

Method Meets Art

Arts-Based Research Practice

T H I R D E D I T I O N



Patricia Leavy



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e-book

Praise for Method Meets Art

“An excellent introductory text. . . . It is time for the arts as research to reside in the research methods classroom and in research proper. . . . Leavy adeptly relates the most basic techniques in ABR—giving them away to students and researchers alike. In addition, she exceeds the introduction of techniques by presenting excellent examples of ABR research by experienced ABR methodologists. . . . It is an excellent resource for students, for beginning researchers, and for academicians in the arts, literature, and social and behavioral sciences.”
—PscCRITIQUES

“Since the first edition, I have assigned this text in all my graduate research courses. It is required reading for each class session, paired with written responses applying the concepts and practices. I especially appreciate the third edition’s additional coverage of research design, which is a powerful aid in helping students understand research holistically. Discussions and examples of a variety of research questions and practices are most useful, as is the modeling of ways to communicate ABR findings to a diversity of stakeholders. The practicality, and, I have to say, beauty of this text lie in its accessibility for the student who is new to the world of research. It reinforces traditional research genres and protocols while giving researchers the courage, inspiration, and means to conceive of new questions and realize previously unseen realities.”
—Candace Jesse Stout, *Department of Arts Administration, Education, and Policy (Emerita), The Ohio State University*

“Consumers of Leavy’s book should also find a comfortable introduction to these arts-based approaches and hopefully an invitation to try some of these methodological modes in research of their own. In her well-written and engaging work, Leavy carefully introduces the world of arts-based research by walking us through the paradigmatic contexts that have helped to shape this approach to inquiry as well as to establish the conflicting perspectives that hinder many to see these methods as being research at all. . . . An excellent choice in an introductory course to arts-based research or an initial qualitative research course.”
—Ronald J. Chenail in *The Qualitative Report*

“Renowned editor, author, and scholar Leavy has created an outstanding third edition of *Method Meets Art* that articulately captures the breadth and depth of ABR. This highly readable and accessible book guides the understanding of the integral nature of this essential form of inquiry. Leavy has managed to achieve the impossible—a seminal work that should be a required text in research courses across a wide range of disciplines, including fine arts, social sciences, mental health, education, and medicine.”

—Cathy A. Malchiodi, *Trauma-Informed Practices and Expressive Arts Therapy Institute, Louisville, Kentucky*

“My students always love reading this book! This is often the first encounter that educators have with the idea that research could be different than the traditional science model or the less-traditional qualitative approaches more common in social science research. It has given some of my students a voice when they couldn’t find it themselves. With this text, I have a way to introduce students to more possibilities for doing and analyzing and sharing their work, often giving them permission to pay attention to the very parts of their research they thought they would need to omit. It is a paradigm shift—a real game-changer.”

—Mindi Rhoades, *Department of Teaching and Learning,
The Ohio State University*

“Will be useful for those wanting to embark on using a different approach to research.... For those practicing counseling and psychotherapy, whether engaged in therapy and/or research and not familiar with using alternative methods of enabling people to capture experience, I believe this book could offer fresh insights to support and further their endeavors.”

—Counselling and Psychotherapy Research

“Leavy’s contribution to ABR is nothing short of extraordinary, and her third edition of *Method Meets Art* is no exception. She continues to update the genre and subgenres by providing new exemplars that advance both theory and practice. I look forward to adding this volume to Leavy’s other publications on my ‘go-to’ shelf. The third edition reflects some major developments of the methodology, including the growing number of researcher/practitioners and Leavy’s expansion of complex theoretical, aesthetic, ethical, and pedagogical issues. In her search to find joy in her own research, Leavy has developed, supported, and promoted such joy within the ABR community and beyond.”

—Joe Norris, *Department of Dramatic Arts,
Brock University, Canada*

“Leavy enables her readers to gain a sense of how a particular art form might suit their research needs and skills-set, while simultaneously validating each methodology and providing guidance over how specific research practice might be emulated.”

—Qualitative Research

“A breath of fresh air.... The contribution of this book to the field of research methods is invaluable.... Leavy successfully establishes the legitimacy of arts-based research in social science research and succinctly explains how pivotal arts-based research is to the future of academic research.”

—International Journal of Education and the Arts

METHOD MEETS ART

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Method Meets Art



Arts-Based Research Practice

THIRD EDITION

Patricia Leavy



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*To C. Deborah Laughton, now and always.
Thank you for the support, advice,
and friendship.*

Preface

Although I entered the sociology graduate program at Boston College intending to study substantive “topics” related to my social justice interests, I soon became captivated by the research process itself. Little did I realize at the time that deep engagement with methodological issues would become my path for pursuing my sociological concerns. Through my coursework, mentorship, and early research experiences, I developed a *holistic approach* to the research process that emphasizes the interconnections between epistemology, theory, and methods. For me, this approach to social research is consistent with my value system.

As graduate school was nearing completion and I was entering the world of “publish or perish” and scant funding opportunities, I soon realized that the disciplinary research demands experienced by those in many academic disciplines called for a far more limited view of research than I’d hoped. For instance, research published in top-tier sociology journals was largely quantitative and relied on the replication of research procedures and the like. Published qualitative research often followed strict disciplinary standards regarding methodological choices, at times seemingly judged against inappropriate positivist standards. Discussions of theory often appeared separate from discussions of method, failing to provide *holistic* accounts of the research endeavor. Innovative qualitative methods, such as auto-ethnography, were relegated to a lower or “experimental” status, thereby undercutting the effectiveness of the research. I was becoming disenchanted. What’s worse, my work had officially started *feeling like*

work. Joyless. I was not expressing what I wanted to or reaching people in a meaningful way. Indeed, I became aware that the very journal articles we all strove to publish were scarcely read. Furthermore, they would never reach anyone outside of the academy. The work was inaccessible in every way, which was reinforced to me when I tried to share my writings with relatives or friends, who would say things like “It looks impressive, but there’s too much jargon, I just don’t get it.” It became clear to me that I needed to find a different way engage in the research process.

Fortunately, at that time I was working on a couple of coedited projects on “emergent methods,” a term for innovative approaches to research methodology. As a result, I began to discover the world of arts-based research (ABR). I slowly began adapting these approaches to my own projects. Soon a new world had opened up.

The Turn to the Arts

Like many, I intuitively understood the power of the arts from personal experience, long before I learned about the arts in any scholarly sense. As a child I would reread my favorite books until the pages were faded, freely surrender to new worlds at the movies, go from laughter to tears between acts one and two at the theater, and marvel at the grace of dancers moving through space.

As an adult, my love of the arts only increased from playing music first thing in the morning to regularly visiting museums and seeing films. It wasn’t until I became a mother and a professor that I started to realize the many ways arts could be harnessed to teach. For example, when my daughter, Madeline, was in elementary school and having trouble with geometry, I took her to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and we analyzed Cubist paintings, looking for shapes. Her geometry improved. **Art taught her much more than information, though; it also taught her about connection, empathy, feeling, resonance, and self-awareness.** One profound experience I had observing this was when I took her at the age of 7 to her first concert. Let’s face it, there are very few incredible first-time life experiences, and most of them don’t involve your mother. With that in mind, I wanted to take Madeline to her first concert, to share that experience with her. I will never forget the look on her face when the lights went out. She stood on her chair and instinctively flung her arms up and started screaming with everyone else. I spent most of the concert watching her, and I realized that

what she was experiencing was **the connection she felt to everyone else there, a connection created through live music.** She was a part of something. It was visceral, embodied, and powerful.

These lessons were echoed in my teaching. In my Sociology of Gender course, I lectured about patriarchy, violence, and sexual assault, and we read many articles on those topics. What really moved students, though, was when I would show a video of Tori Amos singing “Me and a Gun,” a haunting song inspired by the singer’s own rape. In my seminar Love, Intimacy, and Human Sexuality, we covered many topics that were challenging for students at the Catholic college, such as transgender identity. They were less compelled to think and see differently by nonfiction essays than they were by watching the film *Ma Vie en Rose*, about a child struggling with gender identity. The film prompted conversation, reflection, cultivation of empathy, and, at times, increased self- and social awareness.

The arts can uniquely educate, inspire, illuminate, resist, heal, and persuade. It is for these reasons and many others outlined in this book that innovative scholars across the disciplines have harnessed the power of the arts in their research endeavors. As a result, in recent decades a new paradigm has taken shape: arts-based research.

ABR practices have emerged out of the natural affinity between **research practice and artistic practice,** both of which can be viewed as crafts. ***ABR practices are a set of methodological tools used by researchers across the disciplines during any or all phases of research, including data generation, analysis, interpretation, and representation.*** These emerging tools adapt the tenets of the creative arts in order to address research questions in *holistic* and *engaged* ways in which *theory and practice are intertwined*. Arts-based practices draw on literary writing, music, dance, performance, visual art, film, and other mediums. Representational forms include but are not limited to short stories, novels, novellas, experimental writing forms, graphic novels, comics, poems, parables, collages, paintings, drawings, sculpture, 3-D art, quilts, needlework, performance scripts, theatrical performances, dances, films, songs, and musical scores.

I turned to ABR out of a desire to do work that was **meaningful** to me and had the potential to reach others. I saw ABR as a way of moving beyond the prohibitive jargon and limiting structures that characterize much traditional research practice. But the arts can do so much more—they can connect us with those who are similar and dissimilar, open up new ways of seeing and experiencing, and illuminate that which otherwise remains in darkness.

Why This Book Is Needed

I wrote this book as an in-depth introduction to ABR. The book reviews all of the major genres of ABR, including narrative inquiry, fiction-based research, poetic inquiry, music, dance and movement, theatre, drama, film, and visual art. I aim to synthesize, chronicle, and document the work of arts-based researchers and provide some methodological instruction for those interested in this emerging paradigm. Because of my experiences with students and researchers at home and on the road since writing the first edition of *Method Meets Art*, I also hope to encourage and inspire others to try the approaches outlined in this book and to create new ones. Regardless of your disciplinary background and whether you have artistic training, I hope to show you that you can begin from where you are.

Organization of This Book

This book pairs in-depth introductory chapters with research exemplars by leading ABR scholars. The pairing of the introductory review chapters with published research provides a context for understanding each arts-based practice as well as empirical examples of its use. In this third edition the introductory chapters are more uniformly structured and include an opening, background (with genre-specific subsections), methods section (with genre-specific subsections), special considerations, checklist of considerations, conclusion, and references. Each of the genre/methods chapters also includes discussion questions and activities, suggested readings, suggested websites and journals, and an exemplar. Several of the exemplars are printed in the book; however, the music and dance exemplars are available online (links are provided at the ends of those chapters; see also the box at the end of the table of contents). I felt it was important to move to online exemplars for those topics, as they cannot properly be represented via text. Other links to online exemplars are noted throughout the text. Please note that my intention is not that the exemplars be taken as the only ways that these methodological genres may be employed, but rather as standout examples from large genres with innumerable possibilities.

The organization of this book mirrors one way of conceptualizing the journey of ABR practices, as well as the interconnections between these approaches, by following a *word to image* arc. In this vein, the first genres covered, in Chapter 2, are narrative inquiry and fiction-based research. These approaches draw explicitly on the arts, but still

rely on “the word” as their main communication tool. Poetic inquiry merges “the word” with “lyrical invocation” and is reviewed in Chapter 3. Music as method is explored in Chapter 4, picking up on the lyrical nature of poetry, and comes into being via performance as the first of three chapters devoted to performative genres. Chapter 5 covers dance and movement, arguably the most abstract form reviewed in this book. Chapter 6 rounds out the performance-based chapters with discussions of theatre, drama, and film. The final artistic genre reviewed is visual art, the subject of Chapter 7, which completes the arc *from word to image*.

New to the Third Edition

Since I wrote the first edition of this book, much has changed in my own life and in the field. I have met and developed relationships with many of the arts-based researchers whose work I had cited in the first edition, none of whom I knew personally when I wrote that book. Through speaking engagements and social media I have also become exposed to the work of many other practitioners and students, as well as their perceptions of the field. The academic landscape has shifted, and the publish-or-perish mantra that concerned me at the beginning of my career has shifted to a concern for going public. The increased attention to the *impact* of research, including impact beyond the academy, has aided in the development of ABR. Cumulatively, these experiences have changed and deepened my appreciation for the power and possibility of ABR as well as concerns about the skills needed to do this work and how it might be evaluated. As a result, there is new, updated, and reorganized content in the third edition:

1. Chapter 1 has been expanded and now includes a section on research design. This new section covers topic selection, literature reviews, research purpose statements, and research questions.
2. The genre/methods chapters cover additional research practices. Chapter 3, on poetic inquiry, now includes a section on concrete research poetry and coverage of slam poetry; Chapter 4, on music, now includes sections on musically enhanced narrative inquiry, community music projects, and musical spoken word and rap albums; Chapter 6, on theatre, now includes a section on scored transcripts; and Chapter 7, on the visual

arts, now includes sections on comics/graphic novels, wordless narrative research, and installation art.

3. The exemplars at the end of three of the genres/methods chapters are new. There are also new online exemplars noted throughout the text.
4. Chapter 8, on evaluation criteria, has been reorganized; ethics has been moved up in the chapter and greatly expanded to include a range of procedural and relational ethics; and the discussion of public scholarship has been expanded.
5. Chapter 9 has been rewritten and now includes a list of concrete tips for getting started with ABR, a section on collaborative ABR, and a section on the challenges of doing ABR and practical advice for meeting those challenges.
6. All chapters have been revised, including updated references and new research examples. However, I also have retained many of the former references and research examples for readers who are familiar with the original content.
7. Nonbinary pronouns are now used throughout the book.
8. I have paid much greater attention to public scholarship and issues of audience throughout the book.
9. The chapters are structured in a more uniform way, with bulleted guiding questions opening each new section.

Alternative Ways of Reading This Book

Although this book can be read in order from beginning to end, it need not be. Each introductory chapter can be read on its own; so too can the research exemplars. Therefore, readers interested in particular methodological genres can read just those pertinent chapters. In addition, following the path from word to image was merely one way the book could be organized. Alternatively, some readers may view the “performance paradigm” as the major impetus for the call to the arts. For those readers, the separation of theatre and drama from dance/creative movement may be unnecessary, and they might begin with those chapters. Finally, this book can be read in conjunction with a literature review on any of the topics covered. So, for example, a researcher or student interested in visual arts-based approaches to research may read the introductory chapter as well as Chapter 7, on visual arts, alongside articles published in academic journals or on websites.

Pedagogical Features and Resources

In addition to pairing in-depth introductory chapters with exemplars, numerous research examples are woven throughout each introductory chapter. Those chapters also note key terms and definitions, major research practices within each genre, and other key considerations. The six chapters addressing the various arts-based methodological genres also contain several special features. Each chapter ends with a checklist of considerations researchers should bear in mind as they contemplate using the particular methods reviewed. These checklists also provide guiding questions researchers can consider as they outline their own research design strategies. Researchers using this book will also find the annotated list of suggested readings, journals, and websites located at the end of each chapter helpful. The annotated list of suggested readings allows researchers to further explore particular methodological practices, while the annotated lists of journals and websites provide avenues for expanding literature reviews as well as possible publishing venues for those working with arts-based practices. Finally, I've included a pedagogical feature professors can use as they teach with this text: discussion questions and activities that can be worked on collaboratively in class or assigned as homework. Researchers new to ABR may also find these activities useful as they try these new approaches to research.

Audience for This Book

This book is accessibly written for diverse audiences, including undergraduates, graduates, researchers, scholars, and practitioners interested in ABR or arts-based methodology. In terms of teaching, this book can be used in courses in anthropology, art, communications, creative arts therapy, cultural studies, education, expressive therapies, health studies, social work, sociology, psychology, theatre arts, and women's, gender, and sexuality studies. It can be used in methodology courses such as qualitative research, survey of research methods, ABR, emergent research practices, feminist research, narrative inquiry, and critical approaches to research.

Rest assured, this book is not intended only for those who already have training in the arts. I appreciate that sometimes, for all sorts of reasons, it can be scary to work with new approaches. I encourage you to go ahead and try anyway. When I wrote my first ABR novel, *Low-Fat Love*, I knew nothing about what I was doing. What I had was a desire

to try to do it—to get my insights and the stories of those I interviewed out in a new, more engaging, and accessible way. The rewards have been well beyond anything I could have imagined.

I hope this text encourages you to discover what other *shapes* your research might take, what *structures* you might build, and what new *audiences* you might speak to and with. Let the discovery begin!

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Owning My Masters: The Rhetoric of Rhymes and Revolutions by A. D. Carson.

“Gender Icons” by Jack Migdalek.

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METHOD MEETS ART

One



Social Research and the Creative Arts

An Introduction

Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

We all enter the academy wanting to do work that is engaging and of some value to others. However, operating within a context of institutional pressures of tenure and promotion clocks, coupled with publish-or-perish dictates and funding agencies that reward “hard-science” practitioners, many academics soon become disenchanted. Moreover, the limitations of traditional methods for both carrying out research and then sharing that research can become disheartening. Sometimes we need to go at things differently. Here’s an example from my own work.

For nearly a decade I conducted interview research with women (and some men) about their relationships, gender and sexual identities, body image, and related topics. I wrote several peer-reviewed articles, including collaborating with other researchers and students. I had a persistent, nagging feeling of frustration, though: the articles were sterile, jargon-filled, and formulaic (not a marker of good writing). What’s worse, virtually no one would ever read them. Years of work and, more important, many people’s stories were in effect useless to others. The average academic article is read by only a few people, and those folks also have highly specialized education. What was the point of this? It felt like such a waste of resources. Moreover, I had learned much more than was revealed in those articles. In addition to

my extensive interview research, I also learned from my teaching and mentoring experiences. Students shared their experiences and perspectives both inside and outside of class. The result was cumulative knowledge from the combination of my research and teaching experiences that I wanted to share. I also wanted to do so in a way where I didn't have to censor myself, which is another problematic aspect of traditional academic reporting. For instance, I had many interviewees and students over the years who shared stories about dysfunctional relationships and low self-esteem. There were countless times when I wanted to shake them and say: you're making a mistake. Of course, one cannot do this in an interview or teaching situation. Even in the resulting articles, because our assertions are often limited to the study at hand, there is a cycle where cumulative wisdom doesn't always make its way onto the page. Given the limitations I found with traditional academic articles, I turned to an expressive art.

I wrote an arts-based novel titled *Low-Fat Love* (Leavy, 2011b). Through the fictional format I was able to deliver the content, layer more themes, portray composite characters sensitively, create empathetic understandings, promote self-reflection in readers, create longer-lasting learning experiences for readers, and most important, get the work out to academic audiences *and* the public. I have spoken about the novel to students at universities and virtually joined book clubs for Q&As with readers who are diverse in age and educational background. What I have been most struck by is how deeply readers have been affected by the novel. In addition to in-person chats with readers, I've received countless e-mails from people who have used the novel as a springboard to reflect on their own lives, crediting the book with "saving" or changing their lives. I've never had this response to a peer-reviewed journal article or conference presentation. The academic novel also afforded me other opportunities to engage in public scholarship, including media and radio interviews, op-eds, and blog posts. This is the power of arts-based research (ABR). And yes, it is different than other approaches to research, but no less rigorous or valid.

As the example of my turn to social fiction or fiction-based research illustrates, in order to cultivate new ways of getting at research questions and bringing the resulting knowledge to broad communities, we need to be able to see and think differently. While researchers often use the language of form or format to talk about the structure of research reports, I use the word *shape* (see Leavy 2009, 2011a). The word *shape* speaks to the form of our work but also to how the form shapes the content and how audiences receive that content. Therefore, I think about building research projects and representing research in

terms of “shapes.” By emphasizing the need to see and create research in different “shapes,” I also hope to highlight the ongoing role of the research community in *shaping* our knowledge-building and transmission practices (Leavy, 2011a). In order to address different issues successfully and communicate effectively with diverse audiences, we need to be able to see in different *shapes* and to produce knowledge in different shapes (Leavy, 2011a). Arts-based researchers see and build in different shapes.

Arts-based researchers are not “discovering” new research tools, they are *carving* them. With the tools they sculpt, so too a space opens within the research community where passion and rigor boldly intersect *out in the open*. Some researchers have come to these methods as a way of better addressing research questions while others quite explicitly long to merge their scholar-self with their artist-self. In all cases, whether in the particular arts-based project or in the researcher who routinely engages with these practices, a *holistic, integrated perspective* is followed.

In his eloquent book *A Methodology of the Heart: Evoking Academic and Daily Life*, Ronald Pelias (2004) writes, “I speak the heart’s discourse because the heart is never far from what matters. Without the heart pumping its words, we are nothing but an outdated dictionary, untouched” (p. 7). As researchers, we are often trained to hide our relationship to our work; this is problematic for some, impossible for others. ABR practices allow researchers to share this relationship with the audiences who experience their works.

Pelias notes that arts-based texts are “methodological calls, writings that mark a different space. They collect in the body: an ache, a fist, a soup” (2004, p. 11). The turn to the creative arts in social research results from a confluence of many historically specific phenomena. Concurrently, these practices open up a new space that, as negative space defines a positive object in visual art, creates new ways of thinking about traditional research practices. What is clear when compiling recent ABR and researchers’ reflections on it, is that the pioneers in this area seek to sculpt engaged, holistic, passionate research practices. They seek to bridge and not divide both the artist-self and researcher-self with the researcher and audience and researcher and teacher. Researchers working with these new tools are merging their interests while creating knowledge based on resonance and understanding.

Art and science bear intrinsic similarities in their attempts to illuminate aspects of the human condition. Grounded in exploration, revelation, and representation, art and science work toward advancing human understanding. Although an artificial divide has historically

separated our thinking about art and scientific inquiry, a serious investigation regarding the profound relationship between the arts and sciences is underway. This book reviews and synthesizes the merging of cross-disciplinary research with the creative arts. In recent decades a new paradigm emerged in a transdisciplinary research context: arts-based research.

ABR practices are a set of methodological tools used by researchers across the disciplines during any or all phases of research, including data generation, analysis, interpretation, and representation. These emerging tools adapt the tenets of the creative arts in order to address research questions in holistic and engaged ways in which theory and practice are intertwined. Arts-based practices draw on literary writing, music, dance, performance, visual art, film, and other mediums. Representational forms include but are not limited to short stories, novels, novellas, experimental writing forms, graphic novels, comics, poems, parables, collages, paintings, drawings, sculpture, 3-D art, quilts, needlework, performance scripts, theatrical performances, dances, films, songs, and musical scores.

It is worth noting that with the enormous growth in ABR over the past decade, the literature has been flooded with different terms meant to capture or distinguish this work (and its authors).¹ Some authors are quick to point to subtle differences between these terms; however, mostly this frenetic attempt to label work has led to confusion (Chilton & Leavy, 2014; Finley, 2011; Ledger & Edwards, 2011; McNiff, 2011; Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gouzouasis, & Grauer, 2006). Table 1.1 depicts many of the terms that appear in the literature.² To be honest, if I were coming up with a term to describe this work, it probably wouldn't have been *arts-based research*. However, it's important to be pragmatic. ABR is the most widely used term and has gained real traction, globally. As a community of practitioners we have a lot of challenges doing this work, which are elaborated in Chapter 9, so there's good reason to be strategic. I'm not alone in my assessment. ABR pioneer Shaun McNiff (2018) explains the value in using the term ABR "to make a case for artistic inquiries across academic and professional disciplines, to distinguish it from other, current approaches to research, and simply out of conversational necessity" (p. 29). I employ the term *arts-based research* (ABR) for the remainder of this book.³

In this chapter I review the historical context in which ABR practices have emerged; how they sit with respect to ontological, epistemological, theoretical, and methodological questions; the impact of these new strategies on the research landscape; and the primary strengths of arts-based practice, including what these strategies help us to unearth,

TABLE 1.1. Partial Lexicology of Terms for Arts-Based Research

A/r/tography
Alternative forms of representation
Aesthetically based research
Aesthetic research practice
Art as inquiry
Art practice as research
Art-based enquiry
Art-based inquiry
Art-based research
Artistic inquiry
Arts-based research (ABR)
Arts-based social research (ABSR)
Arts-based qualitative inquiry
Arts in qualitative research
Arts-based educational research (ABER)
Arts-based health research (ABHR)
Arts-based research practices
Arts-informed inquiry
Arts-informed research
Critical arts-based inquiry
Living inquiry
Performative inquiry
Poetic science
Practice-based research
Research-based art (RBA)
Research-based practice
Scholartistry
Transformative inquiry through art

Note. From Chilton and Leavy (2014). Copyright © 2014 Oxford University Press. Adapted by permission.

illuminate, or present. I also review how to get started designing an ABR project and discuss the skills needed to do ABR. Finally, I review the organization of this book.

**Pushing on the Borders of an Alternative Paradigm:
Historical Context for Arts-Based Research**

When I wrote the first edition of this book, I considered ABR practices as an emergent methodological genre within the qualitative paradigm. This is because I came to ABR from the qualitative community, and some qualitative researchers have been visible proponents of ABR and

have written extensively about these methodologies. However, there are many researchers and artists outside of the qualitative community, from art education and other fields, who are also developing and using arts-based approaches. Moreover, there are now conferences and journals devoted to ABR that are independent of organized communities of qualitative researchers. Furthermore, as Gioia Chilton and I have written (Chilton & Leavy, 2014), ABR requires a novel worldview and covers expansive terrain.⁴ So I am going to write about ABR as its own paradigm (while acknowledging it is understood by some as a set of methodological tools used in qualitative research). Others in the field have been suggesting the same. For example, James Haywood Rolling (2013) and Nancy Gerber and colleagues (2012) assert ABR is a paradigm, and Tom Barone and Elliot Eisner (2012) wrote about an art-science continuum. Furthermore, Lorri Neilsen (2004) implicitly distinguishes ABR from qualitative inquiry by suggesting ABR uses a “groundless theory” approach, in contrast to the “grounded theory” approach some qualitative research relies on. Shaun McNiff (2018) views art as a unique “transdisciplinary way of knowing and communicating” (p. 24). He explicitly distinguishes ABR from the qualitative paradigm by writing, “artistic inquiry is larger than qualitative research as defined within the social science community. It is more than a new edition to the long list of qualitative types” (p. 26).

In order to understand how arts-based methodological practices offer a different approach to knowledge-building, I offer brief reviews of the quantitative and qualitative paradigms, including a discussion of the emergence of the qualitative paradigm as an alternative to the quantitative paradigm. I should also mention that although many qualitative researchers resent the endless comparisons of qualitative practices to quantitative practices (and rightfully so), given the historical dominance of quantitative research and the extent to which positivist approaches to evaluation remain the “gold standard,” this kind of comparison seems warranted in order to contextualize and distinguish ABR. By offering this brief discussion I hope to give you a better understanding of how ABR is positioned as one of three primary approaches to social research.

The Quantitative Paradigm (Positivism and Postpositivism)

Positivism (or positivist science) emerged in the late 1800s out of European rationalist movements. This model, first established in the natural sciences, is based on the “scientific method,” and served as the foundation on which social science perspectives on knowledge-building

developed, largely as a result of pioneering classical sociologist Emile Durkheim's effort to legitimize sociology by modeling the discipline after physics. With the publication of Durkheim's (1938/1965) book *The Rules of Sociological Method*, which posited that the social world consisted of universal "social facts" that could be studied through objective means, positivist science crossed disciplinary boundaries and became the model for all scientific research.

The scientific method, which guides so-called "hard science," developed out of a positivist ontological and epistemological viewpoint. Positivism holds several basic beliefs about the nature of knowledge, which together form *positivist epistemology*, the cornerstone of the *quantitative paradigm* (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2005, 2011). Positivism holds that a knowable reality exists independently of the research process, and this reality consists of knowable "truth," which can be discovered, measured, and controlled via the objective means employed by neutral researchers. While historically quantitative research was guided by positivism, today a refined view called postpositivism is followed. Differing from positivism, postpositivism rejects absolute truth claims. Postpositivism is based on probability testing and building evidence to reject or support hypotheses, but not to conclusively prove them (Crotty, 1998; Philips & Burbules, 2000). Postpositivism employs *deductive* methods. Within this framework, both the researcher and methodological instruments are presumed to be "objective." Like the natural world, the social world is governed by rules that result in patterns, and thus causal relationships between variables can be identified, hypotheses tested and supported or refuted, and causal relationships explained. Moreover, social reality is predictable and potentially controllable. The positivist view of social reality (the ontological question), researchers' objective and authoritative study of it (the epistemological question), and the tools designed to quantitatively measure and test the social world (methods) together comprise the quantitative paradigm (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2005, 2011). As noted by Thomas Kuhn (1962), a paradigm is a worldview through which knowledge is filtered.

For more than half a century many scholars have been challenging the basic tenets of positivism and postpositivism. For example, Rolling (2013) echoes the feelings of many when he notes that plucking the scientific method from the physical sciences and applying it in the social sciences is greatly limiting at best because, most simply put, people are more complex. Another critique of positivism/postpositivism centers on its conflation with empiricism. Often, positivist science is called empirical science. This has three effects: (1) it presumes all (post)positivist science is empirical, (2) it presumes research deemed empirical

is better, and (3) it positions qualitative and arts-based research as less empirical by comparison, when in fact much qualitative and arts-based research is empirical. Barone and Eisner (2012) have noted that the word *empirical* comes from the Greek word *empirikos*, which means “experience,” and thus astutely suggested our conceptions about what is and isn’t empiricism are confused. They wrote, “What is hard to experience is a set of numbers. What is comparatively easy to experience is a set of qualities” (p. xi).

The critique against positivism and postpositivism resulted in an alternative worldview: the qualitative paradigm. *Qualitative research* is the term used to designate a diverse range of methods and methodological practices informed by various epistemological and theoretical groundings.

It is necessary to review the primary social and academic catalysts responsible for the major challenges to positivist science and eventual culmination into the qualitative paradigm (although such a brief history is certainly partial). Understanding this historical shift is directly related to contemplating the emerging paradigm of ABR because the main concern levied against these methods centers on issues of validity and trustworthiness. These evaluation concepts, however, were initially conceived in relation to the positivist perspective on knowledge building and corresponding methods practices. As researchers working within the qualitative paradigm realized decades ago, the conventional strategies available for checking validity, reliability, and the like, as well as the appropriateness of these concepts, required new methods for achieving trustworthiness and new concepts that properly identified the benchmarks against which scientific “success” could be measured. Many argue that qualitative research is still at times mistakenly judged in quantitative terms, and the legitimacy of qualitative evaluation techniques continue to be critiqued more than their quantitative counterparts. The resistance, by some, to the more recent development of arts-based practices is therefore linked to these larger struggles about scientific standards and knowledge building. With this said, I turn to a brief review of the move toward qualitative research.

The Qualitative Paradigm

Qualitative research is generally characterized by *inductive* approaches to knowledge building. Ethnography has long been the methodological cornerstone of anthropology, a discipline committed to studying people from various cultures in their natural settings. The shift toward ethnography across the disciplines largely emerged at the University of

Chicago. In the 1920s researchers at the “Chicago School of Sociology” began using ethnography and related methods to study various hidden dimensions of urbanization in the area (among other topics). This in part prompted the use of qualitative methods in sociology departments around the United States, as well as the development of new theoretical perspectives that would further propel qualitative innovation. Ethnography produced what Clifford Geertz (1973) later termed “thick descriptions” of social life from the perspective of research participants (as well as the researcher’s own interpretation of what he/she/they learns in the field). Moreover, this method required the researcher to develop rapport with his/her/their research participants, collaborate with them, and embark on weighty and unpredictable emotional as well as intellectual processes. Ethnography clearly challenges positivist assumptions about social reality and our study of it, making the use of this method outside of anthropology pivotal. Similarly, sociologists and health care researchers in the 1940s adapted the focus-group interview method that developed as a tool for then-burgeoning market researchers to suit a range of other topics.

Qualitative research was further propelled in 1959 with the publication of Erving Goffman’s groundbreaking book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. In this work Goffman co-opted Shakespeare’s famous line “all the world is a stage” and developed the term *dramaturgy* to denote the ways in which social life can be conceptualized as a series of ongoing performances complete with “front stage” and “backstage” behaviors, daily rituals of “impression management,” including “face-saving behavior,” and other ways in which people operate as *actors* on life’s stage. Not only did Goffman’s work move qualitative research forward at the time, but as reviewed in Chapter 6 on theatre, drama, and film, his work has been foundational for more recent arts-based innovations.

More than any single work, the social justice movements of the 1960s and 1970s—the civil rights movement, the women’s movement (second-wave feminism), the gay rights movement—culminated in major changes in the academic landscape, including asking new research questions as well as reframing many previously asked research questions and corresponding approaches to research, both theoretical and methodological. Populations such as women, people of color, and LGBTQA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and asexual) individuals formerly rendered invisible in research or included in ways that reified stereotypes and justified relations of oppression, were sought out for meaningful inclusion. The common outgrowth from these diverse and progressive movements included a thorough reexamination of *power*

within the knowledge-building process in order to avoid creating knowledge that continued to be complicit in the oppression of minority groups. This collective goal can metaphorically be conceptualized as a new tree trunk out of which many branches have grown.

For example, feminists developed standpoint epistemology as a means of acknowledging that a hierarchical social order produces different “standpoints” (experiences and corresponding perspectives), and standpoint epistemology spawned corresponding feminist methodologies (see Harding, 1993; Hartsock, 1983; Hill-Collins, 1990; Smith, 1987). For another example, Black feminists developed intersectionality theory, which complicates standpoint by examining how race, class, and gender (and other social identities) form “interlocking systems of oppression” (Collins, 1990, 2007). Intersectionality developed in the context of Black feminist activism in the 1960s and 1970s (Collins & Bilge, 2016). In 1973 the Combahee River Collective formed—a collective of Black feminists whose work was vital to what later became known as intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989, 1991). Through their attention to power dynamics in the research process, many feminists also began a critical discourse about related issues and practices such as voice, authority, disclosure, representation, and reflexivity. Moreover, many argued that feminism should seek to produce “partial and situated truths” (see Haraway, 1988) and that feminists should be attentive to the “context of discovery” and not only the “context of justification,” the focus in positivist research (see Harding, 1993). In these and other ways, feminists called for a dismantling of the dualisms on which positivism hinges: subject-object, rational-emotional, and concrete-abstract (Sprague & Zimmerman, 1993). Moreover, feminists challenged the positivist conception of “objectivity” that permeates positivist research practices. In this regard, feminists have argued that the positivist view of objectivity has produced a legacy of “scientific oppression”—relegating women, people of color, LGBTQA individuals, and people with disabilities to the category of “other” (Halpin, 1989). All of these epistemological and theoretical advances prompted the increased interdisciplinary use of qualitative methods such as ethnography and oral history interview.

In addition to feminism and other social justice movements, globalization and changing media and economic landscapes influenced alternative theoretical schools of thought, including postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, critical race theory, queer studies, and psychoanalysis (which also informs embodiment theory). All of these theoretical perspectives attend to issues of power and have caused a significant renegotiation and elaboration of the qualitative paradigm.

For example, postmodern theory (an umbrella term for a diverse body of theories) rejects totalizing or “grand” theories, calls for a critical restructuring of “the subject,” pays attention to the productive aspects of the symbolic realm, accounts for the sociopolitical nature of experience, and rejects essentialist identity categories that erase differences.

These theoretical and epistemological claims bear directly on methodological practices and the expansion of the qualitative paradigm. With the goal of troubling dominant knowledges or “jamming the theoretical machinery” (Irigaray, 1985, p. 78), researchers informed by postmodern and poststructural theories have adapted qualitative methods in order to expose and subvert oppressive power relations. For example, poststructuralists influenced by Jacques Derrida (1966) apply “deconstruction” and “discourse analysis” approaches to qualitative content analysis. Postmodern theorists have also brought issues of representation to the forefront of methodological debate. Arguing that form and content are inextricably bound and enmeshed within shifting relations of power (see Foucault, 1976), postmodernists have been integral to the advancement of arts-based methods of representation.

The qualitative paradigm has expanded greatly as a result of all of these developments in theory. Resulting from this politically, theoretically, and methodologically diverse paradigm, in recent decades, ABR emerged as an alternative paradigm.

Arts-Based Research Practices: An Alternative Paradigm

A major shift in academic research began in the 1970s, and by the 1990s arts-based practices constituted a new methodological genre (Sinner et al., 2006, p. 1226). This shift is in part the result of work done in **arts-based therapies**. Health care researchers, special education researchers, psychologists, and others have increasingly turned to the arts for their therapeutic, restorative, and empowering qualities. Although there are differences between therapeutic practices and research practices, there is no doubt that knowledge derived from the practices of arts-based therapies (and creative arts therapies in particular) has informed the current practice of arts-based research practices (this is elaborated shortly and these practitioners are cited throughout this text).

Arts-based practices have posed serious challenges to methods conventions, thus unsettling many assumptions about what constitutes research and knowledge. Inkeri Sava and Kari Nuutinen (2003) refer to

these methods as presenting a “troubling model of qualitative inquiry into self, art, and method” (p. 517). These disruptions to traditional research practices, much like early responses to the qualitative challenge to positivism, have caused concerns and inspired debates. As our methods history shows, such debates are critical to scientific progress, as they create a space for a professional public renegotiation of disciplinary practices and standards. Influenced by Elliot W. Eisner (1997), I therefore suggest that the emergence of ABR advances critical conversations about the nature of social-scientific practice and expands the borders of our methods arsenal. Eisner articulated the fear experienced by some as the methods borders are pushed, making way for artistic representation: “We have . . . concretized our view of what it means to know. We prefer our knowledge solid and like our data hard. It makes for a firm foundation, a secure place on which to stand. Knowledge as a process, a temporary state, is scary to many” (p. 7). It is important to remember that this trepidation parallels the fear quantitatively trained researchers expressed when qualitative research was emerging and struggling for legitimacy. In this regard, Kip Jones (2006) has noted that “novelty is always uncomfortable” (p. 12). In a discussion of paradigms, Shaun McNiff (2018) echoes Eisner and Jones, explaining, “Staying close to artistic ways of knowing, then and now, goes against the grain of the prevailing institutional mind sets and values . . . the more common inclination, then and now, is to identify closely with the dominant paradigm and adjust the arts to it in an adjunctive relationship” (p. 22).

The move toward arts-based practices flows from several related issues. I begin by providing some context about art and learning. This is a highly abridged and limited discussion as the literature on art and learning could easily be the subject of a book itself. Second, I review the contribution of creative arts therapies to ABR. Third, I review the intrinsic parallels between artistic practice and the practice of social research, particularly qualitative research. Fourth, I briefly review the role of technology. Fifth, I discuss the philosophical substructure of ABR followed by the strengths of these practices. What kinds of research questions can be answered via these strategies? What can these approaches reveal and represent that cannot be captured with other methods? Finally, I consider the skills needed to conduct ABR.

Art and Learning

Educators aim for meaningful, long-lasting learning. In order to make a deep impression, people must be engaged in their learning process.

The arts can be highly engaging in part because they tap into emotions and may jar us into seeing or thinking differently (Yorks & Kasl, 2006). Intuitively, many people thus realize that the arts can be a profound source of learning, but there is actually philosophy and science to support these assumptions.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) suggest that metaphor is not characteristic only of language, but it also is pervasive in human thought and action. They explain that our conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical, which implies that “what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor” (p. 3). There are clearly implications for how we best reach and engage audiences with research.

In Mark Turner’s renowned book *The Literary Mind: The Origins of Thought and Language* (1996), he argues that the common perceptions that the everyday mind is nonliterary and that the literary mind is optional are untrue. Turner argues that “the literary mind is the fundamental mind,” and observes, “Story is a basic principle of mind. Most of our experience, our knowledge, and our thinking is organized as stories. The mental scope of story is magnified by projection—one story helps us make sense of another. The projection of one story onto another is parable” (p. v).

Famed sociologist Lewis A. Coser was far ahead of his time publishing *Sociology through Literature: An Introductory Reader* in 1963. At the time he deemed the book “experimental” but felt novelists were uniquely able to tap into and describe human experience, which could be of great value to teaching in the social sciences.

There is a growing body of scholarship on the relationship between neuroscience and literature, often dubbed “literary neuroscience,” that has implications for why fiction might be a particularly effective pedagogical tool. Natalie Phillips received considerable attention for her study about how reading affects the brain. Phillips became interested in studying distractibility as a result of her own personal experiences and observations of others. Phillips said: “I love reading, and I am someone who can actually become so absorbed in a novel that I really think the house could possibly burn down around me and I wouldn’t notice. And I’m simultaneously someone who loses their keys at least three times a day, and I often can’t remember where in the world I parked my car” (quoted in Thompson & Vedantam, 2012). She decided to consider how reading affects the brain and turned to the fiction of Jane Austen. Phillips and her team measured brain activity as research participants engaged in close versus casual reading of an Austen novel. The preliminary results were surprising. They found that the whole

brain appears to be transformed as people engage in close readings of fiction. Moreover, there appear to be global activations across a number of different regions of the brain, including some unexpected areas such as those that are involved in movement and touch. In the experiment, it was as if “readers were physically placing themselves within the story as they analyzed it” (Thompson & Vedantam, 2012). Research in this area seems to be taking off. For another example, Gregory Berns led a team of researchers in a study published in *Brain Connectivity* that suggests there is heightened connectivity in our brains for days after reading a novel (Berns, Blaine, Prietula, & Pye, 2013).

It is interesting to note that the history of neuroscience itself is intertwined with fiction. Silas Weir Mitchell (1824–1914) is considered the father of American neurology (Todman, 2007). Interestingly, he was also a fiction writer who published an astonishing 19 novels, 7 poetry books, and many short stories. Many of his works of fiction were inextricably bound to patient observations made during his clinical practice and centered on topics dealing with psychological and physiological crises. Given Mitchell’s extensive body of fictional work, some suggest that students can learn about the history of neuroscience itself through his fictional writings (De Jong, 1982; Todman, 2007). Similarly, Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s 1892 short story “The Yellow Wallpaper” is used in some neurology and neuroscience programs in order to illustrate concepts in mental illness and doctor–patient relationships with respect to sociohistorical and cultural understandings of gender (Todman, 2007).

There is also an important relationship between art therapy and neuroscience (Franklin, 2010; Hass-Cohen, Kaplan, & Carr, 2008; Malchiodi, 2012) that further suggests great potential for ABR and engagement. Historically, scientists thought the two hemispheres of the brain had different functions: the right held creativity and intuition and the left, logical thought and language (Malchiodi, 2012). However, the left hemisphere of the brain is involved in art making, and indeed both hemispheres are necessary for artistic expression (Gardner, 1984; Malchiodi, 2012; Ramachandran, 1999, 2005). A study by Rebecca Chamberlain and colleagues (2014) in the journal *NeuroImage* debunks right-brain and left-brain thinking to argue that those with visual artistic talent or who identify as visual artists have increased amounts of gray and white matter on both sides of the brain. There is an emerging field called *neuroaesthetics* that considers how our brains make sense of visual art. Nobel laureate Eric Kandel (2012) explains that visual art activates many distinct and at times conflicting emotional signals in the brain, which in turn causes deep memories.

Daniel J. Levitin (2007, 2008) has been at the forefront of studying the cognitive neuroscience of music. His popular work combines psychology (including evolutionary psychology), music, and neuroscience in order to look at the evolution of music and the human brain. He writes, “music, I argue, is not simply a distraction or pastime, but a core element of our identity as a species” (2008, p. 3). Like those exploring creative arts therapies and neuroscience, Levitin (2007) notes that music is distributed throughout the brain, in both hemispheres. He reminds us that musical instruments are among the oldest human artifacts and music making is as old as human history. Indeed, Levitin (2007, 2008) suggests music is, in essence, hardwired in our brains. He even points to patients with brain damage who can no longer read a newspaper but can still read music.

The more we understand about human cognition, the clearer it becomes that narrative, stories, and the arts can play a major role in teaching diverse subjects and getting through to people on deep levels. As this potential becomes clearer, it is capturing the attention of those in academia and the media. For example, on March 31, 2014, the *New York Times* published an article about how the arts are being used to teach climate change to college students (Pérez-Peña, 2014). In Finland, new educational policies are requiring phenomenon-based learning, which often involves the arts (Ansio, Seppälä, & Houni, 2017). According to the Finnish government, the arts promote “active citizenship” (Ansio et al., 2017).

Creative Arts Therapies

Creative arts therapy is a hybrid discipline that integrates the arts and sciences (psychology, psychiatry, and medicine) (Malchiodi, 2018), and is often discussed under the larger category of expressive arts therapy. I offer a brief historical sketch of the development of the field (focusing on American literature⁵) and then move into a discussion of the primary advantages of these therapeutic approaches and their relationship to ABR.

The interweaving between arts and healing is as old as society itself, so this review considers the development of art therapy as a professional field, which, as Randy Vick (2012) notes, is the formalizing of long-standing traditions (p. 6). Creative arts therapy assumes that the arts have unique healing capabilities and draws directly on visual art, drama, dance, music, poetry, and literature (as well as integrated arts or multimodal approaches) (Malchiodi, 2018). Early creative arts therapists were inspired by what the arts could bring to the field of

mental health (McNiff, 2011). Creative arts therapy emerged from the 1940s to 1970s (Vick, 2012) with a steep rise in the field in the 1960s and 1970s (McNiff, 2005). Shaun McNiff explains the growth during that time as follows:

[The rise] was fueled by the values of expressionism in the arts, a more egalitarian approach to seeing the aesthetic significance of every person's expression, the desire of artists to use creative expression to serve others and society, the recognition that spoken language has many limits when it comes to communicating the full range of human emotions and experience, and the psychological realization that diverse forms of symbolic expression fulfill basic human needs. (pp. ix-x)

Pioneering women were early leaders in the field. Margaret Naumburg is referred to as the “mother of art therapy” in the United States, and in 1961 Elinor Ulman founded the field's first journal, *Bulletin of Art Therapy* (Vick, 2012, p. 9). In the early 1980s two additional journals were founded, and the field has grown exponentially ever since.

Today, creative arts therapies are often used in the context of psychotherapy, counseling, rehabilitation, or health care (Malchiodi, 2005). In the fields of medicine, health, and rehabilitation these therapies have been used with patients with AIDS, asthma, burns, cancer, tuberculosis, trauma, chemical dependency, and other conditions (Vick, 2012, drawing on Malchiodi, 1999). However, these therapies or principles thereof are also used in educational contexts, marriage and family counseling (see Riley, 1999), relational approaches to therapy (see Dalley, Rifkind, & Terry, 1993), and feminist approaches to therapy (see Hogan, 1997) (Malchiodi, 2012, pp. 7–12). Some practitioners claim art therapy as their profession while others integrate these practices into medicine, psychology, counseling, social work, nursing, education, and other fields (McNiff, 2011). To show you how far we have come from the artificial divide between art and science, today “arts in health care” is a new specialty in health care (Dileo & Bradt, 2009, cited in Vick, 2012).

Cathy A. Malchiodi, who has written extensively in the field, suggests these are distinctive characteristics of creative arts therapies: self-expression, active participation, imagination (as a healing agent), and mind-body connection (2005). The major genres of creative arts therapy are art therapy (visual), drama therapy, dance and movement therapy, poetry and bibliotherapy, music therapy, and integrated arts or multimodal approaches (using two or more art forms). While all genres of creative arts therapy draw on the healing power of the arts,

each genre brings strengths (consult Malchiodi, 2012, for a list). The unique capabilities of each genre of creative arts therapy bear parallels to the genres of ABR reviewed throughout this book.

Indeed, there is an important relationship between creative arts therapies and arts-based research. Creative arts therapists have long been harnessing the potential of the arts for many of the reasons that later, arts-based researchers would, such as meaning making, empowerment, identity exploration, emotional expression, multisensory communication, consciousness-raising, healing, self-reflection and personal growth, relational connections, intersubjectivity, and expressive power (G. Chilton, personal communication, 2013). These bodies of literature have not overlapped to a great extent, and so the significant contributions of art therapy to ABR haven't always been fleshed out. Furthermore, as some creative arts therapists are now studying, creating, and using ABR practices as such, the synergies between these fields is only increasing. For example, *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association* published a special issue that included ABR. There are numerous examples of ABR in creative arts therapy, and this work is published in both art therapy and qualitative journals, showing that the synergies between these fields are being explored. For example, there have been hybrid ABR and creative arts therapy participant action research projects with women's empowerment groups (Huss & Cwikel, 2005) and mental health professionals and their consumers (Spaniol, 2005), and a Nicaraguan study about community-based art therapy and social transformation (Kapitan, Litell, & Torres, 2011).

Perhaps the biggest way creative arts therapists are directly moving the ABR community forward is by eroding the art-science divide. As McNiff (1998) has noted, the field of creative arts therapy shows that art and science can be effectively combined "within the process of disciplined inquiry" (p. 51). Further, the creative arts therapies highlight the potential healing power brought about by merging the arts and sciences, and this recognition is gaining popularity that seemed unimaginable a decade ago. For example, a new initiative in Montreal, Canada, created between the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the association of doctors will soon allow doctors to write prescriptions to the museum to deal with a range of physical and mental illnesses (Livni, 2018). Similarly, thanks to a new initiative created by the government, by 2023 doctors in the United Kingdom will be able to prescribe a range of art activities and visits to their patients (Richman-Abdou, 2018; Solly, 2018). These "social prescriptions" will include art classes, music lessons, visits to museums, visits to theaters, and more (Richman-Abdou, 2018).

Artistic and Qualitative Research Practice

There are many synergies between artistic and qualitative practice. In both instances, the practitioner may aim to illuminate, build understanding, or challenge our assumptions. For instance, artists and qualitative researchers alike may aim to shed light on something about the social world, sensitively portray people and their circumstances, develop new insights about the relationships between our sociohistorical environments and our lives, or disrupt dominant narratives and challenge biases. It is important to note that quantitative researchers may have similar goals. I am focusing on qualitative research because epistemologically and methodologically there are distinct similarities.

Both artistic practice and the practice of qualitative research can be viewed as *crafts*. Qualitative researchers do not simply gather and write; they *compose, orchestrate, and weave*. As Valerie J. Janesick (2001) notes, the researcher is the instrument in qualitative research as in artistic practice. Moreover, both practices are holistic and dynamic, involving reflection, description, problem formulation and solving, and the ability to identify and explain intuition and creativity in the research process. Therefore, Janesick refers to qualitative researchers as “artist-scientists.” She also suggests that if we begin to better understand and disclose how we use creativity and intuition in our research, then we can better understand the function of qualitative research. In this vein, a systematic exploration of arts-based practices can lead to a refining of the work some qualitative researchers *already do*.

Anita Hunter, Paula Lusardi, Donna Zucker, Cynthia Jacelon, and Genevieve Chandler (2002) similarly argue, from their perspective as health care researchers, that the creative arts can help researchers pay closer attention to how the complex process of meaning making and idea percolation shapes research. Hunter and colleagues posit that meaning making is naturally central to the research process, the “incubation phase” in qualitative research—the phase in which structured “intellectual chaos” occurs so that patterns may emerge and novel conclusions can be drawn. However, the incubation phase is only given lip service, it isn’t legitimized as a distinct phase of the research process and is accordingly rushed through and later glossed over (p. 389). Hunter and colleagues suggest that the legitimized research process consists of the following four stages: (1) problem identification, (2) literature review, (3) methods, and (4) results (p. 389). Nevertheless, in qualitative research praxis the meaning-making process occurs as an *iterative process* (not a linear one) and meaning emerges through labeling, identifying, and classifying emerging concepts; interrelating concepts and testing hypotheses; finding patterns; and generating theory

(p. 389). Furthermore, there is an interface between interpretation and analysis—the process is *holistic* (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004, 2006, 2011; Hunter et al., 2002). Hunter and colleagues argue that visual and other arts-based approaches make this process explicit—allowing qualitative researchers to better accomplish what they already do—and draw out the meaning-making process and push it to the forefront.

The move by some qualitative researchers to the arts is not surprising to researchers in drama education, who note, for example, profound similarities between theatre arts and qualitative inquiry. Joe Norris (2000) remarks that in both fields there is an ongoing process of reexamining content in order to create new meanings, and that drama students constantly test hypotheses via “the magic of what if” (p. 41). Johnny Saldaña (1999, 2011) asserts that theatre practitioners and qualitative researchers share many critical characteristics, including keen observational skills, analytic skills, storytelling proficiency, and the ability to think conceptually, symbolically, and metaphorically. Moreover, as indicated, both practices require creativity, flexibility, and intuition, and result in the communication of information from which an audience generates meaning.

Marjatta Saarnivaara (2003) suggests that it is assumed there is a “chasm” separating social inquiry and artistic practice, in which the former is viewed as a conceptual arena and the latter as experiential. However, Saarnivaara contends that this is an artificial dualism and that art and inquiry can be merged because they already entail a similar process. Saarnivaara writes about artists as follows: “I am using the word *artist*, following Juha Varto (2001), in a loose sense—metaphorically—to describe a person who confronts her experiential world by means of a craft and without exerting any conscious conceptual influence and who draws on it to create something new” (p. 582). Although some may argue that it is unrealistic or even undesirable to assume researchers are not applying conceptual frames, Saarnivaara makes an excellent point regarding the common theme of investigating experiential reality via a craft—a *process*, as opposed to the clearly graded stages that comprise quantitative inquiry.

In addition, the writing of research, as with the work of artists, is ultimately about (re)presenting a set of meanings to an audience. In this regard, Gene Diaz (2002) writes, “The act of writing assumes an attitude of persuasiveness. Literary persuasion, or rhetoric, like much of visual persuasion, is artistic. As writers and painters we try to persuade our readers and viewers to see the world through our eyes” (p. 153). The arts simply provide researchers a broader palette of investigative and communicative tools with which to garner and relay a range of social meanings. Moreover, the artist’s palette provides

tools that can serve and expand the promise of traditional qualitative research.

Technology

Technological advances have assisted with the development and growth of ABR. Quite simply, new technologies have allowed for the construction, preservation, and dissemination of many new kinds of “texts.” The Internet, Photoshop and other digital art-making programs, digital cameras, digital-imaging technology, sound files and retrieval systems, print-on-demand, and social media have all fueled ABR. These technologies allow researchers to use the arts in ways not previously possible. The Internet and social media are particularly important for the dissemination of ABR, and several of the exemplars in this book are available online. YouTube and Vimeo are just a couple of the now popular platforms available to share performative and multimodal research. Digital technologies, such as smartphones, also enable data generation in ways that were once too expensive or impractical. For example, camera and video functions allow for participatory designs in which participants create or co-create data, such as in the case of Photovoice (reviewed in Chapter 7). Some are also using social media (such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram) during their inquiry as a means of locating participants and generating data.

The Philosophical Substructure of Arts-Based Research

Each research paradigm has a philosophical substructure that guides research practice—this includes views about what can be known, how it can be known, and by whom. As reviewed earlier, the quantitative paradigm is guided by positivism and generally follows a deductive model, whereas the qualitative paradigm is guided by numerous epistemological positions that value subjective knowledge, is influenced by the justice movements, and generally follows an inductive model. Arts-based research pushes the inductive model even further, as artistic inquiry requires openness to the spontaneous and unknown.

Epistemologically, ABR assumes the arts can create and convey meaning (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Nancy Gerber, Elizabeth Templeton, Gioia Chilton, Marcia Cohen Liebman, Elizabeth Manders, and Minjung Shim (2012, p. 41) suggest a philosophy of ABR:

- Recognizes art has always been able to convey truth(s) or bring about awareness (both knowledge of the self and knowledge of others).

- Recognizes the use of the arts is critical in achieving self/other knowledge.
- Values preverbal ways of knowing.
- Includes multiple ways of knowing such as sensory, kinesthetic, and imaginary.

These philosophical beliefs form an “aesthetic intersubjective paradigm” (Chilton, Gerber, & Scotti, 2015). Let’s break that down. *Aesthetics* or the “beauty” of the research product itself, **the beauty elicited by ABR is explicitly linked to how it fosters reflexivity and empathy in the viewer (and researcher) (Dunlop, 2004). Aesthetics are linked to advancing care and compassion (McIntyre, 2004).** Dunlop (2004) explains as follows: “This beauty is found in our constant revision and interrogation of our own positions in relation to others, so that our minds and hearts and empathies are opened to others” (p. 95). Here we can see that beauty in ABR is linked to the utility of the work—how it affects people. For example, a poignant play or novel will affect people more deeply than a poorly written one, and thus strengthen audience impact, thereby facilitating the researcher’s goals. Aesthetics draw on sensory, emotional, perceptual, kinesthetic, embodied, and imaginal ways of knowing (Chilton et al., 2015; Cooper, Lamarque, & Sartwell, 1997; Dewey, 1934; Harris-Williams, 2010; Langer, 1953; Whitfield, 2005). ABR philosophy is also strongly influenced by philosophical understandings of “the body” and specifically, advances in embodiment theory and phenomenology. **Embodiment will be discussed more in Chapter 5, but generally describes “sensorial experience” (Malchiodi, 2018).** *Intersubjectivity* refers to the relational quality of the arts as knowing, as we make meanings with others and with nature (Conrad & Beck, 2015).

The Strengths of Arts-Based Research Practices

Arts-based practices have developed to service any or all phases of the research endeavor: data generation, analysis, interpretation, and (re) presentation. Many researchers referred to in this volume suggest that an artistic method, such as visual art or performance, can serve as an entire methodology in a given study. Moreover, arts-based practices allow research questions to be posed in new ways, entirely new questions to be asked, and new audiences to be reached with the products of social research. In this section I detail some of the strengths of ABR. Please note that although I separate each strength for the sake of clarity, in practice many of these are interlinked in particular projects. I

hope research examples in the following chapters help bring the capabilities of ABR to life.

New Insights and Learning

All research seeks to yield new insights that promote learning, and in this respect ABR isn't different than any other research paradigm. However, ABR offers ways to tap into what would otherwise be inaccessible, make connections and interconnections that are otherwise out of reach, ask and answer new research questions, explore old research questions in new ways, and represent research differently, often more effectively with respect to reaching broad audiences and nonacademic stakeholders. The research experience or exposure to the final research representations have the potential to jar people into seeing and/or thinking differently, feeling more deeply, learning something new, or building empathetic understandings (as Elizabeth de Freitas notes, reviewed shortly). In short, ABR cultivates new insights and illuminates aspects of the social world and human experience, as do quantitative and qualitative research, but in different ways. **Arts-based practices are particularly useful for research projects that aim to describe, explore, discover, or unsettle.** Furthermore, these research practices are generally attentive to *processes*. The capability of the arts to capture process mirrors the unfolding nature of social life, and thus there is a congruence between subject matter and method.

Problem-Centered

Real-world problems rarely fit discreetly into disciplinary borders, and thus require transdisciplinary approaches. Whether we're interested in bullying, violence, trauma, racism, poverty, sustainability, cancer, eating disorders, or innumerable other topics, we are dealing with multidimensional issues that require the use of multiple disciplinary lenses and tools. ABR itself is transdisciplinary and is often employed in *problem-centered* or *issue-centered projects*, where the problem at the center of research dictates the methodology.

The versatility of ABR to be used in service of addressing real-world issues or problems of import makes ABR a paradigm with a strong ethical base. Problem-centered research design and ethical practice are linked. We live in an age with a wide range of significant issues and problems that need the attention of the research community. There is a moral or ethical imperative for researchers to use available resources, including creating new and transdisciplinary approaches to research, in order to serve the communities in which we are enmeshed (Leavy,

2011a). The ability of ABR to be used in problem-centered projects and in some cases as a part of problem solving, makes it an ethically charged research practice. Furthermore, problem or phenomenon-based learning and research is increasing in many countries, paving the way for greater application of ABR.

Forge Micro–Macro Connections

Sociologists and other researchers working from critical theoretical positions are often interested in making micro–macro connections; that is, exploring, describing, or explaining (theorizing about) the connections between our individual lives and the larger contexts in which we live. ABR can be particularly useful in this regard. For instance, in a short story or novel a character’s interior dialogue can show readers what they are thinking and how they are feeling in a particular environment, in the midst of an interaction, or as they consume media. There will be concrete examples of this throughout the book.

Holistic

ABR practices developed in a transdisciplinary methods environment in which disciplinary methodological and theoretical borders were crossed, blurred, and expanded (Leavy, 2011a, 2017). Furthermore, these research strategies have the ability to integrate and expand on existing disciplines and synergies between and across disciplines (Chilton & Leavy, 2014).

ABR practices may be a part of a *holistic* or *integrated* approach to research (Hunter et al., 2002; Leavy, 2009, 2017, 2018). This is a process-oriented view of research in which a research topic is considered comprehensively, the different phases of the research project are explicitly linked, and theory and practice are married (Chilton & Leavy, 2014; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Leavy, 2009, 2011a). In ABR there is a **synergy between the form and content**, as they shape each other and, in turn, expand how we think about our role in shaping knowledge.⁶ Ardra Cole and J. Gary Knowles (2008) explain a holistic approach as follows:

From purpose to method to interpretation and representation, arts-informed research is a holistic process and rendering that runs counter to more conventional research endeavors that tend to be more linear, sequential, compartmentalized, and distanced from researcher and participants. A rigorous arts-informed “text” is imbued with an *internal consistency* and *coherence* that represents

a strong and seamless relationship between purpose and method (process and form). The research text also evidences a high level of authenticity that speaks to the truthfulness and sincerity of the research relationship, process of inquiry, interpretation, and representational form. (p. 67)

In order to maximize the holistic nature of these approaches to research, some arts-based practitioners use multi- or mixed-methods designs. In a multimethod design two or more arts-based strategies are employed, whereas in a mixed-methods design an arts-based strategy is used in concert with a quantitative or qualitative method.

Evocative and Provocative

The arts, at their best, are known for being emotionally and politically evocative, captivating, aesthetically powerful, and moving. Art can grab people's attention in powerful ways. The arresting power of "good" art, or perhaps better said *resonant art, whether musical, performance-based, or visual, is intimately linked with the immediacy* of art (the concept of "good art" itself needs modification with respect to arts-based practice; this is discussed shortly). These are some of the qualities that researchers are harnessing in their ABR projects, and what makes the arts very different than other forms of expression. As a representational form, the arts can be highly effective for communicating the emotional aspects of social life. For example, theatrical representations of the experience of homelessness, the experience of living with a debilitating illness, or surviving sexual assault can get at elements of the lived experience that a textual form cannot reach. Furthermore, the dramatic presentation connects with audiences on a deeper, more emotional level and may evoke compassion, empathy, and sympathy, as well as understanding.

Critical Consciousness, Raising Awareness, and Empathy

Arts-based practices can be employed as a means of *creating critical awareness or raising consciousness*. ABR can expose people to new ideas, stories, or images and can do so in service of cultivating social consciousness. This is important in social justice-oriented research that seeks to reveal power relations (often invisible to those in privileged groups), raise critical race or gender consciousness, build coalitions across groups, and challenge dominant ideologies. In this regard, Susan Finley (2008) posits ABR is a moral and political enterprise.

While ABR can raise awareness and foster critical consciousness by presenting alternative, emotional, evocative, attention-grabbing and/or resistive stories, images, and performances, it is the *cultivation of empathy* that is perhaps one of the greatest strengths of ABR with regard to these goals and a host of other outcomes, such as unsettling stereotypes. Elizabeth de Freitas (2003, 2004, 2008) has written extensively about the ability of fiction-based research (and I suggest by inference ABR more generally) to promote “empathetic engagement.” In other words, the way the product of ABR is consumed is necessarily engaged and may promote empathy. Consider, for example, if you have ever had an emotional response reading a novel, seeing a photography exhibit, listening to music, or watching a film or play. In particular, have you ever felt “bad for” (empathetic toward) a fictional character in a play? Arts-based researchers can harness this capability of the arts—linked to how the arts are experienced—in order to foster empathy in audiences.

Unsettle Stereotypes, Challenge Dominant Ideologies, and Amplify Marginalized Voices and Perspectives

Many social researchers across the disciplines may aim to unsettle stereotypes or challenge dominant ideologies. Certainly building empathy, as noted earlier, is a part of that. Arts-based practices are often useful in studies involving *identity work*. Research in this area frequently focuses on communicating information about the experiences associated with differences, diversity, and prejudice. Moreover, identity research seeks to confront stereotypes that keep some groups disenfranchised while other groups are limited by their own biased “commonsense” ideas.

Jarring people into seeing and thinking differently is also critical if we wish to challenge stereotypes and the ideologies they promote. Consider the aftermath of the tragic Trayvon Martin case. To recap, Trayvon Martin was a teenage Black male, wearing a hoodie to protect himself from the rain, walking home after dark in his own neighborhood when George Zimmerman followed him, engaged him, and fatally shot him. Zimmerman was acquitted. Many people across the United States and around the world felt Trayvon was racially profiled and murdered for being Black. What much of the commentary in the aftermath revealed was that deep-rooted stereotypes about Black males are alive and shape the life experiences of many. How do you combat these deeply held racist stereotypes that most people don’t even realize they have internalized? For example, the “hoodie” that garnered so much media attention? Counter-imagery is one way. For instance, the students at Howard University’s medical school (a historically Black

school) all posed in a photo wearing dark hoodies. They posed in a second photo wearing white medical coats. The two photos juxtaposed were powerful and held the potential to jar people into seeing and thinking differently, which was clearly the intent. There is actually ample empirical research that this approach works. More recently the Broadway play *American Son*, written by Christopher Demos-Brown and starring Kerry Washington, dramatized the all-too common experience of a Black mother in the United States dealing with racist police officers as she attempts to locate her missing son.

Shankar Vedantam, a reporter at NPR, did a story in 2013 on silent racial bias. A review of social science research found a study conducted at a major medical hospital in Massachusetts in which doctors were found to have treated patients with the same symptoms differently across race, without realizing it. In fact, when the findings were brought to the physicians they were mortified. This is deemed “subtle bias”—one that perpetrators may be unaware of.⁷ The NPR story cited a study out of the University of Virginia where scientists came up with 18 rapid interventions to reverse subtle biases. The interventions were tried on more than 11,000 participants. In short, the one that worked the most effectively was showing counterimages, images that explicitly buck stereotypes. Here we can think back to earlier discussions of art and learning and how ABR can promote new insights and new learning. Harnessing the natural power of the arts, researchers can address stereotypes in ways that would not otherwise be possible.

Unsettling stereotypes also requires inclusive approaches to research. Many researchers, particularly those influenced by the theoretical perspectives that emerged from the social justice movements of the 1960s and 1970s, are interested in accessing and prioritizing subjugated perspectives. In other words, many researchers across the disciplines seek out those who have been marginalized as a result of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, disability, or other factors (as well as the interconnections between these categories) for inclusion in research. Arts-based projects can center on such perspectives and may be particularly effective, as the arts are uniquely suited for challenging the status quo.

