



Creative Approaches to Research

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Creative Approaches to Research is a trans-disciplinary journal for creative research. It reflects the convergences between epistemology, pedagogy and technology. It incorporates multiple forms of text including academic and creative writing, sound, images, and multimedia.

Creative Approaches to Research recognises the need to extend the range of voices and ways for doing, reporting, and discussing research. Academics from many disciplines have come together to create this journal who share a vision of it as a living and colourful text inviting engagement with multiple ways of knowing.

CAR is currently published as an Open Access Journal. We invite papers of variable length, between 2000 and 7000 words, APA style. For inquiries and submissions, please send an email to: CAR_submissions@aqr.org.au

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE...

MARK VICARS

Welcome to the first issue of CAR 2013. The articles in this issue creatively trouble the research process and product, speaking to and about the presence of the undesirable and discomfoting in research practices. Productively disrupting normative epistemic landscapes of inquiry, the authors in this issue, far from shying away, face-up and work the discomfort of the undesirable encouraging the reader in thoughtful provocation as a creative context for research.

Berbarly works with and from a creative analytic representation of a life story conducted with a 20-year-old Southern, white sorority woman. Represented as a fictionalized diary, her paper provides intimate insight into the experiences of the being of a sorority girl. Kenny considers the use of philosophy, story, archetypal myth, and symbol in his exploration of the internal process of the researcher and the external process of the research process and problemtising sexuality and gender in sport, Knijnik & Horton endeavour to speak back to the theoretical and bookish. Pahl, Steadman-Jones and Pool's paper offer us a "a story about a plan that went awry" and in doing acknowledge how the research journey can be "a painful and disconcerting process".

Sameshima and Leggo position themselves throughout their paper as poets, scholars, and educators to attend to what they name as a curriculum of love, offering the reader "a wondering and wandering poetic and aesthetic performance of

ongoing theorizations and conversations on love, research, and pedagogy”. Simpkins and Saleem narrate the story of graduate student’s experiences of arts-based research inquiry. Through autobiographical account the authors explore ideas of legitimacy in research and academe and the lived experience of Kurdish life and culture, with a particular emphasis on the importance of ‘honour’ in Kurdish culture.

The final paper in this issue by Walsh, Rutherford and Crough reviews the emergence of arts-based research and draws on firsthand experiences of working the emancipatory potential of art as research practice with marginalized populations.

I hope you enjoy reading, thinking and discussing the papers in this issue of *Creative Approaches to Research* and I look forward to receiving your submissions for future issues.

REFLECTIONS OF CULTURE

A DIARY OF A SORORITY GIRL

LISBETH A. BERBARY

The following is a creative analytic representation of a life story narrative inquiry conducted with a 20-year-old Southern, white sorority woman. The inquiry focused on the participant's life story concerning the experience of belonging to a traditional, Southern sorority with over 150 members—mostly White, middle class, Christian, heterosexual women between the ages of 18-25. The narrative data was transcribed and analyzed, and is represented as a diary organized around the identified stories. The diary has been fictionalized to the extent that storied data were rearranged and melded into one chronological account. The participant approved the diary and noted “it provides intimate insight into the experiences of being a sorority girl.”

Keywords: *Creative analytic practice, gender, American “Greek” life, college.*

When I first arrived in the Southeast I was immediately astonished by the expectations that women were asked to uphold in relation to gender. Growing up in Buffalo, NY and living the past seven years in a very liberal Ithaca, NY, the strong notions of femininity that seemed to permeate my new Southern home seemed oppressive and almost impossible for me to fulfill “properly.” At 28 I no longer was up to date on the current trends for college women, however, when I found myself in a sea of sorority women at the University football game,

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I soon started to pay attention simply so that I could still feel good about myself. I had always been taught that my appearance was an important part of my identity and for the first time in a long time I felt just plain ugly. While I was at the time “disgusted” by what looked to me like women working so hard for “perfect teeth, perfect skin, perfect hair, perfect outfits,” I also simultaneously wished that I could be like them.

This made me ashamed. How could a smart, talented, fun, women’s studies graduate student still fall into the trap of wanting to be beautiful—and not just beautiful in my own way, but AS beautiful as the young women by which I was surrounded? This initial reaction sparked my interest in not only my own battles through femininity, but in all women’s battles, and how we women understand, manage, and wrestle with our own femininity. How was it that I could commit myself to feminist perspectives and then still worry so much about my appearance? How do we as women in general weave our way through these various, often contradictory layers of what it means to be a woman, of what it means to be appropriately feminine within our culture? In trying to understand my own explorations through my new Southern femininity, I found myself gravitating toward issues of femininity in my own research. In particular, I was interested in talking with sorority women for my research because based on what I had seen they were the “ultimate” females of the South.

The women I spoke with not only told stories about their navigations through Southern culture and university culture, but also the added dimension of Southern sorority culture. In American universities, sororities are selective, woman-centered social organizations that align with male-centered fraternities to compose what is called the Greek System—with each organization named with Greek letters such as Zeta Kappa Phi. While not all American institutions of higher education are home to sororities and fraternities, many of the older institutions of the American South have long traditions and strong legacies connected to their local sorority and fraternity chapters, setting them apart from their less historic Northern counterparts. In particular, Greek organizations in the South are grounded in dominant discourses intertwined with upper-middle class, white, Southern, Christian ideologies (Berbary, 2012). For some, these ideologies are perceived to create women-positive spaces, while for others these spaces are oppressive and anti-feminist (McLean, 2003; Robbins, 2004). However, when I began to interview sorority women, I found that there was much more to their performances of femininity than that which could be accounted for from either perspective.

In particular, I was fascinated because the women who I had viewed as a silly, frivolous sorority girls instead, through their stories of contradiction, romance, dress, academic performance, and compassion, showed me that they were navigating their way not through one culture, not two, but through three cultures that coordinated to produce a very dominant expectation of women and femininity

(Berbary, 2012). It was at this moment I knew that if I wanted to expose the complicated negotiations women made daily just in order to have some say, a voice, an opinion, a stance, a view, and a moment on two feet, this was a perfect sub-culture to explore.

METHODOLOGY

Recognizing my desire to better understand sorority culture and women's negotiations of femininity I conducted a life story narrative inquiry with a 20-year-old Southern, white sorority woman as part of a larger post-structural feminist ethnography on southern sorority women (c.f. Berbary, 2011; Berbary, 2012, Berbary & Johnson, 2012). This inquiry focused on one participant's life story concerning the experience of joining a traditional, Southern sorority with over 150 members—mostly white, middle class, Christian, heterosexual women between the ages of 18-25 in a Southeastern college town. An unstructured narrative interview guide was led by the question “tell me about your experience joining your sorority” and was grounded in post-structural feminist intention to expose tensions, contradictions, and expectations surrounding discursively disciplined gendered subjectivity within sorority subculture. With the intent to explore these discursive gender expectations within sorority subculture, topics of interest, including beauty, fashion, relationships, sorority trends, sexuality, performance, and gender expectations, were probed during the life story interview only if introduced in the personal narrative by the participant (Riessman, 2008). The initial life story interview lasted four hours with two additional 1-2 hour member checking interviews taking place during my time in analysis and interpretation.

Data from these interviews were transcribed and analyzed using a contextualizing analysis in which open coding was used to identify data connected to a priori notions of gender performance, subjectivity, discursive discipline, and discourse, and repetitive ideas that were identified within the narrative. These open codes were first teased out, then re-connected to show overlap, relationship, multiplicity, tensions, and interaction within the messy narrated experiences, and finally re-constructed into drafted stories (Berbary, 2011). These stories were then expanded with the addition of other relevant data and finally re-storied into a temporal order (McCormack, 2004) that exposed the contradictions, inconsistencies, and culturally imposed dominant discourses of femininity expressed within the original narrative.

CREATIVE ANALYTIC PRACTICE

Qualitative research grounded in the post-modern/narrative turn challenges us to re-consider traditional expectations of how we represent data and trouble the

claims that we make about the “Truth” of those representations. In short, rather than focus on traditional endeavors of representing the unbiased Truth of others’ experiences, post-modern notions of language and multiple “truths” instead support “doing representation differently” through contextualization that connects data, shows multiplicity, and represents “a reality” grounded in a local, partial, and contingent socio-cultural moment (Berbary, 2011; St. Pierre, 2000). These post-modern representations free us from post-positivist notions of objective Truth and the impossibility of “trying to write a single text in which everything is said at once to everyone” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 962). Instead, “doing representation differently” recognizes that we are always telling a specific story, from a specific viewpoint, with specific subjectivities, caught within both power and discourse. More importantly there is the recognition that we do not have the authority over what we write, since as typical of all language, our writing is constantly open to new and different interpretations.

Therefore, while the traditional representations’ claims of Truth serve to legitimize academic researchers’ authority over participants’ lived experiences, these post-modern practices of representation instead make a point to acknowledge multiple and contingent truths, highlight participant voice, show not simply “tell” about lived experiences, and give up authority by asking the audience to share power over representation as they make their own interpretations free of researcher voice (Schwandt, 2001). Replacing the concern of objective Truth with the idea of “telling the story that needs to be told” in the specific socio-cultural moment, these new models explore the possibility of representation through the use of creative analytic practices (CAP) such as fiction, poetry, narrative, and screenplay. These alternative data representations connect readers to the lives of research participants, elicit readers’ interest through accessible formats, inspire curiosity, and connect with readers in ways traditional representations might not (Berbary, 2011; Richardson, 2000).

In order to represent my participant’s re-storied life story in a compelling format, I constructed a fictionalized diary. I chose to use a diary format after reading *The Body Project* in which Brumburg (1997) discussed the importance of the women’s diaries as data for gaining a better understanding of historical and current struggles with physical beauty and societal expectations. The narrations of my participant also showed how she negotiated multiple discursive messages about beauty, sexuality, femininity, and relationships and therefore seemed well suited to be told through this genre of writing—a genre often portrayed in connection to young women, intimacy, and personal navigation through discursive expectations. This more intimate format also helped connect the reader to the participant by creating the feeling of reading the diary of a friend/child or even re-creating the memory of writing in one’s own diary during youth.

I constructed the diary to purposefully guide the reader to “see” certain aspects of this woman’s experience, however, diary is fictionalized only to the extent that names have been changed and that the four-hour narrative collection of numerous stories has been melded into one chronological account. It is grounded in the data with the language kept as faithful as possible to the original, although at times I rearranged and repeated expressive phrases accordingly. All stories, emotions, and characters are pulled from the transcription yet have been purposefully re-composed in order to poignantly expose the tensions, lessons learned, and discursive expectations disseminated, enabled, reinforced, and at times demanded within the day-to-day social experiences of my participant. My participant approved the finalized diary, commenting that, “it provides intimate insight into the experiences of being a sorority girl.”

While my participant recognized the diary as an expression of her reality (Richardson, 2000) and felt connected to the experiences I highlighted in the final diary, like most re-storied narratives and creative analytic practices, I must be upfront with the fact that I “co-constructed” this diary by filtering my participant’s experiences through my own interpretative lens with the intention of telling the story that I felt needed to be told (Williams, 1995). In this case, the story I choose to tell was that of one woman’s negotiations of discourses of femininity as she joined a sorority and navigated early college experiences. While I recognize that I lack authority over how others will interpret this story, I hope that readers will connect with her experiences and also consider how her experiences are reflections of those expectations “demanded” by the larger cultures in which she found herself—Southern culture, University culture, and the sorority culture. I ask readers to consider the ways in which cultural discourses disciplined her and how she reproduced and negotiated those cultural discourses. When read with this critical perspective, the diary illuminates the individual as not only a *cause* of specific expectations of femininity, but more importantly as a performative *effect* of those same discursively disciplined gendered expectations. Since I also found myself negotiating these gendered expectations as I moved to the South and conducted my research with sorority women, I will follow the diary with a personal and accessible discussion of the ways in which I saw connections among my participant’s experiences, Southern sororities, gendered expectations, and post-structural feminist theory.

JULIE'S DIARY

August 18, 2006

10:34pm

Today has been a little intimidating because in general I'm not sure what to expect. Mom left this morning, and so far I like the taste I've gotten of a big university. I love not having to go home to a curfew, the freedom of college. I guess I just feel like I'm here, this is it. I guess college will be about growing up, but also having fun. Rush, or sorority recruitment as they told us to say, starts tomorrow and most of the girls from the dorm are going. I'm glad I did random pick for roommate pick because I really like Jenny, even if she isn't doing the whole rush thing. She is still a good girl and I think we'll get along. I still haven't unpacked everything but I should have time tomorrow before our big rush meeting. I'm just going to go through rush to see if I like it. I know Meg, Katie, and Mom are all in Zeta Chi, but I don't just want to go Zeta Chi because they did. We'll see. Hopefully my packet of info and my picture all made it in. Well off to bed. I hope I can sleep. I'm not sure what to expect tomorrow, what should I wear?

August 19, 2006

9:45pm

Wow, today was really ridiculous. Well actually the day was fun. Jenny and I finished setting up our room and then kinda just hung out all day. What was out of control was the rush meeting. I didn't know what to wear and so just threw on my shorts and a t-shirt because I didn't think the meeting was a big deal. When I got to the meeting it was a little intimidating because I have never seen so many beautiful girls in one room. Since not many people from Nardin High came to USouthern with me, I ended up just kinda tagging along with some girls from the dorm. When we walked in I was like wow! All the girls were so well dressed and had beautiful hair, tiny figures, bright eyes, white teeth with dimples, and I was just in my t-shirt thinking this is just a little meeting why are all these girls so dressed up? I mean the ladies in charge of it weren't

even dressed nice, they just had on khakis and white t-shirts. Some of the girls were really nice and so genuinely like "How are you?" "Where are you from?" and that made a big difference. We found out that the next few days we are going from house to house and then at the end of the day we vote on our favorite houses and if they vote for you too you'll get to revisit them the next day until finally it comes down to three houses to vote on. I called Meg to see what I should wear since I never know and she recommended kind of casual, no tube tops or anything too revealing, maybe a halter, and shoes that are nice, but not flip flops, and not anything too painful cause I guess we are going to be walking a lot. I have to be up bright and early tomorrow to get ready to go to a meeting around 7am. Wish me luck!

August 20, 2006

9:07pm

I am so tired! Today was fun, but boy am I ready for bed. Rush was so overwhelming! When I got there I was put in a group with a bunch of girls and we walked to the first house on our list. We were told to wait on the lawn until they invited us in and so we are all just kinda standing around not knowing what to do because no one is coming out to greet us. So all of a sudden we hear this banging on the windows and on the door and we were like screaming and I was like, "Oh my gosh, what is going on?" and they open their door and we go in and they were dressed in their sorority colors, I guess so we can remember who is who when we vote, and they were banging and clapping and cheering and then they stopped and started singing little songs and it was pretty cheesy, but fun at the same time. They sang things for about five minutes and it was pretty entertaining. Then they came and talked to us for a while, but as much as I like talking to people I sometimes wonder why I am doing this. I guess I kinda feel like do I really want these girls looking at what I wear and judging if I should be their friend, but I guess they are considering more than just what I look like. Sometimes I feel like the whole thing is a bit superficial, like of course everyone is going to be nice to you, but so far

I really feel like the girls in Zeta Chi are pretty down to earth and real. We'll see what happens tomorrow.

August 21, 2006

12:35am

Jess, the girl from my dorm that I met at rush, and I did self-tanner together today. We just wore our bras and underwear and did each other's backs. It was so silly. I hope we don't end up looking orange! Oh and some drama today. I guess one of the girls trying to rush had hooked up with one of the sorority girl's boyfriends and word got around. The girl was devastated and I heard she might not get to pledge now. The best part was that the girl had a promise ring from her parents saying she wouldn't have sex until marriage. I guess that didn't work too well! I'm sooo tired. Good night.

August 22, 2006

9:14pm

Last night I ended staying up and watching a movie with Jenny and some girls from the floor and so this morning I woke up late! I was so worried so I just wet my hair under the sink and threw on a dress and ran down in like 10 minutes and I think it is so funny because I know all those girls thought I took all this time to get ready and I didn't. Next time maybe I shouldn't stay up so late. Well today was interesting. I heard a couple of stories about sororities at other universities. First I heard that this one sorority house had to get new piping or drainage or whatever because all of the acidic build-up from bulimia had rotted the pipes - that's not right! Then we heard that at some school the girls make you strip down to your bra and underwear and then they circle your fat. How ridiculous is that! No one has the right to tell you that you shouldn't be the size you are! I would hope that I am picked because of my character rather than how I look. So other than these horror stories things are going well at rush. All the fraternity guys were out yesterday on their porches and driving around in their trucks. They all look cute in their shaggy hair, polo shirts, Croakies—those things that hold sunglasses around your neck,

and boating shoes. I am always looking for cute boys. It's funny because it seems like there's an overwhelming number of good looking girls at this school. I was looking around and was like God, there are so many good looking girls here, but there's not that many good looking guys from what I've seen. I better keep my eyes open for any good looking boys. Since Mom was a sorority girl and Dad was a fraternity boy I guess I always think I'll marry a fraternity guy just because that's how they are - not that I'm looking for a husband, I mean I'll meet him when I meet him, but I think college should be fun and now is the time to date around and meet people. I think you need to take this time to find out what you like and don't like about people. I learned so much from dating Joey in high school that I wouldn't have learned otherwise. Like telling each other what the other person's thinking or asking them. I mean if I get to the point where I'm 23 and all my friends are getting married I'll start to flip out a little bit but whatever. For rush we are down to picking our last six sororities. It is getting pretty emotional for some of the girls. At first it's not that bad if you pick a sorority that doesn't pick you because you don't really get attached or know the girls and maybe you've only talked to one or two, but now it is getting to be that you start feeling like your whole life depends on it. Not that it does, but after four days you meet these girls and you really like them and you'd like to be a part of that and so if you get cut you almost feel like it was personal. I saw one girl crying because she got cut from the sorority that she and her best friend from high school were both hoping to pledge. Now they will be separated and she was just devastated. I mean we're girls anyways and emotional period and then adding this on top, lots of girls are going to get their feelings hurt. I really think I'd like to go Zeta Chi, not because Mom or Meg and Katie did, but just because I like the girls there. I hope they pick me so I don't feel real upset. I was thinking of going suicide and only choosing Zeta Chi as my final vote, but if they don't pick me, then I won't get into any sorority so maybe I'll keep my options open and actually vote on three. It's funny how the whole family might end up being Zeta Chi girls. Let's keep our fingers crossed!

August 23, 2006

10:47pm

It's getting harder and harder to keep up with writing in this journal. Things are just so hectic! A few things happened today that I at least should write about. First, I heard that you can tell whether or not a sorority is going to vote you in depending on which side of the lawn you are brought to when you leave. I don't know if I really believe it or not because they don't always bring you to one side or the other, but I've started looking to see who has been standing around me at the end of our time at a sorority house and it seems like all the cute girls, not only cute, but the ones that are the most talkative, like the nice girls, have been standing with me so maybe that means I'll be voted in! I still like Zeta Chi the best, actually at this other sorority one of the girls came up to me and was like hi and all cheery and then she didn't talk to me for the rest of the time. I mean I'm a nice girl, I'm easy to talk to, if you don't want me in your sorority you still can at least have a conversation with me. I put that sorority last on my voting list today and I feel bad because it turns out that is a really good sorority. I guess Zeta Chi and that sorority are the really good ones grade-wise and their pick of girls, the fact that the girls are all, not the prettiest girls, but kind of pretty, and the ones that are most involved in campus, like the ones the guys want to hang out with. So I felt kinda silly that I rated them last, but I really just didn't like that girl. Anyway, I actually enjoyed most of rush. Oh I almost forgot...this one girl was being really hateful today and was like, "I don't like the looks of this sorority," and so when we went in she turned her name tag upside-down so they wouldn't know who she was and then she started talking about how she went to space camp and she learned about rocks and she loved it. I think she thought the whole thing was a joke and maybe her parents made her do it or maybe she was just testing the system to see what people would be like but I thought it was rude to do that and think you are too good for something. I don't think that is fair or nice. I hope she doesn't get into Zeta Chi. I mean, I try to get along with everybody, but she just doesn't seem like a nice girl. I should find out in the next couple of days if I can pledge Zeta Chi!

September 17, 2006

10:36pm

Even though my whole pledge class was fine that I don't drink, I decided tonight why not try it and see what happens. I went out with Christina who doesn't drink either and we were talking and she was like why don't we just go grab a drink and see if we like it. I have been thinking about trying it for a while and so we went to the bar and I ordered a sex on the beach because everyone tells me it's good and I didn't really know any other drinks. It was a dollar a drink at McMonkey's for Power Hour. As soon as I started to sip it I could feel my body reacting and I could feel my hands go tingling and I was like, "What in the world?" I felt my legs go numb and I realized it does have an effect. I feel pretty good right now, I mean, we only had one drink so I figure from this point on I feel okay about drinking socially. I don't ever want to drink so much that I become that drunk girl downtown or I've heard people talk about not remembering or being sick and that's just scary so I'm just going to keep it to a minimum.

September 21, 2006

12:15am

I'm just getting home from a pledge event that was at The Elmwood downtown. It was supposed to be for just fraternity guys and sorority girls, but it wasn't really crowded so they were letting other people in, which was fine because there weren't many people there. Well, this one guy comes over to hit on Natalie and was talking to her and she was like "Oh he is so cute," and I was like "Ohh nooo!" because I realized she had had a few too many drinks and that he really wasn't as cute as she thought. Then the guy leaves us and starts walking around and hitting on all these different girls and I was like, "Natalie, that is not appropriate" and she's like, "Yeah, not at all," and then she gives him her number! Can you believe it? I'm like who does that? I don't know, he is just so sketchy. I hope he doesn't call her. I don't think he is the kind of guy you could actually settle down with, and why would you just date someone you can't see being with forever? I don't think

I'll ever just date a guy. I don't see the point in it. Why would you waste your time when you could be meeting somebody great or be happier by yourself or with somebody else. I think it is a personal thing. I think she could do so much better, but I think it plays into her self-esteem because I don't think Natalie feels like she is good enough for nice guys.

September 22, 2006

2:30pm

I am getting the impression that a lot of the fraternity guys here are really arrogant and that's not really attractive. I mean, everybody can have whatever pride, like a little bit is good, but it's not good when your head is big. It's like they know the girls have competition to meet boys and they enjoy it. Maybe I don't want to be with a fraternity boy after all.

September 25, 2006

9:32pm

Went for a run today with Jenny but I didn't feel very comfortable. Ever since I saw that program on TV about rape it scarred me for life and I'm just too afraid going to a college town with lots of people everywhere for the possibility of rape, and so I don't think I'll go running at night again even if it's with somebody else. I mean, I feel safe for the most part because there are lots of police around, but I'd rather not run at night again. Oh, I almost forgot to mention that I have another crush of the week. I devote crushes and then lose them left and right. Jenny and Christina make fun of me, but it is just so much fun! Someday I'll actually make a move on my crush, but I guess I have my own personal view of what I think a relationship will feel like and I think there is going to be fireworks and butterflies and I'll just know.

October 21, 2006

11:25pm

There is a boy snoring in my room! The guy that I introduced myself to in the elevator a while back actually came to my room

tonight to watch a movie. I saw him in the hall earlier and invited him over because Jenny is gone home for the weekend. We started to watch *The Sandlot* on the futon and then he leaned over and kissed me! We kissed a little and then we both fell asleep. I woke up a few minutes ago and was like I can't cuddle with a boy all night so I just climbed up to my bed to sleep. He is snoring right now and I don't know what to do!

October 22, 2006

1:55pm

Well oddly enough Keith just left my room. He stayed sleeping and snoring on the futon all night and all day. It is almost 2 in the afternoon! I didn't know what to do because obviously nothing like this has ever happened to me before. Boys weren't even allowed upstairs at our house at home, so I ran over to the other girls' room and asked if I should wake him up or what cuz I really didn't know "know" the kid, I just thought he was cute. So finally he just woke up like 10 minutes ago and he is just kinda like, "Alright, I'll see you later," and then he left. Is that what is supposed to happen? I am so confused!

October 26, 2006

7:13pm

Some girls here get so done up to go out. They wear shoes that absolutely kill them, and like I wore some heels last night but I knew I was just going to wear them from the car there and then I was going to take them off to swing dance and then put them back on to walk to the car... I wasn't going to be out for like three hours and dying, but a lot of girls here go through pain to look good. I mean going out you always try to actually take time to look presentable or feel more confident in what you are wearing, not necessarily to impress a guy, but it is always fun to meet people or see people downtown, but some girls I see just are like above and beyond glitzy. They wear really short dresses and lots of makeup, I mean, I think some people can pull off a decent amount of makeup, but then some people it is just too much! It's like they think they are movie stars or something.

November 23, 2006

11:23am

James, the guy I met at the bar last week stayed at my room last night and I am just so confused. I mean we just kissed and then he slept on the futon so I figured he would just get up and say, "Okay, I'll see you later," like Keith did, but instead he kissed me this morning for a while before he left. I didn't understand... I was like why did he kiss me today too? So I went and asked Heather and she was like, "Julie, girls have to drink to do anything, but guys can kiss anytime, it doesn't matter." I still don't understand, but I guess it makes sense sort of.

December 5, 2006

2:55pm

Well I learned a very good lesson last night. We went out for Molly's birthday because I guess that is what you are supposed to do and unfortunately I had a little too much to drink. We decided to celebrate and drink a little in the dorms before we went out and so I had a strawberry daiquiri and we all were a little tipsy and decided to color Molly's dorm room floor with markers, not the smartest idea. Well I guess my strawberry daiquiri was stronger than I knew because I was taking shots while drinking it and got sick before we even went downtown. I actually don't remember going downtown and I guess I was there like five minutes and then all I remember is waking up down the hall from my room today with no shoes, fully clothed with bruises on my chest. I have been told what happened is that I left my girlfriends when we got downtown and when they finally came to find me I had been smooching with some sketchy boy so they took me away and gave me to a guy friend of theirs to take me back to the dorm. I guess I was puking so hard over the toilet that I got bruises on my chest. I am really a little scared because I don't remember any of this, but it's something I can look back at and laugh because only in college would that happen and only drinking. I learned though how important it is to keep up with people when you go out and make sure they're okay and don't drink too much or go home

with boys who are sketchy or boys in general. I'm really lucky it didn't happen at a sorority event because if you get caught drinking under 21 there you can get the whole sorority in trouble with the fraternity council. Particularly because us girls enforce it a lot more than the guys do. They just don't seem to care as much. Thank goodness that I was just out with my friends last night and not at a formal or date night.

December 6, 2006

1:47pm

I just talked to mom about my drinking because I was so hung over yesterday and probably could have had alcohol poisoning. She thinks maybe I need to evaluate how much I drink or how much alcohol I am pouring into my drinks or how many shots I am taking. Like if I just like to drink, maybe make my drinks less strong or don't drink shots...just drink beer or something. I think it's easy to sit back and say I won't drink too much again, but when you get to it there are some nights it is just hard. I guess you figure it is just more fun if you drink and you don't think or realize how much you're drinking. I think you feel more comfortable with a little alcohol in your system and taking shots together, it's kind of a bonding experience. I guess it just kind of helps get your nerves out. I mean, I don't always get wasted when I go out, but we do go out like 4 or 5 times a week, because that is just what you do in college.

December 7, 2006

1:45am

I just went to my first crush party. It is kinda a silly idea because you pick two boys you want to invite and you give their e-mail or phone number to the social chair and then she calls them and invites them to the crush party, but they don't know which girl invited them, they only know the sorority. So there is this guy I've had a crush on all semester in one of my classes and he's not Greek, but I invited him and I think he knew it was me because there is only one other Zeta Chi in my class. So I invited him and this other guy just because I was afraid the one I really liked, Trent, the guy from class, wouldn't come.

