classroom events. The focus of my study was not other people’s interpretations of the study partners’ experiences, and shifting my emphasis from observations to afternoon teas helped me to better capture what I was trying to understand, that is, the meanings that the study partners made of their experiences.

Neutrality and Naturalism

According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993), ethnographic research strategies are “empirical and naturalistic. Participant and nonparticipant observation are used to acquire firsthand, sensory accounts of phenomena as they occur in real-world settings, and investigators take care to avoid purposeful manipulation of variables in the study” (p. 3). I moved some distance away from these guidelines; the afternoon teas were situated in my home rather than in a setting that occurred naturally and independently of me, and my presence and input influenced the course of the study. I chose to move away from traditional ethnographic guidelines because I believe that ethnography’s historical commitment to observational methods of data collection has on some levels sustained ethnographers’ tendency to embrace unrealistic (and often undesirable) ideals of neutrality and to obscure

the political nature of all research, particularly cultural research. In relying on observation field notes, which are the interpretation of the researcher, ethnographers venerate an ideal of naturalism that is misleading and convince themselves that it is possible to make a neutral record of what is going on. I sought an approach that differed from this stance, agreeing with Roman and Apple's (1990) charge that "naturalistic ethnography constitutes an extension rather than a break from positivism" (p. 48). Reinharz (1992) has understood ethnography to include "long periods of researcher participation in the life of the interviewee" (p. 18). I did not focus on walking alongside participants in order to observe and record their lives. Rather, I favored methodology in which participants related and recounted their lives to me through their own lens.

My work represents a departure from the teachings of Carspecken (1996), who wrote specifically about critical ethnography and offers a step-by-step guide for conducting critical qualitative research. Carspecken emphasized the importance of methodological rigor and attention to validity. What he defines as attention to validity—he provides as examples multiple recording devices, multiple observers, and reduced Hawthorne effects—was absent in my study. I don't see these as overlooked but rather as just not valuable in helping me to answer the questions I was asking. I was a poster child for Hawthorne effects. I am certain that my participation in the afternoon teas swayed the flow of the conversation, that my questions were at times leading, and that my study partners' relationships with me and with each other affected the identities they constructed while speaking at the afternoon teas.

I use the term *critical ethnography* as distinguished from *naturalistic ethnography* to separate it from the neutrality-seeking tendencies of the latter, in which the researcher purports to observe a culture without altering it by her presence. The quest for objectivity in naturalistic inquiry is a by-product of more traditional forms of research and in fact reinforces and perpetuates the connections between ethnography and positivism (Roman & Apple, 1990). This is not to say that I threw caution to the wind. Rather, I acknowledge that by merely walking into a classroom I changed its climate. By turning on a tape-recorder or taking notes, I affected teachers' actions. By asking certain questions, I led teachers to think differently. This did not prevent me from walking into a classroom, taking field notes, turning on a tape-recorder, asking a thought-provoking question. Rather, my challenge was to be mindful of my actions and their consequences and straightforward and transparent in my accounts of events. In decentering the observational data but nonetheless situating this study in ethnographic terrain, I hoped to challenge and extend definitions of ethnography and of critical ethnography by encouraging methodological experimentation that creates space for participant voice and authorship.

Proximity to Praxis

A central benefit of the afternoon teas was that they offered a fertile site for studying the praxis of beginning teaching, that is, the space in which theory and

practice intertwined. Beginning teaching is a fascinating area because historically, in traditionally framed teacher education programs, it was the meeting place at which theoretical knowledge amassed in academic institutions encounters the practical world of classroom teaching. In my own teacher preparation program, teacher candidates learned the theory surrounding teaching and then, at the completion of their coursework, entered schools with the intention of applying it. Exploring the first year of teaching as a study site can therefore allow us an in-depth view into the meanings that teachers make of theory, practice, and the supposed area in between the two. (It is difficult, and perhaps not even useful, to disentangle theory and practice.) The afternoon teas permitted me greater intimacy with this terrain between knowledge and action because they became a site that nurtured the teachers' critical reflection on their practice, which Freire (1998) identifies as crucial to praxis: "Critical reflection on practice is a requirement of the relationship between theory and practice. Otherwise, theory becomes simply 'blah, blah, blah,' and practice, pure activism" (p. 30)

Communities of Practice and Relationship

All knowledge is constructed, and the knower is an intimate part of the known.

(Belenky et al., 1986, p. 137)

The afternoon teas allowed me to be intimate with participants' voices, but then again so did the interviews. A further ingredient that made the afternoon teas such a rich data source, in a way that interviews were not, was the element of community, which helped to move my exploration beyond understandings of individual identity in isolation to the richness and complexity of how identities construct each other. Although I was also present and a participant at the afternoon teas, each teacher was engaging not with just one researcher, but with four other educators. In terms of representation, the presence and validation of multiple voices in community helped me to experiment with degrees of authorship and authority in voice. Community became important, not only emotionally but also methodologically, because power is integrally related to intimacy and relationship.

Community came to be a dominant theme in this study's methodological framework. Mari Matsuda and colleagues (1993) note that group identity, like individual identity, has nebulous beginnings: "its potential exists long before consciousness catches up with it. It is often only upon backward reflection that some kind of beginning is acknowledged" (p. 3). Our group identity had its genesis several years earlier, in the summer of 1997, when I met the first of the study partners, Alexandra, when she wandered into my office in search of advising. I met Katie that fall when she and Alexandra enrolled in a research methods class I co-taught, and Jane and Margaret the semester after that. The study partners were similarly closely connected to each other when I began my study in the fall of 1999. Each teacher had taken at least two classes with each of the others. Each had been

in at least one class that I co-taught. I was familiar with their teaching, having served as coordinator of all four teachers' student teaching experiences, conducting observations, meeting with cooperating teachers, meeting with the teachers every two weeks, and exchanging dialogue journals. I was also familiar with the research of Alexandra, Katie, and Margaret, having supported their Master's theses. We had developed friendships before the study began, socialized out of school, faced professional doubts together. We had attended each other's weddings and met each other's families.

Communities of Practice

The afternoon teas not only were a site of data collection for the study, but contributed to the shaping of the teachers' first year. The afternoon teas created a site of experimentation and collaboration in which the teachers assisted each other in developing not only their pedagogical knowledge but also their professional identities. They brought each other problems and worked together to solve them. Many of these problems related to how to teach, but many revolved around gaining access to and mastering the discursive practices of the larger schooling community. In this way, the afternoon teas became a community of practice, one that was tightly connected to (yet removed from) the community of practice of their graduate schooling, drawing on ideas and ideologies that they had initially encountered in their graduate coursework, for instance ideals about social justice and emancipatory pedagogy. The community of practice of the afternoon teas served as a space in which to practice the discourses of schooling in order to gain access to the community of practice of public school teaching. For example, at one afternoon tea, Katie shared with the other tea-drinkers:

I do think you have to know how to say things. It's all how you present it to the teachers or to the faculty. You can do what you want, then cite a name or cite a study. Or you can pick out a philosophy and say, this is why I'm doing it, even though your purpose may be something completely different. You can front it that way. It's kind of deceitful, but you tell people what they want to hear so that you can do your work.

(Afternoon tea, 11.15)

At the following afternoon tea, when Margaret expressed concerns about appearing to her fellow teachers to be inadequately knowledgeable about language teaching, Katie offered Margaret what she referred to as "retorts" from her repertoire of responses designed to contribute to an expert image:

I can send you [a list of] things . . . to say to administrators when you're not sure what to say: "Well, I'm working on a lot of oral language development because the [new reading program] training emphasized that a good reader will have to have good oral development before they can read.

(Katie, Afternoon tea, 12.06)

And later:

Oooh, Vygotsky model or oooh BICS and CALP. If you're ever at a loss for something, pull out BICS and CALP. It sounds good, you know. They're like, that doesn't answer my question, but thank you.

(Afternoon tea, 12.06)

Katie referred to the images expected of new teachers as *façades*:

That's when you pull the professional façade. My boyfriend Chris told me if you don't know the answer you do the pause. Hmmm. Well, let me think about that.

(Afternoon tea, 12.06)

She connected these strategies to the discourses of her graduate schooling:

The [M.Ed. in TESOL] program gave me a lot of stuff that I could say to other people to back up what I'm doing. The reason I'm doing this is because blah, blah, blah. The research said blah, blah, blah.

(Afternoon tea, 11.15)

Katie indicates that entering the culture of schooling requires more than simply applying the theories they had learned in graduate school to their practice within school walls. Rather, learning how to talk is one of the most crucial steps in legitimate peripheral participation. Lave and Wenger talk about this: “[T]he purpose is not to learn *from* talk as a substitute for legitimate peripheral participation; it is to learn *to* talk as a key to legitimate peripheral participation” (1991, pp. 108–109). The four teachers were not so much learning how to teach or even learning about the culture of schooling; they were learning how to master the discourses of schooling so that they could get into it and legitimate their participation in it. Katie was making a distinction between what teachers know and how they speak. Lave and Wenger (1991) raise the same point: “Issues about language . . . may well have more to do with legitimacy of participation and with access to peripherality than they do with knowledge transmission” (p. 105). The focus of Katie’s step-by-step guidance was to legitimate the presence of the four teachers within the school community, and this focus eclipsed concerns for learning how to teach. For Lave and Wenger (1991), “Legitimate peripheral participation in such linguistic practice is a form of learning, but does not imply that newcomers actually learn the actual practice the language is supposed to be about” (p. 108).

Each person’s identity is significantly shaped by her communities of practice. In the case of Katie, Jane, Alexandra, and Margaret, it would be impossible to separate the process of becoming from the communities that they evolved in, one of these communities being the afternoon teas. A case study approach that looked only at individual teachers in their individual contexts would not have captured the richness of the socialization practices at play within the community of practice of the afternoon teas.

Researcher–Researched Relationship

My history and intimacy with Jane, Katie, Margaret, and Alexandra affected the way I structured the study and the methodological choices and changes I made throughout. Because I was in relation with the four women, I cared about their teaching practice and their personal lives, about how I represented them, and about what they thought of me and my work. As I wrote and rewrote their stories, I struggled incessantly with the daunting challenge of telling their stories in a way that had integrity. I recognized that there was no one single and absolute Truth to be told and that my truth would be only a rendering, but this knowledge did not absolve me of the responsibility of telling stories in a way that was candid and compatible with my truth and yet did not represent them negatively. I wanted to tell stories in a way that didn't exploit or break faith with them. My dilemma centered around the question "How do women make other women the subjects of their gaze without objectifying them and ultimately betraying them?" (Behar, 1997, p. 28). Now, as I look back on this work, I recognize that I haven't answered this question, nor am I satisfied with my representations of Jane, Katie, Margaret, and Alexandra. However, I share my processes and offer my thoughts in order to extend the exploration of subjective research that does not objectify.

I set out to study a world I was already in and women I was already in relation with, and I was therefore not neutral to the four teachers. As the coordinator of their practicum experience, I feel that I have journeyed with the study partners through more than merely theoretical or practical challenges. Laughter and tears have profound effects on research. On one hand, my history with study partners may make me less open to the negative in their experiences, but in this case I believe that the advantages of personal connection outweigh the drawbacks. I am guided by Noddings' (1983) ethic of caring. She writes of replacing the Kantian notion of fidelity to principle with a fidelity and responsibility to people, to individuals. I cannot claim to be objective or neutral to the study partners because we are connected. Connection has been given a bad rap. Gilligan (1982) suggests that connection, traditionally viewed as a pollutant in research, actually furthers our humanness by stimulating our recognition of responsibility for each other. She deplores situations in which "the interconnections of the web are dissolved by the hierarchical ordering of relationships, when nets are portrayed as dangerous entrapments, impeding flight rather than protecting against fall" (p. 49). In a complex, context-dependent study, connection can also help us to paint a richer landscape.

The question of how much a researcher may be affected by her own personal reactions to her study is one that has been argued throughout history, but more hotly in recent decades. The supposition that objectivity is desirable is predicated upon the existence of both an absolute Truth and a path that leads if not directly to it, at least within a stone's throw of it. The form of knowledge pursued in this study was neither detached nor objective. Rather, I sought meaning jointly constructed by the study partners and me. The dynamic between objectivity and subjectivity has been conceived as a balance with a finite degree of give: if

you add to objectivity, it must be subtracting from subjectivity. Harding (1987) has suggested that the converse is in fact true. She called for a rethinking of objectivity and encouraged researchers to make explicit their subjectivity and leanings because “introducing this ‘subjective’ element into the analysis in fact increases the objectivity of the research and decreases the ‘objectivism’ which hides this kind of evidence from the public” (p. 14). An alternative to the positivistic reification of objectivity is Haraway’s (1991) concept of situated knowledge, which casts all knowledge as partial and situated within context rather than abstractly objective.

Conclusion

Complexities in Privileging the Afternoon Teas

The decision to privilege the afternoon tea data resulted in some sacrifices. For instance, in forgoing my focus on an in-depth analysis of classroom life, I also relinquished the opportunity to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how teachers’ realities are linked to their classrooms. This is not to say that I saw events within classroom walls as unimportant—on the contrary, I believe that teaching practice should be studied further. However, the decision to look beyond the classroom afforded me a deeper exploration of issues of identity, brought me closer to the teachers and their voices, and allowed me later on to make methodological decisions nourished by connectedness and relation, both of which were cornerstones of the study’s framing.

Regardless of the steps I took to disrupt the traditional structures of power in educational research, and regardless of what I hope is an elevated presence of the teachers’ voices in my dissertation study, this work remains my interpretation of what I saw. I wrote it sitting alone at my computer. Spivak (1990) says that “We cannot but narrate, but when a narrative is constructed, something is left out” (pp. 18–19). Even when a teacher’s words were quoted directly, I chose which words to include and also which to exclude. Weedon (1999) cautions: “it is important not to speak on behalf of others in ways which silence them and obscure real material differences” (p. 109). This work can be viewed only as my adulterated and personal version of reality. This is not reality, just the temporary account that I’ve managed to stretch and trim over this particular textual surface at this particular moment.

Ethics and Politics of Voice

The quest for understanding is endless, and we will never know everything, but it does not logically follow that we should therefore resign ourselves to knowing nothing. The methodological lesson I learned from conducting my dissertation research is that there is no perfect method, and there isn’t even a right method. Patti Lather (2003) calls on us to face the non-innocence of our work. In doing so I’m compelled to acknowledge that I embarked on this study reifying method,

believing that if I could only find the “right” way to gather and analyze, my representations of my study partners would do them justice. Dale Spender (1985) cautions that there is “no one truth, no one authority, no objective method which leads to the production of true knowledge” (p. 5). What I’m learning to accept is that this work is still me telling someone else’s story.

Situating This Work in a Larger Landscape

It is in our incompleteness, of which we are aware, that education as a permanent process is grounded. Women and men are capable of being educated only to the extent that they are capable of seeing themselves as unfinished. Education does not make us educable. It is our awareness of being unfinished that makes us educable. And the same awareness in which we are inserted makes us eternal seekers. Eternal because of hope. Hope is not just a question of grit or courage. It’s an ontological dimension of our human condition.

(Freire, 1998, p. 58)

Freire wrote of the *unfinishedness* of the human condition. This concept is liberating. Recognizing the unfinished nature of all research frees me to view this work as part of a larger ongoing research process. The methodology I explored through this study may not be for all researchers, all studies, or all questions. The process of experimenting with and even challenging orthodoxies in research methods was generative, but I don’t consider the methods I ultimately used to be final or complete. Nor do I consider them to stand in isolation: I view this study’s methodology as a step on the unfinished human journey of ever-evolving understandings of knowledge. I embrace Freire’s connection between unfinishedness and scholarly community: “I like being human because I am involved with others in making history out of possibility” (p. 54).

Questions

1. The author writes that in telling the teachers’ stories she felt she was “interpreting their actions, cloaking their practices with my perspectives . . . and appropriating their lives.” Discuss this statement and suggest ways of dealing with this tension in researching teachers’ stories.
2. Think of other arrangements besides the afternoon teas that could create spaces for participants’ voices and the development of community in research.
3. Discuss how the author’s views of ethnography were disrupted and transformed, and what you perceive to be the shortcomings and strengths of ethnographic research.

4. Explore emancipatory pedagogy research through the two sources mentioned in this chapter (Lin et al., 2004, and Lather, 1991). Suggest some strategies for integrating emancipatory pedagogy research with other methods of research.

About the author

Suhanthie Motha's life experiences as a woman, a person of color, an immigrant, and a teacher have aroused her interest and investment in social justice and have shaped the ideological orientation of her work. Informing but also staining her conception of what it means to do research, these multiple layers of her identities have inspired her to explore ways in which institutionalized and often subjugating orthodoxies of research can be challenged. Suhanthie was born a minority Tamil in Sri Lanka and soon moved to the San Francisco Bay Area for a few years. She then immigrated with her family to Canberra, Australia, in the 1970s during the years of the White Australia policy, which restricted non-white immigration to Australia. She spent four years in Nouvelle Calédonie, then a French dependency, during the inception of an anti-colonial revolution. Her undergraduate degree, from the University of Toronto, is in English and French literature. She received her Ph.D. in Education from the University of Maryland, College Park. She is currently an Assistant Professor at the University of Washington in Seattle. Her dissertation research examined the intersections of identity, language, and learning in the context of beginning ESOL teaching practice, and in her current research she pursues this line further by exploring the complexities of poverty, privilege, and class in the shaping of linguistic minority identity within schools.

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8

Altered Landscapes *Not the End of the Journey*

RENEE NORMAN

Prologue

In my dissertation, which is centered around women's autobiographical writings, including my own, I challenge the orthodoxies in research and writing by presenting a hybrid and postmodern text. This text blurs the boundaries between scholarly writing and poetic, narrative, and creative writing, and presents writing which is the re-search, re-search which is the writing.

Structured as a textual house of mirrors, the dissertation breaks out of the chapter-by-chapter mold in which definite findings are pronounced and finite conclusions are offered. Indeterminacy and ambiguity layer the work, offering a different paradigm for re-search, and one that is performative, poetic, personal, and artistic.

What is hopeful is the affirmation of such work through publication and award—*House of Mirrors* was published by Peter Lang Publishers, New York, and received the Distinguished Dissertation Award from the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies. Such affirmation elevates the status of the work in ways that open possibilities for others. However, accolades do not make evident the struggles that occurred along the way.

How do we go about conceiving and writing such a text? What do we risk in the process? How do we navigate the traditional structures that exist in the academy as we make proposals, write comprehensive papers, form committees, work with and answer to supervisors? What do we fear? What do they fear? How do we hold onto our vision while being bounced between one response and another? How do we remind ourselves of our considerable backgrounds and experience and lived life in the face of procedures that deny us agency? How do we fit round dissertation pegs into square oral examination holes? How do we cope, continue, re-group, re-bel? Can we leave others with the legacy of our journeys in re-productive terms? And where are we left?

In this chapter I write autobiographically about the experience of being a mature Ph.D. student (and mother of three) who writes a creative dissertation differently. Poetry and narrative that illuminate moments of pain and pleasure are juxtaposed against and with a discussion of such challenges as:

- dreaming a vision
- facing committee challenges (or what to do when your committee doesn't agree)
- deconstructing the oral exam (or who picked this chair??)
- from student to a doctor who can't write prescriptions.

Part I: Present to Past

I straighten the wooden plaque hanging over my desk beside school photos of my daughters. A light layer of dust covers (but does not obscure) the chiseled words that announce my dissertation award. Nearby, several copies of my book, the lilac-colored covers giving the impression of paper flowers, bloom. On a shelf lie several anthologies of autobiographical writing that graduate students in my autobiography-as-re-search-and-pedagogy course have produced, the words ripe with meaning and the scent of lives. But my red knapsack on the floor now holds old toys, not assignments, items which I have been collecting from my daughters to take to my classroom. There are many ways to work and live in this world. Except for teaching the occasional evening course in the academy where I graduated, I have chosen to fill my life with the joyous shapes and colors and sounds of children, colleagues, and parents. I am teaching in a new Fine Arts program in the public school system. Frustrated with the poor working conditions and low salary of the sessional lecturer, and rooted to this location as my daughters complete their high school years, I have shed tenure-track hopes like petals. This is not yet the end of the journey, however. Bulbs that lay dormant in the earth can bloom again. Meanwhile, there is sustenance and nurturance in the memories of wild gardens:

Awakening

The poem is NOT in the answers to all those questions:

I-can-find-the-red-shirt-for-you-if-that's-what-you-want-to-wear-no-you-probably-can't-wear-your-Little-Mermaid-pyjamas-to-Disneyland-I'll-let-you-have-your-pearls-back-if-you-don't-throw-them-down-the-stairs-at-me-again-you're-right-I-should-listen-to-your-answer-if-I-asked-but-you-can't-just-do-the-pictures-all-the-time-there-is-nothing-the-matter-with-me-it-was-just-an-automatic-reflex-to-close-the-garage-door-and-I'm-sorry-the-van-door-happened-to-be-in-the-way-and-no-I-don't-know-what-I-changed-in-Setup-but-I-have-screwed-up-completely-the-words-are-spread-eagled-across-a-blue-and-black-screen-and-we'll-have-to-phone-Jim-to-get-me-out-of-this

The poem is DEFINITELY NOT in the fact that I've been married so long that when I read some poetry I wrote as a young woman I was surprised to remember my parents were against our marriage

The poem ISN'T EVEN in any of that writing I found that I did as a young girl and a young woman, not in the romantic foolish girlish dreams of a girl I forgot and don't even remember, not in the saccharine words of a girl I don't recognize any more and would ignore if I saw again, not in the

bad poetry of someone with the same name as me who I'm glad is gone, not even in the images of a girl to whom I now say yes, I remember you, I knew you once before

The poem is NOT in the one-word "good" at the bottom of the writing, or even the you-should-try-to-get-something-published written in such tiny handwriting that I forgot it was even there or didn't care or didn't want to see it or didn't believe it by then anyway

The poem is NOT in the carefully couched encouragement to try writing since your great sensitivity and perception toward what makes good literature prompts me to say *if* that's what you still want, full of hidden and unwritten maybes and sort of's and probably not good-enoughs

The poem is NOT in the English professor who never even mentioned Virginia Woolf and what she wrote except possibly to identify the title of the play a title which Albee took off the side of a bathroom wall at some university somewhere

The poem is NOT in all the no's I had to say, no, I can't teach a summer course at University of Toronto, no, I can't do that workshop times 100, no, I don't want to be a vice-principal or principal, no, I can't come to your retirement party, no, I won't come to the staff party, no, I don't want to teach an off-campus course in Squamish, no, I can't do my master's program yet

The poem is NOT in the Cheerios I intend to serve for supper tonight nor is it in the loft window which gives a view of the outside world beyond and the poem *is* in the pictures all the time

The poem is NOT in the words jigsaw-puzzled and spread-eagled across the black and blue computer screen and NOT in those faint-praise little-hope large-doubt comments

and ESPECIALLY NOT in that terrible poetry and stupid girlishness and very bad writing

The poem is NOT EVEN in all the reading and the writing and the reflecting and the talking or the journey or the struggle or the women or the discussion

The poem is in me.
The poem
is
me.

As a mature student who began graduate school when the youngest of my three daughters turned two, and my husband sold his 10 am-to-10 pm 6 days-a-week business, I looked forward to intellectual stimulation and time away from the domestic front.

What I discovered was a joy for learning and a renaissance of sorts as I realized a buried desire to write, seek publication, and be a writer.

Following the completion of my first graduate course, a wonderful exploration of research into the world of children's literature, I baked a celebratory cheesecake for the end-of-course get-together. How well I recall the derisive look another woman (with no family) gave me and her comment: "Baking a cake is the last thing I'd do at the end of a course." Still tied to my world of domesticity, and always connecting it with this new world of ideas through my writing, I was surprised by her contempt. Perhaps it had something to do with being on her own and answerable to no one. Or a dislike of cooking. For me, a cheesecake was more than a culinary delight. My mother's Jewish cheesecake recipe, an old one used for generations, represented something sacred I was willing to share with others who were present at the beginning of my journey out of mothering and into a more intellectual realm. For me, the cheesecake linked the two worlds. It was offered as a gift. Though I felt a few moments of discomfort following that comment, I brought the cake anyway, used to the side of me that felt safe at home, in the kitchen, at the sink, convinced that this part of me could coexist with the student and scholar. (Much of my scholarly writing is done at the kitchen table!) I placed the leftover cake in my hostess' fridge, and we all went our separate ways.

I share this anecdote because it seems symbolic of my journey into Ph.D.-dom. The cheesecake is that which I brought to the academy, part of who I am. That "I" is a mother and daughter and partner, as well as a scholar and teacher and Jew. Or perhaps I am even the cheesecake itself, re-creating myself through that which I know and am comfortable with, inserting myself into the fridges (and halls) of new places.

Who knows? Perhaps the cheesecake is just a cheesecake and I'm making too much of my naive beginnings.

The following is an excerpt from *House of Mirrors*:

It is not coincidental that I returned to graduate school after the youngest of my three children was in her second year, when I finally summoned the energy and desire to get out of the house more, having returned once again to part-time teaching following a limited amount of parenthood leave. In the Department of Language and Literacy education I began my studies, with issues of mothering and writing at the heart of much of my work. In this department and subsequently the Creative Writing department, I also found generous encouragement for a writing life as well as a life of the mind. It is through writing that I discovered much more of my life. As Michel Butor has commented: "If I write, if I do all this work, it's because I discover something new in writing. It's because this work lets me understand what I didn't understand, to imagine what I couldn't imagine" (1969, p. 69).

My magistral work involved a collection of creative writing that autobiographically traced a story about "coming to writing" and transforming

through writing. It was framed as a phenomenological revisitation of lived experience with a post-structural consideration of the possible meanings within experience as it is written and re-written. The pedagogical implications of the work were situated within the empowering teaching strategies which encouraged the writing and serve as a model for teaching practice.

My doctoral work and this book grew out of this autobiographical beginning, and looking back now, I am aware of how the “coming to writing”—an autobiographical act—was the pull, the hook, the compulsion, to continuing work in autobiography autobiographically.

(Norman, 2001, pp. 14–15)

Toeing In

tiptoeing
 tripping
 treading lightly
 traversing through the narrow university walls
 of the men’s club
 (where women too
 close the silver-knobbed
 blue-painted doors of academia)
 women with beige-white legs
 well-cut matching flowered suits
 and immaculate impotent hair

 doors opening and closing between
 the men and the doctoral boys
 conversing in the halls
 lingering by those doors
 exchanging well-known names and pleasantries
 that really all say clearly
 just who belongs to
 the club

we’ll just let you in the
 threshold of the door
 if you’re brief
 if you don’t disagree with the article
 if you stop relying on that intuition which
 paralyses
 the tolerance of
 the men and the Ph.D. boys who
 claim they admire wit and wisdom and intelligence
 as long as it doesn’t obstruct
 the men’s club
 is hushed docile still

and stays where it belongs
not behind any more blue doors for écru legs
not in the carpeted halls of blustery camaraderie
not coupled with that intuition and mind and body reading
but in the
safe
distant
faraway place of
part-time
home-bound
mother-hooded
non-academic
woman
dabbler

Woman Flees

we talk of Virginia Woolf
Kristevan intertextuality
how to find time
for baking cookies and
driving daughters
our e-mail messages
form proposals
papers poetry
quick cups of coffee or tea
steam between meetings
where poems are traded for essays
in mutual review
where our revulsion for the letter grades
our children must endure in school
is mixed with 2% milk and
counter-hegemonic practice
all this activity
a proclivity towards the future
this yearning for learning
fleas in the fur of university departments
we burrow in
leave small red itchy impressions
that have the shape of disappearing tires
the smell of burned cookies

Part II: Past

“It’s research,” Ann says in self-defence, sensing his disapproval. “I myself,” he says, “have spent my time without searching, so could not be persuaded to begin re-searching” (Urquhart, 1990, 133).

The above passage is from Jane Urquhart’s disturbing novel *Changing Heaven*. Sensory, color-filled and windy words occupy this moody tale of moors and balloons and air and women who love men and men who don’t love back.

The clouds scudding through the eternal depths of absent sky. Our voices carrying in the air, the breath of the wind. Memories in the making . . .

Yet from a distance, the landscape is altered. The details blur, exist in miniature only, easier to distort. . . .

I was determined to challenge the orthodoxies in my re-search. Not for me the traditional, the empirical, the supposedly objective, research-as-usual.

The following is an excerpt from *House of Mirrors*:

Like other feminist re-searchers such as Janice Jipson (1995), I have come to feel that I must approach re-search in this way. The reading I have done in feminist theory alerts me to the colonialism of the privileged studying and then writing about the less privileged; to the appropriation of others’ voices for research purposes; to the misrepresentation that can occur in paradigms that are very much steeped in hierarchies and power structures. As I have listened over the years to feminist researchers speak of their work, I began to notice how often they insisted that the work changed them. They became a part of the research. I am seeking a place from which to re-search our selves as we exist in relationship to Others, including the Other in our selves as Julia Kristeva theorizes in an interview (Clark and Hulley 1990–91).

Those eternal questions echo: aren’t we, who spend time in the academy, part of an elite, privileged and advantaged group? If we focus on our selves, do we contribute to what William Gass has pejoratively called “Autobiography in an Age of Narcissism” (1994)? The question of just who is part of one elite and who is not (and who gets to decide) is a relational one. When I was a student, I was decidedly not elite if you lined me up beside the full and associate and assistant professors. But change the lineup to street people, or newly arrived immigrants who have fled war-torn countries, and the relative status changes drastically. Change the cast of characters once more to the male editors of mainstream publications which predominantly feature men’s work, and I am less elite than ever. Step back in time and people the lineup with Nazis, and I am not only non-elite, but my life is in great peril.

I concur with Trinh Minh-ha that anyone can become an oppressor to another at one time or another (cited in Ellsworth, 1992, p. 114). Furthermore, we are all oppressed at one time or another. And while I do not claim my Jewish experience is unequivocally identical to bell hooks’s black experience, I think I can understand hers because of (or in spite of) mine. I do not

apologize for my life of relative privilege, but I am very aware that it places me somewhere very different from the place of many women and men who have not had two loving parents, a happy childhood, a middle-class upbringing, and now, a fulfilling and equally middle-class family life with a husband and three children.

(Norman, 2001, pp. 55–56)

I spent my time both searching and re-searching, my voices in the clouds and the altered landscape. What better subject (and who could I know more about) than myself/selves?

In a journal entry I wrote:

I know what I don't want. I don't want to write standard academic discourse that leaves me out, that pretends to be above who/what I really am. Much of the time, that who/what is someone very domestic whose scholarly life is sandwiched between making sandwiches for others. I know I don't want to research others from a distance and make pronouncements . . . Why do we always think to re-search others? Why not re-search our selves?

I know what I do want. I want to write autobiographically and poetically and personally. I want to make sense of my life as it exists with/in the world of ideas and ideology.

About my work, I wrote:

House of Mirrors: Performing Autobiograph(ically) in Language/Education is a textual House of Mirrors which examines autobiography in/as re-search through performance and reflection. Utilizing the leitmotif of the mirror, I invite readers through entranceways, passages and spaces that optically reflect and refract the writer, the reader, the text. My autobiographical writing herein is an artistic performance, enacted as I simultaneously speculate (about) autobiograph(ically). This autobiographical performance is presented through poetry, personal essays and stories, theo-poetic ruminations on the literature and theory and journal entries that record the journey.

I ask: How can we consider autobiography in/as re-search? How does women's writing contribute to autobiography in/as re-search? Each section explores aspects of both these questions. Throughout the text, I refer to many diverse examples of women's writing, including my own, as well as autobiographical, feminist and pedagogical theory. The dissertation, then, interweaves the strands of my own writing, other women's autobiographical writing, and autobiographical, feminist and pedagogical theory in intertextual ways. In some sense the text could be seen as a *bricolage*, that is, incorporating material in a new work and transforming it. In an interdisciplinary approach, I draw upon the zones of feminist thought, post-structuralism, literary criticism, language education, and the hermeneutics

of interpretive inquiry, a narrative and poetic rendering which is written and writes itself with/in the topic.

Throughout the text, I consider the themes of writing, mothering, teaching, by examining my self/selves as writer, m(other), teacher, scholar, Jew, in the context of many textual and living others. Such writing and analysis, with all its attendant complexities, constitute autobiography in/as re-search.

However, this work is more than a self-examination. This House of Mirrors is peopled with many women's lives and words, a deliberate gesture to bring others to my life and work: Doris Lessing, Hannah Arendt, Jill Ker Conway. By incorporating women's autobiographical writing into my text, and considering what they have to say and how they say it, I add depth to the surfaces of the mirrors, Homi Bhabha's other dimensionality. I am affected by the textual lives of others as well as my own. I open my text to other women and the boundaries of autobiographical writing expand.

I also explore some of the vast and rich theoretical writing on autobiography, such as the work of Leigh Gilmore and Janet Varner Gunn, intertextually interspersing this theory among the mirrors of my own and other women's autobiographical writing, so that the text works reflexively and disruptively in the manner of André Gide's *mise-en-abyme*, the mirror-within-a-mirror-within-a-mirror, to look back on itself; in other words, the text questions what we take for granted, suggests infinite possibilities of meaning, indicates the contradictions between what we intend and construct and how this is continually interpreted and re-interpreted.

But there is a price to pay for such work. In challenging the orthodoxies, the orthodoxies also challenge us. I was asked: What conclusions did you arrive at in your study? I replied: I came to the conclusion that I have no conclusions, that I have more questions than answers, that in the gaps and fissures and fractures that exist between the lines of my postmodern text, there are spaces where ambiguity flourishes.

Such a question demonstrates a more traditional view of research in the academy and of dissertation writing, just as my reply attempts to subvert the status quo. And those of us who have been swimming against the current of five chapters, literature review, research methodology and research questions, have gotten much practice at answering such questions. Questions that don't even seem to fit our work, much less seek to understand what it is we're doing.

How well I remember the red-penned examination copy of my dissertation, returned to me by the chair after a successful oral defence. He took the liberty of getting the last word, writing: So why should we award you the highest degree for this work? Just one of the comments in red handwritten in the margins. Annoyed, I was tempted to email him in Texas where he had taken a new position following his Canadian retirement at the university where I completed my work. But when a colleague of his mentioned to me that he had remarked how well I had defended my dissertation, I let it go. Yet another lesson in the process of becoming a "doctor

of words” (my daughter’s term). Despite the supposedly open nature of the discussion and debate during the examination, there were ways to emphasize one’s biases and communicate displeasure without recourse to any healthy airing of views.

Are my words hard, yes, perhaps even harsh? Or words that seem important if we are to interrogate the process of obtaining a Ph.D.?

Having come to such a process later in life, I brought with me a lived life full of varied experiences, and, I hope, some wisdom and perception arising out of those experiences. I was not the only mature student or mother seeking a Ph.D. Most of my colleagues were women over 40, many with children, who, like me, had taught for years, were m(othering) others, and juggling many roles and subject positions with/in the academy.

Yet at times I felt these experiences were barely acknowledged. When one acquaintance, downcast, was lamenting how poorly a committee meeting had gone, following the presentation of her proposal, I reminded her of the wealth of experience she brought to the enterprise. Buoyed by my words, she cheered considerably and found her lost confidence.

I had a vision. I was determined to write a dissertation that was creative and autobiographical, that broke ground. A Ph.D., an award, a book. Yet still I feel like an imposter at times. Can I write the difficulty into this chapter? Or should it stay between the lines, the unsaid, all these tensions?

I wrote in a journal entry:

I continue to read about women and autobiography, dipping into feminist literary criticism books on the subject which problematize (oh, how I hate that word) the “bio” in the autobiography, the “auto” of the autobiography and the “graphy” of the autobiography. What’s left? White space. Monique Wittig’s workshop space, where I will try to carve out some sense about the matter of autobiography and education and feminisms. Chipping away at the books and the theories, smoothing the rough edges of my own uncertainty and confusion, chiselling out some insights and connections that might bring some features into being which begin to show me a shape, a form, a sculpture of some proportion with which I can begin to work.

How do I make sense of all this? How to bring it all together? Kristeva and Cixous, Woolf and Spender, issues of language and gender, narrative, poetic and creative writing. The proportions seem monstrous, as if with each new thought, book or notion, I undrape a new (bigger, borderless) creation, growing in mass (mess) no matter how I try to carve it into some manageable artistic matter.

I am buried under the pieces of stone deliberately chipped away or accidentally fobbed off and revealing slabs of colored rock underneath the outer layer. It feels right to claw through feminist literary theory on autobiography right now, but as I trip over the multi-sized pebbles and stones, I can’t help seeing no end in sight, and no sight in this end (of my work).

I must trust the stone, trust that eventually some vision will be revealed if I work long enough, if I stay open to what the rock is telling me, if I just revel in the cool, sharp, ridged, flat, smooth feel of the rock, the smell of something creative in the making, the taste of living in the rock and in the spaces between each line or contour, the sound of my pen and my hand snaking across the white space of the page.

I was asked: What do you think you are an authority on? (a question that to me reveals how territory is guarded). I replied: I don't think I'm an authority on anything, except perhaps myself, and I'm not so sure about that! Is there a place for humility in the academy? Canadian writer and former academic Sharon Butala writes this about humility:

You have to be still and quiet for these things to happen; you have to release your expectations; you have to stop thinking you already know things, or to know how to categorize them, or that the world has already been explained and you know those explanations. You know nothing. You understand nothing. You have only what your own body tells you and only your own experience from which to make judgements. You may have misunderstood; you may be wrong. Teach me, is what you should say, and, I am listening. Approach the world as a child, seeing it for the first time. Remember wonder. In a word: humility. Then things come to you as they did not when you thought you knew.