Participatory

In ABR, when participants or nonacademic stakeholders are involved, they are viewed and valued as full, equal collaborators (Finley, 2008), thereby crumbling the traditional researcher-researched hierarchy. The second way ABR brings others into the process, which is true in all

projects, is in the role of audience. People consume ABR; they experience it. The role of the potential audience should be considered during research design (Finley, 2008; Leavy, 2017, 2018), including a strategy for how to reach relevant stakeholders.

It is important to note that the participatory nature of ABR, as well as the visceral, emotional way the arts can be consumed, raises particular ethical issues to consider as well (these issues are discussed in Chapter 8).

Promote Dialogue

Arts-based practices can also *promote dialogue*, which is critical to cultivating understanding. The particular ways in which art forms facilitate conversation are important as well. The arts ideally evoke emotional responses, and so the dialogue sparked by arts-based practices is highly engaged. By connecting people on emotional and visceral levels, artistic forms of representation facilitate empathy, which is a necessary precondition for challenging harmful stereotypes (pertinent in identity research) and building coalitions/community across differences (pertinent in action research and other projects with activist components). In this vein, these methods serve postmodern attempts at subversion.

Multiple Meanings

Arts-based practices are able to get at *multiple meanings*, opening up multiplicity in meaning making instead of pushing authoritative claims. For example, a piece of visual art or a dance performance can be interpreted in different ways depending on the viewer (his/her/their attitudes, values, and prior experiences) as well as the context of viewing. There is no one way to make sense of a piece of art. In this respect, research-produced artworks can democratize meaning making and decentralize academic researchers as “the experts.” Furthermore, the kind of dialogue that may be stimulated by a piece of art is based on *evoking* meanings, rather than denoting them. This issue isn’t just about how participants experience the art-making process or how audiences consume ABR, but also how researchers design their studies.

Research often closes off meanings by virtue of the design of the study. Qualitative research typically claims to be inductive, but can falter with preconceived language, code categories, and guiding assumptions creeping into the process, often more than we may realize. Arts-based practices lend themselves to *inductive* research designs and the organic emergence of meanings.

Public Scholarship, Usefulness, and Social Justice

I believe the greatest strength and potential of arts-based research is the advancement of public scholarship and correspondingly conducting research that is *useful*. Research should not circulate in the hands of an elite few with highly specialized education. Researchers can say what they like, but the fact is that traditional peer-reviewed journal articles are totally inaccessible to the public. They are jargon-filled, geared toward academic peers, and circulate in highly specialized journals in university libraries. Beyond that, they are boring and generally poorly written. As a result, knowledge circulates within the arena of an elite few. Morally and ethically, there is no doubt it should not be this way. Research should be useful, which in turn is a part of social justice work. Let's remember Nowab Jan-Fishan Khan's famous statement in the 19th century, "The candle is not there to illuminate itself." On a practical or pragmatic level it also behooves researchers who spend so much time on their work to have it consumed by larger audiences, thereby increasing the potential it may do some good, increasing its *impact*. Moreover, times have changed, and there have been widespread calls for researchers to serve the communities in which they are enmeshed. Historically there was a mandate within the academy to *publish or perish*; however, in recent years there has been a push to *go public or perish*. With *public scholarship* on the rise, I believe arts-based practices will continue to see an increase as a result of their representational strengths.

Research Design: Getting Started⁸

ABR projects vary enormously. There are no design templates one can easily apply that will work well for the wide range of topics and approaches taken up. Add to this the spontaneous and "unknown" process-oriented aspect of art making, and offering specific design instruction that will be useful to many is quite difficult. That said, there are some basic initial design steps most practitioners follow, which I will address in brief: topic selection, literature reviews, research purpose statements, and research questions.

Topic or Theme

Begin by selecting a primary phenomenon or theme you wish to explore. Consider your personal interests, any special skills or knowledge you have, the artistic skills necessary for the exploration, funding opportunities or other available resources, and how well you are positioned to

gain access to possible participants (if applicable). In addition to these personal and pragmatic considerations, think about the significance, value, or worth of studying this topic. What is the underlying value system guiding the project? Is there a social justice or political imperative? Is it a timely issue connected to current events or policy changes?

Literature Review

It's important to create a comprehensive overview of the existing literature on your topic. You will use the literature review at various phases of the project, but at this point it's useful for learning more about your topic, determining if it's a topic worth pursuing, and narrowing down the topic so it is researchable (Leavy, 2017). Do a keyword search to locate both recent and landmark studies that employed ABR as well as other approaches. An ABR literature review should also include a review of how popular- or fine-arts practices within the artistic genre you intend to use have contributed to knowledge on your topic. Once you locate relevant research, read, summarize, and synthesize it (Adler & Clark, 2011). You may also include relevant theories or conceptual frameworks (Leavy, 2017).

Research Purpose or Goal Statement

Using your literature review you will move from a general topic of interest to a more focused, researchable topic. To do so, formulate a brief research purpose or goal statement that clearly states your primary focus. This statement generally includes the main phenomenon or theme under investigation, the research/artistic genre and practice you will employ to generate and analyze data/content, and the primary reason for initiating the project (e.g., to explore, describe, evoke, unsettle). There will be examples of ABR research purpose statements in Chapters 2–7.

Research Questions (Optional)

ABR purpose statements may be followed by a list of central questions your research seeks to address (Leavy, 2017). ABR questions are generally inductive, emergent, and generative (Leavy, 2017). While there are innumerable ways to write these questions, they often employ non-directional language and include words and phrases such as: explore, create, emerge, express, generate, inquiry, illuminate, unearth, yield, and seek to understand (Leavy, 2017). There will be examples of ABR research questions in Chapters 2–7.

Skills of Arts-Based Researchers

Now that we know what ABR is good for and how to begin research design, it's important to consider what is required of researchers who wish to practice ABR. Differing from other approaches to research, the practice of ABR requires us to think and act like both a researcher and an artist. Each practitioner will bring his/her/their own qualities, goals, vision, and skills to their work, so the following review is meant to be taken in a general sense.

Flexibility, Openness, and Intuition

In 2013 I gave a keynote address about ABR at the Arts in Society conference in Budapest. My talk was followed by a garden conversation, during which I spoke informally with conference attendees. One artist made a wonderful observation that artistic work necessitates, demands, and even depends on *spontaneity*, at least to some degree. In contrast to my keynote talk, which included a PowerPoint presentation, where as she noted, everything is predetermined—the act of creation has already happened and closes off the spontaneous—artistic practice must allow for *emergence*. Consider, for example, how improvisation exercises are often used in the teaching of drama, music, and dance.

Many qualitative researchers also follow methodologies that allow for the unknown. Grounded theory, for example, involves a process of cycling back and adapting to new learning. Other qualitative approaches also follow responsive or recursive designs that allow for adapting to new insights.

Flexibility and openness are critical to the practice of ABR. In this regard, Barone and Eisner (2012) have suggested ABR is a process of discovery that requires a willingness to be transformed and educated.

This process thus values the intuition, emotions, and “hunches” of you, the researcher. So don't be afraid to experiment, pursue an unexpected direction, or learn as you go. This is all part of the process. Routine “gut checks” of how you feel, as enmeshed within the project, can help as you evaluate a path to pursue. ABR pushes the bounds of innovative thinking and doing when practitioners are open to the unknown.

Thinking Conceptually, Symbolically, Metaphorically, and Thematically

There is a synergy between the skills needed to conduct ABR and qualitative research. In some respects the analytical process of qualitative researchers mirrors that of artists, although it is enacted quite differently. As noted earlier, in both instances one must think

conceptually, symbolically, metaphorically (Saldaña, 2011), and thematically. Research findings are not replicated in their “raw” form for audiences but rather made sense of (through analysis and interpretation) and then represented in a distilled, coherent, carefully crafted format. Furthermore, because researchers do not represent all the data (in their raw form) and artists do not represent the entirety of the idea or ideas their work centers on, in both instances one is seeking essence.

Ethical Practice and Values System

Arts-based researchers fully bring themselves into their projects, including the value system guiding the undertaking. Who you are, your sense of justice, your personal motivations and hopes for society, all enter into the project. Maura McIntyre (2004) writes, “Bringing the qualities of imagination and creativity to relationships in research sites . . . engages the aesthetic and advances capacities for caring. In doing so the ethical dimensions of research are expanded to include the moral sensibility of the researcher” (p. 259). ABR is an engaged, moral, and at times political activity. Finley (2008) explains that ABR is “uniquely positioned as a methodology for radical, ethical, and revolutionary research that is futuristic, socially responsible, and useful in addressing social inequities” (p. 71). This is because, unlike much traditional research that never leaves the confines of the academy, ABR can be publicly accessible, can be collaborative (involving nonacademic stakeholders), and draws on the emotional, evocative, and resistive in order to jar people into seeing, thinking, and/or feeling differently. This kind of work is vital in identity politics (Holman Jones, Adams, & Ellis, 2013), political justice work (Finley, 2008), and in research that aims to increase compassion (Freeman, 2007). In short, ABR has the potential to evoke change, which Finley (2008) notes makes it “a people’s pedagogy” (p. 73).

Finley (2008) suggests a morally responsible and responsive approach to ABR requires researchers to emphasize ABR as a “public, moral enterprise”; view researchers, participants, and audience members as equal collaborators; respect the views of street critics and street artists; focus on issues like diversity and inclusion; carefully consider the role of the audience during research design; remain open to all art forms; and situate ABR in relation to art (p. 75).

Thinking Like an Artist

Thinking artistically applies to both the research process and the resulting work. Artists conceive of their work as a “doing” activity. *Art making is a verb*. Arthur Bochner and Carolyn Ellis (2003) note that art

is “something made, not something found” (p. 507), which implies the resulting artwork is always tied to the process of producing it, including the artist’s subjectivity. During the process it is necessary to remain open to spontaneity, be unafraid to experiment, and to trust one’s intuition.

When working with an arts-based approach it is important to bear in mind the *artfulness* of the resulting work. This requires attention to craft and aesthetics. You need to pay attention to the craft you are working with or adapting (Faulkner, 2009; Saldaña, 2005, 2011; Salvatore, 2018). Practitioners come to ABR with different backgrounds. For instance, some come from the qualitative research community and social science training, others come from the arts, and some have extensive cross-training. Your point of entry into a project must be considered. If you are coming into an ABR project without formal artistic training or experience, then you should learn something about the craft you are using, which may involve a literature review, immersion into examples of the field (e.g., seeing plays, reading scripts), taking classes, and/or collaborating with artists from your genre (additional suggestions are offered in Chapter 9). While some argue that ABR must meet the same artistic or aesthetic criteria developed in the arts and thus suggest extensive training for arts-based researchers in their artistic genre (e.g., see Finley, 2008), I disagree. ABR is not art for art’s sake. It is a different thing that is artistic, but not *only* artistic. So while it is important to pay attention to craft, I believe that ABR is better judged based on its *usefulness*. Aesthetics can increase usefulness, of course. For example, if your goal in creating an ethnodrama is to connect with audiences on an emotional level, help them develop empathetic understandings, and so on, the play itself must be good enough to accomplish those tasks. However, the driver of aesthetics is linked to effectively delivering the content of the ABR (the substantive and emotive content). Instead of asking, “Is this a good piece of art?” we should ask, “What is this piece of art good for?” (Leavy, 2010, 2011a). I believe that you can learn as you go, regardless of your starting point. Because art making is a “doing” activity, the best way to learn is through practice.

Thinking Like a Public Intellectual

The greatest potential of ABR is its ability to advance public scholarship and thus be *useful*. As I wrote in the beginning of this chapter, arts-based researchers are producing work in new “shapes” and reaching new audiences. Thinking like a public intellectual means thinking about how to make one’s research relevant and accessible to the

public. How can we reach relevant stakeholders? Therefore it is vital to think about how you will frame, label, and disseminate the work.

One should bear in mind that there may be a personal cost to producing public scholarship (Mitchell, 2008). When you put your work and ideas out there, you can't control what you get back from those who disagree with you or offer bad reviews or public critiques of your work. This is especially true when we blur genres and work within mediums beyond our formal training. This shouldn't be a deterrent. Try to develop your own relationship with your work and stay true to the value system guiding it. Despite the potential challenges, those who do this work usually claim that the rewards far outweigh the costs (Mitchell, 2008; Woo, 2019; Zinn, 2008). I certainly feel that way. At the end of the day, do you want to spend all of your time and energy producing work that is consumed by only an elite few who are just like you, and likely only consuming your work to advance their own research agenda? For most, the answer is clear. I return to this issue, and the challenges of doing ABR, in Chapter 9.

Advice to Beginning Arts-Based Researchers

When reading through the list of skills one ideally develops for ABR, it's important to bear a few things in mind. It is a learning process and we all improve with practice; we may not come into a project with all of these skills, but we *develop* them over time. Be fearless. Worry less about being "good" and focus on being engaged. Be fully present in the process. That's the best any of us can do. Once you release a piece of work into the world, make peace with it. Your work will never be all things to all people, so it's important to learn to let go and accept that you have your own relationship with your work, and others will have theirs. Finally, have fun. Just as learning should be a joyful process, the research process can be joyful too. Sure, there will be ups and downs and a lot of hard work, but the work itself can be engaged, pleasurable, and rewarding. People often hesitate to say ABR can be fun because they are afraid it waters it down or makes it appear less rigorous. If you're having fun, I don't think it means you're not serious, I think it means you're on to something. Remember, Einstein said, "Creativity is intelligence having fun."

The Organization of This Book: From Word to Image

ABR practices open up a new range of research questions and topics and expand the diversity of audiences exposed to social research.

This book explores eight new areas of methodological innovation presented in six chapters based on genres: narrative inquiry, fiction-based research, poetry, music, dance, theatre, film, and visual art. For each topic, I have written a chapter that reviews how the genre of ABR developed, the methodological variations, what kinds of research questions the practices can address, examples of studies conducted with the approach, and other issues. These chapters also include pedagogical features such as discussion questions and activities, as well as features designed for researchers, including checklists of considerations and annotated lists of journals, websites, and recommended readings.

This volume also includes exemplars by scholars who have worked with the various practices covered. The pairing of the introductory review chapters with published research provides a context for understanding each arts-based innovation as well as empirical and theoretical examples of their use. Several genres of ABR produce work that cannot be properly captured in a written text, and so those exemplars are available online.

Finally, the organization of the book mirrors one way of conceptualizing the journey of arts-based practices, as well as the interconnections between these practices. Chapter 2 covers narrative inquiry and fiction-based research. These practices draw explicitly on literary forms of writing to varying degrees and still rely on “the written word,” and are thus closest to methods researchers may already be accustomed to. Chapter 3 reviews poetic inquiry. Poetry merges the word with “lyrical invocation” and therefore represents both an extension of and departure from traditional representational forms. Music as a method is explored in Chapter 4, picking up on the lyrical nature of poetry. Chapter 5 reviews arguably the most abstract genre, dance and movement. Continuing with performance-based approaches, Chapter 6 reviews the expansive field of theatre, drama, and film. The final practices reviewed in Chapter 7 center on the visual arts, completing the arc *from word to image*. Chapter 8 is devoted to evaluating ABR. Chapter 9 concludes the book with a discussion of the art–science divide, collaborative projects, and tips for dealing with the personal and structural (professional) challenges of doing ABR.



Notes

1. *A/r/tography* is a specific category of ABR practices within education research. A/r/t is an acronym for artist–researcher–teacher. In a/r/tography these three roles are integrated creating a *third space*; practitioners

occupy “in-between” space (Pinar, 2004, p. 9). A/r/tography merges “knowing, doing, and making” (Pinar, 2004, p. 9). Referring to a/r/tographical research as a localized and evolving methodology, Anita Sinner and colleagues posit, this is a “hybrid, practice-based form of methodology” (2006, p. 1224) that is necessarily about both the self and the social. They write:

A/r/tographical work is rendered through the methodological concepts of contiguity, living inquiry, openings, metaphor/metonymy, reverberations, and excess which are enacted and presented or performed when a relational aesthetic inquiry condition is envisioned as embodied understandings and exchanges between art and text, and between and among the broadly conceived identities of artist/researcher/teacher. (p. 1224)

Performative social science also falls in the ABR family. Proponents of this approach contend their work is *research-based art*, not *arts-based research* (Gergen & Gergen, 2018). In other words, social science research is carried out using the arts, but the seed for the project is social science based. I suggest that the same can be true for ABR. As reviewed throughout this book, there is a continuum from more scientifically driven projects to more artistically driven projects. Nevertheless, there are practitioners who prefer this alternative term and so it is found throughout the literature. Kenneth J. Gergen and Mary Gergen, pioneers of this approach, explain the word “performative” is used for three reasons: to pay attention to how research is presented and thus to issues of audience, to recognize the potential of art to be consequential in the world, and to highlight the role of researchers conducting the research (2018, p. 55).

2. When we developed this table we modeled it after Patton’s (2002, p. 85) partial lexicology of autoethnography.
3. Barone and Eisner (2012) asserted that the term *arts-based research* originated in 1993 at Stanford University.
4. While researchers across the disciplines have long been using the arts in their work, this does not necessarily constitute ABR, and in recent decades there has been a widespread move causing an emergent paradigm. So while using the arts for all those things the arts are uniquely good for is not a new idea, the organization of the field, development of methodological tools, and corresponding worldview represents a paradigm shift.
5. Randy M. Vick (2012) suggests consulting Waller (1991, 1998) and Hogan (2001) to learn about the history of art therapy in Europe.
6. In fact, ABR highlights how all knowledge is shaped by research practices, which is arguably another strength of ABR.
7. The term “subtle bias” is highly problematic and arguably misleading. I use it only because it was used in the study.
8. This section is adapted from my book *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches* (Leavy, 2017). Please consult this book for a full review of ABR design.

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Two



Narrative Inquiry and Fiction-Based Research

The idea is to write it so that people hear it and it slides through
the brain and goes straight to the heart.

—MAYA ANGELOU

Storytelling and writing are fundamental parts of human life and our study of it. Narrative is not merely a research method but an integral part of life (Bochner, 2014; Bochner & Hermann, 2020; Bochner & Riggs, 2014; Clandinin & Connelly, 1989). Arthur Bochner and Nicholas Riggs (2014) elegantly write that we are constantly telling stories to give meaning to our lives, so much so that they are almost as necessary as the air we breathe, and “become our equipment for living” (p. 196). Laurel Richardson (1997) explains that narrative allows us to express and comprehend individuals, cultures, societies, and historical periods in their wholeness (p. 27). Stories that we hear or read can also make a deep and lasting impression. Stories have the potential to make us feel connected; open our eyes to new perspectives; stimulate the development of empathy, self-awareness or social reflection; or create what Ronald Pelias (2004) has called “me-too moments.” Stories enable us to imagine what is and what might be. The power of stories—of narrative—is immeasurable and profoundly entrenched in our humanity.

Numerous research practices draw on the power of narrative in order to communicate truthful stories. These may be our own stories, those of others, or those that blur “the real” and “the imaginary” but are no less truthful in communicating human experience. This chapter reviews narrative inquiry or the narrative method as well as

fiction-based research or social fiction (which are umbrella terms for a range of practices).¹ To provide context for those discussions, autoethnography and creative nonfiction are also briefly reviewed.

Methods that draw on narrative writing exist on a science–art continuum. Some approaches to narrative inquiry are closer to traditional qualitative research practice, particularly interview research, whereas others are further along the artistic side and draw significantly on literary traditions. Mark Freeman (2007) has rightfully suggested that artful approaches to narrative inquiry can contribute to ethical practice by increasing sympathy and compassion (p. 142). Candace Stout (2014) has explored the bonds between narrative art and narrative inquiry as a means of calling forth the “centers” of stories—their resonant cores. Arthur Bochner and Andrew Hermann (2020) suggest narrative inquiry exists “within an intermediate zone between art and science.” Freeman (2018) is partial to the idea of “poetic science” (p. 133). Fiction-based research or social fiction are necessarily further down on the artistic side. However, these practices vary widely too, and may rely on data that were generated and analyzed via traditional research methods, may rely on exact participant language, or may in other ways mirror conventional research practice. It is important to make clear that narrative inquiry and fiction-based research are different research practices and are included in this chapter because they both rely on storytelling and writing (space considerations do not allow a separate chapter on each).

Background

? *What has prompted the increased use of narrative in research?*

Writing is an integral part of research and it always has been. Writing is necessarily entwined with the construction of knowledge. Language or “the word” has traditionally been the communicative device employed in the service of social-scientific knowledge building. In short, all research, qualitative and quantitative, involves writing. Likewise, there is a rich tradition of storytelling methods in the qualitative paradigm that draw on cultural practices of oral knowledge transmission, such as oral history and life history. The artistic turn to narrative in the social sciences can thus in many ways be viewed as the evolution of more conventional research practices and the naming and redefining of a wide set of practices.

Both narrative inquiry and fiction-based research draw on

narrative, in different ways. Most simply put, a *narrative* is a story. Moreover, a narrative is necessarily “*about something*” (Labov, 2006, p. 37, original emphasis). When we talk about narrative we are really talking about the telling and writing of stories. The sharing of narratives in daily life occurs when a person wants to tell others “about something” and that something is “an event—something that happened” (Labov, 2006, p. 38).

Methods that expressly use narrative have been on the rise for over half a century. D. Jean Clandinin and Jerry Rosiek (2007) note that since the late 1960s, narrative inquiry has become increasingly common across the disciplines. Bochner and Riggs (2014) detail the surge in narrative inquiry across different disciplines in the 1980s through the end of the 20th century, by which point the use of narrative intensified. They note the publication of Donald Spence’s (1984) *Narrative Truth and Historical Truth* and Theodore Sarbin’s (1986) edited volume *Narrative Psychology* as key moments in the rise of narrative in psychology, the most resistant of the social sciences. By the start of the 21st century the “narrative turn” had occurred (Bochner & Hermann, 2020; Bochner & Riggs, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Bochner and Riggs point to an increase in personal narrative, life histories, life stories, testimonials, and memoirs as evidence of the widespread use of narrative across the social sciences. Fiction as a research practice—using the tenets of literary writing and narrative—has been on the rise for more than two decades (Leavy, 2013b, 2018). *Fiction and Social Research: By Fire or Ice*, edited by Anna Banks and Stephen Banks in 1998, is an early and important book in the field. In 2011, the academic press Sense Publishers started publishing the *Social Fictions* series, which I created and edit (which is now a part of the Brill/Sense imprint at Brill). This is the first academic book series to exclusively publish fiction-based research and has been honored by the American Creativity Association. To date, the series has published novels, plays, and poetry and short story collections informed by research.

Researchers who use narrative do so for many reasons and in a variety of ways. They tend to have a common desire to breathe humanity into their work, to tell stories (their own and those of others) in more truthful, engaged, and resonant ways, and to do work that has the potential to increase connectivity and reflection. Many researchers wish to engage more collaboratively with their participants and ultimately produce work that can be read by many. Narrative researchers attempt to avoid the objectification of research participants and aim to preserve the complexity of human experience (Josselson, 2006). Bochner and Hermann (2020) understand narrative inquiry as a way

to “humanize the human sciences.” The turn to narrative can be attributed to a confluence of other factors as well. Stefinee Pinnegar and J. Gary Daynes (2007) note four converging phenomena that influenced the turn to narrative inquiry: (1) the relationship of the researched and researcher, (2) the move from numbers to words as data, (3) a shift from the general to the particular, and (4) the emergence of new epistemologies. Additional factors include the rise in autobiographical input and the effects of creative nonfiction both outside and inside the academy, both of which I’ll elaborate.

The Rise in Autobiographical Input

? *How has the rise in autobiographical data influenced research practice?*

What is autoethnography?

Although historically even qualitative researchers such as ethnographers were charged with rendering “objective” accounts of social reality, it is now well accepted that ethnographers are positioned within the texts they produce. In fact, ethnographers communicate partial and situated realities while they also become constituent parts of those represented realities. In other words, although traditionally presenting themselves as “invisible” within their texts, ethnographers, like all researchers, are implicitly interwoven into their final representations in many ways. Carl Rhodes (2000) has used the metaphor of ghostwriting to reveal how researchers are typically hidden in their texts. He notes how excerpted interview transcripts, for instance, conceal the researcher’s role in eliciting and shaping that data.

Moreover, autobiographical writing is often intermingled with representations of other persons or groups. In the case of ethnography—for example, field notes, on-the-fly notes, memo notes, theoretical memos, and analysis memos—it requires the researcher to write his/her/their understandings and impressions of a particular social reality (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2005, 2011). This includes the assumptions the researcher brings to bear on how he/she/they view the world as well as their particular experiences in that reality (which include emotional, psychological, physical, intellectual, and practical field experiences). For ethnographers, engaging with questions of reflexivity therefore requires attention to not only how standpoint and power shape perception, but also how to communicate an experience while living it (Skinner, 2003, p. 527). The “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973) that result from this process are not informed by the researcher’s neutral rendering of events, but rather by his/her/their subjective experience

in that reality, and in the best of cases, by their systematic reflexivity about the experience.

Furthermore, as researchers try to weave their experiences into a coherent narrative that can be distributed to an audience, most engage in a process similar to practices of literary narrative. In this respect, some researchers merely draw on literary conceptions of storytelling while, as reviewed later, others actually use fiction.

In Chapter 1, I reviewed the major dualisms that traditionally guided research practice as well as the challenges to the subject–object and rational–emotional dichotomies posed by scholars in the qualitative paradigm. The explicit use of the researcher as the subject of inquiry challenges yet another long-standing dichotomy: the public–private split. For this reason scientific opposition to autobiographical work can at times be strong. Autobiographical social research rejects the public–private dichotomy, exposes it as a false dualism, and suggests that the private is indeed public, and vice versa. For this and other reasons the use of “the personal” in research is both contested and complex. However, in the world of arts-based research, these dualisms have been eroded.

As stated earlier, traditional ethnography requires an ongoing subjective writing and interpretation process, and in recent years ethnographers have only become more reflexive about this process. Likewise, feminist researchers have persuasively demonstrated how false claims of neutrality mask and perpetuate the construction of gendered, racialized, sexed, and classed knowledge (see Halpin, 1989; Smith, 1987). It is in this context that Sandra Harding (1993) proposed “strong objectivity”—attention to the context of discovery and not just the context of justification—as a means of reflexively situating oneself in his/her/their research. Moreover, Freeman (2007) suggests that autobiography is necessarily a form of narrative inquiry.

The development and subsequent explosion of autoethnography as a valid research method over the past 30 years or so is perhaps the strongest evidence of the rise in autobiographical input. Autoethnography is a method of self-study in which the researcher is viewed as a viable data source, placing their own experience in a larger cultural context. Autoethnographic writing is distinct. Carolyn Ellis (2004) notes, “*Autoethnography* refers to writing about the personal and its relationship to culture. It is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness” (p. 37, quoting Dumont, 1978, original emphasis). Pelias (2004) suggests the purpose of autoethnographic writing is *resonance* (p. 11). Moreover, this method accesses the “nexus of self and culture” using the “self as a springboard,

as a witness” (p. 11). With the landmark publication of *The Handbook of Autoethnography* (Holman Jones, Adams, & Ellis, 2013a), this and associated methods have gained increased legitimacy.

Creative Nonfiction

? What is creative nonfiction?

How does creative nonfiction differ in the spheres of journalism and academic research?

The emergence and proliferation of creative nonfiction approaches to news reporting and, later, academic reporting, is also part of the context for narrative-driven methods. Creative nonfiction arose in the 1960s and 1970s to make research reports more engaging while remaining truthful (Caulley, 2008; Goodall, 2008). In the commercial world of trade publishing and journalism as well as in academic writing and publishing, writers were looking for ways to use literary tools in order to strengthen their factual writing. Lee Gutkind (2012), founder of *Creative Nonfiction* magazine, proclaims creative nonfiction to be the fastest-growing genre in publishing, and says that at its core the genre promotes “true stories well told” (p. 6). He further defines the form as follows:

The word “creative” refers to the use of literary craft, the techniques fiction writers, playwrights, and poets employ to present nonfiction—factually accurate prose about real people and events—in a compelling, vivid, dramatic manner. The goal is to make nonfiction stories read like fiction so that your readers are as enthralled by fact as they are by fantasy. But the stories are true. (p. 6)

The commercialization of newspaper reporting has normalized the tenets of creative nonfiction within the public sphere. Norms in academic writing have changed as a result. If once-purported “objective” journalists could actively engage in crafting good stories by adapting literary techniques, academic researchers were emboldened to do the same. Moreover, as readers have become more accustomed to reading *stories* rather than *reports*, expectations have changed, opening up the possibilities for academic writers. The rise of creative nonfiction has put a premium on good storytelling. For many it isn’t enough for research to “report” or “chronicle,” but it should also do it well. When stories are expressed well, readers are more deeply affected. Theodore A. Rees Cheney (2001) describes creative nonfiction as follows:

Creative non-fiction tells a story using facts, but uses many of the techniques of fiction for its compelling qualities and emotional vibrancy. Creative non-fiction doesn't just report facts, it delivers facts in ways that move the reader toward a deeper understanding of a topic. Creative non-fiction requires the skills of the storyteller and the research ability of the conscientious reporters. (p. 1)

It's important to remember that although using literary techniques in order to make stories engaging has become a norm in journalism, creative nonfiction in this arena is intended to remain strictly factual. Recently *Der Spiegel*, a top German news magazine, made international headlines when they discovered star reporter and editor Claas Relotius had falsified articles, fabricating facts and sources. Relotius was forced to resign. The slope of what's acceptable is more slippery in academia depending on the method used and disclosures made about creating composite characters or other means of fictionalizing.

In the academic world, researchers are storytellers, learning about others and sharing what they have learned. Whether we go into the field in an ethnographic study or conduct oral history interviews, we are charged with telling the stories of others in creative, expressive, dynamic, and authentic ways. We may also be relying on our own auto-ethnographic experiences as data explicitly informing the stories we craft. Bud Goodall termed this "the new ethnography" (2000, 2008). When we represent and share our research, our goal is not simply to expose others to it, but to affect those who read our work. The goals of particular projects may vary—educating, raising awareness, exposing falsehoods, building critical consciousness, disrupting dominant ideologies or stereotypes, putting a human face to an issue, and so on—but whatever our objective, we aim to affect our readers. Just like with good teaching, we hope our research is written well enough to make a lasting impact. Well-written stories are memorable.

Creative nonfiction is such an expansive genre that it is difficult to synthesize it or delineate an exhaustive array of examples. Research articles, essays, op-eds, blogs, and books may all be written in this fashion, and commonly are. Laurel Richardson has long been an inspirational figure to those writing in new "shapes." While she has called her work "writing-stories" and experimental writing, Tom Barone (2008) perceptively notes that her groundbreaking book *Fields of Play* can be considered creative nonfiction. Another example that routinely comes up in the research community is Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1966), which some suggest can be considered a qualitative research project (Norris, 2009) because of the copious research the author conducted.

What is clear is that creative nonfiction, within and beyond the academy, has changed how many view academic writing and has brought the tools of literary fiction into the researcher's purview.

Narrative Inquiry or the Narrative Method

? What is narrative inquiry or the narrative method?

How can this approach be employed?

What kinds of research questions is this approach suited for?

Building on the tenets of ethnography, oral history, and qualitative interview, *narrative inquiry* or the *narrative method* attempts to collaboratively access participants' life experiences and engage in a process of storying and re-storying in order to reveal multidimensional meanings and present an authentic and compelling rendering of the data. In other words, narratives are constructed out of the data through a reflexive, participatory, and aesthetic process. Therefore a narrative perspective changes how we conduct traditional interviews because we are attentive to re-storying as well as the co-construction of the narrative. Narrative inquiry often relies on small sample sizes and produces rich case studies.²

When using the narrative method, data are analyzed using *narrative analysis* or "narrative configuration" (Kim, 2006, p. 4). Jeong-Hee Kim (2006) explains that narrative analysis is a process whereby "the researcher extracts an emerging theme from the fullness of lived experiences presented in the data themselves and configures stories making a range of disconnected research elements coherent, so that the story can appeal to the reader's understanding and imagination" (p. 5).

Researchers employ narrative inquiry in a variety of ways, by asking a host of research questions. Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) note that narrative inquiry generally focuses on *experience*, which can be conceptualized in numerous ways. Some researchers use this method in order to access and (re)present various subject positions on a particular topic. The narrative method is influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin's theoretical framework. Bakhtin (1975/1981) compares the narratives of "epics" to those of "novels," asserting that in the epic genre one viewpoint is articulated, whereas in novels different vantage points are expressed. Researchers influenced by this framework have developed methods of narrative inquiry aimed at accessing and (re)presenting

multiple viewpoints. An excellent example of this comes from Kim's (2006) work in the field of educational studies.

Kim (2006) applies Bakhtin's framework to narrative inquiry and uses multiple voices positing that individuals with different standpoints (occupying varying positions of power) can help readers to try and understand each participant's viewpoint. Kim conducted research on the viewpoints of people in alternative high schools, from students to administrators. The multimethod research included ethnography, semistructured interviews with open-ended questions, and narrative inquiry. Kim's work resulted in an arts-based text consisting of five different voices—that is, narratives. The methodology created a meaningful understanding of the different perspectives operating at this specific site. However, when using this method, the perspectives do not necessarily all take on “relativity,” with none being more legitimate or compelling than the others. For example, in Kim's research the narratives were followed by a section called “Epilogue: The Voice of the Researcher,” in which a fable was relayed, clearly meant to impart meaning and help readers weigh the various narratives or perspectives. In this way, researchers employing this method can bring a literature review as well as their reflections into the text. Kim (2006) suggests that this approach is useful for “interrogating the nature of dominant stories” (p. 11), which can be applied to many kinds of research projects and within various critical theoretical frameworks.

Narrative studies occur in other areas of educational research as well. For example, ample work has been done using the potential of narrative to understand multicultural issues in education (see Phillion, Fang He, & Connelly, 2005). Meta Y. Harris (2005) used narrative research to study how students and teachers can use autobiographical writing to develop better interactions among diverse student populations. Her work examines how personal stories and educational experiences influence who people are, who they become, and how they react to and interact with others.

Narrative inquiry is increasingly employed as a methodological approach to trauma studies, an expansive and interdisciplinary field that may involve work on the process of trauma and recovery. Mary R. Harvey, Elliot G. Mishler, Karesten Koenan, and Patricia A. Harney (2000) suggest that the narrative approach has led to many new research questions. They cite examples of narrative research within medical sociology and anthropology that focus on “illness narratives,” “suffering narratives,” “narratives of hope,” and “chronic illness narratives.” They also cite a range of studies employing narrative inquiry

that focus on the experiences of Holocaust survivors, Vietnam vets, victims of war-related violence, rape survivors, sexual abuse survivors, and African American men dealing with racism.

As many researchers who turn to arts-based practices do, Harvey and colleagues (2000) came to narrative inquiry in their study of sexual trauma survivors when other more traditional research methods failed to fully access the data they were interested in. Their multimethod approach first entailed highly structured interviews used for creating quantitative instruments. Next the team conducted unstructured interviews. Finally the researchers developed a narrative approach, which raised new research questions. Primarily, they were interested in how survivors (re)make meaning throughout their recovery process (p. 292). Moreover, they were interested in the role and function of survivors' stories in the recovery process (p. 292). The turn to narrative inquiry led them to an array of emergent research questions that can easily be adapted to various research projects.

How do trauma survivors deal with the problem of constructing a coherent life story and how does the content and form of the story change over time? Do these changes reflect normal developmental processes of trauma recovery? What initiates the re-storying of a survivor's narrative and does this have a reparative effect, helping to repair the distorting impact of sexual abuse on normal identity development? What is the relationship between these personal narratives and cultural "master narratives" about women, sexual violence, trauma, and gender identity? How do our expectations and preferences, as clinicians and researchers, for a coherent story interfere with our being able to hear what survivors are trying to tell us? Finally, how can we develop ways of listening to their stories that respect their evolving understandings and their efforts to make meaning of their experiences of sexual trauma? (p. 292)

Based on their research, Harvey and colleagues (2000) identify three major components of narratives: coherence, turning points, and replotting.

The concept of *coherence* refers to how a narrative is communicated. Often there is an assumption that research participants share cohesive narratives; however, particular kinds of survivors may not tell their experiences as "coherent" narratives, which can actually make the narratives more difficult to listen to (Harvey et al., 2000, p. 295). For example, Holocaust survivors may not recount their narrative chronologically as a part of their life story because the depth of the horror is so potent that for them the event "stands outside of time" (p. 294).

Women who have killed their partners as a result of battered woman's syndrome often tell their stories differently over time. Usually, initial narratives are not told chronologically as a result of the severe trauma experienced. This has been used against many women during police interviews and court proceedings when police and prosecutors fail to realize that, although initial stories are not relayed cohesively, a re-storied and cohesive narrative may later emerge. Researchers need to pay attention to how narratives are communicated—such as talking style, tense, inflection, and tone—which also signal a range of data.

Turning points are often vital to participants' structuring of their narratives and the experiences to which they attest. For example, a turning point may represent a time when the participant went from a victim mind-set to a survivor mind-set, or might represent another kind of shift in experience or interpretation.

Re-plotting, or *re-storying*, is a primary aspect of narrative research. This is a process whereby participants narrativize their stories through the interplay between cultural frames (available) and individual meaning (which changes over time) (Harvey et al., 2000, p. 307). In addition, re-storying occurs over time, as participants reflect on their own major life experiences and reframe them. Harvey and colleagues conclude that, in their research, participants engage in re-storying to alter the relationship of the past trauma to the present and for the future.

Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method

? *What is the biographical narrative interpretive method?*

What kind of knowledge can this method get at?

Kip Jones has been at the forefront of advancing narrative inquiry, arts-based research, and performative social science. As a scholar who attended art school, Jones understands key similarities between scientific and artistic practice and, as reviewed in Chapter 1, sees a blurring of the lines between natural science and social science, and scientific inquiry and artistic inquiry. Within this context, Jones developed a “visual perspective” on qualitative interviews that draws on his fine-arts training in order to consider the visual aspects of interview. He has identified the ways in which the qualitative interview process, from data generation to analysis and write-up, are *already* visual processes, better attuning researchers to these aspects of their practices.

Theoretically, this methodological practice is influenced by Bakhtin's work that posits the centrality of the border of the “verbal and nonverbal.” Using this framework Jones creates a set of practices at the

intersection of a *visual perspective* and *narrative perspective* transposed onto the interview method. He argues that all qualitative researchers engage in a visualization process as they assemble their participants' stories, "creatively building a story" with sets of "visual impressions" (2001, p. 3). Jones writes, "The bricolage of images and nonverbal clues accumulated to produce additional keys that unlocked the narratives, enriched the life stories and enhanced the analyses" (p. 3).

In addition, Jones draws on his art background regarding the negative space that surrounds and thus gives presence to a positive object (a basic point of fact in the discipline of fine art). He explains that in interviews negative space also surrounds or frames dialogue. He notes, "I have tried to further develop my visual skills in my narrative biographical work. One of the tricks is, I believe, to work on seeing better in order to get a better picture of the people whom we encounter in our research" (2001, p. 2).

It was only after developing a visual perspective in his research that Jones "began to see attempts at verbal description as a device that storytellers used to express the physical, the sensual, and the atmospheric" (2001, p. 5). These dimensions of social life, and our encounters with them via ethnographic observations and interviews, are largely impenetrable by other research methods. Yet it is within and across these dimensions that the soul of our participants' experiences may emerge. In this regard, the advent of innovative arts-based forms of narrative research respond to long-standing goals guiding qualitative research—getting at *real*, textured, complex, sensory, contextual meanings.

It is within the context of these understandings that Jones employs a *biographical narrative interpretive method*. This method relies on a *minimalist passive interviewing technique*, in which researchers engage in an ongoing interpretive process. A minimalist passive interview technique refers to an interview situation where "noninterruption" is practiced (Jones, 2003, p. 62). For example, a researcher begins with one open, "narrative-inducing" question and then proceeds to allow the participant to tell his/her/their story without interruption (p. 61). Rapport is maintained via appropriate visual cues such as eye contact and nodding. This interview method is based on the idea that preconceived questions or even broad lines of inquiry may obscure parts of potential data that are "nested" within something else (p. 61). After the initial noninterruption interview, generally lasting 45–60 minutes, a process of analysis occurs. Then there is a second interview session where follow-up questions are asked, followed again by analysis and, depending on the need, a third interview session.

Jones (2003) identifies *gestalt* as a central theoretical principle of working with this method. He defines *gestalt* as “the constructed shape of a story, through theme, motif and/or various agendas—hidden or otherwise” (p. 62). By using an interview technique of noninterruption the *gestalt* of the participant’s story retains its integrity.

Each interview session is transcribed verbatim, with researcher notes. Jones finds the note-taking process central to building metaphors and gaining understanding of key issues. There are various kinds of memo notes a researcher may find helpful. For example, “on-the-fly” notes may consist of key words or phrases (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2005, p. 258). “Personal matters and reflexivity notes” are a space where the researcher takes notes about his/her/their feelings, concerns, shifting position within the project, and so forth (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2005, p. 259). In addition to standard descriptive field notes and ongoing data analysis notes, these kinds of memo-taking practices may be particularly useful when using this method.

Jones also employs *reflective teams* for analysis. The team analysis approach focuses on two dimensions of the data: the “lived life” and the “told story” (2003, p. 62). The use of analysis teams coupled with the different analysis poles helps to ensure scientific standards designed to suit this method. Jones writes: “Objectivity is maintained by keeping each stage of the analysis discrete as well as involving different teams of researchers in a process of hypothesizing and developing themes” (p. 62). In this vein, a microanalysis of the lived life and a thematic analysis of the told story occur. Jones notes:

Biographical details and themes are tested against in-depth analysis of the text, examining hesitancy, repetition, contradictions and pauses. Through hypothesizing how the lived life informs the told story, the case history is then finally constructed from the two separate threads of the “lived story” and the “told story.” A case structure is then formulated that validates more than one event based upon the actions of the interviewee. (p. 63)

In general, narrative researchers, regardless of their specific methodology, can gain trustworthiness by making their research purpose transparent and then “set[ting] what they deem to be the appropriate context for storying the data” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989, p. 19).

Jones developed this method in order to access “essence,” which may be flattened or rendered invisible by conventional interview practices. Moreover, he suggests that traditional methods are not able to reveal the “sensory,” “emotional,” and “kinaesthetic” (Jones, 2006,

drawing on Law & Urry, 2004). Jones advocates a rigorous method of biographical narrative interview as a way of getting at contextual, sensual, and kinaesthetic knowledge (2006, p. 3).

Narrative Autoethnography

? *Why use narrative autoethnography?*

What kinds of research questions can be addressed with this method?

There are many approaches to autoethnography (see Holman Jones et al., 2013b), but for the sake of this discussion I focus on narrative autoethnography, which is traditional autoethnographic writing that is represented as a narrative or story. Narrative autoethnography exists on a continuum beginning with researchers sharing personal experiences with their participants, which then become part of the larger research narrative, to wholly autobiographical projects, to those that explicitly combine autobiographical data and fiction. In all instances, this is not merely writing about the self, but rather a way of writing about the culture, using the self as a starting point for inquiry.

Carolyn Ellis (2004) pioneered autoethnography and defines this method as follows:

“What is autoethnography?” you might ask. My brief answer: research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political. Autoethnographic forms feature concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection portrayed in dialogue, scenes, characterization, and plot. Thus, autoethnography claims the conventions of literary writing. (p. xix)

This practice combines autobiographical writing with the conventions of narrative writing, often incorporating fiction (although certainly not always). Autoethnography may be communicated as a short story, essay, blog, vlog, poem, novel, play, performance piece, or other experimental text. Researchers may fictionalize aspects of the work in order to create characterizations (which may be composites), as a means of situating the piece within a particular cultural and historical context, to evoke mood or emotionality, or to follow plot conventions. In autoethnographic writing, fiction may therefore be employed as a means of emphasizing particular partial truths, revealing social meanings, and linking the experiences of individuals to the larger cultural and institutional context in which social actors live. This form of writing can

therefore help researchers *bridge the micro and macro levels of analysis* and highlight particular aspects of their work (such as subjugated voices).

A primary advantage of this method is the possibility it has to *raise self-consciousness* and thereby *promote reflexivity*. However, placing oneself at the center of the research process carries its own set of considerations and burdens. Autoethnography requires the researcher to make him/her/themselves vulnerable. You cannot predict the emotions you will experience throughout this process. In addition, by opening up their personal life to the public, a researcher lets go of some privacies and invites possible criticism. Some think of autoethnography as “writing on the edge—and without a safety net” (Vickers, 2002, p. 608). This can be painful. For this reason, and as a measure toward validity, it’s important to have a support team in place to offer feedback throughout the process (Tenni, Smyth, & Boucher, 2003).

Autoethnographic research can be used to address a number of research questions, including those linked to exploring personal or shared traumas; the grieving process; spirituality; the life cycle, or major life markers such as partnering, uncoupling, pregnancy, and parenting; or topics such as organizational life, illness, stigmas, oppression, and subjugation; and many other issues.

Margaret H. Vickers (2002) used narrative autoethnography to explore both her experience of grief (over her degenerative illness as well as her husband’s) as well as the severe abuse she dealt with in her workplace (also related to her illness). In her short stories, Vickers explores her feelings and experiences surrounding her multiple sclerosis, as well as the depression she suffers from, and simultaneous feelings of loss and grief pertaining to her husband’s illness (a chronic lung condition that spread to his brain, affecting his abilities and personality and forcing him to retire at the age of 43)—she writes that she feels he has already died.

Vickers’s haunting work offers alternative ways of conceptualizing the sick-well dichotomy as well as communicating profound feelings of loss, fear, and despair that, in her words, make her life now only about “existing,” that “there is nothing to look forward to” (p. 611), and that things will only worsen. Vickers is also able to explore the oppression she faced at work as well as her coping strategies for dealing with it, along with her other significant life challenges. The autobiographical story form evokes emotion for the reader and allows for a cathartic release. The following is a brief excerpt.

The dark hood of melancholy once again envelops me—slowing me; constraining me; bringing unimaginable loneliness. As I consider

my life, I feel hollow, empty, numb . . . I exist now. I do not enjoy, rarely feel anything but hollow, emptiness. I record another day of unhappiness; another spoke in the wheel carrying me down, but where? . . . I cry a lot. My thoughts are interrupted and the tears hastily brushed away. I take the phone call from one of the intermediaries from the study: Shelly is not doing very well. . . . Michael thinks the tears are for her. The tears are for me; for my pain, my fear, my loss. Not *hers*, not *his*—mine! (p. 613)

This autobiographical method of storywriting is critical, in this example, for creating new knowledge about the *experience* of pain, loss, grief, and illness. Differing from other methods, the autoethnographic short story allows the emotional experience to be conveyed as a part of the knowledge itself; the writing is not sterile, and is actually even difficult to read. The researcher is also allowed to explore her feelings and experiences, thus validating her experiences as legitimate data that are just as valid as those of others she might choose to study. Moreover, this approach broadens traditional understandings of “insider status” (Vickers, 2002, p. 609) by positioning the researcher as both informant and writer. Therefore, this practice also problematizes the *insider-outsider dichotomy* that guides some qualitative research practice. It is important to note that narrative autoethnography revolves around writing—the written word—more so than methods such as interviewing and field research, which rely heavily on verbal communication and visual observations. In the case of autoethnographic narratives the researcher is writing, not speaking—an entirely different process (e.g., most people can speak more quickly than they can write, you can revise what you write) (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2005; Maines, 2001, p. 109).

Other researchers have similarly used this method as a way of exploring grief, but with the express intent of creating connections with others. For example, Jonathan Wyatt (2005) wrote an (auto)ethnographic short story about his father’s last days, death, and funeral. His narrative also explores key issues of family, loss, and the father-son relationship. Communicated as a performance piece (with the intent to publish it later as a short story), Wyatt shared the narrative as a means of creating human connection with audience members and exploring, with others, central aspects of the human condition. The story format also allowed Wyatt to experiment with issues of time as opposed to presenting a linear account.

Narrative autoethnography is often used in identity research. An outstanding example comes from Tony E. Adams. His award-winning 2011 book, *Narrating the Closet: An Autoethnography of Same-Sex Attraction*,

is an engaging meditation on Adams's own struggle as he began to realize he was gay. Adams masterfully engages readers in his personal narrative and recounts the story of a former boyfriend who may have committed suicide after coming out (the official narrative was diabetes, but Adams believes there is another story). Through weaving his personal story, that of his former partner and others, along with other forms of academic scholarship, Adams brings readers into the world of "the closet" and, more broadly, identity construction. Similarly, Sarah N. Gatson (2003) used this method in order to explore racial identity, making key links between her personal multiracial identity issues and the context of racial identity in the United States.

Narrative autoethnography is also often used to explore interpersonal relationships, communication, and identity. Jonathan Wyatt and Tony E. Adams (2014) compiled a beautiful collection titled *On (Writing) Families Autoethnographies of Presence and Absence, Love and Loss* that explores the complexity of family relationships of all kinds. The contributors use narrative autoethnography to address the questions: Who are we with—and without—families? How do we relate as children to our parents, as parents to our children? How are parent-child relationships—and familial relationships in general—made and (not) maintained? Similar themes have been explored using collaborative autoethnography. Bryant Keith Alexander, Claudio Moreira, and Hari Stephen Kumar (2012) wrote a triple autoethnographic text exploring their relationships with their fathers.

Fiction-Based Research/Social Fiction

? *What is fiction-based research or social fiction?*

How can this approach be employed?

What are the components of fiction?

As readers, when we enter into a short story or novel we can become enthralled—totally immersed in the story world and eager to read on. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the researcher behind the literary neuroscience work on Jane Austen said that when she's reading a good novel, everything else disappears and she'd hardly notice if the house burned down. Many people can relate.

Fiction as a research practice is also referred to as *fiction-based research* (an adaptation of the term *arts-based research*) and *social fiction* (a term I coined in 2010 that indicates a merging of social research and

fiction). Fiction has unique capabilities for creating and disseminating research because it is engaging, evocative, and accessible to broad audiences. Through fiction we are able to express ourselves freely, reveal the inner lives of characters, and create believable worlds for others to enter. Fiction as a research practice is well suited for portraying the complexity of lived experience because it allows for details, nuance, specificity, contexts, and texture; cultivating empathy and self-reflection through relatable characters; and disrupting dominant ideologies or stereotypes by showing and not telling (which can be used to build critical consciousness and raise awareness).

Traditional social-scientific research rarely enters the public's consciousness because it circulates in highly specialized academic journals, is loaded with jargon, and is in all ways inaccessible. Fiction, on the other hand, is highly accessible. Readers are likely to approach fiction with a very different mind-set than work labeled nonfiction, because fiction is perceived as pleasurable and doesn't necessitate special advance knowledge. People are more likely to feel unintimidated and enthusiastic. Therefore it is important to understand fiction is both a form of writing and a way of reading (Cohn, 2000).

One of the main advantages of fiction as a research practice, which bears on the processes of both writing and reading, is the development of *empathy* in readers. Fiction is uniquely able to promote "empathetic engagement" (de Freitas, 2003). This may be central to social justice research. As readers engage with fiction and develop highly personal relationships with the characters, they are in fact constructing intimate relationships with "the imagined other" (de Freitas, 2003, p. 5). There are two main features of fictional narratives that can be employed to cultivate empathy. First, fiction offers us unique access into *interiority* by representing interior dialogue (what a character is thinking). Fiction allows us to access the inner lives of characters. In 1961 famed literature professor and literary critic Wayne Booth noted that access to the inner life of others was the most distinctive feature of fiction. Similarly, historian Inga Clendinnen has said, "Through giving me access to the inner thoughts and secret actions of closed others, fiction has taught me most of what I know" (quoted in Franklin, 2011, p. 15). This access to what people are thinking and feeling builds a deep connection between readers and characters. Second, fictional narratives are incomplete and leave space for the readers' interpretations and imagination. In other words, there are *interpretive gaps* in fiction, intentionally included by the authors (Abbott, 2008; de Freitas, 2003). Readers fill in these gaps, and in doing so they may actively develop empathetic connections to the characters (and the kinds of people they represent).

Further, as we read fiction we engage our imaginations. As Franklin (2011, p. 15) notes in her review of Holocaust fiction, “[An] act of imagination is an act of empathy.” There is science to support the distinct ability of fiction to build empathy in the ways suggested. Social psychologists David C. Kidd and Emanuele Castano (2013) conducted five experiments that found people performed better on tests measuring empathy, understanding the lives of others, and emotional intelligence after reading literary fiction (compared to those who read nothing or read nonfiction or popular fiction). They attribute their findings, in part, to the fact that readers have to use their imaginations to fill in gaps that can sensitize them to emotional complexity.

Despite the historical fact-fiction binary, there are actually great similarities and even overlap between the work of researchers and that of novelists (Franklin, 2011). Stephen Banks (2008) writes that “the zone between the practices of fiction writers and non-fiction writers is blurry [because fiction] is only more or less ‘fictional’” (pp. 155–156). When considering the relationship between fiction and nonfiction, it is important to bear in mind that “real life” is the stuff of fiction, which is why these categories necessarily overlap. In this regard, Primo Levi asserted that fictional characters are never “wholly true or wholly invented” (quoted in Franklin, 2011, p. 16). Fiction writers conduct extensive research to achieve verisimilitude, similarly to social scientists (Banks, 2008; Berger, 1977). *Verisimilitude* refers to the creation of a realistic, authentic, and lifelike portrayal, and it is the goal of both fiction and established social science practices like ethnography. In the broader world of literature, it is no wonder there is blurring between genres, such as historical novels and political fiction. Renowned philosophers including Plato, Nietzsche, de Beauvoir, and Sartre all used fiction to communicate their philosophies (and arguably to construct them).

Wolfgang Iser (1997) developed the concept of “overstepping” to describe how empirical reality is incorporated into literary work, and the process he detailed applies well to fiction-based research. Iser outlined a threefold fictionalizing process: (1) selection, (2) combination, and (3) self-disclosure. Selection is the process of taking “identifiable items” from social reality, importing them into the fictional world, and transforming them “into a sign for something other than themselves” (p. 2). Through the process of selection, we “overstep” the empirical world we aim to reference. Selection happens in conjunction with combination, the process of bringing the different empirical elements or details together. The bits of data, empirical elements, or details we select may come from traditional research processes (such as interviews or field research) or they may come to us more abstractly

through the accumulation of research, teaching, and personal experiences (a technique de Freitas and I have both employed). Descriptions and details written in a work of fiction-based research can be considered “data.” The use of details from the real world brings readers into the story while allowing writers to reimagine what “real worlds” are. Finally, self-disclosure is the strategy by which the fiction reveals itself as fiction (which in the case of fiction-based research or social fiction can be as simple as labeling the work a short story or novel).

Fiction can, ironically, expose that which “factual representation” conceals by its very implication. Shaun McNiff (2018) eloquently writes, “As writers and readers of fiction know, rather than compromising experience and reality, it may optimally heighten them” (p. 30). Fiction-based research, similar to narrative inquiry, is about *truthfulness* more than “truth.” Fiction needs to ring true, and when it does it can come closer to truthfulness than mere “facts” may. As Iser (1997) suggests, the act of fictionalizing can make “conceivable what would otherwise remain hidden” (p. 4). Moreover, fiction opens up a multiplicity of meanings and allows readers to bring their own experiences and interpretations to bear.

As with any research project it is important to clarify your purpose and goals and build a project with the potential to serve those interests. This will also help you determine an appropriate format such as a short story, novella, or novel.

When adapting an artistic form, pay attention to the main artistic tenets driving the form as well as the constituent components. The main components of a literary story to consider are (see Leavy, 2013b, 2019, for a full description of each):

- Structural design elements
 - Master plot
 - Plot and storyline
 - Scenes and narrative
 - Endings/closure and expectations
- Interior design elements
 - Genre
 - Themes and motifs
 - Style and tone
- Characterization
 - Character types and character profiles
 - Dialogue and interaction
 - Internal dialogue and interiority

- Literary tools
 - Description and detail
 - Language
 - Specificity
 - Metaphors, similes, and symbolism
 - Presentation of the fiction (labeling it)

Fictional Ethnography

? How have researchers employed fictional ethnography?

Ethnographers (and autoethnographers) may turn to fiction for a host of reasons, and engaging in the practice of fictional ethnography is distinct from traditional ethnography and fiction (Rinehart, 1998). For example, fiction has been used in studies about identity and double consciousness (Visweswaran, 1994); about educational research (Clough, 2002; Cranston, 2016; de Freitas, 2003, 2008); about sexual and gender identity (Sumerau, 2017a, 2017b, 2018); about school administration (Ketelle, 2004); about feminist research about relationships, identities, and self-esteem (Leavy, 2011, 2013a, 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2020; Leavy & Scotti, 2017); and to explore the use of fiction itself in academic research (Wyatt, 2007).

Robin P. Clair, a communications scholar, took her award-winning ethnographic research about corporate greed and transformed it into a suspense novel in order to reach broader audiences and to engage college students on a deeper level. In *Zombie Seed and the Butterfly Blues: A Case of Social Justice* (Clair, 2013), students from a liberal arts class help Professor Delta Quinn and reporter Caleb Barthes uncover the political and corporate story behind the scientific development and implementation of the *zombie seed*. The novel format allows Clair to explore issues of corporate greed, environmental pollution, and domestic violence. Moreover, the book pushes readers to reflect on whether there is a connection between cultural violence and interpersonal violence and to reflect on their own participation or complacency in social and political life. In these respects Clair uses the fictional format to teach “information” she has learned through her scholarly research and to engage readers in a process of self- and social reflection.

Similarly, sociologist Jessica Smartt Guillion has taken her research in public health and written it up as a novel. *October Birds: A Novel about Pandemic Influenza, Infection Control, and First Responders* (2014) is grounded in real-life public health practice, sociological research, and emergency management. *October Birds* works as a novel while it also

presents a sociological theory of community-level response to health threats. It is intended to push readers to think about the inevitable question: “What if?” What if a devastating pandemic does emerge? How will we respond?

I recently took observations made when I participated in the Salzburg Global Seminar session on “The Neuroscience of Art” as well as my cumulative insights into the research process and penned the novel *Spark* (Leavy, 2019). *Spark* tells the story of a group of individuals from different fields and geographic regions who are invited to participate in an all-expense paid seminar in Iceland where they are charged with answering one perplexing question. Readers are invited to look in as they unravel the meaning of the question. *Spark* aims to sensitize students to the research process, interdisciplinarity, and the principles of collaboration, all through a suspenseful, and hopefully inspirational, adventure story.

Fiction, Identity Research, and Critical Theoretical Perspectives

? *How can fiction be used in identity research?*

Fiction-based research, or social fiction, is often useful in identity research and may be particularly appealing to researchers working from critical theoretical perspectives. Fiction is able to “get at” and express complex layers of meaning without closing off the interpretive process in an authoritative manner. Furthermore, due to the pleasure that can be derived from reading fiction, as well as its familiarity, it is uniquely able to tap into a different dimension of readers’ consciousness and promote reflexive engagement (Leavy, 2013b). Let’s take the example of J. E. Sumerau’s *Cigarettes & Wine* (2017) and the sequel, which can also be read as a stand-alone novel, *Palmetto Rose* (2018).

Sumerau is a sociologist specializing in inequities in relation to sexualities, gender, religion, and health. *Cigarettes & Wine* and *Palmetto Rose* are grounded in Sumerau’s personal experience as a bisexual, nonbinary, transgender, and polyamorous person raised in the southern part of the United States. These novels draw on many years of ethnographic, autoethnographic, historical, and statistical research at the intersections of sexualities, gender, religion, and health in the United States. Sumerau also draws on hundreds of formal and informal interviews with people who self-identify as bisexual, lesbian, gay, asexual, heterosexual, intersex, transgender, nonbinary, polyamorous, kink, cisgender, and queer.

Cigarettes & Wine begins in a small room in a church where the protagonist, an unnamed bisexual, nonbinary teenager has their first sexual experience. After this scene we watch the narrator and their friends navigate the teenage years—dealing with sexuality, love, violence, and religion. This is a powerful story about developing an identity and sense of self “in the shadows of churches, families, and a small southern town in the 1990s” (p. xv). In *Palmetto Rose* we follow the narrator 5 years later as they grieve and rebuild from the loss of their first love. This novel invites us to consider how our pasts shape our futures, but how together with our chosen families, we can move beyond pain and heartache in order to build new relationships and embark on new educational and career pursuits.

Both novels are written in the first-person, which was a brilliant, strategic choice made by Sumerau. At a time when the media, and society more broadly, is paying more attention to nonbinary and gender-fluid people, and simultaneously those people’s rights to equal legal protection, visibility, safety, and dignity are being threatened, Sumerau’s novels place the reader in the vantage point of a young, nonbinary narrator. These novels can be regarded as a cultural intervention.

Fiction can also be used by feminist researchers to bridge the divide often felt as we try to attend to the voices of our research participants as well as to our own feminist theoretical commitments. As feminist researchers often note, there can be difficulty when trying to account for both the voices of our research participants and our own theoretical commitments to feminist principles and to the larger project of feminism of which our work is a part (Leavy, 2007; Leavy & Harris, 2018). Particularly for feminists, the challenge is often to account for how our research participants are discursively constituted subjects while also amplifying their perspectives and experiences (Saukko, 2000). Fiction is a medium in which feminist researchers can reconcile some of these conflicts and find ways of writing both the information their participants share with them *and* their insights into how larger contexts and systems shape their participants (their attitudes, perceptions, and experiences). This was what brought me to write my first novel, *Low-Fat Love*.

Low-Fat Love (Leavy, 2011, 2015) was inspired by research, teaching, and personal experiences. For nearly a decade I had collected hundreds of interviews with women, as well as some men, about their relationships, body image, sexual and gender identities, and related topics. During the same period I taught sociology courses about gender, popular culture, and intimate relationships. These courses provoked intimate conversations inside and outside of class, and I learned

endlessly from my students. What was frustrating in all of these situations is that as an interviewer/professor I was limited in my ability to respond freely. However, I often had insights based on my experiences and my immersion in feminist literature. There were countless times when I wanted to reach out and grab a student or interviewee by the shoulders and say, "You're making poor choices. Here, let me give you some advice." Although I did publish some of my research in journal articles, that format is constrained and I was not able to properly share the stories I'd heard or express all of my interpretations. Moreover, scholarly journals are not keen on publishing "cumulative knowledge" but rather focus on specific studies. Many of my insights were cumulative and based not only on my research but also on my encounters in and outside of class with students, as well as my own experiences and those of my friends. In short, I felt like I had learned a lot that I wanted to share in the hopes of helping others, and so I turned to fiction-based research.

Thematically, *Low-Fat Love* explores the psychology of dissatisfying relationships, identity-building, the social construction of femininity within popular culture, and the importance of self-acceptance. The novel is underscored with a critical commentary about how, too often, women become trapped in limited visions of themselves. Women's media is used as a signpost throughout the book in order to make visible the context in which women come to think of themselves as well as others in their lives. *Low-Fat Love* offers a commentary about popular culture and the social construction of femininity. Ultimately, the book explores women's identity struggles in relation to the men in their lives and how women often develop myopic images of themselves as a part of "face-saving" strategies employed to cover up shame, a learned devaluation of self, and their attraction to men who withhold their support. *Low-Fat Love* suggests women seek new ways to see that are not dependent on male approval so that they will value themselves and reject degrading relationships. Moreover, as the main characters in the book learn, the most toxic relationship a woman may participate in is often with herself. So, too, the male characters learn that one must find one's voice or suffer the consequences.

Methodologically, I employed third-person narration as a way of layering the narrative with feminist readings of pop culture and relationships. I used interior monologue as a means of getting inside the heads of characters to reveal their feelings, motivations, and psychological processes. Through this process readers come to understand the characters' actions on a much deeper level than would otherwise be

possible while also building empathy, creating resonance, and at times even producing frustration as readers watch characters disadvantage themselves and suffer as a result. As noted earlier, the ability to *represent the interior life of characters* is perhaps the most unique aspect of fiction. For social scientists, the appeal is in the ability to link the micro and macro levels, show the impact of environment on individuals, and reveal psychological processes. These techniques are simply not available in nonfiction.

After *Low-Fat Love* was released I was bombarded with highly personal emails from readers. At conferences and book events people lined hallways to whisper their stories to me. The power of fiction floored me, and I've been writing novels ever since. For example, my novels *Blue* and *Film* are both connected to *Low-Fat Love*. Although not a conventional trilogy, I view these novels as installation art. Both *Blue* and *Film* center on Tash Daniels, a minor character from *Low-Fat Love*. In *Blue* we follow Tash and her roommates as they navigate their postcollege years in New York. In *Film* we follow Tash and new friends a few years later trying to "make it" in Los Angeles as they contend with gender bias, traumas and other issues related to #MeToo, and personal demons. Both novels explore identity and specifically the search for people who "get us," the underside of dreams, and the power of art. Like *Low-Fat Love*, each novel includes a subtext about popular culture. Similar methodological choices were made, including third-person narration and the use of interiority. There are differences, too, based on the content and mood of each story. The narrator voice is strongest in *Low-Fat Love* as a means of commentary, whereas *Blue* and *Film* unfold primarily through dialogue and flashback scenes, as a means of bringing readers into the action.

Special Considerations

Different approaches to research come with certain strengths and possibilities. In some ways both the rise in narrative inquiry and emergence of fiction-based research are about making research more truthful, meaningful, useful, accessible, and human. As Bochner and Riggs (2014) note, the study of human beings in traditional social science research often lacks a humanness. Here we can see a link to the issue of truthfulness that permeates both narrative inquiry and fiction-based research. Given the historical polarization of fiction and non-fiction, it may seem strange to suggest fiction can be more truthful

than “facts,” which may conceal as much as they reveal. The strongest critique of autobiographically driven narrative research and fiction-based research is that it may not be trustworthy or meet the standards of social-scientific knowledge—the knowledge is simply “too subjective.” This concern is based on positivist and postpositivist criteria for measuring validity and reliability, which are not appropriate ways of understanding ABR.

Often in narrative inquiry we are working with autobiographically informed data and/or data from research participants on sensitive subject matters and accordingly there are special considerations. Researchers using this kind of data must be in tune to their emotional, carnal, psychological, and intellectual indicators. These kinds of internal signals are vital to building authentic and trustworthy knowledge when using arts-based practices. Colleen Tenni, Anne Smyth, and Carlene Boucher (2003) refer to this as engaging in an *internal dialogue* with ourselves. This is especially important in autoethnography or sensitive field research where we may experience discomfort, sadness, or any number of disconcerting feelings (Ellis, 2004; Tenni et al., 2003). Keeping a diary is one strategy for consistently noting where one is located within the process (Tenni et al., 2003).

