**Beyond Methods**

Lessons from the arts to qualitative research

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## Lessons from the arts to qualitative research

## Liora Bresler (Ed.)

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In 2010, with the aim of promoting equity within all faculties, Lund University announced the establishment of a Visiting Professorship in the name of Hedda Andersson, the first female student of Lund University, accepted in 1880 and later becoming the second female university-educated physician of Sweden.

The very first Hedda Andersson Visiting Professorship was assigned the Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts and Malmö Academy of Music. We are very proud and honored that Liora Bresler, professor at the College of Education, College of Fine and Applied Arts and Fellow at the Academy of Entrepreneurial Leadership at the University of Illinois, Champaign, USA, accepted our invitation.

Liora Bresler is one of the internationally most innovative and highly qualified researchers within Education. Having had the privilege to host an internationally established researcher as professor Liora Bresler—our "Hedda"—has been very rewarding on many levels. Liora has served as a role model for the students, PhD candidates and researchers at the Malmö Academy of Music, and her broad competence has been very important to the Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts. Her interest in interdisciplinary research and arts based research methods, as well as her large international network has been a huge source of inspiration.

This book is one result of many of our collaborations with Liora during 2011-2015. With this book we hope to spread and share some of the experiences of the seminars, course work, discussions and ideas that became the outcome of Liora's Hedda period.

In this book, researchers at the Malmö Academy of Music meet with some of the highly acknowledged and recognized research members of Liora's international network. As a result, this book contains of six chapters written by members of our research group at The Malmö

Academy of Music and six chapters written by scholars of Liora's international network, with an additional introductory chapter written by Liora herself.

We deeply thank the authors of the chapters for their important contributions, Thomas Egan for a very thorough and competent language editing, and above all Liora Bresler.

We are very proud and delighted to deliver this book to you the Scandinavian and international readership, and we are looking forward to further discussions in the important matters dealt with in this book.


Malmö September 20, 2015

Eva Sæther and Göran Folkestad

# The polyphonic texture of a collaborative book: Personal and communal intersections

## LIORA BRESLER

The beginnings of all collaborative works are manifold. My role as an editor of this volume is driven by a methodological quest, a growing awareness of the inspiration and support that the arts can provide to the challenging mission of qualitative research. Formed through multiple visits to Malmö, Sweden, the book came alive through the companionship of dedicated, wise, truly inspiring fellow researchers. Its early cocoon stages took the form of two courses and a series of meetings at the Malmö Academy of Music in Lund University. Research projects and ephemeral conversations metamorphosed into book chapters. While the initial core group of authors has consisted of researchers in the Malmö Academy of Music, we invited kindred academic spirits in diverse disciplinary and geographical milieus to create a larger, heterogenic entity. Now launched into the world, the book takes flight on its longer journey.

This generative interplay between process and product parallels the dialectic of inquiry in the human sciences. Qualitative research is inherently an impossible venture. The aspiration to capture personal and cultural lived experience entails a paradox. Trying to stabilize experience through writing is not unlike pinning a butterfly: the very act is likely to take away its vitality, its very life. Similarly, lived experience defies written language, especially one driven by analytic goals.

Still, the endeavor of qualitative research is a worthy one. As cultural historian and philosopher Walter Ong has pointed out, writing, the commitment of the word to space, enlarges the potentiality of language beyond measure and restructures thought (Ong, 1982, p. 7-8). Ong elaborates on the relationship between writing and the concept of study. He observes that human beings in primarily oral cultures, those untouched by writing in any form, learn a great deal and possess and practice great wisdom, but they are not said to "study" (Ong, 1982, p. 9). While all thought, including that associated with primarily oral cultures, is to some degree analytic, the breaking down of concepts into various components—abstractly sequential, classificatory, explanatory—for the examination of

phenomena is nearly impossible without writing and reading (Ong, 1982). Evidently, conceptual and analytical tools of research can be hugely powerful in expanding knowledge and understanding. However, acknowledgement of their limitations and the challenges involved in working with them and continuously searching for additional models is crucial for their effectiveness in qualitative research. The arts, I found in my own intellectual quest, provide a compelling, effervescent model.

The chapter is structured in two sections. The first one presents my personal journey of lessons from the arts as an impetus for a research career and for explorations in research methodology, including inspirations and grappling with hindrances. The second section describes an account of this group project, its origins and evolution, and a brief overview of chapters.

## Lessons from the arts: Personal journey

The elusive, ephemeral nature of classroom life struck me in the initial observation of my very first educational research project. A defining experience in my research career, which followed many years as a pianist, was an Aha moment when I discovered that the familiar lenses of music analysis that structure the fluidity of sound—form, rhythm, dynamics, orchestration, and counter-point—can also be used to analyze the fluidity of classroom life (Bresler, 1983, 2003). Having Elliot Eisner as the first reader of this work was critical. One of the pioneers in the arena of qualitative educational research, Eisner argued that the arts embody sophisticated, relevant knowledge and advocated their use in research (Eisner, 1979; 1991). This coupled with his role as the project director and my academic gatekeeper, was essential. His positive response to my paper provided legitimation for musical lenses as structuring my classroom observations, rendering them from a personal insight to a public, methodological one.

The experiences and intellectual companionship I encountered in my first semester as a doctoral student and research assistant at Stanford were crucial to my journey. Eisner's "Aesthetic foundation of education" course introduced me to readings that follow me to this day. John Dewey's definition of art as intensified experience (1934) was the first one (after years of taking courses in aesthetics!) that finally bridged the chasm between my artistic experiences and my interest in philosophy. It also captured my newly launched experience of fieldwork as intensified, animated experience. Dewey's related observation that "recognition is perception arrested," distinguishing between the surface act of recognition and the inherently aesthetic processes involving heightened perception (Dewey, 1934, p. 52), framed an active, creative seeing both in the arts and in research. I remember leaving Eisner's class with the exhilaration of perceiving the whole big world with freshness. Art, research and life converged.

Other readings from this course were formative as well. Leo Tolstoy's treatise on art (1898/1969) highlighted reaching out and connecting with others' experiences of the human condition through art. Suzanne Langer's notion of dynamic image as a metaphor for dance (Langer, 1957) drew my attention to the fluidity of the artistic form. Morris Weitz (1956) identified the open-ended, ever-evolving concept of art as a linguistic construction, exposing the futility of an "ultimate" definition of art in the aesthetic literature, even while recognizing its usefulness in understanding significant aspects of the arts.

Another pivotal course I took that first semester, with Nel Noddings, was centered on caring. The writings of Martin Buber (with Walter Kaufmann's notable introduction), Paul Tillich, and others addressed the foundation of compassionate scholarship and highlighted relationships based on consideration and kindness. Nel epitomized these qualities in her interactions with us, with integrity and responsiveness to classroom situations. Caring, it was clear, was not about being "nice" (though Nel was nice enough) but about standing up for others in difficult situations (Bresler, 2012), cultivating concern and empathy.

The shared processes underlying the arts, qualitative research, and human relationships as I experienced those first hand, and as supported through readings in aesthetics and existentialism, made attractive the prospect of an academic career that could connect my artistry, academic inquiry, and everyday life. In this process, I recognized the arts to be powerful educators imparting lessons regarding engagement, perception, and conceptualization, as well as reaching out to others in sharing the human condition with compassion. Informed by artistic and aesthetic sensitivities, the processes of research activated my whole self, linking my own inner and outer worlds and connecting to those of fellow travellers.

Later on, after I acquired fieldwork experience through various research projects, the query on "lessons from the arts," stayed with me as I strove to make explicit the relationships between artistic engagement and qualitative research. Most fundamental were the experience of *attunement* (Bresler 2006a drawing on; Buber, 1971; Schutz, 1971; Stubley, 1995) to what we study, an aspiration to dialogue, and subsequent connections (Bresler, 2006b). Connection, I realized, enables responsiveness and improvisation in the unfolding encounter of qualitative research. Intent listening during interviews resembled, in its absorption and intimacy, musical listening. My experiences underlying interviews, observations, and data analysis were similar to aesthetic processes in their intensely active inner involvement, with minimal overt action (Bresler, 2013). It is this inner-outer transaction that enables contemplation.

Like artistic activities, research entails what I refer to as *three-pronged communication* (Bresler, 2005). The dialogical relationship between researcher and fieldwork captured by Buber's (1971) concept of *I—Thou* embeds a third act, communication with future readers/audiences. The dual focus on both present research participants *and* future readers

evokes a polyphony of voices, where resonance and dissonance can generate intensified perception.

In this process of cultivating connection and perception, the qualitative expectation of prolonged engagement with data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is not just about *chronos,* measured time, but also pertains to *kairos,* experienced time. Within a research context, I interpret kairos as the experience of spaciousness around the research project, a space to become intimate and connect without attachment to an outcome. This spaciousness allows a methodological openness of interviews and observations for an evolving relationship with the setting, participants and oneself.

Fresh perception and meaning making do not abide by goals, rules, and technical procedures. Their very nature defies prescription and methods. Dewey and Peshkin respectively have pointed out common hindrances to perception: Dewey (1934) noting the 'automatic pilot' habit of *recognition*; Peshkin (1988) discussing our *subjectivity,* values and beliefs as conditioning our seeing. The disciplinary transition from the cultures of music performance and musicology to the culture of educational research alerted me to a third hindrance—*attachment to knowing*. Being forced to operate within a domain of not knowing, I became acutely aware of the drawbacks and difficulties, but also the vitality of exploration unbound by customs and tradition. Like the hindrances of recognition and subjectivity, the a-priori framework of knowledge can be an impediment. Confronted with my vulnerability in unknowing, I have also experienced how liberating it can be. These three hindrances deserve some articulation.

### Recognition

The power of recognition as a ubiquitous mental state, noted by Dewey[1], is formidable. We draw on recognition in our daily life in order to efficiently handle familiar situations. British philosopher of aesthetics Peter de Bolla maintains that "the ordinary is too close for attention" (de Bolla, 2001, p. 64). The ordinary, writes de Bolla, is extraordinary in its ability to go unremarked. Everyday things often have a strange power, what he calls the "uncanniness of their proximity", to slip *behind* attention (p. 64). We need, de Bolla observes, to construct a mode of inattention to survive, creating a domain too close for attention. In order to *see* (here, I equate seeing with Dewey's notion of perception), de Bolla suggests that we need to take the right distance (de Bolla, 2001.)

In my own experience as a researcher it is not so much about finding the *right* distance as *juxtaposing distances,* creating a polyphonic texture and points of dissonance that enhance perception. Juxtaposition of distances in engagement with the arts can be as simple as experimenting with physical proximity and distance: for example, walking around a sculpture, or moving closer to and farther from the artwork. Additional perspectives can be based on

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[1] Elaborated on by Chris Higgins, 2007.

broadening contexts for inquiry: for example, drawing on diverse sources of knowledge and understanding, including seeking to understand the responses of other viewers; and drawing on information about the artists' historical and artistic contexts in history and art history sources.

The process of conducting research often involves a choice of participants who represent diverse perspectives in regard to what is studied, or a focus on perspectives different from the researchers' in that interplay of "making the strange familiar, and the familiar strange." In ethnography, the starting point is a "strange" culture or sub-culture, seeking insiders' perspectives. In action research, it is typically a supposedly "familiar" setting through a process of de-familiarization, distancing through additional perspectives. In my own case-study work (Bresler, 1991), perspectives of people situated in different positions illuminated important issues: for example, teachers who embraced the arts as well as those that were opposed to including it in the curriculum; or perspectives of community members of various ages and positions who experienced the arts through school performances. In observations, I have found that multiplicity of perspectives can be achieved by attending classes at different times of the year, of the week, of the day, to maximize variance; by locating myself in different spots when observing a classroom; and adding observations of different types of events, such as community performances, teachers' informal gatherings, and meetings with higher administration. These provided importantly varied frames of reference for classroom teaching. The juxtaposition of such multiple approaches enabled me to note discrepancies that initially seemed baffling but made perfect sense after additional investigation. Examples of discrepancies include the role of school performances in the community[2], or specific teachers' relationships to the arts.[3]

Indeed, dissonance is often used to create complex understanding in qualitative and ethnographic research, as it does in Barone's *Touching eternity*, voicing the multiple perspectives of students of an award-winning art teacher, as well as the teacher himself (Barone, 2001); Gottlieb and Graham's parallel and intersecting worlds of the Beng Village in Ivory Coast and the US, as well as the parallel perspectives of the authors themselves—an anthropologist and a fiction writer (Gottlieb & Graham, 1994); and *Pre-schools in three cultures* presenting the differing, sometimes clashing cultural practices and perspectives on early childhood practices in Japan, China, and the US (Tobin, et al., 2004). Similarly, the power of Akira Kurasawa's *Rashomon* is generated by the discrepancies of the stories in their multiple perspectives. The points where the storytellers clearly lie or distort "objective

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[2] Their exclusion from the curriculum indicated their lack of importance, whereas conversations with teachers and community members indicated their powerful role. It took me some time to understand that it was precisely because of their importance that they were excluded as an act of protest for cutting funding for music education (Bresler, 1991).

[3] The same teacher seemed to express fundamentally different relationships to music, using a "rote" style in her teaching, but an expressive one in her own private music making. Here, the discrepancies were explicated by the differences between formal and public versus personal contexts for the arts experiences.

reality" provide insight about their ideal selves and their need to maintain and present (to others and themselves) a particular self-image. In these cases of "qualitative dissonance", the incongruity is not meant to be resolved but to point at important underlying issues. Here, the fundamental assumption of the post-modern worldview of constructed, co-existing multiple realities rather than one objective truth shapes the research goal of *verstehen*, empathic understanding, rather than explanation (von Wright, 1971).

The centrality of multiple perspectives is a key criterion for trustworthiness in qualitative research. For example, the procedure of peer debriefing, suggested by Lincoln & Guba (1985), targets multiplicity of interpretations, where different people examine the same data and share their varied understandings. As in *Rashomon*, it is not only in the correspondences but particularly in the incongruities among interpretations that fresh meaning about personal and cultural values can be found. A related methodological practice is the creation of *interpretive zones* (Wasser & Bresler, 1996), including researchers with diverse disciplinary background throughout the process of interpretation. The inclusion of multiple perspectives supports "making the familiar strange," or, in Chris Higgins' words, "seeing more" rather than "seeing as" (Higgins, 2007, 390).

Qualitative research, I suggest, shares with the arts the aspiration to "see more" in ordinary classrooms, familiar settings, and everyday life experiences. In the quest for intensified perception, methods become 'activated', assuming a life and flow in the process of making sense, taking the researcher (and eventually, the readers) on exploratory journeys of discovery.

### Subjectivity and dissonance

The second hindrance to fresh perception is subjectivity. The inevitable nature of subjectivity, as in recognition, makes its power impossible to avoid. Our situatedness in the reality we study is a given. Capturing this situatedness succinctly, Max Weber remarked in a quotation made famous by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973, p. 5) that "Man is an animal suspended by webs of significance he himself has spun". The only way to release the control that subjectivity holds over us is to bring it to our awareness. Reflecting on his dissonant encounters in his study of a fundamental Christian community (Peshkin, 1986), Peshkin identifies his various "subjectivities", the values and beliefs that were present throughout his research project (1988; 1994) and how they shaped his research.

The active, dynamic relationship between inner and outer reality is inherent in the arts, acknowledged in scholarly literature as well as in a public view of the arts, but less obvious in research. In fact, it was something to avoid in traditional science characterized by objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Post-modern worldview and qualitative methods, however, identified the situatedness of the researcher as central. Peshkin's notion of subjectivity (1988) was instrumental in inviting me to examine my values and beliefs as they unfolded in my

responses to what I observed. It led me to frame the experience of the inevitably subjective resonance—manifested as an embodied response to others' narratives (Bresler, 2006a) as well as to my own observations—and its discordant manifestation, *dissonance,* as key to unravelling important issues (Bresler, 2014). Indeed, resonance is a crucial tool for traversing outer and inner landscapes. Resonance has been recognized as fundamental to reader's response to literature. Betsy Hearne, a prominent voice in folklore, storytelling and children's literature observes: "We are story listeners, story takers, story givers, storytellers, story stealers, story dealers. Whatever distance stretches between our adult story-work and childhood story-experience, between our objective and subjective understanding, can become a journey of insightful connections" (Hearne, 2011, p. 209). As a student of life, teacher and editor, I strive for learning opportunities that will contribute to the awareness of one's positioning on a broad spectrum.

## Attachment to knowing

A third hindrance to fresh perception is the fear of "not-knowing", looking ignorant within a culture of experts. Clearly, ignorance—unknowing, without awareness and openness—can be naiveté at best, harmful and self-maintaining at worse. My use of unknowing (Bresler, in press) is similar to Suzuki Roshi's notion of *beginner's mind* (Suzuki, 1970). A full head, as a well-known Buddhist story illustrates, prohibits learning: the Zen Master continues pouring tea into his visitor's full cup to the visitor's alarm, advising him that until he empties his head, there is no space for new knowledge. The culture of academia can intensify self-imposed pressures and attachment to expertise. Professorship and the activity of professing are often associated with having a full head and an ensuing attachment to one's knowledge and expertise.[4] While the feeling of unknowing is not a comfortable one, it supports fresh seeing and theorizing.

Fresh seeing calls for laying aside the cloak of competence. Unknowing involves an awareness of existing knowledge, rather than a tight grasp on it, allowing the openness of curiosity about what actually emerges. The process of inquiry balances existing lenses or goals with *intentions*. Whereas goals are pre-specified and focused, intentions are open and flexible. Intentions take as much commitment and dedication as goals, but, when coming from a quest for wisdom, have a gentler, softer quality. In the tradition of qualitative research, from Dilthey and Weber to Myerhoff and van Manen, intentions serve the aspiration to understand empathically—intellectually and emotionally—personal and cultural lived experience. Indeed, understanding invokes resonance rather than agreement; it requires the ability to linger with dissonance rather than resolving it into a polarization of "right-wrong", "Us-Them" (Bresler, 2014).

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[4] Popper's story (1963) about Adler's diagnosis of a child to confirm his own theory is a famous case in point, alerting us to the danger of attachment to knowledge. But this case is not unusual.

The quest for empathic understanding of lived experience goes beyond prescribed methods. Methods attend to the disciplined, systematic aspects of inquiry, supporting accountability. But scientific research, as philosopher of science Karl Popper noted more than half a century ago (Popper, 1963) calls for more than discipline and systematicity. The research endeavour is founded on *conjecture*, a creative leap. Whereas the systematic process of refutations can be prescribed, the process of generating conjectures, intuitive and imaginative, defies prescriptions.

Certainly, methodological skills, like theoretical knowledge, serve as invaluable guidelines, acknowledging the wisdom of intellectual traditions, ethos and etiquette. They are imperative to membership in a scholarly community where inquiry is shared, appreciated, and acknowledged within the reward systems of academic and research institutions. Frameworks and methods are necessary, and limited. Qualitative research's quest for the implicit, highlighting that which has not been seen or recognized before, is based on a dialogue with existing knowledge, aiming to go beyond, essentially a leap. It is an act of creation that calls for perception surpassing the given.

The distinction between adherence to, versus dialogical relationship with, existing conceptual frameworks and methods can be compared to the distinction between correct playing of a score (or to draw on an example taken from John Cage, a contractor following a blueprint, noted in Bruno Faria's chapter in this volume) versus the creation of experience, the stuff of art (Dewey, 1934). In the world of education, actual teaching depends on knowledge, skilful pedagogies, and effective organization, demanding responsiveness to encounters and agility in the process of interaction with one's students. Like engagement with arts and teaching, the act of qualitative research requires full presence with what emerges, along with close attendance to both outer and inner voices. Inner landscapes take center place at the stage of reflection and analysis, characterized by the Adagio pace of lingering, listening inwardly to our subjectivity. If the process of interviews entails attunement to others, the reflective processes of subjectivity and writing (Richardson, 1994) entail attunement to oneself.

These qualities and quests are illustrated in the chapters of this book. The attunement to self and others is clearly evident, whether it is in Göran Folkestad's "reversed" auto-ethnography; Eva Sæther's methodological/personal musical inquires; or Sue Stinson's and Betsy Hearne's reflections on their careers of scholarship, teaching, and artistic engagement. Anna Houmann's assignment for her students to make visible their visions of music teachers extends to them the invitation to connect inner and outer realities. Grounded in diverse settings, each chapter illuminates a fundamental aspect of researched lived experience through an aesthetic lens. In this process, each author whole-heartedly, creatively, and insightfully grapples with the hindrances to intensified perception and meaning making.

## Tracing a communal journey

This book evolved out of a visiting professorship position I held in Lund University between 2011 and 2015. My love of the Swedish culture, cultivated for many years through Ingmar Bergman movies, made Sweden an alluring place, one that involved repeated professional visits in various universities. Eva Sæther, with the blessing and support of Göran Folkestad and Håkan Lundström, graciously and warmly initiated the invitation, and took the lead in making me the first recipient of the Hedda Andersson chair. Andersson, an extraordinary figure, was the first female student in Lund University and the second female physician in Sweden. The Hedda Andersson initiation was a moving, all-day experience. In a gathering of several remarkable women researchers from all over the world in the fields of Medicine, Law, Engineering, and the Sciences, in addition to men and women from various levels of upper and middle administration in Lund, I learned about inspiring projects across disciplines and experienced a celebration of higher education with its special culture and affordances. This event launched a period of lively interactions and projects.

## Foundation for aesthetic/research sensitivities: A shared encounter with artworks

One of the first things I was asked to do at the Music Academy in Malmö was teach an intensive course on qualitative research methods, which I titled "Seeing, hearing, sensing and conceptualizing—the foundations of qualitative research". Throughout my teaching career, I have grappled with the "teachability" of intensified perception, complexity and responsiveness. This, I found, is where the arts can serve as catalysts (Bresler, 2013). The course emerged from my long-standing commitment to qualitative research as it is informed by aesthetic sensitivities. The presence of a select group of doctoral students, all accomplished musicians with interest and expertise in the various arts, allowed us to integrate the theme of lessons from the arts more systematically than I usually do in my teaching.

The integration of my typical museum assignment, (in this case at the Malmö Konstmuseum) with a "chamber"-size class of ten allowed for a penetrating encounter. Involving observations of two artworks that evoke different emotional responses, the assignment is aimed at cultivating heightened perception and dialogical relationships with the "bounded systems" (cases) of artworks. Perception is intimately related to the conceptual activities of identifying emerging themes and issues, moving from the concrete to the abstract (and then back to the concrete, with substantiating additional observations.) The assignment also called for identification of new directions of inquiry: generating interview questions for specific people and looking for additional information in archival sources. The assignment in the syllabus reads:

*"Choose two artworks, one that appeals to you and one that does not (evoking aversion or leaving you neutral). Stay with each about 30 minutes. Take field-notes to describe in detail what you see. Identify themes and issues, reflecting on their significance. What are you*

*curious about? Reflect on what it is that you would like to learn and what perspectives will enhance an understanding of your chosen focus and your issues. Generate a list of questions for 2-3 people of your choice to expand your understanding. Identify relevant contexts that will illuminate the case."*

Extended time with each artwork created "prolonged engagement" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as a space to cultivate investigation, exploration, and deepened relationships beyond initial positive and negative reactions. This sustained encounter, noting emergent observations and interpretations, and reflecting on them in the process of introspection, made explicit the active relationships between outer and inner worlds. The assignment to write a paper based on these observations and reflections, was intended to produce a three-pronged connection, committing ephemeral ideas to writing and to future audiences.

*Resonance* is key to identifying connections between inner and outer. *Dissonance*, the discordant manifestation of resonance, has a powerful role in shaping observations but is often glossed over (functioning as de Bolla's "ordinary") rather than scrutinized to stimulate inquiry into understanding of the self's subjectivity. The expectation to observe keenly and examine what emerges, and to articulate and communicate those observations orally to each other and later in writing a term paper, were structured to facilitate a grappling with dissonance. The juxtaposition of multiple perspectives, physical and conceptual, revealed the complex nature of understanding.

As often happens in these activities, some artworks evoked opposing responses among class members. In this visit, the artwork that Sven Bjerstedt disliked, "All thanks to our old friend the sun", an installation mainly comprising of a pyramid construction of 3000-plus transport pallets, was the artwork that Lia Lonnert chose as her "like". Sven's "like", "Towards peace", was one that another class member disliked. The detailed descriptions, insightful interpretations, and depth of emotional responses shared by course participants in relation to the images clearly manifested that both positive and negative responses were rich and expanded our understanding, rather than being right or wrong. Thus, discrepancy of responses proved a fertile learning opportunity for all of us.

These observations were grounded in fundamental assumptions and goals of qualitative research and its worldview. Class discussions included key concepts such as perceived, constructed and created realities; prolonged engagement; subjectivity; and aesthetic lenses of research in classic qualitative texts such as Lincoln and Guba's *Naturalistic inquiry* (1985), Peshkin's *In search of subjectivity* (1988) and Eisner's *The enlightened eye (1991)*.

A second course the following May, "Conceptualizations and communications across qualitative genres: from practitioner research through ethnographies to arts-based narrative inquiry", addressed what aesthetic sensitivities mean in diverse intellectual traditions. Readings about qualitative research in diverse research genres and traditions supported

connections between theoretical and experiential knowledge, including our own research projects. Among the texts were Peshkin's *God's choice* (1986), Tom Barone's *Touching eternity* (2001), Inga Rikandi's *Negotiating musical and pedagogical agency in a learning community* (2012), and Joseph Tobin and colleagues *Pre-schools in three cultures (2009)*. In these as in our own work and artwork observations, we deepened the discussion of worldviews, assumptions, goals and criteria across communities of inquiry, relating those to our own projects at hand and delving into our subjectivity, values and multi-layered relationships with what we study.

Readings and conversations became part of our shared community, evident in our foci and subsequent manuscripts and part of *fat data*[5] gatherings, where advanced doctoral students shared their work in progress to elicit feedback from group members. Communal rites of passage including various stages (e.g., 50%, 75%, 100%) of dissertation defences exemplified the vital processes and products (complete with celebrations) of a scholarly community.

### Extending the circle

When Göran Folkestad suggested an edited book as a "capstone project" for these activities, we thought it wise to expand the scope to outside scholars whose work resonated with this theme of lessons from the arts. In conversations at the Academy we noted the ways in which the diversity of musical genres (classical, jazz, indigenous), range of instruments (voice, violin, harp, piano, flute) and musical roles (ethnomusicology, solo and ensemble performance, conducting) shaped our positioning as to how we engaged with and understood music and the arts. In inviting other scholars, we wanted to extend the thrust of "lessons from the arts" to include additional disciplines and a broader range of positions. The resulting tapestry of artistic experiences in this volume now includes storytelling, dance, visual arts, and poetry. Fundamental to all authors, whether advanced doctoral students or leading international researchers, is the recognition that research involves not "merely the sensation of knowledge in the making" but "a sensing of our selves in the making" (Ellsworth, 2005, p.1). Equally enriching is the observation that the focus on appreciation of research and art intensifies "life appreciation".

The book is structured in three sections. The first section portrays diverse kinds of lessons from the arts. Lia Lonnert's chapter contemplates the power of the arts, and of research, to present "lives not lived", allowing readers and audiences to go beyond their own lived experience. Drawing on his artistic practices, as well as his ethnographic research on artists and youth arts program, Tyler Denmead argues that qualitative educational researchers must willingly surrender themselves to a liminal state wherein they refrain, however

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[5] Named by the originator of this format, Alan Peshkin, after Clifford Geertz's concept of "thick description" (1973).

momentarily, from attempting to know. Sven Bjerstedt discusses lessons from jazz improvisation to research, focusing on issues of expression, authenticity, responsiveness, and identity. Bruno Faria centers on balance and imbalance in musical engagement as well as in research, where his positioning as both a classical flutist and a conductor of soundpainting creates productive dissonances.

Throughout this first section, we note the richness of identities not just *across* authors but also *within* each author, informing implicitly and explicitly their perspectives and interpretations. These include Bruno Faria's layered expertise as both classical performer and conductor in an experimental genre; Sven Bjerstedt's grounding in classical music, jazz, and theater; Tyler Denmead's identities as artist, art educator, and chef among others; and Lia Lonnert's grounding in classical harp, as well as in dance. The relationship of the authors to what they study is based on similarity of positioning as each aimed to broaden and deepen meaning: e.g., Lonnert as a professional harpist studying other harpists; Denmead as a qualitative researcher addressing other researchers; Bjerstedt as an acclaimed jazz musician studying Swedish jazz musicians; and Faria as a flutist and soundpainter examining his own artistic and research processes.

The second section centers around the quest of understanding an "other" situated in a different culture, fundamental to ethnography and its musical branch, ethno-musicology. Koji Matsunobu, a pianist and Shakuhachi player, reflects, based on his research experiences in cross-cultural contexts, on the links between musical process and cultural perception. He identifies the cultural aspect of sensing time, underscored through the arts, and suggests that listening is a form of participation in social worlds. Bruno Nettl[6] discusses organization and writing of ethnographies as attempts at comprehensive descriptions of musical cultures, and provides a number of notable exemplars. Eva Sæther examines—based on her research studies in the Gambia and in Venezuela's inspired El Sistema teaching in Sweden—the role of music-making as data gathering and research tool, inquiring whether ethnographic methods developed in a distant culture can work in local settings.

Eva Sæther examines, based on her research studies in the Gambia, and in Venezuela's inspired El Sistema teaching in Sweden, the role of music-making as data gathering and research tool, inquiring whether ethnographic methods developed in a distant culture can work in local settings.

In the third section of the book, the counterpoint of intersections between research and the arts expands to include educational practice. Göran Folkestad's chapter provides a broad framework for the field, writing from his multiple identities as a classical, rock and pop musician. Deconstructing the false dichotomies of popular music versus classical music,

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[6] The chapter by Bruno Nettl is reprinted, with minor revisions, from his book, *The study of ethnomusicology: Thirty-one issues and concepts*, *New edition,* 2005, by permission of the University of Illinois Press.

informal learning outside school versus formal teaching/learning in school, self-directed learning versus teacher-structured sequenced learning, performance versus education, and teacher identity versus artistic identity, Folkestad addresses the integration of these elements in his own life experiences. Bob Stake's poem on the power of the arts to inspire education (and research), grounded in the USA's historical commitment to freedom, makes a plea to add to the four abiding freedoms (freedom of speech; freedom of worship; freedom from want; freedom from fear) the freedom from *rubrics*. Invoking Beethoven and Spielberg, along with teaching and evaluation as a research practice, Stake contends that the rubric itself needs to be evaluated.

Anna Houmann introduces a pedagogical activity based on creating expressive objects that serve as a research and teaching tool. Here, music education students' expressive objects enable them, and Houmann in the role of researcher and teacher, to explore their deeply held beliefs and assumptions about music teaching. Sue Stinson contemplates her roles as a researcher and teacher, experiences that have transformed her into the person she is becoming in a new phase of her life. Stinson reflects on how her life in dance became part of her teaching, how both became incorporated into her understanding of research, and how all are related to the larger project of living. Betsy Hearne closes the volume with reflections on the power of stories for teaching, research, and self-knowledge. Proposing that all research tells a story, Hearne addresses inner research, the role of creativity in making associative connections, and the experiences of collecting, selecting, connecting, and interpreting the "facts". Authors cover the full range of stages in an academic career, from advanced doctoral students and new PhD's, to so-called retired and vibrantly active scholars who have profoundly shaped existing scholarship.

This book reflects deep caring: about artistic and aesthetic practices; about research; about teaching; and about the arena of education, broadly conceptualized. The culmination of a communal, mutually generative project, the book reaches broadly beyond its initial geographical and disciplinary boundaries. The free-access, electronic format of the manuscript enables, we hope, a continuation of the conversation. We anticipate with excitement learning from readers about their own journeys and where these journeys take them.

I am extremely grateful to my Lund University hosts who made me feel welcome and at home. Göran Folkestad generously loaned me his office, complete with teas, mugs, great books to read and CDs to listen to. Eva Sæther adopted me (as did her mother Ulla) into their family circle, including fiddling excursions and trips to the sea and country, and catered to my various needs as they arose, from rides to lamps and storage space. Anna Houmann befriended me with her home, family and town, introducing me to favourite coffee houses and salad bars. Sven Bjerstedt provided me with an endless supply of printouts, and, with his wife Anna, hosted me and other class members at their Lund residence. Sven and Lia Lonnert,

during my co-supervision[7] of their dissertations, familiarized me with the fascinating Swedish academic rites of passage and their celebrations. Bruno Faria and I shared extended professional and personal conversations over his independent study, and the joys of his baby Samuel's arrival. My University of Lund experience has been enriching, intellectually and emotionally, a travelogue of the heart, with the resulting book a tangible and ever fluid constellation of ideas.

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[7] With Eva Sæther as the first supervisor for Lia, and Petter Dyndahl for Sven.

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# Understanding an unlived life, arts and research as means

## LIA LONNERT

In 1996 I saw Mats Ek's version of Christopher Marlowe's play *The Jew of Malta*. The leading part was danced and acted by Niklas Ek. Somewhere in the middle of the play Niklas Ek danced a solo. I remember only fragments of it: he was close to a pillar, he was lying on his side at some time during the solo, his toes moved. The fragments I remember do not seem important to me. What I remember is how the performance moved me, how I felt his movements in my body although I was myself sitting still without moving—as audiences normally do. It was a physical understanding of the character, of his pain, and the conflicts he was undergoing. Dancer Niklas Ek could create an understanding across space and time for a character in a play from the 16th century. Through his dancing the complexity of the character was deepened. It was an emotional understanding beyond intellectual understanding. I could understand another human being, or maybe myself, with arts as a means.

## The unlived life

Landquist (1920/1971) maintains that we have two different roles in life, building on Goethe who says that every human being has two roles to play: one real role and one ideal role. Landquist's slightly different approach is that the first role is the life we live, and the second role is the life we could have lived. The life we could have lived is not only about the choices we made or were forced to make which led to our life taking one direction and not another, but it is also about understanding the lives of others. Sympathy, which is the term Landquist uses, means to connect to other selves without confusing them with our own self. This is similar to how Bresler (2013) describes empathic understanding. Landquist (1920/1971) maintains that an aesthetic experience does not depend on a unity between object and subject but on the relationship between them. He stresses that it does not have to be an experience of

beauty; it could also evoke other emotions, such as repulsion. The possibility to understand others through art creates a way of evoking the capacity for a hidden understanding. Thus, the empathy we use to understand aesthetic expressions is related to the lives we could have lived. This concept of living different lives through art is appealing. It would mean that we can have an understanding and empathy with others through the arts.

Alheit (1994) uses the term "unlived life" and claims that this unlived life has can be a means of changing the life lived.

> We dispose of a biographical background knowledge with which we are able to fill out and utilise to the full the social space in which we move. None of us has all conceivable possibilities open to him or her. But within the framework of a restricted modification potential, we have more opportunities than we will ever put to practice. Our biography therefore contains a sizeable potential of "unlived life". (p. 228)

Alheit here describes the unlived life as an on-going process, since our lives are full of choices and possibilities. However, Landquist claims that the unlived life also has the potentiality to facilitate an understanding. An unlived life triggered by an aesthetic expression—or by a performer or artist—has the potentiality to create an unlived life previously unknown to the listener/viewer/subject experiencing the art form.

It is possible that one can have a deeper understanding of an unlived life through art, in the sense of having a deeper understanding of other human beings and the self. The knowledge of an art-form may be essential to this understanding but perhaps not the personal experience of performing the art-form itself. There is a possibility to have a vague understanding of something different—a different life: the unlived life evoked by the artist. This should not be confused with understanding the artist, or having a "true" image of what the artist intends. However, the question is whether one's empathic understanding of an art-form only is dependent on choices in life and the lives one chose not to live. Gabrielsson (2013) maintains that powerful experiences (which Gabrielsson refers to as "strong" experiences) of music do not have to be dependent on previous knowledge of the art-form. Unfamiliar music can give powerful experiences. It is possible that unfamiliar art-forms can also facilitate understandings of another person.

## Understanding other human beings

The notion of a possible unlived life can be associated with Landquist's (1920/1971) experiment on himself in which he analysed his own emotions when watching a theatrical performance. He discovered that he felt it was easier to feel empathy for somebody he respected even if he did not agree with the character. He found it was difficult to feel empathy with somebody who was ridiculed, that he was laughing at. How the characters in the play were presented was the result of choices by the writer of the play, but also the interpretation by the director and the actors. Landquist, on the specific occasion when he conducted the

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experiment, found himself feeling empathy for the actor rather than for the performed character or role. The understanding of another human being was thus multi-layered; it could be about understanding the author, the role, the director, the actor's interpretation of the role, or the actor.

The struggle to facilitate an understanding as a writer and researcher is reminiscent of the study by Peshkin (1986) whose own empathy and respect was a basis for presenting his research for the presumptive reader even if this was not an obvious choice since his own experiences and standpoint were different than his interviewees. Peshkin carried out a study of a Christian fundamentalist school. Being Jewish himself, he did not share the Christian values of the school. Nor did he share the fundamentalist, dogmatic values. However, as a researcher he saw it as vital to understand the intrinsic values of the school, and to treat his interviewees with respect. Peshkin could have chosen to present his research very differently since his personal viewpoints in many ways were the opposite of the values and ideas of the school and the people he was researching. The writer's ethical standpoint is thus related to the aesthetic choices made and to the possible capacity for the reader to understand: not living the lives of others, or necessarily identifying oneself with someone else, but understanding the lives of others. To Peshkin, this did not mean that he did not use the critical eye of the researcher. It meant that he conducted—and presented—research with multiple layers, using the respectful, empathic researcher I, the critical researcher I, and the personal I. The role of the respectful, empathic researcher is possible to use as a tool for understanding. Peshkin (1988) also states that the researcher's awareness of his or her subjectivity is important in the research process. Subjectivity and the awareness of subjectivity can be used as tools for the researcher.

