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Welcome

As the incoming editor for *arts-informed*, I would like to personally welcome readers to this issue of the newsletter. In this edition, you will find works of poetry and poetic transcription, essays, prose and an image-and-text piece. The research presented here delves insightfully into a range of personal and social themes including culture, family, power, gender and disability. It is worth noting that two of the essays look at dance, which is a relatively under-represented area of arts-informed inquiry. Finally, we continue to catch up on the *Centre's* events, member updates and new publications.

The Centre for Arts-informed Research

The *Centre for Arts-informed Research* is located within the Department of Adult Education, Community Development and Counselling Psychology at OISE (University of Toronto). We are a community of faculty and graduate students committed to exploring and supporting ways of bridging the arts and social science research. Over the years the *Centre* has sponsored works-in-progress, discussions, gallery exhibits, performances, seminars and conferences. The *Centre* promotes scholartistry that forges innovative forms of academic discourse. We welcome new arts-informed researchers to our community. If what we are doing strikes a chord and you would like to be involved in some way, please contact Ardra Cole at acole@oise.utoronto.ca. Our website is another way to find out more about the *Centre*: <http://home.oise.utoronto.ca/~aresearch>.

*Carl Leggo, Professor
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The Poet's Craft

I planned to write a poem,
but the morning seduced me
with a trace of autumn sun,
so I spent all day with Lana,
cleared a deserted fire pit
in the backyard, gathered
driftwood from the beach
for a bonfire one night soon
under a full moon and stars,
some alive and some dead,
and all day swat at the ache
that always nags at the edges
of stolen pleasures, when
at day's end, a poem
found me anyway, and
I remembered how
Alexander Solzhenitsyn,
for decades after his release
from the Gulag, still wouldn't
budge, not even for a minute,
from his regimented work
schedule, convinced the world
needed every single word
he'd ever sentenced in prison
to memory, and thought if
only Solzhenitsyn had let
the words find him like
I need to learn, now, at last,
the poet's craft, and write
poems while I run the slow
arc of York Harbour, hike
in the hills behind the cottage,
talk long with Anna and Aaron,
five time zones away, and sit
on the patio with a journal
or no journal, bike the hills
and trails to Lark Harbour,
and learn to let poetry breathe
cool spring, expectant summer,
and frigid winter on long treks
across the blizzard-blown bog

to see Cedar Cove in all seasons,
stirred by an easterly wind
while the sea rattles beachstones,
jams with the lyrical lunacy
of gulls and crows and the wind
tangled in alders, full of sighs

Littoral

the alders grow transparent
as light stored in leaves seeps out

shadows are spelled or dispelled,
everywhere, a marbled lime swirl

I will gather scraps of words for
a patchwork quilt to keep me warm

on October evenings on the patio
with cranberry tea while geese call

the rhythms of elsewhere, earth and
sky yoked by tethers of light

like a meadow of wildflowers
on the littoral edge of the sea

Balance

My mother always changed
the pictures in the frames
in the living room
to reflect the seasons

like she was eager
to keep the inside and outside
in moon-struck balance.
No summer scenes

in winter, too unsettling, just
not done. Each season was
marked with new pictures from

Chatelaine or *The Star Weekly*,

cut to fit the precise frames,
always painted to match
the changing pastels
of the living room.

Everything had to match.
She loved beautiful possibilities,
always eager for the stories
in magazines, even if impossible.

If

if the doctor told me
I was going to die
in a few days,
this is the poem
I would write,
this poem full
of nothing
and everything,
this emptiness,
a hole in the heart



Arts-informed Research: Frequently Asked Questions

Victoria Bowman, M.A. Ed.

OISE/UT

Overview

This article explores questions that are commonly raised by audiences when I present the reader's theater component of my thesis, *Is Home Care in Crisis? A Reader's Theatre About Issues in Home Care* (2007). The script represents a secondary arts-informed analysis of data presented in *A National Snapshot of Home Support from the Consumer Perspective* (2005). *National Snapshot* is a federal research project that aims to expand public understanding of home support policies. The report highlights disabled people's perspectives on disability.

The goal of my thesis is to represent research findings in a way that is interesting and accessible to lay audiences. I chose reader's theatre as the form for its value as a teaching tool, data display technique, conversation starter and vehicle for discovery.

Is Home Care in Crisis? is written to resemble an episode of CBC Radio One's *Cross Country Checkup*. I created a guest host, Farheen Khan, and a guest expert, Lorraine McCarthy. I built composite "caller" characters from *National Snapshot* data. The script takes about an hour to read, with a 10-minute break in the middle.

But That Doesn't Sound Like Rex Murphy!

Dixon, Davies and Politano (1996) outline criteria for evaluating how well reader's theatre works as a performance. They offer the following questions to guide evaluation of the script:

- (a) Is it interesting?
- (b) Does the language evoke images for the listening audience?
- (c) Is there a balance between readers and narration?
- (d) Does the dialogue flow?
- (e) Is there a steady pace?
- (f) Is the material appropriate for the intended audience (considering for instance age, reading abilities and listening abilities)?

(g) Does the text include clear directions for what to do?

(h) Does the script remain true to the original text (or data)?

Audiences often respond to my reader's theatre piece with a degree of skepticism about mixing fact with fiction. They consequently seem to be more concerned with what they should believe than with Dixon, Davies and Politano's criteria. Just as readers want true autobiographies, research audiences want real research (recall the public uproar over James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*).

Some audience members also get confused about whether the radio show actually happened. I have received questions about the data that begin with, "So when they called in, did you record them?" Or: "So, on the show, how did you ...". At first these questions surprised me. I thought it was clear that I had invented the show. But it seems that audiences struggle to see where the *National Snapshot* project ends and where the imaginary radio show begins.

Audience members moreover sometimes believe that my script is meant to exactly mirror *Cross Country Checkup* – a familiar show for CBC listeners, with a very recognizable host. During a work-in-progress reading of the script, one member of the audience raised her hand and said, "But that doesn't sound like Rex Murphy!" I was surprised to hear this. "It's not supposed to sound like Rex Murphy!" I answered, "It's Farheen Khan!" Some audience members seem to get carried away by the fictional connection to the CBC, thinking my program had actually happened and I had somehow mixed up the host.

These questions showed me the points in my research process where I need to be especially clear when introducing myself and my work to audiences. Audiences need very clear information about where the data comes from. They need clear information about which parts of the representation are fictionalized, why, and to what degree (to the extent that I can quantify this). Audiences want to know

where the real stuff ends and where the make-believe begins.

So ... Did You Make This All Up?

Cole and Knowles (2001) outline a series of baseline questions that researchers should address when doing arts-informed research. Here is a paraphrased selection of their questions:

- (a) Has the researcher articulated the personal, theoretical, and social value of the work?
- (b) Is the method appropriate to the purpose?
- (c) Are the research processes imbued with qualities of the arts?
- (d) Is the researcher's presence felt and known throughout the work?
- (e) Has the researcher developed appropriate skills congruent with this form?
- (f) Does the work authentically represent the participants?
- (g) Has the researcher identified audiences for this work, and is the chosen form a suitable way to reach them?
- (h) Has the researcher honoured the reader's role in interpretation?

In my experience, few audiences are familiar with arts-informed research, let alone these specific questions for evaluation. Audiences I have encountered to date are much more concerned with the extent to which my research is true.

Shields (2003) writes of the tricky relationship between truth, narrative, and fiction:

[W]e continue, even today, to be troubled by a perceived dichotomy between what is called 'reality' – those quotes again – and what is known as fiction. ... So many questions arise. Is there such a beast as truth? Can we set aside our attachment to truth-telling? Who makes the rules? ... Do we accept that fiction is not strictly mimetic – that we want it to spring out of the world, illuminate the world – not mirror it back to us? (pp. 25-26)

Shields's last question can be extended to arts-informed research: Do we accept that research is not strictly mimetic – that we want it to spring out of the word, illuminate the world and not mirror it back to us? According to Shields, getting inside reality, not getting reality right, is the task of narrative fiction.

For me, that is what arts-informed research is about – getting inside reality.

Sometimes this way of looking at research does not go over well with audiences. For example, when I presented my work to a group of disability studies students at Ryerson University, one person raised her hand and asked, "Are the participants' stories represented in the script the way they told them?" I then described how I had coded the data, determined themes, and developed composite characters to represent the themes. She asked, "So does the script reflect the research process they participated in?" I paused and then asked her, "Are you wondering whether this is true?" She nodded. I explained the concept of narrative truth, which means resonance with the meaning of the data rather than an objective idea of truth, where truth is taken as a matter of word-for-word accuracy. The issue this audience member raised is: Are we to judge reader's theater as a literal depiction of actual events?

I took *National Snapshot* data and reconstructed them in ways that made sense according to my goals of accessibility, interest and public education. The question of truth in research, while not confusing to me, appears to be a recurrent stumbling-block for audiences who wish to evaluate my work.