Some suggest engaging in an *external dialogue* throughout the data generation and analysis process, particularly in narrative inquiry or narrative autoethnography. This adds two features to the research process. First, there is a built-in support system for the researcher, who, as stated, may experience unexpected emotions during the process. Second, this adds a built-in dimension of validity to the resulting knowledge.

Tenni and colleagues (2003) also suggest explicitly *using theory during data analysis* in order to open up the data to new interpretations and alternate meanings. One strategy for using theory is to identify the level of analysis the research is occurring on and then view the data from a theoretical lens on a different level (Tenni et al., 2003). In other words, the researcher views data that operate on the micro level from a macro theoretical perspective, and vice versa. For example, let's take Vickers's (2002) autoethnographic research on her illness and the related abuse she experienced in the workplace and apply this data analysis strategy. Vickers's data occurs at the individual level; however, by applying macro theories, perhaps organizational theory, new interpretations of her experience of illness and related abuse in the workplace may surface. Applying a macro perspective such as feminism to her experience of loss during her husband's illness and her need to

cry “for herself” may offer new insights into this profoundly personal experience, placing it in a larger cultural context of gender relations.

It is also important to consider your role as an interpreter and what that means with respect to expectations you set with your participants as well as your audience. Ruthellen Josselson (2011) has written extensively about the tensions that can emerge as we try to value the words and perspectives of our participants as well as our own voice as interpreters. She writes, “Our challenge as narrative researchers in relation to our participants is both to respect their subjectivity and to claim our interpretive authority, which always involves objectifying them in some ways” (p. 46). She suggests this practice requires researchers to hold a “doubleness.” After recounting experiences with participants who either shrugged off having any reaction to seeing their stories written up, or confronted Josselson with their hurt and angry feelings, she suggests that participants need to have a “doubleness” too, and it is the researcher’s responsibility to facilitate this. Narrative researchers need to explain to each participant, in some detail, that they are both writing about him/her/them and also not writing about him/her/them, but using what is learned from them to write about the topic under investigation (Josselson, 2011). Likewise, expectations need to be set for audiences who will read the work. To do so, she suggests that ethical researchers must acknowledge their role as subjective interpreters.

Fiction-based research or social fiction comes with special considerations as well. Among these is *the presentation of the fictional rendering*. Some suggest it is prudent to be explicit about what aspects of the work are grounded in observations or interviews and what is derived from personal ideas or fantasies (Frank, 2000). Fictionalized narratives derived from a literature review or found documents should also clearly be explained as such. Researchers who employ fiction are advised to disclose, for example, when they have created composite characters or conventional plotlines versus when they are creating a characterization based on a particular individual or when they are recounting a specific experience. As I discuss in Chapter 8, on evaluation, some researchers, myself included, believe these disclosures prevent the fictional rendering from retaining its integrity and “magical” dimensions as an artistic work. For researchers who want the final fiction to stand on its own as a literary work, they can include a preface, foreword, or afterword that briefly explains how the work was created. At a minimum the work can be labeled as fiction, real-life inspired fiction, or some such notation. These kinds of disclosures are a part of ethical practice and simultaneously strengthen the trustworthiness of the data.

Checklist of Considerations

When considering using methods of narrative inquiry and contemplating issues of research design, it may be helpful to ask yourself the following:

- ✓ What are the goals of my study? How does narrative inquiry respond to my research questions?
- ✓ If using autobiographical data, how will I recognize the saturation point in data generation? Will I begin data analysis early in the process? What kind of support team do I have in place, and how will they participate in the analysis and interpretation of data?
- ✓ How will I use theory? How will I employ theoretical lenses that operate on different levels, as well as those that may differ from my first inclinations?

When considering using fiction as a research practice it may be helpful to ask yourself the following:

- ✓ Who is the audience for my research?
- ✓ How will fiction help illuminate the topic under investigation?
- ✓ How will I create verisimilitude, believability, resonance? How will I portray characters and their situations dimensionally and sensitively?

Conclusion

This chapter has offered an introduction to narrative inquiry and fiction-based research. The exemplar for this chapter is a short excerpt from my arts-based novel *Film* (Leavy, 2020). Tash Daniels and her boyfriend, Aidan, moved from New York to Los Angeles so that Tash could pursue her dream of becoming a filmmaker. However, she has little to show for her efforts other than a stack of rejections from short-film festivals and a failed studio internship—she was forced to quit when her boss sexually harassed her. Now working as a personal shopper, she's lost her creative drive. When deejay and musician Aidan is suddenly discovered and given a huge break, she's forced to confront her creative and relationship struggles. In this scene, Tash and Aidan are spending the day at the Getty Center, her favorite place in LA, before he goes on tour.

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. How has the rise in autobiographical work helped pave the way for arts-based researchers?
2. What are the unique qualities of fiction? How can researchers harness those capabilities?
3. Try writing an autoethnographic short story about a particular experience where one or more of your status characteristics played a vital role in your experience (e.g., when gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, age, or health directly influenced some experience). Use this method to try to explore your experience in terms of the setting, the plot, the cultural context, the emotional experience, and your intellectual process, as well as your reflections on the experience. Then reflect on how this method helped illuminate particular aspects of the experience as well as what this method was not able to address or communicate to an external audience.
4. Collect a small sample of data (from ethnographic research or interview work) and experiment with trying to represent it in short-story form, drawing on some of the tenets of fiction. What is your experience of this process, and what issues does it allow you to work through in your own thinking? What does the final product highlight from the data; what might it conceal? Have a peer or colleague read the piece and discuss his/her/their understanding of the data, based on the short story.



Suggested Readings

Abbott, H. P. (2008). *The Cambridge introduction to narrative* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

This book is a comprehensive introduction to narrative, including but not limited to discussions of narrative in life, definitions of narrative, the rhetoric of narrative, the components of narrative, and issues of truth.

Adams, T. E., Holman Jones, S., & Ellis, C. (2015). *Autoethnography: Understanding qualitative research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

This volume is a short but comprehensive guide to autoethnography. The authors provide a detailed review of this methodology with clear and easy-to-follow instruction. There is coverage of philosophy, methodology, research design, conducting research, evaluation, and writing/representation, as well as additional resources. A must-read for those interested in autoethnography.

Bochner, A. P. (2014). *Coming to narrative: A personal history of paradigm change in the human sciences*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.

An exemplar of narrative inquiry. Bochner seamlessly weaves his personal story and his rendering of shifts in the academy that have resulted in, and from, the turn to narrative.

Clandinin, D. J. (Ed.). (2007). *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

This comprehensive handbook offers a retrospective and prospective review of narrative inquiry. The collection of original works by leading scholars is an excellent reference for researchers across the disciplines working with narrative inquiry.

Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: The methodological novel about autoethnography*. New York: AltaMira Press.

This book presents a comprehensive guide to autoethnographic research, addressing both the theoretical and methodological issues as well as providing many rich empirical examples. It is written using literary techniques.

Kim, J. (2015). *Understanding narrative inquiry: The crafting and analysis of stories as research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

This is a comprehensive introduction to narrative inquiry that includes the historical and philosophical context for narrative research, methodological instruction, and robust examples. Different genres of narrative are reviewed, including arts-based and visual-based.

Leavy, P. (2013). *Fiction as research practice: Short stories, novellas, and novels*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.

This is the first comprehensive introduction to fiction-based research and includes discussions of the intertwining of fiction and nonfiction in academic and popular writing, the strengths of this methodology, research design instruction, evaluative criteria, exemplars of fiction as research in practice, pedagogical connections, and additional resources to get started or to publish.

Leavy, P. (Editor, 2010–). *The Social Fictions* book series (various authors). Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill/Sense.

Full-length examples of literary approaches to arts-based research including novels, short story collections, poetry collections, and plays written on a wide range of social justice topics. <https://brill.com/abstract/serial/SOCI>.

Pelias, R. J. (2016). *If the truth be told: Accounts in literary forms*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill/Sense.

This is a fascinating book that questions the nonfiction/fiction or fact and fiction divide. The book is composed of six chapters on different topics. Each chapter includes fictional and nonfictional accounts, including poems,

stories, monologues, short dramas, essays, creative nonfiction, and mixed genres, to address each chapter's subject. Pieces are based on the author's personal experiences, newspapers accounts, and purely fictional accounts (all revealed in an appendix at the end of the book).

Raab, D., & Freeman, M. (2017). *Writing for bliss: A seven-step plan for telling your story and transforming your life*. Ann Arbor, MI: Loving Healing Press.

This book teaches you both how to reflect on your life and how to write about it. The authors offer techniques and prompts for experienced and new writers. The book guides readers to examine how life-changing experiences can inspire writing and how the writing process itself is one of self-discovery.



Suggested Websites and Journals

CTheory

www.CTheory.net

This online journal publishes cutting-edge research on the borders of popular culture, politics, technology, theory, and methodology. Pieces written in experimental writing formats are often published, making this an excellent source of how to incorporate nontraditional writing, including fiction, into social science research.

Narrative Works: Issues, Investigations & Interventions

www.taosinstitute.net/narrative-works-journal

This is an online, open-access, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary journal that explores the complex role of narrative in human life. Disciplines represented include, but are not limited to, psychology, sociology, anthropology, gerontology, literary studies, gender studies, cultural studies, religious studies, social work, education, health care, ethics, theology, and the arts.

So Fi (zine)

<https://sofizine.com>

This is an online, independent sociological fiction publication. The zine is a space for creative translational and ABR, and art inspired by social science. They publish short stories, cartoons, photo essays, poetry, mini zines, sketches, and other creative works. Student work is welcome.

Qualitative Inquiry

www.sagepub.com/journalsProdDesc.nav?prodId=Journal200797

This journal regularly publishes cutting-edge articles about qualitative methods and methodologies, including many arts-based approaches. *Qualitative Inquiry* routinely provides the most comprehensive collection of innovative qualitative approaches to social research.

The Qualitative Report

www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/index.html

This highly accessible online journal publishes both substantive and methodological articles, including those that cover innovative qualitative methods.

Reed Magazine: A Journal of Poetry and Prose

www.reedmag.org

This is San Jose State University's literary magazine. The journal publishes original poetry and short stories from around the United States.



Notes

1. Please note the history of narrative inquiry alone could be a lengthy chapter, so this is a highly selective review.
2. Ruthellen Josselson (2006), a leader in narrative inquiry in psychology, has written about the challenges and possibilities for looking at cumulative knowledge generated from narrative studies. This may be an important future direction for the field.



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Film (Excerpt)

Patricia Leavy

Tash and Aidan sat on the crowded tram heading up to the Getty Center. It was their favorite place in LA. They had taken this ride many times, but today she noticed people staring at them. Aidan had his headphones on, lost in the beats of his future. Tash looked out at a landscape that not long before they feared would be lost to a wild blaze. She looked at Aidan with thoughts of the past and the future, place and space, swirling in her mind. Aidan squeezed her hand, thrusting her into the present. They disembarked hand in hand. As expected on a cloudless Saturday, the grounds were teeming with locals and tourists.

“We were lucky to get a spot in the garage,” Aidan said.

“Uh huh. We always have good parking karma. I’m starving. Let’s grab a bite.”

“Actually, I made a reservation at the swanky restaurant,” Aidan replied, raising his eyebrows.

Tash contorted her face.

“I made it weeks ago, in case we wound up here today. When you were in the shower, I called to push it back. They’re holding a window table for us, but we’re about fifteen minutes late so we should hustle.”

“We usually grab something to-go and sit on the lawn,” Tash said.

“Yeah, but I thought this should be special. Besides, we can finally afford nicer things. We can walk around outside after. Cool?”

Tash shrugged. “Sure.”

Soon they were sitting in the far corner of the dining room, windows on all sides, overlooking spectacular mountain views.

“Wow, they really gave us the best table in the place,” Aidan said.

Tash smiled. “You should probably get used to that.”

Aidan opened his mouth, but before he could respond, a waitress came over to take their drink orders.

“Could you do us a favor and take a photo of us?” he asked, handing over his phone. Returning his attention to Tash, he whispered, “I want to remember how beautiful you look today.”

“You’re such a cheeseball,” she quipped.

After taking a few shots, the waitress returned his phone and said, “I don’t want to bother you and come off all fangirl, but could we take a picture? I love your music.”

Aidan blushed. “Thank you. Of course.”

He stood up and the waitress retrieved her phone from her pocket and handed it to Tash. After taking a couple of pictures of them, Tash returned her phone, adding, “I’ll have a glass of prosecco.”

“A seltzer water for me, please,” Aidan said.

As she walked away, Tash smirked at Aidan. “At least I can say I always knew you were hot shit, even back when your big gigs were an H&M store and keggers at NYU.”

Aidan looked down and laughed. “It’s surreal. Whoever thought that someone like Calvin would happen to hear me and that it would snowball into all of this.”

“Imagine what it’ll be like when your record drops. Aside from your club groupies, most people have only heard your single and you’re already a badass at the star table.”

“Luckily, I’ll be on tour when it streets, too busy to let it distract me. I still can’t believe Calvin asked me to open on his U.S. leg.”

“I believe it. Your music is dope. I thought that even before I knew you could also sing and play like every freaking instrument.” She paused to take a sip of water before continuing. “And you’ve got that *thing*, anyway. That thing people want to be around.”

Aidan reached across the table for her hand. “As long as you want to be around, I’m good.”

“You’re such a sap,” Tash teased.

The waitress delivered their drinks and took their orders. After she left, Tash said, “It’s great we’re not totally busted anymore. Living in that dump in the boonies was super depressing. I’m way happier in Venice Beach. Using your advance for a down payment on the condo was genius, but now that

money is gone. You're getting paid squat on tour if you can't sell your CDs, and like, who buys those anymore? And you won't be getting your regular club money."

"What are you saying?" Aidan asked.

"We're not flush," Tash replied.

"Babe, it's just lunch. And you know I've never cared about money. I want to make music, live my life. I'm cool with having just enough to get by, always have been. You're the one who relentlessly wants more. The way I see it, we caught a huge break. Let's roll with it."

"You caught a huge break," Tash muttered.

"Hey," he said, reaching across the table again. "You're talented and passionate. It's going to happen. It just might not be how you expect. That's the trick: being open to whatever way it comes. And it's not like you haven't done anything these past three years in LA. You rocked all those classes and actually made your short film and it's the bomb. No one can take that away from you."

Before Tash could respond, their food was served.

Aidan focused on his plate, cutting into his chicken. After a long silence, he gently said, "You will make this happen, but you gotta find happiness in the work itself again. The rest doesn't matter as much."

"Easy for you to say," she quipped back, taking a bite of her beet salad.

"Hey, you know I've always felt that way. For me, it's all about making music. I'd be happy spinning at a college party like the old days. Everything else is sparkle, as you would say."

"It's different in film. You need money and connections. There's no frat house version. Without funding, it's impossible to keep going. I can't hit my folks up again. I've done everything I can but all I have to show for it is a pile of rejections."

Aidan's face twitched.

"What's that look about? What could I have done differently?"

"After the internship . . ."

"Don't even fucking start," she shrieked, dropping her fork. "You'll never know what it was like working for that perv."

"Babe, I know. He put you in a horrible position. I still want to smack the hell out of that guy. It infuriates me. Leaving was the right thing, I just wish you could have found something else in the industry."

"Like what? Like giving freaking studio tours? There was nothing else." Tash picked up her fork and took a bite of salad. "You know I ordered this with the dressing on the side. Our waitress must have been too preoccupied making eyes at you to hear me."

“Do you want me to get her and ask them to make you a new one?”

Tash shook her head. “It’s fine.”

They sat for a moment and Aidan started eating. Tash took a deep breath and looked directly at him. “I’m sorry. I don’t want to ruin the day. It’s just . . .”

“Tell me.”

“It’s really hard. I mean, I could barely fund *Pop Candy* and it’s only seven minutes long. And it was rejected from every short film festival I submitted to. Getting into a festival would have helped with the screenwriting grants for the full-length version, but it doesn’t look like that’s happening either. And . . .”

“Yeah?”

“And you’re leaving,” she moaned.

“It’s only for the summer. Just a couple of months. I asked you to come with me or meet me on the road.”

“You know I can’t. Monroe has that Magic Manor thing and I have to do a ton of shit for her. Summer is her big event season.”

“This morning you said that you didn’t want Lu to think I was abandoning her. You know I’m not abandoning you either, right?” Aidan asked.

“Yeah, I know. It’s fine. I’m good on my own. But I could kill you for planning a huge birthday bash for me and not showing up.”

“If we didn’t have a show that night, I would fly back for it. In a heartbeat.”

Tash smiled. “Chill, it’s cool. It’s just that being dateless at your own birthday party is kinda sad. Plus, with the whole eighties theme we were supposed to go as Jem and Rio. It was gonna be rad.”

“Don’t worry. My buddies at the club are all over it. I’ve planned every detail and it’s not going to be even a little sad. I’m pumped, actually,” he said, smiling widely and laughing. “It’s gonna be sooo you. Truly, truly, truly outrageous. You’ll love it.”

Tash smirked.

“It’s gonna be sick, but the summer is more than one night. Try not to get too wrapped up in Monroe’s stuff. Don’t forget that you took that job to leave time for your film work.”

Tash rolled her eyes. “Being rejected doesn’t fill as much time as you’d think.”

“Remember, be open to whatever form it comes in. That gallery was interested in showing your film. That could be another path.”

“Yeah, but I blew them off. Fucking kills me now. At the time, I was so focused on festivals. Everyone in the classes I took said that’s the way you do it, that I’d never get future backing for the longer version unless I went that

route. But if you're not the professor's pet student, you don't get the support you need for that either."

"There's more than one gallery in town. For that matter, there's no reason you can't pitch to New York galleries, or Boston, Chicago, or a fishing village in Maine. Just sayin."

Tash furrowed her brow.

"Okay, well New York at least. My point is that it's truly a piece of art. I mean, it's stylized, totally pop noir like you intended. The black and white with those eighties pops of color—I think it's brilliant. Films like that can do well on the art scene. You know that better than anyone. That's what you said years ago when you first had the idea, before the people here got in your head. Maybe you should let it be what it is and not worry about what it'll lead to. Carve your own path."

"Maybe. Sometimes I think I should just bag it all. I don't know if I want to put myself out there again."

"It's tough, I know, but I remember how happy you were working on it. Even when it wasn't going perfectly, and even during those brutal editing months, you were alive. Just do me a favor and promise you'll think about it."

"I'll think about it," Tash said, reaching her arm across the table. Aidan rubbed her hand.

"I love you," he said.

"I know."

Three



Poetic Inquiry

Poetry, I think, is an interruption of silence. The poem makes sense largely because it has this space around it. It is inhabiting a part of this space, but leaving space around it. So a poem is an interruption of silence, an occupation of science; whereas public language is a continuation of noise.

—BILLY COLLINS, former U.S. Poet Laureate (in Stewart, 2004)

Poems, surrounded by space and weighted by silence, break through the noise to present an essence. Sensory scenes created with skillfully placed words and purposeful pauses, poems push feelings to the forefront, presenting heightened moments of social reality as if placed under a magnifying glass. Carl Leggo (2008), a pioneer in poetic inquiry, contended, “the poet is a human scientist” (p. 165). He went on to write, “Poetry invites us to experiment with language, to create, to know, to engage creatively and imaginatively with experience” (p. 165). In contrast to scientific assumptions that science clarifies while art obscures, Ronald J. Pelias (2004) suggests just the opposite:

Science is the act of looking at a tree and seeing lumber. Poetry is the act of looking at a tree and seeing a tree.

The alchemy that separates the head from the heart finds no gold. (p. 9)

In this regard, the great William Ellery Channing proclaimed:

Most joyful let the Poet be,
It is through him that all men see.

Poetry as a research strategy challenges the fact–fiction dichotomy and offers a form for the evocative presentation of data.

Poetry is a form of representation that relies on the word and lyrical invocation, thus merging two vehicles of expression (Hirshfield, 1997). Poems typically juxtapose “disparate elements and images together so that each might be considered differently” (Rasberry, 2002, p. 106). Poems are highly attentive to space (which includes breath and pauses), using words sparsely in order to paint what I term a *feeling-picture*. Put differently, poems use words, rhythm, and space to create sensory scenes where meaning emerges from the careful construction of both language and its absence. In this way, a poem can be understood as evoking a snippet of human experience that is artistically expressed as in a heightened state.

The use of poems in the production of social scientific knowledge has increased greatly in recent decades. Somewhere between word and music, poems open a space to represent data in ways that, for some researchers, are attentive to multiple meanings, identity work, and amplifying subjugated perspectives. Unlike other forms of expression, in poems the word, sound, and space merge, and this convergence is critical to constructing and articulating meaning. Poetry is not just a representational form but also another way of interpreting and thus understanding (Brady, 2003, 2004, 2007). Therefore, the act of writing poetry can also be the research act or method of inquiry, similar to how in some instances of fiction-based research the act of writing is the research act. Under this conceptualization, poetry is research.

Background

? What is poetic inquiry?

Poetry is a craft. The poetic representation of social-scientific or other data offers qualitative researchers a representational form that can in some ways be understood as an extension of what they may already do; however, poetry also offers a very particular form in which to interpret and represent human experience and should not be viewed simply as another writing template.

With respect to research, poems offer an alternative way of presenting data such as those from in-depth interviews or oral history transcripts. Poetic inquiry merges the tenets of qualitative research with the craft and rules of traditional poetry. The representation of

the data in poetic form can help the researcher evoke different meanings from the data, work through a different set of issues, and help the audience receive the data differently. In this vein, the emergence of poetry within the research process is connected not only to the overall increase in arts-based practices but also to broader epistemological and theoretical insights such as those posed by postmodern and post-structural theory.

Theoretical Developments

? *What theoretical developments prompted the use of poetry as a research practice?*

A recurring theme throughout this book is that methodological innovations typically develop as research paradigms shift, new insights into the social world and research practices emerge, and theories are developed. In this respect, new methods or approaches to research may come out of a “methods gap” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, 2008), where methodological innovations are needed in order to address the issues brought forth from new theoretical insights. In the case of poetry and research, this form of expression has emerged in response to theoretical developments.

In particular, postmodern theory, postcolonial theory, feminist postmodernism, and feminist poststructuralism have challenged traditional ways of knowing. For example, these schools of thought (generally speaking) are concerned with producing situated and partial knowledge, accessing and magnifying subjugated voices, decentering authority, and paying attention to the discursive practices that shape experience and our articulation of human experience. As reviewed in Chapter 1, these critical approaches also call attention to the artificiality of binary categories like the rational–emotional split, which historically dominated knowledge production. These advances in theorizing directly serve as the context in which poetry has developed as an alternative to traditional prose. As will be discussed in more detail, poetry is a form that itself brings attention to silence (or as a poet might say, to space) and also relies on emotional evocation as a part of meaning making while simultaneously exposing the fluidity and multiplicity of meaning.

Both Norman Denzin (2003) and Laurel Richardson (1997) have written extensively about the relationship between new theoretical insights, paradigm shifts, and turns toward scientific artistic

expression. Richardson has been at the forefront of theorizing about the possibilities of experimental writing and poetic representation, as well as offering methods for the poetic representation of interview data. She uses the term “pleated texts” to conceptualize the multiple layers of meaning that can emerge in between what is there and what is absent. She also distinguishes between *narrative poetry* and *lyric poetry*. In Richardson’s framework the former is closer to storytelling, where data garnered from interviews are transformed into a poem that tells the participant’s story, using his/her/their language. The latter form, lyric poetry, emphasizes moments of emotion and is less concerned with relaying a “story” per se. Richardson explains that this method of writing encourages researchers to capture the rhythm, tonality, and patterns that comprise speech, in addition to the participants’ words themselves. In this way, poetry extends our understanding of “voice” in the research process.

Poetic Inquiry or Poetry as Method

? *What different kinds of poetry do researchers create?*

With the rapid growth in poetic inquiry over the last three decades, the literature has been flooded with terms aiming to describe this work (see, e.g., Table 3.1). In addition to the terms listed in Table 3.1, the idea of narrative poetry, or something similar to it, has also been labeled *interpretive poetry* (Langer & Furman, 2004) and *ethnographic poetics* (Brady, 2004, 2008; Denzin, 1997). The term *poetic social science*, used by Arthur Bochner (2000), also speaks to these practices.

Monica Prendergast (2009) offers a useful way to categorize the different types of poetic inquiry, based on the voice that is engaged in the poetry. She proposes there are three major categories of research-driven poetry, from the most to least commonly used: (1) *researcher-voiced*, (2) *participant-voiced*, and (3) *literature-voiced* (p. xxii).

Researcher-voiced poetry is, as Prendergast notes, a somewhat problematic category, as conceivably all poems could be placed under this heading. Nevertheless, this work, which comprises about half of all poetic inquiry, can be distinguished. The data for these poems come from sources produced by the researcher, such as *autoethnographic observations or field notes and reflections from ethnographic research*. So, for instance, *ethnographic poetics relies on taking ethnographic data (field notes, memo notes, etc.), meditating on the data (as*

TABLE 3.1. Multiple Terms for Poetic Inquiry

- Research poetry or research poems (Cannon Poindexter, 2002; Faulkner, 2007; O'Connor, 2001)
- Data poetry or data poems (Commeyras & Montsi, 2000; Ely et al., 1997; Neilsen, 2004)
- Poetic representation (MacNeil, 2000; L. Richardson, 1994, 1997; Waskul & van der Riet, 2002)
- Poetic transcription (Freeman, 2006; Glesne, 1997; Whitney, 2004)
- Poetic narrative (Glesne, 1997)
- Poetic resonance (Ward, 1986)
- Found poetry/found poems (Butler-Kisber, 2002; Prendergast, 2004b, 2006; Pryer, 2005, 2007; Sullivan, 2000; Walsh, 2006)
- Anthropological poetry (Brady, 2000; Brummans, 2003)
- Narrative poetry (Finley, 2000; Norum, 2000; Patai, 1988; Tedlock, 1972, 1983)
- Aesthetic social science (M. Richardson, 1998)
- Poetic, fictional narrative (P. Smith, 1999)
- Ethno-poem (W. N. Smith, 2002)
- Ethnopoetry (Kendall & Murray, 2005)/ethno-poetry (W. N. Smith, 2002)
- Ethnopoetics (Rothenberg, 1994)
- Transcript poems (Evelyn, 2004; Luce-Kapler, 2004; Santoro & Kamler, 2001)
- Interview poems (Santoro & Kamler, 2001)
- Map poems (Hurren, 1998)
- Poetic condensation of oral narratives (Öhlen, 2003)
- Fieldnote poems (Cahnmann, 2003)
- Field poetry (Flores, 1982)
- Hybrid poem (Prendergast, 2007)
- Poetic portraits (Hill, 2005)
- Poetic self-analysis (Black & Enos, 1981)
- Poetic analysis (Butler-Kisber et al., 2003)
- Poetic format (Chesler, 2001)
- Prose poems (Brady, 2004; Clarke et al., 2005; Saarnivaara, 2003)
- Poetic texts (Dunlop, 2003)
- Poetic monologue (Durham, 2003)
- Autobiographical poems (Furman, 2004)
- Poetic forms (Furman, 2006)
- Collective poems (Gannon, 2001)
- Poetic reflection/resistance (Kinsella, 2006)
- Poetic rumination (Leggo, 1999, 2002, 2004a, 2005a)
- Soliloquies/choral soliloquies (Prendergast, 2001, 2003a)
- Research-generated poetry (Rath, 2001)
- Autoethnographic verse, autoethnographic poetry (Davis, 2007; Ricci, 2003)
- Performance poem (M. Finley, 2003; L. Richardson, 1999)
- Verse (Simonelli, 2000)
- Performative autoethnographic poetry (Spry, 2001)
- Investigative poetry (Hartnett, 2003)

Note. From Prendergast (2009, pp. xx-xxi). Copyright © 2009 Sense Publishers. Reprinted by permission. See Prendergast (2009) for references.

field researchers typically do), and presenting the results in the form of poems (Denzin, 1997). Poetry is also one of the forms that autoethnographies can take. For example, Charlie Hope Dorsey (2018) used spoken word poetry to express her experience as a queer Black woman in academia. Dorsey brilliantly wove references into her work, which she describes as follows: “Blending references to white poets such as Emily Dickinson with allusions to writers, artists, and theorists of color, this piece makes space for black culture in the academy” (p. 247). For another example, Kakali Bhattacharya (2013) used poetry to explore her personal experiences of insider-outsider status while she worked with two translational students from India during their first year of education in the United States.

Participant-voiced poetry, which represents about a third of all poetic inquiry, is created out of participant interview transcripts or is solicited from participants who write it entirely, or may be co-authored between the researcher and participant (Prendergast, 2009). The idea within this form is to honor participants’ language, speaking styles, repetitions, and pauses (Prendergast, 2009; Sparkes, Nilges, Swan, & Downing, 2003). *Interpretive poetry* is understood as a method of merging the participant’s words with the researcher’s perspective (Langer & Furman, 2004). This practice, therefore, offers researchers a new way to account for merging the “voice” of their participants with their own insights, perhaps informed by the larger project of feminism and the like. Because this is consistently a challenge, and one that feminists write about extensively, we can see here how an arts-based practice helps address long-term concerns within the discourse about research practice. Alternatively, Carol L. Langer and Rich Furman present research poetry as a practice of creating poems from the research participant’s words and speech style in order to produce a distilled narrative. Participant-voiced poetry can also be used during analysis as a strategy for building trustworthiness into the data. Rosemary Reilly (2013) has developed an innovative approach to member checking by giving research participants copies of their interview transcripts and asking them to create “found poems” out of them. Not only did Reilly find this technique worked as a method of member checking, but the poems also added emotional depth to the qualitative data. Later in this chapter I offer an in-depth example of creating poems out of interview transcripts, in the section on poetic transcription.

Finally, *literature-voiced poetry* represents a newer and less popular trend. This practice involves either using literature or theory as the source from which the researcher creates original poetry or writing poems about poetry or inquiry itself (Prendergast, 2009). Prendergast

grounds this method in the literary tradition of “found poetry” (p. 76). As an example, her poems in one project developed from her work with Herbert Blau’s (1990) book *The Audience*. She used the “literature-voiced research poetry” method to “synthesize, process, and make meanings of Blau’s theory and how it informs [her] inquiry” (Prendergast, 2009, p. 75). The poems, all supported and contextualized with researcher statements, speak to her evolving understanding of audience and performance, central to her career as both a performer and an educator.

Writing Poetry as Research

? How does one write poetry as research?

What is the structure of a poem or poetic montage?

Considering what makes “good” poems can help direct our attention to the craft of writing poetry. Richardson (2000) suggests strong poetry expands our understanding of social life, makes an impact on readers, expresses a reality, promotes reflexivity, and is attentive to aesthetics (p. 254). Sandra Faulkner (2009, 2019) suggests good poetry is authentic and allows readers to keep revisiting it.

When constructing research poems that strive to meet those standards, it is important to understand the “architectural dimensions of a poem” (Sullivan, 2009, quoted in Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 97). The four dimensions of a poem, according to Anne McCrary Sullivan, are concreteness, emotion, ambiguity, and associative logic.

Poems use rhythm, form, metaphors, and the power of language. As with fiction-based research, and perhaps heightened with poetry, given its reliance on few words, language in poetry should be razor sharp. Words must be chosen carefully, with attention to their weight, emotional tenor, sound, and, of course, meaning. Specificity and metaphor are both important in poetry. Prendergast (2012) notes the important role of “metaphor as method” by explaining it is a key characteristic of both thinking poetically and doing poetic inquiry. The process by which research poems are constructed depends on the category of poem (the voice engaged) as well as the larger goals and methodology of the project. Typically, whether it is researcher-, participant-, or literature-generated, there is a process of sorting through data to find words and phrases that can be used to synthesize meaning (Faulkner, 2009, 2019; Glesne, 1997; Prendergast, 2009).

Poetic Transcription

? What is poetic transcription?

Poetic transcription is an approach to analysis and writing derived from a grounded theory perspective (although not precisely the same), where code categories develop inductively out of the data. In the case of interview data, for example, a researcher interested in poetic transcription first studies the interview transcripts looking for themes and recurring language, then draws exact words and phrases out of the data. The selected words and phrases become the basis of the poem. In addition to using participants' language, this approach also preserves narrators' speech patterns (Faulkner, 2005, 2019; Glesne, 1997). This technique ultimately relies on extensive thematic coding, constituting a process of reduction where single words may come to represent segments of an interview transcript. Although participants' language serves as the frame for the poem, the researcher may also incorporate his/her/their own language; for example, part of their dialogue during the interview may be infused into the poem. Corrine Glesne (1997) classifies poetic transcription as presenting a "third voice" that comes from the conversation between the participant and researcher and develops during interpretation. Insights from a literature review or theoretical scholarship may also be a part of this third voice. Again, we can see how poetry offers practitioners a way to address the tension between commitments to participants' voice and their own insights and political motivations—a tension frequently categorized under the terms *authorship* and *authority* in existing literature.

D. Soyini Madison (2005) suggests this approach developed out of feminist and multiculturalist concerns with respect to allowing the narrator's voice to emerge, concerns that are central to the larger project of feminism. Researchers committed to amplifying subjugated voices might be especially inclined toward this interpretation style. Furthermore, as many critical scholars believe, the participant's narrative occurs at the point of articulation, and therefore capturing the speech style of the narrator not only preserves his/her/their voice but also assists in communicating the performative aspects of the interview (Calafell, 2004; Faulkner, 2005, 2019). Whether or not poetic transcription is used, variations of grounded theory analysis may prove useful as a researcher tries to interpret his/her/their data and represent them in a manner that retains the speaker's voice, or *the sound* of the interview conversation itself. Moreover, a grounded-theory approach to interpretation adds a built-in dimension of authenticity.

The following empirical example illustrates one approach to analysis and representation. The data come from a study I conducted about the relationship between sexual identity and body image among college students (this research was supported by a grant from the Foundation for the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality). For this example I focus on the 18 female participants who self-identified as bisexual, heterosexual, or homosexual. Each participated in an in-depth, open-ended interview. While each participant was asked similar questions aimed at probing a defined set of issues, the interviewees had ample freedom to discuss issues of import to them and participate in shaping the flow of conversation. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the interviewees were all assigned a number (and the transcripts cleaned of identifying personal information) and then systematically coded by two coders for intercoder reliability. The result was a lengthy list of metacodes (large code categories), including codes such as Attractiveness, Body Image, Family, Dating, and so forth. Under each metacode category there was a larger list of smaller, more specific code categories such as Attractiveness Ideals Others, Attractiveness Ideals Self, Body Satisfaction, Body Dissatisfaction, First Date, Date Preparation, and so on.

Below is a copy of the coded transcripts that address the smaller code category of Breasts, which fell under the metacode category of Body Image. Five out of 18 participants chose to discuss this topic, which they were not specifically asked about. At this stage, I have gone back to the coded transcript and highlighted with **bold type** some of the words that capture the essence of what these women are conveying. I highlight data from each of the participants to use in the final poetic representation.

13

AND MY BOOBS!!! I WISH MY BOOBS WERE BIGGER!

(Interviewer) OK, why?

I don't know. [*Giggle.*] 'Cause . . . I don't know. I, I don't know, maybe it's the images I see . . . I guess. It's probably what it is, you know? Seeing women my size, 5 foot 2, skinny with like **bigger breasts**, for no reason. You know? They're skinny you know, but they have like **bigger boobs!** I don't know, I guess I wish I had a **little cleav** . . . (cleavage) to fill out some of my shirts. [*Giggle.*] I guess that's all . . .

8

Yeah, **I heart lingerie. I never used to and I have small breasts**, and I never used to wear bras with underwire or push-up bras or anything like that. I just used to wear like, you know, strips of fabric that would cover the nipples. [*Laughing.*] But like, when did I start wearing real bras? I think junior year of college. No? Sophomore year of college, I actually started wearing real bras. And like that's pretty late I think for a girl, uh, and I did it because, well, when I wasn't wearing bras it was because like I wanted my body to look the way that it is and I wanted to just present my body in the form that it was and I didn't want to pretend to ever, like, other people. But I felt like a lot of girls who did that were like, it reflected on their appearance, but like the past few years I fell in love with lingerie and like how it can accentuate the good parts. And I realized that it doesn't reflect on character and your character is there regardless of how you shape your body. It can exist, independently anyway, so you know, I heart lingerie. But I heart my small boobs, like I like them the way they are.

17

(Interviewer) *What do you think are the good parts of your body?*

Um, well . . . Um, I think that, I have nice [*laughs*] **breasts** [*laughs*] so I definitely wear tight shirts so they look good. Um, yeah!

I feel that society pushes us to be like, tall, and skinny with huge boobs and have the perfect body and look like Jessica Simpson and look like all of the ads with the models with perfect bodies in them.

You watched MTV all the time, even the people on *Real World* are gorgeous, like they all have **boob jobs** and are so skinny and the **guys are bricks**, and so I think that when I realized I had a problem, everyone doesn't look like that.

14

I hate my boobs!

(Interviewer) *Why do you hate your boobs?*

Because they are **too saggy** and **too far apart!** [*Giggle.*] And **I want to get a boob job**, when I get . . . 'cause I want to be a lawyer, and so like when I get my first big case I'm **gonna buy fake boobs.**

3

I would really enjoy it **if I had bigger boobs**, I think if I completely filled out a B I would be happy with that but instead I am on the smaller side of the B, which is small.

(Interviewer) So you would like bigger boobs?

Yeah, or at least like I don't know **I just don't feel like I have the ideal boobs.**

(Interviewer) What are the ideal boobs?

Well, I think **shapely**, and they have **a certain nipple size that is perfect**, I don't know. *[Laughs.]*

(Interviewer) Where did you get this idea from?

Umm, well, I got to say, **probably men's portrayal of what they like**, 'cause I'd say women if they had to say what they like, they'd like smaller boobs because **bigger boobs cause problems**, you know, when you exercise they are **all jiggly** or what not. So I would have to say it's definitely **a male want**.

The resulting poem follows:

. . . And My Boobs

bigger breasts
bigger boobs
too saggy
too far apart
all jiggly

tall and skinny with huge boobs
society pushes us
man's portrayal
a male want
guys are bricks

I have small breasts
but I heart my small boobs
I like them the way they are

I want to get a boob job
gonna buy fake boobs

If I had bigger boobs
bigger boobs
a certain nipple size that is perfect

I just don't feel like

I have the ideal boobs

In this example, only the participants' exact language was used in the final representation; however, I, as the researcher, selected which data that would be used and therefore retained interpretive control. The poem dramatically reduces the data and simultaneously emphasizes aspects of it that, when crafted, become emotional and represent highly personal experiences that are also woven together to represent a composite woman. Furthermore, although brief, the poem addresses the macro context in which women have these experiences and develop these self-concepts, including patriarchy, mass media, and the cosmetic surgery industry, and is thus a way of linking micro and macro levels of analysis.

Concrete Research Poetry

? *What is concrete research poetry?*

What does the visual representation add?

Concrete research poetry is a method whereby poems grounded in research are presented in a physical shape that reinforces the poetic content. This method reifies the metaphorical component in poetic inquiry and can be used in concert with metaphor analysis. Marcy Meyer conceptualizes this method as "word-imagery" and explains "concrete poems provide the reader with a visual object to be perceived as well as a text to read . . . creating a shape that serves as a container for the text . . . the reader's interpretation is shaped by the poem's physical form" (2017, p. 34).

Meyer (2017) used concrete research poetry in a study about single mothers of children and young adults with mental illness. Meyer's study was grounded in her own experience as a single mother of a son with mental illness. Although she originally had a research partner, eventually the partner dropped out and Meyer completed the study on her own. Data collection included a literature review and semistructured interviews with eight participants. Meyer used network and snowball sampling to locate the participants. Interviews were conducted in person when possible in mutually agreed upon locations such as the participants' offices or a local library. The interviews ranged from 35 to 60 minutes and were audio recorded. When in-person meetings weren't possible, interviews were conducted via e-mail. Data analysis and coding occurred in multiple stages moving from open to focused coding. Prior to poem construction, the process included transcription, e-mailing participants transcripts for verification (member checks), asking participants for clarifications, making notes in the margins,

using colored fonts to distinguish original versus added text, analytical comments and memos, exploring how code categories relate to each other, rereading the data specifically looking for metaphors, and the identification of 15 metaphors.

Ultimately Meyer created several poems out of the literature review as well as seven poems from six participant voices. With respect to the participant-driven poems, she engaged in multiple rounds of member checking including sharing drafts with participants to see if the poems “resonated” and soliciting feedback from local artists and poets. The feedback served as the basis for revisions. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 are two examples.

As you can see, the visual images help to convey the content of the poem. These are especially powerful for reinforcing the metaphor upon which the poems are built.

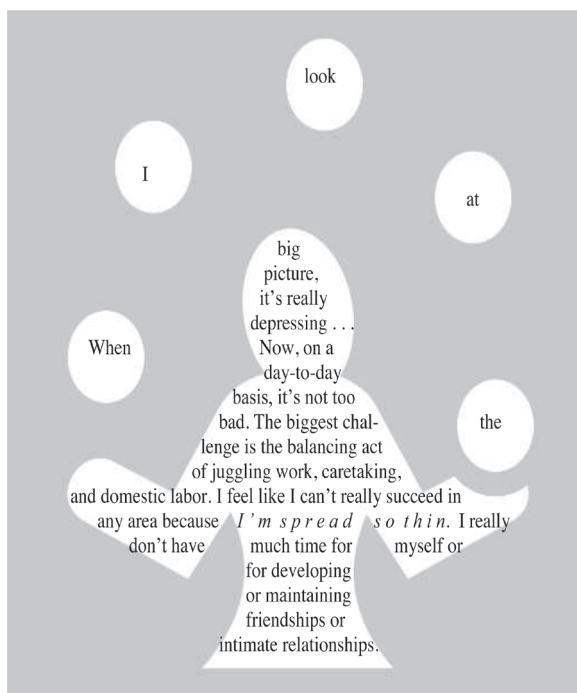


FIGURE 3.1. Concrete research poem: “Juggler.” From Meyer (2017). Copyright © 2017 Marcy Meyer. Reprinted by permission.

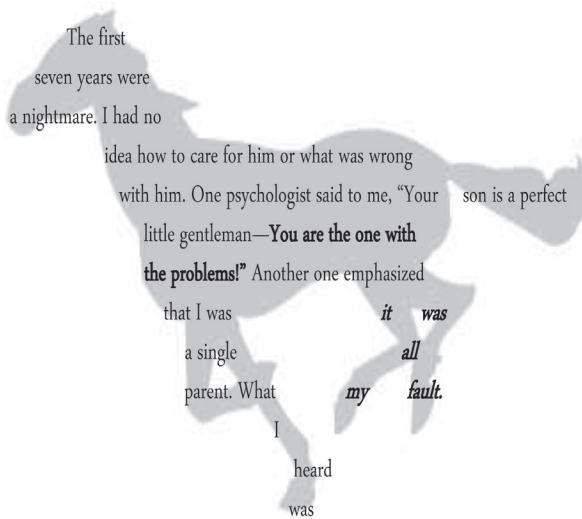


FIGURE 3.2. Concrete research poem: “Nightmare.” From Meyer (2017). Copyright © 2017 Marcy Meyer. Reprinted by permission.

Uses of Poetry in Social Research

? Why might a researcher consider using poetry?

What research objectives can poetry help us achieve?

Poetry is an *engaged* method of writing that evokes emotions, promotes human connection and understanding, and may be politically charged (Faulkner, 2005, 2019). Faulkner (2018) notes poetic inquiry can be used as “an active response to social issues, a political commentary, and a call to action” (p. 2). When there is an affinity between the research project and the poetic form, this method of representation can capture a unique aspect of the human condition, thereby expanding our understanding of social reality.

As with short stories derived from narrative inquiry, the poetic form is more accessible to broader audiences than traditional academic writing, opening social scientific knowledge to the public. Former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins notes some of the pleasures of poetry as irony, feeling, drama, imagination, and wordplay (2005, p. xviii). In addition, poetry evokes an emotional response from readers, which may serve particular research objectives.

Faulkner (2005) suggests that a researcher considers using poetry when prose is insufficient for communicating his/her/their message. Specifically, she proposes using poetry as a means of provoking “emotional responses in readers and listeners in an effort to produce some shared experience” (p. 9). According to Miles Richardson (1998), poetry is also useful when we want to reveal a moment of truth. This form captures “moments” because “the intensity and compression of poetry emphasizes the vividness” of a moment (Ely, Viz, Downing, & Anzul, 1999, p. 135). Similarly, Laurel Richardson (1997) explains that a part of humanity that may elude the social scientist reveals itself in poetry, allowing the audience to connect with something deep within them (p. 459). The human connection, resonance, and emotionality fostered by poetry results from the unique form or shape poems occupy as compared with other styles of writing. Poems present a port-hole to an experience, one that may be shared by the reader, or one that is new.

For example, bell hooks (1990) examined the poems of Langston Hughes, which, to her, revealed the “erotic longing,” lack of fulfillment, and pain that helped shape his life and provide a view into the experience of being a Black gay male within a specific historical and cultural space. hooks’s analysis thus suggests that poems can capture intensely subjective “truths” as well as their relation to the larger context. Through their use of language, rhythm, and space, poems represent “the essence of an event” by painting “a scene” that evokes strong imagery and emotions (Ely et al., 1999, p. 135). More than a window onto an aspect of social life, poetry places a *magnifying glass* in front of that reality, where the experience is even bolder than in everyday life. In short, poems can create a *vivid and sensory scene* that *compels the reader*, teaching him/her/them something about a particular aspect of experience. The poet’s business is to create the appearance of “experiences,” the semblance of events lived and felt, and to organize them so they constitute a purely and completely experienced reality, a piece of virtual life (Langer, 1953, p. 212, quoted in Ely et al., 1999, p. 135). Although data are condensed in poetic form, this does not minimize poetry’s potential to help audiences connect with some aspect of social reality or human experience. The power of a poem as a communicative device is in its ability to dramatically set a sensory scene fostered by attention to the spaces in between words, as well as to those that (literally) appear on the page. In this regard, Cynthia Cannon Poindexter (2002) draws on the power of metaphor, to explain the researcher-poet’s process, which she likens to “diamond cutting”—carving away at language in order to achieve the greatest clarity.

Poems and Identity Research

? How are researchers using poetic inquiry in identity research?

What are the benefits?

Researchers engaged in identity research may find that poetic representation enables their objectives. Poetic inquiry may be used to represent and/or generate data, or as the entire inquiry process. Let's begin with the poetic representation of data garnered via a traditional research method.

An excellent example comes from Faulkner's (2006) work on LGBTQ Jewish Americans' identity negotiation. Faulkner conducted open-ended interviews with 31 people who identify as LGBTQ and Jewish, exploring the question: "What does it mean to be who I am?" This particular group embodies identities that may create conflict or tension, evoke many stereotypes and assumptions, be at risk for homophobia and anti-Semitism, and each of these identities may be more or less paramount at different times and/or to different people's self-concept (Faulkner, 2006). This particular group is also interesting because both identity categories under investigation can, at times, be concealed in a way that other identity categories (e.g., race) are less likely to be able to be concealed. Therefore, part of the identity negotiations, or "identity management," of people in this group centers on the extent to which they conceal or reveal their Jewish identity and/or their LGBTQ identity, and how this may differ in different contexts and at different times (Faulkner, 2006, 2009, 2019). This is clearly a dominant theme in the poems created out of these interviews, as is apparent in the short excerpt that follows.

Rabbis sigh, throw up their hands: How are gay
orthodox Jews part of the solution, they're
part of the problem? Abe says, I'm not *that* Jewish,
locks himself in a double closet, shut away from religion
shoves identity into different boxes, passes for parents
as a devout (but not queer) Jew when in *shul* . . .

In this study on "identity" the final poems were created directly out of participants' narratives in a highly collaborative process in which each participant had an opportunity to elaborate or refine the transcripts of their interviews prior to the construction of the final poems.

As discussed earlier, poems reject static or unitary meaning and instead reveal *multiple meanings*. The focus of Faulkner's study is the process of identity negotiation in which LGBTQ Jewish people engage.

Accordingly, the poetic representation of data has a tight fit with the research objectives and execution of those objectives. As Faulkner herself explains, “Poetry defies singular definitions and explanations, it mirrors the slipperiness of identity, the difficulty of capturing the shifting nature of who we are and want to be and resonates more fully with the way identity is created, maintained, and altered through our narratives and interactions” (2006, p. 99). Faulkner goes on to explain that poems allowed her simultaneously to expose how identities are traditionally represented and to expand the presentation of complex identities in relevant academic literatures. In addition, the poems provoke emotional engagement and human connection between the author, the participant, and the audience—a key facet of identity research with a social action intention. This kind of engagement and connection challenges readers to transgress stereotypical ways of thinking about different groups and therefore has social justice implications. The “truths” that come forth in poems may also be an important part of how this research helps us understand how identity management happens with respect to “concealable identities” (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998) and how disclosure, partial disclosure, or nondisclosure of those identities may be linked to fears about homophobia and anti-Semitism, which are themselves more or less pronounced in different contexts and at different times.

An outstanding example of using poetic inquiry both to generate and represent data comes from Camea Davis’s (2018) study **of slam poetry and adolescent identity construction**. Slam poetry, a form of spoken word poetry, is often “written by marginalized youth to challenge the political and social forces that oppress them through policies, practices, and silencing (Davis, 2018, p. 118, citing Gregory, 2008). Spoken word poetry “uses the vernaculars, cultural icons, and experiences of the marginalized to provide a counternarrative to Eurocentric portrayals of those communities” (Davis, 2018, p. 118). This is an **explicitly resistive art form that exposes injustice in the spirit** of Civil Rights activists and hip-hop artists (Brown, 2011; Bruce & Davis, 2000; Davis, 2018). Davis (2018) likens slam poetry to a protest anthem or marching song.

Situated in the emancipatory power of slam poetry, Davis (2018) developed the following research questions:

How does the slam poetry space enable middle school students to break through social barriers? How does the slam poetry space engage middle school students in the process of identity construction? (p. 117)

In the fall of 2015 Davis invited students enrolled in an elective slam poetry class in a midwestern middle school to participate in her study. She ended up with two participants, both African American, one male and one female, Andrew and Brittany (pseudonyms). The data generation and analysis process occurred over a 2-month period during which each student created a poem over which they had complete autonomy, then Davis spent 2 weeks analyzing the poems, and then the process repeated, resulting in four participant-created poems. The four poems served as the raw data in this study. During analysis Davis engaged in numerous rounds of reading, rereading, coding, and creating analytic memo notes. Out of this process she created a list of codes “used to identify themes aligned to the research questions” (p. 124). During these cycles of analysis she also returned to the poems to search for “poetic devices” (p. 124). Davis created two poems based on the analyzed data. Each poem amplifies Andrew and Brittany’s voices. The findings support the existing literature, showing that the slam poetry space helps adolescents with identity building, including resisting social norms. Further, Davis explains that the process of crafting poetry facilitated collaborative meaning-making with her participants.

Poetic inquiry may also serve as the entire research act. One of the most well-known examples comes from Gloria Anzaldúa, a pioneer in Chicano/Chicana studies and queer theory. In her groundbreaking 1987 book, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldúa merged poetry with prose in order to access and express the experience of embodying a hybrid identity. Here we can see how theoretical shifts, such as intersectionality theory, have affected the development of poetic inquiry. Here is a brief excerpt from her poem “To Live in the Borderlands”:

To live in the borderlands means you
are neither *hispana india negra espanola*
ni gabacha, eres mestiza, mulata, half-breed
caught in the crossfire between camps
while carrying all five races on your back
not knowing which side to turn to, run from . . .
To live in the Borderlands means to
put *chile* in the borscht,
eat whole wheat *tortillas*,
speak Tex-Mex with a Brooklyn accent;
be stopped by *la migra* at the border checkpoints . . .

In this identity work, poetry is research, a style of writing, a cultural intervention, and an act of resistance.

Poems and Subjugated Perspectives, Oppression, and Unearned Privileges

Anzaldúa's work is the perfect bridge between looking at identity research and accessing and amplifying the experiences of those who are marginalized. Researchers might use poetry to get at and express subjugated knowledge and the experience of those who are disenfranchised. Here the specific form or shape that poetry occupies becomes paramount to the articulation of marginalized voices. I am referring to "spaces" in poetry, which are integral to their form. Space and breath are inextricably bound to meaning production. In this way, the spaces that partly comprise poems are *weighted*. Lisa Mazzei (2003) offers the idea of "a poetic understanding of silence," which purposefully conceptualizes silences as "inhabited" (p. 356). Mazzei refers to this commentary about White poets who write about race: "Relationships of race and power exist in their poems most often as a silence or a muffled subtext" (Rich & Lehman, 1996, p. 32). The poetic form can therefore help us access those aspects of a hierarchical society that may be further rendered invisible in traditional forms of scientific writing. Poetry can help us access the *subtext* that helps shape our experience, perception, and understanding of social reality; this is particularly salient in a society in which many are forced to the peripheries of the dominant order and within which others enjoy the "unearned privileges" associated with their dominant status, privileges that the recipient is exonerated from recognizing.¹

Special Considerations

As with all of the arts-based practices reviewed in this volume, a primary concern regarding the poetic representation of social-scientific or other data revolves around the criteria by which the research community and public might judge such work. Although validity and related issues emerge in discussions about all arts-based practices, the use of poetry is the subject of premature dismissal by some and intense scrutiny by others, perhaps in part due to misconceptions that it's easy or lacks rigor. It is important to understand, when contemplating important issues of evaluation, that this kind of research cannot be judged by positivist or traditional qualitative "interpretive" standards (in their conventional configuring). While evaluation is broadly considered in Chapter 8, here is a brief review of issues specifically related to poetic inquiry.

Poetry is a complex artistic craft with its own set of normative practices and literary rules. Researchers embarking on a poetic project are advised to study the tradition of poetry, learn its rules (Faulkner, 2009, 2019; Percer, 2002), and begin to understand the rigorous practice of *crafting* poems. As in the case of fiction-based research, the use of poetry in research increases rigor in the interpretation and writing processes; it does not diminish it. Moreover, attention to the poetic form itself enhances the aesthetic qualities of the work, which in turn increases positive audience response; the audience response is itself a validity checkpoint in ABR.

Poems can also be judged based on their ability to evoke emotions, produce connections, create a scene that *feels* truthful, and inspire political or socially conscious action (Faulkner, 2005, 2009, 2019). Drawing on the work of Richardson (2000) and Bochner (2000), Faulkner suggests that we pay special attention to the emotional undertones of poems and the feelings they produce for the audience. For Richardson the emotional response of readers is critical, while Bochner asks the reader to contemplate the truthfulness of the emotions expressed by the poet-researcher. In other words, when reading a research poem, what does your internal monitor say? What is your emotional, gut-level response? How does the poem promote issues of social justice or understanding across difference? Does the poem call forth something from your experience or help shed light on an experience that is unfamiliar to you? These are the kinds of questions we can ask ourselves as we evaluate specific poems.

Another criterion by which we might evaluate poems comes from the field of poetry itself, a field partly shaped by debates over how “accessible” poems should be with respect to clarity of meaning. Billy Collins suggests that poems should be “easy to enter” so that readers have an entrée into the meanings contained within them: “An accessible poem has a clear entrance, a front door through which the reader may pass into the body of the poem or whose overall ‘accessibility’—i.e.: availability of meaning—remains to be seen and may vary widely” (2005, p. xiv). This principle can be applied to research poems as well. One way of achieving this is to begin with something concrete—concreteness offers readers something to latch on to as they begin the interpretive process.

Beyond the measures already reviewed, Sandra Faulkner (2005) provides the following list of scientific and artistic criteria, followed by her assessment of “poetic criteria.” The scientific criteria presented are based on standards for qualitative practice.

Scientific Criteria

Depth

Authenticity

Trustworthiness

Understanding of human experience

Reflexivity

Usefulness

Articulation of craft/method

Ethics

Artistic Criteria

Compression of data

Understanding of craft

Social justice

Moral truth

Emotional verisimilitude

Evocation

Sublime

Empathy

Poetic Criteria

Artistic concentration

Embodied experience

Discovery/surprise

Conditional

Narrative truth

Transformation

To Faulkner's list of scientific criteria I would add *triangulation* (or something like it)—a strategy employed to add validity to scientific research. Richardson (1997) and Pelias (2011) suggest the term *crystallization* over triangulation. In other words, the researcher paints a picture with words through the rigorous use of language so that the meaning is clear and can be confirmed by multiple readers.

As you can see, the measures of trustworthiness used to evaluate qualitative research and those used to judge the quality of artistic work merge in poetic criteria. In this way, “poetic criteria” do not privilege social scientific or artistic ways of creating and knowing “truth(s)”; rather, proposing the hybridization or merging of the two creates a *third space* for contemplating what counts as knowledge, paralleling the “third voice” produced by poetic transcription. In this way, working through the challenges of creating criteria by which to judge and compare research poems is also a way for social scientists to challenge and expand standard definitions of knowledge itself. Accordingly, poetry is at once an act of research and a style of representation as well as a vehicle through which the research community can engage in larger questions about the nature of social research, truth, and knowledge.

Checklist of Considerations

When considering using poetry for the representation of your data, it may help to ask yourself the following:

- ✓ What are the goals of my project, and how will poetic analysis and representation help me meet those goals? How will the poetic form help get at and reveal issues in ways that differ from traditional prose?
- ✓ What do I want the poems to evoke in readers?
- ✓ What views regarding the nature of knowledge are underpinning my research, and are these views consistent with the use of poetry?
- ✓ How will I construct poems out of my data? For example, to what extent, if any, will a grounded theory approach be used?
- ✓ How will my methodology help me to reach the poetic criteria used to evaluate the resulting work?

Conclusion

Consider the issues that arose in this chapter with respect to the nature of knowledge building, experience, self- and social knowledge, and emotionality as you read the exemplar by April R. Mandrona that follows this chapter. Poetic inquiry can be a powerful tool for coming to understand and represent the essence of a phenomenon or experience. Mandrona, a graduate student at the time of her study, created poetry using the narratives of children. The powerful resulting poems speak volumes about the struggles and perspectives of children, and as the author suggests, help us connect not only with young people but also with ourselves. I should note I have selected this piece as the exemplar for this chapter to highlight how effectively graduate students are using ABR. I hope her example encourages others and reminds you that while learning artistic craft is important, you needn't be intimidated. Start from where you are. There is outstanding, illuminating work being done from practitioners at all career points.

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. Why might a researcher studying sexual harassment in the workplace, the experience of racial or sexual prejudice, or homophobia in a family consider using poetry as a research tool?

How are these kinds of issues addressed by poetry? What can poems help us access with respect to these topics that other methods of representation often distort or obscure?

2. How might poetry assist a researcher who is interested in studying the identity management practices in the high school, family, and peer contexts of first-generation Americans who live with a parent or parents born in a different country?
3. Use the data provided in Appendix 3.1 and perform a poetic analysis, ultimately representing the data as a poem. (These data are a part of the same coded interviews on body images and sexual identity used earlier. These data come from the code category Attractiveness Ideals Self.)
4. Select a topic you're already researching or that you're interested in learning more about and explore it poetically. To do so, conduct a small literature review (three to four sources). Create a poem based on one theme to emerge from the literature.



Suggested Readings

Faulkner, S. L. (2019). *Poetic inquiry: Craft, method, and practice* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

This is a thoroughly revised edition of the first comprehensive introduction to poetry as a research method, including detailed methodological instruction. It includes coverage of the history, benefits, and uses of this method, a robust review of craft and assessment, a detailed research example, and exercises and suggestions for novices.

Faulkner, S. L. (Ed.). (2018). Poetry and social justice [Special issue]. *Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal*, 3(1). Retrieved from <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/ari/index.php/ari/issue/view/1941/show-Toc>.

This special edition includes a range of research poetry and studies, theoretical musings, and reviews.

Leggo, C. (2012). *Sailing in a concrete boat: A teacher's journey*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill/Sense.

This is a gorgeous full-length narrative composed of short fictions interwoven with poetic works. The narrative explores the experiences and emotions of a school teacher named Caleb Robinson. He teaches in a conservative church-administered school in a rural Newfoundland town called Morrow's Cove. Caleb struggles to understand what it means to be a teacher, husband, lover, friend, father, Christian, and human being. This wonderful full-length exemplar will be of particular interest to those in the field of education.

National Association for Poetry Therapy. (2006). *The National Federation for Biblio/Poetry Therapy guide to training requirements*. Delray Beach, FL: Author.

This is a comprehensive guide for those contemplating entering the field of poetry therapy.

Prendergast, M., Leggo, C., & Sameshima, P. (2009). *Poetic inquiry: Vibrant voices in the social sciences*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill/Sense.

This is a robust anthology showcasing the best in poetic inquiry. With 29 contributor chapters, a foreword by Ivan Brady, and three in-depth section introductions, there is a lot of substance in this collection.



Suggested Websites and Journals

Alba: A Journal of Short Poetry

www.ravennapress.com/alba/submit.html

This journal, published biannually, accepts original poetry submissions (only via e-mail and only in the body of e-mails). Interested poets can submit short poems (not more than 12 lines) to albaeditor@yahoo.com. The journal prefers free verse as opposed to established forms, although all styles are considered.

Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal

<https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/ari/index.php/ari/index>

A bi-annual, open access, online journal that publishes poetic inquiry as well as other forms of arts-based and arts-informed research. The journal typically alternates between themes, guest editor issues, and general issues.

Journal of Poetry Therapy: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Practice, Theory, Research, and Education (JPT)

www.tandf.co.uk/journals/printview/?issn=0889-3675%20&linktype=1

JPT is a peer-reviewed interdisciplinary journal sponsored by the National Association for Poetry Therapy. The journal publishes full-length articles about the use of the language arts in therapeutic practices. Articles can be primarily theoretical, historical, literary, clinical, or evaluative. Poems and short reports (four to seven pages) are also published.

National Association for Poetry Therapy

www.poetrytherapy.org

The website for this association contains many features of interest, including membership information, books, conferences, events, and many other resources. Of particular interest is *The Museletter*, the official newsletter of this organization, which is published three times a year. The newsletter spans many topics, including book reviews, information about arts-based therapies, and articles about poetry therapy.



Note

1. Peggy McIntosh wrote about this in her well-known (1989) essay “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack.”



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Appendix 3.1

5

Okay. So what you said before, the shallow reason is that you do some of these things to be attractive to others, what is like, what would make you attractive? What is your goal, what would you want to be to be attractive?

Um, I would say, probably like my stomach is the one thing that makes me unattractive. Because it's not small, for somebody my height, short, should have a small stomach, and like that is what I am trying to work toward, and like when I go to the gym that is what I am trying to focus on becoming, small in the stomach.

6

Okay, do you do these things, like exercising and eating and stuff, is it in any way, would you say, to be attractive to others?

Oh, um . . . I think at this point, definitely, surely who doesn't? But I think in the long run it's just to be healthy, 'cause I don't want to grow up and not have these habits because it's going to be harder and harder to get into it. But right now, of course. Like you just want to look good for yourself and for others.

I just want to keep my body toned, it's not so much losing weight, I just want to keep the body image as it is because right now, as we said before, I'm pretty comfortable what it looks like, so I don't want to change. Um, and I think it has to do with looking good for others, and also it's a confidence issue, when you are happy with the way you look, it's easy to be confident.

2

Where do you think that comes from?

Um . . . I would say, a lot of it is compliments. Like, the good things would probably be complimented on by people, I mean like if someone says "Oh, your hair looks really nice today," you're like, "Oh, I do have good hair!" like, and then you like start to notice it. If someone compliments your smile, like, you notice it, and you're like, "Oh, I guess it does look nice," especially if it's something that more than one person, like multiple people saying it's nice, you start to feel like it's true.

13

Why don't you like being short?

Because I think like I could, I don't know, sometimes I feel like tall people just look good in some clothes that I could like never pull off, you know? Like even in capris sometimes I'm like, "I'm too short for capris!" I just wish I had long, slender legs, I guess.

18

Now for you personally, do you think that you eat healthy and you go to the gym to, do you think part of it is basically to be attractive to others?

Umm, I think it's a nice benefit, and I think that, I think that, I'm trying to, I enjoy it so I don't really think about it in that way, but I think that, well, I guess when I go home, if it's snowing out, and I don't have a gym to go to, I don't go exercising I just watch what I eat more. So I guess you could kind of count that as like worrying what I look like, but at the same time, I like doing those things for me to be healthy. And I mean I still, you like being thin, I do it to stay in shape and to look decent, but I think there are other factors as well.

10

Do you feel that for girls on campus that there's pressure to dress a certain way?

Freshmen? Um, sometimes, I mean, I think that everyone wants to look hot you know and everyone wants to like, yeah, like go out, when we go out in the courts and party everyone wants to look like hot and you know, feel wanted and stuff, but I don't know, but most of my friends don't care how they look, we're beyond that, you know? So, there are two sides to it definitely.

8

What do you think constitutes a cute girl?

Um, hmm, someone who's put together, someone who had like a pretty distinct clique of other cute girls, like uh, I dunno, it's like a phenomenon of youth that did make you cool.

And like that's pretty late I think for a girl, uh, and I did it because, well, when I wasn't wearing bras it was because like I wanted my body to look the way that it is and I wanted to just present my body in the form that it was and I didn't want to pretend to ever, like, other people.

4

Um, well, I like to be able to wear clothes and feel like I look good in them, so if I try on an outfit and I don't feel like I look good in it I do not buy it, or, um, the way I look is also important to me, so I go to the gym—and although I don't faithfully go four or five times a week, like I would like to, I try to go three or four times a week because I like to feel like I can keep my body in check so I do not gain a lot of weight.

So why do you think it's necessary to stay an average weight in order to feel attractive?

Well, I think it's important because first of all it's healthy, and second, it's harder to find a relationship to get into one, I think, if you feel like you have a poor body image. So if I feel like I am average, I feel healthy, and I look healthy, I will be more attractive to others, and I will have a better relationship, knowing that I am doing things the right way and staying happy.

15

So how about you, how important is it for you to feel physically attractive to people?

Um, I think there is some level in myself where I want to be attracted to other people but I also want to feel like I don't need to portray any particular image to be attractive to people.

14

So you desire to have skinny thighs?

Yes!

Why?

Um, I don't know. That's a good question! [*Giggle.*] I don't know, but I mean guess because that is what is seen as attractive by guys. And who doesn't want to be seen as attractive by guys?