Actors and writers use words as tools, thus providing the reader/audience with an aesthetic expression that might be more easily understood than many other aesthetic expressions. A verbal aesthetic expression might help the audience understand the story, the actions, the verbal description—an intellectual understanding. However, within aesthetic expressions too, an emotional understanding is central. There might be a vague understanding which is not a formulated understanding. It is possible to have an understanding and at the same time be unable to verbalize it, or be unable to grasp it completely. It might be an understanding that is related to the understanding of others, but also to the understanding of ourselves.

## Aesthetic manipulation

To be able to touch the soul of the audience may be a kind of knowledge on the part of the performer. The Danish bassoonist, philosopher and writer Peter Bastian (1987) describes how he was listening to a clarinet player who suddenly smiled at him when playing, aware of the emotions he was evoking. Bastian was surprised since he assumed that music that could affect

an audience was created by a musician that him- or herself was affected. But the experience he had when listening and watching this clarinettist was that the musician was aware of the way he could evoke emotions. Bastian also mentions that he learnt this art himself. However, he states that it is a skill that may not work on all occasions. It might go wrong with the result that the concert will not attain the emotional qualities it might have had. According to Bastian, emotional aesthetic manipulation is an art a performer can learn.

To be able to touch the soul may also be knowledge on the part of the creator of the artwork, such as a composer, choreographer or painter. I recall speaking to the composer Sven-David Sandström about his clarinet concerto in 2008. I told him I found the end so beautiful after the fragmented beginning and he winked at me and said: "But then, you see, that was my intention." Choreographer and researcher Åsa Unander Scharin is examining the limits of emotion and aesthetic manipulation in her project with music and industrial robots.[8] In her research the borderlands between humans and machines are examined. According to Unander-Scharin's work and the conversation with Sandström, emotional aesthetic manipulation may be a choice on the part of the creator of the artwork.

Ideas and discussions about who or what evokes emotions, and how these emotions relate to the emotions of the composer or the performer are not new (Langer, 1942/1951). Langer (1942/1951) claims that the strength of music as an art-form is that music is not a referential form, and not a verbal form. Music is related to emotions. However, she states that the facts that music evokes emotions and that music contains emotions should not be confused. It is not a given that music can evoke the emotions it contains, or the emotions the composer had in mind or was affected by when composing. Music as a symbolic form is relevant as a means to express human life and Langer claims that music can articulate things that language cannot. It is not possible to ascribe *one* interpretation or meaning to music "for music at its highest, through clearly a symbolic form, is an unconsummated symbol" (Langer, 1942/1951, p. 240).

Gabrielsson (2013) shows in his research that powerful musical experiences are not always equivalent to the skill of the performer evoking the experiences. He describes powerful musical experiences as a complex combination of the music, the experiencing human being and the situation where it is experienced. But can the possibility to evoke powerful musical experiences also, as Bastian describes, be a skill that might be developed by the performer? Is it a skill that might be developed by the composer, as in Sandström's description? Understanding the unlived life—of the self—is possible, and the understanding of a possible different unlived life—of the self—given by the artist or creator of the artwork is thus perhaps possible. However, it would be naïve to think that music could provide a biographical understanding, or a true image, of an unlived life.

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[8] Åsa Unander Scharin http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mC2LZcQVZ3k

## Emotional understanding—to reach beyond research

Cassirer (1944/1972) suggests that the instability/uncertainty inherent in any interpretation might be the strength of art:

> Art, on the other hand, teaches us to visualize, not merely to conceptualize or utilize, things. Art gives us a richer, more vivid and colourful image of reality, and a more profound insight into its formal structure. It is characteristic of the nature of man that he is not limited to one specific and single approach to reality but can choose his point of view and so pass from one aspect of things to another. (p. 170)

Cassirer claims that art has the ability to show the richness and variety of reality. Bresler (2013) argues that a researcher can learn empathic understanding through art. She argues that it is possible to consciously cultivate empathic understanding with the aid of artworks. Thus, this richness and variety of reality can be used as a tool for understanding.

Bresler (2005) maintains that qualitative research involves three directions; towards the object of research, inwards for the researcher, and towards the audience. It is thus central that the researcher can create meaning for him- or herself and for the audience. Barrett and Stauffer (2012) address a similar concern with the concept resonant work, which describes a research process and product in which the researcher, the researched and the audience are involved.

> "Resonant" in that the inquiry resounds in the lives of the inquirer and those with whom the inquirer engages, as well as those who engage with what is created; "work" in that it is a practice (verb) that produces an artistic or textual account (noun) that can be shared. (p. 8)

If a researcher, as I did in my own thesis (Lonnert, 2015), conducts research within their own profession the resonance between researcher and the researched is a given. From this perspective, the researcher's aim to evoke understanding for an audience is also a given. However, the crucial point is the resonance and the understanding the audience can have for the researched.

Miles and Huberman (1994) maintain that one of the criteria for quality in qualitative research is the possible utilisation or application of the research. They also describe possible generalization and transferability as quality criteria. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also consider transferability as crucial. However, researchers, in the guise of aesthetic manipulation and to create understanding an unlived life, also have the possibility of evoking an aesthetic understanding—and an emotional understanding. The tools a researcher uses are mainly words. These words have the possibility to transfer the contents in the research; the scientific results, the new contributions to the body of knowledge and so forth. However, qualitative researchers also have a more profound reason. They can through their tools—their words— reach the reader and thus create an understanding for different possibilities, an understanding for lives they have not lived themselves. The tools they have as researchers are words, but the

very use of words might also contribute to obscuring the possibilities of this empathic aesthetic aim. Stake (1995) uses the concept of vicarious experiences, in which the writer presents the qualitative research so well that the reader sometimes feels as if something happened to him- or herself. He argues that it is the writer's responsibility to give the reader the possibility to construct meanings and to be able use his or her previous knowledge to construct this meaning by using vicarious experiences and naturalistic generalizations. By naturalistic generalizations are meant the possibility to generalize from one's own experience.

Wittgenstein's (1967) notion that the experience is the explanation in itself and not a description of the experience when referring to music might be worth considering from this angle since it highlights words as a researcher's tool and as a carrier of experience. Words in a qualitative report should of course be relevant to the tradition in which it is written and are important to the quality of the report. But, an additional quality could be that the words are used as tools to reach an emphatic understanding. It is possible as a writer to have the awareness of the clarinet player in Bastian's (1987) anecdote. This is an aesthetic manipulation, but it might be necessary for the writer to develop this tool. This involves trying to transmit the unspeakable, in the sense of Wittgenstein, with the help of words. To be able to evoke understanding and empathy—is this not what qualitative research is all about? However, this does not imply that the researcher should not use the critical I, or the critical eye.

## To learn from performing

For a qualitative researcher the aim is not only to be able to understand an unlived life him- or herself, but primarily to be able to transmit an unlived life for someone else to understand. The researcher here has a task in between those of a composer and a performer. The relationship *composer—performer—audience* has an analogy in *object of research—researcher—reader*. Furthermore, the researcher as well as the performer co-create or interpret the object of research or the musical work.

Leaning on Landquist's (1920/1971) experiment, the question is whether the empathy is with the researcher or with the objects of research – the interviewees, the informants or the observed. Who does the voice or voices belong to? For the reader of qualitative research, in the best of texts, there is an emotional understanding beyond the results of the research. Respect, in the sense Peshkin (1986) uses it in his work, is thus central. Peshkin's choice to present his topic and his interviewees as human beings that it was possible to understand is an ethical choice by a researcher. It is also an aesthetic choice. We should not only confirm ourselves through art—we should expand ourselves. We should not only confirm ourselves through research—we should expand ourselves. What we cannot fully grasp may be the most important part. Even though the communication of the research is through words —which can easily facilitate an intellectual understanding—it might be equally important to facilitate an

emotional understanding. I would claim that what affects us and provides us with new unlived lives—as researchers, as readers—are the things that really matter to us. They may even touch our souls.

What the researcher can learn from the arts is that the communication of qualitative research is not only through research results. It is also through the readers emotional understanding, perhaps of an "unlived life". The aesthetic communication by the researcher through words is a means to reach the emotional understanding through empathy. In this process, the researcher can be seen as an artist and a performer of a work by another artist— similar to a performing artist, musician, dancer or actor.

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# For the lust of not knowing: Lessons from artists for educational ethnography

## TYLER DENMEAD

In her field guide for novice educational ethnographers, Delamont (2008) compares educational ethnographers beginning their projects with pilgrims embarking on a journey. Both, she suggests, are motivated by a "lust of knowing" (p. 39). They are bound by a desire to know what lies along the journey, as well as the journey's end. One paradox is that these journeys are comprised by persistent, and sometimes crippling, moments of *not knowing*. Until the journey's end, educational ethnographers are not going to know, and this not knowing is never easy. It is unfortunate then that novice ethnographers spend little time in their research training and early field experiences practicing not knowing while spending considerable time learning different assumptions about what it means to know. Perhaps more often than not, educational ethnographers will construe not knowing as a sign of intellectual weakness, an obstacle to overcome, or pain to nullify or ignore. Researchers are, after all, self-selected amongst those who have had a knack for knowing throughout their schooling, and once within the academy, perhaps fear being perceived as those who do not know amidst a culture of experts (Bresler, in press).

In this chapter, I attempt to counter pejorative associations that early researchers may have with not knowing. I demonstrate that ethnographers have much to learn from artists by framing their motivations for their projects partly as a *lust of not knowing*. To illustrate the necessity and practicality of not knowing in educational ethnography, I draw upon my own artistic experience in the culinary arts, as well as two ethnographic research projects that I have conducted on the public pedagogies of artists and youth arts collectives. I use these examples to tease out how and why educational ethnographers might come to value, and know how to, not know. For some, commitments to not knowing will already be familiar. But I hope that I can illuminate those commitments by writing in phenomenological terms about artistic tactics for not knowing. Before I turn to describe the lived experience of not knowing

in the arts and educational ethnography, I provide some background for the timeliness and relevance of this topic. Namely, I discuss the reproduction of, and resistance towards, "knowing" in the arts, education, and education research.

## Knowing and not knowing

By now, postmodern criticisms of knowledge and knowledge production in education and education research are well rehearsed. Education research remains principally concerned with learning inside formal educational institutions, and these institutions largely frame teaching and learning as the cognitive-based transmission of disciplinary content. These formal institutions are critiqued for the ways in which they remain modeled on early 19th-century prisons designed to regulate bodies and discipline minds (Foucault, 1979). Reason is the means and the end, and whatever opposes reason—lived complexities, moral ambiguities, queered identities, ineffable feelings, and *not knowing*—are suppressed and/or labelled as lacking. Within this order, knowledge is framed as that which can be named, classified, measured, and compared; not knowing is positioned as the inability to do so.

How schools educate is predicated on how work in a rationale world is imagined. This world in which young people will work is one shaped by science, technology, and commerce working in tandem at a rapid and accelerating pace to reduce knowledge to bits that can be measured, stored, and reorganized. Pupils must learn therefore that knowledge is legitimate when it can be put to work to maximize efficiencies, or to generate "value," most likely in the form of money, with the least expenditure. It follows then that testing with measurable answers and instruction formulated from discrete standards have become the governing structure of schools, a design intended to produce rationale actors—students, teachers, and administrators—who work in tandem to reproduce this "performative" logic (Lyotard, 1984).

This logic, of course, extends beyond schools. It is so pervasive in contemporary life that it can be easily taken for granted. In our personal lives, apps on smartphones reduce our perceptions of health to counting the number of steps taken or calories consumed. Our sense of place is measured in precise coordinates on a digital handheld map. Aging is discerned through minute quantitative shifts in "selfies" taken through the reflective gaze of our smartphone cameras and updated to our social media feeds. From a critical perspective, there is no profit in leaving things as they are and measurable, discrete knowledge can be put to work to manufacture personal and institutional crises that then need to be solved through regulatory means, whether it is plastic surgery or the "Global Education Reform Movement" (Sahlberg, 2009).

Western artists of course have a long history of critiquing accumulation *over and above* all other values. We should therefore expect artists to be exerting their expressive autonomy in the face of regulatory governance that seeks to organize our lives in service of accumulation. *Not knowing* is the strategy *du jour* for artists who are attempting to participate

outside this performative logic as social critics and/or contrarians, even if there is no "outside," perhaps only momentary reprieve, from this naturalized order.

It comes as no surprise then that artists are drawing attention to the ways in which they seek out *not knowing*. In *Not knowing: How artists think* (2013), Fisher and Fortnum draw attention — in rather Deweyan terms — to how artists:

> … often begin something without knowing how it will turn out. In practice, this translates as thinking through doing. Some of the methods used by artists to drive the creative process or work out problems can seem counter-intuitive or irrational: distraction or relinquishing control, embracing chance and collaboration, following a hunch rather than a rationale; privileging the senses over the intellect. (p. 7)

Amidst this performative logic, artists then position themselves as those who desire, and willingly surrender themselves to, a liminal state whereby they refrain, how ever momentarily, from attempting to know. They dwell in blind recesses, stand upon shifting terrain, and welcome chance encounters. In other words, artists do not position not knowing as the moment of ignorance following a puzzling question; it is an intentional pursuit. They are following a "field guide for getting lost" (Solnit, 2006). But as postmodernism might predict, artists cannot claim to occupy some privileged position outside late capitalism; there are now business guidebooks that frame not knowing as "the art of turning uncertainty into opportunity" as a way of improving managerialism and expanding profit (D'Souza & Renner, 2014).

In visual art education research, scholars have argued that art education lacks a firm epistemological rationale for what can be known as art (e.g., Siegesmund, 1998), and have therefore engaged in considerable debate about *what* is taught, or *knowable*, in the context of art education (Hickman, 2005; Duncum & Bracey, 2001). Other scholars have more recently turned to questions of not knowing in art education. For example, Illeris (2015) advocates for pedagogic *events* that draw upon contemporary art practices and attempt to produce liminal states of not knowing. Bresler (in press) describes how she has learned in her research practice to value being lost, thus weakening "the hold of familiar conceptualizations and assumptions" and creating "space for new understanding and ways of seeing." Not knowing has also become prized in "arts-based educational research" where artists and researchers seek to exist within "poetic language," as Butler (1999, p. 102) puts it, in which "multiple meanings and semantic non-closure prevail." In educational research, commitments to poeticism, polyvocalism, and the open dialogism of meaning is perhaps most found in a/r/tography (Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, & Gouzouasis, 2008). In response to the representational and legitimation "crises" of interpretive ethnography (Denzin, 1997), a/r/tography draws upon postmodern perspectives to critique rationalist approaches to education research that privilege one identity, that of researcher, over other identities,

including artist and teacher. A/r/tography views the desire for coherence and certainty in research as quixotic because lived experiences neither cohere nor are they certain.

In this chapter, I want to tease out lessons from artists' not knowing for educational ethnography in ways that are, one might say, *un/a/r/tographic.* This intention results from some methodological concerns I have with a/r/tography. A/r/tography fails, I believe, when researchers let postmodern theory do their knowing and their representing for them, thus leading a/r/tographers to adopt readymade conventions that result in what Hickman and I have described as an interior monologue, "in-jokes, self-referentiality, and what may be deliberate obfuscation" (Denmead & Hickman, 2014, p. 30).

But my criticism of a/r/tography, and my case here for not knowing, is more than a question of style; it is a question of contribution to knowledge. Such a contribution depends upon, as Ball (2006, p. 64) states, using theory as a tool for exploration and thinking otherwise. Thinking otherwise, of course, requires not knowing, requires departing from that which researchers think presently. I propose here that artistic not knowing is an attitude and a method that educational ethnographers can use to avoid the pitfall of using theory as a crutch rather than a compass on their journeys of not knowing. Ball (2006) warns educational researchers that:

> (t)heory can, and often does, function to provide comforting and apparently stable identities for beleaguered academics in an increasingly slippery world. Theory can serve to conjure up its own anterior norms and lay its dead hand upon the creativity of the mind. Too often in educational studies, theory becomes no more than a mantric reaffirmation of belief… (p. 64)

Through not knowing, ethnographers can attempt to avoid "tightly structured (theoretical) positions looking merely for exemplification" (Willis, 2000, p. 114), and instead give themselves the "chance of being surprised, to have experiences that generate new knowledge not wholly prefigured in [their] starting out positions" (Willis, 2000, p. 113). Not knowing therefore is a sign of, and a method for, discovery in the "ethnographic imagination" (Willis, 2000), and such an approach can borrow heavily from artistic practice. Below I describe my personal history with not knowing as a chef in my early twenties and how it unexpectedly informed my current practice as an educational researcher, before turning to providing other researchers artistic tools for not knowing.

### Finis terrae

In my early twenties, I set off for the end of the world. Between my second and third year in college in the U.S., I travelled to Brittany, a region located in the northwest region of France, once thought of as the end of the European continent. My destination was located in Brittany's westernmost region, a region known as *Finistère* or Land's End. I convinced my parents that I needed to go to study abroad over the summer for credit hours, and that was partly true. But my ulterior motive was that I wanted to learn to cook, and France seemed like

a good place to do it. So even though I had no culinary experience and little handle on the French language, I wrote several cold letters to several restaurants near the study abroad program. One chef responded and invited me to his kitchen when I arrived.

When I arrived, the chef, Emmanuel, was in the midst of the lunch service. I stepped into his hot, cramped kitchen. He turned and stuck out his arm with a closed fist. I grabbed his fist, awkwardly, and shook. He said something in French, which I did not understand. I mumbled a greeting in French that I had practiced on the airplane; he opened his eyes wide in confusion. He seemed to shrug his shoulders and then reach for an apron to put around my neck. It seemed like the final phase in a rite of passage for which I had yet done nothing. I regretted for a moment sending those letters; I now saw myself as an imposter.

He handed me a carrot and a carrot peeler before turning back to fish sautéing in four different pans on the stovetop. I began working hesitantly. Moments later, he turned to look over my shoulder. His eyes opened wider this time, noting a nub of carrot in my hand and a pile of carrot shreds on the cutting board. I had whittled the carrot, not peeled it.

In an unexpected turn, the chef let me keep wearing the apron anyway. Indeed, I worked as his apprentice the next three summers with increasing autonomy each time. Part of his motivation for letting me stay, I came to find out, was precisely that I did not know how to peel a carrot. That I could learn quickly. But more significantly, it represented the fact that I had not been acculturated into the discipline of French cuisine, a discipline that he was desperate to transgress. But I was not a blank slate, I had grown up eating in the "New World." Indeed, the chef and I worked towards perhaps what Wasser and Bresler (1996) describe as "an interpretive zone" forged by our different cultural backgrounds and beliefs and various areas of knowledge. Without out much of a shared, spoken language at first, we still could engage in joint inquiry that might open ourselves beyond our old worlds, beyond the end of our worlds. Indeed, one of our first projects that summer combined my knowledge of art history and his knowledge in food; we made a conceptual piece—an art installation on a platter, so to speak—that used food as symbols associated with femme fatale representation in fin-de-siècle European paintings. For both of us, it was an artistic experiment in not knowing arising from this interpretive zone.

I had not seen myself as an artist until this apprenticeship, indeed until we made the "installation" described above. But I started to recognize that my understanding of being an artist could be less concerned with classical technique and more concerned with exploring ideas and material. This embodied and conceptual turn required attending to the lived experience of openness, an openness to new knowledge and new ways of knowing. Indeed, each day, Emmanuel and I tried to create something new, requiring an interpretive dance with texture, color, taste, and smell. Each day required using our senses and opening ourselves to the freshest ingredients that we may not have planned for. Each day presented a steady stream

of opportunity to make aesthetic judgments, judgments based on how each dish we made unfolded. We made small additions and subtractions as ingredients commingled, altered one another, and became refined through the passing of time or being pressed through a sieve. And we considered those aesthetic judgments in the context of our personal-cultural histories.

Through this apprenticeship, I began to embrace my willingness to tread into disciplines and institutions where I neither belong nor possessed the presumed credentials to pass, a kind of transdisciplinary trespassing that hinges upon not knowing. For instance, I became interested in art education even though I knew I was not an "art teacher" in any traditional sense. But I wanted to understand the nature of apprenticeships with artists and how these apprenticeships afford opportunities for unfamiliar ways of knowing and being. So I began to draw on the lived experiences of dwelling in not knowing in that kitchen as a starting point as I set off on a new pathway as an art educator, and years later, as an art educational researcher.

### A field guide for not knowing

The culinary experience described above provided the foundation for me to consider the potential value of not knowing in educational ethnography. This personal experience became useful, methodologically and theoretically, as I conducted two projects that examine the public pedagogies of artists and youth arts collectives. The first ethnographic project investigated the pedagogies of artists who are members of *Cambridge Curiosity, and Imagination* (CCI) based in Cambridge, England. These artists offer open-ended, exploratory, and arts-based workshops for children and adults in and beyond schools (Denmead, 2011). These artists described their interest in promoting not knowing, which they considered a hallmark of artistic practice. While their participants and sites varied—an artist residency at a primary school, a professional development workshop for teachers at an art museum, or a free workshop for families visiting a nature reserve—their pedagogic interests remained constant. They explored how and why to create the social and material conditions for these participants to dwell in "beautiful little moments," moments characterized by not knowing (Denmead, 2011). In these moments, perhaps what Dewey (1934) calls "aesthetic experience," participants' sense of time slows and their senses come alive. In this "consummation," as Dewey put it, their lifeworlds begin anew.

For these liminal moments to occur, CCI artists argued that their participants needed to suspend their interest in knowing the world in any declarative, procedural, or assimilative sense. Participants instead needed to allow themselves to be distracted, to suspend goals, to stop accounting for time, to welcome chance and randomness, to break rules, to follow curiosities and hunches, to play with words, and to privilege their moving and sensing bodies over their intellects. And for participants to adopt this artistic position of not knowing, they needed to acknowledge the contingency of what they know and be willing to unknow what they think they know. As one artist put it:

> [to make art ] you have to have a certain attitude in the world, being in the world… You have to not expect answers, you have to be open to struggle. You have to be open to searching...There is a very fine line between deep knowing of oneself, but also deep unknowing. So, it's a very fine balance. It's knowing that we have the ability to find out, but we never have the answers.

These artists' emphasis on welcoming this struggle has influenced my thinking about ethnographic research. I came to appreciate how not knowing ought to be valued in ethnographic fieldwork. In my next ethnographic project, I reflected on how I might welcome this liminal state of not knowing as a sign of discovery rather than a problem to solve or an inadequacy to address. This project, still underway at the time of writing this chapter, is examining secondary school students' participation in New Urban Arts (NUA). NUA is a youth arts and humanities collective that meets in a storefront studio located near several public high schools in Providence, Rhode Island, USA. At NUA, youth (ages 13-22) and artists engage in highly collaborative, tuition-free arts and humanities inquiry after school, on weekends, and during the summer.

As I discuss tales from these two projects, I will present my reflections on lived experiences of not knowing, both from my vantage point as an ethnographer and from the vantage point of research participants. Along the way, I will use artistic insights for not knowing to explore and to extend their potential for educational ethnography. I will present these insights thematically, and in no way would I claim that each of these two themes— scarifying the ground and doing nothing—exhaust the potential for how to not know ethnographically. I explore each theme in largely phenomenological terms as I describe the lived and liminal state of not knowing. I rely heavily on metaphor in my attempt to provide embodied cues for ethnographers as they attempt to not know in and through their research.

### Scarifying the ground

Educational ethnographers can learn from artists' tactics for not knowing. For CCI workshops, artists, for example, often "cleared" or "decluttered" spaces, as they put it, before their workshops. Prior to a school-based workshop, for example, I observed two CCI artists clear a classroom of its tables and chairs before rolling a giant ream of kraft paper across the floor and the walls. In a matter of minutes, they cut and taped these carpet-sized sheets of paper, clearing any evidence of the classroom's prior use. We were now in a room made of kraft paper and masking tape. One artist described how clearing a familiar space like a classroom allows its teachers and students to "take off the baggage of coming into the same place everyday." By decluttering a space, I interpreted the artists attempting to disrupt the ways in which places mediate its inhabitants' sedimented habits and routines. Members of the classroom can become other than the traditional classroom role and relation of "students" and "teacher."

Educational ethnographers can learn from these artists as they "scarify the ground" (Cocker, 2013), or attempt to cut back the overgrowth of habits and presuppositions. They try to create bare spots from which new ways of engaging form, meaning, and being might emerge. Clearing these spaces, as one CCI artist put it, teaches "surprise, unpredictability, and not knowing as rich beginnings of learning." Other artists experiment with scarifying the ground in other ways. Visual artists might seek out empty spaces, white spaces, and negatives space—the unmarked between the marks—to see beyond what registers as "known." Dancers might similarly attempt to seek out spaces uncluttered from forces that delimit our bodies and body movement. They might clear a space of gravity, letting their bodies fall. In spaces without gravity, in the unmarks between marks, artists seek out "the germinal conditions within which the unanticipated might arise" (Cocker, 2013, p. 127).

How can educational ethnographers peel back presuppositions and patterns to create bare spaces where unexpected analytical findings might emerge? Such a question is ultimately a phenomenological one, and ethnographers have long been influenced by the phenomenological method of bracketing in which one tries to set aside "preconscious background assumptions" and assume the perspective of the other (Maso, 2001). One attempts to dispose of one's existing relationship to one's lifeworld and enter into a more pretheoretical or primordial state. This return to the things themselves, the objects of consciousness, is presumed to allow for discovering unfamiliar ways of being in body, space, time and among others. Bracketing is an attempt to be in the world in a way that is not clouded by one's natural attitude, an attitude shaped through cultural mediation. It is a mysterious method and one now considered impossibly preoccupied with a privileged and unattainable vantage point. We now accept that our interpretations hinge upon our standpoints and histories, there is no escaping either, and the strength of our analysis hinges upon these standpoints and histories.

Nonetheless, much of my understanding of the attempt to bracket is influenced by the imagery the word evokes: [] or {}. These brackets are walls. As an early researcher, I imagined myself attempting to construct walls between my body and its natural attitude, even if I imagined these walls as porous, incomplete, and well, impossible. But what if educational ethnographers focus less on attempting to build these unimaginable barriers—to paper the walls of a classroom—and instead focus on peeling away patterns to create openings, seeking out negative spaces or the spaces in-between, and yielding our bodies to unexpected emergence. Here educational ethnographers might position themselves and construct situations so they are "open to the possibility of letting something in" (Cocker, 2014, p. 134) rather than constructing walls to keep something out. Such positioning might entail leaning our bodies into the social worlds that we are describing, much like we might commit to a painting or a dance. While we lean in, we can surrender our bodies to where that social world

might lead us, much like Paul Klee describes lines in his paintings or drawings "taking a walk."

We must signal to our research participants that we are surrendering ourselves to these bare spaces so that unexpected meanings emerge. We must show we are willing to diverge from our plans and swerve towards what we might accidentally find in these spaces that lay momentarily bare. For example, in one interview for my NUA project with a research participant that I knew personally, but had not seen for five years, I began simply by saying "Okay… let's go back… because I can't remember…" In this opening to the unstructured interview, I signaled without deception or ruse that I was untethered to a topic, willing for the interview to take a walk. I signaled that I wanted to slow down and step back. During the conversation that proceeded, a topic that I had not considered, emerged. I had to trust that this unanticipated topic, this off-topic, or unmarked between marks, was the right topic, the one topic worth knowing. To allow for these unexpected analytical findings to emerge from a liminal state of not knowing, educational ethnographers might also consider doing less, perhaps *being less*, in the field.

### Try—and then try again—to do nothing

New educational ethnographers are often reminded that they cannot enter into the field as if they do not possess analytical hunches or theoretical frameworks; they must, as Willis (2000, p. 114) puts it, make a "theoretical confession," that acknowledge this starting position." As fieldwork unfolds, they are encouraged to identify a progressive focus based on its local significance and its relevant contribution to knowledge. They must identify this focus before being consumed by an endless and purposeless dataset. The pressure to work hard, get focused, and be productive in ethnography is associated with the lust of *knowing*, as reflected in Delamont's (2008) advice for novice educational ethnographers:

> Force yourself to think hard about what effect you are having, on what you need to know, on how to find out what you need to know, changing your focus so the angles you get shift. Think about, and record your strategies for staying alert, for making the familiar strange. Record whether you are too hot or too cold, whether it is quiet or noisy, what you could and could not do. Then think about how that affected what you could see, and what you understood of what you saw. (p. 44)

For me, such conceptions of ethnographic fieldwork lead me to speculate on the extent to which other ethnographic bodies might feel, at times, as hyper as my own when I engage in fieldwork. As educational ethnographers, we shuttle between places to take notes, and make immediate judgments as to whether the social patterns before us are relevant or worth observing. We make these judgments amidst pangs of doubt and the fear of not being productive enough.

But I want to argue that educational ethnographers can also benefit from doing and being *less*. Entering into a liminal state of not knowing requires resisting the temptation to approach

*doing less or being less* as a lack of analytical focus or a sign of methodological weakness. To illustrate, I remember doubting myself one day after six months in the field at NUA. One afternoon, I walked around the 2,500 square foot storefront studio as young people largely were "hanging out," chatting with one another, walking in and out of the studio, napping on the couch. A few were making art, but nothing of interest to me. To me, it looked like "nothing" was happening. Such an inclination may point to my inability to fight familiarity; I was not opening myself to the otherness of the social world I was observing so that the patterns of the social world become visible, so that they register as "something." Or perhaps it was a sign of saturation; I had exhausted data collection for the time being as "nothing" was really new to me at that time. Or perhaps, these patterns were registering as "something" but I was biased against them because they did not register as "learning"—in the sense that youth participants were coming to *know* something. In any case, these unanswered questions point to a moment when educational ethnographers may want to exit the field for a period of time, to immerse themselves in the data and gain some critical distance from the field.

As I walked around the studio without a clear observational purpose, I noticed a young person was also walking around the studio too. We kept running into each other every few minutes. "Do you ever get the feeling of not knowing where to be here?" I asked him.

"Duh," he replied. "*That's why I come here.*" It was not the answer I expected. Later, I asked him what he meant. "I honestly do not know what I am looking for," he said when trying to explain to me why he spends so much time walking around the studio. "I'm staying open to what I might find and to what finds me."

It is quite the artistic insight for a teenager to make, perhaps one he learned through NUA. In his wandering, he is practicing what Dewey calls "flexible purposing" (1938), allowing his aims to shift based upon chance and emergence.

The CCI artists I observed were also interested in allowing their participants to wander with flexible purposes, or similarly, to sit still and "do nothing." They positioned this "purposelessness" as a challenge to the normative virtue of work, which is linked to a pedagogic emphasis on "productivity, punctuality, task completion, the entrepreneurial spirit, and other traits related to free-market values" (Smagorinsky & Taxel, 2004, p. 122). This Protestant work ethic, CCI artists argued, interferes with artistic practice, which requires opening oneself up to emergence. Narrowly focusing on task completion is sometimes counterproductive.

Indeed, CCI artists spent considerable time inviting parents and their toddlers to stay in one place and use their senses to note their surroundings. In one example, they invited participants at the beginning of one of their arts workshops to lay on their backs in a public park and close their eyes. They asked their participants to notice what they can still "see" with their bodies and imaginations. I followed along with their instructions—noticing a residual

horizon line even as my eyes were closed—until I opened them to notice that the little girl sitting next to me was not following their instructions. She was kneeling and looking at a ladybird crawling on her finger.

"It is going to fly away?" her mom, lying down next to her, whispered to her.

Weeks later, I interviewed the mother and asked her what it was like to lay in the grass as her daughter watched a ladybird crawl on her body. She described the moment after the workshop as she walked around town with her daughter. She had not noticed that her shirt was covered in grass clippings. She said that it "felt funny" when she arrived at home and noticed them.

"It didn't look like I'd been doing anything all day" she said. "The whole thing about a mother and doing things. It was obvious that I had *just* been lying in the grass."

Her observation reveals the ways in which motherhood is discursively positioned, that mothers must be "doing something" to make sure their children get ahead.

Like teachers, students, and mothers, educational ethnographers' positions are similarly discursively pressured. There are dissertations and journal articles to be written. These pressures of productivity are undoubtedly becoming more compressed temporally and acute physically as output to deadline is what can be measured and managed. Amidst these pressures, it is imperative that we, as educational ethnographers, pursue "feeling funny" by attempting, at times, to "do nothing" while conducting fieldwork. We must remind ourselves to do less and be less by releasing ourselves from a forced sense of purpose. Doing so might allow us to take note of chance encounters—running into people walking around aimlessly—and what forms of participation reside on the margins of what traditionally constitutes "learning."

As much as we might lean into decluttered spaces, we might also attempt to lean out from the cluttered and hyper ones—not in a faulted attempt to become a detached observer but rather to experiment with what "not doing fieldwork" might entail in our research and how its manifestations momentarily shift our position and perspective. This leaning out requires resisting the temptation to believe that momentarily lacking analytical focus is, in and of itself, *lacking*.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that not knowing is a potential methodological and theoretical resource for educational ethnographers. Not knowing can support analytical emergence during fieldwork, and can help educational ethnographers overcome their own bias to demonstrate that something, anything, has been taught or learned, that teachers and students indeed have *come to know*. For educational ethnographers with a background in the arts, their disposition towards not knowing may have been cultivated, although not necessarily, through

their artistic training and practice. Artists may not have a special hold on not knowing. Nonetheless, educational ethnographers must open themselves to the struggle of not knowing, and come to know that struggle as a sign of potential discovery. Discovery, after all, is what we must lust most.

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# It is all process

SVEN BJERSTEDT

Just after performing an intense piano solo with my jazz band—this was some time after my PhD defense—I suddenly realized that something significant had happened. The concept of *storytelling*, this prominent image of jazz improvisation that I had made the object of so much scholarly scrutiny, was no longer a mere abstract figure of thought. The metaphor had transubstantiated. Through my mind, fingers, and body I experienced myself as an active part of *the story that was being told*. This story was told by myself, but not by me alone. It was told by me as a piano soloist in collaboration with several important co-actors on several levels: the tune we were performing; the musical tradition in which we were playing; my fellow musicians; and our audience. This was suddenly clear to me, and it was crucial. It was a metaphor-come-alive that has held me in its grip ever since, and it thoroughly influences my music. Conceptualization and practice go hand in glove.

When the opportunity arose a few years ago to undertake a PhD project about jazz improvisation, I jumped at it. In my mind there is no question that my scholarly efforts contributed something substantial in return to my musical practice; to put it plainly, my PhD studies helped me play the piano better. Through processes of widened, deepened, and prolonged reflection, my investigations into storytelling in jazz improvisation have had a significant impact on my artistic practice. The research project enabled me to benefit from the artistic experience and reflections of a number of distinguished musicians who generously gave me permission to collect and make use of the results of their artistic research. The thoughts they formulated are now part and parcel of my own artistic reflections. Even though this is probably not an unusual experience in artistic research, to me it was something of an epiphany to realize how the bi-directionality between scholastic and artistic knowledge can function. While the artist shapes a dissertation, it in turn shapes the artist.

In this chapter I will focus on lessons *from* the arts. What may reflection on jazz improvisation bring to qualitative research? Before going into detail, I will make a few

general suggestions. One lesson concerns the dynamics of different kinds of *authenticity*. Just as jazz improvisation can be authentic in more than one way, so can research. Another lesson concerns the dynamics of *observation* and *interpretation*. Just as jazz improvisation can be viewed both as a response to external impulses and as a manifestation of internal gestures, so can research. A third lesson concerns *identity*. Just as the notion of changing narrative identity can be seen as key to jazz improvisation, so may an expanded notion of prolonged engagement emerge as highly relevant to qualitative research processes. A fourth lesson concerns the dynamics of *improvisation* and *composition*. Just as jazz can be seen as process rather than product, so may research.

Twenty years ago, Penny Oldfather and Jane West (1994) addressed methodological issues in a playful attempt to shed light on the nature of qualitative inquiry through a metaphor of *qualitative research as jazz*. They pointed out that jazz music is characterized by its unifying structures and common body of knowledge as well as by the open-endedness of its improvisatory nature. The uniqueness of each improvisation, they held, corresponds to the adaptive methodologies and contextually bound findings of each qualitative inquiry.

I will attempt to contribute complementary views to those of Oldfather and West. I will not primarily use jazz as a metaphor. I suggest that four characteristics of jazz improvisation, in particular, have potential for shedding light on and perhaps deepening our understanding of qualitative research processes. On a conceptual level several of these perspectives encompass, as it were, the release from tensions; the dissolution of what are conventionally viewed as dichotomies. The aspects of qualitative research that I would like to discuss will relate to the problematization of these distinctions. I start by presenting very briefly these four characteristics of jazz improvisation, then proceed to a discussion of their respective relevance to processes of qualitative inquiry.

(i) **Collective Tradition *versus* Individual Voice:** In jazz improvisation, the rules and conventions of musical *tradition* merge seamlessly with the expression of an individual *voice*.

(ii) **External *versus* Internal:** In jazz improvisation, the musical outcome is a product of response to *external* impulses—in time and in space. This includes musical tradition as well as interplay with fellow musicians and audience. At the same time, the musical outcome is also a manifestation of *internal* gestures.

(iii) **Change of Self Through Narrative:** Jazz improvisation may be conceived of as *change of self through narrative*.

(iv) **Process *versus* Product:** In jazz improvisation, the *process* is the *product*.

In this chapter, I first formulate a few "lessons" from jazz improvisation for qualitative inquiry through a discussion of the polar positions (i) and (ii). Then I expand on how the

conception of jazz improvisation as change of self through narrative (iii) may be relevant to qualitative inquiry. Finally, returning to the distinction indicated by the title of this chapter, I reflect on possible lessons with regard to the distinction (iv) between process and product. Arguably, polar positions or dichotomies such as (i), (ii), and (iv) all concern aspects that are highly relevant, indispensable even, to our *understanding* of musical improvisation. Yet they can be of no particular use for defining it. In a sense, by encompassing both ends of these antithetical pairs, *improvisation blurs the distinctions*. I find this observation compelling— and all the more interesting when transferred to the field of research. What can the problematization or dissolution of these dichotomies bring to qualitative inquiry?