What's it Like to do Disability Research When You Don't Have a Disability?

Stone and Priestley (1996) write on knowledge and expertise in radical disability research. They call for a new research paradigm based on:

- (a) a social model epistemology
- (b) surrendering objectivity
- (c) doing committed research
- (e) researcher engagement
- (f) research relevance
- (g) anti-oppressive practices in research production
- (h) choice of appropriate research methods

The final evaluation category is the trickiest and most political one with respect to my own research, as it deals with issues of power and appropriation of voice – who owns certain stories and who has the right to tell them. Think of other insider/outsider communities. How would it look like if I, a young

white middle-class woman, published a reader's theatre piece about life on the Rez or about the African-Canadian experience in the diaspora?

I was directly confronted by the issue of my authenticity as a researcher during a lecture I gave to a research methods class at Ryerson University. A student at the back of the room raised her hand and asked, "What's it like to do research on people with disabilities when you don't have a disability?" In response, I unveiled my story. I told them how I broke my neck once and consequently had to wear a halo. I described how people stared, avoided me, pitied me. How I learned to deflect *The Stare* (Garland-Thomson, 1997; Titchkosky, 2003). I described how it felt to stand out for the first time in my life as different, other, as less than I had been before. At one point the instructor stepped in and said, "It would be okay to do this research if she didn't have this experience, though." Her students nodded. I added, "Of course." I left thinking, "Would it?"

I went to a bell hooks lecture a few years ago where hooks talked about how feminism excludes black women. She lectured on how to build strong, inclusive communities. A member of the audience stood up and asked a question about building community. This person looked to me to be white and butch. She gave a long preamble identifying herself in terms of class, profession, sexual orientation and political perspective. Finally she asked, "How can I respectfully approach youth of colour in my work?" hooks paused thoughtfully and then said, "Well, if you can't figure out anything you have in common with these kids, you probably would be better to go work with somebody else."

I think hooks was right. Doing research needs to involve more nuanced questions than just these: Who are you? What do you look like? What is your experience? Researchers should be asking questions like: What do I have in common here? Why do I want to do this? What am I willing to risk? What am I willing to give?

The next time an audience member mistakenly asks me what it is like to do disability research when I do not have a disability, I am going

to ask them about their perceptions of me. I am going to ask what their criteria are for doing ethical disability research. I am going to ask how they would apply Charlton's (2000) rule: *nothing about us without us*.

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Développé: An Act of Writing

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Introduction

Rudolf Laban, who developed *Labanotation*, a system for notating the movement of the body, writes that “the art of movement on the stage embraces the whole range of bodily expression including speaking, acting, miming, dancing and even musical accompaniment” (Laban, 1960: p4). Writers similarly express themselves through the practice of writing when articulating their thoughts and emotions to readers. Individual experience is, in both instances, given an outward expressive form, bringing the interior world of self into open dialogue with the exterior world of people, places and events.

In the following series of reflections, I explore various aspects of the dialogue between the self and the world, highlighting ways in which the self can be either oppressed or liberated over the course of that dialogue. I also examine the idea of dialogue more specifically within the context of my own experience as a teacher, writer and dancer.

On Embodied Memory and Political Dialogue

My memory returns to my studies as a dance student at *The University of Cape Town School of Ballet*, South Africa, and to my studies in the teacher training program at *The National Ballet School* in Toronto, Canada. My inner landscape then was my embodied memory of the outer political and social landscape of apartheid South Africa. I carried this inner landscape of memory with me into the Canadian landscape. Under the apartheid regime, members of my family and I were classified as coloured/mixed, without the right to citizenship in South Africa, the land of our birth and of our ancestors. White supremacist nationalism entrenched racism in the very bodies and thinking of people and limited the rights of those who were not classified as white. Because of widespread fear and the government’s use of detention without trial, individuals avoided dialogue about their

experience in public settings. Their selves were in this way driven deeply into the silent recesses of their bodies.

Oppressed people in South Africa ultimately united in solidarity through the Black consciousness movement and people of all colours who opposed apartheid identified with the movement. The dialogue about apartheid and the importance of freedom grew internationally in places such as Canada. Groups like *Canadians Concerned About Southern Africa* supported active political resistance initiated by oppressed South Africans. Through this political dialogue, the unfolding and enfolding of meaning occurred and changes began to take shape (Bohm, 1985; Bohm et al, 1991). Many years of dialogue thus influenced the transformations that took place on the South African landscape.

On Transformative Dialogue in Research and Theatre

Dialogue is an interaction often referred to in different forms of research and teaching-learning practices, including participatory action research, narrative inquiry, arts-based research, ethnography and literacy studies. Theories of interaction refer variously to relationship, engagement, and/or connection between the audience and the performer, the reader and the writer, teacher and learner (Dewey, 1938; 1965). Relationship, engagement and connection extend to understandings of communication and relate to the idea of the *fourth wall* in theatre performance. The fourth wall is that dimension of communication between, across and within which interaction occurs between audience and performer(s). This interaction is the invisible wall (Holman & Harmon, 1986) through which the audience observes the action of performers on stage, that “magnetic current between these two poles” (Laban, 1960). Through dialogue, individuals in various landscapes experience transformation in ways of being, knowing and doing in the world.

On Dance as a Metaphor for Writing

How does the act of writing mirror dance?

In ballet, *développé* is a beautiful, slowly executed movement in which the dancer's working leg unfolds while the supporting leg remains in position. The legs work in opposition to each other, producing a tension through continuous support and balance while the movement unfolds. Similarly, the movement of this paper reflexively unfolds in exploring the possibilities of writing. The term 'mirror' refers to actively gathering and throwing back something. In a ballet class, the mirror is an important tool for the dancer in developing the execution of movements. The writing and dance processes require agency, skill and knowledge. Writing and dance are acts that draw on the imagination of the individual – they are creative and self-reflexive acts of the imagination.

On Dance as a Metaphor for Teaching

To teach in classrooms, to teach imagination, a teacher can dance with students. This individual movement of unfolding must be an enfolding in the process of integration (Darroch-Lozowski, 1998). A teacher enters a certain space and time with her or his students. As language unfolds the teacher and students enfold each other's language, imaginations and ideas. Through this process, transformations and new ways of seeing and new ideas emerge. A teacher's care of self encourages risk, allowing students' ideas to unfold. Like dance, teaching is an unfolding of imagination and ideas.

On Imagination, Language and Relationship (with Self, with Others)

Many of our personal experiences become part of what we draw on in our creations. Some of these representations assume the form of poetry, stories, photographs, collages, paintings, music, dance, plays and so on. Personal imagination in this way draws on personal pain and joy to create a greater work of imagination. This creative act in turn informs awareness of the self and ways of relating and learning (Kearney, 1988). Darroch Lozowski, an

educator with interests in aesthetic thought, asserts that

the imaginative aspect is a way of psychological experience and a method for grasping and ordering that experience, a way of giving over to images for their own sake, not for the sake of a meaning inferred from them. (1990, p. 244).

Imagination thus calls us to trust what lies within ourselves as we respond to our desire to create.

Our views of imagination allow us to change ourselves and the way we relate and learn (Greene, 1995; Vernon, 1979). Imagination is always about forging extraordinary relationships among and between what is familiar, unlikely, unprecedented and unusual. This notion of imagination requires that we explore the ways in which the psyche works. As van Eenwyk (1997) writes:

The structure and dynamics of the psyche are both the means and the end of our attempts to understand ourselves. Consequently, trying to analyze the functioning of the psyche is like riding a roller coaster built on a möbius strip. It is a full paradox. It's chaotic. (p.70)

Openness to imagination allows for learning relationships to unfold. As the one who sees the image – the other – in a mirror, I reconfigure within my mind what is before me. I am an other. This is not to suggest that other learners are my mirror; rather, I reconnect with my own learning through the relationships that I build with those I teach.

On Pedagogy as a Committed Relationship

The relationship between learner, teacher, knowledge and tradition is important. It relates to ethics in pedagogy and doing research. The teacher's commitment to uphold a tradition encompasses a broad and deep connection to a body of knowledge. The content of what is to be learned entails a physical, emotional and spiritual dimension. The approach to learning requires the body, mind and spirit of a person to be dedicated to a way of learning that includes individual imagination. This way of being involves an inner as well as outer discipline that will enable the learner to learn (Nasr, 1981). Similarly, a teacher's commitment to professional ethics and pedagogical excellence begins with a personal

commitment as well as respect and responsibility for the other as learner.

Conclusion

As a reader you are invited to engage with this paper, this writing, with your logic, perspective, emotions, thoughts, knowledge and experience. I have here unfolded the inner -outer landscapes I know and through which I pass. My professional landscapes deal with understanding myself as an academic writer, researcher and teacher – a person constantly engaging the changing landscape within and without to create and recreate relationships of professionalism in education, classrooms and the university. In developing this understanding, I begin with myself.

