**DIY Methods** – Plain Text Zines

A Mostly Screen-Free, Zine-Full, Remote-

Participation Conference on Experimental Methods

for Research and Research Exchange

Organized and executed by:

Anne Pasek

Sarah Rayner

Maya Livio

Devin Short

With additional support from:

Kees Schuller

Swati Mehta

Coordinated through:

Experimental Methods and Media Lab

The Low-Carbon Research Methods

Group

(http://lowcarbonmethods.com/)

Table of Contents

[A Field Guide for Embodied Listening Practices 1](#_Toc115459866)

[A Field Guide to Public Policy Collage 6](#_Toc115459867)

[anamana- rethinking research & methodology coloring workbook 16](#_Toc115459868)

[Bodies in Play Zine 23](#_Toc115459869)

[Citation: A FanZine 35](#_Toc115459870)

[Composting Research-Creation 45](#_Toc115459871)

[Critical Cartographies and Speculative Diagrams: An Illustrated Essay on Drawing as a Research Method 47](#_Toc115459872)

[Dangerously Inspired Yodels (DIY): A Meta Hybrid Academic Perzine About DIY Feminism 54](#_Toc115459873)

[Data Collection as a Game - A Brief Creative Research Guide 67](#_Toc115459874)

[Dressing for the Air-Conditioned Workplace 87](#_Toc115459875)

[Fringe Natures - Collaborative Reflections on Method 91](#_Toc115459876)

[Invasive Species into Gifts- An Experiment in Materials, Methods, and Making 100](#_Toc115459877)

[Is This Landscape Lying To You?- Investigating Place Through Zine Making 102](#_Toc115459878)

[Is This Landscape Lying To You? - A Critical Landscape Investigation 107](#_Toc115459879)

[Making Your Own Media: A Paper Peep Box Template 109](#_Toc115459880)

[Networks in the Wild!- A (very short and very incomplete) Field Guide 114](#_Toc115459881)

[On Networked Distribution in a Time of Climate Catastrophe 116](#_Toc115459882)

[Other People's Research - A Guide to Hospitality as Method 127](#_Toc115459883)

[Pandemic Research! Reflecting On An Auto-Ethnography of Mundane Academic Practice… in Pandemic Times 129](#_Toc115459884)

[PARZINE: an Academic Perzine Exploring Participatory Action Research (PAR) 136](#_Toc115459885)

[Play as a Mode of Research - Using Play to Examine Rural Children’s Perspectives on Health and Care 145](#_Toc115459886)

[Precarious Methods - Contingency, Research, and Burnout 154](#_Toc115459887)

[Reading Lake Superior 168](#_Toc115459888)

[Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Secondary Analysis and ‘Second-hand’ Data as a Lower-Carbon Method 173](#_Toc115459889)

[Remix to Resist - Using Methods Creatively in the Age of Projects 186](#_Toc115459890)

[Resisting in and through the Material - or, Critical Making at the End of the World :( 194](#_Toc115459891)

[Salvaging 207](#_Toc115459892)

[See it, Touch it, Rub it, Lick it - How to Study the Curb Stop 217](#_Toc115459893)

[Sick Futurity 221](#_Toc115459894)

[Static Women 242](#_Toc115459895)

[Tangible. Re/Tinkering Life in DIYBio 246](#_Toc115459896)

[The Very Specific Guide to Anywhere 265](#_Toc115459897)

[When Am I Gonna Nut!!!!: Politicising Feminist Rage, DIY Media Making and Visual Practices With Asian Women as Feminist Anti-Racist Methodology 270](#_Toc115459898)

# 

# A Field Guide for Embodied Listening Practices

By: Emily Bilo and Kelsey Hanrahan

[Note from transcriber: this zine was formatted to be read top-to-bottom and bottom-to-top]

How do you listen?

Attune yourself to pace, accent, inflection, intonation, frequency, silence.

Embodied Listening:

Listening beyond hearing

Embodied listening is more than hearing and the

physical presence of

sound waves.

We use our whole bodies to feel and to experience.

It resists and disrupts normative ideas of sound,

voice, and listening.

Listening becomes a relational and embodied practice.

We become aware of ourselves in relation to other

elements in the world around us and

to each other.

Practice:

foster moments

of silence

between speech

Gather together with one or more other people for a

conversation.

Slow the pace of conversation: allow 5-10 seconds between

acts of speech.

Attune yourself to your own and others’ embodied

responses throughout the conversation.

Consider how together we are constructing space to listen

in embodied ways.

Reflecting

on silence in conversation

How did you feel as silence was cultivated in this space?

What did you notice about how others were experiencing

the moments of silence?

How did these practices shape the relationships in the space?

When do you stop listening?

Attune yourself to pace, accent, inflection, intonation, frequency, silence.

Silence

Silence is imposed as a normative expectation to

marginalize and oppress;

speaking up a privilege of those in power and

imposed as a normative expectation of active

participation.

But.

Silences can be purposeful.

Silences are replete with reflection, rest, and

resistance.

When “speaking up” imposes normative structures,

silence actively disrupts and refuses.

We invite you to use this guide in

any way that feels appropriate.

Turning the page in either direction,

you will find

source pages, activities,

and reflections.

We have included works that have

inspired this guide and its activities.

Jump in where you like & choose your own adventure.

Source pages offer more details on embodied listening.

Activities guide readers through different listening

practices.

Reflections include prompts for everyday listening.

Finally, we offer a personal reflection on listening as a site of response and responsibility.

Works we’re inspired by:

“Listening and Speaking Warm-up” in The Nanopolitics Handbook.

Ahmed, Sara. 2017. Living a Feminst Life.

Deighton MacIntrye, Alexis. 2019. What is a Voice? Sounding Out! https://soundstudiesblog.com

Gumbs, Alexis Pauline. 2020. Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine

Mammals.

Gunaratnam, Yasmin. 2021. Presentation fever and podium affects.

Feminist Theory 22(4), 497-517.

Haji Molana, Hanieh. 2021. Geography, accent, and self-worth: A letter to

my fellows. you are here: the journal of creative geography.

Kanngieser, AM. 11 Sept 2021. To tend for, to care with: three pieces on

listening as method. https://theseedbox.se/

Perry, Imani. 2018. Vexy Things: On Gender and Liberation.

Robinson, Dylan. 2020. Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound

Studies.

Sheena Malhotra and Aimee Carrillo Rowe (eds). 2013. Silence, Feminism,

Power: Reflections at the Edges of Sound.

Practice:

becoming aware of ourselves

& the world around us

Choose a place that is familiar, inside or outside.

Settle into the space, taking breaths in and out.

Attune yourself to the sounds your body makes.

Attune yourself to the sounds of your surroundings.

Come back out of the reflection, taking breaths in and

out.

Reflecting

on human and

more-than-human relationships

Reflect on your embodied sensations as you listened to your body and surroundings, moving between them.

Critical listening positionality

is about recognizing we do not listen in universal

ways

and that we are enculturated into particular listening

practices and biases.

We attend to particular sounds, content, and meaning.

We are asking ourselves how we listen so that we can

begin to attune ourselves to spaces and systems and

normative expectations.

We consider how we listen in order

to build and imagine worlds otherwise.

Listening is our RESPONSIBILITY

LISTENING helps to shape encounters with one another.

To situate ourselves in relation to others

Listening creates space to attend to each other.

Listening opens space to curate values.

How do you listen differently in different spaces?

khanrahan@towson.edu

emily.billo@goucher.edu

# A Field Guide to Public Policy Collage

By: Tara Mahoney, PhD

Contents

Introduction

What is public policy collage?

Why use public policy collage?

Steps for using PPC

Key Considerations

Appendix

Process guide

Sample icon gallery

Feelings such as hope, empathy, fear, grief, rage and despair, arise at the intersection of politics and everyday life constantly. Yet these emotions are rarely part of how we experience policy discourse, which is often dominated by bureaucratic and abstract language.

[Image description: a hospital, a police officer, a Tax form, a solar panel, and a large extended family.]

To be sure, facts, figures, arguments and analysis are necessary, but they are not able to grasp the dimensions of human emotions that arise when converging societal crises unfold.

Introduction:

Social crisis and transformation require a public policy discourse that is engaging and participatory. Honest and heartfelt. Accessible and compelling. A discourse that is able to accommodate the beauty, pain and potential of our personal and collective human experience. As Artist Olafur Eliasson affirms, "Facts are one part; just as guilt does not inspire initiative, people will not act on facts alone. We are inspired to act by emotional and physical experience" (Rosing & Eliasson, 2015). Using collage as an arts-based research method, I have observed how the meaning-making power of creating art can break down the barriers created by formal policy language. By choosing images and words, cutting them out, gluing them together - participants become both witness and author of their own political hopes and desires, fears and frustrations. Busy hands and creative activity soften the often intimidating or confrontational discussions that political issues can elicit.

[Image description: a foodtruck patio host booth saying “Check In Here”.]

What brought me here?

I come to this work as a community researcher, media practitioner, organizer and uninvited guest working on the unceded traditional territories of the xmməθkwəýəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səĺílwətał (TsleilWaututh) Nations (Vancouver, British Columbia). Since starting a creative agency focused on civic engagement (Gen Why Media), in 2011 I have been motivated to design creative approaches to political participation.

My interest in public policy collage began through a field study, Creative Publics.· Art-Making Inspired by the Federal Election, that I undertook in the first year of my Doctoral program. I designed this field study as part of the national research project Art for Social Change. An Integrated Research Program in Teaching Evaluation, and Capacity Building, with the aim of investigating how media, art and cultural production might generate political discourse and affective agency.

The study consisted of four interventions that I orchestrated across different public sites in 2015. The purpose of the project was to inquire into how public collaging could serve as a space for low-tech, in-person political engagement where participants could publicly express themselves through affect as well as dialogue.

Through this project, I witnessed revealing, emotional and intimate discussions about how public policies impact everyday life. I have heard heart-felt descriptions among participants who told each other what the collages represented-their young families and aging parents, their dwindling incomes and painful addictions, their projected fears and plans for the future. I have seen how strangers open up to each other, quickly and deeply, in ways that are rarely available in conventional policy discourse.

Sidebar: Reflections from the field:

Making a collage is not about rhetorically justifying a position through reasoned argument. It is about clarifying our own interpretations of reality with others and visually assembling a political point of view.

[Image description: hands working on a collage.]

What is public policy collage?

Public Policy Collage (PPC) is an arts-based research method focused on public policy issues. Participants are given collaging tools (scissors, glue, card stock), icons representing different issues associated with everyday life (food, shelter, health, education, etc.) and asked to make a collage in response to a research question which is determined collaboratively between the research(s) and the participants.

PPC can be used as a synthesizing tool by allowing for juxtaposition and integration of multiple experiences and ideas (ButlerKisber, 2010). The process allows for disparate languages and policy visions to be held together, and surface the gaps or dissonances between them.

Intended to be used in community-engaged research, PPC merges conventional research methods (surveys, interviews, etc.) with collage-making to allow for deeper insight, interpretation, meaning making, creative expression, and alternative ways of knowing.

What is public policy collage?

PPC allows for meaning-making processes that challenge conventional interpretations of public policy. Using metaphor, symbolism, and interpretive communication, participants can move beyond binary thought patterns and language. Intuitively selecting, sorting, connecting, and arranging images link daily life to policy decisions in ways that can spark reflection and critique – revealing the unknown and critically questioning the already known (Yuen, 2016).

For this reason, PPC can be potentially empowering and even therapeutic, in that participants may feel that their perspective is validated, their wisdom is appreciated and their self-expression valued (Gerstenblatt, 2013; Chilton & Scotti, 2014).

The physical act of PPC provides a space and a process for which participants can connect to one another outside the constraints of conventional policy discourse.

PPC, therefore., functions in two ways simultaneously: 1) It provide an open format for personal-political expression, critique and synthesis; 2) It provides a flexible structure for political dialogue. This double-function enables participants to tell their personal stories in such a way that they intersect with broader political issues and spark exchanges with other. As research Felice Yuen (2106) describes:

“Collage elicits a sensory respo09nse that enables the person creating the collage and viewers to respond concretely and emotionally. Such a response sets the foundation for engaging with others and inspiring social change.”

Collage as art-based research method

Sidebar: Reflections From The Field: I witnessed how making a collage can hold space for care and moments of testimony. It is a form of public truth telling that reveals the lived experience and emotional implications behind policy decisions.

Arts-based research (ABR) has developed over the past few decades alongside the calls for researchers to engage in reflexivity and to decolonize the process by which we acquire knowledge (Lather, 1991; Smith, 1999; Capous-Desyllas & Morgaine, 2018). Collage does this by privileging 'everyday knowledge' and by placing emphasis on the researcher and the researched sharing their knowledge as equals (Swantz, 2008).

Collage-making is used as an entry point into pol icy discussions between participants and the researchers, allowing both to express thoughts and fee lings that might not otherwise have been articulated using conventional research methods. Compared to other arts-based approaches, such as drawing or painting, collage can serve as a less demanding and intimidating method because the artwork does not need to be rendered from scratch and most people can cut and glue images together.

Therefore, with fairly rudimentary skills, participants using collage can relay unconscious or semi-conscious experiences that can be challenging or impossible to convey verbally (Butler-Kisber, 2008). However, Scotti and Chilton (2017) remind us that collage is not something that "anyone can do" or a technique in which "anything goes." The challenge for researchers who use collage as data analysis and representation is ensuring that it carries "aesthetic power".

Aesthetic power is an evocative, provocative, and stimulating power that has a potential to connect with others (Barone & Eisner, 2011; Chilton & Leavy, 2014). Part of achieving this means helping participants make work that is evocative and empowering. This is where it is crucially important to work with an artist-facilitator who is able to help participants articulate ideas visually and make a coherent work of art.

Why use public policy collage for research?

Sidebar: Reflections From The Field: The unhurried atmosphere and the slow act of collage-making created a space where conversations could be gradual, allowing for long silences between exchanges as people worked on their art.

PPC invites participants to play a significant role in all aspects of the research, including research question formulation, data analysis and knowledge mobilization ( Van Vlaenderen, 2004; Yuen, 2016). Through symbolism and dialogue, PPC is a simple activity that can facilitate cross-cultural understandings and bridge communication gaps between community members, researchers and policy-makers.

As a method of arts-based action research, public policy collage can help:

Incorporate the views of a wider range of community members (i.e. seniors, youth, women, people with disabilities and so forth) in policy research/development projects.

Link the personal to the political by drawing connections between everyday life and historical, environmental and social contexts.

Create new ways to compare data, animate research processes and communicate findings.

Express a need, document a reality or develop policy recommendations.

Depict emotions, events, perceptions and identities that may not emerge during interviews, surveys or focus groups.

Yield different kinds of data that can create new possibilities for researchers to see, hear and feel.

Bridge communication and power gaps between residents, researchers and policy makers.

Provide a venue for participants to talk about their own experiences, as well as how they feel about the experiences of others.

Facilitate cross-cultural understandings; and strengthen community networks. (Mahoney, etal., 2021 ).

6 Steps for Public Policy Collage:

These steps are not prescriptions about how public policy collage "must" be implemented. On the contrary, they are intended to serve as inspiration to modify or create your own designs that best match your particular research objectives.

Step 1:

Determine whether PPC is a suitable method. Determine the goals of your research and whether this method is suitable for the type of research you wish to conduct. Consider how you will centre the community you are working with as the main benefactor of research outcomes (e.g. communication, advocacy, and knowledge mobilization). A key question to ask is: Will this method help advance the goals of the community I am working with? If so, how?

Step 2:

Identify research collaborators and community partners. Consider whether the researcher(s) have connection and accountability to the community they are working with. Partners could include individual community members, groups or organizations such as academic institutions, non-profit organizations, policymakers (e.g., health authorities, government, etc.), industry, grassroots partners and others. Don't forget to consider the power dynamics (class, race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, age, etc.) at play and whose voices might still be missing.

Step 3:

Formulate the research question with your collaborators and/or participants. Determine the research question(s) you would like to answer with the PPC method and how the analysis will unfold. Collaborators/research participants should be actively involved in the research process, including question formulation, data gathering, analysis and dissemination. Discuss whether you have interests beyond data analysis (organizing, advocacy, etc.) and how/if these elements can work together

[Image description: a collage about “environment” and “climate change” with pictures of laughing politicians.]

Step 4:

Facilitate the collage making process. See Appendix.

Step 5:

Analyze the data. Consider how you will involve the community in data analysis. Consider how the analysis will address your research question and/or complement other research methods. For more information on how to conduct collage analysis see the References section.

Step 6:

Develop a plan for communicating findings. This step should be planned prior to starting the project to avoid conflicts too late in the process. Consider the story you want to tell, your audience and how the public will encounter your research. What findings will you share? Whose story will you highlight? Who will you show the findings to and how will you show them? Who are you trying to influence? What will get their attention? If you are trying to influence decision-making, consider developing a theory of change to determine how you will engage community members, elected officials, decision makers, the media, etc.

Key considerations:

Transparency

Clearly state the rationale for the use of collage and conduct a transparent process for planning the data analysis, conceptualization or dissemination phases.

Prototype

Consider testing the method before facilitating a group process to develop familiarity with the techniques to be able to effectively introduce it to research participants or use it to disseminate findings.

Knowledge mobilization

Considering knowledge dissemination and impact means thinking through how research outcomes lead to advocacy, impact, policy changes, active

Community benefit

What are the potential benefits of the research to the community you are working with and do they align with the community's needs?

Ethics

Consider issues of consent, risk of harm, cultural safety, copyright, accreditation, confidentiality, and data ownership.

[Image description: four collages on a table.]

Key Considerations:

Aesthetic power

Work with a professional artist-facilitator so that the collages have "aesthetic power": an evocative, provocative, and stimulating power that has a potential to connect with the audience. Key factors to consider are: What images are offered'? Do participants have a wide choice of content'? Are images of people of different cultures, genders, and age groups represented'? Do the images include people, things, animals, natural scenes, cityscapes, abstract forms, and so forth'? Are the images visually diverse, depicting a wide range of colors, textures, and design elements'? If there is a specific topic, are there images available that might represent it'? (Barone & Eisner, 2011; Chilton & Leavy, 2014; Scotti & Chilton, 2017).

Accessibility and hospitality

Work with an artist-facilitator who can help participants feel comfortable with the process and help participants articulate ideas visually. Consider barriers to participation and how to alleviate them. Is there compensation for the research participants'? Support for necessary travel or food for participants'? Is the space suitable for making artwork, and is there adequate lighting, comfortable seating, and a place to discard unwanted scraps'? Can images or material be laid out on a table, or are they presented in a stack that must be flipped through'? Time and privacy are two other considerations that can enable or inhibit participants' creativity.

Process Guide:

Time: 15-90 minutes

Group size: 2-5 people (could be multiple groups)

Complexity: Easy

Steps:

Create a welcoming environment with food, music, and comfortable seating.

Explain the goals of the project. Give parameters about how much time people have, how many collage they can make, material they can use, etc.

Provide participants with collaging tools (a 4X6 piece of durable cardstock, scissors, glue, markers) and visual materials that include icons representing public policy themes (eg: democratic reform, education, health care, human rights, national security) and news headlines cut out from newspapers and magazines. Consider pre-selecting and organizing images ahead of time if time is an issue.

Once participants are ready to make a collage, give them a prompt question to respond to with their collage. Formulate 1-2 prompt questions ahead of time.

Encourage participants to re-write headlines, re-mix icons and draw their own images as they reflect their views or concerns.

Following the collage-making process, ask participants to verbally reflect on their collages through open-ended, broad questions such as "What would you like to say about your collage'?" or engage in a more in-depth semi-structured interview, asking the participants to verbally reflect on and articulate their insights that arose from the collage images.

Bibliography:

Barone, T., & Eisner, E.W. (2011 ). Arts based research. Sage.

Butler-Kisber, L. (2008). Collage as inquiry. Handbook of the arts in qualitative research, 265-276.

Butler-Kisber, L. (2010). Qualitative inquiry: Thematic, narrative and arts informed perspectives. Sage Publications.

Capous-Desyllas, M., & Morgaine, K. (2018). Creating social change through creativity. Springer.

Chilton, G, & Leavy, P (2014). Arts-based research practice: Merging social research and the creative arts. The Oxford handbook of qualitative research, 403-422.

Chilton, G, & Scotti, V. (2014) Snipping, gluing, writing The properties of collage as an arts-based research practice in art therapy. Art Therapy, 31 (4), 163-171.

Coghlan, D, & Brydon-Miller, M. (Eds) (2014). The SAGE encyclopedia of action research. Sage.

Gerstenblatt, P. (2013) Collage portraits as a method of ana lysis in qualitative research. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 12(1 ), 294-309.

Lather, P. (1991 ). Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy within/in the postmodern. Routledge.

Mahoney, T., Grain, K, Fraser, P., & Wong,J (2021). Community Resource Handbook 2021: A Guide to Community Engaged Research.

Rosing, M., & Eliasson, 0. (2015). Ice, Art, and Being Human. Studio Olafur Eliasson.

Scotti, V., & Chilton, G. (2017). Collage as arts-based research. Handbook of arts-based research, 2017, 355-76.

Smith, L. T. (1999). Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Swantz, M. L. (2008). Participatory action research as practice. The Sage handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and practice, 38.

Van Vlaenderen, H. (2004). Community development research: Merging communities of practice. Community Development Journal, 39(2), 135-143.

Vaughan, K. (2005). Pieced together: Collage as an artist's method for interdisciplinary research. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 4{1 ), 27-52.

Yuen, F. (2016). Collage: An arts-based method for analysis, representation, and social justice. Journal of Leisure Research, 48(4), 338-346.

Democracy

[Image description: 12 small symbols or pictures related to democracy.]

Environment

[Image description: 15 small symbols or pictures related to environment.]

Energy

[Image description: 14 small symbols or pictures related to energy.]

Social issues

[Image description: 16 small symbols or pictures related to social issues.]

Human Rights

[Image description: 15 small symbols or pictures related to human rights.]

Economy

[Image description: 12 small symbols or pictures related to economy.]

Health

[Image description: 20 small symbols or pictures related to health.]

Infrastructure

[Image description: 12 small symbols or pictures related to infrastructure.]

# anamana- rethinking research & methodology coloring workbook

This zine is a research and methodology workbook that interrogates what and how elements of researcher/scholars’ personal lives are entwined with their academic production. Drawing from our own experiences as feminists of color with multiple marginalized identities, this zine chronicles our encounters and discussions about knowledge production in humanities research and proposes questions challenging the reader-interlocutor to think about their own epistemology and methodologies.

This zine was compiled and designed by AA and aa. The illustrations are by aa.

Our final product, like so many ventures in the world of academia, is a little different from what we initially envisioned or proposed. As we shared ideas and stories and experiences, recorded our conversations, and examined who we are within academia versus how we are seen by the world of academia, we decided to scale back in some areas, to keep it more simple, to focus more on creating space for sharing and being in community, for engagement.

Part I

From within and against - occupying spaces that were not designed for us

Part II

“To every action there is a story.”

Part III

Decolonizing Methodologies

Resources and References

?

Insert your part here:

From within and against - occupying spaces that were not designed for us:

[Image description: a cartoon hedgehog at a writing desk.]

This coloring workbook on research methodologies was created by two grad students struggling to complete their Ph.D. coursework while taking care of their personal responsibilities and mental health.

This coloring workbook is a practical experiment on decolonial methodologies. We used story-work and storytelling approaches to reveal how our positionalities and personal stories enter our research. We invite you to color, doodle, and let your mind meander as you read.

The main method used for data collection was duoethnography - a feminist method within anthropology.

In duoethnography two or more researchers are in conversation with one another about a pre-defined topic. N. Valdéz et al. (2022) write that "duoethnography emphasizes the dialogical intimacy that can form through anthropological work. While autoethnography draws on individual daily lives to make sense of sociopolitical dynamics, duoethnography emphasizes the relational character of research across people and practices. (...) This method emphasizes the dialogical intimacy that can form through anthropological work."

For this project, we engaged in daily conversations with the intention of reflecting on our positionalities: what it means to be racialized and non-traditional students having to develop our own research.

About Us:

In considering our positionalities, vulnerabilities as PhD students, and the realities of potential repercussions, we have made the choice to maintain anonymity.

"To every action there is a story" (King p.29):

By aa

we are deeply informed by our class backgrounds. my siblings and i have discussed how little our parents knew to prepare us for academia - there was more emphasis placed on being "good people" than getting an education. they were able to get degrees because they worked for places that helped pay for them to go to school, they got scholarships and fellowships, grants and other awards. they're both ABD. and yet, as the children of first generation college students, we often felt lost. i still feel lost. i don't know all the rules, and when i do learn the rules, they make very little sense to me. i have been called disruptive and unruly, punished for an unwillingness to maintain the status quo or, worse yet, to not even know when i have done something out of line from the very secret rules. so, i've often wondered about how much harder it must have been for my parents as first generation students, and to both come from spaces where, because of their own experiences, and the experiences of those before them, you just suck it up and keep going. worse things have happened before to us and the us before the made it possible for me to attend college and eat knock off cheerios and own a walkman and.... (...) the stories that i tell are not my own - even my creation story, my birth, it does not belong to me alone. it is a story i have been told countless times. i do not remember any details about the actual birth - i know where i was born (same hospital as my mother and grandmother); i know the date (but not the time, much to the dismay of anyone who has wanted to do a complete astrological chart reading); i know the address on my birth certificate - the home my grandparents lived in for 42 years...but the story begins before i physically exited the womb and entered a hospital room. because the story is about escaping war and uncertainty. the story is about displacement and fear for safety. the story involves family separation, siblings in distress, anxiety over prevention of leaving and prevention of entering, it involves not meeting my father for several months, it is a story about being without a permanent home.... REDACTED Karbala...."every place is Karbala, every day is Ashura" we've chanted over and over and over again. The story has no clear beginning and it has no clear end. The story of my creation began with turbulent change, change that began long before conception and change which continues into death and when my body returns to the earth to be more change.

By AA:

I moved to the US from REDACTED in 2019, at first I didn’t realize how huge that change was, and how my life would be impacted by it. I thought I’d be fine. I thought this was just another move. I thought I was strong and wouldn’t be impacted by it - oh, boy, little did I know…

In one of my therapy sessions, my therapist told me about how being an international student means that it’s like you’re working on two degrees, the official Ph.D. is one, but also another one in life, and in different ways of being in the world and learning about the rules of the new place I’m now living. I had to learn so much and go through so much to get where I am now and sometimes I just want to quit. The thing is, moving from REDACTED to the US changed me and I’m afraid there’s no going back.

Since I moved to the US I’ve been in constant crisis. At first, it was all about identity. I was just so depressed and exhausted in that first year, but still, I couldn’t even name what was really going on. I just had feelings. Lots of them.

I’ve been thinking about a class I took last year, in which we questioned dominant research paradigms, and explored methodologies that focus on responsibility, respect, and reciprocity (Wilson 2008), I’ve experienced firsthand how my research is not dissociated from who I am, and any methodology that purports to say otherwise is only telling part of the story.

I’ve also been thinking a lot about language. I’ve been thinking about my dreams and how they’ve all been in English lately, despite the fact that I lived the first 25 years of my life in REDACTED. I’ve been thinking about what my therapist told me about having therapy in English, which is my second language; about how it means that I’m already analyzing myself every time I talk about a life event that took place in REDACTED. It’s weird to think of language as a location. It’s weird to think that I’m speaking in tongues. The story of what and who I am is not dissociated from the work that I do. There’s no dissociation between these two elements - my research exists because of who I am.

Will I ever not feel lost - in translation and otherwise?"

[Image description: a circle with handwritten text: “Design your methodological academic Step 1: circle”.]

Decolonizing Methodologies:

In chapter 7 of Research is Ceremony, Shawn Wilson (2008: 135) writes that If research doesn’t change you as a person, then you haven’t done it right. Our role as aresearcher/storyteller is not to draw conclusions for another or to make an argument. It’s to share information or to make connections with ideas. (Wilson 2008: 133)

[Image description: A circle with a stick and handwritten text: “ Step 2: line from bottom of circle”.]

[Image Description: A Stick Figure without legs: “Step 3: add arms [raised enthusiastically for learning]”.]

[Image Description: A Stick Figure with legs: “step 4: add legs [spread for balance]”.]

Decolonizing Methodologies cont.:

Doing research under the principle of ceremony involves having respect, responsibility, and reciprocity. It’s about working “with” rather than “on,” it’s about non-linear modes of analysis. It also involves thinking about who will read our work. The purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger relationships or bridge the distance between our cosmos and us, writes Wilson (2008: 137). To critically think about the research we conduct and the methodologies necessary for the work to be done is also a ceremony, it involves paying attention to processes and relationships.

With this is mind, we invite you to consider the following questions:

What are your familial, cultural, and/or personal creation stories?

How was/is knowledge produced within your chosen/family, community, etc?

How does your research engage with respect, responsibility, and reciprocity?

How was/is knowledge produced within your chosen/family, community, etc?

Who are you that you feel safe to reveal within the walls of academia?

Who are you that you feel you must keep safe from academia?

[Image Description: The cartoon hedgehog from before, in colour. It says “Stop believing in yourself”.]

