Creative and arts based methodologies: Expanding applied psychologies’ resources for intervention and empowerment

Abstract

There are many calls from around the world for critical approaches to psychology that can respond the challenges faced by communities at the sharp end of structures and processes of exclusion. Among these are calls for epistemic justice, indigenising of psychology, and a widening of our methodological imagination. In this article, we outline some of the responses to these calls with reference to our research with agencies and communities we have collaborated with in efforts to promote empowerment. The focus will be on community arts and cultural development (CACD) and how it was utilized in support of cultural reclamation, empowerment, and wellbeing of Indigenous people in Australia. CACD has roots in critical and liberation theories and resonates with participatory methodologies. Arts practice is central and entails psychosocial processes such as deconstruction, witnessing, and intersubjectivity. The presentation will focus on the different arts and cultural practices used in various projects ranging from screen-printing, photography, soundscapes and portraiture. We contend that CACD and arts practice can meaningfully expand our methodological resources and sites for and levels of intervention.

*Keywords*: participatory methodologies, qualitative research, community arts, liberation, critical applied psychology

Culture is not the superfluous, it is nor decoration. It is the doing. The manner of doing. And our ways of doing the same thing are not the same, since we all do not dream the same dream, we are not all of the same heart, we are not born in the same land, we do not grow up in the same district, city or state, we do not all eat from the same dish. For this reason, culture is diverse. Culture is everything that exists, truth and lies, everything created by us, in response to our needs, desires, abilities. (Boal, 1998, p. 179)

For applied psychology to contribute to the empowerment of people in society in an interconnected world we will need to expand our ways of knowing and doing. In this article, we draw on critical writing within and outside of psychology to distil some of the broader epistemological, methodological, and ethical resources and imperatives to frame the argument with a specific focus on our research in the area promoting and supporting interventions to support Indigenous cultural and community strengthening in Australia. We describe a program of work with the Community Arts Network in Western Australia (CAN), which spans over a decade. Our involvement as researchers starting in the early 2000s and is ongoing. The program of work is made up of various projects that utilise arts and cultural practice to promote community empowerment. Arts and cultural practice is central to the process of participatory and collaborative praxis. Since our initial involvement, we have worked in various roles including board membership, project evaluator, and critical partner, to collaborative inquiry as a form of psychosocial accompaniment. Through our ongoing involvement over the years, we have developed a deeper understanding of community arts and cultural development (CACD) well as the roles that we can take on through our engagement with organisations and communities working towards empowerment and social justice for minoritised and marginalised groups in our context.

**Disciplinary and Conceptual Coordinates**

Various interdisciplinary areas of scholarship have been important in our work for generating approaches to psychology that can contribute to the liberation and promotion of wellbeing of different sectors of society that carry the burden of histories of oppression and forms of structural violence (Dutta, Sonn, & Lykes, 2016; Fine & Ruglis, 2009, 2017; Montero, 2009; Montero, Sonn, & Burton, 2017; Teo, 2015a). Although not a new critique, many scholars have written about some of the problematic assumptions, in particular the mechanistic worldview and individualism, which underpin knowledge production in psychology. Critical scholars have argued that individualistic, objectivist, decontextualized, and ahistorical analysis amounts to epistemic violence (Gergen & Gergen, 2010, 2011; Montero, 2009, Rappaport, 2000, Teo, 2015, Weis & Fine, 2012) calling for scrutiny of how Western scientific modes of knowing, doing and being have been implicated in colonialism and imperialism (Dutta, 2016; Reyes Cruz & Sonn, 2011; Smith, 1999). In a recent special issue, Adams, Dobles, Gómez, Kurtiș, and Molina, (2015) have called for decolonising psychological science pointing out that through various process psychology has abnormalised the worldviews of the majoritarian world. Adams and Estrada-Villalta (2017) argued that the writing developed in areas such as liberation psychology and efforts aims at indigenising psychology are important avenues for recentering psychology’s capacity to contribute to the development of inclusive and empowering communities in different countries around the world. One of the key strategies to do so would be to contribute to the normalisation of ways of living, being and doing of groups of people who have been subject to colonising discourse and practice.