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Dance: Using Metaphor and Imagery to Elucidate My Research With Girls

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Introduction

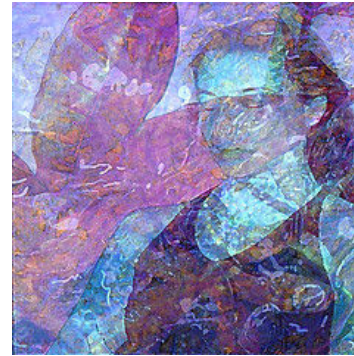
I am a dancer; I am a choreographer; I am a researcher. I have danced between these identities for the past few years, ever since I began writing my thesis. I am nearing the end of this writing phase of my inquiry, which seeks to understand dance as a form of solace and a unifying act between the bodies, minds and spirits of high school girls. Up to this point, my dances as researcher and dancer have been separate. I have not danced as an artist-researcher. I have merely been warming up and stretching. This piece is my first attempt to begin infusing dance imagery into inquiry. I seek an integrated identity that combines the dancer, inquirer and choreographer within. I choreographed the dance-positions used in this piece to illustrate the notion that dance can alleviate distress caused by disharmony between the body, mind and spirit. Dance rushes in to break down the barriers between imagination and the soma-self. By surrendering to the ecstatic that emerges from within, harmony breathes effortlessly between mind and body, restoring balance and order.

I use these images here to briefly tell my narrative and represent my experience and the experiences of the vibrant girls with whom I worked. I then share an aspect of my process as a researcher as well as some of the dance concepts I will use in my thesis.

Background

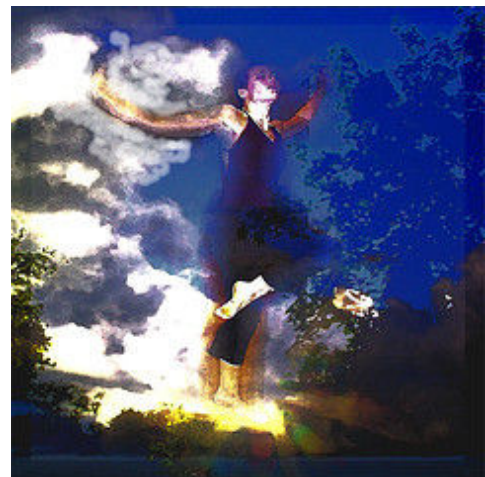
I conceived of working with girls long ago. From an early age I contemplated the emotional anguish within relationships. I felt called forth to alleviate distress. Armed with insight into my experience as woman, I wanted to use this wisdom to help other girls on their path: to lead women to discover their strength and restore harmony to their lives.

Untitled



As a social worker, I was dissatisfied with the healing methods presented to me. They were mental and subscribed to a body/mind split. I enjoyed the purpose of my work but not the path. Seeing my personal struggle, a dear friend reminded me that I love to dance and suggested I take that love more seriously. So I did. I took ballet, jazz and hip hop classes and rediscovered the joy in the movement and aliveness of my body. I dwelled in the emotional and creative worlds that healed me through drama until shortly before I found my doctoral path. Since then, dance has taken over.

Emerging from the Fog



I left social work and was granted entrance into the Ph.D. program in Education at the *Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (University of Toronto)* to specialize in Holistic & Aesthetic Education. This transition signified a powerful realization – I no longer needed to do what others told me I was good at. I could do what I believed in and loved.

In this program I received the knowledge, tools, encouragement and freedom to create a program for girls that included their spiritual and physical dimensions. I led a workshop/inquiry to guide girls through creative dance activities and listened to them reflect on those activities within the broader scope of their lives. We met once a week for three months to meditate, dance and talk. I guided girls to create their own improvisational dances and then explored with them the meaning those dances held for them.

I use a creative dance method as opposed to other dance styles because the focus of this style is on emerging feeling rather than pre-determined form. I provided structure to create a focal point from which they could create, however, the dances emerged from their own creativities. Creative dance is swimming in the ocean of inner feeling.

Inner Feeling



Research Findings

Butterflies Spread their Wings



Creative dance allowed Olivia, Shirley, Stacey, and Lizzy a method to experience peace with themselves and each other. Together we created a safe space where they could relinquish control to feeling, movement, and the creative force. They let go of their body-images and concerns of others' criticisms. They made themselves vulnerable and they danced.

By bringing the kinaesthetic, emotional and spiritual dimensions into focus, their thoughts moved from worry about homework, family and friends to a state of tranquility. The negativity that plagued them when they entered the workshop melted away as they danced the conscious and subconscious stories of their lives. They reported feeling happier, lighter and caring more about the world around them. They openly shared their thoughts and feelings with one another as well as personal aspects of their histories. *They felt more comfortable in their own skin and to be who they wanted to be.* This is no small feat in the face of Judeo/Christian ideas about virginity, prescribed roles of women and the outcasting of anything different among one's peers.

The self-acceptance and trust they developed led to actions they wanted rather than actions which stemmed from peer pressure. These girls began to take more social risks like jumping in the middle of a break dance circle without knowing how to break, stopping and preventing littering, running for student council, meditating and stepping into social conflicts

to support their peers struggling to defy the gravity of peer pressure.

Olivia, Shirley, Stacey and Lizzy intimately connected in friendship. They spoke of spiritually bonding in a way that was closer than that of their friends. Olivia made real friends for the first time at school and they enjoyed our meetings so much that they met with me after-school even on the days they skipped classes.

Research Processes

Inspired by Greatness



As I watched the girls improvise movement, I often felt awestruck. They simultaneously infused creation and movement into their consciousness and transformation took place. To watch girls in high school engage in their own creative journeys in front of peers is like watching previously wounded eagles soar. Each of these girls endured painful life events that have depleted their sense of self-worth. Peers, family members and teachers have made each of them feel less than adequate. Here, they take space for their bodies to roam freely, they leave their pains and worries behind. They create and they feel. In the absence of self-condemnation, dance brings previously neglected aspects of their selves to light. The girls invite imagination and reveal their goddess selves in motion. I am awed by their beauty. It demands that I too move in dance/life with a wide open heart – vulnerable and unapologetic for my presence. My participants gifted me with this feeling

over and over as I watched them discover their somaselves in form and in feeling on their own and with one another.

Research Representations: Using Dance Concepts to Frame my Work

Plié

The *Plié* is a bending of the knee or knees. This ballet exercise renders the joints and muscles soft and pliable and the tendons flexible and elastic to develop a sense of balance (Grant, 1982). This movement is a warm-up as well as a preparation step for jumps and turns. Bending the knees acts as a spring to rise to the toes or to jump off the ground. Meditation, like the *Plié*, is a warm-up and preparation. I used meditation in my dance inquiry to assist girls to mentally prepare for creative movement. Openness to the moment of movement requires relaxed yet focused awareness on body sensations as well as creative impulses. Meditation can clear the mind of stressful thoughts from the day that block creative flow. As the *Plié* stretches the joints and muscles, meditation stretches the mind; as the *Plié* prepares the dancer for airborne status, meditation prepares the mover for creative liberation.

Auto-Regarde: Seeing Student Selves through the Soma-Self:

As a choreographer and dancer, I create forms where I look upon my own outstretched limbs or joints. Watching my own body move through space or held in a gesture allows me to notice and remember a forgotten aspect of my soma-self. I call this movement *Auto-Regarde*, which means self-looking. The motif of a woman looking upon her own body – hand, shoulder, knee or toe – is a noticing and continuous re-noticing of the incredible vessel that she inhabits yet knows so little about. Awed by her own strange presence she comes into deeper contact with her body-self: this body-self that is her and simultaneously not her. When she submerges herself in dance, the body ceases to exist. There is only dance freely expressing unrestricted emotion in aesthetic form. Body and consciousness become one.

The Auto-Regarde allows me to be in relation with the overlooked, forgotten, taken for granted, and purposely neglected significant aspects of myself. Noticing the unnoticed creates an opening in my consciousness. Observing this hand with awe as if it were my first breathes wonder into the dance between us. Suddenly I become enchanted by my own vessel and sink into adoration of my body-self.

I use this looking at one's own soma-self to frame and understand girls' experiences of looking back into the past on themselves and looking forward into the selves they would like to be. This looking back allows them to look down to see where they stand now in the field of their academic journeys. Their looking forward allows them to look out with hope and promise for their tomorrows.

Expansion: Radiating Out in All Directions

*My core radiates when I reach deep into the unknown.
I stretch out in every direction like exploding rays of the sun.
Dance moves me and makes me reach beyond limits.
Rushing through my limbs: Shining beauty everywhere:
I am Dance.*

Expansion



The notions of expansion and contraction are used in contemporary dance forms. Jose Limon uses the idea of expansion with his dance concept of *Opposition* (Lewin, 1973). There are five points of opposition in the standing body: the head, each hand and each foot. Each of these five points can oppose any one of the others. For instance, the top of the head can oppose a palm or foot to create a feeling

and image of an elongated reaching. Opposition lengthens and stretches the body without tensing or gripping (shortening) the muscles. When the muscles reach their stretch peak they must release back in.