Well today in class Trent said, "I'll see you later," and gave me a little wink so I got really excited. Well, I just got back from the party and Trent did come! He is soo cute! At first I was really nervous because we were all singing karaoke and I didn't see either one of the guys I invited. I went to the bathroom and when I came out I saw Trent and he was like, "Where have you been?" and I just know my face turned red. I ran over to him and he said he hadn't been there long, but I felt bad I had been in the bathroom. I mean it must be kinda nerve-wracking to walk into one of these parties not even knowing who invited you or what to expect. We had a really nice time, but looking back I am a little uncomfortable because he had told me before he doesn't really drink much and I was like okay that's fine so I just had a beer while I was there and he had gotten to the bar and gotten a mixed drink and I was like, "I thought you didn't drink," and he was like, "I don't really." So in the meantime I had a mixed drink too and I had drank maybe half of it and I look over and he had had like the equivalent of what two sips would be. I asked Nat, Heather, and Danielle what they thought and they think that he just did it to be social and have a drink in his hand. I think it is kinda funny that there is that comfort level of just fitting in by having a drink in your hand. I don't know if he thinks I am a crazy drinker or anything because after we left he text messaged me "Don't get too crazy tonight." I hope he doesn't perceive me to be a crazy lush. Well I had fun and Trent seems like the kind of guy I would date. I mean he seems respectful of people. Not only of his friends, but of people in classes, people everywhere. Like if we went to a football game together I bet he'd be respectful to the people at vending or to the guy you give the ticket to. I heard you always compare whomever you date to your dad and Trent is into sports and things, so maybe this will work out. I am debating if we could be together.

December 10, 2006

3:46pm

Danielle asked me today why sorority presidents always feel like they have to be skinny. We just had elections and our new president just started working out and we just don't get it. We

don't really work out that much but we are trying to, but I just laugh because I wish I felt more pressure to work out. I think a lot of girls feel pressured, especially around spring break, but maybe it is just more an encouragement thing, like "I'm going to work out, want to come?" than pressure.

January 14, 2007

8:24pm

Things are going pretty well with Trent, but Nat scared me yesterday because before I went to hang out and drink at Trent's room she was like, "Well he'll probably try to have sex with you," and I am like so oblivious when it comes to boys because I don't realize all they think about is sex and I hadn't even thought about having sex with Trent. I was like, "Nat, why would you say that?" and she's like, "Cuz first of all he's a boy and second of all he'll be wasted and since nothing happened the last couple of times he'll probably think something's gonna happen." I think it's kind of not an insult if guys try anything but at the same time yeah it is. So anyways, I went to Trent's last night and it was fine. I am kinda upset that Nat made me worry when I know Trent won't pressure me to do anything. He is a gentleman.

January 23, 2007

2:15am

Oral sex came up today and Christina, Kate, and Liz were all like, "We'll show you," and I was just like no, yuck. I don't know why but I just don't feel comfortable with it at all. Like with Trent, at first he didn't pressure me, but then he realized I was going to really stick with what I feel is right and so he and I are pretty much done. I mean I'm just not going to put up with stuff like that because that is not fair. I'm not going to sell myself short, especially not to just impress a guy or anything. I wouldn't do that because I'd feel too guilty. Anytime I've let myself slip to where I feel uncomfortable with something, I definitely feel guilty about it. When Joey and I were together for seven months all we did was kiss. We tried to go farther once but it was just weird and I felt kinda

guilty. I have to just listen to myself and if I'm not comfortable doing something I won't. I know friends who have had sex many times and never used a condom, which I think is stupid. I don't want to ever feel pressure to do things like that. I mean Trent and I wouldn't have worked out anyway because I realized that with him I just haven't been myself especially around the whole drinking thing. Not that I can't date somebody who doesn't drink, but if I do I think I have to be myself period and not try to hide anything I do or enjoy. Also I had really debated dating him over Christmas break because he is Jewish and I found out he can't marry non-Jewish and so knowing that it's not going to go anywhere is tough and I kept thinking what is the point of getting attached knowing it's not going to go anywhere? So even if we did keep dating it would just get us more attached and it's not fair to either of us knowing it's going to be a dead end. I mean, we could stay together because events would keep us together like his formal and Valentine's Day and so on, but that's not fair either. I guess I just hope we'll still be good friends.

January 24, 2007

8:32pm

Well that was odd. I just got asked out by Nick, my good friend from down the hall. I feel a little caught off-guard because I kind of have a crush on Jon, his roommate. I guess I'll go on a date with him because I don't want to bash it until I actually go on a date. He is a sweetheart but I don't know if it's going to work out.

January 29, 2007

9:47pm

Well I just got back from my date with Nick. We went out to eat and just talked and it wasn't too awkward, but I think he knew I wasn't interested in him that way. I didn't actually tell him that, but I really just hope we can still be friends. It was nice to be on a date. My friends were all so surprised because guys in college typically don't go on dates unless they are serious. It is kinda scary meeting people here because guys don't

just date...they have expectations from what else they have experienced in that meeting people is a lot about sex and there can be a lot of pressure. And it is funny because even when people shack or hook up you can't expect anything unless you go on a date, unless it is established that there is interest. People can have nights of shacking or hooking up and then end up dating, but that's not as common. I thought that was just kinda the normal thing to do, ask someone out, get to know them, but I know people, and not just guys, that will sleep around. I'm sorry I'm so old-fashioned, but I want to wait until I'm ready. I definitely haven't met the right person yet and I definitely don't think it's something to throw around.

February 10, 2007

3:35am

I just woke up to a phone call from Jared. He is Steven's, the guy I know from middle school, cute roommate. It is kind of funny seeing as how all that romantic stuff didn't work out between me and Steven, but I guess boys don't care about things like that as much as girls do. So anyway Jared, the really cute twin, just called and wants to stop by. He is coming in from Atlanta just to pick up his brother's hockey stick and then he has to drive right back. I wonder why he wants to stop to see ME! I want to be casual and cute so I think I'll just wear my cute Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs sleepy pajama pants and a t-shirt. This is so silly, what are we going to talk about?

February 26, 2007

4:05pm

Dad just called me again to see what next Zeta Chi event I would be going to. It is so funny because every time he calls me before he gets off the phone he asks me about what party I am going to that night. I guess he loved college cuz he talks about how being in the fraternity were some of the best days of his life and I'm like, "Is that all you thought about in college, what party to go to next?" Sometimes he is so silly! Right now I am getting ready for a band party at Beta Phi. Supposedly

these boys are supposed to be gentlemen because they are made to take a cotillion class their freshman year. I sure hope they are better than the jerks we mixed with last week. The guys there were all kinda sketchy. They were being rude in person and also really drunk and hooking up with girls. Its funny cuz guys here think that it is macho. I guess they've gotten the impression as college kids that they can do whatever they want. I just think that's silly because no matter how attractive you are, if you are drunk and hooking up with lots of girls, that's just not attractive. I guess we keep mixing with them because there is some kind of tradition to which fraternities we mix with and which ones we don't, but I would rather mix with some new fraternities who might be more gentlemanly than the guys I've met so far. I mean, it is already so hard at these formals or band parties because I feel like I'm one of many because there are only so many guys in the fraternity, but then all these girls flock to free beer and music and drink and so you feel like you have to really try for attention to meet boys and I don't like to do that. So not only are you competing to meet the boys, but the boys to meet are sometimes really sketchy. I did have fun a few months ago at the Jewish fraternity because I know the guys from the dorms and their party was a lot more chill and laid back and I thought they were just real guys, not just ones being petted by girls everywhere. It was funny too because I was one of like 7 non-Jewish girls there and that was kind of different because I was the blonde girl among all the Jewish girls.

February 28, 2007

6:58pm

I felt so silly today because I went up to a guy I had met at a band party and started talking to him and I guess he was just so drunk that night that he didn't remember me at all. I guess he is the one who should feel silly, but I'll think twice before I ever expect someone to remember me from a dance where they were drinking! Sometimes I wish people wouldn't drink as much. I guess people drink to feel more comfortable and I think it plays a huge part in people hooking up or going home

with each other. I really don't think it would happen as much if people weren't drunk all the time.

March 2, 2007

11:43pm

Last night Nat got drunk and told me that she doesn't understand why I don't do anything with boys and kinda was like, "What? Do you think you're too good?" She was like, "You probably think I'm terrible because I have had sex with boys, right?" She was just really drunk, but I think it shows that it does matter to her that she has had sex with 2 or 3 different guys and like more than once. I think it does eat at her and also that I haven't done that eats at her too. I think on the outside she just plays it off and is just like "Oh yeah, we just had sex," and I think some of her friends make it seem like that is okay whereas she knows that I don't stand for that. I think that girls devalue themselves by going out and acting like it's not a big deal when it really is to them. I don't know if they do it because culture makes them think that's okay or what, but I mean, I would never tell her that she is wrong because I really try to get along with everyone, even if I don't agree with how they act all the time. I hope this doesn't get in the way of our friendship.

March 5, 2007

10:55am

Sometimes I wonder if I am doing the right thing joining Zeta Chi. I mean Nick keeps trying to tell me that I am just buying my friends and I'm like "no I'm not," but then I'm like "God, yeah I am," because we have to pay so much for our dues, but then I think that the money is really just toward events and trips so I'm not really buying friends. And I know that there are some girls in Zeta Chi that I'm not proud to say are in my same sorority, but they are still good girls when you take them separately. It is just that when you put them together they play off each other. But I guess I really do love it and it means so much to Katie, Meg, and Mom that we are all in the same sorority. I guess it is really nice and it would be nice if one day

my daughter were a Zeta Chi. I mean, sure if she doesn't want to be I'll sort of be crushed, but not completely. I guess it just does mean a lot to me.

March 6, 2007

4:58pm

Some of the girls who really care more about what they look like have all the top designers like Prada and they have shoes that cost like in the hundreds and I just don't get it. Why would you do that? Or like have dresses for \$200 dollars. I didn't even know the brands before I met these girls. I think that starts in high school if you are going to be brand worried or not. I mean, Meg is into fashion, but I never paid much attention. But these girls don't even take care of their stuff. I mean if these shoes cost so much why wouldn't you take care of them? I guess a lot of the girls are just trying to keep up with the trends.

March 7, 2007

8:47pm

You can tell spring break is on the way. Everyone is getting it'sy bitsy to fit into their swimsuits. You can see them running all around the strip, working out, dying their hair, doing their nails, making sure they don't have tan lines, going to the tanning bed, and I think that's just stupid. I mean some of them do spray tan and makeup and clothes and it's not JUST for spring break, but it's like all year round. I think the trend is to constantly look cute. I heard one girl say that she was coming here to meet her husband so she had to look her best everyday and that is just kinda silly. I just wear soffes and t-shirts to class or even my pajamas, I don't care, I'll just roll out of bed. You know, sometimes I'll wear a little mascara to make me feel like I actually have eyes, but I don't wear foundation and all that stuff. I highlight my hair but I have since high school and it's just because Mom was always like, "Why don't you get a highlight?" She suggested it, not anybody else. I think some girls get highlights because they make them feel better or make them fit in more, or because it makes them feel prettier. I

think a lot of girls go by fads in magazines or TV and I have my own style of dress because I don't have enough money to just buy the new stuff every year. I'll go to Old Navy and buy one or two things that are trendy, but I don't really care. I don't think I'm a typical sorority girl. I don't think I'm sororitastic. I don't wear the pearls with the t-shirt, polo shirts with earrings, reef flip flops, bangs, and short skirts - well, maybe the short skirts were last year, the Ugg boots were last year. I'm not to up to date with this stuff. Jenny and I always say our motto is wear whatever you feel like wearing and if it doesn't really match wear it anyways.

March 31, 2007

6:34pm

I got a letter today from one of the older sisters today just saying that she hopes I have a good week. I thought that was so sweet. It means a lot to me that I am in Zeta Chi because it is just so nice to be able to come back and see everybody having lunch together or dinner together. I love that the cooking is done for us. It is so nice to not have to worry about that.

April 1, 2007

11:12pm

Even though I love college I sometimes feel like there's a lot of stuff I try to cram in for my classes, for extracurriculars, for my resume, and work, and some days I really enjoy it, but some days it just seems like so much to do. I am a little worried about my grades because they aren't the best. I keep going out...I guess because that is what you do in college, but my grades are suffering I think. I mean I came in thinking I didn't have to study but two days before a test, but I don't think that works very well. I mean I go to the student learning center to study, but I take a study break and it becomes instead of 5 minutes like a 20 minute break because it's a pretty social place and of course I end up saying hi to like ten thousand people. I really need to get better habits for studying. I feel guilty my grades aren't that good.

April 3, 2007

7:12pm

We are going out on the town tonight. Jenny just asked me to do her makeup cuz she never does it and we are trying to look cute for guys or whatever, plus other people are going to be cute dressed up too. I think tonight I am going to wear my new dress because I'll see more people than if I just wore it to classes. I mean I don't care about impressing people in class, most of the students are girls so I don't really have anyone to dress up for or impress...I mean, this year my classes aren't necessarily the classes I would ideally look for a boyfriend in so I'm not going to try and wear my cute stuff unless I'm going out. I love dressing up when Jenny and I go downtown because people are a lot more complementative.

April 17, 2007

2:56am

I just got home from Bronze River and while I was hanging out with the girls this guy came up to the bar and we started talking and he was like "oh you look really nice" and I was like "nice to meet you," but to make a long story short I have a date tomorrow night!!! He was like, "Can I take you out to eat?" and I said sure because he looked really, really cute. We are meeting tomorrow at Yamato Grill because I didn't want to have him pick me up in case he is sketchy. I mean he seemed really nice, but I don't want him to know where I live just yet. I am so excited!

April 18, 2007

4:55pm

I am on my way to meet Chris for our date. I told Jenny where I am going just in case. I mean I don't really know this guy. I have decided I want to look cute, but not too dressed up so I am wearing my small tan heels, my tan khaki skirt with the slit, not too much, and my light blue top with the low neck and middle bow with my pearl earrings and my hair down. I am nervous! Wish me luck!

8:35pm

Oh my goodness! I am sooo embarrassed! It turns out that Chris is a lot older than I remember. I guess it was kind of hard to see in the bar. He definitely has gray hairs and is a car mechanic and it was horrifying and I didn't know what to do because I wanted to leave. What do you do when you have a situation like that? I mean I'm not even of age to drink and he was talking about his life and I was like "Oh God, how long have you been around?" I never asked his age, but he is definitely too old for me. I mean he looked really cute in the bar, I mean he is attractive, but I don't think I could tell he had gray hair because of the lighting and it was so embarrassing!! I left and I was just kinda like well, nice to meet you. Remind me to never never say yes to a date from someone at the bar. Where were my girlfriends when I needed them?

April 24, 2007

5:23pm

Oh my goodness. You know those little short skirts that were in, the flowing ones, actually I guess those were last year and still are, but today I saw a girl walking on campus and her skirt flew up and she was wearing a thong or something and I was like why would you wear a thong with a skirt like that? But anyway, the wind blew her skirt up and everyone saw her butt and I was like, "Oh my goodness," but she didn't think it was a big deal! Can you believe it?

April 25, 2007

12:24pm

I got woken up this morning at like 4am because Sam needed a shoulder to cry on. I guess she found out that Laura likes the same guy that she has been trying to get the attention of - some kid named Chad. Sam thinks that Laura is so much prettier so of course Chad is going to want Laura and not her. There is always so much drama around guys. I mean, of course there is going to be some overlap about who likes who because there are only so many guys in one fraternity and then

there are even less cute ones to pick from. I mean it is bound to happen. I guess Laura should have noticed that Sam was hanging out with Chad at the past couple of events, but maybe she wasn't paying as much attention as she should be. That is why I don't compete for guys, there is too much drama. And anyways, it could just be a rumor because Sam heard it from Christine who heard it from some guy friend of Chad's. I told Sam not to worry because it probably isn't even true and if it is she is much prettier than Laura could ever be. My goodness! After she left I was like why am I up at 4 in the morning? but I guess it is for a reason and because she would do the same for me. It's so nice to have that proximity of being together. I'm so glad we are all going to move into the sorority house next year. I bet we'll get even closer.

April 28, 2007

10:35pm

Recently I've started to try and take a little bit more time to look decent for class, like showering in the morning or putting on a little makeup or straightening my hair. Not necessarily to impress anyone, but I think you feel better when you look decent or look nice or presentable. I mean, I can't stay up to whatever is cute and fashionable because I don't have the budget nor do I think it is necessary, but sometimes I see people wearing things and it works and so I'm like oh okay I can wear that too. The silly thing is that our motto to wear what we want whether it matches or not has caught on because now the trend is to wear things that don't match...like t-shirts with skirts and pearls. I guess it just picks up and becomes a trend. Jenny and I kinda laugh to ourselves about it.

RESEARCHER INSIGHTS

It was very interesting for me both personally and professionally to construct this diary because it forced me to grapple with many of my own issues around gender. Although I only knew Julie for a short period, the amount of time I took reading and re-reading her story connected me to both her and her experiences in ways that helped to highlight my own navigation of discourses of femininity. In particular, my connection with Julie helped to position me within her stories

and therefore within my own struggles of who I might be and how I might see myself as a woman. I have been able to take time to explore not only my own understanding of being a woman, but also the critical feminist and post-structural theories that I have spent so much time reading. This project gave me the space to try and connect some of those theories to my lived experiences of being and becoming a woman. I am excited to share my experiences. Below I will take you on my personal journey, just as I have taken you on Julie's.

I'm sad to say that I may not have started my journey on the same page as Julie. I should reveal a bit about my first impressions of Julie to show how far I have come. I shouldn't say that they were necessarily impressions of her as much as they were my impressions of Southern sorority women. From my first experiences at our Southern university, I was embarrassed for sorority women. I considered them sad examples of women, catering to current fashion, men, and trends. I saw them as ditsy girls, with fake tans, bleached teeth, highlighted hair, and sequined purses. Looking back, I think that I focused so much on these behaviors because I was struggling with decisions about my own appearance—wishing my teeth were whiter, my skin were clearer, and that I could fit into current trendy clothes. Unlike many people who often felt comfortable making their distaste for sorority women known to me, even in my contempt there was curiosity and almost a whimsical longing to be like them. Unlike people who wanted to assume they understood sorority women, label them as trivial, and laugh at their foolishness, I wondered what it was like to be a woman in a sorority.

This got me thinking and I started to ask myself questions: What ideals, pressures, or expectations existed for Southern sorority women? How do Southern sorority women understand themselves and grapple with all the expectations surrounding them? Is there more behind the behaviors, dress, and actions of these sorority women than meets the eye?

These are the questions that started me on my journey with Julie the day we first met to do our interview. They are the questions I am still struggling with and the questions that led to my larger post-structural feminist ethnographic study that I eventually completed for my doctoral dissertation. I hope that through revealing my initial and current struggles with these questions, the path I took to move from assuming sorority girls were ditsy blondes to better understanding them as complex women navigating complicated discursive terrain will become more clear. That path began with my interview with Julie and my exploration into Southern sorority culture.

Friends have always asked me why I was so particularly interested in Southern sororities considering that I was from the North and had never been in a sorority of any sort. The real reason I was so interested in sororities in the South was because I had found Southern sorority culture to be of a different vein than the sororities I was used to in upstate New York. A few of my friends were in sororities

at their schools and I got a pretty good picture of sorority life just from hanging out with them.

To me, compared the sorority culture I had experienced in New York, the Southern sororities I observed seemed to have an even more defined expectation of femininity or a more specific definition of how a woman “should” be. Perhaps reminiscent of the Christian traditions, college football cultures, and notions of Southern belles, the Southern culture I was introduced to seemed to produce more strongly defined notions of what “women” and “men” should be like than the Northern culture in which I was raised (Berbary, 2012; Scott, 1984; St. Pierre, 1995). What these more defined expectations of femininity meant to me was that individuals within these cultures became extremely pressured to become certain types of women and men in order to fit very stringent expectations of being (Berbary, 2012; Shaw, 2008). Julie sometimes talked about these pressures when she asked questions about why presidents of sororities always felt like they had to be thin or when she discussed how girls felt like they had to get “done up” with makeup, clothing, hairstyles, and shoes just to go out.

I should probably clarify that when I say “Southern” (or “Northern” for that matter) I do not mean for it to seem that I think that all “Southern” women are the same. In fact to assume so would be terribly incorrect—a poor White woman from Alabama may have a very different understanding of “Southern” than a rich Black woman from North Carolina. I don’t want to reinforce that Southern culture is homogenous or easily defined—I know Southern culture is complex and multifaceted. However, there are cultural distinctions between different parts of our country based on our history, and while women from different Southern states may have very different understandings of Southern culture, they still live in a part of the country with a shared history. Scott (1984) talked about what it meant to be a Southern lady and concluded that the role for women in the South was often more confined than in other parts of the country. St. Pierre (1995) also wrote about Southern woman and recognized that “Southern” women were shaped by particular shared historic influences such as specific notions of race and patriarchy, and memories of lynching, slavery, and war. In other words, when I talk about Southern women I know there are millions of ways to understand what it means to be “Southern.” However, because different parts of our country have such different cultures, values, and historical influences, I felt that in order to contextualize this discussion it was important to use the label of “Southern” both as a location and as a cultural identifier—even if the label has multiple understandings.

Therefore, it appeared to me that based on these geographic and cultural differences Southern culture had fairly specific definitions of what it meant to be an appropriate woman or man. These defined expectations seemed to me to be even more magnified within the Southern Greek systems. This is because the whole

Greek system is organized to differentiate between men and women with many of the perspectives on men and women are trapped in “Truths” I worry are often narrowly defined, strongly enforced, and at times oppressive (Berbary, 2012).

In particular, when reading about fraternity culture, it shows that fraternity culture revolves around and is often defined by fairly specific notions of masculine camaraderie, loyalty, sexuality, and power (Martin & Hummer, 1989). Although these qualities aren’t necessarily negative, Martin & Hummer discussed how these qualities in frats at times have led to problems—particularly in relation to drinking and women. For example, they specifically discussed that when women are raped or sexually abused at fraternity parties, the loyalty instilled in the frat sometimes keeps individual men from stepping up to hold their brothers accountable for such inexcusable behavior. Also, very masculine notions of heterosexual sexuality have increased homophobic and sexist attitudes, and have set up beliefs that men are somehow entitled to female bodies (Hoover & Creamer, 1997; Martin & Hummer, 1989, Robbins, 2004).

Sometimes these notions of loyalty and camaraderie set up a binary—that is a two part system where one part is considered better than the other—where those frats are loyal to, in this case other men, tend to be considered better than those outside of the frat group, in this case men not like “us” and women. This type of exclusionary camaraderie and loyalty can be dangerous because rather than supporting the inclusion of others, it instead serves to further define boundaries of difference, reinforcing an “us vs. them” mentality. This mentality gives the in-group power that might not exist outside of this relationship to each other. This power can create situations in which individuals of the in-group lack empathy for those outside the group and mistreat or misuse those excluded. I was able to witness this power and differential treatment of those outside of the in-group first hand because one of my best friends during college was in a frat. Even then I recognized that something just seemed unfair about the way his frat brothers could so easily disrespect sorority women in ways they would never think to disrespect a fellow brother. We all chalked it up to “guys being guys”—a phrase that now makes me cringe as it passes off the potential to act as individuals or to decide for oneself not to be disrespectful, as the innate and indisputable Truths of a group, in this case all males who can’t help but be disrespectful as though it’s in their blood—something I simply cannot believe in.

Yet, still I want to be very careful because I’m not claiming that this happens in all frats or that qualities of loyalty, camaraderie, and power are irrefutably dangerous. However, sometimes the combination of these qualities upheld in a very narrowly defined hyper-masculine setting can blind individuals to alternative ways of thinking, being, acting, loving, and living. This to me is just as oppressive to the fraternity men as it may be to those they in turn expect to fulfill that which they are not—in this case sorority women.

I choose to first talk about fraternities only because that is where most research on the Greek system begins. What tends to happen in research on the Greek system is that fraternities are the focus, the privileged side of the binary, while sororities are often the afterthought, the add-on, the other half of the binary. This sets up research in which fraternities are seen as the norm, the first, the original, creating a situation in which sororities are most often only discussed in relation to fraternities. I don't believe it is only fraternities that influence sororities and never the other way around. I think that both sororities and fraternities are in a constant process of feeding off of each other—the institutions themselves navigating through relations of power, sometimes equally contributing, other times taking the lead or the backseat.

Julie even spoke about this in her own interview where she discussed the different privileges of fraternities and sororities. She mentioned frats could have parties at their house, but that sororities were not able to. She mentioned that even if a frat wants to hold a party with her sorority, as a sorority you have the right to kindly decline. These kinds of interactions between sororities and fraternities set them up with different positions of power at different times. Therefore, I do not only see sororities as secondary to fraternities but rather that they are caught in ever-changing relations of power held by and held over sororities and fraternities depending on the situation, time, place, and tradition. I know that while sometimes each works against each other, they also share supportive relationships.

So finally back to Southern sororities. Since sororities often understand themselves in relation to fraternities, I'd propose that sometimes sorority women are expected to be "extremely feminine" in reaction to fraternity men's extreme masculinity. In other words, potentially the forced masculinity found within fraternities in turn enables, or perhaps at times even demands, an equivalent defined femininity within sororities. For example, a large part of the very heterosexual masculinity in fraternities expects female counterparts. Therefore, sororities, because they are set up in a system that juxtaposes frat men against sorority women, by default fill that expectation. This then creates a very strong and often narrowly defined expectation of appropriate femininity within sorority culture (Berbary, 2012). So the way I see this entire process is simply that the already specifically defined expectations of gender in Southern culture are taken up, reinforced, and magnified in relation to extreme expectations of masculinity in fraternities—then taken up, reinforced, and magnified in sororities as they create relationships with fraternities within the Greek system. Julie often told me stories about sorority houses having to get new pipes because so many women were puking to lose weight that the acid corroded them. She also spoke of a sorority where current members with a magic marker circled the "fat" on the bodies of new members to indicate problem areas on which they had to improve. Whether these "legends" are true or not, the messages they send out indicate heavy expectations of thin-

ness linked to feminine beauty—maybe even more magnified than outside of the Greek system.

Why this is all so interesting to me is not because all sorority women fulfill these magnified expectations, but because Julie and her friends experiences illuminated the ways that women were able to navigate their ways through and around such expectations—something I still felt like I had such trouble doing. Growing up in a small upstate New York college town I was presented with multiple views or a broad spectrum of how women could be. I knew women who never shaved, who dated women, who dated men, who became men, who were midwives, who were car mechanics, who were fashionable, who wore overalls, and who had breast implants. In a sense, I was provided with multiple views of “acceptable” femininity providing me with competing discourses or options concerning ways to express my own femininity. And still, I am so confused, so influenced by media and by traditional expectations of femininity that even with all my experiences and understandings of femininity I still find myself struggling to weave my way among those ways of being I am attracted to versus those I feel the pressure to uphold to “fit into” society. Sometimes expectations are so pervasive that it is difficult to even recognize that they might not be an “innate” attribute, but rather just something that society expects of us.

Expectations can make us feel pressured to be certain ways—like for instance to not shave our heads if we want to be read as “feminine” by dominant culture—but sometimes this can be even more complicated. Rather than being “expectations of norms” that you and I may become aware of by “reading” societal and cultural messages—like for instance the expectation I am aware of that makes me feel that women should be married by a certain age or, as Julie talked about a lot, the expectation that college kids drink—expectations can also be so ingrained into our understanding of the world that we can’t even see them as expectations and we just take them for granted as fact. What I mean by us “taking them for granted” is that we might fulfill these expectations thinking they are “innate” or “natural” behaviors when they potentially are simply just another set of expectations of norms created or enforced within culture (Foucault, 1979; Butler, 1990). One good example of this that I can think of is when Heather told Julie that “it takes girls to drink to do anything, but guys can kiss anytime, it doesn’t matter.” She said this to her as though there is some biological, natural Truth to the idea that all girls need to drink to want to kiss, but that all boys will just kiss anytime. She makes it seem like this is “just how it is” when really most of it is just how society has positioned men vs. women.

Another example that often plays out in my own life is related to the idea that “all women make good mothers.” How many times have we heard that women are “natural born nurturers” and that all women, no matter what they say, deep down want to have babies? I’ve heard it quite a bit, especially as I get closer to my

mid-thirties. Well these ideas that are really just cultural constructions concerning “what it means to be female” are often naturalized—seen as the natural Truth of things in culture because they are repeated, stereotyped, and played upon until they are no longer questioned, but simply passed forward. They are continuously taken up by institutions, media, and individuals and reinforced as “reality.” Think back to some favorite childhood books and movies—how many of them reinforced the idea that women’s gift is giving birth, that women are good at being mothers, and women want nothing more than to be mothers. It is no wonder we might believe as a fact that all women=nurturers. Because of these processes of naturalization, we might take this idea of women being good mothers for granted as Truth. However, when we can take or make the space to step back and take a broader look at this equation, there are in actuality multiple opinions on the subject, some of which indicate that many women do not want to have babies, that many women are not natural nurturers, that many women biologically cannot have babies, and that men can be just as successful as nurturing parental figures as women. So then what becomes of this declaration that all women should be and want to be mothers? Should it still be seen as an innate fact of women?