(Butala, 1994, p. 129)

Things come to you, Sharon Butala reminds us. I was advised: do this, no, do that, no, do this again, no, go back to that. Others are also taking risks when we try something against the grain in the academy. In breaking new ground, we tread carefully around any possible missteps. There are higher authorities to answer to. When I listened to one committee member, always an iconoclast, suggest I should list my conclusions, I wanted to leap across the committee room table and cry out to this imposter: Who are you? Do committee rooms, meetings, and doctoral candidacy turn courage into status quo? Transform the transgressive to the procedural?

And where in all of this shifting ground does the doctoral student stand? Encouraged to continue with risk-taking work, she sinks at times into the potholes of creative backlash, unearthed by the institutional constraints which bind those who nurture, read, support, respond to her work. Always she must keep in mind the personal in the process, how people's stresses and strains affect their reactions and suggestions. Others, too, are on the line.

A Poem about the Process

You've got enough for 5 dissertations here!
Somebody should have told me to stop.

STOP!

Whose idea was it to put an introduction before the personal essay?

I think the personal essay would be better near the end.

I think the personal essay should stay at the beginning.

I think it needs an intro.

Frankly, we don't like the intro.

Just start with the essay.

STOP!

I think the exit needs more in the way of conclusions.

I don't think I have any.

I can't even pronounce epis—epistemol—epistemological—you see!
I like the original exit.

Maybe I should put a donkey in the exit.

STOP!

The section on 3 reflections on ethics
has been moving through the text of this dissertation
like a mudslide in a torrent of rains
and it gained a 4th reflection
mud gathering debris
as it slid through the words
finally coming to rest with a thud

THUD!

Why isn't the ethics section earlier in the dissertation?

Where's that donkey?

(supervisor) If I had my way, this would be a lot shorter.

(me, printing off another copy) Why didn't I make this shorter?

(husband, delivering news that the laser printer is disintegrating)

That could be a lot shorter.

(committee member) Maybe you should add something about—

(me again, carrying box of 9 copies) Why didn't I make this shorter?

Where's that donkey when you need it?

If I had my way, this would be a lot shorter.

If I had the donkey, this would be a lot shorter.

If this was a lot shorter, I wouldn't need the donkey.

And without the donkey, I wouldn't have the same dissertation.

Part III: Past to Future

If given a second chance, I'd do it all again, if only for the thrill of wearing a gown and that goofy hat in front of my three daughters. And I wouldn't do much of it any differently, either. For the most part, I chose the courses I wanted to take, or asked for them to be taught, or did directed studies courses to adapt what I wanted to explore. I wrote a creative and performative thesis and dissertation, one of my goals, work that included my own autobiographical and creative writing. I had a wonderful time in the Creative Writing department, taking interdisciplinary

courses and being part of writing workshop groups. I worked on topics that fascinated and obsessed me, did re-search in ways that were congruent with my ethical concerns about studying others and my desire to integrate my feminist leanings.

But this is not yet the end of the journey . . .

A gloriously azure sky, clouds blown away by the night's brief rain and blustery winds. A walk in the dark by a favorite lake. The wind still blowing, the clouds visible even in the inky darkness, the crickets alive and singing, dry leaves rustling against one another as automatic sprinkler mists spray their roots and surfaces.

The clouds scudding through the eternal depths of absent sky. Our voices carrying in the air, the breath of the wind . . .

Memories of wild gardens

Bulbs that bloom again

I dust off the wooden plaque that announces my award.

Acknowledgments

“Awakening” first appeared in *English Quarterly*.

“Woman Flees” first appeared in *Whetstone*.

Questions

1. Identify some of the issues raised in the opening. Then name some of the ways that narrative writing and poetry begin to address these issues in this chapter.
2. The writing moves back and forth between poetry and narrative, between past, present, future. How does this differ from standard academic discourse and what effect does the writing have?
3. Choose a poem or part of a narrative that speaks to you, and write a response in kind.
4. How does autobiographical writing challenge the orthodoxies, and what ethical concerns do you envision it evokes?

About the author

Renee Norman, Ph.D., is an award-winning poet, a writer, and a teacher. She completed her doctorate at UBC in 1999 and received the outstanding dissertation award from the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies. Her dissertation “House of Mirrors: Performing Autobiograph(ically) in Language/Education,” which challenges the orthodoxies, focuses on women’s autobiographical writings, including her own, and on autobiography in language/literacy education, and was published as a book by Peter Lang Publishers, New York, in 2001.

Renee has challenged the orthodoxies throughout her graduate work at the University of B.C., first writing an MA thesis that presented a collection of creative writing that autobiographically traced a story about coming to writing and transforming through that writing. Steeped in feminist thought, narrative interpretive inquiry, and phenomenological revisitation of lived experience within a post-structural consideration of the possible meanings within experience as written and rewritten, it was the precursor to her doctoral dissertation, which considered autobiography in/as re-search and how women's writings contribute to this. The interdisciplinarity of this work across feminist thought, post-structuralism, interpretive inquiry, and literary criticism has challenged orthodoxies in research by presenting alternative ways of presenting and re-presenting writing and re-search, blurring the boundaries between standard academic discourse and narrative and poetic forms.

Renee's poetry, stories, and articles have been published widely in many literary and academic journals, such as *Canadian Woman Studies*, *Prairie Journal*, *Freefall*, and *English Quarterly*, as well as in anthologies and newspapers. Renee is one of 12 Canadian woman poets whose poetry is featured in *The Missing Line*, published by Inanna Publications in 2004. A book of poetry, *True Confessions*, was published in 2005 by Inanna Publications, and received the Canadian Jewish Book Award. *Backhand Through the Mother*, a second book of poetry, was published in 2007.

Renee has taught courses in Language Arts, Autobiography, Curriculum, Gender, Children's Literature, and Drama at the University of B.C. and Simon Fraser University.

Currently Renee is a faculty member at the University of the Fraser Valley in teacher education, where she teaches literacy and fine arts courses.

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Whose Story Is It Anyway?

NATHALIE A. C. PIQUEMAL AND NORMAN ALLEN

Nathalie: Originally from France, I moved to Canada in 1994. I was at that time interested in Aboriginal storytelling. While on a trip to the United States, I was invited to attend a ceremony that introduced me to a different way of knowing. While developing strong ties to the land and its people, I also developed a strong interest in learning about respectful ways of researching Native knowledge. My collaboration with Norman started when I was a doctoral student at the University of Alberta. I am now an associate professor at the University of Manitoba; my role as a university researcher has been shaped by our ongoing friendship and research collaboration.

Norman: After a brief tour of duty with the United States Marine Corps, my life took a departure from my original design. I obtained a degree in business administration with the expectation of working with tribal organizations, on my own tribal reservation, or with a public agency. Later, I obtained a law degree from the University of San Diego. Though I spent years using these skills in a professional capacity, several personal tragedies forced me to re-examine my cultural and spiritual identity, and this experience, in part, directed me to this collaborative research.

We believe our research story challenges the orthodoxies in that we have allowed ourselves to be guided in our inquiry by our personal life stories, by our shared life experiences, by the power of the surroundings, and by the challenges that we have faced demonstrating that the collaborative nature of our research was indeed ethical.

This is the story of how we, two co-researchers, have been learning about doing grounded collaborative research in two different cultures: the mainstream culture of the university and the culture of the traditional Native circle to which we belong. While traditional research usually aims at producing unbiased and objective data, grounded collaborative research is based on the assumption that data not only reflect real-life situations but are also unavoidably colored by people's values. Breaking away from an over-reliance on "objectivist" models for ethnography, our research story is an attempt to represent multiple voices, be it our voices as individuals or the voice of the land. We have divided this chapter into two main sections. The first section, entitled "Knowledge Sits in Places," features knowledge as socially constructed and highlights the importance of recognizing the oral copyright of the land when representing research voices. Our research project involved ethical issues related to excavations and to the repatriation of burial items

and objects of religious significance. In this section, we reflect back on our ethnographic experiences and explore ways in which our life experiences have shaped who we have become as researchers and how we approach research. This section raises questions related to the issue of seeking free and informed consent. These issues are discussed in the second section, entitled “Grounded Collaborative Research: A Reciprocal Empowerment,” in the context of a discussion of ethics reviews. In particular, this section challenges the validity of existing university research protocols by redefining issues of authority, expertise, and sovereignty and by arguing in favor of an ethic of reciprocal empowerment.

Part I: Knowledge Sits in Places

Can a research project really be one’s own idea? The idea that a project may have genesis from another source has confounded us. It is an unsettling feeling to discover that what you thought was your idea may have arisen from another source, a higher one. As co-researchers trained in Western thought and in different disciplines, we, at the onset of our studies, rejected the notion that a research project could have no other origin except from us.

A solid friendship is at the source of this research collaboration. We met about ten years ago at a ceremony which we both attended for personal reasons, yet which also brought us together on a shared path of inquiry. As we talked about some of our experiences, we realized our shared belief that the knowledge that surrounded this ceremony could not be easily claimed as one’s own, whether individually or even collectively. Looking back at some of the conversations that we had with the medicine man, we came to understand that our interest in the ethics of researching Native knowledge in collaborative ways has been largely influenced by some of the stories that we were told. Among these stories, some seemed to make a significant point about the need to see knowledge as available to people yet not to be claimed by individuals. We began to understand that the ethics associated with Native knowledge are embedded within a worldview that does not simply draw a line between secular and spiritual, between researcher and researched, and between authority and ownership. We continued to attend this ceremony together, but with a different mindset, one which allowed us to learn to recognize different voices and different forms of authority in research.

It surprised us when we discovered that we each had a message. Even more surprising, it occurred to us that these messages could manifest themselves in unexpected ways. In our case it was no different. We had a message and we knew it! But at the time we did not recognize the full extent of the message. The message just came, and it came with the quiet swiftness of a fleeting shadow. From our earlier training, we had cultivated the notion that the pursuit of knowledge in itself justifies the means. We always recognized that the history of an ancient people could be derived from the objects left behind. We enjoyed learning about the past from the studies and papers prepared by people who conducted research. We learned from them how our ancestors may have evolved, how they originated, and what they may have thought. We believed, like other researchers, that the

objects were inanimate without spirit and that there was no cause for alarm in the study. Such is the impression that Western training leaves in its students. Somewhere in this confused thought, our emerging beliefs caused us to question this interpretation.

We felt as though the message arrived as a breeze rather than as the storm one might expect. As our thoughts became stronger, we knew that issues surrounding repatriation were deeper. With the message, it seemed that there was more to repatriation than mere study. Somewhere this reversal of thought occurred within each of us, but we received it in different ways. The pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake was no longer the primary factor. The mere acquisition of knowledge without a perspective of any spiritual application seemed nonsensical and purposeless.

For some people, the messages come fast, but for others they do not come without labor or sacrifice. It is said that contented people do not receive spiritual messages as easily as persons with a troubled life do. With life's travails, troubled people have more need to look inside themselves. We both were once contented people until life events brought us a more troubled lifestyle. Our life stories caused us to seek self-reflection and to challenge our own beliefs. In a spiritual sense, this became simply a matter of survival.

Norman Allen's Story

I did not come from a strong spiritual background, at least not in ways that are typically associated with Native Americans. In my early years, I avoided things spiritual in nature. I did not understand them, and I was not taught to understand them. Though spirituality was strong in the elders, my parents probably did not want me to take it up because it would hamper my assimilation into the dominant world. Both of them had suffered bad experiences at government boarding schools, and they did not want their children to endure the same treatment—at least, that is what I said to myself. Not knowing any better at the time, I simply acknowledged its presence and moved on with my life. Many tribal elders left medicine pouches around. I received instruction to leave these pouches alone, and I did that as I was told that people could be harmed if these pouches were disturbed. This experience, however, caused me to wonder about this side of my heritage that I knew very little about. How could anything so harmless-looking cause harm? Though curious, I chose to leave this power alone. My mother also told me that she did not believe in Indian medicine, but she frequently carried out healing rituals on patients as set forth by Indian healers. By her actions and her apparent competence, I doubted that she did not believe. In a similar way, I may have been like my mother. I developed the belief that there was more to this spiritual side than I had believed. Yet without any instruction in these matters, I became content to leave the spiritual alone if it left me alone. In a way, this became my pact with the other world. I believed that the spiritual world would have little effect upon me if I kept it separate and away from me. Still, there was that mysterious drawing to the spiritual that I could not easily dispel.

With my spiritual pact in place, I attended public school, served a brief period of time in the military, and later graduated from college with a degree in business administration. Several years later, I attended and graduated from law school. I participated in tribal government and served various terms on the tribal governing body, the tribal council. At times, my style of leadership was quite forceful and perhaps self-defeating. Still, my pact worked. I left things spiritual alone, and the spiritual things left me alone. It was a grand time, but I would soon regard it as one of unfulfillment.

I had heard the tribal elders of my youth refer to the spiritual calling. They spoke of the trauma that would result if one did not respond to the calling. Obviously, I thought that this did not apply to me. I did not have a spiritual calling, but my personal life started to unravel and I did not know why. Years later, I still do not know why, but the feeling remains strong that in spiritual matters all things happen with a purpose. Sometimes you must shed the past in order to proceed with the future. I suppose that this shedding, in one sense, will continue. Overcoming one challenge gives you the strength to overcome even stronger challenges. Some healers later told me that I had started this path long ago and that I left it. Now the spirits wanted me to resume my path. They introduced trauma into my life in order to get my attention. Somehow, my pact with the other world had become disregarded, but I did not know by which side.

My life quickly went downhill. My marriage fell apart. My teenage daughter became pregnant and delivered a baby boy. Later, she died due to complications from seizures. In the midst of all this, I turned to my long-ignored spiritual side and started to attend sweat-lodge ceremonies in order to bring meaning into my life. My first lesson was that I had to learn to trust myself and my purpose. I had to rely upon my emotions and to set aside my need to look at things analytically. The spiritual is neither logical nor analytical and I would have to accept it. We are placed upon this Earth for a purpose. It becomes our challenge to discover that purpose and carry out the reason that we were placed here. It was not easy. We also have free choice to do what we want. The spirits do not interfere with our free choice, but I quickly came to believe that they are more than ready to make us wish that we had taken one choice over another. I began to look back over my past choices in life, and I am still looking over those choices. Those choices dictate the path that we will find ourselves upon.

I learned to respect myself and accept that there are things which I cannot change. I learned to respect the spiritual aspect of all things. Life is a circle, a continuum. One cannot change one part of life without affecting another part. Once one realizes this, life changes forever. There really cannot be any turning back. And I thought to myself that even though I did not choose this path, I would not want to go back. Always, there was that drawing to see what lies ahead and whether we possess the mettle to surmount that challenge. It seemed that throughout all my physical life, I had prepared to meet these spiritual challenges. I had denied the spiritual whisperings until the whispering became too loud to ignore.

I first met Nathalie several years ago in a sweat-lodge ceremony. She participated in order to seek healing in the way that distressed people are led to do. Our meeting

was no accident. This observation became reinforced by our later shared belief that all things happen for a reason. In this often-chaotic world, there always remains a purpose for why we are here and what we do. In this context, our paths would join in order to define and test our spiritual commitments and leanings. My initial impression of Nathalie was that she, as an emerging independent woman, was walking with tentative steps on a path so far undefined.

Nathalie Piquemal's Story

During the first year of my doctoral program in France, I took a course on Native American culture. While listening to the professor's lectures and experiences as well as to a number of Native American guests' stories and experiences, I found myself remembering my great-grandmother, whom I got to know until I was fourteen, when she passed away. My great-grandmother was Spanish and lived in a small village in southern France near Spain. When we visited her, my grandfather would act as a translator between the two of us. I remembered that my great-grandmother often talked in ways that seemed similar to what I was learning in this university course. She believed that things happened for a reason, she believed in a spiritual connection with all living things, and she believed in the healing power of the surroundings.

At the end of the year, I decided to move to North America for a year to learn more about Native American culture, as this new-found connection between my great-grandmother and my course got me curious. I was given the opportunity to study at the University of Alberta, so in the summer of 1994 I moved to Edmonton. I took a couple of courses in Anthropology, but I mostly spent my time in a Native community, where I developed close friendships. I saw in my lived experiences with Native American people a way to reconnect with my great-grandmother's world, but also, and more importantly, a way to learn more about myself. Therefore, I decided to abandon my doctoral program in France to start one at the University of Alberta in both Anthropology and Education.

I used to spend quite a bit of time in the provincial museum's archives section. I used to read books and articles about Native American culture. Once I came across some pictures that I found interesting. I asked permission from the library to duplicate some of them as I thought that they were unusual. One particular set of pictures that showed a man sitting on top of a mountain smoking his pipe drew my attention. Later, I showed these pictures to a friend of mine from a Native community in Alberta. He quickly looked at these pictures and became angry. His anger and sadness surprised me. I asked what was wrong with these pictures. He said that he would never want to see these pictures again. He said that it was a shame that people thought that they could take pictures of things like this. He explained that this man was praying and that this was a very private moment between the Creator and himself, and that he had gone to this place in the mountains to be alone. "This is one of the most insulting and disrespectful pictures that I have ever seen in my life," he said. I was surprised and quite embarrassed at the time. Later, it would occur to me that he had referred to a different knowledge that I did not understand and that I would have to learn how to approach.

A year later, I was invited to participate in a sweat-lodge ceremony in Nevada. I saw how respectful people were of their traditions and of this ceremony. I felt the feeling that my friend in Edmonton had earlier expressed to me about the picture. I found myself adopting the position of protecting something that was not my original feeling. I discovered how hurtful it would be for a people to see their culture misappropriated, in a sense to have their songs stolen. I felt that if I did not direct my research efforts to speak out on ethical issues involved in research with Native American communities, I would compromise my own principles. My senses became more alert, and I understood from the feelings from my own body that they were true. Earlier, I had accepted my friend's belief, but by now I accepted it as my own.

I remember telling my grandfather about my experiences in the sweat lodge. He seemed to listen with great interest, and when I explained to him that we entered the lodge barefoot, he smiled and said: "Your great-grandmother would have liked it there. She would have felt comfortable, because when she was growing up in Spain, she was never allowed into the church because she did not have shoes, or if she did, they were not proper shoes. The family was very poor." This sweat-lodge circle became a very important place in my life, in that it gave me a sense of purpose and of connection. I would travel there as often as I could and would spend days, weeks, and sometimes months enjoying a life in which I felt grounded. I met Norman in a sweat-lodge ceremony. Our shared experiences in this weekly ceremony have shaped our research collaboration.

Meeting

How did this "we" come about anyway? How did two different people come to share in this experience? We came to appreciate the concept that nothing really comes without a purpose. Everything happens for a reason. We came to believe that our meeting in this sacred place was destined to happen. How does a Native American attorney suddenly turn to the lodge at this time of his life? How does a French doctoral candidate travel from her European country halfway around the world and end up at a small Native American community for a ceremony? We thought about and discussed this frequently. The answer took a long time to materialize. The questions and answers that we developed would not have arisen through the efforts of a single person. Sometimes it takes the combining of spiritual energy from two people to reach the right levels of thought. We would learn that this level of understanding should not be taken as a given, that it must be constantly evaluated, as the margin for misunderstanding can just as easily rear its head. It is more than physical understanding, as in this field and with this level of collaboration, the spiritual messages that can guide the research always have the potential for conflicting perspectives.

Our initial meeting on a Sunday afternoon a few years ago started like so many other Sunday afternoons. We prepared for the weekly sweat-lodge ceremony, a cleansing and purification activity. This Sunday was, as always, a special day, and the participants all took special pride in the preparations. Excitement would fill the

morning and early afternoon as the time for the cleansing ceremony came closer. We would gather at the lodge in respectful and quiet ways. We would go inside the lodge in a pre-designated fashion and await the starting of the ceremony. Inside the darkened lodge, we would await heat as the water is placed upon hot rocks. As the steam started to rise and we would begin to feel the intense heat, we would feel especially close to the Creator. With the temperature increasing and as the sweat flowed more easily, our thoughts cleared and we would become lost in quiet meditative thought. We would feel the pleasant changes in our bodies. While the Creator's messages may not come during this time, the sweat period is important for the introduction of the spiritual communication which may arrive later. Then the ceremony would be suddenly over and we would leave the lodge. Unlike the intensity in the lodge, the atmosphere outside the lodge would most likely be quiet, calm, and peaceful.

The quiet finality of a successful ceremony brings the cleansing and uplifting of the spirit. It is at this time that the voices can become the loudest. Of course, it is not a sound familiar to the ear. It comes as feelings and pictures; it arrives as vibrations from a song long gone that prompts healing and stillness of the spirit. Our message became emphatic; the spirits' ancestors must be allowed to rest. The voices posed this to us the living: are we not of the same spirit? Our features may be unlike yours, but are we not of the same spirit? Help us as brothers and sisters to find rest and peace. After this moment, the physical factors intrude. We ask ourselves whether we actually heard these impressions, whether we correctly interpreted them and whether we are wholesome enough to receive these kinds of messages. We doubted and then we trusted that what we heard was correct. That is always the difficult part of things spiritual. We must trust our feelings. Yet in our professional training, we cannot trust without some logical reinforcement. Trust is the great equalizer between the professional and the spiritual calling.

These are the kinds of inspiration that came to us during times of stillness and solitude, inspiration that we came to know as grounded from the Creator, the higher spirit above all of us. With the message, we received the ideas, but did the source come from another? At the time, we believed that the idea flowed from within us in a manner we would call our own. We derive our physical being from the earth, and we return to the earth. But from whence does the spirit derive? If it does not come from the earth, does it originate from the heavens? When life ebbs, does the spirit remain in the earth or does it return to the heavens from where it came? Can we say that we can possess the spirit as we can possess the remains? We cannot. From the unconfined eternal spirit, we had a message! And what a message it was.

This message as we experienced it came as intuitive thought. While we originally thought that the message would be different, the idea that surfaced seemed to focus upon the issue of repatriation of Native American remains and funerary objects. The issues at stake concern the ownership of remains and funerary objects versus the custodianship of such remains and objects. On one hand, we had the viewpoint of the scientists, and on the other hand we had the perspective of Native people. Our research, as it was revealed to us, involved the identification of these issues and

the support for them. The overriding message indicated that the research could be guided through an intuitive process.

This intuitive process has legitimacy. Traditional approaches to research involve scientific methods to provide the support. Native approaches use the oral history and tribal cultural values for support. One approach uses the scientific evaluation of remains and objects. The other approach uses a different method to bring intuition and spirit into the evaluation process. Both approaches should have value. Perhaps they should be seen not as contradictory but as complementary. The remains of former living people should not be viewed as a collection of skeletal remains without a spirit and soul. In a study, should one be done in the absence of the other?

Location

We believe that location has considerable significance as one reflects upon any study of Native people. Their identity flows from their location. In most Native lands, there are recognized places or power centers which are of cultural significance. Native people are drawn to these centers for spiritual renewal. In conducting the initial research, we visited such power centers. In the Great Basin area of Nevada, some of the ancient saltwater lakes remain, such as the ancient Lake Lahontan (Lake Lahontan was part of the ocean as the North American continent rose from the sea in ancient times). We visited two of the natural saltwater lakes in the area. We noticed that each of these lakes possessed different energy. It was not apparent at first, but as we absorbed ourselves in the research project, we noticed that our perceptions were different in each area. At one of the lakes, we picked up a rock and thought of keeping the rock. Suddenly, the thought came to us that this rock should not be taken or transported to another location. We examined the thought. Many Native people believe that even inanimate objects have a spirit, and if the object is removed, the spirit will leave and not return. In this context, we did not believe that it was appropriate to remove the rock. This thought served as a focal point in our emerging understanding of location.

There is a respect afforded to the land. Nothing is taken without surrendering something in return. It is this overture of an offering that distinguishes the act of taking from theft. Yet there may be a distinction between an offering for an object that is not renewable and one that is. We would feel comfortable, for example, leaving a tobacco offering for a living object such as sage, a tree branch, game, etc. What would one do if one wanted to leave a tobacco offering for a rock or similar object? Is a tobacco offering appropriate for a rock? It seems fine to leave a tobacco offering for sweet-grass sage but less fine for a rock. Perhaps it is the thought that we are taking more from the land than a rock. Perhaps we are taking part of the land or its identity with us. It seems appropriate that if we are removing identity from the land then we should make the mutual offering of a bit of ourselves. But this brings us to the even greater question. What is the appropriate offering for taking the greatest identity from the land, namely the bones and, ultimately, the spirit of the long-gone or ancient ancestors? What is the price of the offering that

we must pay? Are we willing to pay or to exact that price? What if that was our message in an evolving form?

We took this thought a little further. We wondered what gave identity to the land. As part of the project, we also visited other tribal areas. We noticed that, like the lakes, the energy from each of the tribal areas was different. In this case, the difference existed between the Paiute and Shoshone tribal lands. Each one had a different rhythm. The identity of the land, we thought, would come from the objects that are deposited on the land. It would flow from the people who lived there. The energy of the people who lived there would permeate the land and give the land a separate identity and rhythm. This is the essence of the point that Native people speak to. This is the spiritual aspect of why the cultural remains should be returned to where they came. In a sense, this is the shared responsibility of modern Native people. They are the custodians of the spiritual and sacred components of the land. This then became the basis of the thought that the spirits made known early to us—that they wanted to be returned to the area from which they came.

We learned that the power of a location can be important to the intuitive process in research. The location derives its strength from the objects in its surroundings. The essence of the power of the location flows from the objects contained within it. These concepts do not gain support from the scientific establishment as the concepts of intuition and creativity cannot be scientifically measured. This is how we jointly came to examine this contradiction. Perhaps the answer to these questions comes not simply from the collaboration between two different researchers but from the collaboration between two vastly different perspectives: the academic community, which does not hear the messages, and the Native community, which does. Perhaps this is the key to this ongoing and ever-deepening mystery. If so, one does not merely look at the bones; one must also hear.

Part II: Grounded Collaborative Research: A Reciprocal Empowerment

As we learned about how to do grounded collaborative research within the context of an academic institution that views itself as the “voice of authority,” we faced a number of ethical conflicts, particularly while trying to comply with the university’s requirement for an ethics review. We felt that university research policies, by requesting researchers to design their entire research project prior to the actual ethnographic research, make it very difficult for true collaboration to take place. We found ourselves questioning the possibility of doing collaborative research in the cultural context of academia, which values objectivity, distance, and neutrality in ethnographic discourse. While we felt that the world of academia was more accepting of qualitative research methods in general, our experience with the negotiation of free and informed consent as laid out by Nathalie’s research ethics board made us realize that university research policies have not yet undergone enough changes to officially legitimize collaborative research methodologies.

In particular, Nathalie remembered her discomfort when she had to submit an ethics review application to the university’s research ethics board. This ethics application required researchers to clearly explain the purpose of their research,

the procedures employed in the study, and the methods to recruit the “subjects.” The researcher is generally expected to deal with all these issues prior to entering the field, as “going into the field” prior to approval from the university’s research ethics board would be considered unethical. In collaborative research, these issues are generally dealt with in a consultative manner as the project unfolds. The establishment of relationships and partnerships prior to designing a research study often holds controversy as many research ethics boards will expect this stage of consultation to be part of the ethics review application. This is something that Nathalie struggled with on several occasions. In an earlier paper, she wrote: “On one hand, if I were to do what was considered ethical by the university’s research guidelines; I had to give up on the whole idea of doing collaborative research. Indeed, how could I begin to think collaboration when everything had to be decided before I was supposed to meet the people who would “collaborate” with me? On the other hand, if I started to design a research question as well as potential methods for inquiry in collaboration with the participants prior to getting approval from the research ethics board, I was in violation of my institution’s ethical guidelines: it would be as if I had gone into the field without the proper travel document” (Piquemal, 2000, p. 50).

This dilemma caused us to wonder about issues of authority, expertise, and sovereignty. We believed that if true collaboration implies shared authority and shared responsibilities, filling out an ethics review explaining how researchers are going to protect the participants creates an imbalance in their relationships with the research participants. The question that arose for us was, by treating the participants as vulnerable research subjects, do we not take away their voice and their right to self-determination in what is supposed to be a reciprocal relationship? We thought that it would be more appropriate for us to look at ethical issues as part of an ongoing process. In a way, we are still dealing with ethical issues, as we strongly believe that our ethical responsibilities will not cease until our research collaboration has come to an end. As long as we are dealing with lived research experiences, life stories, and the analysis of life stories, we have a responsibility to ensure that free and informed consent is ongoing and inclusive of all research voices. Indeed, it is not enough that we get free and informed consent only once prior to beginning research (Piquemal, 2001). We feel that free and informed consent needs to be renegotiated throughout the research process, because collaborative research is a transformative process in which the inquiry’s identity is shaped by interpersonal relationships. In other words, we view the process of writing an ethics review as an ongoing process that evolves with the research and the writing of the research.

In collaborative research, research participants are generally viewed as co-researchers who are involved in decision making pertaining to definitions of various issues with regard to the research design, including the following: the subject of inquiry, methods for data collection, data analysis, and ways of disseminating research results. There is, however, an area in which we believe the voice of the participants is underrepresented—research ethics policies. Indeed, when one accepts the idea that collaborative research is a joint construction of knowledge

that involves a shared expertise, a shared authority, and a shared authorship, one has to question why these shared responsibilities cease when dealing with ethics reviews. We believe that if research participants are to be active collaborators and not only passive sources of knowledge, they should be involved in the ethical decision-making process. If the intent of collaborative research is to promote equitable distribution of power and responsibilities, then why not fully enable participants to have meaningful input into ethical research decisions that are likely to affect their lives in ways that academics may not necessarily understand?

While people recognize that in collaborative research, reciprocal interpersonal relationships are more important than personal power and that research is based on shared beneficence rather than self-interest, more critical analyses focusing on the implications of collaborative research for research ethics policies are needed. For example, by giving researchers full responsibility in terms of ethics review proposals, universities are supporting a paternalistic view in which researchers are usually the ones to decide what is “good” or “bad,” and what constitutes benefits, what constitutes harm for the human subject. In other words, this view conveys the idea that the researcher, along with the university’s research ethics board, is the ultimate legitimate authority concerning ethical behavior.

In collaborative research, in contrast, expertise, authority, and responsibilities are shared. Why, then, not share ethical decisions? Indeed, can the researcher claim to be the expert as to what constitutes harm for the participants? In the same way as the perception of pain belongs to the individual him/herself, the perception of harm may be shaped by the culture to which individuals belong. The controversy around the human remains known as Spirit Cave Man (Kirner et al., 1997; Wheeler 1997) is a case in point. “Spirit Cave Man” is the name given to the approximately 9000-year-old remains of a man found in a cave near Grimes Point, in Nevada. In this case, both the scientific community and the Native community argue that they have a claim to Spirit Cave Man. Researchers want to excavate and analyze, whereas Native communities are seeking to rebury the remains. In this type of research, many anthropologists write ethics reviews for research involving excavations of human burials. Most of them, we assume, get an ethics review approved prior to entering the field. However, as is the case for Spirit Cave Man, while most Native people argue against the excavation of human burials, explaining that these burials have a life, a spirit that should not be disturbed, Western researchers, for the most part, respond to these arguments by claiming that these excavations could not possibly disturb anything (Mullen, 1998). It is clear that Native perspectives of what constitutes harmful research are often in dissonance with those of Western academic researchers. Research ethics policies are such that these perspectives are not, or cannot, be taken into consideration by researchers when proposing research projects.

In a recent conference (Piquemal, 2003), Nathalie reflected on the implications of collaborative research for the research protocol of free and informed consent:

If one of the main purposes of seeking free and informed consent is to promote the participant’s right to self-determination, then why do we not

rely on the participant's expertise of issues such as what constitutes harmful/beneficial research? Ethics review policies need to rely on a principle of reciprocal empowerment rather than on a principle of personal control and on an ethic of reciprocity rather than on an ethic of paternalism. In collaborative research, ethical learning is a process in which co-researchers teach one another and contribute to ethical decisions according to their own field of competence.

(p. 16)

One way to empower the participant concerning ethical decisions is to view free and informed consent as an ongoing process that evolves with the inquiry. This is particularly important when representing multiple voices. One of the predominant voices in our research was, as described in Part I, the voice of the surroundings, the land and the spirit ancestors. Our research question was shaped by our connection with the lodge and its surroundings. In our attempt to acknowledge the impact of these surroundings on our research experiences, we felt that the process of seeking free and informed consent should be inclusive of the "voice of the land." Culturally appropriate ways in which we may seek consent from the surroundings seemed to be through spiritual guidance and confirmation. This intuitive process is based on the assumption that there is a strong spiritual grounding for ethical conduct and that ethics are embedded within a worldview that does not draw a line between the secular and the spiritual. The process of seeking free and informed consent flows from such an ethic, which takes the circle as its model and which does not find it easy to disregard connections between the categories that many scholars create when proposing research projects. Grounded collaborative research is by its very nature fluid; questions of ethics arise at unforeseen moments, mainly because ethical learning evolves with the inquiry. By viewing ethical decisions as an ongoing process, one recognizes that notions of benefits, harm, sensitive issues, and intellectual property rights, to name a few, are inherently difficult to define with any precision prior to beginning the research. In grounded collaborative research, these notions are to be defined in collaboration with the participants. Ethics reviews need to rely on a principle of co-expertise if one is to ensure that consent represents multiple voices, and on a principle of confirmation if one is to ensure that consent is ongoing.

We cannot afford to close ourselves to these messages that are revealed to us. Our research has taken many different directions over the last few years. The ethics review proposal that Nathalie submitted to the university when she started her research proposal became obsolete a couple of months after we started our ethnographic research because we defined our research issues as we shared some of our experiences. Part of the data that we collected was used to help us define and refine our research questions. In grounded collaborative research, it would make sense to view the ethics review process as an integral part of the research itself. In our understanding, the ethics review process is completed when the research is completed.

Our approach to the writing of research was based on the recent turn in qualitative research methodologies from an over-reliance on objectivist models for ethnography toward more “humanistic” ones recognizing the voice of the research as that of a positioned observer (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002, 2003; Weinberg, 2002). The voices of our research were those of people who belong to the traditional circle described in Part I. We identified several research questions aimed at addressing ethical issues involved in research with Native American communities. We used the sweat lodge as a frame of reference to share stories and perspectives dealing with issues of consent and intellectual property rights. We used open-ended interviews and encouraged one another to take part in discussions aimed at developing guidelines for respectful ways of approaching Native knowledge. Our research was shaped by a double collaborative process of researching stories and “storying” research. Our research voices were a reflection of individuals’ stories of their experiences as well as a collective effort to reflect on these experiences, find emerging themes, and develop research protocols that are inclusive of Native American ways of knowing. Our experience suggested the need to attempt to break away from the traditional view of the researcher as in control of the research process. Co-researchers expressed their views on how their stories might be used in developing ethical protocols for non-Native researchers working with Native communities. The final document that was created was built from the interactive and dialogical process of sharing and reflection.

We are not questioning the validity or the importance of an ethics review process. Researchers need to be aware of ethical issues involved in research with human participants, and need to ensure that they have these participants’ free and informed consent. However, in collaborative research in which authority, responsibilities, and decisions are shared, researchers may find themselves in an awkward position when having to seek free and informed consent from the co-researchers, who may have been the ones initiating a request for research. In this case, it seems important to distinguish between institutional consent and relational consent. Institutional consent corresponds to the requirement of the university for a formal ethics review ensuring the protection of the participants in terms of privacy, harm, anonymity, etc. Relational consent is faithful to all parties involved and allows for an equitable representation of voice and distribution of power. While the importance of prioritizing the well-being of the research participants is unquestioned, what needs to be addressed is how the process of seeking free and informed consent alters the reciprocal dimension of relationships in collaborative research. By having to formalize consent, the researcher conveys the idea that the relationship between researchers and participants is one of control and power. The researcher takes responsibility for the safety and the well-being of the participants, who are viewed as somewhat vulnerable and defenseless. This process is legitimate and important when research is done *on* participants. However, in collaborative research *with* participants, it makes more sense, as we have argued throughout this section, to view the ethics review process and consent seeking as a collective responsibility and as a process of reciprocal empowerment. The ethics of reciprocal

empowerment can be articulated around the notion of alterity as defined by Lévinas (1981) and the notion of “I-thou” as defined by Buber (1970). Buber contends that the notion of “I-thou” establishes a reciprocal relationship between two subjects, in contrast to the notion of “I-it,” which establishes a non-reciprocal relationship between a subject and an object or between a subject and another subject treated like an object. In addition, Lévinas reminds us that an ethical relationship begins when the self (researcher) encounters the other (researcher participant) and recognizes the other’s otherness as irreducible to sameness. This relationship with alterity commands responsibility as the awareness of otherness is a calling into question of the privileges of the self. Translated into collaborative research terms, this means that the researcher has the responsibility of disempowering him/herself in those situations where the research participant may have expertise, as may be the case, for example, for research around excavations of objects of spiritual and cultural significance. Disempowerment of the self allows for empowerment of the other, thereby facilitating equity in research relationships. While equity in research may not necessarily imply equal power in decision making, it does, however, imply negotiated power and the inclusion of the participants’ voices in a dialogue about those aspects of the research that affect researcher, participants, as well as places in which knowledge sits.

Questions

1. Piquemal and Allen suggest that knowledge sits in places. How does this fit with your own conception of research?
2. How may personal experiences be credibly integrated in academic writing?
3. How have you dealt with ethics in your own research? How might the notion of reciprocal empowerment be applied in your relationships with the research participants?
4. Research ethics boards are often concerned with the rights of vulnerable populations, such as Aboriginal populations, indigenous peoples, young children, non-dominant language speaking groups, etc. Are there any groups of people targeted for research who may be considered not vulnerable?