I borrow Limon's (1973) idea of Opposition but use my own terminology. I refer to these dance concepts as *Expansion* and *Contraction* as metaphors to frame the personal growth Olivia, Shirley, Stacey, Lizzy and I experienced from this research project.

To expand means:

- To spread out; to open out, unfold
- To give ample utterance to, 'pour out' (one's feelings); to overflow and
- To spread out every way; to cause to fill a larger space, to widen the boundaries; to enlarge (*The Living Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language*)

The Sanskrit word for universe is *Brahmand*. The root *bra* means to bulge or to expand (Sen, 2005). The Universe is continuously expanding. I believe that humans, like microcosmic universes, have a natural propensity to expand – emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. Living is growing and extending ourselves beyond the reach that we know. Contraction is the opposite of expansion. It is a shortening of muscle in the body, narrowness (of mind) and refers to the act of shrinking. In the evolution of myself and the girls that I worked with I also see the contractions contained within the overall expansion of our lives.

These dance-based metaphors guide my work and help me understand the link between the physical and internal arenas of life. Physical self-extensions act as metaphors for emotional, cognitive and spiritual leaps as girls and women choose to change and expand themselves.

Special thanks to Ganga Sunshine, Neil Gislason and Gary Knowles. Photographs courtesy of Ganga Sunshine.

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Re-claiming Life Through Spirituality: Fragments of a Story About Motherhood Within a Bi-cultural (Step)family

*Jasjit Sangha, PhD Candidate
OISE/UT*

Beginnings

I was 26 years old when my life changed and was never the same again. I fell head-over-heels in love with my best friend and the fact that he was a single father to two young girls did not dissuade me in any way. The first time we met I felt an instant attraction to him but it seemed unlikely that we would ever be more than friends.

I was an ambitious South Asian woman who had moved to Ottawa for an internship sponsored by the *Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Canada*. I had recently graduated with an honours degree from *York University* in Political Science in the top tenth percentile of my class. Moving to Ottawa to work for an international NGO or an international branch of the government seemed the next logical step to me. I was focused on building a career that would carry prestige and respect. In many ways I was trying to fulfill my immigrant parents' dreams and it was important for me to make them proud.

A Room for Rent

My world and the world of my husband-to-be collided when a mutual friend took me to inquire about a room he had for rent. His house fascinated me. The walls were painted in primary colours, the kitchen floor was arranged in a checkerboard design and the furniture consisted of retro pieces he had collected over the years at garage sales and second-hand stores. A disco ball, hanging in the middle of the living room, was in perfect harmony with the two turntables set up on a 1970's stereo system. Records were piled up in crates covering one of the walls, and huge windows let in light from almost every direction. In the midst of it all two lively and charming young girls were prancing around, crawling over their father, and happy to greet the new visitor in their house.

Our worlds could not have been more different. He was a small town white boy, born and raised in the prairies. Sitting with his family and friends consisted of staring into a sea of blue eyes and pale skin. He was a single father who worked as a musician in a band, a Disc Jockey and a sound technician. He wore polyester shirts with big paisleys, had his ear pierced more than 12 times and wore bright blue nailpolish when the mood suited him.

I was different not only because of my skin colour. I was a straight-laced woman who had to dress in business casual attire and be at my office by nine a.m.. Yet despite our differences, I trusted his gentle blue eyes and his assurances that his children were well behaved, that they visited their mother on most weekends and that I would not be disturbed by them if I chose to rent a room in his house. He needed to rent out two rooms in order to pay the mortgage and bills, and he was cautious about the type of person he would allow to live with him and his children. I decided to rent the room, not sure how I would break the news to my parents that I was going to live with a man and a single father to boot.

Friendship

The rest is history. Our friendship percolated over the course of a year and a half as we spent more and more time together. Dinner conversations turned into late night talks in the kitchen as we told each other our secrets and contemplated the meaning of life. I usually had to tear myself away in the wee hours of the morning and try to sleep before I had to get up for work. He would stay awake longer jamming in the basement for his next gig. Once, when I was sick with the flu, my mother was so worried that she was ready to come to Ottawa and take care of me. I assured her that she didn't need to because my roommate was taking very good

care of me. He nursed me back to health with warm cups of soup and tea, serving my meals in bed and being a great friend. Love had been developing between us and neither of us really knew what to do with it. Taking a long time to reveal our feelings to each other allowed for a strong foundation of love and trust to build between us, a foundation that was crucial for me to deal with the difficulties and challenges that lay ahead.

Changes

Nothing could have prepared me for the stress, anger, heartache and disappointment that I experienced in my transition from being a carefree and successful woman to being an over-extended step-mother, and then mother. I was naïve about the future and expected things to stay as they were. I had no idea that my life would change so drastically. I was 26 years old and had never been responsible for anyone but myself. But that would soon change. By the time I turned 27 my roommate and I were married, I was stepmother to ten- and twelve- year old girls and I was expecting my first child. Everything happened so fast that I did not have time to stop and ponder the consequences of these changes or even think about whether or not I accepted the new direction my life was taking. In the blink of an eye I went from being a much-adored roommate to being a wife and a much resented step-mother.

The changes began with a move from Ottawa to Toronto, with a pitstop in Vancouver. I had been living in Ottawa for over a year and a half and I had not found work that was stimulating or challenging. Many of the jobs that I had hoped to get with international NGO's required a masters' degree and international work experience. I had neither. I felt too young to be a bureaucrat and to join the throngs of people in Ottawa who had comfortable, complacent lifestyles. I decided to return to Toronto, missing the vibrancy, diversity and familiarity of the city. I would live with my parents for a while and save money to travel. I also planned to apply for graduate school. Completing a doctoral degree had been a dream of mine. My plans altered considerably, however, when my roommate decided to move to Toronto with me. He did not

want our relationship to end and we had both had had negative experiences with long-distance relationships.

Traveling Across Canada

So, we packed the beat up red Ford station wagon and set off on a cross-country adventure, while the girls jumped in sprinklers and ate ice-cream with their maternal grandparents in Regina. We had the summer to ourselves as we crisscrossed the country listening to melancholy folk music, relishing the summer sun. Lou Barlow sang in his soothing voice "I think I love you, but I don't know what that means. Girl of my dreams or a friend that one day leaves. Can I trust you?" It was as though Lou had asked the questions I was pondering in my mind. Was this relationship going to work or were we better off as friends? I still listen to Lou Barlow when I want to be reminded of that carefree summer and the happiness of our newfound love. His songs always take me back to that time in my life when I let my heart decide my future.

That summer trip cemented our relationship and brought us closer. We spent long hours in the car, simply enjoying each other's company. I don't remember our conversations, as much as I remember the feeling I had that I wanted to be with this person more than anything else. It was an experience of a lifetime as I had never been on such a long road trip or seen the Canadian rural landscape. I was blown away by the beauty of the prairies, the majesty of the mountains, the force of the ocean and the wisdom of the old growth forests.

A New Life in Toronto

By the time we arrived in Toronto I was refreshed and ready to start our new life together in the busy metropolis. The first obstacle we faced was finding affordable accommodation not just for the two of us but for my two step-daughters as well. It was the summer of 1999 when rent controls had started to lift and vacancy rates were heading towards an all time low in Toronto. We had no choice but to significantly downgrade our standard of living just to make ends meet. Our four bedroom

Victorian house in Ottawa, with its huge windows, large kitchen and living room was replaced with a two bedroom apartment with no dining room and only one washroom, one floor in the basement and my husband's new computer set up in the kitchen.

The girls no longer had a large house to roam and I no longer had a space that I could claim as my own. We were cramped and in each other's presence at all times. I had made a decision and I now had to live with it.



The Beginnings

Natalie Zur Nedden, PhD Candidate
OISE/UT

The Beginnings is a poetic transcription (Glesne, 1997) fashioned from my life history research on Wendy Priesnitz, a Canadian pioneer in the home education social movement. When I reread the transcript I was inspired to edit the content of our discussion in such a way that it would reveal, to the best of my ability, the emotions this discussion elicited in me. As I started to edit, the “poem” manifested.

*All art is a process of making the world a
different place in which to live...*

- John Dewey, as cited in Glesne (1997, p. 216).

I

The business was growing
but we were also feeling overwhelmed.
Things were going well but
we had to fire someone –
and she wasn't happy.

As we were expanding
we were also thinking
of selling –
we put feelers out there.

We had many people working for us
all crammed
into our house –

it was time for a change;
we leased a commercial space and
moved the business in.

We sold our house to finance the business
and rented an apartment.