Consider the story of my friend Sara. I’ll never forget the day Sara came home enraged about how yet another person reacted when she told them she didn’t want to have kids. “You’ll change her mind when you’re ready,” people would all respond. She was so angry—why couldn’t they understand that just because she was a woman it didn’t mean that she automatically wanted to give birth and be a mother? She was infuriated that even while she could break away from her own expectations of giving birth, recognize it was not an “innate” Truth for all women, and even choose not to give birth, there was still what seemed like to her a systematic attempt by others to coax her into fulfilling this role they felt she was born to fill, a role they expected women to fill because it was the most natural, innate behavior for all women.

And it is this belief in some innateness or natural state of a woman, this belief in expectations of “fact” in general, that is questioned by the theories I read. The post-structural feminist theories make me question this innateness and ask why such expectations are considered Truth, where they come from, and how we come to understand them, maybe choose to reproduce them, maybe resist them, or maybe make new expectations of our own (Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1979; St. Pierre, 2000). In the end, what her story made clear to me was that while she and I as individuals have some choice about what expectations we fulfill, there are other processes always already at work that pressure us in certain directions. They pressure us in multiple directions, creating consequences for our participation in, lack of participation in, or re-creation of expectations of norms. In particular, they push us toward those expectations of “fact” which to me are just expectations of norms disguised as fact or Truth.

It is these expectations masquerading as Truth that I have the most interest in—I think it is because they are the most elusive. For instance, I'd venture to note that there are Truth-disguised expectations that we are fulfilling at this moment and we probably don't even begin to recognize them. Maybe we are sitting in some fashion, dressed in a particular style, or feeling a certain way based on notions of how women should be. But we can't even see it...not unless we step back and look more broadly and even then it can be almost impossible to "see" (Frye, 1983).

Both these expectations of norms and expectations of "fact" play with each other and with you and me so that we sometimes feel the pressure to conform to certain ways of being. In particular I see these expectations weaving in and out of the beliefs, actions, organization, and practices of individuals, groups, and institutions creating templates for how I should exist as a woman, because I am called a woman, because I was born with certain anatomy. And my feeling is to be skeptical of those individuals, or groups, or institutions that try to make me feel like I have to be, like, want, or love certain things, or live in certain ways just because I am called a woman. Just because they have decided that there is some "Truth" to being a woman or a man that should shape how I dress, act, talk, walk, and exist.

If "Truth" or "fact" is so difficult to differentiate from socially created or produced norms, if "Truth" maybe is always already only cultural norm, how inappropriate does it then seem to pressure me to act in certain ways based on this "Truth"? This "Truth" is simply the way that a culture or society at a specific historical moment creates a specific atmosphere for a specific way of being. If we are released from these "Truths" can we imagine the possibilities that might surface, develop, or shift shape? While I feel that expectations of both femininity and masculinity are interesting and at times may be useful aspects of our culture, I believe, like my friend Sara felt, that when they are narrowly defined and strongly enforced they become oppressive.

I've tried to make a distinction between those expectations we may be able to see as norms and therefore potentially resist, and those we may see as facts, and potentially not consider possible to resist. While I am arguing that both kinds of expectations are simply constructions of societies and cultures, the norms are much easier for us to recognize ourselves participating in than those disguised as facts. Through speaking with Julie and reading post-structural feminism, I have come to understand our participation in the fulfillment of both kinds of expectations through both performance of womanliness (Riviere, 1929) and performativity (Butler, 1990).

How do we fulfill, participate in, or perform femininity based on these expectations? I actually like the term "perform" femininity because I think it has numerous meanings. One way I see the idea of performing femininity is just as we might think of an actor performing. An actor receives messages about how to

act, dress, speak, sing, walk, etc., and then “performs” in those ways. On one level I see us “performing” our femininity in this way. We have been taught the norms of how to act, dress, speak, sing, walk, love, and live in ways that are appropriately feminine based on societal and cultural expectation. We accept those messages, as an actor accepts hers, and we then perform them in the ways that gain us acceptance in our lives (Riviere, 1929). For example, Julie often spoke about things she felt one is supposed to do as a college student—she mentioned going out for birthdays, drinking, dressing cute, and smooching guys after a certain number of dates.

Because we are actors in this form of performance we can make choices by choosing from the possible norms presented to us. It is almost as though we can stand in front of a closet and pick and choose among the dresses that are hanging there. We can't choose a dress that is not there, but within those dress options, we as the actor can make our own choice. We may even choose to resist wearing the dresses the way they are and make a stand by shortening them, lengthening them, rearranging them, or making something else completely out of their material. But even when we do that, we still only have those dresses to start from—we can't create something that doesn't already begin with the material of the dresses. This is a good description of the way we might resist or re-create those expectations I always talk about. We might resist or re-create ourselves, but we are still limited by what choices are already “hanging in our closet.”

We are “performing” femininity in this sense when we look at individual women and comment on what they are wearing, whom they have or haven't slept with, or how their hair is worn. We are looking at them as individual actors choosing to perform themselves to others in specific ways—ways that may reinforce, resist, or re-create the expectations pressuring them. However, this is somewhat superficial and begs deeper questions of how does she become an actor, how does she make her choices, and what influences her to perform in these ways. This leads us to a discussion of another way I see the idea of “performing” femininity. This next performing of femininity is for me more closely connected to the ways we often blindly fulfill those elusive expectations considered fact.

Questioning this idea of how we become these actors, how these actors make choices, and what influences them brings me to Judith Butler's (1990) theory of performativity. Truthfully, many people mistake her idea of “performativity” as the type I explained above where actors act. However, this is a misconception of Butler's theory. You see, for her there is no actor—and this is where it gets complicated.

In this second way of “performing,” there is not an actor choosing to act out certain norms of societies or cultures. Instead, there is no actor behind the action, but rather the actor only exists through the action it performs. I try to break this down for myself by thinking of this scenario: You are sitting in a dark room.

Someone enters but cannot see her. Until she acts by saying hello or making some noise, she does not exist to you. It is only after the action occurs that it can be attributed to her and that she exists.

For me these performative acts that constitute us to be perceived as legitimized actors are not the same kind of actions as picking a dress from a closet. When I talk about picking that dress there is a clear sense that the “actor” knows what she wants and makes a choice to act on it. Instead the actions of performativity are more closely connected to those elusive expected acts we take part in because they are considered the Truth or fact of how we should be. I see performativity caught up in those expectations I often blindly consider Truth only because they have been repeated over and over until I can no longer see them otherwise (Butler, 1990). It is by looking for this type of performance of gender, the performativity of gender, that we will be able to start an exploration that gets below the purses, dresses, makeup, and hairstyle of sorority women and begins to make connections among culture, society, groups, and individuals, and all the expectations caught up in between. It is difficult to recognize when we are fulfilling such performatively constituted Truth-disguised expectations, but I think that the first step is looking at the performative practices of women in order to begin exposing both those expectations and the fulfillment of them.

If we could somehow expose these women’s complicated negotiations of femininity, if we could get those people who see sorority women as frivolous girls to understand how complicated and drenched in expectation some of their ways of being are, then perhaps those same people could begin to see both their own complicated lived experiences and those of others. When people begin to see how complicated most people’s experiences are, they might be less quick to write off, clamp up, ignore, and dismiss. They might be more understanding, take more time to learn, take more time to teach, and make the time to change—both themselves and others.

My interview with Julie provided me with a place to begin an exploration of how both she and I, and potentially how many women, have woven our ways among our own contradictory messages of who we should be, how we should act, and ultimately how we are constituted through repeated performative acts in these worlds created around us, both for us and by us. In listening to her, I felt her experiences were similar to my experiences of becoming a woman. As I discussed earlier, some people talk about women and men as though there is some Truth to how we are supposed to feel, behave, act, love, and look based on our anatomy. Some act as though the moment someone exclaims “It’s a girl!” or “It’s a boy” we all of a sudden are defined in totality. That somehow the act of being born biologically with certain genitalia all of a sudden determines our fate—whether we’ll like sports or cooking, whether we’ll like blue or pink, whether we’ll date women or men, whether we’ll be logical or emotional.

Because ways of being women and men have been naturalized in society, it becomes difficult to “see” the violence in the expectation that when I’m called out as a woman I immediately must exist in certain ways. Just like my friend Sara talked about being expected to want to be a mother, when I’m called a woman it is often assumed that I “should” cook, be a mother, clean, take care of others, cry at sad movies, and wear clothing that shows off my body. And too, if I were called a man then it is often assumed that I’d like sports, eat meat, head the household, enjoy driving fast cars, and be good at the grill. Some people think these likes and activities stem from some “innate” qualities of our anatomy—those same people often ignore the fact that societies already provide us with boundaries within which we are expected to live—they provide us with the dresses in our closets, with the certain ways we can think, act, express ourselves, and understand others.

When I feel forced, without question, to live out certain expectations based on my inclusion in the category of “woman,” I feel outrage. I feel panic. I feel trapped. But with great power always comes great possibility for resistance and re-creation (Foucault, 1979) and so I seek ways to break through, create new, mis-repeat (Butler, 1990) and re-verse these expectations. Ways to take little steps within my own experiences to challenge myself and others to see differently, expect less, and try more. To see that anatomy does not need to define me, to stop expecting that I always act in “appropriate” ways, to play around with and try out new ways of being. Looking back, maybe my first attempt to see differently and to persuade others to think differently was when I choose to cut short my waist length hair. I troubled what made people feel comfortable and uncomfortable. I challenged what made me female, feminine, a woman.

And to me this is the point—to mix things up, open them up, and lighten them up—to make room for multiple possibilities of being. Not to re-define women in some other terms, but to leave the term “women” open for anything. To be able to see a shaved head as being as much of an indicator of femininity as long highlighted hair, to open up the potential for a shaved head Southern sorority sister to be just as possible.

These cracks and openings create competing expectations for women. Julie also saw these competing expectations. She talked about them all the time in her interview acknowledging how she had to balance expectations to be to a good girl, but not too good; how to drink, but not too much; how to dress so her look attractive but not too sexy. These are the kind of contradictions that are everywhere, especially in our current culture. This is where navigation of expectations comes in, where Julie’s interview and our co-constructed diary provided the room to explore these contradictions, negotiations, and navigations and expose daily experiences for their complicated realities. If just one person reads this diary and begins to question herself, her culture, her society, and makes sure that the choices she

makes are ones she wants to make, rather than ones she feels she has to make—then I feel we have done the work of moving towards “doing things differently.”

Lisbeth A. Berbarly is an Assistant Professor of Educational Research specializing in qualitative research methodologies. She earned her Ph.D in Leisure Studies at the University of Georgia with graduate certificates in both interdisciplinary qualitative research and women’s studies. Her overall line of inquiry uses critical and post-structural feminist theory to deconstruct how individuals participating in community spaces negotiate issues of stigma, stereotype, and discrimination in relation to both traditional and alternative notions of gender, race, ability, class, and sexuality. She is particularly drawn to qualitative research informed by the postmodern turn and creative analytic practice. For the past six years, she has taught classes in the fields of qualitative research, leisure studies, therapeutic recreation, and women’s studies. Currently, she serves as an associate editor for Leisure Sciences and is the advisor of the graduate Qualitative Inquiry Circle (QUIC) in the School of Education.

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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN TWO KNIGHTS MEET ON THE ETHICAL FIELD OF INQUIRY?

GERARD KENNY

This paper explores how the internal process of the researcher and the external process of the research process interact. It seeks to illustrate how my encounter as a researcher with a spiritual healer was negotiated through use of philosophy, story archetypal myth, numerology, cognitive breathing and symbol. The paper explores how these divergent factors come together as part of an ongoing process that was synthesised to give me a deeper appreciation of how I might respond to internal and external ethical complexity.

Key words: Healer, philosophy, Knight of Infinite resignation, Knight of Faith, imagination, symbol

This experiential account emerges out of contact I had with a person I shall call Jonathan. I met Jonathan when conducting research into the processes that individuals go through in their journey to becoming a spiritual healer. Unlike other members of the sample Jonathan was unusual in that prior to becoming a healer he had spent his life in the world of natural sciences. He describes his attitude as, 'if I could not see it, it did not exist.' Jonathan's process of change to becoming a healer was dramatic and precipitated by some challenging personal circumstances. However, these are not the focus of my inquiry. Jonathan

expressed some strong personal views and opinions on telling the truth and also confronting injustice where he saw it. The exploration of these points of discord between me and the account given by Jonathan were played out in the arena of my ethical position and understanding.

RESEARCH AND PROCESS

Moustakas (1990) advocates that if a research process is followed conscientiously it has the potential to bring about a transformation in the researcher. In keeping with Moustakas's theory my account of this process is exploratory in nature rather than eliciting a central hypothesis or demonstrating a coherent theory. Hustvedt (2003) describes this as being like trying to navigate the path of breadcrumbs left by Hansel after the birds have flown down and eaten them at sunrise. Consequently, the research process unfolds through experience and moves intuitively rather than through a formal technique. This lack of alignment with a specific technique is in keeping with what Moustakas (1990) describes as a path that 'lacks a restraining leash.' Jaspers (2003) understood this lack of a formal technique to be a crucial form of 'philosophical thought' that had the potential to create a dynamic space where we might deepen our understanding of ourselves. Polanyi (1974, p. 381) felt that such knowing through personal experience had the potential to 're-equip us with the faculties which centuries of critical thought had taught us to distrust.'

Kierkegaard's Contribution

Even the most open of inquiry processes can benefit from some guidance and help. The key text that I used to help me navigate my experience with Jonathan was Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* (2003). The title felt to be consistent with the inquiry as it taken from the book of *Philippians* (2, 12) 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.' Like creative approaches to research it suggests that these journeys are not undertaken lightly; they require a great deal of effort and focus. Kierkegaard asks, what is 'true' existence? He offers that authentic existence does not consist in conforming to regular civic life. On the contrary, the characteristics of moving towards authenticity are feelings of uncertainty, fear, trembling, distress, and anxiety.

Kierkegaard (2003) explores three stages in life which he identifies as being the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious. These stages are '*spheres of existence*', they are always present in our lives and overlap with each other. I use this framework to explore how I engaged with some ethical tensions in the research process. The paper is divided into three parts. The first outlines Kierkegaard's framework. The second part explores how the healer's words and the process of numerology

highlighted some of my own ethical blind spots. The third part explores this further in the context of another encounter.

Aesthetic Sphere

Kierkegaard's first sphere is the aesthetic which is linked to the experience of physicality and sensuality. The aesthetic is a world that is governed by the senses, and initially this is where Jonathan's story begins as he describes himself as someone who if he could not see it, it did not exist. Kierkegaard understands that an exclusive focus on this sphere of existence makes it very difficult to commit to anything else. Kierkegaard identifies that if the aesthetic is pursued to the exclusion of all else, it will at some point create a sense of dissatisfaction for what it can offer. For Jonathan, this comes about when he finds himself alone and homeless and having to move in with his aunt. However, there needs to be a note of caution in focusing on just the negative aspect of this sphere because to do so would be to potentially miss the benefits of this realm of experience. Kierkegaard recognises that there is a momentum and energy that comes with the aesthetic that is crucial in contributing to a movement through the other phases. Jonathan does have this quality as he follows his need to find out more and explore the new realm of experience that opens with his exposure to healing. The aesthetic offered Jonathan directness, a willingness to go with things without being paralysed by wider reflection. His willingness to experiment stood in contrast to my more cautious, contemplative approach.

Ethical Sphere

The aesthetic also holds within it the potential to move away from being self absorbed to becoming concerned for others and the wider community. Kierkegaard believes that the ethical sphere increases in importance when this occurs. In this unfolding dialectic, the ethical stands in contrast to the aesthetic; where the aesthetic is about the particular, the ethical is about the universal. If the aesthetic was symbolised by the image of a seducer chasing after unrequited love, the ethical is symbolised by marriage. The ethical is not about the pursuit of individual or temporary pleasures but rather the relinquishing of these in the face of higher claims that might be made by society, nationality or religion.

While the ethical had a presence throughout the research process it was with Jonathan's depiction that it became an issue that challenged me. Externally, I had met the ethical requirements of the research; I had sought approval through an ethics committee, in my consent form I highlighted my ethical responsibility to the participants in terms of their rights, and I was sensitive to the implications of good ethical practice in the context of qualitative research designs. I had taken these codes for granted as being the 'right' way to do things. I had also internalised these codes as part of my life. I had been in a profession where I adhered to an

ethical code of conduct and had used it to justify my actions and protect myself in times of professional vulnerability. These objective principles made sense to me and I had internalised them and used them to guide my subjective experience. In doing so, I was aligning my objective and subjective world to a branch of ethics known as deontological ethics, which seeks to identify what the fundamental ethical duties are. Codes of conduct and research ethics seek to set out as clearly as possible what is right and wrong. In this way deontological ethics provide a framework for human thought and activity (Darwell, 2002).

In Jonathan's depiction these principles were challenged by him and other events that occurred at the same time. Primary among this challenge was Jonathan's subjective response to being confronted. As already identified, Jonathan's willingness to follow his subjective feelings had been crucial in his development as a healer and his transformation. Yet in other areas, I felt a clash, a feeling of dissonance, between myself and the depiction and even admitted to Jonathan that I was struggling to find a way into his story. At the heart of this lay Jonathan's confrontations at work, 'If they want to fight, I'll fight them on an Astral level as well. If there are certain people at work that are bullying other people then I have been known to get pretty nasty....So you know I can basically beat them up.' The second account which left me disturbed was an account of telling a close relative as to why they had contracted cancer. He felt his relative had to know and so 'told it straight'

Religious Sphere

The third sphere that Kierkegaard identifies is the religious. Kierkegaard offers that there are two forms of religiousness which he explored through the identification of two forms of Knights: one attached to the ethical dimension and the other attached to faith. There is an important point to be made here in that Kierkegaard does not use the term 'religious' in the sense of existing formal structures of the church, to which he was vehemently opposed. For Kierkegaard the loss of the individual meant a loss of individual freedom and offers that the relationship to the Absolute can only be a personal one and could not be mediated by church, state or indeed philosophy. Kierkegaard saw that the problem with the external societal structures was that they were inherited and so promoted repetition of experience.

Knight of Infinite Resignation (KoiR)

The realm of the religious sphere is expressed by two knights. The first Knight is the Knight of Infinite Resignation (KoiR). The movement of infinite resignation refers to the giving up of what is valued most for the sake of the universal. Reason is used to keep subjective responses locked within this way of thinking and behaving. Kierkegaard offers that the KoiR was exemplified by Agamemnon, who like Abraham of the Old Testament, was called to sacrifice a beloved child, in this case

his daughter Iphigenia. The cause of the sacrifice was an insult by Agamemnon to the Goddess of hunting, Artemis, who in turn sent a wind to keep Agamemnon's ships in harbour and prevent them from sailing on Troy. When seeking an answer to the problem, Agamemnon was told by the prophet Calchas that his daughter would have to be sacrificed to atone for the offence and enable the ships to sail. With his daughter sacrificed the winds abated and the fleet could sail. Therefore the needs of the many and the higher cause were met through the sacrifice of the individual and subjective.

In sacrificing his daughter, Agamemnon was adhering to the principle of the universal; it is the universal need of the fleet to meet its requirements to go to battle that is more important than the personal or subjective. One of the consequences of being a KoiR is that because of this adherence to universal principles over the personal the KoiR becomes a *tragic hero* because his or her actions can be explained. The KoiR may be pitied or praised but fundamentally, within the society in which they exist, their actions will be understood. These universal values are important and serve as guides and inspiration. However Kierkegaard offers that it is possible to take our frame of orientation from elsewhere for which he offers the personal and subjective.

Knight of Faith (KoF)

In contrast to Agamemnon, Kierkegaard offers the story of Abraham who performs the same action but from a different perspective. His sacrifice goes against the universal. Abraham was not interested in universal ethics but rather what drives him is his unique relationship with God. While both must give up what they love, they do so from different perspectives. Abraham must make a leap of faith in order to move out of the universal and into the personal. In doing so, he performs what Kierkegaard describes in his famous term '*teleological suspension of the ethical.*' In this sense, it refers to Abraham's suspension of the universal ethical principle of, "Thou shalt not kill", so that he could enter into a deeper and more personal relationship with God.

Abraham suspends his ethical beliefs for a higher end. Like the KoiR the Knight of Faith (KoF) must give up everything that he holds dear to him (in this case Isaac). Yet the KoF performs another movement that creates the double aspect and makes the leap. He believes that everything that he has given up will be restored to him by virtue of his belief in the absurd nature of Faith. So in this instance, Abraham believed that even though he would kill Isaac, his son would not be lost to him. Therefore, the KoF performs a double movement because he encompasses the movement of infinite resignation while also making a leap of faith. The KoF can therefore move between the finite and infinite. This has profound implications for Kierkegaard's interpretation of ethics. At the heart of the KoF lies a central paradox, for as Kierkegaard highlights, Abraham was either a

murderer or we are confronted by a paradox that defies mediation. Therefore, if the universal principle of thou shalt not kill, is the highest then Abraham is a murderer. If he is not a murderer, then Kierkegaard reasons, there must be something greater than the universal ethic. For Kierkegaard, it is the individual.

While I was grateful to Jonathan for his openness and honesty, aspects of the depiction challenged me, and the stereotypical image I had of healers as people of peace and non-violence. I wanted to learn from the depiction so rather than assessing these actions and responses against my usual habitual framework, I began to consider how Jonathan might be right in his approach. I had to acknowledge that I had spent most of my childhood and professional life learning ways of communicating with people that was not about ‘telling it like it was’ but rather couching things so that people had the capacity to recover from what might be said so that there might be potential for further communication. I had internalised these principles and they coloured and shaped my actions and speech. I reflected that there were now very few places where I spoke in a ‘straight’ way. I mediated my subjective responses so that they became measured and balanced regardless of how I really felt.

Summary of Part 1

There are three themes that emerge from my initial experience of Jonathan that were to shape and guide my experience. The first was that my encounter with Jonathan was inviting me to make a leap in my understanding. Bergson (2000) referred to this as a ‘*leap in being*’ and felt that the journey from a closed, to a more open experience, did not happen by degrees but through a sudden leap into a new form of consciousness. Even though I could draw on and rely on my subjective understanding, Jonathan’s depiction revealed to me that there were places where I was not prepared to rely on it.

The second theme grows out of the first; Jonathan’s story offered to me as the researcher an invitation into the subjective. For Kierkegaard and Moustakas, the movement into the personal and subjective requires a profound change in the person so that they become an instrument whereby the deeper meanings of their experience can come forth.

The third theme is conflict. Hegel (1979) described the process of inquiry as being one of *via negative*, and recognised that once a position was taken it would call forth its opposite. Hegel’s idea is that there is an inherent movement within us that will ensure that we seek out the dialectic. Yet this is not a path that we take easily or naturally, for the force of habit and the clinging to what is familiar ensures that this becomes a way of despair. Nietzsche (2008) advocated dialectic of unrelenting opposition, a state of continual warfare as a means of not settling on comfortable and inadequate views of the world. The invitation to make a leap

in my understanding and a deepening appreciation of the subjective took place against a backdrop of a conflict which forms the exploration part two.

PART TWO

As a researcher I reflected on how I might move more deeply into the potential invitation of Jonathan's account of his subjectivity. I felt drawn to explore further a small statement that Jonathan made when he said during the interview, 'I did my own numerology. I found out that I am on a life path 34/7. I am doing what I'm supposed to be doing.' Numerology is a system whereby details of a person's full name and birth date are used to give an indication of personal characteristics and qualities and what challenges/lessons that person might undergo in life (Decoz and Monte, 1993). I considered that if I tried to understand Jonathan and myself from a numerology perspective I might appreciate why and how we responded to the world in different ways.

So I wrote to Jonathan (again in an indirect way)

Dear

I have transcribed our time together and have been reflecting on the things that you shared.

What is interesting is that I haven't got to the heart of what you were saying. I suppose I am looking for an essence that runs through what you have said.

I have been thinking about the fact that you described yourself as a number seven in terms of numerology. I wonder if you have any information you would be willing to share about what the number seven represents. This also calls to me to look at what number I am as a way of working with the relationship with the transcript. This is an unusual request in a research context but I am keen to seek to honour and understand what you have shared and that this might help me deepen this process.

So, is there a simple way of working out my number that would be consistent and offering me some insight. If you know of a core text or website where I might find this I would be grateful.

Jonathan responded:

Gerard,

The 34/7 life path issues are trust, patience and emotional expression with faith in the spiritual processes in their life, finding security by giving practical help to others. The life task involves self discovery and integration of all the energies in

order to build a bridge between Heaven and Earth... A step by step process will assist them overcome self doubt and increase trust in all areas of life.

The 7 life path:

Individuals working on this Life Path are here to trust the spirit within them, in others and in the process of life so they feel safe to open up and share their inner beauty with the world. Their inner processing rather than external achievements are what matters to them most. Most 7's need their own space... When 7's come to trust their feelings, thoughts and instincts and intuitions then they evolve into a sense of love, wisdom and justice operating in the world. Trust begins with self trust but not thinking they trust with stored information, theories and ideas but a deeper trust of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels.

Here was part of an answer. I was working at a level of 'stored information, theories and ideas', Jonathan was not. I then asked for my numerology reading and my number was 29/11. Here is Jonathan's response:

Those on the 29/11 path are here to combine creativity with higher principles and integrity, finding ways to apply themselves in service of others. Many on this path are extremely creative but they need to work through issues of identity, balance and boundaries first.

The 2 aspect was:

These individuals are here to clarify the limits of their responsibility and learn to work with others in harmony, balance, and mutual support. They need to balance their sense of responsibility to others with their own needs and limits. Balance is about giving and receiving, about self and others

The 9 aspect was:

Those in a 9 life path are here to live with the highest of integrity, to align their life with their heart's intuitive wisdom, and to inspire others by their example. They need to work through their heart and do what feels right rather than what society dictates through Laws. Sometimes 9's get lost and search for spiritual inspiration from others rather than through themselves.

Jonathan also added his own observation:

In addition your personality traits appear to show you have an active mind and you highly value this ability although if taken too far you may worry too much for yours and others good. Another trait suggests once you mull things over and decide on a goal you have motivational drive to get things done, skills in courage, determination and will power.

While not all of the numerology account resonated with my actual experience there were key areas that were highlighted which had been central in the research process. Jonathan challenges me to consider what was right from an inward perspective rather than from the external values that society dictates. This dynamic was explored in the next sphere of existence – the religious.

PART THREE

Two Knights Meet

At the beginning of the research process I had enrolled on a course that sought to combine, movement, meditation, reflection, group work and experiential learning. I had been approached and asked if I wanted to enrol upon it and in the spirit of following what was before me I saw that it had potential to hold and express some of the subjective experiences of the research process. The teacher (to maintain anonymity I shall just refer to this person as the teacher) of the course could easily be described as a KoF. Kierkegaard (2003) asks: how would you recognise a KoF? For me there was a quality about the teacher which was summed up in The Gospel of St Thomas ‘If they ask you, ‘What is the sign of your father in you?’ say to them, ‘It is movement in repose’ (Ehrman, 2003, p.24). I did feel that this teacher carried this quality of movement in repose and conversely repose in movement that can only really come about through a profound integration of body, mind and spirit.

At the beginning of the course one of the participants left and the teacher spoke about this. The experience was used as a potential learning which at its heart was to explore what happens when we are confronted by the things on the course that are uncomfortable or challenging. The teacher asked, do we jump out or stay with them so that they can be transformed? I could see the value in what was happening yet I also felt very uneasy. At the heart of my concern was that the talk was recorded. All of my universal ethical principles came to the fore about talking about this participant who had not given consent and could not rely on data protection. Yet, I could also see that I had something to learn from the talk and that others were benefiting from what was being said and that no one else seemed to share my discomfort. Therefore I kept quiet.

The course was challenging and yet I found that I could never quite make the leap into what was being offered. I saw those around me changing and being transformed, yet I felt that there was a barrier that I could not overcome. Initially I saw this as my failing; I lacked Jonathan’s trust and willingness to move out of old frameworks and ways of being into something that was more consistent with a deeper reality. At the time I did not recognise that it was my KoiR which was at odds with the teacher’s KoF. Half way through the course they clashed.