Decolonizing Methodologies cont.:

[Image Description: a word search for the following words: Scholar, Diaspora, Ceremony, Protocol, Ontology, Epistemology, Methodology, Axiology.]

[Image description: Eyes, noses, and mouths, with the labels: “Step 5: pick the eyes, Step 6: pick the nose, Step 7: pick the mouth”.]

[Image Description: Busses and shoes, with labels: “Step 8: Transport, Step 8: Shoes”.]

[Image Description: Labels: “Step 9: Choose major [make sure it’s funded], Step 10: Choose your personality

Overly enthusiastic

Overly confident

Imposter syndrome

Changes based on survival”.]

[Image description: fill in the blank the following categories:

“Who are your personal resources/citations?

Family members:

Friend/s:

Musician/s:

Writer/s:

Scholar/s:

Visual artist/s:

Who else?”]

[Image Description: letters with label "Deconstructed methodologies “word soup””.]

Resources and References:

[Image Description: 6 small cartoons of animals and people, with label: “I’m not a robot. Select all images with an academic.”]

Duncan, Patti. Tell this Silence: Asian American Women Writers and the Politics of Speech. University of Iowa Press, 2004.

Clare, Eli. Brilliant imperfection. In: Brilliant Imperfection. Duke University Press, 2017.

Clare, Eli. The mountain. In: Disability And Equality Law. Routledge, 2017. p. 95-108.

Farias, Tom. “Carolina Maria de Jesus, an Author for the Present: Revisiting the Life and Work of the Groundbreaking Writer.” Translated by Edmund Ruge. Periferias, vol. 3, “Alternative Experiences,” July 2019. https://revistaperiferias.org/en/materia/maria-carolina-de-jesus-an-author-for-the-present/. Accessed 7 June 2022.

Freire, Paulo. Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 50th Anniversary Edition. Bloomsbury Academic, 2000.

Haraway, Donna. The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness. University of Chicago, 2003.

Haraway, Donna. “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late 20th Century.” The International Handbook of Virtual Learning Environments, edited by Dordrecht Springer, 2006, pp. 117-158.

Harjo, Joy. Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings: Poems. W.W. Norton and Company, 2015.

Hinton, S.E. The Outsiders. Penguin Group, 1995.

hooks, bell. Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom. Routledge, 1994.

King, Thomas. The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative. University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

X, Malcolm and Haley, Alex. The Autobiography of Malcolm X: As Told to Alex Haley. Ballantine, 1964.

References:

King, T. (2003). The truth about stories: A native narrative. House of Anansi.

Smith, L. T. (2021). Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Valdez, N., Carney, M., Yates, Doerr, E., Saldaña, Tejeda, A., Hardin, J.,

Garth, H., ... & Dickinson, M. (2022). Duoethnography as Transformative Praxis: Conversations about Nourishment and Coercion in the COVID Era Academy. Feminist Anthropology, 3(1), 92-105.

Wilson, S. (2008). Research is ceremony. Indigenous research methods. Winnipeg: Fernwood.

Abdul Khabeer, Su’ad. “Seeing Myself in ‘Ya Husayn’”. Sapelo Square, 3 October 2017. https://sapelosquare.com/2017/10/03/seeing-myself-in-ya-husayn-and-the-resonance-of-ancestral-familiarity/. Accessed 7 June 2022.

Abu-Lughod, Lila. “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?: Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and its Others.” American Anthropologist, vol. 104, no. 3, 2002, pp. 783-790.

Ahmed, Sara. Living a Feminist Life. Duke University Press, 2017.

Barnd, Natchee Blu. Native Space: Geographic Strategies to Unsettle Settler Colonialism. Oregon State University Press, 2017.

Butler, Octavia. Parable of the Sower. Grand Central Publishing, 1993.

“Conceição Evaristo: Biography and Poems | Brazilian Poetry.” Brazilian Poetry, 29 May 2021. [https://www.brazilianpoetry.com/2021/05/conceicao-evaristo-biography-and-poems.html. Accessed 7 June 2022](https://www.brazilianpoetry.com/2021/05/conceicao-evaristo-biography-and-poems.html.%20Accessed%207%20June%202022).

Conlon, Gerry. In the Name of the Father: The Story of Gerry Conlon of the Guildford Four. Plume, 1993.

de Jesus, Maria Carolina. “Children of the Dark”. <https://educ.jmu.edu/~vannorwc/assets/ghist%20102-150/pages/readings/childofdark.html>. Accessed 7 June 2022.

“Duoethnography as ‘Feminist Method’.” Nutrire CoLab. 13 May 2022.https://open.spotify.com/episode/5pygX3KekHy9HSCgUMQ9sV?si=4fcb836b032b478b.

[Image Description: cartoon flowers behind the words “IMPOSTOR SYNDROME but make it feminist!!!”.]

This zine is a living document. There are so many stories we have not told, so many stories yet to come…it has no end.

© Copyright, anamana

# Bodies in Play Zine

By: The Playshop Team

DMG

Izzie Colpitts-Campbell

Santo Aveiro-Ojeda

OCAD University

Cindy Poremba (Game:Play Lab)

Emma Westecott (Game:Play Lab)

Kate Hartman (Social Body Lab)

Ellie Huang

[Image description: the cover background is an image of a purple-haired person in a green and red shirt. They are wearing a device over their eyes.]

Land Acknowledgement:

OCAD University and DMG acknowledge the ancestral and traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe and the Huron-Wendat, who are the original owners and custodians of the land on which we stand and create.

Introduction:

What is A Playshop?

Playshops are social events at which people playfully collaborate to imagine, share, and develop ideas on a subject or theme. The playfulness of these events is core, and prioritises the active engagement and enjoyment of all involved. We believe that play is more generative of new knowledge than work and essential to imagining preferred futures for all.

What is Bodies in Play?

Bodies in Play (BiP) is a research project that brings together academic, cultural, and community practitioners to co-create knowledge towards more inclusive and innovative design practices for the creative technology sector.

BiP launched online in early 2022 at a playshop that explored connections between bodies of all kinds, wearables and extended reality technologies.

What are Game jams?

Game jams are intensive and collaborative game making events that bring a community together to explore and build ideas often around a central theme in a short period of time. In a feminist setting, game jams are organized in a way that is mindful of the labour conditions and equitable access of those involved e.g. fixed duration, childcare options, payment where possible, etc.

[Image description: a picture titled “A Brief History,” with a person following a line past several word clouds. The word clouds, in order, read:

“System Failure” with “Feminism” and “Labour” as associated words

“VVV Jam” with “Volumetric Video Tech” and “Creators” as associated words

“Textile Game Controller” with “Electronic” “Textiles” and “Games” associated words

“Bodies in Play” with the annotation “We are here”

The person stands at “Bodies in Play” and has thrown a paper airplane ahead at “Wearable Tech,” “Mixed Reality,” and “Synthesis and Exhibition”.]

[Image description: a cartoon image of the contributors, with their names underneath.]

[Image description: This image, labelled as a “Partnership Map” shows a Venn Diagram of participation between the “Social Body Lab (SBL+GPL)” and the “DMG.”]

DMG is linked primarily to “Broader DMG Community.” The Social Body Lab is linked primarily to “Borader OCAD Community.” Both communities are connected by “Community Understanding and Practices” and Research Knowledge and Academic Investigation”

This partnership map describes the overlapping structure of this research partnership, aimed at maximizing knowledge sharing across academic and community collaborators.

Playshop Setup:

Our Discord server allows us to host live activities and conversation in audio and video as well as asynchronous text participation. It creates persistent online resources for our community after the event. As an approach taken up during the pandemic, working together online allows us to include people from other parts of the world that we may not otherwise have had access to. Our shared online space helps us be more mindful of varying workflows and feedback - for example the use of emojis to provide encouragement as a back channel to spoken conversation.

Our emphasis was on rapid brainstorming and ideation, a small group of participants were guided over the course of an afternoon to imagine the kinds of body-centric technologies and experiences they would like to see.

This was a speculative exploration into possible themes that could inspire future BiP activities and resulted in this zine - which we hope will provide a foundation for future work for ourselves and others.

[Image description: an Image of the Code of Conduct:

Each “Do” and “Don’t” is accompanied by a small cartoon image of the action.

Dos, on the left, are in order: “Promote Marginalized Voice,” “Active Listening,” “Respect Boundaries,” “No Assumption,” “Accept Correction,” and “Use Inclusive Language.”

Don’ts, on the right, are in order: “Oppressive Conduct,” “Harassment,” “Destructive Behaviour,” and “Exclusionary.”]

Holding our playshop on Discord allowed us to progress participants through sign-off of a Code of Conduct (server behaviour guidelines) and Consent to Research (invitation and consent materials to meet our research ethics needs) prior to pronoun selection and introductions in our server #welcome channel.

These methods are central to our work, intended to both set participant expectations and create the safest possible space for feminist work of this nature.

Playshop Structure:

Each OCADU team member ran a brief playshop activity targeted at specific methods.

We started with: Welcome, Introduction to Bodies in Play, and warm up. This offered us a chance to introduce ourselves and get familiar with the BiP Discord.

Below is a suggested structure - activities can be swapped according to different needs and target audiences.-

[Image description: the Playshop Structure, including both “What We Did” and “General Structure.” Numbers beside entries relate to later sections of this zine.]

12:00 PM – Welcome – Introduction (1)

12:30 PM – Selfie Game, run by Emma – Activity 1 (2)

10 minute break

13:30 PM – Shuffle Pitches, run by Cindy – Activity 2 (3)

10 minute break

14:30 PM – Expressive Wearables, run by Kate – Activity 3 (4)

10 minute break

15:30 PM – 30 minute social chat – Social and Wrap-Up (5)

Activity 01 Selfie Game:

Introduction:

As the first playshop activity, the goal was to introduce the politics of the project and act as an ice-breaker for participants on our Discord server. Written by feminists from several countries, the #Feminism nano-game collection takes on contemporary feminist issues through a series of small games meant to be played with other people.

What is a Feminist Game?

Sexism oppresses everyone and pushes people into unequal power relationships. Feminism is about equity between all genders and is pluralist. Feminist games engage with feminist values, themes, and politics in a variety of ways. We believe that the culture we consume and the technologies we create can help undo the harms of sexism.

Kira Magrann’s Selfie Game

Described as “An intimate game about feelings in images”, Kira Magrann’s Selfie Game asks the player to take and share selfies that express particular emotions felt whilst listening to music. Points are given to players who correctly guess the emotion shared, whilst all players compliment the selfie taker on their emotion, description or photo. Our playshop ran all activities on Discord in separate channels.

[Image description: a cartoon of Emma asks “what are discrete emotions again?” and “how do I make my body express said emotions?”]

Surrounding the words “Selfie Game” are cartoons of unnamed participants, each with a selfie bracket around their face, and 4-8 emotions around their face.

Workbook:

How to Take a Selfie

Chose an angle

Have a light source beside you

Consider head position in the image

Add a filter that flatters skin and hig lights features

Keep background simple

Express with your eyes

How Does it Work?

Step 1:

Create and share a playlist that inspires emotions.

Step 2:

Read the following game description aloud:

In this game, every player will take one selfie at any time while the soundtrack is playing. The goal is to pick a time when you are feeling the strongest about an emotion you wish to express. Write down the emotion then take the selfie and share with the group.

Step 3:

As soon as someone shares their selfie, pause the soundtrack then the other players will try to guess what emotion is being expressed before the selfie taker shares their emotion. Players closest to the correct emotion get a heart on their answer, those furthest get a star.

Step 4:

As players share their selfies the rest of the group will give the sharer one compliment: it could be about the emotion, description or photo.

Step 5:

Repeat until all players have shared a selfie with the group. If you want to make it more of a “game” you could tally hearts to find the winner.

Participants’ Work:

We ran this game in channel and whilst the Discord server struggled with sharing the playlist, the feedback and conversation soon became more important than the points awarded.

We chose the Selfie Game as it playfully introduces participants to each other in a familiar context that emphasises the player’s control over their own image.

[Image description: a different style of cartoon shows participant faces in selfie frames with musical notes in the background. The questions “what are discrete emotions again?” and “how do I make my body express said emotions?” appear again, and some emotions are listed by participants’ “selfies.”]

Activity 02 Shuffle Pitches:

What is a debate/pitch game?

Argument/debate games are a form of improvised game meant to encourage creative thinking and group discussion.

They are popular as both social games (for example Flatlands by Nathalie Pozzi and Eric Zimmerman), and as tools for creative scenario generation (as a form of prompt or speculative thinking, like The Thing From the Future, from Jeff Watson and Stuart

In a debate game, players pick from some pool of random objects, and are asked to convincingly argue something about that object. The game can take on additional complexity when players are asked to combine random objects together, or make particular kinds of arguments (for example, which object is the best fit to a particular statement or condition), compete against other players, and/or convince a group or a judge. A winner or victory condition is largely optional, which makes these kinds of games great icebreakers and idea generators. Since what makes a “best” argument is often highly subjective, it can also be a great way to encourage players to share situated perspectives in a [sic]

Introduction:

For our version of the game (Shuffle Pitches), we chose to co-create three lists of parameters that would be randomly combined to generate an object. Each player would then be randomly assigned an object, and would have a limited amount of time to further describe the object, and create a short story or scenario about it.

They were also encouraged to sketch it, or have one of our illustrators help sketch it. Each player then shared their story or scenario to the group.

We opted not to judge the “best” contribution, instead celebrating the range and diversity of the player stories.

[Image description: There is a cartoon image of Cindy beside the Shuffle Pitches walkthrough. Three prompts are listed – “There could be…” “What does it do?” and “Story/scenario/pitch” and then instructions to “Word Shuffle”.]

Images below show:

1. “The Murmurer” for work life balance, where a kitchen sink tells a woman “you should take more breaks”

2. A kitchen sink that “syncs with your calendar schedule” to help you relax with “hot/cold water” or “scent”

3. A picture of a child sitting in “a booster seat to disconnect” in the back of a car.

Workbook:

[Image description: a diagram of how it works, using a Chess Piece as an example. “Forms” are “The types of things being pictured,” “Value” is “tYhe underlying value and priority,” and “Verb” is “The action and function.”]

How Does it Work?

Step 1:

Co-create lists of object characteristics to randomly combine. Our version used three characteristics: Forms, Verbs and Values.

Step 2:

Each person will be assigned one shuffled object. Generate a random set of constraints for each person/pair.

Step 3:

Describe the object, and come up with a short story/scenario/pitch about it. The scenario provides some context for how this object would exist in the world.

Step 4:

Share your possible object with the group.

Step 5:

If you want to make it more of a “game,” you could vote on the best or favourite option. Judging the pitches is entirely optional!

Participants’ Work:

[Image description: 8 cartoon examples of Participants work: “Witnessing Wallpaper,” “Scarf of Liberation,” “Scab that considers family,” “A Shadow that disrupts comfort,” “An object that heels pride,” “A stove that shrinks Pride,” “A shadow that augments liberation,” and “Commun-I-Play”.]

Activity 03 Expressive Wearables:

Introduction:

This final playshop invited partici­pants to explore the possibilities for embodied expressivity that might be achieved within the realm of do-it-yourself wearable electronics. The following “Toolbox” of expressive components was introduced:

Neopixels - These LEDs (light-emitting diodes) can light up in many colours, be controlled individually, and come in many form factors including rings, strips, and grids.

Servo Motors - These motors can be programmed to turn to precise locations and can drive mechanisms that cause wearables to change shape or visual pattern. They can be easily mounted to the body using 3D printed accessories from the Kinetic Wearables Tool­kit.

Participants were asked a series of prompts and then were invited to create a “Profile” and a “Storyboard” for their Expressive Wearables. The following methods were offered as ways to quickly and easily visualise ideas:

Digital sketching

Sketching by hand and then photographing or scanning

Use of Creative Commons li­cence and copyright-free im­ages via services such as the Noun Project and Unsplash

Help from the two live illus­trators available on Discord

Outcomes were shared both by post­ing to the live slide deck as well as to the Discord channel.

[Image description: A cartoon of Kate by a diagram of the Expressive Wearables components.]

Workbook:

How Does it Work?

Our bodies are inherently expressive. Through our body language and facial expressions they can share mood, attitude, interest, and state of attention with those around us. But sometimes they don’t share enough, or share too much; or are misread or misunderstood.

What we wear often acts as a means of personal expression. Clothing, shoes, and accessories can be used to help us express or connect with different aspects of our identities. But even these options have limits.

Task:

Imagine a wearable electronics device that uses body-based light or motion to express something not adequately expressed by either the body or everyday (non-electronic) wearable items.

How does the wearable use different modes or behaviours of these tools to express different states of being or communication differing information?

Design Decisions:

Who is it for? Where/when is it used?

What type of wearable?

What does it express?

What type of Expression Tools (LEDs, motors, etc.) does it use?

What are the Expression Modes?

Participants’ Work

[Image description: 4 examples of the participants work.]

1 full breakdown of the Profile and Storyboard for the “Introvert Tiara”

2 the Rest Pirator

3 Fluttery Feelings

4 Frazzled

Playshop Conclusion:

Selfies are part of many of our day-to-day digital activities, allowing us to choose how we portray ourselves on social networks and beyond. The Selfie Game helped us get to know each other quickly through shared expression and collective feedback.

Shuffle Pitches gave us a fun means of sharing the materials, interactions, and values we might hope to explore. Our outcome was a marvellous and provocative co-created collection of speculative objects centering the idea of bodies in play.

Concepts for Expressive Wearables adopted forms such as vest, jacket, belt, collar, halo, and face mask. Through the use of Profiles and Storyboards, participants proposed the use of body-based light, colour, shape, and movement to outwardly express the shifts in the spectrum of the wearer’s lived experience, from restfulness to exhaustion, sociability to social anxiety, and more.

It is our hope this assortment of illustrations and stories can continue to prompt new hopes, wants and desires surrounding the relationships between technologies, bodies and play.

Resources & Acknowledgements

Contributor Credits:

Illustrators:

Jenn Liv

Manisha Laroia

Playshoppers::

Alessia Ianni-Palarchio

Alison Humphrey

Barbro Scholz

Cronic

Ida Toft

Kylie Caraway

MaxZane

PM11

Potatoe

Shuting

winder

We would also like to thank additional contributors who asked to remain anonymous.

We would like to thank our partners, our illustrators, our graduate research assistant Ellie and most especially our wonderful players, without whom this zine would not have been possible.

Referenced works:

“Adafruit NeoPixel Überguide” by Phillip Burgess

“Feminism - A Nano Game Anthology” by Julia Bond Ellingboe, Emily Care Boss, Jason Morningstar et al

“Kinetic Wearables Toolkit” by Social Body Lab

“Playshops: Workshop series exploring play” by Barbara Rauch, Emma Westecott, Kate Hartman, Suzanne Stein

“Values at Play in Digital Games” by Mary Flanagan and Helen Nissenbaum

URLs for all partners:

dmg.to

socialbodylab.com

gameplaylab.ca

ocadu.ca

# Citation: A FanZine

By: Kelly McElroy

WELCOME

[image description: a floral collaged background.]

PLAYLIST

Book of Love (the Monotones)

Say My Name (Destiny's Child)

Missing U (Robyn)

Dig Me Out (Sleater Kinney)

Standing in the Way of Control (The Gossip) \_ Now that I Found You (Carly Rae Jepsen)

Call My Name (Prince)

Throw it Back (Missy Elliott)

Hide and Seek (Imogen Heap)

Maps (They They Theys)

You Gotta Be. (Des'ree)

Something to Talk ·About (Bonnie Raitt)

Hot Topic (Le Tigre)

Why a citation fanzine?

It's partly a joke -as a librarian, I've rolled my eyes when

people assume I have all the style guides memorized, and with my colleagues I've helped set the boundary that we're not

going to typically teach the mechanics of citation. I am not

here to police your commas.

But the reasons behind citation -why it is so important to cite, how to clearly communicate where you encountered an idea, to pay tribute to the work that came before you -that stuff is why we even have libraries. So I love citation as homage, citation as love, citation as what Sara Ahmed has called "feminist bricks." Citation is a way to thank our teachers, to show our work, and to give contours to how we got here.

Thanks for playing along!

How to…  
Read in Order to Cite

We read in lots of ways, and not always in ways that support citation. These are some of the ways that I help myself read effectively.

Start with intention. Projects like #CiteBlackWomen invite us to consider citation as radical praxis. How did you select your reading? What do you know about the context it comes from? Who wrote it?

Annotate as you go. This differs for me based on medium, but also has differed throughout the years.

Pause and synthesize. Many things are slow for me to read. When there's a lot to absorb, I have to take breaks between chapters.

Don't lose track of who said what. As I consider Yasmin Nair's anger at soft plagiarism, I've been trying to be more aware of how I do this in conversation. When I speak about "something I saw on Twitter," I try to force myself to go back and find who said it. If I can't find it or remember it, that absence becomes a part of the story.

Add to Zotero (or whatever other mechanism you use to track bibliographic information) as you go, so you're not scrambling to find something later.

Read with a goal This is one of the great pieces of advice that Paul Edwards gives in his How to Read a Book which I often share with students.

When you think you're done, look at who you left out.

On the Vaporsource:

In working on this zine, I remembered a reference question I had a few years back. Someone was trying to track down this citation:

Van der Geer, J., J. A. J. Hanraads, and R. A. Lupton. "The art of writing a scientific article." J. Sci. Commun 163, no. 2 (2000): 51-59.

When we looked it up in Google Scholar, we found a heavily cited\* citation, but no trace of how to get to the actual article. I gave a try in our library's discovery tool, toadied around our list of e-journals, looked through Ulrich's, a serials directory, to see what I could find -- the Journal of Science Communication (didn't start publishing until 2002) and Science Communication (no trace of these authors) were both strikeouts, and I couldn't find any trace of the actual Journal of Scientific Communications at all.

This is a not uncommon kind of reference question, where some widely cited article is strangely hard to track down. In my experience, it is often because some part of the citation is missing or wrong. I tweeted something asking if we have a term of art for this kind of thing. (Props to Ryan Randall for suggesting vaporsource, riffing on vaporware.)

Several folks jumped in to help me track it down, and we went over the same few paths. HOWEVER, several people noted that this article might just be made up. And indeed, many of the hits for this article turn out to be instructions for submitting to journals. I communicated this back to the patron, who then sent me a peer-reviewed article in an engineering journal. The first three citations are all sources listed in that Elsevier journal submission guidelines page -- our elusive "Art of Writing· a Scientific Article" article, Strunk and White, and another apparently made-up (and heavily cited) piece about "How to prepare an electronic version of your article."

Given the unlikelihood that Strunk and White provide data about the impacts that the lack of electricity can have on different health outcomes, I think it is fair to imagine that these authors dropped in these citations as a reminder to themselves of the required formatting, and then forgot to swap them out for the actual source.

What can we take from this? For one thing, what an example of the fallibility of the process of scholarly publishing! Given the process of peer review and editing, we might expect reviewers or editors, if not the authors, of this work to have caught this error. If it happened once or twice, okay ... but literally, hundreds of times? Of course, this also means that may be gaps in the legitimate citations of these articles, if they left off sources they actually did mean to cite. What a complicated web, eh?

I also find myself thinking back to a workshop I attended by Joseph Bizup, about his BEAM model for helping students navigate different rhetorical strategies for presenting and using evidence. In my reference interaction, we walked through several of the supposed citations of the original elusive article. In some, as noted above, the error was obvious. Others seem to be using the source as if it is legitimate -- the citation is one in a string of citations actually about writing, mostly about writing scientific articles. Although I'd like to give the author the benefit of the doubt -- perhaps it is a wry joke? -- it does seem very likely that they just popped the (heavily cited) source in without thinking too hard about tracking it down. Or, since it also uses Strunk and White, this could be another case of what happened above. But, untangling the ways that these authors use (or don't actually use) the information in the cited sources is a way to make meaning out of the texts.

\* In 2016, there were 500+ citations for this item in Google Scholar; writing this in 2022, there are now 1351.

This is likely adapted from a blogpost I wrote in 2016, which you can find at http://www. kellymce .info/bloqgy?offset= 1489511525992

What goes uncited:

Working with lower-level undergraduate students, I often encounter questions about what to cite and when. Typically, we say, encyclopedias and dictionaries and other reference works do not need to be cited. But sometimes the reference work is the subject of study, right?

A few months ago, I lingered on a few tweets from Yasmin Nair about what she calls "soft plagiarism" -where writers with bigger audiences, either academics or journalists, take ideas and share them without attribution.

I'm growing weary of what I call the "soft plagiarism" engaged in by academics and activists, many of whom are actually people of colour and even self-described radicals and leftists. As academia shrinks along with the non-profit industrial complex, more and more writers with institutional clout are scouring the feeds and public writings of people like me to see what they might be able to pass off as their own.

- Yasmin Nair,

https://yasminnair.com/update-on-publishing'-plagiarism-philz-coffee-and-persistence/

Of course, I encountered this on Twitter, where I encounter so many things that just slip right through me. What sticks, and how on earth will I recognize where it came from? It strikes me that this echoes a fear I often hear from students - that they will "accidentally" plagiarize without realizing it. While this fear is often contextualized within the punitive systems of grading and student discipline, it reflects an additional fear of genuinely taking an idea without attribution. Nair clearly sees intent here, and of course she is also right. The soft plagiarist may or may not be fully aware of what they're doing, and may not hold malice, but the harm they cause is real. How do we take responsibility?

Also on Twitter, I encountered #CiteBlackWomen for the first time. (When? Who shared it? I can't recall.) It started out with t-shirts with the simple phrase "Cite Black Women." The idea was to motivate everyone, but particularly academics, to critically reflect on their everyday practices of citation and start to consciously question how they can incorporate black women into the CORE of their work.

<https://citeblackwomencQllective.org/>

#CiteBlackWomen invites us to develop more intentional practices around citation, so we are always thinking about where ideas come from, and whose ideas we are lifting up. How many Black women have shared things into the world that have ended up talking points for white men (or white women) in academia and in the media?

Within librarianship, WeHere (https://www.wehere.space/) has been instrumental in the political stakes for citational practice, offering tools to support building on the research of BIPOC scholars. (And offering publication venues for BIPOC writers through up//root (https://www.uproot.space/).)

One year, I volunteered for the VIDA count, which reviews major literary publications to see, by gender, who is getting reviewed. One of my sabbatical projects is to analyze my own citations - and to use that to inform my future research.

and I am grateful to have worked with collaborators like Deborah Yun Caldwell and Laurie Bridges who have helped make intentions around radically inclusive citation a part of our initial conversations as we start a new project -to make thoughtful citation a part of the core of our research, as #CiteBlackWomen suggests.

CITATION STYLE DEATHMATCH

[image description: centre spread- title in all capitals reaches across both pages saying “CITATION STYLE DEATHMATCH”]

Working with undergraduates, I hear many and varied complaints about citation, particularly the specific citation styles. I used to do an activity where students would air their grievances first - what gets your goat about citation? - before moving on to create their own imaginary citation styles. Their complaints typically included having to move between styles for varying classes, faculty who seemed to prioritize mechanical correctness rather than the strength of the reference as evidence, alllllll theeeee commas and having to get them right.

But these complaints do not end with undergraduates. I myself have my complaints and preferences about citation styles! Journals that have their own variations on given styles, or worse yet, use an outdated edition of a style? What are you doing???

Thank you to Snowden Becker (no style/I DC), Emily Drabinski (APA), Saffyre Falkenberg (MLA), and Donna Witek (Chicago) for putting their preferred styles into the ring. I invite you to read through their offerings, and make your vote, by detaching and sending in the final page of this zine

And of course, I have noticed that scholars can be quite defensive of their preferred style, and dismissive of others.

Seeing how animated folks could be led me to the inevitable: the citation style deathmatch!!!

APA- American Psychological Association

Defended by Emily Drabinski

I want to know who said it and I want to know when they said it and I want to know these two pieces of information the moment you slap down that piece of evidence in support of your claim. I don't want to look in the back of the book. I don' want to look at the bottom of the page. I don't want just the author because the author is what matters. The author's long dead, I'm looking at you MLA. I want to know who said it and when they said it and I want to know immediately after the close-quote. Yeah yeah Chicago author-date, but it's not one among options in APA, it's the whole enchilada. Eat up.

[image description: lines at bottom of page with a title reading “your notes”]

Chicago

Defended by Donna Witck

I am interested in a citation style that has the fewest quirks to remember and still includes all the parts of a citation that are needed to find the thing again. I also like it when the elements are in basically the same spot no matter the source format or genre. In my experience, when a publication asks me to cite in Chicago (Author-Date) style, these needs are most easily met. It's just a period between each element! (Except when still including geographic location of publication, but even there it makes sense to me for a colon to separate city and press because they are in relationship to each other.) The year of publication is nice and early in the citation, because when a thing was created/said/published matters a lot to me! And the in-text citations are just commas between the needed shorthand elements. Finally, and this is a sticking point for me, I like to know the full names of authors. It humanizes scholarship for me. Chicago to me falls cozily between MLA and APA, drawing on the best from each and leaving behind the un-needful quirks of each.