II

One day
Heidi,
Melanie
and I
were at home alone unpacking
Rolf was at the commercial space

when the doorbell rang.

“Hello?” I said
with my lips pressed against the plastic intercom.
“Hi, I’m so and so,” a man answered back,
 “Rolf sent me to talk to you about the business.
 You’re thinking of selling?”
said so and so

I buzzed him in
and greeted him at the door;
he flashed a card at me:

Truant Officer, Peel Board of Education.

He caught me off guard
and pushed his way in.

“There’s been a court appearance – it’s gone against you.
You’ve been ordered to send your kids to school
as of tomorrow.
If you don’t we have an order
from Children’s Aid to remove these kids
from you,”

he said

while Melanie,
Heidi,
and I
just stood there scared shitless.

I called Rolf and he came home.

After talking about it we realized this
was probably not true.
We checked the Education Act
 – there was nothing like this in there.

We went to the legal clinic and
told our story.
The lawyer called Children’s Aid and spoke to a guy
who didn’t have a clue
of what the lawyer was talking about.

At that point we knew it was a lie.
The whole thing was a lie.

Eventually we found out
it was her.

She turned us in.

The woman we fired –
she knew
we were interested in selling the business;
she knew
our children were homeschooled.

She turned us in
to the Peel School Board –
got her revenge.

I wrote a letter to everybody
from the Superintendent of Education
to the Minister of Education
demanding that the truant officer get fired.

I told the whole story.
Copied it to all the newspapers.

He never got fired.

III

Not long after,
a year or so,
this happened again.
And so
we moved again.

We didn't want to continue living
in the Peel Board region
so we moved back
to Lake Erie.

The attitude of the day –
and still is sometimes –
if we push people enough
they'll put their kids in school.

Somewhere between
these two incidents
I realized that we
had better do something.

And from my perspective
that meant getting organized,
 get some recognition here,
 educate people,
including school boards, because
we sure weren't going to stop
homeschooling our kids.

IV

I called Louise.

She was being harassed by *her* school board
in Manitoba.
To temporarily get them off her back
she registered her farm as a school.
She continued homeschooling.

To buy time we “enrolled” Heidi in Louise’s school –
distance education was going to have to do.

We got to talking about being harassed.
We decided to mobilize –
 to protect ourselves.
 To protect our children.

“We need some letterhead
that looks like there’s an organization,”
Louise said.
“Okay,” I replied,
“do we need a national organization?
I can’t help you in Manitoba.”
“Yeah, I’ll start the Manitoba one,
you start a Canadian one,”
she said.
“Okay, I’ll call it the Canadian Alliance of Home Schoolers.”
“Great, I’ll call mine the Manitoba Association
for Schooling at Home.”

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A Somatic Score, Playing with the Syncopation of the Imagination

Susan Aaron, PhD Student

OISE/UT

In this piece, the author reflects on her work as an arts-informed researcher and examines a range of themes that underpin her study. These themes include the nature of bodily experience, the relationship between artistic representation and perception, and the links between place and individual identity.

I: The Researcher

As an arts-informed researcher, I weave my arts training into the research process. I immerse my creativity in a shifting somatic field – my body, my senses, my locale – to arrive at an integration of these things as revelatory, a set of actions that invites people to move with my actions as inquiry. I blend visual design and content, and explore my experience as a researcher moving amidst the researched. My thematic focus is *where*: Where are the embodied actions, asking to become ongoing, but caught within my neighborhood and academia?

I offer art to reveal events as constructs of the senses returning in time and space. I experience my imagination as a syncopation of human rhythms affecting the essential actions of my neighborhood. I ask:

*where do senses attach or shape a world
reactions of thought
as shapes, words, images, sounds, all senses
held or mapped
where are these built, how delicate, how stable
where, or not?
dissolving into the rhythms of now*

I believe that finding and playing with imagination might release, reveal and focus academia in relation to the everyday. Through my art, I expose and play with the frames of multiple technologies of creation, including the body opening to rhythms accessible to all life.

*move beyond healing to tune.
flipping from metaphors that are the body, to motion;
the process of living as the exploration of one person's
imagination;
culture in a cosmopolitan city, dissolved to find an alliance of
the sustaining,
writing as embodied, dialogue, poems ask, confront, play, rather
than weave into a text that posits a place, placed being, a
subject.*

I choose to use art and the senses to reveal where my participatory somatic is held in relation to the landscape and those moving within it.

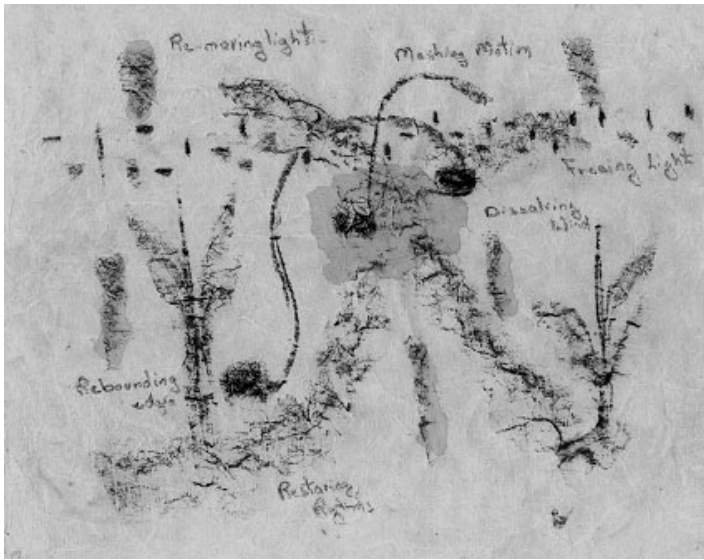
*release the orientation to the horizon, the verticality of life, the
inner and outer,
body and environment, patterns and ideas of the imagination
moving
are here rhythms tossed kinetically
senses and space as interdependent.*

Finding myself in a local ravine, I find

*the ravine offers the sense of the moving ground changing and
forming underfoot, within the horizon dissolving into air;
the sky as blue as reflected light, or water, soaks into the body
as it moves into and of its flowing;
the touch of a tree reveals its age through its lack of water, the
scent, dryness, and give of its trunk;
the chatter of squirrels shuffling through leaves;
the hawk calling amidst the play of peoples discussing; rhythms
of words resting in the ravine focused within the rhythms of now.
here we are away from the ravine yet words shift with its
rhythms and pictures reveal their uses to return the rhythms*

II: Projects Revealing Events

I explored my responses to what occurred around me in my neighborhood in a series of small projects. I represented these responses in a *somatic score*:



1975 not far from the ravine. Here is a still from the video (filmed by Terry McGlade):



The somatic score is like a graphic music score that is played not by notes but by reaction to its graphics.

As I developed the score, it became a new way of illustrating, of carrying the somatic onward. There are eight parts to the score, with each part representing one of the small projects....

The dancers don't deny womanhood, but in their tracksuits and swinging arms and legs, they play out the actions of movement as large and freed and common amidst the street movement. They play the axis at its basic in the busyness, refusing the embodied angles of gender's actions that move in the give and take of held tasks and relations, the manufactured and stored actions of a city.

In another project the embodied questioning moved to the ravine, where I explored my relationship with the landscape in a video. The rhythms of this wetland site acted as a reference for the restoration of rhythms.

*like moving, questions arising,
a choreographic sense lighting up in reaction to unique off
centered embodied actions
juxtaposed against the restorative rhythms of the wetland.
recorded and remembered art as senses moved along a street;
co-creation in shared movement arose to prevent violence to
women;
the shaped senses that are culture were revealed in the idea that
is light as a video;
meditation dissolved the disparate structures of body and
environment;
nature formed through the camera's constructed edge;
the city created structures of this nature;
the academic as a somatic surround was danced away to reveal
where race and gender formed;
and finally a synthesis of design revealed and opened all these
practices in a somatic score.*

Over the course of creating the projects that became the somatic score, I stayed with the present, the restorative, the moving even as I do daily by returning to the ravine.

One of the events I reflected on while creating the score was located in the past: I revisited a video of a street choreography that I presented in



Where was I held within the actions of an overactive human imagination and how to reveal that in a common technology – the video camera? I made many careful excursions to the wetland, baring it to the camera, having it form in the shaped idea that is light. I had previously kept the site safe from technologies' framing actions: a site as event, replete with untouched restorative rhythms....

*am I the actions of, or the actions creating, this camera world
apart?
the camera offers its rhythms
needing me.*

*I exist somewhere because of these multiple relations of
technologies, posts, homes,
all become the shadings of light and dark,
the moving relations made flat,
but as kinetic I exist and breath.
breath, heart beat, nature are all acts of the imagination,
named, aligned, and so is technology.
technology isn't like breath, or heart beat, sustaining.
breath and heart beat, music, ravine, are the resonances of
sounds, as responsive space.
I exist not in spaces or angles that align my actions but of my
actions.*

I insisted on my freedom from the public and private assignation of my actions, forming in a video as held spaces.