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10

Drinking U.S. Water

Flowing Narratives of a Traveling Korean Woman Researcher in U.S. Higher Education

JEONG-EUN RHEE

(Dis)Owning My Places

Countless people are traveling, migrating, and living globally for various reasons in starkly different conditions, disrupting, negotiating, and reinforcing the linkage of cultures, peoples, identities, nations, and specific places. Along with these people, flowing are capital, markets, technologies, and cultures. In its most general sense, this increasing global movement of capital, images, ideas, and people characterizes the word “globalization.” As Torgovnick states, this is the postmodern, with its “polyglot, syncretic nature, its hodgepodge of the indigenous and the imported, the native and the foreign” (cited in Kelsky, 1996, p. 47). My traveling narrative starts from this point, noting how these enormous flows inextricably complicate every sphere of our lives. In this movement, I recognize my privileged location as a marginal/migrant intellectual who could afford to travel whether in class/educational aspiration or in desire to flee from the living conditions I could not bear anymore.

At the inception of my research project, I wrote:

she can't celebrate korea
ragewrathresentment
i am living in
my body
rooted, membered, nurtured in
korea
can't insult it
humiliation,
alienation,
indignation,
she can't identify with the “West”
learned desire,
lived power, the west
can't reject it

impure, guilty, not innocent
inauthentic native,

almost like us
but not,
alien

My research tale comes from this very ambivalent location where I fail or succeed both denunciation and acclamation of my transnational identities. As a migrant academic from Korea,¹ whose modern history is bruised by Japanese colonization and U.S. neo-imperial domination,² the routes I have been traveling to be a researcher—or “educated properly to create knowledge”—are messy (Rhee, 2006). I find no name for myself from off-the-shelf positionalities when I am demanded to work through multiple transnational discourses of identities, gender, race, colonial/imperial histories, and education.

Therefore, in this narrative, I perform the still necessary enunciation of an unrecognized specificity as a traveling Korean woman researcher in the field of U.S. education, “neither as a cultural type nor as a unique individual” (Clifford, 1997, p. 23). At this unrecognized specificity, I am systematically erased from representation in mainstream discursive practice as I get more and more specifically situated—other than being the Other (Kondo, 1996). My mode of being is unrecognized. Kondo (1996) acutely points out this:

In very real ways, we do not exist. Either we are absent entirely or what is often worse, when we are depicted, it is only in the most stereotyped way, thus subjecting us to psychological violence rather than offering affirmation or recognition.

(p. 110)

What does my discussion on representation practices, identities, and historical contexts have to do with research? Researchers bring our own life stories and identities into our research projects as we develop the ideas of why, what, and how we should study a certain topic, population, and phenomenon. In order to understand how research is never an objective, value-free scientific inquiry, I argue that researchers ought to examine how we formulate our specific research questions (Kincheloe, 2003). What directs us to ask particular research questions? What happens when our research ideas do not “fit” to existing languages or frameworks? How do we negotiate to register our “inappropriate” questions, ideas, and projects in the legitimate realm of academic discourse? This chapter engages with these questions by tracing my struggles as a foreign doctoral student who worked to carry out a research project that could not be easily named, partly because, in dominant academic discourse, I did not exist in very real ways. Consequently, this chapter is not really about my experiences as a researcher in fieldwork. But it addresses how my own personal positionality in relation to the *Zeitgeist* (spirit of the times) directed my methods of questioning as I tried to examine

particular educational issues and phenomenon (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 92). Our everyday mundane life is not irrelevant to the issues and discussions of research methodologies. This narrative of how “subjective-personal I” was used to imagine and conduct my dissertation research will demonstrate what has been left out of hegemonic research practice and thus what still remains to be named, seen and heard in contemporary U.S. educational research.

Within postcolonial critique, my narrative constitutes native research tales of encounters between “we,” the natives, and “they,” the natives, using Trinh’s (1989) terms, “here” in the West. Trinh states, “Terminology of the ‘natives’ focuses on *our* innate qualities and belonging to a particular place by birth; terminology of the ‘natives’ focuses on *their* being born inferior and ‘non-Europeans’” (italic original, p. 52). Ruptures and merging of these two “natives” “here” in the West, where Knowledge is constructed, validated, and reconfigured, have racialized, ethnicized, exoticized, and savaged the allegedly homogeneous and safe West. Now, “they,” the inferior natives—for me “they” become we—refuse and resist remaining as the unitary and distinguishable Other. They now even claim their coeval subjectivities and authorities as knowers (Gupta & Ferguson 1997a, 1997b; Lavie & Swedenburg, 1996). Because I write this story as one of them, whose wrongful presence here makes the natives by birth here uncomfortable, the signifier “they” and “we” and the signified “they” and “we” are displaced and replaced from this point. If an anthropologist had the legitimacy to represent a foreign culture by living full time in the village, learning the language, and being a seriously involved participant–observer (Clifford, 1997, p. 20), my traveling tale of the U.S. academic research village should establish ethnographic authority. In this way, this chapter unsettles the dominant paradigm of ethnography in which local natives’ supposed enchantment, tradition, culture, and simplicity are contrasted with the mobile ethnographer’s enlightenment, modernity, science, and development (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997a, p. 9).

Yet my argument is not that “we” and “they” are very separable categorical entities whose borders are clean and clear. It is not what I try to argue for. In fact, that is what I try to argue against. Trinh (1989) states, “These two natives sometimes claim to merge and other times hear nothing of each other” (p. 52). After all, I am a part of the U.S./Western academy. I am living in both us and them simultaneously.

(Alien) Traveling Subjectivities

Faced with the fatal notion of a self-contained European culture and the absurd notion of an uncontaminated culture in a single country, T. S. Eliot writes, “We are therefore pressed to maintain the ideal of a world culture, while admitting it is something we cannot imagine. We can only conceive it as the logical term of the relations between cultures.” The fatality of thinking of “local” cultures as uncontaminated or self-contained forces us to conceive of “global” cultures, which itself remains unimaginable. What kind of logic is this?

(Bhabha, 1996, pp. 53–54)

As a traveling Korean woman dwelling in the U.S., I hear from time to time that I am “*migukmul möken yōja*—미국물 먹은 여자,” literally translated as “a woman who drank U.S. water,” implying that I have been Westernized through “living” in the U.S. culture, territory, or nation-state. After many times, I consider this is an Othering practice exercised from my own cultural/national group to deauthorize my Koreaness. My difference, deviance, and contest against the domination exercised in the name of the Korean, then, are attributed to my tainted Koreaness as *migukmul möken yōja*—미국물 먹은 여자—and dismissed easily as irrelevant and illegitimate within Korean nationalistic discourse. As U. Narayan (1997) suggests, I occupy a suspect location of a U.S. university sanctioned researcher and my perspectives are suspiciously tainted and problematic products of our “Westernization.” So, are my criticisms of my Korean cultures merely one more incarnation of a colonized consciousness, meaning the views of “privileged native women in whiteface,” seeking to attack my “non-Western culture” on the basis of “Western” values (U. Narayan, 1997, p. 3)?

Despite my status as less Korean, particularly within Korean cultural nationalist discourse, the identity of Korean woman for me becomes the most important strategic site of multiple struggles to resist and fight back against various forms of Western imperial domination—ironically as the amount of U.S. water I have been drinking increases. At the same time, however, I often desire to re/sign³ this very sign “Korean women” because of its reflection of a controlling, patriarchal regime built and maintained for a long historical period over the women who need and want to identify with the sign, Korean women in this world.

This internal conflict, tension, and fragmentation gets messier as the occurrence of my incessant yearning for home, “Korea,” and my continuous living here at home, “U.S.,” forces me to reconfigure the presumed distance of Korea and the U.S. Is my traveling to return or to stay? Even at this moment (unfortunately), I feel urged to acknowledge that my claim for being at home in the U.S. may make some people irritated because I am defined as an “alien,” legally, in U.S. territory. So, my claim for home in the U.S. as an alien may sound like an alien invasion to non-alien!

One typical spring day in 1999, I was walking on the street in my campus area. Passing by, a white man said to me, “It’s time Chinese people went home.” I am not Chinese but I was Chinese at that moment because I knew that the word “Chinese” included me regardless of my ethnicity and nationality as well as despite my collective memory as a Korean woman of Chinese imperialism toward Korea. He was talking to me as a Chinese, an Oriental native. “Chinese, go home.” I could not pretend that I had nothing to do with what he said, because my frequent travels to this white/Western world allowed me to understand how I am constructed in it (see Lugones, 1987).

As an alien woman of color, I travel every day to the mainstream white organization of life in the U.S. This practice of travel subverts and complicates the dominant concepts of travel, which Clifford (1997) defines as more or less voluntary practices of leaving “home” to go to some “other” place for the purpose of gain—material, spiritual, scientific. Lugones (1987) articulates:

As outsiders to the U.S. mainstream, women of color practice “world” traveling, mostly out of necessity. I affirm this practice as a skillful, creative, rich, enriching, and, given certain circumstances, as a loving way of being and living. I recognize that we do much of our traveling, in some sense against our wills, to hostile White/Anglo “worlds.” The hostility of these “worlds” and the compulsory nature of the “traveling” have obscured for us the enormous value of this aspect of our living and its connection to loving. Racism has a vested interest in obscuring and devaluing the complex skills involved in this. (p. 390)

Through this almost compulsory traveling, I have learned that the West, the U.S. or America(s) is not a homogeneous space inhabited by authentic insiders. I have met people who are living in the West but cannot and do not claim themselves as and/or within the West. I may be identified as *migukmul möken yöja*—미국물 먹은 여자, an illegitimate Korean woman who is Westernized in Korean nationalistic cultural discourse. Yet here in the West, I am designated as Chinese, and someone who should go back home. In world traveling, I learn to relate myself to the categorized, defined, and reduced constructs of me in a certain world. I also learn to unlearn the categorized, defined, and reduced me to claim myself in another world. Now, I see these worlds are connected through me. As others claim their home in homelessness, I as a traveling woman finally come to claim home through *traveling-in-dwelling and dwelling-in-traveling* (Clifford, 1997), but in different modes at different intersections of history and power. My resistance against and desire for home(s) grow together.

Methodological Policing

Research “through imperial eyes” describes an approach which assumes that Western ideas about the most fundamental things are the only ideas possible to hold, certainly the only rational ideas, and the only idea which can make sense of the world, of reality, of social life and of human beings. It is an approach to indigenous peoples which still conveys a sense of innate superiority and an overabundance of desire to bring progress into the lives of indigenous peoples—spiritually, intellectually, socially, and economically. It is research which from indigenous perspectives “steals” knowledge from others and then uses it to benefit the people who “stole” it. Some indigenous and minority group research would call this approach simply racist. It is research which is imbued with an “attitude” and a “spirit” which assumes a certain ownership of the entire world, and which has established systems and forms of governance which embed that attitude in institutional practices. These practices determine what counts as legitimate research and who count as legitimate researchers.

(Smith, 1999, p. 56)

The way I frame “research” corresponds with Smith’s notion (1999) that “scientific research is implicated in the worst excess of colonialism. . . . Research is not an

innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions” (pp. 1–3). As Trinh (1989) indicates, “‘discourse,’ ‘law,’ ‘order,’ ‘generalization,’ or ‘consistency’—what he [a researcher] values and looks for is, fortunately, what he always only finds” (p. 56). What have we been looking for in our research?

As a response to this much-debated question, I resist my academic authority that allows me, as long as I write and speak the right language, to have *God’s grasp of the totality* (see Trinh, 1989, 1993) in this world. It is very tempting to let the dominant discourse of ethnographer/researcher co-opt me to be a knowledge colonizer, in ways that ignore, deny, and erase my own struggle as an alien woman of color against subjugation and marginalization (Villenas, 1996). Should I mimic (imperial) science of research to establish the legitimacy and authority of myself as a researcher? Kincheloe (2003) argues:

[O]bjectivist traditional science provides a shelter in which the self can hide from the deeply personal issues which permeate all socio-educational phenomena. Such personal issues would, if it were not for the depersonalization of traditional inquiry, force an uncomfortable element of researcher self-revelation.

(p. 69)

Instead, I reuse the space I am thrown into, a space that has been used by so many types of hegemonies at once: a heterosexual woman of color, postcolonial, asian, from four tigers, diaspora, immigrant, third world woman, korean, intellectual, etc. Paradoxically this has been a shared space for building strategic alliances, not to force all fragments to cohere into a seamless narrative but to communicate different meanings of historical and structural subordinations for different individuals and groups.

In this travel, for instance, as a third world woman of color I was able to observe that my long-time positionality, foreign or international student, highlighted my alien position through my different nationality from U.S. citizens, especially people of color, through a binary opposition of domestic vs. foreign. Another binary illusion: we, Americans, and the Others, the rest of the world. This differentiation between and homogenization within effaces unnegotiable differences among so-called foreign students in U.S. higher education. A strong symptomatic case is the continuous and relentless stigmatization of foreign students’ English proficiency as the problem of foreign students, which naturalizes the monolithism of U.S. Anglo-English hegemony when much of the world is more than bilingual and the U.S. is the fifth largest Spanish-speaking country. If the issue is truly about communication and literacy, why is it not uncommon to hear that some accents such as French, German, and Russian are cultural while other accents such as Chinese and Nigerian obstruct their communication efficiency? The foreign does not invoke the same xenophobia. Moreover, the naturalized term “international student” depoliticized my position by heightening my inter-national status to the U.S. nation-state, sending a message that I was an outsider who should not meddle

with inside affairs such as racism, as if I had nothing to do with all different types of domination of/in the U.S. In turn, representation of foreign students (of color) as the absolute Other to the U.S. nation-state in U.S. higher education practices and discourse buttresses the fiction of U.S. nationalism which naturalizes the hegemony of one, eurocentric, collectivity and its access to the ideological apparatuses of both state and civil society (Rhee & Sagaria, 2004). This naturalization is at the roots of the inherent connection that exists between nationalism and racism. Even when U.S. nationalism constructs its own racialized minorities into the assumed deviants from the normal and excludes them from important power resources, othering foreigners (of color) promotes the myth of equal citizenship through one collectivity in this nation-state (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 11). For example, who are more insulted, degraded, and functionally degraded through the learning inculcated by the current U.S. (higher) education institution as a whole, European international students or American Indians, for instance (see Churchill, 1995)? The myth of equal citizenship, one collectivity, and nationalism needs to be more critically examined.

In a similar vein, I find that discourses of culture continuously freeze, normalize, and police our traveling practices. Voices of the Others are still contained in stable, definable, and essentialized cultural/national frameworks instead of inciting the idea that culture is never a sealed room with a homogeneous space inside it, inhabited by authentic insiders (U. Narayan, 1997, p. 33; see also Bhabha, 1994; Chow, 1993; Koptiuch, 1996). According to Nanda (1987), culture describes the specifically human type of learned behavior in which arbitrary rules and norms are so important. Stated differently, “Culture as a system of norms, meanings and expectations does limit human behavior both by channeling it in culturally approved directions and by punishing known violations” (p. 57). Who gets to define the systems of norms, meanings, and expectations—culture—for what purpose and by what authority? Who accumulates benefits through these systems which constitute culture? Or at least, how do differently positioned people in a culture experience it differently? What happens when some of its members contest their entitled culture? Without much paying attention to these politicized questions in regard to the constructions and power dynamics of cultures, the world of dominant U.S. educational research discourse still operates through essentialistic binary oppositions like black vs. white culture, western vs. oriental, feminine vs. masculine, colonizer vs. colonized, etc.—each contained and uncontaminated with the same hierarchical dualities of center/margin.

This is *methodological policing*. Under this way of studying, talking, and thinking, even if some of us may already have acted out our hybrid, multiple, and fractured cultural identities, the boundaries of categories, particularly binary opposition, are easily policed. McDermott (1997) explicates:

As U.S. citizens, we are invited to ask what Jews, African Americans, Vietnamese and Hispanic Americans look like and how they behave. Sometimes we are invited to know how their behavior explains their position inside U.S. social structure, and stereotypes are available to guide our

explanations. Only rarely are we invited to understand the condition for a group being recognized, stereotyped, analyzed, and condemned. Only rarely are we invited to examine the role of mainstream bias in the organization of borders, stereotypes, and the social structure outcomes that maintain the borders.

(p. 116)

As knowledge producers who have the power to do battle about the status of truth—epistemology (see Foucault, 1984)—intellectuals within Eurocentric epistemology have narrated only a certain type of culture where only a certain type of identity story is allowed to formulate, something like theirs but not exactly theirs. Lavie and Swedenburg (1996) solemnly warn that, because the U.S.—Eurocenter constantly consolidates itself against the margin's assaults, we should not overlook that it continually redeploys the binarism in an effort to contain the margins by reasserting their identity in the form of the Other. In its recentering practices, I am different; so I am, simply, the Other.

Binary Opposition: Its Political Implications from an Inauthentic Native

U. Narayan's analysis (1997) helped me unravel further a varied set of forces embedded in the politics of oppositional cultural identity and its representation. She explicates how the differences between "Western culture" and "traditional cultures in Third World countries" have been constructed to insist on the "Otherness" of each for different political reasons in the context of colonization history. According to Narayan, colonizing powers needed justification for the colonial project and so cast colonialism as an attempt to bestow the benefits of Western culture on colonized people. In order to delegitimize Western colonial rules, anti-colonial nationalists needed to valorize the values and practices of the indigenous culture of the colony, often as a response to colonial attempts to eradicate or regulate customs and practices in the colonies that Western colonial governments found unacceptable and inexpedient. This insistence on Otherness, on the differences between the cultures that confronted each other in the colonial encounter, while not entirely false or fabricated, was often exaggerated in that it overplayed differences while ignoring both similarities and assimilations through the mechanisms of *idealization* and *totalization* (p. 15). Important to note is that the differences in contents per se may not be the overriding problems: things became exacerbated as cultural differences were constructed as symptoms of cultural superiority.

Here idealization refers to the fact that a culture is idealized in ways that are far from being faithful descriptions of the values that actually pervade that culture's instrumental practices and social life. Thus, Western culture could see itself as committed to values such as liberty and equality even as Westerners engaged in slavery and colonization, while anti-colonial and nationalist versions of national culture were often equally distorted. Totalization casts values and practices that are pertinent to specific—usually privileged—groups within the community as values

of the culture as a whole. For instance, U.S. values/culture are often equated with Protestant, liberal Anglo/American values, silencing very different values and practices of diverse cultural groups such as Native Americans, Asian/Americans, African/Americans and Latinos/as. In the context of Korea, its culture tradition still valorizes (idealization) and is often equated with aspects of upper-class Confucian culture, ignoring the actual cultural and religious diversity of the population such as Buddhism and Shamanism.

In the process, what U. Narayan (1997, p. 18) brings forward is that obscured was the fact that women and minority groups within the culture were clearly secondary citizens in both Western and colonized cultures! Through exploring the mechanisms of idealization and totalization, she successfully discloses how the rhetoric of Westernization is used selectively and contradictorily to dismiss and deligitimize third world feminists' critique of their own culture. Narayan argues that there have been many different situations where some cultural borrowings of Western artifacts and practices are seen as merely cosmetic change, or pragmatic adaptations utterly consonant with preservation of traditional cultures. In this case, the accusation of Westernization is often to smear only those changes, those breaks with tradition, that are not approved by those who have the authority to define tradition.

Hybridities

“What is a Hispanic?” “Who counts as a Hispanic?” “Are Latinos, Chicanos, Hispanos, black dominicans, white cubans, korean columbians, italian-argentinians Hispanic?” No one can ever answer these questions (Lugones, 1987, p. 395). In turn, stable, essential cultural/racial/national identities for the indefinable cultural groups are impossible. People who travel every day acquire flexibility in shifting from one way of constructing life to the other where we feel more or less at home. As a result, we come to conceive two or multiple different selves in two or multiple different languages, which sometimes collide, conflict, and/or negotiate. This is our hybrid being that exceeds and ruptures the categories of “Knowledge.” According to Bakhtin (1981),

The . . . hybrid is not only double-voiced and double-accented . . . but is also double-linguaged; for in it there are not only (and not even so much) two individual consciousnesses, two voices, two accents, as there are [doublings of] socio-linguistic consciousnesses, two epochs . . . that come together and consciously fight it out on the territory of the utterance . . . It is the collision between differing points of view on the world that are embedded in these forms.

(cited in Bhabha, 1996, p. 58)

As many traveling theorists argue, in this hybridity, not devoid of its situated hegemonic construction, we do not seek cultural supremacy and sovereignty. Rather, we deploy the partial cultural—temporally and spatially—from which we

emerge to construct visions of community, and visions of historic memory, that give narrative form to the minority positions we occupy, where power is unequal (Bhabha, 1996, p. 58). Since our hybrid identifications are results of a long history of confrontations between unequal cultures and forces, in which the stronger culture struggles to control, remake, or eliminate the subordinate partner (Lavie & Swedenburg, 1996, p. 9), each of us experience our displacement, subjugation, and marginalization differently even in our hybrid forms. There is rather a range of positioning of Others in relation to the forces of domination and vis-à-vis other Others (Lavie & Swedenburg, 1996, p. 4). Nevertheless, precisely because of this hybridity,

[o]ne minority can form alliance with another, based on experiences its heterogeneous membership partially shares, each in his or her fragmented identity, without trying to force all fragments to cohere into a seamless narrative before approaching another minority. Having recognized that insisting on an all-or-nothing approach is counterproductive, many minorities are building bridges among themselves based on such overlapping fragments. They strategically suspend their unshared historical specificities, at a price, for the moment.

(Lavie & Swedenburg, 1996, p. 10)

In this sense, cultural, national, and/or ethnic identities for us become the names that we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of our travelings around the past, present, and future (Hall, 1994, p. 394). Therefore, identities are constantly negotiated and transformed as we meet various people, add a new world to our residence list, and struggle against the interlocking dominant organizations of life reigning in many worlds in very different forms; as Hall (1994) writes, “They are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture, and power” (p. 394).

Re-searching Traveling Korean Women

Working both within and against disciplinary conventions, my sense of task is to explore methodological economies of responsibility and possibility that engage our will to know through concrete efforts both to produce different knowledge and to produce knowledge differently.

(Lather, 2001, p. 200)

This cross-cutting shuffling and shuttling allowed me to imagine and write my research project, which re-searched and re-presented various routes of traveling in a mode of a critical auto/ethnography with other traveling Korean women in U.S. higher education (see Rhee, 2002). The goal was to explain our existence in our own terms, however contaminated our voices were. I had seven participants for the study. At the time of research, two of us were working as a faculty member and a researcher. Four were students at various stages of our graduate education. One woman was a full-time housewife of a Korean male student. Four were U.S.

citizens, one was immigrant, one had applied for her immigrant status, and one had an international student visa. Among three women who were married, one was in an interracial marriage. Two other women had committed intimate partners: a five-year-younger white man and a feminist Jewish woman. Two women were adopted by white families when they were very young. Two women were born in the U.S., raised in Korea and came back to the U.S.—one for her education, the other for her husband's graduate schooling. Four came to the U.S. for their advanced schooling. These women's living experience in the U.S. ranged from two years to almost a whole lifetime, time lived while in Korea ranged from seven months to almost a lifetime. For some of us, our place at the time was the final destination, while for others it was just one transit site we were crossing in our journey. For one, it was a returning point of coming home. Our stories were full of contradictions and yet dimly connected each other.

How would you "name" these women to "research" on these women? If you name us Korean women, some of us will say that we/they are Asian/American, not Korean. If you name us Asian/American, some of us say that we/they are only Korean, never American. So, is it even possible to group all these women as mere collective "we" under "business as usual categorization" or is this another imperial way of studying, thinking about, writing about the Other? Without my shuffling and shuttling among various groups of people as well as living in puzzling desires around the continuing colonial history especially between the U.S. and Korea, I possibly would not have realized what connects all these women as us—unrecognized specificity—who share predicaments of racism, sexism, nationalism, imperialism and/or subordination.

I could imagine "we" under the sign of "traveling Korean women" because of possibilities I saw in the practice of our/their geographical, cultural, political, and historical traveling. By calling us traveling women, whether the traveling was voluntary or not, emphasized was our mobility, which used to be tied with or available mostly to (male) colonizers. In many different modes, all of us have been traveling-in-dwelling and dwelling-in-traveling (see Clifford, 1997). In this way of living, our relations to a remembered/imagined home are changing. Through multiple links we have created between our homes—home is where I am; home is where my family is; home is where I was born; home is where I want to be—we realize that we are living through building, rebuilding, and connecting various homes scattered on a globe, within different effects of structural relations of power and inequity. By these different effects of world power structure, we have experienced that a person who was not born a person of color there becomes a person of color here. One who was abandoned there becomes one who is rescued here. One who was elite there becomes a subaltern here. As women in the battle against sexism, some of us find ourselves working with men of color, often against white sisters here. The names we call and feel ourselves are continuously changing. Our experiences are calling into question the stable, fixed, and taken-for-granted notions of gender, race, culture, nation, and identity. Yet, most Western/scholarly explanations in education do not take into considerations the constitutive roles of traveling women of color in the cultural, political, and economic formations of the

society. The terms such as sojourning, immigrant, emigrant, foreign, and exile connote a (natural) home in a particular place which is very closely linked to the concept of nation-state. In this link is naturalized the association of a culture (Korean culture), a people (Korean), and a place (the Korean peninsula). Our experiences as transnational traveling women disrupt this link of people, territory, nation, and culture. Therefore, by adding the sign “traveling” to our name, the meaning of “korean” signifies, at different moments, a national self, an ethnic self, a cultural self and/or something else for different individuals.

Apparently, my field experiences with these women were inherently conflictual with the canon of scientific research as stated by Malinowski: “Only laws and generalizations are scientific facts, and fieldwork consists only and exclusively in the preparation of the chaotic reality, in subordinating it to general rules” (cited in Trinh, 1989, p. 56). My re/research was an activity of a traveling korean woman’s re-researching and writing traveling korean women, not submitting our experiences and lives to general rules, concepts, and knowledge. As a traveling korean woman myself, my everyday life and field sites overlapped, making it difficult, if not impossible, to demarcate the boundary for the field. I took information in from everywhere, at all times, “to make words” (Reinharz, 1992, p. 55). No departing point, no arriving point, and thus many times feeling lost. But when I do not have the final destination or a place to return to, how can I be lost? This can be a new mode of being a researcher who constantly drifts in and out until the borders are worn out (Trinh, 1997). Pink (2000) points out, “If the field is simultaneously ‘everywhere and nowhere,’ the research’ may be defined in terms of the researcher’s decision to engage in the act of producing anthropological knowledge; that is (re)classifying interaction as research” even through the notion of “retrospective fieldwork” (p. 99).⁴ In this way, my study (un)intentionally disrupted the paradigm of scientific research which differentiates the researcher and the researched as well as the personal/everyday and the professional/scientific (K. Narayan, 1997; Okely, 1992; Pink, 2000; Reed-Danahay, 1997).

As both Mohanty (1991) and Chow (1993) argue, proliferation of third world women’s texts in the West is not evidence of decentering hegemonic histories and subjectivities. However, in the orbit of U.S. research discourse, attending to our concerns, issues, and differences, rather than reading our “differences” in contrast to Western “sameness,” will disrupt the Western imperialistic epistemology which sees the rest of the West as the Other. As Christian (1987) indicates, many of us have never conceived of ourselves only as somebody’s Other.

Trinh (1989) defines “imperial anthropology” as “gossip”—a conversation of them with them about us in which us is silenced. She warns us, “You try and keep on trying to unsay it, for if you don’t, they will not fail to fill in the blanks on your behalf, and you will be said” (p. 80). For us, research must serve as an opportunity to converse about us among us to take up active roles to construct knowledge where we rarely hear from or sometimes even about us—except when we are defined as the problem/victim. However, what I have learned is that the dialogue even among us becomes possible only when a researcher accepts that people often choose to conduct their lives separately from her particular vision of the future. This is an act

not of comprehending otherness but of recognizing agency in others (Spivak, 1997). As an “educated” researcher, unfortunately I had a hard time respecting everyone as active cultural producers in their own right even when they/the researched are more educated than I. I was often ready to jump in to prove their marginalization and correct their false consciousness. I had to learn to unlearn my civilized and legitimated ways of studying, knowing, and owning the world by conversing with these women whose theorizing may make a difference in the way that researchers think about their lives and my own life in this academia. Their own political interests as narrators of who they are must not be betrayed, especially by my own (Ong, 1995). Yet at the same time, as a researcher I tried to share the theories and analyses which informed the way knowledge and information were constructed and represented in my research. This is what Smith (1999) insists on as “a principle of reciprocity and feedback for decolonizing research” (p. 16). We had to converse with each other. Not lecturing, not listening only, but talking, arguing, and reconciling between alliances (see Albrecht & Brewer, 1990). I participated in research as a practice of community building imbued by our collective voices, again however contaminated our voices were.

Never-ending stories

While we are living in our hybrid positions, most of us are acutely aware of the impossibility of “ultimate” transcendence over established categories of cultures, nation-states, gender, sexuality, class, and race in our institutionalized everyday life. There are these categories waiting for me to travel into, reflecting my defined positionalities in a particular institutionalized world, such as Chinese as a Korean, a woman of color without my recognition of color in me, or a Westernized woman who fights against Western domination. I would not have created these identifications for myself, but few have ever been allowed to weave a recognizable identity from patterns not prescribed by others (McDermott, 1997, p. 116). These shifting, slippery, and volatile dynamics of identity in relation to “others” as a subject illuminate why the salience of our different identities fluctuates as the political context of our difference changes, although I can remember all my multiple self in different worlds at any moment. This demands of me to know where I am with whom in order to make sense of who I am in a historical world.

Lugones (1987) as a woman of color recognizes much of her traveling to hostile Anglo/white “worlds” as compulsory. However, she still maintains that world traveling is a skillful, creative, rich, and enriching way of being and living in this world. My intention to narrate my traveling research tale is neither to celebrate world travelers nor to valorize our hybrid beings. I recognize that this tale is an effect of continuing (violent) colonial history. However, I too still want to reiterate Lugones’ words (1987, p. 401): “Traveling to someone’s worlds leads us to understand even very dimly what it is to be them and what it is to be ourselves in their eyes. Only when we have traveled to each other’s worlds are we fully subjects to each other.” This offers a new possibility to hear each other from different worlds. McDermott (1997) demonstrates that world traveling is not limited to a particular

group of people such as the marginalized or minorities—fortunately—as he says “I must now take my identity from being ‘a not yet dead white male’ and my least favorite a ‘Euroamerican,’ I may not like them, they may not speak of all of what I am trying to accomplish in life, but they carry well some of the responsibility I owe our shared situation.” McDermott as a white man and I as a foreign woman of color and tainted Korean woman may have different modes of responsibility in the world. But the reason that I recognize as mine the names given to me such as Chinese as a part of my identity in this world, seems to correspond to what he meant by “responsibility.” Being a Korean woman despite my tainted, Westernized identity, whether it is national, ethnic, or cultural, enables me to commit myself to those whom I connect with through our shared enduring experiences of a particular form of neo/colonization and patriarchy. Being a Chinese in this location of the U.S. enables me to connect with people whom I did not know how to relate to, by suspending, at a price, my historical, political, and cultural specificity in another location. For me, the possibility of traveling research lies in this belief and practice that we can write a shared history of neo/colonialism, racism, economic exploitation, gender inequality, and injustice to form sufficient common ground for alliance among diverse peoples and write a shared future through our alliance. This mode of traveling may lead the dominant educational researchers in the U.S. to understand what it is to be knowledge colonizers in the eyes of (third/fourth world) people of color (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Smith, 1999). This mode of traveling may lead us, so differently silenced, to recognize that we are not alone in our struggles for justice, living together in non-oppressive ways. Therefore, traveling-in-dwelling and dwelling-in-traveling becomes a commitment I take as an inauthentic native to testify and practice this radical interconnectedness of our worlds.

Questions

1. How have your personal life experiences shaped your identity as a researcher?
2. How do you position the “Other” in research and how do you think the “Other” positions you?
3. How would you define your own positionality in research?
4. How may notions of marginality and privilege affect research relationships?

About the Author

Jeong-eun Rhee is Assistant Professor in Curriculum and Instruction at Long Island University, C.W. Post. She migrated to the U.S. in April 1992 for graduate schooling. She never imagined that her traveling would last this long. Through the

practice of re/researching traveling Korean women for her dissertation, she began to see her (e/im)migration as a way of living. In her research, she utilizes postcolonial studies, critical race studies, and third world/women of color feminism to make sense and theorize our/their experiences, realities, and visions in the context of global/local education. Thanks go to Patti Lather for the title of this chapter; Mary Ann Donowitz Sagaria, who introduced this opportunity; and seven Korean traveling women who participated in her research.

Notes

- 1 When Korea refers to a nation-state located on the Korean peninsula, I use the official sign of “Korea” with capital K. In contrast, lower-case “korea” is used to multiply its meanings and constructions which exceed and resist the essentialized Korean nation-state official discourse.
- 2 Kim and Choi (1998)’s “Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism” provides multifaceted analysis on the complex relationships of gender, class, representation and neo/colonialism of the U.S. in the context of Korean history.
- 3 I borrowed this concept of re/sign from Ono’s (1995) “Re/signing ‘Asian American’: Rhetorical Problematics of Nation.” In this article he argues that the term *Asian American* should be resigned, scrapped or disused and yet simultaneously we may be able to re-sign it. By shuttling between resigning/retiring and resigning/refiguring, he hopes to enact a critical, rhetorical practice that creates slippage between using and disusing the term *Asian American*.
- 4 According to Pink (2000), Okely (1996) uses the term “retrospective fieldwork” to refer to her anthropological writing about her autobiographical experiences about attending boarding-school as a teenager in “Own and Other Culture.”

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11

Integrated Inquiry

Transforming Multiple Research Perspectives

BERNARD W. ANDREWS

Count: Gently now, sister!

You have a pair of admirers!

Words against Music—which conquers your heart?

Capriccio, the final opera composed by Richard Strauss in 1941 and premiered the following year in Munich, tells the story of the courting of a Countess by two suitors, Words and Music. Each of the suitors is infatuated with the beauty and intelligence that the Countess displays, and each one strives to win her hand in marriage. The hidden ground in the story, however, is the integration of words and music and their transformation to create a new art form, opera.

In our complex world, I find that my life constantly involves attending to and trying to assimilate a never-ending stream of information. The Greeks used the term *mimesis* to describe this process of making sense of one's environment.¹ For them, the experience was both analytical and reflective. Moreover, the pace of life at that time allowed them to invest considerable energy in discussions with colleagues and in philosophical musings. In contrast, we live at the speed of light. The electronic field has created a deluge of new information-processing devices, such as the multi-media computer, compact disk (CD), flash drive, cell phone, internet, digital camera, DVD recorder, and high-definition, wide-screen television. These new technologies have impacted on how we communicate, teach, and seek new knowledge. As academics, we now connect with anyone, anywhere, at any time. We are required to master a range of instructional and research methodologies involving multi-media and sophisticated software programs, and to do many things at once—teach, conduct research, undertake professional service, and perform administrative duties. Indeed, multi-tasking is now a survival strategy. The information overload has left many of us without a sense of our role in the academy and its relevance to our own lives. Moreover, society is challenging the mandate of universities in a technologically driven, postmodern era. Governments, corporations, and the public are seriously questioning the value of teaching without meeting employment needs and undertaking research without a utilitarian function. As a community, we are losing what the Greeks referred to as a knowledge of the “universals.”²

Exposition³

Countess: The words of the poet speak to my heart.
 When noble music speaks a beautiful thought,
 There is nothing I think more sublime in the world.

Theme I

During the lifetime of the composer Richard Strauss, 1864–1949, there were significant developments in the field of educational research. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, investigative reports were undertaken by school inspectors, professional societies, or school board personnel to examine issues of concern to the public or teaching community. These reports relied on the testimonies of interested parties, anecdotal comments, classroom observations, and student records, such as essay scores and test results. In 1897, Joseph Rice conducted empirical experiments to determine the appropriate amount of time to allocate to spelling in the school curriculum by comparing test scores (Rice, 1897). His work, despite flaws in reliability, marked the first use of a systematic approach to inquiry into educational problems and to the promotion of quantitative thinking across the educational spectrum (Rice, 1914). With the acceptance of Rice's work, quantitative methods were gradually implemented to assess student achievement and evaluate programs. Standardized tests were developed in arithmetic, spelling, handwriting, and composition (Ballou, 1916), and surveys were constructed to assess school board expenditures, promotion rates, and drop-out levels (Kendall, 1915; Smith & Judd, 1914).

In 1947, Ralph Tyler and his associates organized the Educational Testing Service (ETS), and through their research, they established the use of objectives as the basic *modus operandi* for the education community (Tyler, 1950). Other researchers, such as Leonard Cronbach and Edward Linquist, elaborated on Tyler's work and expanded the principles of statistical design. They wrestled with the difficulty of meeting the challenges of experimental methodologies, such as constant and uncontaminated treatments, random assignment, stable samples, and unitary criteria (Linquist, 1953). To assist educators make their objectives explicit, taxonomies of educational objectives in the cognitive and affective domains were developed (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, & Krathwohl, 1956; Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masis, 1964, respectively). Leonard Cronbach (1963), however, questioned the emphasis on comparing student outcomes in educational research and evaluation as the basis for decision making. Instead, he challenged researchers to gather information in the field that could improve instruction and guide curriculum development.