[image description: lines at bottom of page with a title reading “your notes”]

MLA- Modern Language Association

Defended by Saffyre Falkenberg

MLA is the best citation style for the humanities because it emphasizes the people contributing to the scholarly conversation at hand and because the mechanics of building a citation are intuitive and flexible.

MLA style places the author first, always, whether in bibliographic or in-text citations, emphasizing the thinkers the author is in conversation with. It's like gathering all of these people in a room together. No author listed? That's okay; cite the title. We'll engage with the ideas if we can't engage with the writer by name.

Additionally, MLA just makes sense because the elements in a bibliographic citation move from small to large. Missing one of the elements? That's okay; move on to the larger element. Everything is collected, neat and tidy, in one bibliography, and in-text citations point to the exact text and page number to find the information being cited. That way, readers can easily engage with the content and participate in the conversation themselves.

For the humanities, which is all about participating in intellectual conversations, a citation style that emphasizes who is contributing to those conversations and allows for flexibility in building citations, such as MLA, is ideal.

[image description: lines at bottom of page with a title reading “your notes”.]

No Style

Defended by Snowden Becker

My preferred citation style has only two rules: 1) Help me understand precisely what ideas, works, people, and resources you're drawing on in your own work, and where I could go to either verify those sources or read deeper into them; and 2) Be clear and consistent in how you go about that.

This might mean that you cite classical research resources, like books, in a pretty classical way. Author, date, title, publisher, page number for quoted or referenced material? Sure, put all of those. But a comma-placement fight? In this economy? No THANK you. And that goes double (maybe triple) for all the new shapes that scholarship and scholarly communication can now take. Kate Turabian died in 1987, people. If you want to cite an unpublished home movie, a meme, a viral TikTok or lnstagram post, or the nested replies to a single threaded tweet or subreddit post, SHE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO HELP YOU.

The wide, wild range of stuff we write should be echoed with a wild, wide range of ways to cite. By all means, give credit where it's due. But last name first, or first name last? That I leave entirely up to you!

[image description: lines at bottom of page with a title reading “your notes”.]

A citation management tool is technology that allows you to capture bibliographic information from websites or other systems, organize references, and generate in-text citations and works cited in varied citation styles. I use Zotero, a free tool developed at the Center for New Media and History at George Mason University, now supported through the non-profit Corporation for Digital Scholarship.\*

How to use Zotero (or another citation management tool):

\* I quickly looked at the Wikipedia page (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zotero) to confirm some details and learned that Thomson Reuters sued George Mason University and the commonwealth of Virginia for having come up with a work-around for their proprietary file type for EndNote, a competing (and paid) citation management tool. FWIW, the case was dismissed, and although T-R was granted an appeal, they failed to move forward with the case.

Set up your tool. For Zotero, this means downloading the tool, including web plugin, which can be done at zotero.org. In addition, creating an account

Find your thing(s). Use a database, use the open web, use a library catalogue.

Add the thing(s). Zotero works with a browser add-on, which you click to add something - a single webpage or article, or even a whole bunch of catalog records at once. Please double-check in the moment that it pulled all the bibliographic information correctly!!! Check if your institution has an account, because that offers unlimited storage (for PDFs and other files).

Use the thing(s). As much as possible, I like to organize things immediately - putting it right into a folder titled after the project at hand, or using tags to identify it. Besides my personal folders, I often share things through shared libraries. You can easily create a group at zotero.org, and invite people. Use annotation or other tools to take notes. You do you!

Cite the thing(s). Citation management tools typically offer a few ways to actually create citations, including tools that work with common word processors, and plain ale copy n paste. They fairly recently added a plug in to Google Docs, which is dreamy ... when it works.

How to get cited:

These suggestions are more about tracking how you’ve been cited, in order to make a case for impact in a tenure dossier, say. All you have to do to get cited is publish relevant and interesting research in well-read journals, right? Right????

Make it easy to track. Create an ORCiD and a\_Google Scholar profile so it is easy to track your publications online.

Make your research available through an institutional repository or other freely available source. This zine ain't long enough to talk through the mean and nasty elements of scholarly publishing, but please don't sign away your copyright when you publish. Typically, you should be able to post a pre-print in an accessible repository -and if they resist, it is worth fighting for. Sharing your work in this way makes work available beyond the paywall, and also likely offers some additional stats -downloads and so on - that you can add into your impact story.

Ask people to tell you when they use their work. This is a bit of a stopgap, but it doesn't hurt to ask generally on social media, say. I have found out randomly that my work has been included in course syllabi or professional development activities, the kinds of things missed by tools like Google Scholar. (And of course, you can also reciprocate this by letting others know when you use their work in these ways.)

Think critically about impact. This is easy for me to say - impact factor or Eigenfactor or whatever isn't highly considered in my little corner of academia. For my tenure process, telling the story of access - certainly, citation counts get included, but a richer story of publishing in particular journals to meet particular audiences was also important.

Pass it on. Once you get tenure, how will you support the folks coming up behind you? How can you advocate for interdisciplinary, radical work? Work whose impact may not be revealed within the strict timeline of the tenure process?

[image description: collaged background with text on top.]

Email me! [kellymce@gmail.com](mailto:kellymce@gmail.com)

Or snail mail, if you’re reading this through DIYMethods

Texts mentioned in this zine are available in the shared library

<https://www.zotero.org/groups/4733982/diymethods> where you can generate citations in the style of your choice.

[image description: handwritten note with collage materials listed- unreadable to transcriber.]

Cast your vote in the citation style deathmatch

[image description: list of citation styles with check boxes next to each one]

Vote by September 1, 2022!

# Composting Research-Creation

By: Zoe Heyn-Jones

Partially-decomposed fragments and half-digested ideas by Zoe Heyn-Jones

[Image description: Trees, grasses, their root systems, and their symbiotic fungi.]

COMPOSTING is…

“a material labor whereby old scraps are transformed – through practices of care and attention – into nutrient-rich new soil” (Hamilton & Neimanis 501)

a “mode of scholarship necessary for growing different kinds of worlds” (501)

a “domestic method for material repurposing” (501)

and a “tender alchem[y]” (502)

RESEARCH-CREATION is "an approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation. The creation process is situated within the research activity and produces critically informed work in a variety of media (art forms)” (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council [Canada])

RESEARCH-CREATION is “the logical outcome of interdiciplinary7, conceptual, and social justice/activist legacies in contemporary art” (Loveless 9)

RESEARCH-CREATION is "a category produced within, with, and for an ever-adapting university landscape'' (10)

RESEARCH-CREATION at its best, has the capacity.to impact our social and material conditions, not by offering more facts, differently figured, but by finding ways, through aesthetic encounters and events, to persuade us to care and to care differently. By wedging open what counts as research, where, when, and how, research-creation ... works to render each of us a little more capable, a little more care-filled, opening us onto new webs of sensorial attunement and nurturance" (107)

How can we compost research-creation?

How can this offer us tools to do research otherwise?

If research-creation is within, with, and for. the Canadian university, (how) can we decompose and transform the Canadian university, through practices of care and attention, into a nutrient-rich new soil?

What happens when we imagine the aesthetic encounter of research-creation as a domestic methodology for material repurposing?

Is composting research-creation a manner of repairing or hacking conventional disciplinary methods?

What political and epistemological legacies could this allow us to decompose?

What systems of collaboration are inherent in composting research-creation?

What might we accomplish through such collaborations?

What tools or methods might result from composting research-creation?

How might they enable us to produce lower-carbon forms of research and research exchange?

How might composting research-creation allow us to think simultaneously of decomposition or loss and emergence?

Works Cited:

Hamilton, Jennifer Mae and Astrida Neimanis. “Composting Feminisms and Environmental Humanities.” Environmental Humanities 10:2 (November 2018) 501-527.

Haraway, Donna. “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin.” Environmmental Humanities 6 (2015); 159-165.

Loveless, Natalie. How to Make Art at the End of the World: A Manifesto for Research-Creation. Duke University Press, 2019.

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. “Definition of Terms: Research-Creation.” N.d. <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/definitions-end.aspx#a22> Accessed 2 July 2022

# Critical Cartographies and Speculative Diagrams: An Illustrated Essay on Drawing as a Research Method

By: Vanessa Graf

[Image description: multi-coloured loops go up and down over a cityscape]

Introduction:

Drawing as a scientific method is nothing revolutionary, quite to the contrary: The technique has been used for decades, if not centuries, and today is firmly established in at least the natural sciences as a standard tool for understanding and analyzing the world around us. At the same time, throughout its long and often convoluted history, the method has encountered a fair share of criticism, from being attacked for replicating colonial power structures to reinforcing a regime of visual primacy that neglects other forms of sensing, knowing, and being, to name just two.

Despite its complex history and deep entanglement with hegemonic power structures, drawing still offers an interesting methodical pathway for researchers working under the premise of situated knowledges (Haraway 1988). When approached from a DIY, bottom-up perspective, drawing can turn from a highly standardized and institutionalized method of traditional Western science into a technique that is able to account for different subjectivities and unexpected encounters in research, setting the scene for discussions on response-able scientific practice and multiple ways of generating knowledges.

The first part of this illustrated essay takes a brief look at two use cases of drawing as a scientific method in the history of Western science and situates the practice within European-centric, colonial practices and power structures. In part two, the focus is on the potential of drawing as a method for analysis outside of these hegemonial frameworks, taking my own media anthropological PhD project on digital infrastructures as a frame of reference.

[Image description: a map-like expanse, with the same multi-coloured loops and arcs.]

Part One: Mapping, Collecting, Organizing, Ruling

Drawing as a research method is firmly seated within the history of Western science, building on a longstanding practice that became especially relevant amongst colonial-era scientists on their travels across lands previously unknown to Europeans. To this day, the method occupies a central spot both in the creation of understanding and the dissemination of knowledge in and across scientific communities. To understand the method’s institutionalized background, this part takes a brief look at two use case examples of drawing in the history of Western science: cartography and scientific illustration.

Cartography is a prime example of the method’s entanglement with existing power structures – maps and plans have shaped the collective understanding of space, mostly to the advantage of a select group of people, institutions, or nation-states, unlike any other medium. The visual practice has sparked a vibrant discussions of the power relations, colonial heritage, social and spatial hierarchies, and normative ideals of societal and geopolitical order encoded in cartographic artefacts (Pickles 2004; Latour 1986). Unlike in other disciplines, not even the advent of digital technologies, remote sensing, or innovations in geographic information systems (GIS) in a larger sense has diminished the legitimacy and importance of drawn or illustrated maps. The products of manual or computer-aided mapmaking are considered “key components of the scopic regime of modernity” (Turnbull 2010, 125), and an integral part of standard scientific practice across a wide variety of fields.

Scientific illustrations, especially in the disciplines of biology and medicine, offer a second interesting use case of drawing as a scientific method. The habit of creating intricate anatomical illustrations of plants, animals, and other living organisms was not only standard practice in the age of colonial expansion and classification (“naturalists considered visual skill the defining trait of their practice and the basis of their method”, writes Bleichmar (2010, 168) of the time, referencing both observation and representation as goals of the visual craft of naturalists), but continues to be taught and practiced in universities today. As with cartography, these illustrations carry with them the weight of institutional expectations and norms, as well as assert a highly specific view of the world and its inhabitants (Bleichmar 2010, Bradley 2021). As a biology student myself, I can testify from personal experience to the meticulous and determinate method of creating a scientific illustration, requiring its practitioners to follow a concise and strict set of rules and conventions that should ideally never be diverted from.

What these short glimpses into the disciplines of cartography and scientific illustration show in an exemplary manner is that drawing is, in many cases, a highly institutionalized, standardized, and controlled method integral to the history and practice of Western science, deeply entangled with colonial rule and hegemonial power structures.

[Image description: geometric shapes pushed against each other, some within each other, reminiscent of a diagram of a plant cell.]

Part Two: A DIY approach to Drawing as Method

The second part of this essay now turns to alternative applications and contexts of drawing as a research method. How could a DIY, bottom-up approach to drawing as a method nudge open the tight hold that hegemonial research standards seem to have on the practice? And how could this help put forth the idea of a research practice that is conscious of situated knowledges and messy, ever-shifting, complex research contexts?

Subversions of standard illustrative methods such as critical or radical cartography (Schranz 2021), imaginative reworkings of classical scientific depictions of the tree of life, the evolutionary ladder or the biological kingdoms (Hejnol 2017), or a critical expansion of visual methods in science through artistic-scientific or practice-based research have cut out an alternative pathway that attempts to create space and awareness for situated knowledge practices instead of recreating the standardized, often exclusive, and in many instances exploitative traditions of Western science. Using drawing as a method for analysis outside of standardized applications – and instead in a DIY, improvised or simply less rigid manner – can offer an embodied way of generating knowledge that is deeply rooted in the slow and intimate practice of drawing and, at its best, acknowledges the researcher’s perspective, background, and biases at the same time. I would like to use the remainder of this essay to share how I engage with these ideas in my own research, in which I use illustration (and animation) as a method to illustrate and understand cultural narratives of digital infrastructures.

I initially became interested in the topic because of the metaphor of the Cloud – a widespread notion that has its origins in early computer network diagrams (Hu 2015). What was initially a convenient graphical shorthand for network engineers to stand in for the ever-growing number of servers and computers in a network has since become a powerful (marketing) narrative that highlights ease of connection and suggests a loss of space and distance, while downplaying or outright ignoring the material and socioecological entanglements of the so-called “digital” era. The Cloud (and other narratives like it) create a “myth of immateriality” (Cubitt 2017, 13) that metaphorically replaces the reality of the vast network of cables, antennas, base – [cont]

[Image description: frames around binary numbering, a woman, a face, plants, and clouds are held up by hands wrapped in, and merged with, the multi-coloured loops and arcs.]

[Image description: the same multi-coloured loops and arcs and cityscape from the cover re-appear, in greater detail.]

[cont] – stations, and data centers of network computing with a Cloud that evades the touch.

In my research, I am conducting a series of interviews and field visits of digital infrastructures and their operators in the Swiss and Austrian Alps in order to understand the local manifestations of this global technology beyond the metaphor of the Cloud. I am particularly interested in the local imaginaries and sociotechnical narratives that these infrastructures inspire: Situated in the middle of the precarious and highly biodiverse natural environment of the Alps, I am curious about the assemblages of technological, social, and ecological imaginations that meet and blend in this context. Alongside the rather traditional analysis of the interview materials co-created in the field, I am using illustration and animation as a method of analysis. Rather than mapping all the digital infrastructures in the area, which is a popular method amongst critical media artists and scientists, but would replicate the common birds-eye view on space that is so often blind to local circumstance and knowledges (Mattern 2016), or drawing network diagrams that mostly reduce socioecological relations to lines and boxes, I am attempting to illustrate the uneasy – [cont]

[Image description: faces with clouds for eyes and brains stare at phones over a background of binary lettering and the same multi-coloured loops and arcs. Lines from their phones and headphones connect to radio towers in the same city scape. The multi-coloured loops and arcs here take the form of power and data lines connecting the city.]

[cont] – connections and interrelations that I encounter in my field visits. Together with field recordings and interviews, the drawings are later animated.

With this project, I am moving under the broad disciplinary umbrella of (media) anthropology. Similarly to mapping and scientific illustration, the importance that is attributed to the use of visual material such as photographs or videos in the field has often been criticized in an effort to create distance from vision as a “chauvinistic, Western, colonial, and technified ‘gaze’” (Grasseni 2010, 3). Drawing as a method of analysis counters this gaze: The illustrations are subjective and deeply biased, and show the researcher’s – my own – perspective. They take time to create, lead me to take time to sit down, and let my hands think through (draw through) the message, the scene, the encounter, the idea. They are messy and faulty at their best, deeply personal at their worst, a DIY method to approach with caution; upon closer inspection, not all that different from researcher’s field notes that are such a common, but seldomly shared practice in anthropology. To me, they are the visualized process of thinking out loud (drawing out loud). In anthropological terms, the technique could be considered a form of participant observation: a way to examine, but also to take part in the cultural narratives and depictions of the digital age.

Coda

It is uncommon to end a contribution to a scientific conference with a personal admission, but considering that the topic is rather unconventional, perhaps the ending could be a little as well. Here is what I have to offer: I am often anxious about the scientificity and validity of drawing as a method. I worry that the practice is too subjective, the method too biased, and the results too incomparable – I fret about the absence of standardization while at the same time being deeply convinced that a softening of globalized standards and streamlined conformity is duly needed (in science as well as in network computing). In these moments of anxiety, there is one reassuring source of comfort, however: That this periodical doubt is what it might feel like to accept constantly shifting boundaries, unstable conditions, precarious nets of knowledges and a multiplicity of perspectives. In short, that perhaps this is what it might feel like to stay with the trouble (Haraway 2016).

Bibliography:

Bleichmar, Daniela. 2010. “Training the Naturalist’s Eye in the Eighteenth Century: Perfect Global Visions and Local Blind Spots.” In Skilled Visions: Between Apprenticeship and Standards, edited by Cristina Grasseni, 166–90. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.

Bradley, Mónica. 2021. “Illustrations and (L) Imitations in Western Art and Science: A Critical Biography of Intersections in the Co-Creation of Liberal Humanism.” Káñina 45 (2): 213–47.

Cubitt, Sean. 2017. Finite Media. Environmental Implications of Digital Technologies. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Grasseni, Cristina. 2010. Skilled Visions: Between Apprenticeship and Standards. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.

Haraway, Donna. 1988. “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective.” Feminist Studies 14 (3): 575.

———. 2016. Staying With the Trouble. Making Kin in the Chthulucene. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Hejnol, Andreas. 2017. “Ladders, Trees, Complexity, and Other Metaphors in Evolutionary Thinking”. In Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet, edited by Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson, Elaine Gan, and Nils Bubandt, G87-G102. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Hu, Tung-Hui. 2015. A Prehistory of the Cloud. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Latour, Bruno. 1986. “« Visualisation and Cognition: Drawing Things Together ».” Edited by H. Kuklick. Knowledge and Society Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present Volume 6: 1–40.

Mattern, Shannon. 2016. “Cloud and Field.” Places Journal, https://placesjournal.org/article/cloud- and-field/ (accessed February 2, 2022)

Pickles, John. 2004. A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping, and the Geo-Coded World. London and New York: Routledge.

Schranz, Christine (Ed). 2021. Shifts in Mapping: Maps as a Tool of Knowledge. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag.

Turnbull, David. 2010. “Maps and Plans in ‘Learning to See’: The London Underground and

Chartres Cathedral as Examples of Performing Design.” In Skilled Visions: Between Apprenticeship and Standards, edited by Cristina Grasseni, 125–42. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.

Vanessa Graf (she/her) is a writer and researcher at the Critical Media Lab Basel, where she is working on her PhD project Head in the Cloud as part of the MAKE/SENSE graduate school at FHNW Academy of Art and Design. She holds a Bachelor in Political Science from SciencesPo Paris and a Master in Media and Culture Studies from University of Art and Design Linz. Currently, she is supplementing her research with a Bachelor in Biology (ongoing) at University of Salzburg. In her research, she is interested in the interactions of (digital) technology with culture and ecology, in particular as mediated by narratives, metaphors, and sociotechnical imaginaries. Her practice-based research draws on approaches and sources from media theory/ecology, anthropology, art, literature, ecofeminism, and information technology. Her work has been exhibited on several occasions, such as at the Ars Electronica Festival and Biennale Warszawa, and she has received numerous prizes and scholarships for both her research and artistic work.

# Dangerously Inspired Yodels (DIY): A Meta Hybrid Academic Perzine About DIY Feminism

By: Anne Adkinson

[image description: title is hand drawn and next to an image of a hawk, and on top of an image of a staple remover.]

Hello and welcome!

[image description: page is collaged. Background is a weekly calendar with hand drawn images of birds.]

What is an academic perzine?

If I were to describe this thing to a friend, I would say, listen, I'm making something weird. Well, I might take a step back and add that I got a grant to fly to London to access the zi.ne collections of two archives, so I could look at riot grrrl zines from the UK side of the movement, a movement that sustained itself through the early 2000's there. Honestly, I wasn't sure what I was looking for. I'd written the grant in 2019 for a trip planned in June of 2020. (It didn't happen!) And in the time that passed a lot of other things did-a global pandemic, an attempted govt insurrection, my personal loss of faith in people's ability to collectively take care of each other, my waning trust in my employer (their initial failure to close the library when we begged them to close, a series of poorly executed and communicated safety policies, their decision to withhold raises during that time, etc etc). My home life changed too: my partner stopped working in the restaurant industry to focus on her solo business, and also, we had a baby(!!!) a baby??! That’s right!!

[image description: page is collaged: text is on top of hand drawn images of birds, dandelions, and clouds.]

All that to say

I was no longer sure what I was looking for in the riot grrrl collection at the Women's Library at the London School of Economics and the London College of Communications by the time I finally got there in May of 2022. I decided I would do the kind of open-ended investigative archival work that starts with a question. Then I'd experience the zines and go from there. Another thing changed since applying for the grant: I got tenure and promotion. This last change means the pressure is off me to produce a particular kind of article. I do still plan to write a peer-reviewed academic article eventually. But when I saw the pitch for a DIY Methods Unconference focusing on zines, I knew this was the best way for me to roll my sleeves up and get acquainted with the material.

In this project, I am reading riot grrrl zines from two UK archives and processing my reactions directly onto the page in the aesthetic form & rhetoric of a zine (you’re holding it!). The format and style of my response is a combination of academic literary criticism and personal memoir. It’s the most meta: a zine about zines that uses structural styles familiar to riot grrrl zines to explore their rhetorical effectiveness. I respond to my academic(ish) critique through first person narrative familiar to perzines, mostly in handwriting. But very quickly the lines got blurry and I could no longer distinguish academic from memoir tone of voice and at that point I was unable to delineate those boundaries through typeface. Let’s just call this an academic perzine.

So…

[image description: text in on top of a dotted background.]

I believe this (a DIY creation) is the most honest and pure way to write about these historical works, or at least the best way for me to. If you want to know more about the theory and thoughts behind the making of this zine as a diy critical method, read the special note in the envelope in the back.

First, some biographical details: I wrote my first zine in 1993 as a high school student. I’ve returned to zines off and on since then---my most recent zine hails from 2021. I’m a white, queer, nonbinary person. My favourite hobbies are cycling, sewing, collage-making, hiking, writing, and kitchen dancing. I’m an academic librarian who works for the City University of New York as an Associate Professor & Instruction Librarian. I have degrees from Smith, Queens (CUNY), and Sarah Lawrence.

But I don’t need credentials to write this. Zines are for everyone. – Izzy Hays (they/them)

+ created in June 2022 in Brooklyn, NY for the DIY Methods Unconference 2022

+ made possible by the PSC CUNY Research Award

+ previous academic works under the name Anne Hays

+ previous zines under the names Alex & AEH

[image description: drawing of a pair of scissors next to a table of contents taken from an unlisted source]

How to make it:

HOW TO make a meta (self-referential) hybrid academic perzine in one month for a DIY Methods Unconference Deadline

[image description: drawing of a long-arm stapler.]

STEP ONE

Become obsessed with your project so that even while you have NO TIME to work on this, your brain is mulling over the details of your project behind the scenes. Example scenario: just hypothetically, let's say you're holding your 6 month old baby who just learned to reach and grab and wants to eat everything (including your face!) so with your left arm you're holding her in your lap but your right arm is feverishly jotting notes on a steno pad while your baby grabs at and tries to eat the air-side end of the pen. Those notes are gold, and evidence that your mind has been working while you're sleeping (if you can call it sleep).

TWO

Ask your department for research time off to complete this project, given the publish or perish nature of your work, and that admin desires more output from you. Know that your dept will consider your request to be too late in the academic cycle, whilst also admitting they have no idea what the cycle is, since "our department is so different" and no one can remember anything that happened pre­pandemic. BUT THIS PROJECT IS DIY which means you use one office day per week to type and print text like a teenager stealing prints from office max, or whatever. If you can't get time off work for research then use your work time for research, is what I'm gesturing at here.

THREE

Feel alive inside because finally your academic project also keeps your creative side sated!!! My job requires two master's degrees to even interview for the position, but my second masters (aside from Library Science) is in creative writing-so I feel like I'm getting away with something in terms of employment. But! Am I? I'm not able to count creative works towards my academic output in my dept (in English or PCA, one can). I'm not complaining, it's fine-do I sound complainty right now? Why would I do that when I'm FEELING ALIVE while at work, an amazing happenstance.

HOW TO HOW TO HOW TO:

DIY Instructional zines have been (and remain) a common style of discourse in zine-making. I haven’t seen academic articles addressing this phenomenon (perhaps because it’s so ubiquitous?) but zines are a space where community members share information about a wide range of craft projects and professional work that could be done oneself.

For example, Riot Grrrl Leeds and Bradford\* (circa 1993) includes an article explaining "How to Make Records and Tapes and CDs," complete with sections on creating a master, how to manufacture and press vinyl, and how to distribute your own products. In Riot Grrrl· A Girl Track Record Zine circa 2002, there are two DIY instruction articles; one describes how to create your own geocities website (Gahl Nostalgia!), and the other shows the reader how to create their own reusable cloth menstrual pads. The DIY menstrual pads essay is extensive-six pages long and complete with a list of materials, detailed instructions, and illustrations of how it should turn out. The intro note starts by saying "getting your period can actually be pretty cool" and re-signifies menstruation as a fun, crafty, stylish, and potentially community-building event, if you make pads out of fabric you actually like and make a party of it with friends.

I'm reminded of 2015, when NYC subways were plastered with Thinx posters advertising menstrual panties and featured bold messaging that didn't shy from the concept of blood. The MTA initially told Thinx their ads were too suggestive and couldn't run because they included the word , "period" and featured images of grapefruit (the ads ran, after the company called the media and the MTA's sexist double-standard went viral). \*\*\*I can't help but wonder if some of the clever women working to break down sexist stigmas, obstruct men from profiting off of women's health, and create menstrual solutions that are nontoxic ended up in, companies like Thinx. Or maybe not because they're still happily sewing cloth pads like feminist DIY champs.

\*Various. Riot Grrrl Leeds and Bradford, (n.d).

\*\*Various. Riot Grrrl: A Girl Track Record Zi.ne, (n.d).

\*\*\* Krantz, Rachel. “Thinx Ads Are on the Subway- But That’s Not All” Bustle, November 9, 2015.

In the zine Grrls World [sic-they only use two r's, an unknown author includes an ironic "how to" article that satirizes the prototypical DIY Instructional articles found in personal zines. In this DIY PLASTIC SURGERY GUIDE she breaks down some handy, inexpensive ways that women can perform DIY surgeries on themselves in order to perpetuate patriarchal norms. Tips include dermabrasion, breast implants, and liposuction, the last of which contains particularly biting suggestions. After suggesting "you" cut an incision and insert a vacuum cleaner nozzle inside "your" body, she comments, "the amount is up to you, but be careful not to go too far-hoover bags only hold so much! (Also, removing too much liquid from your body can send your whole system into shock, causing unfortunate side-effects, such as death.)" This satirical set of instructions uses the "how to" structure that's culturally normative within perzine rhetoric to interrogate sexist cultural norms outside riot grrrl culture. This incisive criticism effectively operates on numerous levels at once. Next to these typewritten instructions are cut & pasted magazine headlines that hover along the bottom portion of the page, reminding the reader of mainstream messages directed to women's bodies, such as "Fat Removal!"; ''Too small"; French style body"; ''Too Big"; "Perfume Tips for a More Kissable You." Effectively, the satirical instructions communicate directly to/against their source .n . mainstream magazines.

-Riot Girl Manchester. Grrls World, (n.d.).

[image description: handwritten text on the right side of the page and bottom of the page, illegible for transcription.]

How Riot Grrrl Zines embrace DIY methods:

[image description: image of a lightbulb next to page title.]

DIY methods (specifically zine-making) and riot grrrl philosophies go hand in hand. An unidentified author writes in Rioc Grrrl Track Record, "Basically each girl decides for herself what she makes of riot grrrl but it's based upon DIY practices (do-it-yourself: it doesn't matter if you don't have the duration or experience to do something, d.i.y. is about having passion and doing it" (p. 23). Attaching DIY ethos to RG principles, she continues, "Ours is creative activism, resistance with a snarl, future self-esteem. We make art and politics as we make our voices and experiences heard."/

To my mind, the DC chapter's media blackout of 1992 (depicted in detail in Sara Marcus's Girls co Che Fronc) is the most clear, concrete example of DIY activism. They explicitly refused to give interviews to mainstream media outlets after a string of glossy magazine articles misinterpreted riot grrrl's message, betrayed the girls who they interviewed, or otherwise mangled the message.

In her book Writing a Riot, Rebekah J. Buchanan writes, "One of the best examples of how riot grrrl created new rhetorical situations and positioned themselves in opposition to mainstream media is when Riot Grrrl DC called for I a media blackout, using their zines to spread the I messages" (p. 58). Zines became a way to control the means of expression and production-they were literally doing it themselves. The downside, as I Sara Marcus describes, is that media exposure brought RG to girls in smaller towns who didn't previously know about the movement, and a media blackout meant avoiding spreading the message (at least in that way).

[image description: two small images of scissors are at the side of the page, with a drawing of a kitchen at the bottom of the page.]