*I am not public because I am not of a discourse held in space.
I am not public because I am not held in relation to space.
I am not public because I am not part of a whole that is defined
by space
Where am I? I am that which I do, which I sense,
Am I at all, if "I" dissolves as I wholly enact a life?*

While in the ravine, I sought to expose what was unique as restorative even as I exposed my technology of creation, the camera. I discovered nature is not there until I act of my imagination's syncopation to name and sequester it.



*where does "nature" exist? it doesn't.
there is no vision in the camera, as a picture of a life moving
close to the ground, the rhythms of now.
the senses aligned as angles of light
reveal the edges that are other beings, patterns, and time.
streaming the rhythms into all actions prevents the forming of a
vision replaced with kinesis*

Amidst my research in the ravine toxins were discovered and development was proposed on its slope.

*even while the wetland sharpens senses, the wetland reawakens
life, it seems frozen
playing in a terminated object, the site as polluted, attacked,
rhythms trapped in the actions of the city.
rhythms gone awry as events become the domain of the
technologies of the city.*

To save this named and created site it had to be packaged into an artful telling, the "rhythms of now", that must exist on the page as at the site, carried in my rhythms.

*I don't live of the rhythms of the city as concrete and glass and
steel but of these rhythms.
a city is of the human imagination but shouldn't destroy one's
own rhythms
perhaps within the actions of a city we find our senses
as the city labels them "nature" in its texts and built structures
fences and sewers, roads and wires.
the city can become a set of actions that dwells on its own
structures.*

Closer to home, I reflected on my responses to a woman isolated in her apartment.

*she moves in, or was moved in.
she lives alone or she has company, daily, or weekly, as men
and then the shouted conversation from a brisk suited entity.
she leaves never, but is visited often.
she lives across the hall from me in my university neighborhood.
months of phoning, and no one hears her, not the police nor the
people and their agencies existing as numbers and voices.
I move, leaving my neighborhood marred, revealed by what was
occurring to me, but never proven across the hall.*

In contrast, this image is of people creating together with sensual rhythms in the snow (this is a still from a video done by Maggie Hutcheson):



I later returned to academia to see what it was holding and what it offered as the event of inquiry. I used performance to dissolve constructs set on the body in space and time. I did this through play with the dynamics of beams of light. I returned restorative motion to the encounter of performer and audience.

*Light and dark, dark and light
Where are the angles, the shapes, the actions that form?
Dissolve them into motion
the body is revealed in multiple beams of light, moving and
testing its substance as surface and dynamic.
in the light's shaping beams the angles of gender form
the heaving of weight becomes actions frozen, as "man",
hovering over the shadowed actions of cradling a child that
becomes "woman"
dissolve them into motion*



From Installation to Performance to the World Wide Web: Our Research on Caregiving and Alzheimer's Disease Continues

*Maura McIntyre and Ardra Cole, Centre for Arts-informed Research
OISE/UT*

In 2003-2004, with funding from the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)*, we exhibited *The Alzheimer's Project* – a seven-piece arts-informed research project about caregiving and Alzheimer's disease – in three Canadian cities: Victoria, British Columbia; Sudbury, Ontario; and Halifax, Nova Scotia. In each place we displayed the project for ten days in a prominent public venue and invited family caregivers to view the work and talk with us about their experiences of Alzheimer's disease and caregiving. We had group and individual conversations and many people contributed written responses and artifacts related to their experiences. Members of the general public responded to the exhibit through written comments and audio-tape recorded stories.

From a thematic analysis of the material we gathered at each site (written comments, audio-taped recordings and transcripts, and artifacts of care and caregiving) we created a 45-minute spoken word performance in three acts. In the winter and spring of 2006 we returned to each of the three research locations and performed *The Love Stories about Care and Caregiving* to audiences of family caregivers, health professionals, high school students, academics and members of the general public. In time for our return to Victoria, our story about the project, *Living and Dying with Dignity: The Alzheimer's Project*, was hot off the press. After our Halifax performances in July (2006) we worked for two long days with filmmaker Ann Bromley and the technical crew at Mount St. Vincent University in Halifax to produce a video and DVD of the *Love Stories*. In the fall (2006) we began work with playwright Martin Julien and a group of professional actors on the production of an audio CD version of *The Love Stories*. Both of these projects are intended for wide distribution of the research to diverse audiences.

With continued SSHRC funding, we began the next phase of research. In *Putting Care on the Map: Portraits of Care and Caregiving across Canada* we have continued our focus on creative and imaginative caregiving in a two-level study in which we ask:

- What does care look like?
- How do people from geographically or culturally diverse communities and underserved populations respond to the demands of caregiving for someone with Alzheimer's disease?
- What is the relationship between and among geography, culture and care?
- How is this relationship expressed on both a national and individual level?

Beginning in the fall (2006) we travelled to outlying areas of our earlier research communities – Sudbury, Halifax and Victoria – for a more in-depth exploration of underserved populations. On the ground, with intensive door-to-door outreach, we conducted in-depth interviews and invited family caregivers to photograph “what care looks like” using a disposable camera. We also invited them to contribute a symbol of care to *Gray Matters* – the growing collage of poems, stories and artifacts about caregiving that began with *The Alzheimer's Project*.

In addition, to expand our investigation of creative care across the country we have developed an interactive website to gather data, provide information, and communicate research results. Through the website we are literally mapping care across the country with an open invitation to family caregivers to help put care on the map. The website has a public education aspect (all project materials are mounted on the site) and two data gathering components (an on-line survey and an open invitation for family caregivers to contribute to *Gray Matters*).

Putting Care on the Map will culminate, in the spring of 2008, with a national public exhibit and a

featured display at an academic conference. Visitors to the exhibit will be invited to engage with the “Portraits of Care” by listening to audio-taped stories of caregiving experience, reading poetic and narrative accounts of creative and imaginative care, and viewing collected artifacts that speak of the caregiving experience. As in all of our work, in *Putting Care on the*

Map, we pay tribute to family caregivers and to the worthiness of care and caregiving in general.

In February, 2007 we launched our book, *Living and Dying with Dignity*, the *Love Stories* video and *Putting Care on the Map* website (<http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/research/mappingcare/home.shtml>) in a “Celebration of Care” at the *Ontario Institute for Studies in Education*.

The Arts and Social Work Research Initiative

Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

The Arts and Social Work Research Initiative (Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto) was launched on November 14, 2006. *ASWRI* creates a space to share projects and foster scholarly and community programs. Faculty members, students, community partners, alumni and multi-disciplinary associates draw from the arts to expand knowledge at

the societal and interpersonal levels and to encourage dialogue and social change.

Faculty founders:
Adrienne Chambon
Izumi Sakamoto
Ernie Lightman



The Centre for Arts-informed Research Seminar Series

Thursdays, 12-1:30 p.m., Room 7-162 at OISE/UT

In a series of informal lunch-hour presentations, arts-informed researchers share works of scholarship and provide a glimpse into the triumphs and tribulations of engaging in research without precedents. The series offers inspiration to novice and experienced arts-informed researchers alike.

Seminars take place on a near-weekly basis. Potential dates for 2007 are:

October 18 – Spencer J. Harrison confirmed

October 25

November 1

November 8

November 15

November 22

November 29

Please check CAIR's most recent seminar schedule to see whether a presentation has been scheduled for a given week.

On October 18, Spencer J. Harrison will present a seminar entitled ***The Queer Project: Trying Through Art, to Bring an End to Violence Against Lesbians and Gay Men.*** Harrison's talk will look at the production and exhibition of his interview-based art, which addresses issues of violence against lesbians and gay men. Exhibited in nontraditional sites such as hospitals, churches and police stations and discussed on the floor of the House of Commons, Harrison's paintings and installations changed ideas around the use of art and the subject matter the work confronted. Spencer J. Harrison, BFA, MA is a nationally exhibiting Canadian artist. Currently he is a first year Ph.D. student in Adult Education and Community Development working with the *Centre for Arts-informed Research.*

The Centre for Arts-informed Research Works-in-Progress Series

Thursdays, 4:30 - 6 p.m., Room 7-162 at OISE/UT

CAIR's Works-in-Progress evening series provides students with a place to share their works-in-progress and offers an opportunity to receive constructive audience feedback in a supportive group setting.

Works-in-progress presentations take place on a near-weekly basis. Potential dates for 2007 are:

October 18

October 25

November 1

November 8

November 15

November 22

November 29

Please check CAIR's most recent schedule to see whether a presentation has been scheduled for a given week.



Member Updates

Nancy Halifax, Ph.D., Visiting Scholar, *Centre for Arts-Informed Research*, OISE/UT, presented an exhibition of photographs, *A Day In The Life – URGENT*, January 29- February 23 2007 at OISE/UT. The exhibition was co-sponsored by the *Centre for Women's Studies in Education* and the *Centre for Arts-informed Research*, OISE/UT.