## (i) Collective tradition *versus* individual voice

My PhD dissertation (Bjerstedt, 2014) focuses on the usage of the term "storytelling" with regard to jazz improvisation, setting out to clarify how this concept is understood by Swedish jazz musicians. The study aims at an exploration of a multivariety of perspectives. Dimensions of temporality, openness, wholeness, and listening stand out as crucial to jazz improvisation and to musicians' understanding of it as "storytelling". The study points to several implications—theoretical, artistic, educational, and sociological—of the usage of the concept of storytelling in connection with jazz improvisation. In conclusion, the concept of storytelling as a rich intermedial metaphor is shown to be significant to the practice and reflection of performing artists through its ability to mediate holistic views of what is considered to be of crucial importance in artistic practice, analysis, and education.

### Authenticity with respect to tradition and self

My investigation points to musicians' use of an expanded storytelling metaphor, where dichotomies such as solo versus collective and individual versus tradition are, in a sense, dissolved. This view provides us with a picture of *layered systems of communication* where the "story" may be told by everyone (all the musicians, all the audience, and the tradition) acting together. Jazz improvisation, then, is never a soloist's enterprise in a strict sense. Apart from the individual ("solo") voice, the layered systems of communication include the collective of musicians as well as larger contexts in space and time: audience and tradition.

In my thesis, I identify a number of artistic implications of the usage of "storytelling" in jazz contexts, including the dynamics of different kinds of authenticity: on the one hand, authenticity regarding the tradition in which the improviser is situated; on the other, authenticity regarding the improviser's own individuality. Jazz improvisations typically include both. However, it might make sense to speak of a difference between American and Scandinavian storytelling in jazz, relating in interesting ways to the difference between two kinds of authenticity—I suggest the terms tradition-authenticity and self-authenticity. While self-authenticity is key to many Swedish jazz improvisers, some of them may arguably attach relatively less importance to tradition-authenticity (Bjerstedt, 2015b).

These perspectives might perhaps be viewed in terms of differences in the master narrative. Individual stories that are "told" in individual jazz improvisations may relate to larger narrative patterns. Different cultural and historical frameworks prompt different master narratives, different individual jazz improvisational "stories"—in a word, different music. The listener's narrativization of music is arguably dependent on cultural competence. In the African American jazz tradition, certain cultural practices—often termed Signifyin(g)—permeate both performing and listening activities, characterized by double meaning, double consciousness, and double-voiced discourse, including the transformation of preexisting musical material, playing *on* cultural memory while playing *with* musical ideas (Gates, 1988; Floyd, 1995).

Modes of communication come about in response to human needs. A language of implication, of double meaning, may not have developed in the same way in Scandinavian jazz improvisation because this mode of expression was not needed in the same way as in African American culture. Hence, Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) concepts of dialogism and double-voiced discourse, though eminently suited to the analysis of African American jazz, may arguably be somewhat less relevant in some European contexts.

Charlie Parker once said, "If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn" (Lewis, 1996, p. 119), and many informants in my investigation adhered to the view that the inclusion of personal narrative in solos is a crucial dimension in jazz. Generally speaking it would seem, then, that self-authenticity is of greater consequence to Swedish jazz improvisers than tradition-authenticity.

Needless to say, the notion of two kinds of authenticity can be transferred, expanded, and fruitfully applied to the field of research. To be sure, in naturalistic inquiry, a researcher will relate *both* to (i) traditions in the field which is the object of interpretation *and* to (ii) traditions of interpretation, i.e., scholarly traditions. In a previous article (Bjerstedt, 1993) I provided exemplification of how an historical text source can be subjected to radically different interpretations by historians.

In brief, there are built-in tensions in tradition-authenticity. Kirsten Hastrup (1999) has proposed three rather drastic metaphors to illuminate the demanding task of qualitative researchers. The interpretive process, she suggests, on the one hand includes the aspect or position of devoted identification and empathy (*shamanism*). On the other hand, it also includes the aspect of complete distancing from the object of research (*cannibalism*). Furthermore, the interpretive process typically includes a continuous oscillation between empathy and reflection (*schizophrenia*).

I suggest that this schizophrenia may be closely related to the notion of tradition-authenticity. The demand to relate to "tradition" is a two-edged sword, if both senses of tradition—(i) and (ii)—are included. I further suggest that one lesson to be learnt from the

field of jazz improvisation is the relevance of another kind of authenticity: self-authenticity. *Just as jazz improvisation can be authentic in more than one way, so can research.*

In sum, my first attempt at formulating a lesson from the arts concerns the relevance of both self-authenticity and tradition-authenticity to qualitative research, in a way that is analogous to the dynamics of these perspectives in jazz improvisation.

## (ii) External *versus* internal

Returning to the topic of jazz improvisation, the focus on self-authenticity mentioned above should certainly not be interpreted as indicating that Swedish improvisers opt for the inner and neglect the outer. On the contrary, nothing is arguably more emphasized in the interviews than the importance of being mentally prepared, flexible, and able to adjust to the demands of the moment by way of the improviser's continuous *gaze outwards* towards fellow musicians and audience. But while requirements for tradition-authenticity are not particularly focused on by the informants, the requirements for self-authenticity are all the stronger. Complementary to the outwards gaze, then, is a *directionality inwards*, to one's inner musical voice and vision.

Improvisation has traditionally often been conceptualized in accordance with the outwards perspective rather than with its opposite: as a *response to external impulses* in time and space (situations, others). For instance, Gilbert Ryle (1976) argues that improvisation characterizes our everyday actions in response to life's ever-changing conditions: "to a partly novel situation the response is necessarily partly novel, else it is not a response" (p. 73). Liora Bresler (2006) contends that life requires improvisation, "distinguishing a life lived from a life endured" (p. 33).

Philip Alperson (2010) views improvisation in general as "a kind of goal-directed activity ('I need to get something to get this boulder out of the way'), but what makes the activity improvisatory is the sense that what is done is being done on the fly ('Maybe I can use this branch as a lever to move the rock')" (p. 273).

It would seem, then, that while there is a prevailing view of improvisation as a response to external impulses, my research points to an important alternative (or, rather, complementary) conceptualization: improvisation as a *manifestation of inner voice and vision*—as reflections of internal gestures such as states of mind, emotions, aims, and processes.

In sum, a traditional view of *improvisation as a response to external impulses* ought to be supplemented by the view of *improvisation as a manifestation of internal gestures*. Musical improvisations, I suggest, should be understood as *both* expressions of the inner *and* reflecting impressions of the outer.

External and internal perspectives, then, emerge as equally relevant to our understanding of jazz improvisation. Self-evidently, this notion, too, can be transferred, expanded and fruitfully applied to our understanding of processes of qualitative inquiry. Its relevance, I suggest, may stand out most clearly in connection with the dynamics of *observation* and *interpretation*. In order to understand as fully as possible the complexity of research processes, we ought not to neglect the relevance to qualitative inquiry of this perspective, of reflective work as expressions of the internal. *Just as jazz improvisation can be viewed both as a response to external impulses and as a manifestation of internal gestures, so can research.*

The dynamics of the external and the internal (dichotomy ii) may appear to be closely related to the interrelations between tradition and the individual voice (dichotomy i). In a way, given that musical tradition may be included as one aspect of the external and internal impulses, dichotomy (i) could be viewed as a special case of dichotomy (ii). This is a reasonable view. But I suggest that it is equally fruitful to treat these two distinctions separately, as they may be related in contradistinctive ways to the objective—subjective distinction. While the tradition—voice dichotomy (i) has to do with the tension between historical and present perspectives (between diachronicity and synchronicity), the external—internal dichotomy (ii) focuses on that which emerges in the present moment; that is, the concept "tradition" is interpreted not as an undivided, "objective" whole, but as individual, "subjective" instances of tradition, manifested as sorts of awakened memories in the creative mind and utilized in its processes of imagination.

In sum, my second attempt at formulating a lesson from the arts concerns the relevance of both internal and external perspectives to qualitative research, in a manner analogous to the conception of jazz improvisation as both expressions of the inner and reflecting impressions of the outer.

## (iii) Change of self through narrative: A lesson from jazz improvisation

One crucial aspect of my investigation of storytelling in jazz improvisation is the conception of improvisation as *change of self through narrative*. Following Paul Ricoeur (1983–1985/1984–1988), we may see embodied jazz improvisation as an instance of changing narrative identity. Narrative identity—such as, for instance, the identity of the "storytelling" jazz improviser—is an identity that changes; the narrative model comprises the notion of the inner dialectics of personality. I regard this dialectic perspective on identity as highly relevant to jazz improvisation. On the one hand, the storytelling jazz improviser's identity is a continuous improvisational process of construction. On the other hand, this construction (performance, improvisation) exists at all times in its very coming into being. The ontology of improvisation, I suggest, is best understood as a temporal performative process of construction of improvisational identity (Bjerstedt, 2014).

I suggest that this perspective may be expanded and serve as a contribution to a development of our conceptualization of qualitative research. I would argue that Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba's (1985) notion of *prolonged engagement* provides the means to construct a reasonable and relevant analogue in qualitative inquiry to the conception of change of self through narrative.

Not only is this notion of (jazz) improvisation as change of self through narrative of relevance to qualitative research; this lesson from the arts may pose relevant challenges for research processes as well as for research products. In the next two sections, I will develop some lines of argument, making use of (i) Lincoln and Guba's (1985) notion of *prolonged engagement*; and (ii) a reconsideration of *thesis structure* through the (jazz) notion of collective interplay.

### Reconsidering the notion of prolonged engagement

Lincoln and Guba (1985) advocate prolonged engagement as one of several techniques by which a researcher can ensure that the research results meet criteria of trustworthiness. Through the investment of time, certain purposes may be achieved: learning the "culture", testing for misinformation, and building trust, which, as they emphasize, is a "*developmental* [...] time-consuming process*" (p. 303). Bresler (2013) points to the relevance of the concept of prolonged engagement to artistic experience. The case of my own research exemplifies two complementary kinds of prolonged engagement: with research, and with artistic practice. In addition to my prolonged artistic engagement with jazz improvisation practice, there is my prolonged research engagement with intermedial conceptual loans and metaphoricity (Bjerstedt, 2010). Then, in the course of my PhD investigation, my research engagement extended to jazz improvisation, and vice versa: the notion of intermedial metaphoricity informs my artistic practice. My background includes several decades as a performer in the same artistic field as my informants, who are all jazz musicians like myself. I suggest that the dynamics between the specific research process and such a prolonged engagement—with data, with theories, with rich experiences, with multi-layered reflections—may provide interesting and important perspectives on the very nature and significance of prolonged engagement.

In generalized terms, mine is a research project that deals with artistic thought and practice; hence, both my prolonged research engagement and my prolonged artistic engagement are of relevance to it. The concept of prolonged engagement is obviously not a monolithic one; the relations described above could be visualized in a four-part model of prolonged engagement (see Figure 1):

| conceptual (research) engagement with conceptualizations | conceptual (research) engagement with artistic practice |
|---|---|
| practical (artistic) engagement with conceptualizations | practical (artistic) engagement with artistic practice |

*Figure 1: A four-part model of prolonged engagement*

I suggest that this model (Figure 1), *mutatis mutandis*, might be of relevance to the notion of prolonged engagement in connection with all forms of naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In my own case, all of these parts are interrelated. Also, they all interrelate to the *prolongation of engagement during multiple research projects over an extended time period*. Not only my previous—and ongoing—musicianship but also, to an important extent, my previous research has shaped and informed the dissertation—which, in its turn, will shape and inform my future investigations as well as my artistic practice in the future. (For a further discussion of this and other aspects of the interrelations between reflective practice and improvisatory art, see Bjerstedt, 2015a.)

## Collective interplay: Reconsidering thesis structure

Musical improvisation is about the dynamics of tradition and freedom. In what ways may my own jazz improvisational practice have informed and shaped the style and structure of my dissertation? I will not be so bold as to suggest that the writing style of my thesis in any way approached or tried to assimilate a "jazzy" quality; however, in one respect I believe I did try to let one characteristic of jazz music inform the prose. The purpose of collecting and analyzing several perspectives on jazz improvisation is best served, I suggest, by supplying rich quotations. In order to provide optimal foundations for interpretation regarding several interrelated issues, the text ought to provide extensive encounters with a string of soloists in collective interplay, as it were: a multitude of voices. In a sense, then, my thesis leans more towards Bakhtinian dialogism than epic monologue. (The preponderance of extensive citations, while hopefully contributing to the richness of the picture, unfortunately also renders the volume somewhat heavier.)

Perhaps more importantly, the character of my own PhD study has made me reflect on questions about thesis structure. It may be argued that the informants in my interview investigation, all experienced musicians, have themselves conducted (artistic) research, and that my presentation of results ought thus to be viewed as a meta-analytical outline of research on the same epistemological level as an overview of (written) previous research. There is arguably no difference in principle between the (oral) perspectives of the informants and the (written) perspectives of previous research; indeed, with regard to the latter kind of

sources, Kenneth H. Phillips (2008) holds that "[t]hose citations are [...] research data" as well (p. 75).

To challenge or not to challenge conventions regarding the structure of a doctoral thesis? I think that *collective interplay* has informed its writing style, but not its overall structure, in the way it could have. After all, I did not juxtapose the oral perspectives of the informants and the written perspectives of previous research; they were separated, in the traditional manner, by a number of chapters on theory and methodology. Based on the argument that these perspectives are actually on the same epistemological level, I could have chosen to prioritize their collective interplay, too, and let it present a challenge to conventional thesis structure.

The conception of jazz improvisation as changing narrative identity, I argue, can be transferred, expanded and applied to our understanding of processes of qualitative inquiry; it has its research analogue in an expanded and developed notion of prolonged engagement. The different problematizations above emerge as exemplifications of what this notion can bring to our understanding of the complexity of research.

In sum, my third attempt at formulating a lesson from the arts concerns the relevance to qualitative research processes of an expanded and developed notion of prolonged engagement, analogous to the conception of jazz improvisation as changing narrative identity.

## (iv) Process versus product

Christopher Small (1987) famously advocates a view of music as activity rather than entity. He strongly advises against all reification: "improvisation is all process; there is no product" (p. 301).

As noted initially, one prominent feature of the phenomenon of musical improvisation is that it seems to have potential for *blurring the distinctions*. Could the dichotomy process−product be problematized also in qualitative research? Arguably, while research always *is a process*, as long as it takes place within a research community in need of communication and exchange, it can hardly avoid *manifesting itself in research products*: dissertations, articles, etc. (A parallel: musical improvisation manifests itself in recordings.) This might be viewed as the commoditization of research.

Arguably, the close interrelations between the two aspects process and product cannot be dissolved. Just as the flow of time can be perceived as a series of frozen moments, so could any continuing process be viewed as a series of quasi-complete products. Interestingly, Keith Swanwick (1988) formulates a rather different perspective than the one advocated by Small; arguing that the product is central, Swanwick defines process as *products-over-time*. In the words of Göran Folkestad (1996), "[t]he product is central, as its development gives impulses to, and motivates the continuing process" (p. 67).

Two questions arise here: could qualitative research partake more of improvisation, less of composition? Could it manifest itself more as living organisms, less as evenly proportioned cathedrals (of different sizes)?

The considerations regarding prolonged engagement in the previous section include a number of problematizations. I argue that these difficulties may all be resolved to an extent through focusing on a view of qualitative inquiry as *process* rather than product.

Behind, or above, all of the tensions I have discussed in this chapter is the dichotomy *practice—conceptualization*. I strongly believe that this conceptual pair, which is at the heart of the relation between qualitative research and the arts, ought to be considered in relation to the notion of *prolonged engagement* (which could arguably be seen as qualitative inquiry's analogue to the conception of jazz improvisation as *change of self through narrative*). I have argued that this notion ought to be revised and expanded in order to serve our conceptualizations of qualitative research better. This revision, I think, is the key to questions such as the one posed above: Could qualitative research manifest itself more as living organisms, as processes rather than products?

I believe that through an expansion of the concept of prolonged engagement, through its inclusion of the "identity" of the researcher in a manner similar to that of the improvising musician—that is, in a sense analogous to that of change in self through narrative—, researchers may learn an interesting and relevant lesson from the art of jazz music. In sum, my fourth and final attempt at formulating a lesson from the arts amounts to a provocative paraphrase of Small's words about improvisation: *The product of qualitative inquiry is all process.*

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# Exploring points of (im)balance through artistic research trans-actions

BRUNO FARIA

As a musician and researcher, I feel that my current work has been punctuated and propelled by encounters with and explorations of points of (im)balance. I employ the parenthesis in the title and throughout the text in an attempt to heed the role and value of both balance and imbalance by keeping them close together and by considering how one potentially creates a space for the other. An interchange of these qualities marks the qualitative motion of life and its various moments of (interpretive) creativity, something that I think can be *experienced* through the arts and *articulated* through research. Even though balance is often considered as a condition for an ultimate and ideal beauty, in both art and academic reasoning, it is often achieved through multilayered explorations of points of (im)balance. With that in mind, in the present chapter I will share aspects of my everyday noticing and exploring of (im)balance through some examples from the joint enterprise of art and research making.

In the field of artistic research, in which I am conducting my PhD studies, one's own artistic practice is the main source from which spring both methodology and outcomes (Borgdorff, 2011, p. 46). This presupposes a certain mutuality between and across artistic and research methodological journeys, something that might render difficult an attempt to extract a clear lesson from the arts to the fields of research methodology and vice versa. The philosopher John Dewey (1934/2005) noted that:

> The artist does his thinking in the very qualitative media he works in, and the terms lie so close to the object that he is producing that they *merge* directly into it. (p. 15, emphasis added).

Feeling more at ease in expressing myself through sounds that are not words, the academic articulation of my musical thinking thus extend the issues I deal with through artistic transactions towards verbal and textual media. The joint making of artistic and academic research itself requires, I feel, attentiveness and quite a lot of effort so that both activities can

co-exist in a balanced relation, illuminating, complementing, and strengthening one another. Different mediums pose different challenges and require different choices of expression, and such nuances come forth when one performs across different (musical or research) horizons. Let me try to articulate better, though, what I have in mind when I think of potential explorations of (im)balance through artistic research.

The tensions and resolutions that emerge from the use of dissonances in music could be taken as examples of explorations of (im)balance. Composers have purposefully explored such tools to enhance aesthetic experience and, in some cases, to push compositional systems to their limits. This kind of artistic (im)balance is closer to my musical background. But what I have most in mind here are instances in which imbalance has been stretched beyond so-called 'musical sounds', beyond the making of those who had already stretched harmonies with so many dissonances to the point that other ways of thinking and making music ended up being conceived and developed (e.g., serial music). Consider, for instance, John Cage's composition *4'33"* as a purposeful pushing of the limits of imbalance between sound and silence through a musical work constituted only by the latter. Cage explored conceptual dissonances, disturbing the balance of the musical world by raising questions concerning the essence of music and music making, and composing artistic counter-arguments to the idea that music expresses something beyond itself.

But I am no genius like Cage, who summoned attention in the art world and beyond with many examples of artistic and conceptual wit, or Dewey, who understood and articulated essential aspects of aesthetic experiences so deeply and concisely. I am a performer stepping into the world of research, and as I write these words I cannot avoid sensing the imbalance that pervades my wish to maintain the integrity of my voice as a musician while attempting to speak in an academic dialect. *This imbalance troubles me: it pushes me forward*. Although thought-provoking, purposeful (and in some cases extreme) explorations of (im)balance in art, those instances in which breath-taking suspensions are intentionally brought forth, generating disquiet and questions instead of answers, as its effects are dramatically reinforced by the absence of a resolution (i.e., a return to balance), may seem different in nature from the continuous search for clarity of well-balanced academic reasoning. But isn't the propelling quality of imbalance a central component in the foundation of research making?

With the idea of exploring (im)balance I have departed from a pragmatic aspect of previously playing and teaching almost exclusively within a tradition of score-based standard (orchestral) practices. In solo dimensions, I journeyed through "recitals" composed by other people's music. In those recitals there were certainly dissonances and other aspects that relate to explorations of artistic (im)balance. Nonetheless, I needed to get closer to Cage and others, and to experience more in-depth ways of making music that in their indeterminacy threw me off-balance as a classically trained flutist. My new goal was not necessarily to embrace and recite somebody else's notated musical thoughts, enriching them as they become my own

through the processes of interpretation, but to find and shape the very basic materials for my own musical ideas (e.g., sounds, articulations, dynamics, silences), trying to effectively express myself through these.

I will try to express below some of the (im)balance issues that have permeated my quest for understanding and for methodological development in the field of artistic research. To do so I will concentrate on three dimensions: that of equipment (e.g., instruments, resources), contents (e.g., sound, silence, dissonances), and subjectivities (e.g., artist, educator, researcher). To situate this discussion I will present briefly the background for my PhD research. Then I will try to articulate a transformation in my understanding of the notion of musical transactions (Stubley, 1995) and to reflect upon my journey as a fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 1960/2006). I consider these reflections significant for gradually opening myself to learn from the potential lessons I can take as a researcher from artistic (im)balance. (Feel free to jump ahead and read these reflections which are to be found in the last three sections of the text, if you will.)

## Coping with balance: Needing imbalance

The prevalence of standard and score-based repertoires that delineated my usual practices made me notice an artistic imbalance that kept at the margins other opportunities for experiencing music and exercising musicianship. In my doctoral research I decided to bring one of these marginal musical practices to the center, taking a different stance towards my musical background by focusing on a kind of musical activity that is marked by higher degrees of indeterminacy. Since in my everyday occupation as a classically trained flutist I had experienced improvisation mostly on the level of the unforeseen moments of performance of traditionally notated music, an artistic need served as a starting point towards appropriating another musical horizon and embodying another experience of improvisation.

To follow a musical path that I had occasionally walked through, my investigation focuses on experiences stemming from a practice called *Soundpainting*, an artistic-performative medium created and developed by North-American musician Walter Thompson since the mid 1970s (Thompson, 2006). In it artists are requested to improvise upon more or less delimited parameters that are conventionally attributed to specific body/hand movements (i.e., a multimodal sign language). The collaboration between group leader (i.e., *soundpainter*), who defines and presents sequences of such movements to a group of performers, and the latter, who interpret these and develop musical expressions upon their knowledge of the medium's conventions and meanings, happens in the moment. That means that rehearsal and performance work are not based on musical materials previously studied from a score (e.g., pitch, rhythms, articulations, dynamics); the art springs from the joint and multimodal explorations of possibilities delineated through the functions and contents conventionalized in each Soundpainting sign.

Soundpainting happened to be the medium through which I chose to develop my research, for it created a field of musical possibilities in which I could a) explore from a different perspective ideas related to musical signs, gestures, and also particularities of the roles of performer, conductor, and composer, and b) try to find my own musical center (or balance, if you will) in the unforeseen of improvisation. John Cage comes to mind again. In his articulations of musical indeterminacy in *Silence: lectures and writings* (1968/2009), he describes the role of musicians by making various analogies with other activities (e.g., a contractor following a blueprint, a photographer, a traveler). He argues that "the introduction of a score — that is, a fixed relation of the parts, removes the quality of indeterminacy from the performance" (p. 37), consequently withdrawing musicians from the possibility of performing from their own centers.

Even though the Soundpainting practice as a whole is intrinsically improvisatory and collaborative, thus deeply connected to the present moment of intersubjective artistic transactions, I started searching for ways to incorporate it into my individual instrumental practice, from where I will be drawing my examples. In my quest for a musical center (or at least another route to it) through Soundpainting proper and now also through a kind of transformed Soundpainting for the purposes of individual practice, I started encountering and dealing with artistic (im)balance from another perspective.

## Concrete and conceptual tools: Instrumental and expressive balance

The practical difficulties of maintaining Soundpainting ensemble work on a daily basis (due to the limited availability of performers and working space, for example) generated an aspect of imbalance that considerably limited the scope of my research. Not being able to experience daily the field of indeterminate musical possibilities of such practice would hardly allow me to even start to seek a musical center within an improvisatory framework. To come to grips with such imbalance I needed to create a virtual field to work in, wherein I could reenact the search for expression experienced in the actual fields in which Soundpainting proper set the boundaries of play. I therefore enacted a re-turn to a concrete and common tool for both musical practice and research: notation.

Through graphic signs and abbreviations of Soundpainting-sign names I started devising what I have been calling Soundpainting-sketches (Figure 1). As I searched for ways to represent in print what was meant to be communicated through the body, my initial steps in the development of these semiotic resources were marked by a more technical and perhaps distanced approach. Projecting musical ideas onto a sketched notation, imaginatively weighing sonorities to devise an interesting framework to improvise upon, represented one moment of explorations of (im)balance, in which the unforeseen of performance could be sensed only at a distance. On the other hand, the processes of experimenting with various forms of actualizing and expanding from such projections through performance were of a

more symbiotic nature. In these a stronger and flowing aesthetic connection drove my search for an artistic-methodological balance, which ranged from coping with what I took to be strengths of the notated medium (e.g., its indeterminacy) as well as its weaknesses (e.g., its inability to convey deeper levels of meaning as bodily gestures would), through concrete aspects of acoustic differences that I needed to equalize in the use of different instruments, to the very artistic decisions concerning which materials to explore, what means to employ, what to express and how to do so. In these processes I began noticing that points of (im)balance could be explored as powerful components, as instances that brought another level of energy and understanding to my (re)search.



*Figure 2: Example of three sketches with captions indicating the meaning of each sign.*

The awareness of points of (im)balance emerging from these interchanges between media raised a need for a deeper sensitivity in the research process as a whole. In this particular case, I felt that notation had flattened out the depth and dynamism characteristic of the gestural/aural nature of Soundpainting, which, again, is not originally embodied in print (fixed) form but in the movements of soundpainters' bodies and musicians' improvised sounds. The first signs on the upper left corner of Figure 1, for instance, represent short notes ("Hits" in Soundpainting) in different registers, which a soundpainter can either a) inform the performer to play by showing the sign for "Hit" with each hand's index finger and thumb pinched together, facing the ensemble, close to the body, and then indicate a form of entrance without necessarily communicating any extra meaning through gesture, or b) inform the

performer by showing the sign for "Hit", as a preparation, and then communicate other levels of meaning by stepping forward and throwing the arms in the direction of the performers, releasing or not index fingers and thumbs in ways that the soundpainter's gesture and performer's sound become contiguous. Understanding and balancing the affordances of each dimension (i.e., the gestural, the notated, the sonorous) has been a necessary condition for accomplishing a meaningful transformation across them, one which involved more than a mere alteration (Gadamer, 1960/2006, p. 110) and which afforded a multilayered field of exploration.

The designing of the sketches steered my compositional thinking into new directions; the flatness of the notation raised a challenge and an opportunity for, in the moments of performance, focusing on the sound as the ultimate conveyer of a dimension of embodied (gestural) knowledge that could not be printed. Through the analysis of the performed outcomes recorded in audio and interpreted through text, these and other issues were raised, rekindling my explorations and strengthening my awareness of the significance of exploring such instances of (im)balance as a researcher. In a way, the work with these sketches functioned like musical (auto)inter-views, which allowed me to perceive the practice from different perspectives and to gain enough distance to gradually notice the nuances of each moment of the research.

Similar (im)balance issues appeared in the work with interviews (in a more traditional academic perspective) with novice and experienced soundpainters for my dissertation, in which different moments and media afford and require different approaches. Certainly my attention was steered in different directions through the processes of preparation for an interview, considerations about how to document it, the actual interviewing, and the later processes of transcription, interpretation, and communication. Developing an awareness of what each of these moments afforded has been crucial for both making the most of each and compensating (balancing) for their respective weaknesses when needed and/or desired. Now as I write this I realize how deeply such balancing depends on one's awareness and sensitivity towards what is present to and absent from perception, an issue articulated in phenomenology (Sokolowski, 2000); being aware (of the value) of what is present and absent in a certain context (e.g., an interview, a sketch, a performance, a text) allows the researcher to explore fully in action as well as in reflection peculiarities and nuances of what is at hand, *(im)balancing-out* when appropriate. Perceiving and attempting to represent through written texts the subtle meanings that emerged in the dynamic qualities of a conversation, I often reached points in which the quality of the work shifted between being at times significantly more technical and more expressive (to borrow a differentiation between styles of interpretation used as criteria in assessing music performance). As in understanding the difficulty of an intricate musical passage, assimilating the density of a subject matter that an interviewee was trying to convey through words, intonation, and gesture, for instance, usually

called for a more surgical precision. Yet, an aesthetic connection with what was being studied contributed to the sensing of potential meaning, the depth of understanding, and the effectiveness of its communication. Points of (im)balance across and between different media and approaches impact the significance of what is (to be) conveyed.

Based on sketched references to musical concepts and expressive enactments of these through performance, I started building more systematically an improvisatory path within my own practice. Gradually sensing that some degree of balance in relation to the notation *and* the mindset to perform from these had been reached, each disclosing different dimensions of musical embodiment, I took another step towards potential imbalance by adding other voices to my work. As in the cumulative tensions of dissonances, contrasting rhythms, or through divergent understandings voiced by different scholars or interviewees, an accumulation of instrumental voices (e.g., the contrabass, the alto, and the piccolo flutes, plus a move beyond acoustic sources to work also with electronic sounds activated by foot pedals), each with its own character, contributed to the emergence of imbalance. Besides the issues of actual physical (im)balance involved in playing instruments of different dimensions and acoustic characteristics (e.g., resistance, responsiveness), and also in using my feet to activate and control electronic sounds, I had now to discover and (im)balance-out the expressive affordances of a widened instrumental range through this transformed medium.

Sketched tools and mediums hopefully lead gradually to more complex forms, where particularities of the work can become more salient and (im)balance issues more delicate. Foreseeing moments of actual communication of research processes and outcomes (e.g., performances, recordings, texts) from the practice/study room, the question of how to explore media and resources became pressing. The common imbalance between the different capacities of sound projection of different flutes, for instance, was literally amplified by the necessity of using microphones to allow a full-blown exploration of electronic processing. On a more subtle level, expressions could easily be enriched as well as impoverished from alterations or transformations attained through electronic manipulations. An academic parallel to these aspects relates to understanding how (particularities of) certain messages became potentially amplified through different media or resources. To what extent could the communication of the research process and its outcomes be enhanced or devalued through the use of text, audio, still or moving images? How does the use of resources available for each media (e.g., audio/video recording and editing techniques, linguistic tools) enrich or impoverish the content to be communicated? Both in the musical and the academic perspectives, concrete and conceptual tools needed to be carefully weighted so that expressive purposes would not go astray. How could the message behind four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence be precisely expressed?

## Sound and silence: fundamental content balance

Similar to the relation balance/imbalance, sound and silence depend on one another; the presence of one delineates and reinforces the (sometimes muffled) presence of the other. Let us take again John Cage's *4'33''* as an example. Having only silence represented on the score, in being performed the piece brings forth another realm of sounds and potential meaning that offer some balance to the notated silence, becoming part of the music if one is willing to embrace such a challenging experience. As a result, the unique character of each and every musical performance is dramatically highlighted: even if the same crowd and (group of) performer(s) were gathered in the same room on another occasion, it would not ever be possible to repeat it.

Given my commitment towards defining the very content that composes my musical and academic expressions, I was drawn towards the issue of (im)balance between sound and silence. My previous experiences with traditionally notated scores taught me about potential meanings of silences in music, which in itself constitutes another lesson from the arts: rests are not empty spots, mere absence of sound and meaning (see Matsunobu, this volume). How was silence meaningful in the improvisational practice that I was constructing? An artistic need for understanding and for conscious exploration of the subtleties and (im)balances surrounding these two fundamental contents led me to a quest for how to perceive and explore the meaningfulness of silences in my developing improvisational subjectivity.

This artistic quest has also been enriched through the developments of my researcher's subjectivity in a more academic sense, when I am not necessarily engaged with music performance. While reading academic texts, as well as in actual transactions with interviewees, for instance, I need to be aware of the delicate issue of sensing meaning in what remains unsaid. Interpreting carefully the fabrics of discourse it might be possible to uncover significant knowledge that may rest unarticulated in silence. Sounds and silences articulated through interviews helped me form a fuller picture (along with the musical interviews) of possible meanings emerging through experiences of Soundpainting. Balanced listening, attention towards, and connection with the whole of an "embodied narrative" (Bresler, 2006) disclose the significance of musical rests and the silences that punctuate verbal discourses. Experiencing the significance of sound and silence through art, I attempt to heighten my sensitivity also through methodological perspectives that are not necessarily merged into the processes of art making.

Perceiving subtleties between such fundamental contents of expression as sounds and silences are brings forth the possibility and highlights the relevance of purposeful explorations of (im)balance in other dimensions. For instance, through the research process I gradually became aware that a silent and yet very present aspect of my work with Soundpainting-sketches is the embodied knowledge derived both from working as a soundpainter and from having worked with different soundpainters over the years. When delineating my expressions,

not only in moments of individual practice but also in moments of sharing through performance, I reenact through my playing nuances reminiscent of bodily gestures that helped shape my understanding. Similar to the work realized in collaboration with orchestra conductors, who share musical knowledge through bodily gestures (more than or) as much as through words, the work that springs from Soundpainting contains the possibility of a sensitive and deeply embodied balance between meaningful silence and sound.

On a fundamental level, upon which I carry on many activities pre-reflectively, sound and silence have reached in some cases a degree of (artistic) balance that encompasses an intersubjective dimension. Learning through performance and research that bodies are impregnated with such tacit balance, I strive to notice it while relating to others in various musical and academic transactions. The aspect of intersubjectivity has been articulated in phenomenology and neuroscience not only as cognitive but also affective, pervading action, perception, *and* imagination (Gallagher, 2007):

> My intersubjective understanding of others is not a purely intellectual accomplishment. I *perceive* the emotions and the intentions of the other person in their bodily movements and gestural expressions, and in doing so, my own embodiment acts as the template for understanding. (p. 288, emphasis in the original)

(Im)balances between and across sonorous, verbal, and gestural aspects of various transactions carried out in performance and research potentially become tools for the disclosure of understanding. Through points of (im)balance the contours of the various sides that constitute my own musical being (e.g., classically trained flutist, improviser, soundpainter) become gently delineated, allowing a deepening of self-understanding.

## Subjectivities in balance

Since a level of deep embodiment and inter/intrasubjectivity has been mentioned, I should take the opportunity to address the issue of balancing subjectivities. This might not necessarily be a lesson originating from the arts but perhaps more a mutually reinforcing example stemming from research and arts. I take a clue from Alan Peshkin (1988), who articulated how our subjectivities shape the course of our research through each phase of its realization. Analyzing different research records (e.g., my own recordings based on sketches at different times, musical and academic interviews with fellow artists) I start to notice how a fluctuation of subjectivities influences my understanding of (aspects of) the world that I am attempting to disclose through artistic research.

Developing within different traditions, it is natural to nurture different modes of thinking and to embrace distinctive standards. Naturally, as a classically trained flutist, I carry with me standards of performance that shape my conceptions of musical quality. Ideally, even within that horizon of understanding, in which performance quality is constituted also by awareness

and embodiment of peculiar stylistic and historical qualities, I must be attentive towards subtle fluctuations of subjectivities so that a romantic vein, so to speak, will not distort the interpretation of a baroque piece, for instance. My standards as a classically trained musician, though, become radically challenged through a practice like Soundpainting, and imbalance points in the direction of re-signification. For instance, one can be called upon to thoroughly develop musical expressions from any kind of sonority and not just the habitual ones most often prejudged as 'beautiful tones'. A sound considered 'ugly' or 'unmusical' in a certain context might become exactly the point of departure for the construction of expressions in another. In academic grounds, thoughtful explorations of unsound arguments and through different ways of understanding the world expressed by various intellectual traditions fuel academic (and artistic) discussions, and points of imbalance become triggers for further developments. The significance of my journey towards understanding through Soundpainting practices has benefited from explorations of points of (im)balance between my younger subjectivity as an improviser and my older one as a classically trained orchestra musician, each in different ways concerned with precision, correctness, and fidelity on the sublime level of deep embracement and expressive representation of ideas/emotions, not on the surface and depreciative level connoted by some authors. On a different dimension, this journey became enriched through points of (im)balance between how hermeneutic, phenomenological, or semiotic perspectives understand and articulate the structures of meaning, and how I understand meaning conveyed through the arts.

It took me some time to recognize, for instance, pervasive aspects of imbalance in my performances of the sketches and to start searching for a balanced way to shape and pace my musical expressions. Here I would refer to Gadamer's understanding of "recognition" as knowing more than what is at hand and moving beyond the familiar (1960/2006, p. 113). Listening back to recordings I found that in many cases my choices and the achieved results were still rather limited. Dynamics as well as timbre could be explored much more broadly, musical directions could be delineated more clearly, the time spent on each component of the sketch could be better distributed and connected to a whole. I gradually realized that my former striving for a flawless performance and a truthful rendering of what was printed on a page was misplaced and in need of re-contextualization. That mindset was to a large extent incompatible with the practice I was attempting to develop, and it was actually hindering me from taking advantage of a much more extensive openness that these musical trans-actions offered. It was necessary then to balance out my subjectivities for the sake of the artistic and the research work.