I try to go to the gym 5 days a week and I do 20 minutes on the elliptical and then I do power yoga. That's about it, I mean no, is it power yoga? I think it's power yoga . . . abs yoga, it's abs yoga! I do 20 minutes on the elliptical and then I do abs yoga for like 15 minutes, so I don't really go that long, but the fact that, like I do that consistently combined with the fact that I try not to eat like complete crap, combined with the fact that I have the ability to lose the weight I feel like that's enough to get me the image, the body image that I want to have.

So, why do you go to the gym overall?

To stay thin.

So why don't you eat it all the time?

Because it's more important for me, to myself to be thin and to look good than to eat what I like.

Children's Poetic Voices

April R. Mandrona

Poetry is an anchor in the present, in the moment where everything unfolds. It reaches places deep within the psyche to shake free our emotions, memories, and alternate levels of awareness. Inherently ambiguous, poetry begs interpretation, while at the same time rejecting such analysis. It is a place of communion between the world, each other, and ourselves. In the past few decades, poetic inquiry, or the use of poetry to produce, collect, analyze, or explore data, has gained prominence as a powerful tool of discovery capable of revealing the connections and subtleties often overlooked by conventional research approaches. As an effective reflexive or self-study technique, poetic form articulates the tensions and complexities of lived experience. It challenges our ingrained modes of thinking and expression as it breaks from the confines of linear ways of knowing. "Found poetry," also called "participant-voiced poetry" (Prendergast, 2003), utilizes the original words and phrases from participant transcripts, reorganizing the text into stanzas and playing with line, meter, repetition, and pauses (Richardson, 1992). Writing found poetry is an immersive process; as we ruminate on the words of others we are momentarily engulfed, catching glimpses of a different subjectivity.

A short time ago, I began to use poetic inquiry in my own professional practice in an effort to better understand the children I work and research with. While pursuing a PhD in art education and teaching art to elementary

students, I identified a need to shed light on the often disregarded insights and perceptive abilities of these young children. My standard reductionist methods of representation and analysis no longer seemed tenable, as the original luster and intensity of the children's experiences was often obscured. I was unsure of how to move beyond this obstacle until, in the spring of 2010, as part of a found poetry exercise for Lynn Butler-Kisber's qualitative inquiry class at McGill University, I revisited the videotaped data from my master's thesis. The research focused on young children's drawn and sculpted representations of people, but I had not examined in depth the discussions they had with me while creating their artworks. Previously, I glossed over their accounts, as they appeared impulsive, tangential, and often unrelated to the task at hand. Upon reexamination of the video footage, however, I was immediately struck by what had eluded me before: the rich, poetic quality of their utterances. The children recounted their experiences; although often short and fragmented, their narratives revealed a playful poignancy. Something stirred within me; I was reawakened—a true “eureka moment” (Butler-Kisber, 2010). From these data I produced several “untreated” poems, “conserving virtually the same order, syntax, and meaning as the original” text (Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 84). This first poem was taken from the narrative of a young boy who told me about an experience using clay and the resulting objects that now adorn his home. The second was created using the words spoken by a 5-year-old boy as he constructed an environment from clay complete with people, a car, and a garage. Although both poems are rather simple in their message, each possess a mysterious resonance. There is a movement beyond purely analytic thinking to a form of intuitive–associative understanding.

A ship in a jar

I made a ship in a jar,
a pirate ship in a jar,
a ship made with clay.

With blue all around.

I made a small ship,
with straws for posts,
that hold paper sails.

With blue all around.
(By a young boy, age 6)

Garage

Garage, like a car
trying to get out of a cage
and then it opens.

(By a young boy, age 5)

Creating the poems involved the application of a modified version of the “Stonebanks method” (cited in Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 87). The process is as follows:

- After listening to the recordings several times and transcribing the data, conduct a close reading of the transcript, allowing themes to surface.
- Pull out phrases and words that “breathe life into the poem,” highlighting any words that might help to shape the poem (see Figure 3.3).
- Immerse oneself in the world and words of experience and successful attempts of writing poetry. (In this instance I read Adrienne Rich, Carl Leggo, Christian Bok, Margaret Atwood, William Carlos Williams, and Leonard Cohen.)
- Combine phrases from the transcript, experimenting with line breaks, rhythm, and so forth.
- Use key words from the transcript in the title to help give meaning to the poem.

Through this exercise, I was carried back to a frame of mind that I had forgotten, to a time when I was a young child who would often tell stories filled with imaginative musings intertwined with observations from my surroundings. For the first several years of my life my mother kept a journal documenting my newly acquired behaviors and language abilities. Before I learned

- 17: I'm not making a person yet. I'm making a car. It has a **garage** (begins to squish clay with his
- 18: fists). Yeah, a **garage!** You know, a **garage, like a car trying to get out of a cage. And then it**
- 19: **opens** (motions with outstretched palms).

FIGURE 3.3. Excerpt from transcript with words and phrases highlighted.

to write myself and in the time that followed, she acted as my transcriber, noting each discovery, developmental milestone, and addition to my vocabulary. Wanting to be heard, at times, I would request that my words be written down, so that I and others could examine this tangible trace (see Figure 3.4C). Figure 3.4A constitutes what my mother calls my first haiku, which I uttered upon realizing that wild animals, unlike humans, wore no clothes. Figure 3.4B describes my amazement at seeing tiny particles of dust catch the sunlight as they floated through the air. I wrote the typewritten poem using the family's large, authoritarian manual typewriter, wanting to express my alarm that hardly anyone around me believed in fairies anymore.

In rediscovering these entries and poems, I was witness to a part of myself, the part that views the world as miraculous, that is surprised at the chances of existence. I could see the delight I had experienced as a young learner, and the delight of my mother as she watched this unfold. While I place great value in a well-trained mind, to reach a deeper state of understanding I believe requires a freeing from the rigidity of the learned. One must once again be open to experience possibility, fresh input from the world. My own reflexive process represents the spiraling and recursive nature of learning and experience. We continually move outward, gathering knowledge and skills, moving away from the self, but must circle back to call upon the prime planes of the self.

But how quickly we may dismiss from mind these childlike meditations and enter into a realm where we are expected to think rationally, sensibly. The words of children, the language we once used, is outgrown and often deemed trivial, empty, or fanciful. In becoming adults we position ourselves outside the worlds of childhood, and there is a tendency to speak for children or about them rather than with them. In our state of disconnect, all too often we become patronizing and overly didactic. As asserted by Wareing (2003), "language actually creates power, as well as being the site where power is performed" (p. 11). Applying this concept to the construction of children, Peccei (2003) states that children "are differentiated within society not only by their special social, economic, and legal status but also by the language that is used to describe and categorize them" (p. 117). This system of representation reflects the societal status of children and subsequently determines their level of participation within the various spheres of knowledge production. Only recently have the experiences of children been viewed from outside the parameters of traditional knowledge, revealing the power systems embedded within the dominant research constructs. More critical and diverse approaches, such as art-informed methods, have helped to bring attention to

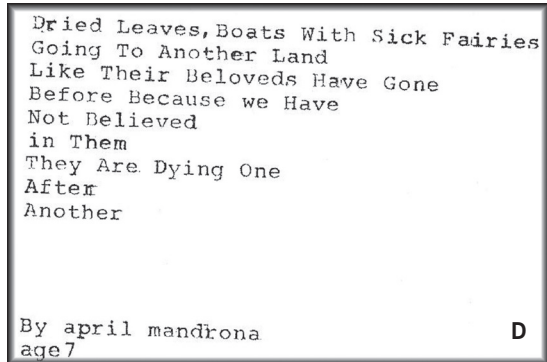
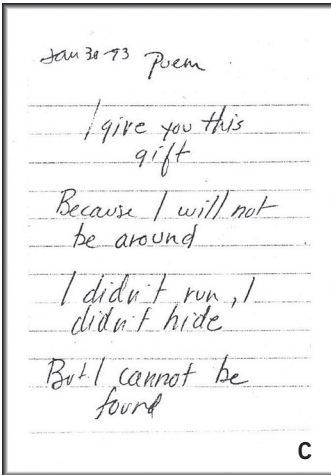
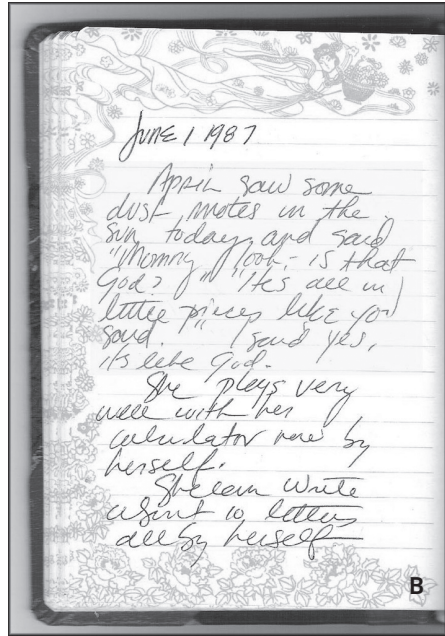
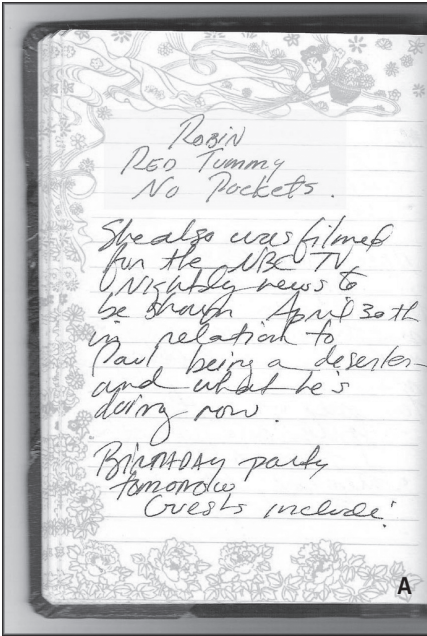


FIGURE 3.4. Preserved journal entries and documents. Panel A shows a “haiku,” or a description of a robin: “Robin red tummy no pockets.” Panel B shows observations of dust in the sunlight: “April saw some dust motes in the sun today and said, ‘Mom, look—is that God? He’s all in little pieces like you said.’ I said ‘Yes, it’s like God.’” Panel C shows a poem on the subject of death. Panel D shows a typewritten poem on the existence of fairies.

the marginalization and silencing of children. The concept of “voice” or “voicing experiences, claiming the right not only to speak but also to be listened to—has become a metaphor for political recognition, self determination, and full presence in knowledge” (Thorne, 2002, p. 251). However, as maintained by Punch (2002), one of the problems with involving children in research is that “[I]t is difficult for an adult researcher to totally understand the world from the child’s point of view. . . . As adults we were once children but we soon forget, unlearn and abandon elements of our childhood culture” (p. 235). Adults are separated from children by a perennial distance, which stems in part from the rapidly changing social and cultural contexts of childhood, and the diverse experiences of individual children (Dockett & Perry, 2007). This presents a difficult dilemma for those who work with children, but I believe it may be possible to significantly reduce this “adultist” bias by becoming more in touch with the realities of the child.

I do not wish to suggest that the categories of “child” and “adult” are fixed, dichotomous entities, but agree with Thomson (2007) who, drawing on the work of scholars such as Paolo Freire, suggests that we are all human “becomings” as opposed to human “beings,” that is, we are inherently incomplete, continually learning, growing, and expanding. Thomson further contends that “the competent adult is a myth, that all individuals are human becomings, regardless of age, and that identities are multiple, fluid in nature and continually negotiated within and through space (including research space)” (p. 214). Learning does not follow a predescribed, linear path, but is meandering and lifelong. Identity is layered and dynamic, and individual realities are constantly shifting and overlapping. For me, the poetic space offers a form of distillation, a stripping down to the core of being, and as such represents a possible point of convergence or place we may share with children. Poetry can expand the boundaries of language, thus challenging and subverting the dominant reality. Leggo (2004) proposes that “Truth is composed in the open places broken open by art . . . art calls forth the unfamiliar. And so this is why I recommend that writing poetry is crucial to sustaining a creative flexibility in language and discourse, and hence the composing of truth in our living” (para. 23).

I would hasten to add that putting oneself in a state of poetry does not require learning a new language but returning to one deeply lodged in memory, a lesser-known, once-familiar, basic form of communication. Poet John Steffer (1995) posits that “poetry approximates, through the powerful use of language, our fundamental, original sense of life’s miraculousness, its profound and mysterious meaning” (p. 47), something that is known intimately by children. Sullivan (2009) suggests that “poems must be concrete. There

must be things to see, hear, smell, taste, touch. . . . Concreteness is about embodiment. We experience life in all its grittiness and pleasure through the sensory mechanisms of the body. . . . The human voice, authentic and resonant with experience, has its own concreteness” (pp. 112–114).

There is something retained in the talk of children. Children offer a freshness, unpretentiousness, an unmediated whimsy that we as adults might struggle to emulate. Their stories are anchored in the world of the concrete and the immediate, while simultaneously pointing toward the prophetic and the profound.

I returned to my split grade 1 and 2 art class at a local elementary school with a renewed curiosity and direction. I felt a need to pay closer attention to what the children were telling me. However, with the large number of students, it was difficult to balance the normal teacherly duties of classroom management and assisting with cutting, assembling, and designing. Breaking the class up into smaller sessions allowed me to concentrate on individual children and talk with them at length about their ideas and experiences. I transcribed the recorded discussions, then transformed the text into several poems, arranging the narratives into stanzas to emphasize the rhythmic quality of speech and the children’s unique ways of speaking.

Poetry “clusters” or a series of poems around a given theme blend the general together with the particular. As stated by Butler-Kisber:

Poetry clusters help to show the tentativeness of individual interpretations, that is, how each understanding of a theme, topic, or concept is limited by the time, place, context, and stance of the researcher at the time it is written. A poetry cluster that represents different events, moods, topics, etcetera, can acknowledge the “truth” of each poem in the series while simultaneously uncovering something more. The “something more” is the revelation that often occurs in the unveiling of a poetry cluster. The reader, and/or author(s) herself, can see for the first time dimensions of a theme that might otherwise not be revealed. (2009, p. 4)

Many of the children created and discussed art that focused on animals and their knowledge of these creatures. I chose to present the poems that resulted from these experiences in the form of a poetry cluster as a means of representing the mosaic of specific viewpoints. Read together, however, this cluster appears to express the children’s special relationship to animals and their understanding of the subtle yet surprising aspects of the natural world. The words of the children are accompanied by their artworks on the same topic.

Huntin' dog

Mine's a special dog.
 He likes to eat dog food and biscuits.
 He howls when he's scared.
 Someday he's gonna be a huntin' dog.
 He howls when he smells an animal.
 And then the hunter shoots.
 (By a young boy, age 7)

I know

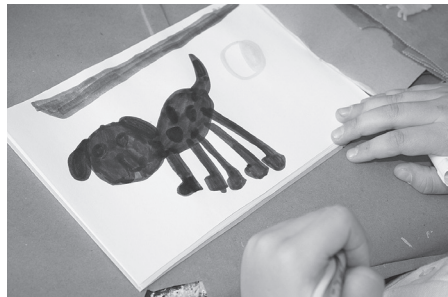
how
 frogs jump
 Sometimes
 very far
 They are
 green
 blue
 red
 blackish
 (By a young boy, age 7)

Tadpoles

turn into frogs
 when they are older
 they will live



A



B

FIGURE 3.5. Artwork depicting “Sniffy” the dog by a young boy, age 7. Panel A shows a print of “Sniffy.” Panel B shows a drawing of “Sniffy.”



FIGURE 3.6. Clay sculpture of a frog by a young boy, age 7.

in green water
there's a difference
between us
we can't breath
inside water
they can't breath
outside
so we have to be
in different places
to be able to live
together
(By a young girl, age 7)



FIGURE 3.7. Clay sculpture of a tadpole by a young girl, age 7.

Pig Poem

I dream about you,
I talk about you,
and I love you.
From the pig to you girl.
(By a young girl, age 7)

The final poem in the cluster was written by one of my students. In my art classes, I encourage the students to write poems and stories if they wish. I also share poetry with them that I find interesting or compelling. Each of them receives their own journal where they can draw or record their thoughts, dreams, and reflections.

The following collection of poems, while not a true poetry cluster, clearly shows the children's personal perceptions of the world. The children's words are bittersweet, as they demonstrate an attentiveness to life's wonders but also an acknowledgment of its limitations.

A country house

I had a country house
and I went to the water

My mother had it when she was tiny
She had it for such a long time

But now it's sold
And I got a condo in Florida
(By a young girl, age 7)

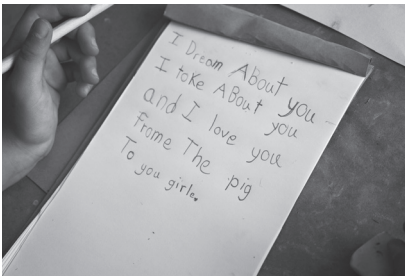
**A****B**

FIGURE 3.8. Work by a young girl, age 7. Panel A shows a poem she wrote in her journal. Panel B shows the girl with the “pig” described in her poem.

Polkadots

I am drawing polkadots
around you
with different colours

I think it's special and unique
It kinda takes long time
but I'm being patient
(By a young girl, age 6)

I am different

from the
other people
in my class.

I made
a kind of creature
a unicorn-jaguar.



FIGURE 3.9. “April surrounded by hearts and polkadots.” Drawing by a young girl, age 6.

It has
a horn
it's fast
and flies.
(By a young girl, age 6)

Running out of magic

We are running out
of magic.
This is crazy
science.

We are running out
of magic.
We got the wrong
one.

We are running out
of magic.
I want to go
back.
(By a young boy, age 7)

Through the distillation of the children's words that took place in writing these poems, it became possible to identify the previously unrealized ambiguities, dualities, and complexities that these children embody. The children and their worlds begin to be revealed to me. At once they appear both foreign and familiar. These little beings, so full of joy and woe. They are wise and naive, vibrant and latent. I borrow from them this flexible state of being and step into a space of fluctuating borders. I become both teacher and learner, straddling the worlds of reality and imagination. The creation of poetry has become a way for me to document and explore the multiple layers of the educational contexts that I share with children. When viewed in conjunction with their artworks, their words move beyond the purely descriptive and offer insight into their emotional and intellectual processes. I believe this has helped to develop my ability to understand the experiential and dialogical activities of my classroom. As a result, my teaching practice has become even more delightful, more dimensional. I am more trusting and respectful of my students' decisions as the frequency and depth of exchange has increased.

On creating found poetry from interview transcripts Richardson (1992)

writes: “I am better able to step into the shoes of the Other, as well as into the Other’s body and psyche. I am more attuned to lived experiences as subjectively felt by the Other. This has affected my willingness to know myself and others in different ways. . . . In writing the Other we can (re)write the Self” (pp. 135–136).

Poetic inquiry with children offers an opening for conversation, questioning, and learning. Children seem to speak from the subconscious, moving within a less filtered way of knowing. Their perceptions appear closer to a form of “truth,” as if they function as a kind of oracle speaking to the essential aspects of existence, evoking the imaginative and the creative. Transforming their words into poetry can create a shifting, shared, and interactive space. The result is an attempted blurring of boundaries, not only between the external imposed constructs of “child” and “adult,” but also between the child and adult that exist simultaneously within the self. This form of exploration gives credence and voice to their stories and allows me to dwell, even temporarily, within a renewed, spontaneous state of understanding.

Author Note

This chapter represents a project unrelated to my current doctoral research. As such, on the advisement of both the Human Research Ethics Committee of Concordia University and the English Montreal School Board, ethical approval is not required from either institution. However, parental consent and child assent was obtained as well as permission from the elementary school administrators. For reasons related to anonymity and confidentiality, the names of the children have not been included.

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Four



Music as Method

Music is a language that doesn't speak in particular words. It speaks in emotions, and if it's in the bones, it's in the bones.

—KEITH RICHARDS

Louis Armstrong famously noted that, as jazz musicians, “What we play is life.” Similarly, literary giant Leo Tolstoy professed, “Music is the shorthand of emotion.” Although the turn to music in research may seem suspect to some, if society were compared to a living body, one could argue music would be flowing through its veins. The use of music in social science research methodologies can be viewed less as an experiment and more as a *realization*. Music-based approaches to research can help researchers access, illuminate, describe, and explain that which is often rendered invisible by other research practices. As Aldous Huxley said, “After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music.”

Listening to and participating in making music may also have unique capabilities to heal and empower. There is ample research in the social sciences and creative arts therapies showing music can aid the psychological or physical healing process (e.g., see Daykin, 2004; Malchiodi, 2005, 2012; Trier-Bieniek, 2013; Vaillancourt, 2009; Vick, 2012). For example, an ambitious interdisciplinary project investigated the phenomenon of singing. “Advancing Interdisciplinary Research in Singing” (AIRS) was a 7-year, multiproject research study led by Annabel Cohen and involving more than 70 researchers all over the world. One of the themes explored was singing and well-being. Beyond listening to music, participation in singing can also be beneficial for psychological and social well-being (Clift, Nicol, Raisbeck, Whitmore, &

Morrison, 2010). There are individual and group benefits to community singing, such as choir participation (Riley & Gridley, 2010; Slottje, 2010). One group of researchers in AIRS found community singing so worthwhile that they propose it is explored as a social work intervention (Dore, Gillett, & Pascal, 2010). Other researchers have also found community music making useful. Joan Harrison (personal communication, 2014) founded a youth orchestra that met weekly in a retirement home where residents were invited to observe and/or participate, as she gathered data about youth attitudes toward seniors.

Music is innately social, ingrained into every culture. Although now emerging as part of ABR practices across the disciplines, music has long been a part of social research, with roots in anthropological studies of folklore as well as research in music education. From a social science perspective music can simultaneously be many things, including a creative expression, a commodity, an ideological text, a political tool, a resistive tool, and an integral component of cultural rituals and daily social life. Many music educators suggest music is a social activity and a source of social agency (Blaukopf, 1992; DeNora, 2000; Regelski, 2008). Music is an integral component of society (Regelski, 2008).

Music can be defined in many ways, particularly when thinking cross-culturally, so my suggestions for how to define or conceptualize music are inherently limited. Nevertheless, music is generally considered to be the art of arranging sounds into a continuous and unified composition with dimensions that typically include rhythm and melody (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/definition_of_music). Music generally refers to sounds with distinct pitches that are arranged into melodies and organized into patterns of rhythm. Peter Gouzouasis (2013) suggests tonality, meter, and form all play a role in music as a way of knowing. Songs in many genres also include lyrics (combining music and text), often arranged as a narrative with bridges and repeating choruses. Songs can be found throughout history and across cultures and are thus a “universal human practice” (Bakan, 2013, p. 6). In Western culture there are norms for creating harmony that are also integral to the making of music. Music also has a symbolic system or language through which it is written. As Robert Walker (1992) explained, the visual, symbolic forms “act as mnemonics for the physical actions necessary in the production of musical or spoken sounds” (p. 344). As with any other discipline, music education has a unique epistemology and structure as well as specialized jargon (Richardson & Whitaker, 1992, p. 549).

Songs and musical scores are conceived for many purposes, including the evocation of emotion, the creation of beauty, the growth of the

individual artist, and as a part of many cultural rituals. Music can be a means of accessing truth. Gouzouasis (2006) explains that whether he is listening to, writing, or performing music, he has insights. There is also a long history of music and social justice movements (Bakan, 2013). For example, jazz, rap, and hip-hop were all born from anti-racist politics. Music is able to *connect* people through emotional evocation that in certain contexts may transcend language, economic, and other social barriers. Poet Robert Browning expressed this sentiment best: “Who hears music, feels his solitude peopled at once.”

As with other arts, music is a cultural product imprinted with material and symbolic aspects of its point of production as well as the musical conventions prevalent in that time and place. Music is created in cultural and historical contexts and thus varies across time and space. Contrary to notions of universality, music only unites people within certain contexts and can also identify differences across cultures and ethnicities and comment on those differences (Elliot, 1989; Jordan, 1992).

Background

? *How can we philosophically understand music?*

Philosophers have posited that music is intrinsically social in ways that extend beyond its status as a socially constructed art form. Philosopher Theodor Adorno and economist Jacques Attali, each influenced by Karl Marx’s analysis of capitalism, theorized about the social importance of music long before music was taken seriously in the social sciences.

Adorno, who (influenced by Marx) considered the political economy of music, saw music not as an add-on to human experience, but rather as a significant force in shaping consciousness. In Adorno’s (1984) work, not all music has the same value. Popular music, driven by a market economy, creates conformity, passivity, and thus contributes to “false consciousness.” On the other end of the spectrum, some other kinds of music can subvert and resist stereotypical, complacent group thinking (false consciousness), and therefore music has resistive capabilities that can propel altered social consciousness and transgress the dominant order. Let’s take a look at an example. Jazz has political roots. Recently, Cornel West and Arturo O’Farrill have argued that despite its “subversive and political” history, jazz has become “commodified” and “sanitized” under today’s capitalism (Norton, 2016).

Attali (1985) examined the implication of music in relations of power, particularly economic and political power. Like Adorno, Attali analyzed music as an agent of social control with insidious workings in the execution and maintenance of social power, far more than the popular perception of music as entertainment would suggest.

As Attali suggested, sound and “noise” more generally are virtually a constant component of social life, far more insidious in the daily shaping of experience than we might realize. More specifically, music is used for many purposes and incorporated into many aspects of a society. For example, music is often a part of religious or spiritual rituals and practices, of ceremonies related to weddings or funerals, as well as of educational markers such as graduation, popular entertainment, or leisure activities. In addition, this medium communicates a variety of information to the society—providing insight into particular historical periods, power relations, social struggles or movements, social or political resistance, and personal or collective experience related to any number of characteristics or circumstances (e.g., racial or gender inequality, the experience of war, violence, sexuality, euphoria or pain from drug use, or extreme ecstasy and pleasure).

Given the narrative capabilities of lyrical songs, in many cultures music is viewed as a major form of storytelling. For example, in Korea the performative art form *P'ansori* combines singing and storytelling and is believed to reveal social and political elements of Korean culture (Grossberg, 2005).

Multiculturalism, Hybridity, and Ethnomusicology

? What is the relationship between music education and multiculturalism?

What is ethnomusicology?

For over four decades music education has been one locus of attention for larger movements in the United States toward multiculturalism and pluralism (Jordan, 1992, p. 735). However, an interest in music from different cultures has been a part of music education long before the multiculturalism movements of the past few decades (Anderson, 1974; Jordan, 1992). Music, always produced by social actors situated in groups, can offer many insights into the peoples and cultures that produce it, including identity issues and points of similarity and difference across ethnicities. Typically, music from other cultures has been included in American music education, but this music has been exoticized and relegated to visitor status within the curriculum. In the context of America's culturally pluralistic society, we might conceive of a music

education curriculum that includes music from diverse cultures with the intent of cultivating a “world perspective” as opposed to including various music but using Western standards as the benchmark by which they are judged and thus privileging one musical tradition over others (something that has already occurred under the rubric of multicultural music education) (Jordan, 1992). Looking at the role of world music in American education—and its relationship to larger issues pertaining to diversity, voice, and cultural representation—can provide many insights into social phenomena while raising questions such as: What might a world music curriculum consist of, and how would it be organized? What might it teach students about anthropology, globalization, development, ethnicity, diversity, democracy, nationalism, and, of course, different musical systems from a music perspective? As we share different musical traditions, how can we cultivate cultural appreciation and avoid cultural appropriation?

From a social science perspective, an extension of considering the relationship between music and multiculturalism is examining music as a locus of hybridity—a space in which different elements, often from different cultures, times, or genres, merge to create something new. Hybridity scholars refer to this as a “third space” (Bhabha, 1993) that emerges when aspects of different cultures merge, opening a new site for the production and negotiation of culture. The term *third space* does not derive from an additive model but rather from the opening of a space where something new develops. The opportunity and need to investigate musical hybrids has increased exponentially with globalization and the multidirectional cultural exchange it has fostered. In this regard, the turn to music as an object of social inquiry allows researchers interested in cultural aspects of globalization a data source in which processes of hybridization are embedded. Because hybrid music always requires a mixing of sounds, genres, or cultures, there is great potential to study collective identity struggles and negotiations via this medium.¹

Within the study of music itself, *ethnomusicology* is a disciplinary hybrid with roots in both anthropology and musicology. Ethnomusicology involves the study of music in or as culture and the study of “why, and how, human beings are musical” (Rice, 2014, p. 9). In musicology, studies often involve comparing musical systems cross-culturally (Bresler & Stake, 1992, p. 80). In anthropology, studies aim to understand the music of a culture in the context of that culture and human interaction therein (Bresler & Stake, 1992, p. 80). As with other forms of ethnography, these studies typically occur in natural settings. Researchers immerse themselves in the culture in an effort to understand music

within its cultural context (Bresler & Stake, 1992, p. 80). Nicole Carrigan (2003) has conducted studies using this method and explains that when going from one musical culture to another, researchers must consider three dimensions of how music fits into the culture: the conceptual, the contextual, and the circumstantial (p. 42). Furthermore, she advocates four categories for developing a cross-cultural perspective: (1) ideas about music, (2) social organization of music, (3) repertoires of music, and (4) material culture of music (Carrigan, 2003, drawing on Stobin & Titon, 1992).

Embodiment and the Mind–Body Dichotomy²

? *What does it mean to say that music is an embodied experience?*

The increase in social-scientific research projects exploring music (and dance) and creating music-based methods innovations is linked to overall increases in studies of embodiment, the body, and bodily experience, which is reviewed in detail in Chapter 5, on dance and movement (see Grosz, 1994; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Pillow, 2001; Spry, 2001). The increase is also the work of feminists and others who continue to dismantle the mind–body dichotomy (see Bordo, 1993; Butler, 1993; Hesse-Biber, 1996, 2006; Leavy, Gnonng, & Sardi-Ross, 2009; Sprague & Zimmerman, 1993; Wolf, 1991) upon which much traditional social science rests (as discussed with respect to positivism in Chapter 1). The making of music, inextricably linked to its performance (whether in practice or the formal performance), is a site of embodiment for both the performer and the listener. Liora Bresler (2005) writes:

Music is produced by physical movement—the voice or an instrument which functions as the extension of the body, where the performer unites with the instrument to produce sound . . . in performance . . . music is experienced, not as something given to the body, but as something done through and with the body. Sound penetrates us, engaging us on a bodily level in fundamentally different ways than the visual, for example. (pp. 176–177)

Similarly, Eleanor V. Stubley (1995) notes that audiences do not distinguish between instrument and performer but rather experience them as one.

An embodied experience, the performing or making of music exposes, challenges, and dismantles the mind–body dichotomy in ways that are relevant to research. Stubley (1995) goes on to posit that the unique experience of music blurs our “sensations and perceptual

boundaries,” and that performing music has a spiritual component as “oneness” is experienced (p. 59). Bresler (2005) concurs, adding that both the mind and the body are actively present as we perceive and interpret music and that this “mind–body presence” is central to working with research participants, in which we constantly send messages to our participants through body language, posture, physical proximity, and so forth. These factors are particularly salient in cross-cultural research or when outsider status is in play (Bresler, 2005). Moreover, she notes as researchers try to create a space in which interaction and conversation can occur, we can benefit from attending to the mind–body oneness that occurs in music. By using music to represent research we can affect audience members in new ways.

Music as Performance

? *What happens when music is performed?*

Music is not merely a text or object: it is *performed* and *heard*. Music comes to be at the point of articulation, that is, during performance (Rhodes, 1963). Similarly, music can be thought of as an event or a “happening,” and one that is necessarily singular because no two performances are alike, nor is a particular score or song performed quite the same by different musicians, each with his/her/their own “musical voice” (Stubley, 1995). In this way, musical performances bear similarities to focus-group interviews, which also provide a “happening” and which, regardless of the degree of structure and control imposed, are never identical (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2005; 2012). Stubley (1998) explains that musicians search for something beyond the score as they *make* music.

In addition, as with poetry, lyrical music utilizes space and breathing to evoke emotional responses. Space in music exists during performance.³ Space surrounds every musical note, and singers and musicians can manipulate or sculpt these spaces, by elongating them, for instance, to produce the desired audience response and, correspondingly, impart meaning. The transformation of musical composition into audible sound thus unleashes its potential to access or reveal emotions as well as to elicit emotional responses from listeners.

The resistive, transcendent, and transformational possibilities of music also come into being through performance. Musical performance is a transformative way of knowing and communicating (Bakan, 2013; Bresler, 2008; Gouzouasis, 2013).

An example comes from Stacy Holman Jones’s (2002, 2007, 2009)

research on the emotional and resistive space opened up by torch singing (by *torch songs* she is referring to formulaic songs of unrequited love performed by female artists such as the hit “Memories,” sung by Barbra Streisand). This genre of songs speaks to commonalities many (heterosexual) women may experience as a result of relationship norms related to their gendered location in the social system, although other differences (race, social class, etc.) may come into play. As this research shows, torch songs open up a space of engagement and transcendence at the point of performance.

At the level of “engagement” Holman Jones draws on postcolonial feminism and other critical perspectives to show how, without essentializing women and disavowing difference, the performance of torch songs allows the audience to engage in what is common to their experience as women, thereby building bonds and forging community. Therefore, this is an implicitly *political* form of engagement. In terms of *transcendence*, during performance there may be a suspension or tabling of difference (in a certain respect)—a space in which differences are transcended and “common understanding” emerges (Holman Jones, 2002, p. 748). Alternatively, the space that opens may offer an opportunity for dialogue, an exchange of ideas, and a multiplicity of voices (Conquergood, 1985; Holman Jones, 2002, 2007, 2009). Holman Jones (2002) has suggested that performance can provide the means for an “oppositional consciousness” that can manifest in many spheres of public life (p. 748).

Music as a Model for Qualitative Research

? How can some of the dimensions of music be employed to enhance qualitative research methodologies?

How can they build effective listening skills?

How can they be adapted as a coding strategy or framework for representation?

Liora Bresler (2005) has been at the forefront of theorizing about how music can help sensitize qualitative researchers to the fluidity of social life and bring greater attention to many of the issues they are already interested in. Western culture is considered a “visual culture.” In this context, Bresler explains, people are sight-driven, and therefore researchers have created methodologies that are also sight-based, such as constructing knowledge via visual observation. However,

in ethnographic and interview research *hearing* is integral to the knowledge-building process, and skills associated with music can help researchers build their listening skills with great depth and nuance. Bresler (2005) suggests that by adopting “musical lenses” or “musical sensitivities” when engaged in qualitative research, we may be able to access dimensions of the subject and research process that would otherwise remain untapped (pp. 170–171). Brydie-Leigh Bartleet and Carolyn Ellis (2009) further suggest music can greatly enhance how we represent our research and thus the experience readers have as they engage with our texts.

Bresler (2005) offers a model built from metaphors in which all formal dimensions of music can be adapted to highlight dimensions of social experience that may not be fully attended to in traditional qualitative research projects. These dimensions of music include form, rhythm, dynamics, timbre, melody, polyphony, and harmony. Attention to these aspects of music can assist researchers in the three major techniques associated with qualitative research, which are, in general terms, perception, conceptualization, and communication (Bresler, 2005, p. 172). Moreover, I suggest that researchers who conduct ethnographic and interview studies think about how Bresler’s categories could be implemented as a coding strategy and/or as a framework for structuring the written representation of research findings.

Form speaks to the organization of music, referring to how the parts and whole are conceived as well as how variation, unity, and repetition are organized. Bresler (2005) notes that form, in these ways, is also integral to social life and our writings about it, in which we must negotiate how the parts of a person’s story fit together; where variation and repetition can occur to impart meaning; and how to employ conventions such as organizing our data into stories with beginnings, middles, and ends (p. 172). Researchers can use music to contemplate the importance of form in life and research—the transcendental quality of music may inject new awareness into this process and help the researcher to reconsider the relations of parts within the whole.

There are also several aspects of music that attend to how meaning is communicated and can offer qualitative researchers lenses through which to view how their participants create and communicate meaning. These dimensions focus on patterns, pace, tone, inflection, and texture. *Rhythm* refers to temporal patterns (tempo being pace) and to the relationships between tempi (Bresler, 2005, p. 173). Attention to rhythm helps shape how researchers communicate knowledge; for example, this is clear in the way researchers construct conference presentations and other public talks. *Dynamics* has to do with how

“loudness” and “softness” are perceived differently, depending on the context. For example, the same sound may be perceived as louder or softer based solely on what it follows, and how loud or soft that preceding note is. Bresler (2005) writes, “Silence feels different just before the music starts, as compared to immediately following a climax, or as closure” (p. 173). Dynamics are also active in social interactions shaping “anticipation, tension, confrontations, resolutions” (p. 173).

Next, researchers can consider *timbre*. This concept refers to the musical color, inflection, and tone that are all integral to how meaning is conveyed. This dimension may be particularly important to researchers engaged in interactive research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, oral histories, and ethnography, all of which require acute attention not just to *what* participants say but also to *how* they say it, and how communication styles also impart meaning. Researchers dealing with disenfranchised or disempowered populations; those working from feminist and other critical perspectives; as well as those interested in accessing the subjugated knowledges of women, people of color, LGBTQA individuals, and others forced to the margins of the society may find an attention to “timbres” particularly useful. Bresler (2005) notes that timbres can offer a window onto gender and race differences as well as individual differences (p. 173).

Polyphony, in musical composition, creates texture through simultaneous lines of sound as well as through the interrelation of the lines. This structural concept bears directly on the fluid nature of social life, which “consists of simultaneously multiple voices, sometimes silent, always present—thinking, interacting, experiencing, creating the texture of life” (Bresler, 2005, p. 174). Moreover, “texture creates and enables harmony” (p. 174). This is both a wonderful metaphor for the study of difference and diversity and a way of tuning researchers in to those aspects of social life wherein texture and harmony emerge. Bresler (2005) notes, “As researchers, we attend to the dissonances and consonances of social life, often appreciating the interplay between dissonant moments and their resolutions or lack of” (p. 174). This approach may be particularly appealing to intersectional feminist researchers and other critical scholars.

Another important and related concept is *counterpoint*, which “means that while individual voices may be different in rhythm and contour, they are interconnected when played together to form harmony” (Bartleet & Ellis, 2009, p. 13). Attention to this aspect of music may change the way researchers represent multiple research participants; consider, for example, the possibilities for interpreting and representing focus group data.

Finally, *melody* refers to the “plotline,” including what emotions and climaxes are built into the plot, such as anticipation or drama (Bresler & Stake, 1992, p. 84). Researchers can apply this concept during their interpretation and analysis of interview or focus group data. Moreover, as researchers write up their findings they can pay attention to the melodic structure of their writing, considering how they place emphasis and how different audiences might receive the work. Researchers interested in preserving their participants’ voices (both words and tonal dimensions) can write in a melodic structure that mirrors their participants’ telling of their own stories.

Bresler’s categories could be applied to the data-generation phase of qualitative research (e.g., via listening techniques), during analysis and interpretation (serving as a method for organizing and coding field notes or interview transcripts), and/or as a format for representation. These approaches could thus be used in conjunction with more traditional qualitative methods or could serve projects that employ newer methods such as autoethnography or multivocal autoethnography (see Davis & Ellis, 2008). Bartleet and Ellis (2009) have written extensively about using “music as a framework” for autoethnography to help researchers tap into the senses and reach people on an emotional level (p. 13).

As you consider how to enhance qualitative research design using musical concepts, it’s also important to pay attention to the nature of both research and musical practices. Lifelong musician and scholar Peter Gouzouasis (2018) reminds us that songwriting is largely an “organic” process (p. 237). He writes, “While making music, the feeling and sound of the music takes precedence over the critical analysis, just as an inquiry does not begin with a research method in mind but begins with a research purpose and question” (p. 237).

Music as Method

? *What music-based practices are researchers developing?*

Due to the training needed, the ephemeral nature of music, the language used to write music, and the favoring of text-based representational forms in academia, music (along with dance) remains the least used artistic medium in ABR.⁴ Most of the research we have that deals centrally with music is either (1) content analysis (the study of musical content) or (2) music as intervention (as seen in the recent studies of singing and well-being discussed earlier). Neither of these inclusions

of music in social research constitutes ABR; however, they both have implications for arts-based practice. The former centers on meaning making in music and the latter on the effects of listening to or making music on audiences or participants, both of which are integral to music-based methods.

Notwithstanding the challenges, in recent years researchers have begun creating more music-based research practices. Perhaps more than anything else in arts-based inquiry, music may offer researchers a way to represent that which would otherwise remain out of reach. Norma Daykin (2004) writes:

The problem for the researcher is that of portraying complex discussions in linear form. In music, such problems are managed through principles of orchestration, hence music is arguably able to encompass a greater degree of complexity than other representational forms. In music, voices can speak together without negating one another.

In this regard music as a method may allow researchers to get at and express a multiplicity of meanings, or layered meanings, not communicable in other forms. In the case of songs, “music ideas interweave with linguistic ones to enhance both” (Bakan, 2013, p. 6). The “textual” aspects of songs, *lyrics*, are communicated differently than prose. In song lyrics, words unfold over time and take on multiple and metaphorical meanings (Bakan, 2013; Bresler, 2008; Neilsen, 2008). In this context Bakan (2013) echoes many singers by saying, “If I could say it, I wouldn’t have to sing it” (p. 6).

Musical Portraiture, Sonic Analysis, and Performance Collage

? What is musical portraiture?

An exciting extension of using music as a model for qualitative research comes from Terry Jenoure’s (2002) work “Sweeping the Temple,” in which she developed two music-based research practices. The first, which she refers to as *musical portraiture*, is the process of coding data using musical structures, resulting in *sonic narratives* she likens to “jazz riffs.” The latter method, *performance collage*, refers to the process of musically coding and writing up data culminating in a musical performance.

As with many researchers at the cutting edge of ABR, Jenoure’s innovative methods were developed when traditional methods left a

project feeling “unfinished.” The project also emerged at a complex personal and professional intersection. Jenoure is a scholar and musician who was working on a book about African American artists who teach at historically White colleges. During this time her best friend and artistic collaborator of 20 years, Patti, a dancer, was diagnosed with breast cancer. Patti was one of the interviewees for the book and even agreed to videotape one interview session in the latter stages of her cancer battle. Patti fought her illness for 2 years and died. Jenoure finished the book that featured her close friend as one of four “portraits” developed out of the interview data.

The portrait method arose out of an artistic approach to analysis, interpretation, and writing, one that drew on Jenoure’s musical and research skills. During the process of reviewing the data Jenoure, in a manner she describes as virtually “automatic,” began aligning particular kinds of comments. Although this may seem unremarkable to qualitative researchers, the artist in Jenoure saw the musicality in this process. She writes, “I realized that what I had was a series of short conversations. I was composing sound again. I was making songs and I could hear them in my head and it felt perfect. Best of all, I felt more like myself . . .” (2002, p. 77).

Using this emerging methodology, Jenoure created “characters” out of the interview data, paying attention to such issues as tension, textures, colors, rhythms, brightness, pauses, and accelerations (2002, p. 77). These aspects of music extended far beyond the metaphors and conceptual categories delineated by Bresler and became a way of *organizing* and *writing* the data into textual pieces that embody musicality. Through this process Jenoure created “hushes,” “screams,” “drum rolls,” and “cymbal crashes” (Jenoure, 2002, p. 77).

As is often the case when working with an innovative methodology, unexpected issues can spring forth during the process. In this instance, Jenoure engaged in extensive contemplation regarding the ethical implications of her work. The sonic form her analysis was producing made her participants at times appear as if in conversation, which had not actually occurred. Comfortable that she had not altered anyone’s words, she forged ahead and added her own voice into the mix in the role of interviewer.

This entire analytical process resulted in pieces that Jenoure, borrowing from the language of jazz improvisation, termed *riffs*, and were incorporated into the book. She notes that in jazz, riffs are used to “punctuate a musical idea”; with this conceptual frame in place, the vibrant “riffs” were woven throughout the book (Jenoure, 2002, p. 78).

Despite the successful incorporation of musicality into her work,

the completion of the original project coupled with the devastating loss of her friend left Jenoure feeling unsatisfied. With respect to Patti, she felt that her story and their story of friendship and collaboration had not been fully told in the monograph. In addition, the subject of her book—interviews with people who had balanced their scholarly and artistic lives—made Jenoure feel like an “outsider” to her own project, particularly on the heels of 2 years without performing (so that she could complete the book). The musical element of her work still placed her in the role of “researcher” and, as many researchers who take on ABR do, she retained an artist identity that was unfulfilled. Jenoure writes, “My artist-self felt the way I always do when I’ve gone through long, dry spells of musical celibacy, then gone to hear my colleagues in concert; me: stiff, tense, and awkward, them: on stage, illuminated in their spirit bodies, wings and all. In those moments, I’m sad, overjoyed, frustrated, inspired, depressed, exuberant, and confused, all at the same time” (2002, p. 76). Jenoure’s candor in this area is, I think, deeply generous. Many, if not all, researchers who work with arts-based practices also embody an artistic identity. Traditional social-scientific methods, including conventional approaches to qualitative research, often force artist-researchers to disavow a part of their identity in order to produce publishable work and meet tenure, promotion, and funding criteria. As arts-based practices expand the borders of what constitutes legitimate science, researchers who struggle to balance their academic and artistic lives may have an easier time. Beyond Jenoure’s desire to perform again, the absence of a performance element left a dimension of the work *underrealized*. She felt compelled to integrate the different parts of her life and complete this work, and Patti’s unfinished story provided the material.

Jenoure returned to the data from Patti, adding autoethnographic data. She found that the data fit into two primary categories: Patti’s stories and her own poems. From the data Jenoure composed a musical performance using recorded and live excerpts—the mixing of the two intended to create “depth” and “reverberation.” Spoken prose was relegated to the recorded segments while poems were sung live. Repetitive phrases were also employed to shape rhythm.

Jenoure’s research was highly successful in reaching her goals. She effectively developed two music-based methods: one textual and one performance-based. In terms of the former, the sonic portraiture Jenoure created has the potential to move forward not only music-based methods innovations but also our understanding and execution of narrative analysis. The latter method enlivens our understanding of embodied methods of (re)presentation.

Music Narrative Inquiry

? *How are researchers creating new methods by combining music and narrative inquiry?*

Benjamin Bolden (2017) developed a research method called “musically enhanced narrative inquiry (MENI),” which “builds on literary forms of narrative inquiry through the use of sound and music” (p. 4). Bolden goes on to explain the approach as follows:

My conception of MENI is inspired by the notion that, through music and sound, it may be possible to explore, reveal and communicate meanings otherwise ignored—that sound and music may enhance the potential of narrative to engender resonance and empathetic understanding. (p. 4)

Bolden employed this methodology in an educational research study. His research question was: “What is the personal practical knowledge that experienced educators have developed over a lifetime of work with children in schools?” (p. 8). To explore this question, he conducted multiple 60–90 minute interviews with two participants, Betty and Lindy, as well as two interviews with both of the women together. The data analysis then occurred in two stages: textual analysis and musical analysis. Here’s a description of the musical analysis:

Using digital audio technology, I selected and positioned participants’ actual recorded words within an audio document, to create an audio version of the story narrated in the participants’ own voice. I added musical framing, underscoring and commentary to the story in order to further explore and communicate the meanings embedded within it. (p. 8)

The process involved thematically selecting chunks of interview data for musical analysis. For example, Bolden began with the parts of Betty’s transcripts that addressed the question “What is a good teacher?” Once he had culled those chunks of data from the transcripts, he used audio editing software to organize that data into a narrative and then analyzed the narrative to identify *in vivo* codes that represented larger themes. He describes the rest of the musical process as follows:

I imported the audio narrative, in Betty’s own voice and words, into music sequencing software. Then I set to work to musically enhance it. I began by creating musical motifs to underscore and represent text themes, generating the motifs directly from the rhythm, pitch

and cadence of Betty's voice as she spoke the words (in vivo code) that represented the theme. I positioned the musical motifs directly beneath the spoken phrases to musically code them, underline them, mark them as significant, and lift them up and out of the text. (p. 10)

In total, there were four themes to emerge from the interview data. Bolden made the artistic decision to create musical motifs for three of the themes. Compositional choices were made in relation to themes as they emerged in the interviews. For example, in some instances musical choices were based on the goal of creating something "energetic and child-like"; not all of the pieces included a restatement of the words; and different instruments and tempos were used (p. 12). This is an excellent example of how arts-based researchers make artistic choices by balancing research and creative concerns. The musical pieces were sent to participants for feedback. Bolden concludes his work would not have been possible without this approach and that MENI, and music more broadly, has enormous potential to study and represent a range of phenomena.

Another way of combining music and narrative analysis can be seen in Norma Daykin's (2004) multimethod work exploring ideas about creativity and how they influence musicians' identities. Creativity has social dimensions but is also a part of personal discourses. In her work the research participants created the musical compositions. Daykin interviewed 13 freelance musicians and used narrative analysis to explore notions of creativity in response to serious disruptions, such as illness. There are "core creativity narratives" that influence an individual's sense of creative identity, and she found these were seriously challenged at times of disruption. During narrative analysis key metaphors emerged. Based on her findings, Daykin (2004) added a second phase to her research, which she explains as follows:

As the stories unfolded, it became clear that each existed in a particular sound world. For example, as people described the changes in their instrumental technique or approach to performance that had sometimes been forced by difficult circumstances, they also engaged in an aesthetic reevaluation of particular forms of music as well as new ways of playing or writing. Appreciation of these sound worlds seems an important dimension of listening to these particular stories. Hence, Phase Two of the research focuses explicitly on these sound worlds, exploring their impact both as representational devices and as a means of generating new insights. Each participant is invited to offer particular music that is meaningful to them in the context of the themes emerging from the research interview.

The interview process then extends to discuss these meanings, and the process continues as the research is disseminated and each new audience considers the research themes, assisted partly through the medium of sound.

Daykin ultimately found that not only was the second phase representational but also the musicians developed new meanings based on the music they created, and thus new insights and understandings were garnered through the music-making phase of the project.

Community Music Projects

? *What is community music?*

How are researchers developing community music-making projects?

Community music, mentioned earlier in this chapter, is increasingly used in research. Community music can be defined as “music-making with social goals” (Rimmer, 2009). This is a collaborative, participatory form of music making. In recent years there’s been an increase in community music in Finland, which has occurred in various institutions including hospitals and reception centers for asylum seekers (Ansio, Seppälä, & Houni, 2017). Beginning in 2017 Finland even began offering a professional specialization study program for community musicians (Ansio et al., 2017).

Helia Ansio, Piia Seppälä, and Pia Houni (2017) conducted a community music project about students with disabilities as a part of a larger research project in Finland exploring art and well-being. The project focused on teachers and special needs assistants. The researchers explain their purpose: “The aim of this study is to investigate how a community music project at school influenced the school employees’ work: their skills and ideas, their feelings, and their perceptions of community” (p. 5). The study sample consisted of four classes of students with special needs in grades 1–9 (ages 7–16 years), four special class teachers, and 12 special-needs assistants. The community music project occurred for one month in April 2016 in collaboration with a local cultural center and involved a musician working at the school daily for one to two days a week per class, for two to three hours per day. Instruments were selected for their accessibility. The researchers explain the musical activities as follows:

The daily work in the community music project consisted of experiments with instruments (Finnish zither, djembe, xylophone, ukulele,

guitar, and wind chimes), voices and singing, and different auditive elements of the environment and the body. In the project, each class had a special theme chosen together by the musician, employees and pupils according to their interests. . . . Each class created a musical composition, using different instruments and further acoustic material, planned and recorded by the musician in collaboration with the staff and pupils. The audio tracks were performed at a school celebration, some accompanied with photographs and one with a live performance by the pupils. (p. 6)

The methodology for this study included four semistructured dyadic interviews with teachers and assistants (a total of eight from the larger sample). The researchers wanted to employ a dialogic approach, with two participants interviewed at a time, in order to elicit data that might not otherwise surface. The interviews occurred two weeks after the music project, but prior to the final performance. They lasted 20–40 minutes and were audio-recorded and transcribed. The musician was also interviewed for 60 minutes. Additional data came from a six-page diary the musician kept. The qualitative data was analyzed using Atlas.ti software. Three themes emerged from the data: new perspectives and ways of working, positive feelings, and a sense of community. The researchers note, “All of the participants expressed experiences of positive feelings and affects” (p. 21).

In order to be successful, this approach to inquiry requires deep levels of collaboration. In the current example, everyone was highly involved in the project. The researchers conceptualized the musician’s role as that of “facilitator,” and the musician noted the role of the teachers and assistants was invaluable, for example, in facilitating communication with a student who didn’t speak (p. 8).

Constructing Songs and Musical Spoken Word as Research

? *How are researchers creating songs as research?*

Some scholars have turned to creating collected works of sonic expression in critical social justice research focused on race and racism. In these instances, the musical form is integral to the research, and in fact, the research could not have manifested in another form. A. D. Carson (2017) produced a 34-song rap album as his dissertation. Carson has called his project a “Black study” aimed at pushing against, and expanding, the academy, disciplines, and the politics of communication that excludes, including addressing issues of race swept under the carpet at his own university. The album, titled *Owning My Masters: The Rhetorics of*

Rhymes and Revolutions, went viral, and has been viewed or downloaded hundreds of thousands of times on YouTube, Facebook, and SoundCloud, and Carson received news coverage around the world.

We can also look to famed public scholar Cornel West. Known for his work in critical race studies, West has incorporated music into his work in numerous ways from releasing spoken word albums to having his spoken word featured in other musical works. On May 21, 2016, West and jazz composer Arturo O’Farrill premiered “The Cornel West Concerto” at the Apollo Theater in New York City (Norton, 2016). The piece was intended to use the power of the creative arts to disrupt dominant ideologies and reclaim the subversive roots of jazz (Norton, 2016).

It’s important to note that spoken word is only one way in which researchers can marry text and music. For example, Peter Gouzouasis and Carl Leggo (2016) have combined music and poetry.

Now let’s look at individual song construction. Daniel Bakan (2013) wrote a song titled “The Beauty of Song” as a part of an a/r/tographical inquiry. The song chronicles a “transitory circular moment” in his scholarship process as he transitioned from artist to researcher (2013, p. 4). While it’s a personal song about Bakan’s journey as a new scholar as well as a grieving son (he wrote the song shortly after his mother’s death), it’s also a song about theory. During the research process Bakan’s video documented the “birth” of the song. Although the song was not a complete or perfect artistic rendering at that point, he conceptualizes the video as a “field note” that informed his research process (p. 4). Bakan thought about his audience, a group of a/r/tographers, in two distinct ways during song construction. First, when he developed the song he considered what language would resonate with that group. Second, he considered audience participation and designed the song for audience members to sing along to the chorus (also called the “hook” in music). This technique offers a lot to think about with respect to how music can be used in inquiry in order to prompt participatory learning and/or participant or audience engagement. Consider, for example, the potential of audience members singing along to the knowledge they are consuming as well as the implications if it gets stuck in their head, as a catchy chorus can. Clearly there are ethical implications as well that the ABR community will need to contemplate.

Music in Autoethnographic Research

Bartleet and Ellis (2009) have written extensively about the relationship between music and autoethnography and the methodological possibilities when music meets methods. They suggest the commonalities

between music and autoethnography include “a desire to communicate engaging and personal tales . . . which inspire audiences to react, reflect, and, in many cases, reciprocate” (p. 8). They also remark that the processes of musicians and autoethnographers are quite similar, involving “cycles of creation, reflection, and refinement,” using various sources for inspiration and moving between “different layers of . . . consciousness” (pp. 8–9).

A beautiful example comes from Miroslav Pavle Manovski’s work, which won the prestigious 2013 outstanding dissertation award from the arts-based educational research special interest group of the American Educational Research Association. Manovski’s work is a multimedia autoethnographic account of his journey becoming a singer and music educator, and the personal experiences of being taunted, marginalized, bullied, and called “gay” that are beneath the surface. Manovski transcribed and analyzed recordings of his current voice lessons as well as recordings from singing throughout his life—this, along with autobiographical stories he wrote, served as data. Through this process he was able to tease out, contextualize, and reflect on the intersecting moments of his life as a singer, musician, music learner, music educator, and human being. His multimedia project, which includes many photographs, was published as a book in 2014.

Special Considerations

It is important to acknowledge that the researchers blazing trails in music as an arts-based practice are trained musicians. While novices routinely experiment with many of the approaches reviewed in this book, this is less so the case with music as inquiry. The reasons for this are probably apparent—playing an instrument and writing music take training.⁵ Singing “well” typically takes experience and schooling, too, although certainly many people sing for fun, even if in the shower. As a musical score is written in its own language, writing or reading music is not possible without instruction. For those with training in music or who plan to seek out such training, I hope some of the research examples in this chapter have been helpful. However, I believe there is much to draw on regarding music as inquiry even for novices.

Notwithstanding the challenges working with music poses for non-musicians, we all have ample experience *listening to music*. There are, at a minimum, several ways anyone can incorporate music or musicality into ABR. First, you can learn to think musically by applying Bressler’s (2005) ideas to a research project involving textual data, such as

interview transcripts or ethnographic field notes. Second, you can collaborate with musicians as co-researchers. Many arts-based researchers seek out the expertise of others as they build and execute transdisciplinary projects (Leavy, 2011). Third, you can have participants create music as a part of inquiry. This may involve trained musicians as in Daykin's (2004) research; however, bear in mind creative arts therapists often explore music and sound making with nonmusicians.

At the end of the day, music is likely in your life and can be incorporated into your thinking, at a minimum. Musician or not, consider this: Have you already listened to music today, from your alarm clock, iPod, car radio, or elsewhere?

Checklist of Considerations

When considering using music in your research, consider the following questions:

- ✓ What is the purpose of the study, and how can music serve as a medium to shed light on this topic?
- ✓ What is my conception of music? In this study, is music conceptualized as a text, as an object, as a sign system, as a performance, or as some combination of these? Am I interested in the textual form of music, music at the moment of articulation, or both?
- ✓ What form will the musical data be in? For example, are the data in the form of compositions, scores, and lyrics, or am I interested in the performative, audible aspect of music? In terms of the latter, will live performances be recorded, or will recordings be used? Will the physical performance serve as data, or only the music itself?
- ✓ What is the analysis strategy? For example, will the music alone be analyzed, or will data be gathered regarding people's subjective experience of the musical performance via interviews or other methods? In terms of the latter, what do I want to learn from the research participants (e.g., their process of creating meaning out of the music, their identity negotiations, their experiences of resistance or community building, the transcendental qualities of the performance)?
- ✓ If using music as a model for conducting qualitative research, how will I pay attention to dynamics, rhythm, texture, and harmony during my observations and interviews? How will my understanding of form affect my writing process? How will I adapt these principles in order to attend to issues of difference and diversity? What form or shape will my writing/representation take?

Conclusion

While music is still underutilized in research, I hope the overview provided in this chapter inspires those interested in exploring the unique capabilities of music-based methods. There are two online exemplars for this chapter that represent projects of different scopes. Importantly, these were both produced by graduate students illustrating the exemplary work that practitioners at all career levels can create when they dare to take chances.

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. What happens at the point when music is articulated? How does the performance of music create and transform the music as well as the audience? What possibilities for social resistance emerge through the performance of music? What does it mean to suggest that making and listening to music are embodied activities?
2. Here's an exercise to help you analyze musical data. This can be done with a partner or on your own. To begin, select a genre of music (rap, heavy metal, folk music, ballads, etc.) and then sample a preselected number of songs (six to eight songs). Proceed to develop an analysis strategy. Given the genre you have selected, what are you interested in (representations of gender, power, violence, injustice, identity, sexuality, romantic love, etc.)? If you do not have particular interests with respect to your sample, allow the themes to emerge inductively. Next, try listening to the songs in their entirety while writing memo notes regarding your impressions, themes, keywords, and sounds. Make note of possible similarities and differences between songs. Then proceed to a more systematic analysis by determining the unit of analysis (parts of songs, songs in their entirety, etc.) and developing code categories. Continue with analysis. Finally, start to develop metacodes (major themes) under which the smaller codes fit. Through this process, pay attention to spaces, breathing, tonality, emotionality, and so forth, in addition to the sounds and lyrics. This exercise is designed to help you practice careful listening as well as to give you some practical experience analyzing audible data, which includes developing a coding procedure.
3. Take an interview transcript and try to identify the major musical dimensions within the transcript, such as timbre, melody, dynamics, and rhythm. Take memo notes that address how this kind of "listening" to the transcript affects your understanding of it.

Suggested Readings

Bartleet, B., & Ellis, C. (2009). *Music autoethnographies: Making autoethnography sing/making music personal*. Samford Valley, Queensland: Australian Academic Press.

An edited collection about the possibilities of merging music and autoethnography. The book includes a robust introduction by the editors followed by 16 contributor chapters organized around four themes: composing and improvising, interpreting and performing, learning and teaching, and researching identity and cross-cultural contexts.

Benedict, C., Schmidt, P., Spruce, G., & Woodford, P. (Eds.). (2015). *The Oxford handbook of social justice in music education*. New York: Oxford University Press.

A comprehensive collection of works from an international group of scholars addressing a multitude of connections between music education and social justice, illustrating how music education can be used to alleviate a range of social ills.

Bowman, W., & Frega, A. L. (Eds.). (2012). *The Oxford handbook of philosophy in music education*. New York: Oxford University Press.

A comprehensive collection of works from an international group of scholars that addresses everyday concerns faced by music educators, demonstrating that philosophy offers a way of navigating the daily professional life of music education and proving that critical inquiry improves, enriches, and transforms instructional practice for the better.

Manovski, M. P. (2014). *Arts-based research, autoethnography, and music education: Singing through a culture of marginalization*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill/Sense.

An earlier version of this work won the 2013 American Educational Research Association Outstanding Dissertation Award in Arts-Based Educational Research. This book, with photographs, is a full-length autoethnographic and arts-based work about identity, music, and sexuality. This book explores the author's experiences being taunted and called "gay" and his evolution as a musician and music educator.

McPherson, G. E., & Welch, G. F. (Eds.). (2012). *The Oxford handbook of music education* (Vols. 1 & 2). New York: Oxford University Press.

The Oxford Handbook of Music Education offers a comprehensive overview of the many facets of musical experience, behavior, and development in relation to this diverse variety of contexts. An international list of contributors discuss a range of key issues and concepts associated with music learning and teaching.

Suggested Websites and Journals

Ethnomusicology

www.press.uillinois.edu/journals/ethno.html

Ethnomusicology is the official journal of the Society for Ethnomusicology. Articles reflect current theoretical work and empirical research in ethnomusicology and related fields. The journal is accessible to a diverse audience of musicians, musicologists, folklorists, popular culture scholars, and cultural anthropologists, and publishes a current bibliography, discography, and filmography, as well as book, record, and film reviews.

International Journal of Community Music

www.intljcm.com/index.html

The *International Journal of Community Music* is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes research articles, practical discussions, reviews, readers' notes, and special issues concerning all aspects of community music.

Journal of Aesthetic Education

www.press.uillinois.edu/journals/jae.html

Journal of Aesthetic Education is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes articles from a variety of viewpoints, including philosophical aesthetics education, communications media, and environmental aesthetics.

Music Education Research

www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/14613808.asp

Music Education Research is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes articles in all areas of music education. A philosophical, sociological, or comparative study, or a psychological perspective in analyzing research and methodological issues, is encouraged for submitters.

Music Perception

<https://ucpressjournals.com/journal.asp?jIssn=0730-7829>

Music Perception is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes empirical, theoretical, and methodological articles, as well as reviews. The range of disciplines covered in the journal include psychology, psychophysics, linguistics, neurology, neurophysiology, artificial intelligence, computer technology, physical and architectural acoustics, and music theory.

Popular Music and Society

www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/03007766.html

Popular Music and Society is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes reviews and articles about various music genres from a social or historical perspective. Articles can be theoretical or empirical. This is an excellent source for sociologists as well as scholars working from a cultural studies background.

Research Studies in Music Education

www.rsme.callaway.uwa.edu.au/home

Research Studies in Music Education is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes articles about the research methodologies used in music education. This journal is particularly well suited to researchers with a music education background, as well as to methodologists.

Saving Our Lives Hear Our Truths (SOLHOT)

<http://solhot.weebly.com/>

A collective that celebrates Black girlhood through music. This website includes links to soundcloud files.

Studies in Musical Theatre

www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals.php?issn=17503159

Studies in Musical Theatre is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes articles about live performance that uses vocal and instrumental music in conjunction with theatrical performance. Many aspects of the field are considered, including opera, music theatre or musical theatre, actor musicianship, the training of performers for musical theatre, the fusion of the languages of words and music, the use of music and song within “straight” theatre, paralinguistics and the rhetorical expression of music in song, negotiating the art–entertainment divide in musical theatre, and the academic study of musical theatre. Book reviews are also published.

UNESCO Multi-Disciplinary Research in the Arts

www.web.education.unimelb.edu.au/UNESCO/ejournal/index.html

UNESCO Multi-Disciplinary Research in the Arts is an open-access, electronic peer-reviewed journal that has published extensively about music and a/r/tography or ABR.

**Notes**

1. For example, in Britain an urban musical genre called “British bhangra” has emerged and become popular. This music combines elements of folk music from the Punjab people, located along the diverse and expansive borders of Pakistan and India, with Black music genres and British pop music (Dudrah, 2002, p. 363). British bhangra combines Punjabi lyrics, Indian drumbeats, the *dhol*, Black musical genres, and British pop sounds (p. 363). Both the emergence of this hybrid genre of music and its acceptance into mainstream British music (and society) speak to larger issues pertaining to the arts, processes of cultural globalization, and identity negotiations among British South Asian audiences. According to Rajinder Dudrah (2002), this musical form speaks to a range of identity issues, with gender

- and class/caste overtones, while affording listeners a space in which to create their own meanings.
2. It's important to note that all ABR is embodied, both in its creation and in the audience experience. For example, you feel a novel or a play, as you consume it—it's a sensory experience. So although I emphasize embodiment in the following chapter on dance and movement, because the body is the instrument in those practices, it's important to understand that the entire field of ABR is connected to embodiment.
 3. It is worth noting that some ABR practitioners/poetic inquirers perform spoken word.
 4. Benjamin Bolden (2017) notes that even many trained musicians lack experience composing music.
 5. All ABR takes training. Writing poetry well, for example, isn't easy. One must learn the craft over a lengthy period of time, and will likely improve over a lifetime. As Faulkner notes, in the beginning, one is likely to write a lot of really bad poetry. I emphasize the training needed in music only because it is harder to begin informally, whereas all researchers have some experience writing, for example, and so even if they aren't skilled at the outset in a particular genre of creative writing, novices may have an easier point of departure in fiction, poetry, or ethnodrama, for which they at least know the language.



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As the exemplars, and a bit of inspiration to graduate students, listen to Daniel Bakan perform “The Beauty of Song (Gonna Sing My Way to a PhD),” discussed earlier, online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMeodbWXGYk, and to A. D. Carson’s 34-song rap album *Owning My Masters: The Rhetorics of Rhymes and Revolutions*, also discussed earlier, online at <https://soundcloud.com/adcarson/sets/owning-my-masters-the>.