The images in the exhibit were selected from a vast number shot over a period of eight months, in a community-based photography project where cameras were given to women and men who were experiencing insecure housing and homelessness, social exclusion and poverty. The exhibition revealed photography as, and in, ethically transformative relationships where there is an opportunity to begin to promote empathic identification between the viewer and the one who is viewed.

Using digital and analogue 35mm single lens reflex and "point-and-shoot" cameras the focus was on urban environments, where participants worked with natural light and whatever other circumstances the setting offered. Eloquent black and white photographic montages were printed on canvas and left un-stretched: the medium is in part the message. The montages are large (30 x 40) and do not encompass the lasting archival quality that photographic fine art prints have. These prints reflect the transient nature of the lives of the artists that make them and the material-canvas-reflects the notion of the tents and the tent cities that have appeared and disappeared across the urban landscape.

Kathleen Vaughan's doctoral thesis *Finding Home: Knowledge, Collage and the Local Environments*, comprises an illustrated text and visual art installation. Her art installation was exhibited in November 2006 at the *Gladstone Hotel* in Toronto. A virtual tour of the *Gladstone* installation is available on Kathleen's website: www.akaredhanded.com.

In *Finding Home*, Vaughn explores personal, cultural and educational meanings of home, investigating how a person can create a feeling of being at home in the world. She takes a personal vantage point, basing her work in her own neighbourhood around Bathurst and St. Clair in Toronto, observed through a walk with her dog, Auggie. The text is a guided walk that brings together cultural, urban and art theory, history and geography, education, and ideas about collage as a method of research and art-making. Also representing the route of the walk, the visual work includes large scale drawings on paper, textile maps and sculptures, and archival and contemporary photographs—with the text creating a version of collage.



Recent Arts-Informed Theses at OISE/UT

Bowman, Victoria (M.A., 2006). *Is Home Care in Crisis? A Reader's Theater About Issues in Home Care*

Bowman's reader's theatre script, *Is Home Care in Crisis*, represents a secondary analysis of data from a research project entitled *A National Snapshot of Home Support from the Consumer Perspective*. This research draws from two academic disciplines: critical disability studies and arts-informed research. Bowman's analysis aims to make the findings of *A National Snapshot* interesting and accessible to the general public, in order to support the lobbying work that the *Council of Canadians with Disabilities* is already engaged in around disability supports at the provincial, territorial and national levels. Bowman first presents her reader's theatre piece, followed by an academic narrative that makes sense of her work according to elements of arts-informed and disability research.

Lichtblau, Dorothy (Ph.D., 2007). *Dialectical Play and Dramatic Discourse: Eve, A Counter Myth*

Lichtblau's drama inquiry is a reconstruction of the ancient myth of Adam and Eve, merged with a story about a woman in the not-too-distant future. *Eve, A Counter Myth* is a full-length, multi-media theatrical work. Despite its serious intent and themes, it is a comedy written in modern colloquial language. The play links past with present, and legend with contemporary trends. An artistic project, *Eve* also is a qualitative creative inquiry that aims to contribute to discourse about what it means to be human. Lichtblau situates her inquiry in an investigation of the myth of *Adam and Eve* in part because this text exemplifies how stories evolve over time due to myriad variables, including the intentions of the storytellers, and cultural influences. She also explores how telling this patriarchal allegory about the feminine archetype from an alternate point of view might shift consciousness about gender, authority, nature, and morality.

Luciani, Teresa C. (Ph.D., 2006). *On Women's Domestic Work and Knowledge: Growing Up in an Italian Kitchen*

This is an arts-informed thesis where recipes, images and text are scattered and shattered all over the kitchen floor and (re)assembled to tell stories about women's ways of teaching and learning in the kitchen. Through fiction, autoethnography and photographs, Luciani locates the kitchen as a place where identities, social roles and expectations are conveyed and contested. Abstract concepts are fleshed out in small, ordinary acts and experiences—the fragments—that make up a life lived. In this manner, scratching the surface of mundane domestic chores exposes the depth and complexity of domestic knowledge; celebrates and values how and what women teach and learn in the kitchen; shows how knowledge not only resides in the mind of an individual but also in the body, the senses, and in relationship with others. In this sense, education becomes relational, contextual, embodied.

Plett, Lynette Sarah (Ph.D., 2006). *Thinking Back Through Our Mothers: A Sampler Quilt of Kleine Gemeinde Mennonite Women and Country Homemakers*

Thinking Back Through Our Mothers is an autoethnographic and historical account of the lives of Mennonite farm women. Plett writes about her childhood on a farm in a Mennonite community in Manitoba and uncovers the everyday lives of her mother and grandmothers – *Kleine Gemeinde* Mennonites in Manitoba and Kansas – by delving into their diaries. She compares their lives with the lives of other prairie farm women by examining letters to *The Country Homemakers*. *Thinking Back* takes an arts-informed approach and is written in the form of a Sampler quilt. There are twelve *blocks* or chapters to this thesis. The blocks are thematically organized into four *rows*. Each row (made up of three chapters) begins with an autoethnographic account of the theme for that row. The second chapter in each row is a historical narrative of Plett's *Kleine Gemeinde* mother and grandmothers. The third chapter in each row includes a script based on the letters farm women wrote to *The Country Homemakers*. Images of a quilt which accompanies this thesis, *Uncovering Ordinary Women/Everyday Knowledges*, are pieced into the text.

Rykov, Maria Helena (Ph.D., 2006). *Music at a Time Like This: Music Therapy Cancer Support Groups*

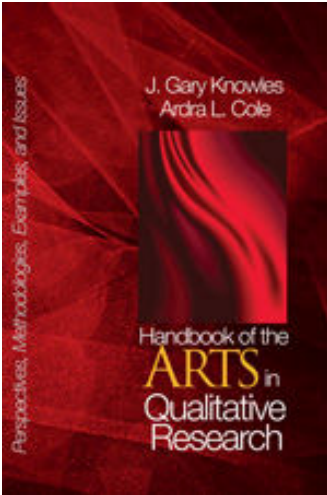
Music at a Time Like This chronicles a music therapy support group for adult cancer patients that voices experience from the patients' perspectives. Participants talked about feeling lonely and isolated as cancer patients. They experienced the music therapy support group as profound, nonverbal connection to themselves, to each other, and connection to something larger – the music – that was beyond themselves. The experience of improvised music-making in music therapy support groups was particularly empowering and provided feelings of control during a time of loss-of-control inflicted by the disease and its experience as illness. Music therapy research is, by definition, arts-based. The representation of this is, furthermore, arts-informed because the findings are portrayed in a literary form that is intended to be accessible to a wide readership beyond the academy and the music profession. Nonverbal and auditory elements are incorporated to portray the participants' experiences directly and to heighten the reader's phenomenological engagement. These include a melodic-poetic transcription – a song – based on the compression and synthesis of the research findings.



Books of Interest

***Wild Fire: Art as Activism*, Deborah Barndt (Editor), Sumach Press, 2006.**

The dynamic essays in this collection speak to activists, artists, educators, students and community workers who share a passion for art, politics and social change. The questions of why and for whom art is made and the way it can be used to promote discussion and transformation are addressed. Through exploration of a range of artistic projects – from mural painting, photography, zine-making, alternative publishing to street theatre, puppetry and protest singing – *Wild Fire* inspires critical and artistic forms of social commentary and action. Contributors discuss experiences across the globe, taking the reader on journeys to Nicaragua, East Asia, Bosnia, Canada and Chile.



***Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues*. J. Gary Knowles and Ardra L. Cole (Eds.), SAGE Publications, Inc., November 2007.**

The bringing together of the arts and qualitative inquiry is changing the face of social science research. The increasing shift toward arts-based research has raised complex questions, such as how to evaluate its quality and even whether distinctions exist between what is art and what is research. In the *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research*, editors J. Gary Knowles and Ardra L. Cole bring together the top scholars in qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive overview of where arts-based research has come, and where it is going. Through various categories of art and art-based research - namely epistemological, historical, methodological, thematic - this defining work will address all the significant issues of conceiving and conducting arts-based or arts-informed research in the social sciences and humanities, as well as the challenges of composing final representations of the research.

***Seeing Red - A Pedagogy of Parallax: An Epistolary Bildungsroman on Artful Scholarly Inquiry*, Pauline Sameshima, Cambria Press, 2007.**

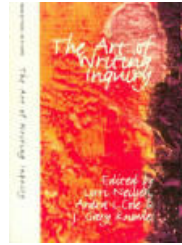
Seeing Red is based on Sameshima's doctoral thesis, winner of the 2007 *Arts Based Educational Research Outstanding Dissertation Award*. The book is written in the form of an epistolary bildungsroman – a didactic novel of personal developmental journeying. The work is a fiction (letters from a graduate student to the professor she is in love with) embedded in developmental understanding of living the life of a teacher researcher. Sameshima shares the possibilities of how artful research informs processes of scholarly inquiry and honours the reader's multi-perspective as integral to the research project's transformative potential.