The few girls who agreed to interviews post-blackout made waves, created internal discord, and in at least one case (Jessica Hopper, who spoke with a reporter from Newsweek) were ostracized from the community because of it.

Reading about RG infighting, the media blackout – and the fallout that created an internal backlash- makes me really sad, especially after spending so much time immersed in the actual, physical riot grrrl zines from the UK archives. I’m surprised by how gutted and disappointed I feel (a frog in the throat) over ideas and words from 20 years ago.

I can completely sympathize with the RG’s confusion and sense of betrayal from media outlets depicting a flattened, cardboard version of a movement that was clearly so raw and intense and personal for them. Zines are publications, but they occupy a nether-space between personal diary and published (polished) magazine articles-perzine writers use them as a space to try out ideas in real time, to make bold proclamations but messy ones that are inherently unformed, unfinished. \*

\* like a total asshole I’m going to cite my damn self here.

[Hays, Anne. “Reading the Margins Embedded Narratives in Feminist Personal Zines.” Journal of Popular Culture 50, no. 1 (217): 86-108J

[image description: page is collaged: images of sound and recording equipment are layered underneath the text.]

While I was personally writing zines during RG’s biggest years (1992-95) I was not part of Riot Grrrl. I was part of a male dominated skater punk scene and had vaguely heard of RG but assumed it was too cool for me. I didn’t have direct access. But, I do have a story about writing zines, my expectation for the audience of those zines, and experiencing a head-whirling reality shift. During my high school years (especially ’93-’95) I wrote personal zines and sold them for a dollar each to classmates around school. I published them and distributed them IN MY SCHOOL but nonetheless I understood my audience to be my peers- the other students and other punk kinds in my scene. As I look back this seems naïve, but when I heard a history at that high school had gotten copies of my zines and handed them out in class as part of an assignment, I was shocked and dumbfounded.

It felt like a breach of a silent code; a school assignment was part if the dominant structure, part of the patriarchy, and part of an adult world that I saw myself as maneuvering. Outside of (and against). I couldn’t believe that professor even knew about my zines , and I felt mortified that students were researching my personal thoughts/feelings for class. My perzine was personal but not overly so- I didn’t write about sexual assault, for instance. Still, it makes a gut-level sense Why RG members would struggle to read about depictions of their private revolution, complete with their own vulnerabilities, in such public spaces as Newsweek (and through an outside narrator’s lens), even while voicing bold external politics and a desire to change the mainstream in their zines. This was before social media started to erode the barriers between personal expression and public spaces, before young people could be expected to be “media savvy” as a method of activism.

[image description: hand drawn background of grid paper.]

Another way in which I can relate to zines as an unfinished and molting vehicle for self-expression is when I started writing perzines as an “adult”, after taking a break from them. At around 28 or so (?) I embarked on a deep-dive excavation of my gender identity through writing about it and I chose the zine as a safe® space than edited publications I would otherwise write for.

A published essay with an editor and copyeditor demands a tidy ending, a narrative arc, a confident and known sense of self. A first draft may be an exploration and method of learning, but the final draft is the result of the author’s being known. A trustworthy narrator in memoir is one who is ten steps ahead of their reader, while the author of a diary expresses ideas for the very first time, ideas that are likely to change and evolve. I needed a space in between, a space where I was learning myself through writing, and “publishing” it in a form that I expected my reader audience to understand was unfinished, understand as a state of molting.

That’s what zines give the writer and give the reader.

I could pop in 100 citations here from academics who have covered all of this terrain, but you know what? Fuck that- I’m telling you this is true because I’ve lived it.

So if a glossy mag editor had somehow found my zine and published parts of it as an example of how genderqueer people feel…I think it would have tripped me up. (But also- it would have been ok, because I’ve also worn hats as a writer and editor of formally published works. I would have understood multiple sides of that process. I could have absorbed it.) I guess what I’m saying is

[image description: photograph of a tape recorder.]

I can both sympathize with the riot grrrls who felt betrayed by media depictions AND can sympathize with grrrls who left the group in frustration over being silenced by the leaders of an ostensibly leaderless organization. All of these points of view are understandable to me – maybe that’s why reading about it makes me feel like crying!

Perhaps the most uplifting way to end this section is with a quote from the zine Riot Grrrl: A Girl Track Record Zine, circa 2002 and published by a group in the UK many years after RG tensions in the US. “I’m not totally against using the mainstream media. I think if we featured in something like J-17 it would undoubtedly be awful. I know I wouldn’t be too happy with it as an accurate, politicised account of our aims. Yet I’m wary of remaining subterranean. RG would survive any media onslaught- it has in the past, it has now with sporadic press interest, and it will in the future, Cos it can’t be grasped, destroyed. Use it once

Use it once and it keeps forever. My thoughts on this is that I want more girl whispers OK teen mags sell out or whatever but we would reach a critical mass if this could catch even the slight attentions of one girl enough to follow it through check out some websites maybe find some girls near there then this gain far outweighs my initial problems with the representation maybe I'm naive but I want the risk.” (p.15)

Yeah. I can relate to that, too, the sense of zines being worth it. How will readers of this academic perzine hybrid Zine read this as I DIY method, as I deconstructed space to interrogate watts both inside and outside the self? HOW?

[image description: handwritten ribbon with the text “the end”.]

Speed Zine

c/o sleep deprivation and caffeine

Hey! How fast should I make myself write this? I found a zine in the archive, the pink surf speed zine, which the author wrote in 15 minutes!!! What a wild challenge. Here goes nothing... Sets timer for 15 minutes and here's a stream of consciousness

I'm not starting a revolution, nor am I super closely involved in any current revolutions that I inspirit support. I'm doing this other thing I'm raising a kid. So, I'm 45. And I have a 6-month-old baby. It's an experience I really didn't expect to have- I had been married to someone I tried to never think about, an academic woman who did not want children and was very vocal about that. I was like, well, I'm ambivalent so I guess we won't have kids. I could have known we were not compatible a few months into our dating life, when she asked me what I thought the meaning of life was. I said, “to have fun” and my ex was completely flummoxed by my answer. She deeply believed the meaning of life was to learn and that to commit oneself to learning was the single most important thing one could do. And my feeling was, that only makes sense if you find learning fun. (A related red flag- I love the Cyndi Lauper song “girls just want to have fun” and she hated that song.) LOL.

[image description: side bar: handwritten text entitled “What are we doing here” that is illegible for transcription.]

Anyway, we finally broke up when she had an affair with her personal trainer in Algeria, where she was dutifully studying some stuff for her PhD but I was already unhappy before she even left town. She was consumed by her studies, and would burst into rage whenever I made noise that broke her concentration (my typewriter, for instance). She also despised weakness and saw my emotions as problems rather than the ordinary human feelings. She seemed freaked out if I ever got sad, specifically, and seemed to wish I'd snap out of it. In the midst of that, I quit drinking, a process that as it turns out commonly opens people up to the avalanche of feelings they'd been repressing for years by drinking- it's like alcohol covers your feelings with a thick blanket, and then sobriety ribs the blanket away. My emotions were super incompatible with her stern intellectualism, so increasingly I turned to friends for all my real conversations. It became noticeable to me that my friends were providing all my emotional support, something I wished I could share with my partner. So when she cheated I was like BYEEEEEE and started my life over. All I can say about that is I wish I had left her sooner.

And so! I met a lovely sensitive and thoughtful woman who loves kids and fun and feelings and dancing to goofy songs. She's kind, and sweet, and comforting. Fast forward a bunch of years and yeah- we’re married and we have a baby. It's funny because I guess my lifestyle is very normative and mainstream but I feel like I'm living a personal revolution. It feels very radical to drop everything and focus my attention on someone so small and wild and unique. I'm determined to break the patterns of dynamics in my family by raising this new life of a thoughtful, sober, self-aware queer person. And even though I'm older and could regret my stumbly, bumping road to this place, I can't because right now is the moment I became ready to take this challenge on. Well, 15 months ago. That's when I became ready. I wasn't ready at 27, or 30, or even 35 period now I get to share all the joy and kitchen dancing I have in me with my wife and hilarious baby.

Lists :

[image description: square with the word “lists” written three times in different sizes.]

(Some) nonfiction books that present as Hybrid Genre Academic Memoirs:

Biography study scholar Anna Poletti situates the list in zine-making “as a representational strategy that performs the self and its construction within the mundane, everyday practices of popular culture.”

Scott Stossel (2014) My Age of Anxiety: Fear, Hope, Dread, and the Search for Peace of Mind. Stossel explores the history of the medical and psychology fields’ understanding of anxiety. These academically oriented details are interspersed with his own personal exploration of his extreme anxiety, memoir-style.

Maggie Nelson (2016) The Argonauts. Nelson explores motherhood, gender identity, sexuality, and sexual desire through an academic lens (many, many quotes) while also sharing her own personal journey through the same topics, mainly through memoir writing about her relationship with her queer filmmaker partner.

Leslie Jamison (2019) The Recovering: Intoxication and its Aftermath. Jamison guides readers through a historical and literary exploration of addiction and recovery narratives, which she interweaves with a personal narrative about her own battle with alcoholism (and sobriety).

Jeremy Atherton LIn (2021) Gay Bar: Why We Went Out. Lin narrates his personal connection to gay bars (very graphically- it’s a sexy memoir) in London and San Francisco while deep-diving into the historical and cultural significance of the gay bar over the past century.

 I Feel Grateful:

[image description: handwritten text: “Hello and welcome to the end of this zine! THX (thanks) for reading!!

If this were a riot grrrl zine I would

Include my actual personal address and phone number

Ask you to join a band with me (should we?)

Invite you to mail me a blank cassette tape so I can share my band’s music with you

I’m not going to do these things. The most recent songs I’ve written are ones I sing to my baby, Their titles are “Squawk Squawk I’m a Baby” and a maladaptive chant that runs through the vowel sounds. Send me a cassette if you’re into that.]

The Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade while I was writing this. So things are not fine. How do we find hope?

Dangerously Inspired Yodels has been inspired by:

Brim, Matt, and Amin Ghaziani. Imagining Queer Methods, New York: NYU Press, 2019.

Buchanan, Rebekah J. Writing a Riot. New York, NY: Peter Lang Verlag, 2018.

Hays, Anne. “Reading the Margins: Embedded Narratives in Feminist Personal Zines.” Journal of Popular Culture 50, no. 1 (2017): 86-108J

Krantz, Rachel. “THINX Ads Are on the Subway- but That’s Not ALL.” Bustle, November 9, 2015

Marcus, Sara. Girls to the Front: the true story of the Riot Grrrl revolution. New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2011.

Poletti, Anna. “Where the Popular Meets the Mundane: The Use of Lists in Personal Zines.” Canadian Review of American Studies 38, no. 3 (2008): 333-349

Riot Grrrl Manchester. Grrls World, (n.d.)

Riot Grrrl Leeds and Bradford. Riot Grrrl Leeds and Bradford, (n.d.)

Various. Riot Grrrl: A Girl Track Record Zine. (n.d.)

Dangerously Inspired Yodels Letter Insert

Today’s Expenses

Hello dear readers,

[Image description: A cat saying “hi”.]

YY/MM/DD Item Expenses Card Cash

Welcome to this back corner of the zine, where we will speak in hushed and conspiratorial tones about what it took to put this zine together! I’m so glad you found your way to this special envelope!!!

Firstly! Every time I’ve written an article about zines, I’ve had to include a definition of zines for the uninitiated reader, and it often bums me out how niche zines are that this definition is necessary. In this project I was excited to NOT define the zine at all. I hope that readers will know what they’re holding, and if not, don’t worry – there are plenty of places online to look it up. I made another to not include a definition of, or history about, riot grrl as my subject matter. This one seemed dicey to me, but in a mere 20 pages of text/images, I didn’t feel I could use limited space that way. People (like Sara Marcus) have written entire books about riot grrrl history, so it you’re interested in the topic you should definitely check her book out. I may have mistakenly included too little contextual information this zine, but I hoper it made sense. Did it?

Some nerdy craft details: I made this zine using cut & paste craft techniques, which means I printed all the text, cut it out with scissors, then taped it down onto my master pages with tape. I love stationary, so a lot of the backgrounds are layers of stamped ink and various types of paper I’ve collected. I often wish I lived anywhere else in the world where A and B sizes of paper norm – what a bounty of sizing options that would bring! As it stands, I chose legal size paper b/c it’s easier to print cheaply (very impt for zines to be cheap for the buyer) but would give me more marginal space to include notes to the side of my essays/ My scanner I not that large, though, so annoyingly I had to “scan” every page using my phone. Listen, this is a marvel of technology, but the downside is not being to tweak the scanner settings much. So there are dark lines beneath cut & pasted text where shadows live. I usually don’t like to see any lines on the page that I didn’t intentionally include, especially because I get a kick out of geometric patterns in my backgrounds. But HEY. Part of DIY style is using what you’ve got on hand, so that’s what I went with.

Notes on theorizing “methods”: Since you’re here, I also wanted to address deeper questions about the craft of this zine, and how it strikes me as an embodiment of a DIY method for examining riot grrrl zines. The blind reviewers who reviewed my proposal for this Unconference suggested my project seemed weak on theory, that it might not directly address the “methods” aspects of a methods conference. They were totally right, but I was naively thinking this zine could speak for itself and I felt the way I imagine a painter could feel about being asked to provide an artist’s statement. This imaginary painter would step back and wave a had toward the painting saying, “but don’t you see?” But I’m thankful for the comment, because3 their critique gives me a chance to articulate what DIY Methods could possibly mean (to me) and how my understanding certainly informs the object you’re holding.

In considering DIY methods, I can’t help but also consider Queer Methods, a burgeoning framework introduced in 2010 (Queer Methods and Methodologies) and more recently articulated by Matt Brim and Amin Ghaziana in their book Imagining Queer Methods (2019). In their introduction, they include a quote by Jane Ward, who speaks of “queer” as “defined by its celebrated failure to adhere to stable classificatory systems or be contained by disciplinary boundaries” (5). This poses a direct affront to “methodology,” which relies on orderly systems, protocols, and established, reproducible techniques for gathering and synthesizing information. Brim and Ghaziana recommend a loose structure of fluid ways of thinking that can help research of queer theory avoid replicating dominant structures that render queer lives unintelligible, ands suggest that “queer methods can access hidden histories by negation, by emphasizing instability and the disruptive and by using deconstructive practices.” (14)

“Do it yourself” is a commend (or a suggestion?), a craft-practice that speaks handily for itself, while “DIY methods” could require some squinting and head scrat6ching to make sense of. DIY theories and practices, like queer theories and methods, are inherently mess, unfinished, and unconventional. In the very first sentence of DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture, Amy Spencer writes, “The DIY movement is about using anything you can get you hands on to shape your own cultural identity; your own version of whatever you think is missing in mainstream culture.” Hmm, as a queer person I can relate to that comment on numerous levels. Queer methods and DIY methods are certainly not the same, but I find their overlapping quandaries informative. Unlike queer theory, DIY methods must be explicitly a-professional, and DIY attitudes cross-pollinate through a number of disparate American cultures, includi9ng punk rock (and riot grrrl zines) but also areas such as…Mormon women’s scrapbooking, the shows “Car Talk” and “This Old House,” pirate radio, self-published novels (50 Shades of Grey?!), YouTube content creators, and etsy shops (this last example is slippery). Arguably, any unmediated solo enterprise could b e an example of doing it oneself. With such a wild variety of examples, how can one articulate a theory of DIY-ness?

Because DIY is a craft-practice as well as a way7 of life, I would argue that the “doing” is the “method,” similar to how queering (as a verb) is an expression of doing queerness in thew world outside one’s bedroom. But if methods are an expression of DIY theory, then one might add a layer of self-co0nsciousness or intentionality to the practice. One method for uncovering deeper critical truths about a cultural object could be to interrogate that object through a messy, inherently unfinished, nonprofessionally edited, DIY vehicle for self-expression such as the paper zine. This is what lead mne to make a self-referential zine that both critically analyzes my subject (British riot grrrl zines) and comments on that analysis through the practice of making a perzine. I really could have made this zine three times as long and still had more to say, so the imposition of the conference deadline forced me to stop here. But even this fact, I would argue, is an aspect of the DIY nature of the project. It’s a collection of first impressions/ It’s a snapshot in time. We’ll all keep thinking beyond this.

-Izzy

# Data Collection as a Game - A Brief Creative Research Guide

By: Christine Tomlinson and Mike Romain

Games as Research:

Games can have a number of purposes outside of leisure and recreation (Castronova & Knowles, 2015). Most notably, although they tend to be linked to digital games specifically, “serious games” are an opportunity to use games in medicine (Graafland et al., 2014) or to teach and train new skills (Romero, Usart, & Ott, 2014). In addition to these increasingly studied applications, games and game-like processes can be used to assist with research and data collection in engaging and creative ways.

There are, currently, a number of data collection methods that require creative approaches and interactive roles for participants, including cultural probe kits and the use of vignettes to investigate how people think and feel. These more interactive approaches can be great for uncovering the unexpected. In similar ways to ethnographic observation, things you had not yet thought to ask or were not prepared to encounter can be illuminated when people work through or directly experience different activities.

This guide will provide some foundational considerations and information for another approach to creative data collection that engages respondents in unique ways. Here, we will discuss forming a game to aid in data collection to explore respondents’ feelings, opinions, and thought processes in a co-creative and exploratory way. Due to the authors’ backgrounds, the examples will also be game themed.

This guide will first discuss the kinds of methods that this approach draws from, provide some insights into why a game might work for you, give tips on how to create the game, and expand upon some additional considerations and limitations.

[Image Description: A “GUIDE ROADMAP” of 6 steps “Methods Background,” “Why Make a Game?,” “Turning Data Collection into a Game,” “Creating the Game,” “Recording and Retrieving Results,” “Complications and Potential Problems”.]

Background and Practical History:

Turning data collection into a game borrows from a range of methodological traditions across various fields. It can also be combined with other approaches, like interviews and journaling to facilitate further insights and allow participants to build on their experience. Focus groups might also be of interest to introduce a multiplayer or collaborative effort. For the purposes of this guide, we will center our discussion primarily on single-player approaches.

Games on their own can be opportunities to explore notions of the self and identity (Consalvo, 2013) and using games to gather research draws from other generative, creative, and people-focused research methods. While game design and creation are an important element of this process, the method also draws from cultural probes and probe kits, surveys, and the use of vignettes in research.

Cultural Probe Kits

As a technique that began in design, cultural probes add a unique interactive element to research. While the method is gaining popularity and expanding well beyond its original uses, the approach was developed initially to explore design in cases where designers needed to find out more information about their target audience or users (McDougall & Fels, 2010). Increasingly, design-based approaches and the broader concepts of cultural probes have been engaged with by “usability and user experience researchers, ethnographers, sociologists… and ‘practice-based’ research communities…” (Černevičiūtė & Liebutė, 2022, p. 170).

Pairing this approach with other fields, however, can be tricky. There is an emphasis on exploration and investigation, but in ways that highlight uncertainty in results and analysis (Černevičiūtė & Liebutė, 2022). Because this method allows participants to explore, play, and investigate, the information provided may be more useful for establishing subsequent data collection via other methods, including surveys, interviews, or observations as some examples.

The things that contribute to the uncertainty of cultural probes and cultural probe kits are also what make them good for exploration, creativity, and co-creation with participants, which can illuminate behaviors, actions, thoughts, and attitudes that may not have been anticipated. They are also able to be deployed in spaces where observation or other intrusive methods may be difficult to implement without influencing your participants, do not rely on participants reporting what they might do, and allow respondents to explore their own thought processes in an engaging method that can be fun to take part in (McDougall & Fels, 2010).

Cultural probes and probe kits are often comprised of physical materials that can be mailed to participants and use creative means of finding out what people think, how they engage with concepts or activities, and how they navigate scenarios and proposed situations. Depending on the aims and goals of the researcher(s), cultural probe kits can resemble something similar to journaling, but the main goal is to have something interactive that allows respondents to assess, consider, and build upon prompts.

Sidebar: For a more comprehensive look at cultural probes, see” McDougall and Fels (2010) or van Leeuwen, Karnik, and Keane, (2011).

Surveys:

Surveys are a widely used approach to gathering attitudinal data and – depending on the sampling approach – can yield a very broad range of information that can be generalized to a population. Participants have an opportunity to directly give feedback and information in response to set questions, whether they have bounded options or some degree of open-endedness. While surveys tend to have breadth given that they can cover a wide range of topics for a large number of people, they do lack the depth of smaller, longer-form, and more open-ended approaches to gathering data directly from respondents like focus groups (Adams, 2015).

Surveys can be excellent tools for investigating social questions, seeking more information on social behaviors and processes (Brückner, 2017), and attributing these findings to a broader population (Keiding & Louis, 2018). Generalizability, however, is influenced by how representative the sample is and what the response rate is (Keiding & Louis, 2018). Biases from how questions are phrased and other design elements can influence results, as can biasing from your participants themselves through aspects like their interpretation of questions or recall of events (Slattery et al., 2011).

Vignettes:

Vignettes have a broad history and use in research. They are a good way to investigate an expansive range of social experiences, landscapes, and interpretations (Barter & Renold, 2000). Like cultural probes and probe kits, vignettes offer interactive opportunities for respondents to work with stories or images and react to them, providing insights into their thoughts and feelings in ways that might be missed by interviews, surveys, or even observation.

Vignettes are particularly useful because they allow researchers to introduce situations and concepts for their participants to consider. This means that care needs to be taken when developing vignettes for this purpose. The stories or images should reflect the aims and goals of the research project (Hughes & Huby, 2004).

As with all research methods, vignettes do come with their own difficulties and limitations. Like other methods that rely on participant recall, including surveys and interviews, respondents need to remember events accurately and completely or guess how they would feel or behave (Barter & Renold, 2000). Images and stories can also influence participant perceptions or understandings and this method likely needs to be paired with another approach to investigate responses further (Hughes & Huby, 2004).

While they do a good job at tapping into emotional and attitudinal responses, vignettes also present difficulties around situational interpretations and – for better or worse – give respondents room for applying their own understandings (Barter & Renold, 2000). Because of these factors and elements, combining vignettes with other methods, such as focus groups, play, or fill-in-the-blank exercises can produce more useful findings (Barter & Renold, 1999; Barter & Renold, 2000).

Combining with Other Methods:

In many instances, the methods discussed above can benefit from being combined with other methods and data collection strategies. Each, in its own ways, can miss information or leave room for incomplete accounts or unexplored details. With that in mind, since the game draws on these methods to varying degrees, it is important to keep in mind that there may be gaps and supplementing with additional methods may be useful for pulling your project together.

Okay, but Why Make a Game?:

Interactive methods of data collection can produce surprising, unanticipated, and expansive findings. Combining the approaches of cultural probes, surveys, and vignettes while exploring more potential applications of serious games provides new possibilities for interacting with and collecting information from respondents to highlight social insights, emotions, and behaviors.

Sidebar: For more information on designing for less-than-recreational settings and purposes, see: Denning, Shostack, and Kahno (2014).

A game can add new dynamics and elements to your data collection. Players not only need to consider hypotheticals, as they might with vignettes, but must actively make decisions – albeit ones with fictional stakes. These cases of “doing” can still be influenced by other factors, especially if you implement obvious point systems (where players can earn or lose points based on actions or responses), but this still illuminates motivations, interests, inclinations, and thought processes while your respondents interact with and navigate the game. With a mixture of methods, respondents can also talk through, explain, or further evaluate their choices and the reasons they made them.

Some additional methods that can help further illuminate processes and choices made during play are focus groups, interviews, surveys, and journaling. Journaling is a good way to assess how respondents perceived the choices they made, and their reasons for making them, in a space that may feel more secure. This can also allow participants to create their own stories and expand on their interpretations of what happened in the game. This approach increases the potential for co-creation and allows participants to expand on and further explore their experience with the game and the content being investigated through it.

Games provide spaces and opportunities for unique viewpoints and introspective thought. This can be considered, in part, through the perspective of gaming literacy. One main takeaway from this idea is that games provide new perspectives and approaches to look at or think about the world. This gives researchers new ways to look at data collection and allows participants to engage in play that gives them a chance to reconsider, reconfigure, and reassess their approach to sharing information and exploring hypothetical scenarios.

Sidebar: Gaming as a Different Perspective

“Gaming literacy turns this inward-looking focus inside-out. Rather than addressing the meanings that only arise inside the magic circle of a game, it asks how games relate to the world outside the magic circle — how game playing and game design can be seen as models for learning and action in the real world. It asks, in other words, not What does gaming look like? but instead: What does the world look like from the point of view of gaming?” (Zimmerman, 2013, p. 156)

Gaming as a Different Perspective:

“Gaming literacy turns this inward-looking focus inside-out. Rather than addressing the meanings that only arise inside the magic circle of a game, it asks how games relate to the world outside the magic circle — how game playing and game design can be seen as models for learning and action in the real world. It asks, in other words, not What does gaming look like? but instead: What does the world look like from the point of view of gaming?” (Zimmerman, 2013, p. 156)

Turning Data Collection into a Game:

As with any approach to data collection, several considerations need to be made while putting things together and moving your project forward. What questions do you want to answer? What does your population – and your sample – look like? Would your project be best served using mixed methods? Here are some brief methodological considerations, although more specific game-related issues and approaches will be discussed further below.

Consider Your Population/Sample:

As with any other research approach and in addition to recruitment considerations, one major thing that will determine how you set up and approach your game will be your population and sample. To bring things back to game literacy for a moment, you should consider how the respondents’ knowledge of and experience with games (Zimmerman, 2013) will influence their participation. What are the games and rule systems your population is likely to be familiar with? This will give you a good baseline for the kinds of games you might want to introduce as a data collection strategy.

Keep Potential Biases in Mind:

This goes for any method, especially those where you are giving respondents questions to consider and respond to. Think about how you set your game up, how you frame and phrase scenarios, and where biases might be encountered. As with interviews or surveys, you might frame something in a way that biases or influences your respondent. If you implement a point system, consider also how respondents might play to “win” or achieve a particular outcome. Having other methods included and using that space to allow respondents to explain their process or to talk to participants about their experiences, choices, and motivations can be useful not only for expanding upon their answers and actions, but also as a kind of debrief for the game.

Consider Your Skillset:

You will also need to consider your skills in addition to your goals. Are you adept at programming? Would you be able to use software like Unity and code in C# to create a digital game? Or would you be more comfortable with software that offers a potential of less coding, like Twine? Or is a physical game – like a card, board, or tabletop game – more aligned with your skills and interests? These are all important factors in determining what kind of game to make, in what format, and using what materials or programs.

What do you Want to Send Respondents?:

This question is important to consider as you determine the best approach to designing, implementing, and analyzing your game-related data. Depending on your skillset and how you hope to interact with your respondents, there are a few options that we will recommend. For physical card games, physical space interactions are an option, but as with any other method, will limit you in terms of your sample and scope. This may also reduce the benefits of probe kits that frequently allow respondents to complete activities in spaces where they are comfortable. For digital games, you may want to consider using a game hosting space, including itch.io (discussed further below). There are also options for hosting your game on a server to allow for multiplayer and tracking options, but this is beyond the scope of this guide.

Creating the Game:

Knowing what you are looking for and who you need to talk to is a great first step, but you also need to determine the best game for your needs. This is where your goals, creativity, and skillsets come together. Now, it is important to think about how to best achieve your goals while engaging your respondents in a way that is generative and opens more avenues for exploration.

Types of Game:

Although the options available are numerous, it is important to think about what kind of game is going to work best for your approach and your skills. Will you want your respondents to have a physical card game to manipulate and use? Will it make more sense to keep things digital? What technology do you have access to in order to create the game? How can you best distribute your game materials? What will work for collecting and analyzing your data?

This guide will cover a few potential options, mostly from single-player (or single respondent) perspectives, but they can be adapted to introduce a collaborative and/or focus group method. These can and likely should be paired with other methods as well to gain more insights and information from your respondents, whether that involves reflection journals, interviews, surveys, or observation.

Physical Card Games:

This approach is likely to be least tricky for creating your game/method. Once you pick an approach and a way to design – whether that is using some kind of software, creating cards by hand, or sending along a pre-made card game that can be used for your purposes – you just need to establish your aesthetic, rules, and a way to print and/or distribute.

Physical card game approaches can vary in form, from providing players with randomized scenario cards that they need to respond to with randomized response cards to giving players matching tasks to providing them cards to build their own story based on what they gravitate toward.

Digital Card Games:

For this type of game, it will necessarily be more time intensive. This approach will require using game development software, doing some amount of programming, and likely running more extensive playtests. One of the ways to achieve creating a digital card game for your participants is to work with Unity, a free-to-use game engine/creation software.

This does have a somewhat steep learning curve for people with no coding experience and uses C# as its programming language. There are numerous free online tutorials for using Unity, however, and guides to making different types of card games using this software. For the purposes of this guide, we will discuss a simpler version of card game creation in Unity.

This approach can also range in complexity, from allowing your respondents to create a story in the game by producing situation cards that they need to respond to or establishing a story for your players where they need to appropriately react to scenarios or characters that they encounter as part of the game.