Noting points of imbalance in my own artistic work and also in the work of fellow artists, the latter through semi-structured interviews, other points of imbalance started to emerge from the data. Analyzing videos from Soundpainting sessions realized with students, I could notice here and there how my interjections prevented potentially interesting artistic

developments, being too constrained by a didactic perspective and attitude. Through conversations with Walter Thompson, I learned about his difficulty in being a player in Soundpainting groups, due to the strength of his subjectivity as the creator and very first teacher of Soundpainting; from his rehearsal and performance anecdotes it became possible to see how subjectivities infiltrate one another, (im)balancing-out one's perception of the unfolding work. Yes, one assumes different roles (e.g., performing, teaching, researching) that might call for the prevalence of one mindset or another at different moments. However, in cases where art making is central, especially in performance-related areas (e.g., performance education and research), instances of (im)balanced subjectivities can be unnecessarily obstructive.

The disclosure through artistic research of points of (im)balance between one musical mindset and another reinforced the value of sensing the momentary predominance of subjectivities and of acknowledging the prejudices that come to surface. An example with both artistic and methodological significance that caught my attention was that I was frequently reading-in restrictions on the sketches, which were rather open-ended sources for musical exploration. There was no apparent reason for restricting my performance based on nonexistent notational limitations. To me, the reading-in of restrictions that was brought forth through my musical practice flagged the danger of reading-in meaning and becoming tied to interpretations that might be to various extents untrue towards their sources, whether these are to be found as artistic processes, research data, or *merged* as artistic-research data. Such (self)warning highlights the importance of being aware of the impact that (im)balanced subjectivities, senses, and thoughts could bring to the interpretation of various sources and to the communication of new ways of understanding.

## From transactions through trans-actions: Exploring (im)balance anew

Underlying issues of (im)balance in art, research, and life in general can be approached from different angles. In a broad and primordial existential sense, (im)balance marks our very striving for life through the transactional relations we keep within different "environing conditions" (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 36). Zooming in, it is also present in the concrete coping with various tools such as musical instruments, scores, or academic texts; in the processing and embodiment of ideas and skills that unfold through the laborious formulation of concepts and expressions; and in the sharing of these with fellow musicians, researchers, and audiences.

Interpretation pervades various moments of meaning creation, whether when carried out by an author who could be interpreting the Muses, as Plato would have it in the dialogue *Ion* (Plato, trans. 2011), by an improviser in contemporary music, or by a performing interpreter as the *rhapsode* Ion or a part of my musical self as an orchestra flutist. The aspect of transaction with one's surrounding and the exemplary model of aesthetic experience that

Dewey explored in depth were incorporated and further developed in the realm of literature by Louise Rosenblatt (Rosenblatt, 1978/1998), who understood reading as transactional events and readers as central agents in the realization and expansion of meaning(ful) "potentialities" disclosed through encounters with written texts. Relevant extensions of the notion of transaction can also be found in the realm of educational research in the work of arts-based research scholars such as Elliot Eisner and Tom Barone (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Eisner, 1998). Rosenblatt's attention towards readers instead of authors later on acquired a musical overtone through Eleanor Stubley's work (Stubley, 1995), which focused on the activity of the performing interpreter, re-contextualizing the notions of *efferent* and *aesthetic* ways of reading. Different perspectives disclose various aspects of (im)balance that pervade and shape these processes of meaning-making, these ways of reading.

In my activities centered on the performance of standard solo and ensemble/orchestral repertoire for the flute I have frequently experienced the analytical approach of efferent transactions as well as the somewhat flowing connection of the aesthetic transactions. As proposed by Rosenblatt and Stubley, in the former the understanding of the material being interpreted functions as a platform for later usage, whereas in the latter one becomes absorbed in the present moment of reading. As Stubley points out in the case of music performance, neither excludes the other; there is potentially a constant (and perhaps necessary) alternation between the two. Through the work of these scholars I find that not only a new balance has been reached between the roles of author and interpreter in terms of understanding the processes of meaning-making disclosed through each perspective, but also different aspects have been highlighted concerning the balancing aspects that pertain to each of these stances, marking such processes throughout. Through my research into experiences of Soundpainting, on the other hand, I have experienced another aspect (or degree) of transactions, which sheds new light on the relevance of artistic and academic aspects of (im)balance.

The artistic-research commitment towards reaching, questioning, and expanding meaning not only through paths opened by fellow artists and scholars, but also through paths that I had to open myself from scratch has extended my agency as a meaning-maker through performance. Reconsidering how I dealt with issues of (im)balance, I started reshaping the aforementioned notion of transaction into one of *trans-actions*, which refers to acting across boundaries. Through my artistic-academic work the lines usually drawn to separate interpreter, composer, and improviser have been gradually fading away. By acting across boundaries I came closer to points of (im)balance and found opportunities to explore them anew to the benefit of my own work.

## (Self)findings across fused horizons

Through the various stages of my research work (e.g., from bibliographical revisions, through field work, to communication) points of (im)balance emerged, inviting reflection. Different

sources afford different understandings. Ideas, persons, techniques, qualities encountered and experienced on the way combine one with another, sometimes clashing, at other times merging. Assuming different perspectives, in some moments being more of a reader, a performer, an interviewer, an interviewee, or an author, is a way to enrich one's understanding of the world. The perspective and commitment of a researcher, under which all these moments become fused, allow for a multilayered emergence of meaning. Surprises on the way do occur, but I find that these are not merely accidental; they are like the upper harmonic partials of a tone that can only be noticed through prolonged engagement.

The aspects of (im)balance that caught my attention while carrying out an artistic-research project seemed relevant also to deal with other essential aspects that pertain to the unforeseen nature of performance in general and improvisatory performance in particular. In the delicate transition from a background as a classically trained orchestra musician to the development of a mindset to cope with the challenges of improvisation, understanding the origin and the value of findings became crucial. The keeping of one's own integrity as a historical being and the awareness of one's prejudices, both key conditions for the meaningfulness of a fusion of horizons as Gadamer noted when addressing the acquisition of historical horizons and the subjective transposition into other situations (1960/2006, pp. 303-304), should not conceal a lesson to be learned from the concept and practice of improvisation. This lesson points towards the value of what *appears* to be found unexpectedly. As Bresler (2006) pointed out, research methodology can be greatly enriched through what is found in the unforeseen of improvisation. Through my artistic-methodological journeys towards improvisation I came to think that such findings do not necessarily result from an imbalance between expected and unexpected encounters. Rather they stem from deeper levels of embodied balance that become unveiled through the purposefulness and sensitive connection of the researcher towards the means and ends of the work. Before the eruption of a volcano, there is activity beneath the surface. Likewise, the emergence of an insight points back to an accumulation of sensitivities and currents of thought that gradually gain power through research. The perception of a shade of meaning that was temporarily concealed is broken off. This means that characterizations of certain findings as accidental, in the ancient Greek sense of non-essential (Gadamer, 1960/2006, p. 114), could mislead and jeopardize the journey towards a deeper understanding of the constitution of horizons of understanding.

Through multilayered processes of fusing a classically trained flutist's horizon of understanding with the new one of an improviser, a fusion taking place upon an underlying and also developing horizon of a researcher, a balanced understanding is called for if due value is to be paid to what is achieved as a result of artistic and academic purpose. The meaningful disclosure of musical ideas across time and through different instruments requires attention, sensitivity, memory, and also agility to move from one idea and/or instrument to

another without accidentally compromising the identity of musical expressions. Likewise, in academic work, the articulation of essential knowledge depends upon such qualities and upon a purposeful exploration of different sources and mediums. A thoughtful understanding and a purposeful exploration of points of (im)balance can be instrumental for disclosing the essence of both artistic and academic expressions.

## (Im)balance: Impulsion as conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to delineate processes, to refer to and reflect upon transformative affordances mediated through art. Again Dewey's insightful considerations about what artists do and undergo are significant for the context of my research pervaded by the metaphor of painting with sounds, and for bringing forth the transformative character of aesthetic experiences:

> The act of expression that constitutes a work of art is a construction in time, not an instantaneous emission. And this statement signifies a great deal more than that it takes time for the painter to transfer his imaginative conception to canvass and for the sculptor to complete his chipping of marble. It means that the expression of the self in and through a medium, constituting the work of art, is *itself* a prolonged interaction of something issuing from the self with objective conditions, a process in which both of them acquire a form and order they did not at first possess. (Dewey, 1934/2005, pp. 67-68, emphasis in the original)

Dewey characterizes the genesis of one's search for balance as an "impulsion" (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 61), something that resonates with an artistic need mentioned earlier and referred to by different artists as the motivating force for developing new paths (e.g., Jackson Pollock in Namuth, n.d.). Rather than the exclusive prerogative of those occupied with making art, such impulsions or needs, and their consequent transformations, are potentially also lived by those who encounter and are open to undergo "an experience" (Bresler, 2006; Dewey, 1934/2005; Heidegger, 1959/1982) with art. The worlds opened up through art (Rader, 1973, in Bresler, 2013; Heidegger, 1935/1993) can be discovered and traversed by both sensitive artists and perceivers, who depart from distinct starting points and have different but nonetheless pressing motivations that lead them on a transformative journey. Dewey's hint about what *constitutes* the work of art becomes enriched through the phenomenological meaning of the term "constitution" as a truthful disclosing of a world (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2012, p. 25; Sokolowski, 2000, p. loc. 1250).

From the platform of the transformative potential of aesthetic experiences I have been re-signifying connections, mindsets, and embodiments that constitute the artistic worlds I am attempting to traverse and disclose through research. From my (re)searches through improvisation, which also include transacting with and reflecting upon others' searches through art in general and the practice of Soundpainting in particular, I came to reconsider my experiences as *trans-actions*, in the sense of acting across borders. Through such trans-actions

I came to perceive many (im)balance issues which I could, and perhaps should, explore more consistently both artistically and academically. As I continuously search for a center from which to speak both in improvised music and academic writing, (im)balancing-out different components of expression when appropriate, I hope I have found ways to convey something meaningful to the research community through this paper.

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# Musical reflection on time, silence and listening in qualitative research

## Koji Matsunobu

Disciplinary training is a process of acquiring and developing a set of skills and knowledge necessary to solve problems and perform in a specific area. Musical training involves training the ears, understanding musical structures and forms, and developing psychomotor skills to sing and play an instrument. This process is often culture specific. For example, musical training within the Western music system encourages the development of hearing to recognize pitch over timbre (Pitt, 1994). Developing the eye-body coordination skills is an essential part of formal musical training in the West (McPherson, 2005) due to the fact that music has been transmitted and taught through sheet music (Walker, 2007). This is not always the case where music is orally inherited (Trimillos, 1989; Nettl, 2005). In such cultures sight takes a relatively minor role in music learning. Visceral responses and spiritual connections may be central to musical training (Keister, 2005). This is to suggest that the way in which we hear and construct the acoustic world is shaped by our cultural conditions. Our senses are the result of enculturation into a specific culture (Classen, 1997).

Senses play a significant part in qualitative research (Bresler, 2008; Matsunobu & Bresler, 2014). As is often suggested by qualitative scholars (Janesick, 2003; Piantanida & Garman, 1999; Merriam, 2002; Patton, 2002), the researcher is the main instrument for the inquiry. The body of the researcher is the site where perception and reflection occur for meaning making. If so, a question emerges: How do musicians perceive the world and how does it influence the way they experience qualitative research? Is there any difference in the way they conduct qualitative research? Recent discussion on the role of music in qualitative research highlights not only perceptions of musical forms and elements but also music as a way of understanding human interactions (Bresler, 2005, 2008). The premise of such an inquiry is that sound is a way of knowing and that music helps us understand social worlds. The centrality of sound as a modality of knowing and being in the world is widely

acknowledged (Feld, 1996; Gershon, 2011; Powell, 2012). In my previous work, I have drawn on the notion of musical space in human interaction using a cultural lens (Matsunobu, 2014). My point, to summarize here, is that people of different cultures define a musical space differently, and their senses of musical space have something to do with their social spaces that they construct and experience in everyday contexts.

In this chapter I continue my reflection on the link between the musical process and cultural perception that took place during my research, with specific attention to the elements of time and listening. I argue that sensing time is cultural, and our awareness of time in research settings can be highlighted through the arts. Later, I make a case that listening is a form of participation in social worlds.

## Time and experience

Lived experience is the key to understanding phenomenology and the many forms of its descendants such as narrative inquiry in which the researcher delves into the meanings of an action, event, person and object in retrospect. Time is an essential component of lived experience as the meaning of an experience changes over time. Phenomenological reflection on lived experience is not "introspective" but "retrospective" and "recollective" (Manen, 1990, p. 10). As we live an event over and over again in the course of a lifetime, we renew its meaning and add further meanings to it. Narratives researchers emphasize the temporality, fluidity and continuity of human experience by attending to a past, a present and a future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Qualitative research is an act of giving meaning to the stream of time that otherwise ceases. Dewey emphasizes the structure of experience by emphasizing a time component. In his discussion of an experience, the structure of experience is marked by a beginning and ending. The arts help us perceive such structure by making it visible, audible and sensible (Irwin & De Cosson, 2004). Through the arts we are able to perceive phenomenological experience of time in a vivid form. Artists working in cross-cultural contexts are often made aware of varying degrees of time in tempo and rhythm through their productions of work. Akira Kurosawa's movies beautifully capture moments of suddenness and transience in intensified forms. Toru Takemitsu's compositions brought forth the contrast between the Western and Eastern structures of musical time through effective uses of silence.

Time is a crucial component of field research. The researcher spends a significant amount of time observing, participating in, and analysing events from etic and emic perspectives. Fieldwork is marked with a beginning and an end. In the beginning stage, the researcher spends time to grasp a picture of what is going on and look for possible participants, often encountering difficulties and making mistakes in entering the field. In the beginning phase fieldwork may start slowly as the researcher settles into a site. Data collection typically takes weeks and months. By the time he or she establishes rapport and insiders' perspectives, it is

often time to leave the field. Although reflection and analysis are always ongoing during fieldwork, "aha" moments often arise later. It is often after the researcher leaves the field that a clearer idea of what he or she should have done emerges.

My experience of fieldwork too has a similar structure. But it has a cultural element, which I would explain through the concept of *jo-ha-ky*ū. Originally coined by Motokiyo Zeami (1364–1443), the founder of Japanese noh theatre, this notion has been used to describe the structure of Japanese performing arts, consisting of three sequential components: jo (序), ha (破) and kyū (急). Each signifies the slow, the breaking, and the rapid, respectively. Jo-ha-kyū is typically identified in the way noh performance or music is structured: a noh play begins slowly, breaks into a faster pace, and proceeds to a rapid conclusion.

Jo-ha-kyū is not a musical form, such as a sonata or rondo form. Nor is it a kind of form that refers to the external appearance of a material or a sort of condition. It refers to a form of human experience, like "an experience" by Dewey. My phenomenological understanding of this notion is that a fulfilling experience, once given retrospective reflection, reveals the jo-ha-kyū quality, especially when it has gone through a "flow" moment. The jo-ha-kyū structure of time is what children experience during twenty-minute recess in school. Exciting football games are often punctuated with some sort of unexpected drama at the end. So is the first-time experience of writing a long thesis (proved by many of my students at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels). All of these are experienced in a similar structure, from the beginning to the ending, with a sense of time progression culminating in a drama, leading to a fulfilling experience, which Zeami would call jo-ha-kyū. Many ethnographers must have experienced this sense of time flow in their fieldwork. The realization of the kyū stage is heightened towards the end of the process, which is realized in reflection.

As a native Japanese, I knew of this cultural notion. But my understanding was a textbook sort of knowledge as I had not given enough thought to it. Like many Japanese, I understood it more as an aesthetic form that appears in the structure of performing arts, in pieces that start slowly and end fast. Indeed, I came across many pieces that appeared to take on a jo-ha-kyū structure through my musical training on the shakuhachi. But my awareness of the experiential aspect of the jo-ha-kyū structure was almost non-existent until I studied the art of noh performance in 2014 as a student of noh singing. During this period, I attended and watched real noh performances, including both indoor and outdoor performances. As expected, a performance started slowly, with a serene feeling. The beginning was typically story telling. There were often retrospective parts in which the main character, *shite*, reflected on his or her life, both past and current. The shite went back and forth between the present and the past. Meanwhile, the rhythm of music became dense in structure, and the physical movements of the shite became faster and vibrant, giving a sense that the ending was approaching. When the shite left the stage with low step motions, a short moment of silence

arose, giving the audience a psychological space for pausing before clapping. It was in this moment that I had an "aha" moment: my experience of a noh performance was very similar to that of my ongoing fieldwork project in terms of how I entered the field and experienced the intensity of time, and this also resonated with my earlier fieldwork experiences.

My argument is that experiencing a jo-ha-kyū quality through the arts enlightens our awareness of time structure in life, and this process in return helps us to better appreciate art and organize our research process. This is not to suggest that experienced artists are good qualitative researchers, but to allude that appreciating performances of noh, kabuki and other forms of Japanese performing arts may help us to better understand the nature of flow experience in Japan. In research contexts, this awareness encourages us to think more deeply about such questions as "what are we experiencing now?" "Where are we within the jo-ha-kyū process?" "Are we too fast or too slow in conducting the research process to maximize our fieldwork experience?" In the interview context, the jo-ha-kyū awareness may lead to asking about the evolution of interviewees' experiences and the meanings of their experiences. "How did they become aware of the value of the event?" "When did they have an epiphany or intensified moment? What was the formative period?" A series of questions are highlighted through the link between aesthetic and phenomenological structures in time.

Zeami seems to have understood the connection between the two, as he underscored the link between aesthetic perception and everyday perception. He held that the rhythm of jo-ha-kyū penetrates all things, including human experiences and natural phenomena and emphasized the aesthetic continuity between experiencing beauty and everyday events, especially nature, as both can potentially lead to an experience. He viewed fulfilment as being born out of an intensified experience, such as noh acting and appreciation of nature. He believed that those who do not appreciate the aesthetic quality of nature could not be such good actors or connoisseurs of noh theatre as those who do. To understand the highly sophisticated art of noh, actors are expected to observe the rhythm and order of nature, find the jo-ha-kyū quality in it, and reveal its beauty through their entire bodies. Zeami noted,

Thinking over the matter carefully, it may be said that all things in the universe, good and bad, large and small, with life and without, all partake of the process of jo, ha, and kyū. From the chirp of the birds to the buzzing of the insects, all sing according to an appointed order, and this order consists of jo, ha, and kyū. (Indeed, their music surpasses any question of mere skill and represents an unconscious Fulfillment.) Their singing creates a pleasing musical sensation and gives rise to feelings of a Melancholy Elegance (Zeami, 1984, pp.137–138).

Zeami clearly identified the continuity between art and everyday perception. He did not separate the two dimensions. This was an observation made by an artist who lived over 500 years ago.

Time is so natural to all of us and yet very foreign as a research topic. The exploration of the dimension of time in human experience can be examined further in qualitative research. Phenomenological understanding of time is not the same as scientific inquiry of time, as time is not linear, constant and irreversible (Lee & Liebenau, 2000). Experience of time is subjective and cultural, as examined by post-colonial scholars (Anderson, 2011; Shahjahan, 2014). What musicians can offer to our understanding of time is enormous. Without suggesting a causal relationship between musical training and research training, this paper encourages further exploration of musicians' qualitative insights into time.

## Listening to silence

Our cultural orientation encourages us to focus more on substance in the foreground than space in the background: sound rather than silence in music, object rather than empty space in painting. Appreciating the art of negative space in Japanese arts sensitizes our eyes and ears to the value of blank space and silence as meaning-attendant entity. Takemitsu highlighted the meaningful silence through his compositions such as *November Steps*. He found the depth of music in a single tone rather than in a highly developed melody line, complicated rhythms and harmony, and all other features interwoven in an intricate musical structure. He underscored the significance of silence (ma); in his view, if silence functions simply as a rest in music, the sound would lose its strength within the functionalism of music's structure (Takemitsu, 1995, p. 61). He believed that the powerful silence of ma generates a rich blank space in which a single tone is highlighted. Galliano (2002) put it this way, "Ma describes neither space nor time, but the tension in the silence and in the space surrounding sounds and objects" (p. 14). Thus, ma is distinguished from a blank space or a musical rest. Japanese arts facilitate perception of indifferences between subject and object, self and other, mind and body, foreground and background, sound and silence, being and non-being (Nakagawa, 2000; Nishitani, 1982). To be an artist within this cultural system involves appreciating and executing the fine timing of ma. In visual art, perceiving the value of negative space, or ma, is part of the artists' expertise and knowledge. In music, embodying the right timing of ma is viewed as being as important as, or even more important than, being able to play the tones smoothly.

Negative space captured through the concept of ma goes beyond the arts realm. Ma is not only a musical or visual concept but a social construct. It refers to silence in speech, a break in performance, and physical and mental distance in social interaction. When things are not going well in human interactions, people in Japan often say that the ma is amiss. This is the reason for my argument: developing sensitivity to ma in the arts helps to better understand the nature of social interaction.

The way we perceive and appreciate silence shapes our communication style. Peek (1994) makes the case in African cultures, arguing that "sound is not simply culturally

patterned noise filling acoustic space" (p. 475). Silence for them plays an important role in human communication. He introduces Zahan's study on the Bamana to claim that silence is not an absence but a present reality. Speech takes on its full value when it is understood in relation to the silence underlying the communication. Silence "is tied to life, it is a source of life since it leads to the conservation of existence which it otherwise protects" (Peek, 1979, p. 119). This suggests that attentiveness to silence, whether it is within the ceremonial context or everyday context, is crucial because it establishes the foundation upon which meaning is made. In traditional societies, it is artists or shamans who listen well. In a modern society, we forget to listen. Peek observes that "Given our scholarship's visual bias, we know far more about how otherworld beings appear than how they sound" (Peek, 1994, p. 475).

We tend to pay attention to what people say, and we do not pay much attention to what we do not hear. Behind this is an assumption that people talk when they have thoughts, and do not talk when they have no thought (Matsunobu, 2014). "We think therefore we speak. We speak therefore we exist." A space that has yet to be filled is a void. This assumption is problematic when we explore the depth of experience, such as spirituality. Spirituality is often realized and explored in silence rather than through speech. Text-based communication is often located at the opposite end of the continuum. This is more so in the increasingly technological world in which the disappearance of space and silence is noticeable (Ho, 2001). Our information-driven minds desire to seek out more information. Yet, we seldom cultivate ourselves to appreciate silence as listeners and scholars.

When investigating spirituality, qualitative researchers face the significance of attending to silence. They try to understand the value of here-and-now moments through silence, the meaning of a pause when a person is speaking of a critical incident in life. This was definitely the case in my research on spirituality and music in cross-cultural contexts (Matsunobu, 2009). Below is an illustration of a spiritual moment in which such sensitivity was required.

*I normally hesitate to play outdoors in places like Tokyo because there are so many people everywhere and also because I can easily stand out with such a long, unusual instrument which people are not familiar with. I don't want to be overly conscious about how people look at me. But today, the autumn foliage was so beautiful. So was the flow of wind and movement of leaves. Cats and pigeons were nearby where I played. The sound of my shakuhachi was well suited to that environment. You can never experience that indoors. Curious to say, when you play a tune like "honshirabe," you feel that there is a beginning and end in time, whereas you wouldn't feel anything if you stayed in the ordinary state. Basically, there is no beginning and no end. Time just passes by. Then, a human intervenes in the stream of time, breaks the silence, and creates the beginning and end with a sound. You create a swelling in the completeness of a moment. You feel as if you were a falling autumn leaf swaying in the wind, under this blue sky, in that free space surrounded by tall city buildings. The sound carries a sense of unity. If you ask me if that was my subjective consciousness, I cannot tell. It may be*

*just that I inhaled too much air. I cannot tell if I can share that sense with other people. But it was just gorgeous. (Interviewing Ken in a park)*

Following this anecdote, I wrote that this student's experience was brought about by his sensitivity to sound and silence. "He thinks that by playing music, human beings can create a silence in the environment. By appreciating it, players can create a harmony with nature. These beings can also break the harmony by ignoring the silence."

Attentiveness to silence was part of my analysis. Another illustration of such an anecdote is as follows.

*So I was going to see him just to do the same thing, basically just playing some long notes. I cannot teach anybody because I can barely play. I don't know any songs. I just blow and play and enjoy myself. So I was with him. I brought several flutes. And we were just playing all those flutes on top of each other. Playing anything, playing tones. Then, there was a weird thing. Suddenly, the forest came to life. We experienced all kinds of wild life, birds flew in from every direction, deer came out of the forest and came right up to twenty feet away. Deer came right out of the woods up to us. Such a beautiful day. It was a little bit misty. Completely silent. So haunting and strange. (Andrew reflecting on his spiritual moment in music)*

Andrew and I shared many moments of silence with a feeling of awe and wonder. . In these moments, we stayed mindful and appreciated the shared sense of togetherness in silence. Reflection occurred much later when we talked about these moments.

Appreciating silence is an important foundation for researchers to delve into the depth of human experience. Marcandonatou (1998) argues that silence is a method of understanding the working of one's mind. She states, "the most important aspect of silence is that of listening… it is a listening with one's heart, one's whole being. By listening in this way, one opens to the mystery and meaning of personal existence" (p. 310). With this sensitivity, the researcher's listening resonates with the participant's telling. Being trained musically in a culture where musical training involves appreciating silence may help to develop sensitivity to sound and silence in human interactions.

## Listening in the field

Qualitative researchers are engaged in a variety of listening during interviewing, transcribing audio recordings and analyzing transcripts. Listening, for DeVault (1990), refers more broadly "to the ways we work at interpreting respondents' accounts" (p. 101).

The kind of interactive listening that musicians are trained to do is what Alfred Schutz calls "mutual tuning-in." Mutual tuning-in is a kind of heightened awareness of connectedness when playing music together. Schutz (1971) considers musical engagement as a form of social relationship among the participants (e.g., between the composer and performer and the performer and listener). Schutz argues that tuning arises when participants

share the flux of time through music as a direct inner experience. Schutz believes that sharing the same flux of time brings an emergent sense of togetherness in such a way that the participants "grow older together while the musical process lasts" (p. 175). Schutz further argues that in achieving mutual tuning-in, the participants do not always have to be in the same place and time, such as when listening to recorded music. In the context of qualitative research, this refers to a sense of connection that arises when conducting interviews and listening to and transcribing data, which continues further at the stage of member checking and even after the research has finished. Schutz's discussion addresses not only the importance of time for generating a sense of mutuality, but also that of physical space, in which bodily movements are interpreted as a field of expression (Matsunobu, 2014). The result of such an interaction is a shared sense of mutual connection.

Tuning-in is a mode of human interaction through music and sounds. In Schutz's discussion, tuning-in is assumed to be an experience of a complete "resonance" that leads to a sense of harmony. In a research setting, we not only experience resonance but also dissonance. The nature of such human interactions can be described – to use a musical metaphor – as "polyphonic" when multiple voices are heard, "monophonic" when a single person stands out as a storyteller, or "homophonic" when a representative voice is heard from a group. What is missing in the portraiture of these forms of listening is the view of a listener as an active participant. In proposing an active interview method, Holstein and Gubrium (2002) argue that the interviewer's role is as an active meaning maker. The interviewee is seen as an active constructor of knowledge in collaboration with the interviewer rather than as a vessel of answers. The same can be said about music interaction: listening involves active participation.

The kind of music that Schutz presumed is Western classical music in which a clear separation between the player and the audience exists. This mode of listening, I found, is useful in some stages of qualitative listening, for instance, when transcribing audio recordings and analyzing transcripts. My experience and understanding of empathetic listening in social research settings, especially the kind of listening we do in the field, takes on more of a participatory nature. Turino's (2008) distinction of "presentational" music and "participatory" music helps to clarify the participatory nature of field engagement. The former is typically classical music in which the best interest of musical performance is to please attentive listeners, while the latter invites the active involvement of all participants and thus blurs the distinction between the performance and the audience. Among the many differences between the two, Turino focuses on texture: transparent texture is a characteristic of presentational music in which individual voices, while sounding simultaneously, can be heard clearly and distinctly. Dense texture is a common feature of participatory music in which voices overlap and merge to the extent that they cannot be distinguished and heard clearly. Field researchers are not merely observers but very much involved in the actual doing (e.g., when performing

with actors, when taking lessons from a guru). Turino argues that the focus in participatory music is primarily inward, among the participants in the moment, which is a special kind of concentration. This heightened concentration on others' participation results in a strong force for social bonding. In my research experience, I described this nature of social bonding using Victor Turner's (1979) concept of "communitas" to suggest that musical sharing connects people deeply to one another and leads to the experience of liminality as a group.

Field experience can be chaotic as all senses are involved in its formation. Researchers listen to field stories in dense structure. It is whole body listening, not the kind of focused listening applicable to presentational music (and "high fidelity" recordings defined by Turino). Turino (2008) implicitly argues that many of the institutionally trained musicians, like us, are more tuned to presentational music and not used to the values and sound structures of participatory music, including dissonance and noise. This indicates that musicians' ears, unless cultivated outside the traditional path, are not necessarily suitable for certain types of listening in qualitative research.

## Coda

The arts represent how people connect to each other in a given culture. Music is a form of cultural expression and helps us to understand our cultural orientation to hearing. I argued that perceptions and sensitivities employed in music and qualitative research have much in common and support each other. Appreciating artistic expressions of a given culture, nuances and subtleness, gives us a clue to understanding thoughts and feelings that are communicated in everyday contexts. Understanding the latter is a way to gaining insights into the former. This study therefore suggests that qualitative researchers familiarize themselves with the aesthetic expressions of a culture under study.

This chapter looked in particular at negative space in the arts and silence in human interaction. Silence is an enduring aspect of human interaction and thereby a legitimate area of inquiry in qualitative research. Qualitative researchers have overcome a simplistic view of silence as a lack or absence of communication (Jaworksi, 1993; Mazzei, 2007). Silence is perceived as a fullness of experience that is allowed into being (Poland & Pederson, 1998) and allows for multiple interpretations (Mazzei, 2007). It invites the listener to attend to understanding the speaker's meaning. Because of this nature, listening to silence makes interview transcripts as performance text rather than monotonic text (Mazzei, 2007).

Much attention in our training, be it musical or scholarly, is given to talking (playing) over listening, and sound over silence. Qu and Dumay (2011) suggest that too much emphasis is placed on asking questions in qualitative research training when the real skill is listening, and introduce Doyle's (2004) quote:

> Qualitative interviewers have to learn to tolerate silence. It is important not to get impatient, but to give participants a chance to think about what they want to say.

> It is a natural human tendency to fill in pauses in conversation, and if the researcher can avoid doing so the interviewee will often fill the silence with more information. (p. 11)

For musicians, a moment of silence is a moment of intensive listening in which to breathe and refresh the engagement with the players. Musicians learn how to attend to it, extend it and cultivate it rather than ignoring it. However, just as we do not emphasize silence in qualitative research training, we do not necessarily appreciate and cultivate silence in our music training. The emphasis is placed on producing, listening and analyzing sounds rather than silences. To understand our cultural orientation to the sound world is thus to suggest an alternative listening and sensitivity for silence. Understanding artistic forms of cultural sensitivity and expression should be part of the process of qualitative research education.

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# The meat-and-potatoes book: Musical ethnography

BRUNO NETTL

## Doing ethnography, writing ethnography

You're in the "field," doing ethnomusicology.[9] My guess is that you are working on two tracks. One is the solution of the particular problem you have set yourself—maybe the life history of a famous singer, or the way a particular genre of song has changed in a village, or how people teach a traditional instrument, or how members of a folk dance club in Chicago construct their conception of their own ethnicity. But you are also (and maybe I should have put this first) trying to get a picture, as much of a panoramic picture as you can, of the culture of the society in which you're a guest, and about the way music interacts with the rest of that culture. That's what I'd call "doing" musical ethnography.

And now you're back home, and your friends are curious. "So," they asked, "now that you're back from your year in that Hungarian village, what did you learn? We mean, besides just recording a lot of songs. Give us a talk." Well, I did find out a lot [hey, dear reader, this is

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[9] This essay is actually a central chapter, slightly revised, from my book, *The study of ethnomusicology* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005 edition). It may be helpful to locate it, briefly, in its context. The book discusses a number of issues faced by ethnomusicologists, roughly in the order in which they may be encountered in a career. Thus, basic concepts such as the concept of music and its universals are followed by transcription and analysis of music (which ethnomusicologists learn, hopefully, before engaging in independent research), and in turn by fieldwork, which includes the gathering of data for ethnography. They may then engage in the construction and writing of ethnography, the holistic description of the musical culture they have studied, and I maintain that the organization and writing of musical ethnography is perhaps the central activity of ethnomusicology. It may be followed (and this happens in my book) by various kinds of interpretation from historical and geographic implications to the understanding of processes, and the role of music in gender and power relations, and of practical applications of ethnomusicological findings. The essay at hand is concerned with the organization and writing of ethnographies as attempts at comprehensive descriptions of musical cultures, and refers to a number of important examplars. It makes no claim to being even close to comprehensive in its coverage of the literature.

an imaginary ethnomusicologist speaking, not your author, who has never visited a Hungarian village]; I feel I know just about everything about musical life in that village. But where to start? With my favorite person? The most impressive festival? The kinds of food I was served? The typical family? The way the streets were laid out? A list of instruments? And since they want me to talk for some time, how can I organize what I'm going to tell them?

The word ethnography has come to mean something different around 2000 from what it meant, say, in 1937, when Robert H. Lowie wrote that "ethnography is the science that deals with the 'cultures' of human groups. By culture we understand the sum total of what an individual acquires from his society" (1937, p. 3). Dictionaries define ethnography simply as the description of culture. In either case, the implication is one of comprehensiveness. To describe a "culture" is to write about or take into account all of Tylor's "complex whole." In the 1990s, scholars and students in anthropology, but also in fields involved in cultural studies and interpretive theory, began to use the term more casually, often associating it with thorough, detailed description of an event, saying, for example, "I'm doing an ethnography of this concert" or "of this committee meeting." I wish here to follow more closely on the original meaning. Some of the more limited projects certainly qualify as "ethnography," significantly if and as they show what the event has to do with the rest of culture; some, in my opinion, may not. In any event, describing the "complex whole"—even if transferred to the microcosm of musical culture—is not an easy task, to put it mildly, and no one really accomplishes it completely, but the concept of ethnography grew out of the insistence that all of the domains of a culture are interrelated, and so when you are in the "field" doing the "ethnography" part of your task, you are hopefully working within this broad perspective, even when you are listening to one song or just taking a flute lesson.

There was a time when ethnography was downgraded because it was thought to be "mere" description, contrasting with the interpretive and thus loftier "ethnology" to which it led. Now it is "ethnography" that has the interpretive character (while "ethnology" is hardly used). Still, it's good to bear in mind that Harold Conklin's serious and by now classic admonition continues to have relevance: "The data of cultural anthropology derive ultimately from the direct observation of customary behavior in particular societies. Making, reporting, and evaluating such observations are the task of ethnography" (1968, p. 172).

"Doing" ethnography in the field is one part of the challenge; the second is "writing" ethnography, and that's what this chapter is principally about. The point is that while you may have learned a culture comprehensively—maybe you've been there for a decade and have countless notebooks, computer disks, audiotapes of data, and a lot more just in your head—your task now is to interpret all this material, possibly but not necessarily in accordance with theoretical basic assumptions, but in ways that on the one hand do not violate the culture's own perspective and on the other still communicate something meaningful to the society that is your audience. For musical ethnography, one of the great challenges has been the discovery

of a systematic way of comprehending the enormous number of ideas, activities, and events that comprise the musical life of a society in their relationship to the totality of a people's culture. Examining the literature of ethnomusicology shows us that each author has a distinct way, and that there is much less consistency in these works than there is in the description of musical sound.

Many ethnomusicologists—I think I'm right in making this guess—would like, perhaps for their dissertations, to produce musical ethnographies, accounts that are comprehensive of musical cultures, circumscribed and limited by repertory or population or geographic area. Each would like to write the book about the musical life of a village or a nation or an ethnic group.

There was a time when we thought that folk or indigenous cultures were so homogeneous that one could learn all there was to be learned in a year. But it turns out that even in a society of a couple of hundred people, the musical culture is an extraordinarily complex—shall we put it this way?—organism, a small version of the grand "complex whole" of culture. But for some decades, the fundamental work that ethnomusicologists have aspired to is what I'll call the book-length "musical ethnography." It is the meat-and-potatoes book of our field.

I suggest that the literature of many disciplines, particularly the humanities, revolves around a kind of "meat-and-potatoes" book. In historical musicology, it is probably the life-and-works account of a composer; in literature, more likely the critical and historical evaluation of a major novel or set of poems; in history, a biography or a book about a war; in social anthropology, a book about a society; or in folklore, the folk tales or songs of an ethnic group of community or tribe. Well, in ethnomusicology it has been "the music of the." I have a feeling that this is what most ethnomusicologists usually want to do, once in their lives. Their problem, though, has been the writing of ethnography, at least as much as the "doing" of ethnography.

## Classics

Let's see how some scholars from the earlier period of our history solved this problem. Consider five approaches, illustrated by works that qualify as classics, from the period before 1975.

One elementary approach to making an inventory of a musical culture is to take all of the concepts and categories that a society uses in its musical culture as the basic material, deriving this from the terminology. We might use a dictionary of musical terms. Might this work for Western music? Well, we'd have to take into account the differential emphases that Western academic culture accords to various musics. The Harvard Dictionary of Music wouldn't show the overwhelming significance of popular music, for example. But what if the account of the terminology resulted from disinterested field research?