Again someone left the course, and again the reasons for leaving were being explored in the context of the themes that had arisen. This time I did speak and expressed my discomfort about what was happening and that it was being recorded. The teacher responded that I was to listen first to what was said and then make a decision. As I listened I realised that the talk could have been given without reference to the participant; I felt that their 'rights' had not been acknowledged. At the end of the talk I approached the teacher and rather than expressing my anger at what had happened, I put it in the terms that I knew best: that this participant had rights and as the course leader the teacher had a right to protect them. The teacher became angry and asserted their right to speak and act as they saw fit. I was arguing in terms of universal principles, the teacher was arguing for their subjectivity, to act in a way that was in keeping with their truth and not the created truth of others. It ended with the teacher's angry recognition that I did not trust them.

I never really got over the confrontation nor regained any measure of my previous commitment and left the course without finishing it properly. The teacher was right; I did not trust. Yet in the confrontation there was a call to both of us; to the teacher, to recognise that the subjective inner world must take account of the outer social context. The teacher's invitation to me was to move in their direction, to claim my own subjective truth and speak from a place that was true, and take the risk rather than operate from the safety of frameworks and values created by others. I am also mindful that I could be guilty of the same error as the teacher. I have written about them and yet their perspective is not present and they do not have the right to reply. However, true to my internal KoiR, I have tried to be balanced; to recognise where they were right and where learning had arisen in the process. I have sought to maintain their anonymity and those of other participants.

Trusting the Tacit

Polanyi's famous aphorism, 'We know more than we can tell' describes the tacit dimension. Tacit knowing recognises that as humans we use knowledge that cannot be located into a pre-existing framework and may be difficult to articulate. Tacit knowing comprises a range of experience that might include conceptual and sensory information that can be used in flexible ways to become a unifying framework that makes sense of experience. For this reason Polanyi (1974) identifies that tacit knowledge precedes and underpins explicit knowledge. Tacit knowing has qualities of flexibility and will shift and change when new experiences are encountered. Yet because these processes lie deep within us, they are not part of our everyday consciousness. Moustakas (1990) identifies tacit knowledge as being,

the deep structure that contains the unique perceptions, feelings, intuitions, beliefs, and judgments housed in the internal frame of reference of a person that governs behaviour and determines how we interpret experience (Moustakas, 1990, p. 32).

Abraham's Shadow

My experience on the course and with Jonathan's depiction caused me to look at my own ethical standpoint differently and also to question deeply the standpoint of Jonathan, Kierkegaard and the teacher. I was not just a KoiR for within the tacit dimension of my experience I was making a judgment that was consistent with my internal framework. However, I choose to express these values not by using my subjective self informed by the tacit but through an explicit framework of pre-existing rules and regulations. Recognition that my explicit understanding of the situation was informed and guided by my tacit understanding enabled me to move forward and explore more deeply the unspoken shadow that lay beneath the call to make a subjective leap of faith.

I did this through a closer examination Kierkegaard's use of Abraham's story to express the leap of faith. Miller (1991) describes her response when coming across a picture of the sacrifice scene depicted by Rembrandt. [see figure1]

Figure 1 Sacrifice of Isaac



(Source: http://www.pbase.com/bill_adams/image/48140571)

In the painting Miller was struck by the image of Abraham's hand completely covering the face of Isaac, denying him sight, speech and breath. In the expression of one person's subjective truth (Abraham) another (Isaac) was silenced and bound. This had resonance with my experience in the encounter with the teacher; in his expression of freedom someone else was bound. Initially, it was one of the participants who had left the course that was bound; they had no sight of the proceedings and were given no air for their voice to be heard. We as a group were also bound, for as Perera (1986) identifies, when someone is cast out it leaves the remaining members 'guiltless' and so unable to look and see this guilt within them. In my encounter with the teacher, the teacher experienced my binding of them to a set of values that they perceived as inferior.

The consequence of recognising the shadow within the subjective leap of faith was that it allowed the dialectic process to come into greater relief and also balance. I was then faced with the challenge as to how I might find a sublated space that might hold the various tensions within this depiction. I sought to do this through the use of imagination which Moustakas (1990) identifies as having an intimate link with the tacit and intuitive in creating frameworks and structures that might bring us to greater understanding of our experiences.

Imagination

The capacity of imagination to make connections has long been recognised in the field of intuitive inquiry. Our ability to make pictures in our head brings into being an invisible world that can have an influence on our mind, bodies and soul. Kabat-Zinn (2001) has explored the use of imagery in relation to enhancing the healing capacities of the body. The Ulanov's (2008) understand that imagination can have a role to play in healing the divisions between psyche and spirit. Nielsen (2004) drawing on the work of Rudolph Steiner felt that imagination had the capacity to move between the material and the spiritual poles of human existence. Hillman (1989) agrees and sees imagination as an active force that can help overcome deep dialectical tensions. Dawkins (2006) identifies that this quality has been integral to our evolution as it allowed for the exploration of alternative solutions to a problem. The notion of imagination as unifying activity is taken up by Greene (1995) who argues that imagination is not something passive that requires our removal from the world, but rather it is something that might awaken us to action for that which was previously unseen; in doing so it can become a source of empathy.

Jaspers (2003) highlights that there are events in our life that can bring us into confrontation with ourselves and our world in a disturbing way. He describes these events as *boundary situations* because we come up against the edges of what we feel ourselves to be. Jaspers identifies that a characteristic of these situations that is that they cannot be overcome with recourse to our normal habitual ways

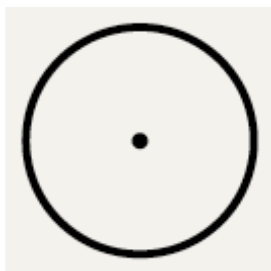
of thinking and reasoning. Rather, Jaspers offers that we must enter into the situation with an openness to having our personalities and world views re-shaped and altered by the experience. While I did not make a 'leap', I and the research did experience a shift and moved in a new way as I began to work with imagination in the context of a symbol.

Circumpunct

Jung (1997) acknowledges that symbols help us negotiate those experiences and phenomena that may sit on the edges of our human understanding. Jung identified that a symbol can facilitate an interaction between our conscious and unconscious spheres. Symbol derives from the Greek *symbolon*. It is constituted from two words, *syn* meaning together and *bolon* meaning to throw. Jung recognises that the power of symbols lay in their capacity to remain constant throughout generations of use while at the same time having the potential to point to something beyond them, to something deeper and greater. The potential to be more than they appear gives symbols deep roots which can be useful and powerful when accessed to enliven those aspects of the research with which they came into contact. Tillich (2001) was in agreement and saw that symbols had the capacity to express a dimension that was dormant or absent in our lives. Accessing and working with a symbol may provide some insight into hidden levels of reality which are inaccessible to our everyday ways or thinking and looking because

Einstein, speaking of how limited we can become in our understanding and interactions, spoke of the need to 'free ourselves from our prison by widening our circle' (Eves, 2004, p.60). During this period of the research I became interested in the symbol of a simple circle with a hole in the middle. I explored further and found that in a western context it was an archetypal image used to represent the sun or an expression of God. As an elemental symbol it did fit with Jonathan's depiction which felt that it had a lot of 'fire' present in terms of my experience of it, at times, as being a place of anger and the threat of violence. [see figure 2]

I approached this symbol by engaging in what Zajonc (2007) describes as 'cognitive breathing' which is a process of giving ourselves fully to an object of contemplation and uniting ourselves with it to enable it to shape and mold us. Once a day I imagined myself at the centre of the circle and stood there. I then began a process where I called the teacher to the edge of the circle where we stood facing each other. The purpose was to undo the process of 'binding' each other that I felt that we had been through. Initially I would call the teacher to the circle and try to take back the authority and power that I felt I had lost in not speaking or in the way I had spoken, and give the teacher back those aspects of the encounter that were no longer helpful. In the eye of my imagination these encounters became like a fight with neither giving up what the other had.

Figure 2 Circumpunct

(Source: <http://www.symbols.com/encyclopedia/26/268.html>)

Kazantzakis (1988, p.7) saw that the struggle for wholeness was an inevitable part of the inner dialectic and described it as an, ‘incessant, merciless battle between ...two armies.’ Kornfield (2002) recognised that this war is already part of our natural state and that stepping out of the conflict was the only way to stop it. I decided to follow Kornfield’s advice and work with imagination and symbol in a different way. I began to call the teacher to the circle but in different ways. Not to the edge of it but at different distances inside. I began to get a sense of what was the ‘right distance’ the ‘right space’ where the different directions in which we were pulling might find a point of balance. When we were able to move into this right distance the amount of effort required to unbind each other shifted. I was able to call back what was mine, what I felt I had lost in the relationship. What was also important in this dynamic was that I was also able to give back what I had taken without effort or strain.

In this sense, the inner circle of awareness that Einstein had spoken of began to expand into my everyday life. I began to question myself; where was the right or optimum place to be so that there was a sense of balance, of ease, where things might flow easily? This took place when I stood at the front of a classroom, or at the supermarket checkout. I was employing my subjectivity and while it was not a leap, I was taking significant steps. For Moustakas there exists an ‘unshakable connection’ between what exists outside of me in external reality and what resides within in reflective thought. Through making the connection between these two dimensions, the interiority of my experience and my social context, I could ‘come to know essential meanings inherent in my experience’ (Moustakas, 1990, p.12).

Summary of Part Three

In my engagement with Jonathan’s depiction, I was confronted very powerfully with the idea that an aspect of the healer’s journey was the ‘leap’ into personal subjectivity. This was accompanied by the fact that the knowledge and understanding that derives from this profound shift became an important source that guided his life. The ripple from this encounter played out in challenging ways against those

sources that I had in turn used to inform my life. Through the encounter with the teacher, I was able to experience the difference between individualism and individuation. Greene (1988, p.16) distinguishes between the two by highlighting that exclusive individualism creates a type of freedom whose expression is fundamentally negative and characterised by ‘the right not to be interfered with or coerced or compelled to do what they did not choose to do.’ Greene does not perceive this to be true freedom because it fragments a person from their larger context and the values which inform that context. In contrast *individuation* refers to the possibility of actualising one’s potential but doing so by recognising that we cannot escape the consequences of our personal choices and actions in relation to wider social, cultural and spiritual contexts. A positive interpretation of the inner subjective path is that individual reflection requires communion with others in a process of collective self reflection that must be receptive to wider context. Watts (1979) is in agreement and highlights that individual spiritual experiences do not necessarily enable people to relate to each other in a wholesome way, and that spirituality needs to be integrated into the social, if conflicts are to be engaged with creatively and positively.

CONCLUSION

Cutcliffe and Ramcharan (2002) identify that when the research design is emergent and the direction and the outcome of the research is not known then it can be challenging for the researcher to negotiate unexpected moral dilemmas that present themselves as the research unfolds. Moustakas (1990) highlights that this process can be guided by the tacit and intuitive which in turn can bring about a heightened self awareness of the researcher’s internal framework, where the researcher can bring into greater clarity their values and beliefs. In the above example it can be seen how the interview, philosophy, numerology, the environment of the course, engagement with the teacher, engagement with key texts and the utilisation of a symbol all interact to shape the research process. This was a reflexive process that required an examination of how my assumptions impacted on the research process and sensitivity to how the research was in turn influencing and affecting my personal beliefs.

Gerard Kenny is a Senior Lecturer at the University of the West of England

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"ONLY BEAUTIFUL WOMEN NEED APPLY"

HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER IN BRAZILIAN FOOTBALL

JORGE KNIJNIK & PETER HORTON

Football in Brazil has always been a 'man thing.' Until 1979 a law existed, that banned women from playing it competitively. Since this law was repealed in 1979 women have gradually become more prominent in the sport. Despite this, obstructive prejudices still permeate women's football in Brazil. In 2001, the Football Federation of Sao Paulo (FPF) organized a women's football championship where only the 'beautiful ones' could play. This paper demonstrates how arcane paternalistic concepts of gender in Brazilian football still continue to repress the human rights of women players. The article is centred upon three semi-structured interviews with players who played in the FPF championship; they revealed that the male hegemony that rules Brazilian football is replete with discrimination, racism and the sexualization of women players.

Keywords: Football, gender, Brazilian women, human rights

STOCKING BALL

The participation of women in sport has long been a target of contestation. In the mid 20th century women were still viewed in many cultures, including Brazil, as being too fragile to take part in vigorous sport which posed a perceived threat to both their femininity and their maternal viability (Welch & Costa,

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1994). Sport in Brazil was viewed as the domain of the 'male warrior' and was the domain in which masculinity was played out. In some contexts this notion persists today (Vertinsky, 1994), yet in the 21st century, it is most apparent that women are increasing in their levels of sporting engagement, even being involved in the most physical and vigorous (violent) forms such as Rugby football and boxing. This does not mean however that female participation in sport is no longer viewed as being problematic. Sport remains largely a male dominated hegemony.

Competitive sport embodies the deepest aspirations for a significant majority of human beings whether male or female, young or old. The quest for victory and the necessary inherent sense of challenge the sporting environment offers the fight for space and the symbolic 'destruction' of one's foe, are extant in sporting contests whether the competitors are male or female: it is the essence of competitive sport. Harsh attitudes are required though at times misunderstood by the uninitiated and critics. Sport inevitably begets prejudices and bias however these are necessary attitudes even in the most passive of sports such as, lawn bowls. Yet, even in these enlightened times women who exhibit 'real' physical robustness and aggression are vilified as being 'butch'; women's professional boxing still attracts gender-based criticism apart from the more normal health-based censure. As recently as the late 1990s some critics espoused the biological notion that boys and men being more endowed with testosterone are hard-wired for violence, aggression and the social constructs of war, politics and crime. Moir & Moir (1998, p. 108) even suggest that this process starts in the womb: "...The more testosterone a (male) foetus gets, the more aggressive he'll be as an adult." They suggest that this 'hard-wiring' towards aggressive behaviour is why tough competitive sport has become a 'male' domain. However, Moore (1997) had previously asserted that contemporary research in biology refutes this notion; she argued that biology is also a dynamic component of our existence and not a predetermined human condition.

Even though the sporting environment demands that female athletes must exhibit some behaviours and assume attitudes that do not correspond with the widely accepted norms of femininity, the dichotomy between the lived and the normative social expectation remains. Over two decades ago Paiva (1989, p. 51) predicted a change to such social norms when she suggested that:

...women today should execute all the tasks before executed only by men but they should keep all their old attributions and the same femininity that was attributed to them historically. In this sense the social preaching is ambiguous and ambivalent that put everybody into an indefinite situation that is naturally realized like dangerous.

Today in spite of the growing trend towards gender equity in developed nations, or at least the stated and politically correct commentary, sport remains

skewed towards a male hegemony and the actual sports that dominate are themselves ‘hegemonic’ (Western male) sports. Brazilian football is utterly dominated by patriarchal institutions. Knijnik & Vasconcellos (2010), suggest that in Brazilian football female players are considered as an underclass even though they have achieved outstanding international performances such as, their Silver medal in the 2004 Athens Olympic Games and again in Beijing in 2008, they were also Gold medal winners in football at the Pan American Games in 2003 and 2007: yet female football players in Brazil remain virtually invisible to the public eye. The reason may well lie in the attitude of Football administrators towards the women’s game. Knijnik (2011) points out that when female footballers *are* promoted in Brazilian football it invariably has nothing to do with their athletic talent or skill and this was patently obvious when the Sao Paulo Football Federation (FPF) established its own championship of women’s football, the *Paulistana*, in 2001. Heralded with much media-fanfare it was, however, shamefully based upon a set of repugnant chauvinistic regulations that had nothing to do with athletic skill only the sexualized body of the (female) players.

The athletes who took part in this championship needed to comply with some stringent ‘beauty’ stipulations, because the Executive Committee of the FPF had promised a ‘good and *beautiful* championship’ that would unite “femininity and football” (Folha de Sao Paulo, 2001, p. E5). Regulation one, for example, banned players who had cropped hair, because they want only “ladies” with long, preferably blond hair could compete (Folha de Sao Paulo, 2001, p. E5). Next they imposed an age requirement, stating that competitors had to be under the age of 23 years; the FPF’s motivation being to attract the male television audiences through the exploitation of the players, sexualizing their bodies and projecting the images of athletic beautiful young women in an attempt to offer the largely male television audiences copious and potentially erotic viewing.

Barbieri (1991) maintained that, such attempts by men to control and manipulate women’s bodies are direct re-assertions of masculine power intended to continue the subjugation of women: there should be no concession given to women in terms of the established gender-power complex: in this the FPF stands ‘convicted.’

The promotion of the *Paulistana* that embraced these rules produced controversies galore: politicians like Dr. Rosinha (Worker’s Party) spoke out against the discrimination of “not so beautiful women”, athletes protested to newspapers whilst others protested and suffered in silence; yet the championship went on! Attracted by the championship’s potential to promote their sporting careers, hundreds of competitors took part, thus subscribing to the (horrendous) dominant ideology so as to compete for a federated club in an official football championship, which would obviously advance their football careers. This study was based upon a series of interviews with three competitors, from different clubs that took

part in the 2001 *Paulistana*. The players were aged between 18 and 23 years old, and it was the aim of the interviews to evoke from them how they felt competing in a championship that seemingly privileged the beauty rather than the skill and tenacity of the players. We also aimed to interrogate both their sporting histories and their views about professional female athletes *per se* (Berlin, 1998). The interviews took place in November of 2001 and were taped with the consent of the interviewees. The interviews were open and semi-structured focusing upon the subjects' sporting careers and their opinions about women's football in Brazil. Probing questions (Minichiello et al, 1995) were asked to evoke deeper responses and explanations from the three subjects.

These techniques closely aligned to the theoretical challenges as suggested by Scott (1986. p. 1055) in her comparative study of the genders, their histories and their impact upon their current social practices. Scott asked, "...How does gender work in human social relationships? (and) How does gender give meaning to the organization and perception of historical knowledge? The answers depend on gender as an analytic category." In this limited study we proposed to embrace this category of analysis as the focus of this investigation into the national passion of Brazil: football.

"MAMA DON'T CRY"

The three athletes that featured in this study are each identified by a single syllable, each of which bears no relationship to an actual name they are, Za, Zi and Zu. This analysis will consider aspects of socialization and sporting elements in the lives of the subjects and be derived from the interviews which were inductively framed. We gazed at them in light of the social division of the professional and corporal practices in society and the representations that permeate Brazilian society in regards to the role of women in that society.

How the subjects interacted with boys emerged as a major issue that concerned the subjects in their earliest days in the game. Obviously this was and remains as an ongoing issue. Both Za and Zi commented about their concerns with boys when they were becoming immersed in the game, Za commented that:

I started to play football in the street of my house. There were many boys and few girls, so I stayed there aside and when a player was missing they put me into the goal. After that I started to play in the line and then I started to play with them.

Whilst Zi stressed the importance of her brothers to her socialization in the game:

I believe I started playing because I have two brothers, I'm the only girl at home, two men always playing football in the yard, and I used to play with them. They used to go to a football school and I went with them, my father was going to play football and I went together, I was like a little son, too. I was like a little son, too... There were many boys and few girls in the game.

This typifies how the subjects accommodated the blurred gender terrain extant in their socialization, which was also the starting point for the increased gender-division that was to emerge in their later lives and clearly reflects the social representations and the 'myths' that surround social practices for each gender. Investigating the inequalities of gender necessitates that one should analyze not only the political and economic contexts in which the gender relationships are operative but also the cultural and symbolic senses that are concordantly related to the differences of gender. In Brazil childhood football appears to be predominantly a male activity thus, if they want to play they must do so with boys and preferably look like a "little son." Even then they will probably confront serious problems: Zu, who took part in many sports, commented that:

My mother never wanted me to play football. She always followed me in my sporting life, I started when I was seven years old, she was always close, she even started to practice karate with me and swimming, too...I started to practice volleyball and suddenly, I was seven years old, when I started to play football she stopped.

Dio Bleichmar (1988) reinforces this point asserting that in Brazil at the onset of adolescence a major social and genderized regulation of children's activities occurs. And obviously, the body is central to this process, and body performance in these activities is critical as it tends to narrowly define the child's gender. She reflects upon evoking the well-known analogy: "ballet for girls, football for boys." She argues that adults control and guide their children in their body activities, thus establishing gender conformity with the stereotypical paradigm (Dio Bleichmar, 1988). The Brazilian researcher and feminist Auad (2006) in an extensive ethnographic study on gender in Brazilian school reports that even in the so-called progressive schools gender is an issue which is always let aside, and discriminatory practices are common, as teachers and parents are vigilant on regards children's body activities.

Adults choose, guide, support and even forbid certain practices, as our footballers relate: "And my mother forbid me of training I just played, so it was martyrdom to me. Then she started to ignore" (Zu); "I used to go with the boys to play and one day I told my mother that I wanted to play. She said no" (Zi); "My mother never said anything, she always motivated me, and she said if I wanted her help I would have to devote myself. There was no prejudice against me in football" (Za). But nothing is perfect. Za said that, if she did not face too many

obstacles at home, she could not say the same about her neighborhood. She confirmed that she had to overcome much prejudice and a campaign of gossiping by her neighbors.

MOTHERLAND IN FOOTBALL BOOTS

Two themes often recur when all footballers reflect upon the game. The first is their passion for the game and secondly how the development of this passion has directed their lives. They would fight until the end to continue playing football and would do anything to keep-on playing. This was apparent in the interviews with our trio when asked about how they felt about being women in football: “I feel good, I do what I like ...I’ve already argued with my family, my boyfriend, with everybody, and I will do what I want to, what I like ever” (Zu). Za was just as emphatic, “I always like football, I’m passionate. I watch TV, I get bristly when I see the shots and when I see a beautiful goal I get moved, I do like it.” (Za) Whilst Zi elaborated:

Two years ago I was in the second degree of high school, I said that I was going to play and what I needed to do to play it I would do it because I always loved to play football... (Zi)

These comments lead us to consider the possibility that sport promotes the construction of identity and, in this instance, in a very particular manner. This supports Castells’ (2010) belief that in society the search for a communal identity is essential to the development of self-identity. Our footballers completely identify with their activity and collectively identify themselves as “the girls of football”, a group with attributes of real community which has its own identity and discourse as a sub-culture.

Scott (1986, p. 1058) argues that the emergence of meaning to a person is connected both with the individual level and with the social context in which s/he exists. She argues that is vital for a human to be able to build up an “identity, a life, a set of relationships.” One may ask why then did these women choose this activity, football, which, in Brazilian society has such a masculine identity? A consideration of the psycho-social analytical aspects of gender choices provides some interesting reflections on this subject and they go beyond the stereotypical arguments that surround this topic.

Dio Bleichmar (1998) describes in detail the female desire to do things that are generally accepted as masculine as being associated with their sub-conscious mind. As she maintains, this is affirmation of what is actually a social norm. Symbolically this woman wants to have access to what is appreciated in the society and she sees this valorization in only the male universe. So when she realizes she has,

as a woman, a ‘minor’ role (feminine) in society, she seeks to acquire the power, the position and the abilities that men have. So, when a young girl desires to play football, an entrenched masculine practice in Brazilian culture, she is attempting to break into the masculine world so as to gain the social value and not referring to her feminine qualities. This male-world is beset with symbols that, as Bourdieu says (1998, p. 48), are deeply rooted in and act upon the structures of the unconscious so that they appear to be natural conditions of supremacy, a ‘supremacy’ concocted deep inside of the ruled.

The male world of Brazilian football is omnipresent in our subjects’ thoughts. It has a central part in their relationship with their families and obviously in their sporting lives. The following extracts show how this omnipresence is lived by the footballers in this study:

I was nine years old. My mother said no to me, if I play I was going to look like a boy and I was going to have a short haircut. She didn’t want me to play it (...). There is also a sort of prejudice; they say football is for man, people ask what am I doing in the field? I believe the wage is inside this prejudice that women are not able to play football. (Zi)

Zu demonstrated how much she felt the weight and implications of her choice:

When I really started to play my mother didn’t like it. For a long time there was vigilance, and then she got calm. Up to now I invite her to go to the games, but she doesn’t go, she says the public is totally unusual and she is not going to get together with them. (Zu)

Za reiterated and demonstrated how entrenched the prejudice and bigotry is even for female physical education teachers:

I went to a neighbor’s for visit recently and she found out I was playing football. She said that I was lesbian; when I got there she told me that. I told her I was taking Physical Education course she told me I was a real lesbian. She is an adult about 45 years old. But she is not the only one, her daughter, who was my friend in my childhood, said it, too. (Za)

These statements reflect Scott’s comments regarding the adoption of gender as a category of analysis (1986, p.1055), in which she argues that gender and social roles are not immutably linked, and the ‘social constructions’ that are embedded in gender practices represent offers, avenues, to distinguish sexual practices to genderized roles.

Scott also stresses that gender and body-practices walk side by side, and this was patently obvious in the regulations regarding what the ‘acceptable bodies’ were in the minds of the organizers of the 2001 *Paulistana*.

Their pronouncement that the body-image of the players was of paramount importance was an archaic chauvinistic decision, one that is, by all 21st century human rights standards, barbaric. The FPF had made the presumption that this women's football championship was the appropriate venue to reaffirm the 19th century Brazilian dogma *vis a vis* the role of women in society. So, contrary to all contemporary standards the FPF invoked regulations that prioritized the players' beauty above their skills and performances. Paiva (1989, p. 52) maintains that the body's image, from its conception is characterized by the meanings that the culture sets down, and is "necessarily sexualized." The FPF created a doubt in the players' minds as to whether or not to compete. They were confronted with a selection criterion of physical appearance over and above their sporting ability. How they were seen aesthetically (sexually, in truth) by spectators and particularly the media was prioritized above football skills and fitness. Those who took part did so in the first instance because they were sexually attractive! After all the fights that they have waged in their sporting lives to be able to play football, they were now reduced to 'eye candy'!

Za confronts the morality and the logic of this regulation:

There was also the beauty thing. It was a grand polemic. In the championship trials to fill out the teams the Federation managers said they wouldn't select girls with short hair and a bit mannish. They wanted this female championship to be a feminine championship; they didn't want unusual women, they wanted a prettier thing, they want a better championship to watch. Because many women who play football are not womanish. (sic) So they wanted to take those away. The Justice spoke out saying that was discrimination. Well nothing happened, they saw the trials, managers said the best players would have a team, but the girls who had short hair were not going to play but this wasn't discriminating the girls.

Zu reinforces this point, saying she was angry about the disorganization and the discrimination at the *Paulistana*:

So I believe the keyword to this Paulistana is disorganization. They tried to show it in a way but the image was another. Inclusively this beauty thing, they said the girl who had shaved hair or short hair were not going to take part but this doesn't measure how good is the football of someone you just can't say if a person is a good player because her appearance, I think it was discrimination.

Zi was very bitter and incredulous about the appearance regulation:

There was also this appearance thing that I didn't like, if you are blond you are in if you are black you are out. (...) And you did the trial, they were going to see you playing, if you had a level to dispute a championship, you got in and then they would arrange the teams, so it was a thing made in a hurry, it had a

bad organization (...) they did a thing in a hurry and the appearance was used a lot... Everything is because they wanted to sell the imaged of the championship on TV; they didn't want to see a toothless girl on TV, they wanted to see the blond girl. So many girls were successful in the trials because they were pretty, and not because they were good players. I knew the girls, many of them didn't have condition to play, and they were successful because they were pretty. There was also a girl who had crispy hair and she was toothless, she failed the trials and she was a very good player. It was an appearance championship and this made me very mad.

As can be seen from these comments the manipulation of the women's physical appearance confounded all appropriate and accepted attitudes of sport. The invocation of these obscene rules suggested to our trio of players where the 'real power lies in women's sport in Brazil: not in the skill but from the sexualization of their bodies. Dio Bleichmar (1998, p. 95) concurs: "The more beautiful, the more well thought (sic), the more beloved, the more desirable. The girl finds out the admiration and the privileges she obtains with the possession or exploration of her beauty very precociously."

So, it seems as though a 'reinforcement' of the normative position of women in Brazilian society has emerged in this particular context of women's football. This was marked by the depreciation of the person's quality, via the stereotyping of the female form – its beauty, as opposed to their personal qualities and abilities, in this case, their athletic capacities, and football skills. Although in some contexts the valorization (and the manipulation) of the image and the beauty can be advantageous for the woman in sport (particularly regarding sponsorship), in football it would seem to be an utter paradox, as this does not validate their effectiveness on the field!

THE CURTAINS ARE CLOSED, THE SPECTACLE IS OVER: PROVISIONALLY

As an exercise in the problematization of sport, sexuality and gender in sport these interviews aimed to inform the more theoretical and 'bookish' studies that have warned of the prevalence of superimposed sexuality on gender in our roles and engagement in society – including sport. Thus, Scott's (1986) proposition of the use of gender's as a category of analysis is most relevant and applicable in this context.