Five



Dance and Movement as Inquiry

Dancing is just discovery, discovery, discovery.

—MARTHA GRAHAM

Famed photographer Annie Leibovitz commented that after many efforts at photographing dance she realized it was an impossible goal, for, as she put it, “Dance is in the air, it’s just in the air.” As dance belongs entirely to the moment, existing only in performance (and performances are never identical), it is difficult to pin down for descriptive purposes. Elaine Clark-Rapley asserts that dance “exemplifies the doing side of living” (1999, p. 89) and is best described with action words. The human body is the instrument of dance. This art form is thus embodied, sensual, and sensuous (Snowber, 2016, 2018; Wiebe & Snowber, 2011). Dancers manipulate motion for artistic purposes (Blumenfeld-Jones, 2008). Despite the dynamic nature of dance, ritual and discipline shape both the many uses of dance as well as the dancer’s body, a highly disciplined instrument (and the focus of earlier scholarship on dance and gender).

Dancers work with form, shape, and rhythm (Snowber, 2018). Yet dance is the most abstract form explored in this book. The abstract character of dance is also linked to its reconstituting of many other art forms. Dance combines elements of all the other art forms in this book: it is musical, performative, visual, poetic, autobiographical, and can serve narrative. Of course, while dance draws on these other arts, it cannot be reduced to any of them nor is it their sum total. Although an

abstract art form, and perhaps because of it, dance has been referred to as a “universal language,” the “mother of all tongues,” and the “mirror of the soul” (Warren, 1993). Nevertheless, as reviewed with respect to music in Chapter 4, dance too is historically and culturally bound and thus differs within and across contexts.

Dance is also a *genre of performance*, and as reviewed in the next chapter, performance studies is a greatly expanding area. Techniques that have emerged and been refined in performance-based methods may be useful as dance-based methods evolve. Like theatrical performance, dance can be used to create empathetic connection, raise awareness, educate, and promote social justice.

Dance can incorporate words as well, and can even be based on a script, which may or may not be summarized for audiences in written form (as is the case when ballets such as “Romeo and Juliet” and “Swan Lake” are performed). In other words, dance can communicate narratives. Researchers presenting their data via dance might consider an accompanying textual component of representation in order to contextualize the performance, just as many visual artists include statements with their work.

There is emergent theoretical scholarship that explores dance within the context of Marxist views, positing that dance transcends historical time. Clark-Rapley (1999) argues that Karl Marx’s analysis of human activity centers on instrumental human action, with purposive material ends. She suggests that dance is a form of transformative human action that expresses an individual’s being *without purposive ends* and can thus support communal relations (as opposed to alienated relations) and aid, not diminish, self-actualization. Moreover, improvisational dance breaks patterned movements and promotes discovery, differing greatly from Marx’s view of labor and social control. Clark-Rapley conducted ethnographic research in a university dance class with 24 undergraduates. Her research included field notes, audio-taping, videotaping, and dancers’ journals. From this data she made several observations about dance improvisation from an outsider’s vantage point. She writes:

Improvising activity is distinct from practical activity since it begins and ends with a unified relation between the dancer (as ‘subject’) and the dance (as ‘object’). The relation of the dancer to the dance, and of the dancer to the dance process, is a relation of unity that blurs the subject/object distinction: the dancer is the activity and the dancer is the dance. (p. 92)

In part what this research suggests is that dance has a *transcendent, consciousness-raising potential*—a recurrent theme in dance scholarship.

Researchers can harness the transcendent and consciousness-raising capacities of dance. For example, social action researchers may use dance performances to celebrate differences and/or transcend social, cultural, and economic barriers. Researchers working from queer studies, feminist, or critical race perspectives, might consider dance as a representational vehicle for its capacity to foster consciousness-raising. Research participants might be asked to engage in creative movement exercises in addition to in-depth or focus group interviews as a source of consciousness-raising and reflection during data analysis. Researchers may also use dance to propel self- and social reflection, challenge taken-for-granted assumptions, *and* jar us into feeling or seeing differently. For example, this is evident in Jack Migdalek's work, reviewed later in this chapter. He employs dance-based research as a form of inquiry and intervention, and a way of shifting the most basic assumptions about gender.

Background

? *What is the context for the increase in dance and movement research?*

While dance and movement remains the least-explored genre of ABR, there has been an increase in these practices since I wrote the first edition of this book. As ABR has gained legitimacy and popularity, even the most underutilized art forms are being explored, and the pioneering researchers and students working with these approaches are making a concerted and commendable effort to document their work. For example, Celeste Snowber, a leader in the field, has published a plethora of articles and papers on dance-based research in the last several years in addition to her live performances. Also significant, the "Dance Your PhD" contest (Myers, 2012) founded by John Bohannon began in 2008, launching dance into public conversations about science and research. In short, the contest encourages researchers in the natural and social sciences to use dance in order to explain complex problems. In some cases, these collaborations have even led to scientists using dancers to determine how to build a model for the phenomenon they are studying. As Bohannon illustrated in his famous 2011 Ted Talk delivered with the help of the Black Label Movement dance troupe, which garnered over half a million views, dance can engage and teach people more than PowerPoint. The recent increase in dance as a methodological tool also

results from the overall increase in performance studies (explored in Chapter 6), the surge in embodiment research, rises in phenomenology, and increases in health and education research that have identified dance as a therapeutic tool and vehicle for building positive social characteristics (which is now being applied to ABR practices).

Within the context of increases in performance and dance studies, *movement analysis* has emerged as an important research method that can enhance the practice of traditional qualitative methods such as ethnography and interview by helping researchers systematically attend to all of the gestured and other nonverbal communication that occurs within qualitative research (see Daly, 1988).

Dance Studies in Anthropology

? *How has dance been explored in anthropology?*

Despite only recently being explored as a method of inquiry and representation across multiple disciplines, dance has been a subject of anthropological studies of folklore and folk life for many decades (as well as dance education). In a special issue of the *Australian Journal of Anthropology* (December 2000) on the anthropology of dance, Rosita Henry reviewed the new directions being chartered in anthropological studies of dance. She posited that there has been a great surge in anthropological studies of dance and movement since the 1980s (formerly a marginal topic of inquiry). She suggests the increase in “dance studies” results from new understandings about how dance is a dynamic, productive force in social life. On behalf of the contributors in the special issue Henry (2000) wrote:

We theorise dance practices as domains of lived experience, and position movement as a performative moment of social interchange that is not merely reflective of prior political, personal, social and cosmological relations, but also constitutive of the relationship of them. We argue that a renegotiation of the relationship between dance and anthropology is required so that dance is given full recognition as an active, fraught and dynamic force in human social life . . . we contest conventional boundaries of dance concepts by taking as our focus of study a dialectical space of performative action where discursive political, aesthetic, ritual and cultural forms are produced. Attention to the ways in which movement is able to infuse space with socio-religious and socio-political meaning requires that dance practices be viewed as historically embodied, contextual, discursive and interconnected domains of lived experience. (p. 1)

In her article “Reprise: On Dance Ethnography” Deidre Sklar (2000) reflects on how when her essay “On Dance Ethnography” was published in 1991 there was very little literature on the subject, but a decade later dance and movement scholarship had blossomed, creating a range of theories, methods, and case studies executed within the categories of “cultural studies in dance,” “performance studies,” “anthropology of dance,” “anthropology of human movement,” “dance ethnology,” and “ethnochoreology.”

Arguably, the low status dance has historically received in academic research mirrors the low status dance enjoys relative to other arts (as evidenced in many ways, including the pay scale for dancers as compared with other artists at a comparable career stage). Susan W. Stinson (1995, 1998, 2004) explains that the low status of dance is inextricably linked to its association with women and women’s bodies.¹ Nevertheless, the exploration of dance in cultural (and expressive) anthropology reflects the centrality of dance and movement to many cultural rituals, as well as its productive role in culture. Dance can produce insights into various aspects of different cultures.

Embodiment Research and Phenomenology

? *How have advances in embodiment research contributed to the use of dance in research?*

How are phenomenologists advancing our understanding of all experience as bodily in ways that promote the body as a central source of data or representational vehicle?

Dance cannot be understood without attention to the fact that it is necessarily an embodied art form. In this vein, Snowber (2012, 2016, 2018) reminds us that “we do not have bodies, we are bodies.” As briefly noted in the last chapter, it is important to note that the growth in our understanding of embodiment is a part of the context for all ABR practices. Charles R. Garoian eloquently writes, “Bodies make artworks just as artworks make bodies” (2013, p. 21). I discuss embodiment in greater depth in this chapter due to the unique nature of dance. Early 20th-century choreographer Ted Shawn proclaimed, “Dance is the only art of which we ourselves are the stuff of which it is made.” Over the past several decades “the body” has garnered considerable attention in academic scholarship largely due to the advances of feminist, postmodern, poststructural, and psychoanalytic theories of embodiment. Although this is a broad range of theoretical traditions,

what these critical perspectives have in common is attention to social power and a position that claims all social actors are *embodied* actors, and thus experience is necessarily embodied. Social reality is experienced from embodied standpoints. Of interest to many social justice-oriented researchers working within these traditions are the ways in which bodies become raced, sexed, and gendered. As Pierre Bourdieu (1971) theorized, culture infiltrates bodies.

Renowned scholar Elizabeth Grosz (1994) distinguishes “inscriptive” and “the lived body” approaches to embodiment research. The inscribed body serves as a site where cultural meanings are created and resisted. The body has been colonized (Snowber, 2018). Influenced by the work of Michel Foucault (1976) and Susan Bordo (1989), Grosz writes, “The body is not outside of history, for it is produced through and in history” (1994, p. 148). The inscriptions may be “subtle” or “violent” but are ultimately cumulative in effect (p. 141). The way we sex or gender or race the body is deeply implicated in existing relations of power (pp. 141–142). Here we can also conceptualize bodies themselves as interdisciplinary (or perhaps transdisciplinary). Beatrice Allegranti (2011) writes: “Bodies are quintessentially interdisciplinary; we are socially and biologically constructed. Moreover, bodies are not neutral: gender, sexuality, ethnicity and class are socio-political aspects that shape our mental, emotional and physical selves and inform our ethical values” (p. 487). The inter- or transdisciplinary nature of human bodies suggests the yet untapped power of the body as an instrument of arts-based transdisciplinary research.

It is in theories of “the lived body” that a clear link between embodiment research and phenomenology is evidenced. “The lived body” refers to people’s experiential knowledge. Grosz is influenced by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962), who posited that we must look at the “necessary interconnectedness” of the mind and body (Grosz, 1994, p. 86). Merleau-Ponty argued that experience exists between the mind and body, and accordingly he wrote about the body as “flesh.” Therefore, the body is not viewed as an object but rather as the “condition and context” through which social actors have relations to objects and through which they give and receive information (Grosz, 1994, p. 86). Snowber (2018) disrupts the binary further by conceptualizing embodiment as “the interconnection of the body, mind, heart, imagination, and so forth” (p. 249). One might view this interconnection as spiritual. Stephanie Springgay and Debra Freedman (2007) draw on the work of feminist philosopher Moira Gatens (1996) when they write, “understanding the body as meaning as opposed to a container in which we store or put

meaning, problematizes the relations between inside and outside" (p. xx). Furthermore, the experience of being embodied is always mediated by our interactions with others (other bodies) (Springgay & Freedman, 2007; Weiss, 1999). As Sean Wiebe and Celeste Snowber (2011) point out, all experience is embodied—"it is through our senses that we come to know" (p. 111). Gatens (1996) similarly posits "embodied understanding takes place in and through particular bodily existence" (p. 57). This includes the research experience.

Wiebe and Snowber (2011) use the term *embodied intellectuals* to account for the inescapable role of our senses in understanding. Tami Spry (2006), an innovative qualitative researcher, suggests that in order to access experiential knowledge researchers must find ways to access "enfleshed knowledge." Snowber (2012) has similarly written, "I have often wondered if the gift of the body's knowledge is the best kept secret. We are bodies, we do not have bodies. They are a place of deep learning, and both bodily knowledge and bodily wisdom are always available to us" (p. 119).

Snowber (2012, 2016) uses the metaphor of a GPS system. She suggests bodily knowledge is available to us and can be accessed via dance and movement and to fail to do so is like having an internal GPS system and not using it (2012, p. 121). This is a holistic view of experience as embodied and of the mind and body as interconnected. These advances in our understanding of embodiment and the physicality of experience, which have largely emerged in theoretical scholarship, raise the question of how we might access "enfleshed" knowledge. Therefore, this theoretical backdrop serves as a part of the context for various methodological innovations, including recent explorations of dance and movement as research tools.

For example, Stinson (2004) explains that dance teaches a person to feel from the inside, and correspondingly how to use the body as a source of knowledge and locus of meaning (p. 163). Drawing on theories of embodiment as she reflects on dance and movement as legitimate methods of inquiry, Stinson proposes that the body is a microcosm of the world and a venue for understanding its meaning (p. 160). Moreover, influenced by phenomenological approaches to knowledge-building, she further suggests that the entire body can be viewed as an experiential and memory repository for what we "know," which may emerge through dance in unexpected ways (p. 160). Wiebe and Snowber (2011) also contend that "our memory is located in our senses" (p. 111). For example, think about the power of smell to evoke memories—a loved one's perfume, the smell of a childhood treat, a holiday meal being prepared.

Dance as a Therapeutic Tool in Health and Education Research

? *How are researchers exploring the health benefits of dance?*

Beyond the increase of dance in the creative arts therapies, which has in part paved the way for researchers, in recent decades there has been a significant surge in health researchers and practitioners, as well as other scholars, who are (re)exploring the mental, psychological, and physical health benefits of dance and movement. Long used by indigenous groups as well as a part of standard care in many Eastern health care and lifestyle practices, these are not new insights, but Western researchers are only now, slowly, beginning to embrace them. For example, Yvette Kim (2004) writes about the positive benefits of ancient “multidimensional healing” practices. Her work focuses on a teaching workshop where indigenous methods of healing are used, including dance and music. Some researchers working at the cutting edge of this field, such as Ebru Yaman (2003), suggest arts-based or “expressive therapies” like dance can be both *healing* and *validating*—a combination of outcomes that explains why the benefits of arts-based therapies are of interest to practitioners in both health care and education. With respect to the latter, Fay Burstin (2004) proposes that movement and music can be used in education to help develop communication and literacy skills. Bernie Warren (1993) posits dance as an alternative creative outlet for shy people.² Jennifer Kingma (2004) conducted research that explores the link between dance and markers of positive self-esteem such as confidence.

Dance as a Methodological Innovation

? *How are researchers harnessing the power of dance?*

How does the choreography process mirror the research process?

Although dance and traditional research methods may seem disparate, they actually bear similarities particularly with respect to the process of choreography and the use of improvisation. Marybeth Cancienne and Celeste Snowber (2009) write, “The choreographic process is one of sorting, sifting, editing, forming, making, and remaking; it’s essentially an act of discovery” (p. 198). Donald Blumenfeld-Jones (2008) explains that the choreography process involves researching a theme (through a literature review, observations, etc.), developing the theme,

and then composing movements. The choreographer conceptualizes a dance and then watches the dancers to see what is actually possible. Blumenfeld-Jones writes, “The choreographer analyzes the observed world, has a motional response, and interprets and rearranges the world through motion” (p. 177). Then he/she/they makes alterations. This is a similar process to ethnography, with motion replacing words. Improvisation, another element of dance and movement, can also mirror the experimentation required in the research process, as well as the revelatory moments that can follow.

Dance and movement research practices allow us to pose questions, connect with emotions, understand theoretical concepts, raise consciousness, represent research findings (with the potential to reach broad audiences), and use the self as a place of discovery (Cancienne & Snowber, 2009). With regard to the latter, the influence of embodiment scholarship and phenomenology also coincide with the turn toward the self as a viable locus of inquiry. The rapid growth of autoethnography in the last few decades, reviewed in Chapter 2, illustrates the turn to self as a source of knowledge. This too is part of the context for dance-based methodological innovations. Dance-based practices can access bodily knowledge that is otherwise out of reach. Blumenfeld-Jones (2008) notes that the insights gained from dance are only available in that way. He explains that these insights emerge as a result of motion and “thinking through” motion (p. 175). He suggests the dancer is thus both an “analytic instrument and analyst” (p. 176). Dance itself can be employed as an act of inquiry (Blumenfeld-Jones, 2014). Another area where dance has considerable potential to contribute to our understanding is in regards to the public-private dialectic. Dance merges the public and private, or inner and outer worlds, if we are to adopt the discourse of dance education, because the dancer’s body is always moving within an environment. As these cutting-edge research practices are used and refined, it is likely that we will see more scholarship (outside of dance education) that explores this relationship.

As noted earlier, while still less utilized than other art forms, dance as a research tool has increased dramatically just in the last few years. In addition to the new studies that are reviewed in the following sections, there is also increased thesis work that uses movement and dance-based practices as a part of inquiry, indicating arts-based researchers are teaching these approaches to the next generation. There are many examples. For instance, Cheryl Annetta Kay (2012) uses the term “photopoetics” in her doctoral thesis to describe her arts-based exploration that aims to contribute to our understanding of how dance educates students. Raisa Foster (2012) coined the term

eragraphy—education, research, animateuring—in her dissertation, which used dance as a method of data collection and representation within an exploration of identity and mutuality. Karen McKinaly Kur-naedy's (2013) thesis investigates the bodily perceptions generated during dance and the significance of dance for teaching and learning. As noted earlier "Dance Your PhD" contests have also become popular.

Dance as Inquiry and Representation: Single-Researcher Studies

? *How are choreographer-scholars using dance in social research?*

Researchers trained in dance may develop a dance-based research project to study any number of topics. Researchers may choreograph a dance based on a written text or study, autoethnographic observations, or data generated via other methods (such as field or interview research).

Mary Beth Cancienne is a trained choreographer, dance expert, and scholar who has used dance to represent research in collaborative and single-researcher projects. Interested in the intersections between housework, gender, and cultural identity, she choreographed a dance called "Women's Work" (Cancienne & Snowber, 2009) that explored domestic chores as influenced by her Cajun identity. The dance plays with and questions idealized images of the "domesticated woman." The design of the dance, including the musical choices, was intended to communicate meaning. For music, Cancienne chose water drums for their associations to women's physical experience using water to clean and because the sound they make mirrors the sounds of a heartbeat and breathing while working. The dance style she chose was also congruent with her goals and themes. The movements were metaphorical of daily chores (no props were used). The themes of gender, relationships between women working together, individualism, and community were highlighted. She writes: "In essence, the body is not simply flesh and bones; instead, it is a living enactment of culture and social beliefs" (Cancienne & Snowber, 2009, p. 205). In this regard the dance performance was her way of revealing the imprints of Cajun women's experiences with cleaning. The audience reported both emotional and physical responses to the dance.

Jack Migdalek (2012) also used a dance-based approach to study gender for his doctoral thesis. He aimed to self-reflexively examine masculine and feminine norms of embodiment evident in both dance and everyday life. He investigated his own "embodied habitus" (the

habits that become second nature to us) with regard to gender performativity, or how we display masculinity and femininity in everyday life (and dance). His work combined theory, autoethnography, the experience of a professional development session with colleagues, and performance (including audience feedback).

As a part of data generation, in the professional development session Migdalek used “sound collage” with 29 fellow performance art educators and practitioners. Music with powerful beats evoked masculine movements while music that was delicate evoked feminine movements. During the 11-minute improvisation participants slipped into common gender movements. Migdalek began to deliberately resist, following the motions inspired by the music and then scrutinizing how and why he felt uncomfortable at certain moments (e.g., when embodying/exhibiting typically feminine movements). Migdalek (2012) writes, “In short, I used dance as a device through which to research my own comforts and discomforts with embodied masculinity and femininity.”

He took all of this data and choreographed the dance, or physical theatre performance, “Gender Icons.” The piece includes props, music changes, verbal speech, and numerous dance styles. All of these elements come together to question the gender binary and ideas about gender normativity. For example, two props are paper cutouts of perfume bottles; each is a different shape, and Migdalek questions how one has become assumed to be feminine and the other masculine. He did the same with different music styles and his corresponding movements, asking the audience if music pushes us to move in certain ways.

“Gender Icons” challenges norms that are embodied and “so deeply embedded that they are rendered invisible.” *The only way to jar oneself and audience members into seeing and experiencing these habits differently was through the body itself.* That is the critical point and affirmation of the necessity of dance and movement approaches to research. Migdalek views the piece as a *form of intervention*, intended to raise consciousness. He notes that through the dance his own perspectives shifted and his understandings of gender and embodiment were enhanced. The performances had a profound impact on audiences too.

The initial performance was for peers and academics and was thus fully contextualized. Later, with great trepidation, Migdalek brought “Gender Icons” to high school students. He worried about their reactions but decided to be courageous. He received extensive positive feedback from students and educators in the audience, whose comments suggested their consciousness had been raised. There were also some unfortunately predictable comments assuming the performer was gay and others that credited him for being a “real man” and thus

brave enough to do this. All of those comments reveal the very gender expectations the performance is meant to challenge.

Migdalek (2012) reports the experience was personally enlightening, emotionally challenging, and clearly illustrates the unique capabilities of dance-based research to access issues linked to embodiment that are otherwise impossible to get at and express. He writes:

I advocate the use of dance . . . to advance critical enquiry and investigation into embodied gender inequity. More broadly these methods can be an effective means toward the challenging of cultural boundaries, influences, parameters, and protocols that regulate how we habitually operate.

With limitless potential to explore these topics in his current research, Migdalek is investigating similar themes with expanded “ethnographic dance-based fieldwork” with 400 students and 160 educators.

Dance as Inquiry and Representation: Cross-Disciplinary Collaborative Studies

? *How can choreographers and researchers from different disciplines design dance-based studies together?*

Cross-disciplinary collaborations can be forged to explore synergies between seemingly disparate fields or to explore concepts that are difficult to understand with traditional methods. In these instances dance is both the form of inquiry and representation. This is the backdrop for Celeste Snowber and Susan Gerofsky’s (1998) collaboration.

Snowber is a scholar, dancer, and dance expert and Gerofsky is a mathematics educator; they came together to explore the notions of limits and infinity, concepts that are interconnected in mathematical inquiry and that can be explored through the body. The result of this collaboration was a 45-minute mixed-media performance titled “Beyond the Span of My Limbs,” which combined modern dance, creative movement, improvisation, music, poetry, readings from their own writings, and audience participation. The piece was performed in a variety of venues, including for high school students who wrote reflections about the performance.

Snowber explains that through the experience she learned math and dance bear many similarities: “As math has forms, rules, and pattern, so does choreography in its use of composition, design, pattern, repetition, shape, space, and quality of movement” (Cancienne & Snowber, 2009, p. 207). Snowber was able to incorporate mathematical

concepts into the dance in a way that enhanced her understanding, through embodied learning. She explains as follows: “I could make geometric shapes with my body and physically ‘understand’ those shapes. As a result, I continue to incorporate angles, curves, spirals, and circles into my aesthetic designs” (p. 207). This is an example of how the act of inquiry itself leads to learning, similar to Migdalek’s experience embodying “feminine” and “masculine” movements in order to better understand taken-for-granted assumptions about gender.

Cross-pollination is also used in studies that aim to take data from one form and represent them through dance. Carl Bagley and Mary Beth Cancienne’s (2002) research is a landmark example of using dance as a representational form in education research, an approach they have called “dancing the data.” Bagley is an education researcher, and, as noted earlier, Cancienne is a choreographer, dance expert, and scholar. While attending a conference Cancienne was asked, with very little notice, to present a dance representing a dataset. Ultimately, the last-minute attempt failed; however, Cancienne wanted to try again under more optimal circumstances, convinced that dance as a representational form could contribute to social knowledge.

For the project they developed together, Bagley collected data on the topic “Impact of School Choice on Families Whose Children Had Special Educational Needs.” He conducted interviews and then selected 10 of the interviews as the final dataset for the collaborative project, at which point he gave Cancienne the data so she could create a dance that represented them. Cancienne constructed an interpretative dance with words in order to preserve parents’ voices and best convey the data. She portrayed the voices in abstract ways (that were nonetheless clear in meaning). For example, at one point a dancer drew the name of a child on the floor with her foot when the parent spoke of the child being unable to write.

Bagley felt the project succeeded because people could connect with the data. The researchers viewed the data (or information) as the same as in traditional textual form, but the dance performance infused it with new light and insight. They concluded that the dance added *new dimensions* rather than new understandings (Bagley & Cancienne, 2002, p. 15).

Finally, the representation of the data in a dance format opened up a space for multiple meanings to emerge, although within the confines of a set of themes. Bagley and Cancienne (2002) write:

In “dancing the data” we were able to facilitate a movement away from and disruption of the monovocal and monological nature of

the voice in the print-based paper. Through a choreographed performance we were provided with an opportunity to encapture the multivocal and dialogical, as well as to cultivate multiple meanings, interpretations, and perspectives that might engage the audience in a recognition of textual diversity and complexity. (p. 16)

Dance as a representational strategy has the potential to add both depth and texture to the insights created out of traditional research practice.

Another outstanding example comes from Alexia Buono and Charles H. Gonzalez's (2017) collaborative project. Gonzalez had conducted interviews with 12 participants in the field of teacher education. He was having some difficulty with the analysis and interpretation process, especially in regard to a participant he called Tiffany, whom he felt was a "data-rich" case, but one he had trouble grasping (pp. 9–10). Fellow graduate student Buono, drawing on her dance education, offered to assist by "dancing the data." Buono embarked on a rigorous 12-week process that began with reading and annotating the written and spoken interview transcripts. From this she created a "movement vocabulary" based on major themes (p. 10). The process continued with "bodily writing" sessions, which were recorded and reflected on, sharing ideas with Gonzalez, and multiple stages of creating and refining the dance script, which was eventually performed at a symposium. Audience members were given a chance to write brief reflections after the performance. Upon seeing the performance, Gonzalez writes this:

She was no longer my collaborator up there. She had transformed into my participant. Everyone else in the room had melted away and she moved and gestured and danced in front of only me. It was like I was watching a condensed version of all of my observation recordings; through this performative inquiry I could see everything Tiffany had experienced throughout the semester. I was able to see the times she was frustrated and the points over the semester that helped her grow. I could see the implicit and explicit obstacles she overcame; I could see how she grew. I could finally see Tiffany. (p. 2)

Of course cross-disciplinary collaborations are always tricky, and this is only enhanced when there is the issue of translation (taking data in one form and putting them in another—like from words to dance/movement). Elizabeth Sharp (2013) provides an excellent example of the complexity in this kind of work.

Sharp took two social science interview studies with single women

aged 25–40 and one study with women about weddings and the experience of being newly married. Together this research became the impetus for an evening-long dance performance. Sharp had three choreographers examine the data sets with the goal of making public women's ideologies and experiences about topics that are usually kept private. In this spirit she turned to dance with the aim of contributing to public scholarship about women's lives. Sharp (2013) writes, "The project emphasized bodily knowledge and lived experience as lenses through which to view, interpret, and re-present social science qualitative data" (n.p.). The resulting dance, titled "Ordinary Wars," was performed by a professional dance company to an audience of more than 200 people. Portions of the interview transcripts were used as a part of the performance.

While they received positive audience feedback, Sharp has written about the difficulty or "messiness" she experienced as the researcher, which she suggests is part and parcel of transdisciplinary projects. Sharp identifies the locus of this difficulty: Social scientists and choreographers have very different relationships to the data. She suggests social scientists have been immersed in the data and are trained to ground themselves in them. By contrast, the choreographers she worked with used the data as a jumping-off point. Surely many in arts-based collaborations run into this issue, which Sharp has astutely pinpointed. Researchers in the natural and social sciences are trained to stay grounded in empirical data, whereas those trained in the creative arts may be more adept at using textual and other source material as inspiration. While this presents challenges for those working in collaborative relationships, there is also the potential for immense growth as an arts-based researcher. Learning the art of recognizing and letting go of one's disciplinary training and seeing/experiencing differently, including *seeing* and *experiencing* data differently, is ultimately a great asset.

Dance and Multimethod Research³

? *How can dance be used in multimethod research?*

Dance or movement can be employed as one of several data collection tools in a multimethod research design. As with all multimethod or mixed methods research, the goal isn't simply to "add" methods but rather to let them inform each other (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2005, 2012).

Carol Picard (2000) incorporated dance into health care research as one of multiple methods. The study examined the process by which

women at midlife expand their consciousness via two different means of expression: narrative and creative movement. The sample consisted of 17 women at midlife. Data generation occurred in three phases: (1) an in-depth interview, (2) a creative movement group, and (3) a follow-up in-depth interview (all of which occurred within a 5-week period for each woman).

The first interview lasted from 50 minutes to 2 hours, 75 minutes on average. Women were asked to share what was most meaningful in their lives. The second phase, the creative movement component, occurred in the context of the group (the women were divided into two groups and were allotted 3½ hours for the session). None of the women had participated in a creative movement group before, so it was a new experience. Each group began with a series of trust exercises so that the women would feel comfortable moving their bodies within the group. Then each woman was given an opportunity to express, via movement, what was most meaningful to her. She then had an opportunity to describe what the movement meant to her, and then to repeat her movement. Finally, there was a group-closure exercise followed by a breathing exercise. The creative movement sessions were video recorded and analyzed by the researcher for “meaning and overall movement qualities, such as the overall use of space, and the complexity, length, or brevity of the whole of the expression” (Picard, 2000, p. 152). The verbal data from the videotapes were transcribed and also analyzed. The researcher then created a diagram of each participant’s patterns (adding a visual component to the interpretive process). In the second interview session the diagram was presented to the participant, who had the opportunity to revise it. Next, each woman viewed the video of her movement with the researcher and was asked to reflect on it as well as the entire research process.

In this study, the different methods all “speak to each other” and are a part of an *integrated approach* to knowledge-building. In other words, the methods operate synergistically. The traditional qualitative interview component and creative movement component are related, both seeking to yield insights about the same thing: what is most meaningful in the participant’s life. The latter interview then provided a reflective, collaborative opportunity for the participant to clarify the meaning derived from the data as well as to reflect on what the experience had been like for her. Picard (2000) reported that the women reflected the experience promoted *self-discovery* and that the group component made the women feel valued and accepted by others. Moreover, all but one of the women reported that the creative movement they viewed on the video accurately reflected their narrative (in the

anomalous experience important data were garnered, as the participant noted a disjuncture between her life as it was and as she imagined it, reflected in her narrative vs. creative movement expressions).

For many of the women, the combination of verbally sharing their narrative and then creatively using their bodies in a public space provided an opportunity to reflect on their lives that extended beyond the confines of the research project. One participant even reported using creative movement at home after participating in the study. Picard (2000) concluded that the use of creative movement added to her research on how women's consciousness develops and that the participants themselves validated the use of this form of expression. She noted that the use of multiple methods of expression can add depth and dimension to social research.

Special Considerations

There are three main issues to think about as you consider working with a dance-based practice: translation, multiple meanings, and training/methods that study movement. These issues are present in other genres of ABR but are more pronounced in dance-based research.

Translation

There is a complex translation process when we take data in one form and represent them in another. Given the highly abstract nature of dance, this issue is heightened.

Creative arts therapists Elizabeth Manders and Gioia Chilton (2013) conducted a 1-year study that led to increased understanding of the translation process. They took on this work because of the importance for creative arts therapists to be able to articulate what occurs during artistic aspects of therapeutic sessions. Their study used artistic inquiry to examine intersubjectivity in a creative arts therapy studio. A group of two professors and four graduate students participated. Their methodology had the six participants (Manders and Chilton included) engage in artistic explorations (in various media), and then 30 minutes of journal writing about the artistic exploration followed by 30 minutes of group discussion.

The group found that the conversion of meaning from dance to textual/verbal (or even visual) representation required a particularly complex and difficult translation process. Manders and Chilton cite Panhofer and Payne's (2011) work, which found that even experienced

dance/movement therapists had difficulty with translation despite being trained in a technical language used to describe movement. They preferred metaphor and poetry as means of description over the technical language with which they were trained. This mirrored Manders's own experience participating in the 1-year study. She found the translation from dance to journaling extremely challenging because it was hard to capture the full experience in words. The group found that sometimes multiple translations facilitated the process. In one go-around Manders went from dance to fiction (another art form), writing a fairy tale to describe the dance experience. The fictional writing served as a bridge between art and verbal interpretation. As Manders and Chilton (2013) point out, the translation of one art form through another is a method of interpretation, and one that is unique to ABR. Manders and Chilton have created a most helpful table of creative strategies for translation in ABR based on their participation in this year-long study (their table is reprinted with permission in Chapter 8 within a review of interpretation strategies and evaluation criteria).

Multiple Meanings

The translation process and development of intersubjectivity discussed in Manders and Chilton (2013) is also linked to the issue of multiple meanings. How can we make sense of a dance performance we see? As researchers, how do we know whether audiences will receive our intended messages?

Of course the preceding questions can be asked in any kind of research, including quantitative and qualitative. We are always engaged in representing data and thus there is the possibility for misunderstandings or unexpected interpretations. Gonzalez writes the following based on his collaborative project about "Tiffany": "Throughout watching, I struggled epistemologically . . . How do we know that you're not just making it up . . . and then I went back to, well, how do we know that we're not just making it up because we're using 'text?' " (2017, p. 16).

In the groundbreaking volume *Dancing the Data*, edited by Bagley and Cancienne, Blumenfeld-Jones (2002) explores the art-research connection that emerges when dance is used as a medium for representation. He suggests that dance can be used to *convey meaning*—meaning as intended by the researcher. However, congruent with larger issues pertaining to art and social inquiry, he notes that art necessarily invites several interpretations at once. This does not mean that all interpretations are accurate (a concern that guides much of the criticism of arts-based and even qualitative research—a fear of everything being relative

and all-inclusive). Blumenfeld-Jones argues that when working with dance as a representational vehicle, researchers must be very careful to use movements that convey only a range of meanings that are appropriate to the theme of which he/she/they is communicating dimensions. I suggest an external review phase of research. Specifically, after the choreography has been created the research design could allow for a “pilot performance” for a sample of colleagues or experts who could provide you with feedback regarding their impressions, how they interpreted the various movements, and what themes emerge from the dance. You could then make modifications as necessary in order to evoke the limited set of interpretations you’re after.

Training and Methods That Study Movement

As echoed throughout this book, creative artists engage in extensive training that you may or may not have. As seen in several examples in this chapter, even without any training in dance, one can collaborate with others in order to create a choreographed performance informed by research. There are also methods that study movement that an untrained dancer may attempt to learn. For example, Diane C. Freedman (1991) designed a research project using the *Laban movement analysis* (LMA) method that systematically studies movement. LMA employs “effort/shape” approaches to the analysis of dance and movement. According to Freedman, the approach considers three perspectives: (1) use of the body, (2) use of the space, and (3) use of effort. Additional factors for LMA include which body parts, how they move in space, and the type of energy that motivates the movement (Freedman, 1991). The body and the space are also further categorized. Dimensions of the body include height, weight, and depth. The three axes of space are horizontal, vertical, and sagittal (front to back).

Checklist of Considerations

When considering using dance/movement as inquiry and/or (re) presentation, consider the following:

- ✓ Am I seeking embodied or bodily knowledge and if so, how might dance or movement assist me in my goals?
- ✓ Do I have the training necessary to design this project? Should it be a collaborative project?
- ✓ If collaborative, how will my collaborators and I set expectations with regards to use of the data and our process? What will the translation process entail?

- ✓ What, if anything, will be built into the research design in order to address multiple meanings and how audiences may interpret the dance? Will there be a pilot performance, and if so, for whom? How will feedback be gathered from audience members? How, if at all, will future performances be modified based on audience feedback?

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to review the major uses of dance and movement in research, with particular attention paid to current innovations of dance as inquiry and representation, and what has led up to these practices. I hope this chapter has highlighted the unique possibilities of paying attention to embodiment and bodily knowledge.

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. What is the relationship between theoretical advances in embodiment research and methodological innovation in dance and movement research?
2. What kinds of hard-to-get-at topics can be addressed by paying attention to the body?
3. How can researchers employ dance as a methodological device? What strategies are available for using dance as or during inquiry? How can dance be used as a representational form? How can dance and movement be used in multimethod or mixed methods research? What are the potential advantages and disadvantages of this approach?
4. For this activity, try working with LMA, aimed at systematically studying movement. Get a video recording of professional dance (any genre), develop a coding procedure based on LMA, as reviewed in this chapter, and code the data. What does this strategy draw your attention to? What have you learned from this process?



Suggested Readings

Bagley, C., & Cancienne, M. B. (Eds.). (2002). *Dancing the data*. New York: Peter Lang.

This classic edited volume covers many topics pertaining to arts and research, including readings about dance and research by renowned scholars.

Blumenfeld-Jones, D. S. (2012). *Curriculum and the aesthetic life: Hermeneutics, body, democracy, and ethics in curriculum theory and practice*. New York: Peter Lang.

This book brings together the author's vast experience in dance and education. Of particular interest coverage includes chapters on bodily knowledge and dance education, a review of dance curricula, dance as a mode of research, and dance and choreography in social science research. The linking of aesthetics and ethics throughout the text also makes a contribution to the theoretical foundations of curriculum theory and educational philosophy.

Migdalek, J. (2014). *The embodied performance of gender*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.

This book exposes and challenges the gender binary by exploring gender as embodied and performative. Migdalek draws on his own struggles as a performance artist, educator, and person in the everyday, as well as the findings of empirical fieldwork with educators, performance arts practitioners, and high school students.

Snowber, C. (2016). *Embodied inquiry: Writing, living and being through the body*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill/Sense.

The author brings her vast experience as an educator, dancer, and embodiment scholar to bear on this book which aims to help readers deepen the connection to their bodies. Snowber presents the body as a place of inquiry, learning, understanding, and perceiving and suggests how we can come to know through attention to our bodies.

Springgay, S., & Freedman, D. (Eds.). (2007). *Curriculum and the cultural body*. New York: Peter Lang.

This edited volume offers a robust introduction to the topics of embodiment, bodily knowledge, intercorporeality, and the role of embodiment in education, followed by chapters by leading scholars addressing the roles of bodies in learning and knowing. This text will be of particular interest to those in education, curriculum studies, and a/r/tography, but valuable for anyone interested in embodiment and bodily knowledge.



Suggested Websites and Journals

Journal of Dance Education

www.tandfonline.com/loi/ujod20#.UfBg2Y2IGSo

Articles cover the range of dance education in all settings, including early childhood and preschool, K-12, higher education, private studio, special education and people with disabilities, and children at risk. Articles address teaching methods and practices; curriculum and sequential learning; the aesthetic and creative process; use of higher-order thinking skills and problem solving; standards at the national, state, and local levels; assessments; professional preparation and teacher training; and interdisciplinary education.

Research in Dance Education

www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/14647893.asp

This journal publishes research in dance education that is relevant to an international audience of learners and teachers. Topics covered include all phases of education, from preschool to higher education and beyond; teaching and learning in dance, theory, and practice; new methodology and technology; and professional dance artists in education. This journal also has special sections. The Perspectives section aims to republish significant research that may no longer be available in print, and the Dancelines section showcases outstanding student writing.

Electronic Journal of Folklore

www.folklore.ee/folklore

The *Electronic Journal of Folklore* publishes original academic articles in folklore studies, comparative mythological research, cultural anthropology, and related fields. The journal is issued in print and in a full free online version. The electronic journal includes video and audio samples.

**Notes**

1. Historically, the Cartesian mind–body dichotomy has been used to equate women and femininity with the body. Many feminists have argued (Bordo, 1993; Butler, 1990, 1993; Classen, 1993; Grumet, 1988; Springgay & Freedman, 2007; Weitz, 2003; Wolf, 1991) the mind–body binary puts men and women, masculinity and femininity, in opposition to each other; masculinity is located in mind qualities and femininity is located in the flesh (Hesse-Biber, 1996, 2006), and the mind is then viewed as higher than the body. In short, this has been a way to devalue women and relegate femininity to a lower plane than masculinity. As reviewed in the section on embodiment and phenomenology, dance and movement–based research practices necessarily challenge the artificial mind–body binary. Dance-based research also challenges the highly limited gender binary. A great deal of the dance-based research centrally deals with gender.
2. Warren (1993) also suggests several reasons why dance is beneficial to the ill. On a philosophical level, the body serves as an instrument that is used to communicate thoughts, feelings, and a range of information (p. 58) (as explored in-depth by symbolic interactionists in the social and behavioral sciences). In this vein, children learn about the world by moving their bodies through it and interacting with their environment (p. 58). Therefore, experimenting with dance and movement is a way of learning about the self. Warren further asserts the sick and those with disabilities need a means of self-expression to aid their well-being, broadly conceived. There are physical benefits as well. Warren suggests that dance and movement can help control the muscle spasms experienced by people with cerebral palsy and can also strengthen fine and gross motor skills, neurological functions, and circulatory regulation (p. 59).

3. Please note that depending on how one conceptualizes ABR—as a paradigm or set of tools within the qualitative paradigm—the following example could be classified as mixed methods or multimethod research.



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The exemplar for this chapter is Jack Migdalek's "Gender Icons," reviewed at length earlier. The performance can be viewed online at <https://vimeo.com/336932377>.

Six



Theatre, Drama, and Film

All the world's a stage.
—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Dramatic reconstruction, for the stage or screen, can capture aspects of human experience and social life in unparalleled ways. Judith Ackroyd and John O'Toole (2010) suggest, for researchers, dramatic reconstruction is a way to recreate the fullness of what was learned during the inquiry process. Johnny Saldaña (2011) astutely observes that, paradoxically, performance can make things seem more “real.” Theatre, drama, and film are powerful mediums of communication and can be used as highly impactful approaches for investigating and representing human experience. These genres can all be classified as *performative*. *Performance studies* or *performative genres* also include music and dance, as previously discussed.

Congruent with the move toward public scholarship, these mediums are accessible to diverse audiences. Importantly, performances constitute an exchange or transfer between the audience and performer(s) (this exchange is mediated in the case of films or scripts). The “exchange” may involve a complex negotiation of meanings. This interaction between the performer and audience also varies depending on the environment and mood (Langellier & Peterson, 2006).

Performance can serve many research purposes, including consciousness-raising, empowerment, emancipation, political agendas, discovery, exploration, and education. Although often considered a representational form, performance can be used during any single phase of a research project or as an entire research method, serving as a means of data generation and analysis as well as a (re)presentational form. Performance is therefore an investigation *and* a representation

(Worthen, 1998). Data garnered via any other research method can also be translated or adapted into performance texts or films in numerous ways.

Performance extends beyond a method or representational form and offers a new way of thinking about and conducting research. Ross E. Gray (2003) argues that performance challenges and disrupts conventional ways of knowing (p. 254). Helena Oikarinen-Jabai (2003) suggests that a performance-based methodology allows researchers to transgress borders with their research participants and serves as a means for locating empowering spaces, exposing contradictions, and building empathy (p. 578). Writing about her experience with this kind of methodology, Oikarinen-Jabai concludes, “A performative approach helps me to find, experience, and express the desire, passion, ambivalence, powerlessness, uncertainty, shame, love, fear, and other emotions that are hidden in our relationships and our cultural discourses” (p. 578). The possibilities are vast.

Background

? *How have performative approaches to research grown?*

The use of performative approaches in research—theatre, drama, and film—has exploded over the last several decades. Both qualitative and ABR conferences now regularly feature theatrical presentations, drama-based workshops, and research-based film screenings. Mary Gergen and Kenneth Gergen (2011) note that *performance ethnography* has grown in disciplinary contexts as well. For instance, they note that performances have increased in communication just as dramatic writing has grown. They also note that even fields historically more resistant to arts-based inquiry, such as psychology, have seen a significant surge in performance studies.

Along with Mary and Kenneth Gergen, Kip Jones (2006, 2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2013) uses the term *performative social science* to talk about research that fuses art and science. Jones explains this work as “creating a new model where tools from the arts and humanities are explored for their utility in enriching the ways which we research social science subjects and/or disseminate or present our research to audiences” (2010, para. 12). While performative social science does not refer only to the genres covered in this chapter, but could indeed be applied to ABR more broadly, the use of the term is an important part of the context in which performative work is also increasingly common.

Theoretical Developments

? What theoretical developments have led to the move toward performance?

The move toward performance, or what Victor Turner (1974) deemed a “performance paradigm,” is linked to developments in embodiment research and the mind–body connection (reviewed in the previous chapter), postmodern theoretical advancements (in this regard Denzin, 1997, refers to the “sublime” postmodern performance text), the larger academic move to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary scholarship, as well as the cumulative impact of researchers expanding and refining the qualitative and arts-based paradigms in accord with new theoretical, epistemological, and methodological innovations.

Joan McLeod (1988) argues for the inclusion of image, gesture, and sound with the two dominant forms of word and number within the curriculum. This can be applied to research moving us beyond traditional qualitative and quantitative approaches. Joe Norris (2000) proposes these ways of knowing are all integrated in drama. Performance methods are congruent with holistic views of the research process. In this spirit, these approaches to research also merge advances in embodiment research that reject a mind–body separation and the move to cross or blur disciplinary boundaries (often in an attempt to access subjugated perspectives).

Kristin M. Langellier and Eric E. Peterson (2006) suggest that performance studies cross boundaries and expose “the cracks of disciplinary boundaries” (p. 153). Moreover, the “I” and the “you” may find themselves in symbiosis in the performance of personal narratives (p. 156). In this regard, Langellier and Peterson write, “Performing personal narrative reclaims and proclaims both body and voice: the personal gives a body to narrative, and narrative gives voice to experience” (p. 156). Moreover, performance serves as a method for exposing what is otherwise impossible to reveal. This potential results from the three main qualities of performance that Langellier and Peterson define as framed, reflexive, and emergent. Similarly, W. B. Worthen (1998), noting the methodological strengths of performances, explains that they can be unmade and remade (p. 1101).

Although recent epistemological, theoretical, and methodological developments have promoted the expansion of performative genres, sociologists have long recognized that performance is an inseparable aspect of social life. Erving Goffman (1959) coined the term *dramaturgy* to denote the presentation of self that people engage in during their daily lives.¹ Building on the famous idea that “all the world’s a stage,

and all the men and women merely players,” Goffman posited that in social life there is a “front stage” and “backstage.” The front stage is what others see (in theatre, this would be the actual performance), and the backstage is all of the behind-the-scenes stuff of life that others do not see (in theatre, this would be the playwriting, the rehearsals, hair and makeup, etc.). Under this theoretical framework, all of life involves performance, including what Goffman termed “face-saving” strategies. In a similar vein, Worthen (1998) notes that social life is full of performances such as street performances, identity performances, and everyday life as drama.

Social constructionist and postmodern theories have also contributed to our understanding of the complexity of performance in daily life. For example, Judith Butler (1990, 1993) theorizes about the performance of gender by discursively constituted and constituting subjects. In other words, Butler explains that gender itself is a performance. Feminist researchers have explored sexuality, embodiment, power, and women’s health issues through performative means (Gergen & Gergen, 2011). Performance can also be a space where identity categories are renegotiated, struggled over, and challenged.

Connected to postmodern theory, scholarship on hybridity has also influenced our understanding of performance and identity work. Homi Bhabha (1993) wrote about the hybrid “third space” (created when two cultural forms merge) that cannot be understood by traditional conceptual frameworks. As an example, influenced by Bhabha’s work, Helena Oikarinen-Jabai (2003) writes about the performances of the Gambian women she researched and how these performances served to challenge discursively constituted identities: “The performances of Gambian women made me admire their ability to challenge their cultural and gendered identities and to use different and traditional and imported genres in criticizing and questioning cultural conventions and hierarchies. They connect art to their everyday experience” (p. 576). The anthropological study of performance, as well as concepts of drama in everyday life, influence performance-based research practices, although they themselves are not the subject of this chapter.

Synergy between Qualitative Practice and the Dramatic Arts

? *What are the similarities between drama or performance and qualitative inquiry?*

As reviewed in the chapter on music, many qualitative researchers are elucidating and harnessing the synergies between qualitative inquiry

and arts practices. For scholars working within the theatre arts, the recent surge in social researchers drawing on the power of performance is not surprising. There is an affinity between the work of playwriting and performing and the craft of qualitative research. Joe Salvatore (2018) suggests that the process of creating theatrical works mirrors the process of conducting research. Johnny Saldaña (1999) proposes that there is a similarity between the goal of qualitative researchers and playwrights, both of whom try “to create a unique, engaging, and insightful text about the human condition” (p. 60). He further asserts that theatre practitioners have the following foundational qualitative research skills:

1. Enhanced sensory awareness and observation skills, enabling an attuned sensitivity to fieldwork environments.
2. The ability to analyze characters and dramatic texts, which transfers to analyzing interview transcripts and field notes for participant actions and relationships.
3. The ability to infer objectives and subtext in participants’ verbal and nonverbal actions, which enriches social insight.
4. Scenographic literacy, which heightens the visual analysis of fieldwork settings, space, artifacts, participant dress, etc.
5. The ability to think conceptually, symbolically, and metaphorically—essentials for qualitative data analysis.
6. An aptitude for storytelling, in its broadest sense, which transfers to the writing of engaging narrative research reports. (p. 68)

Salvatore (2018) further observes that many well-known theatre artists, including Anna Deavere Smith, Moises Kaufman, and Emily Mann, use interview transcripts, field notes, and media documents as source material for their theatrical works.

Similarly, Joe Norris (2000) notes that practitioners of drama education have tremendous experience with drama as a *meaning-making method* as well as a (re)presentational form. For example, Norris explains that in drama classrooms, students routinely test hypotheses “through the magic of what if” (p. 41). Norris argues that practices in educational drama can be considered a research methodology and refers to *collective creation*, which is a play that is created by the entire cast as a series of vignettes (Norris, 2000, drawing on Berry & Reinhold, 1984). This technique, referred to as “play building” by Carol Tarlington and Wendy Michaels (1995), draws on the same techniques qualitative researchers use in their meaning-making processes. Norris writes, “Much of what we do in process drama helps us to re-look at

content to draw insights and make new meanings; this act can be considered a research tool" (p. 44).

Norris likens the dramatic process to the qualitative practice of focus groups. Similar to a focus group, a cast gathers to examine a particular topic or question; however, differing from the "moderator" role researchers adopt in focus groups, within the context of a dramatic *collective creation* there is no division between the researcher and participants. The cast (referred to as the participants in qualitative research) provide the initial data, out of which a performance emerges via a drama-based process of analysis and representation. Writing of his experience with improvisation as a meaning-making activity Norris (2000) explains, "In the improvisation the researchers/actors articulated what they knew (data collection); framed it in the improvisation (analysis); and presented it to others (dissemination). Consequently, improvisation, even in its rudimentary form, is a research act" (p. 44). Norris further explains that in Readers' Theatre the way data are structured constitutes a form of analysis. For example, the placement of quotes is an *analytic act*. Readers' Theatre and "staged readings" have become popular presentation styles at conferences (Norris, 2000, p. 43). Robert Donmoyer and June Yennie-Donmoyer (1995) define Readers' Theatre as: "a staged presentation of a piece of text or selected pieces of different texts that are thematically linked. Selections are sometimes performed by individuals and sometimes read chorally by the ensemble or a subgroup of ensemble members" (p. 406). Readers' Theatre and related collaborative drama-based practices can utilize data yielded from qualitative (or other) methods.

Drama as a Means of Personal Growth, Consciousness-Raising, and Subversion

? How can drama be used as a part of critical pedagogy?

How can drama be used to subvert existing relations of power?

Many of the epistemological and theoretical developments reviewed promote an exchange between researcher and researched that is not only more collaborative and egalitarian but also actively beneficial to the research participants. In this context, the consciousness-raising and empowering potential of drama has become a precipitator for performance-based methodological development. In a general sense, drama is a form of communication that can foster personal growth (Warren, 1993). As drama utilizes imagination, it can help people examine how their life is and how they would like it to be (Warren, 1993).

Creative arts therapists employ drama for a host of purposes, including strengthening the ability to observe personal roles (Malchiodi, 2005) and to foster personal exploration and growth (Malchiodi, 2012). Moreover, in addition to imagination, drama cultivates flexibility, expression, and even social skills (Malchiodi, 2005; Warren, 1993).

Norman K. Denzin (2006) writes about the pedagogical dimensions of performance when it is employed as a critical pedagogy, including (1) as a form of instruction that helps people to think critically, historically, and sociologically; (2) as a means of exposing the pedagogies of oppression; and (3) as a means of contributing to an ethical self-consciousness that will help shape a critical race awareness (p. 332). In addition, *performance pedagogy* fosters the “sociological imagination,” allowing participants to reveal and explore the link between historical processes and their individual biographies (p. 332). Denzin asserts that promoting this kind of critical self-reflection and consciousness-raising is a political act with the potential to challenge normalized viewpoints. In this regard, he writes that through performance pedagogy “a critical consciousness is invoked” (p. 330). Going even further with respect to the possibilities for empowerment and subversion, Denzin suggests, “Critical Pedagogical Theatre can empower persons to be subversive, while making their submission to oppression disappear” (p. 331).

Kristin Bervig Valentine’s (2006) research on incarcerated women and performance suggests that creating a performance space for women in prison allows the women an otherwise impossible outlet for expression. For example, performance is the only space in which a statement such as “fuck the guards” is permissible (p. 315). She further proposes that this kind of programming reduces recidivism (p. 313). Valentine writes:

My hypothesis is that mind-liberating activities generated by performance and creative writing programs . . . increase effective communication skills that help women avoid actions harmful to themselves and others. By acquiring these skills they increase their abilities to avoid reincarceration when they are released from prison, thereby benefiting themselves, their families, and their communities. (p. 321)

Another example comes from Claudio Moreira’s (2005) research in which he explored dramatic performance as a method for revealing the experiences of the oppressed class in Brazil, and more specifically how the dominant class determines what people learn (a process that contributes to a cycle of oppression). Moreira’s paper is constructed as a performative text. When each person sitting stands up to speak

it is revealed they are a part of the audience. Together the voices tell the story of a young boy who lives in a poor neighborhood in Brazil. He learns from the other boys the sexist and racist idea that young Black girls are “made for sex.” The audience follows his thoughts as he gathers with other boys to conspire to rape Black girls. This horrific narrative is interwoven with messages about “dominant narratives”—how they are constructed and disseminated in order to perpetuate a cycle of ignorance and oppression in which the oppressed victimize one another, deterred from examining the source of their “common-sense” ideas.

The Public and Public Policy

? What are the political capabilities of theatre-based practices?

How can these methods engage the public, democratize knowledge-building, and affect public policy?

The next stage in consciousness-raising and subversion involves inspiring social or political action. One of the advantages of ABR in general is its ability to make scholarship accessible to the public. ABR also has, and perhaps performative methods uniquely have, a capacity to promote social reflection and education that spurns social or political action. Research in performative genres has been widely used to involve the public in political conversations and affect public policy.

Augusto Boal has been a central figure in developing our understanding of the political capabilities of theatre. In his pioneering works *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1985) and *Legislative Theatre: Using Performance to Make Politics* (1998), he asserted that theatre is a highly effective political weapon that can educate, inform, and move people to action.

There are many possibilities for how performative approaches to research can be used to affect public policy. Perhaps the greatest potential centers on involving the public in the policy development process. Often various community stakeholders are cut out of the policy development process. Likewise, some groups are both used and simultaneously erased in policy discussions. There are various types of examples.

Immigration in the United States is a clear example where those stakeholders most affected by policies are often prevented from describing their own needs. Ricardo Castro-Salazar and Carl Bagley (2012) conducted extensive research with Americans of Mexican origin (many of whom came to the United States as minors) about their experiences with discrimination, racism, and what it means to be “undocumented.” Castro-Salazar and Bagley collaborated with artists and community

organizations in order to bring the experiences of their participants to life. This work included a performance at a local community theater in Tucson. Not only was the 110-seat theater filled, but an additional 60 people sat on the floor.

Health care is also an arena in which performance is being used to involve stakeholders in policymaking. Jeff Nisker has been highly active in health theatre as a means of engaging the public in health care and medical ethics issues of import. He notes (2008) that one of the challenges in policy research is developing effective strategies for citizen participation in policy development. Policy researchers need new tools for engaging citizens in this process (Leavy, 2011; Nisker, 2008), including agenda setting (McTeer, 2005): “Theatre can be such an instrument, as it is able to engage, cognitively and emotionally, large numbers of citizens of diverse perspectives, provide them relevant information . . . and provide a forum where citizens are able to air and debate their opinions for policy research purposes” (Nisker, 2008, p. 614).

Researchers are actively drawing on the potential of the dramatic arts to engage and inform people in order to involve different stakeholders in the development of health policy (Nisker, 2008). Nisker (2008) writes:

Theatrical productions, focusing on the persons at the center of a health care issue, can bring all who ought to be responsible for its policy development (e.g., patients, their family members, the general public, health professionals) to a better understanding of the new scientific possibilities, ethical issues, and most important, the persons immersed therein. (p. 615)

For example, beyond health care conditions per se, there are many contemporary ethical issues and questions emerging at the intersection of science and technology that deeply affect the public (McTeer, 2005). It is vital that researchers develop ways to bring different communities into these discussions in informed ways. Specific examples of these “health theatre” efforts are offered later in this chapter.

Theatre- or Drama-Based Practices

Ethnodrama and Ethnotheatre

? What is ethnodrama?

What is ethnotheatre?

? How can a researcher write an ethnodrama?

What strategies are available for the analysis and interpretation of traditional qualitative data garnered through ethnography, interviews, and the like, with the goal of constructing an ethnodramatic script (possibly for performance)? What coding issues arise? What ethical issues?

What components of typical theatre arts playwriting must a researcher consider when writing an ethnodrama? How is the process similar/dissimilar to solely artistic playwriting?

Ethnodrama and ethnotheatre are perhaps the most widely used performance-based research practices. Judith Ackroyd and John O'Toole (2010) suggest anthropologists first used ethnodrama, before ethnographers more broadly turned to dramatic methods to “re-create” the fullness of what had been observed during research. *Ethnodrama* refers to the writing up of research findings in dramatic or script form and may or may not be performed. Qualitative research is the “source material” for an ethnodrama (Salvatore, 2018). Saldaña (2005) writes: “An *ethnodrama*, the written script, consists of dramatized, significant selections of narrative collected through interviews, participant observation field notes, journal entries, and/or print and media artifacts such as diaries, television broadcasts, newspaper articles, and court proceedings . . . this is dramatizing the data” (p. 2). While ethnodrama is a genre of writing, styles within that genre include realist (most commonly used), musical, and performance collage or revue (Saldaña, 2011, p. 146). Ethnodramas may be written in alternative formats such as screenplays (Saldaña, 2011).

Ethnotheatre is a performance-based practice, constituted by a dramatic event (such as the live performance of an ethnodrama). *Ethnotheatre* and *performance ethnography* are terms often used interchangeably, and speak to a particular subset of practices within performance studies. This group of performance-based practices relies on using qualitative data garnered from ethnography, interviews, public documents, and other traditional qualitative research methods and then analyzing, interpreting, and representing the data via a dramatic script. Saldaña (2011) writes the following:

Ethnotheatre . . . employs the traditional media and artistic techniques of theatre or media production to mount for an audience a live or mediated performance event of research participants' experiences and/or the researcher's interpretation of data. The goal is to investigate a particular facet of the human condition for purposes

of adapting those observations and insights into a performance medium. (pp. 12–13)

It's important to note that ethnotheatre can be used as an act of interpretation among researchers and participants, as opposed to only as an act of representation performed for an audience (Cranston & Kusanovich, 2017). For example, Jerome A. Cranston and Kristin Kusanovich (2017) conducted a study examining the perspectives of graduate students enrolled in an educational leadership course. They replaced a weekly lecture with an ethnotheatre workshop coupled with journaling. The students' awareness of challenges in educational administration increased as a result of participating in the one-act plays the class created.

The move by some researchers toward ethnodrama results from the ability of dramatic performance to get at and present rich, textured, descriptive, situated, contextual experiences and multiple meanings from the perspectives of those studied in the field. There is an affinity between ethnodramatic performance and the general principles of ethnography that guide many qualitative researchers. Moreover, the theatre arts allow researchers to explore the dimensionality, tonality, and multisensory experiences that occur within the field in ways not enabled by traditional textual representation. This offers the audience deeper access to the raw data, in a manner of speaking. Ethnodramatists attempt to *re-create social contexts* and the fullness of research data in order to produce new insights (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010). Ackroyd and O'Toole (2010) suggest the common point between theatre and ethnography is indeed the "paradox of ethnodrama," which is "attempting to record and communicate the transience and evanescence of human behavior" (p. 77).

Johnny Saldaña (1998, 1999, 2003, 2005, 2011) has written extensively about the practice of ethnodrama. As with any research project, he proposes (1999) that ethnodrama be employed when it serves the goals of a particular project and he suggests that researchers ask themselves how the story they seek to tell can be "validly, vividly, and persuasively told" (p. 61). Saldaña focuses primarily on the process by which researchers can analyze, interpret, and represent their data as an ethnographic performance.

Although all research involves a reduction process by which raw data are sorted through and condensed, Saldaña suggests that this process occurs in a particular context in performance studies because the researcher aims to reduce the data to "the juicy stuff" in order to achieve dramatic impact (1999, p. 61). Saldaña (1998) discovered

a host of ethical considerations linked to this aspect of producing a performance text. During a study about an adolescent aspiring actor named “Barry,” Saldaña encountered several ethical dilemmas when Barry and his parents experienced some unanticipated conflicts. Casting choices came into question, and some of the information revealed during private in-depth interviews constituted “the juicy stuff,” but its use may have jeopardized the privacy of the participants. Salvatore (2018) cautions that “experiencing one’s self in performance” as a character can conjure any number of feelings (p. 273).

Reviewing the different components of a script, Saldaña (1999) provides a step-by-step list of issues researchers confront as they attempt to create ethnographic performance texts. The coding procedure implemented is vital to the construction of the text, which is enhanced in performance texts because analysis and representation occur fluidly. Saldaña advocates *in vivo coding*, where the participants’ own words are used as coding labels during the analytic process because such categories may later assist the researcher as he/she/they determines which passages should be used for dialogue and monologues. Grounded theory methods of analysis and other inductive approaches can also accomplish this end. *Grounded theory* involves an inductive coding process in which data are analyzed, typically line by line, and code categories emerge directly out of the data (see Charmaz, 2008, for a discussion of emergent grounded theory practices). The categories and themes that emerge during this process may eventually become scenes in the play (Saldaña, 1999, p. 61).

Joe Salvatore (2020) has developed a special process for transcribing interviews for the creation of ethnodramatic works intended to retain the “cadence of speech patterns” and “rhythmic way of speaking.” His process involves “retaining and notating all filler words like “ums” and “aahs,” rhythmic pauses, verbal stumbles, and disfluencies of the speaker.” He contends the removal of these aspects of the interview serve to “flatten” the data and fail to provide information about the “delivery of the text.” In addition to noting these aspects of the text, Salvatore hits return to begin a new line of text each time the interviewee takes a noticeable pause. The transcribed text ends up resembling verse and so he terms the result a *scored transcript*. There are implications through to the performance phase. Salvatore writes: “Actors working in this style of performance benefit from thinking of the transcript as a musical because it provides them with information about *how* someone spoke in addition to *what* someone said. The scored transcript can also provide powerful insights into the mindset of the participant at a given moment.”

Regardless of how data is collected and analyzed, there are several major components of the play that must be worked through: characters, dialogue/monologues, plotting, structures, and scenography (for live theatre there are additional issues such as directing, staging, costuming, and acting).

Let's begin with *characterization*. Saldaña (1999, 2003) proposes that the number of research participants whose stories stand out during a review of the data become the number of characters in the script. Characters in the script can be constructed as composites so that the themes that emerged during data collection—which in interviews, for example, may have come forth in multiple interviews—can be used to create character “types.” The number of characters and their relation to one another affect the plot and structure of the play as well. For example, the play may unfold from the perspective of a central character (the protagonist), two characters in conflict (protagonist and antagonist), two flawed characters who guide each other to greater understanding, multiple characters in vignettes, or other standard formats (Saldaña, 1999). Saldaña (1999, p. 62) provides guidelines for how researchers can create truthful, three-dimensional portrayals.

1. From interviews: what the participant reveals about his/her/their perceptions.
2. From field notes, journal entries, or memoranda: what the researcher observes, infers, and interprets from the participant in action.
3. From observations or interviews with other participants connected to the primary case study: perspectives about the primary participant.
4. From the research literature: what other scholars and theorists offer about the phenomena under study.

Dialogue and *monologue* are linked to characterization. In ethnodrama the dialogue or monologue may be extracted directly from the raw data (e.g., an excerpt from an interview transcript), or the text may be constructed by the researcher during the interpretive process. Dialogue can reveal how characters react to one another (which may particularly appeal to researchers working from a symbolic interactionist framework) (Saldaña, 1999, 2011). Monologues, when done well, can offer social insight (which may include the researcher's voice or voices from the literature review or theory) and can also foster an emotional response from the audience (Saldaña, 1999). Saldaña encourages us to

think about monologues as “portraits in miniature” that may reveal the essentials of a character, such as their motivations or obstacles (2011, p. 66). The relationship between the characters and their dialogue is dialectical. For example, when composite characters are created out of multiple participants’ stories, the researcher then considers this when he/she/they writes the dialogue. Saldaña (1999, p. 64) offers the following guidelines for interweaving participant voices from two or more individual interviews:

1. Offer triangulation through their supporting statements.
2. Highlight disconfirming evidence from their contrast and juxtaposition.
3. Exhibit collective story creation through the multiplicity of perspectives.

In addition, the researcher must consider his/her/their own role within the script. This is a concern for many researchers, made explicit in the case of performance texts. In ethnodrama the place of the researcher within the process, an epistemological decision, becomes explicit as the researcher must decide how to write him-/her/themselves into the script, if at all. Saldaña (1999) proposes the following options for how a researcher may appear in the ethnodramatic text: “1. a leading role 2. an extra not commenting, just reacting 3. a servant 4. the lead’s best friend 5. an offstage voice heard on speakers 6. a character cut from the play in an earlier draft” (p. 66). These are examples, not an exhaustive list. Ultimately, Saldaña suggests that the level of overt analysis and interpretation depends on what is necessary for the promotion of audience understanding. The place of the researcher in the ethnodramatic script is inextricably linked to the epistemological and theoretical underpinning of the study. For example, scholars working from “power-reflexive” or “power-sensitive” perspectives (Haraway, 1991; Pfohl, 1994) such as critical theory, queer studies, feminism, critical race theory, postcolonialism, poststructuralism, and postmodernism may be particularly attentive to how power operates in part via the researcher’s choices with respect to disclosure and authority. Scholars working from interpretive traditions or feminist epistemological positions may be particularly concerned with the plane on which researcher and participant operate and how that is communicated to an audience in a full and authentic way.