Ames and King (1971) provide what purports to be simply a glossary of terms and expressions used by the Hausa of northern Nigeria in talking about music and musical culture. It qualifies as a description of musical culture, using the vocabulary and thus generally the categories that the Hausa themselves use, therefore providing essentially an emic picture of the niche music occupies in the culture. It is a classified glossary. The authors first divided the subject into five broad areas, using their own taxonomy: instruments, professional performers, patrons of music, occasions on which music is performed, and music performance. Within each category some subdivisions, as that of instruments into the traditional categories of Hornbostel and Sachs (1914—idiophones, membranophones, chordophones, aerophones), were imposed from outside, while others, such as the division of vocal performance into categories distinguished by social context as well as musical style, were the Hausa's own: proclamation, ululation, challenges, acclamation. The authors' way of taking musical concepts and fitting them, as it were, into the culture, was to examine each term that is used somehow in connection with music. It turns out that in Hausa culture the degree of integration is great; very few words are specific to music, and the vast majority are terms normally used in nonmusical contexts but also applicable to music. This situation of widespread but not universal. The academic language of classical music in English was at one time much more music-specific, using loan words from Italian (allegro, andante), or words whose meaning is primarily musical (concert), and others with a specific musical meaning quite separate from their denotation in other domains (note, beat). This in itself may tell us something about the differences in the place of music in the two societies. In the case of Ames and King, there is an overarching taxonomy imposed for comparative purposes, but within it there appears clearly the taxonomy of Hausa culture and its principles. One way to study music in culture, clearly, is to use language as a mediator.

Reaching five decades back from Ames and King in the history of ethnomusicology, Frances Densmore's book on the songs of the Teton Sioux (1918) is the most comprehensive of the many collections of songs of Native American nations she published over half a century. It is basically a collection of songs, many dozens of them, arranged by social context and function, with comments about their genesis and use. Although it does not set out to give an account of musical culture, it accomplishes this more than other works of the time, simply because she put into it everything she was told by her informants. There are many weaknesses, unnecessary to discuss here; the book should be viewed in its own historical context. But if the book-length musical ethnography is our meat-and-potatoes work at the end of the twentieth century, the main course of the menu early in the century was the (usually article-length) collection of transcriptions, with musical analyses, such as those of Hornbostel and Stumpf. Densmore (1918) is like them, but it really tells a lot more about musical life.

McAllester's *Enemy way music* (1954), a landmark of a different sort—a classic study because it is among the first to deal explicitly with musical and cultural values in a non-

Western society—examines the musical content of a Navajo Indian ceremony. Devoting only some twenty pages to the discussion, he manages to describe and comment upon a group of central values of Navajo culture, focusing on the perception of danger that comes through misuse of anything, including music, and further dividing values into aesthetic, existential, and normative. Examples are self-expression, quiet, humor, provincialism, formalism, and individualism. The differential treatment of these values—it is difficult to distinguish the degree to which each is aesthetic, normative, or existential—may be debated. But of special interest is McAllester's implied conclusion that while cultural values are reflected in music, this reflection appears in musical behavior and in attitudes toward music, and only secondarily if at all in the structure of the music. If I may venture to interpret his words, to McAllester it is concept and behavior that reflect culture, and if one is to study music as culture, one does so primarily through these components of music and much less through sound.

While the studies just described are by scholars with a substantial interest in anthropology, William Malm's (1959) general book on Japanese music makes no pretense of being a contribution to that field or indeed to concentrate on music as or in culture. More than the other works discussed here, it purports to be about music, but Malm makes it clear that an understanding of the music must rest on at least some understanding of Japanese culture, past and present. For example, in his section on koto music, he first gives a detailed cultural and historical context of this instrument and its music. There follows an account of the history of the instrument, not purely organological but also mentioning persons, events and occasions, places, literary sources, myths, characterizations of the Japanese historiography, schools of musicians and the basis on which they are formed, and relationships to social classes, repertories, and other instruments. He goes on to a discussion of teaching techniques and their relationship to musical and social structure, and finally moves on to the contemporary instrument and its music, again laying stress on the social context. By now an "old classic" superseded by more recent work, it is an unusually good illustration of the "music in its cultural context" type of study. The distance between the ethnomusicologists who come from anthropology and those who come from a background of a more strictly musical nature is hardly as great as it is sometimes made out to be.

Even earlier, some of the historical accounts of small cities in Germany and Austria by music historians of the first half of the twentieth century, who tried to exhaust all data and also worked at establishing a rational organization, might be considered forerunners of musical ethnographies; for example, Arnold Schering's *Musikgeschichte Leipzigs* (the second volume, covering 1650–1723, published in 1926). And in quite a different way, Constantin Brailoiu's small book *Vie musicale d'un village* (1960—but researched in the 1930s) showed the distribution of songs and song types and functions among the various components—age groups, classes—of the population of a Romanian village. Another study of a village, carried

out in 1940 but not published for six decades (!) is Vargyas's (2000) work, *The musical world of a Hungarian village—Aj, 1940*, which does in over 1,000 pages what the title promises.

The works I've mentioned so far are intellectual precursors to the musical ethnographies that populate the 1980s and 1990s publishers' catalogues. In my view, the grandmother of comprehensive musical ethnographies is Merriam's study of the Flathead (1967a), not because he succeeded in being comprehensive but because he set out—even in his title—to write systematically about all aspects of Flathead musical culture and their interrelationships. Following in some measure his tripartite model of music, he divided the first part, whose main thrust is the presentation of music in culture, into chapters that deal mainly with concepts (those on sources and ideas of music) and others that discuss behavior (on instruments and uses of music, subdivided into some categories recognized by the Flathead). The second part of the book is comprised of transcriptions and analyses—the "sound" part of Merriam's model. While a brief glossary of terms is appended, there is no attempt here to use the Flathead language as the point of departure. Rather, observations combined with the recording of statements by Merriam's own and earlier informants, elicited through questions about music from discussion presumably in English, are the main source. The overall organization is Merriam's to a much greater extent than it is that of Flathead culture.

Surprisingly, what is less clear in Merriam than in the less interpretive Ames and King (1971) is the way in which music functions within, or is a part of, Flathead culture. The concepts of music and the ways in which people behave "musically" are described in exemplary detail. But other questions, such as the reflection of Flathead values in musical ideas, or how music relates to other domains of culture, are not frequently touched upon. It is interesting to see that even one of the most outstanding publications coming from the "anthropology of music" approach to ethnomusicology concentrates on the music, broadly conceived, and deals with music holistically, but less than Merriam might later have wished with music as culture.

## Organizing "that complex whole" of music

Although there were predecessors, some of them described above, the late 1960s marked a kind of threshold into a period in which ethnomusicology was characterized by the appearance of many extensive studies, most of them book-length, each of them in some way making a comprehensive statement about a musical culture. They were increasingly described as ethnographies, and I feel that most of their authors had in mind a holistic view of musical culture. They faced significant problems, one of which was organization. The number of things to be learned about a musical culture is, well, infinite, and even if one is pretty selective, as was Merriam in his Flathead study, the job is to find a reasonable and logical organization that reflects what the culture would, as it were, say about itself and also enhances the author's communicative intent. The second problem, maybe more interesting, involves

two considerations. One, which speaks to the process of analyses, if the "complex whole" culture concept of Tylor (or concepts related to it) has utility—and the domain of music is a proper microcosm—then it should be possible to learn from every part or sector of the musical culture something that is significant about the musical culture as a whole. And second—this is more important in the actual writing of musical ethnography—if it's impossible to really give a comprehensive account (Merriam tried, but would have been the first to admit that it's a "first attempt," spotty and sometimes superficial), an alternative is to find a small piece, sector, or aspect of the musical culture that functions as a kind of point of entry into the larger whole, from which you can derive these more general insights.

Many of the musical ethnographies of the 1980s and 1990s seem to me to accept these basic assumptions. They rarely say so outright. But typically they deal with some aspect of the culture in great detail, their insights radiating outward to the rest of musical life. The points of entry may be a genre, a musician, an instrument, a process, a song—none of them, in most cases, of sufficient exceptionality to merit great attention, were it not for the ethnographer's ability to use them to demonstrate important insights about the culture as a whole. Let me mention a few important examples.

One of the earliest works in this genre is Steven Feld's *Sound and sentiment: Birds, weeping, poetics, and song in Kaluli expression* (1982). Aside from many other contributions of this book, and also problems that it raised, one thing that struck me as important was the way Feld approached the comprehension of music in Kaluli culture—first by placing music in the Kaluli taxonomy of sounds (speech, weeping, singing, birdsong, and more), and then, in a way related to the thinking of Claude Lévi-Strauss (1969)—who believed that a central myth provided the key to a society's mental processes—by identifying a myth that, so he thought, explained the Kaluli world of sound. It was a myth about a boy who became a bird. Feld later told a story about the time he tried to tell the Kaluki people what he had written about them, and they asked him, "Why did you choose that particular story?" Well, clearly, ethnography is substantially an interpretive enterprise, but the question led to Feld's concept of dialogic editing, giving voice in the interpretation to the music's own society.

About the time of Feld's publication, there also appeared books by Daniel Neuman, Paul Berliner, and Lorraine Sakata, each using a different element to gain entry to the musical culture as a whole. Like many of the books that were to make up the standard literature of the end of the century, each of them was based on the author's dissertation and on fieldwork of well over a year. In a work that has since become a classic, *The life of music in Northern India* (1980), and a related article (1977) Neuman explained central elements of Indian musical structure through the ways in which Hindustani classical music was transmitted from teacher to student and the ways in which musicians were socially organized in relation to Hindu and Muslim social structures in India. Sakata, in *Music in the mind* (1983), looked at the way basic concepts and assumptions about music in Afghanistan provided insight into the

ways musical sound and musicians interact. In Berliner's book *The soul of mbira* (1978), an instrument, the mbira in Shona society, was a center from which ideas radiate into the domains of musical culture.

Neuman's (1977) study of hereditary musical specialists in North India illustrates an examination of the relationship of a social and a musical system. For example, Neuman compared the hierarchical structure of performance, divided into various levels of soloist's and accompanist's roles, with the hierarchical social organization, supporting the parallel with the finding that soloists and accompanists are drawn from separate social lineages. He relates the desire, probably of recent origin, of North Indian accompanists to become soloists to the coming of greater social mobility. Musicians become soloists by affecting the social appurtenances of the system within which the soloists normally live, such as officially recognized "gharanas," or schools of musicianship, which are also real or imagined genetic lineages. Neuman thus concluded that "the two phenomena are crucially interlinked" and "both affect and are affected by the changing character of the soloist-accompanist relationship" (1977, p. 233). Neuman did not try to state the central value system of North Indian society but concentrated on one social value in the lives of groups of people who are particularly concerned with music, the groups from which musicians are drawn; nor did he try to establish the totality of musical values. His ethnography concentrated on an aspect of Indian musical culture whose understanding would have to precede a more detailed accounting of the technicalities of music.

## Points of entry

Let me cite some further examples of ethnographies whose authors have chosen a wide variety of points of entry to their cultures. Examining the life and work of the individual person as a way of sampling musical culture became an important method of ethnography in the late 1980s, but it had forerunners in anthropology, such as Paul Radin's presentation of the life of a Winnebago (Ho-Chunk) man, Crashing Thunder (1963), originally carried out in the 1920s. I want to mention three major works in this category. *Blessingway Singer*, the autobiography of the distinguished Navajo leader and religionist Frank Mitchell, edited by David McAllester and Charlotte Frisbie (Mitchell 1978), is unique in its comprehensiveness because it presents the singer's own story along with the informed analysis of the editors. More recently, Virginia Danielson's study of Umm Khūltum, the great Egyptian singer, *The voice of Egypt* (1997), tells about many aspects of twentieth-century Egyptian musical culture from the perspective of a musician considered by many as the ideal. It would be a bit like portraying the musical culture of early nineteenth-century Vienna by concentrating on Beethoven, an approach that has its weaknesses because of Beethoven's uniqueness. (And yet in other respects, what other figure could be more representative of that musical culture?)

Following in certain respects in the footsteps of Brailoiu (1960) but also parallel to Danielson in its emphasis on the experience of individuals, Judith Vander's *Songprints* (1988) tells insightfully about the musical culture of the Shoshone though the life histories of five women. To me, the most significant concept here is the "songprint," the total repertory—music sung, known, recognized—by an individual person, because it provides insight into the musical counterpart of a longstanding problem in anthropology: the interface of personality and culture, of what is individual and what is shared.

In ethnomusicology we don't have the citation indexes that are used by scientists to identify the most influential authors, but Anthony Seeger's book on the Suyá (*Why Suyá sing*), published in 1988, has in the 1990s been cited perhaps more than any other work from this literature of book-length musical ethnographies, in large measure because he made a felicitous distinction between Merriam's "anthropology of music" and the concept of "musical anthropology," which suggests an even greater degree of integration, insisting that music not only results from the guiding principles of a culture but is itself one of the forces that determine the character of a culture. One would think that the musical life of a society of some 150 people would be easy to describe and organize, but the Suyás' musical culture is a very complicated organism, and Seeger uses a central ritual, the Mouse Ceremony, as a kind of leitmotif to which he continues to return.

Other sectors of the musical domain have also served as points of departure for the kind of comprehensive insight one would wish to see in a book that could be called "The ethnomusicology of . . ." Thus, for example Thomas Turino's book *Moving away from silence* (1993) focuses on the way music plays a central role, and undergoes change as cultural environment changes, in the course of the migrations of Aymara people in Peru from the village to the town of Colima and then to Lima. Philip Bohlman's book *The land where two streams flow* (1989) is fundamentally a musical ethnography of Israelis of German, Austrian, and Czech origins whose central music is that of Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. The main kind of event analyzed, musically and socially, is the house concert, a type of event that usually took place in people's homes on afternoons. One or a small group of musicians would play classical or Romantic sonatas or chamber music, people would speak German, and refreshments duplicated, as well as possible, the offerings of Viennese Konditoreien.

Jane Sugarman's book (1997) on the music of Prespa Albanians living in Macedonia and North America, largely women, gives important insights into Albanian musical culture, and into the culture of emigrants. Kay Kaufman Shelemay (1998) examines the musical culture of Syrian Jews in New York from the perspective of one major (not easily circumscribed) genre, the pizmonim. Timothy Rice's book *May it fill your soul* (1994), about Bulgarian folk music culture, takes as its main point of departure the teaching of bagpipe music. Helen Myers's work on Hindu musical culture in Trinidad (1998) focuses on the part of the repertory that can be hopefully traced directly to the origins of the community in India, and concentrates on the

ethnography of one village. Donna Buchanan's *Performing democracy* (2004) uses a major instrumental folk ensemble in Sofia to shed light on the changing and changed musical culture of Bulgaria since the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact. Theodore Levin's (1996) point of entry to Uzbek and other Central Asian musical culture is a kind of travelogue, a thoughtful account of a journey through the area whose music he describes.

Naturally, I tried my hand at this too, using, for Blackfoot culture (1989a) the system of ideas about music—Merriam's "concept" sector—as the foot in the door, and trying to organize it into four categories: fundamental concepts, music as it moves through time from its origins to recent change, music and societies of people (Blackfoot and others) and supernatural beings, and the technicalities of music. I suggested looking at music in Western academic culture as four different kinds of society. Attracted to the significance of myths to provide broad insights, I tried to make a case for a central Blackfoot myth that explained their ideas about music. For the Blackfoot, it was the myth of the supernatural beaverman who had an affair with a human woman and compensated her husband by giving him his powerful songs, singing each one once in exchange for the dressed skins of all of the fauna in the Blackfoot environment. And later, trying a similar technique for Western art music in mid-western schools of music, I nominated the familiar Mozart/Beethoven dyad.

This quick survey of the literature of musical ethnography is hardly exhaustive; there are many more books that might have been mentioned. And there are also others that could qualify, easily, as musical ethnography but concentrate on processes, on recent change, on political issues. Even in recent times we have seen significant attempts to do what Merriam tried, the really comprehensive study of the musical culture of a society. An example is Eric Charry's *Mande music* (2000), which covers an astonishing number of aspects of the culture, from history to important older and modern genres, instruments, musical terminology, and the interface between tradition and change. Ellen Koskoff's (2001) account of the musical culture of the Lubavitcher Hasidim has the quality of comprehensiveness, looking at history and present, and devoting its most insightful chapters to the relationship of music to the past, the modern, gender, and social lineage.

Giving cultural insiders a voice has been an aspect of our methodological canon (more in theory than practice) since the 1960s, but the concepts of dialogic editing, as so labeled by Steven Feld (1987), and "collaborative ethnography," a newly coined term used by Luke Lassiter (1998), increase the significance of that voice, and the interface between insider and outsider, in the writing of ethnography.

Finally, ethnomusicologists have of course written about the concept of ethnography—trying to find ways of conceptualizing musical culture, organizing, providing an interface between insider and outsider, between fact and interpretation. One of the most comprehensive surveys of the issues and the literature is the essay by Anthony Seeger (1992a). Martin

Stokes's introductory essay to a compendium (1994, pp. 1-28) goes through a large number of the issues of concern to ethnography—performance and place, ethnicity, identity, nationalism, class, gender. Timothy Rice has long grappled with the need to provide an elegant statement of the fundamentals of ethnomusicology, stating (1987) in one sentence what ethnomusicologists are after, and (2003) charting new directions for ethnography from the description of a static norm to emphasis on what changes, given the revised concepts of "culture" and "society" required by recent history. Making ethnography less of a snapshot of a moment and more accountable for culture as constantly changing, Rice (2003, p. 174) looks to the future of the ethnographic enterprise in music: "Musical ethnographies that trace the movement of subjects in location, metaphorical understanding, and time, and the differing experiences such movements entail, take on a fundamentally dynamic character responsive to the new or newly understood complexities of the modern world."

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# Exploring musical research sensibilities

EVA SÆTHER

*It travels hither and thither, in larger or smaller leaps, forward and backward, in a blend of tenses: present, past and future at one time. (Asplund, 2002, p. 38, my translation)*

Most music education researchers have an active past or present as musicians. In my case, it is the fiddle tunes from Norway and Sweden, suffused with orally transmitted musical knowledge that has served as a driving force. They paved the way to both teaching and research, to my introduction to the study of a foreign culture, and to music education research focussing on intercultural issues. In this chapter, the fiddle tunes serve as a basis for reflections on past and present lessons and challenges; what are the implications of including music as a basis for understanding the world when undertaking research in music education? The opening quotation is taken from a book on academic writing. However it could serve as an apposite description of the nature of any of the living polskas[10] that accompany my work, no matter whether they are actually played or just silently stored in my inner music room[11].

This chapter has a twofold purpose. The first part explores and expands on the theoretical underpinnings of the lessons learnt from a critical incident event when my co-researcher on a research project in Gambia played the interview questions on his kora[12] and thereby, as he later explained, "opened the whole book". Without his musical intervention I would never

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[10] A dance tune in ¾ -beat, as the name indicates it came to Sweden and the other Nordic countries from Poland. The rhythmic variations of the polskas give the fiddlers and dancers plenty of space for personal, regional and improvisational interpretations.

[11] What takes place in my inner music room is related to the concept *the personal inner musical library*, introduced by Folkestad (2012). While the personal inner musical library is used to understand and illustrate the relationship between musical experiences and compositional processes, what takes place in my inner music room is related to music education research; playing with methods.

[12] A West African 21-stringed harp-lute.

have found the answers to my questions about attitudes to musical learning in Gambia. What I experienced with my co-researcher, who asked me to keep silent and used his instrument and his melodies in the conversations with key informants, has ever since accompanied me in my research projects: if a kora can be used for data collection in Mandinka culture—what importance can I give the fiddle when undertaking research at home, in my own culture? The second part discusses possible methodological consequences of this event for music education research. It draws on methodological challenges and empirical data from a study of the implementation in Malmö of *El Sistema*, a teaching concept that aims at promoting integration by inviting children to participate in immersive music activities in school and in a symphony orchestra.

## The border researcher

As a PhD student my entrance to the research field was intertwined with my experiences from the teacher-training program at Malmö Academy of Music. Since the early 1990s global issues evolved in our local context. Malmö grew into a multicultural town, demanding new competences from music teachers working in classrooms with 99% immigrants. What competences does a music teacher need? How can these be trained and developed? What is needed at the institutional level in terms of curriculum development and didactic creativity? Ultimately, as a researcher, I had to confront the consequences of working with differences, inspired by McLaren (1998) who introduces the idea of border educators:

> We need to become familiar with multiple sets of referential codes from other languages, histories and cultures. In this way we can become border educators as well as border intellectuals. Ultimately we need to reinvent ourselves. (McLaren 1998, pp. 260-261)

McLarens' call for border intellectuals is both challenging and inviting. Is this a call for the border researcher? If so, what does it take to reinvent ourselves? One example is how Danish anthropologist Kirsten Hastrup had to struggle when writing herself back in Academia after a period of severe doubts concerning the relationship between the researcher and the researched. She points to the reciprocal nature of anthropological work, placing the researcher in an "in-between" that forces her to talk in an ethnographical here and now. It is the researcher representing the world of the other, in spite of experiments with co-authors. This may be disturbing, but there is also a potential for the ethnographer to expand knowledge on both sides of the conversation. However, she claims that the term informant needs to be abandoned, as a result of the broken distance in the discovered world between us and them, researcher and researched (Hastrup, 1995).

Seventeen years before Hastrup's explorations of the "in-between", the ethnomusicologist Kenneth A. Gourlay argued for a more "visible" researcher, criticizing earlier generations of ethnomusicologists for not having discussed how the researcher can avoid value judgements based on his or her own cultural background.

> The "scientific method" of this conception is self contradictory in its failure to include all variables, while achieving a semblance of authenticity through use of abstract expression which conceals their omission from the writer. The analogical reasoning that empirical methods which have produced objective results in the "hard" sciences are equally and directly applicable to the human sciences may or may not be valid. (Gourlay, 1978, p. 7)

## Opening the whole book

I like to think of my PhD thesis *The oral university* from 2003 as a study making use of research methods that give space for what music offers: communication, closeness, improvisation, intensity and surprises. To facilitate access to the Mandinka culture I was travelling with one of the respected musicians and as prompts for relaxed and informative interviews I used to dance together with the interviewees. But even if I danced myself into the empirical field, when I read the text 12 years later I have to admit: this activity was more important than my just using music and dance to gain access to the field. The music in itself and in the cultural context was one of the key tools to produce and understand data. This is the time to let that insight take centre stage. The incident under a baobab tree in Basse when my co-traveller asked me to keep quiet serves well as an illustration of the broken distance between the researcher and the researched, while adding the dimension of music.

In the initial phase of the field work, *jali*[13] Alagi Mbye served as an informant in the traditional sense. We travelled together to high status traditional musicians conducting interviews on attitudes to teaching and learning music in Mandinka culture. He was one of my key informants. He was also interpreter and door opener for me, the Western researcher. *Jali* Alagi Mbye is highly respected as a jali, and his position as an insider facilitated my entrance to the field. To improve my credibility I never missed a chance to dance in the village activities, as a legitimizing warm up before the actual interviews.

By the time we reached the Kanuteh brothers in Basse, Alagi Mbye had interpreted enough interviews to come to the conclusion that my verbal interview method was not suited to provide the "thick description" in a Geertzian sense that he knew the research project needed. I was simply asked to sit down and keep quiet while he played the questions on his instrument, using the musical discourse in Mandinka tradition to guide or manipulate the conversation along the lines needed (Sæther, 2003). In the kora tradition, there are certain ostinatos[14] connected to certain parts of the myths and narratives that the jali performs. In his capacity as musician, the kora master constantly reinterprets the Mandinka history, by using the knowledge that is stored in the melodies that are used when narrating the songs. Alagi Mbye knew that the Kanuteh brothers were highly skilled and that they would understand

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[13] *Jali* is Mandinka for musician. The title covers duties such as peace negotiating, transmission of knowledge and tradition, dissemination of information and entertainment. In French literature the title jali is usually translated to *griot*.

[14] An ostinato is a short melodic movement that loops, over and over.

every musical twist. Therefore he started the interview by playing the ostinato to a narrative that talks about how Allah rules our destiny, and how jalis are legitimized by Allah, a song that he knew they loved. This inspired the old brothers to talk about the importance of tradition, but also about how things used to be better in the good old days, when the children were not tempted by rap and hip hop. It seemed to Alagi Mbye that the opening ostinato took the conversation in an undesirable direction, to praising the old practices and not reflecting on keeping tradition alive. By inserting a disturbing improvisation that landed in the ostinato connected to the hero Sunjata Keita, the interviewees were reminded about the value of breaking rules and taboos. In fact, that is how Sunjata Keita in the old days gained his position of power, so why not talk about changes and the development of the old master—apprentice means of transmitting knowledge? When asked why he changed the ostinatos on his kora at specific places in the conversation, his answer was: "Now the whole book is opened" (Sæther, 2003, p. 94). And by opening the book with his *kora*, we were able to explain some of the qualities in the oral university of Mandinka music culture.

In Hastrups (1995) explorations of the relation between experience and theory, she concludes that the ethnographer's task is to construct a world outside time and place, a space for shared social experience. In the example of the kora playing the questions, music served as a tool for creating this shared social experience, thereby helping me as a researcher to make sense of the "in-between".

The rather unusual instruction "keep quiet" from my emerging co-researcher was of course a surprise to me. In retrospect my instinctive obedience might have been based on what Lonnert (2015) refers to as *henid* knowledge, a vague unformulated thought, much like the composer who hears an entire work in his head, before anything has been written in the score. The henid as concept denotes a sort of intuition since it comprises the kind of background knowledge that no longer needs verbal articulation. However, allowing a place for surprise in the field situation paved the way for more surprises in the transcription phase, as the power of the manipulating and energizing ostinato phrases became evident; "Now the whole book is opened", was Alagi Mbyes explanation of the choice of Sunjata Keita's ostinato as a way to open up for a discussion on the breaking of taboos, and finding new practices for kora teaching that include all children, not only those that are born into the privileges of the jali family. To me, it became the starting point for an on going search for research methods that, with inspiration from jali Alagi Mbye's playing of questions, makes use of music.

## Surprises and the in-between

In her long experience as an educator of music teachers, the Danish researcher Kirsten Fink-Jenson, makes use of methodological inspiration from social anthropology. She introduces the concept "astonishing praxis" (*forblöffende praksisser*) (Fink-Jensen, 2012, p. 10), and

suggests that music educators can learn from how anthropologists tend to open up for astonishment as a resource for reflection, on cultural differences for example. But, as she stresses, we do not need to study foreign cultures to be astonished.

> To be able to be astonished, to capture the meaningful pedagogical moments, resembles the duties of the researcher, conducting participating observation in the field. To have tools for action in praxis demands experiences in praxis. To be able to analyse and understand what could be "exemplar actions", based on didactical and theoretical readiness. (Fink-Jensen, 2012, p. 25, my translation)

Pedagogical moments might occur with the help of *didactic irritations* (Fink-Jensen, 2012, p. 24), situations when the teacher has to leave the pre-planned lesson structure. If the teacher possesses the willingness and ability to profit from such moments, the problem can be exploited so that it helps develop the teaching, by providing insights on expectations and competences in the student group.

The point about didactic irritations is that they can be turned into positive resources—provided that teachers and/or researchers are trained in the art of being in-between, and in inviting astonishment. When this happens, a pedagogical moment that provides possibilities for pedagogic action is created, action that is meaningful for the student—or, as in this context, meaningful to the researcher. It might therefore be worth contemplating on how didactic irritations might be transformed into possibilities. This demands both a surplus of subject knowledge and the ability to use theory in praxis (Fink-Jensen, 2012).

## Music and the in-between

Music has a place of its own in the discourse on the in-between. In his book *Art as Experience* from 1934, John Dewey describes the role the arts might play in educational contexts, by presenting how the arts through powerful experiences create an opening for imagination and new experiences. The risk of stagnation in repetitions and imitations decreases with the connection between the arts and imagination.

> There is always a gap between the here and now of direct interaction and the past interactions whose funded results constitutes the meanings with which we grasp and understand what is now occurring. Because of this gap, all conscious perception involves a risk; it is a venture into the unknown, for as it assimilates the present to the past it also brings about some reconstruction of that past. When past and present fit exactly into one another, when there is only recurrence, complete uniformity, the resulting experience is routine and mechanical; it does not come to consciousness in perception. The inertia of habit overrides adaptation of the meaning of the here and now with that of experiences, without which there is no consciousness, the imaginative phase of experience. (Dewey 1934/2005, p. 284)

This quotation illustrates how the arts facilitate a blend of tenses, the in-between, and the unpredictable. Therefore, in educational contexts, the arts could be regarded as "the incomparable organ of instruction" (Dewey 1934/2005, p. 361). This was not the case in the

1930s when Dewey introduced his theories on art and experience. Nor is it the case today. John Dewey's theories are relevant to current music education research. The social aspect of experiences from the arts, as emphasized by Dewey, is central to both anthropological, ethnomusicological and music education studies. This social aspect is elaborated on by Carrithers (1992) who uses the concept *sociality* to explain why humans need culture, the core of what it means to be a human being. His anthropological research shows how throughout history it is the human capacity to interact and communicate rather than technical inventions that explains development. Ethnomusicologists, like for example Nettl (1990) describe how all human cultures in one way or the other use music as a tool to transmit the values that sustain them. In music education research, the social aspects of music are discussed by Schippers (2010), Sæther (2010), Wright (2010), Hebert (2010), Dillon (2006) and Karlsen and Westerlund (2010), among others. Schippers (2010) introduces the "Twelve Continuum Transmission Framework" (TCTF), as a tool to be used in the development of more inclusive music education practices. Aspects of democracy and identity construction are developed by Hebert (2010) and Wright (2010), while Dillon (2006) and Karlsen and Westerlund (2010) further develop the concepts of inclusion and student agency. My own study of the Persian music school in Malmö (Sæther, 2010), shows how immigrants use music both to dream about imaginary homelands, and to construct new hybrid identities. When it comes to developing research methods, drawing on experiences from the arts, Bresler (2005; 2006; 2013; 2014) has paved the way, both by developing theoretical concepts and methods to be used in research education. Bresler draws our attention to the use of dissonance, a concept similar to didactic irritations. When conceptualizing temporal lived experience, musical lenses are used, thereby developing the usefulness of improvisation and the juxtaposition of intimacy and dissonance, for example.

## Musically informed research

The critical incident under the baobab tree in Gambia, when the jali took over my role as interviewer, was a condensed illustration of surprises, powerful experiences through the arts, and musical virtuosity intertwined with cultural values. But would it be possible to translate this experience into research at home, in the Swedish school context? What theoretical concepts might be helpful? And what approaches to research design? The American anthropologist Paul Stoller introduced the concept *sensuous scholarship*. His argumentation rests on long periods of fieldwork in Niger where he, among other things, learned how to smell the world. And how to hear the world: "Listen to the godji (violin) and let its cries penetrate you. Then you will know the voice of the spirits, they would tell me. Feel the sound of the drum and know the power of our past" (Stoller 1987, p.101). In his development of research methods that include many senses and that emphasise embodied knowledge, he acknowledges that implementing his ideas might be a challenge to the researcher:

> Sensuous ethnography, of course, creates a set of instabilities for the ethnographer. To accept sensuousness in scholarship is to reject the conceit of control in which mind and body, self and other are considered separate… (Stoller, 1997, p. xvii)

Stoller (2004) suggests that researchers need to rethink their scholarly being-in-the-world: "culture, society and power are continuously negotiated, renegotiated, foregrounded and backgrounded, remembered and forgotten in our relations with one another and in our orientation to a greater whole (the lineage, the community, the region, the state" (p. 820). This reminds me of a polska; something remembered, forgotten, in relation to something greater…

There seems to be "something" about the arts in general and music in particular that is useful in qualitative research. "The very engagement with qualitative research, I suggest, parallels the engagement with the arts with their focus on presence, intensified perception, interpretation and understanding" (Bresler, 2013, p. 61). This "something" is music's capacity to combine feelings and cognition, rather than creating dichotomies:

> Lessons from the arts address its ability to evoke empathic, interpretive understanding. They help us explore personal and cultural lived experience. They do so through engaging us in interplay between the concrete (sounds, textures, colours, rhythm) and the abstract (moods, conceptualizations, ideas). Engagement with the arts requires a presence that involves cognition as well as affect. This presence leads to a heightened perception that is expansive rather than reductive. (Bresler, 2014, pp. 610-611)

Equipped with the understanding that there is something about the arts that is useful in qualitative research. I designed a study of music education at two schools in a segregated area in Malmö. The study included my using the fiddle, hesitating at first but relying on earlier research in combination with the experience of a kora that once played the interview questions. My empirical example is the *El Sistema*, a system for music education that is both foreign in the sense that it started in Venezuela and has now spread globally, and local in the sense that it takes a context specific direction when implemented in the multicultural town of Malmö. Hence, the potential for didactical irritations and surprises was promising.

## The *El Sistema* phenomenon

The Venezuelan music project *El Sistema* started in the 1970s as a tool for combatting poverty and to give children in the streets music education. Today it has spread all over the world to as many as 55 countries. In Sweden 14 cities have started *El Sistema* schools. The worldwide interest has contributed to *El Sistema's* position as a well-recognized educational project (Creech, Gonzales-Moreno, Lorenzino, & Waitman, 2013). When *El Sistema* was established in Malmö in 2013, it marked the start of a local and permanent activity, not just a project, based on the recommendations of the Malmö commission work 2011—2013 (Stigendal & Östergren, 2013) to promote a socially sustainable city. The contextual framing

in Malmö is unique in its long-term ambition, which opens up for a longitudinal and multidimensional study of a changing educational landscape (Sæther & Lindgren, 2015).

The purpose of *El Sistema* is to serve as a tool for individual and social development by providing an arena for intercultural meetings, where children from different districts and with various cultural backgrounds and socio-economical conditions can develop both musical knowledge and social agency. Even if *El Sistema* can be described as a social project, the demands on musical quality and progress in skills are considerable. The El Sistema children are involved in music lessons three times a week, and they should interact with professional musicians through mandatory cooperation with a symphony orchestra. Lindgren and Bergman (2014) point to the tension that lies in the double aspirations: on the one hand the activities are supposed to contribute to a more inclusive society, on the other hand the children are expected to develop excellent musical performance skills. This makes great demands of the teachers, but it also places the teachers in an in-between that can be used to develop new teaching methods and to expand on the traditional teacher role.

## Playing with methods

*It is raining and I am late for the class that I am observing at Kroksbäcksskolan in Malmö. Should I just leave the fiddle in the car, in order to run faster? Anyway, what am I really doing in the classroom, trying to mix my role as a researcher with being a fiddler? My inner critical voice, perhaps prompted by the rain and the stress, almost forces me to abandon my intuitive and collaborative approach in this research project. But I return to my senses, grab the fiddle, and walk slowly towards the school building. I have chosen to make use of surprises, sensuous scholarship and didactical irritations*. (Field notes, 17 September 2013)

There were many reasons for me to decide on a research project aimed at studying the implementation of a global music education trend in a local context: *El Sistema* in Malmö. Firstly there is the question of meaningful music education in multicultural settings. Bamford (2006) shows in her study of learning in the arts that one of the most important factors for well-functioning education is the co-operation between schools and the surrounding society. Other important conditions are co-operation between schools and institutions for higher education, an inclusive approach with equal opportunities for all children and flexible school structures. Music education research and ethnomusicological research during the last 20 years have shown how meaningful music education can be organised in multicultural societies. Historically, the initial emphasis on the inclusion of music from many different cultures and genres (Elliot, 1989; Volk, 1998) has opened up towards aspects of democracy, organisation of the learning, and a critique of the unreflected use of the concept immigrant music (Karlsen, 2012; Schippers, 2010, Sæther, 2010).

A second reason for choosing this research project is that it provides an arena to study the close relation between art, experience and learning. *El Sistema* rests on a combination of

collaborative learning, learning communities, master-apprentice situations and socially inclusive methods in order to create wide participation, meaningful learning and ending up with artistic results; musicianship. Therefore it is natural to use concepts such as *situated learning* and *communities of practice* (COP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991/2011) and relational learning (Aspelin & Persson, 2011). It is also useful to return to John Dewey's educational philosophy. As was the case in his day, the status of the arts in the general school system is low. In Sweden for example, the esthetical subjects have been demoted at high school level, and in the compulsory school the music subjects rests in the shadow of the subjects that are measured in the PISA test[15]. The *El Sistema* initiative in Malmö marks a possible change in the educational landscape, by offering music lessons in large scale and new settings.

Thirdly and most important to the focus on methodology is the immersive nature of the *El Sistema* which allows for a variety of research methods. In *El Sistema* the children are involved in approximately three times as many music lessons compared to the normal school curriculum. Through the stipulated cooperation with the symphony orchestra they meet orchestra members, are introduced to concerts and also play and perform with the orchestra at the concert hall. These grand events are interspersed with regular local concerts in the neighbourhood and in the school. In *El Sistema* in Malmö, six teachers work in teams, and mix instrumental teaching with eurhythmics, body movements and singing. There is little verbal instruction; most of the time it is music that leads the activities. The closeness between art and experience permeates the methodology of this study, based on musically informed research methods. The fieldwork started on a small scale during the late spring 2013, and continued with weekly visits during the autumn and winter of 2013 - 2014. Three themes were initially of special interest: the learning and the experiences of the children, the reflections and method development carried out collaboratively by the teachers and the municipal music school as a learning organisation.

### Playing for confidence

A typical Monday would start with the teachers gathering for reflections on the previous week's work and planning for the coming week. This rather unusual planned collaboration by the music teachers, allowed me to take part in the visionary work of *El Sistema* in the Malmö context, and to experience how the music teachers developed their agency. During the afternoons I would participate in the musical activities with the children, sometimes as a musician in the warm-up sessions, sometimes helping the teachers as an assisting adult, and sometimes in the circle of learning children, waving my bow in the air remembering how hard it can be to learn to hold an instrument.

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[15] The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) evaluates education systems worldwide by testing 15-year-olds in the key subject areas language, mathematics and science .