The approach adopted in this study was very generic and it is suggested that a more detailed analysis, focused on a single aspect of these depositions could add depth to the analysis, particularly, it is felt, in regard to the psychoanalytical issues and the mother's role as the female commentator or critic of such female athletes. Such interactions as shown in this study illustrated how impactful they were and, it is felt, this warrants further investigation.

This reflection has also illustrated how necessary it is to be alert to the emergence of 'new' discriminatory devices for women in sport. Gender stereotypes regarding sexuality assault an individual's human rights whilst stigmas and associated bullying can insult and even destroy the psychological balance of individuals, including elite athletes. Also, when discrimination and prejudice are institutionalized, as in the case of the 2001 *Paulistana*, it represents a contravention of fundamental human rights and those responsible should be castigated. Such arcane barriers, stereotypes and crass conditions are barriers and impediments to the participation and progress of women in any field let alone the field of sport. Our work gave the athletes a voice and a space to express their worries, concerns and frustrations about their sport. It is hoped that in some small way it might impede the repetition of such excluding practices in the future and help to safeguard the rights of women athletes to compete in all places and fields that they deserve to be on merit and not (just) good looks.

Jorge Knijnik is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at University of Western Sydney. His academic life started in 1992 in Brazil. As a social and education worker, Jorge spent considerable time in the slums of Sao Paulo, where there are extensive and systematic human rights violations, promoting accessible sport programs for marginalized girls and boys. He has been developing a series of research on gender and sport with Peter Horton. He is the author of 'Gender and Sport: Masculinities and Femininities' (ed. Apicuri), 'Brazilian women and sport: body and history' (ed. Mackenzie) and 'Boys and Girls in Physical Education: Gender and Embodiment in the 21st Century' (ed. Fontoura).

Peter Horton is a senior lecturer in the School of Education at James Cook University and Fellow of the Cairns Institute; this work represents the second in a series of collaborative analysis of women in sport in Brazil with Jorge Knijnik. He is a member of International Editorial Board and two regional boards of the *International Journal of the History of Sport*. Dr. Horton has a range of research interests focusing on the socio-cultural analysis of sport; historical, sociological and cultural studies of sport in Australia, the Asia Pacific Region, SE Asia and Brazil feature significantly in his published work.

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DIVIDING THE DRAWERS

KATE PAHL, RICHARD STEADMAN-JONES
& STEVE POOL

I placed an advertisement in a newspaper, asking people to donate their trophies to my art project for a small symbolic fee. In a relatively short time, I had collected over two thousand. I was equally pleased and shocked about how people were ready to part with these tokens of their past accomplishments. The reasons varied, but, ultimately, the trophies in my collection were all donated because of an urge to 'let go' of an attachment to the past; to clean out cluttered spaces; to shed old, stagnant relations; to free oneself from the material burden or the symbolic power of the trophy itself. This psychological state of 'letting go' is what interests me the most [...]. (Aleksandra Mir quoted in Allen (2011: 95))

THE UPPER SURFACE

This is a story about a plan that went awry. It is about a group of people who wanted to cross the frontier between academic and popular discourse but didn't prepare sufficiently for the journey. In a way it is a cautionary tale: little girls who play with matches end up burned alive (Hoffman 1995: 8); little boys who go out in the storm are blown away by the wind (Hoffman 1995: 26); and people who make journeys without preparation risk ending up somewhere that they really hadn't intended, perhaps without the train fare home. The journey we tried to make involved presenting academic research in an exhibition that was

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open to the public. We wanted to find a means to communicate our ideas in a manner that stripped away the academic trappings from the research and gave it a directness that would be engaging to viewers who were not interested in reading journal articles or monographs. But attempting to move across that boundary led us into epistemological territory that we found it hard to map or navigate. In fact, it led in the end to an exhibit that was more about us than about the ideas we wanted to communicate. Reviewing what happened has sometimes been a painful and disconcerting process but it has been valuable in that it has taught us something about why public engagement – an activity that academics, in the British context at least, are under considerable pressure to embrace – can be so difficult, not just on a practical level but in its very epistemological structure. Indeed, this article might be read as an object lesson in practical epistemology. Fundamental to its concerns are the conflicts that can emerge between different regimes of understanding as well as the unanticipated consequences to which such tensions can give rise in the context of collaborative work¹.

The story begins early in 2011 when two academics, Kate Pahl and Richard Steadman-Jones, started work on a contribution to an exhibition. Organised by researchers from a range of what might broadly be called ‘arts’ subjects – languages, architecture, history, design – the exhibition was to focus on concrete experiences of space: the buildings we inhabit, the objects we own, the practices that underpin our relationship with both². Kate is based in a department of Education and is an ethnographer with an interest in everyday literacy – the reading and writing that people do in their daily lives³. Richard works in an English department and is a historian of ideas focusing on conceptualisations of language and textuality, particularly the changes they undergo over time⁴. What led them to collaborate was a shared interest in the materiality of writing⁵. To make a text, one needs both a writing instrument and a surface. But the instruments and surfaces we use are diverse: a ballpoint pen on paper, a tattoo machine on skin, an embroiderer’s needle in fabric. Kate and Richard wanted their contribution to emphasise the diverse materiality of written texts. They decided to obtain a second-hand chest of drawers and devote each drawer to writing in a different medium: embroidery in

1 See Hart, Northmore and Gerhardt (2009) and also Agusita and Facer (forthcoming).

2 See the ‘Inhabiting Space Exhibition and website: www.inhabiting-space.org. This was an exhibition in which a number of academics from Architecture, History, Russian and Slavonic Studies, Town and Regional Planning and Computer Science materialized their research in different visual and material forms in an exhibition space at the University of Sheffield.

3 See Pahl (2004) and Pahl (2002).

4 See Steadman-Jones (2007) and Dubow and Steadman-Jones (2012) for explorations of the history of linguistic thought in relation to the genres of the grammar and the novel.

5 In 2009 they and William Gould from the Department of History, University of Leeds, received an AHRC ‘Connected Communities’ grant to develop a two-year project exploring the materiality of everyday literacy in three areas of Rotherham. The title of the project was ‘Writing in the Home and in the Street.’

one, images of tattoos in another, and so on. By housing the material in a piece of household furniture, they hoped to underline their interest in the ‘everyday’ and ‘ordinary.’ Richard planned to write a curatorial text onto the surface of the chest, commenting on the objects presented inside the drawers.

Soon, however, they decided they needed help in realising their ideas and approached their friend and collaborator, Steve Pool, a visual artist who trained in sculpture and has considerable experience of arts practice in schools and museums⁶. Thus, throughout this essay, the first person plural denotes the three of us – two academics, one artist, all interested in the ideas that the work was to express, all committed to collaboration, and yet strangely at odds about the meaning of the activity in which we were engaged. The conflicts arose from a simple problem: a chest of drawers is a wholly different entity depending on the epistemological framework that you impose upon it. Thus, to Steve, with his training in Fine Art, it was obvious that if you place a second-hand piece of furniture in an exhibition space, then you are working with a ‘ready-made’, an ‘*objet trouvé*’, and are, in the process, entering a very well trodden territory of arts practice⁷. To Kate, with her anthropological training, a second-hand chest of drawers is an object from an ethnographic context – it is not the property of the researcher but must be interpreted in relation to the self-understandings of those who have lived with it and used it⁸. And to Richard, coming from English Studies, it seemed natural to think of the chest of drawers as the material means by which a more abstract ‘text’ was to be distributed, a perspective deriving from scholarship that examines the relationship between literary works as on the one hand abstract linguistic constructs and on the other material commodities⁹.

To capture the contrasts between these viewpoints we have modelled this essay on the structure of the chest of drawers itself. What follows is a ‘carcass’ with four embedded ‘drawers.’ The carcass is the bare story, the outline of what happened, and each of the drawers articulates a different voice or group of voices. To a large extent, this is what our exhibit was like: a single object but one ‘divided’ between different viewpoints. The difference here is that we have tried to move beyond those divisions and draw the voices together to articulate a collective point of view. Thus, the final section – the ‘plinth’ on which the essay stands – is intended to support the discussion and find the common ground. This common ground has emerged as we have reframed what the process we en-

6 See Pahl and Pool (2011) and Pahl, Comerford-Boyes, Genever and Pool (2010).

7 See Buskirk (2003) for an extensive discussion of the status of the ‘art object’ in the second half of the twentieth century and the place of the ‘readymade’ in that history.

8 See texts such as Coffey (1999) Pink (2001) for discussions of the reflexivity required in ethnographic practice

9 See Finkelstein and McCleery (2005) on the field of ‘book history’, especially chapter 1, which deals with the theoretical implications of research on the book as a material artefact.

gaged in meant. In some ways the decision to work with a chest of drawers was a casual one – it was a ‘bright idea’ to make the display more engaging. But, as time passed, we came to realise that the chest provided an astonishingly effective way of externalising the kinds of epistemological differences mentioned earlier. In short, it constituted a ‘holding form’ in the sense of a concrete situation that pulls into focus a problem that participants agree to explore together. We realised this too late to have much impact on the original exhibit, but that, after all, is the nature of a cautionary tale. It is the account of a bad experience that nevertheless projects a better future. Recently there has been a ‘turn’ to a recognition of work that listens to voices across diverse epistemologies, a development evident among those researching engaged cosmopolitanism (Hull, Stornaiulo and Sahni, 2010), dialogic arts practice (Kestor 2004), listening (Back 2007) and, most important, the reverse of knowing – the space of ‘unknowing’ or the giving up on academic knowledge (Pahl and Pool 2011, Vasudevan 2011). In the story of the chest of drawers, the ‘moral’ constitutes the learning that arose from the messiness of real experience and the key point here is precisely the power of incorporating collaboration itself into the subject matter of collaborative work.

THE CARCASS

Here, in brief, is what happened. Having come up with a plan, Kate and Richard began searching for a chest of drawers. Combing local websites, they located a map chest free to anyone who could collect. But, though beautiful, it did not really ‘fit.’ It was not sufficiently ordinary, so it felt right to resist its aesthetic allure and seek something more ‘true’ to our ideas. Finally, a participant in Kate’s ethnographic work donated a chest of her own. Fairly small, it was well-used with four brightly painted drawers. The chest chosen, we began to consider the contents. Early notes betray unevenness in our thinking. Some proposals were concrete (‘textiles’, ‘skin’), while others were more abstract (‘the lost’, ‘the secret’). Kate’s suggestions tended to reflect the views of participants in her research and she approached two pairs of girls with whom she had already worked. (Richard generally works with texts rather than people and so did not have any participants to consult.) Since time was flying, we agreed to spend a day together at a local arts centre developing the exhibit.

The day came. Richard arrived with a stack of tattoo magazines and some wallpaper paste; Steve brought the drawers in; and Kate drove the girls from their homes into town. Kate and the girls immediately went out to buy materials, leaving Richard and Steve to talk and begin work on Richard’s idea of a tattoo drawer. Kate returned in the early afternoon and the girls started to turn their drawers into ‘homes’ using partitions provided by Steve to divide them like dolls’ houses. This made sense because of Kate’s focus on home literacies: the girls were recre-

ating the domestic spaces central to her work with them. Their designs alluded fleetingly to writing. One pair wanted to include ‘secret writing’ and placed little texts, tightly folded, in obscure places around their ‘home.’ There was something touching, but also hermetic, about this. To a casual observer, the drawer did not seem to contain writing at all. Kate used the partitions to divide another drawer into cells, creating space for a range of contributions. Steve wanted the day in the arts centre to ‘frame’ the work. We would spend eight hours together and display the result. But Richard wasted time agonising over basic decisions and wanted to continue the work later. Two of the girls worked on at home – the others did not. The mother of one took charge of developing the fourth drawer, lettering the outside and gathering donations for individual cells. There *was* writing among these contributions but the definition of text as it applied to that drawer was broadly semiotic rather than focused on alphabetic writing. The process produced tensions between the girls and within the family of one of them, conflicts that Kate tried to mediate.



The date of the exhibition drew close. We wrote a text to accompany our work but it was difficult to explain on a single sheet of paper. We projected photographs taken during our day working together and played related sound. We had two recordings – one of the girls made during Kate’s field work and one of our conversation during the day at the arts centre. Choosing between them led to a dispute between Steve and the exhibition designer, Steve preferring the recording from the arts centre because it contextualised the work better, the designer preferring the girls’ talk, for reasons Steve found unclear. Again, we wondered how transparent these materials were. The work sat between a video of a housing estate, cleared for demolition, and some photographs of the interiors of Russian apartment buildings. Another exhibitor, an architect, commented on the ‘artiness’ of these three pieces, ruefully describing her own contribution, a banner displaying interviews with clients, as ‘corporate.’

Responses were relatively positive. People found the drawers intriguing, though *not* entirely transparent – appealing because of their eclectic, home-made aesthetic. The girls attended the opening but were critical. The space was not a ‘real’ gallery. The event was too academic. Later we took the chest back to the arts centre, where it appeared in a sparse white space with other pieces by the girls. This they liked, and we held a private viewing for their families. In most galleries, their work would either have been excluded or segregated as ‘children’s art.’ But this one emphasises process as much as product, and the work was taken as an element in our developing project, rather than as art to be judged. This is obviously not how the girls saw it. They wanted to be artists.

This article in a sense allows us to curate the drawers once more and fill them with our voices, reconciling the contested nature of the object, a chest of drawers, through the process of writing as a mode of inquiry (Richardson and St Pierre 2005). And it is thus an attempt at crystallizing our thoughts as part of a refractive and open process.

DRAWER 1: KATE

Thinking about the project for me has led to a crystallization of thought that begins with Paul Willis’ concept of the ‘Ethnographic Imagination’ (2000). This is a juxtaposition of ideas which as Willis says, might seem far apart, ethnography being about the everyday and the imagination being about transcending the everyday. But what Willis argues is that the ethnographic can be understood as a process by which a range of imaginative meanings can be grounded within social thought. Ethnography is an empirical and conceptual discipline, and through this lens social change and social thought can be glimpsed.

Experience and the everyday are the bread and butter of ethnography, but they are also the grounds whereupon and the stake for how grander theories must test and justify themselves. They should not be self-referenced imaginings but grounded imaginings. (Willis 2000: viii)

Willis then continues by exploring the particular ways in which the everyday and the social imagination are brought together. The question here is how the exhibit was brought together, why the situation evolved in which the drawers were curated by two sets of 8–13 year old girls, and why perhaps this caused difficulties, beyond a normal range of academic angst.

Bourdieu (1992) asks that as academics we ‘trace the epistemological unconscious’ of the researcher’s discipline. Williams (1961) has consistently argued that dominant notions of ‘culture’ need to be examined in relation to the ‘Long Revolution’ that began with the industrial revolution and is now unraveling. In the case of my ethnographic research site, this has happened in the generations that have followed the collapse of the coal industry in the Dearne Valley and Rotherham in South Yorkshire. Williams’ argument that ‘culture is ordinary’ and his engagement with the felt, embodied ‘structure of feeling’ in ‘the ordinary’ resonate with me, particularly when I enter a home. I first began ethnographic work in homes when I was looking at boys at risk of exclusion from school and I spent two years doing an ethnographic study of three boys (then aged between five and six) in their homes in North London. These children lived on council estates, sites where nobody ‘wanted to be’ but at the same time, were ‘home’ and I studied their images and meaning making practices as a reflection of their experiences (Pahl 2006). This concept of ‘home’ and its layers were interesting to me. I began to see ‘home’ as a site of text making but also a text in itself, a space for meaning making to be generated.

Here I found Bourdieu’s concept of the Kabyle House as habitus-as-text became particularly important. Bourdieu’s ethnographic research with the Kabyle people in Algeria in the 1950’s remained the bedrock of his work for the rest of his life, and he returned to the way in which the structures and practices he recorded in his fieldnotes echoed down the generations of the people he studied in the form of a set of schemas, the ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu 1970: 1990). Habitus, he argued, is enacted through play, games and other practices and is part of a set of durable schema which is set within practice:

Whether in verbal products such as proverbs, sayings, gnomic poems, songs or riddles or in objects such as tools, the house or the village, or in practices such as games, contexts of honour, gift exchange or rites, the material that the Kabyle child has to learn is the product of the systematic application of a small number of principles coherent in practice. (Bourdieu 1990:74)

However, when I went into homes, I also found that children improvised upon the habitus, particularly in text making. Bartlett and Holland (2002) wrote about the way in which habitus could be improvised upon and these improvisations could be on existing practices and structures through texts:

Bourdieu's theory remains limited by his tendency to underplay the importance of culturally produced narratives, images and other artefacts in modifying habitus. (Bartlett and Holland 2002: 12)

I argue in previous work (e.g. Pahl 2008) that this improvisation within texts is a vital way in which children make meanings anew within home settings. I am interested, particularly when working with children in less affluent and more marginal spaces, in how these meanings are made. Like Williams (1961) and Willis (2000) as well as Hoggart (1957) I privilege the 'ordinary' spaces of the everyday, particularly in the Northern communities including the British Asian communities and white working class communities, of the UK, which can become invisible within mainstream settings. I am interested in how texts and practices that are invisible can become visible, in how writing can be made visible when often, the meanings are interior and silent:

an invisible place where, as in the Kabylean dwelling, the structures are inverted as they are interiorised, and where the writing flips over again in exteriorising itself in the form of practices that have the deceptive appearance of being free improvisations. (de Certeau 1984: 58).

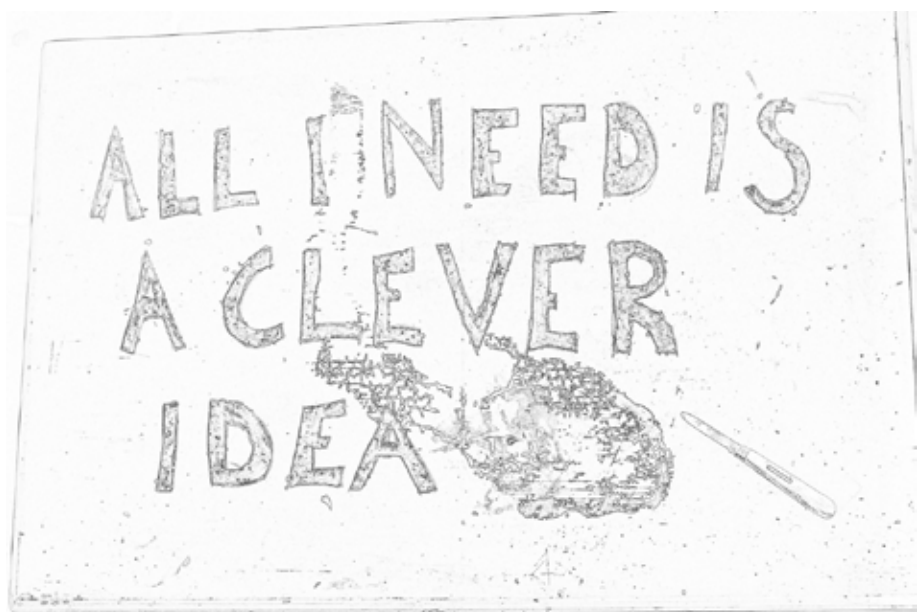
This brings me to a key point, which is that I work in an Education Department and, in some sense, this involves a commitment to social change and social justice through a wider concept that could be 'learning' or could be an engagement which is visionary and imaginative about how things could change.

And so the drawer for me, was about putting these ideas into a 'space of practice' (Bourdieu 1990); however, what I had not anticipated, was an appreciation through this process, of the determinism of the form; while I had taken from the 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1977), I had not listened sufficiently to the 'everyday aesthetic' (Saito 2007) behind the drawers, and more importantly, recognized fully the dialogic space of practice that the drawers offered (Bakhtin 1981). This move, from the habitus (the modern) to the relationally aesthetic and dialogic (the post modern), has allowed the framing of the determinism of Bourdieu's schema, the habitus, to be fractured by more dialogic and collaborative modes of inquiry (see also Richardson and St Pierre 2005; Kester 2004). I have since worked with Steve to think about 'giving up' on academic epistemologies as a situated discipline of 'not knowing' (Vasudevan 2011).

DRAWER 2: STEVE

Diary Extracts.

1 March. Kate Pahl emailed me to invite me up to the university to discuss a project she was working on. She needed some technical help converting a chest of drawers.



2 March. Walking up there I had a really clear idea of what was being asked. I was thinking about materials and I was thinking about safety: How big were the drawers? What were they made of? To be honest, I was thinking a chest of drawers might be a bit lame. If you went to any Art School's final degree show in the 1980s there would always be a chest of drawers with stuff in it. I was wondering if I should do it if it was going on display. It might not be very good.

I slip into the technical persona very well. It's a big part of the framework that I operate within. I take things apart in my head all the time and put them back together. While I'm writing this I'm remembering fixing keys on the keyboard which the dog had scratched off with his over-excited paws. A couple of days in my workshop doing a practical job, which I was well capable of completing: I was looking forward to it.

The chest was salvaged from Bonni's room. I met Bonni and asked her about it. She said, "Don't know really – we just wanted to get rid of it." It's got a handle

missing on the top drawer. I suggested to Kate that we replace the handle with the word “handle” but she said Richard liked it and wanted to put a piece of wire in there instead. I suggested a new handle but I don’t think that’s going to happen. A missing handle is a problem because it makes it hard to open the drawer. It’s also probably why Bonni wanted to get rid of it because the top drawer is clearly the most important one.

Kate asked me to do a specific job. She said, ‘Can you divide the top drawer into twelve small boxes? Can you cover the top of each drawer with Perspex? Can you divide Bonni’s drawer in half straight down the middle? And can Richard’s also be divided into two horizontally? Can you make sure it can be free standing and attach an etch-a-sketch to the top of it and paint the back with metalized paint so we can attach magnetic lettering? Can you make sure it has a secret drawer?’

Then she asked if I would take the third drawer down and put something of my own in it.

9 March. Finally got down to thinking about the drawers. I would have to shelve all ideas of an easy ride. I switched from technical role to artist role but on a very straightforward level. Concerned with the object, I started to decode what it would present in the exhibition.

I’m not sure if Kate is interested in making an art object or if she just wants a place to house things. A chest of drawers needs to be raised a bit for it to become an art object. She likes the fact the object comes from a family home and seems interested in the fact the drawers are authentic. It situates them in her mind. I’m thinking of how to reference this for an audience. We have decided to explore doing some sound recording: the drawers’ owners talking about them. I’m not sure this will work but it’s a start.

7 April. Even though I’m now inside the epistemological space we are building inside the drawers, they still have to stand up, both in an argument and in reality. For them to stand up, I’m going to have to mount them on a bit of a plinth. If you went to Art College in the age of postmodernism you could spend two of your three years worrying about plinths but I need to stop worrying and start making.

7 May. A day at Bank Street with everybody. It all got very messy. Kate had not counted the drawers properly and there wasn’t one for me after all. Not sure I mind really but it does feel a bit funny.

15 May. Just scratched into the top of the drawers with a chisel the phrase, “All I need is a clever idea.” Came to me late at night when I was trying to think. I wanted to inscribe it into the work, to cut forcefully into the material in a way

that could never be removed. I cut it deep enough that it couldn't be sanded back. I carved it to make a point and didn't ask permission.

28 May. Exhibition opening, It was what it was. I think I'm over reacting to the whole thing can't believe it has struck such a nerve. I suppose the whole thing felt compromising but when I unpick it I'm not sure why. I suppose it's just the framework of an exhibition and I can't let go of control even when I really don't want control.

18 June. I wrote a secret text on the underside of the drawers. It reads, "I know this." And now I'm thinking that this was an arrogant thing to do because as the drawers moved into different spaces and shifted meaning I began to realise that I didn't know. Much of my supposed knowing was a barrier to actually knowing.

4 November. What was interesting about the project started after both exhibitions had finished and I began to think about shared space. If we are to work together we need to find a space where we can bring together our different experiences and approaches. If this space isn't there we need to start to build it. It is within these unfinished spaces that we can become connected, grounded and purposeful. The chest of drawers was a problematic space. At times it was a conflicted space but through the journey and the conflicts it became a point of enactment where we and others could begin to learn how best to understand new ways of working and eventually potential new ways of knowing.

DRAWER 3: RICHARD

I was the one who came up with the idea of displaying our material in a chest of drawers. On one level, housing the material in an item of domestic furniture seemed a nice way to emphasise our interest in writing as an ordinary, everyday activity. On another, I thought that, if we wrote our curatorial text directly on the surface of the chest of drawers, it would provide us with a way to underline our concern with the materiality of writing – the specific physical means by which a text is made available to the reader. Years ago I read Paul Monette's memoir, *Borrowed Time*, in which he describes the death of his lover in the early years of the AIDS crisis. He talks about his growing anxiety that the tides of history would sweep his writing away after his own death and describes his memories of visiting Greece and seeing in the fields there 'broken slabs and columns ... covered with Greek characters', monuments more lasting than books preserving the memories of lives lived in that place. 'Soon,' he says, 'I was brooding that nobody left written artefacts any more to slab the fields of the future.' And so he determined that he would make something more lasting than a book to record the present moment:

I scoured secondhand furniture stores till I found a nice low table with sturdy legs. Then I went to Koontz to buy some paint, and only there decided that it had to be blue. Aegean blue, I called it, remembering the window frames and shutters of the white stucco houses of the islands. I bought the most indelible felt-tip pen I could find. Then I set myself up in the garage and painted my Aegean table two coats of blue. When it was dry I began to write all over the surface, neat block letters stark as Greek, even on the bottom and up and down the legs. (Monette 1996: 146)

I have often thought about Paul Monette's table. The notion of opening a text out onto the surface of an object has haunted me ever since I read his memoir and came to me again as we planned our contribution to the exhibition. But there is an elision in the story. The marble slabs of the Greek islands were created specifically as monuments, quarried and cut for the specific purpose of commemoration. But the table with its characters 'stark as Greek' already had a history before it was pressed into service as a token of remembrance. Its progress to the second-hand furniture store could in principle have been reconstructed and might have involved a death and a house clearance, financial ruin and the sale of property, or a narrative of self-transformation in which all reminders of the past were deliberately cast aside. The previous history of the object is effaced from Monette's story. To produce a more exact parallel he should really have built his own table.

I think it is unreasonable to castigate a man whose lover is dying for not learning carpentry. Indeed, the earlier history of the table would have to have been pretty powerful to match the story which Monette made it tell – he could scarcely have been accused of erasing a powerful history to tell a trivial tale of his own. But the same is not true of our chest of drawers and I realise that, when I envisioned its place in the exhibition, I was thinking of it not as a 'real' object with a history of its own but simply as a surface on which to write. Both Steve and Kate had a much stronger sense of the object's own history and life, Steve because it fitted into the category of the *objet trouvé* (which is well theorised and endlessly explored at a practical level) and Kate because ethnographers are always concerned with the contexts from which objects derive their meanings. And yet, if I am trying to speak to a wider audience, can I not speak through media other than old-fashioned museum displays mounted on the walls ('nicely' designed with a combination of text and image)?

I wonder now at how easily I surrendered my sense of *authorship* over the piece. At the core of my plans was the idea of writing a text, the materiality of which would be highly salient to its readers – the words unfolding playfully, vexingly, poignantly over the painted surface of a familiar object. If we had chosen an object the origin of which was unknown – or which we had made ourselves from scratch – that original vision need not have been overshadowed by the history of the drawers themselves. During the process I often denied that we had turned the

drawers into an ‘art object’ and I think Steve often felt that these protestations were made in bad faith. What else could the work have been but a piece of art? But what concerned me was the *kind* of art we had made – an appropriative work that played upon the historical origins of the materials from which it was constructed. If the work had been much more formal, a text unfolding provocatively in three dimensions and entwining itself around examples of the phenomena we have studied, I would have been far more willing to take ownership of what I had done. As it was, my drawer was the only one not curated by ‘ethnographic participants’ and, for that very reason, it looked anomalous and strange. We displayed it separately from the others on a plinth of its own and it sat there – a little object – its separation readable by us as a mark of the tensions among our perspectives but wholly opaque, I suspect, to the visitors who walked by it on their way through the exhibition space.

I still hanker to display some writing in an exhibition because, in the end, that is my medium. And it seems to me that there is scope to do something that we have not as yet done: to dramatise that process of fitting words to world – of textualising reality – in a way that foregrounds authorship as a central part of what it actually is to make research.

DRAWER 4: THE THREE OF US

On Friday 4 November, 2011, we met in Steve’s Shed in Burngreave Road to talk about our experience. We began by discussing the thorny question of whether the drawers were ‘art’:

SP. Were the drawers a piece of art?