Theme II

Several major theorists responded to his challenge. Among them, Michael Scriven (1967) initiated a Goal-Free approach to evaluation which emphasized learning about a curriculum's effectiveness without a priori knowledge. He compared the results of an in-depth experience (e.g., document analysis, interviews, test results)

with stated curricular goals and objectives *post facto*. Daniel Stufflebeam (1971) developed a comprehensive four-stage process for large-scale evaluation research, entitled Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP). This method focused on defining the setting, assessing a system's capabilities, identifying defects, and judging student outcomes. Egon Guba and Yvonne Lincoln (1981) shifted the emphasis from objective standards, and they developed the Naturalistic model, which was carried out in real-life settings using a case-study format. The model required divergent thinking, a holistic approach, and qualitative instruments. Their approach was unique: it emphasized process rather than product and evolved from an evaluation model into an innovative and influential method of inquiry.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Guba and Lincoln's work was followed by a series of theorists who developed alternative qualitative research methods. For example, Interpretative Inquiry focused on understanding the meaning of experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1985), and Religious Inquiry on the meaning of life (Huebner, 1985). Instrumental Inquiry adopted a technical rational-means approach to solving curricular problems (Shavelson, 1988) whereas Deliberative Inquiry focused on building consensus among stakeholders (Reid, 1988). Action Research emphasized the participation of those most affected by research findings: it involved teachers and researchers working together to solve practical problems (McKernan, 1991). Reflexive Inquiry focused on an examination of the researcher's role and its influence on the research process (Holland, 1999).

Development

Countess: In music, emotions are yearning for language,
In words, there's a craving for music and sound.

Theme 1

The function of research is to seek new knowledge through systematic inquiry. This involves framing questions, selecting a methodology, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data, examining the implications of findings, and recommending future areas of study. However, the complexity of problems, the interdependence of factors impacting on solutions, the emphasis on partnerships and collaboration, and the new technological tools for collecting and analyzing data require that researchers be flexible and use a variety of methodologies in their work. Further, one must at times select, combine, and modify such methods to suit the occasion, often without the sense of a unified field. Indeed, "inquiry is now so flexible and methods are so many that it has been said that there are as many methods as there are questions" (Courtney, 1987, p. 105).

Quantitative research has evolved: it is now based on the belief that knowledge is conjectural rather than absolute, and research is a process of making claims, discarding some, and refining others more strongly warranted (Phillips & Burbules, 2000). This type of research is characterized by the *control* of variables and *prediction* of outcomes. Quantitative methodologies include experiments, surveys, and comparative and co-relational studies, and instruments include

standardized tests, scaled responses, checklists, and close-ended questions. Researchers focus on relationships among variables, test hypotheses, examine methods and conclusions for bias, and apply standards of validity and reliability to ensure objectivity.

In contrast, qualitative research is based on the belief that knowledge is created by human beings, and research is a process of making sense of the environment based on historical and social perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). This type of research features *description* and *explanation*. Qualitative methodologies include narrative inquiry, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, and case study, and instruments include observation, interview, peer report, impact statement, critique, and text and media analysis. Researchers seek to understand different contexts by generating meanings from data collected inductively in natural settings, and by developing interpretations shaped by their own experiences and backgrounds.

More recently, mixed methods have been developed by researchers primarily concerned with practical applications and achieving results. Such an approach emphasizes the use of separate quantitative and qualitative instruments in which data is collected either sequentially or concurrently (Creswell, 2002). A sequential mixed method involves collecting data from quantitative and then qualitative instruments, or, alternatively, from qualitative and then quantitative sources. For example, a researcher can survey teachers on their use of instructional models with follow-up interviews to focus on details; or, alternatively, interview a small number of teachers on their instructional practices to develop the questions for a large-scale survey. In a concurrent mixed method, the researcher collects both qualitative and quantitative data during the study. For example, when investigating student achievement, one could observe students' classroom learning and review formative test scores.

Despite the development of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, the research community has identified a need for an integrated approach to inquiry where different methods are combined in the design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination components of a study. Researchers in the health sciences (Beutler, 1994; Johnson, 1991), curriculum (Bertrand & Stice, 1995; Hamston, 1996; Mancino, 1995; Sterling & Olkin, 1997), research methodology (Creswell, 2002; McKernan, 1991), and evaluation (Bruckerhoff, 1996; Posavac & Carey, 1997) emphasize the need for the development of a methodology that combines multiple approaches to inquiry. Combining approaches is supported in the literature as a means to substantiate analyses and epistemological stances (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990); and the use of multiple sources of data is recommended for obtaining in-depth findings and for verifying them (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Posavac & Carey, 1997; Rossman & Wilson, 1985). What researchers are seeking, however, is a research method where there is integration throughout the research process; that is, "triangulation within a single methodology" (McKernan, 1991, p. 193).

Theme II

Countess: How lovely the words are, how new their meaning.

Has music been lying in wait to sing the verses and embrace them?

Integrated Inquiry is a new approach to research that combines multiple perspectives throughout the research process. This model involves identifying the issue(s), describing its dimensions in consort with the literature, and developing appropriate questions and/or hypotheses. The researcher or research team then creates multiple instruments, or develops an instrument that solicits multiple perspectives, administers the instrument(s), and collects the data. Data are analyzed, themes (qualitative) and/or results (quantitative) are generated, and then these are combined by linking, blending, and cross-referencing. Integration is facilitated by employing an analytical research procedure compatible with multiple data sources, such as content analysis, the constant comparative method, ethnographic analysis, phenomenology, meta-analysis, or text and media analysis. The findings are then critiqued and revised with reference to the literature. Qualitative *and* quantitative instruments, or, alternatively, multiple qualitative *or* multiple quantitative instruments, may be used. This is unlike traditional methods which focus on *either* qualitative or quantitative instruments, or mixed methodologies which require “*both* qualitative and quantitative data” (Creswell, 2007, p. 5). The key outcome of the methodology is the integration of multiple perspectives throughout the research process to create new meanings. In this way, the strategy is transformative (after Miller, 1998); that is, it offers a meta-perspective within a study, thereby extending the parameters of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches to research.

Integrated Inquiry has its roots in the postmodern notion of reflexivity; that is, that there is not one over-arching objective way of knowing. Reflexivity focuses on the complexity of experience, on “the self-critique and personal quest, the experiential, and the idea of empathy” (Marcus, 1998, p. 568). It involves both self-awareness and awareness of the context within which one lives and works; that is, a “bending or folding back of a part upon itself” (Hoffman, 1991). It is a circular process embodying the interface between objectivity and subjectivity where subjective reflections are integrated with more traditionally “objective” approaches to problem solving. Reflexive inquirers both *respond* to the environment by employing qualitative strategies that describe and explain, and *impact* on the environment by using quantitative strategies that control and predict (Andrews, 1993; Holland, 1999).

Integrated Inquiry adopts the professional composer as a metaphor to describe research design. The composer is an artist who operates at a meta-level by integrating multiple professional judgments and measurement decisions in a seamless web of integration to create a composition.⁴ Composers are reflexive to the musical context: they must respond to the needs of the musicians and their ensemble to create and impact on the musical culture. Composers require a high degree of self-awareness and sensitivity to the musical setting to create effectively. Graham Wallas

(1926) identified four stages in the creative process across several domains: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. The stages of composing referred to in the music composition literature (Bahle, 1934; Bennett, 1976; Critchley & Henson, 1980; Gardner, 1993; Graf, 1947) are based on Wallas' early creativity research and supported by major twentieth-century composers, such as Igor Stravinsky (1947), Roger Sessions (1970), Pierre Boulez (1975), Morton Feldman (1984), and Elliott Carter (1946/ 1994). These stages are: identification of one or more musical ideas (preparation);⁵ creation of a brief sketch outlining the general musical parameters, such as the type of melodic development and overall form (incubation); examination and integration of musical elements in a first draft (illumination); and critique and revisions of the score during the rehearsals and performances to complete the final copy (verification).

Composing music means “putting together” musical elements, such as melody, rhythm, harmony, and form, to create a “whole,” that is, a musical composition (Randel, 2003). “Wholeness is the critical *sine qua non* of a musical work” (Reynolds, 2002, p. 3). This process involves seamlessly combining *qualitative* and *quantitative* dimensions in “a multileveled search for ultimate integration” (Reynolds, 2002, p. 4). For example, composers select the instrumentation for a composition (i.e., the instruments that will be most suitable) and orchestrate the parts (i.e., the instrument(s) that will play the melody, counter-melody, accompaniment, etc.) based on their *professional judgment*. However, the deployment of a particular meter (e.g., 4/4) is a *measurement* decision, as it determines how the piece is counted (i.e., four beats per bar) and the relative duration of each note value (i.e., a whole note receives four beats, a half note receives two beats, etc.).

Integrated Inquiry involves a similar process to composing a new work. This involves: identification of the issue(s) and a multidimensional description (preparation); creation of multiple instruments or an instrument with multiple qualitative and/or quantitative sections, and collection of a variety of data (incubation); examination of data and integration of theme and/or results (illumination); and critique and revisions of the findings (verification).

Recapitulation

Count: Gently now, sister!

You have a pair of admirers!

Words against Music—which conquers your heart?

What does Integrated Inquiry look like in practice? How does it function in the research environment, where design receives the utmost scrutiny from conference attendees, reviewers, and journal editors? With Integrated Inquiry, multiple qualitative themes (e.g., Andrews, 2004a, 2005a) or multiple quantitative results can be integrated (e.g., Andrews, 1999). When both qualitative and quantitative instruments are used in the same study, the themes and results can be integrated to reinforce and extend the findings (Andrews, 1995, 2002a). Qualitative and quantitative dimensions may also be integrated within the same research

instrument (e.g., Andrews 2002b; Andrews & Carruthers, 2004). Further, integration may be strengthened by linking together each of the phases of the research design (e.g., Andrews, 2004b, 2005b, 2006) or by replicating the design itself (e.g., Andrews, 2000, 2001).

The key to successful integration is the organization of the data-gathering instrument(s). It is essential that the multiple instruments or the multiple sections of an instrument be inter-related so that relationships can be identified during the analysis and interpretation of the data. A novice researcher could design a questionnaire with quantitative (e.g., checklist, Likert scale, true/false) and qualitative (e.g., essay, commentaries, open-ended questions) dimensions where the information acquired in one section could be expanded in another section. For example, in my formative years in research, I was asked by the director of teacher education at my faculty of education to undertake a review of our professional development program for experienced teachers. In consultation with our stakeholders, I created a questionnaire comprising both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. In the quantitative section, I asked the teachers to rank the availability of instructional equipment, and in the qualitative section, I asked them to comment on its accessibility. A combined analysis of the rankings and commentaries using the constant comparative method (after Stake, 1995) revealed a high level of concern about the use of equipment in professional development programs. This concern arose from the low rankings in the checklist, which were corroborated by the comments about the limited access to adequate equipment in the open-ended questions section (refer to Andrews, 2002b).

A researcher familiar with computer software analysis can design a questionnaire with rankings (quantitative) and provide an opportunity for the participant to explain his or her selection (qualitative). For example, when undertaking an evaluation of ArtsSmarts,⁶ I designed such a questionnaire with partner organizations across Canada. Participants ranked key features of their projects, such as school involvement (i.e., never, sometimes, frequently or always), and then provided an explanation of the value. Using Sphinx/Lexica software, the value frequencies were recorded, thematic fragments clustered from the explanations, and then an analysis undertaken to identify best and worst practices. A synthesis of “always” indicated that the best practices for school involvement in arts projects include direct participation by school personnel throughout the project; integration of the project into the school curriculum; documentation of student progress by school staff; and commitment of resources by the school administration. Projects were viewed negatively by staff when they were not school-wide and when they only involved a small number of students (refer to Andrews, 2001, pp. 30–31).

Today, the resolution of complex challenges often requires the combined expertise of individuals from diverse backgrounds. In such situations, an experienced researcher could employ a participatory-based approach to Integrated Inquiry, which can be an effective strategy for problem solving by organizations. For example, when I served on the non-profit Ontario Council of the Canadian Music Centre, councilors (i.e., composers, educators, and media representatives) regularly expressed concern about the lack of Canadian music studied and performed

in post-secondary music programs. Together, we designed and implemented a survey (quantitative) to determine the status of Canadian music, and then solicited commentaries on the survey results from university representatives (qualitative) (Andrews & Carruthers, 2004). Subsequently, we undertook a visioning exercise based on the survey results and commentary themes to develop policies for university music departments and faculties of education that will promote Canadian music in post-secondary institutions (Andrews, 2005a).

Coda

Countess: Must I decide?
I prefer just to listen.

Unlike the Greek philosophers, who had the luxury of time and so few resources, as academics we have so little time and so much technology. In a multi-tasking world, I have found Integrated Inquiry offers the best opportunity to combine diverse sources of data in a coherent way. As in composing music, the method involves combining and transforming professional judgments and/or measurement decisions, thereby enabling a researcher to thicken description, reinforce findings, and create new meanings. For example, a researcher may combine multiple data sources from a classroom visitation, such as observations, student interviews, and teacher tests, to evaluate student creativity; administer a questionnaire to principals using scaled responses with explanations to determine levels of administrative decision making; integrate statistical results and focus group responses to measure and better understand teacher stress; or correlate results of standardized and teacher tests from different years to identify patterns of student achievement.

Integrated Inquiry represents an evolution in recent trends within research methodology—from the quantitative to the qualitative through to the mixed methodologies. This method of inquiry operates at a meta-level within a study by enabling researchers to orchestrate the research framework. The knowledge claim is transformative in that the research design fosters multiple perspectives, and the data collected are combined to create new meanings. Employing Integrated Inquiry, researchers use the lens of a composer to organize a study and interpret qualitative and/or quantitative data. Composers identify themes, develop and measure them, and through this process create new music. Similarly, researchers identify and integrate multiple qualitative themes and/or quantitative results to create new knowledge; that is, they “cultivate multiple ways of seeing . . . in a world where nothing stays the same” (Greene, 1995, p. 16).

Questions

1. What are the characteristics of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches?

2. What are the benefits of an integrated approach to undertaking research studies?
3. Is Integrated Inquiry a revolutionary or an evolutionary approach? Explain.
4. What is the benefit of adopting “metaphor” in defining an approach to research?

About the Author

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Notes

- 1 Discussed in McLuhan (1962) and in more detail in Auerbach (1953).
- 2 The Greek term *universal* refers to both an unchanging general principle and a permanent job category. Refer to Loomis (1971).
- 3 This chapter is written in “sonata form,” a musical structure developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and predominantly used by composers for the symphony and string quartet. Generally, there is an Introduction to the work, an Exposition of one or more themes, Development of these themes, a Recapitulation of the Exposition (usually with some variation), and a Coda, that is, a concluding section.
- 4 Elliot Eisner earlier introduced the metaphor of the “visual art critic” to describe his approach to program evaluation, entitled *Educational Connoisseurship and Criticism* (Eisner, 1976).
- 5 Musical ideas may be identified by discovering a germinal idea through inspiration or generating an idea through external stimuli. Refer to Critchley & Henson (1980) and Thaut (2005).
- 6 ArtsSmarts is a national arts education program funded by the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation of Montreal, Quebec and administered by the Canadian Conference of the Arts, Ottawa, Ontario. The program operates in partnerships with arts organizations, community foundations, and arts councils to sponsor artists working with teachers in classrooms across Canada to improve arts teaching and learning.

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II

After the Journey

Reflections on the Afterlife of Research

12

Re-membering Michael

Emotionality, Vulnerability, and the Research

Process

KARYN COOPER

Introduction

The word “research” originally meant intensive searching, investigation directed toward discovery (Old French, *recherche*). In looking at the word more closely, the prefix “re” means having the general sense of “back” or “again” and the word “search” means to examine thoroughly. In educational research, as in any research, there are of course numerous methodologies for “searching.” However, for purposes of discussion, if the search for human understanding is a main concern in educational research, as I believe it ought to be, then accepted opinions (orthodoxies) must be challenged. These accepted opinions, or “orthodoxies,” are oft-times represented by so-called “objective” standardized research procedures and practices, some of which have outlived their usefulness or have been routinized to the point that these “orthodoxies” are no longer questioned. Tradition and historical precedence have played a part in creating a logico-mathematical backdrop for “orthodox” research methods that has commonly resulted in objective positivistic research traditions, often to the exclusion of any type of subjectivity. Consequently, the pursuit of knowledge is often expected to take place in an emotional vacuum.

It is this objective, dispassionate view of empirical educational research which is often regarded as “conventional” educational research and, as such, often demands distance from the emotional aspects of both learner’s and researcher’s lives. But what is lost in teaching and educational research when seeing emotion and vulnerability as the antithesis of rational thought is insisted upon? This chapter suggests that too much may be lost.

This chapter attempts to balance the scales relative to traditional empirical research by challenging these “orthodoxies” through narrative methodology. It is the author’s purpose to address potential shortcomings of standard research methods through autobiographical writing and advocacy for “emotion” in research. It is hoped that this clear statement of purpose presented above will serve to anchor the reader, through a series of emotive, evocative, and self-revealing narratives.

Autobiographical in nature, this chapter begins with my personal account of a young boy who becomes institutionalized. I share this narrative fragment because,

more than any other, it has left an indelible impression on my life, guiding my interpretational standpoint as an educational researcher. This event shows how personal, emotionally charged events can be the source of, the impetus for, and the driving force behind inquiry that results in new ways of understanding the educational experience.

Autobiographical journeying can be as much a collective endeavor as an individual one, if only because in either one, what may be learned is greater insight and creativity into the story of our cultural construction and pathologies. To take one aspect of our cultural story and to re-think the role of emotion and vulnerability in the research process, who the researcher in the research story is, and what her or his intentions in doing the research are, become more central.

My Brother Enters the Abyss: A Narrative Fragment

I loved my brother Michael more than anything else in this world. We were only a year apart in age . . .

He had eyes of china blue. They were big and wide and sparkled with explosive energy like firecrackers in the night. His hair was yellow and feathery-soft like duck down. He was small for his years. He had a slight limp. His one withered arm was like a little wing that he used expressively, especially when he played soccer. He had a slight English accent like our grandparents. His smile was often mischievously twisted. Yet he was honest and cuddly and he loved easily.

Then Michael was diagnosed as epileptic. We watched him slowly lose ground. Tying shoelaces and doing buttons became insurmountable tasks. He lost the ability to read and write, but not to speak. This is the way I remember my little brother before he was institutionalized.

There are those moments which change a being. Seeing my brother in an institution for the first time, when I was ten, changed my life . . .

I remember the morning that I first went to see him. The air was crisp with all the dying smells of autumn. I remember being told to look at the trees on the hills, but I didn't like looking at them. They seemed like old withered men dressed up for their own funerals. My mother smoked, dragging all the strength she could muster out of every last cigarette. My father didn't say much, his eyes only watching the road dead ahead. All too soon, we were there. The building that lay before us was Michael's new home.

Feeling anxious and tense, I peered through the window of the car. Michael's new home had high windows and a large front door. There was a playground with one seesaw, the wind whistling a melancholy tune on its pipes.

The door opened, and when it echoed shut again behind me I felt as if I'd been swallowed whole. I immediately smelled the stench of urine. My stomach did a quick turn and then adjusted to the assault on my nostrils. There were children everywhere, some wearing hockey helmets or other

protective garb. Then a large crowd of them, some young, some older, came pouring around us, pecking like birds, trying to get a tender bit of attention. I wanted to scream, but I desperately concentrated on the bare walls. The furniture was sparse; there were a few assorted toys. The attendants had smiles that were starchy and as put on as their uniforms.

Then I saw my little brother. Not knowing what to do, I watched my parents. They seemed as small and powerless as I felt. It took me a while before I could focus on Michael's eyes. They were still large, but now they appeared almost too large. They made me think of the vacant windows mirroring the blank expression of the bare institutional walls. Looking at my brother with patches of his hair pulled out and with his teeth kicked in, I felt violated. Part of me was now dead, as dead as my brother's eyes had now become.

Seeing my little brother in an institution while I was very young turned my certainty and security upside down. The impact the experience had on me has never truly diminished. It lifted the veil with which our culture hides the truth and showed me the puppet's strings, making me curious as to who pulls the strings, who makes the puppets dance.

What is the connection between this interpretation of the story and of the story itself? What was the veil with which our culture hides the truth? The puppet? The strings? I suppose that this was the first time when I could not help but see how the culture within which we live creates roles for us. Some of these roles must be enacted by the weak and the powerless. This was one of my first recollections of how unjust our society can be. While the intellectual concept of social justice was unknown to me at that time, the emotional impact of injustice and cruelty was not. What society would take a child away from its parents? What emotionless and unfeeling mechanisms existed that put this into play, despite the yearnings of a small girl for her brother to be able to remain as part of the family unit? While there may have been serious and significant reasons why this could not be so, it was clear that I was responding subjectively to an objective reality. It was this objective reality which forms the positivistic backdrop to much of our society, including the way that children are taught and the way in which research is conducted. Is there no room for emotion? There wasn't then; perhaps the past can be improved upon by our becoming more sensitive to "subjects," to leave room for emotion, for feeling, in all that we do.

It is because of this experience that I was, am, and forever will be plagued with those questions that hide in the light. This experience made me suspicious of those in power, and leery about aligning myself too closely with one or another camp of thought. It made me take notice of the way we treat people of difference, and of the way our focus on difference instead of similarity may lead to a sense of alienation not just for those who are the target of alienation but ultimately for us all.

Although my vantage-points are complex and dynamic, always shifting as I continue, they serve as a compass, situating and guiding not only why I write about what I do, but also what and how I write. Looking back over my life, I believe

this experience and others like it for other people require a certain “self-understanding” or “re-searching” which acknowledges the permanent enduring presence of the past. My brother had entered the abyss, and I had stepped into it for a moment. Here was an abyss, a time/space which resonated “with the voice of those whose chance for life has been aborted by concentration of power bent on holding them in check” (Caputo, 1987, p. 286). My brother’s opportunity to have a fair and just life was connected with more than the voices of those with starched and put-on smiles. Caputo’s image of the abyss as a space where we are abandoned “to the measureless [where we experience] our lack of a fixed point from which to take its measure” (p. 287) is an image familiar to me. At this moment I looked into measureless, unbounded space. I concentrated on the bare institutional walls. There is danger in the abyss. There is also an “openness to the mystery” if we are willing to stay in play with the play. The question is whether and how, given the movement of that play, we are able to join in it (p. 293).

As a young adult, I journeyed into the cultural story of institutionalization; working as a ward aide for the severely physically and mentally challenged, I was sickened to learn, especially given my personal history, how easy it is to become just another cog in the institutional machine. I was truly humbled by this experience and I began to see emotion as a doorway to self-understanding and emancipation. I journeyed through the halls of education, becoming a special education teacher and then a reading specialist. Within the confines of schools, and obtaining yet more schooling, I began to recognize one of the sources of my difficulties with education. To recognize the source of difficulties and the possibilities of opening a path from that source is to name, understand, and act upon this struggle that has shaped, and continues to shape, my interpretational stance as an educational researcher.

As I read the research written by others, I often wonder who is the questioner behind the words. Where is the researcher in the process and what is her or his intent in doing the research? Does the researcher take into account her or his own prejudices? Or does the researcher present her or his interpretation as an objective description, as in the words of Nicholson “like a view from nowhere” (1990, p. 9). When I listen to myself and others speak and write, who is it that is speaking and writing the words I hear and read? We speak in many different voices. Sometimes we merely mouth cultural clichés. Sometimes we attach labels to what we hear. I say: “This sounds like feminist thought and/or postmodern thought,” “conservative” or “radical” thought. Sometimes it appears to be monolithic; at some times it reveals traces from all over the interpretational map.

We all have multiple vantage points which we come to, points from which we interpret our view. However, in spite of this inevitability, Alvermann, O’Brien, and Dillon (1996) have noted that “one neglected component of methodology sections in many qualitative reports is an explanation of the role, perspective and biases of the researcher” (p. 116).

The narrative fragment which began this chapter was written through the eyes of a ten-year-old child. This child is a part of myself that is most often concealed behind a more worldly adult image. This more worldly image is the side I show to

the outside world, and yet I am also aware that even this side has multiple dimensions. This multiplicity remains unvalued, however, if there is little or no place or time given to examining multiple dimensions of interpretational perspectives. What appears to be less explored in educational research is questions of who we are in the research process and how we know what we know, particularly the interactive nature of “experience and self-understanding, and the constant interaction between them” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 152).

Emotional and the Personal in Research

How do we know what we know? The Enlightenment says we know through Reason. As children of the Enlightenment, we have inherited the myth that we can reason our way out of confusion. Yet the supremacy of Reason itself needs to be called into question (Flax, 1991, p. 10). The privileging of scientific knowledge over personal experiential knowledge has a long and complex history dating back to Bacon, Descartes, and Locke, who established the theoretical roots of the “modern” era (Borgmann, 1992). Borgmann notes that we can think of modernism “as the fusion of the domination of nature with primacy of method and the sovereignty of the individual” (p. 25). Descartes, in particular, argued for clear and precise measures for dispelling both superstition and religious dogma, the legacy of the medieval era. To this end, a rigorous method of science that privileged the rationality of the knowing subject, detached from the conditions of his subjectivity, was born. This way of thinking is now so deeply entrenched in our culture that it often goes unchallenged even in texts that purport to be about the subjectivism of interpretation. In their treatises on the embodiment of knowing, Varela, Thompson, and Rosch (1993) attempt to move beyond this dualistic debate. They show us that in the West, two extreme views—that of scientific knowledge and of experience—have operated. They argue that the triumph of scientific knowledge over experience has resulted in disembodied thought.

The worldview of scientific knowledge is consistent with the objective positivist stance of contemporary science. The second worldview, that of experience, is one of extreme subjectivism in which the individual mind constructs the world on its own in absence of Other. One view searches for a recovery of what is “outer”—what is to be found in the world independent of the knower. The other view searches for a recovery of what is “inner” to the mind of the knower—what is created independently of an external world. Varela, Thompson, and Rosch (1993) argue for a middle way between objectivism and subjectivism. They look at knowing as a continuous oscillation between different modalities.

Any discussion on a midway point between objectivism and subjectivism needs greater nuance and engagement with a wider array of sources than can be achieved within the confines of this article. While this is not new ground, the use of Bateson’s (1994) term *continuous oscillation* is tangential to the discussion. Bateson (1994), in her book on anthropology, *Peripheral Visions*, elaborates on a similar theme of needing to overcome the presuppositions our culture has imposed on us. Bateson encourages us to cast aside familiar learning habits and explore our discomfort,

those places of disruption of the unusual that often occur on the periphery of our lives. She sees anthropology as the study of the way other cultures disrupt what we take for granted. She encourages us to view the unfamiliar as a challenge rather than as a threat to our emotional well-being.

In conducting educational research, perhaps the best we can hope for is to become aware of some of our views and purposes and the contradictions therein. The world presents a variety of problems that challenge researchers to develop an informed perspective and a suitable method. To this end, I do not believe that there is one best method for making meaning, although I believe it is important to employ suitable methods or principles depending on one's research purposes. Qualitative inquiry, which considers the interplay of both the multi-aspected self and the researcher self including experiences of culture, requires a synthesized method of approach offering multiple perspectives which facilitate questioning of taken-for-granted notions, thus creating a new understanding of the educational experience.

A Brief Critique of Reason

Reason has been held up as an exemplar of what it means to be human, throughout the ages. After all, only humankind has the ability to reason. Or so it is said. Any old animal can feel. Consequently, the very thing which supposedly sets humans apart from the animal kingdom, the ability to reason, has become the leitmotif of the societies within which people live. Yet people are not free from emotion, nor should they be. In short, it is that very thing, emotion, that humankind shares with the animal kingdom that helps to make people human. Imagine a world without emotions, without feelings. To close the human brain to emotion and instinctive thinking is to create a half-life in which people will act their parts upon the stage of life and then cease to exist, literally and figuratively. These people will have no place in human consciousness if emotion is excoriated from the human psyche. Reason, the very thing that sets humans apart from the animal world, is shared in many ways and in many different forms throughout the animal world. Ravens using rocks to open clam shells, monkeys using sticks as tools, whales communicating in languages that only their particular pod can understand are all examples of animal reasoning. Oh, this is not reasoning, you may say. It is only instinct. Thank you for making my point. Some researchers argue that instinct is not reason, but a feeling. It is an emotional stimulus that causes such actions. In fact, some researchers have applied this to all of humankind, suggesting that we really do not reason at all, that we only respond emotionally to the stimuli around us. While this is not necessarily the case for all researchers, it is sufficient to suggest that basing research upon reason through a positivistic framework has its risks. Perhaps it is not quite as objective as it appears. Perhaps it is not quite as reasonable as it sounds, particularly if the distinction between what serves as reason and its counterpart, emotion, appears to be somewhat indistinct.

However much reason is needed within the current societal and research networks, emotions have often received much bad press. They are regarded as

negative sensations, to be avoided at all costs. Yet emotions are an essential and unavoidable part of who we are, as researchers and as human beings. In education, brushing emotion aside appears easy, especially given the traditional view that “[i]n teaching and in all learned professions it is a justifiable source of pride to be scientific in one’s approach to things” (Jersild, 1955, p. 51). On much of the academic terrain I have traveled, it has been my experience that any display of vulnerability, uncertainty, or any other emotion often calls forth such labels as “weak,” “base,” “unscholarly.” Oakley (1981) expresses best why this may be so:

While everyone has feelings, our society defines cognitive, intellectual or rational dimensions of experience as superior to being emotional or sentimental. . . . Through the prism of our technological and rationalistic culture, we are led to perceive and feel emotions as some irrelevancy or impediment to getting things done.

(p. 40)

While “objective positivistic world views” contrasts against “extreme subjectivism,” to give credit where it is deserved, this may be somewhat of an over-simplification of current approaches to social science research. While Oakley’s early discussion (1981) supports the inclusion of “emotion” in educational research, it would be useful to bear in mind Oakley’s current views on research. Oakley (2003) is now advocating for the use of randomized controlled trials in social research, and has recently argued:

My main argument goes as follows: that in the methodological literature today, the “quantitative”/“qualitative” dichotomy functions chiefly as a gendered ideological representation; that within this gendering of methodology, experimental methods are seen as the most “quantitative” and therefore as the most masculine; that these processes of methodological development and gendering cannot be separated from the ways in which both science and social science developed, and the social relations in which they were embedded; and that the goal of an emancipatory (social) science calls for us to abandon sterile wordgames and concentrate on the business in hand, which is how to develop the most reliable and democratic ways of knowing, both in order to bridge the gap between ourselves and others, and to ensure that those who intervene in other people’s lives do so with the most benefit and the least harm.

(2000, p. 3)

In concert with this, as concepts of education and teaching and learning change over the years, contemporary writers such as Eisner (1991), Jagger and Bordo (1990), and Hargreaves (1998) now recognize that vulnerability and uncertainty may be friends rather than foes in a discourse for a deeper understanding of both ourselves and others, of teachers, learners and researchers. It is within the field of educational research, however, where I learned to be suspicious of my own

experience and understanding, of my own emotions and sentiments, as legitimate knowledge in favor of a more dispassionate, objective approach. My graduate research journal, written in 1992, best captures my sentiments on the role of the emotional and the personal in my research:

I have always had a haunting, sad feeling deep within, resting dormant in a cloud of unease, hovering back and forth in silence, in shadows.

One day I hear a voice. It sounds hollow, pretentious, didactic. I have now become the trained master, an expert researcher, someone with an acceptable and yet unapproachable voice.

The surface has worn thin.

I sit and cry because I know that voice is mine. Why am I so tightly bound by silence? Perhaps I have been conditioned to disown my emotions not only in academic life but in other areas of life as well.

What do we lose in educational research when we insist upon seeing emotion as the antithesis of rational thought? We may trap ourselves in dualistic thought that separates reality into pairs of opposites. Such dualistic thinking, traced back to modernist epistemology, sees true knowledge as that obtained through the application of rational thought. Not only do we divide thought into rational/irrational, but this either/or thinking leaves its imprint on other dualities such as the theory/practice divide. Compartmentalizing ourselves in this way results in the fragmentation of being. A compartmentalized existence may be typical of life in our culture.

Can emotion be a virtue in research? What is to be gained by abandoning a non-emotional perspective in research? Kierkegaard writes that “[t]he conclusions of passion are the only reliable ones,” and “[w]hat our age lacks is not reflection but passion” (Kierkegaard in Kaufmann, 1956, p. 18). And yet, to bear in mind that extremes of emotions are also untrustworthy, Hitler was a passionate speaker who launched a passionate campaign.

In championing the role of emotion, Kirby and McKenna (1989) remind researchers to be cognizant of this “conceptual baggage” of biases, emotions, and prejudices that inevitably shapes the research process. They suggest one’s emotional experience contributes to or informs the research process. Later, they suggest that when self-reflection happens, a researcher becomes “another subject in the research process and another dimension is added to the data” (p. 53). As researchers, we ought to continually pose questions to ourselves regarding the relationship between our experience and the research. In this way, perhaps we can bring emotion to the research in a reasonable way.

Certainly words shape our experience. In a very real sense, we are born into a scripted society, a society which is shaped and which shapes us through structures based on a literate understanding of the world. Through questioning what we consider knowledge to be, through discovering who created that knowledge, through analyzing the concepts and rules used to make meaning and determine whose experiences are valid for knowledge-making, we may come to understand

the scripts by which we live and can perhaps change them if we so choose. To sum up, as children of the Enlightenment, we may equate the language of Reason with the purest description of reality/human experience.

If our knowledge does little more than specify “the categories in which the significance of one’s life must be contained,” which is what Reason sometimes does, then Reason, “logos,” is not enough. It fails to help us understand ourselves and others in a richer and more compassionate way. Part of the problem is that the language we must use not only enables us to describe reality, but also pushes reality away from us. Instead of knowing directly, we know the experience through words. And words impose a “stop-action” on events that are continually on the go. In our mind—the intentional world—we can stop action, but not in the existential world. Perhaps the biggest challenge in educational research today may be to find methods and perspectives that honor the useful work of empirical scientific research, while at the same time finding a way to express a life of vulnerability, a vulnerability that does not banish emotionality in the name of predictability.

Being and Vulnerability in Research

The notions of multiple dimensions of understanding and varieties of research methods and perspectives are distinctly postmodern. Postmodernism marks the beginning of a new era, one in which rationalism is no longer privileged, and allows for different ways of knowing. Postmodernism has been extremely controversial and difficult to define among scholars, intellectuals, and historians as it connotes to many the hotly debated idea that the modern historical period has passed. Nevertheless, most agree that postmodern ideas have had a major impact on philosophy, art, critical theory, literature, architecture, interpretation of history, and culture since the late twentieth century. The term defies easy definition, but generally comprises the following core ideals, which include continual skepticism toward the ideas and ideals of the modern era, especially the ideas of progress, objectivity, reason, and certainty. Postmodernism also maintains the belief that all communication is shaped by cultural bias, myth, metaphor, and political content. Meaning and experience can only be created by the individual, and cannot be made objective by an author or narrator. Furthermore, postmodernism accepts the notion of a society dominated by mass media in which there is no originality, but only copies of what has been done before. Globalization, another concept inherent in the notion of postmodernism, is suggested to be leading to a culturally pluralistic and profoundly interconnected global society lacking any single dominant center of political power, communication, or intellectual production. Instead, the world is moving toward decentralization in all types of global processes. Postmodernism draws on the work of various thinkers such as Nietzsche, Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, Kristeva, and Rorty to display its multiplicity.

While a change to postmodernist thinking may not be without its own set of problems, as Rosenau (1992) suggests, what is important is the way postmodern thought challenges one “best” method and the notion of one “true” way of knowing. It offers instead an expansive creativity and multiplicity.

Krishnamurti (1967) helps us to “think” further on these things. He explains, “[t]o think about the problem is not to understand. It is only when the mind is silent that the truth of what is unfolds” (p. 41). I think it would be a mistake to suggest that Krishnamurti renounces thinking. To do so would only perpetuate the dualistic thought that he claims is so prevalent in Western thought. Instead, I think Krishnamurti points us back to the Knowledge of the Body to complement the knowledge acquired through Reason and Language.

Knowledge of the Body introduces knowledge of the being. Perhaps more than any other book, Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (1962) opens the discourse on Being. What might be central to his thinking, Nietzsche-like in character, is primarily that tradition has fought to suppress the life and truth of the body. Of relevance to this study are Heidegger’s three dimensions of embodied human existence: the period of the infant, in which we enjoy primordial understanding; the period of adulthood, in which we may become disconnected from the material world; and the period of maturity, in which we may regain a deeper sense of Being. These are not necessarily sequential stages but can be, rather, simultaneous ones. Of central importance is Heidegger’s argument that knowing and being cannot be separated. He champions the importance of pre-understanding as a way to deepen our awareness of our experience. As I read the later Heidegger, I found that he seems to be calling for the integration of knowledge of being with our everyday existence.

If we develop a Heideggerian understanding of being through allowing our minds to be silent in the Krishnamurti sense, then we may have a new understanding of the interconnection between experience and research. To understand something in a deeper and more meaningful way may mean a call to action. This does not mean that we simply acknowledge the social and political nature of human being, but that we act on this deeper understanding to change ourselves and society. Such action may mean we have to abandon many of our biases, emotions, and prejudices and socially prescribed behaviors. We must simultaneously remember who we are as human beings and call into question what “being human” means. This questioning may make us feel extremely vulnerable, although vulnerability does not necessarily make us weak. Many courageous women and men have shown the power of vulnerability and uncertainty in the search for human understanding. Rich (1976) reveals the place of vulnerability in her writing process: “for months I buried my head in historical research and analysis in order to delay or prepare way for the plunge into areas of my own life which were painful and problematic” (p. xviii).