Our critical engagement in communities and with the literature in various fields have been important for shaping community research and action to contribute to social justice and empowerment -- for it to be socially engaged, responsive and progressive. Mariolga Reyes Cruz and Christopher Sonn (Reyes Cruz & Sonn 2015), have sought to engage in community psychology praxis. They advocate for a decolonizing standpoint, which seeks to disrupt:

essentialist understandings of cultural matters that have served historically to marginalize others. This standpoint brings into clearer view ways in which power/privilege/oppression are reproduced and contested through racialized and ethnicized practices and discourses; that is, how social inequality is maintained and challenged through culture (Reyes Cruz & Sonn, 2015, p. 128).

This standpoint is an epistemological and political approach resonant with the liberation paradigm (Montero, 2009), within which liberation psychology sits, as well as other developments described as Southern Theorising (Connell, 2007, Santos, 2009). In Latin America, Martín-Baró (1994) advocated that psychology should develop a new praxis, that recognises peoples’ virtues, that is based in the lived realities of the oppressed to engage in the recovery of historical memory and to de-ideologise taken for granted social realities in the process of reconstructing identities and communities. Watkins and Shulman (2008) puts the work of liberation in this way: “…claiming resources; testimonies, storytelling, and remembering to claim and speak about extremely painful events and histories; and research that celebrates survival and resilience and that revitalizes language, arts, and cultural practices”. (p. 276).

***Narratives, stories and participation***

People evolve in relationship with local environment of discourse, culture, and custom, culture is understood as “it the fabric of signs and symbols, language and image, customs and ceremonies, habitations, institutions, and much more that characterize and enable a specific human community to form and sustain itself” (Goldbard, 2013, p. 11). Narrative is central to cultural approaches to psychology. Narrative is “a natural vehicle for folk psychology. It deals with the stuff of human action and human intentionality. It mediates between the canonical world of culture and the more idiosyncratic world of beliefs, desires, and hopes” (Bruner, 1998, p. 52). Narratives are conveyed through stories that are central to identity and community making processes. Stories are individual, social and ideological, and because they are produced in social contexts, they often reflect narratives that are socially and culturally available (Sonn, Stevens & Duncan, 2013). Individuals and communities do not always have equal access to resources, such as mass media, for story and narrative production and circulation, and as a result, in some contexts those in less powerful positions may be excluded or marginalised or their stories silenced, concealed or devalued, while dominant group stories may work to reinforce racism and existing power arrangements (Bell, 2010; Rappaport, 1995). As noted by Watkins and Shulman (2008):

…subjectivity is layered with expected scripts and official histories, as well as resistant interpretations; threads of dream and fantasy; sediments of forgotten music, ritual, and story; and bits and pieces of iconic memory outside of conventional narratives. Within buried layers of symbolic meaning, there are resources for lives lived otherwise, a compost where energy is building, where seeds of hope and transformation may take root. (p.233)

Storytelling is a methodology, which is often located within participatory action, indigenous and critical approaches in the social science (Kovach, 2009). In these approaches, the researcher-researched binary is disrupted as relationships are based on democratic principles with participants typically repositioned as co-researchers. In essence there is a dialogical orientation based in an epistemology of relatedness: “…everything happens within social relationships, …” and a “dialogue implies another person, an Other, who needs to be accepted not as a subject, but as a social actor, who must be respected, who constructs knowledge, who has a history” (Montero & Sonn, 2009, p.2). Smith and Sparkes (2006) note that the invitation to tell stories “… creates an imperative in which the task is to not only tell one’s story, but also to assume responsibility to listen carefully and attempt to grasp what is being expressed and said by others who have contrasting tales. Through this dialogic relation, it is also hoped a fusion, rather than exclusion, of horizons is accomplished.” (p. 186). In critical approaches, there is a concern with elevating silenced, excluded narratives and challenging damaging narratives (see hooks, 1990) – that is, the goal is counter storytelling for social change.

***Participation and arts practice***

Participation is central to the empowerment oriented research and action. In their review of liberation psychologies, Watkins and Shulman (2008) pointed out that arts process is typically central to participation. Community Arts is a form of cultural practice in which art is produced and used by local people within their communities as an instrument for social change (Madyaningrum & Sonn, 2011). In Australia, Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) is defined by the Australia Council for the Arts as:

… a community-based arts practice and can engage any art form. There are many variations of how community arts and cultural development works are made, developed and shared, and as such, there is no one model. What is at the core of this practice, however, is the collaboration between professional artists and communities to create art (para 1, line 1-3.)