KP. No.

RSJ. I think they were but I don’t think they necessarily need to have been.

SP. Were they ever a piece of art Kate?

KP. I think they were when the girl’s mothers and grandmothers came to look at them in the arts centre.

SP. And they weren’t a piece of art in the original exhibition?

KP. Exactly.

SP. Why not?

KP. Well, at the Science Museum, they produce exhibitions. They use 3D stuff. But actually in the end it’s not art is it?

RSJ. I imagined the drawers as an interesting container to display things. But something happened to them to make them more art-like.

SP. They have their own narrative and at points they looked like art. They weren't like an artifact in a museum as they had been deliberately tampered with to give them a new layer of meaning. The only thing which was different from art was intention. I don't see how anything can escape being art in that context. If you had put a big sign on it saying, "This is not art", it would have made it into art even more clearly.

We thought about the way in which the origin of the chest of drawers shifted the meaning:

RSJ. I'd not thought about the impact of their origin. Had we them on eBay it would have been an entirely different thing.

SP. Had you bought them from eBay and had you both worked collaboratively as a pair and involved me just as a technician, it would have been completely different.

KP. For me it's made me look at my practice as an ethnographer and see that sometimes it goes... wrong. Following the logic of ethnography it is about the emic, about the framing – this explains the rant because I went into that from the emic – thinking what it must be like to be a 13 year old in East Herringthorpe – it's a romanticism and I think that's actually what I was trying to do with that bit of rant.

We asked ourselves whether the drawers offered empowerment to the participants:

SP. If we were going to do a piece of work about empowerment, we needed to think about how the work could give the girls a voice, especially given that the space we were working in was a space in the academy. It's fine to say you want to empower but it's how you empower and what empowerment does in the spaces we work in. We don't get equal chances in life. We live in a society that is completely unjust, and, if we are not careful, that lack of justice could sweep us away. I'm not sure an art gallery is a place where you can empower people. There is too much baggage in that space.

RSJ. I wasn't thinking at all in terms of empowering anybody. I was just thinking that there are these things in the world – types of textuality – and I wanted to draw attention to them. I'd imagined the exhibit as displaying actual things that involved writing, and I'd imagined that collectively they would speak – they would say something straightforward but telling: 'writing is something you do with an object on another object.' I'd imagined a lot of the work lying in taking decisions about how much explanatory text would be needed to let the exhibit speak.

We wondered about how much we valued this project:

KP. I think it's amazing how much value we are placing on all this activity. Here we are, sat in a shed on a rainy Friday evening, still talking about it months after the event. We've come to see it as a valuable and a useful thing, whereas I originally thought it was just a bit of a muddle.

SP. I am interested in ideas emerging in different places – like a rhizome. So right from the beginning we had to write an article about it because we have made an object which actually exists in the world but has a metaphorical charge. I suppose it's the idea rather than the concrete object that's become important and needs exploring now in a different form.

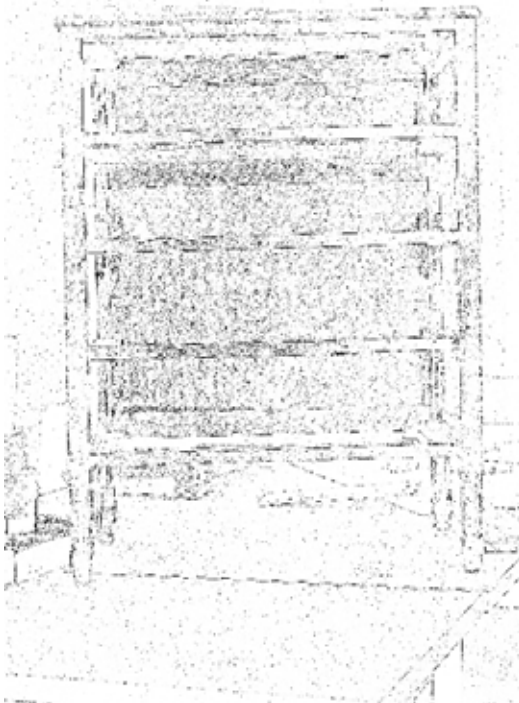
We asked ourselves if we would do a similar project again:

RSJ. Yes, well I almost think we need to. To have gone through it all – to have survived the arguments – in a way we have got to do more. I think that in the future we might understand what we are doing better and have a clearer idea of how to move it on.

SP. We need to create a holding form where things can come. And the lesson is perhaps that you can't find something neutral to be a holding form because the richness came out of the fact that it was not neutral. Kate has suggested finding a safer space to work within but we need to be careful not to find too safe a place. There is also something about structure – establishing a context for the work at the beginning, but minimally so that things can evolve.

An owl hooted and it started to rain.

KP. I want an umbrella



THE PLINTH

A key idea to emerge from the process of ‘dividing the drawers’ is that we could not have avoided the tensions we experienced through better planning. In a sense, the conflicts provided an opportunity to work through questions of disciplinarity and, rather than trying to plan them out of the process, we should have embraced and worked them through so that the finished exhibit constituted a reaction to the process. In thinking about this, we have worked with an insight of Steve’s – that, as the project developed, the drawers emerged as a ‘holding form’ in a process of creative research. The term ‘holding form’ is associated with theatre and forms part of Robert Witkin’s account of the teaching of the arts in his book, *The Intelligence of Feeling*. Witkin’s argument takes a totalising view of the psychology of arts practice, but, even if we reject his assertion that it applies to *all* ‘expressive acts’, his analysis of ‘the creative process’ provides a useful characterisation of our experiences.

Witkin (1974: 170) argues that the creative process has three ‘phases’: the ‘setting of the sensate problem’, the ‘making of a holding form’, and ‘movement [...] to a resolution.’ The ‘sensate problem’ is a provocation that arises from an experience of conflict or contrast. Although our attention was initially directed towards the work’s concrete content – the diverse materiality of writing – we came belatedly to see the ‘real’ subject as the tensions, even conflicts, between our own ways of seeing and doing. These included contrasts between academic communication and arts practice, among academic disciplines, and – significantly – between researcher and research informant. Thus, the work was in a meaningful sense ‘about us.’ The term ‘holding form’ names the context that focuses the working through of the sensate problem. To quote Witkin (1974: 181):

The effectiveness of a holding form depends upon its complete simplicity. [...] The sensate problem itself consists of the structure of sensate disturbance which I have described in terms of ‘contrasts’, ‘discords’, ‘identities’, etc. [...] The individual produces a form that captures these structural characteristics in their barest essentials. It is the essential gestalt of the disturbance that is held in the holding form.

Characterising the provocation as a ‘disturbance’ is interesting. Had we sat down to *discuss* our differences, we could have done so more dispassionately. But working on the exhibit was an emotionally charged experience, confronting us with ‘contrasts’ and ‘discords’ in ways that cut into our self-perceptions. This is undoubtedly because, as a holding form, the drawers really did constitute the ‘essential gestalt’ of the disturbance, poised on the fault lines between our forms of scholarship and practice: for Kate and Richard, they constituted a medium of academic communication but to Steve they were obviously an example of arts prac-

tice; they simultaneously constituted an authored 'text' and an archive of 'found' material; they partly inhabited the 'marked' world of academia or arts practice and partly the world of the everyday. To work on them was to engage with these contrasts, experiencing them concretely and moving towards 'resolution.' And the process of reaching resolution involved a kind of 'letting go' – a willingness to accept that the artefact was both more and less than we had each initially thought. Thus, our process of discovery echoes Aleksandra Mir's statement about her own practice of exhibiting second-hand trophies as part of her practice as an artist, a statement quoted as the epigraph of the essay. When people donate trophies to her for her project they 'let go' of an attachment to the past and so the psychological state of 'letting go' has become central to the meaning of her work.

Public engagement is a relatively new field that remains under-researched. The field is multidisciplinary and includes academics as well as those who work in museums and visual culture settings, social policy and practice and collaborative, community-based settings. One point that we have highlighted in this article is the complexity of the visual, which, although it has a deterministically 'accessible' quality can be problematic as a form of public engagement. We argue here for a revisiting of public engagement's relationship to visual cultures, drawing possibly on research that renders visual cultures and interpretative strategies in museums and art galleries problematic (e.g. Banks 1998; Hooper-Greenhil 2000). However, our argument goes beyond the difficulties associated with a number of disciplines materialising ideas in a visual form. It lies in the epistemology of our modes of enquiry, which became entangled in an object that, despite all our good intentions, fell apart under the strain of the process, shed a drawer, lost three more and ended up as an empty carcass in Kate's room, where it remains.

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HOW DO YOU SPELL LOVE?

CURRICULAR CONVERSATIONS

PAULINE SAMESHIMA & CARL LEGGO

As poets, scholars, and educators, we are always seeking to understand our practices and commitments, our philosophies and desires, our motivations and hopes. We ask about how we spell love in order to know the spell of love as we learn how to live with heart and wisdom. We all need to attend to a curriculum of love. How do we conceive of the word? We need to view ourselves as generators of love. If we are able to love as teachers, there is a greater possibility that we will encourage students to live in love. We offer a wondering and wandering poetic and aesthetic performance of our ongoing theorizations and conversations on love, research, and pedagogy.

Keywords: love, curricular conversations, poetic inquiry, mentorship, curriculum

... we do not love, or look for love, in a world of our own.

(Evans, 2003, p. 142)

*A conversation is immitigably two-sided and always to
some degree mysterious; it requires faith.*

(Berry, 1990, p. 209)

Writing is the delicate, difficult, and dangerous means of succeeding in avowing the unavowable. Are we capable of it? This is my desire.

(Cixous, 1993, p. 53)

As poets, scholars, and educators, we are always seeking to understand our practices and commitments, our philosophies and desires, our motivations and hopes. We have collaborated on many research projects for almost a decade, and in all those projects, we continue to ask questions about love and loving pedagogy and loving and living poetically. Above all, we ask about how we spell love in order to know the spell of love as we learn how to live with heart and wisdom in the world. We all need to attend to a curriculum of love. In order to learn how to love, we need to acknowledge that we are not alone, independent, and autonomous. Love is a practice and a commitment. Love is a daily devotion. To change the world we start with love, but not with an abstract, general, impossible declaration like, *I love the world*. Instead we begin with an abiding and abundant question: How are we going to live this new day with love?

You ask *What does love have to do with educational research?* It is an epistemology, a way of seeing the world, a way for organizing research, a way for teaching, a way for learning, a way for living. As a practice, this way of seeing the world influences research project selection, methodological plans, pedagogical style, and relational connections. As teachers, we need to consider the spelling of love. How do we conceive of the word? Is it a concept, a fact, content knowledge that can be used and consumed rather than a way of living inquiringly? Love needs to be acknowledged as an enterprise for participation. We need to view ourselves as generators of love, to understand how love is spelled in the different ways it is. If we are able to love as teachers, there is a greater possibility that we will encourage students to live in love.

We ask, what is the purpose of schooling? Douglas Gerwin and David Mitchell (2010), Waldorf Educators, suggest that the cultural value and integrity of education must be to assist human physical, intellectual, and emotional unfolding. We need to pay more attention to the latter. We need to educate on the spelling of love. We need to learn how to be together. In 1958, Hannah Arendt said of individuals in the public, the problem is that the “world between them has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and to separate them” (pp. 52-43). We are still struggling: in a modern world, we are still at war. Online interactivity is growing in popularity. Millions of teens and adults are playing massively multi-player online role-playing games (MMORPGs). World of Warcraft, one example of an online role-playing game, had 11.4 million subscribers as of March 2011, holding an estimated 62% of the MMORPG subscription market (Wikipedia, 2011). Facebook, as of June, 2011, had more than 500 million active users with 50% logging onto Facebook on a given day and spending 700 billion minutes

per month on Facebook (Facebook Statistics, 2011). People want to know how to love, be loved, to be a part of a community – using words and technology to find those loving spaces. Interestingly, love is not a part of the education curriculum.

This text comprises ruminations and poetry that emerged from several years of e-mail conversations. Out of tens of thousands of words that we exchanged, we have gathered some fragments, and shaped them in an essay where we hope to offer a poetic and aesthetic performance of our ongoing theorizations and conversations on love, research, and pedagogy. We speak here to each other with the hope that you will join in the conversation with your own ruminations and poetry.

*

*The poem is the body.
The body speaks.
Love is in the body
of the work. Not
in the words themselves,
but in the fissures
of the words and
in the spaces.*

*

Perhaps love is
emptiness & fullness,
silence & hearing,
the still pause between
the heart's systole & diastole,
spirit-filled breath
in the grammar
of our sentences.

Your writing about love invites readers to slow down as they remember other stories of love. Perhaps the space for communing about love is the space of the text that keeps us vulnerable and hopeful.

It is very difficult to describe
strong emotion in writing
because it is so easy to slip
into sentiment and cliché.

How do we create a strong sense
of urgent and convincing truthfulness
with the heart's raw and boundless
(and often inexplicable) desire?

Your writing is like a tightrope walk,
a seemingly impossible journey
that both defies and embraces physics.

*

I reread Julia Kristeva's book Tales of Love (1987) recently. She says, "Are not two loves essentially individual, hence incommensurable, and thus don't they condemn the partners to meet only at a point infinitely remote? Unless they commune through a third party: ideal, god, hallowed group" (p. 3). In my stories of love, the chance of love ever connecting two people is sacred. So many people deeply love those who cannot love them in return—it's disheartening. So the idea of communing in a space of love is very hopeful.

*

I'm reminded of the word "littoral"—a coastal region, a shore, a region between the limits of high and low tide. I am playing with "littoral" and "literal" and seeking the places where words wash in and out. What is the sturdy shore that I seek to walk? Am I seeking to walk an invisible line that only unfolds as I lay the letters down, throwing letters into the air, and then jumping from one to another? Perhaps the only sureness I can know as a shore is in the writing that lives and loves.

*

*You revive me, make me
want to jump off the cliff
into the text of love.
Your words prevent
my work from scattering
all over the floor.*

*We're walking together.
Don't tell me you don't
know the way.
I'm following you!*

*Wish me luck
as I continue to delete
and still don't know
what is important
about love to keep.
**

Literally

pragmatic practical
with
prosaic exactitude

faith in the actual
factual eschewing
the figurative

we construe words
with too little imagination
we follow words

in the original
a literal translation
letter by letter

without
exaggeration
the nature of letters

is domesticated
in the alphabet
the literator is no

liberator
lashes with literalism
too literal

we need to lie
in the possibilities
of the littoral

know how
literacy & literature
are not owned

by the literati
we do not need
the letter of the law

we need
the love of the letter
the letter's love

*

*My grief
I want words
to hold my body.
I don't know how
to hold love
in words only,
without body.*

*

Laying words down in order to create a path is an expression of embodied knowing and living. I never separate the body from words, or the poetry from the poet. I might sometimes wish I could, but I know I can't. I write about the poet's corpus because I want to acknowledge how my body is the body of the writing. This does not diminish the physical body. Instead, I hope to understand all of experience as embodied, connected to the body and bodies.

*

*Did you know Socrates connected "the art of love" with the concept of "the love of wisdom"? The noun *erôs* (love) and the verb *erôtan* (to ask questions) sound as if they are etymologically connected.*

Do words hold love?

or

Does love hold the words?

Imagine life as a strong rushing river with lots of tributaries. I like Arendt's (1958) idea of natality—the human's freedom based on the ability to create new life and Levinson's (2001) idea that we are new but belated because we are already in the river when we are born and when we are creating. We are swept along in a few versions of the same story, thousands of words like flotsam swirling around us like windy words soaking into us making us want to live the archetype. But it's the blank, the clear water, the fissures (see Kristeva, 1980) and spaces between the flotsam that is actually holding us. The clearness is the beauty of art, music, rhythm, smoothness on our skins. So the water is holding us, not the words. We can be buoyed by masses of words all stuck together, but that's fleeting. The river washes these away downstream. Words spoken and read are lost in the air after the sound goes past us, but they colour the water and change the temperature of the water – this is what the body and the skin feels and remembers (Sameshima, 2007, p. 223).

The words do not hold the body; it is the inbetween, the water that surrounds me that holds me. This does not mean that we do not write in an embodied way. When we write well, we are immersed, feeling the body, gathering the words in the water that surrounds us, articulating the body's "expanded space" or aura.

Perhaps the main storyline of the big river is that love will fill those holes; not the jagged words that don't fit the shape of the wounds, but the free flowing water filled with love.

Pedagogically, teachers cannot view students as wounded, filled with holes of deficiency. I think many of us imagine the teacher as healer, saving the lost, raising the students to whatever is deemed "par," pouring curriculum into the holes. We have to conceive of the student as already whole, full of experience, buoyant, splashing around in joy, in love-filled water, lovingly bombarded by every "bodies" trace on the words in the water and feel the belonging through responsibility and polite obligation to those near us. I think responsibility and polite obligation can develop all the other virtues that we worry are fading in our classroom, schools, and world. Love is in stories of relation.

*

You are opening up startling spaces for re-membling experiences and emotions. Consider the locations represented in combining different prepositions with love: in love, with love, above love, under love, between love We need vibrant and lyrical and joyful words that remind us to breathe and attend to how the heart infuses life through(out) the body.

I want to write poems about the heart: clichés of the heart, the sacred heart, learning by heart, chambers of the heart, eyes of the heart, fickle heart, broken heart, pedagogy of the heart, pure heart, ace of hearts, heart beat, heart attack, heart arrhythmia, hard heart

*

We cannot conceive without warmth, movement, and breath. That is the key to our writing. I went to a herbalist last week. His office was at the back of a storefront lined with glass cases of strange-looking dried plants and barks. On his desk rested a tiny white pillow. I wondered what it was for. He told me to put the back of my wrist on the little pillow. He felt my right wrist (pulse) and then my left wrist for a long time then asked to see my tongue. He spoke little English and my Chinese is poor so I didn't say anything. After those little "examinations," he told me I think too much, that I should not do "strong" exercise and that my stomach circulation is weak. I had not indicated in any way that I was spending a lot of time writing late into the night, nor that I was playing more ice-hockey than usual. He gave me a prescription which I handed to someone in the store front. The man efficiently went about gathering bits of this and that from little drawers lining the wall and from the glass cases. He weighed everything meticulously with a Chinese balance and gave me four individually wrapped newspaper packages that I was to boil and drink. I saw the herbalist again today. He said my circulation has improved, but that I am hot and cold and need to find a warm place. To find the equilibrium, I'm to eat less "cold" food. The Chinese have grouped their foods. Hot and cold does not refer to temperature. I don't know what the pattern is but oranges and celery are cold as are shellfish—strangely new and exciting information. I know what hot and cold is in my own interpretation. You and I have some coldness. I think it's a hole in the heart. It's not the coldness of aloofness the way Westerners mean, it's an imprinting of sadness or loss of sorts. It's also a realization of something but I'm not sure what. I think to feel the hot means you must know the cold.

*

I am quite intrigued with your discussion of hot and cold. St. Augustine says that we all have a hole in our hearts. He also says that only God can fill the hole. Hold fast to the writing, the call that compels the word-making and art-making and heart-making....

*

*Love is a vulnerable
act of courage,
a commitment
to entanglement.*

*

The more I attend to your writing
about ways of living and loving,
the more I am encouraged
that you are writing wisdom
and hope in the midst
of joyful difficulty
and difficult joy.
All your writing is steeped
in a conversation with others.
At the same time, your work
is uniquely yours—singing
in your voices, connected
ecologically to the places
and people that hold you.

*

One thing I've realized is that it doesn't matter how many people love me, I'm happiest when I'm loving in love. I write in order to find a place for love in learning.

I've been trying to explain something I didn't understand and you've been saying it to me all along. When I think of you, I think of your aura or the space around you that has become my learning context. I know now it's because I am in your heart's light. It's not just words. I feel it.

*

The really hard part of offering the gift of a poem is rejection. Many people do not like my poems, and I have had to grow strong in accepting rejection. It is inevitable I suppose. Not everyone likes every book in the library. So, now I write my poems and I offer them with a cloud's eagerness to rain wherever the rain will fall. The cloud probably doesn't even know that some will want the rain, and some

will not. The cloud is doing what clouds do. I am a poet, and I write poetry, and I offer the poetry to the world. What happens after that is a part of the story that is still unfolding.

*

*In making the mosaic
I've worn my fingers
almost to the bone.
I dremmeled and sanded
till running a finger
along the stems
of the pussy willow
is only smooth
and sensual.*

*

I received a letter from the FBI! They told me my application for permanent residency in the United States was pending because of the quality of my fingerprint scans. The friction ridges of my digits are too smooth. I have failed the residency biometrics testing three times now. The Spokane clerk at the Citizenship and Immigration Services offices said I must be typing a lot or cleaning with skin abrading cleaners. I laugh to myself in thinking back (now that I have a green card). My memory of this long and tedious process was filled with an overwhelming sense of vulnerability and powerlessness—I would be accepted into this country only on their terms. It seems to me that living as an academic has its own enculturation process as well.

We will always be perceived by some in ways that hurt us. You live in the world with boundless energy and creativity and joy. Much like Tigger! We will always be misunderstood by some, and certainly we will often be upsetting to some. Your calling in the academic world is to pursue your passions. That won't mean always pleasing others. Above all, always be you in the world—a dancing whirl of colour calling out the possibilities for joyful and wise living.

*

I'm beginning to think there must be a collective consciousness or some kind of historical memory for Chinese music that my body recognizes. To feel a merging between self and world, to not feel the separation all about us; and being in love is to feel immersed in all the world's fullness.

*

You are swimming with a poet's rhythmic strokes in the hot/icy sea. There is always more to read. Of course! What you and I need to remind ourselves is that some of our research attends to the texts that have not been published in books—texts of the heart, imagination, spirit, experience, intuition. These texts are significant but so easily ignored. Your work is singular in its devoted attention to theorizing and art-making and living and becoming as ways of knowing that complement one another.

*

A journal has rejected my manuscript. One of the reviewers said I should not use the word “magic.” I was talking about how art layered with literature magically emboldens. Another said I should not “offer Volkart’s words” because “offering is not enough when the purpose of theoretical writing is to develop and defend an argument” The same reviewer said my poem “lacks a discussion as to how its form and content constitute arts-based research.” I appreciate the time these people have given my writing and humbly take their thoughts into consideration and without seeming dismissive, I also realize that I am living on a different island. I want to write in a way that can reach many with the possibilities of “other.”

Jacques Derrida says “I have the feeling that the more I understand from within a poet or a writer, the more I am able to, let us say reproduce what he is doing, the more I am able to write something else, or to counter-sign” (Padgaonkar, N.D, online)

To the Thin Air

*lie with me then
lie with my words
and know desire's
intention
not falling backwards
to restore the forever lost past
but a crackling fire which
pushes us forward
rises up to the stars
to the thin air
come*

*

Did you see the full moon on Friday,
light amber and singing? Your words
taste like light. Perhaps we live in light.

*

I think we are in the “groove”—the place where we’re surrounded by the same thoughts.

Love makes the moon glow, doesn’t it?

*

Your words always bring me lyrical joy. What a treat to see your art in the dentist’s office! Art needs to linger in every place where people linger. I wonder if the dentist would like to include poetry in his waiting room.

*

*Love is not enough when it is private.
To articulate love is to make it public.*

When we speak or write love, love becomes.

*

I want to slow down and taste the rhythms of our words, presented with heartfelt care. That is how I wish to live!

Perhaps love stories never really end. Perhaps they are lived in multiple ways, rhizomatically even, or fractally, or holographically. Perhaps we live too often in love stories like we have learned to understand love stories from literature and popular culture—linear and suspenseful and climactic. Perhaps there are many love stories and many ways to live love stories and many ways to represent love stories. Our calling is to live love like artists, seeking the unfamiliar in the familiar, and the familiar in the unfamiliar, knowing the process will be both lovely and terrifying.

*

You advised me to include the challenges of writing that which is autobiography and that which is fiction. I wasn't sure what you meant and I keep forgetting to ask. Are you asking how I write what has not happened to me?

*

Always so much to discuss. Regarding autobiography and fiction, I am always looking for the intersections where neither writer nor reader can tell the difference, where life emerges in all its playful, puzzling, pungent, pugnacious, poetic power.

Your writing returns me to memories of love, and the stories that emerge from the experiences of love—desired, lived, spoken, written....

How can we learn to love in the ways we have learned to breathe?

*

*Everything is
beautifully complex;
perhaps it's best
just to listen.*

You said perhaps you loved everyone but not anyone. That can't be true.

It's wrong to think that love is about belonging.

I want to love with grace, a gentle love that doesn't hurt.

*How do we love
when our conceptions
of love are so
limited & limiting?*

*

Fool
(for Lana)

mesmerized heart, full of fiction
like a fickle spring day
 with sun and rain
 in the same hour

memorized script from *Love Story*,
scraps of a big story, fixed
 like Keats' lovers
 on an urn that turns

pledged love on the morning star,
constant even in a cloudy dawn,
 forgetting how a star burns
 itself up like a dried apricot

imagined return to the womb
born anew, now in the mirror,
 a stranger with a stuffed heart,
 wheezy with other dreams

fractured light, almost too late,
in winter birches under a full moon,
 sufficient light for knowing,
 even if not finding the way

*

I don't know how to restory this story.

Why are so many people not in love? If love opens the world, brings joy to living, brightens every mundane moment into a special memory, why don't we love more?

Sweet Sound of You

*I remember the silence
the break where I can
relax in your breath
on the phone
Last time you broke the silence
with a laugh and said
“You caught me off guard”
I wondered what you meant
didn’t ask
I was tasting the words
inside my ears
tangy extracts of exotic fruit
forming on the sides of my tongue
tiny concentrates simply
lying on the words
waiting for me without intention
an underhanded coyness*

*I hear you
slowly submerge
in a silent delicious world*

*

Love and language tango in the tangled garden. I said to friends last night that human beings might be the only creatures in the earth who are always fighting against the lively environments that hold us. Other creatures swim and fly and run and swing and bounce in the ocean, sky, ground, air, but humans are always longing for home and complaining about feeling homeless. Perhaps home is all around us, holding us close and loose.

It was lovely to talk with you today, as always. I am ruminating on the tender description of me as one who “knows no edge of love, filled with poetic mystery.” Perhaps I do love everybody. At least, I do not feel the need to compartmentalize or ration or divide or bank love. Perhaps my life history has prepared me for love. My ruminations on love are always scattered because I cannot hold the whole image of love in my miniscule imagination.

We have much more to write about love. Perhaps we need to open up to theological and religious language, too. Perhaps I need to be more conscientiously convicted about loving everyone. Perhaps I need to think about love as the spirit that animates everything and everybody.

*

I hope you've had a great vacation and found the words you left last year hiding in the cracks of rocks, under leaves on your hikes, and in the trout pond.

I remember writing you a very long letter about this time last year. Don't worry. This is a short one. Here is the link to an interview with Derrida <http://www.scribd.com/doc/6990116/Derrida-Interview-on-Love> Nikhil Padgaonkar I mentioned this interview a while ago but forgot about it. I like it because Nikhil Padgaonkar (N.D., online) asks Derrida about philosophy, or the love of wisdom. Derrida says "deconstruction is always accompanied by love." The interview discusses criticism as coming after an acknowledgement of "yes," an "affirmative desire towards the Other – to respect the Other, to pay attention to the Other, not to destroy the otherness of the Other." So in teaching or correcting or deconstructing, one must first respect the other. Later, the article talks about implicit faith in an implicit relationship. Perhaps that is the kind of love we're talking about in classrooms. I like this idea of faith in the teacher and the teacher's faith in the student. I like the ending. Padgaonkar says, "But there is an implicit faith, an implicit relationship . . .and Derrida answers, "It's a matter of faith, of good faith, but its faith, it's faith. . ."

Glad you're back.

Glad you liked Derrida.

Glad.

*Faith
to be able to write
to each other the way we do*

*

I am richly blessed by you and your heart and your words. This has been an odd day, lumbering on the heels of an odder day yesterday. Your poems are lines that I can hold fast to. Thank you for the gifts.

I am reading a book titled *Science of Breath* by Yogi Ramacharaka (1904). He says we should breathe through our noses, that our mouths are no more for breathing

than our noses are for eating! I wonder how old a person is when she or he knows this kind of stuff with sufficient conviction for living well

I am thinking much about love, too.

Your poems scoop up the reader's heart and carry it high, up and up, as if it must linger above the tops of the mountains in order to see all that must be seen.

I only wish I could write with your courage and your commitment to love.