Let’s move on to another vital part of script construction: the story. What is the narrative being communicated? Ethnodramas are

scripted stories and follow conventions of plot, storyline, and structure. Saldaña (2003) defines *plot* as the overall play structure and *storyline* as the progression or sequence of events within the plot. Unlike conventional playwriting, in the construction of ethnodramas, plotting and storylining begin as distinct processes but eventually become inter-linked (p. 220). *Plotting* is the “conceptual framework of ethnodrama” (Saldaña, 2005, p. 15).

In addition to plot and storyline, the structures that frame the play also communicate meaning. Typically called “units” in theatre, traditional structures include acts, scenes, and vignettes that may be arranged in a linear or episodic sequence (Saldaña, 2003). How the story unfolds depends on the analytic process the data have undergone and the range of meanings the researcher intends to convey.

Ethnotheatre (performed ethnodramas) also have a visual dimension. In this way, performance pieces allow researchers to capture and communicate the visual components of social life, which are indistinguishable from human experience and our study of it. In particular, sceneography communicates information about the time, place, and social climate, while costumes and makeup help establish “the look” of the characters and show (Saldaña, 2003, p. 228). In addition to scenic elements and costumes it is important to consider the performance venue, lighting, media technology, and sound/music (Saldaña, 2011). Salvatore (2018) notes practitioners must pay attention to the “aesthetic demands” of the method, including script development, staging, live performance, and dealing with the presence of an audience.

Let’s look at all phases of the process by means of an example. Michelle Ludecke (2016) conducted a year-long research project on first-year teachers’ “epiphanic or revelatory first moments of identity transformation” (p. 1). For the *scripting phase*, Ludecke began by generating qualitative data. She recruited 12 participants for a minimum of 3 semistructured interviews plus e-mail communication. During transcription she formatted each conversation as a play script including interview dialogue and her notes about participants’ expressions and the like, which read like stage directions. Ludecke (2016) relied on verbatim transcript text to construct the script using several “rhetorical strategies” during analysis (p. 6). During this process she observed theatrical elements in the transcripts. For example, thick descriptions mirrored monologues and thinking aloud resembled soliloquy. *Costing decisions* were also carefully made. Ludecke cast teachers with drama backgrounds in order to create an authentic experience. The *rehearsal phase* included a “validation rehearsal” in which the cast read the play for participants. Revisions were made as a result. Finally, the play was

performed for an academic and artistic audience. Ludecke (2016) contends gaps placed in the script allowed audience members to bring their own experiences to bear on meaning making. She further concludes the performance promoted “empathetic understanding” (p. 14).

Current and Historical Events

? How have researchers employed ethnodrama and ethnotheatre to examine inequality?

What kinds of current and historical events have been explored via these methods?

Ethnodramas can be created to address important issues relating to inequality, social justice, identity, and the experience of prejudice. Researchers with experience in the dramatic arts who are interested in these kinds of topics may find ethnodrama particularly appealing because of the emotional impact of dramatic writing and performance, which can assist us as we try to expose and disrupt stereotypes and oppressive environments, build bridges across differences, and foster empathy. Tara Goldstein has used ethnodramatic writing for all of these reasons (although she prefers the term *performed ethnography*).

Goldstein’s collection *Zero Tolerance and Other Plays: Disrupting Xenophobia, Racism and Homophobia in School* (2013) features three scripts that center on themes of racism, xenophobia, and homophobia. Goldstein wrote “Zero Tolerance” in 2008 in response to an incident of school violence in Canada. In May 2007, a 15-year-old high school student, Jordan Manners, was shot and killed in the hallway of his Toronto school. In response, the Toronto District School Board commissioned an investigation into school safety, which resulted in a four-volume 595-page report titled *The Road to Health*. The report was released to the public on January 10, 2008, during a press conference. A month later Goldstein, focusing on one theme in the report, adapted it into a 30-minute performance script to provoke discussion about the investigative report among teacher candidates and teacher educators in Toronto. One of the decisions Goldstein made was to include her own voice as a narrator. Without giving anything away, this choice was important for several reasons, including facilitating an ending to the script that, especially when performed, is meant to evoke audience reflection and discussion with the intent of problem solving and helping to prevent the kinds of incidents portrayed in the book. With this three-play collection, Goldstein aims to bring her research to teachers and others who work with youth in schools, in addition to traditional theatre and academic audiences.

Joe Salvatore and Maria Guadalupe (2017) have also used ethnodrama to expose and subvert stereotypes by means of exploring a current event. Salvatore and Guadalupe co-created *Her Opponent* (for which Salvatore also served as Director). *Her Opponent* is a restaging of excerpts of the 2016 presidential debates between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. The ethnodrama used gender-reversed casting to shed new light on the gender dimensions of those critical debates. Highly acclaimed, *Her Opponent* received national television news coverage and was well-reviewed by popular media sources including *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*. Please visit www.heropponent.com to watch a full archival recording.

After considering the preceding responses to a current event, let's look at how ethnodramas can also be derived from historical research. Lojo Simons and Anita Simon wrote *Heartland: A Historical Drama about the Internment of German-Americans in the United States during World War II* (2014) about a little-known part of American history, German Americans being forced into internment camps during World War II. The U.S. government confined thousands of Japanese, German, and Italian Americans to isolated internment camps while at the same time it shipped foreign prisoners of war (POWs) to the United States for imprisonment. *Heartland* reflects on the intersection between these two historic events through the story of a German-born widow and her family who take in two German POWs to work on their family farm. The German American family and the POWs bond too well for the townspeople to accept, and the widow is arrested, interned, and eventually suffers a breakdown, which tears her family apart. This is a powerful educational story about this forgotten part of American history. More broadly, it illustrates the power of fear and prejudice.

Heartland is based on empirical research but follows fictional characters. Simons and Simon (2014) describe their research process as follows:

We began our research into German POW camps in the United States, using primary source material as much as possible, online and in local libraries. Sources in this initial research phase included US government documents about the Alien Enemies Act and Presidential wartime proclamations. Several POW camps were identified in places as varied as New Ulm, Minnesota, and Clinton, Mississippi, and we found useful photographs and documents about these camps on websites dedicated to the preservation of local history in these states. Additional research was gleaned from officials at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, now a state park and museum, which once served as a German POW camp. After our initial research phase, we

created a timeline of events, and explored themes such as patriotism and xenophobia that could be woven into the fabric of the play. We chose Wisconsin as the location for the play because of its many dairy farms in close proximity to POW camps. Once we knew the setting, we conducted additional research on dairy farm life, using texts such as *Give Me a Home Where the Dairy Cows Roam* by LeAnn R. Ralph, and *Letters of a German-American Farmer*, by Johannes Gillhoff. (p. 12)

They wrote an initial draft of *Heartland* in 2006 and brought it to a playwriting group in 2007 where actors read the play to an audience of approximately 40 people. They sought feedback from the audience and then revised the play. A new version was presented to a different group in 2008, followed by more revisions. The play was officially premiered later in 2008, and the script was published in 2014.

Health Theatre

? *How can ethnodrama be used in health research as a means of creating awareness and discussion around health-related topics and/or accessing subjugated perspectives?*

Ethnodrama/ethnotheatre has been used extensively in health studies (Cox & Belliveau, 2019). In this area, drama is a vehicle for learning about and communicating the experiences of sick people, their caregivers, or the complexities of medical ethics. Jim Mienczakowski, Lynn Smith, and Steve Morgan (2002) use the term *health theatre* to describe this work—it is the use of performed ethnodramas that focus on health-related issues.

Collective Disruption, a Canadian research ensemble, created *Cracked: New Light on Dementia*, which explores living with and caring for those with dementia (Gray, 2017). The playwright and director, Julia Gray (2017), writes:

Developed together by a group of health researchers and artists, in regular collaboration with people with dementia and their family members, *Cracked* forefronts the centrality of relationships and humanity when providing care for persons with dementia, and the need to recognize the dynamic ways that memory and self-expression occur through embodiment despite memory loss. (p. 2).

Cracked premiered at a conference in Toronto on March 25, 2014, and has subsequently been performed at long-term care facilities,

professional and academic conferences, and an arts festival. It continues to be performed and there are plans for a Canadian tour.

Jeff Nisker (2008, 2012) advocates using theatre to tackle emergent ethical and moral health care issues. Performances can help bring together differently situated stakeholders, including the public at large, to explore the human side of new scientific capabilities. For example, with funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and Health Canada, Nisker (2008) wrote *Sarah's Daughters*, about predictive genetic testing, and *Orchids*, about testing in vitro embryos for genetic markers. *Orchids* was performed 16 times in English and French, indicating the potential for research-based plays to reach relatively large public audiences.

Jim Mienczakowski has been in the forefront of health theatre, paying special attention to the ethical issues that may surface, particularly when vulnerable populations are involved, such as in his collaborative work on schizophrenia. He suggests that even though this method carries many positive social justice-oriented possibilities, there are also potential pitfalls. Accordingly, Mienczakowski and colleagues (2002) argue for guidelines for the ethical practice of health theatre. Health theatre is a form of *public performance*; therefore, the researchers bear responsibility for the impact of the performance on audience well-being. The need to create guidelines specific to this method has arisen from incidents in which audience members were put at risk as a result of witnessing an ethnodramatic performance. For example, Mienczakowski and colleagues (2002) cite the example of two attempted suicides after a performance titled *Tears in the Shadows*. The strategies they propose can also be employed to add dimensions of validity to a study, thus serving a dual purpose. First, they suggest having a preview performance of the drama for an audience with knowledge about the topic under investigation. Second, "postperformance forum sessions" can be used to analyze audience responses to assess the show's impact (p. 49). In these ways, as researchers navigate the ethical issues that emerge with this form of inquiry, so too have they created measures for maximizing validity and trustworthiness.

Playbuilding

? What is playbuilding?

Differing from theatre, *drama* usually refers to "dramatic literature and improvisational studio work" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 15). It is out of this improvisational studio work that Joe Norris has pioneered what he

calls the Playbuilding method. *Playbuilding* is the practice of producing evocative texts that are performed (Barone, 1990; Norris, 2000, 2009). It is a topic-, issue-, or problem-centered research practice that involves assembling a group of people to brainstorm about a topic of mutual interest (Norris, 2009). The group draws on personal (auto-ethnographic) observations and often data from other sources as well, including literature reviews, newspapers, magazines, and/or fiction (Norris, 2009). Norris refers to the participants as *A/R/Tors*, denoting actors-researchers-teachers. All participants are stakeholders in the research process—collaborators, partners, co-creators, and coauthors (Norris, 2009).

The Playbuilding process typically is as follows:

First, is data collection (generation), followed by data analysis (interpretation), and concluded with dissemination (performance). Such is the case with ethnodrama, where data is traditionally collected, analyzed, and then disseminated through an “alternative” form of representation. With Playbuilding, data is generated and interpreted in a different manner, and, at times, these three phases are simultaneous. (Norris, 2009, p. 22)

Norris (2000) has created a record-keeping system that he likens to the “coding” process in qualitative research. Conceptualizing “record keeping” or “coding” as an “emergent process,” he advocates using a series of files in which cast or team members place notecards with their thoughts, ideas, impressions, and so forth throughout the process. Some of the files he uses are “To Be Filed,” “Themes/Issues,” “Metaphors,” “Scene Ideas,” “Rehearsed Scenes,” “Quickies” (short scenes and phrases), “Keepers,” “Props/Costumes/Music Needs,” “External Research Data,” and “Potential Titles” (p. 47). Ultimately, as the performance approaches Norris notes a shift occurs from collection to compilation—a process guided by the question: “What do we want this play to be about?” (2000, p. 47). Playbuilding has to draw on the tenets of the dramatic arts in a meaningful way as it represents the data. Norris (2009) explains this part of the process as he reviews going from *data to drama*: “The A/R/Tors take the generated data and judiciously take artistic license, using metaphor, composites, and theatrical styles to create a verisimilitude of lived-experiences to create texts (theatrical vignettes) that evoke conversation” (p. 35).

The outcome of Playbuilding is a live performance, which may in turn generate new data or interpretations of the data as audience members are brought into the process (Norris, 2009). For example,

postperformance discussions or focus groups can be used to generate new data for the next phase in a mixed- or multimethod project. Norris has been involved in the development of more than 90 performance projects in collaborations with Mirror Theatre casts and community members. They have been commissioned by outside agencies to create performance pieces and workshops on many subjects, including violence in schools, inclusion/exclusion, prejudice, sexuality, body image, addiction, equality/respect in the workplace, risk taking, and student teaching. (For more information about Norris's work and other related resources, visit www.joenorrisPlaybuilding.ca.) Others have also engaged with this approach. For example, George Belliveau, Graham Lea, and their colleagues used playbuilding to develop a health theatre production about veterans' stories of trauma and recovery (Cox & Belliveau, 2019).

Film

? How can filmmaking be used by researchers?

What are the funding challenges?

Film, or "the recording arts," bridge multiple art forms (Monaco, 2009, p. 44). Film is a performative genre; however, the narrative potential for film has a close affinity to that of the novel (Monaco, 2009, p. 51). Film is another artistic genre in which some ABR is emerging. There is a long history of using documentary filmmaking in anthropology, and it remains a somewhat contested genre within the discipline (Ruby, 2008). There are various terms used to describe filmmaking in the social sciences, such as *ethnofiction* and *ethnographic film* (Sjöberg, 2008) and *ethnocinema* (Harris, 2012). There has been a sharp rise in these practices as evidenced, for example, by the Ethnographic Film Festival of Athens 2012. The growth in ABR coupled with the advent of the Internet and digital technologies has resulted in new approaches to filmmaking as a research practice across the disciplines.

While anyone can create videos to upload on the Internet on sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, as well as personal webpages, entering the world of filmmaking is far more difficult. Filmmaking, even at a basic level, is extremely expensive. Furthermore, distribution is difficult to achieve; it is a closed world and getting your film out to the public is particularly challenging. Possible sources of funding include grants, personal investments, and crowd funding (Woo, 2019). In order to be

more successful in crowd-funding efforts, it's important to build a following by strategically using the Internet (e.g., developing a following on social media related to your project) (Woo, 2019).

Films (and video) are used in many different contexts in contemporary arts-based scholarship. There is also a great range in approaches to using film, including numerous documentary styles and a continuum of approaches to narrative film (from loosely planned to fully storyboarded, scripted, and rehearsed). Furthermore, these different kinds of film may feature researchers and their participants or actors. Here are three examples of the highest quality, by researchers coming from different disciplinary perspectives and exploring diverse topics with varying styles. I begin with an example of the organic filmmaking process as a part of the inquiry and then offer two examples where traditional qualitative data have been adapted into film.

The Hidden Face of Suicide

Creative arts therapist Yehudit Silverman (2010) used film in concert with mask making in order to explore the experience of those who have survived the suicide of a loved one. Silverman's exploration was grounded in the personal, and to her surprise, became a journey of self-reflection and family healing for her as much as for her research participants.

As a teenager Silverman lost multiple classmates to suicide. Then at the age of 17 she learned, by accident, that her uncle had committed suicide. What was common to all of these experiences was the silence that surrounded the suicides. No one ever spoke of them. Later in life, Silverman decided to investigate that silence.

Her process of inquiry involved using a character as her guide to get into the space she wanted to explore. Silverman suggests in this film and earlier work that, for her, using a character as a guide helps her "go there" (to a dark, challenging, and compassionate place). For this inquiry, she needed to go to the underworld, so to speak, to the dark and painful buried feelings; but she also needed to be able to come back. She drew on the mythical goddess Persephone to aid her process of discovery. This methodology gave her courage and helped her navigate both realities. For data generation Silverman attended a survivor suicide group for a year. She then invited group members to participate in the film.

One aspect of her research involved mask making. Those who have survived the suicide of a loved one often feel like they have to wear a mask, which they hide behind to conceal their pain, shame, guilt, and

a host of emotions that they feel they have no space in which to reveal. Silverman suggests masks are a powerful and poignant therapeutic tool because they can be both the subject (when on) and object (when off). They also represent what we reveal and what we conceal. Silverman suggests they have the potential to reveal our “inner face” to us. In this spirit, six of the survivors made their own masks in workshops, and Silverman, not originally intending to participate in that activity, ended up making 30 masks. The masks allowed her to carry the different stories, including that of her own family.

Finally, the filmmaking process was quite organic. Although there were images that Silverman wanted shot and included in some form, the filmmaking did not follow a fully planned, linear path. She reported being comfortable with the unknown and had faith it would all come together in the end. For many, spontaneity in the creative and meaning-making process is critical. When the film was complete Silverman wrote the original music that completed the nearly 60-minute, stunning film titled *The Hidden Face of Suicide*. Silverman reports the process was transformative for her and her family, for other participants, and subsequently, for viewers. Her aim was to lift the burden of silence for survivors, and consequently to create a space where those who are depressed and suicidal may feel more able to share their pain. The methodology and resulting film are highly effective (for more information about the film, visit www.yehuditsilverman.com).

Singapore Dreaming

Education researcher Yen Yen Woo (2008) conducted in-depth interviews with young people in Singapore and New York about their sense of legitimate and illegitimate ways of spending their time, as well as about their sense of desirable and undesirable life paths. Woo wanted to engage audiences beyond the academy with her findings. Influenced by Henry Giroux (2008), she turned to a popular medium because of the potential of such a format to shape public consciousness and influence both public policy and personal choices. She ultimately translated her qualitative research findings into a 105-minute social-realist narrative film titled *Singapore Dreaming*.

Woo (2019) suggests approaching creating a film out of qualitative data by first selecting an overall strategy and then, in an order that makes sense per the project, crafting characters, determining the setting, and creating the narrative structure and plot. In the case of *Singapore Dreaming*, because the film was based on interview data, she began with character construction before plotting. She also suggests

taking the intended audience into account as you determine the narrative structure and begin devising the plot. Woo (2019) writes the following about her experience:

It would have been easier to make the screenplay episodic, with separate segments hewing more literally to the individual interview participants' accounts. I knew, however, that to populist audience members like my grandmother, mom, and nonacademic friends, this would have been too "arty" and distancing. So I challenged myself to attempt the harder task of composing a single, unified story into which I had to interweave each character's narrative and themes. (p. 370)

After conducting research on the structure of populist feature-length films, Woo decided to use a three-act structure. This common narrative structure begins with an "inciting incident," which propels the protagonist into the plot, followed by the "lowest point" of their journey at the end of act two, and concluding with the resolution (Woo, 2019).

Woo's turn to film was based on the following question: "How can we reach new audiences with our work, so that we do not just converse among ourselves but rather increase the relevance of our work toward ameliorative educational goals and achieve greater influence with the public?" (2008, p. 321). *Singapore Dreaming*, which premiered at the Singapore International Film Festival in 2006, in Singapore's largest digital theatre, has subsequently had a commercial theatrical release and a television and DVD release, and has been screened in schools, community centers, churches, and other community spaces. Woo also developed a curriculum guide that teachers in secondary schools could adapt when they screened the film in their classes. Through her turn to a popular expressive format, Woo has been able to engage multiple audiences with her research findings in ways that would otherwise be impossible.

Rufus Stone

Kip Jones, whose background is in sociology and social psychology, turned to film in his multiyear qualitative research project on older gay identity in the rural United Kingdom. Jones led a 3-plus-year research project titled "Gay and Pleasant Land?: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of the Connectivity of Older People in Rural Civic Society," which

was funded by Research Councils UK. Knowing the limitations of traditional research reporting, Jones turned to film in order to disseminate the findings to public audiences (as well as academic audiences). The result was the 2012 award-winning 30-minute short film *Rufus Stone*. The film was created and executive-produced by Jones, directed and scripted by Josh Appignanesi (*The Infidel; Ex Memoria*), and produced by Parkville Pictures, London.

Rufus Stone tells the story of a young gay man from a rural area in the United Kingdom. Rufus and his love interest, Flip, are outed by a young woman in the village, Abigail, who had made unreciprocated advances at Rufus. The outing scene, which takes place at a lake where the two young men are discovering their feelings for each other, only to be taunted by Abigail and others, is quite powerful. Everyone's reaction to the blossoming attraction is harsh and swift. As a result, Rufus flees the village and moves to London. This is all before the opening credits. The bulk of the film then takes place 50 years later, when Rufus returns to his village in order to sell his deceased parents' home. He is forced to confront the community, his lost love, and his own bitter memories. I don't want to give away any further plot points, but there are moments of intense beauty, humor, and tragedy. The film is not only a glaring look at how homophobia and intolerance can shape people's experiences, but also very much about looking at who we are, how we became who we are, and how we allow our lives to unfold. In this respect, it is a timely film about identity, time, and the importance of introspection.

As a scripted and professionally made film, the filmmaking team had to cast actors, scout locations, consider cinematography, and deal with a range of other issues. Figure 6.1 presents a few stills from the process. The top and middle photos offer a behind-the-scenes glimpse of shooting the film, as well as insight into how many people it takes to bring this kind of vision to life. The bottom photo is an image from the film itself, showing two main characters and the geographic area that is so central to the project.

Rufus Stone fosters empathetic engagement and compassion, and unsettles stereotypes. This illustrates how film can be used to distribute research findings to diverse audiences, illuminating a range of social science concerns and bringing traditional research projects to the public. Moreover, by making research publicly accessible and, indeed, far more moving and thus effective, Jones and his colleagues can legitimately claim that they have made a multiyear project "worth it" in terms of both their own labor and resources and their participants' (for more information about the film, visit <http://microsites.bournemouth.ac.uk/rufus-stone>).



FIGURE 6.1. Stills from the filmmaking process of *Rufus Stone*.

Special Considerations

? How can performance pieces be evaluated? What criteria are used to judge performances?

What strategies are available for adding validity and authenticity into the (re)presentation of the data?

How might audience members be involved in the evaluative process?

While evaluation is covered in Chapter 8, here I briefly note some special evaluation considerations for performative genres focusing on two intertwined issues: validity/authenticity and aesthetics.

A central evaluative criterion in theatre and film methods is *authenticity*, which in these contexts is associated with validity. As noted earlier, Saldaña (1999) proposes strategies for building validity into the script construction process (i.e., he suggests how to design a study with validity checks built into the data collection and analysis phases). Specifically, Saldaña (1999) proposes variations on *triangulation* as data are selected, *highlighting disconfirming data*, and *exhibiting collective story creation* (which means dialogue has occurred consistently) (p. 64).

Jeasik Cho and Allen Trent (2005), in proposing several strategies for how performance-based research can be assessed, ultimately suggest a mix of strategies. Cho and Trent create their validity checks by adapting some of the issues raised by Conquergood's (1985) research on "dialogical performance" and Madison's (2003) "possibilities performance."

Dialogical performance involves a dialogue between different people or researchers and texts. This method enables multiple views, new ideas, and a renegotiation of ideas. In this regard Cho and Trent (2005) write, "Dialogical performance theory seeks an open-ended, co-existential, intimate, honest, courageous understanding between self and other" (p. 3).

Madison's *possibilities performance* creates a space where possibilities can be actualized. In this framework marginalized voices can emerge (via characters), allowing the audience to see possibilities for how the social world can change. Ideally, such an experience motivates audience members to be a part of positive social progress.

These dialectical methods of performance prompt discussion that gives the audience a glimpse into their roles (and how they could be configured differently) and allows silenced persons a space for expression. Therefore, building on these performance theories, Cho and Trent (2005) advocate preperformance, performance, and postperformance

stages of discussion and feedback. During the preperformance discussion, the data collected can be used to create or alter the script. During the performance there is an exchange between the performers and audience. The “success” of the performance is based on the perceived *authenticity* of the text and the *aesthetics* of the performance (aesthetics is elaborated on shortly). Finally, the postperformance stage allows the researcher to prompt a dialogue where ideas are struggled over. In this final stage the researcher assesses the effect of the performance on the audience. Norris (2000) also proposes that dramatic performance stimulates discussion with the audience, allowing for the continued negotiation of meaning. Norris writes, “This makes the process recursive as our research dissemination also becomes a means of data collection. It is a form of participatory research where the text ceases to be a declarative authorial one but one in which consumers can become producers and vice versa” (p. 48). In performance studies, the data collected during and after the representational stage, when traditional research has typically ended, become another avenue for assessment.

The response of the audience and the extent to which they perceive it as authentic will ultimately be linked to the *aesthetic or artistic quality* of the piece. Saldaña (2011) reminds us that even though we are conducting research we must ask, “But is it *art*?” (p. 203). He (2005) further cautions that we must remember theatre’s primary goal is to entertain: “to *entertain ideas as it entertains its spectators*” (p. 14). In order for the work to be received well by audiences, meaning to achieve authenticity and fulfill the hopes inspiring the research endeavor, the result must be artistically sound (Saldaña, 2011). This is true for both theatrical and film productions. Saldaña suggests such an aesthetic emerges from practitioners’ creative use of available forms, styles, and elements as well as their “integrity to truthfulness as well as truth” (p. 203). The examples presented throughout this chapter illustrate that authenticity, truthfulness, and audience impact are fostered through attention to the artistic form as much as the ideas being represented. For example, the high quality of the acting in *Rufus Stone* is inextricable from the resulting film as both art and research.

Checklist of Considerations

When considering using theatre, drama, and film in your research, consider the following:

- ✓ What are the objectives of the project, and how are they served through performance, dramatic-based practices, or film?

- ✓ Will the entire structure of the research design be dramatic, or will drama serve as one phase of the research project?
- ✓ How will the data be garnered (ethnography, interview, public documents, etc.)? What performance-based or cinematic method will be employed? Is this method collaborative?
- ✓ During script construction, how will plot, narrative, and overall structure be conceived? How will characters be created? What will be done to ensure three-dimensional, sensitive portrayals?
- ✓ What ethical issues might emerge? What safeguards will be in place for audience members and/or participants?
- ✓ In the case of film, how will the film be distributed to audiences? Will there be supplemental textual or online materials?

Conclusion

This chapter has served as an introduction to theatre, drama, and film as research practices. This is an expansive interdisciplinary methodological genre with the potential to continue to cultivate epistemological, theoretical, and methodological innovation.

The exemplar for this chapter, “Blink” by Mary E. Weems (2003), is a powerful ethnodramatic script about diversity, prejudice, and experience on college campuses. Weems combined autoethnography, ethnography, poetic inquiry, and fiction for this piece, which is intended to promote critical reflection and dialogue.

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. What are the similarities between the craft of qualitative research and the practice of drama and theatre arts? How can these similarities be harnessed to produce rich research?
2. What are the primary strengths of these performative approaches to research?
3. What are the primary performance-based methods? What is distinct about each practice?
4. For this exercise, select a research topic (e.g., body image, sexual identity, youth killings) and collect a sample of data from public sources (including an academic literature review). How might you begin coding or cataloguing the data with the intent of creating a performance or film script? Note how themes, characters, dialogue, and narrative begin to emerge. For a variation on this activity, work

in a small group of three to five people and follow this same process with the goal of “collective creation.”

5. Watch one of the three films reviewed in the section on film. Write a two- to three-page reflection on what you learned from viewing this work, your emotional response, and what you think the film illustrates about the strengths and weaknesses of this method.

Suggested Readings

Cox, S., & Belliveau, G. (2019). Health theatre: Embodying research. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of methods for public scholarship* (pp. 335–358). New York: Oxford University Press.

This chapter focuses on ethnotheatre in the field of health studies. The chapter details methodological issues, fleshes out the connections between playbuilding and ethnodrama, and offers robust research examples. This chapter is available in Oxford Handbooks Online.

Duffy, P., Hatton, C., & Sallis, R. (Eds.) (2019). *Drama research methods: Provocations of practice*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill/Sense.

This anthology addresses the methodological and ethical possibilities and challenges of theatre-based research. Innovative uses of drama and theatre-based methods are emphasized. Authors offer critiques of the field, including their own work.

Gray, J. (Ed.) (2017). *ReView: An anthology of plays committed to social justice*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill/Sense.

This is an outstanding collection of three ethnodramatic works with social justice themes in different subject area. Each play includes background/introductory material.

Madison, D. S., & Hamera, J. (Eds.). (2006). *The SAGE handbook of performance studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

This handbook provides a comprehensive retrospective and prospective review of performance studies, with theoretical chapters as well as contributions based on empirical research. In general, the chapters are advanced and appropriate for researchers, scholars, and graduate students.

Norris, J. (2009). *Playbuilding as qualitative research: A participatory arts-based approach*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

This book explores the theatrical genre known as collective creation, or Playbuilding. Norris draws on his experience creating more than 200 pieces through this method and provides in-depth examples from his work on topics ranging from bullying to racism. Appropriate for all readers interested in this methodology.

Saldaña, J. (Ed.). (2005). *Ethnodrama: An anthology of reality theatre*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

This edited volume provides an outstanding collection of ethnodramas, all written in dramatic form. The contents are divided into three sections: ethnodramatic monologue, ethnodramatic dialogue with monologue, and ethnodramatic extensions. The appendix in the back of the book is a fantastic resource that offers suggested readings categorized by the different dramatic models employed in the study (e.g., autoethnography models, narrator as a key figure).

Saldaña, J. (2011). *Ethnotheatre: Research from page to stage*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

This seminal work in the field details the methods of ethnotheatre/ethnodrama offering background, methodological instruction, evaluation criteria, and in-depth exemplars from the field. Highly user-friendly and thorough.

Woo, Y. Y. (2019). Narrative film as public scholarship. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of methods for public scholarship* (pp. 359–382). New York: Oxford University Press.

This chapter reviews the use of film in scholarly research. The author draws extensively on her widely acclaimed film work, offers practical advice and insider knowledge, and emphasizes how film can be used to reach public audiences. This chapter is available in Oxford Handbooks Online.



Suggested Websites and Journals

Etudes: An Online Theatre and Performing Arts Journal for Emerging Scholars
www.etudesonline.com

This is an online theatre and performance studies journal for emerging scholars. They seek scholarly manuscripts, media, performance reviews, creative work, manifestos, and the like, covering any range of topics within the theatre and performance studies realm. They are particularly interested in works of performative writing and academic playfulness. Innovation and risk-taking are encouraged.

International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media
www.tandfonline.com/loi/rpdm20

This interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journal draws contributions from diverse researchers and practitioners who work at the interface of new technologies and performance arts.

Journal of Video Ethnography (JVE)
<http://videoethno.com>

The aim of this peer-reviewed online journal is to advance the social

scientific use of video/film as a method for exploring human society, systems, and cultures and as a medium for presenting the findings of those explorations. The journal publishes ethnographic studies that feature video as a central methodological component and the primary form of output (not as supplemental or decontextualized video clips).

Psychocultural Cinema

<http://psychoculturalcinema.com>

Psychocultural Cinema is a collaborative and interdisciplinary website devoted to the intersection of psychological anthropology and ethnographic film. *Psychocultural Cinema* provides a forum for anthropologists, filmmakers, students, and film subjects to share their work and ideas and reflect on their participation in ethnographic projects.

Studies in Musical Theatre

www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Journal,id=119

This peer-reviewed journal publishes articles about live performance that uses vocal and instrumental music in conjunction with theatrical performance. Many aspects of the field are considered, including opera, music theatre or musical theatre, actor musicianship, the training of performers for musical theatre, the fusion of the languages of words and music, the use of music and song within “straight” theatre, paralinguistics and the rhetorical expression of music in song, negotiating the art–entertainment divide in musical theatre, and the academic study of musical theatre. Book reviews are also published.

Studies in Theatre and Performance

www.tandfonline.com/loi/rstp20

This multidisciplinary peer-reviewed journal is for scholars, teachers, and practitioners to publish methodological, theoretical, and empirical research in the area of theatre practice, as well as work with regard to teaching and performance. This journal serves as the official publication for the Standing Conference of University Drama Departments in the United Kingdom.



Note

1. “Performative social science” is grounded in dramaturgical theory (Gergen & Gergen, 2011).



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Blink

Mary E. Weems

Playwright's Note

This work is constructed from the stories of faculty, staff, and students at a private college. The catalysts for this qualitative, interpretive, arts-based research project were my experiences in the academy over the last 17 years, on-campus observations, and being approached by an African American male student about what was happening to students who were different based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and religion on the campus where this research was conducted. The stories were collected during formal and informal interviews over a 1-year period. In terms of method, “Blink” combines autoethnography, ethnography, poetic inquiry, and fiction. To protect the anonymity of all involved, stories have been collapsed under single characters and certain details have been fictionalized or imagined by the playwright. It is intended to represent colleges and universities across the United States. The purpose of this play is to use the experiences of the participants to prompt constructive, critical dialogues that lead to a greater understanding of how important empathy, acceptance, and interculturalism is as we move forward to becoming a more unified society in the 21st century.

Characters

Dr. Nguyen: Professor—From another country

Dr. Wells: Professor—African American

Dr. Smith: White male professor

Jeffrey: Student of color (male)

Kenyatta: Student of color (female)

Jeffrey: White male student

Sara: White female student

Marvin: Gay White male student

Lucille: Lesbian White female student

Shaniqua: Lesbian student of color

Kevin: African male student

Marcia: Maintenance staff (African American woman/restrooms)

Setting

Begins with sound of the John Carroll Clock tolling 9:00 A.M. Students stroll back and forth in silence from both stage right and stage left, book bags on backs, giving a sense of peace, and all is well. One lamppost has a sign that reads “Think Respect.”

Silent Scene #1: Nine O’Clock A.M.

(Stagehand walks out, erases “previous” sign, etc., then writes “Residence Hall” on white board. Another stagehand walks out with a “wet floor” sign. On it is taped a sign that says “Nigger-Free Zone.” Next, an actor walks out holding a sign with a cartoon drawing of a White Cinderella choking a Black girl with her bare hands and she has the Black girl dangling by her feet. The caption on the cartoon says “Rope Is Expensive.” Another actor walks out holding another sign to that reads “That’s So Gay.” Another actor walks out holding a sign that reads “Towel Heads Go Home!” Another actor walks out holding a sign that reads “No Asians Wanted.” An actor walks out with the “last” sign that reads “Diversity Go Home!” The actors reverse their signs to show they all read “Diversity Go Home!” After a beat they all walk off from both stage right and stage left.)

Scene #2: I Don’t Understand Acting Out on Hate

(Three students, two White and one of color, walk out in front of the silent scene and discuss res life.)

- S1: I know some people have a problem with difference, but I don't understand acting out on hate.
- S2: Me either. My mother sent me here because she thought I'd get an excellent education, not to come to my floor and see this kind of mess on the doors and even the wet sign floor.
- S3: And I'm so sorry this happens around here—
- S1: I am too. I hope you know all of us don't feel—
- S2: I know, I know a lot of people on this campus don't feel this way about Black students, or gay students, or Muslim students, or Asian students, or Jewish students, or Protestant students but . . . *(Pause)* That doesn't make it hurt any less. My mind understands, but my heart, my feelings hurt. It's like a sharp pain I can't get rid of. *(Pause)* Some nights I call home and beg my parents to get me out of here. They keep telling me to hang in there, but when I hear the word "hang" all I can see is that sign on my door with Cinderella choking me up off my feet. *(S3 and S1 reach out and give S2 a group hug.)*
- S1: Come on, let's get out of here. I'll treat you to a burger and fries.
- S2: Good idea, but before we go, let's report this and see if this time we can get a dialogue started about this kind of disrespect instead of—
- S3: What usually happens, this mess is removed and you don't hear anything else about it. *(They give each other high fives and exit as stagehand enters and erases white board, and removes signs, while White male enters from opposite direction wearing earbuds, listening to his music. As he gets to around center stage, he notices the audience, removes his ear buds, and begins.)*

Scene #3: Okay, So I'm a White Guy

WHITE MALE STUDENT: Okay, so I'm a Caucasian, er, I mean White guy. *(Pause)* My dad went to this school, my mom went to this school, and hell even my grandparents went to this school. We have a long history in this place and anytime anyone in my family even talks about going somewhere else, the first thing that happens is their parents take them on a road trip to show them why they love it so much. *(Pause)* With the exception of a "single" cousin, all of us have come through these doors as freshmen and left with our degrees. *(Pause)* I grew up in a suburb of New York, went to private schools. My dad's a lawyer and yes, I did get a car for my

16th birthday. It was 5 years old and a 4 cylinder, but my parents bought it and all I had to do was work part-time to pay the insurance. *(Pause)* When some people look at me they think Catholic, check, conservative, check, male, check, capitalist, check. *(Pause)* Then they start making up stuff about my heart, racist, sexist, homophobe, tight ass. *(Pause)* Thing about stereotypes is, they're always true about some folks—but not me. Sure there's people I don't like, my ex-friend Jimmy who took away my Power Ranger in second grade and broke it, Michael, the guy who went behind my back and invited my girlfriend to senior prom—and she went. My stepdad who would wait until my mom wasn't around to beat me. *(Pause)* But I don't judge and I don't hate. I was raised to treat people like I want to be treated. *(Pause)* *(Suddenly he sees his friend Jamal off-stage and rushes off.)* Hey, Jamal! Wait up! *(As he exits from one side of the stage, the rest of the cast comes out as if a "chorus" line. Spreads out upstage, begins to chant while stomping and clapping in unison.)*

Scene #4: We Want to Celebrate, Not Tolerate, Difference

ALL: We want to celebrate, not tolerate, celebrate not tolerate, celebrate not tolerate, difference! *(Repeat twice in place, then exit as if chorus line, stepping and repeating the chant, all the way off stage as an international female student enters the stage area from the opposite side.)*

Scene #5: I Am Not a Zero

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT: I came to this country from South America when I was 19. My parents wanted me to have a North American college experience. My first day in the residence hall I was assigned to, the White girl who'd been assigned as my roommate asked if I could help her with her Spanish for a class she'd be taking. *(Pause)* I told her in my country we speak Portuguese, not Spanish. After that she never said another word to me the entire school year. *(Pause)* I had no friends. Once a White girl I took a class with who realized I'd be alone for Thanksgiving, invited me to her house. While there her grandfather asked me about back home. When I told him I lived in a five-bedroom, three-bathroom house, he told me that this was impossible because my people lived in huts. *(Pause)* He kept calling me Zero too, the entire time I was there. *(She writes, "I am*

not a Zero” on the board and exits the stage while several students enter and take positions as if relaxing on quad in a close group. WM student walks up. He’s doing a crossword puzzle on his iPhone.)

Scene #6: A Four-Letter Word for Acceptance

WM: What’s a four-letter word for acceptance?

S1: Hello?

WM: (*Laughs.*) No. Besides, that’s five letters.

S2: Okay? As in I’m okay, you’re okay?

S3: And gay?

S4: How about L-O-V-E love?

WM: That’s it! Thanks. See you guys later. (*Continues walking. As he walks off, two gay males walk by, holding hands. The group appears not to notice, but as soon as they’ve walked past them “all” heads turn at once to stare, they mimic how they think gay people walk with hands on hips, etc., then shake their heads in disapproval. They exit quickly to the same side of the stage as the couple.*)

Scene #7: Ghetto Party

(*Stagehand walks out and writes “Ghetto Party” on the white board. As the stagehand exits, a group of White students enter wearing sunglasses, caps turned back, large chain necklaces, hoodies, short skirts, tight tops, fake hair, Timberlands, etc. Using language that parodies Black speech, giving each other fake handshakes, drinking from bottles in brown paper bags, etc.*)

S1: Hey, what it B?

S2: What it D? I mean that shit is joke mofo.

S4: What you lookin’ at, whore?

S5: I’m lookin’ at you, what you tryin’ to be, Snoop the Frog or what? (*All laugh.*)

S1: This was a good idea. Just in time for break we get to get our sneak on—

S2: You mean “freak on,” don’t you?

S1: What? What? Dude, I don’t know, I’m just playing a ghetto Black, not trying to be one.

- S2: Why do you say that? If somebody Black was here, you wouldn't say it—
- S1: Will you chill out, that's the whole point nobody Black is here and we're just having some fun, no harm no foul, right? Right dude? Right?
- S2: *(Starts removing his costuming silently and dropping it on the ground. He leaves without saying another word. The other students exit singing The ghetto, the ghetto, the ghetto . . . [Making it obvious they only know the first two words of the song.] As they exit, a Faculty of Color Professor carrying a bag that includes envelopes of student evaluations enters and takes a seat at the desk.)*

Scene #8: Faculty of Color—Course Evaluations

FACULTY OF COLOR PROFESSOR: When faculty of color all over the country talk to each other about our experiences in the academy, our stories are so similar, it's like listening to one voice. We're hired to bring racial, ethnic, and language diversity to campus. But when we start bringing those things that make us unique including our scholarship—it's not accepted as legitimate. *(Pause)* We're never fully embraced by colleagues, who see us as Affirmative Action cases, as not quite as good as they are. *(Pause)* I've been here for a while and have had some wonderful students who welcome what I have to share in my classes, but I've never gotten used to some of the negative written comments some students make on their course evaluations. *(She opens a pack and begins reading.)* "I learned absolutely nothing all semester." *(Picks another one.)* "I can't believe she's still teaching." *(Opens another one.)* "When is he going to learn to speak English, I didn't understand a single lecture," "She talks too much about race," and so on and so on. *(FP puts forms back in the envelope.)* Today is my last day here, I'm stressed out and tired of being sick and tired. *(Pause)* Not sure what's next for me, but whatever I do, I intend to be some place I feel welcome. *(She puts the evaluation forms in her bag and exits.)*

Silent Scene #9: With Liberty and Justice for All

(Actor writes "Romney for President" while another stagehand writes "Barack Obama is a monkey." Both exit, while two students enter from the opposite end of the stage. One of them erases what was written, while the other draws a huge

“Give Peace a Chance” sign. They both stand back and look at the sign for a few seconds, then turn to face the audience, recite the Pledge of Allegiance, then exit while a Jewish female student enters with another White female student and both stand and address the audience one at a time.)

Scene #10: You Don’t Look Jewish

JEWISH STUDENT: When I tell students I’m Jewish, the first thing they say is, “You don’t look Jewish,” as if there’s one way to look. *(Pause)* As if that’s some kind of compliment. *(Pause)* I don’t say anything, but it’s insulting. *(Pause)* In one of my classes this semester, the professor is always telling the class things about Judaism that aren’t true. At times I raise my hand to disagree, but so far he hasn’t called on me once. *(Pause)* Today he said we light our Menorah with a cigarette lighter. *(Pause)* I got up quietly, left the class, called my mom to talk.

Scene #11: Racism Poem

CHORUS (ENTIRE CAST):

Racism is so Personal
if it was a carcass
the stench would block
the nose of the world
and everybody would die
One billion pages printed
to support the myth
leak death over the fingertips
of scientific bullshit artists
working themselves into sweats
to meet the emancipation deadline

White power men wear their
Black face under judicial robes
making up new games with constantly
changing rules written in invisible ink
Injustice is so personal the woman
with the bandage over her eyes keeps
trying to take a nosedive
Way back in time today

the little white lie is a giant
 wearing huge shit-covered shoes
 looking for a beanstalk
 to fall down
 Truth is so personal
 every time it doesn't make sense
 I sleep a little easier.
 —Mary E. Weems (2003, pp. 21–22)

(They exit while a stagehand enters, erases white board, writes “The Classroom,” while another stagehand pushes a professor’s desk to the center. Faculty of Color Professor walks out with a chair, sits behind the desk, begins to write.)

Scene #12: Faculty of Color—Letter Home

FACULTY OF COLOR PROFESSOR: Dear Mother and Father: I pray this letter finds the two of you in good health and spirits. Please give my love to my sister and brother. I miss you all so much and can't wait to see you next week. This is the last day of our fall semester, and even after 5 years, many of my students still act as if I don't speak English. They are almost constantly interrupting my lectures to ask me to repeat something I've just said that is also on the PowerPoint. Someone is always asking me to spell something they claim they don't understand. It never seems to occur to most of them to do what I have always had to do when listening to someone speak English—listen carefully. *(Pause)* Yesterday, two students who were leaving my class did not even wait until they were out of my room. They started making rude sounds, “Chi, Chow, Change,” or something like that. *(Pause)* They were laughing and complaining about how they wish professors like me had to take a test before we can teach in this country. *(Pause)* Was I invisible to them in that moment? After they left, I picked up a piece of white, crumpled paper from the floor. It was a cartoon drawing of me—pulling my hair out. *(Pause)* This was very hurtful, but I made myself not cry until I got to my car. *(Pause)* There are good students here too, but when they hear their peers saying mean things about me, they act as if they don't hear them. *(Pause)* I have to go now. See you soon. Love, your daughter. *(As she exits, a White male professor enters the classroom and takes a seat at the desk, while an African American male student and four other students walk out with student desks. They arrange them classroom style and take their seats. He addresses his class.)*

Scene #13: My Name Is James

WHITE MALE PROFESSOR: Okay class, we've just finished watching one of the most controversial movies about Black people and slavery made during the 20th century: *Roots*. Get out a piece of paper, put your name and today's date in the top—Yes, Alex Haley, did you have something to say?

AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE STUDENT: I didn't raise my hand.

S1: That was me professor, I had a question about—

WHITE MALE PROFESSOR: Maybe you didn't raise your hand, Alex Haley, but you looked as if you were ready to make a comment, which is why I called on you.

AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE STUDENT: *[Silence.] (Beat)*

S2: Uh, professor, what else did you want us to put on our paper?

WHITE MALE PROFESSOR: Ask Alex Haley. No, on second thought, don't ask him, obviously the Massa's got his tongue. Class dismissed. *(The professor exits in a huff, the White students exit, the Black male student walks up to the white board and writes, "My name is James" and follows his peers off the stage. A new group of students enter and take their seats before their Muslim professor of color arrives wearing her hijab.)*

Scene #14: Rag on Her Head

S1: I hope she doesn't have that rag on her head today.

S2: She's so unprofessional. Always telling us stories about how racist American society is and how sexist and how—

S3: Homophobic it is. Yes, that's right, but isn't that what this class is supposed to be about?

S1: Well, I don't give a shit about that stuff, I've already taken my required diversity class and I'm tired of hearing all this—

S2: *(Making a whining sound.)* Whining. Why don't those people get over it already and move on with their lives.

S1: So true, my parents came here with nothing, they worked hard, pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps and—*(He's interrupted by the sound of S3 laughing.)*

S3: Bootstraps? Are you kidding me? Do you actually believe that crap? Who do you really know that made something of their life without help from a single living soul? *(Beat)* That's right, nobody. And as for what our professor wears on her head, what does that have to do with how she teaches?

S2: Because it's distracting, it makes it hard to concentrate when she talks because instead of—

S1: That's right, I'm looking at what's on her head and wondering what her hair looks like and why she can't afford to get her hair done and it makes me miss part of her lecture.

S3: That's the most ridiculous thing I've heard all day, I think— *(They're interrupted by the professor entering the class wearing her hijab.)*

FACULTY OF COLOR PROFESSOR: Okay class, let's begin with today's lesson. Does anyone have any questions?

S1: *(Sweetly)* Yes, professor, would you like me to help you pass anything out?

(End of scene. Professor exits one way, students exit the other, while a stagehand enters, writes NIGGER, DYKE, FAG, BITCH, on the white board. When the stagehand is done he exits, while an African American lesbian student enters.)

Scene #15: We Are All Equal?

A.A. LESBIAN: "We Are All Equal?" Every time I see these images I feel sick to my stomach. Knowing that as a classmate this is how you see me: A nigger, a dyke, and a bitch. You have limited me to just the basics, ignoring my intelligence, my sense of personhood and womanhood. I am nothing more than a token, so that the school can say it's diverse.

You have ignored me, made me feel like the dirt underneath your shoes. But when you think about it, I'm not any different than you. The color of my skin does not make me inferior. My being a woman does not make me a bitch, whore, and slut.

Because I identify as queer does not make me less of a person. Every time I see these racist, discriminatory images and words, I try to excuse it by saying that you are ignorant. But the time has come for me to stop excusing these things. The time has come for me to call you out. The time has come for me to stand up for myself. I will not excuse your

actions any more. You are not better than me, just like I'm not any better than you. At the end of the day, we are all children of God, and you will stop making me feel less than a person.

(As she finishes she walks downstage as if she's rapping to herself and as she walks, a gay White male and a lesbian White female, neither one of them "out" on campus, walk out together and sit down to talk.)

Scene #16: I'm GAY, Okay?

GWM: How's your semester going?

GLF: About like the last one. *(Pause)* My classes are cool, none of my professors are a problem, and I'm keeping on top of my work, at least so far; you?

GWM: Pretty much the same as you are. *(Pause)* It's hard being on this campus sometimes, though, you know?

GLF: Yep, it's so hetero. Everybody expects you to have a boyfriend, or at least talk about having one and—

GWM: If you're a guy, they expect you to talk about girls. Getting a girlfriend, getting laid, what happened when you got laid, what happened that you didn't get laid, everything I don't want to talk about.

GLF: I think the hardest part about not being out is having to listen to what people say, not being able to do anything even though I want to scream at the top of my lungs, will you shut up! I'm—

GWM: Gay, okay? Gay, and I don't appreciate hearing you call other young men faggots, and I don't like it when you say dyke or lesbo or any of that stuff. I don't want to hear it. Get it?

GLF: *(Beat)* Yeah, I know what you mean, I feel it too, and you know we're not the only ones. Fact is, if everybody who's actually LGBT came out, this place would be a lot less hetero, a lot less stuck up—

GWM: And a lot more fun. *(Pause)* Gotta run, see you tomorrow.

(They embrace and exit from opposite ends of the stage while a stagehand enters and writes "Cafeteria" on the white board, other stagehands enter with chairs, they sit around the cafeteria table. Student actors enter with trays with cups, cans, napkins on them.)

Scene #17: Equal-Opportunity Cafeteria

S1: I thought we were supposed to have something special for lunch today?

S2: I think you heard that wrong. They meant we'd have a "special" on the menu.

S3: Same old stuff. Meatloaf, mashed potatoes, green beans, and a roll.

S4: Well it's a lot better than I can cook for myself.

S1: And the other good thing is, we don't have to worry about cleaning up like back at home.

S2: So true. That's what they pay these minimum-wage workers for, and you know what I always say—

S3: Sure do. You believe in equal opportunity and want to make certain these people never have to worry about their jobs.

S4: *(Noticing the time.)* I'm going to be late for class. See you guys later.

(He gets up and throws his cup, napkin, and plate on the floor, the others do too, and they all leave their trays on the table as they exit, making an obvious mess for the cafeteria workers. One student of color and one White student enter with trays. They pick up the mess.)

S1: No home training.

S2: You really think so?

S1: *(Beat)* No. I was being sarcastic. How many times have we watched this same thing happen day after day?

S2: Too many to count, but this is the first time we've actually talked about it.

S1: True. We usually just clean up the mess so the cafeteria workers don't have to.

S2: Yeah, it's like even though we weren't raised in the same place, we both were brought up to clean up our own mess.

S1: And I know what you meant earlier—so were they. They're just being—

S2: Smartasses. As if since poor people are paid to clean up, they want to make sure they have something to clean up.

S1: Which is also ridiculous and rude. *(Beat)*

- S2: So true. I hope one day we can come here, get our lunch and not see people doing this kind of stuff.
- S1: Agreed. Let's eat. *(They pick up their trays and exit the stage as two female students enter and take seats.)*

Scene #18: Why Do Guys Act Like This?

- FS1: Where've you been?
- FS2: Laying low for the last few weeks. I've only been going to classes.
- FS1: Why, what happened?
- FS2: It's more what I want to stop happening.
- FS1: Come on, what are you talking about? *(They don't notice a male student in the background who stops to listen.)*
- FS2: Some of the boys around here, one in particular. *(Pause)* He's been lying and telling his friends that I'm a good lay, I can be passed around like a six-pack. You know, crap like that.
- FS1: So sorry, girlfriend. Why didn't you say something before now?
- FS2: Why do guys act like this?
- FS1: I have no idea. Not all guys do, but somehow it doesn't matter when you're the target.
- FS2: And even when you're not, you're still not a person, you're a thing. I hate it.
- FS1: Worst part is, it doesn't seem to have changed much really. Women have marched, written, formed organizations, sued—
- FS2: But what we wear is still more important than what we think.
- FS1: And a man can still damage our reputation with just a few words. *(Young man who's been listening walks up to interrupt.)*
- MS1: Excuse me, but I couldn't help but overhear part of what you were two were saying.
- FS2: And?
- MS1: No disrespect, but I just wanted the two of you to know something.
- FS1: And what is that?
- MS1: Some of us care. Some of us were raised to respect women as our equals, some of us don't want to be lumped into a group with guys too

ignorant to know how important it is to be good to any woman we have the privilege to get to know. *(Pause)* Have a nice day. *(Exits quickly before either of them can respond, leaving them looking at each other surprised.)*

FS1: Well, that was a nice change.

FS2: No lie, I guess there are some good guys around here.

FS1: Yep. *(Checks watch.)* Oops, time for class, gotta go.

(They hug before they exit in opposite directions.)

Silent Scene #19: Trying to Clean the Men's Restroom

(Stagehand walks out and writes "Men's Restroom" on white board. Next, an African American woman walks out with a floor sign that says "In Service." She puts it on the floor, then gets her mop, bucket, and cleaning cart. After she begins washing the floor, one White male walks right past her as if she's invisible. He stands close in front of the sign and uses the urinal. He bumps the cleaning lady, washes his hands, throws the paper towel on the floor, and walks across the part she's just washed. The cleaning lady picks up the paper towel while another White male walks in, uses the urinal, takes a spray bottle off the cart and sprays some in her direction, laughs, then exits. The cleaning lady continues to try to wash the floor, while two more White males enter and begin taking things off the cart and tossing them back and forth. They leave the items on the ground and walk across the wet part of the floor as they exit. The cleaning woman watches them until she can't see them any longer, then turns to look at the audience for a moment. She picks up her mop and washes the floor as she exits from the opposite end of the stage. As she exits, a Black male student enters, turns a chair around, straddles it backwards.)

Scene #20: Laundry in the Dorms

A.A. MALE STUDENT: Even though I know all kinds of negative things go on around here—especially because people find me easy to talk to, so they're always telling me stuff—I've never experienced racism on this campus. *(Pause)* Here lately I've been asking myself why that is. *(White gay male student enters.)*

GWM: Why what is?

A.A. MALE STUDENT: I didn't see you come in. Nothing, I was talking to myself.

GWM: Then you should talk lower. *(Pause)* What's up?

A.A. MALE STUDENT: I was just thinking out loud about why I haven't had any of the experiences all of my Black friends and Asian friends and some of my Jewish friends have had.

GWM: So what? You're one person. Everybody who's White doesn't have the exact same experience, so why should all non-Whites and non-Christians have the same experience? It doesn't make sense.

A.A. MALE STUDENT: And that's exactly my point. It doesn't make sense and it's starting to bother me. *(Pause)* I mean, is it because I fit what's acceptable around here? I get along with everybody, I do well in my classes, and I'm a devout Christian. Is that it?

GWM: Do I look like the answer guy? Hell, I'm dealing with my own crap. Try being a gay White guy around here. Half the time, I'm just glad when it's not me on the receiving end of the joke that's never, ever funny.

A.A. MALE STUDENT: I feel that. Have to get to work. I'm out.

GWM: Okay, see you later. *(The two of them exit to the same side of the stage as a foreign student enters and takes a seat.)*

Scene #21: Squandering Your Money

FS: It took my family a long time to make a way for me to come here. *(Pause)* Some years my parents went without things they needed because they wanted to make certain that when I got here, I'd have nothing to worry about except doing my best as a student to keep my grades up. *(Pause)* Yesterday, I received a call from the Financial Aid office. This guy wanted to know why my final bill hadn't been paid. *(Pause)* Before I could answer or even get two words in, he started asking to see my bank statement. *(Pause)* When I asked why, he told me because he wanted to make sure I wasn't wasting my money foolishly. *(Pause)* I didn't say anything. I was too afraid it would cause my family a problem, but I don't understand. I know a lot of American students who aren't able to pay their tuition on time, but I don't know of even one who has ever been asked to show bank statements, or been accused of squandering their money. *(Pause)* Two days later my money arrived, but when I went to the office, the guy never said one word. No apology, nothing. *(Exits. Almost immediately the entire cast walks out "side-by-side" carrying a sign that reads "SCENE FOR*

THE MISSING STORIES.” They stand silently holding the sign up for several seconds. Then they place the sign on the floor and go right into the chorus.
 NOTE: All on stage “and” the actors “preset” in the audience should say together if possible.)

Scene #22: Scene for the Missing Stories

ALL: We believe in love. We believe in the power of art to inspire positive change. We refuse to believe hatred, prejudice, and fear have to exist. We stand as one for inclusion.

(After “Inclusion” is said by all [wait for a beat for emphasis], the cast should move to various parts of the stage, while the two cast moderators address the audience.)

MODERATOR 1: Okay class, we’ve just seen a play about the focus of this course. Let’s have a discussion.

MODERATOR 2: To help us get started, reach under your seats and locate a question card.

MODERATOR IN AUDIENCE: If you can’t locate them raise your hand and we’ll help. Also, if you have your own question or comment, please feel free to share.

MODERATOR 1: First question or comment. *(From this point, our job is to get and keep people talking for as long as the discussion continues or for 20–30 minutes, whichever is longer. At the end, call the actors up on stage for applause. Acknowledge Dr. Gygli, and the production staff. Last, encourage participants to fill out a survey about the performance.)*

Questions (Preset under Chairs)

1. What do you do to become part of the community?
2. As a future educator, how can I help students respect one another?
3. Some people have been raised to hate, judge, discriminate against, and hurt people. What would our campus look like if we were raised to love, accept, include, and protect each other?
4. Why is it so hard to treat people with respect, like each of us would like to be treated?

5. I was raised conservative; how can I learn to deal with people who are gay?
6. Some people aren't conscious of their own racism and bias; how can they be helped?
7. Why don't all students on this campus have to take classes on racism and inclusion?
8. Have I not experienced blatant discrimination because of the light tone of my skin?
9. The professor has the power to give me a bad grade. What can I do when I'm insulted or attacked in a class by the professor?
10. Why was dialogue made part of the play?

Reference

Weems, Mary E. (2003). *Public education and the imagination intellect: I speak from the wound in my mouth*. New York: Peter Lang.

Seven



The Visual Arts

I never made a painting as a work of art, it's all research.
—PABLO PICASSO

The power of the image, and its role in society, cannot be underestimated. According to a popular expression, a picture is worth a thousand words. This saying opens up two of the most paramount issues researchers consider as they use the visual arts in their knowledge-building practices.

First, **visual imagery does not represent a window onto the world, but rather a created perspective.** In photography, for example, photographs are popularly thought to “capture” and record some aspect of the social world, neglecting the vantage point of the photographer, the lens through which he/she/they looks, and the context in which the photograph is viewed. In this sense, visual art production can be likened to journaling, a fact not lost on artists. Cubist painter Pablo Picasso noted that “painting is just another way of keeping a diary.” Second, although visual imagery is created and the point of production is inextricably bound to the art, visual art inherently opens up multiple meanings that are determined by not only the artist but also the viewer and the context of viewing (both the immediate circumstance and the larger sociohistorical context).

Visual images are unique and can evoke particular kinds of emotional and visceral responses from people; they are typically filed in the subconscious without the same conscious interpretive process people engage in when confronted with a written text. Moreover, visual images are powerful and occupy an elevated place in memory. This is evident when thinking about the collective memory of events, how

selected images come to represent the event, and how readily these images are available for mental recall. For example, when September 11th is mentioned Americans typically recall an image of New York's World Trade Center under some state of attack or destruction. In this regard, visual images are consumed differently than text and sound and can make lasting impressions.

Visual art may serve as a vehicle for transmitting ideology while it can as effectively be used to challenge, dislodge, and transform belief systems and stereotypes. In terms of the latter, visual images can be used as a powerful form of social and political resistance because the arts, and perhaps the visual arts in particular, always retain oppositional capabilities. Cultural norms and values, which change over time as they are contested and negotiated, shape the production of visual art. Furthermore, art is created in an economic context, with market forces influencing changing definitions of "art," as well as its perceived value. Moreover, visual art may be produced in an institutional context with various restraints, norms, and pressures influencing its production and circulation, as well as the value system within which it is judged. Importantly, the Internet, and social media in particular, has created a space where many artists can showcase their work, with few or sometimes no formal gatekeepers.

The visual arts have long captivated both the public and scholars. As our society has become an increasingly visual one, with images appearing in multimedia in diverse settings from the mundane (e.g., modern advertising) to the "special" (e.g., museums created for the display of what is officially legitimized art), researchers have created various methods for incorporating the visual arts into their scholarship.

Background

? *What role has visual art played across the disciplines?*

Providing background for the development of visual arts-based research practices could itself fill a book. The visual plays such a large role across cultures and in daily life. Today, we are exposed to thousands of images each day from advertisements to shared photographs on social media. Historically, visual imagery has also had a role in all disciplinary fields—from drawings in early medical books to photographs in social science ethnographies. Broadly speaking, visual art and imagery has been and continues to be used in research to chronicle, document, analyze, and resist. Furthermore, visual art and imagery

can inspire both social and self-reflection, quite actually prompting us to *see* differently.

Visual Anthropology

? *How have images been used methodologically in anthropology?*

Anthropologists have a rich history of using still and moving images as a source of data and representational form. Some suggest films are a primary methodological tool in anthropology (Hockings, 2003) and that ethnographic films are the root of visual research methods (Holm, 2008).

In 1957 George Mills encouraged anthropologists to use visual art in their research, positing it as a significant source of information within which researchers can discern patterns pertaining to individuals and society. He wrote that art acts as a barometer for change in society and labeled art “public objects” through which symbolic meaning is conveyed and “unconscious associations” created. Similarly, Bernie Warren (1993) labeled art a “record keeper” and communicative device.

Historically, anthropologists often coupled interviewing with photography from which they developed “photo essays,” one approach to anthropological description (Collier & Collier, 1996, pp. 106–108). This approach can be applied to various ethnographic practices across the social sciences. For example, *visual sociology* is a growing field in its own right.

John Collier, Jr. (1967), was an early pioneer of photography in visual anthropology, and later, he and Malcolm Collier (1986/1996) delineated numerous strategies for using photography as a research method. Their approach was quite “scientific,” looking for ways to code, classify, measure, and compare photographic evidence. While they presented a detailed “scientific” approach to using photography in anthropological research that is now rejected by many, their contribution to the field has been significant (Holm, 2014; Pink, 2007).

Visual Art as a Method of “Aesthetic Intervention”

? *How can visual art reify or challenge stereotypes?*

How can visual art serve as a method of exposing and altering unequal relations of power, privilege, and oppression?

Art is a significant source of information about the social world, including cultural aspects of social life; economic and political structures;

identity issues at the global, national, group, and individual levels; and many other issues. Given the vast range of social phenomena to which art can speak, in this section I focus primarily on how visual art can be used with respect to diversity, race, and ethnicity.

bell hooks has been at the forefront of theorizing about the relationship between visual art and group identity struggles, paying particular attention to the macro contexts in which these struggles over representation occur. Although her work is largely theoretical, and it is that aspect of her work that must first be addressed, it also has methodological implications.

In *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*, hooks (1995) conceptualizes art as a medium for conveying political ideas, concepts, beliefs, and other information about the culture in which it was produced, including dominant views of race, class, and gender. Informed by her engaged feminist politics, hooks makes a persuasive case that race, class, and gender shape who makes art, who sells it, what is sold, who values it, how it is valued, who writes about it, and how it is written about. In this respect art can function as a *site of exclusion*. However, for hooks, visual art also carries a *transformative power* that can resist and unsettle stereotypical ways of thinking.

Recent research supports hooks's contention. NPR's Shankar Vedantam (2013) reported on research about how to combat subtle racial bias. He reported on social science research that says, notwithstanding extreme hate based on prejudice, much racial bias is actually unconscious.¹ People have biased attitudes and stereotypes that they are often unaware of. Calvin Lai and Brian Nosek at the University of Virginia challenged scientists to come up with strategies to combat this kind of subtle, unconscious bias. As a result, 24 researchers worked on ideas and came up with 18 different interventions (Lai et al., 2013). What worked best? Showing people counterstereotypical images. Trying to teach people about discrimination and the like in traditional, nonartistic ways was ineffective, but what worked, at least in the short term, was showing people counterstereotypical images (e.g., associating the word *black* with positive imagery).

Visual art is clearly an important medium through which struggles over representation occur. The use of visual art in research may therefore appeal to researchers working from feminist, postcolonial, and other critical perspectives. bell hooks (1995) writes, "Representation is a crucial location of struggle for any exploited and oppressed people asserting subjectivity and decolonization of the mind" (p. 3). In hooks's framework, art can serve two primary functions with respect to group representation: (1) recognition of the familiar and (2) defamiliarization.

In terms of the former, visual art can depict aspects of how social life really is for people differentially located in the social order, or how life can be (re)imagined.

In addition, not all groups are represented in art. Underrepresentation occurs in two ways. First, many groups that are underrepresented in art cannot turn to (legitimized) paintings, for example, to see representations that they can identify with. For example, hooks notes that in Black culture there is very little opportunity for people to recognize “self” in art. Second, there are gross distortions and stereotypical characterizations in artistic representation, with some groups systematically privileged over others. Thus visual art can foster stereotypical ways of thinking. In terms of the latter—that is, the capacity of art to promote defamiliarization—visual art can propel people to look at something in a new way, which is critical to social change. Visual art can transgress racist and sexist ideologies and has a resistive and transformational capability. Visual art can jar people into *seeing* something differently. This kind of consciousness-raising, unleashed by images, may not be possible in textual form. The painter Edward Hopper once said, “If you could say it in words there would be no reason to paint.”

hooks offers a methodological strategy of “aesthetic intervention” for researching this aspect of artistic practice. Similarly, Rolling (2005) proposes “visual cultural archaeology” as a method for accessing the insidious ways in which visual culture creates images of normalcy and otherness. hooks analyzed the work of artist Emma Amos, who represented people and the political cultural context in which they operate. For hooks, Amos’s work harnesses the power of visual images and their cultural symbolism to reimagine shared (collective) images in a new context and correspondingly jolt people into seeing differently. For example, destructive historical images of the Ku Klux Klan can be used in contemporary art in order to expose their dangerous historical uses, raise awareness and social consciousness, and foster social change. For a contemporary example, consider the photograph by Howard Medical School students (a historically Black college) after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the killing of Trayvon Martin, as described in Chapter 1. The medical students posed in dark hoodies in one photo and in their white medical coats in another. The two images together were a powerful statement about racial bias. This kind of artistic “intervention” that unleashes the *oppositional potential* of art is consistent with (Black) feminist and other critical epistemologies that have a strong interest in social justice. The increased awareness and heightened feminist consciousness this method cultivates are necessary preconditions for any grassroots social change.