In community psychology, community arts are about claiming ones right to tell existing stories about self and community and to create new ones. Thomas and Rappaport (1996) suggested that community narratives are about “… reclaiming a history and filling in a past that helps to make a whole person. Restorations of community histories are important for forming and informing the human subject and developing community solidarity. Not only exercises in nostalgia or feeling good” (p. 330). Liberation arts methodologies are varied and can include music and dance; radio; altars and memorials; storytelling circles; theatre practices; photovoice and other visual arts; performances, happenings, conceptual arts. Goldbard (2006) notes that ranges of tools are used “from aspects of traditional visual- and performing-arts practice to oral-history approaches…to use of high-tech communications media, to elements of activism and community organizing…” (p. 21).

*Community arts and Arts-Inquiry*. Community arts and cultural development are not typically viewed as entailing research, but there is growing interest in the social and health sciences to utilize arts in research and as research. Finley (2005) has stated: “Arts-based inquiry has emerged in postcolonial postmodern contexts, woven from complex threads of social, political, and philosophical shifts in perspectives and practices across multiple discourse communities” (p. 682). Savin-Baden and Major (2013) list three types of arts based research: Arts-based inquiry, arts-informED inquiry and arts-informING inquiry. They distinguish between these types of inquiry in the following way:

1. Arts-based inquiry: where the artistic process is used as research by artists, researchers and participants in order to understand the art itself or understand a phenomenon through the artistic process.

2. Arts-informED inquiry: that is of two types: a. where art is used to represent the findings of a study; b. where art is used to represent a response to the findings of an issue or situation studied.

3. Arts-informING inquiry: where art is used in order to evoke a response from an audience (in the broadest sense) made to a situation or issue; the response may or may not be captured (Sonn, Smith, & Meyer, 2015, p. 295-296).

This typology of arts research together with CACD captures the growing currency of arts in social science inquiry and action, which is relevant to critical applied social psychology that seeks to empower society in interconnected world. Arts-based research rests on the assumption that there are multiple ways in which the world can be known and that knowledge is produced and not simply experienced, and therefore it invites broadening the ways of understanding, knowing and living in the world (Gergen & Gergen, 2011). Community arts and arts-inquiry offers a mode of collective inquiry and allows for creative ways of communicating, disseminating, and translating knowledge (Gergen & Gergen, 2011, 2014), which ultimately democratizes research and knowledge production. Sajnani (2012) has stated: “Arts-based research approaches share a similar goal with other forms of enquiry wishing to illuminate the human condition, they aim for context specific rather than essential and generalizable truths” (p.84). McKenna (2015) argued that artful praxis can be understood on its own terms where knowledge is community focused and co-created with a focus on producing psychosocial wellness, fostering respectful engagement, and promoting liberation through aesthetics and art as practice and experience. In the next section, we describe our work with the Community Arts Network (CAN) to illustrate the different ways in which arts and cultural practice have been woven into research and action.

**Making Art, Promoting Recognition, and Reigniting Community**

Our focus is on describing the arts practices used, the insights developed about the ways in which arts, and cultural practice, can produce liberation and empowerment for individuals and groups. The story focusses on the collaboration with the CAN located in Western Australia. CAN is a leading community arts and cultural development organisation that seeks to transform communities through partnerships to produce creative projects using arts; delivering training opportunities and mentoring artists, cultural workers and government professionals; and it manages state government funds aimed at providing opportunities for communities to develop locally owned arts community projects. While each of the projects that we outline here can be examined within its own parameters, they can all be understood as part of an overall program of work that have developed in an iterative and generative fashion, in response to community desires, new developments within groups, and the availability and access to financial resources to undertake work. However, it is important to highlight that CAN made a very deliberate decision following extensive feasibility work to invest in and respond to the needs of the Indigenous community in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia. What follows are necessarily truncated summaries of projects developed and delivered over time (see Table 1), but with a focus on the arts modalities and outcomes, which arguably contributed significantly to the elevation of Indigenous stories, culture, and history in pursuit of recognition, cultural strengthening, and participation.