Qualitative research methods such as observation, normally rely on what we can investigate with the help of vision. This is a condition that Stoller (1987) wants to expand, by reminding us that there are many ways to understand the world. Depending on culture and context listening, taste and smell are possible useful senses. The closeness that Stoller (1987) suggests by introducing radical empiricism was used on a small scale in my study. Radical empiricism suggests that the researcher both acknowledges her impact on the research situation, and by using as many senses as possible fully participates in the social context and interaction that is studied. It encouraged me to use the fiddle in my communication with the teachers and the children.

During the first semester of *El Sistema* in Malmö I spent every Monday with the six teachers, the 450 *El Sistema* children (school years 1—4) and the process leader[16]. In addition to employing small scale radical empiricism I interviewed the teachers and the process leader, and collected diary notes from one of the teachers. Three Vänstays[17] were observed as was an evaluating workshop with the *El Sistema* team at the end of the semester. The first meeting between the children and the Malmö Symphony Orchestra took place at a sports hall in the children's district. This event was documented and observed. The two schools are located in a district of Malmö called Hyllie. The district has a mixed population, representing the average situation in Malmö: 29% of the inhabitants were born abroad. The five largest groups with foreign background in Hyllie come from former Jugoslavia, Poland, Denmark, Irak and Iran, in total 9.000 persons (Malmö Stad, 2011).

An expected long term result is that in the next phase of the study, when interviews with the children will be conducted, the relationship with the children will be established by the shared moments of music making. For example during the first semester two boys used to stay after the music lessons, eager to learn the Norwegian halling[18] tune that they heard me play with the teachers during the body movement part of the lesson. These stolen extra minutes gave me a chance to establish a relationship of shared musical joy, as the boys captured the tune, little by little, week by week, much like how a novice fiddler in the old days would copy the experienced fiddlers at dance evenings or informal concerts.

As a result of the design of the study, incorporating the careful building of relations to the children, the largest body of data from the first semester of *El Sistema* in Malmö focuses on the teachers' work and reflections. A longer and continuous period of fieldwork will be needed in order to follow the students on their musical and life paths.

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[16] The *El Sistema* in Malmö uses the term process leader for the project leader.
[17] Vänstays are evening concerts for and with the parents and other family members. In Swedish "vän" means friend.
[18] Halling is a dance tune in 6/8 beat, played in Norway and in the western parts of Sweden. It is a demanding dance for males who want to show their acrobatic skills.

The *El Sistema* teachers generously shared their everyday work. They knew that I teach music education at masters and doctoral level, and some of them have an interest in doing research themselves. Therefore, in the fieldwork, there were moments when we shared more than music making. From my field notes:

*The planning of the work for the semester has started, and the team has decided to compose songs. They used to teach songs from the El Sistema repertoire, but now they want to develop their own material. There is lots of enthusiasm, everyone wants to share their ideas. One of the teachers has composed a clapping pattern for "Pictures at an exhibition" by Mussorgsky, in order for the children to recognize the piece when they hear the symphony orchestra playing it. Another teacher has a tune that she wants to develop together with her colleagues. Today is a day of composing! Joy and exaltation. A quick look at the time schedule, then off to a room with a piano and some poufs. I am at present reading a book on narrative inquiry[19], and the El Sistema teachers want to hear what it says on exaltation as a way of escaping routines. Exaltation seems to be useful in music education. One of the teachers talks about her friend who is doing narrative research. She is interested in intersectionality and has a project up and running. Another teacher wants to find time to finalise her masters thesis. A third teacher has been to a conference on voice and the right to be heard. She shares what she heard on flow in one of the lectures.* (Field notes, 26 August 2013)

Our roles are blurred, the teachers are clearly teacher-researchers, and I am researching, teaching and playing with them. The teacher who has composed the "clap" for the children to playfully use body movements and rhythmic expressions when they listen to recordings of "Pictures at an exhibition" uses what I would describe as "sensuous teaching", closely linked to the ideas of sensuous scholarship. As I participate in their composing processes, they take the chance to explore directions for their own future research endeavours, through my experience as a researcher. We are in a shared in-between, tied together by our musical experiences. The discussion on what the teachers want to achieve continues. The following excerpt from my field notes show how the teachers and the process leader value their capacity as musicians, when building sustainable relations with the parents and the children.

*Teacher 1: Our task is to find the level where flow happens. Can you imagine playing in "Baltiska hallen" to 3.800 persons, with immediate response from the audience?*

*Teacher 2: Yes, but I am afraid that the children want to become tv-stars at once. There is a gap between this concert and the concert in the local library.*

*Teacher 3: How do we prepare before every concert to give them equal importance and value?*

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[19] I was reading Barrett, M. & Stauffer, S. (Eds.) (2012). *Narrative soundings: An anthology of narrativy inquiry in music education*. New York: Springer.

*Teacher 4: We could ask the older children to come in as role models at the Vänstay events.*

*Teacher 5: If they can play for dancing, we can invite the audience.*

*When the process leader returns from a meeting and the compositions are ready, the team continues to discuss how to organize the Vänstay evenings. The process leader underlines how important it is to engage the parents. He also wants to show the quality of the El Sistema teachers by involving them as musicians together with the children. He thinks they should not demand too much from the parents.*

*Teacher 3: We need to ask ourselves what the most important purpose for having a Vänstay is. For children and parents to share experiences? For everyone to be friends? To promote classical music? Or just music in general?*

*The teachers decide to start on a small scale, and to concentrate on the communication between children and adults.* (Field notes, 26 August 2013)

During the period of my fieldwork, the children developed their musical skills from being beginners to taking part in musical moments where they constructed shared meaning. They played with the symphony orchestra, they performed at their own concerts and at Vänstays. The teachers used the music to promote a context and structure that contributed to the childrens' growing confidence. A demonstration of this happened at a concert/lecture on *El Sistema* two semesters after the start of the *El Sistema* lessons. The children had performed, I played the halling-tune with them, and I talked and invited the audience to ask questions. After hearing some of the questions, one of the girls took the microphone and said "you get proud by being part of this."

The frequent lessons, Vänstays with the parents, concerts in the district and cooperation with the symphony orchestra demands a modification of the more traditional music teacher role. To the teachers, *El Sistema* offers a possibility to investigate and develop their praxis as teachers. The process of enculturation in *El Sistema* thereby encompasses mutual transmission of knowledge. The children live out powerful experiences by playing music together, by interacting with the symphony orchestra, and by spending time with engaged music teachers. Through the collaborative learning the teachers are also involved in powerful experiences, by the intense togetherness with the children and the structure of their schedule. In this respect, *El Sistema* serves as a vehicle for change.

It is too early to reach any conclusions about the long-term effects on integration, inclusion and a sustainable multicultural Malmö. Only continued studies, building on created relations and musical bonding, will provide the information needed. However, my fieldwork period with the fiddle, helped me in understanding *resonant work* as suggested by Barrett and Stauffer (2012). The concept is introduced as a tool to describe the kind of research that

reverberates in the researcher, the researched and those who share the research product. Resonant research is advocated as most useful for studies that cover participation and meaning-making in the arts, as it attends both to the qualities of engagement and the qualities of the product (Barret & Stauffer, 2012, p. 4). In my search for a method that builds on experiences from the *kora*-event in Gambia, I decided to include my fiddle in the fieldwork, inviting *henid* knowledge and surprises. The main purpose of participating in the field with the fiddle was to build relations with the children, in order to prepare for future interviews with them. These have not yet been carried out. What can be stated, however, is that the data collection that concentrated on the teachers' agency and methodological development was suffused with our shared musical moments. For me, to take part in the musical activities, gave me a bodily and sensual experience of the challenges the teachers met, when working in the field of tension between the ordinary music teacher who teaches purely musical skills, and the more unusual music teacher who works for a sustainable society.

Resonating with the nature of resonant research, this chapter will conclude with the four R-words that are the core ingredients of this sort of research: *responsible, rigorous, respectful* and *resilient* (Barret & Stauffer, 2012, pp. 9-13). The four R:s are also used to come back to the initial question: would it be possible to transfer the experience from Gambia into research at home, in the Swedish school context?

Responsible: We are as researchers responsible: to the researched, to the research community, to the shared public good, and to ourselves as researchers. How do we best make use of our own pre-understanding and knowledge? In the *El Sistema* study incorporating the fiddle was my way of striving for responsibility. It also helped me to take responsibility for how to be attentive to participants. This is double-edged, since it also demands careful and longitudinal duties.

Rigorous: Qualitative research methods need other quality criteria than truth tests: reflexivity, detail, transparency and comprehensiveness. Did the fiddle enhance the gathering and telling of stories? Probably. Without it, I would not have gained the confidence of either the music teachers or the children. There were moments when I hesitated as to its value, but as stated by Barret and Stauffer (2012) we are better researchers when outside our comfort zone. When we are in the in-between.

Respectful: When creating relations, respectfulness requires attention. In the research process all involved, the participants and the researcher, will be impacted. Process matters, as do words and modes of presentation. Earlier I described an event from a presentation of research results where the children played. At this lecture one of the girls grabbed the microphone to make her voice heard. When writing this text where my own voice is dominant I realize how important it is to choose and create different arenas for presenting results, with respect.

Resilient: This is the most challenging of the four R:s. How to produce research that is both elastic and durable? How to write texts that by having resilient qualities lend themselves to new interpretations, while providing rich evidence? Did the fiddle help? It certainly helped in slowing down the process, in understanding that there might be no oneway of getting it right. One can however aim to make it nuanced, just like playing a polska with rhythmical playfulness, sometimes with firm definition, sometimes more with a dancing bow.

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# Living the dichotomies of music and music education: Lessons from the arts for research

## GÖRAN FOLKESTAD

Debates in music education on what should be taught in school, and how, and the implications of these for research, might be summarized as circling around some recurring themes and topics, which are quite often presented and discussed in terms of dichotomies. Among these are popular music *vs* classical music, informal learning outside school *vs* formal teaching/learning in school, self-directed learning *vs* teacher-structured sequenced teaching, performance *vs* education and teacher identity *vs* artistic identity. These polar positions have also involved a debate about oral/aural music traditions *vs* written music traditions, and, not least in the case of children's creative music making, the issue of improvisation *vs* composition.

The aim of this chapter is twofold: (i) to summarize the scholarly discussion on some of these dichotomies and (ii) to mirror them in my own personal background and experiences. Thus, this chapter may be seen as a methodological experiment in what might be described as "reversed autoethnography". Ellis *et al.* (2011) describe autoethnography as "an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)" (p. 1). Accordingly, autoethnography is a form of self-reflection and writing that explores the researcher's personal experience and connects this autobiographical story to wider cultural, political, and social discourses.[20] In this chapter this is done the other way around: the result of scholarly inquiry is mirrored in personal experiences which are recounted in italics and interspersed with the scholarly discussion.

Dyndahl and Ellefsen (2009) discuss the issue of *dichotomized discourses*, based on Derrida's ideas of deconstruction and his notion that such dichotomies are "socially

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[20] See http://anthropology.usf.edu/cma/CMAmethodology-ae.htm

constructed value hierarchies…[and that] what appears like binary oppositions should be regarded as arbitrary relations between components in a sociocultural system" (Dyndahl & Ellefsen, 2009, p. 17). They maintain that "dichotomies of music education may originate from historical, sociocultural and educational systems and relations of power" (p. 11).

The praxis of music education, music teaching, must in one way or another be normative. That is, a teacher should have, indeed needs to have, an idea of what is good or bad about his or her teaching, and what is good or bad for the students. Music education researchers, however, must put this normativity in abeyance and adopt *epoché*, to use a term from phenomenology, in order to achieve a descriptive, analytical level.

One of the tasks facing research in music education might thus be described as disclosing and exposing the prejudices or preconceptions that are present in contemporary discussions on music and music education. These are held not only by parents, politicians and the general public, but to a certain extent also by school administrators, principals, teachers in general and music educators in particular. These preconceptions are quite often, implicitly or explicitly, formulated in terms of dichotomies on the basis of which decisions are made on how and what to teach, what kind of music children need or should be taught at school, etc.. Accordingly, one important task of research might be described as refining knowledge about these matters—to enable a move from mere belief to knowledge, in Socratian terminology from *doxa* to *episteme*, that is "from a state of being simply opinionated to being capable of questioning and justifying" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008, p. 37)—thereby replacing a view of things being either black or white with a picture including all the shades of grey in between these extremes, in "a logic which recognizes both/and" (Dyndahl & Ellefsen, 2009, p. 17).

Before discussing the actual dichotomies, by way of introduction and as a backdrop to the rest of this chapter, I would like to establish some fundamental insights and premises for music education and research.

Already during their first years of life, growing up in today's rich and varied sonic environment most children all around the world today learn a lot about music. They hear the latest chart hits and the common repertoire of children's songs, and, by watching Disney movies such as the Lion King, for example, they are exposed to the tonal language of Western classical music, blended with multicultural elements from other parts of the world, in this case African music.

This leads up to a very important insight, and a first premise for music education research: from the very start, even before they are born, children interact with their sonic environment, thereby starting their lifelong journey of musical learning. As adults—having spent our childhood in what we thought was a new age, but in comparison with the impact of musical exposure of today was still a stone age—I think it is hard for us to fully understand the situation for today's children, who right from the start interact with recorded music,

television, DVD-movies, computer games and all the musical activities on the internet. This is increasingly true with the advent of iPods, Podcasts, You Tube, etc.

From this follows a second insight and premise: as music educators we never meet musically ignorant, uneducated children and students. On the contrary, when pupils come to school they all possess a rich and in some ways sophisticated musical knowledge, acquired from a variety of outside-school musical activities. These are activities that start long before these children enter school and have their first music lesson.

*"He's singing!" the next-door housewife burst out when she heard me babble sitting in my pram, less than one year old. This incident is the origin of a story told to me again and again over the years of how I could sing before I could talk. Whether this is true or not, in a strict sense, is not important to me, nor if this episode might be regarded as an empirical example of the theory that people start by singing and then learn how to talk, and not the other way around. But this incident is interesting, and might even be important, in the sense that this is my first memory of being regarded by others as musically gifted—seen as a musician—and what such an early recognition and acknowledgement has meant for my subsequent musical endeavours.*

*When visiting friends of the family's, I remember that I, still only a couple of years old, was drawn to pianos as if they had a magnetic force. My parents noticed this, and by they age of five I got my first piano. Neither of my parents were musicians themselves and up till then there were no instruments in our home. However, my parents were sensitive and attentive to my desires to play music and have always been supportive of me, not least in the sense of providing good conditions for my musical development.*

The song I sang in the pram in 1953 was one of the popular songs of that time, frequently played on the radio[21]. This influence of popular music even on small children can be heard in the recordings from 1960 in Bertil Sundin's (1963) pioneering research study on children's music making in kindergarten, in which he "wanted to find out what children did musically when they were not directly influenced by adult authorities, what children came up with when they were asked to invent their own songs, and what music meant to children" (Sundin, 1998, p. 35). This brings us to the first dichotomy and lesson for research, the one about learning in and out of school.

## Lesson #1: Learning in and out of school

The notion that learning takes place everywhere, not only in schools, leads us to the first dichotomy which might be regarded as the meta-dichotomy of music education and research—musical learning in and out of school—as it establishes the foundation of how the field of research in music education as a whole is defined.

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[21] *Torparvisan* written and recorded by Gunde Johansson.

At the time of the founding of the PhD programme in Music Education at Malmö Academy of Music, Lund University, in 1996, most research in music education, both in Scandinavia and internationally, had so far dealt with music training in institutional settings, such as schools, and as a result it was based on the assumption, either implicitly or explicitly, that musical learning results from a sequenced, methodical exposure to music teaching within a formal setting (Folkestad, 1998).

However, from the very beginning of the Lund programme—based on a theoretical perspective grounded in sociocultural theories, viewing musical learning as cultural practice (Folkestad, 1998, 2005, 2006)—we took into consideration not only formalized learning situations within institutional settings, such as schools, but also various forms of learning that take place in informal musical learning practices outside schools in a multitude of semi-formal and informal musical leisure time activities. This perspective on music education research rests on the insight that the great majority of musical learning takes place outside schools, in situations where there is no teacher, and in which the intention of the activity is not to learn about music, but to play music, listen to music, dance to music, or just be together with music. Each of these examples typifies situations in which music is experienced and learned, one way or another. For more than a decade now, this has been further accentuated as a result of computers and new technology and all the musical activities on the Internet, in which the global and the local interact in a dialectic way (Folkestad, 2002).

This widening of the field of research in music education not only involves bringing in all kinds of informal musical learning in various youth and popular music contexts as objects of study. Other obvious places of outside-school musical learning are orchestras and ensembles of all sorts playing all kinds of music, including Western classical music. Accordingly, one important area of research is to study and analyse the musical activities in these contexts—rehearsals, performances, etc.—from the perspective of lifelong learning. This brings us to the next two dichotomies and lessons for research, (i) classical *vs* popular music, and (ii) education (teacher) *vs* performance (artist).

## Lesson #2: Merging the worlds of classical and popular music

A topic of major discussion internationally over the last 40 years has been whether or not to include popular music in the school music curriculum (Byrne & Sheridan, 2000; Dunbar-Hall & Wemyss, 2000; Folkestad, 2000; Hebert & Shehan Campbell, 2000). This issue is analyzed and discussed by Dyndahl and Ellefsen (2009) as a "dichotomy between aesthetic, serious music and functional popular music" (p. 13).

Applying a socio-cultural perspective to music education Folkestad (1996, 1998) also implies that many questions taken for granted have to be reconsidered: for example, the question of whether or not to have popular music in school becomes irrelevant – popular music is already present in school, brought there by the students, and in many cases also by

the teachers, as part of their musical experience and knowledge (Folkestad, 2000). The issue is rather: how do we deal with it?

My experience as a music educator is that, on the one hand, students might be negative to "classical music" when it is presented as classical music, but on the other hand, when listened to as film and TV music, in computer games, etc., they seem to be well acquainted with this music, in particular the orchestral music of the 19th and 20th century. In other words, though students might express negative attitudes towards classical music as a concept, they can at the same time be very familiar with, and appreciative of the same music as a sonic experience.

As I see it, one thing popular music (pop and rock music) and Western classical music have in common is that they both partly originate from, and have some common roots in, European popular music. Another thing they have in common is that today they are both parts of a global musical culture. Just as radio stations broadcasting chart music sound very much the same all over the world, Western classical music also has its "chart lists": it is often very hard to tell from the programme of a concert hall in which country or part of the world the concert is held.

As a conclusion, it is not the music in itself—its intra-musical content—that decides whether the music is "popular" or "classical, art music". It is rather the function, the context in which it appears and the status of the aesthetic and cultural values these bring to the context that decide whether it is to be defined as either popular or classical.

*In addition to the playing and singing at home, from the age of six I was asked to perform in public. My first appearance was as leading "stjärngosse"[22]. Later, I sang solo in churches, at the same time as I sang pop songs with a guitar at home and at parties.*

*From my very early years I never classified music in different genres, of which some were accessible or suitable to me as a child and others not. To me the only relevant division of music has always been, and still is, the one between good and bad music, regardless of style or genre. In retrospect, I realize that this approach was not always unproblematic.*

*My first memory of such a situation is from school as a 9-year old. We had a recording at home by Jussi Björling singing "Paris' Entrance Song" in Jacques Offenbach's operetta "La belle Hélène"[23] and I loved listening to his wonderful and powerful voice. I asked my mother to transcribe the lyrics and the next Saturday I proudly performed the song a capella in front of the class. I remember that my teacher had a puzzled smile on her face when she thanked me and that the rest of class looked at me with a mixture of surprise and bewilderment. I had no idea that I had probably gone far beyond the musical borders I, and the rest of the class, were expected to live within, but to me there was no difference in singing this song compared to*

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[22] A boy attendant in the procession of the traditional Swedish St. Lucia Day celebrations on 13th December dressed in a long white shirt and pointed cap who carries a star on a stick.
[23] www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqFE3xX7FNs

*singing one of the popular pop songs of that time. In some contexts this approach to music was fruitful for me, for example in my being accepted for the new Music Teacher Education Programme, in which the ability to master both classical and popular music was regarded as an asset (Olsson, 1993). In other contexts, for example as a recording artist, it was sometimes problematic. The A&R[24] people of the record company with whom I was recording had some problems with this and asked me to specify exactly which style my music was supposed to be in. That also involved questions regarding their promotion of me as an artist, and boiled down to the practical issue of into which compartment in the record store to put my record.*

*A critical incident, which brought together my two, so far separate, musical worlds is the following:*

*At the age of 15, and after having been trained in playing the classical piano since the age of 6, I started to study the church organ. In parallel to this, I continued to play the piano in my blues group. To me the musical worlds of (i) sitting alone in the empty and quiet church playing fugues of Bach and other pieces of sheet music from the traditional church organ repertoire, and (ii) playing improvised music by ear in garage like premises and smoky clubs were never in conflict, but to me two natural contexts for musical expression. However, in some aspects they were separated, not only in time and place, but also as the former was taking place in solitude and based on written sheet music from past centuries, whereas the latter was executed together with other musicians and based on contemporary, to some extent improvised music played by ear.*

*This feeling of separation ceased in a couple of seconds when I first heard the song A Whiter Shade of Pale, released 12 May 1967 by the British pop group Procol Harum[25]. The song is well known for its baroque and classical influence and has an introduction and countermelody, played on a Hammond organ with a church organ-like sound, based on the third movement Air of J. S. Bach's Orchestral Suite N° 3 in D Major. All of a sudden my two musical worlds and discourses came together in one and I remember running to the chapel playing the song by ear on the church organ, and singing the, to me incomprehensible, lyrics out loud.*

## Lesson #3: Merging the teaching and performance of music

The way institutional education is organized affects the way people construct their thinking and in the case of music and music education, I think this is particularly true: the division between, on the one hand, the training to become a performing artist and musician, and, on the other hand, the training to become a music teacher, at different seats of learning or as two separate departments within the same university, has led to the widespread view, or

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[24] A&R stands for Artist and Repertoire.
[25] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mb3iPP-tHdA

construction, of artistic performance and music teaching as completely separate musical activities.

It goes without saying that in reality artistic performance and music teaching are not separate musical activities, and by studying aspects of musical performance, for example performance anxiety, as a learning activity, the gap between these two major parts of higher music education might be bridged. My experience of 20 years of research is that, at least on the graduate and post-graduate levels, there is no benefit in maintaining a clear distinction between these aspects of musical learning—the educational and the artistic. On the contrary, on the more advanced levels of reflective and scholarly activities these two aspects, or perspectives, may be construed as fertilizing each other and might even be seen as two sides of the same coin: interpretation, a core activity and concept in performance training and research might be seen and analyzed as a way of learning, while the musical activity in a classroom can be analyzed and understood as a sort of artistic performance.

To summarize: although music education research, rooted in the "traditional" research of the social sciences and based mainly on the study of others, and artistic research of performance and composition, based on the researcher's own artistic activity are necessarily distinguished according to specific issues, it is my experience that—regardless of from which perspective the research project is conducted, whether the discipline of music education or artistic performance—both sides of the coin are always present: education *and* the performance of music.

*At the age of 17 (1969) I listened to the Dutch group Ekseption's[26] version of Bach's Air, and all of a sudden, almost like a revelation, I experienced the possibility to not only merge my interest in both classical and popular music but also to do it in a pedagogical setting, now having found a tool for enabling this merger between classical music and pop music not only in myself but also for my imaginary future students. Before that, the possibility of becoming a music teacher had never been an option in my mind. One of the reasons was that at that time the music teacher education programme rested on playing classical music only. In addition, it required one to play a string instrument in order to be accepted, which I regarded as out of reach of my ability.*

*However, listening to this recording I situated myself in my imagination in a classroom with students, and I pictured myself as starting the lesson by playing the original version, followed by the Swingle Singer's vocal version from 1963, with an upright bass and soft jazz drums as the only other instruments, ( https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=soZwC7eN8TI ) and finally Ekseption's version (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_I031TWIXE).*

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[26] Ekseption was a Dutch rock band, playing mostly instrumental "classical rock". They made a number of rock versions of famous classical pieces such as Bach's Air, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and Khachaturian's Sabre dance.

*Ekseption's version, which consists of the first 24-bar of Bach's original being played four times, starts with the melody played by a soprano saxophone (with a sound having much in common with an oboe or an English horn), the piano and bass playing the original chords and bass line and the drums playing a standard pop beat. The second round is a jazz/rock piano solo, now with more of a swing beat on the drums. The third round is played in more of a baroque style, with a harpsichord in the lead improvising in a "baroquish" style on top of a standard pop beat on the drums. Finally, there is a repeat of the first round.*

## Lesson #4: Formal teaching and informal learning

In her book on how popular musicians learn, Lucy Green (2001) presents five characteristics of informal musical learning: (i) "informal learning always starts with music which the learners choose for themselves"; (ii) "the main method of skill-acquisition…involves copying recordings by ear"; (iii) "informal learning takes place alone or alongside friends, through self-directed learning, peer-directed learning and group learning"; (iv) "skills and knowledge…tend to be assimilated in haphazard, idiosyncratic and holistic ways, starting with "whole", "real-world" pieces of music"; (v) "informal approaches usually involve a deep integration of listening, performing, improvising and composing throughout the learning process" (p. 10).

These characteristics might still be described as the core of informal musical learning, even though the descriptions derive from research on popular musicians who learned to play their instruments 15 to 40 years ago, and who worked in what today might be described as "traditional" ways compared to many of today's young musicians who learn to play and compose by means of computers and music technology. Hence, the second characteristic may be in need of some revision: it might be argued that among today's young musicians the main method of learning is no longer just to copy recordings by ear, but that features of Web 2.0 technology, tabs found on internet web sites, performances on, for example, YouTube, and instruction videos are gradually becoming just as common and important when learning how to play.

At first sight it might seem like a paradox that descriptions of how popular musicians learn—copying music they like, not only by using written music but also by ear, imitating well-respected masters, etc.—have many similarities with the master-apprenticeship teaching and learning typical of conservatoires. This means that, in all probability, the main difference is not between formal and informal as such in terms of in or out of institutional settings. Rather this distinction concerns, on the one hand, *playing music*—musical learning by musically committed people playing music they love, regardless of whether it is done in an institutional setting such as a conservatoire or a garage, in a concert hall or a recording studio—and, on the other hand, *learning how to play*, that is, the "schoolified" music activities of pedagogically adjusted and sequentially structured music making in primary or

secondary school guided by teachers governed by external demands, restrictions and regulations, such as curricula, and by their own constructions of what is to be regarded as proper music teaching. This difference is pointed out by Barbara, one of the teachers in Green's (2008) project on forming a new classroom pedagogy: "Something that this approach seems to do is to make you teach as musicians, rather than as teachers" (p. 62).

Accordingly, it seems as if it is not so much the content in terms of musical style and genre that makes the difference, but the approach to music making and the methods by which the music is transformed.

In order to explore how the concepts *formal* and *informal* are used in the literature, I conducted an analysis of some of the main texts in the area (Folkestad, 2006). Four main ways of using *formal* and *informal* were identified, each one focusing on different aspects of learning:

1. The *situation*: where does learning take place? That is, formal and informal are used as a way of pointing to the physical context in which learning takes place: inside or outside institutional settings, such as schools. For example, "formally and informally trained musicians" which in this respect basically means trained in or out of school.

2. *Learning style*: as a way of describing the character, the nature and quality of the learning process. In this respect, expressions such as "formally or informally educated musicians" refer to learning to play by written music or by ear.

3. *Ownership*: who "owns" the decisions regarding the activity; what to do as well as how, where and when? This definition focuses on didactic teaching versus open and self-regulated learning.

4. *Intentionality*: towards what is the mind directed: towards learning how to play or towards playing (Folkestad, 1998)? Within a pedagogical or a musical framework (Saar, 1999)?

These definitions are not contradictory or mutually exclusive, and it is possible to use more than one of them, but it is very important to be explicit about the ways these terms are used in any specific context. My impression is that today, the distinction between these ways of using formal and informal is sometimes blurred and indistinct. Accordingly, it is important to distinguish between (i) where the learning/activity takes place and (ii) the type and nature of the learning process, in order to be clear about whether *formal* and *informal*, respectively, are used to describe formal and informal learning situations or formal and informal ways of learning.

The reason for this is that one conclusion of the research presented above is that it is far too simplified, and actually false, to say that formal learning only occurs in institutional settings and that informal learning only occurs outside school. On the contrary, this static

view has to be replaced with a dynamic view in which what are described as formal and informal learning styles are aspects of the phenomenon of learning, regardless of where it takes place. Accordingly, using the concepts *formal* and *informal* as an analytic tool, what characterizes most learning situations is the instant switch between these learning styles and the dialectic interaction between them.

In conclusion, the division between formal and informal learning practices might no longer be valid, since these practices, in their absolute form, hardly exist. This is particularly true when studying school activities, which by definition are formal, regardless of which methods are used—teaching is always formal; there is by definition no such thing as "informal teaching." Up to now there has been a point in referring to learning activities without teachers outside school as "informal", in order to acknowledge them and bring them into focus, but from now on the approach to learning described as informal should rather be included among the (formal) learning strategies, which today are quite well-established in schools all around the world. In fact, this is a general result of studies conducted over the last ten years: both in the musical activities of a classroom led by a teacher and in the voluntary self-directed outside school musical activities there seems to be a constant switch between what have been described as formal and informal teaching and learning styles (e.g., Folkestad, 1996; Saar, 1999; Nilsson & Folkestad, 2005).

*One early experience of mine illustrating the issue of formal and informal learning, and learning in and out of school, is from when I had only just started to have English lessons in fifth grade. Up till then, I had learnt most of my English from the lyrics of the pop songs I sang. I remember my first visit to London and how I "quoted" different lines from various songs when speaking to people. This meant that from the very start I used complete sentences instead of expressing myself in single words or short phrases. However, this way of learning English informally by adopting lyrics in pop songs as my vocabulary caused a clash in the classroom: when marking one of my written assessments, the teacher had corrected me when I wrote "she don't…" and had written "she doesn't…" as the correct answer. I argued that the teacher was wrong, because I was firmly convinced that "she don't" was correct as this was how the Beatles sang it in "Ticket to Ride". I even sang the line—"but she don't care"— for her, and asked her, I'm afraid a bit arrogantly, if she really thought that she, a teacher in the rural Sweden, was better at English than the Beatles! The teacher was sympathetic enough not to be offended, but simply explained to me that there are sometimes differences between written language and the way a language is used in various everyday situations.*

This episode demonstrates not only a clash between informal and formal learning, and the difference in learning a language or music in what might be described as a holistic way, compared to the more atomistic teaching and learning in traditional school pedagogy. It also introduces the differences between oral/aural and written cultures and traditions.

## Lesson #5: Oral/aural—written

One of the reasons why the above mentioned division or dichotomy between classical and popular music has developed and emerged might be a focus on the differences in how these musics are learned and transmitted: in other words not the music itself, but the difference between notated music and oral music, and the distinction between oral and written.

There seems to be a widespread view that the distinctions between formal-informal and written-oral/aural are equivalent in the sense that formal is written and informal is oral/aural. However, oral/aural training is not of necessity more informal than using written music. In this respect, Eva Sæther's (2003) study of the attitudes to music teaching and learning among *jalis* in the Gambia provides interesting findings. That which on a surface level, and from the perspective and prejudice of Western music education, might appear to be an informal practice, was in fact found to be a very formalized and "institutionalized" way of knowledge formation and knowledge mediation. The title of Sæther's book, *The Oral University*, refers not only to this main result, but also to the notion that there is no causal relationship between orality and informality—a connection which, implicitly or explicitly, is taken for granted in much of the literature in this field. By extension, this also challenges the established prejudice that written music is the only content of formal institutionalized music teaching, whereas popular and orally transmitted music is regarded as the typical content of informal, out-of-school activities. Accordingly, written music might historically have been the predominant way of learning a song or a piece of music in schools, whereas oral/aural learning has been more connected to the way young people outside school and popular musicians in general have learned music. Today, however—as was also the case when learning 'classical music' before the 18th century (Hultberg, 2000)—aural learning is just as common in the training of musicians at conservatoires, and written music in the form of sheet music and tabs are essential tools of the informal musical learning taking place, for example, via the internet.

Consequently, today aural learning might be just as much a strategy in contemporary formal music education as written music might be in informal learning practices.

This distinction between oral/aural and written music might be valid to a limited extent in the discussion of how music is created, learned, transmitted and performed. However, to the receivers of music, the audience, music is always a sonic experience regardless of whether it is orally transmitted or interpreted via a score. In that sense, from the music education and artistic perspectives, music is never visual in terms of being a *written* product—the music is not its score—but music is always an aural art form, a sonic experience. Quite often it is the distinguishing-mark of a good performance that the singers or instrumental soloists are not playing strictly by the score, but they have freed themselves from the visual dimension of the written music, made it their own and play it *by heart* in its literal and true sense.

This could serve as a memorandum for music education: the emphasis should not be put on reading about music and analyzing music by reading scores to the extent that the essence of music as sonic art is lost.

## Lesson #6: Improvisation—composition

Another dichotomy connected to aural and written is the one between improvisation and composition.

In much of the discourse on children and music, not least with respect to music education and music curricula, there seems to be an implicit assumption that (small) children might be able to improvise, but not to compose. This implies that one prerequisite of composition is maturity, in the sense of having the ability to accomplish a certain amount of structured thinking. In other words, the child is no longer only oral, but has entered into the written culture. This might be true to some extent, but the problem with this view is that it also transmits a view of improvisation as a lower, or less refined, form of composition. A view of improvisation as a pre-stage to composition and as a musical utterance of an aural culture leading up, with the guidance of proper training by educated tutors, to the utterance of the written culture, composition.

Regarding composition and creative music making, we now have studies of children from the age of three up to adults, from "novices"—whatever that term means in the light of what has been presented in this chapter—, to experts—again, whatever that means today—confirming that when it comes to essential aspects there seems to be no major difference in the approaches to composition and music making between these groups.

Bertil Sundin's (1998) internationally pioneering naturalistic and ethnographic research study from the beginning of the 1960s, mentioned above, demonstrates how children of 3-6 years of age used improvisation as a means of composing their songs. In my own PhD study on computer based creative music making (Folkestad, 1996) the dialectic relationship between improvisation and composition is obvious in the creative music making processes of the participants, who were 15-16 years old.

The results of Bo Nilsson's PhD study of 8-year-olds focus on the definition of composition and improvisation, respectively, and how these concepts become integrated in the practice of computer-based creative music making: to improvise is to compose and composition involves a great deal of improvisation (Nilsson & Folkestad, 2005). The title of Nilsson's published thesis *I can make a hundred songs* emphasizes that for a child it might be just as natural to make a new song instead of re-working an already existing one; that is, to compose by improvisation instead of composing by reflective analytical cognitive tools, the latter being regarded as a key feature in "adult" composition.

Recent research on adult experts shows that today computers and new technologies are well established in professional composition—in all kinds and genres of music. This has led to a situation in which it is no longer relevant to make a distinction between computer-based composition and "traditional" composition. Today, almost all composers use computers in one way or another, regardless of whether their work is based on avant-garde or traditional artistic approaches to composition. Accordingly, as computers and new technologies are now well established in "traditional" composing, one aspect of contemporary research is to study how, not whether, computers are used.

It is also true that performing artists use new technological equipment as instruments and part of their improvisational activities on stage (Nilsson, 2011), and that contemporary composers use improvising musicians as input in their composition processes (Östersjö, 2008).

One result of this development is that improvisation and composition should no longer be treated as distinct and separate concepts. On the contrary, these concepts appear to merge more and more with contemporary improvisational and compositional practices—composition is a key aspect of improvisation and improvisation is, as a result of the new technology, increasingly used as a method in composition.

*Even as a child when I started playing the piano, I found it much more fun to try out melodies and small musical pieces of my own by improvising, than to play the sheet music compositions of my piano homework. In that sense, I was probably never a good piano pupil, and quite often my mother, who overheard me from the kitchen playing in the living room, expressed her concerns with me spending most of the time on my improvisational experiments instead of practising my sheet music piano home work. I remember her saying: "Is that really proper music, it sounds like you're making it all up". Which of course I was! Quite often the elaborations in these improvisations resulted in small compositions, some of which I also wrote down as sheet music.*

*Throughout my musical career, it has been the creation of music, by experimenting in notes and sounds and out of small embryos of musical ideas forming a musical unity that has fascinated me most. As a 14-year old I got my first tape recorder. I used it to record one harmony, and improvise by playing or singing another to it, and with the sound-on-sound technique the options were expanded to what I experienced as unlimited, recording the kick of a bass drum with a slipper, the snare drum with a box of matches, the hi-hat with two sheets of sandpaper, etc.*

*Between 1983 and 1987 I had the opportunity to observe, at close range as a composer and recording artist, how MIDI-technology was established in recording studios and in the production of popular music. This has contributed to a further increase in the role of improvisation as a method in the composition.*

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have described six lessons from the arts discussing how the deconstruction of what might be described as dichotomies in music and music education also has implications for research methodology.

In an investigation of hip hop musicians' artistic and educational strategies, one of the interviewed female hip hop musicians in New York City states that "the education system isn't educated enough to educate the kids" (Söderman, Ericsson & Folkestad, 2007, p. 15). Taking this seriously, one mission of music education research, in and out of school, in a multitude of cultures and in all kinds of music, is to provide the teachers and educators of music with knowledge so that the education system becomes educated enough to educate not only children and adolescents in and out of school, but also adults in their lifelong musical learning.

To borrow the title of one of the Beatles' songs, this is why music education researchers need to be *here* in schools at all levels conducting all kinds of various research projects, but also to be out *there* where children, adolescents and adults encounter musical learning in all its various forms. Moreover, as a result of the globalized world in which the local and the global interact, particularly in the musical learning of young people, researchers need to be *everywhere,* focusing not only on formal and informal musical learning in Western societies and cultures, but including the full global range of popular, world and indigenous musics in their studies.