As an educational researcher, it is the discomfort, ever-present through one’s experiences, such as Michael’s story, that outlines the places within which to begin the re-search for deeper meaning.

Hermeneutic Inquiry: The Re-search for Deeper Meaning

Hermeneutics may be described as the development and study of theories of the interpretation and understanding of texts, more broadly used in contemporary

philosophy to denote the study of theories and methods of the interpretation of all texts. The concept of “text” is here also extended beyond written documents to any number of objects subject to interpretation. It is in this way that hermeneutics relates to postmodernism. As postmodernism is rife with symbols and uncertainty in most of its areas of influence, it is a field deeply in need of explanation. For this, hermeneutics provides a useful methodology.

In a primitive society, it is doubtful that my brother would have been “given up.” He would likely have spent his days within his family circle, being cared for until his illness ended his life. The postmodern world is different and has subjugated emotional caring to reason. It was reasonable for Michael to be institutionalized, but it is anti-rational to a ten-year-old sister. Such are the dichotomies pitted against one another; the adult’s versus the child’s conception of caring, the justness of the procedure versus the inherent injustice of it all, the power of the society versus the vulnerability of the young boy. All of these operate within the concept of postmodernism as scripts, or “texts” to be examined, unraveled and understood. It is in this way that a hermeneutic methodology can assist in making sense, not only out of daily activities, but also of the very fabric that has been woven by the society itself.

The re-search for the deep meanings in human lives understood as narrative texts and the ongoing process of interpreting them is essentially a hermeneutical endeavor. Hermeneutics is the theory and philosophy of the interpretation of meaning; it has a lengthy and complex history. Different schools and different thinkers have offered varying definitions of it. As Mueller-Vollmer (1989) points out, hermeneutics is both a historical concept and an ongoing concern in the human sciences. He goes on to say that some see hermeneutics as a method for interpreting literary texts, and some see it as an intellectual movement. Its historical emphasis on rigorous scholarship, which is still very much with us today, is based on the tradition established by Chladenius, a university teacher in the eighteenth century who wanted to provide a consistent theory and rules for interpretation.

As Mueller-Vollmer (1989) shows, although interpretation has been around since antiquity, it was not until the Renaissance and the Reformation that hermeneutics as a discipline came into being. This is not surprising given that during those periods the Christian Church needed a process for interpreting Holy Scriptures. Following the logic of Aristotle and the Enlightenment thinkers in general, hermeneutic scholars found the grounds for “correct” interpretation to reside in reason itself. In fact the “contention was that like logic itself, hermeneutics rested on certain generally applicable rules and principles which were valid for all those fields of knowledge which relied on interpretation” (Mueller-Vollmer, 1989, p. 4). The twentieth-century work of Betti and Hirsch (1976) epitomizes this tradition of generally applicable rules of interpretation. Many other scholars today still hold that “the aim of interpretation is to reproduce the meaning or intention of the author by following well-defined hermeneutical canons that guide reading” (Gallagher, 1992, p. 9). The belief in these hermeneutical rules constitutes the essence of “scientific” hermeneutics, which assumes the accessibility of an original interpretation of the author’s text. A second type is “philosophical” hermeneutics,

which allows the interactive role of the reflective self in relation to the text. It views life itself as a text.

Philosophical hermeneutics, as developed by Gadamer (1960/1991), questions the assumptions of scientific hermeneutics. Philosophical hermeneutics attempts to bring us back to the everyday world by questioning just how a particular understanding has come to be; it is “an effort to rethink what we are and how we might relate ourselves to the world” (Crusius, 1991, p. 15). According to Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics, “understanding begins . . . when something addresses us. This is the primary hermeneutic condition. . . . The essence of the question is the opening up and keeping open of possibilities” (1960/1991, p. 266). Gallagher (1992) further elaborates on the many competing theories and practices of hermeneutics that both historically and currently shape our practice in education, including conservative hermeneutics, moderate hermeneutics, critical hermeneutics, and radical hermeneutics. He manages to bring hermeneutics into the present world and relate it to education by suggesting that hermeneutics “examines human understanding in general.” This thought is in accordance with Gadamer’s notion (1960/1991, 1977) that all understanding is interpretation.

Philosophical hermeneutics was not created in a vacuum but rather rested on the work of many. It received its impetus from the Romantic movement in central Europe, which revolutionized the intellectual landscape. Schleiermacher, a Protestant theologian, is credited with grounding hermeneutics in the concept of understanding (Palmer, 1969). To be no longer concerned with simply decoding a proper line of thought but, instead, to be trying to illuminate the conditions for the possibility of understanding actually to occur, was a major departure of thought. Perhaps the contribution of philosophical hermeneutics to educational research is that it gives a scholar a method for hearing, seeing, and knowing what is questionable in a given situation or context beyond traditional, “rational” research.

Perhaps it is in this way that the beginning scholar can begin to unravel some of the mysteries inherent in daily lives, in the narratives that double as scripts, or texts. These texts are not meaningless ramblings of emotion junkies, but represent feelings, which in turn point to universal vulnerabilities that everyone shares and understands. It is research of this nature that promises to shed light on little-known but taken-for-granted issues of human nature. Human emotions cannot be quantified, but they can be highlighted and focused upon through “autobiographical writing” informed by hermeneutic perspectives.

Conclusion

We can never be totally aware of every prejudice that shapes our interpretation. Perhaps the best we can hope for is insight into the way that we think it has come to be. A single point of view is inadequate to understand the human condition. Rather, we need a multiplicity of views. Merleau-Ponty (1962) expresses the need for a multiplicity of views in this way:

Should the starting-point for the understanding of history be ideology, or politics, or religion, or economics? Should we try to understand a doctrine

from its overt content, or from the psychological make-up and the biography of its author? We must seek an understanding from all these angles simultaneously, everything has meaning, and we shall find this same structure of being underlying all relationships. All these views are true provided that they are not isolated, that we delve deeply into history and reach the unique core of existential meaning which emerges in each perspective.

(pp. xviii–xix)

Merleau-Ponty's words remind me that deeper understanding of myself and others may be possible through discovering a multitude of meanings not in isolation from, but in relation to, one another, and in relationships which include the emotional as well as the cognitive.

It is my hope that rather than insisting unrealistically upon a non-emotional, objective approach to her or his topic, the educational researcher will incorporate the emotional aspects of both learner's and researcher's lives. Not every educational researcher has a "Michael" narrative, or in fact a personal narrative they want to make public, yet every researcher does have a narrative of emotion and vulnerability, one that may situate and guide the research process.

Postscript

My brother Michael died on December 27, 2003. At his funeral I met a woman familiar to me, and friend of Michael. She spared the usual social grace of verbalizing how sorry she was about Michael's death and with a twinkle in her eye told me of the last encounter with my brother. She saw Michael in the grocery store, several days before he died. She said he teased her about wanting to steal her lovely hat for himself (Mrs. Paras is a woman with many hats) and I gather this was part of their usual banter. She went on to relate that although he was not well, in seeing her struggle to get through the door he came to her aid. She said he was the only gentleman in the place. I expect Mrs. Paras had no inkling as to how helpful and healing her story was. Yet her action made me reflect on how a story has the power to heal or destroy. As educational researchers, perhaps we need to thoroughly examine the reasons for sharing the stories we make public: do the stories we represent, interpret and reflect upon have the power to challenge and change our lives for the better?

Questions

1. Can you identify any narrative fragments, personal accounts or overarching stories which may serve as a compass, situating and guiding your pen as you write educational research?
2. "Above all else, I know this to be true . . ." How does this personal truth influence your methodological approach as an educational researcher?

3. In doing educational research, why may it be important to “cast aside familiar learning habits and explore our discomfort . . . on the periphery of our lives”?
4. How is the role of an educational researcher scripted? What factors are influencing changes in the role of the educational researcher?
5. Choose a favorite piece of educational research. Read it once more. What makes this a valuable piece of educational research, in your opinion? Where was the piece published? Who is the intended audience?
6. Language enables us to describe reality but it may also push reality away. Reflect upon a piece of educational research that you found (or did not find) personally empowering. How did the author use language? Find examples of several excerpts that made you ponder, feel deeply moved, or moved you to want to make change.

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Questioning as a Pedagogical Tool in Teaching and Research

KARYN COOPER AND SUSAN LONDON McNAB

We don't lose the life of curiosity as long as we keep the question before us, who are we?

(Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 81)

Introduction

In this postmodern era, there has emerged an urgency to create teaching and research approaches that are responsive to the social, political, and moral dimensions of learning and teaching (Silin, 1995; Smith, 1999; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). While theorists have identified a tension between epistemological and ontological knowing (Bruner, 1986; Eisner, 1992; Gadamer, 1960; Gallagher, 1992), there remains a practical need to reconcile professional rational/technical goals of teaching and research with the personal social/emotional reality of the classroom.

This inquiry addresses how questioning as a pedagogical tool may allow the teacher/researcher to move beyond theoretical binaries into responsive practice which supports diverse perspectives and multiple ways of knowing and being. Beginning research questions were:

1. What constitutes an effective question, to whom, against what criteria, and under what circumstances?
2. How can the teacher/researcher facilitate the child/adult learner to ask and address difficult personally and socially relevant questions?

Theoretical Framework

The complementary methodological frameworks of narrative inquiry and hermeneutics are foundational to reflexive revisioning of practitioner research within curriculum theory and practice.

The research methodology of narrative inquiry, as a search for deeper meanings within texts through the constant questioning of normative truths, is essentially a hermeneutical endeavor. Within the scope of this chapter, hermeneutic inquiry may be described as comprising three themes, "namely, the inherent creativity of interpretation, the pivotal role of language in human understanding, and the interplay of whole and part in the process of interpretation" (Smith, 1999, p. 30).

Smith further states that “good interpretation involves a playing back and forth between the specific and the general, the micro and the macro.” Narratives rich in detailing lives of unique individuals, become the many-colored threads which weave themselves into complex tapestries of the socio-cultural fabric.

Crites (1971) describes two reciprocally influential narrative forms, mundane and sacred, micro and macro, operating simultaneously, carrying forward cultural aspects of experience. Small personal stories build into broader patterns of cultural social experience. Larger sacred stories embody taken-for-granted attitudes determined by how social context is represented; they present contextual shapes within which the mundane stories unfold. Mundane stories point to, but do not overtly express, the cultural sacred story. The mundane story furnishes opportunities to examine what has been culturally constructed in an implicit way through the sacred story.

Many recent contemporary educational researchers (Aoki, 1991; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995) have advocated narrative and hermeneutic approaches as necessary to understanding the reciprocity of shared experience and meaning making in the classroom where a multiplicity of perspectives is valued. The larger lessons and implications of the human story are infused with life and meaning, are illuminated, made relevant and understood best through the tangible immediacy of individuals’ stories.

Narrative Threads

Karyn’s Story of a Teacher Educator as Student

I remember, as a school-aged child, my unease around continually having to prove my own existence. Something that is known intuitively is always hard to prove. Constantly having to prove everything had adverse effects on me. Being constantly questioned about my “proof” and seldom being affirmed as a knower without it, served to isolate me further from the wider community, and from myself. Somehow it never seemed acceptable just to say, “I know something because I feel it deep inside my bones.” To search for answers only outside of myself seemed so unbalanced. As a result, I began to doubt myself and my natural instincts. Indeed, much of my time in school seemed to lack relevant approaches connecting me to the world within myself, where I could find the stuff human beings are made of.

As a young teacher, I encountered a student named McKenzie (pseudonym), who gave me her Grade 2 journal, which contained stories and questions that resonated with echoes of my own childhood. In her eloquent and insightful account of the seemingly mundane experience of going to the lunchroom for the first time and feeling terrified at the prospect, McKenzie actually focused attention on issues that humankind has been struggling to voice but society has tried to silence since the beginning of time: Who am I? What does it mean to be alone? Who am I in relationship to others?

This little girl’s journal could have been mine. An anecdote from my own experience dealing with similar themes comes to mind:

I remember I was in Grade 4. I was in Enterprise class, now termed Social Studies. Somewhere between the plants and marine life, I remember us being told by our teacher for the very first time that human beings are really part of the animal kingdom. I remember the textbook; there were colorful pictures of beastly looking men with wild eyes, living in caves and scribbling on walls. Our teacher nonchalantly announced that we are all really “just animals.” There was no discussion. Somehow, I felt humiliated by this prospect. I brooded for weeks, and subsequently had many heartfelt conversations with my dad about the nature of “humanbeingness.”

I shall never forget my dad’s little laugh, yet I always knew deep down that my dad took me seriously. Being supported in this way was somewhat of a luxury. For the most part, I was seen as an “odd duck” by many of the adults around me. I was often told not to “think so much,” to “stop being so emotional,” and to “play like a kid.”

I can relate to a story that Gloria Steinem (1992) recounts: “A teacher had insisted I could not possibly have written my Thanksgiving poem because its refrain (something like, Not only for the dead, but for the living) was too adult” (p. 262). I feel for McKenzie, I feel for Gloria Steinem, and I feel for children in general. I can only now, from the safe distance of adulthood, begin to feel for myself as a child, to remember the hurt of not being taken seriously, especially when the world was so fresh and I had such a hungry desire to feel her questions.

Susan’s Story of an Elementary Teacher as Student

As a child, I loved school. The smell of freshly sharpened pencils and the sense of promise in opening a new notebook and writing neatly on the pale blue lines gave me a contented satisfaction. I understood the rules and followed them with care and concern; I delighted in pleasing my teachers and in doing well. In Grade 4, this pleasure was recognized with the decision that I would benefit from attending a twice-weekly program at another school, “the enrichment class.” It sounded wonderful; I already knew the expectations of school, and was sure it would be the same, only more!

However, Mrs. Woodcock, and later Miss Ingalls, had slightly different plans. They began by asking questions about what we thought and were interested in, not what we remembered an adult having told us the day before, and introduced us to a brand new idea—research! It was suggested that we think about topics for undertaking both “group research” which all ten of us would decide on together, and “individual research” which we would decide on alone and which could be anything in the world we wanted to investigate. I was floored. Never before had a teacher asked *me* what I was interested in learning about, much less offered me the chance to find out. Still bound by a child’s perception of loyalty to my parents and a strong wish not to disappoint them with my choices, I was at first a little afraid to take up this freedom with total abandon. My first decisions were tentative ventures into what constituted my own curiosity, supported by frequent reassuring

consultations with my mother and father. However, these initial efforts at embarking on self-directed study were complemented and accelerated by another most amazing activity that our enrichment classes offered: the “daily talk.”

Each morning, we met as a group and two of us would deliver a talk that we had researched, written, illustrated, and practiced at home. A heretofore rather quiet and reserved child, I quickly discovered that I really liked talking to other people about things I was interested in. My mental list of future daily talk topics grew longer and longer, as more and more intriguing things seemed to appear in the world, and I could hardly wait for my turn to come around again. This new confidence spilled over into my “research,” my projects in the regular classroom; my whole demeanor and way of interacting with the world—and the universe—opened up. I explored the world of the three-toed tree sloth, discovered how to make slides for a microscope and examined both still and wiggly things found anywhere within reach, with unshakable intensity; and sewed a kimono and made rice and green tea for a Japanese tea ceremony. I now found not only pleasure in school, but sheer joy in learning! I had somehow become more real, to the world I knew and to myself—I was a person with ideas and interests that counted, with questions that were every bit as worthwhile as anyone else’s, grownups included.

In Grade 7, upon graduating to the local junior high school, our class, comprising students from several different elementary schools, became part of an experiment. The enrichment classes of our younger years had been deemed so successful (essentially, we had kept up our good marks, despite having been withdrawn from our regular classes consistently) that we were all placed in one full-time enrichment class for Grades 7 and 8. The person selected to teach us was the former art teacher—who better than such a vocationally creative person to teach such (now) lively independent children? Not so. It quickly became apparent that the art teacher was terrified at the prospect; she was afraid of us; she was afraid that we would challenge her in unanticipated ways and that she would be found lacking. One of her resultant responses was to limit every activity she presented to us, so as to keep it and us within safe bounds. Even the once sacrosanct daily talks were not protected under her regime—she posted lists of acceptable topics, for which we had to sign up. These were lumped under a general area of inquiry she had deemed suitable for our class—no more group discussions of what we might be interested in investigating. We railed against these constraints; we criticized, argued, cajoled, and explained that there were other things we really wanted to learn about. But it did no good. Her word was law.

I began to commit academically subversive acts: I wrote complicated epic poems of unmerited tribulations and justice triumphant, and created a secret alphabet in which to record them; I composed fiercely melancholy piano pieces. But in the spring of the second (and final) year of the experiment, after a year and a half of doing active battle against this reasonless and

unresponsive dictatorship, and being forced to acquiesce each time, I awoke one day to the startling realization that my mental list of wondrous things to learn about was gone. It had always nourished me, given me great things to dream about, and assured hope. I grieved its loss deeply, but didn't know how to restore it. My ecstatic communion with school learning was gone.

Research Question One: What Constitutes an Effective Question, to Whom, against What Criteria, and under What Circumstances?

Children make the best theorists since they have not yet been educated into accepting our routine social practices as “natural” and so insist on posing to those practices the most embarrassingly general and fundamental questions, regarding them with a wondering estrangement which we adults have long forgotten. Since they do not yet grasp our social practices as inevitable, they do not see why we might not do things differently.

(Eagleton, 1990)

Hermeneutically speaking, it can be suggested that a pedagogic failure of Karyn's school experience may have resulted from tensions between the micro and the macro on the part of the school. While Karyn's home experience was one that honored and valued questions of a curious and personal nature, school was a place that often militated against this very notion. The macro interpretation of the dominant culture failed to acknowledge that an “effective question” may begin with the child, with “the most embarrassingly general and fundamental questions.”

Pedagogically and hermeneutically, a curriculum that is not “child centered” but one that has traditionally been “teacher centered” arises from curriculum theory and materials mandated by legislative bodies permeated by the language of skills-based expectations. Examples of this technical language include “performance outcomes,” “indicators,” and “accountability,” which sustain a tradition rooted in scientifically based technologies of educational practice developed from the work of Thorndike. Thorndike (1932) and his contemporaries (Bobbit, 1924; Tyler, 1950) were part of the intellectual tradition of systems thinking still evident in the language of curriculum theory and educational practice today. The language of technical models, as well as the language of legislative mandates and school board policy statements, supports and sustains a tradition of objective knowing and continues to provide important components to present teaching practices. Unfortunately, it is often claimed as a unique focus, limiting teachers to a single set of assumptions about how they come to know, be, and teach.

In the context of teaching children to question, Shutz (2000) points out that:

what we are led to believe about ourselves, what we learn about how we are supposed to act, the ways we are taught to frame “problems” and even the tools of reason that we use to solve these problems, do not simply represent neutral skills but are in fact ways of forming us into particular kinds of

subjects. “Power” in this vision does not merely suppress or restrict but actually produces actions and desires.

(p. 216)

Pedagogically speaking, teachers have historically functioned as handmaidens of the state, often unwittingly transmitting explicit and implicit policies and practices. For example, in *A Superintendent’s Suggestions to Teachers*, Cone (1924) offers the following advice, under “The Art of Questioning”:

You will find great diversity among your pupils—a fact which makes your problem a difficult one. You will find the bright and the dull, the willing and the stubborn, the normal, and possibly the subnormal, but remember that it is your problem to reach every one of these individuals, if possible.

More recently, Bloom’s taxonomy (Alberta Department of Education, 1990), which also arose from the technical rational backdrop, is a teacher-centered, linear, hierarchical (from knowledge-based through evaluation) system of assessing students’ learning still prevalent in current practice. Much of this writing about teachers’ questioning starts with the interrogative form as the unit of interest and then asks, “What purpose do the teachers’ questions serve?”

These teaching practices have a long history, deeply enmeshed in systems of power and technical rational approaches to education. Perpetuation of these power structures defines the teacher as its subject and may preclude valuing the child’s input. Rather, the classroom stories recounted above suggest a need to challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in existing orthodoxies of research and teaching practice, through reframing questions to examine not only what has been offered but also what has been missing.

What does constitute an effective question, then? The process of questioning may open new windows through creating opportunities for viewing thoughts and experiences from new perspectives. However, whose questions are to be asked? Which questions matter, to whom, when, why, and in what ways? What does it depend on? How do we know? How do we find them? If questions are windows, which do we want to open?

Clearly, the direction in which the answers to these questions lie depends on deeper fundamental beliefs about the purposes of education and the role teacher/researchers play. These are endemic to contemporary socio-political power systems that have formed them, in alignment with their own ideals and goals. In the early part of the twentieth century, post-industrial revolution and pre-depression, when confidence in the rewards of technological and financial investment was high, education was seen as a means to the practical end of successfully entering the world of business and industry. From *A Superintendent’s Suggestions to Teachers* (Cone, 1924) come these instructions on Teaching Arithmetic:

1. The essentials of arithmetic have been stated to be: (1) counting;
- (2) addition and multiplication . . . (3) subtraction . . . (4) division . . .

- (7) enough of percentage to compute a commercial discount and the simple interest on a note . . .
2. . . . The business world demands definite knowledge of these fundamentals and absolute accuracy in their use.

One possible response to this query, then, is that the purpose of education is to fulfill the needs of business, and that we educate children to fill these roles adequately in perpetuation of the status quo. While it may have been assumed that aims of education have changed since 1924, nonetheless prevalent current aims represented in Canada by the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training curriculum document state, “the changing world of work provides new opportunities for student placement.” In suggesting that agencies of the state exert “control over the process of schooling . . . in order to realign education to the needs of the globalized economy,” McLaren and Baltodano (2000) extend this to a global context. If, however, the purposes of education are to be linked not only to the goals of business but also to something beyond, then this pattern needs to be carefully examined and alternative ideologies considered.

If questioning is to become an effective pedagogical tool for promoting democracy, social justice, and equity in schools, then what circumstances need to arise in the classroom (both elementary and pre-service) for an increase in democracy and shared power? Recognition of the need to challenge the balance of power in the classroom, inherent in Susan’s rejection of the constraints of her schooling by “committing academically subversive acts,” is a first step toward acknowledging the pivotal role of questioning in facilitating change. Now, years later, as a teacher/researcher uncomfortable with pedagogical strategies which relegate children to the role of passive recipient rather than invested participant in the process of their own learning, Susan strives to explore what constitutes a classroom environment where such declarative acts of freedom and choice are encouraged to take place.

Weaving Questions into the Curriculum

Susan’s Story of an Elementary School Teacher: Declaration of Freedom and the Right to Learn

A critical curriculum does not supply answers. It supplies questions.
(Edelsky, 1999, p. 31)

This teaching research is placed within the context of an independent all-girls’ school in Toronto which is striving to develop and implement a woman-centered curriculum. All classes are small, with a maximum of 16 students, from Grade 4 through OAC (high school completion). Two science classes were tracked over six weeks, as students completed one multi-stage individual project: one Grade 4/5 class of 11 girls, aged 9 through 11; and one Grade 6 class of 16 girls, aged 11 and 12 years.

The Grade 4/5 and 6 science programs enrich and extend the required curricula as set by the provincial Ministry of Education and Training, containing elements

of constructivist experiential approaches, and teaching practices which support recognition of the individual student's strengths, struggles, accomplishments, and uniqueness. The annual Science Fair in mid-February is one example of a standard assignment which has been reframed, and is approached and experienced differently as a result.

Susan's children's Science Fair project inquiries began not as an internet search for topics and project descriptions, but as a series of their own "I wonder . . ." questions. They were invited to wonder about anything in the world, and were instructed simply to write down as many questions as they could possibly think of, on things they had always been curious about. "Everything," I told them, "can be related to science. Don't worry if you can't see the connection at first—we'll find one! Just ask questions on things you're curious about, on anything under the sun that you want to know!" Both Dewey (1990) and Lindfors (1999) offer theoretical support for the pedagogical strategy of beginning with the child's own curiosity, and using this first personal step to build links to the larger outside world.

"Why do I need glasses? How do my eyes work? Is it something to do with my brain?" from Karrie.

"How does bubble gum work? Why can't I blow bubbles and my little brother can? What is the biggest bubble anyone has ever blown?" from Lark.

From Molly, whose father had just undergone eye surgery, "What is a detached retina? How do lasers fix it? How did he get it? Can he get it again? Will I get it?"

"Why are different foods different colors? How do manufacturers decide what colors to dye foods? How does color affect the way we taste things? If I made vanilla ice cream purple, would it taste the same or different?" from Tessa.

"Why do pigs like mud?" from Cate, and then, "I have something I've always wondered about, but I don't think it has anything to do with science." I replied that anything was legitimate if she needed to know it, and that of course it would somehow have something to do with science! "Well, when a man and a woman get married . . ."—she paused, and I found myself holding my breath—"why does the woman always have to wear a wedding ring, but the man doesn't?" A relieved exhalation on my part followed instantly. Then, together, we explored, through a linking chain of questions, the symbolism of a circle through mythology, its place and function in so many aspects of our daily lives; the value of gold and other precious metals and gemstones as evidenced in searches throughout history, what they are made of, and how they are formed.

Those students who had done a Science Fair project this way with me before arrived at school in September with questions already burning for answers, and electric with excitement. Of the students for whom asking their own questions was a new experience, some (one in Grade 5, and two in Grade 6) seemed to find this shift in power and responsibility startling and unsettling. They wanted to know more precisely what was expected, to feel sure of doing the "right" thing; they reached first for a familiar project on a topic they had already encountered, and then formulated a question that could be answered by that project.

Not only were the students eager to engage in the process, but many enjoyed coming to school so much that parents found it hard to keep them home even

when they were sick. The resulting projects were excellent by any standards, and were presented knowledgeably and with great enthusiasm on the night of the Fair. When it came time to select participants for the city-wide Science Fair, the gratifying response was that every student wanted to attend. The selection was therefore made by drawing names from a hat, with the promise that those who could not go that year would be first in line to go the next. Those who represented the school were well received in comments made by the official reviewers, although at the Kindergarten to Grade 6 level no ranked adjudication was made of the entries.

In addition, a visitor to the school was so impressed with students' projects that a substantial donation was made to the school in appreciation and support of the science program. From this generous gesture and through comments from volunteer "listeners" on the night of the Fair, what had been seen as exceptional was the vigor and competence with which the girls had engaged in the practice of inquiry and experimentation in science, as well as their ability to translate issues of equity from a feminist perspective to a more universal understanding.

These responses all seemed to offer external validation of my own assessment that, when the project had been approached differently by letting the students' own curiosity lead the way, science had been done well, and with great delight.

Karyn's Story of a Teacher Educator: Questioning as a Critical Pedagogical Tool

The more rooted I am in my own location, the more I extend to other places so as to become a citizen of the world. No one becomes local from a universal location.

(Freire, 1998, p. 39)

As a university researcher and teacher educator in a pre-service and graduate program, my critical pro-justice stance is not just part of my teaching, but infused throughout it. For years, I have wondered how to encourage students to deeply question what is happening around them. In particular, I have wondered how to engage them in curricular activities that help them to see that, while they are continually interpreting texts, they also have the ability through reinterpretation to change texts that they may be uncomfortable with.

One assignment I ask my pre-service students to engage in is part of the curriculum for a foundations course on equity studies. The course is organized structurally around three themes: 1) Learning to understand one's own story: Micro and macro structures within school and society; 2) Learning from one's own and others' questions; 3) Pedagogy of hope and school change. These three themes culminate in their final assignment: exploring a "burning issue".

The course requires the students to begin with their own stories of schooling, because I believe, as Freire does, that it is difficult to get at a deeper understanding of the world without beginning close to home, with oneself and one's own preconceptions. Venn diagramming shows one of my stories as a child in school (micro) intersecting the complex tapestry of the broader design of socio-cultural fabric

(macro). One of the personal stories I share is that of my brother's disability and the school segregation that resulted. I pose certain questions to focus the discussion on the interplay of the micro and the macro: Do you think it is still like this in schools? Why? Who benefits from it being this way? Is this democratic? Is there more information you need to help you to understand the situation? Is anyone's perspective missing? Whose, and why? What doesn't this story tell you? Is there a way to interrupt and rewrite this story?

Next, I ask the students to write about their own schooling experiences, or find a school experience of someone, real or fictitious, that they can relate to. Within safe parameters already established, they share their stories with a partner, using the suggested questions as a framework to help reveal the cultural or macro structures at play. Simultaneously, they are asked to think about and share questions resulting from interactions with articles, videos, and guest speakers introduced in previous classes. These resources, dealing with issues of equity and justice, are carefully selected to unveil underlying dominant structures within society. Students are not to worry about coming up with a "right" answer; instead, the focus is on raising concerns so that students may become aware of the many faces of injustice and think of ways to interrupt and rewrite these stories. This process of questioning helps focus one burning issue that they choose to explore in depth. The burning issue assignment connects to the final theme of the course, "pedagogy of hope and school change," by asking students to share how they might put their newfound understanding into action in the classroom.

While I plan the curriculum very carefully, I am never really sure what will happen when I ask the students to begin with themselves. While students are sometimes resistant to look at their own stories, I find that if I share my personal story, many students become more comfortable addressing tough questions from their own lives. John's (pseudonym) story comes to mind. His paper begins with the following paragraph:

I chose this topic because at the age of nineteen, I was diagnosed with both Tourette Syndrome and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder. I do not like to refer to them as disorders; rather, I prefer to say that I experience symptoms of TS or OCD. Until the time of my diagnosis, I was uncertain as to where I was going in life in terms of a career. When the diagnosis came, I quickly changed my major in university to Psychology, and began to have interest in the field of education. I began to educate myself about TS and OCD and . . . began to be a strong advocate for others with special needs. I feel that my diagnosis was somewhat of a calling for me in my life, to help others like me who are struggling.

John goes on to speak of the cultural alienation a child may encounter and examines how schools have historically segregated these children. His burning issue assignment offers hope, not only by making others aware of Tourette syndrome and obsessive-compulsive disorder, but also by reframing the issue through offering practical classroom applications for supporting children with these

problems. He has, in effect, interrupted a story that often causes children to feel a strong sense of alienation. In his own practicum, he read a children's book entitled *Hi, I'm Adam*, which he offered as one strategy for helping teachers and children understand what it is like to live with Tourette syndrome.

John was a student who was able to immediately address and share his personal story in depth. Others began by looking at issues raised in their practicum experiences. Many of these issues, however, resonated with their own personal stories, which they were able to explore to greater and lesser degrees.

However, not all students were grateful for the opportunity to explore the social-emotional dimensions of the curriculum. Sam's (pseudonym) story is set in counterpoint to John's.

Sam reported not being comfortable with sharing personal stories, missed the first assignment and asked to do a "traditional" research paper instead. I wondered what was at the root of Sam's discomfort and then waited. I reminded him that he did not have to start with a personal story, but could use the practicum experience as a springboard for the burning issue assignment. I was surprised to find Sam's assignment in my box well before the date due. I include an excerpt:

Burning Issue Question

How can we as trusted and caring educators, assist bereaved children in dealing with grief, in order to assist the child in the painful process of mourning in the near-term, and embrace their emotional well-being in the long-term?

Why Such a Morbid Topic?

When I was eight years old, my six-year-old sister drowned in a public pool during the summer holiday. Our family structure, which until that moment was very stable, was shaken. I lost my sister, and consequently the foster brother I also had at the time since my parents were physically and emotionally unable to continue as foster parents. I was alone in what previously was a house alive with children. My parents gave all the love they could, but my mother was crippled by grief and unable to assist me with my own grieving. My father, a very stoic man, was also unable to help me since he was not equipped with the emotional skills to deal with his own grief issues, never mind my own.

Through this personal narrative, Sam reminds us that the death of a child is not a natural occurrence and, when it happens, families are shaken apart. In his paper, he elaborates on how this unnatural occurrence is compounded by the preoccupation of Western society with the sanitization of death. Yet perhaps the saddest part in all of this is that Sam's burning issue reveals that children are often left to walk the road of grief alone.

While Sam's paper is full of excellent research and practical considerations for helping teachers help a child deal with bereavement, I am even more impressed with his courage in confronting a tragedy that affects him to this day. He said this

assignment helped him work through personal issues so that, rather than hide behind his own personal grief, he now feels confident in helping children grappling with the same pain.

These two narratives are examples of many burning issues written by 65 student teachers. Other topics included “Working together to accommodate the needs of ESL children,” “I’m gay and I want to stay,” and “An investigation on eating disorders.” By beginning locally, with themselves and their own stories, through sharing and experiencing the multiplicity of perspectives within the class, the students, to varying degrees, took up the opportunity to extend their understanding beyond the individual to the universal, to become a citizen of the world (Freire, 1998).

Research Question Two: How can the Teacher/Researcher Facilitate the Child/Adult Learner to Ask and Address Difficult Personally and Socially Relevant Questions?

This chapter began with the practice of questioning as an effective research and pedagogical tool in helping teacher/researchers and students develop a critical stance, not only to become aware of inequitable practices but also to learn how to become socially responsible, no matter what their age.

Through this inquiry, driven by our own “need to know” as teacher/researchers, we found more similarities than differences between child and adult learners. We found that students on both educational landscapes shared thoughtful and engaging projects (some described above). Some students, both adults and children, found the shift in power and responsibility unexpected and uncomfortable, sometimes manifesting itself in a general lack of personal investment. It was not uncommon for students to feel wary of trying something new, and to cling to familiar projects on topics they had encountered before. This period of discomfort varied in intensity and duration. Apprehension in the children tended to be short-lived; their response to such internal conflict was to talk openly about their worries, to spontaneously reframe parts of the assignment to suit their needs, then to fully engage. Adult responses included both overriding and addressing their disquiet, producing a range of engagements from apparent detachment to deep involvement. Although none of the children were at any time content with emotional detachment from their project as a solution to discomfort, some adults maintained a distance throughout.

There were students in both groups who were primarily concerned with grades. With adult students, a rubric was provided in response to the early request. With the children, only a few expressed concern with marks and assessment, although those who appeared less sure of themselves in asking their own questions were also those most focused on evaluation. It seemed that the children, more readily than the adult learners, took an active role in the questioning process by following their own curiosity, resulting in their tendency to become increasingly self-directed in their own learning throughout the course of the project. While there may be many reasons for this, our observations have caused us to question this correlation and its possible influences more deeply.

Research by Lindfors into the socialization of children and its role in questioning echoes our experiences. Her study demonstrates that pre-school/kindergarten children ask questions that are approximately 45% social and 33% curious in nature, and less than a quarter procedural; however, by the time they finish the primary grades, this has been reduced to 14% social and 19% curiosity questions, with 66% becoming procedural. At the intermediate level, 16% are social, 16% remain curiosity questions, and by now 68% are procedural questions (Lindfors, 1987, p. 288). This suggests that greater exposure to the schooling process results in an increase in adherence to procedural concerns, and a devaluing of the importance of one's own curiosity within the educational environment. This cultural pattern may offer insight into why some children and many pre-service teachers had difficulty beginning with their own stories and questions. This research insight reverberates throughout all levels of inquiry, from child to adult learner, and with teacher/researchers in both elementary and university settings.

It may help to illuminate this question by taking a hermeneutic turn to examine child-rearing practices in Western culture. Miller (1991) draws evidence from daily life that reveals the suffering, confusion, and fear often experienced by children under ordinary circumstances. She claims that avoidance of recognition of these childhood experiences is one reason why suffering remains with adults. This is borne out in both John's and Sam's stories, where cultural responses of segregation and isolation rather than acceptance and compassion prevailed in their childhood struggles, carrying entrenched pain into adulthood. Indeed, a professional legacy has sustained the conventional thought that schools are unwelcome places for the personal or the social, for emotions or curiosity.

It would seem that adult and child learners face similar obstacles to their full engagement in the process of finding questions within themselves. However, our observations resonated with Lindfors' and Miller's findings that these challenges seemed more difficult to overcome by the adults than by the children; the taken-for-granted assumptions introduced by socialization into the dominant culture seemed to have become more deeply rooted with time. Further, we began to question the implications of this insight for our engagement as adult teacher/researchers in the research process.

Conclusion

Through the course of this inquiry, it has become clear that using questioning as a research and pedagogical tool requires considerable patience and vulnerability on the part of the teacher/researcher: requiring teacher to become learner, leading us to refine our understanding of the role of questioning in our own teaching and learning practices. In the process of engagement in this research, we often spoke of our own sense of discomfort and uncertainty as we grappled our way in unexplored territory. While we came to rely on this feeling as an indicator of important areas to investigate further, the inclusion of uncertainty as a research and teaching tool is absent from most methodologies. "Traditional" approaches require teachers always to be experts, and the researcher always to be certain in the methodology (Gadamer, 1960).

The problem with this approach, as Weinsheimer (1985) has pointed out, is that there is no method for stumbling. While we believe that all forms of research have their place and value, to be engaged in a hermeneutic inquiry means letting go of an established role and calls for re-interpretation. As the poet MacEwan (1969) writes, “the moment when it seems most plain is the moment when we must begin again.” This is where stumbling starts. Choosing to share personal stories from our own experiences, as both models and examples, requires considering what to share and what not to share, and why, with both elementary school students and pre-service students. Further delving revealed that this particular question lay within the realm of a more general area of difficulty—the line drawn between private and public. It became clear, through our research inquiry, that delving into private narrative fragments offered a place to begin to think about change in the broader public realm, although this was not always easy.