Table 1: CACD Projects and Arts Practices

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project** | **Arts** | **Qualities** |
| Cultural mapping | * Photography * Silk and Screen printing |  |
| Voice of the Wheatbelt | * Photography * Photo elicitation * Caption writing * Exhibition | * Whole of community * Opportunity to re-present place and belonging * Important part of groundwork (developing relationships, networks) |
| Narrogin Stories | * Storytelling * Playing Cards * Soundscape * Place decoration | * Response to issue of feuding within the community * Sensitive and delicate process * Represented many voices in relation to difficult subject (issues of feuding) * Highlighted the hopes, aspirations of the community * Community celebration |
| Rekindling Stories on Country, The Bush Babies Project (Narrogin) | * Storytelling workshops and production of digital stories * Informal storytelling (on country) * Portraits/Paintings * Exhibitions (Local, State, State-wide) | * Opportunities for intergenerational dialogue and connection * Stories and portraits for the archive * Community celebrations, opportunities to come together |

**Cultural mapping and laying foundations**

CAN established its first arts and cultural development program in the town Kellerberrin in 2006 after a couple of years building relationships in the town. The relationships were built though visits, dialogues, local meetings, and a series of art workshops and conversations with the wider community to ascertain the relevance and the need to establish an art and cultural development presence in the town. Through consultation, it became clear that the town was an important landmark for Indigenous people, in particular Noongar people, and, at that time 2004/05, the town had one of the strongest language speakers in the Noongar nation. However, very limited resources from the State government were allocated to Noongar arts and cultural activity. It was also established that since 2002, the local Aboriginal corporation had been hosting a cultural Indigenous festival with limited support from the local government. The local people and the Elders wanted to promote cultural activities as the town lacked any activities culturally relevant to the local Noongar people. Yet, despite being well patronised by the Noongar people from Kellerberrin and surrounding towns, this festival had no attendance by the non-Aboriginal people which pointed to highly complex race relations in the town.

This background propelled CAN to respond with an explicit empowerment agenda and the desire to support making visible Noongar stories and viewpoints through art making. This process was started by engaging a Noongar artist to run a visual arts workshop. The aims of the workshops were: to get people together, ascertain the desire to participate in arts and cultural development, and to consult with the Noongar community. This workshop was very successful and well received and, because of this reception, CAN embarked on a series of art workshops aimed at understanding the processes of empowerment that were occurring because of the arts and cultural activities. A series of photography workshops were delivered with young women after they showed interest in a photography short course run by CAN. In the short course, the women learnt light, colour and patterns in photography. Older woman expressed interest in silk and fabric screen-printing. The workshops were important activity settings and subsequent interviews revealed that, people discussed their engagement in those workshops as empowering because they *acquired new skills*, *had fun*, and *felt heard* when they told their stories, and they l*earn about social issue*s and how they could be addressed (Green & Sonn, 2009). Enjoyment and pleasure that results from participating in the arts is often not emphasised because the focus is on addressing social ills (Putland, 2008). These projects delivered a lot more nuanced outcomes than can be summarised here. Suffice to say that it surfaced a series of persistent issues experienced by Noongar people in the community in terms of race relations, whiteness, as well as the challenges that Aboriginal people faced on the fringes of country towns where racism and entrenched patterns of racialised interactions continue to shape everyday social relations. The level of participation in the arts and cultural activities demonstrated that the community supported this work. Therefore, armed with the outcomes and the community mandate to do more, CAN secured significant resources to scale up these workshops, and include three other neighbouring towns.

**Voices of the wheatbelt: Making place**

The voices of the Wheatbelt project built on the foundations laid with the earlier work. However, this project was designed to privilege Noongar voices and experiences of their local communities and it focussed around the themes of sense of place and belonging. CAN was able to successfully compete for Federal Government funding to upscale the photography workshops across a number of towns. They developed a similar program of activities based on learning photography and exploring themes of place and belonging. Photography was chosen as a very appropriate medium to engage with young people. This medium had been tried and tested in the previous projects, and the young people responded well to it. The program was delivered in schools to over 100 children during 16 weeks from five school in four Wheatbelt towns. Importantly, two non-Aboriginal and two Aboriginal artists facilitated photography and songwriting workshops. Songwriting was also chosen as we had been told singing, especially in the form of Karaoke was an activity that Noongar people were familiar with and like. However, song writing and karaoke are more than just popular activities, song writing entails active reflection and naming the world and our experiences in it and ways in which we are becoming. It is a means to enhance young people’s capacity to be reflective and critically read their social and cultural environment.

Working across neighbouring towns was significant at the time because strengthening the opportunities for Noongar people to come together across the Wheatbelt meant fostering the opportunities for collaboration across family groups. The movement across the communities is limited because of big distances between places, many people do not have cars, and there is limited public transport in these towns. This community linking was also happening against a backdrop of the beginnings of the biggest Native Title negotiations in the country. CAN activities activated the networks across the communities in the region.