Text Adventures:

Text adventures are closer to playable vignettes. This can be done in a physical or digital format. For a physical text adventure, this can be achieved by providing an interactive story that involves turning to specific pages based on the choices your respondent makes. This would, effectively, give your participants an opportunity to play through a choose-your-own-adventure-style story.

You can also use software, like Twine, to make a text adventure in a digital format. Twine allows you to storyboard your entire game, include point systems (if desirable), and even integrate with Unity for a broader game experience.

Formats:

Due to the flexible and malleable approach of this method and given the broad range of games available to adapt for these purposes, there are a number of formats that can be used as alluded to above. We will give a very brief overview of some of the options that you might choose when moving forward with this method. Further, each format can be adapted for physical or digital play.

Tell a Story:

Participants can form a story in response to a situation card (or prompt) and select cards that create what they consider the perfect response. Depending on your goals and how you want to assess your players, you can have them draw random cards, provide some specified cards, or make this more free-form and allow them to fill in their own content to cards. This format is about exploring multiple options or the overall process that participants would go through in response to a specific situation or circumstance.

It can also be a good idea to match card types, with a set of appropriate or possible responses linked to a specific kind of situation or scenario. This approach allows your player to build a full response to a situation, rather than playing a single card or playing multiple cards through multiple rounds.

Explore a Story:

In this format, players are given less room to define their own experience and are likely more constrained to specific options and responses. As with a text adventure, the options and paths are less numerous than allowing players to build their own stories (within the bounds of the game’s design). The story is mostly predefined and players can select limited options in response that guide them toward an ultimate outcome. This will likely entail longer sessions of play, more rounds, and can involve point systems to attach a number of varied experiences and outcomes to the story. In these cases, it is more about observing and analyzing what options players pick and how they understand those selections.

Sidebar: Playtest your games! One thing to remember when creating any game is that part of the process will be making sure everything runs smoothly. Test your games to ensure that everything makes sense, rule systems work, and the code is doing what you want it to!

Overcome a Challenge:

Another potential approach is presenting players with situations and scenarios that are more linked to specific challenges. This is likely a better format for card games than text adventures and can assess how participants handle more stressful situations or how they would perceive challenging scenarios. An example could be being presented with a fast-approaching deadline and playing a card against the timeframe to cut down on stress. In keeping with the game-theme presented thus far, it could also be encountering a dropped connection to the internet during online play and what approaches could be used to resolve the issue and/or handle upset team members.

Additional Format and Rule Considerations:

You can also provide more options and opportunities to your players to gauge how they feel in a given scenario presented to them. This can be achievable with an observational session or a diary collection, but allowing players to associate emotions with scenarios can help clarify their thoughts and feelings. Providing a collection of emotion cards or including point systems assigned to stress and relief can let players link emotional reactions to specific decisions or actions. This, however, can also place more pressure on your players and can introduce bias. If a player wants to avoid collecting stress points, this can alter the choices they make.

Similar precaution should be applied to point systems and “rewards.” Keep in mind what you want to measure and what you are trying to find out with your game. For example, I may want to include a point system that adds points for selections that are related to friendship to provide a fun personality reward, but it may not be the best choice if I am trying to measure something else about the choices and responses.

Here is where rules become important as part of the process. How many cards should your participant draw? Under what circumstances do they interact with the card? For example, do you want your respondent to keep cards turned over until they want to play them? Should your participant/player be able to see all of the cards and choose cards that resonate with them? Or, would you rather have your respondent work with random choices and explain their process, difficulties, and navigation in another segment of data collection, such as a journal entry or interview?

Sidebar: For more useful information on games in educational applications, see: Robinson (2008) and Denning et al. (2014).

Think About Your Rules:

Game design – including the rule system you use – can build specific experiences for players. In the case of using a game as data collection, it not only engages your participants, but also gives them an opportunity to co-author and co-create their experience. As part of this, however, you must define the options and parameters. Agency is an important part of a gaming experience, but is always bounded by the assumptions, expectations, and design of the game (Bizzocchi & Tanenbaum, 2012, p. 394, 401).

Consider your goals for your data as well as what you have in mind for your participants. In this context, consider what you might be pairing the game with for data collection and what this will require of your players. Is this game about self-exploration? Do you want to place pressure on your respondents to some degree? Is there a way to “win” and, if yes, what does winning look like?

If you want to add stakes for your respondents, your rules might include elements that alter their gameplay based on the decisions that they make. Certain choices and options can be tied to points. For example, players might be able to collect stress tokens based on their sense of how they would feel in a given situation. Alternatively, choices and selections can be automatically tied to points – participants could gain or lose stress/relief tokens linked to decisions that they make, but allowing players to define their own stress/relief in the context of the game will provide you with stronger data.

In the case of adding a point system, you can link this to outcomes. These outcomes can be some kind of virtual reward, a personality indicator, or a story ending – this is flexible based on your goals, your game, and your data collection aspirations. As an example of a reward, Quantic Foundry’s Gamer Motivation Profile survey gamifies survey-taking by giving respondents personalized motivation results once the survey has been completed.

A caveat when it comes to point systems is as follows: this requires that your participants are honest about their goals and that they are not trying to “game” the system to win. One thing that is important to note with creative approaches to teaching, data collection, and games alike is that one cannot necessarily predict what participants/players will do, but they can prepare for it (Robison, 2008, p. 362-364). Consider what opportunities your rule systems and design might leave open for players and, if possible, use this to your advantage with supplementary data collection strategies.

If, for example, your physical card game makes it likely that players will be able to use the cards in unintended ways, how can you delve into those decisions further to get more information? Players might play more cards than intended if they feel constricted by the options. If you have a digital game that defines the paths and options provided for your players, they may feel restricted in other ways that make it less possible to convey their true feelings or decisions.

These scenarios among others would be good to explore in more depth by giving players a space to elaborate on their choices, decisions, and overall experience with the game. For a step-by-step approach to producing a game for the classroom that can be mapped on to this, see Denning, Shostack, and Kohno (2014).

Technology for Design:

Another important consideration is what you have at your disposal for designing your game. There are, fortunately, many free-to-use options for game design in a multitude of formats. Here, we will briefly discuss some of the software and online resources available to facilitate making a game.

Analog Games:

Design tools and options are numerous and can depend on your skillset and the programs available to you. For analog games – such as physical card games, board games, or other tabletop games – design is still involved, but will be implemented quite differently in comparison to digital games.

There is, on one end, the option of acquiring pre-made cards that can work for your purposes. Numbered cards, for example, could connect with passages and/or images if paired with vignettes. This is limited, but can still work well with a desired story-building system for your game.

If more specific cards are needed, they could be designed by hand on physical material or designed digitally and printed, although this will be time consuming. Numerous options exist for digital design and printing, including free assets online, icons and images included with Microsoft Office Programs (as used for the example cards and design in this guide), or creating designs by hand in programs like Photoshop or similar free-to-use software like Gimp. In these cases, printing and distribution costs are necessary to consider.

Digital Games:

Creating digital games is another potential route for those who want to lower distribution costs, but come with their own challenges. For this guide and for our design, we have used Twine and Unity, which are free-to-use programs that have a wide range of support from both official resources and those found in online spaces like Github, Twinery, and Stack Overflow.

Twine:

Twine is a useful storyboarding and text adventure creation program that allows you to easily form a text adventure game without much programming knowledge. If you do have more experience with coding, you can create more sophisticated game and story designs, but it is not necessary. The games you make can also be distributed directly as a file or hosted online in spaces like itch.io for respondents to access and play your game.

The software allows you to make branching stories where your respondents can create unique story experiences. They can be presented with a number of options and scenarios to consider and respond accordingly, mapping them along a branching narrative path.

Twine is fairly intuitive and easy to navigate for users with less direct experience with coding or creating a game. It also allows for more complex approaches to game design, including incorporating point systems or – for those with a particular aesthetic in mind – adjusting the visual appearance of your game.

There is a great deal of support available to users working with Twine. The program includes examples of necessary code in unwritten passages that users can fill in with their story information. Initial story coding is as simple as putting your options in brackets, which will populate the game with clickable choices for your user.

Linked story options appear in a narrative map for the game’s creator and easily identify the different routes possible for players. The code can also be more complex, with the addition of point systems that can link your players to specific outcomes or in-game “rewards” (for research purposes, likely some kind of insight into their play). This can, however, result in more potential bugs and needing to test significantly more.

Approaching Twine with additional coding information also requires a separate passage, not linked directly to your story. The “StoryInit” option will allow you to track your point systems or extra game information in a way that influences the outcome and what is being tracked from your players, but should not impede or alter your participants’ experiences.

Unity:

Unity is a free and powerful tool for creating both 2D and 3D games, with an abundance of resources and a helpful community to help creators bring their ideas to life. Unity also makes it easy to build your game for multiple platforms to reach your target audience on whatever devices they prefer to use.

For the digital version of this card game, we decided on a 2D text adventure. In our game, we included scenarios someone might run into when playing a multiplayer online game. Each scenario has a set of responses the player might make, which are represented as both dialogue choices to progress the story and actions the player might take in the scenario.

Although this can be completely created in Unity, we built on a story created in Twine. Twine creates stories based on branching decisions referred to as “nodes.” We added tags to nodes indicating which nodes are scenarios: a situation in which the player must choose a response. In the response options to scenarios, we identify which responses the game will then display as cards, or actions, for the user to select from. While stories built in Twine or provided in a physical card game are fairly intuitive, these options and decisions must be designated as part of the code, which is handled in another program like Visual Studio.

The first step in creating the game with this approach was parsing – or defining the parts of the story and syntax – through the dialogue tree to display the dialogue and choices on the game screen. Since we had to parse the dialogue with code in Unity, we exported the Twine story into the Entweedle format (a format for Twine stories that has simpler code which will make the parsing easier). We used code developed by a Twine and Unity user as a base to help us get started, although we had to modify this heavily to support our scenario/card game structure (MrVentures, 2020).

Depending on how big the text adventure game is, you may find yourself with many different types of scenarios and response actions. For our game, we chose to represent both of these as cards to display on the screen. We needed to store the data for cards and scenarios in a way that could be changed and added to easily, without requiring massive alterations to the game code. We chose to represent these in JSON (JavaScript Object Notation), which is a format for storing data that is easy for humans to read and write, and commonly supported within Unity for parsing and generating data dynamically.

When the game is running, the code pulls the necessary data from the cards JSON file, creates the cards dynamically, and displays them on the screen. If the cards are action cards, they receive a property that allows them to be clicked to advance the story.

Itch.io:

The next potential barrier for digital games is how to get these to your players/respondents. One option for distributing your game is using itch.io, which is a space where independent creators can share their creations. It is an open-ended space where creators can set a variety of options for themselves and supports a number of approaches to distribution, including the option to make your game playable in a browser.

You can further adjust and restrict access to your game project, if desired, particularly if you are going the route of having data sent back to you. This will be important to remember, especially in cases where collection for your data has been reviewed through an ethical board process.

Recording and Retrieving Results

There are a few possible retrieval strategies when it comes to collecting data from these games. If you are conducting an in-person study where you can observe the gameplay, taking photos and jotting notes during and/or after the game is useful for later reference. If you are conducting the study and running the game remotely, you can have participants take and send photos or screenshots.

Supplemental data will need to be recorded in addition to or in conjunction with game information. If including a journal component, it can be useful to link entries with specific incidents and experiences in the game. If conducting interviews or focus groups, photos or screenshots of the decision can help in the context and process of speaking with respondents.

While photos or screenshots will work for digital or physical versions of the game, there are other options when it comes to digital games as well. In the case of Unity, we included some code to make the game capable of recording and emailing the choices and results of the game.

Based on the additional code, the game is designed to record options displayed during the game and chosen by the player. These events are stored in a log within the game as they are selected. Once the player is finished with the game, the resulting log can be retrieved in multiple ways, such as: storing the file on disk, allowing the user to copy it to the clipboard, or automatically sending it via email. We chose to automatically send an email, which can be reviewed and stored for analysis.

Complications and Potential Concerns:

One thing to keep in mind moving forward with game creation is that there are limitations and possible complications to this method. Always be aware of potential challenges, including those related to designing the game, creating rules, and analyzing the data from one source. This section will present a brief list of just some of the issues that may arise, including those that you are likely to encounter when creating a game digitally.

You Can’t Cover Everything:

Unfortunately, there will always be gaps and this will be exacerbated in cases where you have randomly generated cards. While random cards distributed to the player create interesting dynamics and can show you more about your participants’ thought processes, this is also a limiting factor for your responses and your data. This depends on what you are trying to assess and investigate, but in some cases, it may be good to give your participants more expressive leeway and opportunities to build upon their answers. Additionally, in the span of a game played as part of a research project, the amount of time you will want to allocate for your players is fairly brief. This means the games need to be on the shorter side and should not have many rounds.

Be Mindful of Participant Stress:

Also note that depending on your questions, point systems, and overall game set up, it is possible that your players might experience stress or discomfort with the process of the game. Keep this in mind and be flexible when providing point systems or potential scenarios where your players are able to “win” the game. The process of playing a game as part of data collection should be a fun experience and open up creative opportunities for your respondents, so you will want to provide a good space and foundation for this.

Give Participants Space to Elaborate or Investigate:

As noted above, giving players an opportunity to elaborate can be important as part of the play process. While this is a risk in interview and survey approaches as well, in regard to leading questions, this is also something to think about when designing cards and options for your players. This method provides a space where participants can share interesting and dynamic information, but this must be facilitated and fostered by the researcher(s).

Bugs, Roadblocks, and Testing Your Game:

You, yourself, will encounter issues when putting the game together. Sometimes it will be an issue of implementing a rule that does not really work. Others, if you are going the digital route, will mean a broad range of bugs and issues with your code. Unity, and coding, are complex and time consuming. Even a seasoned developer will have to learn familiar concepts over again in the context of Unity, and someone who has never programmed before may struggle to achieve their desired results.

Defining the Project Upfront:

Unity projects can quickly become large and unwieldy if not managed well; going back and changing core rules or behaviors after they have been implemented can be cumbersome and difficult. Defining much of your game's specifics, rules, and flow upfront will be helpful in avoiding issues down the road. For example, one such issue we ran into was that the digital game was originally coded to only allow one card to be selected at a time. We later decided that we should allow multiple cards to be selected, as long as it made sense for the scenario. Depending on how you structure your code and Unity project, changes to core rules like this can become a big deal and take considerable effort to change.

Not Everyone is an Artist:

In creating for any of these games, keep in mind that some level of artistry and design will be required. In the case of text adventures, you are writing a story for your participants. In the case of cards, unless you are repurposing pre-created cards, you will need to determine the design, layout, functions, and systems.

Design can be relatively easily achieved, however. Microsoft Office programs and their included assets were used and combined for most of the design images in this guide and the card examples. Themes, styles, and images were able to be quickly selected and applied using a mixture of Publisher and Word. When going the digital route and using a program like Unity to create a card game, basic game assets such as backgrounds, sound effects, and card faces need to be created for your game. In our example game, we used simple images and a card face created by hand in ProCreate, but it is all still very basic. If you want your game to look and sound good, be prepared to spend either a lot of time or money on game assets.

Do Not Neglect to Consider Analysis!:

After everything is designed, distributed, and collected, you still need to analyze that data! This is likely going to involve qualitative coding for themes and patterns across your dataset. What kind of coding, how many passes you make over the data, and any additional programs you might use (like Dedoose or ATLAS.ti) are up to you, but do not forget to keep this in mind when determining a collection strategy and additional methods that might be included in the project.

Concluding Thoughts:

Creating a game to collect data is an involved process, but with the growing popularity and application of creative methodologies, this offers another potential tool available to researchers. Games give respondents chances to explore, investigate, and experiment as part of the research process and provide a unique co-creative dynamic. This approach will not be right for every case or every researcher, but if this feels like a good choice for you and your work, we hope that this guide has been helpful!

Sidebar: Resources for Design

Twine [Computer Software]. (2021). Retrieved from https://twinery.org/

Unity [Computer Software]. (2005). Retrieved from https://unity.com/madewith

Icons used for card design come from Windows 365. Most example cards were created with a combination of Microsoft Word and Microsoft Publisher.

Images used for card examples in Unity were obtained from Vecteezy.com.

For Future Reference:

Adams, W. C. (2015). Conducting semi-structured interviews. In Newcomer, K. E., Hatry, H. P., & Wholey, J. S. (eds.) Handbook of practical program evaluation (pp. 492-505). Jossey-Bass.

Barter, C., & Renold, E. (1999). The use of vignettes in qualitative research. Social research update, 25(9), 1-6.

Barter, C., & Renold, E. (2000). 'I wanna tell you a story': Exploring the application of vignettes in qualitative research with children and young people. International journal of social research methodology, 3(4), 307-323.

Bizzocchi, J., & Tanenbaum, T. J. (2012). “Mass Effect 2”: A case study in the design of game narrative. Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society, 32(5), 393-404.

Brückner, H. (2017). Surveys. In The Oxford handbook of analytical sociology (pp. 667-687). Oxford University Press.

Castronova, E., & Knowles, I. (2015). Modding board games into serious games: The case of Climate Policy. International Journal of Serious Games, 2(3), 41-62.

Černevičiūtė, J., & Liebutė, L. (2022). Cultural probes method in design research: Creativity in sketches. Creativity Studies, 15(1), 169-181.

Consalvo, M. (2013). Hot dates and fairy-tale romances: Studying sexuality in video games. In M. Wolf, & B. Perron (Eds.), The video game theory reader (pp. 193–216). Routledge.

Denning, T., Shostack, A., & Kohno, T. (2014). Practical lessons from creating the {Control-Alt-Hack} Card Game and research challenges for games in education and research. 2014 USENIX Summit on Gaming, Games, and Gamification in Security Education (3GSE 14).

Graafland, M., Dankbaar, M., Mert, A., Lagro, J., De Wit-Zuurendonk, L., Schuit, S., ... & Schijven, M. (2014). How to systematically assess serious games applied to health care. JMIR Serious Games, 2(2), e3825.

Hughes, R., & Huby, M. (2004). The construction and interpretation of vignettes in social research. Social Work and Social Sciences Review, 11(1), 36-51.

Keiding, N., & Louis, T. A. (2018). Web-based enrollment and other types of self-selection in surveys and studies: Consequences for generalizability. Annual Review of Statistics and Its Application, 5, 25-47.

van Leeuwen, J. P., Karnik, M., & Keane, K. (2011, October). Discovering Madeira: A case study of cultural probes. In Procedings of the Second Conference on Creativity and Innovation in Design (pp. 439-447).

McDougall, Z., & Fels, S. (2010, September). Cultural probes in the design of communication. In Proceedings of the 28th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication (pp. 57-64).

MrVentures. (2000). Converting a Twine Story to Unity. https://www.mrventures.net/all-tutorials/converting-a-twine-story-to-unity

Robison, A. J. (2008). The design is the game: Writing games, teaching writing. Computers and Composition, 25(3), 359-370.

Romero, M., Usart, M., & Ott, M. (2015). Can serious games contribute to developing and sustaining 21st century skills? Games and Culture, 10(2), 148-177.

Slattery, E. L., Voelker, C. C., Nussenbaum, B., Rich, J. T., Paniello, R. C., & Neely, J. G. (2011). A practical guide to surveys and questionnaires. Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery, 144(6), 831-837.

Zimmerman, E. (2008). Gaming literacy: Game design as a model for literacy in the twenty-first century. In Perron, B. and Wolf M. J. P. (eds.) The video game theory reader 2 (pp. 45-54). Routledge.

A Note on the Authors:

Christine Tomlinson is a lecturer in the school of Social Sciences at the University of California, Irvine. The author’s work primarily centers on video game players and their experiences in the context of content, identity, and online communities.

Mike Romain is an independent software engineer with a passion for playing – and sometimes creating – digital games.

Corresponding Author:

Christine Tomlinson

School of Social Sciences

University of California, Irvine

3151 Social Sciences Plaza

Irvine, CA, USA 92617

ctomlins@uci.edu

# Dressing for the Air-Conditioned Workplace

By: Sara Daly

Transcriber’s note: we don’t know the order of the pages of this zine, and so they have been arranged in an order that seems to make sense. This is to say, feel free to read each paragraph in whatever order you choose! This zine was originally formatted to be printed as a square with the images and text around the edges, and to be folded into a hexagon.

This file needs to be printed back to back so the front and back should be on a double sided sheet – and lined up. If you cannot line them up (I couldn’t) you can print them on 2 separate sheets, cut them out, and paste back to back,

To fold follow the flat flexagon folding tutorial here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7H4lDi79YY8>

A Method

1 . Set up the wardrobe ethnography: ethics approval, consent forms, participants, ethnography design, zoom. Because you're going into people's very private space, a lot of trust is needed, so it's helpful to find participants you already have some connection with. This can be done without Zoom too, of course.

2. I chose a meeting time of 30-60 minutes, the first few minutes I explain the project and the idea: take me through (show and tell) what you dress in for the air-conditioned workplace. I have a list of prompts but try not to steer too much—rather letting people talk freely as much as possible. People were pretty willing to talk about what they wear and why so prompts weren’t needed much.

[Image Description: Shoes.]

3. Record the meeting, transcribe the notes and analyse! Research different methods for analysis. I chose Else Vogel's (2021) method of juxtaposition and Joseph Dumit s (2021) "substance as method" (SAM) (Ballestero 2021). Vogel and Dumit's methods suggest reorganising data is one way to challenge classic methods of analysis.

[Image Description: A dresser]

4 . The outcome in this study is a series of vignettes organized around single items of clothing, for example, socks or jackets. I will reorganise the material again, and again under categories like: memory, identity, comfort, etc., or home, work, the desk, lunch… Think about how the notes can be written into so many different stories am reflect how your choices are influencing the way your project reads!

It’s a sunny afternoon in The Philip Law Building, alias, Building B, a university building named after Antarctic explorer Philip Law who, as part of the Australian Nation Antarctic Research Expedition (ANARE) activities helped map 3000 miles of coastline and 800,000 square miles of territory in Antarctica for both commercial and scientific interests.

His legacy is recorded in this brutalist brick and concrete building with deep floor plan, windows lining the perimeter and filling the outer rooms with light and an inner core of rooms devoid of natural light or air. A building like this requires air-conditioning for the internal rooms to be functional, and for the air-conditioning to work more efficiently the beautiful large hinged windows leading onto balconies are sealed shut.

[Image Description: The bottom half of a mirror selfie.]

To dress for this air-conditioned building is a challenge: first there’s the variable temperature of the building because the temperature of the centrally controlled ai [sic] flow is uneven across t [sic] building depending on t [sic] location of the space t [sic] the vents. Finally setting this against ea [sic] body’s unique thermal regulatory system and ideal zone of thermal comfort is in tension with where the centrally controlled thermostat should sit.

[Image Description: The top half of a mirror selfie.]

The implied rather than enforced dress-code for this building creates room for movement, but also reinforces how feelings of “rightness” continue to be shaped by the notion of appropriateness for work.

[Image Description: Shirts in a closet.]

In winter, leather shoes are the go-to, which brings with them a more formal sense of dress: long pants, button down shirts, sweaters, and long woollen coats.

[Image Description: Shoes on a shoe rack.]

Alex sticks his finger through the hole in the side of his New Balance sneakers, laid out against his new New Balance sneakers, un-scuffed and unworn. It’s hard to wear the new ones because the old sneakers have become so much of his identity. The shoes provide a comfort with a physical quality, which is about both temperature regulation and fabric choice. These sneakers, they're porous and breathsble, his toes stick out in a nice kind of way.

After shoes, there's socks. Coda's dislike of wearing socks impacts shoe choice and shoe choice dictates outfit. It's a balance thing and a comfort thing. This might be what makes Coda’s go-to pants over dresses, even though dresses are more comfortable.

[Image Description: Socked foot.]

She wonders whether that’s because she doesn’t like dresses with the shoes that are comfortable, or if it’s a Melbourne thing—casual shoes, neutral colour palettes, pants and tops, most likely a combination of factors. Or is it the indoor climate control that means wearing tights with dresses in summer when indoors is cool, but that’s uncomfortable outdoors on a hot day.

[Image Description: A calf.]

Leigh’s sock draw is a moment of self-critique “I’ve heard people say… in the context of someone kind of criticizing people like me, a straight white cis man, and it’s like ‘Oh, your entire personality is wearing a bright pair of socks’… I felt seen by that.”

[Image Description: An office desk.]

They're a way of dressing down. It's a way of “dressing down in a way that' s true to [himself] ... a bit like that SNEAN look." Later, he reflects on his way of dressing and adds, "if I’m honest, I think there’s a lot of pressure

The imperative to get the socks right is about avoiding the discomfort and distress of the wrong socks: socks that don’t work with the outfit, unusual socks, branded socks. Flexing his toes, already in distress at the thought of the “pressure” of the “wrong” socks on ankles and the suddenly the intensified [sic] feeling of clothes on the body. Focus slips away from the job and onto the discomfort these socks bring with them.

Robbie’s enthusiasm for socks comes with their functionality as little wonders of thermal comfort and regulation. Robbie’s invested in sharing the delight of brand new, good quality socks that feel like “standing on pillows.” Socks so good the same outfit can be worn year-round because the socks regulate the temperature.

[Image Description: The heel of a New Balance shoe.]

Melissa’s colourful socks lift moods, but they take effort and are only good for those days with extraverted energy. Socks are kept for years: from parents, partners, hospital visits-as well as mood they carry memories though for work only the hole-free socks pass because shoes will inevitably be removed and socks with holes in them wouldn’t feel right.

[Image Description: Socked feet under a desk.]

Other images:

[Image Description: The tongue of a New Balance shoe.]

[Image Description: The side of a shoe.]

[Image Description: A sweater laid out on a bed.]

[Image Description: An office chair.]

[Image Description: A person sitting in an office chair, wearing a sweater, face redacted.]

[Image Description: A thigh.]

[Image Description: Socked foot.]

# Fringe Natures - Collaborative Reflections on Method

By: Madeline Donald, Yazdanmehn Gordanpour, Chhavi Mathur, Astrida Neimanis, Dani Pierson

[Image Description: A yellow background with the title written on the lines of a swirl. There are hand and footprints of many species along the swirl that are filled in with pictures of trees. The bottom of the page has a drawn grey beige speckled path with ants crawling towards the bottom right corner. The path is lined with grass, flowers, and rocks.]

THE FEELed LAB:

The FEELed Lab is a feminist environmental humanities field lab at UBC Okanagan, on the unceded territories of the syilx people.

The FEELed Lab asks: what does feminist environmental humanities research look like in practice, in this particular context? How can “academic research” itself be a generative site for exploring how feminist, antiracist, anticolonial, queer-, crip- and trans- affirming perspectives can deepen our understanding of what climate crisis is and how it manifests in place?

This FEELed Lab work is research about research: what it is, where it is, who does it, what it is for, and how it can be responsive to the most pressing questions of our time.

“FRINGE NATURES”:

To do this research, the FEELed Lab convenes a series of gathering we call “Fringe Natures.” “Fringe natures” is a figuration (to borrow Donna Haraway’s term) – which means it is both a real thing (or a real place) in the world, and a metaphor that evokes certain associations. A figuration is always more-than-metaphorical.

Since our work on syilx territory largely takes place in the riparian littoral zone, “fringe natures” designates the “real place” of this research: in the ecotone between land and water, with all of its ambivalences, transitions and particular sensations. Metaphorically, this is also where mainstream environmentalism’s marginal or “fringe” perspectives can flourish. At our gatherings, we work to further unpick the frayed edges of colonial mastery, heteropatriarchal dominance, ablist infrastructures that reinforce tired and exclusionary norms and relegate different ways of knowing to the “fringes.”

Different ways of knowing are strengthened by paying attention to different lived experiences and the ideas those experiences can generate. What new worlds can we build, dwelling tenderly and courageously at the fringes?

Image Description: The text is in a white text box in front of a top down photo of water and green leaves and grass.

This zine introduces our “fringe natures” research methodology: using informal gatherings of people from different backgrounds in place, we come to deeper understanding about environmental issues and their intersection with issues like colonialism, racism, heteropatriarchy and ablism.

Cultivating a DIY “make-do” vibe, we use informal conversation, “low stakes” activieis and embodied practice (walking, listening, improv, weeding, writing haikus, games) to learn about our own “situated knowledges’ – i.e. our different responsibilities, accountabilities, feelings, and relations to these issues. This deepens our collective understanding, too.

Our zine includes contributions from both the FEELed Lab research team and ‘friends of the FEELed Lab’ who have participated in our research. Each page illustrates a key principle of our methodology, or offers a reflection on how participants responded to or engaged with these methods.

(We made this zine collaboratively as one of our low-stakes “fringe natures” activities! This also gave us the chance to take stock and reflect on our shared principles, together.)

[Image Description: vines, grass, and pebbles roughly drawn in black ink line the edges of the page. The page is white with a beige border.]

“hanging threads left loose or

Formed into tassels or twists”

Fringe Natures

“the border or outer edges”

When we come out together

For a

FEELed Lab Fringe Natures

gathering our

minds and bodies

are free to slip out of

whatever roles and

expectations

we carry.

The “lab” is outside

wherever we choose

to

be present

and

form a community

and our work is also

rest,

healing,

and play.