Taking as a point of departure the musics and the musical experiences of the students does not entail that this should be the only music included in the school curriculum music. To take the original meaning and function of *the pedagogue,* in ancient Greece the slave who met the student at the door step of his house and followed and guarded him on his way to school, as a metaphor: what we should do as music educators is to meet the students where they are situated, musically and otherwise, but then not to stay there, but to take them by the hand and lead them on a journey towards new musical endeavors and experiences. From such a perspective, there are no conflicts or opposition between, for example, popular and "classical" music; on the contrary the former might constitute a fruitful point of departure for exploring the latter. Likewise there need not be a conflict between the established ways of institutional teaching and the new means of achieving knowledge. The important thing is that we as educators acknowledge the new ways of music making and musical learning and meet the students on their own ground. And in order to be able to meet the students, we need to know where they are: we need to research these areas in order to get a picture of where they stand and from which point we can guide them in crossing borders on their musical learning journeys *living and negotiating the dichotomies of music and music education.*

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# CHAPTER 9

## ROBERT STAKE

During World War II

President Franklin Roosevelt

called for commitment to four freedoms:

Freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.

The tones of his expression still bring tears to a few older eyes.

Those war ravaged years

have passed almost beyond memory

into a more complex world.

We have other problems.

One that is little recognized, calls for another freedom,

freedom from the rubric.

In order to evaluate complex matters in our lives,

many of us borrow or compose a rubric.

A rubric is a set of criteria,

a list of essential characteristics, for grading things.

It is a reminder of what we have thoughtfully considered

as the essence of quality.

A rubric is a set of red letter ideas,

important enough to be the titles of our chapters.

President Roosevelt had a rubric

for a world free of war and oppression.

*His* rubric had four essentials.


A rubric itself is not necessarily good.  It may be overly simple.

A rubric is not necessarily bad.

Sometimes greater conformity to explicit standards _is_ needed.

The rubric itself needs to be evaluated.


One rubric for good expression,

a rubric for teachers of writing, draws our attention to:

content, organization, word choice, voice, fluency, and convention.

According to the rubric,

organization includes "good transition" from one part to the next.


The literary world changes too.

What was once a standard for expression,

may _not_ be essential for what we are doing this time.

Beethoven sometimes avoided transition, as does Steven Spielberg.


A rubric helps one think about some things

and keeps us from thinking about others.

A rubric does not read the essay,

and then think, "What is good here?"

The rubric looks for deficits.  Are these four or six things missing here?


The human mind is capable

of looking at a writing sample

or a teacher teaching writing

And finding strengths and weaknesses—or more.

The mind is capable of thinking of holistic quality

as separate from the goodness of parts.

A rubric standardizes the evaluating,

but does not necessarily make it better.

As Elliot Eisner said, evaluators need be connoisseurs,

Using all their sensitivities and experience to examine the evaluand at hand.

In some places, the rubric has attained a dictatorial power.
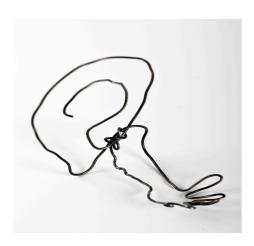
It sometimes usurps the law of reason.

This may be time to battle

for freedom from rubrics.

# The key to the life-world—Unlocking research questions through expressive objects

ANNA HOUMANN



This chapter describes a study that explored creative art as a research tool. Music teacher students created a three dimensional object designed to express their understanding and experience of the term "music teacher". In interviews, music teachers and music teacher students described and explored the objects and how they reflected their lived experience of the phenomenon *discretionary power*, within a phenomenological framework. I define discretionary power as to have the opportunity and knowledge to exercise one's own professional judgment in carrying out and making decisions in daily work.

Music teachers' professional work may be studied from a broad range of perspectives. My study centres on music teachers' descriptions of their perceived possibilities and limitations in the everyday work from a phenomenological perspective. My overall theoretical point of departure is the assumption of the *life-world* as the complex, everyday world wherein we live our lives. The life-world is a world that is already there for us, it is a given world and

the world in which all science begins and ends. This assumption stems from the life-world concepts developed by Husserl (1970), Schütz (1953/1999) and Merleau-Ponty (1962/1999). This conception lies behind my understanding of the life-world as an intentional, lived and social world, and my understanding of research as the study of lived experience.

This chapter focuses on the methodological and pedagogical processes of studying experience in order to unveil the lived experience, by using an expressive object created by the students as a key to the life-world. I will tell the story of the lessons I learnt from art in research by focusing on creative art as a research tool. Here, I use or interpret the concept of "Art" as comprising expressive objects, created out of a personal drive to convey a message, mood, or symbolism for the perceiver to interpret. Heidegger (1971) and Merleau-Ponty (1964) interpret art as the means by which a community develops for itself a medium for self-expression and interpretation. Let the story begin.

## The story of the objects

As a child I used to spend my weekends and vacations with my mother and brother at various museums, exhibitions and churches. When travelling around Europe we saw more of the walls of exhibition halls than the actual city we were visiting. My childhood evolved around these winding journeys in a search to unveil the world of fine art, architecture, music, dance, theatre etc. In all of those places there was a story to be found, a story to be told. And if there were not one available my mother would tell us one or ask us to make one up. Every art work, building, piece of music, movement or character had a story, told or untold, ready for us to convey. I resemble all other human beings in terms of the story-filled nature of my life, but I have come back to the idea of story again and again because it intrigues me. Working as a composer, music teacher, music teacher educator and researcher I recognize that stories come into our lives in many disguises—often we are not even aware of them as stories.

Wilson (2006) and Zeldin (1998) suggest the need for story literacy in order to manage the complex communications of education and professional work. Story literacy includes the social skills of managing stories in conversation—both in listening to the stories of others, in recognising the gist or the point that is being made—and the need to be able to respond, appropriately, sometimes with another story. This idea is easily transferred to music education since musicians communicate through, in and about music using similar skills to manage the story that evolves through musical conversations. As a music teacher educator I make use of these musical communication skills and develop them further by using different means of reflection through story. To take just one example, my students in the first course of their music teacher education first writes an autobiography and then in collaboration compose a piece using the soundtrack of their lives as a focal point (Houmann, 2015). However, not only can story mean many different things but there is also a vast number of purposes for telling and some are beneficial for the teller and some for the listener.

My initial motivation for using an expressive object to construct meaning was the wish to devise a way of eliciting stories both as a music teacher educator and later as a researcher. "Whatever form a story takes", Plummer (1995) reminds us, "it is not simply the lived life. It speaks all around life: it provides routes into a life, lays down maps for lives to follow, suggest links between a life and a culture" (p. 186). Gauntlett (2007) describes the construction of Lego structures as means of exploring ideas and identity—and maybe stories too. In this case the expressive objects played an important role in supporting multisensory approaches to reflecting on learning instead of writing. In addition, a lot of work has been carried out arguing for the recognition of academic intelligence as something which is not predicated on writing, but on other modes of embodying and expressing knowledge (James, 2007; Pink, 2008; West, 2009; Robinson, 2011; James & Brookfield, 2013; 2014). Expressive objects thus served as prompts in my research study, or rather, as keys to open up the life-worlds of the interviewees.

### Accessing the life-world—the three dimensional objects

Even though a life-world researcher tries to get knowledge, through experience, about the life-world of others, this does not mean you have clear access to it. Much of the time, experienced professionals in both education and other fields cannot explain what they are doing, or tell you what they know; and students cannot articulate their learning. Yet professional development and practice are often discussed as if conscious understanding and deliberation are of the essence. Whatever the researcher choose to study depends, amongst other things, on what assumptions they have about the reality they are about to study and what experience consists of. These assumptions may either comprise our implicit everyday conceptions or they can be explicitly chosen.

In my doctoral dissertation (Houmann, 2010) music teachers and music teacher students lived experience of discretionary power was studied through interviews. In total 30 interviews were conducted. In an effort to access the life-worlds of others, expressive objects, such as those in Figure 1, were used as a focal point for the interviews.



*Figure 3: Examples of the three-dimensional objects created by music teacher students (Houmann, 2010)*

The objects were constructed by music teacher students during a course as part of the teacher training. Their task was to describe the work of the multifaceted music teacher by creating a

three dimensional object representing the role of the "multi dimensional music teacher". In doing so the students highlighted the concepts, qualities or skills they believed to be inherent in the role of the "multi dimensional music teacher". The purpose of the course task was to give the students an opportunity, in the form of a practical exercise, to describe the web of musical, pedagogical and sociological experiences that a music teacher creates in his or her work.

One can view the creation of the objects as a figuration of the life-world as an intentional world, lived world and a social world (Bengtsson, 1999, 1962/1999; Schütz, 1953/1999). The life-world as an intentional world derives from an understanding that human consciousness is intentional. It means that people's experiences are both experiences in themselves and experiences of something. The life-world as a lived world is characterised by a presumption of a world that includes both human beings and phenomena. The life-world as a social world means that people who live, think and take action are not just individuals but are part of a social context. The objects the students created should engage with the ideas they had about teachers' *discretionary power*, teachers' possibilities and limitations in their everyday work. In this way the creation of the object was designed to initiate a reflection on the development of the role of teacher, where theory and practice constitute two sides of the same coin. My understanding of discretionary power as having the opportunity and knowledge to exercise one's own professional judgment in carrying out and making decisions in daily work may be compared to Berg's (2003) definition of professionalism as "a question of carrying out a job taking both the formal commission and the actual conditions into consideration" (p. 53). Whereas Berg emphasizes two prerequisites, the formal organisation and the actual conditions, the definition in my study stresses the relational nature of discretion and teachers' work.

The purpose of creating the objects in the course was to give visual and kinaesthetic form to the concept of discretionary power and to what a music teacher "should" be like. The assignment was designed in such a way as to contain linkages between the theory of the discretionary power and experience. At the same time it created prerequisites for the students, with the help of the visualisation, to transfer their thoughts from the immediate and concrete to more abstract and theoretical reasoning

The students' objects are all unique and the capacity for invention and the creativity is apparent when you hold or look at the objects. The students have painted, sewn, baked, woven, welded, cut, clipped, glued, plastered and used ceramics. They have written on paper, cloth, leather, wood, clay, candy, bread, fruit, pasta, plastic, glass, CD, vinyl records and even in steel. Most of the students reported that they started the process with the concepts, personal qualities and knowledge they wanted to bring to the making of the object, and then looked for a suitable shape. Some students created or started with an existent shape and connected it to the words they had chosen (see Figure 1 for some examples).

The purpose behind using the expressive objects as a "key" to the life-world, for me as a researcher, was to discuss fundamental methodological assumptions about possible approaches to the empirical study of lived experience. Above all it came to methodologically consider an approach to question the researcher as a part of the life-world. A phenomenological approach is expressed by the ambition to be open to different possibilities to follow the direction of the research question, to be open to my own and others pre-understanding of the researched phenomena and thereby to open up for new experiences (Gadamer, 1960/2004; van Manen, 1997).

The inspiration for using the models as a research method was Bengtssons (1999) exhortation to employ "methodological creativity" (p. 32). He describes the research problem, research question and method as being intertwined, something that will have implications for the actions of the researcher in empirical studies:

> It is necessary for the life-world researcher to seek out arenas where experiences, impressions and actions etc. are embodied in worldly situations and in connection with the researcher's participation in the activities being pursued there, it is also natural for him or her to take part in the ongoing discussion there. (Bengtsson, 1999, p. 37)

The objects in my study served as to develop strategies to empirically research discretionary power as lived experience and can be described as an interwoven part of the work to transfer lived experience to written research report (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

To conduct research, employing a phenomenological approach, involves the researcher experiencing the phenomena with the aspiration to deepen his or her understanding of the meaning of the lived experience.

> On the one hand it [the understanding of nature of lived experience] means that phenomenological research requires of the researcher that he or she stands in the fullness of life, in the midst of the world of living relations and shared situations. On the other hand it means that the researcher actively explores the category of lived experience in all its modalities and aspects. (van Manen, 1997, p. 32)

I considered myself as the "familiar" (Plummer, 2001, p. 209) as a participant during the making of the objects as well as the empirical study. This implies that I was familiar with the persons involved in the study since I resided in the context of "teacher training". In terms of the research method it gave the study a life-world in the shape of an object, which at the same time afforded an opportunity to create a distance, to make the known unknown, and be able to hold the life-world "in your hand" during the interviews (Houmann, 2010). A phenomenological approach means, amongst other things, to be open to our experiences as researchers (Gadamer, 1960/2004). In connection with the objects a research strategy incorporating flexibility and sensitivity was developed. When it came to concerns about the researcher's reflexivity, I reconsidered my pre-understanding of discretionary power. The

insight that my previous experiences had significance for what I recognised was not in itself sufficient. On a concrete level the problems involved documenting interviews at the same time as I was involved in the context I was researching. It came down to shaping strategies to research the experience at the same time as it was lived. At the same time the documentation and the reflection of the object led to a continuous struggle to direct my attention, time and time again, to the complex character of the phenomenon of discretionary power. In that way my understanding of discretionary power, as a complex phenomenon, deepened in line with my new experience of discretionary power. Assumptions previously taken for granted became, during the creation of the objects, both unclear and contradictory. For example, I was constantly reminded that the phenomenon in the descriptions that I formulated as a foundation for the planned study rather portrayed "my" discretionary power than a complex phenomenon. It contributed to my returning to the initial research questions that gave direction to the study.

In previous research (Bouij, 1998; Bladh, 2002; Lindgren, 2006) music teachers' professional socialisation is seen as the interplay between two opposite identities, the musician and the teacher. The result of my study points in another direction; the identities are interwoven with each other. One explanation for this could be that the created objects work as a "key" in the interviews and simultaneously as interpretations of a complex teacher role. In the object there is interplay between thought, knowledge and action from a holistic view on their future profession where both "identities" exist side by side and are seen as each other's prerequisites rather than oppositions. Hence there is only one identity with various facets and therefore the students created one object, one entity, when they visualized the role of the music teacher, as explained by one informant with reference to the object in Figure 2.

> This is one object. Not two. This is everything in one unity. The music and the teacher and the musician is in the same… They are dependent of each other and influence each other. They are a one sided coin. If you stimulate one you immediately stimulate the other. If I believed it to be a difference I would have created two objects. (S6)



*Figure 4: The object produced by informant S6 (Houmann, 2010)*

One possible result of the study is that the objects portrayed the role of the music teacher as both unique and composed exactly as in the life-world, in the tension between theory and practice, between opportunities and limitations and between the identities of musician and teacher. In this way the expressive objects may be parallel to interviews in research, or any other research tools. That is why the descriptions of the phenomenon of discretionary power in a world that is equally dependent on "the experiencing and acting subject as the subject is dependent on the world" (Bengtsson, 2009, p. 65).

## Methodological principles

*A drawing (or a painting, photograph, and so on) is first and foremost an expression of its medium. (White, 2011, nr 5)*

I have always been interested in (or rather obsessed by) the relationship between form and content, as a researcher, teacher, artist and human being. The quotation just above translated into research terms would be; the method is the research first identity. It is secondarily about what it depicts. Form shapes content. A poorly executed study remains insignificant as a poorly executed image remains insignificant. A well-constructed image of something seemingly insignificant can be masterful. In all great work, the subject and the means by which it is rendered are inseparable. As White (2011) put it "master your technique to protect your content" (p. 15). A phenomenological approach means that the research question determines the researchers approach to the context of the phenomenon. It implies that when the researcher answers the research question the meaning of the studied phenomenon appears and the understanding of phenomenon deepens. The research question shapes the study and it is to the question the researcher returns to check what has been done and to set a new course. During the empirical study the researcher lives the research question and in that way anchors the study in the lived experience.

In the arts as well in research, compositional variation is limitless. Composition is the foundation of object making as well as preparing an empirical study. It is the spatial relationship between all the parts. Whether it is an expressive object or an object of a research study, how something is composed determines its appearance, its feel, and its meaning. Studying discretionary power as lived experience, as I did in my thesis, implies a composition to "study the world in its full concretion as it shows itself for equally concrete existing people" (Bengtsson, 1999, p. 32). Preparations for the empirical study were governed by the question of possibilities to access the life-world of others using lessons from the art; letting the form shape the content. In a first step a flexible and sensitive approach evolved into an issue of "being there", when I considered how to empirically study lived experience using an expressive object. Seeing art as a continuing dialogue that stretches back through the years, research through arts is a contribution to that dialogue. Observation lies at the heart of the art process. Whether the expressive object is derived from mimicking nature or extrapolating a mental construct, the powers of observation are critical. Using the object as method for

conducting research enhanced the opportunity to "be there" and to "study the world in its full concretion".

Which research method is used can be seen as a question, within one's chosen theoretical framework, considering the possibilities of different methods to contribute to a deepened understanding of a phenomenon. Different methods are thereby connected to different theoretical presumptions, which means that no matter which method or work technique is used the basis of choice should be clarified (Silverman, 2006). As in research as in arts, this discussion (not a monologue) is between you and the object/study you're constructing; searching for the inner logic, responding to it, trying not to impose ideas that don't fit the direction the conversation is taking. In this case the object may contain information that arrives without conscious understanding of how it got there. If not alert and observant, you might miss it or work over it. Hence the research questions were used as a guide when doubt occurred at a crossroad of choices. To answer the main research question of the study "What does discretionary power mean to music teachers and music teacher students?" the created object was used as a focal point with the ambition to access what in the "context of discretionary power" could be questioned, to direct attention to the meaning of the phenomenon.

Interview questions were formulated on the basis of the insight that "to be able to ask you must want to know, i e know, that you don't know" (Gadamer, 1960/1997, p. 174). The empirical study was thereby an interview study in the sense that I interviewed music teachers and music teacher students. However what makes the study a phenomenological study is the fact that the research questions both draws attention to and open up for possible new meanings (Gadamer, 1960/2004). It is by living the research question that the researcher orients herself towards the focus of research to be able to get near to the meaning of experience and to thereby answer the question. According to White (2011), quoted, above, art is the means by which a culture describes itself to itself. Translated into a lesson learnt, those descriptions, in turn, form our sense of how we see ourselves in the present and in relation to the past. They embody our ideas and sensibilities. Meaning does not exist in the singular.

A life-world phenomenological approach as a theoretical perspective means that it emanates from people's different life-worlds and thereby allows the complexity of the life-world and the divergence of different qualities to emerge. Every phenomenon is intertwined with its context and its participants. It appears as something to someone. The focus of research, i. e. discretionary power as lived experience always appears from someone's point of view (Houmann, 2010). The phenomenological question is to raise the question about the meaning of the phenomenon and thereby also "to be addressed by the question of what something is "really" like. What is the nature of this lived experience?" (van Manen, 1997, p. 42).

**The collection of data through the expressive objects—unlocking the door to the life-world**

The expressive objects in my study came to function as concrete possibilities to maintain the focus on the points in question and to obtain an oscillation between nearness and distance. Using the object as a focal point the interview method contributed to "exploring or gathering experiential narrative material that may serve as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of human phenomenon" (van Manen, 1997, p. 66) and the expressive objects were used as "a vehicle to develop a conversational relation with a partner (interviewee) about the meaning of an experience" (p. 66). Hence an oscillation between lessons learnt from arts in research and lesson learnt from research in arts.

In the study the interviewees were asked to talk about and to describe the objects. They got to describe the content, form and the possible interplay between different parts. In this part of the interview the interviewees were asked to describe the object as an artist would be asked to speak about his or her work. The work, seen as the starting point, and ending point, of its content, was discussed in six stages; describe completely, and in detail, what you see, and only what you see, in your object; assess the literal or metaphorical content that you see revealed in your description; trace the influences that gave birth to the content you see; avoid interpretations of what you may think or feel but which is not present in the actual object; describe how the object's content is revealed by its form and how its form is dictated by its content; weave a direct, coherent narrative that tells the story uncovered by the above.

A lesson learnt from art in research during the interviews using the expressive objects was that the objects occupy the same space as our bodies do. Their physical presence is different from that of a two-dimensional artefact. Three-dimensional objects challenge and confront us physically. They are not dependent on the spatial illusion present in most two-dimensional work, even abstract works. It seems as if an expressive object never has to justify its reality. It simply is. Physical presence is a form of power (Houmann, 2010). Focusing on the object helped the interviewees to "get back on track". Some examples of questions I asked are "have you yourself experienced what the object visualises?", "can you give me an example of how the object might resolve this situation?", "how would this object go about when developing its discretionary power?".

Another lesson learnt from art in research during the collection of data was that the interviews using the expressive object as a focal point were, like art, a language of signs and symbols. To describe new conditions, new signs must be created or old symbols must be redeployed in ways that give them new meaning. Given that the world is constantly changing and that each new generation describes the world it sees in its own way, the symbolic language of art must always be evolving. Henri Matisse (quoted by Louis Aragon, 1972, p. 57) stated, "The importance of an artist is to be determined by the number of new signs he introduces into the language of art". In that respect the focus of the interviews concerned

knowledge that the interviewees for the most part had not reflected upon but taken for granted. Some of them express this in terms of lacking words or concepts to describe discretionary power but the object helped them along the way. One example of this is informant L7 talking about Figure 3.

> I: Discretionary power could be…It is difficult to explain what discretionary power really is, when you start to think about it. Well you…how should I explain this…You know what it is, but explaining it is another thing…Of course looking at the object I can clearly say that it is thinking inside or outside the box… (L7)



*Figure 5: The object discussed by informant L7*

This quotation shows that both the situation as such and object encouraged the interviewee to reflect about the phenomenon of discretionary power. In a number of cases the interviewees said that during the conversation about the object they had arrived at an insight about what discretionary power means, an insight they did not have before the conversation. I see this as an example of what Merleau-Ponty (1964) describes as a dialectic reflection. In this situation an object also stimulated the dialectic reflection. According to Giorgi (1983) reflection means "to bend back upon or take up again what we have experienced, lived through or acted upon prereflectively" (pp. 142-143).  This may be linked to the idea that art has no boundaries except those imposed by the needs of the maker. A lesson learnt from art in research, from analysing the expressive objects, is that boundaries, in the sense of limitations and possibilities, are a form of definition, nothing more. They are a way to create a hierarchy of concerns, interests and priorities. Boundaries change all the time. That is part of what art does and this could perhaps also be true for research. By defining an area of interest or by stating a new priority, art allows us to create new definitions of ourselves and the context in which we operate. To blur a boundary is to confuse the definition. To move a boundary is to make a new definition.

With the help of the object the interviewees and I engaged in building a "bridge" between our life-worlds. We directed our consciousness towards the other with an interest in the meaning that submerges through the story of the other.

> In the experience of dialogue, there is constituted between the other person and myself a common ground; my thought and his are inter-woven into a single fabric, my words and those of my interlocutor are called forth by the state of the discussion, and they are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is

the creator. We have here a dual being, where the other is for me no longer a mere bit of behaviour in my transcendental field, nor I in his; we are collaborators for each other in consummate reciprocity. Our perspectives merge into each other, and we co-exist through a common world. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/1999, p. 413)

The created object has been described above as a "key to the life-world". During the interview it also had a function as an interview guide. It can be described as a movement between the familiar and the unfamiliar, where the familiar made it possible to formulate questions and the unfamiliar challenged my pre-understanding of the phenomenon at hand.

With the object as a work technique the ambition was to create a foundation, or in Gadamer's (1960/2004) terms, to acquire a horizon, to use the work technique of interview to put myself in the situation of the other. The object became something the interviewees and I could both use as a point of reference and as an example when we wanted to make something explicit or clear, or when we were not sure we understood what the other person meant.

All recollections of experiences, reflections on experiences, descriptions of experiences, taped interviews about experiences, or transcribed conversations about experiences are already transformations of those experiences. Even life captured directly on magnetic or light-sensitive tape is already transformed at the moment it is captured. Without this dramatic elusive element of lived meaning to our reflective attention phenomenology might not be necessary. So, the upshot is what we need to find access to life's living dimensions while realizing that the meaning we bring to the surface from the depths of life's oceans have already lost the natural quiver of their undisturbed existence. (van Manen, 1997, p. 54)

### Methodological implications of working with expressive objects

Working with the objects as a research method comprises a set of activities combining metaphorical modelling and conversations to explore a complex issue. Its technique draws heavily on stories and the use of metaphor through representing one thing in the form of another. According to Schön's view (1971) metaphors are a means of creating radically different ways of understanding things. An illustration of this is when "a music teacher student, trying to make a three dimensional object of the multifaceted music teacher, had a breakthrough when she observed that 'a music teacher is a kind of pump'" (Houmann, 2010, p.45). An aeroplane is therefore not just (or even) a plane; a builder might use it to indicate concepts, values, or embody clichés ("high flier", "the sky's the limit", "I grew wings"). A green plant is not just something for the window ledge, it may signify growth, inspiration, abundance, or it may not be a plant at all, but hair or energy. A red rectangular piece, the archetypical brick of the early Lego packs, is not just a plastic geometric shape; rather it may be heat, passion, a shoe, a person.

Bengtsson (1999) argues that the researcher is always part of the life-world and that fundamental assumptions about the world always have to be made explicit. Using the objects as a method gave me the opportunity to distance myself from my previous experience of the

research phenomenon and in that way open myself up to the different ways the phenomenon appears. "To return to things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always speaks" (Merleau-Ponty 1964, p. 82). Whatever we know, we know from the world that surrounds us. Art studies the world, in all its manifestations, and renders back to us not simply how we see, but how we react to what we see and what we know as a consequence of that seeing. The world is the source of all of our relationships, social and political as well as aesthetic. Throughout the research process I moved, through the object, between different point of views and my interest directed itself towards knowledge as an opportunity to see the situation in which we reside in a light (Houmann, 2010).

> To acquire an awareness of a situation is, however, always a task of peculiar difficulty. The very idea of a situation means that we are not standing outside it and hence are unable to have any objective knowledge of it. […] We always find ourselves within a situation, and throwing light on it is a task that is never entirely finished. (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 30)

In this way the usage of the object developed strategies to empirically research discretionary power as lived experience. The object, and the material gained by using the object, can be understood as a specific perspective on the world. It can be described as a widened perspective in the respect that it is not limited to a personal point of view, at the same time as the perspective takes its focal point in people's subjective experiences in the world and the possibilities that appears are grounded in the life-world.

The empirical material of the study has taken shape between the researcher, the interviewees and the objects in the interviews. The phenomenological contribution to the base of knowledge can be understood as communication between people. The object can be described as a common arena for the analytic process, where "my" point of view of the world changes in interaction with other peoples' interpretations of the "same" world. The intersubjectivity, in that sense, replaces the meaning of the concept objectivity through a new joint meaning about what "new" knowledge can contribute with limits to what can be seen as valid or possible (scientific) knowledge.

The richness of variation in creating the objects highlights the phenomenon of the study, discretionary power, as complex and multi-faceted. The research results directs the attention towards the life-world as a world of "both…and" (Bengtsson, 2005, p. 4). The life-world is described through the objects as harmonic and contradictory, common and unique, thematic and rhapsodic. A methodological contribution can in this way be described as a contribution to more possibilities to see the world in a new light, by using the objects. This means that the results of the study should not be perceived as answers to what the world "is really like", but rather descriptions of how it could be. In that sense the objects function as a method with a point of view in which the world appears as a possible world. The phenomenon, discretionary power, appears as intertwined by body and thought, embodied, situated in the life-world. In

the social world the identity of the embodied subject is constituted "by the worldly experiences of the subject" (Bengtsson, 2009, p. 65).

A circularity between language and experience also surfaced in using the objects. In the interviews the interviewees had the possibility to express their lived experience of the phenomenon with the help of the objects. Experiences of discretionary power were something mainly perceived as taken for granted and knowledge consisted of pre-reflexive knowledge. During the interviews the interviewees had the opportunity to try to understand and verbalize this experience through reflexion. Many of the interviewees said' that they had learnt quite a lot about the phenomenon during the creation of the objects and it was the interviewees themselves that verbalized the meaning of the phenomenon without me contributing any statements. This can be understood in relation to Merleau-Pontys philosophy of language (1964), where a central aspect is the relation between the signified (experience) and the significant (to create an object). By expressing the experiences of the phenomenon as verbalized through art, the experiences are cognitively confirmed and the learning at hand can be used constructively later in life. This also correlates with Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the concept of segmentation; through experience people collect embodied structures of meaning, which are used in other situations to create meaning to new experiences. Segmentation can constantly be changed through new experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). In a life-world perspective language can also have a crucial role, but is seen as a means of describing a phenomenon. The focus is on the phenomenon not on language.

### The end of the story?

As a researcher and teacher educator, I found that the method described in this chapter may have an important place in researching music education, because music teachers are, at their core, makers and storytellers. One has a different understanding of a piece of music or an object, how it does what it does, if one knows the details and processes of its creation intimately. This is one reason imitation has always been a part of music training. Music teachers assimilate a whole range of psychological, aesthetic, political, and emotional data points, and they then make music or music lessons to organize and give meaning to them. This takes skill and practice, working in tandem with intelligence and keen observation. But without the tools to research lived experience, it is like trying to capture air with a net – and often about as effective. Basic form-giving skills help the interviewees bridge the gap between cognitive beliefs and implicit beliefs and embodiment. The objects serve as demonstrations of what the words are largely about: how we learn through observing and attempting to capture ideas. The issues we encounter as researchers of art are life lessons and should always stay with us. Without them, we are not researchers of life. And so the story continues.

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# Dance/Teaching/Research: The practice of living

SUSAN STINSON

Transitions usually offer a time for reflection, and my own life is a case in point. In 2012, I stopped teaching after more than three decades at my university, becoming an interim dean and then retiring a year later. I had planned the date of my retirement for some years, but when it arrived, I had only a general sense of how to respond to colleagues who asked, "Now what?" I knew that I wanted to make the next chapter of my life something different, rather than continuing to do the same work on a less intense basis: Some underdeveloped parts of myself were calling me. I was ready to make a change, and yet the person who arrived at this point in time had been significantly shaped by the activities of the majority of my years, especially in the academic triad of teaching/research/service, and the specific discipline of dance. How do we create what we will become out of what we have been?

I hoped my own transition to retirement would be made easier by the fact that different facets of my professional work have always felt like parts of the same whole. My research most often grew out of challenges encountered in teaching, so that being a teacher and being a scholar were extensions of each other. Often I began a study because I found insufficient research by others on a topic I was teaching. While I engaged in reflexive and action research in which I explicitly examined my own teaching (e.g. Stinson, 2001, 2005; Dils and Stinson, 2009), issues I encountered in the classroom whisper, at least, in most of my work. Beginning early in my career and continuing throughout, I wrote about my moral struggle in creating curriculum and pedagogy that were consistent with my values—values I continued to question, especially when I found I was making decisions which contradicted them. In recent years, with the increasing emphasis on outcomes-based assessment in teacher education, I reflected deeply on ethical issues in assessment (Stinson, 2009, 2013, 2015).

Further, my approach to questions I pursued in research and teaching usually had a great deal to do with my life outside of the academy. Having been inspired by Madeline Grumet's

work (1988) while a young scholar and mother, I found stories from my life with children informing my scholarship, and the insights I gained in my work enhanced my parenting and grandparenting. For example, reflecting on my children's intrinsic motivation to master physically challenging skills ( Stinson, 2002) made me rethink my own neglect of such skills in dance education in favor of creativity and "self-expression." My growing interest in *challenge* bloomed in a larger study examining young people's experiences of effort and achievement in dance (Bond and Stinson, 2007). I hear the voices of kids in that study now when I encourage my grandson to "keep going even when it's hard," wanting him to experience the satisfaction of mastery.

But as I contemplated my transition, I was less certain about my own desire to "keep going" with the professional issues I had been dealing with for so many years. Just before I retired, I reluctantly accepted an invitation to guest lecture on dance research for a few days at an institution beginning a new graduate program.[27] I feared inauthenticity if not incompetence, wondering how I could legitimately teach about research when I had initiated no new research in over a year. And because my research agenda was so connected to my teaching, I could not imagine continuing the former without the latter. But as I prepared for these lectures, I realized that my understanding of research, so deeply informed by my understanding of dance and teaching, was still alive, continuing to guide my thoughts about how to live a meaningful life, whether retired or not. Being an artist/educator/researcher has given me a way of being a person-in-the-world which I take with me, because it has become so much of who I am. The significant life roles in my past have not so much been abandoned but rather transformed into the person I am becoming in the next phase of my life. In this chapter, I will share reflections on how my life in dance became part of my teaching, how both became incorporated into my understanding of research, and how all are related to the larger project of living.

## Lessons from dance

When people ask me if I "still dance," I tell them that I stopped performing and making dances many years ago.  But as a former dancer—or perhaps a forever dancer—I found that I could have similar experiences outside the dance studio, in teaching, research, and more. Here are some of the lessons from dance that I took with me into other parts of my life:

### Dance as a state of consciousness

I came to this understanding through teaching dance to children, and asking myself what the difference was between dancing and just moving around. Since I called myself a *dance* teacher and not a *movement* teacher, I wondered how I could facilitate more of the former, i.e., more dancing than just moving. Eventually I came to understand dancing as being more of a state of consciousness than an activity. The state is one of being fully present in the

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moment, paying attention to what the movement feels like on the inside (something we now call somatic awareness) as well as what it looks like on the outside. In my teaching of children, I was quite explicit about the difference between just moving and dancing, and I found that even 3-5 year olds could make the distinction (Stinson, 1988, 2002).

In this state of consciousness I call dancing, I am more attuned not only to who I am, but to others and the world beyond. For example, I notice curves and angles around me while feeling them inside myself, perceiving the world through my whole body, not just my eyes. Similarly, basic movements of advancing and retreating, rising and sinking, tensing and relaxing, bending/straightening/stretching, closing and opening, balancing and falling – all are basic organizing principles in the physical world, which I can see around me if only I notice. Paying attention to my internal state while experiencing these principles as a mover, offers me further understanding of how they are working in other aspects of my life. For example, exploring the need to go off balance and then fall in order to move beyond where I am physically, helps give me courage to experience the risk of doing so in other ways. I know in my body that taking a single step requires going off balance: We can't go anywhere unless we are willing to fall. Through reflection on these experiences, I came to know my body as a laboratory for learning not just about myself but also about the world, and about connecting inner and outer.

But I learned far more in the art I lived in for so long. Through dancing, I experienced the joy of feeling fully alive—"wide awake," in the words of Maxine Greene (1978— reminding me that such states are possible and worth cultivating, and not just while dancing. One can easily go through life on automatic, as though anaesthetized to joy as well as other feelings, and the aesthetic experience can be a powerful wake-up to consciousness.

I do not wish to imply that all of my dancing was joyful, for there were also times of struggle and even despair, as in other parts of life. It required courage to make myself vulnerable and publicly visible as a dancer. I admit I loved the hard physical work of dancing, and took pleasure in achieving greater strength and flexibility through discipline and commitment, even when I did not achieve the unrealistic goal of "perfection." Because of my strong work ethic, a harder lesson for me to learn was to stop pushing long enough to *allow* change to happen in my body, trusting that my inner body sensibility would work things out even when I did not consciously understand and could not make them happen through force of will and training.

Through dance I also learned to value the sense of security achieved in following directions from an authority as well as the freedom of "making it up as you go along," and that greater creativity can result when improvising within boundaries or a structure of some sort. I appreciated the community I experienced in dancing with others, as well as the times of

solitude. I learned from good teachers, mentors, and colleagues, and also the inner teacher I had to cultivate within myself.

## Dance as creating

Going beyond dancing to choreography, there were additional lessons that I took into my life as an educator and researcher. The process for creating a dance is quite similar to that used in other human creations, such as lesson plans or a research project. As a choreographer, I often went into an empty studio with some ideas, but without a clear sense of either form or content. (If either *is* initially clear, it often changes before the work is complete.) One pays attention to the movement created or generated by dancers, and makes decisions about what does and does not fit. This is a time of trying out, false starts, unfinished phrases. One looks for relationships, decides what is important, and eventually both form and content, and ultimately meaning, become clear. There is a good bit of messiness along the way, all trial and error. One hopes for patient dancers and for a muse that will speak as quickly and as clearly as possible. But it was indeed an act of faith to go into the studio, trusting that a dance would result from my labors.

As in dancing, a choreographer must pay attention throughout, so there is a heightened state of awareness during the process of creating original work. If work is to impact others, the awareness is a connection between inner and outer: A good choreographer avoids falling too much in love with a creation and knows when to use the external eye of a critic. There are times of joy, but also struggle and despair; I recall moments when I questioned whether I was creating anything of value. There is a need for disciplined commitment and hard work (having dancers scheduled to show up at a definite time for rehearsal is a powerful motivator for doing one's homework), as well as setting the work aside so that the subconscious can resolve the "stuck" places.

## Dance as interpretation

In more recent years of my dance education career, with changes in the state-mandated curriculum for public school dance, I started to pay more attention to the practice of critically and reflectively w*atching dance* as a member of an audience. An engaged observer invests a certain kind of attention. Some works are highly visceral and grab my attention, but with others, I have to choose to engage, to look for the treasures I might find, even with no guarantee that they will be there. In some dances, meaning is readily apparent, but with others I have to make a conscious decision to raise my own questions in seeking to make sense of what is before me. Sometimes I have to accept my lack of understanding. Listening to meanings found by others in the same work, and questions they asked in order to find them, adds to my own efforts. The practice of watching dance performance especially attunes me to the need for rhythm: There are times for being in the present moment, feeling myself *in* the dance as I watch it, and times for reflecting. Like dancing and dance-making, it is a way to

understand ourselves, others, and the world we share—which is also a good way to describe research.