*

When you touched my mosaics, I felt moved. I was very glad you could see them as they are meant to be seen and felt and lifted and experienced.

Yes, I am loved beyond measure as you say, loved in ways that I cannot return too. How greatly blessed! And it is I who love many, too, so many beautiful friends, and my family who are so important to me. How strange sometimes that I feel burdened with the inability to return love the way those who love me deserve to be loved. And a sadness too, a wish that everyone could find so many to love.

Right now, I am able to find so much joy in my life and you are a great part of that. I think of you often and find pleasure in being with your words and sharing my poems with you.

I would like the opportunity to tell more people about love and your love and how the mentor's love opens doors. I also wonder how this can be misconstrued or misunderstood. I am almost ashamed to talk about love.

I feel so much resonance in your words. We are resonating in the unsaid as well. I think hypertext is a good way to describe the paths and roads we've never traveled. And we do choose them alone for hypertext is designed for solo choices.

Time does not fade all memories.

I've been thinking about how the words we use for love may be connected to my confusion. We always talk about love filling us, as if we need to hold on and as if we can actually grasp love. And yet I know that the more I love, the emptier I feel, that the kiss cannot draw love back inside. That perhaps a deeper joy is loving another in an outgoingness as compared to the fleetingness of loving words received. I used to be perplexed about the emptiness of love and desire and I wonder now if changing my

conception of love from a consumable to an inquiry can change that fulfillingness. As a love generator, I can fill my own wanting, perhaps.

*

How we compose our daily living stories involves an intricate and creative journeying in the liminal spaces between the past and future, our memories and desires.

Thank you for the writing about hypertext which opens up new possibilities. There are always more paths to walk than we can walk.

Our lives are likely motivated more by desire than any other physical-emotional-psychological-social-cultural energy. Perhaps we need a curriculum and pedagogy of desire. Perhaps all our education ought to begin with the experience and study and analysis of desire. Perhaps if we could speak truthfully about desire, we would learn how joy and love and wisdom are found and known in the interstices of past and future where the present is always re-presented.

Thank you for your gorgeous message—full of your quintessential, quixotic, quotidian, quotable wisdom, heart, imagination, and energy!

Each of your new poems holds the reader in a tender/firm grip that invites and commands attention and attentiveness.

*

I hope you are writing vagrantly, fragrantly, and frequently.

*

I will spend most of the next couple weeks on vacation,
vacating, seeking vacancy, even a little vagrancy,
scribbling love between the lines of poems.

*

*You guide me where ever you are.
I suspect that it is the confidence I feel
you have in me that makes me grow,
to find ways to please you and myself.*

*I remember your asking
when I started writing.
I said "in your class." Now
it's become my way of living,
a need, like Rilke wrote about.
It's no longer for anyone but me.
Thank you for leading me to such joy.*

*

I don't think I could live without poetry.
I am convinced that poetry generates
the spiritual energy that sustains me
in the hurly-burly craziness of a world
where I seldom feel at home.

I have been hiding away
from e-mail in order
to attend to poetry.

I know you will embrace the challenges because you know that we can never live fully in response to the creative callings that compel us without facing and living with numerous challenges.

The challenge is to write love
and live love in loving ways
that do not interrupt
our loving well and living
poetically in the world.

All love must know limits. If I claim to love everybody, I am still not claiming to love everybody in the same way(s).

Your poem is poignant, a sigh from the heart, true, a song infused with the blues.

I told a friend yesterday that I was having a bad hair day but a good heart day. Today I understand that I am always hoping for good heart days.

Regarding love, perhaps we can love best when our desire is mostly focused on nurturing the loveliness of the other, instead of wanting to possess the other's loveliness.

Being a poet is lonely. I offer my words everywhere! But the world is not ringing my doorbell, calling for my poems. I grow more reticent about poking my poems in folks' faces, but it is the calling I embrace as integral to my being and becoming. So....

*

... the conservative stance I was trying to make a point about. Her question implies that the teacher remains homogenous, that the teacher cannot fall in love or make mistakes or do things that are taboo. The fact that we hide these things about teachers from the public enforces the idea that teachers should only be blank conduits of preset curriculum. I would like to say that we need to tell the unsaid stories, the stories that happen all around that no one will speak. Not that I have any answers, but we need to acknowledge that it is a taboo and ask why. Then maybe we'll be talking about love and eros in ways that we can begin to understand.

I hope you are well and falling smoothly in love with all the new faces you are getting to know this term!

You say everyone loves me and you love everyone. I have thought about that phrase. It is not light. I am loved and I know it and am grateful. I imagine some people think I can heal them. I cannot—only feel myself draining out. How do we heal with love? Can you really love everyone? Why do you love everyone?

I'd like to think about intellectual seduction more.

My life is so full of love and loss and love and fullness. Perhaps this is why we don't open Pandora's love box at school - we cannot control or limit love. It runs out and colours everything. As well, when this fullness falls, it is a mighty crash. That is to say, love does not stay still, it grows and blooms and dies at different speeds and it must.

I feel now the way I felt when I was drumming with Mandido. It was the different drum pattern he told me to keep, a pattern in juxtaposition with everyone else's that made the song "The mystery of love" beautiful. Ted Aoki talks about this "contrapuntal interplay" (Berman & al, 1991, xiii)." I'm intrigued because mentorship looks so different relationally. Even you guide so uniquely.

Did you know I spoke to him a week or so before he passed? He sounded well but I felt it was a goodbye. My memories of his music and our experiences were like a summer flower in bloom.

*

In Closing

Our conversations about love and loving will continue. Thank you for the privilege of collaborating in wondering and wandering, amidst questions and tangled spaces, honouring always the heart's rhythms.

May our days be filled with poetic sunlight
affectionate joy and joyful affection
in the heart's imagination
seeking w(hole)ness
and while waiting for more poems
may we continue to write and live love with wild imaginings

....

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PEACE WAS NOT UPON HER

SHEILA SIMPKINS & PESHRAW Y. SALEEM

Outside— autumn morning fresh—hazy sun, brilliant sky, crisp air—the day exudes promise. Unlike in here, I think, where the air has taken on a decidedly wintry turn—cool, nippy, quite frosty. Dr. X and I are sitting in my office, at the University of Kurdistan-Hawler (UKH) in Erbil, Northern Iraq—the site of my doctoral research project. Every morning, for the week that I have been here, Dr. X has popped in from his office across the hall to say good morning and to have a “chat.” He is friendly, welcoming. This morning he tells me that he has heard that I have been asked to teach a third year sociology course. I reply that I have indeed been asked to do such a thing and moreover the administration has indicated that they are delighted to have me teach whatever course I choose—I am delighted because I have chosen to teach arts-based research inquiry.

You see, graduate work was something of a spiritual conversion. What wonder, what marvel, the discovery—music, poetics, narrative, photography, story-telling, drama, métissage, autoethnography—incorporating artistic modes—violating prescribed conventions: sonare relsiding with videre¹ (Aoki, 2005 p. 373). Inquiry, a sensual pleasure; how divine a revelation. I rejoiced in the rebellion and rejection of the traditional, the positivistic, the scientific, the impersonal, the unembodied, the insensible. I have become a seeker of pleasure...seeking and finding pleasure in my research and writing. I have embraced this newness like a new religion. And like any zealous con-

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vert, I have turned my back on the old ways. Not only has the planning of my research and dissertation been a celebration of the new—a passionate endeavour—this passion, this zealously spills over and tumbles out compelling me to proselytize.

Oh dear! This is problematic; not well received. Dr. X isn't aggressive or combative, isn't angry; he is the voice of reason—the voice of reason from a seasoned, experienced academic giving advice to an assumed inexperienced graduate student. He is appealing to my inherent rationality. Dr. X is confident that this superior voice of reason will persuade and prevail and I will respond accordingly. “These students need to learn how to do serious research, scientific research. They need training in formulating a hypothesis, collecting, organizing, evaluating, and verifying data, making deductions, reaching conclusions. They need to be shown how to write up their research results. They need to be shown how to do research that uses acceptable scientific methodology. You do them a disservice by offering a useless and ineffective course.”

I try to explain that arts-based research does not pretend to be positivistic research, that the goals of arts-based research are very different than traditional/scientific/positivistic research goals. To compare the two kinds of research is like comparing apples and oranges—it can't be done. I tell him that arts-based research assumes that research should be transformative. It should lead to a better understanding of the self and others and of the world we live in. I go on to say an important goal of arts-based researchers is to share the worlds that we research in representations that privilege the sensuous, the figurative, the expressive, in an effort to foster empathy and understanding. I finally finish by telling him, really, there are times in social science research when the scientific is not a good fit/method for intended research goals and as sociologists these students need to be aware of the different ways of seeing and doing research. Dr. X is not used to this kind of resistance. My proclamations are met with a clipped, polite condescending “You have a real chance to make a valuable contribution not only to the students, but also to the university. I do hope you will change your mind.” A biting cold northerly wind hovers in the corners of the room as he sweeps out the door; frosty, definitely frosty.

It was the last semester of my undergraduate studies at UKH. We sociology students were intrigued; we had heard through the grapevine that we were going to have a new lecturer. We were wondering who that lecturer would be and what course she would teach. We found out she was going to teach us Arts-based Research Inquiry – a research method that I had not taken before. In fact, I had never even heard of it. After the first class I learned so fast and so well what this kind of research is. In just the first few classes I not only appreciated arts-based research as a feasible and efficient method of research – but – I found myself, my life experiences and the realities of life in it.

I think this autobiographical story of mine is the most accurate and unbiased research that I have ever done. The data is not my hypothesis or analysis of certain at-

tained data – as in empirical research – but the data are facts that happened right in front of my eyes; facts that I live with. I have conducted this research subconsciously, but so precisely. In the notebook of my mind, I have collected all the data. I have analyzed it, and reached conclusions. However, I didn't have the right method to present this subconscious research – until now. Arts-based research inquiry is a perfect means for transforming this long unheard voice into a story that I could share with the reader.

It was the beginning of summer of 1998. It was the last day of the school year, and my last day at primary school. I would be going to secondary school after the three month summer break. That day, I was with my best friends, Frishta and Karzan, playing football in the school yard. I remembered clearly the six years of primary school spent with both of them; with my classmates; with my closest friends!

Frishta. Her name means “angel”—she acted and looked like an angel, too! Frishta was slim and pretty with long dark hair; the girl with an innocent smiley face. She smiled a lot! She was so thin that whenever she smiled, she would have a tiny fold in her skinny cheek. She was so smart at her studies, too. She helped me with my studies many times.

Karzan. He was an unserious and careless student, but a nice, friendly, emotional and intelligent person. Karzan was neither fat nor skinny but, he was tall. Taller than the rest of the students. He was two years older than Frishta and I, because he had failed two years during primary school, while we had never failed any. Karzan was Frishta's brother; the best brother for her, and also the most helpful friend for me.

Karzan would always be there for me and Frishta to defend us against the bully Redar and the aggressive Hawa; two cousins who always tried to pick on us throughout our primary school years. I remember how, when I had just enrolled in primary school those many years ago, many times, Redar and Hawa bullied me and beat me up. However, after I made friends with Karzan and Frishta they weren't able to hurt me anymore. Karzan was so much stronger, taller and older than both of the cousins. He was a good protector. It was always the three of us together, studying, laughing and playing.

That day, the last day of school, the end of the football game in the school-yard came so soon! It was time to go home. It was also the time to say good bye until the next year. “We may see each other again, if we all pass this year, and if we are enrolled in the same secondary school this coming year,” I told Karzan and Frishta, while we were walking home. We reached the end of the alley where our homes were. We said goodbye to each other. Frishta and Karzan went on walking to their home which was in the alley behind my home.

I lived with Dad, Mom, and three other siblings. I was the oldest son, with a younger sister and two younger brothers. Dad was a primary school teacher, mom was an illiterate housewife, my sister Shirin and brother Aso, who was younger than her, were students at primary school. Mohamed, my youngest sibling, was an infant.

The primary school, where we studied at, was one of the only two primary schools in our crowded neighborhood. So, the school had two shifts of teaching; morning shift and afternoon shift. Shirin and Aso were in the same school where I studied, but on a different shift. We lived in the Nawroz Neighborhood; the furthest neighborhood from the city center. Our home was on the last alley on the border of the neighborhood and it had the least public services available in the city of Hawler, the capital of Kurdistan. Yet, it was a heaven compared to the houses in the alley behind our home!

Right behind our home there was a long muddy, noisy, curvy, narrow alley, where the slum was. A relatively huge number of poorly structured houses were built very close to each other. The houses were made of *khisht* (hand made bricks, made from clay) and tree timbers. The place was called *Khanwa Quraka* (mud houses). I felt really bad for the residents of the alley. The cold winters are so severe for the people of the slum. It needs real resistance to survive in a cold and dark house without burning fuel and electricity!

During the summer break, I missed Frishta and Karzan a lot. Although their home was right behind our alley, in the slum, I still could not see them because my parents did not let me go away from home. “You must stay around home! I want to see you nearby, so that you can hear me as soon as I call you to come back home,” Mom usually told me before she let me go outside, in front of our house. I sometimes went to our balcony, which overlooked the slum. From the balcony, there was a clear view of the slum; a bunch of low-roof mud-colored houses, clustered into each other unevenly. I knew Frishta and Karzan were living in that slum, but I didn’t know exactly where they lived.

In the corner, at one end of the alley, was a large house; larger than any other house in the slum. One day, my mother pointed to the large house and said “This is where your father goes to on Friday nights—*Kak* (Mr.) Ahmad’s house; the *hayran-bej* Ahmad.”

At that time, I immediately realized that this large house was where Frishta and Karzan lived because they had already told me all about their father and his well-known *hayran*. *Hayran* is a Kurdish folkloric type of song, usually sung without any musical instrument, and usually in the *diwakhan* (a Kurdish traditional guest room). *Kak* Ahmad was a well-known *Hayran-bej* (hayran-singer) in the area. Many people were eager to visit *Kak* Ahmad’s home to listen to his *hayran*. Ahmad’s *hayrans* were not only popular among the slum residents, but also with the people from nearby neighborhoods. *Kak* Ahmad’s house would be full of guests every Friday night. My father was a close friend of *Kak* Ahmad and a fan of his. Dad sometimes used to visit Ahmad’s *diwakhan* (guest-room) too.

After I found out where Frishta and Karzan lived, I kept begging Dad to take me with him to *Kak* Ahmad’s *diwakhan* each Friday night. “Please, Dad, I want to come with you! I very much like to listen to *hayran*, Dad!” However, my father

always refused to take me with him. He usually told me “*Diwakhan* is a place for *piyaw-maqulan* (gentlemen), not kids!”

Many days I went up to the balcony to see if I could spot Frishta or Karzan. I sometimes saw Karzan playing with the boys of the slum, but I never saw Frishta. Karzan never noticed me or heard me yelling his name, “Karzan! Karzan!” waving at him with my arms.

I had the hope that I would see Frishta and other dear friends at secondary school in the coming year. The three months of summer break finished and the time came for me to begin school. On that first day of school I looked all around to see my best friends, but I didn’t see them. A couple of weeks passed, I saw neither Karzan nor Frishta. One day, on my way home from school, I encountered Karzan. I was both surprised and happy to see him. “Have you been enrolled in a different secondary school?”

“No!” Karzan replied sadly.

“Then what happened?!” I asked in astonishment.

“I failed and had to stay in primary school.”

“Oh, so sorry to hear that. What about Frishta?”

“Frishta has dropped out of school,” he replied.

I took Karzan’s failure as a normal thing because he was not so smart at school, but I was shocked by Frishta’s dropping-out; she was really smart at her studies and she loved school. So, I forced Karzan to tell me the truth about it. After a long effort Karzan told me “Dad says that she is an adult now, and it is not appropriate for an adult girl to go to secondary school alone.” After I heard this from Karzan, I was completely hopeless of staying in touch with my friends. I would never see Frishta again, and I would see Karzan only if we should by chance meet on our way home from school.

It was a Friday evening, and we were having dinner. “Get us some food, *Jine* (wife)! Make it hurry!” Dad said to my Mom. I knew exactly why Dad was in a hurry; he wanted to go where he usually goes on a Friday night. “He is going to visit *Kak Ahmad’s diwakhan*, tonight!” I thought to myself. If I were allowed to go with Dad, “I would be able to see my dear friend, Frishta, tonight!” Yes! I decided I would ask to accompany Dad.

“What happened to the dinner?!” Dad asked Mom, with a frown on his face and a frustrated air of being in a hurry.

“Just wait a few more seconds. The meal is not cooked enough yet,” Mom said.

“Wait?! The food is not ready?! What is the job of a woman?! Can’t you prepare a simple meal on time?!” he added.

“This is not the only thing that I have been doing today. I have been cleaning the house, doing the dishes, washing dirty clothes, buying food and cooking it! Besides, I had to look after our baby “Mohamed” for the whole day!”

Dad continued complaining about my Mom. Dad's loud voice woke Mohamed up, who was in his crib. Mohamed started crying, and Mom went to him and held him on her shoulder. Dad became quiet while Mohamed was crying. Mohamed finally stopped crying when Mom breast-fed him; then she put him at ease back into the crib. Now, Dad was about to burst in anger; he was staring at Mom with bulging eyes, and with his mouth firmly closed. Mom went to the cooker and got the meal on the table. Mom was not looking at anyone, she did not say a word, and she was looking down at only the food while she was dividing the food into several plates for each of us. Now, the room was full of tension. Everybody quiet, looking down at their plates and eating their meal. I decided now was not the time to ask to go to *Kak Ahmad's* house.

Shortly after we finished eating I took courage and asked Dad if I could go with him. I could hardly believe it! Dad, for the first time, agreed to take me with him to *Kak Ahmad's diwakhan!* "Now, you're an adult! You have finished primary school! You have to learn to deal with men," Dad said. "Get yourself ready! We will go to *Kak Ahmad's diwakhan*, now!" Mom brought me a coat and my shoes. I set out to *diwakhan* with Dad.

Dad told me "You have to be a real man! You must talk like a real man, act like a real man!" He told me that when we enter *Kak Ahmad's diwakhan*, I had to say 'Salamu-alaykum' (Peace be upon you) to the people there. "That is how a real Muslim man greets!" Dad told me.

He also told me not to refuse anything the hosts give us. "Eat and drink anything they bring to you, but don't drink a lot!" Dad was giving me advice the whole time on our way to *diwakhan*.

"What if I don't want to eat or drink?" I asked Dad.

"You still have to eat or drink whatever they offer you, because you show disrespect to them if you refuse; they may think that their food or drink is tasteless and they are not good hosts"

We reached *Kak Ahmad's* house. I could hear noises and laughter coming from inside. I knocked on the thick wooden door. We knocked several times at the mute door until someone, finally, answered. It was Karzan who opened the door for us. He was excited to see me with Dad. He was looking at me with bright eyes. I was glad to see him, too. "Salamu-alaykum, Son! Is your father at home?"

"Yes, *Kak Yousif!* My father is at home. Please, come in," Karzan replied. He led us to the *diwakhan*. It was much different than I had ever thought it would be. I thought it would be just a little noisy, but it was really loud. There were many more people than what I thought there would be, the room was packed with guests. The smoke from the wood-stove and cigarettes occupied the room like a thick fog. The room was not bright enough although there were two oil-lamps hanging on two walls. I could barely see *Kak Ahmad's* wife, Maria, sitting by the wood stove. *Kak Ahmad* was sitting on the floor in a corner of the room, with a

large pillow between the wall and his right arm. He held Kurdish prayer beads in his hands. The guests were sitting in a circle with their backs against the walls. *Kak Ahmad* had either just finished singing a *hayran* or had been interrupted by the knock on the door and our arrival.

When I entered the *diwakhan*, I was so eager to see *Frishta* and *Karzan*, and so disturbed by the noisy and smoky room, that I had forgotten everything *Dad* told me about the “real men’s” ways of behaving and talking. The first thing that I, allegedly, embarrassed my *Dad* about was when I entered the *diwakhan* before him. *Dad* gave me an angry look; older men have to enter first in Kurdish culture. The second thing was that I had totally forgotten to say “*Salamu-alaykum*” as I entered. When *Dad* and I entered the room, everyone stood up as a sign of respect. *Dad* and I shook everybody’s hand and finally sat beside *Kak Ahmad*. “Say ‘*Salamu-alaykum*’ next time! OK, brave man!” *Kak Ahmad* told me. After we sat down and were welcomed, *Kak Ahmad* began singing a series of *hayran* for hours. There were breaks between each *hayran* so that tea and homemade cakes were served.

Maria was the one who made all the teas and cakes. She served the guests during each break. During the singing *Maria* hid behind the stove. I could feel her counting the guests with her eyes so that she would prepare teas and cakes according to the number of guests; there were a lot of guests and a lot of teas to be made. *Frishta’s* mom brought us our tea. The tea was over cooked and it had become very bitter; she had put a lot of sugar into the tea to make it sweet. However, sugar was not the solution, the tea was terrible! “I still have to drink the tea to show that I like it,” I told myself. I felt like I was drinking poison, and I felt very nauseous—but I kept pouring little sips of the tea down my throat. At last, I finished the tea; I thought it took me a year to finish the whole cup of tea.

I was waiting to see *Frishta*. Hours passed, she did not come into the room. Finally, *Dad* asked *Kak Ahmad* about her. “What happened to *Frishta*? *Peshraw* told me that she has dropped out of school. Why?!”

Kak Ahmad gave *Dad* an evil ironic smile. “She already graduated, *Kak Yousif*! She graduated at *Khanwa Qurakan* (slum) and now I employ her in the kitchen!” *Kak Ahmad* said and burst into laughter. I already felt sick with the noise, smoke and the terrible tea. After I heard *Kak Ahmad’s* speech about *Frishta*, I felt much worse!

I went to *Kak Ahmad’s diwakhan* with *Dad* a few more times. But, it seemed that *Frishta* was not allowed to integrate with men in *diwakhan*. So, I decided not to go back because I could never see *Frishta* there either.

I was still in my first year of secondary school. As several months had passed, I had made up my mind I would have to forget about ever being in close contact with my two friends. Then one day *Dad* came home looking very sad. He came directly over to *Mom* and me. He looked at us so sadly. There were tears in his

eyes. Then, a few tears dribbled down on his cheek. I had never seen Dad like this. I had never seen him weeping!

“Something so tragic must have happened!” I thought to myself.

“I just heard something terrible!” Dad said. “I have just heard that Ahmad has killed his daughter Frishta!”

Mom and I were shocked by this news! I was so shocked that I couldn’t speak. I didn’t cry; I was so bewildered. But, mom cried “Why?! When did it happen?!”

“People say that she eloped a few months ago. And now, when she has come back home Ahmad killed her, because he was embarrassed by her. She brought shame to his ‘honour.’” It took me a whole day and night to believe she was really gone. When I finally realized it I wept buckets of tears.

This tragic event changed my life forever. I learned to question my society, and the authenticity of the values, norms and ideologies that had/have been taught to me. I remember when I went to the diwakhan and Kak Ahmad told me “Say ‘Salamu-alaykum’ next time! OK, brave man!” He wanted me to be a man, to be brave, to say “peace be upon you!” But, where was his bravery, his manhood? No mercy and peace could be found in his heart towards his innocent daughter—‘peace was not upon her.’

You are wondering how things turned out between Dr. X and myself. Did we ever patch things up? I would love to report that Dr. X and I had an ongoing collegial conversation about research, its intended goals, and how purpose and method can and should be seamless. It would have been wonderful to have him read “*Peace was not upon her*” as an exemplar of autobiography as research. He would have recognized that even though the text is autobiographical it describes the human condition, giving us a glimpse into the lived experience of Kurdish life and culture while addressing gender issues and bringing awareness to the phenomenon of ‘honour’ killing² (U.S. State Dept. 2008) that is prevalent in Kurdish society. I am sure Dr. X, a political scientist, would have recognized how political the story is.

We never did have those collegial conversations. It would have been good for Dr. X and me to at least agree to disagree. However, after that chilly morning conversation, there were no more pop-ins to chat, no more friendliness, no more welcoming. Each morning I would look across the hall at a very determinedly closed door.

Sheila Simpkins is a doctoral candidate in the department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Victoria, Canada. For her research, she is exploring how the practice of narrative métissage can be used as a peace education initiative to foster understanding of and empathy for the self/other in post-conflict situations. In the fall semester of 2010 she carried out her research in Kurdistan, Northern Iraq. Before returning to her graduate studies, she taught

academic English writing to university students in China, Turkey, and Northern Iraq. sheilasimpkins@hotmail.com

Peshraw Y. Saleem is a graduate of Sociology and Social Sciences at the University of Kurdistan-Hawler (UKH). He is currently awarded with a scholarship by the Ministry of Higher Education of the Kurdistan Regional Government to pursue Masters' study abroad. He is primarily interested in studying Gender Issues as well as Cultural Studies such as Anthropology and Ethnography.

NOTES

1. Ted Aoki explains "It is imperative that the world of curriculum question the primacy of *videre* and begin to make room for *sonare*." *Videre* is the disembodied objective world of what the eye can see. *Sonare* is embodied knowing, feeling, and emotion.
2. 'Honour killing' is a significant human rights abuse in Kurdish society. The United Nations estimates that at least 255 women died in honour-related killings in Kurdistan in the first six months of 2007.

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ARTS-BASED RESEARCH

CREATING SOCIAL CHANGE FOR INCARCERATED WOMEN

CHRISTINE A. WALSH, GAYLE RUTHERFORD
& MEREDITH CROUGH

Our point of entry for research with women who have experienced incarceration was a call to action from Aboriginal women in Canada who had experienced poverty, homelessness and incarceration. Aboriginal women have higher rates of homelessness than non-Aboriginal women and are overrepresented in the prison population, largely as a consequence of historical and systematic oppression (Walsh, MacDonald, Rutherford, Moore & Krieg, 2012, p. 363). Over the course of a year we met with Aboriginal women with histories of incarceration who shared their experiences and identified that the most effective research approach is one which served to promote their voices as a means of creating a greater understanding of these issues for members of their own community and for those who serve them. In contrast to much of the available literature, they wanted participatory types of research within which their views were heard, respected, and directed at change—change that could lead to different conditions, opportunities and options. They held little hope for change within their own lives but were committed that their “younger sisters, daughters, and granddaughters” should not have to travel down the same difficult pathways they had.

We thus investigated arts in research with marginalized populations to determine its potential to meet the goals women had identified. We were particularly concerned with how arts-based research could serve as a vehicle for social trans-

formation among the population we were interested in: women facing poverty, homelessness, and incarceration. Although sparse, current literature gives some indication of the unique concerns in this area of investigation. Canadian studies with homeless people have used arts-informed research methodologies to participate in discussions about issues directly affecting their lives in order affect change (see for example, Conrad & Kendall, 2009; Eastham et al., 2010; Sakamoto et al., 2008; Walsh, Rutherford & Kuzmak, 2009). Fewer investigations however have examined the experience of incarcerated women using the arts. In a study of incarcerated women dealing with trauma related to domestic abuse, Williams and Taylor (2004, p. 48) noted women's key struggles as negative self-image and feelings of losing control over their lives. These issues serve as agents of disempowerment and place barriers to open dialogue, particularly in traditional research practices (Finley, 2005, p. 683). The researchers found that supporting women to create together in groups as a means to tell their own stories not only revealed individuals' lived experiences but also created a sense of community among participants. We concluded that arts-based research appeared to offer opportunities to partner with women struggling with poverty, homelessness and incarceration in ways were meaningful and empowering for them and could promote contribute to broader change and social justice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Arts-based research is an emerging mode of social inquiry, uniquely situated with roots in postmodern and participatory forms of research (Finley, 2005, p. 682). The ethos of arts-based inquiry is to eliminate the separation between researchers and the community being researched by eliciting the free and conscious voice of research participants (Foster, 2007, p. 364). In addition, arts-based research, by incorporating authentic community participation, stands at the intersection point of academic investigation and liberating social justice. In this paper we review the emergence of arts-based research and draw on our firsthand experiences of implementing this practice with women who have experienced incarceration as examples of the emancipatory potential of art as research. Specifically, we seek to address the question, how are arts based methods used to create social change with incarcerated or women who have experienced incarceration?

Arts-based Research: Meanings and Origins

Social research is aimed at exploring the boundaries of our understanding; thus, the marginalized—the silenced and the unknown—ought to be the focus. In this way researchers move “in and beyond the comfort of prescribed discipline knowledge, as issues and concerns demand approaches where new perspectives are opened up” (Sullivan, 2006, p. 32). The arts-based approach presents itself as

a key component of this evolution of understanding of the social world and ways in which to represent it (Eisner, 1997, p. 5; Rolling, 2010, p. 103).