We don’t have

a set path.

our research is an

ongoing practice

or mode of

feeling out

and embodying

ways to be

with

and

open

to

each other

and the

places

we

inhabit.

[Image Description: The poem is on the left side of the page and on the right is a colourful drawing of a path, tree, circle of stick figure people, and a steaming mug of coffee.]

Our research has “yoghurt pot aesthetics”

At our zine making event we made tea from herbs we found in the feral garden outside the lab. We learned about edible things and discussed ethics of foraging – and we had a delicious cuppa! (we even added tarragon – risky!)

This means we often research, create and share using ready-to-hand materials – like yoghurt pots!

This is “low carbon” but it also encourages creativity and “safe risk taking” – leaving your comfort zone. It is ok to make a mistake!

(This zine also uses a yoghurt-pot aesthetics approach!)

Image Description: This page is white, the text is handwritten in black ink. In the middle of the page, underneath “yoghurt pot aesthetics” is a steaming cup of tea with herbs floating in and outside the cup. The first paragraph is beside the coffee cup.

How do we know that our events are or embody feminist, anticolonial, anti-racist, queer, and crop perspectives?

A FEELING:

Members, participants, and FEELed friends have described a certain feeling that cocoons our time together. This feeling, we think, is assembled through many actions that centre these perspectives. Thus, these perspectives swirl around us as we gather – shaping and guiding our conversations. Here are a few of our actions:

We work had to create an open and inviting spaces. We build on this environment through constant reflection and ongoing community relationship building.

We hold space for and share our tears (and all our other emotions).

We embrace slowness. We try not to rush things – we try not to rush each other. We always give space to post-pone, to cancel, to leave when we need, and to be present when we gather.

Image description: This page is handwritten in black ink with small drawings of a welcome sign, tears, and a snail.

Imagining queer feminist futures.

Judee B.

[Image Description: A collage of paper images and plants. The top is a black and white image of clouds with the text in the top left corner. In the top middle is a photo of two people kissing inside an oval gold frame. The top right has a small yellow flower. Sloping down from the left is a blue wave with smaller, lighter blue stripes and a rainbow. There is a black and white photo of two boys in water looking at each other inside the blue wave. Underneath is blurry images of grass with earth toned pieces of plant matter and a small photo of a woman with long hair. On the bottom of the page is five, red, paper houses connected in a chain. In front of the houses is a black and white image of a group of people.]

When we organize a research event, we ask: who will show up? What can we do to make room for people who might not have shown up? How can we offer better kinds of welcome? How can we reduce barriers to (financial, physical, mental, cultural) accessibility?

We are not always doing this perfectly. Learning from “who shows up” is part of our research, folded into our research events.

[Image description: Above the text is a blue ink sketch of artist Coralee Miller.]

[Image Description: Coralee is wearing a green hoodie with syilx written across the chest. She is holding a long syilx fishing hook. Beside her is a table of other syilx fishing tools. She is standing on the grass.]

I was born amidst concrete and pollution, ergo no personal connection to nature!

In Fringe Natures, I met people who KNEW THINGS ABOUT THE PLAVE WE WERE IN and plaves they had come from. People who could name different kinds of pines and I would just go “wow! Big tree so nice!” Were I felt like an intruder in nature, I felt at home among people.

On hikes, I always like to lag a bit behind and hear the people’s conversation blend into the journal of the wind and the river. People sitting around a campfire like the stones around the firewood that keeps the flame contained. Mark C Long, in “Close Reading at the End of time,” offers a new interpretation of close reading in the context of literature pedagogy as not only reading close to the text but reading close to others. He envisions the classroom as a collective site for the “practice of reading in proximity to others [which] is socially situated, radically contingent, and potentially more consequential activity than the disciplinary routine of circulating scholarly or professional “readings” that advance a particular theory or a demonstration of its claims” (80).

Fringe Natures is close reading: an effort to make meaning and explicate difficulties and their sources and implications regarding the environments we exist in and our relation to them.

Fringe Natures is different from a solitary hike or camping with friends.

The reciprocity that emerges is between me, the collective, and the process of our interactions with the environment.

Long, Mark C. “Close Reading at the End of Tine.” Close Reading the Anthropocene, edited by Helena Feder. Routledge, 2021.

[Image Description: The text is handwritten in blue and purple ink.

The collective is only loosely connected. The vulnerabilities are “low-stakes” and engagements with nature are semi-structured. For me, who sees nature as always mediated by community, a new perception of nature often arises as well. My personal research question becomes: when and how does belonging begin or end?]

On a hike, seeing a small stone bridge over a creek is idyllic and beautiful but a wind turbine is jarring and out of place, yet both are equally man-made. Sense of belonging – to a community or an environment – tells much more about me than my surroundings. Fringe Natures allows a close reading of what it means to belong. A close reading of ME.

[Image Description: A white page with handwritten text in blue and purple ink. Below the text is a black ink sketch of a group of trees, a campfire, and wooden chair. Pasted of the sketch is the words “RESEARCH METHOD IS THE GOAL ITSELF.”]

[Image description: a photo of a walking path, small dock, and pond.]

[Image description: The following is laid out like leaves on a hand-drawn tree.]

You passed me

I circled back had an

Ear full of water from

Some elsewhere we were alone

Together I passed you slowly it all happened and is happening still I blinked

Backwards kept my eyes closed as I let you pass me kept shorter intervals between

Each opening

We research accessibility in environmental humanities practice by experimenting with different modes of research activities. We walk at a slow pace, on accessible pathways, outside. We meet online. We ask participants what they need. We offer alternative and multiple modes of participation.

A LOW BARRIER TO ENTRY:

“It’s lovely to be able to just show up”

Come as you are

Image Description: Handwritten text in black ink with yellow smudges underneath the title. The bottom of the page is coloured green to form a small hill. There are ants climbing the hill towards a sign that says “come as you are.” One of the ants is speaking and says “It’s lovely to be able to just show up.”

LOW STAKES VUNERABILITY:

It is mildly intimidating to join people you do not really know, in a park you have never been to, to try something semi-new. As I walked towards Munson Pond, there was a warm, dull thud in my chest and flutters in my stomach. I was apprehensive, but not deterred.

The FEELed Lab excels at low stakes vulnerability. The Fringe Natures event series gently nudges you out of your comfort zone to reacquaint you with the spaces we (co)exist in and learn with. The learning we do is experienced through our bodies as we honour these feelings of discomfort to build community. Fringe Natures does not ask for too much of you, but we share tender moments. We embrace vulnerability as we offer bits of ourselves – our voices, our poems, our hums of agreement – to each other and to the spaces we inhabit.

Image Description: The page is white with text handwritten in black ink. The title has a watercolour green stripe behind it.

We research ways of building different kinds of social infrastructures as a necessary part of “climate change mitigation.”

We ask participants to actively engage, but in low-stakes ways. In doing so our research is interested in ways that we can blur our own hard edges. How can being just a little bit vulnerable (reading out loud, sharing a gesture, walking together, contributing a movement) help us open to other perspectives, and new ideas?

Image Description: Behind the text is a pencil sketch of a garden with a fence around it. In the middle is abstract green plants.

Support – care – rest – telling each other what we need –

“Something sad and unexpected happened. I can’t organize the event we planned.”

“You need to take care of yourself and your family. We can do it another time!”

Our research is slow and responsive. Careful process is more important than predetermined outputs.

[Image Description: A black ink sketch of a laptop with two people on zoom having a conversation. The dialogue is in speech bubbles and underneath the laptop is a sentence of text. There are the words “Support – care – rest – telling each other what we need” lining the edges of the pages.]

Our research prioritizes affirmative, joyful community-building even in the face of difficult issues (like climate change, colonialism, pollution, heteropatriarchy).

Thinking carefully about (and experimenting with) how we research together-in-place (and how we might do this differently) is part of these affirmative ethics.

[Image Description: Behind the text is a colourful drawing of a small house and creek. At the top of the page are a few mountains, trees, and clouds. Underneath is a narrow creek with a large bird and small turtle sitting on a rock. The creek turns into a waterfall in the middle of the page with a few rocks lining the fall. On the left side of the fall is two brown bears surrounded by trees. The water floods out and covers the bottom of the page, covering the bottom of the red house. The house has yellow doors, purple windows, and a black roof. In the bottom right corner is a large leafy plant.]

We document our research events (i.e. record and store data) via regular informal blogposts. These keep the ‘data’ moving through expanding networks of knowledge. The data is living, sticky and multiplying – forming new connections and insights as it travels.

[Image Description: Behind the text is a black ink sketch turned sideways. The centre of the sketch says “FEELedLAB” with small images of wings, a welcome sign, a person with an easel, text scribbles, pebbles, a beaker, eyes, and amplifier surrounding the text in a circle. Lining these images are small, curved, black lines.]

Zine contributors:

Yazdan Gordanpour

Chhavi Mathur

Madeline Donald

Dani Pierson

Xiaoxuan Huang

Yujie Gao

Judee Burr

Juan Sotelo

Maria Sanchez

Astrida Neimanis

Some plants

This zine was produced on the unceded territories of the syilx people during a rainy summer solstice season in June 2022 for the DIY methods 2022 conference organized by the Low Carbon Research Methods Group.

The FEELed Lab is institutionally supported by the Faculty of Critical and Creative Studies at UBC Okanagan and the Canada Research Chairs program.

Image Description: A yellow page with the text in the middle. At the top of the page is three birds flying figure eights around a few clumps of clouds. At the bottom of the page is a large snail on a grey-brown, speckled path that connects to the front cover.

# Invasive Species into Gifts- An Experiment in Materials, Methods, and Making

By: Jessican Marion Barr

[Image description: a drawing of plants.]

cover material:

paper handmade from “dog-strangling vine” (DSV) / European swallowwort

(Vincetoxicum rossicum/Cynanchum vincetoxicum

Can our hands, bodies, and relationships to the lands we inhabit be part of our research methods? Can these embodied methods also in some small way remediate and assist in repairing damages to the lands and waters?

I have been harvesting invasive “dog-strangling vine” (DSV) and processing it to create handmade paper. Prolific DSV poses threats to native species; it shares some similarities with ninwinshk,\* common milkweed (Asclepias syriaca), and can be fatal to endangered ashkibag,\*\* monarch butterflies (Danaus plexippus), if these valuable pollinators mistakenly lay their eggs on it rather than their sole “larval host” (http://nyis.info/invasive\_species/swallow-wort).

\*https://dictionary.nishnaabemwin.atlas-ling.ca

\*\*https://neyaashiinigmiing-nature-com.webs.com/insects

While I am aware that “native vs non-native” dichotomies risk over-simplifying identities as well as multispecies relations, I still want to explore tangible and embodied methods of ecological remediation, reparation, and decolonization, guided by place- specific Indigenous knowledges (e.g. www.nccie.ca/videos /ziinzibaakwadgummig-the-sugar-bush).

More broadly, I am excited by embodied methods, research- creation, and close attention to the materials we use as artists- researchers-activists. I want to consider “a process of co- composing with the more-than- human [reflecting] how our relationship with other forms of life can be reconfigured in accountable and collaborative ways” (<https://jer.openlibhums.org/news/499>).

You may wish to experiment with invasive species in your area. Are there harmful plants that can be safely harvested and repurposed? Fibrous plants such as dog- strangling vine or phragmites (Phragmites australis), which grow prolifically and invasively in Ontario, can be processed and made into paper, or woven to make baskets or other creative objects. Garlic mustard (Alliaria petiolata) makes a delicious and nutritious pesto!

Handmade papers can incor- porate local native species seeds, and then be planted to encourage the growth of beneficial, pollinator-friendly Indigenous flora.

Imagine: gifting native plants back to their ecosystems, carried by former invaders.

Making paper can range from fairly simple to quite complex.

If you want to get serious about it, Papermaking with Garden Plants & Common Weeds by Helen Hiebert is an excellent resource. The basic steps are paraphrased here: www.motherearthnews.com/diy/making-paper-from-plants-zm0z17jjzqui

and here http://liz-annaslakeside

studio.blogspot.com/2010/06/papermaking-tutorial.html

I confess I did not follow the instructions to the letter (the DSV paper could be much smoother), and may have been in danger of blowing up my kitchen. Also the smell was terrible.

\*Always read up on safety!

This zine is folded from junk mail – itself a kind of invasive species which arrives unbidden in so many of our mailboxes, often touting products that themselves degrade and destroy Indigenous ecologies and nations.

How does the contrast between the handmade paper and the junk mail affect you? What potential lies in the roughness and impracticality of the DSV paper? Might invasive species papermaking be a meaningful reparative low-carbon decolonial research-creation method?

The text is printed on 100% post- consumer, acid- and chlorine-free paper.

By virtue of its materials, this zine should be compostable or recyclable in most areas.

Jessica Marion Barr

jessicabarr@trentu.ca

Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Territory

Nogojiwanong

Peterborough

Ontario

2022

# Is This Landscape Lying To You?- Investigating Place Through Zine Making

By: Piotr Wojcik

It Probably Is.

In This Issue:

Horses, Housing, And Haunting In Lexington, Kentucky

A landscape can be considered to be the entire visible, tangible scene perceived from one place.

[Image description: An empty field.]

Caption: “HERE IS A LANDSCAPE IN LEXINGTON KY'S EAST END.”

This grassy field in the middle of a roundabout obscures the past uses of this plot of land. For example, for over 100 years until the Great Depression, this was the site of Lexington's thoroughbred horse racetrack, the Kentucky Association (our town is crazy about horses - but many people don't know about the East End's role in equestrian history). After that, it was home to one of the United States' first federal public housing projects, Bluegrass-Aspendale (it was torn down in the 2000s as part of the controversial HOPE VI program that decentralized much public housing).

That is part of how landscapes "lie."

If landscape is a way of seeing (with its emphasis on the visible scene), then there are potentially as many subjective ways of seeing as there are eyes to see. But as geographer Don Mitchell has written,

this ignores the fact that "landscape" is a relation of power, an ideological rendering of spatial relations. Landscapes transform the facts of place into a controlled representation, an imposition of order in which one (or perhaps a few) dominant ways of seeing are substituted for all ways of seeing and experiencing.

Okay, maybe this is a big claim. But what are the "facts" of this place and how might we find them? What power relations is this landscape representing … and concealing?

[Image description: a road map of N. Shropshire Ave.]

Here is where the racetrack used to be (in black, based on a 1934 fire insurance map) compared to the East End's present-day street grid (in pink),

To this day, the land where the racetrack used to be is noticeably flatter than the surrounding area… a trace of the past, if you know where to look.

[Image description: A map of the area, and a picture of the racetrack stands.]

Why does this matter?:

Mitchell echoes other scholars of landscape when he writes that landscape structures social reality; it represents to us our relationships to the land and to social formations.

Apart from knowing the struggles that went into its making (along with the struggles to which it gives rise), one cannot know a landscape except at some ideal level, which has the effect of reproducing, rather than analyzing or challenging, the relations of power that work to mask its function.

During the late 19th century, the racetrack functioned as a place where the wealthy, mostly white owners extracted value from the horses + the human workers (who were mostly poor + black) who took care of them.

[Image description: A man and a horse.]

Yet scholars such as Katherine Mooney and Maryjean Wall have pointed out that racetracks - particularly in Kentucky - were sites of contradiction where Black horsemen (often as jockeys, both enslaved and later emancipated) achieved a level of social and economic status not seen in or her aspects of American society. One example was Oliver Lewis, who won the first Kentucky Derby in 1875 and was treated like a national celebrity. Another is Isaac Murphy, pictured below, who at one point owned a mansion in Lexington's multiracial East End from which he could watch meets at the Kentucky Association racetrack while entertaining guests on his roof

[S]uch men inspired discomfort and even fear in white turfmen when they asserted their own autonomy and proved the transformative power of black aspiration.

[Image description: Isaac Murphy.]

However, after decades of cyclical financial troubles, the Ky. Assn. went into bankruptcy and closed its doors for the last time after its spring race meet in 1933. The horseracing elites of Lexington, "Horse Capital of the World," were left without a functioning track, and Kinkeadtown and Goodloetown (as the working-class, ramsackle neighborhoods surrounding the track had come to be known) served as to visible a reminder of the socio-economic inequities in this capital.

Luckily the federal government was looking for land to build one of the country’s first public housing projects: “whites only” Blue Grass Park + “colored only” Aspendale. The “new deal” was coming to Lexington.

Despite its many shortcomings (including the way it institutionalized racial segregation on a scale that hadn't quite existed in Lexington until then and the way it was meant to be a "stepping-stone" to private property ownership in the suburbs), Bluegrass-Aspendale represented a marked improvement in living conditions for many working families in central Kentucky (both Black and White).

At the same time, the US Housing Authority's willingness to pay up for a large plot of land so close to Lexington's downtown alLowed many shareholders of the old Ky. Assn. to finance a newer, fancier track on the rural edge of the

county named "Keeneland."

Seen here: 1934 aerial photo of the track being redeveloped into public housing (right)

[Image description: the track being redeveloped into public housing.]

With that, horses left the East End of Lexington, and so did the horse money that had been extracted from it.

In the ensuing decades, Bluegrass-Aspendale experienced prolonged disinvestment, mirroring a general attack on social housing in America. In the meantime, Keeneland became a landscape where international capital descends on Kentucky horse country (some have called it Lexington's Fort Knox in reference to the US gold stockpiles a hundred miles to the west). In the meantime, the East End was erased from the "official" horseracing landscape.

The last remaining rowhome in Bluegrass-Aspendale was torn down in 2006. That same year, when the horse Meydan City fetched $11.7 million at the Keeneland yearling auction, the median household income in the area was less than $30K.

[Image description: Row housing.]

[Image description: A man holding a race horse sign.]

Then, in 2017, after years of delay, east end residents celebrated the imauguration of Isaac Murphy Garden – striking a claim to their “place” in Lexington’s horseracing heritage be altering the landscape.

But is this strategy being co-opted by developers of expensive new housing in the East End? Indeed, horses have also returned to the neighborhood in the form of murals attached to condos like the one recently built across the street from Isaac Murphy Garden (in the background, above; also pictured on the cover).

Some in the community see the demolition of the projects as the first phase of the East End's gentrification (it's only a mile from downtown). Rents have certainly skyrocketed over the past few years ...

None of this history makes itself known through the landscape, which (in part through its visible underdevelopment) naturalizes Lexington’s east end as an “emtpy” space ready for reinvestment.

This is how landscapes lie (and how they become haunted, if you ask me).

I have been exploring how the landscape in my neighborhood sets the limits for how people imagine its past - and therefore its future – by making and sharing zines. Zine-making has made my academic research as a grad student in Geography at the University of Kentucky more accessible to the people around me, and also allowed me to play around with thoughts in a more rapid and playful way than traditional thesis writing would allow me. (I still have plenty of questions, though .. .)

I NOW SUGGEST YOU START "DIGGING IN" TO A LANDSCAPE NEAR YOU!

Please refer to the second booklet in this pair for some inspiration and let me know how it goes!

[Image description: A horse racing mural]

Suggested reading list:

www.AfricanCemeteryNo2.org !!!

www.PhoenixRisingLex.org

Pellom McDaniels, The Prince of Jockeys

Don Mitchell, The Lie of the Land

Katherine Mooney, Race Horse Men

Richard Schein, "Normative dimensions of landscape," in Wilson & Growth (eds.), Everyday America

Maryjean Wall, How Kentucky Became Southern

Harvey Molotch & John Logan, Urban Fortunes

Lisa Lykins, Building Public Housing

Josh Poe & Jessica Bellamy, "Plantation urbanism," in Radical Housing Journal 2.2

July 2022

Contact:

[pwojcik606@gmail.com](mailto:pwojcik606@gmail.com)

DIYmethods.net

# Is This Landscape Lying To You? - A Critical Landscape Investigation

By: Piotr Wojcik

Choose a place you'd like to study through zine-making and write its name here:

Draw a picture or paste a photo of this landscape below

(I recommend physically visiting this place to begin work).

Your name (if you wish)

In a short paragraph, introduce your research site.

What is it? Where is it? Why did you choose it?

Sit for a while.

Below, draw (or paste a printout of) a MAP of your research site as it appears TODAY.

Briefly explain how the landscape you are studying came to be.

Who built ic7 Why7 Under what conditions7

Consult your local librarian for help finding chis information if you need to.

Find a map of your research site as it was in the PAST and copy it below.

(You can draw it by hand or also paste a printout.)

Besides the library, some good places to find historical maps online include the

Library of Congress (lac.gov/maps) or the David Rumsey Map Collection (davidrumsey.com).

You are encouraged to annotate it: how is it different &om today's map?

(Note the year depicted in the istorical [sic] map here.)

STORYTIME: Feel free to answer any of the prompts on this page (or to ignore them) as you develop a narrative around how this landscape got to be the way it is today.

What are three identifying features (small or large) of this landscape?

What makes these unique?

From where you are now, what would someone have seen X years in the past

(for example, in the year shown in your historical map on the previous page)?

You can speculate using words, pictures, something else, or a combination.

What emotions, memories, or connotations does this landscape evoke? Why?

Have others tried to commemorate anything here (for example, in the form of markers, signs, graffiti?)

How does the development of this landscape tie into broader themes of local, regional [sic], national, or even international histories? If other landscapes like this exist elsewhere in the world, how is this one similar and different? Do some additional research to speculate on why this is.

What CONVERSATIONS are people having about chis place7

Are there any controversies regarding the landscape or how it may change?

If people are not talking about your research site, why not? Should chey7

Think about how the landscape itself structures what people chink of chis place.

How might it be perceived differently if what used to be here could still be seen?

Why does chis place's history matter and what pares are concealed by what we can see?

What QUESTIONS are you left with?

Alternatively, draw or collage how you imagine this landscape might look like in the future (be sure to annotate your image).

Resources:

Where can readers find more information about your research site?

Congratulations! You've made a zine about the research you did on chis place.

Share it with someone you know or leave it at your research site for a stranger to find ...

(Write the date here:)

# Making Your Own Media: A Paper Peep Box Template

By: Christina Corfield

Inside cover:

Making Your Own Media: A Paper Peep Box Template

Christina Corfield

email: ccorfiel@ucsc.edu

Twitter: @tinacorfield

website: www.tinacorfield.com

Since 2018 I have been producing hand held, collapsible paper peep boxes. These peep boxes are small, smartphone-sized media that acted as miniature theaters, generated 3D depth effects and were at the height of their popularity in the mid nineteenth century when, in paper form, they were often sold as souvenirs at World’s Fairs or tourist attractions.

Reading about histories of early immersive, interactive visual media, I was particularly drawn to those which were easily reproducible using accessible materials like paper. Compared to black boxed devices like smartphones and computers, I found the ability to make these media easily by hand and thus comprehend how they worked, refreshing and fascinating. I especially found interactive media that prioritized haptic forms of experience – a fundamental part of much historical “peep media” according to media historian Erkki Huhtamo – a much more engaging way to think and learn about historical media, media use and the materialities of media. But practices of making your own paper media, particularly as a method of resistance to or rejection of dominant (and frequently corporate) practices and economies of exchange, creativity and community are not new and range from drawing zines to grangerizing books.

Historians of media such as Lori Emerson, whose involvement in the Media Archeology Lab at the University of Colorado, Boulder has written clearly and convincingly about the importance of old media in a technological world governed by the temporalities of late capitalism. As Emerson explains “…if it weren’t for this supposedly ‘quirky’ and eccentric habit I have of keeping old media around long after they should have been consigned to the trash heap, how would I know to even question the design of my laptop? Without access to the past, how would I ever be able to imagine an alternative present and therefore a future where our things are built with, for example, longevity, care, maintenance, and sustainability in mind?” The Media Archeology Lab is accessible to those who want to study twentieth century media. But looking at much older media can be hard as many examples of old media hardware are preserved and stored in archives. In 2013 calls for an “experimental media archeology” by Annie van den Oever and Andreas Fickers, argued for a more hands-on approach to studying media history that encouraged “reenactments” with old media to gain new perspectives on them. Media archeologists such as Wanda Strauven and Meredith Bak more recently demonstrated how physically interacting with historical media objects produced important knowledge about the materiality of media and media use, both for researchers and students alike, with Strauven turning her classroom into a “lab” and Bak interacting with historical children’s toys in archival settings. I began to consider my paper media as a potential template for others to be able to access obsolete media that otherwise might be confined to archives or special collections which can be difficult to access, either due to a lack of institutional affiliation, or because classes of students cannot enter them. In these circumstances, as I have argued before, being able to make your own media can be a helpful substitute, teaching about the architecture of the paper media through construction, while also, when completed, allowing makers to interact with the hardware and experience their visual effects.

The development and expansion of this peep box project was additionally influenced by the work of feminist scholars like Daniela Rosner, whose Critical Fabulations spoke to much of what the peep box project aims to achieve, that is, the orienting of the history represented toward different “narrative potentials.” Reconstructing these historical paper media was not just about working with the hardware. The design of the visual content was an equally important part of visualizing and challenging the history that the project embodied, namely the ideologies that were communicated via the content that the medium powerfully delivered via its special effects. As part of a historical project that turned the ideologies embedded in historical peep boxes on their head, I began developing content by focusing on my knowledge of what historical paper peep boxes had traditionally represented, which would have included Orientalized images of “far-away” places and peoples, and celebrations of Imperial or monarchic power among other things. However, rather than filling my boxes with historically accurate images I instead chose to include scenes of civil disobedience and events that highlighted social injustice. Thus, choosing to deviate from historical accuracy allowed me to ask questions such as: what images might fill our reconstructed peep boxes if we use reconstruction as an opportunity to tell different stories? What new architectures and forms might emerge if we tinker with the structure of the box and the way it produces its visual effects? And what might be the most appropriate combination of content and form be to produce an object that embodies a critical argument?

Rosner’s work is also helpful as it highlights how traditions of craft can inform design thinking and reorient understandings or approaches to separate fields of practice – in Rosner’s case, computing. DIY, as a form of craft itself and as this conference highlights, helps us rethink our objectives, approaches and priorities to given knowledge, questions and practices. So, while reconstructing historical paper media brings knowledge about how such hardware was put together and how it produced its visual effects, such activity also encourages play and experimentation, research and design, process as much as product. In other words, fabulation through crafting helps us (forgive the pun) think outside the box. Critical crafting has in recent years gained more attention in the fields of art and design, but I see productive overlaps with practices of experimental media archeology that would allow makers to use crafting to gain knowledge through process, while also producing an object that acts as a scholarly text at the same time. As Anthea Black and Nicole Burisch have argued, “Craft is a meaningful shorthand, a sign, a symbol, a representational system that flows across multiple sites of knowledge and cultural production.” Rather than limiting these paper reconstructions to the realm of “tinkering” in which process is more important, emphasizing the handmade quality and specific materials used in making the finished peep box as part of a “representational system” can be an important part of the scholarly object’s argument or matrix of meanings as a completed object/text. Hand craft functions to direct viewers to the authorship and labor that produced the object, but it can also work to highlight the creative and critical possibilities of alteration, introducing narrative opportunities to explain why and what kind of alteration was implemented as well as what such craftwork can contribute to our understanding of the medium and to the way we tell stories about media through media. Producing homemade media provides incredible opportunities for makers to think deeply about the materiality of media and the potential to create scholarly, poetic texts which literally embody the ideas being communicated. One powerful example is the work of indigenous Canadian zine-maker Rowan Red Sky, whose zine “Mud Plot” about trees and their relationship to them via their Haudenosaunee culture, was produced with homemade inks sourced from trees in their neighborhood in Toronto. Employing a material as rich in variety and history as paper likewise affords many opportunities to communicate ideas poetically. Paper affords much in its physical flexibility and ubiquity. It is not precious in the way that expensive components might be, thus the stakes of trying different approaches in construction and making mistakes are lower due to the cost and accessibility of the materials. At the same time, the variety of papers that could be used, from construction paper to expensive artisanal or even homemade sheets, allows makers to produce objects with more complex signifying potential, multi-layered meanings which could come, for example, from the ecological composition of the materials used (potentially speaking to environmentally centered issues and concerns) to the cultural, social or political histories and contexts of which they are a part.

This zine is an invitation for readers to become makers and participate in a “make-your-own media” project. By so doing, this zine acts as a guide to readers/makers in how to make their own peep box, invoking a sense of what Tom Gunning has termed “amazement” and curiosity about old media and encouraging a creative mindset in which alteration of the architecture and content of the box is valued. I produced these miniature peep theaters by attempting to recreate what I saw in photographs of historical objects. I did not follow manuals or instructions but followed my intuition. So, as I share my own instructions in this zine, I encourage all makers to deviate, explore and expand those instructions to suit any alterations they might be inclined to make either in their first construction or in subsequent iterations.

In the latter half of this zine, you will find instructions and a template for a paper peep box you can cut out and make yourself. I have provided the instructions to make the architecture of the collapsible box, allowing you to choose the images you may want to include within.

Instructions and templates for making your own peep box.

[Image description: a diagram of a Paper Peep Box.]

[Image description: each of the following steps is accompanied by one or more a diagrams of the step.]