## Lessons from teaching

Building on what I knew from my dance experiences, becoming a teacher expanded who I was in ways that impacted my research and my life as a whole. I was still dancing in the traditional sense when I began teaching, but found, upon the arrival of a second child and a university tenure track position, that I could not do everything. I "stopped dancing," but really didn't. Instead, I created a life as an educator that was still about a heighted consciousness, being as fully present in my body/mind as I was when performing. Before class, I put many hours into preparation, trying to create a time together that I hoped would satisfy my aesthetic sensibility (see Grumet, 1989) as well as help students learn. I found that the discipline and hard work of preparation allowed for spontaneity in the moment: I could put aside my lesson plan because I had done so much thinking and imagining ahead of time. As in improvised dancing, structure and boundaries gave me the security to improvise.

This, however, was a level of understanding I grew into. Initially I felt like I was playing dress-up as a teacher, certain that I didn't know enough myself to teach others. Indeed, I became better at a variety of dance skills in the process of figuring out how to teach them. By the time I reached my mid-30s, I began to feel more legitimate in teaching children, but still felt like a fraud teaching university students about teaching. Gradually I came to understand that my identity as a university dance educator was not about being an expert with all the answers, but being a fellow traveller with my students: perhaps one who has been there before, but seeing with new eyes and thus seeing new things. Such seeing, of course, is critical for a researcher.

Even as this definition of my professorial role gave me more confidence, I continued questioning myself about everything I taught, recognizing all I did not know and would never know. This kind of reflection became the core of my life as a curriculum theorist and researcher. At some point, I became more accepting of not-knowing, and rather liked it. In fact, I started defining good teaching as being more about having questions than having answers. Being certain I was right, like being perfectly in balance, would mean staying stuck in the same place (and never needing to do more thinking or research).

Teaching also opened in me greater respect for differences, for appreciating skills and knowledge my students had that I didn't. Once I no longer needed to feel like the ultimate expert, I could learn from them, a critical awareness for the relationships I would have with research participants. Akin to what I was discovering as a parent about the same time, teaching became not about reproducing myself but rather helping students become who they chose to be. I regret that my ego sometimes got in the way, dressed up as the caring savior: When seeing my students struggling with problems for which I had already found a good

answer, there were times I too readily shortchanged their opportunities to make their own discoveries.

## Teaching as moral praxis

Even beyond specific pedagogical skills and techniques such as team-based and problem-based learning, I attempted to be the kind of educator I hoped my own children would have in college, and the kind of person I wanted to live with. My previous experience teaching in a Quaker school had helped me value cultivating the inner teacher within every student. During my doctoral work, I drew inspiration from Martin Buber (1955, 1958), and became conscious of the difference between treating students as subjects and as objects, a consciousness that extends to research participants as well. (See Bresler, 2006, for an especially thoughtful application of these ideas to research.) This led to even more intense questioning as to whether or not I was teaching—and thus living—in accordance with my values. While I often came up short, I valued the humility which resulted from this consciousness; such humility was a constant companion in my teaching and research.

I came to know the concept of Praxis through the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1983), as *reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.* I saw my teaching of prospective educators as a way to transform the world of dance education, especially by bringing to light moral issues embedded in how we teach, as well as how young people experienced dance. While I frequently taught and wrote about social justice issues in dance education (e.g., Stinson, 1985; Risner and Stinson, 2010), however, I often wondered to what degree I was avoiding dealing with larger issues of social justice, hiding out in my own safe world of dance education.

## Research as the practice of dance, teaching, and living

My research life started when I began my university tenure track position. As a mother of young children and committed teacher/mentor, I had to find ways to make research integrated into my life as a whole person. Research for me was always another way to practice all the lessons I have described thus far.

## Research as a state of conscious awareness

For me, being a researcher, like being a dancer, has to do with how we perceive the world. Choreographers find ideas for dances everywhere, and the same carried over to my research. Unlike many researchers, I never had to shape my agenda around what grant money was available so had the luxury of selecting my own questions, based on what seemed important. I found potential research questions everywhere, appearing in such disparate circumstances as when teaching a class, talking on the phone with an adult child, or getting lost. Here are some examples:

*How should I respond to this intriguing question asked by a student during class, one I have never thought about before? Do I feel the need to be an authority, or can I be a fellow seeker? How does my answer relate to my pedagogical values?*

*How can I as a parent get better at keeping my mouth shut when I just need to listen to this young man—now an adult, but still my child? How does this skill relate to teaching? To art-making?*

*How am I responding to getting lost? Is it a cause for anxiety, or excitement at the possibility for adventure and discovery? What does my response tell me about being an educator, an artist, a person? How do others respond to getting lost?*

Any of these would make intriguing research questions for arts educators. And any of them could be missed if we do not stay open to finding them while doing other things.

But selecting a research topic cannot be just about satisfying my own curiosity; I tried to remain conscious of the moral implications of my work. The easy part of this is following ethical guidelines for dealing with research participants. I found unexpected challenges, however, in research involving interviews with young people. It was a dilemma when some revealed stories and interpretations that shed negative light on their teachers, the very ones who had been so helpful in arranging the interviews.

A research focus prompting these interviews began with what felt like an ethical position, a mission to bring the then-absent voices of young people into the dance education research literature through listening to and then respectfully analyzing the stories of their experiences in dance. But the work of some critical social researchers, such as Jean McNiff (2013), makes me question myself. McNiff writes that any kind of research in which one person attempts to speak on behalf of another is unethical. She grounds this position in a value for human rights, including those of people who have a long history of having things done to them by those who think they know better, whether the "experts" are military invaders, so-called "benevolent" dictators, physicians who make patronizing decisions for their patients – or well-meaning educators. While recognizing the complexity of this issue and the value of listening to and sharing the voices of others, I wish now that I had not just collected stories from young people, but also given them an opportunity to participate in interpretive stages of the research. Fortunately, research consciousness continues to evolve, both on an individual level and in the field as a whole.

## Research as disciplined practice: Making time for what matters

So maintaining consciousness, of possibilities and also of ethical issues, is the ground from which a life in research springs. At the same time, incorporating such consciousness into everyday life doesn't mean that there is no need for disciplined, committed work. I have always been impressed by stories of professional novelists who go daily to a special writing

place, engage in their chosen rituals and sit down to write as an act of faith, even if the words that come out are drivel on any particular day and end up in the trash. Similarly, yoga practitioners take their mats and water bottles to their places of practice even when tired, and choreographers schedule rehearsals even when not feeling inspired. When actively engaged in a particular project, I think this discipline is necessary for researchers, too. Work doesn't get done for most of us unless it gets scheduled into our calendars as an activity that matters, not as something to do in an hour here or there when nothing else is going on.

I might be able to *find* a research question while folding the laundry (e.g., "when is order important and when does it get in the way?") but I can't make decisions about how to pursue it without the discipline of sitting down to write. If my research question takes me out into the field to observe or interview others, I of course will have a pre-determined schedule of dedicated time. But all too many research projects get aborted after collecting data (the fun part that involves observations, interviews, or other meaningful interactions with others). After that, unless working collaboratively, it can get really lonely, and *hard*.

## The rhythm of research

When doing the difficult work—wading through dense literature, or puzzling through mounds of data searching for what is meaningful and what patterns may lie hidden—the disciplined commitment to practice can get us through. So can getting up and taking a break (that's really what folding the laundry can be good for!), as long as we are committed to returning.

So there is a rhythm to research just as there is to choreography and teaching, because we do the work on more than a conscious level. Once we are really engaged, the work does not end just because it is now noon, the end of one's dedicated time, with a meeting to attend. Life as a researcher is not lived within carefully kept boundaries. One morning, I may have reviewed literature on my topic for three hours and thought I found nothing of significance, but when walking to the afternoon meeting about something totally different, I got a flash about how both the literature and the walking were related to my research. As I read a bedtime story to my grandchild that night, an insight about the main character somehow seemed connected. In other words, once a research project is begun, *everything* seems related. And of course, rhythm is about relationships.

Through this rhythm—flowing between the hard work, the "pushing on" during dedicated time and the open "allowing" outside the boundaries—we find breakthroughs. This is especially true when it has to do with the interpretive part of research. What does this data mean? Is there anything of significance? What *is* going on here? When writing, I often have an intuitive sense that it is going to come together before I can say how, but have to return to the computer and the work of writing before it can take shape. This doesn't happen just once, at least for me. I experience being stuck multiple times, but with commitment to the process, the breakthroughs come. And of course, I have to stay alert to avoid being seduced by

thinking I have "the answer," listening carefully to my inner critic (while making sure she does not paralyze my thinking).

## Body knowing

In my own research, my lived body has been a powerful source for understanding my data and discovering theoretical frameworks. I have written previously (Stinson 1995, 2006) about how I found the theoretical framework for my dissertation through my body:

> I was struggling with a very abstract topic: the relationship between the ethical and the aesthetic dimensions of human existence as they related to dance education. All of my attempts to figure out my theoretical framework felt disconnected from the concerns that had initially propelled me into the study. At the suggestion of my advisor, I began to write a series of pieces describing moments that seemed important in my life, regardless of whether I knew why they were important. These stories were full of sensory language, because it was in my senses that my memories were stored. Some were stories of dancing, while others came from other parts of my life as a child, a mother, a student, a teacher, a friend. As I tuned in to these experiences, my awareness of everyday life was heightened. One day, still searching for my elusive framework—the form that would reveal the content—I went for one of those long walks that were a necessary part of my thinking process. When I returned, I lay down to rest and instantly became conscious of how differently I perceived myself and the world when I was standing compared to when I was lying down. Within moments I knew my framework, which was based upon a metaphor of verticality (the impulse toward achievement and mastery—being *on top*) and horizontality (the impulse toward relationship and community—being *with*). I noticed how lying horizontal felt passive and vulnerable, while the return to vertical made me feel strong and powerful; these feelings offered important insights as to why we value achievement so much more than community.  Once I had identified this dual reality in my own body, I found it in the work of others: in Fromm (1941), who spoke of freedom and security; Bakan (1966), agency and communion; and Koestler (1978), self-assertion and integration. While I had read each of these authors previously, I had to find my framework in my own body before I could recognize its connection to the issues with which I was grappling. (Stinson, 2006, pp. 206-207)

Any kind of activity—especially ones that involve movement—can be equally generative. Because, at some level, everything in life is, I think, deeply connected; it's just that we are usually unaware of the relationships.

## Cultivating companions

I have already mentioned the community nature of much of my experience of dance. We usually think about research as a solo endeavor, and indeed there are times when I experience it as a lonely, individual activity. But collaborative research is increasingly becoming the norm, and most of my best experiences in research have been collaborative.   And although I have not experienced the kind of research team described by Wasser and Bresler (1996), I

share with them the recognition that all research is, in some way collaborative. Our cited sources, and all others whose ideas and images we have absorbed into our own consciousness, allow us to create what feels like new work.

Even when I was a solo author, the participants in my research felt like companions, as I listened to their voices over and over, seeking to understand what they were telling me. I have had other valued traveling companions in projects primarily conceived of as solos. They are ones who gave me not just critique, but also courage. For new researchers, a mentor or teacher is essential, but eventually, one becomes one's own teacher and most rigorous critic. However, someone outside our own minds, someone we trust to be honest, can help keep us out of the minefields of self-indulgence, faulty logic, and overly-dense expression. I have always cherished being able to share a work in progress with a colleague, with a request to be critical enough to save me from embarrassing myself. I learned that I needed to cultivate such treasures by being willing to do the same for them, and not to abuse them by asking too much or too frequently. I was fortunate that some of them became collaborators on later projects, where we negotiated the new challenges of writing as a duet.

### Research as the practice of persistence and courage

For me, starting to write a scholarly paper is just as much an act of faith as is creating a dance, and the process is just as messy. Initial drafts are a kind of written improvisation, a time of trying out with many false starts and unfinished sentences. I experience the frustrations of trying to get ideas down before they disappear, of trying to figure out how the puzzle goes together even before I know what picture the puzzle makes. It is important not to fall too much in love with my own words or those of my respondents, because large amounts of this material may get thrown away, or at least thrown away from this project when it turns out to be heading in a different direction than originally expected. There are times when I wonder if it ever will become something worth keeping. This is the inner part of writing, the part a reader never sees.

Preparing a research report or presentation involves a different kind of courage and much more discipline. In teaching, one needs to think not only about oneself, but also about the impact one hopes to make on others. Similarly, in research as well as choreography, good practitioners look critically at the outcome of their work and shape it so it will mean something to others, not just themselves. This is called *editing*, but it's really about the relationship between the inner and outer, between self and others. We can think about this time as preparing the work, like a growing child, to go out into the world without us there to explain or defend. I also think of writing as a kind of performance, so read my work aloud over and over again, thinking about rhythm as well as content and grammar and transitions. Perhaps because I began as a dance artist and educator, I have always wanted my work to *move* those who read it.

### And then?

Just as when a novel reaches its conclusion, or a choreographic work comes to an end, we can have a satisfying sense of completion upon finishing a particular research project. But of course, reaching completion is only a temporary part of the practice of research.

In any one project, I have always generated more questions than I could answer, and often told my students that this was one hallmark of a good piece of research. In other words, it keeps going, this rhythm—of staying open to possibilities, tolerating the discomfort of having unanswered questions—in fact, loving the questions, loving the journey, not just reaching a destination. This kind of uncertainty has become part of how I experience being fully alive, along with all of the other lessons I have learned in my professional career: Paying attention. Reflecting on my own lived experiences and finding meaning. Making time for what matters, but allowing space for the unexpected. Listening and attending to relationships (internal ones and those with others). Practicing courage and humility. Trying to make a difference. At this point, being a researcher is not just something we do, but who we are, even if we have retired.

Indeed, those ways of being I developed as a dancer/choreographer, educator, and researcher seem just what is called for in creating the next chapter of my life. As in beginning any creative work, including research, I am experiencing the uncertainty of not knowing what it will look like and how it will end. But I am comforted by the knowledge that I have, in a sense, travelled here before.

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# Ida Waters turns off the lights: The inside and outside of knowledge

BETSY HEARNE

*What we achieve inwardly will change outer reality*. Plutarch

As soon as the teacher left, the third-grade classroom erupted into 25 brush fires, with me as the lone fire fighter. This class was notoriously filled with the most difficult 8-year-olds in the school. I raised my voice over the chaos, but the louder I got, the louder they got. My presentation on new children's books was lost in the din. Verbal eruptions were turning physical, and I had no idea what to do. John Dewey, who once theorized in this very same hallowed University of Chicago Laboratory School, deserted me. Then suddenly the lights went out. An instant of silence and darkness descended, and in that instant the returning teacher, Ida Waters, said in a low voice, "Go to your seats quietly please." Calmed physically by the extinction of fluorescent lights, mentally by the familiar guidance of a trusted teacher, and emotionally by the reinstatement of safe limits, the children listened while Ida suggested that it was time to practice receiving a guest into their classroom.

I was not exactly a guest, since I had just started as school librarian and had worked with children before, but this moment began a post-Masters, pre-doctoral apprenticeship. "How do you manage kids like that?" I asked Ida after they had exploded onto the playground. By "kids like that," I clearly meant "these kids are a mess."

"When you ask them to do something, you have to know in yourself that they will do it," she said.

This struck me as both mystical and unattainable, but even though I didn't quite believe her, I believed *in* her. Learning did have mystical and even miraculous aspects. More immediately Ida's dictum had a practical application for something I asked of all these elementary school children: to listen. Every child in the Lab School, kindergarten through

sixth grade, came to library storytelling sessions once a week, and I told stories almost daily to different age groups. In the decades since then, I've taught storytelling and children's literature to university students and have spent untold hours researching folklore, fairy tales, and the oral tradition. My courses expanded to include a spectrum of storytelling from young to old, and I've written books for children, young adults, and adults. In the process, I have come to understand that Ida was not just talking about compelling her class to obey or even about developing self-confidence, but about a deeper process. "When you ask them to do something, you have to *know in yourself* that they will do it." "Know in yourself" involves knowing yourself, self-knowledge—a synergy of experience, wisdom, and creativity that she not only represented but also cultivated in her students.

Ironically, I already knew what she told me but wasn't aware of knowing it. The previous year I had gotten a job in a mid-Western library telling stories—by telling the director that I could tell stories, which was a whopping story (or what my grandmother would have called a lie). The first storytime in early September had an audience of three, two of whom were siblings. By Halloween, the director had to open up the Carnegie library attic to accommodate dozens of children. Unfortunately it was not heated, so they all kept their coats on. I started telling a Brer Rabbit story and soon all the children were mirroring my motions: the switch of Brer Fox's tail, the snarl on his lips. One little boy edged closer and closer. "Wow, this is power," I thought. Then he threw up all over my shoes. Was it power or the flu? Who knew? But I put my sweater over my shoes to cover up the mess, signaled one of the other librarians to lead him away, and closed the story quickly, switching to a rhythmic song accompanied by a clay drum. This strategy re-focused the children's attention. It was the same kind of contrast and element of surprise that worked for Ida Waters when she walked into the classroom and turned off the lights. Surprise is a crucial element in both stories and storytelling, not to mention research—such a small and important thing to know.

My self-knowledge evolved through stories. I came to believe in them—not necessarily *believe* stories, of course, but believe *in* stories. What is a story? What is the relationship of stories to self-knowledge, and what does any of this have to do with what the arts teach us about research methodology? I'd like to probe these questions narratively—that is to say, eventually—through a combination of stories and reflection on a lifetime of work.[28] As Emily Dickinson famously wrote, "Tell all the truth but tell it slant / Success in circuit lies / Too bright for our infirm delight / The truth's superb surprise." We are often surprised by our lives and then left to figure them out in time. An effective story rarely explains its meaning directly but rather allows readers to construct meanings in reflection of their own experience. And reflection, I suggest, represents a balance of outer and inner knowledge.

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[28] My hope is that this retrospective will offer readers an opportunity to reflect on the narrative arc of their own work.

## Outer and inner knowledge

Some time ago I participated in a panel of four authors talking about our fiction-writing process. During the Q&A, a listener in the audience asked what kind of research went into our stories. The other three panelists took this to mean the search for background information. I spoke last, by which time it occurred to me that although I did look up facts and spend a great deal of time delving, much of my research process was inner. I spend a lot of time staring out the window, a space that often allows transmission between the subconscious and the world that feeds it. Self-knowledge doesn't mean that you don't acquire as much knowledge as possible outside of yourself, but that "inside" and "outside" knowledge permeate and transform each other.

I've experienced this same process in research as well as in the creative arts of writing and storytelling. Creativity involves associative connections: in research, between documented facts; and in writing, between imagined facts. The incident I have described in Ida Waters' class happened in "outside" reality. A short story I eventually based on it, "Light" (Hearne, 2007), has differently imagined characters, setting, tone, and plot based on "inside" exploration. And the meaning I derived from both the factual and imagined incidents is "inner" or interpretive. How can this apply to research? We don't make up facts, but we collect, select, connect, and interpret them. For example, in the case of research that I did on unsung women who pioneered children's literature, storytelling, and libraries for youth during the 20th century (Hearne, 1996), the facts acquired deep context from personal stories my mother told about breaking professional boundaries for women in the same period. This research also gained from my personal experience working in public and school libraries that were run by women committed to the value of children's literacy.

Further, my involvement in the 1960s-70s women's movement contributed to shaping my research interests. In researching folklore I was again drawn, as we shall see, to strong women who overcame adversity. This extended to the under-appreciation of women in the field of early folklore (Hearne, 2000). For instance, Andrew Lang, famous for a series of 12 folktale collections for children (1889-1910), actually relied on his wife to translate and retell the stories. While *The blue fairy book* and its successors circled the English-speaking world, "Mrs. Andrew Lang" (Leonore Blanche Alleyne) was buried in obscurity. In another example, few people know about the women from whom the Brothers Grimm collected their stories, nor would most recognize the French writer who published the version of "Beauty and the beast" (Madame Jeanne-Marie Le Prince de Beaumont, 1756) that remained in circulation for the next three centuries and made Disney a fortune. Thus I was drawn to researching my gendered heritage as well as my cultural roots.

The results of collecting, selecting, connecting, and interpreting data partially depend, for better or worse, on understanding our roots, on self-knowledge. Although the inside-outside interaction has sometimes been denied in research processes where objectivity is considered a

gold standard, current social science and science increasingly recognize subjectivity as both inevitable and enriching. Historians not only include multiple-perspective primary sources in their classes, but also honor oral history in the form of personal stories as complementary to official records. Anthropologists expect researchers to acknowledge their own cultural orientation in studies of other cultures. Medicine has recently begun to emphasize the importance of doctors listening to patients' stories for better diagnoses. (Men's symptoms for heart attacks told the wrong story about women's symptoms before the latter were finally included in studies.) Of course, I do understand that scientific and qualitative research differs in some basic respects. Nothing in this essay is meant to imply that hard facts are unnecessary to research or that unfounded beliefs don't misguide us. I am seeking, rather, to consider how self-knowledge contributes to research, what the first-person subjective can teach the third-person objective.

On several occasions, editors or publishers have asked me to replace the active voice with the passive; in other words, get rid of "I." Yet an omniscient phrase like "It was observed" or "the researcher observed" is in no way superior to the more clearly identified "I/we observed." In addition to strained language, the effect is to eliminate *self* from the work, implying an omnipotent *other*.[29] This is (I believe!) partly because academics are suspicious of the personal, the emotional, the inner aspects of knowledge in relation to the impersonal, the material, the outer aspects of knowledge. Theoretically, a neutral stance combats "confirmation bias." Yet the inside and outside of knowledge are omnipresent and are *both* valuable when recognized as interactive elements based on the researcher's combination of evidence (factual, statistical, textual, documentary) and insight (selection, perception, interpretation, conclusion).

In fact, the passive voice often favored in academic writing—even in qualitative research—camouflages an active mindset, a viewpoint. All research tells a story. This assumes a definition of stories as a broad spectrum, including scientific, social, and artistic, as well as literary. The question is, what kind of story, whose story, how has it been told? Who and what have been emphasized or left out? How do we recognize and honor both the subjective and objective elements that affect (and effect) research decisions? Human experience involves connections between inner and outer knowledge, as well as between mind, body, and emotion. Stories reflect those connections, and it is the humanities, including literature and the arts, that have most consistently valued narrative and other subjective methods of research. Nevertheless, the self in self-knowledge can be suspect especially in relation to female researchers who—given conventional views that women are over-emotional—often bend over backwards to separate the personal from the professional. Since

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[29] I use *self* not in the sense of Freud's ego or egocentric personality, but rather *self* as a being shaped by knowledge and experience. With deepening awareness, one can go beyond self to become a conduit between the inner and the outer.

human beings invariably experience emotions, it seems strange that so many traditional methodologies have claimed exemption or at least distance from emotional involvement on the part of researchers.[30]

When we view research as a story we tell, which it inevitably is (whether qualitative or quantitative), we can see that it is inseparable from our own life story. The stories we construct about others reflect the stories we construct about ourselves. However, despite the fact that a researcher's personal life and research are interactive stories, many factors function to separate them, including intellectual trends and academic politics. Assessing the mutual influence of personal experience and research knowledge requires determined effort as well as insight. Moreover, it is important to put research into a broader context as it waxes and wanes in our lives, both physically and emotionally—at times offering richly integrated fulfillment, at times diminishing with limitations of time, place, health, family, financial, and technological support. This perspective offers a framework in which we can view research as an organic life process.

## Knowledge and self-knowledge

My research on stories reflects, to some extent, Joseph Campbell's circular model of the mythical journey, though I'm aware that many myths depart from that model and my own adaptation involves a lifelong rather than youth-oriented adventure. The first half of the journey was outward bound, intent on learning as much as I could about new intellectual worlds, and passing tests of courage and endurance. The second half has become increasingly inward bound, sifting a large collection of hard-earned knowledge to return home with a much smaller handful of wisdom. Of course, the circle is an oversimplified graphic. In truth we move back and forth in time throughout the stages of a journey, however sequential they may seem. As adults, for instance, we carry with us who we were as children; whether we re-run or run from our childhoods, they affect what we do.

As a child born in the pine woods of central Alabama in 1942, I heard about war heroes from my father, but I observed that my mother was a different kind of hero, facing great odds. It's not surprising that my favourite story was "East of the sun and west of the moon," a Scandinavian folktale in which the heroine saves her birth family, her true love, and herself by accepting the proposal of a magical bear, traveling with the winds of the world, and overcoming a pack of wicked trolls. (She's helped by 3 old women, who will crop up here in later comments.) I had no doubt that my mother would save our family, which she did, and that I should prepare for the same kind of job when I grew up. The story and its exquisite illustrations were my script, which imprinted themselves on my memory and then got buried in the past. Presumably. Not till after I had written my dissertation and two books on "Beauty

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[30] Liora Bresler (2013) considers issues of distance in her nuanced essay "The spectrum of distance: Empathic understanding and the pedagogical power of the arts."

and the beast" (Hearne, 1989, 1993) did I realize the story's grip on my subconscious. "Beauty and the beast" is a variant of "East of the sun and west of the moon," with an underlying pattern of a heroine who saves her birth family, her true love, and herself by venturing to the magic castle of a beast.

It was no accident that I had been drawn to "Beauty and the beast" as my chosen research focus 30 years later. But surely this was a personal aberration, I thought. Then, as I crossed interdisciplinary lines to incorporate child psychology and cultural studies into my literary and folkloric orientation, I began to discover how deep the roots of childhood stories reach. Also, many of the adults with whom I spoke—parents, teachers, academic colleagues—had favorite stories that had affected them strongly. In a book that I co-edited with Roberta Seelinger Trites (2009), *A narrative compass: Stories that guide women's lives*, nineteen scholars of varied ages and ethnic backgrounds wrote about the stories that have shaped their work. They welcomed this rare opportunity to weave personal and scholarly threads into a whole pattern. Included in their choices is a range of folk and fairy tales, children's classics, and family narrative that affected their work.

For instance, Native American poet and professor Ofelia Zepeda tells of the ritual chants she remembered her family singing as they worked in cotton fields; she became the first in her family to complete high school and go to college, the second in her tribe to get a doctoral degree, with a dissertation that focused on standardizing writing symbols for her language of Tohono O'odham so that these beautiful chants could be preserved. An African American professor of English and Education, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, tells of falling in love with *Anne of Green Gables* via the Disney Channel version, in the troubled Detroit of 1990. A Mexican doctoral student, Claudia Quintero Ulloa, compares her family's generations of melodrama to the Cinderella themes in today's *telenovela*. Minjie Chen, a librarian at Princeton's famous Cotson collection of children's literature, recounts the destruction of her grandfather's first family by Japanese who dropped bombs releasing bubonic plague on a Chinese mountain village—an event that triggered her research into how and why such atrocities were covered up by both governments. Professor Maria Tatar, also at Princeton, tracks her involvement with fairy tales from an early age; Professor Roberta Seelinger Trites traces her academic career back to *Little women*; and Professor Christine Jenkins reflects on connections between *The secret garden* and her studies of gay and lesbian youth literature and intellectual freedom. A professor of health policy and management, Cindy Christiansen, describes how her career in solving research mysteries was launched by Nancy Drew! Each of these essays verifies the enrichment that "outside" research can derive from "inside" research.

Several educators whose books most influenced my philosophy of children's literature-based learning were pioneers in combining theory, practice, and personal experience. Examples include Sylvia Ashton-Warner's (1965) *Teacher*, Dorothy Butler's (1980) *Cushla*

*and her books*, and Shelby Wolf and Shirley Brice Heath's (1992) *The braid of literature: Children's worlds of reading*—all three underappreciated, I think, for their courageous experimental approaches. In addition to personal experiences, our work as researchers is influenced by academic trends. My initial training in folklore was structural: the observation of formulaic story patterns across geographical and cultural boundaries. However, folklore research, while valuing such studies, moved in the direction of contextual work, emphasizing details, voice, and circumstances that tied a tale's interpretation to its culturally and individually specific telling. "Informants" became partners with researchers rather than "subjects" of research. In the 1960s and 1970s it was increasingly obvious that for the purposes of valid interpretation, text and context could not be separated without damage to the study. Bruno Bettelheim's *Uses of enchantment*, for instance, suffered from overgeneralizing "the Child" (as opposed to specifically considered children) and from universalizing the Grimms' tales (instead of considering them as culture-bound and historically specific).

And what happened when a middle-class white storyteller appropriated stories from African American or Native American narrative traditions, changed them, told them, and claimed them (for profit) as authors and illustrators of picture books? Especially among marginalized ethnic groups, this represented further cultural oppression, which increased as folk and fairy tales found a broadening market (Hearne, 1988). After federal money dried up for school libraries in the US during the 1980s, complex publishing economics assured sales to consumers who were less knowledgeable about book evaluation than were librarians. Further, a public who could afford shopping in bookstores resisted investing tax money in libraries and librarians trained to select books. As a result, many more folktales were published in beautiful editions because folktales were popularly regarded as a traditional genre for children (even though most were originally intended for adults or mixed audiences). These folktale picture books and collections generally had no identification of, nor paid any attention to, cultural sources. Thus, while scholarship was coupling text and context by connecting stories to their specific cultural sources, a booming children's book industry was separating text from cultural context. Stories certainly travel beyond temporal and geographic boundaries, but we gain depth of understanding by knowing where they have been—understanding not only of the stories but also of ourselves and others who have passed them on.

Ideally, research informs public production and consumption in the arts and humanities as well as in science and social science. As a folklore researcher, storyteller, writer, and children's book review editor of two journals for 35 years (sequentially), I engaged with a steady stream of folktales published for broad distribution in classrooms, libraries, and private homes. In addition to researching European fairy tales, I began studying the increasing number of Native American stories being published without tribal attribution, permission, or

compensation (Hearne, 1993, 1999). I also started querying my right as a white woman raised in the racist South to tell African American stories. Are stories free, earned, or owned? It was a complicated question that I explored in a study of Brer Rabbit tales' evolution in oral and print traditions (Hearne, 2011). In the process, I examined my own folklore and the way family lore and personal narrative contribute to an individual's value system. My book *Seven brave women* (1993), for instance, addresses the courage of a matriarchal line who never fought a battle but nurtured generation after generation of children, developed interests in art and science, and helped lay groundwork for women's rights. The outsider-insider (and outside-inside) issues of my research agenda assumed increasingly complex ethical, cultural, and aesthetic dimensions.

## Stages of knowledge

In 2007, after more than four decades in the field of children's literature, I retired with the expectation of continuing my work with more time and energy than I had while juggling commitments in a fulltime job. No committees, no faculty meetings, no classes, no grading! During the first year I completed a book of short stories for young adults, finished editing a collection of essays, published several articles, mentored graduate students, gave visiting classroom lectures, and made speeches. But remember those narrative surprises. Exactly one year after retirement, on August 20, 2008, I was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, for which I underwent radical abdominal surgery five days later, followed by two months in the hospital and years of survival work. (Here I sing the praises of a highly trained and unusually empathetic surgeon, plus the results of randomized drug trials!)

Once life and death turn inside out, plans are cancelled, altered, re-formed, transformed. If the experience coincides with old age, the products of living give way to the process of living. Even as days seem to slip by more quickly, one's mind and body move more slowly. Priorities shift, status fades. Ambition, whether it has been sustaining or unsettling, becomes irrelevant. If the young have trouble keeping up with massively accumulating information, how do the old incorporate it? What happens to a self that is built of work when work falls away? And how might this affect the inside and outside of knowledge? The bad news is, I believe, that research and scholarship can suffer; the good news is that wisdom can make up for it. An inner knowledge accrued through the strength and flexibility of exercising the mind through a lifetime of research can adapt to new challenges and interests. This is especially true if we have allowed, acknowledged, and benefitted from a dynamic interaction between the personal and the professional. Although my focus on stories and storytelling particularly lent itself to such an interaction, there is some evidence that the process I'm describing applies to other areas of study.

Neuroscientist Elkhonon Goldberg (2005) in his book *The wisdompParadox: How your mind can grow stronger as your brain grows older* writes, "What I have lost with age in my

capacity for hard mental work, I seem to have gained in my capacity for instantaneous, almost unfairly easy insight" (p. 9). Another neuroscientist, Richard Davison (Davison & Begley, 2012), has spent many years researching what he calls "Emotional Style, its origins in childhood, and the discovery of the brain patterns that determine where we fall along" six dimensions: resilience, outlook, social intuition, self-awareness, context, and attention. These form "a unique blend that describes how you perceive the world and react to it, how you engage with others, and how you navigate the obstacle course of life." We have, he says, "the power to live our lives and train our brains in ways that will shift where we fall on each of the six dimensions" (p.225).

Especially deepened in post-retirement years can be the time for, and appreciation of, sustaining human connection—family and friendship—along with strength of spirit in the face of physical deterioration. Those who have cultivated such dimensions in their work may find a new balance more easily. The stories I study and tell have changed but not diminished, though I write less and it takes longer. I return more often to poetic forms, which profit from slow (s)pace. All this is not to deny that aging brings tough choices. Elders are usually folkloric helpers rather than heroes of the story. Or at least, wise elders like the three old women in "East of the sun and west of the moon." On the unwise side are elders—often cast as villainous hags—who are unreconciled to time removing them from starring roles. (Snow White's stepmother comes to mind.) Dwindling time creates great pressures. Death, of course, is the invisible new "informant"; best to make it a collaborative research partner.

The inside light kindled in Ida Waters' classroom continued unexpectedly in a hospital room forty years later. Before telling the story, let me follow the inside/outside research that led up to its collection, selection, and interpretation. Out of informed habit, I listened attentively from the beginning of my stay at the hospital, aware that everyone and everything comprised a story that might eventually tell me something. This is not a strenuous exercise. It's a state of openness cultivated by practice. Listening—to both sound and silence—is as crucial as telling in the story process (Hearne, 2005). There were certainly periods of pain and haze, and I didn't yet know what I was listening for. The hospital as living-space was a new world to me, and it's important in research discovery to listen first without listening *for* something, without an agenda. Patterns will emerge, and ideas or theories in dialogue with the data. The "outside" of this research comprised the hospital staff, patients, and incidents that I heard/observed. The "inside" involved the experience, knowledge, creative associations, and interpretation (all of which would vary with each researcher) that I brought to bear on what I heard/observed.

Among the many incidents of my stay in that hospital, I found myself describing a particular incident repeatedly in personal circles before realizing its importance as an extension of my research on storytelling. At first I didn't understand the reason but knew that if I stayed with it and explored it, I would find out. While this process may sound a bit like

"faith" or "instinct," it was my study of oral lore and the shaping of consciousness through personal narrative that made me begin a dialogue with the story, though I could not yet articulate why. Some stories go and some stay. It's important to me as a researcher to note – personally, culturally, and socially—which ones those are and what they suggest about us. Instinct, after all, can be defined as "an inborn pattern of activity or tendency to action common to a given biological species."[31] Humans are a storytelling species, and our stories tell much about us.

This story had a lot to say:

A month and a half after my 14-hour surgery for pancreatic cancer, on the eve of my 66th birthday, things were not looking good. In addition to pneumonia, heart problems, and a lot of missing intestinal parts, the prognosis for recovery or even remission was grim. I was also isolated because of a massive infection called MRSA (Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*). One night, sometime after the midnight meds—and I had some great drugs in that hospital—I was drifting in and out of awareness when I heard singing, not the normal thing in a darkened hospital ward. There was also a beautiful light. Those who have nearly died talk about that light. So this was it. The last light. But I hadn't really expected angels singing me into heaven. (I hadn't expected heaven at all!) And these angels, all dressed in white with their eyes glowing above the light, seemed to be singing "Happy Birthday." Suddenly the ugly florescent lights went on overhead, and the night-shift nursing staff hovered around me.

"Blow out the candles, Betsy!  Blow out the candles!"

I have no recollection of how many candles were on the cake, but there were enough to require almost more breath than I had to blow them out. Since I was on a feeding tube, the nurses ate the cake, but the sight of that chocolate icing cheered me up more than I can say.

That could be the end of the story, but it's not. About mid-morning the same day, a contingent of the day shift gathered and sang "Happy Birthday," this time with a pink vanilla cake just as beautifully decorated as the first one, but without any candles. Afterwards, one of the younger aids said, "Hey, we forgot to put the candles on!"”

"Are you kidding?" said a veteran nurse. "Look at those oxygen tanks. We'd blow the place to kingdom come!"

Remembering the candles on my midnight cake, I started laughing so hard I could barely breathe. But I never told on the night shift. All I could think of was, what a great way to start the rest of my life, with plenty of oxygen, candlelight, and a room full of people who gave more than they had to. And that could be the end of the story, but it's not. There are backstories to every one of those nurses and nurses' aids, and I heard a lot of them. I heard about women raising children alone, working overtime, suffering disrespect from doctors and

[31] http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/instinct?s=t

administrators and patients and visitors. Some of their stories were inspiring, others were dispiriting. I was lucky enough to be able to *listen* even though I couldn't talk much. We spent a lot of time together, sometimes during procedures, sometimes because they just made time to check on me. And once, to celebrate my survival with beautiful, soft, explosive candlelight.

The stories about brave women I had researched earlier in folklore and family lore, the work stories and personal narratives I had taught in seminars—all took on new meaning in a situation that materialized at a time when I could hardly lift my head, much less think about research. And, like my earlier discovery about effective narrative in Ida Waters' classroom, this story held a surprise. Both stories, in fact, featured a narrowly averted explosion: one human, one chemical. The first is about professional survival and discovery at the beginning of a career; the second, about physical survival and discovery at the end of a career. Both have strong emotional components of helplessness resolved through a strength of spirit offered by other women. The classroom and hospital room stories even involve similar elements of light, and it's both storytelling and research in storytelling that taught me to see connections between the two stories. A story can take years to interpret, and interpretations—as well as the stories themselves—can shift with the years. This story is still in process, and it will join others that elaborate a constantly changing pattern of human behavior. As an elder, I am privileged to participate in listening, telling, and interpreting such patterns. There have been many times in my professional life when commitments to interdisciplinary research, teaching, creative writing, raising children, and engaging with grandchildren seemed to conflict, but in perspective each has illuminated the other.

Somehow, I *knew in myself* that it was so.

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