With her elementary students, Susan often tells stories of her childhood, giving examples of her fears and struggles, offering books, ideas, and questions that captivated her heart and mind. Her students know, too, that she is a mother, and place great trust in her judgment of their emotional and physical well-being. Even in legal terms, school teachers in Ontario are charged with the responsibility to act “*in loci parentis*,” as stand-in parents, expected to make decisions as a reasonable parent would under the same circumstances. Yet it is clear that a line divides the personal from the professional, beyond which a teacher must not go.

With pre-service teachers, Karyn spoke of her teaching with passion, a personal investment, of how her decision to take a sabbatical from teaching resided in her inability to disconnect from the personal hurt at the awareness that in almost every class she taught there would be children who are abused in some way, and a cynicism from feeling personally powerless as “only” a teacher who wanted to protect the children she cared for. These private/public moments let students see the inherent irony that teachers are held professionally accountable for personally based decisions, yet the personal has little place in the political power structures which set policy.

Also questioned was the role of teachers as instruments of indoctrination. It became even more important to us not to tell our students what to think, but rather to introduce questioning as a tool for challenging their own and society’s belief systems, and in this way to locate and justify their actions. While it is important to honor all questions, no matter whose interpretational gaze is dominant, this is not without its own set of dilemmas. When students question openly, the results are unpredictable; their beliefs will sometimes fundamentally oppose ours. In response, then, we need to deepen our understanding through embodied awareness, rather than simply trying to counter their arguments. This moves from a primarily cognitive response to a response which includes the aesthetic.

Hegel (1993) was responsible for the hermeneutic turn to the original meaning of the word “aesthetic” as the science of sensation or feeling. Gendlin (1978) coined the expression “felt sense” to describe embodied knowing; there has since been increasing attention paid to the aesthetic mode of awareness (Berman, 1990; Levin, 1985; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991). Gadamer’s (1960) work in relation to

aesthetics and hermeneutic inquiry emphasizes patterns of relationship between what is variously called reason and sense, matter and form, the universal and the particular.

Within this tradition, we introduce the concept of “aesthetic dissonance” to articulate the essential discomfort that propels effective questioning. Cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1962) refers to disequilibrium in the rational realm; aesthetic dissonance refers to disequilibrium in the felt realm. They complement rather than oppose one another and place sense and reason on an equal footing.

The process of aesthetic dissonance creates a place for the felt sense of discomfort and uncertainty, which may work toward the reconciliation of the theoretical binary of epistemological and ontological knowing. Questioning as a critical pedagogical tool may help resolve the practical dichotomy of the professional rational/technical goals of teaching and the personal social/emotional reality of the classroom. Understanding aesthetic dissonance as key to the development of effective questioning allows practitioners to move beyond these theoretical and practical binaries into responsive practice which supports diverse perspectives and multiple ways of knowing and being.

Questions

1. Do you think it possible for teacher/researchers to remain neutral when engaging in research?
2. What are some strategies that can be used to distinguish private from public stories?
3. On what occasions, and for what purposes, do you foresee using questioning as a research/teaching strategy?
4. Can you think of any ethical issues involved in using questioning as a pedagogical/research tool?

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Who's Afraid of Virginia's Daughters?

Writing, Research, and Relations

ERIKA HASEBE-LUDT

There must be another life, here and now, she repeated. This is too short, too broken. We know nothing, even about ourselves. We're only just beginning, she thought, to understand, here and there.

(Virginia Woolf, 1937, *The Years*)

If we get rid of traditional notions of “objectivity” and “scientific method” we shall be able to see the social sciences as continuous with literature—as interpreting other people to us, and thus enlarging and deepening our sense of community.

(Ernesto Laclau, 1991, *Community and its Paradoxes*)

Interpreting Lives

It is a question of the community we are reaching for in our work and on which we can draw; whom we envision as our hearers, our co-creators, our challengers; who will urge us to take our work further, more seriously, than we had dared; on whose work we can build.

(Adrienne Rich, 1979, *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose*)

In my work in teacher education, literacy, and curriculum, I focus on interpretive inquiry as a way to interpret lives, particularly on the role of language(s) in this field. I am interested in investigating questions about the place of life writing and other autobiographical texts in different educational settings, and I collaborate with students and colleagues to become ever more aware of “what goes on in language” (Aoki, 1995) in dialogues between students and educators. As a teacher educator, my writing and researching have been shaped by my experiences inside and outside of classrooms—in the public school system, in the university, and in other communities. When dialoguing with students and colleagues, in the interconnected realms of the pedagogical and the personal, I encourage students to write about what matters to them, in their everyday lived curriculum and in their theorizing. I aim at creating and maintaining dialogues among different individuals and communities. I am committed to hearing the voices of those who have been disenfranchised in the past and who are still silenced in the present. As

an educator I have a serious obligation to foster language that expresses a commitment to building inclusive, respectful, and ethical relations between human beings in the context of “research that matters” (Chambers, 2004).

What does this language sound like and how can it be articulated? What are the components that make up the kind of texts educators can embrace as moving toward an embodied pedagogy, a “curriculum of being” (Berman et al., 1991)? How can schools and universities teach “the arts of understanding other people’s lives and minds . . . explore the ways in which mind and body can be made to co-operate; discover what new combinations make good wholes in human life” (Woolf, 1938, p. 62)? Madeline Grumet (1988), in her essay “Bodyreading,” dwells on Paul Ricoeur’s notion of text as being about both sense and reference, about what we know and how we live:

Ricoeur maintains that language is not a world of its own. It is not even a world. But because we are in the world, because we are affected by situations, and because we orient ourselves comprehensively in those situations, we have something to say, we have experience to bring to language.

(p. 454)

Ursula Le Guin (1989), situating herself among her feminist literary relations, reminds me that the texts of women writers in particular have often been “dismissed with the usual list of patronizing adjectives reserved for women who write as women, not imitation men,” rather than being recognized and celebrated as genuine expressions of lived experience (p. 230). Denny Taylor (1994) comments on issues of authentic language in educational research, emphasizing the need for the kind of literacy research

that could provide us with new understandings and significant insights into the ways in which personal understandings and significant insights are socially, culturally, economically, and politically constructed, and also individually situated in the practical accomplishments of people’s everyday lives. . . . Consider the studies that could be conducted of the ways in which literate practices make visible the power relationships between men and women.

(p. 279)

The importance of *where in the world* language and literacy interactions take place, and the way these display power relationships, is what I have been asking my students to pay attention to in connection with their experiences in educational settings. And I have been trying to model this kind of attending through my own writing, both individually and collaboratively (Chambers, Donald, & Hasebe-Ludt, 2002; Hasebe-Ludt, 2004; Hasebe-Ludt & Hurren, 2003).

As wo/men working, living, and writing with/in the discourses of the academic world, we are participating in complex interpretive events of researching, teaching, and writing for the purpose of making sense of the words and the world around us, for ourselves and for our students, for those we care about. David Smith (1994)

refers to “the inherent creativity of interpretation, the pivotal role of language in human understanding, and the interplay of part and whole in the process of interpretation” as *the hermeneutic circle* (p. 104). Jürgen Habermas (1990) links this hermeneutic task with communicating and living well with others so that human beings can create vibrant and vital relational networks.

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1986a; Misgeld & Nicholson, 1992) sees language as the horizon of a hermeneutically conceived ontology, a way of being wherein an individual’s language experience provides a way to gain insight into the wider human language community. Gadamer, based on Humboldt’s work, views “Sprachansicht als Weltansicht”—meaning that the language perspective one embodies also constitutes one’s world perspective. In this lies the potential, when learning new languages, other people’s languages, that one can also expand one’s own view of the world to become more inclusive and informed by others, to enter into a dialogue about *other worlds*. Gadamer (1986b) called these dialogues “unendlich,” never-ending or infinite: in the conversations between us, we may find possibilities for renewal and innovation through the creative turns we craft. Building on each other’s experiences, we construct *propositional composite intertexts* (Gunderson, 1997) that inform us about the lived realities in the specific settings we live and teach in. The notion of intertextuality, based on Bakhtin’s work, recognizes that “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of *intertextuality* replaces that of inter-subjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least *double*” (Kristeva, 1980, p. 66).

Intertextuality is a notion that holds much potential for re-defining my own and my students’ work with language, with texts. It is an inclusive concept that, in Roland Barthes’ words, allows us to think of culture as made up of a great web of *unlimited semiosis*, of texts that are woven with quotations, references, and echoes. These are cultural languages “that traverse the text from one end to another in a vast stereophony” (Barthes, quoted in apRoberts, 1986, p. 8). Intertextuality is derived from the Latin *con(m)/inter*, meaning not only *among/between* but also *together, one with the other*; it explores the *context* (derived from the Latin *contextus* and its root of *texere*, weave), considers what comes before and after the text, what influences the meaning of the words, what weaves texts together and creates new meanings (Barber, 1998). Re-reading and reflecting on the hermeneutic question of “What is going in (the writing of) these texts?” (Chambers, Oberg, Dodd, & Moore, 1993) therefore becomes a necessary part of research. Attending to the complex connections between gender, culture, pedagogy, and place, drawing from multiple textual influences, lived experience in the form of one’s own stories becomes a relational intertextual act.

The Company She Keeps

There is no going alone on a journey. Whether one explores strange lands or Main Street or one’s own backyard, always invisible traveling companions are close by.

(Lillian Smith, 1954, *The Journey*)

The experience of writing a dissertation that reached across the boundaries of established fields, working with notion, of interdisciplinarity and intertextuality, braiding languages (English and my own and others' mother tongues), literacy and curriculum theory, philosophy, and cultural geography, has both heightened and deepened my sense of the pivotal role of language in researching. When investigating notions of community and identity in a culturally mixed urban community school classroom, I looked at how I was becoming literate as a teacher in relation to children who were becoming literate in their first and second or other languages.

Finding myself at the end of the long journey of graduate work, at the moment of completing my dissertation and "defending" it in front of my examining committee, I had, on the insistence of my supervisor and my committee, tried to summarize the important *findings* resulting from my research. These words keep ringing in my ears: *I read your thesis for the third time, and I still wonder: What did she find?*

Uncomfortable with the expectation of putting down in a definitive language what I "found," I came to reflect on the journey I had embarked on with this thesis, a wondrous, exhilarating path of writing, of re-discovering and re-writing old and new texts, my own and others', re-connecting with themes that mattered then and now, and rejoicing in Erin Mouré's words:

inter-text. Using and repeating my own and others' earlier texts. Pulling the old poems thru the new, making the old lines a thread through the eyes of the words I am sewing. Sound & sense. The eeriness.

(Mouré, 1988, p. 85)

The words I am sewing, the notes I am displaying in this *new key*, journalizing, journeying toward a research that makes sense, that has my name written in front and in between the lines. At the same time celebrating the pedagogical and personal relations with others whose lives and stories have informed me, have challenged me to become a better teacher and a more considerate, thoughtful person through the dialogic dimension of coming to know others. With this thesis, in an intertextual fashion, I have sewn the tapestry of my own being, as a teacher, as a scholar, and as a person. I have woven the *textus* of who I am and what I care about within an ontological and curricular framework, and I have come to build a bridge between the *I* and the *we* through relating to others, belonging together in moments of authentic dwelling. Yet: How does this answer the epistemological question of *What do I know?* What *did* I find?

(Research journal, October 25, 1995)

I remember the breath-taking and often breath-less process of conceptualizing this thesis, writing, and re-writing *curriculum in a new key* in the Aokian understanding of curriculum as a lived/living text (Pinar & Irwin, 2005), gradually recognizing the power of stories and the importance of the voices of people

engaged in learning and teaching—the children, their families, and their teachers. I remember the challenging questions from members of my thesis committee, the *unending dialogues* that have pushed me further along the path of inquiry to seek further understanding through language within the hermeneutic circle:

Like Eleanor, the female character in Virginia Woolf's *The Years*, I felt myself standing on the edge of a precipice, looking toward new and unknown territories of writing, feeling both exhilarated and terrified. Like Eleanor and Virginia, I wanted this experience to lead to a better and brighter world of understanding. I felt inspired by my committee's and my colleagues' encouragement and celebration of the stories written. For a few days after the thesis' oral examination, still hearing those dialogues in my head, I felt affirmed to continue on this path of hermeneutic inquiry.

But then something happened that forced me to re-examine my researching and writing in this new key. The chair of my examining committee, in an unofficial note to my supervisor, criticized the narratives about my lived experience, especially those referring to my relationship with my daughter, as irrelevant and intrusive. He called the autobiographical writing that went beyond the standard academic discourse "trivial." Referred to in the third person, with personal pronouns sounding impersonal and pejorative, I started to doubt even the genuine voices of support from my committee members, colleagues, and friends, and I began to re-examine my work with a critical eye/I. How valid was this criticism of what I had written? How were the autobiographical portions of my thesis not informing my readers about the way my notions of *currere* had evolved (Pinar, 1988b)? Was this research that mattered—or not?

I linger in the space of re-searching, remembering Ted Aoki's words (personal communication, October, 1994):

A thesis that is not a thesis.
A dissertation that is not a dissertation.
It is and it is not.

I know that what I have written does constitute a thesis, a *magnum opus*, as one of my committee members called it, an intertext that received many enthusiastic comments. At the same time, it is not *only* a thesis: it is so much more. It is a love story about teaching, about learning, and about relating to others about what matters.

I handed in my *magnum intertext* to the library today, one week after the defense, and I feel a tremendously joyful sense of accomplishment, finally, after all the emotional trials of this week in wake of the patronizing, insulting note that once again had brought out the bitterness in between the sweetness of this love story about teaching and writing and the pain that comes with trying to turn a new key.

(Research journal, October 1, 1995)

I know now that there are no perfect answers to my questions, but I keep asking them and living them (Hasebe-Ludt, 2003). I know this experience has left me with

an increased sense of the responsibility about writing in a new key. How can I make more room for it in the academy? What does it really need to say to the diverse audiences of students, teachers, colleagues, others? Where do I want to go next with my own writing and my writing work with students and colleagues? When thinking about these pedagogical questions, I join Ted Aoki in remembering that the roots of the word “pedagogy” have evolved from the etymology of the Greek word for *leadership*. And I re-think the question he asked: “Who does a leader follow?” (T. Aoki, personal communication, July 1995).

The company she keeps . . . I think back to writing a master’s thesis on Mary McCarthy’s stories about women and their relationships and how the voices of the established male critics of the literary elite condemned and trivialized her writing as that of a woman whose subject voice does not count among the ranks of the male literary establishment.

(Research journal, October 12, 1995)

The eeriness of re-connecting with my old texts, the words I was writing and speaking in a different cultural place and space, in Berlin, in a different language, in the interdisciplinary context of another thesis in Women’s Studies. I linger in the strangely formal-sounding voice of my “then” writing, re-reading in German words that stretched subject matters from a feminist point of view yet still adhered to the impersonal language of academic discourse; I realize now that the words left out so much of the stories of the women writers and of my own story, did not tell from the heart the truths about the place of women writers in the company of others. And I am aware of how my “now” writing has changed to include the personal *and* the other that matter (Hasebe-Ludt, Chambers, Oberg, & Leggo, 2008; Sampson, 1993). On this journey, I have found many more connections between my own propositional intertext of research and that of other writers and researchers writing narratives that are both autobiographical and dialogical. David Smith (1995) reflects on the notion of journeying as a way to re-connect with the human condition, a way to re-align ourselves with what we left behind when going out into the world: we go on a journey in order to come home, eventually, in a better, healthier way. So with this dissertation I was able to re-connect with my old texts, after all, going back and finding a new way of academic research through interpretive inquiry.

A friend and former colleague whom I hadn’t seen for a few years came to my dissertation defense. We had worked together prior to my becoming a teacher, as researchers on a linguistic survey project. In the busy and hectic pace of our lives, we had not had many chances to talk since that time. My work in education and my life as a teacher were very different from the work we had done together, eliciting and transcribing speech samples from participants and filling out questionnaires. Therefore I was surprised by her eagerness to come to this event, even though many years ago she had been a language teacher herself, and I wondered whether she would

be able to relate to my current work, particularly since she hadn't read the dissertation.

After the defense she told me that she was deeply touched by my presentation and by the way I expressed my beliefs about teaching and learning when queried by the committee. Standing there in front of me, she was on the verge of crying, saying that she was glad to be here, that she was inspired by what she heard me say about teaching and that she felt proud to know me. And she told me how, while she was sitting in the audience, she figured out that I was born exactly nine months after the day she was married—and that, while she was listening to me speak about my life and work, and my writing about my relationship with my daughter, she realized that I was the kind of daughter she had always wished for. She *is* the mother of three beautiful daughters and granddaughters of her own, and I feel honored to have become part of this company of women through today's events.

I am writing this journal entry just a few days after my own daughter's birthday; she turned 15 this week, and I feel the heartstrings and the deep sense of community between my friend, myself, and our daughters as women and as human beings connecting through the generations—kindred spirits, illuminating the rhizomean shoots of our stories and journeying in this world.

(Research journal, October 6, 1995)

Restor(y)ing Ourselves to the World

It is good to have an end to journey towards, but it is the journey that matters in the end.

(Ursula Le Guin, 1989, *Dancing on the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places*)

Hannah Arendt reminds me that education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and, by the same token, save it from the ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable. Education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices (Arendt, 1958). As leaders of the young we have the power to re-create and re-shape a community that is in danger of being lost for so many of us, of our students. With this comes the responsibility to lead well, to heed Lyotard's (1991) warnings about the terrors and restraints inherent in education and, ultimately, to reconsider the options we have at our disposal for changing the remains of those terrors. Leaders—and followers, for that matter—are often still defined by culture-specific norms, along the lines of gender, race, and socio-economic status. The field of pedagogy is no exception, and many of the connections with the stories of our past need to be realigned, many of our past histories need to be re-examined, individually and collectively, to give more meaningful messages to present and future generations of students.

Women writers and researchers, along with enlightened male colleagues, are indeed interpreting their own lives and those of other people to us in new heartful ways of researching, of writing and relating (Chambers, 2004; Leggo, 2003). Yet much more needs to be written, and read, in and about this new turn in thinking and writing and reading. Pushing further, thinking harder, feeling stronger, beyond the status quo of traditional and reactionary notions of research, we may discover new territories in new words and worlds, without the terrors, with integrity and conscientiousness:

Even though human understanding begins and ends with interpretations, what remains unending according to Gadamer is dialogue that replaces these and other projects that aim to overcome the finitude of human understanding. . . . Unending dialogue (*die Unendlichkeit des Gesprächs*) remains marked by finitude inasmuch as it requires of one who would participate both integrity (*Redlichkeit*) and conscientiousness (*Gewissenhaftigkeit*). As Gadamer tells as well as shows us, integrity entails “acknowledging the commitment involved in all understanding” and conscientiousness involves becoming historically conscious and critically aware of one’s own hermeneutical situation.

(Wright, 1990, pp. 1–2)

In the current backlash of forgetfulness about the past, of violence, sexism, and materialism that is part of globalization (Smith, 2006), this is an urgent call. It is a call to construct counter-narratives to the marginalization and silencing that persist in schools and in the academy (Berthie-Holthe, 2003; Chambers, 2004). The commitment to hearing others and understanding other points of view involves courage, and a willingness to open closed doors. It requires a doubling of the imagination, a multiple reading of texts, articulating them as complex, chiasmatic, and complicated. This is Derrida’s notion of a “double invagination chiasmaticque des bords” (Bennington & Derrida, 1991, p. 210), Pinar’s “complicated conversations” (Pinar, 2000), Chambers’ “path with heart” (Chambers, 2004). It requires putting into action the principles and values of Aoki’s “curriculum in a new key” (Pinar & Irwin, 2005) that speaks with integrity and conscientiousness against discrimination based on gender, race, class, and other imposed societal conditioning.

As Hannah Arendt reminded Mary McCarthy in one of their many transcontinental conversations: a life of the mind divorced from a love of the world is not worth living (Brightman, 1992). Arendt’s *amor mundis* incorporates thinking for the purpose of further understanding: through multiple readings of texts, through open questioning of our being in this world we can ultimately enlarge and deepen our sense of community and reconstruct the world in new ways, to be at home in a more creative way, yet mindful of the past, always affected by the remains of the texts we have come to cherish and to fear. Constance Rooke, referring to her friendship with the poet and writer P. K. Page, says: “In reading deeply, we open the

pores of the self to the other, taking on or perhaps discovering in oneself that other sensibility” (Rooke, 1996, p. 145).

The work that remains to be done is to see in a new light buried treasures and tragedies that let us not forget the “scandals of an epoch” (Cixous, 1991). The tools, methods, and motions we use to examine past and present lives cannot be harmful and hard, but they need to be strong and sensitive at the same time, allowing the multi-directional back-and-forth of an intertextual perspective. The notion of deep reading and understanding has transformed, in the post-structural world, into a *chiasmatic* textuality, where strands or braids of texts cross over and touch each other. Materials and matters are in a fluid exchange, embrace opposite and diverse directions. Therefore, when it comes to re-searching, we need to ask not only “how” and “what” and “where” and “why”—but also, even more persistently: “why not?”

So I remember the pivotal role of language throughout my journeys in researching and interpreting pedagogical communities. I remember the gift brought to humans in the form of language by Hermes, the messenger of the gods believing in the inherent giftedness of all human beings (Sparks, 1993). Like Hannah Arendt (1968), I continue to seek dialogues with women and men to move out of dark times. Like Renee Norman (Norman, 2001), I carry on the legacy of the mothers communicating with their daughters, continuing to write wildly, dangerously, irreverently, furiously, seriously, passionately. Like Virginia Woolf (1937), I want writing to help heal broken lives. I want to do my part as a teacher of literacy and language helping teachers and their students to speak and write truthfully, to speak of the scandals and to engage in truth-telling while living and teaching “in a season of great untruth” (Smith, 2005).

The very soul of hermeneutics lies in realizing that no matter how important and powerful one’s own insights and autobiographical acts may be, ultimately they must be informed and enriched by those of others whom we care about. My hope is that together we can grasp in a new way what so often has evaded us in the past: the possibility of pedagogical dialogues resonating with heart-felt words and ways that are partial truths at the same time as they are, in Virginia Woolf’s words (1937), *whole, bright, deep with understanding*—deepening our sense of community, making our world more whole. As literacy researchers and practitioners in the public realm, we have the power to transform others’ lives and to restore and restory ourselves to the world (Chambers, Donald, Hasebe-Ludt, & Leggo, 2005). Telling our stories and listening to those of others constitutes a political and cultural act toward inclusiveness and equity, against injustice (Davidson, Walton, & Andrews, 2003). And so I continue to write personally out of a moral responsibility to transform “the malaise and misery in the world” (Freire, 1998) into public and personal freedom, without fear, with all my relations.

Questions

1. After reading this chapter, can you begin to answer the three questions Hasebe-Ludt poses on page 218?
2. Do you agree that the call to “construct counter-narratives to the marginalization and silencing that persist in schools and in the academy” is urgent?
3. How does Hasebe-Ludt think life and autobiographical writing contribute to education and dialogues between educators and students?
4. The author refers to the intertextuality of text. In what ways is this chapter intertextual? Who are some of the intertextual voices she recalls?

About the Author

Erika Hasebe-Ludt teaches and researches in the areas of teacher education, language and literacy education, and curriculum in the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. Her background is in interdisciplinary studies in linguistics, literature, and culture, with degrees from the Freie Universität Berlin and the University of British Columbia. She has taught in multi-age classrooms in Vancouver, Canada, and in international teacher education at Simon Fraser University. Her current research focuses on local and global literacies and discourses of teaching in between languages and cultures in transnational and transcultural contexts. She is interested in how teachers and students negotiate their work/life through writing as a way of living truthfully and in a complex cosmopolitan world. Her work has been published in various national and international journals and books. With Wanda Hurren, she is co-editor of *Curriculum Intertext: Place/Language/Pedagogy* (2003, Peter Lang).

In her chapter “Who’s Afraid of Virginia’s Daughters? Writing, Research, and Relations,” she explores interpretive inquiry and autobiographical writing as a way to understand the intertextual role of language(s) in education and related fields. She investigates questions about the place of life writing and other autobiographical texts in educational settings, in public school classrooms and in the academy. Her interest when writing in a hermeneutical interpretive framework is to advocate writing that is dialogical and inclusive, heart-felt and ethical—writing that opens up possibilities of “restor(y)ing us to the world.”

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Teaching and Learning Qualitative Research

Educational Space as a Fluid

LYUBOV LAROCHE AND WOLFF-MICHAEL ROTH

Prelude

How interesting. The moment when something is about to begin is so intriguing. Here and there is a shimmering sea of superimposed multiple potentialities. The realm of the possible is seemingly chaotic and formless, yet it is filled with patterns of meaning, various patterns that are juxtaposed and meshed into a protobiotic mixture. The challenge is to identify a pattern, then this pattern takes on a life of its own, gradually emerging from obscurity, out of the background, dragging behind itself yet other patterns. The chain of these patterns is not necessarily linear. Connections and relations can break and shift, so the patterns can be manipulated and rearranged into this story or that. *This* story never was, yet always existed; it existed everywhere and nowhere, in potentiality, in a virtual form; it waited to be recognized and actualized into words.

We noticed something like a beginning of a story at the moment when one of the authors of this chapter, Michael Roth, who was the instructor of the *Interpretive Inquiry* graduate course, invited postdoctoral researcher Lyubov Laroche to step into his class in the role of a participant observer. From the very beginning, our story somehow curved itself in spacetime, bending all of the linear layers and planes, allowing *this* moment to meet *that* moment and superimposing *the distant* with *the close*. The metaphorical space that makes such superimposing possible is fluid (Serres, 1998). Our story, which is written unconventionally, describes unorthodox ways to teach, learn, and understand how to do qualitative research. We conceptualize educational space as fluid and we write out of a space of fluidity, where extremes such as poetry and academic style, teachers' stories and learners' stories, are swirled into a collective spiral of meaning with infinite connections. The concept of fluidity has emerged from our attempts to identify and describe unorthodox features of *Interpretive Inquiry*. What made this qualitative research methods course unconventional and what can we make out of its unconventionality?

Analyzing our data, we identified patterns such as "participation," "change," the "extension of learning into space and time beyond the class," "formation of new research cultures," and "blurred boundaries." These patterns guided us to the metaphor "fluid educational space." The physicist Werner Heisenberg once stated

that the way we see and construct our worlds depends on the instrument of our investigation. Using a “fluidity” metaphor as the instrument for further examinations of our data, we identified more patterns for conceptualizing a fluid space of learning. Thus, the process of our explorations fluctuated hermeneutically, from patterns to the central metaphor and then to more patterns. These patterns emerged out of transcribed class discussions, our documented observations, and out of students’ narratives, which in turn emerged out of patterns of meanings from their research, experiences, and backgrounds. Our story therefore comprises patterns within patterns, above, below, inside, outside, an intricately patterned design within an ongoing flow. As a leitmotif throughout our story, we quoted French philosopher Michel Serres, who proposed to think of time in terms of the flight trajectory of a fly, full of folds, zigzags, and millions of connections, and who initiated explorations of epistemology of a fluid space. We perceive our manuscript as a contribution to these explorations, and this is where we begin: from discussing a metaphorical realm called “fluidity.”

Poetics and Epistemology of a Fluid Space

[K]nowledge is never cut up into crystalline continents, strongly defined solids, but is like a group of the oceans, viscous and always churning: ten hot or cold currents traverse them and produce gigantic maelstroms. No history of science or history in general, no instruction is possible, no transformation is without this fluid whirlpool.

(Serres, 2000, p. 56)

Fluids. What an enigma. Elusive, viscous, enveloping. Eternal wanderers, they tend to flow, seduced by gradients, imperfections, and freedom. Their flow can be calmly laminar or madly turbulent. Out of the madness of fluid turbulence, vortices and whirlpools are born. Unique, yet inseparable from the totality of a flowing substance, these vortices and whirlpools are islands of temporary structures, tiny fleeting permanences within an ongoing flow.

Fluidity. Metaphor for elasticity, mixing, shifting, play, change, becoming. We can never step twice in the same water in a running river; every moment is new and fresh. Fluidity as a metaphorical space assumes shifts from static to dynamic, from abstractions to concrete contexts. “Knowledge is never cut up into crystalline continents or strongly defined solids, but is like a group of the oceans, viscous and always churning” (Serres, 2000, p 56). Without fluid turbulence, flight is impossible. Without participating in the flowing stream of collective knowing, we are unable to invent and construct wings. Within a fluid realm, the individual is no longer a fragmented unit, but the unique expression of totality, a vortex inseparable from flowing collectivity.

Mol and Law (1994) use a fluid metaphor to look at the social construction of our understanding of anemia. They distinguish between and connect three social spaces: fragmented solid clusters, rigid relational networks, and spaces of fluidity.

The “social” does not exist as a single spatial type. Rather, it performs several kind of spaces in which different “operations” take place. First, there are regions in which objects are clustered together and boundaries are drawn around each cluster. Second, there are networks in which distance is a function of relations between the elements and difference a matter of relational variety. These are the two topologies with which social theory is familiar. The first is old and secure, while the second, being newer, is still proud of its ability to cross boundaries. However, there are other kinds of space too. Sometimes, we suggest, neither boundaries nor relations mark the difference between one place and another. Instead, sometimes, boundaries come and go, allow leakage, or disappear altogether, while relations transform themselves without fracture. Sometimes, then, social space behaves like *a fluid* (p. 643).

Fluidity is a useful concept for theorizing the topology of our sociomaterial world (Boyer, Roth, & Lee, 2003). In this chapter, we explore the benefits of a fluid metaphor for designing and researching new, unorthodox learning environments. There are conventional clustered spaces of learning in the form of memorized facts, teacher-centered instruction, prescribed outcomes, standardized tests, individual achievements, isolated subjects, and classrooms dissected from the rest of the world. There are newer educational environments, designed through utilization of interdisciplinary and constructivist approaches to learning. Such environments are learner-centered; they move from plain memorization toward hands-on, minds-on, problem-based, or project-oriented learning. Network environments acknowledge and employ interconnections and interrelations between individual students and all other actors coming into play when learning occurs. Nevertheless, they still are static, rigid, and they are largely concerned with *individual* learning outcomes. Such environments are designed to cross the boundaries between the teacher and the learner, between different disciplines, and between the individual and the collective. By crossing boundaries, however, they honor and maintain the very existence of these boundaries.

Fluid spaces enable the dissolving and mixing of clusters and networks. Fluidity blurs all kind of boundaries and generates transformations without discontinuities. From our perspective, the fluid metaphor helps to articulate new educational environments as active and interactive collectivities, where collectivities are not uniform monadic entities, but cultural forms emerging from the constructive interference of individual and collective. In physics, constructive interference means mutual enhancement of two or more superimposed waves. Applying this metaphor to the human realm, this means superimposition and reciprocal enrichment of the individual and the collective through changing participation in an ever-changing world.

We believe that the *Interpretive Inquiry* course operated within a fluid learning environment, where beginning graduate students conducted their research by collective participation in research. Their participation involved immersion into a common research theme, which in turn was immersed into the turbulences of real-life issues in the community. Learning occurred through shared experimenting, experiencing, making connections, and openness to transformations. An

educational environment conceived as a fluid blurs and shifts distinctions between the classroom and the rest of the world, between theory and praxis, between the observed and the observer, between teaching and learning, and between individual and collective. Out of the fluctuations of shared journeys into the unknown, rhythms and patterns of ideas and relationships emerged.

Rhythms and Patterns of Fluid Learning Space: Interpretive Inquiry Graduate Class

Learning by doing is really another way of knowing.

(Interpretive Inquiry student)

What we produced together exceeds what we could have done individually.

(Interpretive Inquiry student)

The flowing flux turns through rhythm, and what falls, comes back in cadence.

(Serres, 1998, p. 39)

Immersion into the Depths of the Research Topic: The Water Controversy

The issue for the *Interpretive Inquiry* collective research was not some abstract topic, but a long-term, ongoing, unresolved controversy occurring in real-life settings. This controversy, represented extensively by the local media, involved a small West Coast community, a rural zone with restricted further development. Residents supply their water from wells that draw on local aquifers. Some homes have good quality of water in their wells; the water of others is chemically and biologically contaminated. During the driest period of the year, the quantity of water in the wells of the unfortunate residents is insufficient and the quality is poor enough to corrode household equipment, including dishwashers and hot water tanks.

Residents requested municipal water from the local government; however, their requests were repeatedly rejected. The local government hired scientists to test the water. According to scientific reports, the water is safe to drink, but has “aesthetic” problems. To deal with their pressing water problems, affected residents organized their own committee, so as to make recommendations to local government. This committee decided to hire its own consulting firm to test the quality of their water, but reports from this firm have not produced a uniform conclusion. The committee of residents was split into a majority, who were against a water main extension (these residents have good water in their wells), and a minority, who have bad water and, consequently, desire access to a municipal source. The municipal government refuses a water main extension, reasoning that residents of this affluent community want this extension to increase the value of their properties through the further development, prohibited by the current zoning.

The controversy was carried into a public meeting. After this meeting, local government decided to close the issue since there were no serious health concerns.

Residents were advised to depend on their individual water supply. The issue was closed, but the problems remained. The controversy has not yet been resolved. Who is wrong and who is right? Which side to take? What decision to make?

Michael provided his *Interpretive Inquiry* class with an extensive database from his longitudinal ethnographic study of science and scientific literacy in the local community. This database included the transcript of a public meeting related to the water issue, extensive field notes, publications produced by activists, videotapes of public events, audio-tape interviews, newspaper clippings, and inscriptions from the region that relate to the issues of water and watershed management. The course assignment was to (a) engage in interpretive analysis related to the research topics, on the grounds of a reflexive hermeneutic phenomenology; (b) do relevant background reading; (c) extend the data set through self-research, including interviews with the parties involved in the controversy; (d) draw conclusions; and (e) provide recommendations for solving the problem.

Michael taught *Interpretive Inquiry* around the water controversy for two successive summers, with different time frames for each course. Due to this difference, the final goals of each course were different. In addition to the layers of assignment described above, the course that had been offered for a longer period had a more complex task. The students were invited to write a collective academic article as a final class outcome. This article, entitled “Those who get hurt aren’t always being heard: scientist–resident interactions over community water” (Roth et al., 2004), was available to the students in the second, shorter course. The goal of the shorter course was to share research journeys during class discussions and through internet posting, without any pressure to reach consensus. Students had a choice of working individually or in pairs.

Even though the assignment was structured around a common research theme, it was open-ended. The students were free to choose a research question, theoretical framework, method, and ways to present results from their inquiries. The shared journey into learning how to do research began from immersion into the extensive database and from sharing interpretations. This is how one student describes the beginning of the research:

We began by reading and interpreting the materials individually and subsequently met to discuss our analyses as a group. The written analyses were shared through a website. We refined our interpretations in subsequent discussions and by taking into account new developments of the issues, as these played themselves out of the local newspapers while we conducted this analysis.

Becoming Absorbed: Research as a Lived Experience

Initially, the students were somewhat bewildered and bedazzled by the fact that Michael required them to analyze given data rather than allowing them, as did other professors teaching in the program, to write on whatever topic they wanted. These ambivalent feelings are evident from the following student passage:

When I first received the data set, I immediately felt the content was:

- a. foreign to me
- b. not interesting at all
- c. totally outside of my own experience and therefore impossible for me to grasp
- d. perplexing in its applicability of qualitative research.

Now . . . I have these views on the data set and the “topic”:

- a. highly engaging
- b. a topic of great complexity, considering the stakeholders, their personalities and the “issue”
- c. a global issue, a human issue, and an issue perhaps ahead of its time
- d. a worthy issue, especially when applying the structures associated with qualitative research.

What had happened between these two extreme perceptions of the research topic? The students indicated that the relevance to real life made a difference. They gradually became absorbed into the complexity and tensions of the topic. Eventually, many students went beyond what was required by their assignment. They commented later, “At this point the issue took on a life of its own, it was constantly on my mind. It was exciting finding each new bit of data and thinking of who else we could talk to.” And, “Reading the data set was simply not enough; I went to the ‘newspaper’ database of Gateway and read 12 more articles, some expository, some editorial, in order to get a richer picture of the scenario.”

What does it mean to be absorbed and what do we experience when feeling absorbed? Years ago, Michael wrote a poem about being absorbed in a greater world:

Circling over
White-crowned breakers,
Below, black, blue-green infinity
At the horizon, curvature of the Earth, and

From behind, towering peaks, in majestic white,
Pyramids of nature, into the infinity of the universe.

MySELF,
The ocean, the mountain,
Dissolving the EGO, floating
Ever present, part
Of this world’s great design

(Before the Great Divide)

In his book *Being and Becoming in the Classroom* (Roth, 2002), Michael writes about being absorbed in teaching, researching, and writing:

Most important, when I teach—in the same way as when I write research articles or analyze data—I am not thinking about my Self. I do not reflect on the process of writing while writing these lines. In fact, if I were to do so, I would probably never be able to write these lines, instead, always remaining caught in reflection and in infinite regress. Rather, when I write and teach, I do not seem to exist as a person; instead, I become so absorbed in the activity that nothing seems to exist. There is a sense of flow, but there is no longer an “I” standing against the world out there. There is no more distinction between myself as a living being and a social or material world that contains me, but is distinct from me.