1. Cut out all the pieces of the box from this booklet. Cut along the dotted lines and fold along the bold lines.
2. Focus on the scrims. Cut out the shapes outlines in a dotted line on each scrim. The rest of the scrim is where you can glue your images. Check alignment of the images on your scrims by frequently placing one scrim on top of the other.
3. Add images to your scrims. You can draw them or use images cut out of magazines. Think of the scrims as mini collages. Smaller images on the back scrims and larger images on the front scrims. Don’t forget the back panel too. Leave glue to dry when done.
4. Attach scrims to accordion sides where marked, glueing folded flaps directly into accordion creases. Leave until glue is dry.
5. Glue accordion sides to the insides of the front and back panels. Leave until glue is dry.
6. Put a heavy book or weight on top of everything to flatten. Leave overnight. Be careful when you open the box as you may need to pull apart sections that have stuck together.

The following pages are intended to be cut out and constructed.

Cut along the dotted lines and fold along the bold lines. I have written instructions and tips on these templates to help as much as possible, but tinker as need be.

You can also photocopy these pages so you have multiple templates to work with.

You may fill these boxes with whatever image content you like. In my project, which you can find on my website, tinacorfield.com, I drew inspiration from current events, from the protests at Standing Rock to the Flint, Michigan water crisis. I found images in newspapers and online which I printed out, cut out or traced.

When folding the accordion, follow the directions below, beginning at the bottom and folding towards you, then folding back along each of these lines. You can also try folding every second line too if you want bigger accordion folds. If you do this, still begin by folding toward you and then away, and then toward, etc.

[Image description: Pages marked with instructions of where and how to cut them out to make a Paper Peep Box.]

# Networks in the Wild!- A (very short and very incomplete) Field Guide

By: Anne Lee Steele

Cut on the dotted line!

This zine is a rough draft: an attempt to think about, through, and along networks: both their visual and invisible forms.

The proliferation of networks (and their visualizations) is closely tied to the network culture in which we are all enmeshed both online and off. networks push up against linearity, and show us connectivity. they invite notions of decentralisation and redistribution, rather than hierarchy. they illustrate ecosystems, rather than individuals, and often help us to situate a particular thing within its context (or sometimes, even ourselves).

The more i’ve see [sic] networks around me, the more i’ve asked: why are we so confined to the form of the list, despite the illustrative weight of networks? why can’t we illustrate everything as such? who would we take note of? what would we care for? who would receive credit?

This zine does not attempt to answer these questions. instead, it visualizes networks as they are being rendered and used across the web, in order to help you form your own answers. it renders a typography of these networks (situated in my own biases) from an ever-expanding arena channel,\* which links to the projects and ideas in full, with an invitation to through your own network of networks.

Think of this zine as a (very short, and very incomplete) field guide into the wider world of networks, doddles, provocations, challenges, reflections, and comments welcome.

- anne

\*https://are.na/anne-lee-steele/networked-thinking

[Image description: a network of eight words on a background of webpages. The words are: “care, entanglement, connection, decentralization, attribution, resilience, interdependence, credit”.]

network

noun

1. an arrangement of intersecting horizontal and vertical lines.

2. a group or system of interconnected people or things

verb

1. [with object] connect as or operate with a network

2. [no object] interact with others to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts

[Image description: A diagram “mapping a network of networks”.]

Network of networks includes:

networks for exploration

mental mapping

networked thinking

networks for describing social relations

networks for platform capitalism

networks for knowledge management

networks of fragility

networks for surveying big data

networks for systems thinking

networks for resilience

networks of power and patronage

networks for accountability & transparency

networks for institution building

networks for community building

Each network has a variety of sub-categories around it

[Image description: An empty box with instructions to “map your own network” and prompts of “who is included?” and “who is not?”]

[Image description: An empty box with instructions to “map your own network of networks” and prompts of “how would you categorize these connections?” and “what themes emerge?”]

This zine emerged from a conversation with anelda van der walt, anne treasure, nomalungelo maphanga, yo yehudi, and malvika sharan — as well as from many others within the open scholarship + open science community. thank you!

# On Networked Distribution in a Time of Climate Catastrophe

By: Morphic Rooms (allison anne and Jeremy Bushnell)

with art by Jam Doughty

How can we leverage our countercultural values as zine distributors and artists into the design of resilient methods for distribution in a low-carbon future?

Introduction:

We’re allison anne and Jeremy P. Bushnell. Individually, we each produce work in the fields of collage, mail art, and zinemaking, and we produce collaborative work together as Morphic Rooms. In 2022, we decided to launch a new project, Nonmachinable, a zine publishing and distribution service, or “distro” for short. Essentially, we gather, curate, and publish work from visually innovative artists around the globe, and distribute this work to adventurous readers.

Artist and critic Anwen Crawford has written “art is not precious, neither is politics,” by which she means that “neither thing should be remote from the texture of our lives or out of reach of our making.” The founding of Nonmachinable served as a way for us to work art more deeply into our lives, but also as a way for us to do the same with politics–to bring politics more firmly within the scope of “our making.”

Sidebar: Crawford, Anwen. No Document. Artarmon, NSW, Giramondo Publishing, 2021.

We would like to think that we have risen to this opportunity. Supporting independent artists and providing a platform for their work always has some modest political dimension; championing abstraction feels critical at a time when the neo-fascist “traditionalism” revival wants to hold it up as a sign of cultural decay. We decided early on that we were committed to focusing on work made by marginalized people, especially trans people and queers. And we believe that the zine community and the mail art network have each long served as alternative structures, existing in stalwart opposition to institutional power. However, we also wonder whether more could be done. In this essay, we aim to engage with the question of how we could leverage our countercultural values into the design of resilient methods for distribution in a low-carbon future.

Network stewardship:

A word here on the mail art network, for those unfamiliar. Mail art–also known as postal or correspondence art–is the practice of sending creative works through the mail. While traditions of decorated or embellished letters and unusual correspondence stretch back much further than the 1950s and 60s, there is some consensus that the mid-20th century represented the point at which mail art became an organized phenomenon. Artist Ray Johnson, working in New York City during this time period, was an extremely prolific collagist and mail artist who brought together an early mail art network by sending mail art to friends, celebrities, galleries and curators, further developing these connections into what became known as the New York Correspondance [sic] School.

Over the next several decades, mail art developed into an alternative means of collaborating; building community; and exchanging creative work, information and ideas– one that was not reliant on galleries, museums or other institutionalized aspects of the art world. Many mail artists refer to the mail art network as being “eternal”–forever in the present tense.

[Image description: A stamp that says “Fluxus,” a postcard of trains, a pen, and an envelope that says “Art Mail!”]

Zinemakers both young and old also have spoken about developing a similar sense of the zine network as its own kind of living movement, relying on the activity of its participants as a practice of ongoing stewardship.

Speak to anyone who has participated in these “eternal networks” and they will tell you that the experience is a precious, unique, life-changing enterprise, bringing both art and politics into the texture of one’s life, neatly in line with Crawford’s ideals quoted above. And yet. One of the most critical political issues of our time is the climate emergency, which calls upon us all to serve as activists as a matter of our survival and the survival of those more vulnerable than us. And when faced with the question of whether these networks rise to the importance of this precarious moment, we pause.

In fact, we find ourselves struggling with the difficult questions: are these networks complicit in the ongoing climate catastrophe? And is there a way to maintain participation in the activities of network stewardship–sending, receiving, circulating, and distributing–while simultaneously reducing the carbon footprint of those activities?

[Image description: a drawing of a postal box.]

Postal infrastructure:

Ray Johnson had the great insight that you could use the postal system “as a social interface and mode of production,” to, in effect, leverage its entire infrastructure toward an artistic end. But in so doing, he, and the mail artists who have followed in his footsteps, have also coupled their work to a carbon-intensive operation, reliant on a fleet of more than 200,000 aging vehicles. Attempts under President Biden to electrify the fleet or otherwise reduce the carbon footprint of the operation have been met with resistance–notably from Trump-appointed Postmaster General Louis DeJoy–and the final outcome of these attempts appear to be at least partially diminished.

Sidebar: Carter, Jordan and Haskell, Caitlin, “‘New York’s Most Famous Unknown Artist’: Getting to Know Ray Johnson.” The Art Institute of Chicago, 23 Nov. 2021

Is it incumbent upon mail artists, then, to decouple from the Postal Service? This is a steep “ask,” of course–one could say it is the equivalent of asking painters whether they could do without paint, not to mention the fact that many mail artists, ourselves included, have a deep fondness for the organization. It is perhaps fortuitous, then, that personal mail seems not to add considerably to the overall load managed by the postal service. In 2015, the Postal Service handled approximately 154.2 billion pieces of mail, and of this, only 3.6 billion–about two percent–represented “household to household” mail. The vast majority of mail–116 billion pieces, 75 percent–is “non-household to household” mail: in other words, your packages from Amazon, or, even more likely, stuff like those weekly circulars from your nearby supermarket. (Package delivery is a growing sector for the USPS, and the COVID-19 pandemic has surely accelerated that growth, but back in 2015 “advertisements” comprised a gargantuan share–62 percent–of all mail received by households, with packages coming in at only three percent.)

Sidebar: Soifer, Don. “Postal Trendwatch.” Lexington Institute, 27 Sept. 2016.

Thus, it could be argued that mail art is really operating in the margins of an enormous infrastructure that primarily exists to disseminate business literature and commercial products (predominantly clothing, to judge from the 2015 data). All of mail art (and indeed, the entire human enterprise of using the mail for personal correspondence) could disappear tomorrow and the Postal Service would barely notice–they might not cut a single route. Put another way, if a mail artist wanted to reduce their carbon footprint, curtailing their mail art activities is an inefficient step: it could not inconceivably be said that a more impactful pastime would be for them to concentrate their energies on advocating for the end of capitalism (and indeed, many do).

[Image description: A whimsical, drawn map of the world with a “Mail Art Worldwide” stamp.]

Zine distribution, however, might be another matter. Like mail art, it is dependent on the dirty postal network. However, unlike the circulation of mail art, which operates almost exclusively as a form of interpersonal gift exchange, making a business of selling zines is, by definition, a capitalist enterprise (however marginally). We run Nonmachinable from our respective homes, so for now our postal activity falls into that “household to household” category, but it isn’t hard to find older and more storied distros that operate as true businesses and are run out of shops, which nudges them into that more problematic “non-household to household” category–the capitalist category on which the whole edifice hangs.

It’s not impossible to imagine a “post-capitalist” zine distro, and doing so might be a worthy enterprise, though one beyond the scope of this pamphlet. Instead, we’d like to contemplate the related, yet more modest, question of what “post-postal” systems of networked distribution might look like.

Centralized nodes:

One potential answer is to consider the opportunities presented by centralization. We think of networks as sprawling things, but let us draw in our focus and consider individual nodes in the zine distribution network as particular, localized points of interest. If we do so, we find a teeming ecosystem of zine libraries, shops, and other community fixtures, including ones that exist on a temporary or periodic basis, such as festivals and fairs. These nodes are important in that they represent places where distribution can occur in the most low-carbon modality available: hand-to-hand exchange.

To be fair, it is worth noting that festivals and fairs can be viewed as carbon-intensive, especially given that the larger, better known ones serve as attractive events, inviting people to travel from both near and far in order to attend. It’s not hard to imagine boarding a commercial airliner in order to attend a high-profile art book festival, which might offset whatever “green” benefits such a festival would provide. But a closer look reveals that there are a number of smaller, hyperlocal fairs that effectively sidestep this problem. One example worthy of note is the Autonomous Zine Fest in Minneapolis, which avoids having an online presence and instead promotes itself via low-tech methods like word-of-mouth and printed fliers spread throughout the community. Locals bring their zines and a blanket or table to Powderhorn Park to connect with others while trading or selling their publications–networked distribution at its finest.

Sidebar: Vallely, Jonathan. “Zine Fests Put to the Test!” Broken Pencil, 29 Nov. 2021.

Zine archives and libraries have an important role to play in the matter of centralization, housing a variety of material that may span a wide range of time, preserving the output of the network at various points. Zines are highly ephemeral–but a library creates an opportunity to engage with archival and historical material that is no longer being actively distributed. There are a variety of archival projects that demonstrate the enormous importance of this aspect of networked distribution. A notable example is the ABC No Rio Zine Library in Manhattan, which grew from an effort to rescue the Blackout Zine Library in 1998 during an eviction. It now houses more than 13,000 items, “inspiring new generations of zine makers by demonstrating the sheer numbers and breadth of the types of zines possible.”

Sidebar: ABC No Rio: The Culture of Opposition Since 1980. “Zine Library.” abcnorio.org.

Shops such as Quimby’s (Chicago, IL), Boneshaker Books (Minneapolis, MN), or Wasted Ink (Phoenix, AZ) are reliant to a modest degree on the postal network, inasmuch they have an openness to sending out some packages to distant customers, but they also represent centralized points of interest, beckoning a wide range of people to gather, create, share ideas and distribute their work. And again, achieving the goals of distribution in a low-carbon fashion, by putting material directly in the hands of the customers who have congregated in these spaces.

Most zine distros don’t have the capital necessary to transform themselves into brick-and-mortar retail enterprises, of course, and we aren’t saying that the climate catastrophe would disappear if every distro became a shop (after all, a physical location requires resources to maintain, including power consumption and the usage of other utilities). But we are saying that an important range of opportunities for decarbonization present themselves when you consider the instructive example of something like the Tree of Knowledge distro, which was initially run out of a residence in Little Rock, AR, catering to people coming to house shows.

[Image description: “Zines!” followed by 4 zines hanging on a string, 4 zines below, all next to a “FREE!” sign and stickers.]

Tree of Knowledge didn’t need capital to get started–it originated in 1995 as “two milk crates in the corner of [founder Theo Witsell]’s bedroom”. Before too long, of course, the success of the distro brought it up against a familiar problem: the scarcity of affordable space in a capitalist society. One need only check the escalating cost of rent in 2022 to know that there is no easy solution to this problem, though it can be creatively forestalled: Witsell’s collaborator Mary Chamberlin, after watching the distro “slowly [...] eat all of Theo’s space,” eventually took over the operation, moving it to her living room.

Sidebar: Hubbard, Robert. “Midwest Underground Media Symposium (MUMS III ’99) - Day 2 Tree of Knowledge Distro.” youtube.com, 2 May 1999.

One could cynically suggest that this is just a way of kicking the can of the problem down the road, but it is notable that Chamberlin continues to operate Tree of Knowledge, and continues to emphasize the importance of the fact that it is not a brick-and-mortar outfit, but rather something that operates out of “nontraditional environments,” including the White Water Tavern (still in Little Rock).

Sidebar: Clancy, Sean. “Hang Time.” Arkansas Online, 3 Dec. 2013.

Although Tree of Knowledge has been centralized in Little Rock for decades now, it is important to mention that part of its success was dependent on Witsell’s “frequent tabling at fests across the country” and Chamberlin’s willingness to “[take] it on tour with every band from her home state of Arkansas” [ref]--both carbon-intensive activities. So what other approaches could we consider?

Sidebar: Brent, Bill, and Joe Biel. Make a Zine!: When Words and Graphics Collide. Bloomington, In, Microcosm Publishing, 2008, p. 151.

Sidebar: Biel, Joe. Good Trouble: Building a Successful Life and Business with Asperger’s. Google Books, Microcosm Publishing, 15 Mar. 2016, pp. 7–8.

Local distribution:

To consider an even more radical approach to local distribution, we could turn to the work of Molly Sherman and Emily Fitzgerald. Sherman is an artist, designer, and educator, currently working as an Assistant Professor in Communication Design at Texas State University. In 2016, when she was living in Portland, OR, she collaborated with the photographer Emily Fitzgerald on “People’s Homes”, a collaborative project that “paired local artists with longtime residents to share their life stories and draw attention to the city’s quickly changing landscape.”

Sidebar: Fitzgerald, Emily, and Molly Sherman. “People’s Homes.” Efitzgerald.com, 2016.

Fitzgerald and Sherman write: “The artists and homeowners have worked together to create small-scale billboards that represent the elders’ experiences of home. The signs signify the artists’ interpretations and homeowners’ perspectives, the relationships they formed with one another through this project, and the ways in which their lives intersect. The signs are installed in the residents’ front lawns—asking passersby to reflect on their communities, interact more intimately with their neighbors, and acknowledge the past while recognizing the urban changes taking place around us.”

Sidebar: Fitzgerald, Emily, and Molly Sherman. “People’s Homes.” Efitzgerald.com, 2016.

This is an interesting, socially committed project with much to admire and many aspects worth remarking upon. However, the aspect most germane to our topic at hand is the fact that the project yielded a supplementary publication, also called People’s Homes–a twelve-page, black and white, tabloid-sized document which contained short interviews with the project participants, a map, and a few pages of contextualizing remarks from Fitzgerald, Sherman, and others.

This document can be found online as a PDF available at tinyurl.com/PeoplesHomes, but it was produced in a physical edition–essentially as a zine–and subsequently distributed. Interestingly, it was not available for sale in a commercial context (which would, of course, require the mechanisms of commercial shipping and all that that implies) but was instead distributed to the household mailboxes of residents in the area.

[Image description: A bicycle stopped on grass, with a backpack and water bottle.]

This provocative approach invites creative thinking around the prospect of local distribution networks. There is no reason why all distribution must strive to be global or even national. Why not conceive of a distribution network that was the size of the area you could cover in a day? Using a car could give you a fairly broad area; using public transportation could give you a similarly broad area but reduce the carbon footprint. Or, to decarbonize the process fully, why not rule out use of a car, and delimit your distribution scope to an area you could comfortably cover on foot? Or within the range of a bicycle? Or a wheelchair?

These would be radical choices, but there are precedents here that are worth considering. Gabriel Levinson began pedaling the Chicago Book Bike around city parks in 2008, and Sarah Mirk, a graphic journalist, editor and teacher based in Portland, OR, designed a ‘zine bike’ – a “communal zine tricycle” that offers her local community the opportunity to reserve use of the vehicle on Mirk’s website, fill it up with printed goods, and hit the streets at no charge. Or consider Mathias Svalina’s Dream Delivery Service, a subscription service to one writer’s dream journal. When the service is active, Svalina writes down his dreams every day and hand-delivers them “via bike before dawn to nearby subscribers”, most recently in Nashville, TN. These innovative methods of distribution function as mobile nodes in the network, expanding it in an hearteningly low-carbon manner.

Sidebar: Duffer, Robert. “Book Places: The Book Bike.” Chicago Tribune, 14 July 2010.

Sidebar: Silverman, Julia. “Portland Is Getting the World’s First Communal Zine Tricycle.” Portland Monthly, 21 May 2021.

Sidebar: Svalina, Mathias. “Dream Delivery Service.” dreamdeliveryservice.com.

The final approach to climate-conscious local distribution that we have room to discuss is Saint Paul, MN-based Springboard for the Arts’ Community Supported Art (CSA) project, which takes cues from Community Supported Agriculture projects in terms of structure, keeping “the same buy-direct, buy-local spirit in mind” and applying it to local art. This exciting project offers both the joy of receiving work from a favorite artist and the thrill of discovering new ones. This method represents thoughtful consideration for sustainable distribution and also builds community, one delivery or pickup at a time.

Sidebar: “CSA: Community Supported Art.” Springboard for the Arts, springboardforthearts.org.

Image description: a circle wrapped in a tree branch, with a drawing of a landscape inside

Conclusion:

We are living through an era of climate catastrophe, which challenges both our broad networks and our local nodes to rethink existing practices and reimagine collective systems. Addressing this crisis requires resources and infrastructure at the scale of corporations and government, and, as much as we might offer suggestions, it is important to reaffirm that it will not be solved by individual choice. Collective action is necessary, and artists, writers, publishers and other independent creatives are able to share knowledge, resources and further develop systems of sustainability and care. As we have discussed throughout this zine, artists are often consciously engaged with institutional power, troubling existing hegemonies and inviting discussion. This presents a great opportunity for social learning and growth that aligns with a sustainable mindset–not only distributing art and writing about sustainability, but building those considerations into the methodology of creating and publishing.

There are many tangible actions that mail artists, zinemakers and small publishers can take to advocate for increased sustainability and carbon consciousness in their practice and within their communities. Planning events, sharing resources, and thoughtfully considering and designing publications both on- and offline have a collective effect, opening inroads to carbon reduction in practice and sharing the results so that others can learn.

Pivoting to publishing, distributing, and hosting projects electronically may feel like a solution we have overlooked, but this of course presents its own carbon considerations. In our increasingly digital world, there’s much discussion of data being stored in the ‘cloud’, but many are disconnected from the material reality behind this terminology. While cloud storage is generally more energy-efficient than the large data centers of the past, resources are still necessary to keep it running. The World Economic Forum believes, optimistically, that as the cloud providers feel more pressure to use zero-carbon power, the pace of this progress will quicken–Google has matched 100% of its energy consumption with renewables, with the other largest providers, Microsoft and Amazon trailing behind. That being said, Google still depends on the available sources of energy to power its facilities, “many of whom will not be able to supply 100% renewable energy”–in other words, renewable sources are not always guaranteed.

Sidebar: Francis, Taylor. “The Next Big Cloud Competition is the Race to Zero Emissions.” World Economic Forum, 20 Sept. 2021.

Sidebar: Brunner, Laurel. “Giant Strides for a Smaller Footprint.” Blokboek, 12 Jan. 2017.

There are ways, though, to make our digital distribution practices more carbon-conscious as independent publishers and artists? Applying a similar logic to our online offerings as we do our printed projects presents some solutions–think about what you’re using! In terms of data size, HTTPArchive.org shows that desktop websites today are nearly four times larger than in 2010, and mobile sites have ballooned to about thirteen times the average size in the same timeframe. Some considerations and best practices include being mindful of the size of your website, as each view and download represents a contribution of emissions; optimizing and compressing images that are intended to be consumed digitally; ensuring your material is hosted with renewable energy (a tool such as TheGreenWebFoundation.org is handy); and being cautious about the storage and transfer of enormous files in situations when they aren’t necessary.

Sidebar: “HTTP Archive: Page Weight.” Httparchive.org.

While it has been argued that “print has a one off carbon footprint: you don’t need energy to use it or store its content,” this isn’t strictly true. We have concentrated in this document primarily on matters of distribution, but matters of material production, physical storage, and waste must also be considerations. Paper takes resources to produce, ship, and store, as does the printing of a publication, long before the matter of distributing the final product comes into play. Considering the environmental, social and political impact of a zine or artist’s book can become rich parameters for creative exploration, problem-solving and community learning at every level of the process. Consider creating a publication within the framework of the mailing guidelines for a one-ounce letter to reduce the carbon footprint of its distribution, or using paper that might otherwise be discarded, such as letterhead from a business that’s changed their branding–Ray Johnson, ever a lodestone for our work, once built an entire phase of his output around letterhead salvaged from New York City’s Department of Housing and Buildings.

Sidebar: Brunner, Laurel. “Giant Strides for a Smaller Footprint.” Blokboek, 12 Jan. 2017.

Sidebar: Carter, Jordan and Haskell, Caitlin, “‘New York’s Most Famous Unknown Artist’: Getting to Know Ray Johnson.” The Art Institute of Chicago, 23 Nov. 2021

This publication has sprung from a variety of questions and curiosities that have arisen through our own creative practices and our work with Nonmachinable. We endeavor to continue learning from individuals who are already “inventing, repairing, and hacking methods” that make inroads into the territory of carbon-conscious distribution and publishing, and to share what we’ve learned in order to help inform the actions of artists, zinemakers, independent publishers and other network stewards in this era of climate emergency. Rethinking processes for creating, publishing, and distributing work to adapt to the needs and challenges of catastrophic times presents new opportunities for networked collaboration. Let’s seize this moment together.

Morphic Rooms is a collaborative collage laboratory founded in 2021 by allison anne (Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA) and Jeremy P. Bushnell (Dedham, Massachusetts, USA).They produce layered, abstract work that utilizes systematic parameters, creative rulesets, chance operations, and collaborative interplay as tools for radically reimagining a collection of images, texts, ephemera, and detritus, drawn from centuries of cultural accretion and mechanical reproduction. Together, they support the expansion of the public domain, cast a critical eye on the mechanisms of capitalized acquisition, and aspire to produce convivial tools enabling everyone access to artmaking. Find them at @morphicrooms or morphicrooms.com

Jam Doughty lives in Chicago with their partner, their pet snake Cromis, and their bike, Pizzaboi. Jam draws creatures, plants, buildings, things found in the street, and collages of found paper ephemera. They aim to make art that helps people see themselves as part of an ecosystem. Find their work on Instagram at @wormyorchids.

[Image description: a scrap of paper with a stamp reading “BOGMAIL” featuring mushrooms. Smaller text reads “2022 ALMOST SPRING”.]

# Other People's Research - A Guide to Hospitality as Method

By: Stephanie Sadre-Orafai

[stephanie.sadre-orafai@uc.edu](mailto:stephanie.sadre-orafai@uc.edu)

DIY Methods 2022 / Printed by Jordan Tate

[Image Description: two chalices, with a leaf overtop.]

Mentoring

Organizing

Curating

Coordinating

Editing

Designing

Hosting

[Image description: Illustrations: Heritage Library’s Animal Murals, All the Leaves, and Vases and Flowers. // Fonts: Forma DJR Micro, Text & Display and Minion Pro // Process: Risograph]

Ghorbunet beram.

I sacrifice myself for you.

Bedooneh shoma

khosh nemigozareh.

Without you,

it will not be fun .

[Image Description: One dog-like creature sits, while a horned dog-like creature passes by.]

I grew up in the south, raised by an Iranian father and an American mother (also a southerner). Hospitality was a shared cornerstone value. Becoming fluent in ta'arof and southern hospitality meant learning that (1) ritualistic performances of deference and etiquette could mask sincere intentions, (2) sincerity, directness, and transparency are not always the most important values for communicating or building relationships, and (3) while text and aesthetics are key, to be a good host (and guest) you must attend equally to the subtext and affective charge of interactions.

While the context of these performances whose time, labor, or benefit they were structured to support- are foregrounded when codes are crossed, hospitality is a useful barometer for feeling out new environments. Running counter to neoliberal advice dispensed to academics, hospitality as method encourages shared projects of placemaking, valuing community over an atomized focus on the self. While appearing self-abnegating, it shows our debts to others craft our sense of self. Hospitality as method asks what is needed to support and nourish these relationships, to surface knowledge, and feel good while doing so. It centers pleasure and proliferates relations.

[Image Description: a leaf.]

Hospitality as method is engaging with other people's research at various stages of development. Finishing graduate school, navigating the job market, tenure, and promotion would have been impossible without writing partners. Over coffee and meals, we wrote alongside one another, read and responded to each other's work, and provided encouragement and community for what is an isolating and seemingly solitary pursuit.

During the pandemic, the need to be both host and guest became more urgent. Colleagues, students, and mentees all needed more grace. Preparing a shared, inviting meeting place (virtual or otherwise) helped keep ideas and feelings flowing. When my own work (or life) was too overwhelming or difficult, turning to other's was affirming.

Hospitality as method blurs boundaries between research, teaching, and service. It can chafe, creating friction between our disciplined expertise and the incidental, amateur, and latent talents we nourish on the side.

I was always interested in design, but never formally trained. Collaborating with welcoming artists and designers was transformational. Beyond sharing techniques, their encouragement to try and to play made all the difference.

Don't just stay in your lane.

Hospitality as method re-keys academic spaces. Rather than gatekeeping (ourselves or one another) by discounting the knowledge and outside talents we bring to a project or a collaboration, we can cultivate a shared sense of creativity and curiosity.

Prepare a space of invitation and encouragement for those you mentor (formally and informally), authors you edit, speakers you host, and collaborators with whom you work. Prioritize the durability of these connections.

You are so much more than your title or credentials. You are so much more than what you produce in your name only.

Prepare the ground.

# Pandemic Research! Reflecting On An Auto-Ethnography of Mundane Academic Practice… in Pandemic Times

By: Ariadne Avkiran, Constantin Holmer, Bao-Chau Pham, Fredy Mora Gamez, Esther Dessewffy, Andrea Schikowitz, Kathleen Gregory, Sarah R. Davies Pham

[do we have a title?]

[Image description: Abstract line drawings of an open note book.]

Scattered thoughts, infrastructure-anxieties in digitally mediated academic work

Image Description: A hand-drawn illustration of a computer screen with a Zoom meeting in progress.

Pandemic Challenges:

This panic is grounded in the absence of wi-fi at home for more than 10 days. This means, the impossibility of conducting Zoom meetings, working online, conducting databases and Google scholar searches, and the impossibility of carrying out home schooling using online material, engaging with ANTON (app) or just entertain the kids while finding a short time to catch up with daily work. As other forms of materiality that become visible upon breakdown (Leigh Star, 1999), cable infrastructures are quintessential for other forms of infrastructure, like the internet, to operate. I therefore realise how my emotional resources in the last year or so have been exhausted by fear of someone I care about being affected by the pandemic, but at the same time the anxiety when certain material conditions fail in permitting the normal operation of online digital technologies crucial to my work. These infrastructure-anxieties have become part of post-pandemic everyday life.

[Image description: Screenshot of a text exchange between two people on an instant messaging app.]