In a review of the Voices of the Wheatbelt, Sonn, Quayle and Kasat (2015) concluded that the arts project entailed creation of settings for people, who may not typically interact with one another, to come together. Through the various workshops and the subsequent techniques used to explore with participants the meanings of images, we showed the complexity of life in these towns and the various ways people give meaning to it – through memories and narratives of the past, everyday social relations, and the natural physical environment. For Noongar people, this also meant making visible a history of dispossession and exclusion, and elevating concealed places of cultural significance. Creating contact zones of this kind, facilitated people coming together to get to know each other, to share what makes them unique and to discover what they have in common. The photos people took and the processes of picturing, photo elicitation (Purcell, 2009) and caption writing, were all meaning making activities that help to capture different elements of Wheatbelt life, and invited producers and the audience to explore the community and the landscape through the eyes of those who live, play and work there (CAN WA, 2009).

**Narrogin Stories: Responding to social suffering through arts practice**

The Voices of the Wheatbelt project revealed much of the complexity of living in country towns, their histories, relationships with city centres, and the struggle of Indigenous communities on the margins of those places. A subsequent related project, which Kasat (2013, 2014) has documented elsewhere, deals more explicitly with the aftermath of young people committing suicide in one of the towns. This phenomenon continues to be a vexing issue in Australia and disproportionately impact upon Indigenous communities. Kasat (2013) describes the broader context, the aftermath, and the range of ways in which mainstream community responded to the tragedy. We have subsequently developed a deeper understanding documenting processes of community arts praxis, such as building understanding of the local community context, developing trust, and creating safe spaces for people to tell their own stories and be heard, and using arts as a vehicle to express private pain and hope. The stories of pain, violence, and loss were heard as well as the desire for hope. Thus, a key aspiration of the project was to transform stories of pain and suffering into stories of hope (Sonn, Kasat, & Quayle, 2017).

In this project, various arts components were developed in consultation with and based in the life stories of people. These arts components all focused on creating and materialising a new narrative of hope as constituted by the stories of the community. The arts components included; playing cards that captured quotations of hope, a *soundscape* composed of people’s narratives, and the transformation of a community place decorated with various symbols, which signified turning the lights back on in the town. In line with liberation arts, the processes in this project included the collection and re-articulation of individual and group stories through creative output, and the production and staging of a soundscape to facilitate the process of creating an alternative community narrative to foster hope (Sonn, et al., 2017)

**Portraits, Memory and Legacy**

The Bush Babies project was produced as part of the Rekindling Stories on Country strategy, which, in some way, is the culmination of the work started several years ago in 2000. The Rekindling Stories on Country aimed at creating opportunities for intergenerational dialogue and cultural transmission, as well as to celebrate Noongar history, culture, and language. The Bush Babies project uses story-telling to record and convey the stories of Noongar Elders from across WA. The Elders are people who were born in the bush on the margins of mainstream white society. The project started with a Noongar Elder who wanted to honour the Noongar Bush Babies and midwives who delivered them. Since the original project there has been several iterations delivered in different towns across the Wheatbelt. The actual process for story making involves different arts practices, but Noongar conception of story and country is the foundation (http://www.canwa.com.au/project/bush-babies/).

*Using storytelling to record and create a community archive*. CAN created opportunities for intergenerational storytelling. Chronicle, a digital storytelling company, facilitated a two-day storytelling workshop at the local High school involving local Elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media studies students. Elders shared stories of their lives growing up—often these were stories of removal to a mission as a child, or growing up on an Aboriginal reserve. Then, students received support to create short digital stories using photographs and the recorded Bush Baby stories. CAN recorded additional Bush Baby stories informally often on country. CAN also facilitated workshops with students (Primary school and high school) and family members to explore the Storylines database, which is “an online archive for the State Library's digitised heritage collections relating to Aboriginal history in Western Australia” (<http://slwa.wa.gov.au/for/indigenous_australians/storylines)>.