Austin and Forinash (2005) defined arts-based inquiry as:

a research method in which the arts play a primary role in any or all of the steps of the research method. Art forms such as poetry, music, visual art, drama, and dance are essential to the research process itself and central in formulating the research question, generating data, analyzing data, and presenting the research results. (pp.460-461)

This mode of research is founded on the idea that the arts are useful as a means to engage in research as a participatory act that allows those involved to more directly express their voices through artistic media with the goal of enhanced self-expression (Huss, 2009, p. 612). Arts-based inquiry is thus not only a particular method of research, but also represents a novel way of conceiving research. As it broadens our understanding of research, it pushes those engaged in research toward methods that are more inclusive and empowering (Conrad & Campbell, 2008, p. 250).

Current literature offers insight into the legitimacy, value, and purposes of arts-based research. As research is a way “to shape experience and to enlarge understanding” (Eisner, 1997, p. 8) different research tools are suited for different tasks. In the case of arts-based inquiry, the methods of investigation are ready-made tools used to probe into areas of society that are typically obscured or invisible within mainstream discourse (Estrella & Forinash, 2007, p. 378; Finley, 2003, p. 288; Prinsloo, 2010, p. 207).

Performing Praxis

Traditional research practices often make distinctions between researchers and researched, studiers and studied. This concern prompted Finley (2005) to question how researchers were able to share research findings “without “othering” their research partners, exploiting them, or leaving them voiceless in the telling of their own stories?” (p. 682). O’Neill (2008) suggested that non-traditional, arts-based methods constitute an “approach to knowledge production as collaboratively made, not found, that in turn loosens the knowledge/power axis involved in knowledge production and expertness” (para. 2). The equalizing ability of arts-based research lies in its collaborative nature. Researchers must support participants to create and express themselves in the data collection and dissemination phases, and participants must offer their own interpretations of their lived experiences in a cooperative, participatory method of data triangulation (Zenkov & Harmon, 2009, p. 578). This approach depends on the ability of researchers and researched to form partnerships and truly understand one another (Foster, 2007, p. 365). In defiance of unjust power hierarchies, researchers and commu-

nities partake in artistic co-creation of knowledge, engage in self-reflexive, self-interpretive dialogue that promotes groups' liberation in and through the research approach (Packard, Ellison & Sequenzia, 2004, p. 3) and collective transformation (Stiell, Tang, Bennett & Price, 2006, p. 216). This process makes way for research products that are egalitarian and conscientized, (Veroff, 2002, p. 1275) ready for social and political action.

Arts-based Research as Social Justice

Employing arts-based methods releases new avenues to explore and practice research as a form of social justice. This is particularly true in the case of research with marginalized or alienated groups, such as indigenous, homeless, incarcerated, mentally ill, disabled, or racial minorities, who can become passive objects of study rather than active partners (O'Neill, 2008, para. 1). Missing is the authentic voice of research participants in creating and disseminating their knowledge concerning their lived experiences. In handing over the contents and interpretation of the research in arts-based approach to the research participant, Huss and Cwikel (2005) asserted that, "the participant is empowered, the relationship between researcher and research participant is intensified and made more equal" (p. 2).

For true social and political change to occur, not only must marginalized voices be heard, but also they must be able to elicit attentiveness and responsiveness from the mainstream community and its seats of power. O'Neill (2008, para. 30) proposed that within arts-based research practices, there is potential to develop a kind of dialogic space, wherein the mainstream meets with the marginalized and together create movements of social and political justice, which are foundational to social change (Bresler, 2006, p. 57).

In the following sections we share some of the arts-based methods—specifically, creative writing, photovoice and digital storytelling that we have used to increase engagement, promote voice, and advance solutions aimed at increasing equity and social justice among marginalized women.

METHODS

Arts-based Research as a Means of Raising Voices

Our interdisciplinary research team (social work, nursing and international development) examined the challenges for and needs of women involved with the justice system in a study with female inmates at the Calgary Remand Centre (CRC), which is a jail for those awaiting trial or sentencing, or serving warrants; and with women who were formerly incarcerated and living in the community in Calgary, Alberta or Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. The authors received ethics approval for the study from their respective institutions and the Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security Research Department for the CRC. Using community-based and

arts-based research methods we elicited the voices of women to convey their own experiences in their own words. Together with the women, we explored their understanding of the factors leading to their imprisonment as well as the collection of struggles they encounter in attempting to build a life after release from jail. Our aim was to inform the development of more effective service delivery mechanisms and policy initiatives. This learning emerged primarily from the three arts-based methods we used: creative writing, photovoice and digital storytelling; each of which is discussed below.

Arts-Based Response to Challenges of Research in Jail: Creative Writing

The inherently coercive and power-based prison environment creates difficulties for research practitioners in collaborating with incarcerated participants to access an authentic voice (Allspach, 2010, p. 715). The women at CRC participating in our study possessed extensive histories of marginalization (see Rutherford, Walsh, Crough & Madden, in press). As such, our aim as researchers was to avoid further marginalizing the women by maintaining a strict power disparity and instead make our voices fade into the background as much as possible. Thus, we avoided somewhat more interrogative, researcher directed methods such as interviewing, in favor of arts-based methods, and in particular, creative writing. Creative writing, as a more hands-on, self-directed and self-reflexive method provided the opportunity for the women to express themselves and participate in knowledge co-creation with the researchers.

Current literature on creative writing as a research method includes both poetic and prosaic works written by participants during the investigation or presentation phases of a research project (Farrier, Froggett & Poursanidou, 2009, p. 61; Furman, 2004, p. 84). Creative writing as data collection involves eliciting written work from participants as an emotive and deeply personal expression of lived experiences. Additionally, the process of creative writing is by nature introspective, requiring that the author engage with her own feelings, biases, perspectives and experiences to produce a piece that is authentically self-expressive (Furman, 2004, p. 99). This kind of self-reflexivity provides a space for researchers and participants to understand themselves and one another as both sets of participants must seek greater awareness of self in the production of artistic representations of inner thoughts and feelings (Day & Guiney Yallop, 2008, p. 54). Poetic inquiry allows participants to “synthesize experience in a direct and affective way” although as Prendergast (2009) articulates, the “best examples of inquiry poems are good poems in and of themselves” (p. xxii) the creation of which may prove challenging to some participants.

Between September and November 2010 we met held 11 weekly meetings with women in the CRC (n=25). To recruit, correctional officers on the CRC female unit posted a flyer with a description of the research project, including the

study objectives and the expectations of participants. Women who were interested in participating in the research study were instructed to sign-up on the sheets provided. The director of the programs at CRC reviewed the list and decided who would be allowed to attend based on their compatibility with other group members. We met individually with women to explain the study and gather written consent forms prior to beginning the formal group meetings. The group dynamic changed frequently due to uncertainty regarding length of stay at CRC, release, and the women's personal desire to attend. Nineteen of the women had been homeless at one or multiple points in their lives, and 20 had prior experience with incarceration, and 16 were of Aboriginal descent. Meetings consisted of conversations regarding the cycle of incarceration and homelessness, and how to develop solutions to end the cycle for themselves and other women. To facilitate these conversations, the women participated in various arts-based activities such as drawing, dancing, discussions on music videos and films, and reflective creative writing.

The simplicity and accessibility of creative writing as data creation was especially well suited to research within the walls and restrictions of a jail setting such as the CRC. Due to tight security policies in place, our team was severely limited in the kinds of materials we were allowed to bring in for the women. CRC provided us with flipchart paper and colored pencils along with notebooks and pens for each woman to write in, not only during meetings, but to take with them to write reflections in their cells throughout the week. The permissible arts items that we were allowed to take into the CRC generally included prose and poetry books, audio CD's and DVD's (both of which had to be played on CRC equipment). These physical limitations, coupled with our aim to use creative methods in the study, helped to determine the format and content of meetings. In particular, because paper and pens were the only objects we could leave with the women, journal writing became the predominant conduit for the women to express their stories. It is stories, Leggo (2010) contends that "present possibilities for understanding the complex, mysterious, even ineffable experiences that comprise human living" (p. 69).

Each week we discussed with the women topics for "homework", typically writing on topics which emerged from the discussions during the meetings. In the beginning, the research team primarily produced the questions and issues for writing; however, as meetings went on and the women became more comfortable, they also contributed ideas for writing topics. Subjects for journal writing included points such as strength, hope, how to deal with sobriety and a non-chaotic life, plans for release, support needs for release as well as freestyle writing on whatever stories the women felt others needed to hear. The subject of these writings rose out of the conversations occurring in meetings, and were reflected in the arts pieces and other activities in which the women participated.

Arts-Based Opportunities Outside of Prison

We used photovoice as a method to illustrate the issues facing multiple disadvantaged women reintegrating into the community in both the Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and Calgary, Alberta community settings. Photovoice is a grassroots, community assessment tool enabling local people to identify, represent and enhance their community using photography as the medium for communication (Strack, Magill & McDonagh, 2004, p. 49; Wang, 1999, p. 185). It is an investigative tool that assists people in critically reflecting on the everyday social and political realities of their lives, enriching their understanding of their communities and the issues pertinent to them, while at the same time, giving them a voice from which to educate others on these issues (Wang, 1999, p. 186).

Photovoice allows participants to document their own worlds, discuss issues with policy-makers and become active agents in social action, thus serving as a catalyst for individual and collective change (Strack, Magill & McDonagh, 2004, p. 54). Local people who experience poverty, social marginalization, oppression or mental or physical illnesses often have insight and expertise about their living situations that are not accessible to outsider research. Through photovoice, mutual sharing of expertise and knowledge-building is promoted, an activity which crosses educational or language barriers inherent in traditional research (Wang & Burris, 1997, pp. 370-371). Inherent in this process is the movement from what the researcher thinks is important to what the community believes is important (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 372; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008, p. 184).

Since the photovoice process stimulates discussion and motivation for social action at the community level, it can be an effective means of shifting the power balance, encouraging local people to become advocates in their own reality by organizing community members to prioritize their concerns and discuss problems and solutions. Photovoice has been used to examine social and health issues of marginalized women, youth and homeless populations (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 370; Strack, Magill & McDonagh, 2004, p. 50; McIntyre, 2003, p. 47). Rather than presenting the community through a pathologizing lens, wherein the community is portrayed as deficient, the community is defined as one of strength with the capacity to take action. In this, photovoice can be helpful in providing the community with the opportunity to assess policy and program strengths and weaknesses with evidence from their analysis on how these policies and programs have or have not benefited them (Wang, 1999, p. 190).

We met bi-weekly for 16 weeks with formerly incarcerated women (n=14) in Prince Albert to discuss the cycle of homelessness and incarceration. For recruitment we used a combination of key informant and snowball sampling. The key informant was a woman active in the community who was able to gain initial contact with study participants. Application of inclusion criteria resulted in all of the participants having had prior experience with the justice system, being

over 18 years of age and of Aboriginal descent including First Nations or Métis. The prospective participants attended an initial meeting to discuss the photovoice process, the role each participant would play in the project, the underlying issues around the use of the cameras, issues of power and ethics, potential risks to the participants and how these risks could be minimized. Those who chose to carry on with the project then signed informed consents.

When the group of photographers was solidified, the researcher/facilitator held the first official meeting, provided digital cameras and offered an initial theme for taking pictures. Discussions around the initial theme were undertaken as a group, to stimulate ideas and provide examples of potential images. The photovoice process involved discussion around the group-identified themes on key issues, as well as on how these issues were personally defined for each photographer and how they could be represented on film. The photographers were given a journal to record their ideas around the central theme and note possible photographs to accompany them. Photographers were provided instruction on the use of cameras, and they were asked to take photographs in the community to illustrate the issues discussed. Following the discussion after the initial images were shown to the group; the photographers went into the community to take the additional images. The meetings served to foster group cohesion, stimulated motivation and provided examples to those who were having difficulty finding visual representations of their thoughts and ideas. We continued to meet bi-weekly throughout the project, for both social and project-related reasons. As a group, we had come to enjoy one another's company and appreciated the time we had to meet on a social level. Every meeting was both project related and pleasure, discussion around the art product and process and the study specific issues and content were interwoven with personal communication about life events, personal concerns and community happenings. In addition, for us as researchers we realized that by really listening to the words of the women as they described their images and told their stories, we were not left with a feeling of despair. Rather, we had admiration and hope. We felt honored to be gifted with their life experiences through their pictures and words and by their trust that we would accurately represent these stories in our writing.

Digital storytelling, a multimedia art form combining both visual and auditory elements was used in the Calgary, Alberta community setting as a second method of conveying women's ideas. Digital story authors write a brief autobiographical script, which they then narrate as voiceover paired with a series of still images to relate a personal story (Gubrium, 2009, p. 187; Tucker 2006, p. 54). Though each story is unique to the individual, the process of creating a digital story also emphasizes connections to community through workshops where participants learn to use the necessary technology and which function as a means of group bonding and growth as individuals share their stories with one another.

Digital stories are thus both a catharsis for the individual and a vehicle to deliver a message to the audience, be they fellow participants or society at large (Gubrium, 2009, p. 188). Though there is not an extensive body of writing on digital storytelling as a research method, emerging literature suggests that this art form has notable potential to facilitate participant self-exploration, expression and empowerment in research practice (Benmayor, 2008, p. 189; Hull & Katz, 2006, p. 57; Walsh, Rutherford & Kuzmak, 2010, p. 193).

A distinctive aspect of digital storytelling is its use of mixed media forms. Common themes in the literature are the importance of the story, authors narrating in the unique rhythm of their own voice which allows for authoritative self-representation and the authors' choice in images, activities which function as a connection point between the individual's story and cultural context (Brushwood Rose, 2009, p. 212). Hull and Katz's (2006, pp. 56-57) study of digital storytelling with underprivileged youth, for example, reveals that the process of constructing a digital story facilitates the author's self-reflection, while the performative aspect of this method allows for personal reconstruction and the growth of the agentive self with the power to envision and direct their own identity and life story.

Women with histories of homelessness and incarceration (n= 8) were recruited via snowball techniques in Calgary, Alberta. Once the study was explained to the women and they provided written informed consents, we met weekly for a year. All of the participants were over 18, had histories of incarceration, all but one had served federal time, and five women were Aboriginal. Women initially completed the photovoice process similar to the method described previously. Subsequently we conducted a digital storytelling workshop consisted of a three day immersion process. While the term digital storytelling is somewhat contested in its direct meaning and intention, we followed a process similar to that described by the Center for Digital Storytelling (n.d.). That is, we sought to create short digital films to tell a particular story from the first-person narrative, following a meaningful workshop process, and utilized participatory methods of production (i.e., the women created and owned their story). The process allowed women to reflect more deeply upon their stories and the issues that they had engaged in with the photovoice process.

The research team also gathered data in more traditional methods, including field notes of observations and audio-taped group meeting, except in the CRC, where audio taping was not permitted. We collected the women's writings, artwork, photovoice and digital story products as a source of data and adopted a conventional content analysis approach (Cresswell, 2007, p. 12), which was flexible and allowed us to understand cycle of homelessness and incarceration. We coded the raw data and developed themes through an iterative process of discussion, reflection and negotiation to increase the quality and accuracy of the analysis (MacQueen, McLellan, Kay & Milstein, 1998, p. 32). At least two researchers

independently coded the data; differences were reconciled (Foster-Fischman et al., 2005, p. 280). We used a grounded theory approach in developing the coding framework and in the analytic process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 28-52), which helped to ensure that the final themes were an accurate reflection of the emergent data and the participants' perspectives. Through this process we identified the eight major themes related to the underlying causes of cycling between homelessness and incarceration: history of violence; drug and alcohol addictions; isolation and alienation; family and friends; resource gaps and system failures; lack of a safe place; lack of adequate income; and fear, doubt, and self-esteem. Although we present these themes as discrete entities in the results section, they played out in women's lives as complex, interwoven and cumulative. Exemplars of art products which illustrate some of these themes are presented in the following section. Our emphasis in this paper rather than reporting study findings specifically is on sharing how arts-based methods contributes to social change at the individual and societal level for women with histories of homelessness and incarceration

RESULTS

Women's Voices in Jail

At the CRC site women shared stories as well as poems and personal reflections that they had written in their journals. The themes *isolation and alienation* is depicted in the poem, *Hide and Seeking*, in which one woman communicated how her life on the streets and in jail caused her to feel alienated from herself, 'Through my trials and tribulations, lost everything, even me/ Some days I even changed my name/ And feeling I'm the one to blame.'

Figure 1



Illustrates the dichotomy between one woman's self image depicted as angel/devil

Women created drawings individually and as a group, on various themes related to their stories with incarceration, and their fears, hopes and needs regarding release. Women's drawings conveyed their tension regarding their ability to succeed after release. Figure 1 is an example of the theme *fear, doubt, and self-esteem*. In the drawing the creator portrays her fear and hope regarding the external challenges she may encounter after leaving the CRC, as well as her internal struggles or doubts around her ability to maintain positive change, or fear of relapsing into harmful behaviors.

Concerns around release in relation to the theme *drug and alcohol addictions* were also a strong presence in the women's journals, as a stanza from the poem, *Confusion*, illustrates:

Am I safer here that I am out there?
 Will I ever overcome my addiction?
 I say I won't ever use again
 But is it cause of the situation I got myself into?
 Now I have a clear mind
 But still confused where will I go when I get out?

Brief clips of documentaries, comedy videos and popular music videos served as platforms to discuss issues such as women's experiences of violence. One woman's journal entry illustrated the theme *history of violence* in relationship to her addiction, criminal behavior and subsequent incarceration:

I got into an abusive relationship with a guy who was an active member of organized crime. He mainly sold drugs, had firearms and was just getting into the "fraud score." My career suited his new means of making money just perfect. I got involved, and made some really poor choices and never in a million years would I have believed I'd have ended up in jail, but here I am.

Women's Voices in the Community

The lens through which the women viewed their experience in photovoice was key in creating knowledge immersed in critical reflection within which the women were able to reflect on their past to create solutions for the future. One of the major themes, *resource gaps and system failures*, was depicted through participants' stories of specific incidents where they encountered "closed doors" which limited their ability to make healthy decisions. Alternatively, women recalled incidents where the presence of supports altered the course of their lives in a positive direction. In Figure 2 the woman calls out for resources that would help break the cycle of violence, chaos and poverty she experienced as a child.

Teach me something different than what I learned at home or you know, where everybody was drunk and passed out you know, kids are getting molested

Figure 2



and you're hungry. Teach me that there's a different life that that. Teach me something that is, you know, something that's going to help me get over some hurts, you know.

The themes *lack of a safe place* and *inadequate income* is illustrated in Figure 2 which portrays one woman's untenable choices to provide for herself and her family.

Even as a teenager, I had two choices. Either be on the street or shack up. Well I was too scared to be on the street, so I shacked up. I'm not proud of it. What I did, I did, and that's why now I tell my kids never look down on anybody. 'Cuz you don't know why they're there.

Family and friends were a central issue for women in the study, identified as times a source of strength and support while on the streets. Yvonne captured an image of an empty cul-de sac that was a frequent hang out prior to gentrification commenting:

I walked through there so many times. I can sit there and look around. I could see and sense the lost tears. I would sit there and get high. I could picture all the people who passed away. But it wasn't all bad that happened there, we used to have fun. It was like a family, and now there is nothing left.

Figure 3



In her digital story Toni shared the trauma resulting from her abandonment as a young child and again at losing custody of her own child:

I'm not worth anything. I can't be a mother to this child; I can't be a mother to my other child... All that I'm worth is the corner [the street where she would sell sex]...And my second mother's day I got so drunk. I went out and I got so drunk I ended up going with this guy that I wouldn't have went with and he kicked the shit out of me. He left me for dead out in a field... I didn't care 'cause I lost my baby.

In Jen's photovoice collage, *Getting out Alive*, she describes her journey as a child prostitute leading to addiction, criminal behavior and ultimately incarceration underscoring the complex interwoven nature of these related to the cycle of homelessness and incarceration.

Figure 4



I was just a baby. This is the corner that I stood on. When I was working the corner I was so involved in the game that I didn't see anything wrong with it. I was 15 years old working 'high track' and at the time, that was a sense of pride. My friend's father was my pimp and I didn't know any better, my mamma kicked me out, my father was in the hospital and no group home would take me, and so I accepted it. I was like its OK, but it's not OK! I thought I was doing what I had to in order to survive. People don't see you when you are on the corner. They don't want to see you; they don't want to know what is going on. But it's a very shameful experience. When you stand out there you are ashamed of yourself and so you become overly hard, and you don't need anyone now because now I'm doing fine and don't need you. In this moment I am ok. I was very hard and angry. I always figured go big or go home because the harder you are the less people can hurt you.

She provides further context in recasting her story in a digital story, the fighter, shares how the challenges she overcome led her to becoming an advocate for women who face similar struggles and have been silenced.

One of the most transformative aspects of this research occurred during the process of dissemination, when the voices of those experiencing issues around homelessness and incarceration were heard. Women in the community-based study have had numerous opportunities to share their stories and move towards solutions in the form of practice and policy recommendations for women facing similar struggles. In these activities participants became educators, sharing insight into the service and support needs of women experiencing the impact of incarceration on successful re-entry into the community through their drawings, poetry, reflective writing, images and stories. The struggle for successful reintegration into community after incarceration for women was more salient for audiences through the immediacy of poetry, written reflections, visual image and personal stories which clearly outline opportunities for change. For example, women shared their photovoice products in the first national forum for women's homelessness in Canada, *All our Sisters*, where they were the only presenters making the connection between homelessness and incarceration. As a consequence of their participation in the event they are part of a national grassroots movement to raise awareness and develop solutions to end women's homelessness.

DISCUSSION

In our study with multiply disadvantaged women both inside and outside prison, we used arts-based research practices to encourage individual and collective voices, promote dialogue, facilitate deep reflection, explore in the subject matter in a meaningful way. Developing relationships and building trust were essential parts of our process. The emphasis on dialogue presents opportunity for sharing deep, personal experiences requiring an atmosphere conducive of open and honest communication. The time commitment alone creates opportunity for relationships that surpass traditional research methods. As well, developing relationships and building trust was necessary between researchers and participants, as well as between the participants to create the deep contextualized knowledge we sought. As well, the dissemination phase of the project proved transformative for women participants, for us as researchers and for audiences.

Our primary sources of data in this study were the products women created while engaged in arts-based research. Our findings support those in literature that suggest the self-directed and self-reflexive practice in arts-based research is particularly beneficial in eliciting the authentic voice of participants in marginalized and oppressive circumstances (Farrier et al., 2009, p. 61). Our aim as a research team was to ensure that those in power receive the impact of women's words as well as their suggestions for system-level changes. In sharing their stories the women contribute to change to improve outcomes for women who cycle between

homelessness and incarceration. One Aboriginal woman notes the power of stories in leading change:

The other day when I was walking I thought of, the Indian Nation, I think we've survived against all odds. I'm sure they all thought we'd be gone by now, or assimilated into the White society. But we've stuck to our guns. But how often do we ever get that opportunity to actually be that voice? You know, to take our stories and make them into knowledge about hope and courage? How often do we ever get that opportunity?" I thought about this for awhile and decided to go to university; I want to be that voice for our people.

In answer to the overarching question we hoped to address regarding how to use arts-based methods for social change with marginalized, in our case, incarcerated populations, our study indicates both short and long-term potential. Our current findings are preliminary in the sense that we have yet to learn the full impact of the artistic data the women created as dissemination continues. In the case of the women from the Prince Albert and Calgary community sites, the women themselves are involved on an ongoing basis in deciding how their stories, in the form of photovoice and digital stories, are used. This too is a part of arts-based research's unique kind of power. As Finley (2003, p. 288) notes, arts-based research, in its process, product and distribution is not static, but fluid and open to multiple purposes. We have engaged in dissemination activities in several venues including the academy, the community and the service sector and will continue to seek opportunities to advance women's words and vision. Our hope, and the hope of the women who work with us is that, as Finley (2005, pp. 285-286) suggests, the evolving knowledge-sharing process will contribute to larger social changes for marginalized, particularly incarcerated, women. As one Aboriginal woman advises:

I used to cry to my Elders about the time I spent wasting my life in jail. They said, "No, you didn't waste your life in jail that was your lesson that you learned so that when you leave here you will be able to help people." And that's why I think it's really important for all of us to tell our stories because other women who are listening to your story will say, "I can really relate to that." Your stories help other people. And the more you tell your stories, the stronger you get and the more strength and power we have together to create change. Thanks for listening.

The more immediate effects of our arts-based work with women are evident in their creative works. Eisner (2008) describes art has been described as facilitating the connection with "personal, subjective emotions, and through such a process, it enables us to discover our own interior landscape" (p. 11). In CRC women reflected on their inner emotional and psychological state and their challenging outer circumstances in poetry and prose. As literature on creative writing research

suggests, the artistic tools we used advantageously contributed to the process. In allowing the women to examine their own questions and concerns and present them to us, rather than us controlling the examination (Farrier et al., 2009, p. 68), their vision guided the framework, content and outcomes of our meetings and they truly became co-knowledge creators instead of unequal subjects of research (Spaniol, 2005, p. 87). Though neither arts-based research in general, nor our meetings in particular are meant as a therapeutic endeavor, the dialogic space we opened in collaboration with the women a forum to communicate and work through their experiences in jail, and their fears and hopes for release. Arts-based research in CRC stimulated change as the women expressed awareness of themselves and their needs for successful reentry into the community. As one woman's poem illustrates:

As I sit within these prison walls
 I ask myself, how far must someone fall?
 When will I get it through my head?
 If I don't change now, I'll end up dead.

In our community-based settings women began creating personal and social change. Without the restrictions of a correctional setting, the meetings became more open-ended and ongoing, this not only facilitated the research purpose of creating arts pieces to tell stories, the women formed important social support networks. In bonding over common experiences, struggles, fears and hopes, the women enjoyed the benefits of participating in arts-based research by connecting with each other as allies in their journeys (Feen-Calligan, Washington & Moxley, 2009, p. 443). At every step of the creative process women were investigating themselves, sharing themselves with researchers and members of their community and sharing their stories and recommendations for change. This is evidence of arts-based research's use as a vehicle for community empowerment and improvement (Stiell et al., 2006, p. 216). The women have moved from the social support network that they have created and have developed a resource guide and obtained funding to develop a peer mentorship program designed to walk with women exiting prison.

For us as researchers arts-informed methods allowed us to bear witness to the intimacy of incarcerated of formerly incarcerated women's stories and about pain, trauma and, at times, hope and triumph. This caused us to reflect about our role as researchers in our participants' lives both in the immediate sense of: are we creating further harm to an already vulnerable populations by allowing stories to unfold often in settings and systems where changes was limited and also what is our ability to contribute to positive individual and systematic change for these women and others facing similar circumstances recognizing the limitations of our role as researchers. The answers we found emanated from our individual struggles

which were refined and recreated in concert with collaborating with women over the course of the projects. One researcher describes her journey in an excerpt from her poem:

As a child, entangled in a family ‘hidden by homeless’
As an academic, researching “issues of poverty and homelessness”
As a woman, coming to know, coming to understand and becoming friends

In both the carceral and community settings arts-based methods proved to be tools for change as women from socially marginalized groups made their unique voices heard according to their own direction rather than that of the researchers. The women empowered themselves as a community through a common purpose in the creative process and in common goals for personal healing and healing for women in similar circumstances. As one woman noted among the various struggles, “I’m really strong and I’m gonna’ make it.” Springgay and Carpenter (2007) referred to this type of community created through the arts process as ‘a mobilizing force that has no end’ (p. 11). The women in our studies are initiating change in their own lives, and contributing to change in the lives of others by sharing their stories with the intent of raising consciousness and encouraging action within their community and the general public. The resultant process of conscientization provides the vehicle for social justice and transformation for marginalized communities (Veroff, 2002, p. 1275).

Dr. Christine A. Walsh is an Associate Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary. She has a program of arts and community-based research aimed at developing solutions for marginalized populations including women experiencing poverty, homelessness and incarceration.

Dr. Gayle Rutherford is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Calgary. She has a background in public health nursing and working with vulnerable populations. She has partnered with Dr. Walsh over the past five years in arts and community-based research with women who have been homeless and who have cycled in and out of prison.

Meredith Crough is an undergraduate student at the University of Calgary in the Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies program. She has also worked on the project “Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness and Incarceration Using Community Based Research,” a study addressing women’s experiences and support needs in relation to homelessness and incarceration.

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