(p. 31)

From Lyubov’s poem, being absorbed into something is like being enchanted:

I feel
 a warm wave flowing over my body
 which,
 while becoming lighter and lighter,
 gradually loses its material essence, transforming itself into a wave
 that merges and resonates
 with
 the waves of the ocean,
 the waves of my child’s laugh,
 the beauty of a mathematical formula,
 the sounds of a dark haunted night,
 the rhythms of winds and raindrops . . .
 I feel
 losing track of thoughts, of questions:
 Where am I? When am I? Who am I? Am I? I?
 As a butterfly flies out from her cocoon,
 my soul flies out from my separate “Self,”
 swirling in a timeless and spaceless tango of oneness
 with the subject of my enchantment.
 I and whatever I feel enchanted with:
 a poem, a picture, my work
 are evolving into a single living and breathing organism,
 unified by spiritual “gravity” . . .
 Nothing else exists nor matters during an enchanted moment.
 I am consumed.

Being absorbed means losing a separate Self; it means merging with and living within phenomena, events, actions, and moments. As the class progressed, *Interpretive Inquiry* students began to live their research and one commented: “I am starting to make connections between events in my life and the research issue. Am I starting to get obsessed?”

Absorption in learning can happen only through participation in learning. “Learning by doing is really another way of knowing,” wrote one student, expressing the main idea behind the cultural-historical theory of activity (Leont’ev, 1978). According to this theory, human knowing evolves out of participating in community-related activities. Humans are not merely subjected to their conditions but are co-creators of these conditions and therefore of their learning environments.

Current teaching of research methodology in social sciences causes “epistemological rupture,” since graduate students have to abstract themselves from their intuitive relations with the world (Bourdieu, 1992). Such rupture would not occur if learning how to do research was grounded in a context that did not require abstractions from everyday common-sense experiences. You cannot become absorbed in something that is sterile, clean-cut, and reduced to abstractions.

If we are absorbed into the process of learning, then our knowing becomes absorbed in us. Absorbed knowing becomes an internalized, hidden, underwater part of the iceberg. It lives within us as an intuitive common-sense understanding of the world. Invites Serres: “We should invent a theory of obscure, confused, dark, non-evident knowledge” (1998, p. 148). So, this is another aspect of learning as/through absorption. When working with a more experienced professor, and while being immersed into the collective research practices, students are provided with the opportunity to “tune” intuitively into their professor’s internalized, underwater, non-evident knowing. This mode of learning is based on a “silent pedagogy.” Thus, absorption in learning happens through being with and within (Roth, 2002). Fluid spaces provide optimal conditions for absorption, and from there, for self-organization.

Fluidity as Self-organizational Space: Emergence of Patterns

An *Interpretive Inquiry* student wrote:

We had begun with a vague idea about the assignment but it became clearer as we investigated data and were able to make connections such as “access to the field,” establishing trust, framing the question, finding missing pieces, looking at a variety of data sources, and sorting the data according to what we would use or exclude.

According to this paragraph, there was no “rigid instruction” as to how to conduct the assignment, and there was no absence of instruction. There was a common research topic, extensive database, data from students’ research, the goal to make sense from all of that, and the guidance of the class instructor. The rest was up to the students: what angles for appropriating data collection to choose, what themes to pay attention to, what theoretical framework to use, when and with whom to work, and how to present the outcome of their study. Such a learning environment can be characterized as “bounded randomness” or, using the term from chaos and complexity theory, “the edge of chaos.” While being constrained by the flexible and

elastic boundaries of an assignment, the students had a freedom of expression within it. In the above paragraph, the student described a learning process that can be understood as self-organizational.

Self-organization is the spontaneous emergence of structured patterns out of a seemingly chaotic and vague realm. According to the emerging science of complexity (Prigogine, 1996), the realm of chaos is not a complete randomness; rather, it is a space of dialectically related hidden structures, both enabling and disabling.

Several contributors to *Learning as Self-Organization* (Pribram & King, 1996) state that the process of self-organization is deeply embedded in nature. The complexity of spider webs, ecosystems, organisms, or societies speaks on behalf of a plentitude of self-organizational processes in this world. Self-organization is the principle and driving force of development and evolution; if so, allowing learning as self-organizational experience is more natural than direct, linear instruction.

To illustrate the phenomenon and to further our metaphoric analysis, we will describe one scientific experiment. The Henri Bénard experiment involves liquid in a container placed between two copper plates, one of which can be heated with respect to the other. When the temperature difference between the plates is small, nothing observable happens. The liquid is quite uniform, symmetrical, and stable; on a micro-level, the molecules follow the random patterns of Brownian motion. The system “liquid in the container” is in a state near equilibrium. When the temperature of the upper plate is increased, the system moves further and further from equilibrium, finally reaching the so-called “bifurcation point” where thermal convection suddenly shapes itself into a striking organized pattern of hexagonal “columns,” all of which become arranged in a pattern similar to a honeycomb. This new order of organization jumps spontaneously into existence. The system has undergone a transformational experience.

Such a process illustrates an amazing correlation between large numbers of particles. Self-organization happens as if each element of the system was “watching” the behavior of its neighbors and knew its own role in participation in the overall pattern (Prigogine, 1996). When the temperature differences increase even more, the system moves even further from equilibrium until a new point of instability is reached. At this new bifurcation point, the honeycomb of structured cells self-organizes itself into spirals, the beautiful expressions of a new, higher level of complexity. Only under particular conditions will capricious patterns emerge out of fluctuations, out of turbulent convectional movement, out of a disturbed sea of possibilities.

In the example with the fluid between cold and hot plates, the increased temperature gradient results in the emergence of more complex structures. Thus, the process of self-organization requires discomforts, gradients, and tensions as initial conditions. Students started from discomfort and “vague ideas.” As their studies progressed, however, they became increasingly absorbed into the richness of possibilities, into the flow of shared experiences, as they investigated data, established trust, framed questions, and searched for missing pieces. Gradually, patterns of meaning began to emerge out of the initial vagueness.

Students realized that despite having the same research topic, their interpretations evoked different patterns of meaning due to differences in their backgrounds. They commented, “People in the class seem to be realizing that even if we had all the same data, we would create new meanings from them,” and “Looking back I see many other ways our research could have gone. It is intriguing to think of the many interpretations people have when data is the same.”

The variety of patterns identified in relation to the researched issue included health, democracy, values, environmental concerns, expertise, scientific and local knowledge, education, and ethics. There was polarity in students’ conclusions as to whether local residents should be granted municipal water or not, and they stated:

PRO: Clean water is a right not a privilege! It’s time somebody “wakes up” the dissenting council members with a splash of reality in the face—hook them up to city water and let us be done with it! If they are not ashamed of their own inertia, perhaps it’s because they are too bored to notice? I would like to tell the Council that life is not a rehearsal—this is it folks! Solve the water issue and move on to serving your community by fulfilling the mandate to which you were elected.

CON: The data does reveal that the residents have refused to consider any alternatives to a water pipeline and one cannot help but wonder how ethical it is to refuse to compromise or consider alternatives. Not only have the residents been so compartmentalized in their thinking that they refuse to move on the conditions for solving their problem, but they refuse to consider that it has ramifications within the rest of the community if considered in a relational way. I can find no data that suggests the residents care about anyone in the community but themselves. Where are their ethics of caring?

These polar opinions were supported by extensive data analysis. The shorter class, which did not have to reach consensus in their views and which did not intend to write a collective article, exhibited “honeycomb” structures of various emerged patterns of meaning. The more variety in the patterns, the more interesting it gets. But what if you have to come to one common perspective and to one collective decision? This is where the temperature and pressure gradients become elevated dramatically. How can the various patterns of honeycomb cells be organized into a single more complex spiral of a common meaning? In this case, differences can reach extremes. One student, who did not support local residents because she lives in a similar community [but residents there did not want any municipal water], skipped a few classes out of frustration. She did not “fit” into a common flow. How can consensus be reached between different perspectives within the *Interpretive Inquiry* class in particular and within society in general?

Dissolving Clusters and Networks

Fluid social space can dissolve clusters and networks, providing conditions for their elements to mix, diffuse, interpenetrate, and rearrange (Mol & Law, 1994).

Applying this to our situation, there are clusters with some homogeneity between their elements and boundaries between inside and outside. Some local residents have good water in their wells and some suffer from the poor quality and quantity of their water. The community's committee is split into a minority and a majority, into those who are pro pipe extension and those who are opposed. Some council representatives seem to have personal agendas regarding the water controversy and some do not. There are, therefore, some clusters within the town council itself. Some clusters of students in class had the experience of depending on well water, and some had not.

There are networks, too. There is a network comprising local residents, their wells, houses, household equipment, self-formed committees, scientists hired by residents to test their water, scientific measurements, numbers, newspaper articles, and public meetings. There is a network of council members with various backgrounds, instruments, perspectives from scientists hired by local government, concerns about rural development, and perhaps other hidden concerns. There exists the network of the professor, graduate students, and other human and non-human actors involved in an educational process. Networks are rigid and provide passageways for the displacements of *immutable mobiles* (Latour, 1995). (These are that which in a network move about and do different work in different locations, without changing their physical shape.) The networks can move and extend their regions, but they do not change their structures.

When clusters and networks are placed into a fluid space, their rigid bonds often disappear. Their elements diffuse within a fluid realm; the individual unit becomes a unique expression of the collective. Fluid space therefore allows interpenetration and constructive interference of self-interests with the interests of "the other." In their collective article, Michael and the students described how constructive interference of different perspectives and interests can be achieved (Roth et al., 2004). At some point in their analyses, they found themselves echoing the tensions of the researched issue, "having begun to empathize with different actors and having begun to take sides."

In a fluid educational environment, the classroom becomes a microcosm of a larger world. When discussing the potential article, one student said in class, "I just have to say this. I am burning . . . I see an interesting dynamic in this group which is identical to this process."

Michael and the students recognized that their tensions were similar to those that plague the local community. Eventually, the class dissolved the rigidity of their perspectives and overcame their tensions by reasserting the right of all involved to speak and to be heard. The group felt that its diverse backgrounds had allowed it to draw on varied expertise that enriched the discussions and forced them to deal with different discourses, unquestioned assumptions, and forms of reasoning. Because the "we" of their collective effort eventually won over, they could extract themselves from the juxtaposition of differences. It was through the development of solidarity that they avoided the pitfalls of playing one special interest against another. That made it possible to feel that they have been heard, despite not getting their way. It may even be that they changed their ways because they recognized

contradictions might exist between the common interests and their own partial interests. They completed their study with a sense that a process similar to the one that got them out of their communicational difficulties might help the community at large to overcome its communicational difficulties.

Within the larger scale of social space, however, there are many more actors and variables. The task therefore becomes much more complicated. But perhaps fluid educational spaces can trigger fluidity in society at large. If we learn to listen and to hear “the other” even at the expense of own partial interests, a beautiful spiral of shared common interest may appear.

The Spirals of New Research Cultures: Fluids as a Space for Educated Solidarity

The collective spiral of a new order emerges through the collaboration of all elements of the system, through the solidarity of all participants. What is solidarity, however? From the article produced by Michael and the students, solidarity is a cultural state that involves a “conversation from the use of ‘they’ (as in ‘all they want is to develop this land’) to the use of ‘we,’ a conversion from special, partial interests to universal, common interests. . . . Out of this conversion contingently develop new cultural forms of life and new vocabularies, both of which can be explained retrospectively” (Roth et al., 2004, p. 26).

A fluid space of learning allows the emergence of a sense of solidarity through placing emphasis on the collective flow, while honoring the individual as a unique expression of the collective. The *Interpretive Inquiry* class developed a new approach to educational research as a collective practice, where the class as a whole and each individual student creatively co-evolved. Some students commented on the initial tendency “to be secretive about data we have collected.” As the class progressed, though, a new, collective research culture emerged and the sense of solidarity became stronger. Students commented that during their multiple readings of the data, they continually clarified each other’s understanding. If they saw things differently, they debated the issue and presented proof to each other from within the data set. They had discussions with classmates, friends, and spouses in order to hear the points of views of others. This kind of debriefing helped them to clarify their own understanding. Students increasingly realized the advantages of sharing their information and perspectives with others. They readily continued developing their collective culture through interactions and communications that extended far beyond regular lesson time.

This emergent collective research culture appropriated new and different members. At the beginning of the class, some of the students did not see the relevance of this topic and this research method apropos of their own work and commented: “How did the assignments connect with education, particularly primary education? Could what I would learn by doing the assignment be related to my thesis, which is very quantitative? What is interpretive inquiry anyway?”

As their study progressed, students found that collaborative learning by doing research helped them to understand “how interpretive inquiry could be used in

many different situations” and to gain “a newfound appreciation for the maxim ‘the whole is more than sum of its parts.’”

The concept “the whole is more than the sum of its parts” represents a motto of self-organization. This principle is essential to new research cultures within fluid educational spaces that are, using Serres’s (1998) expression, “locally not individuated and globally not summed up. . . . They are not aggregates and not discrete. They are a bit viscous perhaps” (p. 5). The students described the emergence of interactive collectivity within a fluid continuum: “It almost seems that we don’t know where someone’s idea starts and the other’s idea ends.” Not only does a fluid continuum contain entangled, interwoven ideas, it also enables certain kinds of transformational experiences.

Transformations

Fluidity is the realm of changes and transformations. At the beginning of the class, Michael invited students to pay special attention to the evolution of their perspectives on the research issue and to their evolution as researchers. Within the flow of experiments and experiences, new orders of understanding emerged and re-emerged through the process of self-organization and transformation. Students underwent transformations as they shifted and re-shifted patterns of meaning, as they formed and re-formed themselves as researchers, as they acquired more and more information, skills, and abilities to work with others and to see, invent, and design, patterns within patterns within patterns, honeycomb cells, vortices, and spirals. Students created their transformational paths as they traversed through the collective and participatory research.

Not only did students become transformed within a fluid space, however. There was an expert, the professor, the one who was with and within, who guided, who caused transformations, and who became transformed as well. By providing conditions for the transformations for both the more experienced professor and the novice students, a fluid educational space blurs the boundaries between who teaches and who learns. For instance, in relation to the water controversy, students with different backgrounds (arts, education, nursing, counseling) identified new patterns of signification, such as health and values, which Michael had not noticed before. In the fluid educational space, each member of an evolving research culture has something to contribute to the establishment of ideas. Everyone has something unique to share with the others.

Through the process of teaching and interacting with others, Michael became more flexible and open to a variety of perspectives and writing styles. Acknowledging the process of reciprocal transformations, he departed from his initial “apprenticeship” model of teaching, which intended to re-produce his expertise in his students.

There exists a situated or distributed model of cognition, according to which learning occurs as cognitive performance within the context and across situations (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Since liquids tend to distribute themselves throughout and across surfaces, does this mean that the concept of distributed cognition belongs

to fluid educational spaces? Yes and no. Liquids are fluids only when they flow. After distributing themselves, they become still. Distribution is about equilibrium, but not about turbulences.

What is turbulence? It is an intermediate state. Chaos appears there spontaneously, in the order, order appears there in the midst of disorder. The turbulent state mixes or associates the one and the multiple, systematic gathering together and distribution.

(Serres, 1998, p. 109)

Distribution is the opposite of gathering. It is about re-producing existent worlds rather than inventing them. It is about repetition rather than about newness. There are no vortices, no honeycomb cells, and no beautiful spirals within distributed liquids.

The apprenticeship model for teaching and learning that comes from a distributed approach to cognition is not sufficient for fluid educational spaces, since it advocates transmission and repetition of experts' skills in their students. In such a model, there are no conditions for fluidity and fluctuations, and there is no room for self-organization and transformation.

A fluid approach to cognition, which has yet to be conceptualized, embraces turbulences, ambiguity, and fluctuations. It follows self-organizational and transformational processes in learners. It seeks optimal conditions for production of newness. Fluid educational space extends transformational experiences beyond class, beyond research, into society, into life itself.

In the following excerpt, the student's perception of himself as a citizen and his perception of the socially constructed value and meaning of water underwent transformations throughout and after his research:

I have learned something about myself. I realized that I often dismiss issues as being pertinent to me because I only look at the bigger questions it brings forward. I found it very difficult to represent the big picture of this complex case but I found that by going through the data and digging deeper into the issues that it brought bigger issues of who has the responsibility for ensuring we have a safe drinking supply and of social justice. We should all be concerned about these issues.

The Fluid Conclusion: The Story Always Begins

Here we are caught within a dilemma. We must come up with a conclusion, but fluids must flow. A conclusion is the logical outcome of rational thinking. However, just like an impenetrable wall, conclusions stop the flow of stories.

The question arises as to how to marry fluidity with rationality. If we enter a fluid space, should we abandon then our urge for rationalism? This is perhaps not feasible. Without rational, logical thinking, it would be difficult for us to see a way. Perhaps we simply must re-rationalize our rationality, so as to align it with the

properties of fluidity. The new type of rationality should embrace ambiguity, narrative, fuzziness, and open ends (Prigogine, 1996). Well, that sounds pretty fluid to us.

To the best of our rational and poetic ability, and using the metaphor “fluid educational space” as a tool, we have identified certain patterns out of the chaotic plentitude of our data. These patterns are immersion, absorption, self-organization, transformation without discontinuities, dissolving clusters and networks, and the emergence of spirals of collective research cultures.

Here we are now, in front of an open door, moving toward newness, inventing a new form of research that walks through “a maze whose walls rearrange themselves every step you take” (Patton, 1990, p. 69). This metaphor “fits a great deal of fieldwork in real-world settings” (p. 69). New forms of research aim to overcome the limits of conventional reductionist methods, accounting for the complexity of a world outside the classroom, even though, as one student wrote, this complexity, one level after another, is always waiting to muddy the waters.

But what about fluid conclusions? How do we write about them and describe their meaning? It appears challenging to conclude research that walks through “a maze whose walls rearrange themselves every step you take.” There are no permanent walls, neither are there closed doors in the realm of fluidity. Perhaps fluid conclusions should embrace a continuum, an extension, new beginnings, new patterns, a threshold. Perhaps fluid conclusions should reside within the dialectics of *the closed* and *the open*. These concluding thoughts from a student paper seem to illustrate such dialectics:

All in all this has been an interesting journey. I have not only learned about qualitative research methods but become more familiar with an issue in my community. I will follow the election results in November much more closely than I would have done otherwise. In many ways I have become more aware.

Another student indicated that being inspired by class research, she intends to involve her second grade in an environmental project related to the restoration of a local creek. She already has contacted a coordinator for her project. “I haven’t heard back from her but I’m hoping that the students can experience stewardship as well as [grasp] the importance of small streams to the ecosystem. This in turn will help them become future environmental advocates and responsible citizens.”

From students’ concluding passages, new patterns have emerged from a maze of class research, patterns out of patterns, honeycomb cells, vortices, intricate designs extended into the life of communities, into the lives of new generations. Such conclusions from the students’ papers, from the class, from the research, from our story, do not seem to violate the spirit and conditions of fluidity, since the ending and the beginning swirl here together, in a turbulent turning motion, into the spiral for a new story that already patiently awaits its chance to be told.

Questions

1. The authors ask: “What made this qualitative research methods course unconventional and what can we make out of its unconventionality?” How can you begin to answer this?
2. Which metaphors in this chapter do you find most compelling, and why? How do these metaphors contribute to research and teaching that challenges the orthodoxies?
3. How does collective participation in research change the research paradigm, and how do we navigate any turbulent waters there in terms of expectations, both student expectations, and those of the academy?
4. How does the poetry in this chapter contribute to the meaning and richness of possibilities? In what ways?

About the Authors

Lyubov Laroche

Originally from Latvia, Lyubov taught science and arts in different countries. Throughout her life, she could never manage to stay within a box. Out. Out of the box. Free fall without a rope. Sometimes a beautiful flight, sometimes painful bruises.

Her doctoral dissertation, titled “‘You Were a Star Once, Weren’t you?’ Nonlinear Steps into the Re-enchantment of Science Education,” was unorthodox in terms of what she wrote, how she wrote it, and how she presented it. She balanced on a thin and elusive line between the real and not-yet real, in the space where waves of the possible dash upon the shoreline of the existent. Her story “wrote itself” into an eclectic mixture of science, poetry, science fiction, and philosophy. It was a conceptual-philosophical essay, where she imagined how school science education might appear if based not on an outdated mechanistic worldview, as it is right now, but on the startling new perception of reality portrayed by most contemporary scientific theories, including quantum theory, chaos and complexity, and human consciousness research. She described her vision and the pains and pleasures of its practical implementation within the conventional educational system. Despite its apparent unconventionality, her thesis won the Most Outstanding Dissertation of the Year Award, given by the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies. A shortened version of the dissertation appears in the online journal *Educational Insights* (Laroche, 2002).

When Lyubov started her postdoctoral program with Michael Roth, she realized with fascination that he actually practiced a new pedagogical approach that she envisioned in her dissertation. While observing and analyzing his *Interpretive Inquiry* course, Lyubov underwent the “Aha!” experience. Through her co-writing with Michael, she hoped to articulate this experience to readers by inviting them to enter a fluid learning space of *Interpretive Inquiry*.

Wolff-Michael Roth

Where there are no words
 Space and time dissolved
 Being is
 The experience of unity
 Released by the moon
 I am taking the road
 of the evening sun.

(From an untitled poem
 in the 'Transcendence'
 series, February 1980)

Michael's life unfolds from the dialectical unity of opposites. Wanting to become an art teacher, he became a research physicist. Having been a teacher for a dozen years, he became a researcher. Having been a statistician, he is doing and teaching qualitative research. Most importantly, though, two culturally very different, mutually contradictory but dialectically related texts describe his being in the world. First, it is no use wondering about the road Robert Frost wrote about, the one not taken, or wishing to have taken it, because our lives unfold as trajectories of chaotic systems, unpredictable beyond the next bifurcation, and where minor perturbations can provoke a jump in the trajectory into a very different state space. And yet, as Mikhail Bakhtin tells us, we are responsible for every single act we produce. This chapter challenges the orthodoxy in at least two ways. First, its content describes a form of teaching that is not based on the information or knowledge transfer from the teacher, who knows, to the student, who does not know. It also challenges the constructivist ideology, in that it questions its presupposition that knowledge is something students construct in their heads. The chapter proposes instead a different metaphor for knowing and learning as fluid participation in different life-worlds. Second, the chapter challenges the orthodoxy about academic writing, weaving together postmodern and post-structuralist analysis with poetic expression. Out the disembodied author, who has disappeared from the text, and in the authentic authors, who concretely realize themselves in but also estrange themselves through the text they leave behind as part of their poetic labor.

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Narrative Inquiry and the Discovery of Self within the Academy

YOLANDA M. WATTSJOHNSON

Once the anonymous essay became the norm, then the personal autobiographical story became a delinquent form of expression.

(Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 734)

Journal Entry

August 31

I was inspired to write these reflections after reading *White Teacher* by Vivian Paley and reflecting on the comments of a colleague. We have many stories such as Paley's where the white teacher, after much introspection, examines her racist beliefs and realizes the need for other perspectives with which to deal with her students. She changes to become a better and more reflective teacher, illustrating to the white students in my class to whom the book is assigned, that they can do the same. I remember my colleague saying,

"That's all well and good, but where are the stories for the black students?"

Buying into the clearly constructed black and white notion that we have in our U.S. society, I asked in agreement where *are* the stories for the black students? Yes, we do have models from popular culture in the form of romanticized movies of effective white teachers working with black and Latina students, but few role models, to my recollection, of the black teachers working with white students, or black teachers working with their own.

Here enters my story of a black teacher working with a predominately white student population in a white institution. The context of my story is the university.

My purpose is to tell a story and learn more about myself. I have always been the type that likes to look at myself and see what I do, and know why I think the way I do. I am curious to know myself in a revelatory way. I want to know what prejudices I hold about my white students and how this affects the quality of my instruction. I am good at what I do, and after years of consistently working at my practice I am able to say this. So, then, why examine myself? Well, because being an effective teacher means that I know that there is a lot that I do not know and many ways in which I can improve my practice. So, while being a good teacher, I have never stopped to look at how

my prejudices against whites, no matter how valid, affect my practice. I also believe that because I think, “I’m good” I will have the most profound learning as I reflect on my practice in this manner.

Introduction

This chapter will present a selection of a series of journal entries written during my first year at a predominately white institution, and then analyzed using the four paradigms of narrative inquiry.

When I decided to do this autobiographical study of my own work, I approached the institutional review board to seek approval for my research. Because I, and my perceptions, were the primary focus of my research, I was not required to complete a human subjects form.

This was the first indication that what I was doing challenged the “research-as-usual” paradigm and the orthodoxies of qualitative research. My project as I explained it to our institutional review board did not fit within the established parameters we had for qualitative research with human subjects. This work also challenged the norms of traditional qualitative research and writing based on my intentions, and, now, the means by which I am disseminating my “findings.” Once I had begun my journaling I understood that my intentions were about raw survival. I was doing this research as a means of survival in an uncomfortable academic environment. I was also doing it for memory, with the lofty intentions of one day returning to my writing to excavate my learning.

The process I engaged in reminded me of Mary Catherine Bateson’s (1989) description in *Composing a Life*:

Composing a life involves a continual reimagining of the future and reinterpretation of the past to give meaning to the present, remembering best those events that prefigured what followed, forgetting those that proved to have no meaning within the narrative.

(pp. 29–30)

During the experience of my first two years at the institution, it seemed that all I could do was breathe and write, with writing being the breath of fresh air. Although I was concerned about my pedagogy, and wanted to be more reflective about my work, I did not have the space to critically analyze my daily classroom practices and interactions with students. My intentions prevailed. My journal entries have left me with the memory of experiences from which I have extracted new meaning.

As for the dissemination of my findings, I have once again chosen a cathartic process where I write about some of my negative experiences within the academy, and then publish them (Wattsjohnson, 2003). Doing this can be perceived as a challenge to the academy, but, in truth, it returns to the intention of my research, while I add my voice to the literature (Kupenda, 2003; Robinson, 1997; Smith,

2000) which grapples with the issue of race and teaching, while being a professor within the academy.

I do not publish my writing to challenge the academy, but, dramatic as it sounds, for the sake of my sanity. I share my new awareness through published media to break the silence of that which had originally oppressed me. In doing so, I find my strong, new voice and help the academy live up to its promise of academic freedom for its members. My actions embody a wonderful contradiction, for it is my commitment to academe, and my desire to preserve the beauty of the institution, which require that I step outside of the box. It reminds me of the famous saying by Che Guevara, “Let me say, at the risk of seeming ridiculous, that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love.” I love the academy and it is these feelings that inspire me to challenge some of the orthodoxies of research and writing that constrain us.

Guiding Rationale

In 1979 Cushing wrote, “My *method* must succeed. I live among the Indians, I eat their food and sleep in their houses. . . . On account of this, thank God, my notes will contain much which those of all other explorers have failed to communicate” (pp. 136–137). Although Cushing was referring to his ethnographic work with the native population in Zuni Pueblo, New Mexico, and not autoethnography, his words offer a partial rationale for my work. In essence, I am the native and the one who knows my story better than any explorer that could observe me would ever understand. By journaling and then using narrative inquiry as the tool for analysis, I succeed in a discovery of self and an understanding of the constructed community in which I existed that surpasses conventional modes of knowing.

The work in which I engaged was autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Lionnet, 1989; Neumann, 1998) because it explored and simultaneously delineated my concept of who I am as a black woman academic, while investigating the social forces which shaped the development of my identity. By taking ownership of the process of defining who I am and telling my own story, I also challenged the traditional Western concept of how knowledge is created. In this case knowledge was not created with a discovery by the white male anthropologist or an academic with his explanation of who I am, or why I behaved as I did. Similar to the work of Zora Neale Hurston described by Lionnet (1989), I am telling the canon who I am, but, “to be more precise, how” (p. 97) I have become what I am. I did not wait for academia to impose its understanding of who I am upon me. This is authentic.

In taking ownership of the process, I, as others have done (Hymes, 1969), challenge the very existence of the discipline of research as we know it, and suggest that it might benefit from different motives in which I, the teller, clarify and authenticate (Tedlock, 2000) the images created about me. Part of my work was an excavation to better understand the creation of my identity as an academic for my own edification, while another aspect of my work intentionally sought to redraw the boundaries of the space others have historically invaded to speak for me. Thus,

doing this work not only became emancipatory (Scholte, 1969), but it “consciously confronts dominant forms of representation and power in an attempt to reclaim—through a self-conscious, individual, political response—representational spaces that marginalize individuals and others.” (Neumann, 1998, p. 189). The most authentic representation of who I am and how I have become that person begins with me.

I chose narrative inquiry as my means of analysis for it was the only way I knew that I could tell my personal story, while collecting data that I could return to for analysis. The very act of bringing the story of my experiences as a black woman teaching at a white institution to light, out of the silence, and the subsequent analysis can lead to findings with the potential to affect social policy and culture.

Using the four directions of questioning referred to by Clandinin and Connelly (1994), in the chapter “Personal experience methods,” I will reflect on my journal entries guided by an inward, outward, backward, and forward questioning of my experiences. This analysis is reflective of all my journal entries, most of which could not be included here due to limitations of space.

The chapter will proceed with a presentation of a selection of my journal entries; typical of those I kept for a full academic year. I present them to you as they were initially written, with few revisions. On occasion identifying remarks have been altered to respect the privacy of individuals and context.

Journal Entries

September 7

I learned with my students this week, now to try to translate into words what some of that learning was. For starters, today I realized I was less of the black professor than I was the professor, which leads to reflection on how much of it the people place on themselves and how much comes from external forces. When I feel as if those who are observing me are looking at me as a black woman, what part do I read into it? How does this feed my image of blackness? To what extent are my students seeing me as just black?

The example I think of today was my attempt to get my second section of Social Studies Methods to understand the process of taking an idea from a broad concept to a specific focus. Identify the subject/disciplines that you draw upon and then, using this model, create instructional strategies.

The first group “got it” with some effort, while in the second group there was resistance and lack of comprehension. The students moved quickly to “She doesn’t have a clue about what she’s talking about, why not just forget it and move on.”

I could read this in the room, and yet I did not feel as if it was a judgment of my abilities as a black woman. In reality, this could have been where they were, but I was clear that I was the most knowledgeable person in the room on the subject matter. I knew they did not understand the concept. I ignored their attitudes that were bred out of ignorance. When I called on and

questioned one student, and the light bulbs began to go on for the rest of this class, I was vindicated.

This experience led me to believe that maybe I feel more like the “black woman” under scrutiny when I am not in control. When I am in control, I do not care if my students question my abilities, even when they do it out of lack of respect and confidence in me as a black professional. I knew what they did not understand; more importantly, I knew that their understanding of the material was going to be dependent upon my guidance. I also knew I could facilitate their learning. I am a teacher. They would come to understand the material and then concede that I knew what I was talking about. The dance of feeling that my color is not important, as long as I prove that I am more competent than my students, is not where I want to be.

The biggest coup of the week was getting my students to recognize that they possessed prejudices and that these prejudices affected their relationships with others. In my Introduction to Schooling class, using *White Teacher* (Paley, 2000), I asked students to name how Paley defined diversity. The discussion illuminated that Paley’s initial concept of diversity was counting the number of students from her perceptions of observable ethnic backgrounds.

After students were able to observe this about Paley, I then asked them to expand the list and name some of the ways she began to see her children. As the list began to grow, I asked the students to make a shift, and from that point onward to only name tendencies that they could own as well. They had to tell me what characteristics they used to group/code/define people.

Because we were on a roll, I believe the students decided it was okay to be honest and to keep naming the true ways they grouped and eventually judged others. Each time a student offered another way to characterize people I thanked them and then repeated a statement such as, “Okay, Pearl has shared that she will sometimes judge people based on the color of their hair.”

I reinforced this exercise by owning some my own prejudices (i.e., judging others by whether they smoke or drink). I stated that it did not sound good to say, but that we were not there to judge what we did at this point, but to merely observe and acknowledge the behavior.

I ended the discussion with revealing items from the list that I could own as well, and named them as examples of my behavior that exhibited prejudice. I went back to the class and asked if they now saw how they were prejudiced as well. Slightly stunned, they had to nod their heads in agreement. I knew I had them.

They had to acknowledge that they were prejudiced in some regards and that these very prejudices could lead them to interactions with children that were discriminatory. In actuality, I, a black woman, successfully walked into my class of predominately white students, told them they were prejudiced and had them agree with me. I really felt like I had taught something to that class.

September 12

Today was the day that always happens at some point, when my students question my authority. They have begun to feel the pressure of the readings and are frustrated that I am asking them to think in new ways, or rather just think. Their response was, “This doesn’t make sense. This is a social studies class and we’re supposed to be learning about how to teach social studies, but instead we’re doing all this multicultural stuff.”

When I shared these comments with a sympathetic white male member of the faculty, he suggested I could just dismiss their comments. I reminded him that I did not have this luxury as a black woman trying to make a difference with my students. The reality is that if I responded to my students with the indignation I was entitled to, we would both become defensive and not able to deal with the bigger more important issues. The only important issue for me was getting students to open up so they would become excellent classroom teachers and change the face of what learning looks like for all children.

I pointed this out to him and he agreed that it was likely that he would not encounter the types of questions to his authority that I experienced in my class. The student who asked me, “Why are we doing this? it doesn’t make sense,” and said, “This is a social studies methods class and you are not teaching us how to teach social studies” would have never expressed these sentiments, in this manner, to my colleague. It is probable that they would have not expressed this to any male professor in this manner.

September 14

This was the “set it straight week.” I have learned from my experiences that as a person of color with a new audience, I need to be clear about the boundaries of respect between myself, as the professor and my students. I cannot allow them the same freedom to question authority and hierarchies of power that exist in American education as I have other students, because they have yet to learn how to do it respectfully. They are not questioning the way we formulate knowledge in our classroom; instead, they are questioning my abilities as a black woman whom they do not see as capable of offering them anything of value. They are angry that they have been placed in a position where they need to be subjected to my evaluation of their work. They are equally angry that I am someone (my position) they know should be respected, when everything inside of them and most of their experiences have taught them and allowed them not to respect black people.

So, I had to “lay down the law,” so to speak, and let them know that I would not tolerate any more conversations in my classroom that questioned my authority and/or prevented us from moving the lesson forward.

September 19

There was not a lot of “race stuff” today. I showed Vivian Paley in *Starting Small* (Teaching Tolerance Video) in one class and the other class was an introduction to storytelling. Both went well. I believe that it will be easier

sailing in my social studies methods class from here on in. I don't think it's totally over, or that all my students have converted into incredibly wonderful respectful students, though some are. What I have observed is how good I feel after standing in my power, not backing down and dealing with the race and disrespect issue head-on, not running from it, but running into it. When I say dealing with it head-on, that is also misleading, as dealing with it head-on would mean addressing their discontent, because of the underlying racist attitudes. I only dealt with the pluses and minuses of my instructional strategy and my preparation to stand before my classes as a professor more knowledgeable than they are.

What black teachers of white students know is that we are not given the immediate respect given to white men. Students challenge our authority and do not assume that we are as capable or as knowledgeable as other professors at the institution. It appears that because I am black, it is a given that I should be evaluated carefully and scrutinized.

Being a constructivist of sorts, I do not mean my comments to suggest that I support this very hierarchical presentation of knowledge where the professor knows, but what I am saying is that as a black professor I am not afforded the same respect as my colleagues.

September 28

Today was interesting as with all other days. One of my students, let's call her Jane, stopped by my office to let me know her mother was going to be in town and wanted to know if she could attend class. She asked if her mother could visit and I "being my wonderful self" (this is how my mother refers to me when she knows I need to monitor my interactions with others) said, "yes, of course bring her." I sensed a plot. My instincts were correct! After a good class her mother, who appeared a bit uncomfortable during class, approached me. Maybe it was because I spoke about the fact that Abraham Lincoln never wanted equality between the races. I spoke about how our goal is not to demonize Lincoln now that we are learning more about him and his motivations, but to present the multiple perspectives that make up any good presentation of history. I stated that I did not want them to get caught up with seeing me as a black woman with a biased point of view, but as an educator with a respect for the truth and a full representation of any story.

Jane's mother thanked me for the class and informed me that "oh, by the way," both she and Jane's father had been teachers for many years. She let me know that she thought the way I presented certain information was "interesting." Bing! I knew it; mom was a spy. I know part of Jane's mission was to expose me, as a scattered woman who was "trying" to teach social studies, but the mission failed. I believe that much of what I say makes individuals uncomfortable. I appreciate the power of honesty. Pedagogically, my stuff is tight, so I just leave them wondering. That's good. Wondering in this environment might actually be the beginnings of independent thinking and real reflection.

In my next class I had the opportunity to graphically portray how a student who was humiliated by a teacher during one of their school visits might feel. A student shared how in one class a teacher from another room brought in a student who had committed some form of wrongdoing. With little to no explanation the classroom teacher agreed with the other teacher and allowed the student to remain in her room for his wrongdoing. She promptly chastised the student harshly with, “Shame on you,” and had the student stand with his nose against the wall while she continued to conduct her class with her other students present. The student was a black male youth.

Because both teachers were white in a majority black school, I asked my students to consider what racial overtones could be implied and how that teacher, as a parent, would feel if another teacher decided to humiliate their child in the same fashion. I then turned and held my face against the wall in front of the class for a period of time long enough to make everyone uncomfortable with my supplication to graphically illustrate the point.

October 3

Today I became more aware of the attitudes my students have that prevent and inhibit instruction. I connect this to my status as a person of color and a woman whose authority is being challenged in the classroom.

I am attempting to instruct students in a manner that forces them to be critical thinkers and apply the principles of constructivist learning to our work together. This is hard work. Any professor attempting to use the strategies I am using in my class with students who want to use more traditional instructional practices would be likely to face the challenges that I am facing. I do not question the discomfort my students are experiencing, nor the resistance, but I do question the manner in which they voice their concerns to me.