One other part of the Bush Babies project was the *Honouring the Elders portrait project and exhibitions,* which were based on portraits produced as part of the collaboration. The portraits project started with a non-Indigenous artist who was interested in turning a photograph of one of the Elders into a portrait. Local people, including TAFE students, were involved in producing the portraits of several Elders. One of the local artists involved in the project noted:

We have a huge age range so we people in their 80s painting people in their 80s…it was a lovely thing to see I really liked that and particularly for people who were parenting in the 50s ah or born in the 1950s in this region or lived here or grew up in that time in this region um the attitudes that, it was hugely racist so for people who came, who have come through that time, who have come to now painting portraits of Aboriginal elders I think that's a major, major achievement. (K. Keeley, personal communication, July 11, 2014, as cited in Quayle, 2017, p. 104)

The Elders portraits, photographs, hand woven baskers, along with the digital stories produced by students, were exhibited locally in Narrogin and in Perth at the Western Australian Museum. The Honouring our Elders exhibition was also shown across the State as part of Art on the Move. The final version of the Rekindling project was presented in Perth earlier this year.

The stories collected and archived so far are resources for Aboriginal communities. The process of storytelling about oppressive realities and the various ways in which people resisted, subvert, and survive oppression is a central part of the push for epistemic justice. Storytelling is an Indigenous methodology; it is not a simple strategy of telling about the past, it is a way of knowing and doing. Storytelling itself produced information that can be examined for how various psychosocial strategies people and groups mobilize to resist oppression as well as how structural violence becomes embodied. In fact, this aspect was the subject of a doctoral study that examined the stories of the Elders (Quayle, 2017). The study showed the complex ways in which oppression was institutionalised and how it regulated the lifeworld of Aboriginal people, in the past and in the present. The analysis also revealed the complex ways in which people resisted, contested, and protected communities from oppression and the central role of Indigenous cultural knowledge in that process (Quayle, 2017; Sonn et al., 2017).

**Summary and conclusion**

Our group have over the years of our partnership with CAN, developed deeper understanding of the role of arts and cultural practice as central to the tasks of liberation oriented community psychology (Montero, et al. 2017). These goals include responding to the task of contributing to epistemic justice and recognition, and valuing and strengthening Indigenous knowledge. CACD and arts practice is central to this task. CAN has, over time, developed in collaboration with local communities, a processes and practices to capture cultural knowledge that is being lost. Importantly, Noongar Elders perform a central role in this process. The projects over time have used various tools ranging from photography, digital story-telling to portraiture, through to a process of psychosocial accompaniment to create what can be viewed as an archive of materials that responds to the demands for recognition and community concerns about losing culture with its attendant implications for subsequent generations. CACD aligns with participatory research, drawing from a relational ethics and epistemology valuing the lived experiential knowledge of those who are at the sharp end of injustice. Fine (2010) noted that those “marginalized or silenced carry substantial knowledge about the architecture of injustice, in their minds, bodies and souls; in ways that are conscious and floating; individual and collective” (p. 223)

As we start to reflect on this body of work, it is clear that we need to respond to the calls of Indigenous communities. Through CACD and related processes, CAN has taken on this challenge. Each project is carefully crafted in collaboration with the local community. Arts and cultural tools are mobilised in psychosocial processes designed to build capacity, recovery of historical memory, and strengthen bonds across generations. This work does not always lend itself to traditional social science methodologies, but it has challenged us to examine issues related to epistemic violence and ignorance, to place knowledge production within broader landscape of knowledge/power dynamics, and to also imagine new ways that we can engage with dynamics of exclusion and injustice. Through our research so far, we have noted that critical participatory work requires that we expand our ways of thinking about research and action. The actual process of CACD requires:

* knowledge and understanding of community histories and the dynamics of power and privilege,
* practices for building relationships and trust including deep listening, centering Aboriginal knowledge and perspectives, and constant questioning of one’s own identities and assumptions,
* creating settings that are safe for storytelling and witnessing, and often this involves being flexible and patient,
* building skills and sharing resources for individual and community self- expression.
* and, adequate investment of financial resources to ensure the production of high quality arts and cultural products (Sonn, Kasat, & Quayle, 2017, p.##).

We join with Fine (2010) in her calls for provocative generalisability, which

…. asserts that researchers and readers, performers and audience, victims, people of privilege and witnesses: we are all positioned in unjust settings. And such an existential truth obligates us to be present, feeling and thinking critically about how unjust distributions of resources and opportunities affect our comfort and discomfort, our dependencies, privileges, joys, our moments of shared pain and potential collective action. (p.220)

Within each of the projects were have been able to show the different ways in which participation has influenced participants and groups, as well as the key contributions of producing counter-narratives for the cultural archive that are key to the decolonizing agenda and calls for indigenous self-determination.