Visual Phenomenology

? What is visual phenomenology?

As feminist scholar Judith Lorber (1994) has famously explained, the paradox of human nature is that it is necessarily social. Therefore human experiences cannot be understood separately from the environments in which they occur. When our everyday environment becomes highly visual, then the visual becomes a part of how our consciousness develops. It is in this context that Alva Noe (2000) suggests merging art and the study of perceptual consciousness.

Specifically, Noe (2000) proposes that art can be an effective, although previously neglected, tool for phenomenological research (a perspective that places experience at the center of knowledge building). In this regard, he writes, “To describe experience *is* to describe the experienced world” (p. 125). The implication of Noe’s work is that if researchers working from a phenomenology framework are interested in accessing experience, and experience now occurs within a visual landscape, experience is embedded within its visual context. Noe proposes that phenomenologists refine their “conception of experience as a mode of interactive engagement with the environment” (p. 124) and therefore offers *visual phenomenology as a method for investigating visual experience*.

Similarly, Marjatta Saarnivaara (2003) explores the transgressive experience of art from a phenomenological perspective that emphasizes experience and description. She ultimately shows how this approach illustrates “the enslaving effects of convention” (p. 582) that stem from traditional research practices that falsely polarize inquiry and art (the former as conceptual and the latter as experiential) (p. 582). The merging of art and phenomenology may continue to lead to increases in visual sociology.

Technology

? How has technology impacted visual arts-based research?

Technology has an important role in visual arts-based research practices. Cameras provided early visual anthropologists with a new research tool—they allowed researchers to see social reality differently, ask different questions, garner data in new ways, and represent research findings in new ways. Digital photography, the proliferation of smartphones, iPads, and other technologies with built-in cameras as well the Web and specifically social media and photo-sharing sites,

have all drastically increased the use of photography. Billions of photographs have been shared on Flickr, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, and other sites. CD-Roms, home photo printing, photoblogs, Photoshop, and art-making and graphic design software have all changed society and the research landscape.

Visual Arts–Based Research Practices

? *What visual arts–based practices are researchers creating and using?*

Are these approaches necessarily participatory?

The art forms used in visual arts–based research practices might include photography, painting, drawing, cartooning, graphic novels, collage, sculpture, ceramics, installations, knitting, quilting, doll making, 3D art, and mixed-media art. I have selected a sampling of art forms and approaches to review. Before doing so, I want to discuss participatory versus nonparticipatory approaches, which is a complex but important issue.

In one sense, visual arts–based practices are necessarily participatory—that is, visual art has an audience that experiences it. Donald Blumenfeld-Jones (2002) notes that the art–research connection is grand because the beauty of art is that it is interpretive and therefore different perceivers will have different interpretations; researchers can learn from these multiple interpretations. However, there is a difference between approaches in which participants are creating or co-creating art in some medium and those in which the researcher is creating art.

Visual arts–based participatory methods are a specific set of practices that involve research participants creating art that ultimately both serves *as* data, and may also *represent* data. These methods are frequently (but not necessarily) part of mixed or multimethod research designs. Researchers may use visual imagery when traditional methods cannot fully access what they are after, and so these tools are sometimes employed after interviews or ethnography in order to elaborate on the data. This kind of approach may also serve as the point of departure for dialogue (in the form of interviews and the like), in that case coming at the beginning of a multimethod research design. *Photo elicitation* is at times used in interview projects. This method relies on using photographs as prompts to “unlock” or dislodge knowledge (Holm, 2008).

Participatory research raises the question of *aesthetics*. When amateurs are invited into the art-making process, certainly they cannot be

expected to possess artistic ability or training. Creative arts therapists, for example, routinely work effectively with people who are untrained in the arts. In participatory projects the aesthetic quality of the resulting visual art takes a back seat to the other advantages of the methodology. However, although produced by amateurs, the visual art produced by research participants can still be quite powerful, especially with respect to conveying emotion.

Photography

? *How has photography been used as a research method?*

Photography is widely used in research across the disciplines beyond anthropology, which was already discussed. For example, photographs have been used throughout the history of psychology (e.g., Darwin) and although visual methods remain marginal in the field, photographs continue to be used frequently in research on children (Holm, 2014; Reavey, 2011). Photographs are also commonly used in education research involving children (Holm, 2014). Ironically, students are often invisible in research on schools, and photography can be used to engage youth in research, particularly marginalized groups within schools (Lodge, 2009). In sociology photographs are often used to document social change. Photographic surveys can be used to study changes in people, places, and processes (Holm, 2014; Rieger, 2011).

Whether the researcher is taking photos or having research participants do so, it is important to document the context of production whenever possible (if using preexisting photos, it is always good to seek any available information about their production). There are also particular ethical issues to consider. Issues of access, informed consent, and confidentiality can become complex with photographic data (Holm, 2014). First, you should decide whether photos will be edited (e.g., by blurring faces in the case of children or people in the background who could not give informed consent). Second, there may be questions of ownership and copyright that should be negotiated and agreed upon up front (e.g., if participants take the photos themselves, who owns them?) (Holm, 2014; Pink, 2007). Third, there may be permission issues to deal with. For instance, you may need permission from people shown in photos as well as the person who took the photos (Holm, Sahlstrom, & Zilliacus, 2018). For another example, if using a family photo album, you might need permission from multiple family members or owners or executors of the estate (Holm et al., 2018). All of these issues can be dealt with but require planning and communication.

Photographs are not always used to chronicle, document, or elicit additional data; they may also be used in projects about hard-to-get-at topics. For example, photography can be used to study that which is taken for granted and generally escapes our attention, like *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990; Holm, 2014; Sweetman, 2009). As we saw in Migdalek's work in Chapter 5 on dance, arts-based approaches may be uniquely suited to investigations of *habitus*. Photographs may also be employed as an art form in work that is abstract or metaphorical. For example, Gunilla Holm (2014) shares a six-photograph montage of cigarettes, beginning with an unlit cigarette, with each one increasingly burned down. The cigarettes are used to represent young people's lives—their possibilities and hopes, which shrink over time.

Also bear in mind that through photography we can bypass language barriers and thus open up a range of possibilities, including working with participants who have difficulty communicating through language due to age or disability, engaging indigenous populations, or doing cross-cultural or transnational studies. For example, Janhonen-Abruquah (2010) studied the daily lives of transnational immigrant women by having the participants keep photographic diaries of mundane activities (Holm, 2014).

Photovoice as a Social Action Research Method

? How can participants be tasked with photographing their own environment?

How can we conceive of participants as co-researchers and structure projects accordingly?

Photovoice is a practice that merges photography with participatory methods. Some refer to this as a method for conducting *arts-based action research* (Chilton & Leavy, 2014). In essence, research participants are given cameras and asked to photograph their environment and circumstances. Of course, research goals and instructions to participants vary greatly, but generally, participants are documenting their circumstances as they relate to a larger goal, such as improving their community, affecting public policy, or increasing self- and social awareness. For example, the “Witness to Hunger Project” involves having low-income mothers in Philadelphia take photos and record their stories in order to influence social welfare policy (Chilton, Rabinowich, Council, & Breaux, 2009; see www.witnesstohunger.org). Photovoice can also be used in multimethod or mixed methods research and has become popular in public health research where the data are used to advocate for

community improvement (see Berg, 2007; Holm, 2008). Holm (2008) suggests that the practice of this method can be grounded in critical consciousness-raising theories.

Janet Newbury and Marie Hoskins (2010) used photovoice to study the experiences of adolescent girls who used methamphetamines. They conceived of the girls as co-researchers, which allowed the adult researchers and girls to interact in ways that might not otherwise have been possible (Chilton & Leavy, 2014). Newbury and Hoskins had the participants take photos and reflect on their lives. This led to conversations with the adult researchers that would not have otherwise happened, which in turn prompted a deeper level of understanding. The photographs taken by the girls elicited narratives that would otherwise have been out of reach. When designing a project using photovoice, some of the issues to address include how to conceptualize the problem and define the research objectives; training participants; determining guidelines or prompts for photo taking; engaging in reflection and dialogue; selecting, contextualizing, and coding photographs; and reaching relevant stakeholders (e.g., policymakers, media, community members) (Wang, 2005).

Collage as a Method

? *What is collage? How is collage used as a method?*

What are the advantages of collage as an arts-based practice?

Collage is a popular visual arts-based research practice across the disciplines. Gioia Chilton and Victoria Scotti (2013; Scotti & Chilton, 2018) note it is also popular in creative art therapy because materials are accessible and people are generally not intimidated by the prospect of participating in collage making. This is important with respect to breaking down barriers and giving more people the means (materially and psychologically) to work with the arts. Collages are made by selecting images from magazines, newspapers, textured papers, or other sources, and then cutting, placing, and attaching them (often with glue) to a surface such as a piece of paper or cardboard (Chilton & Scotti, 2013; Scotti & Chilton, 2018). By transforming the different bits into something new, which is greater than the sum of its parts, new ideas may emerge (Chilton & Scotti, 2013; Scotti & Chilton, 2018). Collages often bring disparate elements together and can be a powerful way of jarring people into thinking and seeing differently, performing cultural critique, producing connections that would otherwise remain out of reach, inferring new associations, or refining or enhancing meanings

(Chilton & Scotti, 2013; Diaz, 2002; Scotti & Chilton, 2018; Vaughan, 2008). Collage may also use images and text in an attempt to create a reality and find meaning (Diaz, 2002). The *juxtaposition of words and images* opens up new meanings that would not otherwise emerge.

It is important to note that nontraditional materials may be used as well. Assemblage is a technique similar to collage, but differs in that 3-D objects are used (Scotti & Chilton, 2018). For example, Lisa Kay (2009; Chilton & Scott, 2013) developed a method of “bead collage” that involves the use of beads and found objects.

Collage has been used by researchers across the disciplines for a host of purposes. For example, Susan Finley (2002) used collage in her research with teachers regarding the ways they may or may not unintentionally model media-defined gender roles for their students. When they were graduate students Gioia Chilton and Victoria Scotti (2013) used collage in a collaborative project that aimed to explore the use of collage in ABR and art therapy.

Let’s look at an in-depth example. Figures 7.1–7.6 are part of a series of collage-style artworks created by Maryjean Viano Crowe. The series (1993–1994), titled *All-Consuming Myths*, examines gendered social relations in middle-class White America in the 1950s from the perspective of the artist, who was a girl during that time and watched her mother and other women perform gender roles revolving around the preparation of baked goods (which in the art serves as an actuality, a symbol, and a metaphor). The resulting collages juxtapose images in order to expose new and multiple meanings. The series artfully links the macro context of patriarchal culture in which femininity was scripted and enacted to the personal experience of one girl, now a reflective woman. The artist’s statement follows:

Here is my memory . . .

I am sitting at the pink Formica kitchen table watching my mother construct a cake for my birthday party. A small vinyl doll with a slightly askew wig and stark eyes that blink open and closed is placed within the hollowed-out center of two round layer cakes piled atop each other, secured with a slathering of frosting. It is sometime in the 1950s and my mother is happy, content at this fanciful task of inventing a doll cake, a dream girl for my delight.

Through the magic of food coloring, my cake evolves. Her vanilla frosting gown, sugary and feminine, is transformed into a palette of colorful swirls, complete with frosting flowerettes. Later, my girlfriends and I will eat this cake, cutting away at her slice by slice, deconstructing her colorful ensemble to literally feast upon her. But for now she is safe, beautiful and insulated within the folds

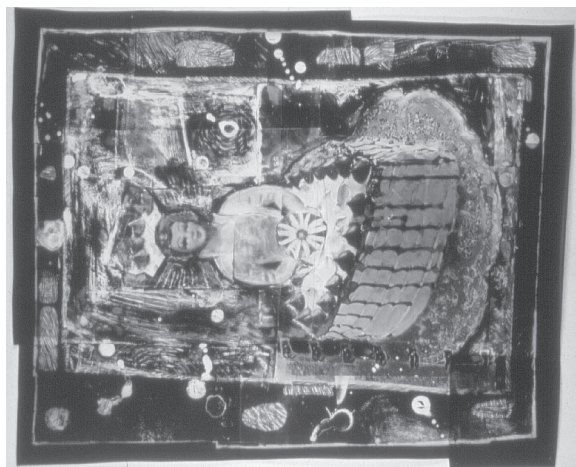


FIGURE 7.1. "Doll Cake I."

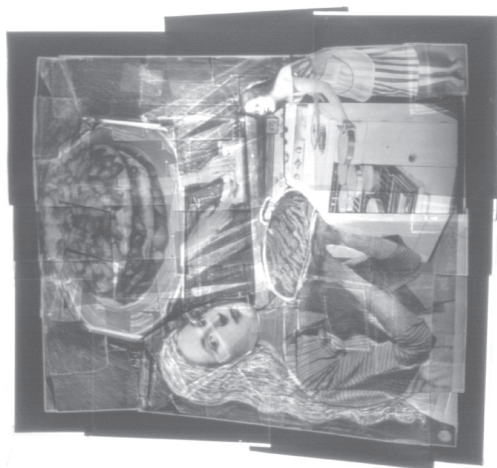


FIGURE 7.2. "Pie in the Sky."

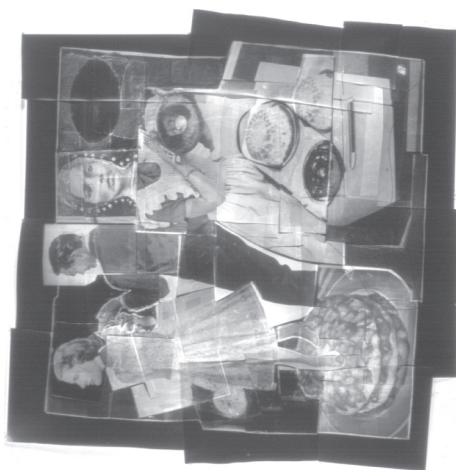


FIGURE 7.3. "The Bake-Off."



FIGURE 7.4. "Visions Danced in Her Head."

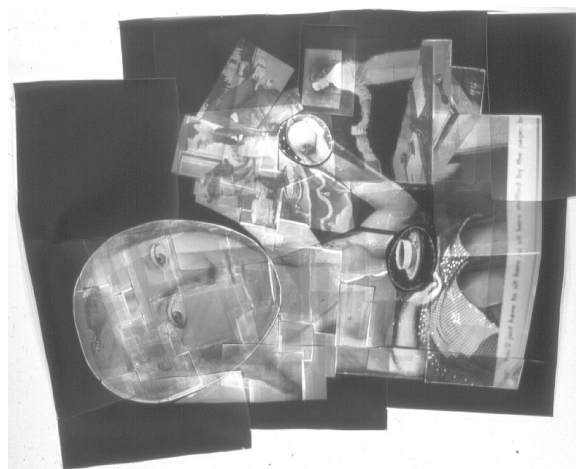


FIGURE 7.5. "Coffee Crumbs."

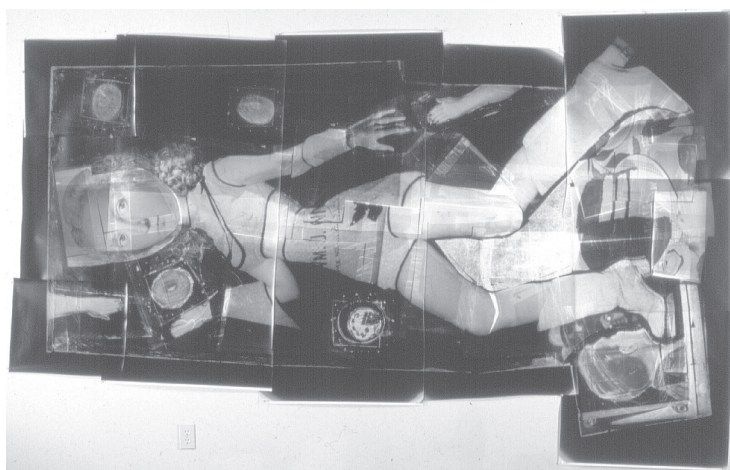


FIGURE 7.6. "Cake Walk."

of her confectionary cocoon. And I am happy at the kitchen table, watching my mother as she frosts and listening to stories of her girlhood hopes and dreams.

It is sometime in the 1950s, and so I lick the frosting from the bowl, willing to consume the dream.

—MJ VIANO CROWE

From a feminist perspective, this series visually represents a range of urgent social issues. For example, there is a commentary about women's roles as homemakers, as evidenced in "Pie in the Sky." The relationship between women's homemaking, embodied in baking, and the standard heterosexual romance scripts that may help structure their fantasy and "real" lives, is perhaps illustrated in "The Bake-Off." This piece speaks to larger issues about how women's relationships (with men, with other women, and with themselves) are structured in a patriarchal society. "Visions Danced in Her Head" and "Doll Cake" link the metaphor of baked goods to female body image, beauty, and independence, among many other issues. The multiple meanings addressed in the pieces allow the dynamic nature of society to emerge as well. For example, "Coffee Crumbs" and "Cake Walk" use the same collage style and food metaphor to explore women's changing roles in society, the merging of the public and private spheres, the pressures on women to balance and negotiate their changing roles, and many other social issues. What is most important when examining this series is that meanings are not closed off, but rather open, multiple, suggested, and implied.

Installation Art

? *What is installation art?*

How have researchers used installation art?

While as noted some methods related to collage take us from 2-D to 3-D work, installation art goes further, creating a complete, multisensory, experiential, and immersive experience: "The installation, including the space it inhabits and the assemblage of elements, is designed to be viewed as an integral whole" (Lapum, 2018, p. 379, citing Bishop, 2014).

An exemplar comes from a project titled "The 7,024th Patient," led by principal investigator Jennifer L. Lapum. The project was based on a study about patients' experiences of open-heart surgery and recovery, which had previously been published in a traditional academic format. The piece was 1,700 square feet and 9½ feet tall. Lapum (2018) describes the concept as follows: "A labyrinth pattern was chosen as the

installation's concept, through which viewers would follow the patient's journey into the iconic center of the body (i.e., the heart) and the patient experience (i.e., the operating room)" (p. 383). To date, the installation has been viewed at two hospitals, a Canadian cardiovascular congress, and an international qualitative inquiry conference (where I saw it), and has been viewed thousands of times by relevant stakeholders including health care providers, patients, and educators (Lapum, 2018).

Artist Rebecca Kamen has also collaborated with scientists in numerous disciplines to create science-inspired installations. For example, "Divining Nature: An Elemental Garden" represents chemistry's periodic table (see Figure 7.7). Kamen's installation "Portal," from 2014, is based on gravitational wave physics and Einstein's discovery of general relativity (see Figure 7.8). Kamen partnered with Susan Alexander who created a soundscape for the exhibit.

Participant-Made Art as Data

? How might we engage research participants in art making?

In studies that involve participants making a single piece of art as data, what is learned in this process that would otherwise be out of reach?

What are the benefits of involving participants in art making?



FIGURE 7.7. *Divining Nature: An Elemental Garden.* Mylar, fiberglass rods, soundscape; 300" × 300" × 38". Copyright © 2009 Rebecca Kamen. Reprinted by permission.



FIGURE 7.8. *Portal* installation. Mylar, fossils, soundscape; 300" × 300" × 38". Copyright © 2014 Rebecca Kamen. Reprinted by permission.

There are numerous ways that participant-made art may serve as data, such as through art journaling where participants create visual art journals or by having participants create a piece of art on a particular topic or theme (which may or may not involve constraints with respect to the medium they can use).

Art journaling is a method involving *participants creating visual journals* that may include text and images such as magazine clippings or drawings (Chilton & Leavy, 2014). The instructions given to participants may range from quite open to highly specific with respect to the prompts for journaling (topics, questions), materials, and frequency of journaling. For example, a/r/tographers in art education Lisa LaJevic and Stephanie Springgay (2008) had student teachers create visual journals to explore and critically reflect on their life experience.

One variation on art journaling is participant-made *altered books*. Creative arts therapist Cathy Malchiodi (2013a) writes, "An altered book is a form of mixed media artwork that changes a book from its original form into something different, altering its appearance or intended meaning. The book itself can be cut, collaged, painted or otherwise changed or transformed in some way." In arts therapy

this process can allow someone to rewrite their story via a visual arts medium (Malchiodi, 2013a).

Malchiodi (2013b) has created a list of the top-10 art therapy visual journaling prompts that may be helpful in a range of contexts or as exercises to familiarize yourself with these approaches (see www.psychologytoday.com/blog/arts-and-health/201311/top-ten-art-therapy-visual-journaling-prompts).

J. Gary Knowles and Suzanne Thomas (2002) conducted a study to explore place and sense of place in school (p. 122). Knowles and Thomas asked a sample of students to use art in order to convey how they see themselves and what they think about school as a place to be. They requested that students apply a “model of structure to their inquiry and artistry” and supplied them with seven multimedia elements: self-portrait, memory map, photo of place, narrative, photo of self in place, found object, and two- or three-dimensional artwork (p. 125). Students were also able to textually describe and explain their art. In this way, the art can be viewed as both the method of inquiry and a springboard for conventional qualitative inquiry.

As a result of this artistic participatory method the researchers learned a great deal about students’ feelings, their struggles, and their challenges with respect to “fitting in” at school. For example, one student created a self-portrait that she explained in this way: “My portrait is cropped closely around my face to represent the lack of freedom I feel at school” (p. 127). Knowles and Thomas (2002) reflect that their arts-based approach allowed them to gain a greater understanding than traditional interviews would have.

Moreover, visual arts-based practices allow for *synergistic practices* that foster a holistic view of the research project, where there is a tight fit between the research goals and the methods employed. The creative process and verbal follow-up could be an empowering experience for the research participants as well, where they retain control, share their experiences, and have their feelings and perspective taken seriously. Knowles and Thomas (2002) reach the following conclusions regarding their methodology:

By immersing ourselves in their art, we focused on the depictions of place and the feelings evoked; the drama, mood, and tone of the images; the interrelatedness and coherence of the images with the text; the emphasis given to place and theme in the work as a whole; the balance and composition of the images; and the relationship between the images, text and maps. (p. 126)

Knowles and Thomas found an arts-based participatory approach highly effective in their study of subjective experiences within a specific social setting.

Steve Haberlin (2017) used a participatory visual arts approach to study the “peak experiences” of five gifted second-grade students. *Peak experience* refers to when a student feels their best in the classroom. His research questions were:

1. In what ways do five gifted elementary students describe their peak experiences in the general classroom?
2. How does the general classroom teacher perceive the conditions and circumstances surrounding possible peak experiences of the students?
3. In what ways might arts-based research contribute to the research of gifted students, namely their affective development?

It's difficult to get good data interviewing children, so Haberlin turned to the arts, choosing drawing as an activity children generally enjoy. He also believed drawing might “help illuminate the psychology of gifted children, yielding new, and perhaps unexpected insights” (Haberlin, 2017, p. 6).

The methodology entailed each student coming to his office once a week where they were given paper, colored pencils, and written instructions asking them to “draw a picture of yourself and include speech and/or thought bubbles to show one of the *best* moments that you had in the classroom this week” (p. 7). The instructions were also given orally. Once each drawing was complete, he asked the student to explain what they created. In order to triangulate the data, two additional data forms were collected. The students' English language arts teacher recorded her observations each week. Haberlin also observed students each week in class and recorded field notes and analytic memos. While he originally planned to collect 9 portraits per student, after consulting with a colleague he stopped after 5 portraits, which he felt was the data saturation point.

During the data analysis process, visual data was converted into text-based data. Haberlin wrote highly detailed descriptions of each portrait, focusing on how the students portrayed themselves and what activities they were engaged in. He employed thematic coding as a part of a six-phase process of analysis. The findings centered on

four themes: teachers, praise, intellectually challenging curriculum, and creative activities. Haberland concludes that art gave the children a medium through which to express their insights. Drawing on Nicole M. Jamison (2015), he further contends through ABR children may be honored in the research process.

For a final example, Susan R. Whitland (2016) used puppet making in a mixed methods project that sought “to investigate how attitudes may change when older adults and children participate in an intergenerational art project.” The art in this study did not serve as the data, but rather the art-making process was book-ended by quantitative data collection. This study involved 15 sixth-grade students, 10 volunteer older adults from the community, and 10 university students enrolled in art education (they assisted with the puppet making). The children were given pre and post surveys to measure their attitudes toward older adults. The older adults completed questionnaires after the project was over. All of the survey data were analyzed statistically. The heart of the project was a 5-week workshop that met on Tuesday mornings during which the children and older adults engaged in arts activities including graphic novels, papier-mâché puppet making, and painting. The researcher assumed the role of participant observer. The final workshop included a field trip and the participants performed puppet shows. The survey data did not show significant changes in the students’ attitudes, but there was evidence they had developed new meanings surrounding aging and older adults.

Comics and Graphic Novels

? What is comics-based research?

How are scholars using comics and graphic novels in their research methodologies?

Comics-based research uses comics to collect, analyze, or represent research (Kuttner, Sousanis, & Weaver-Hightower, 2018). Comics are multimodal (Kuttner et al., 2018; Kress, 2009, Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001), including both visual and textual components. In doing so, comics create “a unique language” that unifies “word and image” (Kuttner et al., 2018, p. 398). Leading practitioners note that it’s difficult to define comics; however, there are frequently used conventions that help clarify the genre:

Most comics use cartooning, which relies heavily on iconic imagery and solid black lines. Speech is usually portrayed in “speech

bubbles,” thoughts in “thought bubbles,” and narration in “text boxes,” and most of the images are “framed” with panel borders and a “gutter” between frames. (Kuttner et al., 2018, p. 397, citing McCloud, 1993; Varnum & Gibbons, 2001)

While comics can employ myriad visual and text styles, they often rely on commonly used devices and symbols. For example, balloons are used to communicate sound. These symbols allow ideas to be communicated quickly (Kuttner et al., 2018).

What distinguishes comics from other art forms is how they are experienced: both sequentially and simultaneously. In other words, they are read sequentially and experienced all at once. Kuttner et al. (2018) explain, “The interplay of sequential and simultaneous modes offers researchers nonlinear, tangential, and multi-layered possibilities for conveying complex information and a multiplicity of perspectives” (p. 401). The advantages of this genre are the ability to draw on the strengths of both images and text and how people consume them.

There are many wonderful examples of comics-based research, but perhaps the best known is Nick Sousanis’s (2015) award-winning book *Unflattening* (originally his doctoral dissertation). This work is grounded in educational philosophy and explores questions about perception and knowledge. Like all successful ABR, *Unflattening* bares Sousanis’s unique fingerprint in multiple ways: drawing style, the non-narrative structure, and the use of metaphors to make complex ideas accessible. In Figure 7.9, Sousanis explores key theoretical concepts with respect to idea generation.

Wordless Narrative Research

? What is wordless narrative research?

Jeff Horwat (2018) was inspired by wordless novels of the early 20th century and created the method of wordless narrative research. This is a wholly visual approach to inquiry that bypasses language barriers and “uses visual storytelling to study, explore, and communicate personal narratives, cultural experiences, and emotional content too nuanced for language” (p. 172). This method produces accessible narratives, rich in metaphor. Wordless narratives contribute to public scholarship and “foster imaginative engagement that encourages an empathetic connection” (p. 174).

Horwat (2018) notes that methodologically, this method offers unique rewards but also carries its own particular challenges.

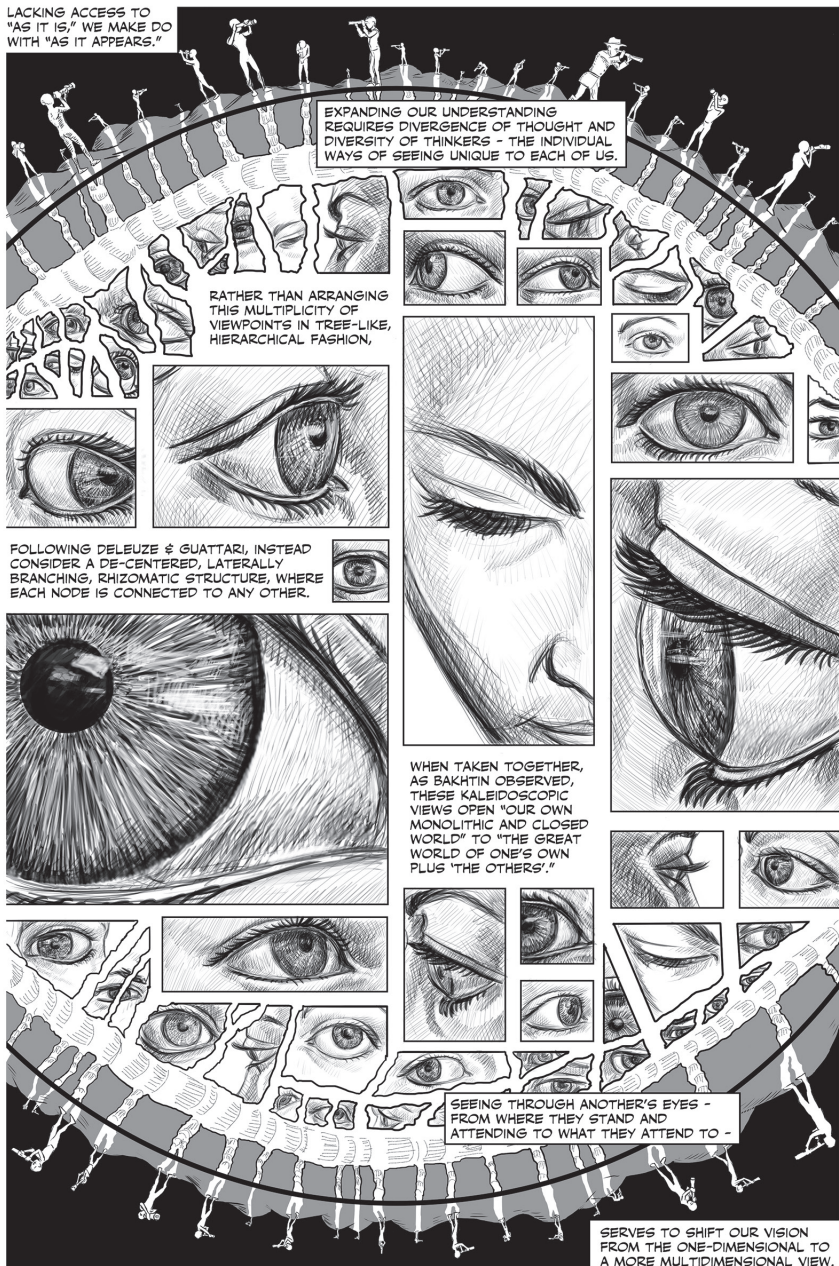


FIGURE 7.9. Page 39, "Kaleidoscopic." From Sousanis (2015, p. 39). Copyright © 2015 Nick Sousanis. Reprinted by permission.

Practitioners should strive for a balance between clarity and ambiguity, so that intended meanings can be communicated while simultaneously leaving space for audiences to bring their own experiences and perspectives to the interpretive process. Horwat (2018, p. 178) suggests considering how to use the following elements in order to best express your narrative in a visual format:

- Visual styles (e.g., expressive, realistic, surrealist, illustrative)
- Metaphors and symbol systems
- How elements are arranged, composed, and sequenced (flow and narration)
- What happens between each image
- The relationship of each image to the whole

Finally, Horwat (2018) reminds us that “all aesthetic decisions must take into account both the qualitative data and narrative plot” (p. 178). He goes on to explain, practitioners “must have an understanding of how the literary, qualitative, and visual aspects all correlate to one another in a way that is cohesive, logical, meaningful, and trustworthy” (p. 178).

Visual Art in Analysis and Interpretation

? *How can visual arts practices be used during data analysis and interpretation?*

Visual art techniques can be used as strategies of analysis and interpretation at various phases of a research project. The process of conducting research is always a meaning-making activity. Despite the inseparable nature of analysis to knowledge, analysis and interpretation are often hurried or rendered invisible in the final work. Anita Hunter, Paula Lusardi, Donna Zucker, Cynthia Jacelon, and Genevieve Chandler (2002) collaborated to discuss the process of making meaning in qualitative health care research, reviewing how various arts-based methods aided what they deem the “incubation phase” in which ideas percolate, patterns emerge, and original conclusions develop (p. 389). They refer to this vital period as “intellectual chaos”; however, they are quick to note techniques available for structuring this activity (p. 389).

As an example, Donna Zucker (in Hunter et al., 2002), one of the five health care researchers, employed maps or models as a means of allowing her information and data to become visual so that she might

see it differently during multiple interpretive moments. Diagrams also serve as a similar heuristic device. Zucker self-identifies as a visual learner, and consequently the visual representation of her data fostered heightened idea generation. Zucker created visual maps during three phases of her project. The first map was linked to her immersion in existing scholarship and was made during her contemplations of the literature review. The second map was constructed during data collection and the last during coding and analysis (although clearly analysis and interpretation were ongoing parts of her research). This strategy deepened the “incubation phase,” allowed relationships between data to emerge that may otherwise have remained hidden, and weaved interpretation throughout the research design in a systematic and holistic manner.

While maps, models, and diagrams are visual, they are not necessarily artistic. Painting and drawing can also be used as an act of analysis and interpretation. In my collaborative work with Victoria Scotti, which resulted in the book *Low-Fat Love Stories* (discussed in detail in Chapter 9), I sent Scotti typed summaries of qualitative interviews with women, which included demographic information, key themes, and key quotes. As a means of analysis and interpretation, Scotti then crafted a “visual concept” for each interview. The hand-drawn images evoked the themes and emotional tenor of each woman’s interview. Guided by each visual concept, we then proceeded to the final phases of interpretation and representation, writing first-person short stories and creating final portraits.

Another example comes from Barbara J. Fish (2018), who makes “response art” in her creative art therapy work. She explains her motivation: “When I am disturbed by something, want to understand it more fully, or have a response to an interaction that doesn’t fully make sense to me. I make these pieces with the intention of bringing clarity of purpose and interpersonal understanding to my work” (p. 338). The response art is made as an act of research and analysis, and serves to represent the entire process. Fish writes, “The process of drawing, painting, and investigating the response art that I create about what I witness is my research. The images are the vehicle of investigation, as well as its synthesis” (p. 339). Through this process, Fish cultivates insights that may otherwise elude her.

In actuality, any of the practices reviewed in this chapter may be used during idea generation, analysis, and interpretation. For example, collage work may be employed during these phases. Gioia Chilton (2014) used collage as she compiled a literature review for her dissertation. Scotti and Chilton (2018) note researchers can also use questions

or prompts to create collages during data analysis. The collages may explore a host of issues, such as the primary themes to emerge from the data or the researcher's emotional response to some aspect of the process (Scotti & Chilton, 2018). Lisa Kay (2009) created small mixed-media collages from paper and pastels, and found materials to capture her reflections of her research observations. She understands the works of art as visual "field notes." The collages served as another form of both documentation and interpretation. Furthermore, the artworks have also been displayed in a gallery and presented at conferences, illustrating how this approach opened the research up to wider audiences (public and academic) (Chilton & Leavy, 2014). To illustrate that other art forms may be used in similar ways, Manuel J. Ramos (2004) created sketches during anthropological fieldwork.

Special Considerations

One issue to consider is translation. In a general sense, in ABR translation refers to "moving from an artistic process . . . to some other kind of language, whether it is an artistic, verbal, or written language" (Gerber & Myers-Coffman, 2018, citing Chilton, 2015, personal communication). In studies in which interview research or ethnographic observations, for example, are being represented visually, there is a translation process from one medium to another. This is often the case with ABR and is discussed at greater length in Chapter 8 but warrants some special consideration here with respect to the *word-picture relationship*. It is this very issue that Inkeri Sava and Kari Nuutinen (2003) explore in their collaborative research that seeks to create a dialogue between inquiry and art. Specifically, they empirically and theoretically examine the hybrid or "third space" created as art and inquiry, where image and word meet, which they view as a merging of the subjective and objective.

For their project Sava served as the researcher-writer who created the words and Nuutinen functioned as the artist who created the images. This was a three-tier project consisting of (1) the word-picture performance, (2) reflective textual dialogue, and (3) a general discussion about the word-picture performance and reflections on it. The project involved the production of seven textual messages and seven drawings that were not paired together simultaneously until a panel discussion. In addition to invited audience discussion that allowed the "reader" to engage in meaning making, the writer and artist each wrote their reflections independent of one another. They had previously agreed to

allow for ample freedom of “inner voice” while remaining attentive to the main theme of “the dialogue between word and picture, between inquiry and art” (2003, p. 516). Sava and Nuutinen’s research suggests several things about the relationship between text and visual art:

First, in the performative dialogue between writer and maker of pictures, it can be a question of *change, transformation of word/text into a picture* (or *vice versa*), of *sliding, flowing, streaming*, perhaps also a question of *translation from one language to another*. Second, texts and pictures can form an *intertextual surface, an associative texture*. Third, pictures can function rather as *illustrations of the text*, or in the opposite process, *text as illustrator of the pictures*, or they form a mutual, living dialogue, a unified story or dialogical state. (p. 532, original emphasis)

As alluded to in the last point, this research contributes to ongoing scholarship in the area of hybridity. Sava and Nuutinen note that the “third space” “*is strongly experiential, sensory, multi-interpretive, like a fleeting shadow, intuitive and ever changing . . .* must accept borderline existence of the two or more worlds, the meeting place as *a mixed stream of fluids*, as something multi-layered, not known, always to be created anew, as the field of many understandings” (2003, p. 532, original emphasis). This exploratory collaborative project contributes to scholarship in multiple areas while raising significant questions about what occurs when researchers translate words into pictures or pictures into words, and how audiences perceive the relationships between words and images.

Checklist of Considerations

Here are some questions to consider as you explore methodologically using the visual arts in your research:

- ✓ How does the use of visual art help address the issues in this study? What can visual art tap into or offer in the context of this investigation that enhances the research?
- ✓ Who will be creating the art for this study, with what materials, and with what guidelines?
- ✓ What are the ethical issues to consider, including ownership and distribution of the art?
- ✓ How will the visual art component speak to the other components in mixed or multimethod research?
- ✓ What method best suits my research objectives (e.g., photography, collage, visual archeology, participatory methods)?

- ✓ How will visual art be used (e.g., data collection/generation, analysis, interpretation, representation)? If there is a transfer between words and images, how will this “translation process” be understood?

Conclusion

Visual arts–based research is an expansive genre, and thus this chapter is meant to provide an introduction. The exemplar for this chapter is reprinted from *Low-Fat Love Stories*, my collaborative project with Victoria Scotti. This project is discussed in more detail in Chapter 9, but I have selected to use the story of 59-year-old “Leala” here because for this project visual art was used both during analysis and representation. This project was grounded in qualitative interview research with women about a dissatisfying relationship, past or present. During the data analysis process, I created qualitative interview summaries. Scotti then used each summary in order to create a “visual concept” for each participant’s interview. I then wrote a first-person short story, using verbatim interview language, and Scotti then created each woman’s final portrait, meant to express the major themes and tone of her interview.

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. How can visual art be used to reinforce or challenge stereotypes? How can visual art be employed in a research project aimed at amplifying subjugated perspectives?
2. How can participatory visual arts–based methods access hidden dimensions of social life? How does photovoice differ from other approaches? What are the social justice possibilities?
3. How is collage used as a research practice? Why might a researcher employ this technique?
4. How can the visual arts be used during analysis and interpretation?
5. Collect a small sample of visual images from a magazine or newspaper. Without context, what stories do the images tell? What meanings are communicated? Create a collage out of the images considering the role of juxtaposition in meaning making. Now what meanings are communicated?
6. Select a research topic and then take a small collection of photographs based on your topic (four to six). What do the visual images convey?



Suggested Readings

Emmison, M., Smith, P., & Mayall, M. (2013). *Researching the visual: Images, objects, contexts and interactions in social and cultural inquiry* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

This qualitative visual research primer covers a range of topics pertaining to conducting research with visual data. The authors also provide exercises throughout the text suitable for students or researchers who wish to try out some of the techniques in the book.

Foster, R. (2019). Visual art campaigns. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of methods for public scholarship* (pp. 383–416). New York: Oxford University Press.

This chapter focuses on visual arts campaigns, art as activism, and the role of art-science in public scholarship. Background, key concepts, and other issues are addressed, and examples are offered. This chapter is available in Oxford Handbooks Online.

hooks, b. (1995). *Art on my mind: Visual politics*. New York: New Press.

In this book, hooks regards art as a method of conveying political ideas, concepts, beliefs, and other information about the culture in which it was produced. In particular, hooks critically examines the relationship between art and interlocking identity categories such as race and gender.

Leavy, P., & Scotti, V. (2017). *Low-fat love stories*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill/Sense.

A collection of short stories and visual portraits based on interview research with women about a dissatisfying relationship with a romantic partner or relative, or their body image. Written in the first-person with language taken directly from each woman's interview, the stories are raw, visceral, and inspirational. The authors developed an original method of "textual visual snapshots" for this book.

Pauwels, L., & Mannay, D. (2020). *The SAGE handbook of visual research methods* (2nd ed.). London: SAGE.

This comprehensive edited handbook covers a range of genres of visual research methods as well as issues such as analysis, presentation, and ethics.

Pink, S. (2012). *Advances in visual methodology*. London: SAGE.

This interdisciplinary reader offers chapters on a range of theoretical and practical topics pertaining to visual methods. Of particular interest is the attention to how new media relate to these practices.

Sousanis, N. (2015). *Unflattening*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

An exemplar of comics-based research that uses comics to explore philosophy, knowledge, perception, and visual thinking.

Suggested Websites and Journals

Arts and Humanities in Higher Education: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice

<http://ahh.sagepub.com>

This peer-reviewed journal publishes articles and reviews based on scholarship in the arts and humanities in higher education. The journal has an international outlook and is useful for teachers as well as researchers.

ArtsJournal

www.artsjournal.com/visual.shtml

ArtsJournal was founded in 1999 and features daily links to stories taken from more than 200 English-language newspapers, magazines, and publications featuring writing about arts and culture. Stories from sites that charge for access are excluded. This is an excellent resource for articles and to other venues that deal with art and culture.

International Journal of Education through Art

www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals.appx.php?issn=17435234

Published three times a year, this is an interdisciplinary journal that promotes relationships between art and education. Particular emphasis is placed on articles and visual materials that critically reflect on the relationship between education and art; propose original ways of rethinking the status of education and art education; address the role of teaching and learning in either formal or informal educational contexts and alongside issues of age, gender, and social background; adopt an open and inventive interpretation of research-based analysis; and promote and experiment with visual/textual forms of representing art education activities, issues, and research.

Visual Studies

www.visualsociology.org/publications.html

Published three times a year by the International Visual Sociology Association, this multidisciplinary peer-reviewed journal publishes “visually oriented” articles that represent empirical visual research, studies of visual and material culture, visual research methods, and visual means of communicating about the social and cultural world.

Journal of Visual Arts Practice

www.ovid.com/site/catalog/Journal/2444.jsp?top=2&mid=3&bottom=7&subsection=12

This journal addresses issues of contemporary content and practice in fine-arts studios. Over the past decades fine-arts practices have expanded from the traditional media of painting, sculpture, and printmaking to include installation, performance, film, video, and digitized media.

Art Journal

www.collegeart.org/artjournal

Founded in 1941, this peer-reviewed journal aims to provide a forum for scholarship and visual exploration in the visual arts; to operate in the spaces between commercial publishing, academic presses, and artist presses; to be pedagogically useful; to explore relationships among diverse forms of art practice and production, as well as among art making, art history, visual studies, theory, and criticism; to give artists, art historians, and other writers in the arts a publishing venue; to be responsive to current issues in the arts, both nationally and globally; and to focus on topics related to 20th- and 21st-century concerns.

Oxford Art Journal

<http://oaj.oxfordjournals.org>

This peer-reviewed journal publishes innovative critical work in art history. It is committed to the political analysis of visual art and material representation from a variety of theoretical perspectives, and has carried work covering themes from antiquity to contemporary art practice. The journal also publishes extended reviews of major contributions to the field.

Technoetic Arts: A Journal of Speculative Research

www.ovid.com/site/catalog/Journal/2453.jsp?top=2&mid=3&bottom=7&subsection=12

This peer-reviewed journal publishes work dealing with cutting-edge ideas, projects, and practices arising from the confluence of art, science, technology, and consciousness research.

International Visual Sociology Association (IVSA)

www.visualsociology.org

The purpose of the IVSA is to promote the study, production, and use of visual images, data, and materials in teaching, research, and applied activities, and to foster the development and use of still photographs, film, video, and electronically transmitted images in sociology and other social sciences and related disciplines and applications.

**Note**

1. Peggy McIntosh wrote about this in her well-known 1989 essay on White privilege.

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Low-Fat Love Stories (Excerpt)

Patricia Leavy and Victoria Scotti

LEALA

59 years old

Sexual orientation not given

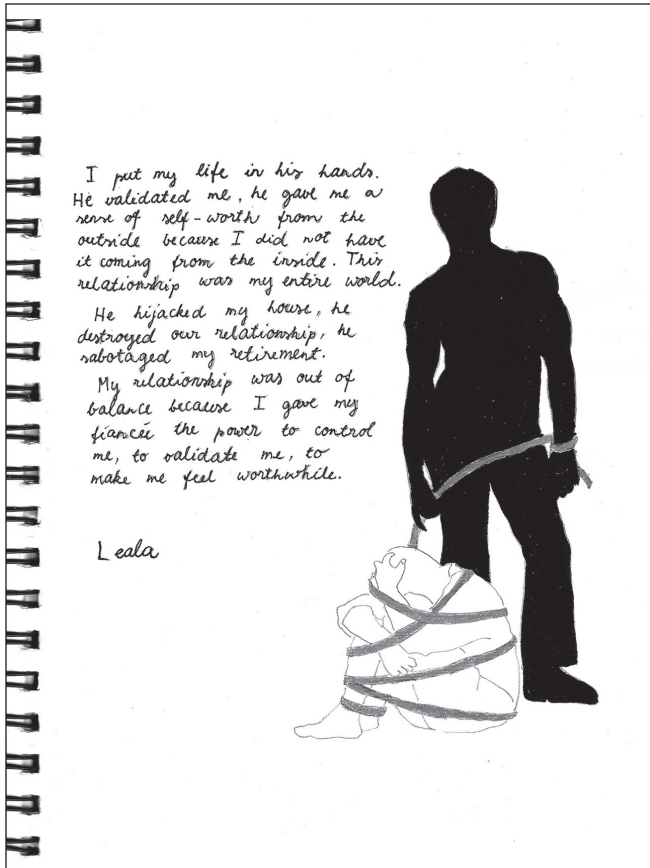
Latina

Religion not given

Light My Own Fire

Once upon a time, I met the man of my dreams. We were in a ballroom dancing class. Like a fairy tale, I twirled right into his arms. Maybe that's not exactly how it happened, but it's how I remember it. He was tall, dark, handsome, and successful. He was well-respected. And sexy. So damn sexy. I looked up to him. He was the most charismatic person I had ever met. Everyone was enamored by his charm; some people ooze something that makes you want to be near them. He was like that. He was highly skilled in making you feel that you were the only person in the room, the only person who mattered. I never met anyone like that before, and I was totally captivated by him. I couldn't believe that someone like him wanted me. Each time he glanced my way with his sly smile, I melted. From the very beginning, I always thought he was too good for me.

I knew he had baggage. He was divorced, with adult children and financial messiness. I was willing to overlook it all. None of that mattered. I'd found



a wonderful man. I wished I could spend all of my time with him. Due to the demands and location of my job, we lived a distance from each other but spent every other weekend together for many years. We danced, we played golf, we played tennis; we loved going to the theater, kayaking, and just being together. We always wanted to do things with each other. My life expanded. I truly loved him and believed that he loved me. For many years I was blissfully happy.

Everyone thought that we were the perfect couple. I thought so, too. It seemed perfect.

I never thought about my life outside of him, or us. This relationship was my entire world. I had no friends and no family to speak of. He was the center of my life. I worked an extremely demanding job, long hours, with a lot of travel. It was exhausting and didn't leave time for anything other than him,

so I didn't spend a lot of time or effort looking outside the relationship for entertainment, companionship, or comfort. He was my entire world, and my identity was attributed to him. I didn't exist outside of my job and my relationship. I was happy and didn't see what a perilous situation I'd put myself in. Only now, looking back, do I realize how much I relied upon him and how much of myself I'd handed over to him. When a relationship is all-consuming, it's easy to get lost in it—to want to get lost in it. I had found my real-life Prince Charming. As far as I was concerned, or anyone else looking from the outside was concerned, I had everything. The moment he proposed was the happiest of my life.

He outstretched his hand, revealing a small, velvet box. He opened the box and a brilliant diamond sparkled at me.

"Will you marry me?" he asked in his sexiest voice.

I can't believe this is really happening. He actually wants me, I thought before emphatically saying, "Yes!" I was so overjoyed I shook with excitement. I was head over heels in love with this man.

After we became engaged, everything started to unravel. Fairy tales have an underside, a shadow side. My castle was about to crumble. My prince would burn it down, and with it, the entire fairy-tale illusion. He was a dark prince.

I knew he had toxic finances. He owed money on college loans for his kids, the divorce settlement to his former wife, and a buyout provision to his business partner. I ignored it all. When he was looking for a place to live, I rented him my investment house. It made perfect sense. One day that house would fund my retirement, which we would spend together. That house represented our chance at happily ever after. It would be our version of riding off into the sunset. He paid me a meager rent, enough to cover basic expenses. I lived in a small condo close to my job and the airport. I visited him at the house every other weekend.

Once we decided to get married, he started to change. It was so subtle at first that I thought I might be imagining it. He would offer an unkind word or grunt in response to something I said. The impetus was usually if I made a remark about wanting to retire and sell the house. Soon his slights were no longer ambiguous. Somewhere along the line he became very greedy and then very belligerent. Instead of being excited at the prospect that we'd have more time together if I retired, he tried to convince me to keep working. He became overbearing. It was as if he thought he could control me, my thoughts, my desires, and my money. I repeatedly posed vehement objections to his attempt to control my financial life. The house was no longer a dream for the future, but rather a thing for him to possess, just like I had become.

Exhausted from years of hard work and commuting, I wanted to down-size, enabling us to spend our married years together. I wanted more than four days a month together. When I became determined to retire and sell my house, our relationship fell apart. All he cared about was staying in my house, which I couldn't afford unless I kept working. He told everyone in the community I was trying to uproot him and end his happiness. No one knew the house belonged only to me. He lied. The man who had always listened to me in the past began to ridicule me. He would not listen to me or accept my point of view. He bullied and badgered me. He sneered at me. He mocked me. He criticized me publicly. Without his validation, I fell into a deep hole. How could I live in a world where fairy tales don't come true?

Because I had been happy before our engagement and his attempt to take financial control over my life, I wondered if the act of becoming engaged had changed him. Maybe he really didn't want to marry me and this was his way of destroying the relationship. Was it my fault? Eventually I came to understand that he had lied about many things over the course of our relationship. He changed stories, exaggerated details, and simply made things up. He had created an imaginary life and persona for our neighbors. He was a professional liar. By the end, when we went out he had to brief me on what he had told other people. I knew deep in my heart that the relationship was completely over. I thought I was going to die.

Being brought to my knees was humbling. I knew I was at a crossroads. I decided to save myself. First, I had to confront a dark truth. I had handed over my complete self-image, my complete self-worth. I put my life in his hands. He validated me and gave me a sense of self-worth from the outside because I did not have it coming from the inside. I needed to accept responsibility for my own self-worth. No one can hijack your life unless you allow them to.

I had to recognize that I have value with or without a man. My value comes from inside, who I am, not from the outside. I needed to accept full responsibility for my own happiness, for my own self-image, and for my own worth. No one has to take care of me, no one can complete me, no one is needed to make me a whole person.

I was attracted to his charismatic energy because I didn't think I had any of my own. I tried to draw strength from him like a parasite, and that's how he treated me. And I was comfortable that way. It took me a long time to realize that I wasn't looking up to him, but rather he was looking down on me. A dark, foreboding force, casting his shadow over me. I was curled up in a ball, at his feet, tied and bound willingly by my own choices. By my own choices.

I didn't need to draw energy from a charming man. I needed to learn to tap into my own energy. With renewed focus, I became a creative force. I

became the architect of my own life. When I eventually did retire, I searched within for my own worth and passion. I took what I had learned about finding an authentic sense of self and I wrote a book, blogged, and shared my story on radio shows. I was able to recover from these catastrophic events in my life and then go on to teach others how to do the same. This was empowering. I built an identity that wasn't dependent on anyone else. I took the sullied fairy tale, the dying embers from our crumbled castle, and used them to light my own fire.



Eight



Evaluation Criteria for Arts-Based Research

Interpretation is the revenge of the intellectual upon art.

—SUSAN SONTAG

In recent years the issue of evaluating or assessing ABR has become the focus of much debate. There are questions about whether ABR can be evaluated based on the standards used in qualitative practice or if new standards need to be created. For example, some question the very idea of criteria, validity, or uniform standards as inextricably bound to positivism (Bradbury & Reason, 2008). This is interlinked with ongoing discussion about the tension between the kind of standardization evaluative criteria may assume versus the nature of artistic expression and our experience of artistic works. Within this larger debate there are also emerging questions regarding how to judge doctoral work (and what counts as acceptable doctoral work) within this new research landscape (see Chilton & Leavy, 2014, 2020).

It's not surprising that as the arts-based paradigm emerges and grows, issues regarding quality have taken center stage. This is to be expected. For example, the development of appropriate criteria for evaluating qualitative research was met with debate, negotiation, and renegotiation, and to a large extent it continues to be contested. While I think it is important to focus more heavily on building methodological principles and creating spaces to share new arts-based works, there is no question that we need ways to assess this work.

Many arts-based researchers have developed assessment criteria for the genre of ABR they focus on (e.g., see Faulkner, 2009, 2019, for poetic criteria; see Cox et al., 2014, for visual research methods).

Ultimately, each genre needs to be evaluated based on standards that fit the specific approach within the genre. With that said, there are general criteria that can be used to assess ABR.

Many researchers have presented various lists of criteria (e.g., see Barone & Eisner, 2012; Chilton & Leavy, 2014, 2020; Cole & Knowles, 2008; Norris, 2011). Most arts-based practitioners endorse a model that applies these individual criteria as appropriate to a specific project (the goals, methodology, and position of the practitioner, including their disciplinary perspective), as opposed to universally applying them. For example, Joe Norris (2011) has created a four-P model of evaluation based on a circle metaphor like a medicine wheel. His evaluative criteria include pedagogy, poiesis, politics, and public positioning, with each representing a quadrant of a circle (see Figure 8.1).

Pedagogy refers to the intellectual or emotional growth one experiences when they experience or create a work of art. *Poiesis* centers on the meaning-making process evoked through art by producing an aesthetic experience. *Politics* refers to the degree to which an art work embodies a political stance, which may be a deliberate political statement in the artwork itself or may refer to the creation process. Finally, *public positioning* centers on the public consumption of the artwork. Norris invites you to imagine placing a work of ABR over the circle, and imagine how the particular project may cover all four quadrants equally, or may cover some to a much greater extent than the others given the specific goals and methodology. Figure 8.2 presents two examples (each representing a different ABR project with unique goals and outcomes).

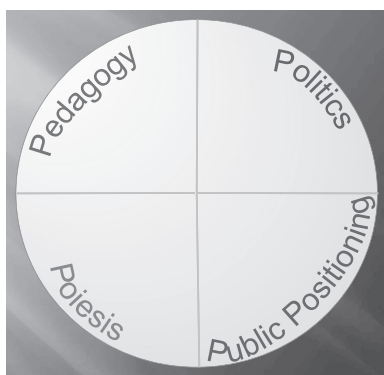


FIGURE 8.1. Great Wheel Image 1. From Norris (2011). Copyright © 2011 Joe Norris. Reprinted with permission from the *International Journal of Education and the Arts*.

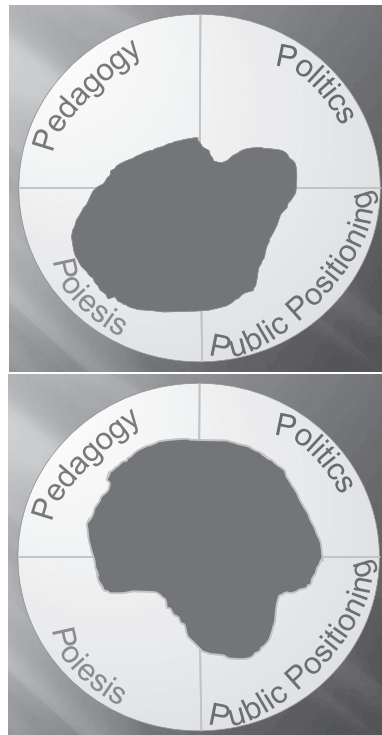


FIGURE 8.2. Great Wheel Images A and B. From Norris (2011). Copyright © 2011 Joe Norris. Reprinted with permission from the *International Journal of Education and the Arts*.

Given the diversity of arts-based practices as well as the tenets of artistic practice, most reject following a positivist model of evaluation that in turn creates a “gold standard” by which all ABR is judged (Barone, 2007; Barone & Eisner, 2012; Norris, 2011). It is in this spirit that I present suggested evaluative criteria, which, although somewhat contested, consistently appear throughout the literature on ABR.

Evaluation Criteria

The list of criteria I am presenting is distinct for ABR, although some are adapted from qualitative research standards. I want to reinforce my opposition to creating a “gold standard” and thus remind you that these are suggestive and should be applied as appropriate. When I say

as appropriate I have two intentions. First, I want to highlight that not all criteria will apply to each project but will be based on the goals of the particular project as well as the genre one is working within. Second, I intend to call attention to the fact that individual arts-based practitioners may philosophically or otherwise reject some of the standards or simply prioritize some over others. Differences in philosophical points of view may result from training and what disciplinary perspective(s) one is grounded in. For example, based on disciplinary perspective one may value artfulness over usefulness or usefulness over artfulness. Similarly, transparency may be valued more by someone with a scientific or social-scientific background, while some with formal art training may find transparency counter to the spontaneous and magical elements of art and art making. These are just examples. My point is that not only do criteria not fit each project but each researcher may value and thus prioritize different criteria.

Finally, while I am separating these criteria out for instructive purposes, in practice there is overlap. The criteria are often linked, intertwined, and even conceptualized differently. *This is a messy terrain.* For instance, a few of the criteria I will suggest and discuss separately are: aesthetics, methodology, usefulness, and audience response. In actuality, aesthetics may be intertwined with methodological practice and usefulness. In artistic practice, a sound methodology includes attention to craft, and the aesthetic power of the piece affects audience response and thus usefulness. And of course all of these choices have ethical implications as well. As I said, it's a messy terrain.

Ethical Practice

Ethical practice is an expectation in all research, regardless of paradigm, and can be used as a benchmark by which to assess ABR. The word *ethics* comes from the Greek work *ethos* which means "character." Ethics refers to morality, integrity, fairness, and truthfulness (Leavy, 2017). There is an ethical substructure that impacts every aspect of the research process (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2012; Leavy, 2011, 2017). Topic selection all the way through to the representation and distribution of research findings bears ethical considerations.

As an emerging and rapidly growing paradigm, ethical issues are still being fleshed out. There are some who have suggested that the very practice of ABR is in some respects both ethical and moral (Denzin, 2003; Finley, 2008). The primary ethical areas addressed in the literature are the public and participatory nature of some ABR as well

as issues relating to aesthetics. However, there are also standard ethical issues across paradigms that need to be addressed.

Topic Selection

Research is intended to be of some value in the world—to contribute to our knowledge. Consider the *potential value, significance, or usefulness* of research on the topic. Jeasik Cho (2018) suggests a worthy topic may also be relevant, timely, and interesting (p. 36). Issues to focus on include who the beneficiaries of knowledge on the topic will be; if the research will address an identified social need, the potential to promote new learning, social justice, or social change; and if the research will attempt to mediate a historical bias by focusing on an underrepresented group or seeking to destigmatize a disenfranchised group (Leavy, 2017). It's also prudent to ensure there are no potential *conflicts of interest*. For instance, if your research is funded, make sure their agenda does not compete with your own. There should be no pressure or monetary gain for deriving certain outcomes or research findings (Leavy, 2017).

While we strive to conduct research of some value or significance, it's important to acknowledge that sometimes we're simply unable to achieve this outcome. Mindy Carter (2017) has written eloquently about her research with indigenous youth in Guatemala and Canada, intended to help participants better understand their identities. When the research failed to produce the “transformational experiences” she was hoping for, Carter questioned the ethics of her work (pp. 13–14). Carter writes, “Does this research matter? Ethically, should I be doing this work if it feels like my participants do not really need me? How does need determine justification for something in arts based research?” (p. 14).

Selecting a topic of value is critical to ethical practice; however, if we have acted responsibly we need to make peace with it when our expectations aren't realized. If we had all the answers, we wouldn't be conducting the research. As Carter ultimately suggests, we can learn from each project and modify or refocus our topic moving forward.

Procedural Ethics

First do no harm is the primary principle governing the protection of research participants. Adapted from the biomedical community, this principle states that no harm should come to research participants (or the settings in which research occurs) (Leavy, 2017). Participation in

a research project must be voluntary, understood, and (typically) confidential. These issues are addressed as a part of informed consent. *Informed consent* means that participants understand the nature of the research they are participating in, including any possible risks or benefits, and they understand their participation is completely voluntary and can be discontinued at any time without consequence. Further, confidentiality is usually required. In other words, participants' identities should be protected. However, there are some cases in which participants may decide to waive anonymity, such as in the case of co-created art they wish to be credited for.

Procedural ethics are a set of standards and practices in place to ensure the protection of research participants (Ellis, 2007). *Institutional Review Boards (IRBs)* are established in universities to ensure that ethical standards are adhered to. While there are variations at different kinds of institutions, IRBs have a minimum of five members and must include at least one scientist and one nonscientist, so you should expect your proposal will be reviewed by those outside of your field, some of whom may have little to no knowledge of ABR. Prior to contacting potential research participants or beginning any data generation, you must seek permission from your IRB. Your proposal to the IRB will include information such as the purpose of the study, the benefits of doing this research, the intended outcomes of the study, the population you are interested in, how you will select and recruit participants, the possible risks to participants (which may include any physical, psychological or emotional harm), benefits to participants, and your plan to garner informed consent.

Participatory Work

ABR often involves partnerships between academic researchers and artists or community participants. This raises a host of issues. One must consider standard issues pertinent to any ethical research practice, including *consent*, *confidentiality*, and *not doing harm to the people or settings involved*. Given that there may be joint art making or scenarios where participants are imaged in art (e.g., photography), issues of *ownership and copyright* may arise (Holm, 2014). It is best to set clear expectations with participants or co-creators. Likewise, participatory arts-based approaches often demand developing meaningful relationships with co-creators (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010; Lather, 2000). For example, Patti Lather (2000) has famously revealed that she has talked with research participants while in a hot tub in an effort to make them comfortable and address cultural difference and social power in the

context of research. Carolyn Ellis (2007) encourages us to consider “relational ethics” as we engage in our research practice. *Relational ethics* refers to an ethics of care in which our relationships with participants are valued and everyone is treated with dignity and mutual respect (Adams, Holman Jones, & Ellis, 2015; Ellis, 2007). Setting agreed-upon expectations regarding the process, including closure to the project, and how and where the final representation(s) will be disseminated, is vital.¹ It is also important to realize that even when we document our own stories through autoethnographic practices or as a part of any research experience, others are implicated in our stories.

While informed consent must be obtained prior to beginning research, in a project in which participation extends over a period of time, it is appropriate to *process consent* at multiple stages (Adams et al., 2015). This means that you designate times to check in with research participants and review consent issues, including the voluntary nature of the project and their right to withdraw. This also provides an opportunity to see how they are doing and learn about any negative and/or positive outcomes of their participation.

Sensitive Portrayals

A primary goal of social research is to sensitively portray human experience (Cole & Knowles, 2001). This can be challenging in all forms of research as we reduce, interpret, and translate data. In arts-based practice it is vital that we present multidimensional portrayals, whether in fictional writing, theatrical performance, or other genres. Furthermore, as we aim to afford people or characters their multidimensionality we must be mindful of being culturally sensitive so that we don’t colonize those we aim to portray.

Public Performances

With respect to the public nature of some ABR, beyond the standard “first do no harm” mantra that applies to all research participants (see Bailey, 1996, 2007; Leavy, 2017), arts-based practitioners also need to be cognizant of *protecting audience members*. Jim Mienczakowski has been a particularly strong advocate creating clear ethical guidelines in the case of *public performances*. The need to create ethical guidelines has arisen out of incidents in which audience members were put at risk as a result of witnessing an ethnodramatic performance, which was reviewed in Chapter 6 (Mienczakowski, Smith, & Morgan, 2002). Jeff Nisker (2008) suggests that toward this end various stakeholders

should be given drafts of the script for feedback or “reality checks” prior to performance. Alternatively, Mienczakowski and colleagues suggest having a preview performance with an audience of people who possess knowledge about the topic under investigation. They also note that “postperformance forum sessions” can be used to analyze audience responses to the performance in order to assess the show’s impact (p. 49).

Artistic License

As noted at various points throughout this text, ABR is a hybrid form, and tensions can emerge as we try to balance research practice against artistic practice. Johnny Saldaña (2011) reminds us that there is a tension between our ethical obligation to represent the data, to be truthful and faithful to the data, and our use of artistry in order to entertain as we educate and produce quality art. At the end of the day, practitioners need to decide the extent to which they will enact their artistic license. Furthermore, how the artistic rendering is contextualized and framed for audiences, including what information is given about the construction of the artistic work, is also linked to ethical practice.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a criterion that has gained considerable attention in qualitative research, and I think it bears on arts-based practice as well. Reflexivity requires paying attention to how *power* influences our attitudes and behaviors, and our own role in shaping the research experience. *Reflexivity involves constantly examining your own position in the research endeavor, including your assumptions, feelings, and decisions* (Leavy, 2009, 2017). Another way that we engage in reflexive practice is to be attentive to issues of *voice*. This term is typically used to talk about the ability to speak and is implicitly political (Hertz, 1997; Wyatt, 2006). It’s important to remember that we do not speak for others, nor do we give voice to others, as they already have their own voices, but we can use our platform as researchers to amplify the voices of others. This links back to issues of representation, including sensitively portraying people and their circumstances and using artistic license prudently to best share our research. I’m often asked about my own ethical choices in my arts-based practice, and I have heard many other artist-researchers asked similar questions about their practices. At the end of the day, while there are guidelines we can use, as indicated throughout this chapter, we also must pay attention to our own internal barometers.