Students constantly interrupt my presentations with questions that are disrespectful. Questions and statements, such as

“Why do we have to do this?”

“This doesn’t make sense,”

“We are not learning how to teach social studies,”

“I respect what you are trying to do, but you are supposed to be teaching us social studies, but instead you keep talking about black people and how bad they were treated. I feel bad about that, and don’t mean to be disrespectful, but in our other classes we focus more on lesson plans. That’s not what we are doing here.”

This is how students speak to me. Now, in my history as a student, even when the professor was definitely “out to lunch” and all my classmates agreed, we still maintained a degree of respect for the professor and did not challenge his or her authority. Neither did we challenge their right to teach what they taught in the manner in which they taught it.

October 17

My students began their presentations on the “Other America” project today. They were excellent. I feel good that some are learning, even if too many will still slip away not knowing how to approach teaching critically. Maybe they will retain just a glimmer of what I have tried to share with them. The students I speak of are those who have had a program that has been taught entirely by adjuncts for the past several years without full-time faculty.

In the morning section the nasty head of disrespect surfaced again with students in class jumping at the opportunity to tell me about the lack of communication they feel exists in my class and the expectations that are not clear. They do not respond when I remind them that the information they question is clearly spelled out in the syllabus.

I was upset at myself for becoming as obviously annoyed as I was, but maybe it was for the best. I clearly told them that I was tired of their complaints and using every opportunity to find ways to subversively criticize my instruction. I let them know they need to speak to me during my office hours and not to bring this to my class anymore. My frustration was most intense because it changed the mood of the classroom for the other students that demonstrated an understanding of the material. It detracted from the presentations of those students who had worked hard to prepare.

Starting Thursday, I will begin writing from the four inward and outward as well as forward and backward frames of reference I discovered in the personal experience method. This will definitely enrich my writing. My journaling is sounding too much like a complaint sheet without my discovery of deeper truths.

Week of October 30–November 3

I’m going home for Aunt Antoinette’s memorial service, nothing else matters.

A Narrative Inquiry Reflective Analysis

The following qualitative analysis uses the aforementioned frames of narrative inquiry to analyze some of my journal entries to come to a deeper understanding about my first-year experiences. The method is both reflective and analytical. This is one of the gifts and challenges of using narrative inquiry; the process of growth and understanding via the written word is never-ending. The process rarely offers the opportunity for comfortable pausing points at which one can say, “okay, so that is what this was about.” As an academician this frustrates my desire to understand my pedagogical process and experiences in the definitive manner. Although it is often like trying to capture water with your hands, my desire to continually move toward self-actualization challenges me to become proficient in my use of narrative as an instrument which informs my research.

Inward

The inward reflection analyzes my internal emotions. Inwardly, I experienced an ongoing flow of questions and constant thoughts about my world. I was excited about the stage I had entered into with my students. It was a time when I had the opportunity to observe if I had planted the appropriate seeds. Were they able to be reflective practitioners and how did they demonstrate it? Did I do enough modeling for them to become the types of educators I would like them to be, or at least show promise? Had I settled a bit more about being challenged as a black woman at a predominately white institution? The numbers of folk of color on the campus, or lack thereof, really made it a white institution, but I began to think that I needed to step back from that because I was there, as were a few others. If I said it was a white institution, was I discounting my own existence and the work others were doing? I knew that the work we did was valuable and actually helped to make our institution a better place. They, most whites, resisted us and tried to make it seem like they were happy to have us there, as long as we did not push the wrong buttons too hard; just press lightly.

I experienced a sense of joyful indignation watching my students slowly realize they were wrong in their initial judgments of me. They tried to creep into a comfortable place of acceptance with me, seeing that much of what I said made a great deal of sense. Many stated, "I totally agree with you," as if this was where I wanted them to be. They still did not get it. As with some white individuals, I think they believed I was looking for their acceptance of my ideas. I THINK NOT!!! I wanted them to become critical thinkers capable of analyzing their own thought processes without external intervention.

Unfortunately, I began to see that they were so trapped into thinking that their experiences in my class were about their relationship with me and who I was, that it was hard for them to divorce themselves from this dynamic. In the same moment that I was able to read this in my journals and come to this understanding through my analysis, it became a challenge for me. I have begun to think about working to transcend this dynamic as my responsibility. *How can I, a black woman, help to relieve the sense of anxiousness that young white women might have working with me, so that they can focus on their own learning and the development of their pedagogy?*

Inwardly, I also had to come to terms with the anger I felt as I remembered and personally experienced the destructive influence and power of white women who express displeasure with a black person. It has been difficult to reconcile wanting to shout at them, telling them about the injustices perpetuated against women of color by white women during the feminist movement and the unjust torment the black community has endured because of white women who have decided to use us as scapegoats. I wanted to tell them to go see the movie *Rosewood*, and then multiply that by every black family in America to get a sense of how brutal the scorn of white women could be. With this awareness, I then wanted to lead them along a path that asked them to be mindful of their power, as well as their own oppression, and then gently set them on a path of readings that would assist them in making sense of it all.

As much as I came to understand these things inwardly through the pedagogical dynamics of my classroom, I also knew I was not in a place to do what I named above. I began to understand that their resistance and the hatred they exhibited toward me were based on their fears of not wanting to honestly confront the very issues I identified. So, once again, the narrative process led me to a place of understanding that presented a new challenge. *How can I use my pedagogy as a place of healing for the divide that exists between black and white women, so that we can each own our power to make a greater difference in this world?*

My last discovery made through my inward reflections was the most difficult. This discovery was having to acknowledge the painful mixture of being continually disrespected on both a personal and a professional level that was and continues to be unavoidable for me.

At the time of my research, my only first aunt and my mother's younger sister was dying. I found myself wanting to say to my students, colleagues, and the rest of the world, "Hey, someone I love is dying, do you think you might do me the favor of treating me fairly and with just a little kindness while I get through this?" When my experiences did not grant me this wish, it led me to the painful realization that as a powerful black woman, I would have to first concede my power and minimize my own intelligence before the structure of the academy would be kind to me. As long as I continue to speak my truth and do not back away from my intelligence or insights, I will be a target for the ugly behaviors of both blacks and whites who are too fearful to do the same.

It appeared that being a woman, intelligent, black and willing to speak truth to power, put the world in an attack mode against me. Unfortunately, we have not reached a place in our evolution as a society that respects, or cares for, influential, intelligent black women. Worse, this lack of caring for black women placed a time limit on the time I was able to remain in academia.

Outward

The outward analysis questions the incidents that were actually happening. Some of the things that were happening were things I needed to claim responsibility for, while others were not. Students were still not reading and some of the activities flopped. I thought I needed to tweak some of the activities to improve the delivery of instruction, but even with my tweaking, I had to acknowledge that it was a given—things would flop if my students did not do the reading.

We had a discussion using Jean Anyon's (1980) piece on the hidden curriculum. That discussion did not go well because more than half of my class did not read it. To motivate the class to read the piece I told the students that during the next class we would have a quiz on the chapter and our discussion. The quiz was in a reflective writing format to allow them to capitalize on our previous discussion. All except for 8 out of 45 students failed the quiz!

I realized I had to release getting them all to where I wanted them to be. Maybe my expectation and desire that they could all do well, and nursing them along, is part of our problem in education today. Maybe we are supposed to lose more than

a few. Everyone cannot teach. As schools of education we should not continue to certify individuals that do not demonstrate true capacity as teachers and who, academically, tend to be some of the weakest students at the university. *What can we expect from our black children if the teachers are ignorant?*

One student, in her response to the question “What is the hidden curriculum and what does our notion of social class have to do with it?” stated that she had not read the article(!) but that she thought the hidden curriculum of our class was the race issue that I kept talking about. I wanted to ask her what race “issue” she was talking about; was it the one she sidestepped and believed would go away if she kept quiet? As an educator she will contribute to the continued oppression of children of color and help maintain the ignorance of too many whites.

My analysis of my outward experiences took me back to my work on peer and sexual harassment. The research team realized that doing the research and writing about the work (Cohan et al., 1996) was painful and unfulfilling, as we came to understand the emotional trauma which so many of our children experience. Similarly, I did not want to lose focus on the pedagogical issues I wanted to examine, but first I had to deal with the emotional and psychological stress that accompanies being a black teacher at a white institution.

My outward awareness focused me to acknowledge that students and colleagues regularly disrespected me. Unfortunately, there were many experiences to draw upon.

There was an incident where the undergraduate student advisor suggested to my students that it would be within their rights to write a letter of complaint to the department chairperson if their discussions with me did not go as they would like. The advisor also shared student complaints about me with the chair without ever once sharing these “concerns” with me. I knew she did not have to speak to me, but it would have been naïve and ignorant for me to believe that she was trying to foster positive relationships and sentiments around my employment. I responded by seeking the support of a senior faculty member to lead a meeting to discuss the role and responsibilities of support staff. Instead of dealing with the issue at hand, the faculty member used it as an opportunity to begin a discussion on race.

None of my colleagues ever seemed interested in actions that would dismantle the very structures which fed the discrimination. I learned that most often white academics would prefer to engage “a conversation about race and diversity” as opposed to doing something about it. I learned to be wary of the self-proclaimed white liberals who will suggest conversations to derail your efforts when you are ready to take action regarding racist practices.

Backward

The backward reflective analysis includes the experiences and reminisces that came forward in my psyche and shaped my reactions to the outward experiences. I have found that this aspect of the narrative inquiry process yields important insights. It gives us an opportunity to glimpse some of the unresolved issues in our personal and professional lives that affect our current actions.

I clearly remember an incident in which I had to call a white male student out into the hallway to let him know he had overstepped every conceivable line. He had given me a “piece of junk” for an assignment, failed, and when the assignment was returned, he flipped. He openly confronted me during class and demanded an explanation for his grade, while he continued to berate my instruction. He stated that I was not qualified to teach the class, at which point I asked him to leave. He initially refused to leave, saying that I could not make him leave. When I looked at him as if he had lost his ever-loving mind, and alluded to the fact that he was truly as crazy as he was acting if he thought I would allow him to remain in my class, he decided that he would speak with me in the hallway. I think by that point, he was beginning to realize that he had gone too far, because all the other students were astonished and his friends refused to support him. Although some of these students in class acknowledged the inappropriateness of his behavior, regrettably the administration within my department did not. Their response was to encourage me to examine what I had done that would prompt such a reaction.

When I thought of that incident and the experiences I had during my first year while doing this study, I still found it amazing that my colleagues could not see how their siding with the students, by immediately assuming I was doing something wrong, questioned my authority within the classroom and my pedagogy. I was also amazed that they chose to be offended and annoyed when I suggested the incidents could be racially motivated. One of my white male colleagues, in a serious, half-joking manner, told me that white people are dumber than I think. Although I never agreed with his commentary, I questioned how they construct their understanding around issues of race.

The backwards analysis also prompts me to go back in time to re-examine past historical events surrounding the lives of black Americans in this country. This re-examination of the past can begin with the irrefutable connections between the story of Rosewood and the abusive power of white women, to all the missed opportunities for black Americans that are still unaccounted for. I think of my own life and the racially motivated instances that were intended to disadvantage me, and wonder how my life would have been different had they been more or less effective. Some were and others were not; while I am certain there are many more I am unaware of. There was a racist white principal who excluded me from an exam to attend an advanced high school because, as she told my mother, I would not have done well on the test. It was the same principal I watched re-calculate the class average at least ten times before she had to concede that I was the class salutatorian, by just mere fractions of a point between myself, the class valedictorian, and the third highest placed student.

My sojourn into the background analysis has been brief and calculated, lest I risk the elevation of anger that is counterproductive for my current goals. I see how race contributes to preference of some individuals over others, but I look to the forward analysis for corrective action.

Forward

The forward analysis explores my planned reaction to the prior three dimensions and provides a place of possibility and hope. Within this analysis I made decisions about the future course of my pedagogy and how I can best survive within the academy, while being an effective teacher for my students. These decisions have involved my syllabi, the logistics of class activities and my general disposition regarding the purpose of my work.

For my syllabi I have learned that I must be very specific about what my intentions are for the class, guidelines for participation, and my own professional biography. The syllabus becomes the “contract” I have made with students. Unfortunately, I have learned that I cannot alter this contract, even if it is in the best interest of the students and if it enhances the course, because by doing so, I risk being criticized for not being clear about the course expectations. This rigidity helps to minimize the students’ attempts to show I am not “teaching the class as I should” and the constant inquiries that seek to establish my validity.

The forward analysis has also helped me to reconsider the types of experiences I want my students to have in my class and then work to create the environment to make this possible. These experiences would include the life-altering realization that teachers really do have the power to change the world, and that, more importantly, a world not based on violent white male supremacy would be a better world. The environment for change could begin with a black woman, so in tune with her pedagogy that she is able to create windows of opportunities from closed doors.

Seeing myself and my academic life through the lens of the inward, outward, backward, and forward, I have been able to reconsider the general dispositions that I must create within myself regarding my work. I often consider the statement made by Mahatma Gandhi that we must be the change we wish to see in the world. If I want to help create teachers that will be successful teachers of all children, while in particular working to counter the systemic racism that exists for children of color within the U.S. public schools, then I must set an example. My pedagogy must be illustrative of the reflective practices that I know make me a better teacher. I must also refine my ability and the graceful capacity with which I deal with the racism I confront working in a predominately white institution of higher learning.

Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter I have been very mindful of the power of both the content and the method that I have presented through narrative inquiry. Both my story (the content) and the method (narrative inquiry) are powerful in their own right, but it is only the combination of the two that has moved me from a place of possible victimhood to that of reflective practitioner. I believe a recitation of my experiences without the lenses of narrative inquiry would make me the victim re-telling my version of the incidents. With narrative inquiry I have been able to take my story and turn it into data, open for analysis and yielding insight for positive change.

My narrative resists the constraints of anonymity, except to protect the privacy of those who have participated in my life, and places my personal essay at the center of my research methodology. It challenges the paradigm of “research as usual” while leading to my own transformation and discovery of self within the academy. And so it is.

Questions

1. What evidence is there in this chapter that narrative inquiry and the process of committing thoughts to paper for reflections offer insight and opportunities for growth?
2. How can the process of committing thoughts to paper, and the narrative inquiry cycle, be used to make changes within our research using qualitative methodology?
3. What are your reactions to the question that the author asks: How can I, a black woman, help to relieve the sense of anxiousness that young white women who work with me might have, so that they can focus on their own learning and on the development of their pedagogy?
4. The author asks: How can I use my pedagogy as a place of healing for the divide that exists between black and white women, so that we can each make a greater difference in this world? What is your own position with regard to this question?
5. Understanding that too many teacher education programs do not include this as part of their curricula, how can we address the cultural and content-specific ignorance of teachers so that their students will have opportunities to be exposed to visionary thinking?
6. What are some of the possible subtexts of young white students who exhibit anger toward their black professors and other black individuals who represent power and hold positions of authority?
7. Throughout the text, the author has italicized questions which are discussion questions. Return to these.

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17

Getting Away With “It”

WANDA HURREN

She has been warned of the risk she incurs by letting words run off the rails,
time and again tempted by the desire to gear herself to the accepted norms.
But where has obedience led her?

(Trinh, 1995, p. 264)

Just a few years ago, when I was giving a presentation on my doctoral research to a graduate class, one of the students asked me, “How did you get away with it?” The “it” to which the student was referring was my non-standard approach to educational research. The research I had conducted did not require university ethics approval. It was not exactly narrative research; it was not exactly autobiographical research; it was not exactly empirical research; it was not exactly conceptual research; it was not exactly action research. It was not exactly easy to categorize my doctoral research as it did not exactly fit the structures in place for standard educational research. I described “it” as a re-conceptualization of conceptual research. Maps, poetry, vignettes from my everyday living, a narrative about sailing through the lands of curricular documents and classroom practices, text printed on transparencies instead of white paper, and fortune cookie fortunes layered underneath a discussion of scientific approaches to research all found a place among the pages of my dissertation.

Since completing my doctoral research, I have continued to take non-standard approaches to educational research and writing within the academy, and sometimes I get away with “it.” I do find venues to publish my non-standard writing, including a book published from my dissertation (Hurren, 2000), a research piece co-authored with students, written as a readers’ theatre script (Hurren, Moskal, & Wasyłowich, 2001), map-poems, and narrative texts with multiple layers of interruptions. I do manage to receive funding for my research (but I have learned to write grant proposals in very traditional-sounding ways). I do have the opportunity to work with graduate students who also take non-standard approaches to their research and writing. And each of these “getting-away-with-its” has been the result of an ongoing trial-and-error approach.

In general, the trials involve having to put forth double the effort to ensure that graduate student work makes it through the various series of gates; for example, special selection of externals to give the stamp of approval, backroom bargaining with grad program chairs, and working extra time with faculty members who are not convinced of the value of non-standard approaches to

research. And in general, the errors involve false assumptions on my part that others will understand the work and thus it needs no explanation. Or, I am not willing to let go of a text or approach that breaks the rules—I think the work is just too precious, and so it remains, *sans* revisions or concessions, precious, in my filing cabinet. Owing to these trials and errors, I have a brief list of supportive strategies for non-standard approaches to research and writing, for those who want to get away with “it.”

S.A.D.

If money and/or release time for research are involved, adopt Standard Academic Discourse (S.A.D.). Use S.A.D. when you write grant proposals. And while you may welcome the opportunity to explore the ambiguous nature of your research question, take out all language that sounds ambiguous. If you are planning to conduct a study that will result in a document that looks suspiciously like a book of poetry, using S.A.D. in the “Findings and Recommendations” section of your 3000-word grant proposal, “it” can sound like this: “the resulting manual will allow other scholars to appreciate the complexity of the various situations in which the participants are involved and will provide a permanent record of the life histories of the . . .”

S.Q.R.

Keep a file of Supportive Quotes and References (S.Q.R.) regarding non-standard approaches to research and writing. And widen your search for S.Q.R. beyond your immediate fields of reference. The more well-known and widely published these brave authors/researchers are, the better, for example, “[t]o accept the responsibility of writing and reading not what they tell us is wanted/will sell/other people want/we “should,” but what we choose to write and read, is to increase the area of our power, both personal and as members of a community of writers and readers” (Le Guin, 1989, p. 189), or “[t]he more truly your work comes from your own being, body and soul, rather than fitting itself into male conventions and expectations of what to write about and how to write it, the less it will suit most editors, reviewers, grant givers, and prize committees” (Le Guin, 1989, p. 177), or Bach (1998), Jipson and Paley (1997), Neilsen, Cole and Knowles (2001), or Pelias (1999).

S.Q.R.’s are useful when you are asked, for example, by the dean of graduate studies to explain how it is that a book of country ballads and lyrics (Raju, 2001) written by a graduate student meets the criterion for a magistral thesis.

G.S.S.

Once you have made it through the gates with your own non-standard approach, provide Graduate Student Support (G.S.S.) to help others through the gates. Post samples of their non-standard work in your office or on your office door, share examples of their work in your graduate seminars, invite students to present their

unique approaches to research and writing in your graduate classes. Mention these students by name, for example Catherine Cochrane (2003), Sheena Koops (2006), Dan Macdonald (2002), Kathy Nolan (2001), David Raju (2000). And, drawing on your own experiences, in the true spirit of G.S.S., encourage students to let go of the parts of their work that, if left in, might indeed jeopardize the success of their whole project.

M.W.P.

Keep a stash of Microwave Popcorn (M.W.P.) in your office. When things seem particularly hopeless, and you believe you might soon have to choose between maverick and martyr, pop a bag of M.W.P. in the faculty lounge microwave and make sure to smile as you leave the lounge followed by a stream of show time “butter flavour” steam.

Question

1. Hurren leaves open the possibilities of hope for the future, when young academics become seasoned professionals and doctoral students become academics. In your opinion, is this hope justified?

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*Valediction, Requiem, and Invocation for
Research[ers]*

SANDRA G. KOURITZIN, NATHALIE A. C. PIQUEMAL, AND
RENEE NORMAN

We have grown together like Han Suyin's crippled tree, branches stooped and sometimes shattered, bowed heads hanging low over Academe River, bruised, misjudged, trammled, but not broken. Who could have foreseen, from the conversations we all agreed to continue, the twists of twigs as we three, from different times and spaces, grew together with one another, and with the contributors to this volume?

There have been reckonings for all of us. We are vulnerable together. A murdered son wounds us all and makes us fearful of our own frailty. We mourn. Battles with cancer, our own, our friends, our family. We win, for now. Amen. A boy, just a small boy, loses his skin, loses language, and is brought back through love and faith. We rejoice. Illness, prolonged, and a fight to the finish. We lose, for now. We grieve and go on. In order to heal one's self, sometimes the flesh and bone must be removed, replaced. It is done. We accept. We do all of this because this is who we all are. Because we bear another's sorrow, because we feel another's burden, because we ache when others grieve, because we feel love and joy as deeply as we do, we do research differently. Even when we do not know or love an "Other," we love and know, and work within a different ethic. We cannot help it. As our lives and experiences challenge the orthodoxies, so too does our research.

Many of the stories in this book capture the essence of research as an embodied lived experience that is concerned with human lives and human relationships beyond the scope of an academic agenda. We hope that these research stories will continue to unfold as readers make sense of them in the context of their own lived experiences of research. These stories of research, as challenges to academic orthodoxies, speak of important human issues, such as power, caring, change, relationships, and identity, in ways that reflect a deep level of authenticity as well as personal and professional integrity while, at times, revealing a layer of vulnerability in an undoubtedly skeptical academic community.

Each chapter tells us about qualitative research as challenging the orthodoxies. Some describe how qualitative research is possible, valuable, and credible in caring, relational, and dialogical environments. Others challenge us to explore further

change in traditional approaches to academic research by raising issues related to ethics, positionality, gender, race, and power.

We, as editors, have been affected by each chapter. As we, qualitative researchers, advisors of student-researchers, educators, women, mothers of born and unborn children, think about ways in which we may position ourselves in the academic discourse as well as in our own practices, we realize how each chapter has a unique voice enabling us to further reflect on our personal and professional identities. We invite the research community to further explore with us research possibilities that challenge academic orthodoxies.

Index

Pictures and diagrams are given in italics.

- abyss 186
activism 108
aesthetic dissonance 213
aesthetic (Hegel) 212
afternoon teas 104–5, 108–9, 111–13, 115
aleatory compositional process 29
Alexandra (first-year ESOL teacher) 103–5, 107, 111–14
Allen, Norman 7, 148–9
Alvermann, D. 186
amor mundis (Arendt) 224
Andrews, Bernard W. 7, 177
Anyon, Jean 257
Anzaldúa, G. 48, 55–6
Aoki, Ted 220–2, 224
Apple, M. 118
Arendt, Hannah 222, 224–5
ArtsSmarts 175, 177n.6
Authorization (Snow) 30
autobiography 6, 7, 122, 134
“Autobiography in an Age of Narcissism” (Gass) 127
Awakening (Norman) 122–3
- Bakhtin, Mikhail 219
Baltodano, M. P. 205
Barthes, Roland 219
Bateson, Mary Catherine 187–8, 248
“Before the Great Divide” (Roth) 234
Behar, R. 61, 106–7
Being 192
Being and Becoming in the Classroom (Roth) 234–5
Being and Time (Heidegger) 192
Betti, E. 193
Bhabha, H. K. 153, 159–60
“Bodyreading” (Grumet) 218
“bordercrossings” 48
Borgmann, A. 187
Bourdieu, Pierre 38
- breasts 107, 127
Buber, M. 148
Butala, Sharon 35, 131
- Cage, John 29–30
Canterbury Tales (Chaucer) 69, 76
Capriccio (Strauss) 169
Caputo, J. 186
Carspecken, P. 110
Causton, Richard 91
CEGEP entrance requirements 92, 101n.3
Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development 59, 63n.6
Chandra, S. 39, 43n.7
Changing Heaven (Urquhart) 127
Chaucer, Geoffrey 68–9
child-rearing 211
childhood
landscapes 49; “rememory” 50
Chow, R. 162
Christian, B. 162
Cixous, H. 107
Clandinin, Jean 45–6, 59, 250
Clark, G. 48
Clifford, J. 154
cognitive dissonance 213
cold reading 95, 101n.4
collaborative research stories within a story 27–33; new stories/phases 33–9; and relational stories 45–61; beginning to compose counterstories 46–7; identity enclosures 47–50; evolving selves and relationship 50–5; new mestiza stories 55–6; specialness to difference 56–61, 57; in two different cultures 135–43; reciprocal empowerment 143–8
community 104–5, 111–12
Composing A Life (Bateson) 248
Cone, J. A. 204–5
Connelly, Michael 45–6, 250

- Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP)
171
- continuous oscillation* (Bateson) 187
- Cooley, Miriam 6, 42
- Cooper, Karyn 7–8, 196, 213
- credibility 20, 53, 95–6, 99
- Crites, S. 200
- critical dialogue 105–6
- Cronbach, Leonard 170
- Crook, Marion 6, 24–5
- curriculum in a new key* 220
- Cushing, F. H. 249
- daily talk 202
- data 67, 79–80, 90–2, 105
- de Marrais, K. B. 3
- decision* 92
- Dedroty, General (Deputy Director) 93–4
- Delamont, S. 73
- deliberative inquiry 171
- Denzin, N. K. 74
- Derrida, Jacques 224
- Descartes, René 187
- Dewey, John 30, 206
- Dillon, D. 186
- dissertation writing 2, 46, 50, 56, 69–70,
75, 79, 104–5, 115–16, 121, 129, 130,
132, 134, 220, 263
- Donmoyer, R. 89
- Educational Testing Service (ETS) 170
- Eisner, E. W. 20
- emotion 183–91, 194–5
- English as a Foreign Language (EFL) 70
- epistemology 158, 199
- ethnography 103–4, 109–10
- Face[t]s of first language loss* (Kouritzin)
69–70, 78–9
- felt sense* (Gendlin) 212
- Feyerabend, P. 33, 43n.4
- Fillmore, Wong 70
- Fine, Michelle 107–8
- first language loss *see* language; loss of
Flavin, Dan 31–2
- Fleming, Sir Sandford 36, 43n.5
- Flew, A. 43n.3
- fluids 230–2, 236–43
- Forrest, Michelle 6, 42
- Freire, P. 111, 116
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg 194, 212–13, 219,
224
- Gallagher, S. 194
- Gandhi, Mahatma 260
- Gass, William 127
- Geertz, C. 20
- Gendlin, E. 212
- generalizability 5
- Gestation Term 1 92–3; Term 2 93; Term
3 94–5; Term 4 95–6
- Gide, André 129
- Gilligan, C. 114
- Gitxsan language 16
- “glass-encased world” 54–5, 54
- globalization 151, 191, 224
- Graduate Student Support (GSS) 79,
264–5
- graduate students 1, 2–3, 6–7, 56, 59, 88,
98, 122, 214, 231, 236, 239, 258, 263–4
- Great Basin area, Nevada 142
- Greene, M. 49, 60
- Grumet, Madeline 218
- Guba, Egon 171
- Guevara, Che 249
- Habermas, Jürgen 219
- Hall, S. 160
- Haraway, D. 115
- Harding, S. 105
- Hasebe-Ludt, Erika 1–2, 8, 226
- Hawthorne effects 110
- Hegel, G. W. F. 212
- Heidegger, M. 192
- Heisenberg, Werner 229–30
- Henri Benard experiment 237
- hermeneutic circle* (Habermas) 219
- hermeneutics 192–4, 212–13, 225
- Hermes 225
- Hesse, Eva 37
- Hirsch, E. 193
- House of Mirrors* (Norman) 121, 124,
127–9
- Huber, Janice 6, 61–2
- humility* (Butala) 131
- Hurren, Wanda 8, 265
- Hurston, Zora Neale 249
- hybridities 159–60
- “I” and “i” 47, 48, 53, 55–6, 60
- “I-thou”/“I-it” (Buber) 148
- illumination 174
- immutable mobiles* 239
- “imperial anthropology” (Trinh) 162
- incubation 174
- Indigenous communities 13–24
- Inside Stories: Qualitative Research
Reflections* (de Marrais) 3

- instinct 188
 integrated inquiry 173–6
 interpretive inquiry 171, 217–25, 229,
 231–3, 235–6, 238–41
intertextuality 219
 Isherwood, Dr. Geoff 97
- Jane (first-year ESOL teacher) 103–5, 107,
 111–14
 Jipson, Janice 127
 John, Mary 60
 John's story 208–9, 211
 Journal entries 247–8, 250–5
- Karyn's Story 200–1, 203, 207–8, 212
 Katie (first-year ESOL teacher) 103–5, 107,
 111–14
 Kerby, A. P. 14
 key issues table *xvi–xvii*
 Kierkegaard, S. 190
 Kincheloe, J. L. 156
 Kirby, S. 74, 190
 Kondo, D. K. 152
 Korea 151–7, 159–62
 Kosuth, Joseph 31–2
 Kouritzin, Sandra G. 1–2, 6–7, 81
 Krishnamurti, J. 191
 Kristeva, Julia 127
 “Ku” 91–3, 99–100
- Lake Lahontan 142
 language
 loss of 70–4, 77; acquisition of 74; in
 research 220
 Laroche, Lyubov 8, 229, 244
 Lather, Patti 3, 115
 Lave, J. 113
 Lavie, S. 160
 Law, J. 230
 Le Guin, Ursula 218
 “Learning as Self-organization”
 (Pribram/King) 237
 LeCompte, M. 109
 Lévinas, E. 148
 life history research methodology 74
 Likert-like survey 98
 Lincoln, Abraham 253
 Lincoln, Yvonne 171
 Lindfors, J. 206, 211
 Linguist, Edward 170
 location 142–3
 Lorde, A. 56
 Lugones, M. 154–5, 163
 Lyotard, J. F. 223
- McCarthy, Mary 224
 McDermott, R. 157, 163–4
 MacEwan, G. 214
 McKenna, K. 74, 190
 McKennie (pseudonym-student) 200–1
 McLaren, P. 205
 McNab, Susan London 8, 213–14
 Magee, Bryan 43n.2
 Margaret (first-year ESOL teacher) 103–5,
 107, 111–14
Marginalization of the Principal, The
 (Meyer) 88
 Matsuda, Mari 111
 Merleau-Ponty, M. 194–5
 mestiza, la 55
 methodological policing 157
 Meyer, Matthew J. 7, 100–1
 Michael (brother) 184–6, 192–3, 195
 micro/macro narrative forms 200
 Microwave Popcorn (MWP) 265
 Mienczakowski, J. 89
migukmul möken yöja 154–5
 Miller, M. 211
 mise-en-abyme (Gide) 129
 Mohanty, C. T. 162
 Mol, A. 230
 Motha, Suhanthie 7, 117
 motherhood 77, 124
 Mouré, Erin 220
Moving the Mountain (Crook) 19–24
 Mueller-Vollmer, K. 193
 mundane/sacred narrative forms 200
 Murray, Garold 1–2
 “My Brother Enters the Abyss” (narrative
 fragment-Cooper) 184
- Nanda, S. 157
 Narayan, U. 154, 158–9
 narrative inquiry 46–9, 199–200, 250,
 255–7, 260, 263
 Nelson, H. L. 47
 Nicholson, L. 186
 Noddings, N. 114
nominal three, the (to William of Ockham)
 (Flavin) 31–2
 non-standard approaches 263–5
 Norman, Renee 1–2, 7, 133–4, 225
 novel writing 17–21
 novellas *see* short stories
 Nunan, D. 74
- Oakley, A. 189
 objectivism/subjectivism 187
 O'Brien, D. 186

- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder 208–9
Ockham's Razor (video) 27, 28, 29, 30–3, 31, 40–1
1+1+1 Collective 29, 31–2, 36, 42
 orthodoxies 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 25, 80, 81, 116, 117, 121, 127, 129, 133, 134, 135, 183, 196, 204, 213, 244, 248, 249, 267–8
- Paiute/Shoshone tribal lands 143
 Paley, Vivian 247, 251
 Paras, Mrs. 195
 “partial biographies” (Kirby/McKenna) 74
Peripheral Visions (Bateson) 187
 Piquemal, Nathalie 7, 148–9
 playwriting 92
 “Poem about the Process” (Norman) 131–2
 postmodernism 191, 193
 prairie 35–6
 “Prairie, Summer” (Butala) 35–6
 praxis 110–11
 Preissle, J. 109
 Process Art 30
 prologue (fall, 2006) 45–7
propositional composite intertexts 219
- qualitative inquiry 188
 qualitative research 172, 174–5
 quantitative research 171–2
 Quebec Ministry of Education 89
 questioning 199–213
 questions (Crook) 24; (Forrest et al.) 42; (Huber/Whelan) 61; (Kouritzin) 80–1; (Meyer) 100; (Motha) 116; (Norman) 133; (Piquemal/Allen) 148; (Rhee) 164; (Andrews) 176–7; (Cooper) 195; (Cooper/McNab) 214–15; (Hasebe-Ludt) 226; (Laroche/Roth) 244; (Wattsjohnson) 261; (Hurren) 265
- racism 154–5, 249–60
 “realism of process” 30
 Reason 191
 recapitulation 174
 reflexivity 173
 Reinharz, S. 105, 110
 reliability 5, 9, 172
 religious inquiry 171
 research 105–6, 183, 191
 research project extract (Rhee) 151–2
research question one 203; *question two* 210
 resonance 5, 42
 Rhee, Jeong-eun 7, 164–5
 Rice, Joseph 170
- Rich, A. 192
 Richardson, Laurel 99
 Ricoeur, Paul 218
 Robinson, Trudith 15–16, 17–19, 21–2
 story 16; poem 17–18
 Rogers, Carl 34–5
 Roman, L. 110
 Rooke, Constance 224–5
 Rosch, E. 187
 Rosenau, P. 191
 Roth, Wolff-Michael 8, 229, 233–5, 245
 Rowland, Wade 32–3
- Saks, A. L. 20
 Saldaña, J. 89
 Sam's story 209–11
 “sanctioned ignorances” 60–1
 “Sandie” (dialogue) 67–8, 78–9
 “saturation of knowledge” (Bertaux) 76
 Schleiermacher, Friedrich 194
 school board steering committee 83–7
 Schwartz, K. R. 38–9
 Science Fair project 206–7
 script, the 94
 Scriven, Michael 170–1
 self-organization 237
 Serres, Michel 230, 236, 241
 short stories 93
 Shutz, A. 203–4
 situated knowledge (Haraway) 115
 Smith, Brydon 30
 Smith, David 199–200, 218–19, 222
 Smith, L. T. 14, 155–6, 162
 Snow, Michael 30
 “sonata-form” 170, 177n.3
 Spender, Dale 116
spheres of infra-influence 90
Spirit Cave Man (Grimes Point, Nevada) 145
 Spivak, G. 115
 “Split Rock” (video reframing) 31, 31
 Spradley, J. 103
 “stakes” 92, 101n.2
 Standard Academic Discourse (SAD) 264
Starting Small (Paley-video) 252
 Steinem, Gloria 201
 Stiik'yoodinhlx mountain 15–16
 stories of our experiences (Huber/Whelan) 50–3
Stories of self and other-identities (Huber/Whelan) 45–6, 62n.2
 “stories to live by” (Clandinin/Connelly) 45, 62n.1
 Storm, H. 14

- Strauss, Richard 169–70
 Stufflebeam, Daniel 171
 “subjective-personal I” 153
Superintendent’s Suggestions to Teachers, A
 (Cone) 204–5
 Supportive Quotes and References (SQR)
 264
 Susan’s Story 201–3, 205–7, 212
 Swedenburg, T. 160
 Swiss Air Flight 111 38, 43n.6
- Taylor, Denny 218
 “teachable moment” 9
 Teaching English as a Second Language
 (TESL) 70, 75–6
 Terence Bay (November) 38–9
 text 192–4
The Years (Woolf) 220
Theatre as Representation (TAR) 88–100
 Thompson, E. 187
 Thorndike, E. L. 203
 “Those who get hurt aren’t always being
 heard” (Roth et al.) 233
 “three-dimensional narrative inquiry
 space” (Clandinin/Connelly) 46
Toeing In (Norman) 125–6
 Tourette Syndrome 208–9
 transcendence 90–1
Transitional Wars (Meyer) 83–8, 90–1, 95,
 97–8, 100
 “travel” 48
 triangulation 109
 Trinh, T. Minh-Ha 46–7, 54–5, 127, 153,
 156, 162
 truth 20
 “trying to get it right” (Wolcott) 14
 turbulence 242
 Twelve Riffs for a Guitar with No Strings
 xii–xiii
- Tyler, Ralph 170
 Tyrizo 96
- “unendlich” (Gadamer) 219
 “universals” 169, 177n.2
 universals theory 32
 University of Manitoba 1–2
 Urquhart, Jane 127
- validity 5, 9, 38, 100, 103, 109, 110, 136,
 147, 172, 260
 Varela, F. 187
 ventriloquism 107–8
 verification 174
 video images 36–8
 Villenas, S. 107
 “voice of the land” 146
 voices 107
- Wallas, Graham 173–4
 water 232–3, 238
 Wattsjohnson, Yolande M. 8, 261–2
 Weedon, C. 115
 Weinsheimer, J. 212
 Wenger, E. 113
 Western culture 158
 Wheeldon, Linda 6, 42
 Whelan, Karen Keats 6, 61–2
 “When learning a second language means
 losing the first” (Fillmore) 70
White Teacher (Paley) 247, 251
 William of Ockham 32–3, 38, 43n.2/3
 Wolcott, H. 14
Woman Flees (Norman) 126
 Wong, S. 105–6
 Woolf, Virginia 220, 225
 writing to/for 79–80
- Yennie-Donmoyer, J. 89