***Curriculum and the Cultural Body*, Stephanie Springgay and Debra Freedman (Editors), Peter Lang, 2007.**

Curriculum and the Cultural Body extends the discussion of body knowledge by attending to the unspoken questions and practices in education that silence, conceal and limit bodies. The collection of essays exemplifies a new genre of interdisciplinary writing. Drawing on such diverse discourses as curriculum studies, cultural studies, film studies, media and technology studies, feminist theory, queer theory, phenomenology, a/r/tography and art education, the authors in this edited book explore the multiplicities and complexities of the body in learning and knowing. Each engages with questions that relate the practices of culture to a re-conceptualization of the body in and as curriculum.

Arts Informed Inquiry Series

Backalong Books and The Centre for Arts-informed Research



The Art of Writing Inquiry

Lorri Neilsen, Ardra L. Cole, &

J. Gary Knowles (Eds.)

Publication: November 2007.

ISBN 1-894132-06-8. List Price CDN \$34.95

A rich collection of arts-informed writing as inquiry and inquiry into writing: essays on teaching and learning, excerpts and examples of writing inquiry, exhortations, strategies for writing and inquiring, powerful poetry and plays to perform—all at the leading edge of contemporary scholartistry.

Provoked by Art: Theorizing Arts-informed Inquiry

Edited by Ardra L. Cole, Lorri Neilsen, J. Gary Knowles, & Teresa Luciani

ISBN: 1-894132-08-4. List price: CDN\$28.95

In this collection authors draw on illustrative examples of arts-informed research to foreground theoretical elements and issues associated with new genres of social science inquiry. Through languages and genres of fiction, poetry, drama, and visual arts the works in this volume show the potential of arts-informed research to bring together the academy and diverse knowledge communities.

Scholartist Series

Backalong Books and the Centre for Arts-informed Research

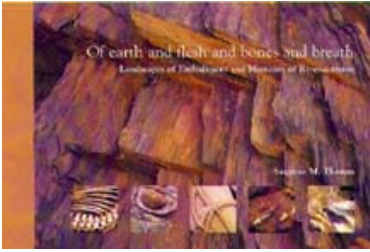
Living and Dying with Dignity: The Alzheimer's Project

by Maura McIntyre and Ardra Cole

The *Alzheimer's Project* is comprised of several three-dimensional multimedia representations based on predominant themes emerging from the authors' research. Data informing their work are from multiple sources: personal writing, journal entries, caregiving notes, photographs, personal documents, library and internet research, and a series of structured conversations about the authors' experiences. The six themes represented in the installations, subsumed under the overarching theme of dignity, are: caregiving and contexts of care; dependence; education; mother-daughter relationships; memory; and, identity.

RESPECT: A Reader's Theatre About People Who Care for People in Nursing Homes

by Maura McIntyre



**Of earth and flesh and bones and breath:
Landscapes of embodiment and moments of re-enactment**

by Suzanne M. Thomas

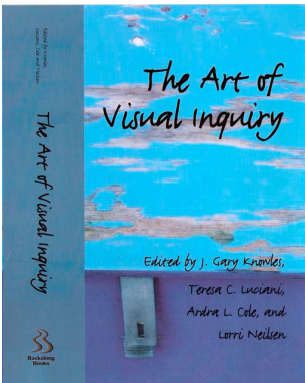
ISBN 1-894132-14-9. List price CDN\$34.95

Thomas has woven poetry, art, citations, and ruminations into a creative text that explores and performs, with insight and care, how to conceptualize and theorize the intersections of complex issues around place, memory, poetics, embodied knowing, pedagogy, ecology, philosophy, aesthetics, artful knowing and writing. The book celebrates the possibilities of human being and becoming when the heart is integrally connected to the earth.

The Art of Visual Inquiry

Edited by J. Gary Knowles, Ardra L. Cole, Lorri Neilsen, & Teresa Luciani

ISBN 1-894132-10-6 List price: CDN\$28.95



The authors portray, imagine and theorize about research that infuses visual arts processes and representational forms with qualitative inquiry. Chapters reflect a range of two- and three- dimensional visual art forms including photography, painting, installation art, collage and film.

Contributors: Nancy Viva Davis Halifax; Allan Neilsen; Nicholas Paley; Suzanne Thomas; Pauline Sameshima; Annina Suominen; Alexandra Cutcher; Kathleen Vaughan; Lynette S. Plett; Rachel Nash and W. F. Garrett-Petts; Alex F. de Cosson, Rita L. Irwin, Sylvia Kind, and Stephanie Springgay; Kathy (Aikatherine) Mantas; Robyn Gibson and Marianne Hulsbosch; Kelly Akerman; Lois Kunkel; Sharons L. Sbrocchi and Teresa C. Luciani; Jennifer Sumsion; Adrienne Chambon; Leah Burns; Lynn Butler-Kisber; Claudia

Mitchell, Shannon Walsh and Sandra Weber; Carl Bagley; Maura McIntyre and Ardra L. Cole; Pauline Sameshima, Sharon L. Sbrocchi and J. Gary Knowles.

Creating Scholartistry: Imagining the Arts-informed Thesis or Dissertation

Edited by J. Gary Knowles, Ardra L. Cole, Lorri Neilsen and Sara Promislow

ISBN 1-894132-16-5 List price CDN \$34.95

Authors offer experience-gained insights into the art and craft of creating arts-informed theses and dissertations. Issues associated with imagining, developing and completing non-traditional social science research are addressed as well as the barriers, complexities and rewards of guiding and facilitating such exciting work.

Contributors: Lynn Butler-Kisber; Alexandra Cutcher; Bronwyn Davies & Suzanne Gannon; Liz DeFreitas; Patrick Diamond & Christine Van Halen-Faber; Lynn Fels, Kadi Purru & Warren Linds; Alma Fleet; Anastasia Kamanos Gamelin; Noel Gough & Warren Sellers; Peter Gouzouasis & Karen Lee; Andre Grace & Kris Wells; Nancy Halifax-Davis; Rita Irwin, Stephanie Springgay & Alex deCosson; J. Gary Knowles; Lois Kunkel; Carl Leggo & Kevin Kirkland; Morna McDermott; Solveiga Mieztis & Kathy Mantas; Renee Norman; Antoinette Oberg & Laura Cranmer; Sara Promislow & Ardra Cole; Carole Roy; Sharon Sbrocchi; Karen Schaller; Suzanne Thomas; Pat Thomson & Jane Baskwill.

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Books are also available for purchase at *The Centre for Arts-informed Research* events and can be ordered through the Centre's website: <http://home.oise.utoronto.ca/~aresearch>



arts-informed 6(2): Call for Contributions

The *Centre for Arts-informed Research* is now calling for contributions to *arts-informed*, an online a forum for researchers whose work bridges artistic practice and social science research. *arts-informed* enables researchers to write about their experiences, share their work and engage with other researchers who are expanding the boundaries of academic discourse. We welcome works of scholarship, essays, reflections, poetry, short stories, book reviews, artwork and other work related to arts-informed research. We also accept descriptions of work-in-progress.

Length and Format: Contributions should not exceed 2,000 words. The format for citations and references should conform to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (current edition). References should be listed at the end of the contribution. To facilitate online publishing, endnotes are used instead of footnotes. All submissions should be saved in Rich Text Format (**RTF**) and sent as an attachment.

Images: Images should be saved in **JPG** format and sent as an attachment. Images embedded in Word or .pdf files will not be accepted. Only copies or photos of original work should be sent – please do not send the work itself. Copyright must be respected. Be sure to include identifying information for each item submitted (name of artist, year, title, art-form and/or materials, and original dimensions). Please note the preferred location of images in your contribution. We reserve the right to select which, if any, graphics are included in the article.

Regular Columns

Member updates: If you have news to share please send your updates (limited to 60 words).

Arts-informed doctoral theses at the OISE library and other institutes: Please send your thesis title and the year in which the thesis was completed. Include a brief description of your work (limited to 60 words).

Books/Journals/Articles of interest: If you would like to recommend a book, journal, or article related to arts-informed inquiry, please send the reference (*APA* style) with a short description (limited to 60 words).

Please direct all submissions to Neil Gislason at ngislason@oise.utoronto.ca Please indicate “arts-informed” as the subject.

Deadline for Submissions: Vol. 6(2) – February 1, 2008

Call for Referees

The *Centre for Arts-informed Research* is developing a version of *arts-informed* that will operate as a refereed student-run academic journal. We are currently searching for referees to join our review board. Please send a brief statement of interest to Neil Gislason at ngislason@oise.utoronto.ca

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