Like qualitative researchers, we can do so systematically, to varying degrees, if we choose to, through memo or diary writing about our choices, and then cycling back and interrogating those choices.

Methodology

Methodology is an issue in all research. *Methodology* refers to how the research was carried out and the rationale for doing so. In other words, researchers need to demonstrate that the use of an arts-based approach, and the specific research strategy, makes sense, for instance, garnering insights not otherwise available or as a means of distributing the research to relevant stakeholders. There are several issues one can consider with respect to methodology.

Question–Method Fit

A research methodology should be designed in accord with the research objectives. There should be a *fit between the research questions and the methodology* designed to answer those questions (Chilton & Leavy, 2014, 2020; Creswell, 2007; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2005, 2012; Leavy, 2017; Patton, 2002; Saks, 1996). The research method or practice selected should suit the research objectives.

Holistic or Synergistic Approach

A key strength of ABR centers on the potential to develop holistic or synergistic approaches to research (Blumenfeld-Jones, 2008; Cole & Knowles, 2008). Several concepts can be applied in order to judge the holistic or synergistic quality of a final project. *Thoroughness* refers to the comprehensiveness of the approach. *Coherence* (Barone & Eisner, 2012), *congruence* (Leavy, 2011), or *internal consistency* (Cole & Knowles, 2008) refer to how well the components of the project, including the final representation, fit together. In other words, these terms refer to the *strength of the form* (Barone & Eisner, 2012). One can imagine the importance of internal consistency in the case of evaluating a novel or play, for example.

Data Analysis

There are various strategies of data analysis one might employ in an arts-based project, and the act of doing so can serve as another evaluative criterion. Although there are numerous strategies for data analysis

that ultimately need to be selected in conjunction with the research aims (question–method fit), four that I will review are: garnering feedback from peers, having an internal dialogue, use of theory, and use of literature.

In terms of gathering feedback from peers, or having an *external dialogue*, *data analysis cycles* can be employed (Tenni, Smyth, & Boucher, 2003). One can also use a team approach to external dialogue. Kip Jones (2003) has used *reflective teams* for analysis. Gathering peer feedback might be particularly salient in projects if researchers are using autobiographical data (autoethnographic data), even in part. When researchers use their own experiences as a part of data collection, there may be a tendency to collect too much data (Tenni et al., 2003). By analyzing the data in cycles, beginning early in the collection process, researchers are better able to recognize when they have reached “data saturation,” which is the point at which the collection of more data stops adding to the insights gained and the researcher risks being inundated (Coffey, 1999). Given the transdisciplinary nature of arts-based practice it can also be useful to solicit feedback specifically from artists (practitioners in the artistic field you are working within). This kind of *cross-pollination* can strengthen your artistic practice if your original training is in another field.

Researchers are also advised to be in tune with their emotional, carnal, psychological, and intellectual indicators. Colleen Tenni, Anne Smyth, and Carlene Boucher (2003) refer to this as engaging in an *internal dialogue* with ourselves. This is especially important in autoethnography or sensitive field research where a researcher may experience discomfort, sadness, or any number of disconcerting feelings (Adams et al., 2015; Ellis, 2004; Tenni et al., 2003). This is also vital for creative arts therapists who may be working with people in the midst of a healing or recovery process. Keeping a diary is one strategy for consistently noting where one is located within the process (Tenni et al., 2003).

Tenni and colleagues (2003) also suggest *explicitly using theory during data analysis* in order to open up the data to new interpretations and alternate meanings. One strategy for using theory is to identify the level of analysis the research is occurring on and then view the data from a theoretical lens on a different level (Tenni et al., 2003). In other words, the researcher views data that operate on the micro level from a macro theoretical perspective, and vice versa. Similarly, one can examine how *literature* was used as data or to interpret, frame, and contextualize data. The use of concepts, ideas, statistics, or other information from a literature review can bring other voices into the work and help ground the project.

Translation

While we typically think of *translation* as a process of transforming one language into another, in ABR the concept goes further to refer to “the transformation of one form of knowledge into another” (Gerber & Myers-Coffman, 2018, p. 587). We engage in this process in order to build new knowledge and garner new insights (Gerber & Myers-Coffman, 2018, p. 587). James Monaco (2009) insightfully suggests we bear these questions in mind: “How does the translation of an idea into the language of the art affect the idea? What are the thought-forms of each particular artistic language?” (p. 23). In ABR translation may be a part of data analysis as we are often moving from one form to another. For example, we may be moving from text to visual images or from poetry to prose, and so forth. We may use an art form during any part of this process to take notes and analyze and interpret data. For example, Alina Gutierrez of VisualVersa created the image *The Arts as Hope* (Figure 8.3) as a way of notetaking during a PowerPoint

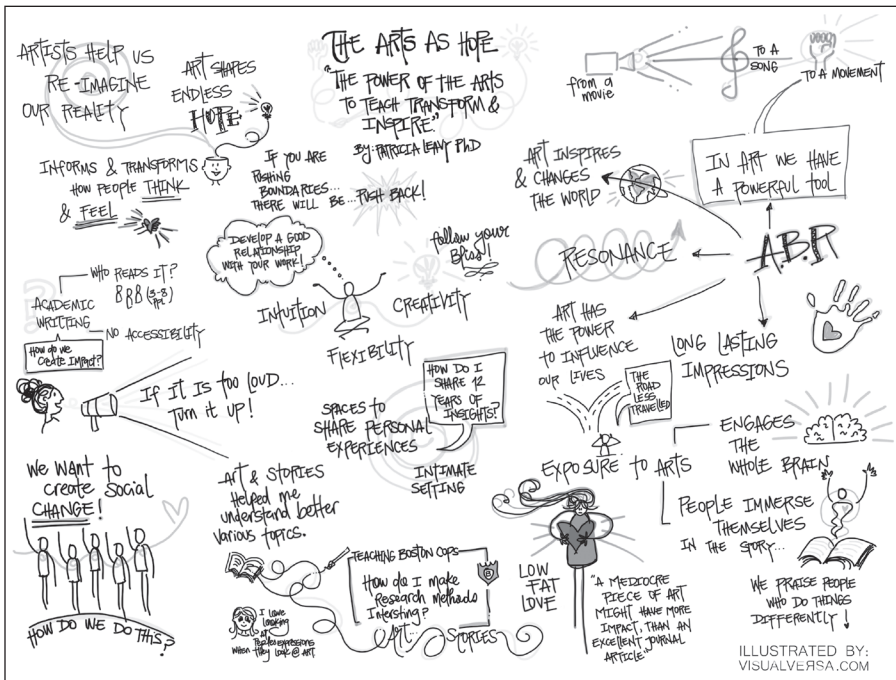


FIGURE 8.3. *The Arts as Hope*: visual notes from a presentation and lecture on arts-based research.

presentation and lecture on ABR. She took textual and oral information, documented it, and made sense of it through a visual medium. This principle can be applied to the analysis and translation of ABR. Based on their research, Elizabeth Manders and Gioia Chilton (2013) have created a fantastic table (Table 8.1) that details specific strategies for assisting with translation in ABR.

Another framework for thinking about translation in ABR is to consider *adaptation theory*, which focuses on adaptations from one genre to another (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010). Adaptation theory is usually applied in film studies when a source such as a novel or play is adapted into a film. However, it has applicability to ABR. In the mainstream, there are often debates when artists adapt one genre to another. For example, critics are often harsh on films that have been adapted from classic books (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010). However, we understand that an adaptation, for example from a novel to a film, can offer new insights or perspectives on the original (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010; Sinyard, 1986). One of the major takeaways from adaptation theory is that different genres require a different treatment of the source material (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010). Furthermore, each genre offers its own set of possibilities (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010).

Transparency or Explicitness

Transparency, or *explicitness*, refers to showing the process by which the research occurred (i.e., by which the final representation came to be) and has been deemed an important evaluative criterion by some arts-based scholars (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Rolling, 2013). As the field of ABR grows, many feel that it is important for practitioners to document and explain their processes. For example, a review of arts-based practices in health research found that while the methods were useful for producing and disseminating knowledge, there remains a need to document research processes and explain the rationale for the use of arts-based approaches (Fraser & al Sayah, 2011). The importance of this issue is highlighted in doctoral research, where students and advisors need to clarify the fit between goals and methods, which requires documenting their processes (Atkins, 2012).

As an example, Katherine Frank (2000) urges that when working with the tools of fiction, researchers are explicit about what aspects of the work are grounded in observations or interviews and what is derived from personal ideas or fantasies. She suggests that fictionalized narratives derived from a literature review or found documents should also be clearly explained as such. Douglas Gosse (2005) wrote

TABLE 8.1. Creative Strategies for Artistic Inquiry Translation

Creative strategies for artistic inquiry translation	Objectives
Spill writing (free writing) Write as much as possible about the artistic experience without concern for grammar, form, or style.	To reduce anxiety To increase creative flow To document the process
Free association Verbalize the first thing you think of about the images, metaphors, and symbols in the artistic inquiry.	To explore and critique the products of artistic inquiry
Creative dialogue Ask: “If this dance/artwork could talk, what might it say?” “Dance, what do your movements mean for me?” “Artwork, what is important about you?” And so on.	To explore the dialectic between the researcher and the art To play with interviewing the art directly to access unconscious knowledge
Poetry Write in free verse, use found words, or use standard poetic forms such as the pantoum, tanka, or cento.	To use words to discover meaning through creative textual/verbal thinking
Write a story or fairy tale Use a traditional fairy-tale format, beginning with “Once upon a time” or remake the storytelling form to fit the needs of the inquiry.	To use imagination to unlock new insights
Concept map or diagram Link word and sentence fragments together to map central elements of the inquiry.	To visually contextualize and locate the products of artistic inquiry To make disparate connections
Magazine collage Cut and paste using a mix of words and images.	To use creative means to transition from visual to textural concepts
Use another art form Create using a different art form with the intention to seek meaning or translate the previous work. Dance the shapes found in the art. Draw images from the dance.	To generate new insights To clarify and expand on data To transition to words through another art form that may be easier to translate

Note. From Manders and Chilton (2013). Reprinted with permission from the authors and the *International Journal of Education and the Arts*.

his dissertation as a novel, titled *Jackytar* (which won an award from the American Educational Research Association). In the dissertation version he included extensive footnotes referring to theory and literature that he called a “hypertext.”

It is important to note that given the nature of artistic output, it may not always be deemed desirable to be explicit about the process; like the other criteria, this will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. For instance, some may feel that, at least in certain cases, the art should stand on its own as a work of art. In the case of my novels *Low-Fat Love*, *American Circumstance*, *Blue*, *Spark*, and *Film*, I chose to present them as artistic or literary works. Most of my novels include a preface and/or afterword providing a brief description of the intention and process. For each novel I have penned blogs, given interviews to popular media, and spoken at academic conferences. These activities have allowed me to expand on the research aspects of my work while letting the publications themselves operate as literary works that anyone can read.

After completing his doctoral requirements, Gosse published a version of *Jackytar* without the footnotes/hypertext, allowing it to be a pure literary work with his research embedded into the novel, underscoring it. Similarly, Kip Jones (2010) suggests that the art work should be the main output, not academic prose. When the art work is going to be the main output you can consider how much detail about the data and/or process to include in accompanying materials, such as a playbill, preface to a novel, or curatorial comments at an art exhibition.

Usefulness, Significance, or Substantive Contribution

The *substantive*, or *practical contribution*, of any research is always at issue. Research is intended to advance knowledge in a given area (Cole & Knowles, 2008; Leavy, 2017; Richardson, 2001) or result in improved life conditions (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Mishler, 1990). Research should illuminate, educate, transform, or emancipate. Lynn Butler-Kisber (2010) writes, “There needs to be an upfront and continuous questioning of the ‘so what’ or utility of our work. Does our work make a difference, and if so for whom, and how and why?” (p. 150). The knowledge produced out of the research experience is necessarily about something and for something. Arts-based approaches are employed because they enable our research goals, and therefore one evaluative criterion is the social significance of the research purpose and how well that purpose has been realized. In ABR the final product may prompt intellectual and/or emotional growth in the viewers or bring them to understand a

particular topic differently (Norris, 2011). The work may also be politically motivated to varying degrees (Denzin, 2003), and at one end of the continuum may be used to shape public policy.

While *social significance* may be a standard used to judge qualitative or quantitative research, *usefulness* is particularly salient in arts-based practice, with most practitioners agreeing that it's an important benchmark. For example, Elliot Eisner (2005) warned that ABR is about utility and not just novelty. Barone and Eisner (2012) separate "generativity" as shedding light on a topic and "social significance" as making a difference. There are many terms one can apply, but personally I find the idea of *usefulness* the most appropriate for ABR and the most all-encompassing. However, for those who wish to distinguish different aspects of "usefulness," Barone and Eisner have provided a sound way of doing so.

The issue of usefulness will reemerge during the discussion of aesthetics. Because arts-based practices stem from a range of disciplinary perspectives and goals, such as those from the social sciences, there can be a tension between usefulness and aesthetics. I elaborate on this shortly. However, with respect to considering usefulness as an evaluative criterion it is important to shy away from questions like "Is it a good piece of art?" and rather ask "What is this piece of art good for?" (Chilton & Leavy, 2014, 2020; Leavy, 2010, 2011, 2017, 2019).

Trustworthiness and Authenticity

In order for ABR to be socially significant and/or useful, the quality of the work is important. In the ABR paradigm *trustworthiness* is a goal, not "Truth." Arts-based works may be judged based on their *truthfulness* and *trustworthiness*. Truthfulness and trustworthiness in ABR may be thought of in conjunction with the concept of *resonance*. Does the work resonate? For instance, when writing a novel one may seek to create verisimilitude through resonant details and mastery of literary techniques. The hope is it will be *believable*. In a research-based film, the quality of the acting contributes to believability and trustworthiness. Guiding questions are thus: Does it ring true? Does it feel authentic?

Public Scholarship

Public scholarship is that which is available outside of the academy (Leavy, 2019). Going further, lay citizens have access to public scholarship; it is in some way useful to them or has the potential to be, and

optimally addresses public needs (Leavy, 2019). While public scholarship has always existed, even when not referred to as such, it has been a part of the academic discourse since the 1960s (Denzin & Giardina, 2018) and has been the subject of considerable attention and debate over the past 25 years (Leavy, 2019).

Accessibility to Diverse Audiences

Perhaps the greatest advantage of ABR is the ability to make research accessible to broad audiences, including those beyond the academy (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008; Leavy, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2017, 2018). A recent study claims that more than 90% of academic journal articles are never read by anyone other than their authors, editors, and advisors (Gordon, 2014). Statistics vary, but it is frequently reported that academic journal articles are read by no more than a few people, and it's a standard joke told at professional conferences. Indeed, one could argue that it is most likely even those readers are only accessing the articles in order to cite them in their own work (I say accessing because downloading an article or even citing it does not necessarily mean that one has read more than the abstract). Traditional quantitative and qualitative research findings circulate in inaccessible academic journals that the public has little or no access to. Furthermore, these articles are jargon-filled and unlikely to be read or understood by anyone except an elite few with highly specialized education, training, and interest.

In addition to circulating in publications that few have access to, the academic writing format is particularly poor and uninspired. Stephen Banks (2008) has astutely observed that most academic writing lacks the qualities of good, engaging writing. Kaj Sand-Jensen (2007) wrote a very funny and on-point article titled "How to Write Consistently Boring Scientific Literature." Sand-Jensen's article opens with a quote by Erik Ursin that equates hell to being forced to read one's own scientific publications. For many years there has been a public critique of academic researchers "in ivory towers," implying that they are disconnected from the communities in which they are enmeshed, navel-gazing and doing work that is of little use to others. In 2014 *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof wrote a scathing indictment of the academic publishing system, noting that although professors are among the most knowledgeable people, they have been made and made themselves irrelevant in conversations of import. He likened academic writing to "gobbledygook" that is typically "hidden in obscure journals." In short, the vast majority of academic articles and thus research

findings are totally inaccessible, and we are all becoming increasingly aware of this problem.

There are practical and ethical mandates for doing research that leaves the academy (Leavy, 2011). Research that matters has an audience of many (Jones, 2010; Leavy, 2011, 2019; Rolling, 2013). In order for research to be useful, it must reach relevant audiences. ABR can be judged based on its accessibility in two ways. First, it should be *jargon free*, and in that regard *accessible to diverse audiences*. Second, it should be *disseminated via appropriate channels to relevant stakeholders*, including nonacademic stakeholders. Issues of *audience* are thus paramount, with the need both to identify relevant audiences and to find ways to reach them.

Some arts-based projects are also intended to influence policy-making in some way. For example, a study might be aimed at increasing community participation in a development project or increasing voter participation on a particular issue. In these circumstances the work can also be evaluated based on its effectiveness in achieving its policy-related goals (this issue can also be deemed a part of question-method fit).

Many arts-based researchers present their work in more than one form or “shape” in order to reach both academic and nonacademic audiences. For example, many of the practitioners whose work has been noted in this book have presented their work to public audiences and also written journal articles or presented professional conference papers to their peers. As vital as it is to make research useful beyond the academy, as long as the structure of research institutions remains in its current, although evolving form, journal articles and conference presentations remain viable ways for academics to talk among each other. However, this should not be the only or even primary output of ABR (Jones, 2010). Furthermore, arts-based researchers increasingly are finding other ways to share information with one another via social media, blogging, vlogging, list serves, and other means, and therefore the value of the academic journal system itself might change or diminish over time.

Audience Response

Audience response is another important marker of success in ABR. The response of the audience is tied to several other criteria, including public scholarship, usefulness, and multiple meanings. Audience response is also the other side of the coin of *the effect of the research*.

ABR has the potential to be emotional, evocative, provocative,

illuminating, educational, and transformative. It may also be employed to unsettle or disrupt stereotypes or commonly held assumptions, bridge differences, challenge dominant ideologies, present resistive narratives or possibilities, prompt social reflection, and stimulate self-awareness. Therefore, it may be important to evaluate how well a piece of ABR has accomplished those ends, as applicable to the project goals. For example, in the case of narrative inquiry and autoethnography, Arthur Bochner and Carolyn Ellis (2003) suggest considering how well readers understand, feel, and engage with what has been expressed.

While audience response may be important in a range of projects, it cannot always be ascertained and therefore cannot always be used as an evaluative criterion. For example, while there are numerous ways to garner audience feedback at performative events, including ethnotheatre, dance, or musical performances, it can be more difficult or at times impossible to gather data on audience response for research presented in other formats, such as narrative or literary texts. Furthermore, sometimes it is possible to gather informal data about audience responses but not systematic data. For example, in the case of a novel or poetry collection that is consumed by readers in private, it may be impossible to gather systematic data about audience response; however, readers may have an opportunity to informally share their experiences at book talks and the like or by leaving feedback with online vendors. Of course, during the process of creating the ABR you can always gather feedback from peers, artists in the genre, and other stakeholders (some strategies for doing so were discussed in relation to data analysis). Like with other evaluative criteria, the ability to gauge audience response ultimately needs to occur on a case-by-case basis.

Multiple Meanings

One of the unique strengths of ABR practices is that they allow for *multiple meanings* to emerge (as opposed to authoritative claims that one might find in quantitative research). In this regard, arts-based researchers are after truths not truth (Bochner & Riggs, 2014). By producing a multiplicity of meanings, ABR has the potential to promote deep engagement, critical thinking, and reflection, all of which contribute to the ultimate impact and thus usefulness of the work. Therefore, *ambiguity* can be seen as a strength of ABR. Of course there is always a balance to strike between opening up a multiplicity of meanings and maintaining responsibility for the range of meanings that could emerge from the work and thus affect the audience.

For example, when writing up research as a short story, novella, or novel, one technique for opening up meanings and creating ambiguity is to put *gaps* in the narrative (Abbott, 2008). Those gaps allow readers to insert their own interpretations into what they are reading, which can foster engagement, critical thinking, and imagination. One technique for balancing ambiguity against the intentions of the researcher with respect to meaning making is to use the voice of the narrator to bring in the researcher's voice and/or voices from the literature. Consider a visual art exhibit as another example. Visual art is uniquely suited to open multiplicity in meaning making, and thus the active engagement of viewers in the meaning-making process, particularly the more abstract the art is. A researcher may balance his/her/their desire for multiplicity against his/her/their desire to impart particular meanings through written commentary that accompanies the exhibition (which in a traditional visual art exhibition might be produced by a curator). The extent of the commentary, and the degree to which it provides context or imparts direct meanings, results from the researcher's intent with respect to the issue of ambiguity.

Aesthetics or Artfulness

One of the great advantages of artistic forms that differs considerably from traditional quantitative or qualitative academic writing is that there is the potential for intrinsic beauty or artistic merit (Bamford, 2005; Butler-Kisber, 2010). While in the discussion of usefulness I suggested asking the question "What is this art good for?" when it comes to the aesthetic value of the work, Johnny Saldaña (2011) reminds us to ask: "But is it *art*?" (p. 203).

Aesthetic quality, aesthetic power, or artfulness is central in the evaluation of ABR (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Chilton & Leavy, 2014, 2020; Faulkner, 2009, 2019; Leavy, 2009, 2017, 2019; Patton, 2002). Indeed, the aesthetic or artistic power of the work is intimately tied and arguably inextricably bound to audience response and thus usefulness. If the playwright or filmmaker's intent is to emotionally connect with audience members and cause them to engage with the artistic work in order to achieve any number of goals, such as creating empathetic understandings, then the stronger the play or film is as a piece of art, the more likely it is to achieve those ends. In those instances, acting alone will be central to how viewers connect with the piece and consequently the impact the piece has on them. Likewise, one of the benefits of short story or novel writing is that readers can become immersed in

the fictional worlds, but again, the literary formats must be used well in order to elicit that response in readers.

How one achieves artfulness varies from genre to genre, but there are some overarching guidelines. *Aesthetic power* is created through the *incisiveness*, *concision*, and *coherence* of the final artistic output (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Chilton & Leavy, 2014, 2020). In their discussion of portraiture, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Hoffmann Davis (1997) suggest we must consider structure, form, and coherence and how “the aesthetic whole emerges” (p. 255). An artistic rendering must get to the heart of the issue and present that essence in a coherent form in order to achieve aesthetic power. In order to achieve these ends one must pay attention to the architecture of the form. For example, when constructing a song, the chorus or “hook” might be important, particularly if audience participation or mental recall is relevant to the project. In the case of a short story or novel, there are basic issues to consider regarding storyline and plot construction, such as closure and responding to audience expectations in the ending. When constructing poetry, concreteness can be used to bring images to life (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Faulkner, 2019; Meyer, 2017).

Given the artistic demands of this work, arts-based practice requires us to think like artists (Bochner & Ellis, 2003; Saldaña, 2011). Ivan Brady (1991) has used the term “artful scientists” to speak to this issue. While arts-based researchers come from a range of disciplines, attention must be paid to the artistic craft one is borrowing from. It is vital to learn the form you are working with. This can be accomplished via professional training, cross-pollination with peers, or even disciplined self-teaching. As Elizabeth de Freitas (2004) notes, when the work has “deep aesthetic impact,” then rigor has been achieved (p. 269).

Some suggest that arts-based practice requires extensive training in the arts, parallel to fine-arts practitioners (see, e.g., Blumenfeld-Jones, 2014; Piirto, 2002). However, I believe that people mustn’t be intimidated to learn to work with new genres, which requires experimentation and risk taking. Furthermore, in ABR, although the resulting piece of art may be important as a stand-alone work, this is not the only consideration and may need to be weighed against the usefulness of the work. There is a messy and dialectical relationship at play because the aesthetic power needed in a piece of ABR may be intended to enable other research goals, such as usefulness and reaching broad audiences (which one is more likely to do with an arresting piece of art). In addition, if we create difficult standards for artistic training that we use to evaluate ABR, then we will have the unintended consequence of

greatly limiting the participation of diverse stakeholders in the ABR process, and their participation is one of the strengths of this research paradigm (Finley, 2008). Thus there are ethical and social justice consequences as well. For those weary of untrained researchers working with artistic formats, I encourage you to look at the literature in expressive and creative arts therapies. Creative arts therapists often work on art making with clients untrained in the arts, with outstanding results. Like all other criteria, the aesthetic/usefulness/public possibilities of ABR must be considered as appropriate to each project.

Artful Authenticity

While authenticity was discussed earlier in relation to trustworthiness, it is important to clarify how the term, when applied in ABR, may differ from (traditional) qualitative research. In ABR the audience must experience the representation as truthful (Chilton & Leavy, 2014, 2020). An intertwining of authenticity and artfulness comes out in the audience experience. Some have argued that the authentic *is* aesthetic (Hervey, 2004; Imus, 2001). This quote sums it up: “The best art is the most honest, authentic art” (Franklin, 2012, p. 89). Under this conceptualization, if the arts-based representation carries meaning or power for the audience, then it may be deemed aesthetic regardless of how well it adheres to the conventions of the genre from which it is borrowing. In other words, a short story presented by an arts-based researcher may be deemed aesthetic if readers are moved by it regardless of whether it meets the criteria set out in the field of literature. Here again we see the complex relationship between usefulness and artfulness within this research paradigm. This should give students, novices, and even experienced researchers who wish to experiment with arts-based practices the courage to do so.

With respect to *artful authenticity* there is one additional issue to consider, which I will revisit in the discussion of ethical practice. There’s often a tension between creating good art and reporting research findings (Ackroyd & O’Toole, 2010; Saldaña, 2011).

For example, Saldaña (1998, 2011) has written extensively about how good ethnodrama reduces data to the “juicy stuff,” but at the same time one must be ethically mindful of the research that is informing the ethnodrama. One must balance fidelity to the data with the need to create an engaging piece of art in order to most effectively communicate the essence of those data. In a newspaper interview, Kip Jones talked about this issue in relation to the making of *Rufus Stone*, and the

challenge and importance of covering the major themes to emerge out of the data in a short film (cited in Guttenplan, 2011).

Personal Fingerprint or Creativity

An issue related to artfulness is the unique quality, vision, approach, talent, or perspective that a particular artist-researcher brings to his/her/their work. All artistic practices are *crafts*, and therefore there are no cookie-cutter models; rather, each practitioner brings him/her/themselves to the project. The *personal fingerprint of the artist* may thus be used to assess ABR (Banks 2008; Barone & Eisner, 1997, 2012). Artistic works have a *voice*. This is about finding and expressing your voice.

Cultivating a personal style takes time and skill. An artist's personal signature is important for several reasons. First, it shows a rigorous commitment to the genre being used (paying attention to the craft and the aesthetic merit of the rendering). Second, good artists keep their audiences wanting more because of their unique style. For example, most people have favorite musical artists, filmmakers, and/or writers. This is because they enjoy and are drawn to that artist's approach to the genre, which may include the topical coverage of content they present and their stylistic sensibilities. If the aim is to move people through the artistic rendering, the practitioner's individual approach is integral in doing so. Third, artists are present in their renderings. Artists cannot disavow their role in the creation of their work. By imprinting the rendering with one's personal signature, the artist-researcher is accounting for his/her/their active presence in the resulting representation. Finally, arts-based researchers are pushing the boundaries of form through their innovative and creative practices. By developing personal trademarks or styles, researchers are also contributing to the larger repository of approaches to ABR available to others.

Speaking generally, there are a few areas through which one may cultivate a personal signature. The materials, format, style, and content-based choices, such as recurring themes, may all come to reflect an artist-researcher's unique fingerprint. Beyond these generalizations, the tools available for developing a personal signature depend on the specific artistic medium.

Summary of Evaluative Criteria

Table 8.2 summarizes the evaluative criteria reviewed in this chapter.

TABLE 8.2. Summary of Evaluation Criteria**Ethical practice**

Topic selection
 Procedural ethics
 Participatory work
 Sensitive portrayals
 Public performances
 Participatory work
 Artistic license
 Reflexivity

Methodology

Question–method fit
 Holistic or synergistic approach
 Thoroughness
 Coherence
 Congruence
 Internal consistency
 Data analysis
 External dialogue
 Data analysis cycles
 Reflective teams
 Internal dialogue
 Literature and/or theory
 Translation
 Creative strategies for artistic inquiry translation
 Adaptation theory
 Transparency or explicitness

Usefulness, significance, or substantive contribution

Trustworthiness and authenticity

Public scholarship

Accessible to diverse audiences
 Jargon-free
 Dissemination—reaches relevant stakeholders
 Participatory approaches

Audience response

Multiple meanings

Aesthetics or artfulness

Aesthetic quality, aesthetic power, or artfulness
 Incisiveness
 Concision
 Coherence
 Artful authenticity

Personal fingerprint or creativity

Final Comments on Evaluation: On Messiness, Balance, and Artist-Researcher Positionality

One of the questions I get asked most frequently is: What distinguishes your arts-based novels from those written by a traditional novelist? This question highlights a fundamental issue operating behind the scenes in my review of evaluative criteria and the messiness and interplay of even those criteria that we do have. Perhaps this messiness is most evident when talking about usefulness versus aesthetics.

In terms of the usefulness/aesthetics tension, I think what distinguishes ABR from a traditional piece of art is *the purpose for which it was created*. In the same respect, purpose is what distinguishes a piece of ABR from traditional representations of quantitative or qualitative research (in this case, the purpose might include evocation, emotional connection, or reaching public audiences). When I am evaluating my own arts-based work I always bear in mind my overall purpose, which in my novel writing has included addressing particular thematic content, connecting with readers in order to promote reflection, and accessing nonacademic audiences. The tension remains that in order to meet those goals the novels must be *good enough*, which may in fact be the most realistic benchmark for artistic quality in most ABR. Kip Jones (2010) has written about this issue with great clarity:

I did not suddenly decide to transform into a graphic illustrator, script writer or filmmaker. I remain a social scientist with a particular story to tell or message to get across by exploring which media will best help me to accomplish that. I don't worry about whether I am exceptionally good at the use of the specific media but rather, wonder if that means will serve the purpose at hand. (para 9)

Jones's perspective takes into consideration the vantage point from which a practitioner comes to ABR. I come to this practice as a sociologist with a particular interest in studying women's lives and relationships, and so my research purpose guides other considerations. However, I understand that in order to best achieve my purpose, artistry is important, and the more I work with literary forms, the more committed I am to them as rigorous crafts. I aim for my novels to be solid, well-crafted, and enjoyable reads. I truly want them to be beautiful and stand purely as literary works. I strive to make them better than good enough, knowing I may fall short. In this regard de Freitas (2004), who also writes fiction as research, explains that rigor emerges from her attention to the craft of writing. Saldaña comes to qualitative

research from theatre arts, and therefore emphasizes the quality of the art as a piece of art. Yet he also notes the tension between artfulness and fidelity to the data and the importance of the research data in the construction of ethnodramatic works. So for those concerned about working with these formats because they don't have "enough" artistic or social science training, I urge you to approach this practice from whence you came.

Evaluating ABR puts us in a messy terrain, and I think we're positioned to do our best work and bring out the best in others if we accept and indeed *embrace* that messiness. There is no model for how to do ABR or how to evaluate it that will suit each project. While there are general criteria as outlined in this chapter, and also standards within each artistic genre, they can't be applied uniformly. So my advice is this: Begin from where you are, learn as you go, trust your intuition, take risks, balance your goals and abilities, and accept that no research product can be all things to all people. We would all love to be able to make work that is simultaneously great research and great art, but that isn't always possible, nor is it always the goal. The question may be: Is it *good enough* to achieve the intended purpose?



Note

1. I should note in the interest of disclosure that sometimes this is more difficult in practice. For example, when I collected interviews over the course of many years, which later informed my novel *Low-Fat Love*, I had no idea that I was ever going to fictionalize what I had learned. It wasn't possible to inform participants, and for that matter students and others from whom I had learned, that themes I learned from them would wind up in a novel. In these instances protecting anonymity, creating sensitive and multidimensional portrayals, and aiming to "do some good" is the best you can do.



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Nine



Bridging the Art–Science Divide

The scholar seeks, the artist finds.

—ANDRÉ GIDE

Method meets art at the intersection of social and political progress, the emergence of alternative theoretical and epistemological groundings, overarching social justice-oriented research initiatives, and the academic shift toward transdisciplinarity. The merging of the world of science with the world of art has caused a renegotiation of the scientific standards that traditionally guided research practice while also highlighting the points of convergence between these two falsely polarized worlds. The methodological hybridization that has occurred as a result of these larger shifts, which constitutes the focus of this book, facilitates the objectives many researchers have long held while simultaneously creating a space where new research questions can be formulated. As borderlines and borderlands change and even rupture, new spaces for arts-based inquiry emerge.

Elliot Eisner noted that our selection of research topics is inextricably bound to the available knowledge-building tools; he posited that our “capacity to wonder is stimulated” by the kinds of methodological tools and forms of representation with which we are familiar (1997, p. 8). In addition, Eisner suggested that we seek “what we know how to find” (p. 7). These tools shape topic selection, research questions, and research design (from data generation to representation). Sharlene Hesse-Biber and I (2006, 2008) have suggested that new methods provide ways to “come at things differently.” Therefore, methodological innovation is not simply about adding new methods to our arsenal

for the sake of “more,” but rather about opening up new ways to think about knowledge-building: *new ways to see*. Attention to creativity and innovation allows us to think in terms of *new research structures*. Arts-based practices are on the methodological cutting edge—researchers are *carving* new practices and creating *new ways to see*. These practices are about composing, weaving, orchestrating, creating tapestries of meanings, and producing knowledge in new shapes.

The Arts as Research

In everyday social life the arts are often characterized as “universal.” Although the arts can be a source of common understanding and serve as a point of convergence (a strength of some arts-based methods), by and large the idea that music or dance serves as a “universal language” is a romanticized view of the arts that fails to consider the larger system in which art is produced and consumed. Art is created within socio-historical and cultural contexts. There is an institutional context to the production of art, and market forces, which together create the value system in which art is legitimized, judged, experienced, and traded. Moreover, philosophical perspectives on art, cultural norms and values, as well as pragmatic concerns also affect the production and consumption of art. Globalization—a multidirectional exchange of cultural artifacts, capital, and technology—also influences artistic production. In this vein, hybrid arts, in both form and content, have been popping up everywhere and can serve as an entrance into significant contemporary questions about cultural exchange/transfer. For these reasons, we may see an even greater increase in ABR practices for their compatibility with studies of globalization.

There are several related phenomena that have most clearly propelled the arts into social research practice. These include the power and immediacy of artistic media, the oppositional possibilities of art, and the move toward public scholarship. It is worth noting that the push toward public scholarship not only is occurring within the academy but is fueled in part by the democratization of knowledge resulting from the Internet and social media.

The arts can grab hold of people’s attention in powerful ways, making lasting impressions. Art is immediate. Music can permeate an environment and penetrate the listener; a piece of visual art can stop people in their tracks and jar them into seeing something differently; a play can evoke a range of emotions, causing audience members to weep and laugh. Clearly not all art, or even most art, affects people in

these ways; however, all of the arts have the *capability* of doing so. They hold the promise, the possibility. Even when a particular art piece falls below these lofty goals, it may still communicate an important story or range of meanings, and do so in an aesthetically interesting way. Given the various aesthetic qualities of art forms, it is not surprising that many people take pleasure in the beauty of the arts and their power to transform, alter mood or outlook, and bring depth to life. Consider how many people elect to spend their leisure time consuming art, from novels to films. The arts as a representational form therefore accomplishes two important things formerly absent from research reports.

First, the appeal of the arts extends beyond academia, as does the ability for a novice to enter into the story being told. The turn toward artistic forms of representation brings social research to broader and public audiences, mitigating some of the educational and social class biases that have traditionally dictated the beneficiaries of academic scholarship. When I wrote the first edition of this book, the goal of expanding the audience for social research had not yet been truly realized because most arts-based researchers still published their work in specialized academic journals or presented their work to limited audiences at conferences. However, this is changing. Publishers are increasingly taking on border-crossing work, print-on-demand technology and self-publishing has dramatically risen, arts-based exemplars have received recognition via awards in research and art communities, and funding sources have begun to take the issue of “impact” more seriously, making more funding available for performative work, as well as mixed methods research. There is still a long way to go with respect to broadening our audiences, but the progress is clear. Furthermore, the potential is there for ABR to go public in a way that is not the case with traditional jargon-laden research reports.

Second, the arts have the capability to evoke emotions, promote reflection, and transform the way that people think. Recent research on the relationship between neuroscience and art, reviewed in Chapter 1, strongly indicates that art has enormous and perhaps unmatched potential to educate. The move toward artistic forms of representation in particular is entwined with the surge in social justice research across the disciplines. Many scholars using arts-based practices are doing so with the intent of increasing a critical consciousness, promoting reflection, building empathetic connections, forming coalitions, challenging stereotypes, and fostering social action.

Research conducted or presented via arts-based practices retains a transformational capability because of the oppositional potential of art as a medium. Historically, various art genres have been used as sites of

resistance to social oppression. Grassroots movements, activist-artists, and many other individuals have drawn on the arts in social protest and resistance both publicly and privately. The resistive potential of art is now being harnessed by researchers increasingly committed to dismantling stereotypes, accessing and amplifying the voices of marginalized groups, and engaging in research that propels social change.

As new theoretical and epistemological perspectives, particularly those grounded in social justice politics, have emerged, a need for methodological innovation has also developed. So, for example, the turn to the arts has been natural for some qualitative researchers because they view artistic inquiry as an extension of what they already do. As noted throughout this volume, there is a congruency between the skills needed to conduct qualitative research and those that guide artistic practice. In summary, both practices can be conceived of as *crafts* aiming to shed light on some aspect of the social world. In addition to accessing and (re)presenting subjugated voices, these methods are well suited to projects in which the researcher is after multiple meanings. In contrast to positivist research that limits the set of meanings that can emerge from a research project, arts-based practices lend themselves to multiplicity.

Figure 9.1 distinguishes some of the main features of quantitative research, qualitative research, and ABR. This figure highlights several phenomena. First, arts-based practices value different kinds of content and representational formats or shapes. The emphasis or goal, what we aim to get at and impart, differs from work in other paradigms. Thus the way we conceptualize our goals and appropriate strategies for achieving them, including the goals and means for (re)presentation, differs.

Second, arts-based practices require a specific skill set on the part of the researcher. The practice of ABR may encourage practitioners to further develop their research and/or artistic skills. In addition to learning about the craft one is adapting, ABR practice demands the following on the part of researchers: flexibility; creativity; openness and intuition; storytelling proficiency; thinking conceptually, symbolically, metaphorically (Saldaña, 1999), and thematically; attention to ethical practice and one's values system.

Third, arts-based practices are moving from interdisciplinarity to transdisciplinarity. Former disciplinary boundaries are disrupted within the ABR paradigm—making way for integrated cross-disciplinary practices and emergent practices that are not “housed” in any one disciplinary context. This is another way in which these practices challenge existing research paradigms.

Quantitative	Qualitative	Arts-Based
Numbers	Words	Stories, images, sounds, scenes, sensory
Data discovery	Data collection	Data or content generation
Measurement	Meaning	Evocation
Tabulating	Writing	Re(presenting)
Value neutral	Value laden	Political, consciousness-raising, emancipation
Reliability	Process	Authenticity
Validity	Interpretation	Truthfulness
Prove/convince	Persuade	Compel, move, aesthetic power
Generalizability	Transferability	Resonance
Disciplinary	Interdisciplinary	Transdisciplinary

FIGURE 9.1. Main tenets of quantitative, qualitative, and ABR approaches.

Finally, this figure indicates that the goals of arts-based practices—the *intention* within a given research project—differs from quantitative and (traditional) qualitative research purposes. Therefore, as reviewed in the last chapter, knowledge constructed with arts-based practices must be assessed on its own terms. Researchers working with this new breed of practices have been developing criteria, and it is important that broader scientific standards are adapted according to their findings so that the research community is not forced to compare apples and oranges. Although new theoretical and methodological innovations are always met with scrutiny, and perhaps even fear, it is important to remember that sometimes researchers are so careful to be “sterile” in their attempts to meet established scientific criteria and mitigate possible critique that they ironically end up *muddying* the truths to be found in their work. In other words, reliance on the concepts of reliability and validity does not ensure that work will have any significance for the research community or the public.

We may also need to develop a new kind of practice-based language to explain and facilitate these new transdisciplinary research practices, including evaluative procedures. As qualitative research ushered in new terms appropriate with research practices, the new kind

of knowledge building occurring in arts-based traditions may also require a new way of talking about research. For example, many ABR practitioners use the word *practice* over *method* as I have mainly done throughout this book. It may be important to think in terms of *data generation*, not *data collection*. The former implies we are active in creating data via inquiry and not merely “finding” it. Some suggest we also use new words to talk about “data.” Joe Norris (2014) suggests the word *content* instead of *data*. Even without these specific examples, broadly speaking, many of the authors noted throughout this book are thinking in terms of *new research structures* and, as I have suggested, are *building knowledge in new shapes*. The research community needs to consider that, as we develop new ways to see, knowledge may be formed in new shapes. These new shapes are at times a sonic architecture, portraiture, or the many other forms reviewed in this book, as well as those that artist-researchers have yet to carve. Using the language, practices, and forms of the arts allows us to think and therefore see and build in new ways.

Let’s briefly compare the traditional “shape” research takes to those reviewed in this text. As Shaun McNiff (2018) points out, the typical format used for research reports is a scientific model: IMRAD (introduction, methods, results [findings], and discussion). This template dictates the “shape” of most peer-reviewed journal articles and the like. When doing ABR, there are no templates. As McNiff (2018) suggests, ABR demands we do away with typologies and standardized approaches that go against the nature of art itself. Arts-based practitioners may build knowledge in innumerable shapes, including all of the artistic forms reviewed in this text, and the many others one may adapt or conceive.

When using the IMRAD format, it’s easy to see if you’re doing a “good” job representing your research, simply because there’s an insert-this-info-here formula; however, it’s trickier with ABR. How do we know that we are creating a strong representation? Paying attention to aesthetics and artfulness, as reviewed in the last chapter, is important. As noted throughout this text, there’s a long process of learning the craft you’re adapting, and accepting you’ll improve with time and practice. Here are some tips you can use to get started (which first appeared in a 2018 blog I wrote for the National Art Education Association):

- Consume art in your medium. For instance, if you’re interested in ethnodrama, read many plays, including some on the subject area your research explores, and, if you’re able, go to theatre. Or if you’re

interested in collage making, look at examples in books, and, if you're able, visit museums, art galleries, or stores.

- Consume ABR in your medium. For instance, if you're interested in writing fiction, read examples of research transformed into fiction (short stories, novellas, and novels). Search online journals and the *Social Fictions* book series for examples. If you're not sure how to find examples in your genre, read journal articles and books about ABR. Note the scholars mentioned in the text as well as the reference list.

- Take note of what you enjoy. If you're interested in creating a short film based on your research, and you've just watched several short films, here are questions to consider: What stylistic choices did you respond to? What did you like about the writing? What did you notice about the cinematography? Ultimately you will want to develop your own unique style, but learning what you're drawn to will help.

- Read about the craft of art making in your genre. For instance, if you're interested in writing poetry, read books about poetry. If you're interested in a visual art medium, look at online tutorials.

- Start experimenting. Take your research (e.g., interviews, ethnographic observations, literature review) and try dabbling with art making. Start small. For instance, if you're interested in writing a novel based on your interview research, begin with an in-depth character profile, perhaps based on a composite of your interviewees. Or, create a writing prompt by taking a key sentence from your data and use it as an opening sentence for free writing. Or if you're interested in representing your research through visual art, start with sketching out some ideas. This is just about learning, finding your voice, and developing a feeling for integrating your scholarly and arts practices.

ABR requires building a discipline around your arts practice. To get started, designate a certain amount of time each day or on specified days of the week to practice your art or writing. Whether you can carve out 30 minutes or two hours, try to create a schedule you can stick to. Turn off all distractions (no checking social media). Even if you're not in flow, it's better to force yourself to struggle through the time in order to become disciplined about your practice. Sometimes it's not about inspiration, it's simply about forcing yourself to do the work. The more immersed you become in ABR, the less you will need to impose this structure, as it will morph into a regular part of your routine.

Also, remember when it comes to representation that you need to think like an artist *and* think like a public intellectual. With respect to

thinking like an artist, this necessitates making the best art you're able to make—which might mean, for example, that it's emotional, evocative, resonant, challenging, layered, or in some way compelling. If it touches or moves you, chances are it will do the same for others. With respect to thinking like a public intellectual, this draws our attention to the intended or potential audience(s) for our work. Consider if the work is clear, accessible, understandable, and even enjoyable, should that be a goal. Gathering feedback from participants, peers, and/or artists can be helpful. Likewise, if you're using a written form, reading your work out loud allows you to hear it differently.

As with all research projects, research practices or methods should be selected because they align with the research objectives. In other words, how well can this tool or set of tools help answer the research question? What can this practice uniquely access or enable? What does this approach fail to get at? Research objectives and the corresponding research design need to click together. By *clicking together*, I mean to suggest that research methods should be selected and adapted to meet particular research questions that are embedded within a framework of epistemological assumptions and theoretical commitments. The arts-based practices reviewed in this book all try to achieve a harmony between research question, design, and final representation.

Moreover, an arts-based approach to research may constitute one phase of the project. For example, data generated and analyzed via conventional methods may later be represented via an artistic form in order to impart the particular kinds of meaning deemed important and/or as a means of reaching a wider audience. Alternatively, data generated via other methods may be analyzed and interpreted with an arts-based practice. For example, focus group data may be analyzed using music as a model, allowing the data to be coded for timbre, dynamics, polyphony, and so on. An arts-based practice may also serve as one phase in a mixed or multimethod research project. In this case, the arts-based practice and traditional method(s) ideally inform each other, constituting an *integrated approach* to the methodology.

Collaborative Arts-Based Research

The practices reviewed in this book include narrative inquiry, fiction-based research, poetic inquiry, music as method, dance and movement, theatre, drama, film, and visual arts. The approaches are not interchangeable, however, and each adapted art form features particular methodological strengths while requiring an understanding

of the discipline from which it emerged. Consult previous chapters to learn about specific genres and practices. Simply because of space constraints, there are numerous other art forms that have not been included, some of which include: needlepoint, knitting, quilting, and martial arts. Collaborative ABR projects, in which two or more practitioners participate, also warrant discussion, as they seem to be on the rise. While some examples have been noted throughout this book, I'd like to highlight collaborative ABR.

Much research, including ABR, is collaborative with respect to our work with research participants. That is not my focus here. In this discussion I'm referring to collaboration between researchers or practitioners. The researcher is still often portrayed as a lone figure, and the research enterprise as a solo endeavor. However, collaboration between researchers or researchers and artists can enable the asking and answering of questions that would otherwise be out of reach. Research partnerships may center on one project or may be longer collaborations resulting in a body of work. Collaborators may bring shared knowledge or radically different expertise. Partnerships may develop for a host of reasons, including but not limited to: a unique opportunity that arises, a means of problem solving in a specific situation, or a long-term shared vision, and of course there may be overlap. Here I briefly review examples of each of these circumstances.

With respect to a unique opportunity, let's return to the Alexia Buono and Charles H. Gonzalez dance example from Chapter 5. To recap, these two doctoral students in an education program learned about ABR and wondered how they could use it to further their interests. They were each conducting independent research: Alexia in childhood dance education and Charles in teacher education and preservice teachers. Charles was having difficulty analyzing his data, particularly in regard to one participant, Tiffany. The two students decided to collaborate and engaged in a rigorous 12-week process that resulted in "dancing the data."¹ Charles described the process as moving from "a self-questioning period in relation to analyzing his data" to "collaborative thinking" (Buono & Gonzalez, 2017, p. 9). Alexia viewed this project as a way to bridge the fields of education and dance. This wound up being a highly successful collaboration (which you can read about in more detail in Chapter 5). It's also an example of collaborative ABR that developed out of a specific opportunity—two students in a program with the time to take this on. In this case, the unique skill sets each brought to bear enabled the project.

A few years ago I participated in a collaborative ABR project as a means of problem solving. This project, *Low-Fat Love Stories*, was briefly

reviewed in Chapter 7 (within which an end-of-chapter exemplar was also featured). Here I will elaborate. When my debut novel *Low-Fat Love* was released, I was inundated with highly personal notes from readers, and at book talks people waited in lines to whisper their stories to me. I was deeply moved by the experience and wanted to honor the sharing of stories inspired by the novel. I conducted a new set of qualitative interviews with women across the age spectrum and from diverse backgrounds. The interviews focused on a dysfunctional relationship of their choosing, past or present, with a family member, friend, or romantic partner, or in some cases, their own body image. I secured a book contract with the intent to write a traditional monograph titled *Low-Fat Love Stories*. After data analysis and interpretation, I ran into a problem: writer's block. For over a year, every time I went to start writing, I stared at a blank computer screen. I put the project on the back burner numerous times. Each time I returned it, I was stymied. After writing fiction for years, the monograph format was too constricting. When I tried to write, the essence of the women's stories didn't come through. I was on the verge of cancelling my book contract. By great luck or happenstance, at the time I was serving as a mentor to a creative arts therapy doctoral candidate, Victoria Scotti. Victoria is an accomplished visual artist. She was also conducting interview research with women at the time. One day over Skype I told her about *Low-Fat Love Stories*. She suggested I send her one of the 2–3 page single-spaced interview summaries I created during analysis, which consisted of the participant's demographic info, the main themes to emerge in her interview, and key quotes. I sent her a summary and she e-mailed back, "When I read this I see a portrait." We had numerous follow-up conversations via Skype and e-mail during which we developed a new methodology for the project. I sent Victoria an interview summary; she created a visual concept based on the themes and emotions of the summary (an act of visual data analysis); I placed the visual concept in front of me and used it as inspiration to write a first-person short story grounded in the participant's exact language (drawing about 50% of the words directly from the interview transcript); Victoria then used the story to create the woman's final portrait (which depicts the themes and emotions of her story and is not meant to represent what she looks like). We provided feedback to each other throughout the process. We call what we created "textual-visual snapshots." The result is a coauthored book titled *Low-Fat Love Stories* (2017) which features a collection of 16 short stories and visual art, based on 17 interviews. Having spent years immersed in these interviews I truly believe the final book captures the essence of the women's stories in a way no other format would. This

collaboration was effective because Victoria and I each brought different expertise to the project, hers in visual art and mine in fiction, and we respected each other's point of view and talent. It's also important to emphasize that although I did the writing and Victoria created the art, we are listed as *coauthors* on the final book, each entitled to the benefits that carries. The visual art in this book is not merely illustration and thus the term *coauthor* was appropriate. When working with collaborators across art forms it's important to consider the ethics of how each person is named, the potential financial and professional implications, and what this signifies about how each art form is valued.

There are also numerous examples of partnerships based on a long-term shared vision and these collaborations may last for one project or extend across numerous projects, forming a joint body of work. Collaboration may even occur in genres we tend to think of as solo endeavors, such as novel writing. Alexandra C. H. Nowakowski and J. E. Sumerau, friends, partners, and previous coauthors, coauthored the novel *Other People's Oysters* (2018), which is grounded in years of ethnographic, autoethnographic, historical, and statistical research that they have undertaken individually and jointly. In the preface they describe the book this way:

Although written as a first-person narrative that allows readers to imagine themselves in the shoes of a neuro-atypical, bisexual, non-binary person, *Other People's Oysters* is a novel about families, politics, and social movements; how decisions by political elites influence the lives of working people, and the complex ways families and social movements form in relation to broader socio-political and environmental conditions. . . . *Other People's Oysters* offers a view into the ways political decisions—by officials and activists—shape and shift the life course of individuals, families, and towns over time. It also provides a first person view of some ways social movements develop and play out in the lives of everyday people. (pp. xv–xvi)

They further explain that their shared belief in the usefulness of stories as a method of advocacy and intervention as well as their “shared realization” that the story could help introduce a broader public to “some of the ways neuro-atypical people see and experience daily life” inspired them to coauthor the novel. They write “we crafted this novel as a way for readers to step into the shoes of a mental, sexual, gendered, and classed experience uncommon in existing academic and media depictions of our society, and to walk through the types of local, regional, and national political activities that facilitate social movements” (p. xvii).

ABR partnerships may also produce large bodies of work. For

example, Durell M. Callier and Dominique C. Hill formed the collective Hill L. Waters. Graduates of the same doctoral program, they self-describe as Black, queer, scholar-artists, colleagues, and friends. As a collective they have engaged in years of work in various forms of ABR, including performative work and artistically rendered autoethnographic writing. They recently published the book *Who Look at Me?!: Shifting the Gaze of Education through Blackness, Queerness, and the Body* (2019), which explores how we, as a society, see Blackness and in particular Black youth. In this text they suggest that the ability to operationalize the sentiment that #BlackLivesMatter, requires seeing Blackness wholly, as queer, and as a site of subversive knowledge production. They write the following about their work as a “collective,” which they conceptualize as deeper than collaboration in the traditional sense:

Our coming together was and remains intentional. Since deciding to write together, we have learned a great deal about each other, supported and challenged one another on how we engage with academia and institutional expectations, and reflected deeply upon our collective practice. This practice is rooted in feminist, lesbian, and queer-of-color collectives, which serve as important bedrocks for a variety of academic disciplines and are the wellspring from which methodological and theoretical frameworks were born. The joys of working in collectivity versus collaboration prove intense and necessary. We realize that collaborations usually offer clearly defined beginnings and endings, yet we seek to continue. Despite its intent of togetherness, collaboration often takes the form of lone creating and writing with a piecing together of individual creations, whereas we wrote this virtually, face-to-face, live via Google Doc, *together*. We would be remiss, however, if we didn't acknowledge that our deliberations around how to write together as well as the choice to write requires intense labor, communication, and is not without consequences (seen and not yet materialized). . . . Despite these challenges, and perhaps in spite of them, we persist as a collective. (p. xix)

Of course while collaboration carries certain opportunities, it also comes with a range of challenges. Some of these challenges center on practical issues such as “credit” within academia, which still favors and incentivizes individual research. This is discussed in the next section.

Before moving on to challenges, it's important to note there are also multimethod arts-based approaches, which have been included in this text. There are many exciting examples of practitioners combining different artistic mediums in a single project. Several of the examples of collaborative work noted are also multimethod projects, such as

Low-Fat Love Stories, which combines fiction-based research and visual art in a study based on in-depth qualitative interviews.

Challenges Doing Arts-Based Research: Practical Advice

Throughout this book I've encouraged you to begin where you are, bringing enthusiasm and fearlessness to your work. I truly believe the greatest professional satisfaction comes from doing work that engages us and about which we are passionate. However, that doesn't mean there aren't challenges doing ABR, particularly for students or early career scholars. The fact remains that academia still heavily favors quantitative research, and this bias is built into publishing, funding, IRB, and other professional structures. Qualitative research has garnered more legitimacy over time, but is still structurally regarded as the "lesser" approach to research and many challenges persist. ABR is even trickier; it's unknown to some and dismissed or diminished by others. In no way do I wish to discourage anyone from doing this work; despite the challenges, it's brought me the greatest rewards of my career. I am not alone. Scholar and filmmaker Yen Yen Woo, whose film *Singapore Dreaming* was discussed in Chapter 6, beautifully explains how and why she works in artistic forms despite the inevitable doubts:

A big part of why I work in creative forms is not rational. At some level, it is simply fun. The energy of creating is very different from the hard-but-necessary slog of scholarly research, but one informs the other. I imagine the story/film/book/play in my head one day, probably from my research or teaching experience, and some months or years later it takes concrete form, which then becomes a part of the public cultural landscape, which then informs my scholarship, and the cycle begins again. The processes are also rarely linear, and I often juggle multiple potential projects in my head without being able to predict which will come to fruition first. The hazy, half-formed ideas gather energy. . . . In some ways, it's like giving birth to a child—the sleepless nights, the self-doubt, the anxiety over whether my efforts are good enough, the dread that all of this was some mistake from the very beginning—and then the audience sees the work, and a smile or a tear or a word from them makes me ready to do it all over again. (2019, pp. 360–361)

As I said from the start of this book, ABR is a messy terrain. It's also beautiful, inspirational, and full of possibilities. Despite the highs,

engaging in ABR carries challenges, and I'd like to offer some practical advice.

The research landscape is highly political, with researchers coming from different schools of thought vying for standing and often scant resources. If you decide to embark on ABR, the extent to which you will find support or resistance is partly based on your institution. Some smaller liberal arts schools are more open to innovative approaches to research. They tend to care less about what kind of research you're doing, as long as you're doing something. Many renowned ABR scholars have found good professional homes at smaller schools. Larger research-centered institutions tend to have stricter guidelines about what constitutes valuable research. However, in a larger institution there is the chance others will also be doing ABR or something adjacent to it. Please bear in mind, these are generalizations and will not apply to every institution. No matter what kind of school you work at, it's important to have a good look at the tenure and promotion criteria. If they developed when ABR wasn't recognized or wasn't taken into account, they may need updating, and having those conversations early on with your department chairperson and dean is wise. You don't want to wait until you're up for promotion. Issues of coauthorship and assigning "credit" also come to bear. It's vital to make sure your school's tenure and promotion requirements allow for coauthorship. Some of the best research across paradigms, including ABR, is born from collaboration.

Building a sense of community, at and beyond your institution, is also invaluable, as is seeking out appropriate venues to present or publish your work. Here are some suggestions:

- Seek out other scholars doing ABR at your institution.
 - If there aren't others doing ABR at your institution, seek out scholars who are likely to understand and be supportive of ABR, for example, those working in the arts, qualitative researchers, or those working from critical perspectives.
- If you're forming a thesis or dissertation committee, seek one or more external members who specialize in ABR and will be able to help you situate your work.
- Attend conferences that actively support ABR (if funds are tight this may mean forgoing your national association conference in favor of a smaller conference such as the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, or joining arts-based or arts-related

special interest groups for national associations such as the American Educational Research Association).

- Network at conferences—find scholars with similar interests.
- Join social media communities that center on ABR or the specific kind of work you're doing and try to forge connections with people who share common interests.
- Submit your work to journals that value ABR (you can consult the suggestions at the end of chapters in this book as a place to start).
- If you're looking for a book publisher, see who has published other books about or that use ABR.
- If you're presenting or displaying your work in a format that isn't text-based, such as a performance or visual art display, document the event.

When you're trying to grapple with “red tape” and meet certain benchmarks, such as dealing with thesis committee members who may not understand ABR or IRBs who may be unfamiliar with your methods, remember that at the end of the day they just want to see you are in conversation with others. Research is meant to contribute to larger conversations on your topic. To do this, cite, cite, cite. Offer examples of others using your methods or similar methods. It's also wise to build extra time into your project for additional go-arounds with IRBs and the like. Expect that they may not approve your project quickly and might request additional information simply because what you're doing is beyond the scope of what they're used to. Plan for this.

Regardless of what approach to research you use, try to think strategically as you navigate the professional landscape. Part of this has to do with forming strategic relationships and developing a network, as reviewed. Another aspect of this is how you deal with critique. Whether it comes from professors, anonymous journal reviewers, or customers on Amazon, anyone who conducts and publishes research faces some measure of critique. So remember, you're not alone. And yes, it can hurt. It can hurt more with artistic work because of our personal connection to it. With ABR, the critique can often come from people who do not know about or understand ABR or those who are evaluating your work based on inappropriate standards created for quantitative or qualitative research. Arm yourself with information—know what assessment criteria makes sense for your work and familiarize yourself with examples of other students or scholars who have conducted

similar research. Another piece of advice for dealing with naysayers: Always take a beat before you respond. It's easy to respond defensively in these situations, but I find it's much more effective and disarming to respond straightforwardly. I've even used graciousness as a strategy. For example, when someone critiqued one of my novels in a public forum, I thanked him for taking the time to read it. He was floored and silenced. In another instance, when I was delivering an invited lecture at a university a professor stood up and asked how I would respond to people calling my work "all that is wrong with academia." I told him I wouldn't respond to someone saying that. He was silenced, but others in the room leapt to talk about the benefits of ABR. By and large I've learned that, for me, what makes the most sense is presenting my work and allowing others to respond to it as they choose. I don't get swept up in defending the field. It stands on its own merits. You'll need to choose what's right for you.

There's one more challenge I want to mention, one that is both personal and bound up with ethics: the nagging question "does my research matter?" We engage with ABR in order to do research that we hope has meaning for others. We do research to be of use. Yet sometimes when all is said and done, we don't know if what we've done has mattered. Maybe we weren't able to reach our intended audience, maybe we weren't able to get our work outside of academia, or maybe we weren't able to help our participants in the ways we hoped. For example, as noted in the last chapter, Mindy Carter (2017) wrote a powerful, honest reflection on the "deep despair" she felt after conducting an artful inquiry project with indigenous youth in Guatemala and Canada (p. 11). The project was intended to help indigenous students understand and represent their identities, but in the end, she felt they didn't need her. Carter grappled with the ethical implications of having allocated time and resources to the project, and the experience took a toll on her. The truth is, if we knew all of the answers, we wouldn't be conducting the investigation in the first place. So we won't always meet our goals, get the answers we seek, or create the change we hope to see. It won't always work out as planned or hoped. Yet from each project, we do learn and we can apply those insights to the next endeavor. My advice, whether it's dealing with resistant scholars, challenging IRB committees, unwelcoming journal editors, or your own inner critic, is this: Develop your own relationship with your work that isn't dependent on anything external. Focus on the process and staying true to your guiding value system. You can always learn for the next time, and as Maya Angelou eloquently said, "when you know better, you do better."

Exploding Myths and Building Coalitions: Crossing the Art–Science Divide

Art is mysterious. Science is straightforward. Art promotes thought through its reliance on metaphor, symbolism, and imagination. Science offers “facts” and “truth” through its reliance on numbers, words, and objectivity. These kinds of polarizing and one-dimensional views of artistic practice and scientific inquiry have guided the building of paradigmatic borders within which artistic inquiry and social inquiry have been artificially separated. The recent growth in ABR practices across the disciplines has been propelled in part by creative researchers analyzing the similarities between scientific research and artistic practice. To do so, some have exposed the false separation of art and social inquiry (see Saarnivaara, 2003). For example, both scientific research and artistic practice are fueled by creativity (Ernst, 2000; Janesick, 2001). In this regard, Ivan Brady (1991) has long been using the term “artful science” and similarly Valerie Janesick (2001) suggests the term “artist-scientists.” Johnny Saldaña (1999) rightly observes that both research and artistic practice require thinking conceptually, symbolically, and metaphorically. Innovation, intuition, and flexibility all play key roles in both scientific and artistic communities. The principles underscoring these practices are thus the same. Moreover, both communities aim to discover, explore, and illuminate. To summarize, key principles in both artistic and scientific practice include (Leavy, 2013):

- Thinking conceptually and building conceptual structures
- Thinking symbolically
- Thinking analytically
- Using metaphors and metaphorical analysis
- Innovation
- Intuition
- Flexibility
- Discovering, exploring, illuminating

The dismantling of the dichotomies that guide positivist research, including the rational–emotional, subject–object, and concrete–abstract, as reviewed in Chapter 1, have ultimately led to the discovery and interrogation of additional dualistic models that have underscored social-scientific research practice while remaining invisible and thus

beyond discourse. These dichotomies are science-art and fact-fiction. ABR practices call our attention to the polarizing notions that distinguish art and science from each other in ways that have prevented the kinds of cross-pollination that might advance conversations about the human condition and our study of it. For example, art-science innovations call our attention to the power of art to interrogate and communicate and the many ways that metaphor, symbolism, and imagination already guide some “scientific” research practice, although within the shadows. ABR also calls attention to how we, as researchers, generate data, often collaboratively with participants (we do not claim to simply discover or collect it, disavowing our role in the creation process or objectifying research participants). This shines a spotlight on how all researchers are involved in shaping knowledge, and frequently so, in concert with others. In these ways and others, arts-based innovations and the public scrutiny of them by various professional communities allow the scientific community to problematize the polarization of fact and fiction—an artificial dualism that legitimizes some ways of knowing over others and may contribute to the replication of dominant power relations.

The fusion of tools from the arts with scientific methods has created the methodological innovation necessary to more fully address the complex realities that constitute social life. With this said, arts-based practices have a long way to go with respect to professional legitimacy so that academics are free to use these tools without cost to their career (from promotion to funding).

Pragmatically, in order for the best researchers to be able to work with these tools, the institutional context in which research occurs needs to change. For instance, arts-based practices cannot be relegated to the status of second- or third-tier methods. These approaches cannot be categorized as “experimental,” which undermines and marginalizes these practices. In order to advance our understanding of these practices and their potential to add to our knowledge, conference, publication, and funding opportunities need to be available for researchers working within this paradigm. Increasingly this is the case. As Sharlene Hesse-Biber and I (2006, 2008) wrote about in our books on emergent methods, a “funding gap,” often coupled with the pressure to publish in recognized peer-reviewed forums, prevents researchers from engaging in cutting-edge methodology and disseminating their research via new channels. As academia has become more interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary, these material and structural barriers should be adjusted to make way for methodological hybrids like those reviewed in this volume. Furthermore, as we continue to move

toward public scholarship and researchers are increasingly expected to show evidence of the *impact* of their work, funding sources will need to catch up. This is certainly where things have been and are heading. For example, in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, research is now categorized in a few different ways, one of which is *practice led*, and requires a systematic analysis of its impact. As issues of open access have also made online journals more popular, the historic journal hierarchy is slowly being eroded. Times are changing.

When it comes to publishing, screening, or otherwise distributing research, there are increased venues across the board. As evidenced by the suggested journals and websites listed at the end of each chapter in this book, opportunities to work with these practices and still meet even traditional professional benchmarks of publication and the like are available.

For the time being, as noted earlier, researchers beginning to work with these methodological practices may meet some resistance by the established scientific community. I've tried to provide you with some practical strategies for negotiating these challenges. You may feel frustrated, but don't be discouraged. Cubist painter Georges Braque once famously noted, "Art upsets, science reassures" (in Fitzhenry, 1993, p. 51). That saying always brings a soft smile to my face and it may help to bear it in mind when bumping up against institutional and pragmatic barriers. It's also useful to bear in mind that the scientists and artists we most celebrate, like physicist Albert Einstein or Nobel Prize recipient Herbert Simon or author Zora Neale Hurston, embraced transdisciplinarity, crossed borders, rejected dualisms, and valued creativity.

New pathways don't just form, we have to create them—we *have to blaze the trails we want to pursue and that will be traveled by others*. To do so, build networks of those interested and committed to these innovations, experiment with cross-pollination, and take risks. Embrace creativity. As you embark on this journey, methods and art will fuse to create new pathways for social research, for countless others to follow.



Note

1. This term is taken from Bagley and Cancienne (2001, 2002).



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