**Acknowledgements**

An earlier version of this article was presented at the International Conference on Intervention and Applied Psychology 2017, University of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia.

**References**

Adams, G., Dobles, I., Gómez, L. H., Kurtiș, T. & Molina, L. E. (2015). Decolonizing psychological science: Introduction to the special thematic section. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 3*(1), 213–238. doi:10.5964/jspp.v3i1.564

Adams, G., & Estrada-Villalta, S. (2017). The modernity/coloniality of being: Hegemonic psychology as intercultural relations. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 59,* 31-42. DOI: 10.1016/j.ijintrel.2017.06.006

Bell, L. A. (2010). *Storytelling for social justice: Connecting narrative and arts in antiracist teaching*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Connell, R. (2007). *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Dutta, U. (2016), Prioritizing the Local in an Era of Globalization: A Proposal for Decentering Community Psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 58,* 329–338. doi:10.1002/ajcp.12047

Dutta, U., Sonn, C. C., Lykes, M. B. (2016). Situating and contesting structural violence in community-based research and action. *Community Psychology in Global Perspective, 2* (2), 1-20.

Fine, M. (2010). An epilogue of sorts. In J. Cammarota, J. & M. Fine (Eds). *Revolutionizing education: Youth participatory action research in motion* (pp. 213-234). New York: Routledge.

Fine, M., & Ruglis, J. (2009). Circuits and consequences of dispossession: The racialized realignment of the public sphere for US youth. *Transforming Anthropology, 17*(1), 20-33. doi:10.1111/j.1548-7466.2009.01037.x.

Fine, M. (2012). Troubling calls for evidence: A critical race, class and gender analysis of whose evidence counts. *Feminism & Psychology, 22*(1), 3-19. doi:10.1177/0959353511435475

Finley, S. (2005). Arts-based inquiry: Performing revolutionary pedagogy. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 681-695). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* Ringwood, Australia: Penguin.

Goldbard, A. (2006). *New creative community: The art of cultural development*. Oakland, CA: New Village Press.

Gergen, K. J., & Gergen, M. M. (2010). Scanning the Landscape of Narrative Inquiry. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 4*(9), 728-735.

Gergen, M. M., & Gergen, K. J. (2011). Performative Social Science and Psychology. *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung, 36*(4 (138)), 291-299. doi: 10.2307/23032295

Green, M. J., & Sonn, C. C. (2008). *Drawing out community empowerment through arts and cultural practice*. Retrieved from Perth, WA:

hooks, B. (1990). *Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics*: South End Press Boston.

Kasat, P. (2013). *Community arts and cultural development: A powerful tool for social transformation*. Unpublished Master of Sustainability and Social Change Dissertation. Murdoch University, Perth, Australia.

Kasat, P. (2014, May). Tools for social transformation: Making the personal creative and political. *Griffith Review, 44*, 7-17. Retrieved from <https://griffithreview.com/wp-content/uploads/Notes_from_the_Front.pdf>

Madyaningrum, M. E., & Sonn, C. (2011). Exploring the meaning of participation in a community art project: A case study on the Seeming project. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 21*(4), 358-370.

Martín-Baró, I. (1994). Towards a liberation psychology In A. Aron & S. Corne (Eds.), *Writings for a liberation psychology: Ignacio Martín-Baró* (pp. 17-32). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

McKenna, T. (2015). The Business of Validity, Reliability and Authentic Need. *Arts-based Approaches to Researching Practice. In M.* Vicars, M., Steinberg, S. R., McKenna, T., & Cacciattolo, M. (Eds). *The praxis of English language teaching and learning (PELT) : beyond the binaries: researching critically in EFL classrooms* (39-54). Rotterdam: SensePublishers.

Montero, M. (2006). *Hacer para transformar. El método en la psicología comunitaria.* [Action for transformation: Method in community psychology]. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Paidós.

Montero, M. (2009). Methods for liberation: Critical consciousness in Action. In M. Montero & C. Sonn (Eds.) *Psychology of Liberation. Theory and Applications* (pp. 73-92). New York: Springer.

Montero, M. & Sonn, C. (2016). About liberation and psychology: An introduction. In M. Montero & C. C. Sonn (Eds.), *Psychology of Liberation: Theory and applications* (pp. 1- 10). New York, NY: Springer.

Montero, M., Sonn, C. C., & Burton, M. (2017). Community psychology and liberation psychology: A creative synergy for an ethical and transformative praxis. In M. A. Bond, I. Serrano-García, & C. B. Keys (Eds.), *APA Handbook of Community Psychology: Vol. 1. Theoretical foundations, core concepts, and emerging challenges*, (pp. 149-167). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Purcell, R. (2009). Images for change: Community development, community arts and photography. *Community Development Journal, 44*(1), 111-122.

Putland, C. (2008). Lost in translation: The question of evidence linking community-based arts and health promotion. *Journal of Health Psychology, 13*, 265-276.

Quayle, A. (2017). *Narrating oppression, psychosocial suffering and survival through the Bush Babies Project*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Victoria University, Melbounre, Australia.

Rappaport, J. (2000). Community narratives: Tales of terror and joy. *American journal of community psychology, 28*(1), 1-24.

Reyes Cruz, M., & Sonn, C. C. (2011). (De)colonizing culture in community psychology: Reflections from critical social science. *American journal of community psychology, 47*(1/12), 203-214.

Reyes Cruz, M., & Sonn, C. C. (2015). (De)colonizing culture in community psychology: Reflections from critical social science. In R. D. Goodman & P. C. Gorski (Eds.), *Decolonizing “multicultural” counseling through social justice* (pp. 127-145). New York, NY: Springer. doi 10.1007/978-1-4939-1283-4\_10

Sanjani, N. (2012). Improvisation and art-based research. *Journal of Arts and Health, 3*, 79-86.

Savin-Baden, M. & Howell Major, C. (2013). Q*ualitative research. The essential guide to theory and practice*. New York: Routledge.

Smith, L.T. (1999). Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples. London: Zed Books.

Smith, B., & Sparkes, A. C. (2006). Narrative inquiry in psychology: Exploring the tensions within. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(3), 169-192.

Sonn, C.C., & Baker, A.M. (2015). Creating inclusive knowledges: Exploring the transformative potential of arts and cultural practice*. International Journal of Inclusive Education.* doi: 10.1080/13603116.2015.1047663.

Sonn, C. C., & Quayle, A. F. (2013). Developing Praxis: Mobilising Critical Race Theory in Community Cultural Development. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, n/a-n/a. doi:10.1002/casp.2145

Sonn, C. C., & Quayle, A. F. (2014). Community cultural development for social change: Developing critical praxis. *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology, 6*(1), 16.

Sonn, C. C., Kasat, P., & Quayle, A. (2017). Creative responses to social suffering: Using community arts and cultural development to foster hope. In M. Seedat, S. Suffla, & D. Christie (Eds), *Emancipatory and participatory methodologies, peace, critical and community psychology* (Chapter 8). New York: Springer.

Sonn, C., Smith, K. & Meyer, K. (2015). Challenging structural violence through community drama: Exploring theatre as transformative praxis. In D. Bretherton, & S. F. Law, S. F. (Eds.). *Peace Research for Peaceful Means: Methodologies in Peace Psychology* (pp. 293-308) New York: Springers Publishing.

Sonn, C.C., Stevens, G., & Duncan, N. (2013). Decolonisation, critical methodologies and why stories matter. In G. Stevens, N. Duncan & D. Hook (Eds.), *Race, memory and the Apartheid Archive: Towards a transformative psychosocial praxis* (pp. 295-314). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Stein, C. H., & Faigin. D. A. (2015). Community-based arts initiatives: Exploring science of the arts. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 55 (1-2), 70–73. doi:10.1007/s10464-014-9698-3.

Teo, T. (2015a). Critical Psychology: A Geography of Intellectual Engagement and Resistance. *American Psychologist*. doi:10.1037/a0038727

Teo, T. (2015b). Essay on an aesthetics of resistance. In J. Cresswell, A. Haye, A. Larrain, M. Morgan & G. Sullivan (Eds.), Dialogue and debate in the making of theoretical psychology (pp. 303-310). Concord, ON: Captus.

Thomas, R. E., & Rappaport, J. (1996). Art as community narrative: A resource for social change. In M. B. Lykes, A. Banuazizi, R. Liem, & M. Morris (Eds.), *Myths about the powerless: Contesting social inequalities* (pp. 317-336). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Watkins, M., & Shulman, H. (2008). *Toward psychologies of liberation*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan.

Weis, L., & Fine, M. (2012). Critical bifocality and circuits of privilege: Expanding critical ethnographic theory and design. *Harvard Educational Review, 82*(2), 173-201.