Yet, I make sure to wear a decent shirt, clean up the space behind me in the temporary house I am living in, and transfer all the mess made by my kids behind the screen of my (borrowed) laptop. When i decide to ask a question, I quickly check that my older kid is correctly "plugged to" Disney Plus . Once the conference is over, I feel relieved that I managed to ask a decent and uninterrupted question. All things considered, l think it’s too simplistic to say that reading from physical objects is where i take in knowledge, and writing (or all kinds) on digital platforms is where i make it - but the digital does seem to afford a different mode of working, one that is more about focused production.

[Image description: Line drawing of a desktop screen and laptop screen with the following text:

I embody some of those infrastructures, as their failures are now also my anxieties. A poor connection during a class accelerates my heartbeat or triggers my frustration.

Text in a box at the end of the page: My kid and partner are feeling sick so I cannot escape to my office.]

[Image description: Image of a closed glass window overlooking a hill. There are fern trees and snow covered grounds visible outside the window.]

What practices (do not) enact care (in knowledge production)?

[Image description: A hand drawn arrow from the question points to the word ‘care’ circled and shaded in yellow.]

[...]

“While the feeling of being isolated and hesitant to ask questions or for support was omnipresent at my previous research project, asking the naivest questions was warmly welcomes by PhD and post doc colleagues as well as our professor.” [...]

[Image description: A hand drawn arrow from the quote points to the word ‘care’ circled and shaded in orange.]

[Image description: Image of a glass bottle kept on a work table. A hand drawn arrow from the image points to the word ‘care’ circled and shaded in red.]

[...]

“Exchanging thoughts, experiences and reflections in our reading group and meetings informed the empirical parts of research in the last month.” [..]

[Image description: Image of a writing exercise in a group meeting. The text on the paper is not legible.]

[...]

“Apart from reading and reviewing literature, I came to find that most of the academic practices I am working with now are new to me.” [...]

(Group member, Feb 2022)

What is (digital) care?

Acknowledge and value care, organizational, and social forms of academic work

● Digital care?

● Smiles and hugs?

● Flowers or plants?

[Image description: Top right corner of the page: an image of a plate with a piece of cake.]

Non-hierarchical in our interactions

Value each other’s time, opinions, commitments, needs and interests

[Image description: Image of a dining table with food on it.]

Collegial and non-competitive and generous

Demonstrating our values through practice

resist patriarchal and colonial relations

[Image description: Image of a snow covered ground with several large pine trees. Two people are walking among the trees.]

Acknowledge our different responsibilities

[Image description: Image of a closed glass window overlooking a hill. There are fern trees and snow covered grounds visible outside the window.]

Hi there - thank you for taking a look at (reading our) zine! We are a research group/collective engaged in Science & Technology Studies research on the nature of (our own) knowledge- practices. Since March 2021 we have been conducting an auto-ethnography project that focuses on our academic work/lives. Back then, as a newly formed group, our focus was on gathering. research data, and getting to know each other, despite the pandemic's restrictions. Through digitally sharing our thoughts, emotions , and observations about our work practices during (in) a pandemic, we (started to) became familiar with (get to know) and cared for each other. Reading and engaging with each other's notes sprawled into reflecting on our practices more generally, beyond the pandemic context.

Since then, both our group constellation and the of this project have developed and grown. We are now eight individuals, who have different (academic) backgrounds and interests, diverging responsibilities and (care) duties as well as positions in the university. ( \*insert footnote here that we are still all located and educated in the Global North, etc). Nonetheless what we share is a common interest in finding alternative formats to reflect on and communicate our research and a commitment to fostering alternative, liveable and caring spaces within academia. We (have) also chosen auto-ethnography because we think (for) it affords us to move a step closer to an anti-patriarchal understanding of conducting research and producing knowledge.

In making sense of our individual and collective reflections, we use the notion of a pinboard and logics of juxtaposition rather than linear argumentation (Law 2007). Instead of following a step by step argument, this zine is in itself another part of our epistemic practice. From pinboards to (on) whiteboards, sketches on paper, to Miro and now this zine, we explore various steps in the process of relational thinking and academic work, engage with our data in different ways and are curious to find new means of communicating,

On the previous and subsequent pages you can find fragments. of our field notes, some images, commentary text, scribbles, connecting lines, doodles, and interventions. This empirical material is intimate, affective, and at times contradictory:, we think that we need visual and non -linear methods to communicate its richness. Not only is our material diverse, messy, and personal, so is the way we put this zine together. The way we collated the pages is mediated by the different affordances of our computer systems, available licenses (powerpoint, Adobe InDesign or, Illustrator, sketches by hand or on a tablet ), and graphic skills but also by our subjective interpretations. While this is a group effort, individual group members took the lead in curating pages. Therefore, some text fragments or images might show up on multiple pages.

The double page-spreads broadly revolve around the following four key themes: pandemic challenges, care, choreographies, and epistemic practices. These reflect the bigger topics we have been grappling with throughout the project. However, they are also deeply entangled so that making sense of them separately is impossible. The repetitions of our empirical material and the different foci make visible and speak to our situated lived experiences and practices (both individual and collective). In taking care of each other's intimate empirical observations as we collate, cluster, and juxtapose it in different ways on our pinboards, we are also engaging and caring for each other.

We invite you to flick through our collection of experiences, impressions, emotions and reflections. Feel free to zoom in on and stay with fragments that resonate; to doodle and scribble your thoughts or disagreements; to read the zine front to back, back to front or to jump from one page to another. In engaging with our zine, we would like to ask you: What do you care for in your (academic) work? What should for (more, or less)?

We - Ariadne, Bao-Chi, Costa, Andrea, Esther, Fredy, Kathleen and Sarah - are a research group at the University of Vienna's Department of Science and Technology Studies and engage with Technosciences, Materiality, and Digital Cultures. We are interested in and study the digital as material practice, in diverse sites where technoscience is created and negotiated.

[Image description: A collage of images of empty office space and dining table with a notebook and open laptop. The word ‘SPATIO’ is stenciled next to images.]

Taking the laptop with me in this initial phase surprisingly made me less spontaneous in my everyday life. Where was I planning of sleeping on the weekend? Would I be able to stop by at my flat to pick up the laptop before monday?

In any case, the act of writing a list always helps my productivity and my understanding of whether something is manageable in a particular timeframe (and how in control and calm I am feeling). This kind of organising work in not ‘intellectual’ or ‘academic’ per se, but I feel that it takes a lot of effort and energy and paves the ground for me being able to do things like write or carry out data analysis.

[Image description: Image a white board with green post-it notes under headings written in blue and red marker pens.]

Transferring information from one medium into another one serves as ordering mechanism. The seam between the programmes turns into a membrane which evaluates and discriminates what is let through and what stays outside.

My spatiotemporal movement throughout my apartment and between the office and home depends on where other people are (my office colleague, my partner and my son), what taste I am working on and which kind of spatial and infrastructural setting supports them best, respectively, and also on my feelings and mental state (if I worry more or less about the pandemic and if I have a phase where I can focus easily on if I tend to be more distracted etc.)

[Image description: Screenshot of text message exchange between two people on an instant messaging service.]

Physical books, papers and my notepad form an essential part of patchwork by which I can carry out knowledge work. Taking notes by hand affords a different way of arranging my thoughts and tasks- one reason that I cannot imagine solely using digital devices to work with.

Image description: Screenshot of an email.

Through its visuality and acoustics (and the conversation rhythms that they transport), zoom triggers different affects that have other impositions on my personal flows than, say, google docs. These spaces have totally different vibes for me. I feel like positions and physical circumstances posited by tools really impact my way of thinking; the more sensory cues "seep through" a platform, the more interferences in my personal rhythm of thinking, the more scattered and disjointed my thoughts. On the other hand, I feel like a balance between maintaining my own work flow and external inputs / rhythms is key for me, as after having digested them, they give me new drive and of course open new avenues of thought.

The intertextuality between the work of others (presentations, conversations), notes, draft papers/proposals, printed books, and pdf books/articles make possible my (academic) work. The intertextuality of my work is also enriched by the comments and inputs of others about my ideas and writing. hence, one possible (preliminary) way to understand academic work is as a set of tasks (labour) taking place between material intertext. These practices include thinking relationally between apparently unrelated topics to make new connections and enlarge the network of existing intertexts. The intertexts are given meaning by the multiple texts of sts and social research in conversation with the texts of publishers, funders, universities and states. thinking relationally as intertext is also shaped by the texts of other fields (urban planning/design, migration, data science, science communication, AI) we choose and position/circulate as value objects.

[Image description: Image of a worktable with a large monitor in the middle. On the right of the monitor is laptop, an open notebook and a glass of water. There is a keyboard in front of the monitor. On the left of the monitor is a table lamp, an organiser, and another open notebook.]

It's also important, though, that these digital devices on the desk are surrounded by analogue means of thinking and knowing. physical books, papers and my notepad form an essential part of the patchwork by which I can carry out knowledge work.

[Image description: Image of a white board with several post-it notes placed under headings in black and surrounded by arrows in red.]

I also wonder about the trace of our knowledge practices, the material trace of our thinking-feeling with our themes, data and ideas, and how the digital becomes entangled in these traces. For example, when I compare the shades of the presentation about technoscientific capitalism and my messy notes, I wonder about the Translations, deletions, transformations and perhaps betrayals between the different texts that sustain my relational thinking.

What would become more visible for my (our?) own reflections if I (we) traced back the process of writing a paper until its very beginning as messy notes? How do we stage and select what to show on academic outcomes? And how does the digital play a role in these multiple transformations?

Translating the handwritten notes into digital files introduces reflection and ordering and it helps me to decide what is relevant and what I don’t need to keep. For me, going back and forth between material and digital practices is an important work technique and I couldn’t do with only one of them. Apparently, it is the re-ordering and translation process from handwritten notes in a physical notebook to typing them into different computer files and through this also make them ready for further processing at the computer, this also proves productive for me. [ ... ] Here, like in the case of my notebook, transferring information from one medium into another one serves as ordering mechanism. The seam between the programmes turns into a membrane which evaluates and discriminates what is let through and what stays outside

[Image description: Illustration of a notebook with the following text on its cover.]

My field notes and reflections on this kick off event together with the interview transcript which I went through mainly informed my epistemic work so far. Besides taking digital and handwritten notes, I have also drawn several visual aids and diagrams to help grasp the structural and organizational aspect of my research object.

Epistemic Practices:

[Image description: Abstract line drawings illustrating different overlapping objects such as a pen, open pizza box and a keyboard.]

Ariadne Avkıran, Bao-Chau Pham, Constantin Holmer, Andrea Schikowitz, Esther Dessewffy, Fredy Mora Gámez, Kathleen Gregory, Sarah R. Davies

# PARZINE: an Academic Perzine Exploring Participatory Action Research (PAR)

by: megan heise

[mheise21@gmail.com](mailto:mheise21@gmail.com)

[www.meganheise.com/zine](http://www.meganheise.com/zine)

Contents:

What is PAR?

About My Study

& Research Methods

A PAR Manifesto

Dissertation Constraints:

The Problem!

Scaling PAR: Working with(in) tensions

PAR Reminders

Sources

What is PAR?:

According to the Institute of Development Studies:

“Participatory Action Research (PAR) is an approach to enquiry which has been used since the 1940s. It involves researchers and participants working together to understand a problematic situation and change it for the better. There are many definitions of the approach, which share some common elements. PAR focuses on social change that promotes democracy and challenges inequality; is context-specific, often targeted on the needs of a particular group; is an iterative cycle of research, action and reflection; and often seeks to ‘liberate’ participants to have a greater awareness of their situation in order to take action. PAR uses a range of different methods, both qualitative and quantitative.”

Israel et al. (2012) define 9 principles of what they call “community-based participant research” (CBPR) in health:

CBPR acknowledges community as a unit of identity

CBPR builds on the strengths & resources within the community

CBPR facilitates a collaborative, equitable partnership in all phases of research, involving an empowering and power-sharing process that attends to social inequalities

CBPR fosters co-learning & capacity building among all partners

CBPR integrates & achieves a balance between knowledge generation & intervention for the mutual benefit of all partners

CBPR focuses on the local relevance of public health problems & on ecological perspectives that attend to multiple determinants of health

CBPR involves systems development using a cyclical & iterative process

CBPR disseminates results to all partners & involves them in wider dissemination of results

CBPR involves a long-term process & commitment to sustainability (pp. 8-11)

About my study:

Over one percent of our global population has been forcibly displaced, among them 20.7 million refugees (UNHCR, 2021).

With the increase in forced migration has also come an increase in anti-refugee rhetorics, which in turn fuel policies that have life or death consequences for refugees (Gotlib, 2017).

Refugee voices are urgently needed in scholarly, public, and political realms, yet these perspectives are frequently neglected, overlooked, and silenced, even (and especially) in research around refugees’ literacy and language practices (McDonald, 2013).

My dissertation study enacts a transmodal (Hawkins, 2018, 2020) pedagogy in a zine-making workshop for 25 refugee teens resettled in the United States, as part of a summer camp focused on English language learning and creative expression.

By taking an agentive, asset-based approach to advanced literacies education, this study seeks to expand English language teaching with resettled refugee teens beyond monomodal, English-only paradigms and into a transmodal, anticolonial borderlands space (Licona, 2012) of equity and inclusion.

The study utilizes a Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Community-based Research (CBR) research stance to address the overarching research question, “(How) do transmodal zine-making workshops amplify the voices of resettled refugees?”

By centering the creativity, insights, and assets of resettled refugee youth themselves in research around how they best learn and communicate, this study seeks to transform the public and scholarly narratives surrounding refugees, with the ultimate goal of changing pedagogies and policies that have embodied, tangible impacts on refugees’ lives, to be more just, equitable, and affirming.

Research methods:

Research Questions

Compositional Choices:

What do refugee youth participants choose to compose about?

What modes and languages do they choose to use in their zines?

Outcome Perceptions

How do refugee youth participants perceive the  outcomes and impacts of the zine-making workshop?

(How) do they experience benefits?

(How) do they experience challenges?

Asset Identification

What do participants identify as their own strengths, assets, and resources that they drew upon in transmodal composition of their zines?

Sidebar: Overview of Research Design

[Image Description: nested circles labeled (from outside in): “Transmodal Framework,” “CBR & PAR Research Stance,” “ABR Methodology,” “Field Notes, Zine Artifacts, Surveys, and Arts-based Interviews”]

Relationship Between Data Sources and Research Questions

[Image Description: a chart showing the relation between the “Data Source[s],” specific “Research Question,” and “Overarching Question”.]

A PAR manifesto:

“The experiences of vulnerable populations have largely been interpreted through the researchers’ perspective, voice and analysis” (Martin et al., 2019, p. 297)

I consider PAR/CBR to be a radical reorientation to what counts as research and whose voices are considered and valued in research

I work to amplify the voices of resettled refugee youth as much as is possible in a single-authored dissertation, and to shine a spotlight on their stories, art, and perspectives

Counternarrative “asks audiences to re-imagine the centre, to question their assumptions as they experience the emotions, rhythms, spaces, and relationships of those whose voices are often ignored” (Chappell & Chappell, 2016, p. 298)

I strive to counter the pervasive (neo)coloniality embedded in sponsorship of refugee literacies (c.f. MacDonald, 2018, 2017; Malkki, 1996; Wagner, 2017)

I see communities such as resettled refugee youth as “legitimate sources of knowledge” to whom we must listen and respect (Martin et al., 2019, p. 297)

“The epistemic position of research [is one] whose privileged subject positions has the power to create, silence, or reify the various subjectivities of the object of their inquiry” (Mahalingam & Rabelo, 2013, p. 26)

I focus on the voices of young resettled refugees as equal collaborators in this work, not as “subjects” upon whom I am researching

I recognize their voices as much more important than my own to be considered in implementing policy and pedagogical changes

CBR focuses on “power and ethics or questions of why research is conducted, by whom, in whose interests, and to what ends” (Grabill, 2012, p. 212)

I view my position as the researcher and facilitator of this project as one with great responsibility to my participants

I uphold relationship building as a research stance, one that rejects the notion that researchers always should (or even can) be “neutral” and detached observers, but rather embraces that we ought to be active collaborates with community co-researchers

“As researchers, we are also actors and creators of the stories we choose to tell” (Creese, 2020, p. 253)

I honor that, through the embodied aspects of art and counternarrative, creators can connect with and evoke tangible responses with their audiences

I endeavor, through interview, surveys, and zine copies, to honor the agency of workshop participants in telling their own stories and sharing their own perspectives

Dissertation constraints:

ThE PRoblem(s)!

Dissertations are inherently single-authored; it’s not possible to co-author with participants or name them as co-researchers

Researcher/participant power dynamics are pronounced in dissertation work, especially between an adult facilitator and teen participants

Collaborative and equal partnerships (drawing on Israel, et al.’s (2012) third tenet of CBPR)are harder to accomplish. For example, I would love to have involved youth in all stages of the research, but am limited both by the constraints of the dissertation genre as well as recognition that youth are very busy and may not have the time to be as heavily involved as might be ideal for true PAR.

Long-term sustainability (from Israel et al.’s (2012) ninth tenet of CBPR), is one that I certainly hope to uphold. However, it’s difficult to imagine long-term sustainability given my tenuous position as a PhD candidate and contingent faculty who may not be able to stay in the region when I go on the job market in the coming years.

Scaling PAR:

Working with(In) the Tensions

I had to ultimately embrace this reality, especially due to the multiple vulnerabilities of the participants I’m working alongside. Given their age (as minors) and other vulnerabilities, it would be ethically complex to co-author, period. However, I am working with other young people on co-authoring articles, and will try with this population once stronger relationships are built

I acknowledge that power imbalances between researchers and collaborator-participants are inherent in the research process and are especially prevalent in research relationships between adults and youth (c.f. Banister and Daly, 2006), and seek to both vocally acknowledge and mitigate these dynamics in my work with refugee youth

I worked for two years with my partner organization before undertaking this research, and have built genuine relationships with many staff and students. I also met with the organization’s youth advisory board in advance of the study to conduct a mini zine workshop and talk through the research project, in order to solicit their input and ideas. I also implement a tiered participation scheme wherein participants can opt out of any further steps (interviews, member checking) at any time.

My rigorous qualitative research and pedagogical records will enable others to replicate and build upon this work across contexts. The implications of this work are not only for researchers and educators, but also for the organization itself. Participants will learn transferable writing and creative skills and be encouraged to think metacognitively about how they can apply these skills in their future.

Remember:

PAR is flexible & context-dependent!~

PAR is a stance or worldview that allows for adaptability in enacting its core principles, particularly based on the communities involved and their interests and availability for collaborative roles in the research process

“valid PAR research can be variously participatory, based on a community’s capacities for participation” (Feuerherm, 2013, p. 76)

PAR isn’t a methodology or method, but rather a/n:

“stance” (Ward, 2020, p. 11)

“orientation to inquiry” (Kindon et al., 2007, p. 13)

“approach” (Feuerherm, 2013, p. 31)

PAR counters extractive research, also known and critiqued as:

“helicoptering in and out” (Bledsoe & Hopson, 2009, p. 392)

“hit-and-run” (Marshall & Shepard, 2006, p. 150)

PAR research is RELATIONAL.

“emotional distance [is] not always an asset” (Martin et al., 2019, p. 307)

PAR is embodied, emotional, connective, and human.

“If we believe it is important to put youth at the centre of our research – to not only hear their voices but also recognize their key roles in our communities – we need to value and foster our personal and professional connections with them” (Marshall & Shepard, 2006, p. 150)

\*\*\* Do you want to use PAR \*\*\*

\*\*\* in your context? \*\*\*

\*\*\* Go for it! \*\*\*

Sources:

Banister, E., & Daly, K. (2006). Walking a fine line: Negotiating dual roles in a study with adolescent girls. In E. Banister, C. Benoit, B. Leadbeater, M. Jansson, A. Marshall, & T. Riecken (Eds.), Ethical Issues in Community-Based Research with Children and Youth (pp. 139–156). University of Toronto Press.

Bledsoe, K. L., & Hopson, R. K. (2009). Conducting ethical research and evaluation in underserved communities. In D. M. Mertens & P. E. Ginsberg (Eds.), The Handbook of Social Research Ethics (pp. 391–406). Sage.

Chappell, S. V., & Chappell, D. (2016). Building social inclusion through critical arts-based pedagogies in university classroom communities. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 20(3), 292–308.

Creese, A. (2020). Afterword: Starting from the other end. In E. Moore, J. Bradley, & J. Simpson (Eds.), Translanguaging as Transformation: The Collaborative Construction of New Linguistic Realities (pp. 251–253). Multilingual Matters.

Feuerherm, E. M. (2013). Language policies, identities, and education in refugee resettlement [Doctoral Dissertation, University of California Davis]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Gotlib, A. (2017). Refugees, narratives, or how to do bad things with words. Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal, 27(2), E – 65 – E – 86.

Grabill, J. T. (2012). Community-based research and the importance of a research stance. In L. Nickoson & M. P. Sheridan (Eds.), Writing Studies Research in Practice: Methods and Methodologies (pp. 210–219). Southern Illinois University Press.

Hawkins, M. R. (2018). Transmodalities and transnational encounters: Fostering critical cosmopolitan relations. Applied Linguistics, 39(1), 55–77.

Hawkins, M. R. (2020). Toward critical cosmopolitanism: Transmodal transnational engagements of youth. In E. Moore, J. Bradley, & J. Simpson (Eds.), Translanguaging as Transformation: The Collaborative Construction of New Linguistic Realities (pp. 23–40). Multilingual Matters.

Institute of Development Studies. (n.d.). Participatory Action Research. Participatory Methods. Retrieved June 13, 2022, from <https://www.participatorymethods.org/glossary/participatory-action-research>

Israel, B. A., Eng, E., Schulz, A. J., & Parker, E. A. (2012). Methods for Community-Based Participatory Research for Health. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

Kindon, S., Pain, R., & Kesby, M. (2007). Participatory action research: Origins, approaches and methods. In S. Kindon, R. Pain, & M. Kesby (Eds.), Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods: Connecting People, Participation and Place (pp. 9–18). Routledge.

Licona, A. C. (2012). Zines in Third Space: Radical Cooperation and Borderlands Rhetoric. SUNY Press.

MacDonald, M. T. (2017). “My little English”: A case study of decolonial perspectives on discourse in an after-school program for refugee youth. Community Literacy Journal, 11(2), 16–29.

MacDonald, M. T. (2018). Governing sponsorship in a literacy support program for resettled refugee students. Reflections, 18(1), 39–70.

Mahalingam, R., & Rabelo, V. C. (2013). Theoretical, methodological, and ethical challenges to the study of immigrants: Perils and possibilities. In M. G. Hernández, J. Nguyen, C. L. Saetermoe, & C. Suárez-Orozco (Eds.), Frameworks and Ethics for Research with Immigrants: New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development (Vol. 141, pp. 25–41). John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

Malkki, L. H. (1996). Speechless emissaries: Refugees, humanitarianism, and dehistoricization. Cultural Anthropology: Journal of the Society for Cultural Anthropology, 11(3), 377–404.

Marshall, A., & Shepard, B. (2006). Youth on the margins: Qualitative research with adolescent groups. In E. Banister, C. Benoit, B. Leadbeater, M. Jansson, A. Marshall, & T. Riecken (Eds.), Ethical Issues in Community-Based Research with Children and Youth (pp. 139–156). University of Toronto Press.

Martin, S. B., Burbach, J. H., Benitez, L. L., & Ramiz, I. (2019). Participatory action research and co-researching as a tool for situating youth knowledge at the centre of research. London Review of Education, 17(3), 297–313.

McDonald, M. (2013). Keywords: Refugee literacy. Community Literacy Journal, 7(2), 95–99.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR]. (2021). Figures at a glance. <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>

Wagner, A.C. (2017). Frantic waiting: NGO anti-politics and “timepass” for young Syrian refugees in Jordan. Middle East - Topics & Arguments, 9, 107–121.

Ward, M. C. (2020). How an arts-based youth participatory action research study can prevent further marginalizing a vulnerable research population (K. Thoma (ed.)) [Data set]. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529740110>

# Play as a Mode of Research - Using Play to Examine Rural Children’s Perspectives on Health and Care

By: Sienna Ruiz, Jean Hunleth, Eric Wiedenman

[Image description: a photo of stuffed animals on a bed.]

[Image Photo description: drawings of Tooth Fairy and Emma lying down.]  
  
[Image description: a photo of Delphox throwing a basketball at a net, with an outline around them, and an outline around their pre-jump position. Composite of two later photos of Delphox.]

Text by Sienna Ruiz, Eric Wiedenman, Jean Hunleth. Layout and zine design by Dionisia Ruiz. Interviews with participants were conducted by Sienna Ruiz, Eric Wiedenman. Other contributors include Casey Allen, Hannah Fechtel, Laurel Schmidt, Angeline Gacad, Katherine Sleckman. Study funded by National Cancer Institute (P50 CA244431) - PI: Hunleth and National Cancer Institute Training Grant (T32 CA190194) – co-I: Wiedenman.

We would like to thank all of the participants of PHRAME participants and their families, without whom this work would not be possible.

All the children who participated are de-identified with pseudonyms of their choice.

[Image description: cartoon drawings of the participants’ Zine Avatars. These include:

Chicken Wing, Cinderella, Noodles, Big Mac, Phoebe, Rainbow Glitter Unicorn Sparkles, Pete, Josh, Delphox, Tooth Fairy, Jeff, Emma, and James.]

“You do need to know that their opinion matters. Take that into mind.”

Josh

Hello! We are Sienna, Jean, and Eric, and we are researchers who aim to listen to children’s perspectives and experiences in health research. Jean is a researcher who studies children’s contributions to health in Zambia and the U.S., and Eric’s research is with children and health prevention in rural areas.

And I’m Sienna! I do work on health geography, and I’ll be the one taking you through this zine. Together, we’ll explore ways we can learn from uses of play in children’s research. I’ll explain about our inspiration for this zine, examples of play from our research, and the lessons we can draw from researchers playing with children.

Throughout the zine, we wrote notes for methods that will pop up in boxes that you can use to inspire your research, your teaching, or even your own means of play with others in your life.

Follow me!

We wrote this zine because children’s perspectives on health issues often go unheard by adults despite the fact that children have critical knowledge to share, especially when children are the targets of many health policies and programs. This happens even though we know children shape health in their households and communities.

Adults who are connected to institutions like universities, research organizations, or the government often assume what children know and need, and can view children’s perspectives as undeveloped or unworthy of adult attention. Or, they may not have experience listening to children. For example, many research methods in the health fields were developed with adults in mind. To counter such trends in research, we developed the Picturing Health by Rural Adolescents in the MidwEst (PHRAME) study to listen to children’s stories, opinions, and imaginings of health and care.

In PHRAME, we are interviewing children ages 8 – 14 on their perspectives of health and care in the rural Midwest. These interviews are happening in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, so we are carrying out the project virtually. We are using methods like conversational interviews, drawing activities, photography, and storytelling. Children received cameras, took photos between interviews, and these photos became the focus of the interviews.

The box below describes the process of meeting the young people 3 times on Zoom to discuss health and care from their perspectives and through their photographs. Throughout the study, children shared their thoughts and experiences with us in many ways through their photos and drawings, in response to our questions and in story form. They did so in many ways, including through play…

[Image description: a drawing of Josh above a screenshot from the videogame Minecraft. Caption reads “Photo by Josh”.]

What is play in research?

Play is usually thought of as a set of activities. However, we mean something a bit different when we use the term. We view play as an orientation, a way of approaching the interviews. We are inspired by anthropologist Helen Schwartzman. Helen Schwartzman studied children’s play and identified that play is a:

Defining context that players adopt toward something, which produces a text characterized by “allusion (not distortion or illusion), transformation (not preservation)”, and “purported imitation.”

Helen B Schwatzman, Transformations: The Anthopology of Children’s Play. (Springer, 1978): 330.

[Image description: a drawing of Jeff jumping into a pool. Caption reads “Photo by Jeff”.]

Transformation is important here because it means that, through play, we can arrive at new understandings and meanings. Play as a mode of research ; it, did not create entirely new concepts but creatively unraveled the construction of health and care in their day-to-day lives, and imitated different roles and abilities related to health and care.

In PHRAME, we are prioritizing spontaneous play and the imagined and fantastical to learn about health and care. Play varied during the interviews and children led play-filled interactions that innovated our approach. By trusting children’s and entering into play with them as researchers, we hope to create a safe research space that allows children and researchers to explore play. Doing so without consequences, judgement, or rigid expectations is key to the full expression of play. As scholar D. Soyini Madison writes,

“in order to be playful, it is not the individual that must change but the unplayful world.”3

We want to extend this world into this zine and invite you enter and play along with us to learn more about health and care in the children’s day-to-day lives.

[Image description: a photo of the character Marshall from Paw Patrol in his firetruck. Caption reads “Photo by Delphox”.]

D. Soyini Madison, Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance, 2nd ed. (Sage, 2012).

We specifically invite you to play with images in our zine. This invitation is inspired by Max Liboiron’s “rules of exchange for reciprocal reading” where both author and reader work together to produce meaning from a piece of work. We suggest that play with the photos children took might offer a way of listening to children’s important messages about health and care. We aim to recreate our play-filled conversations with the children and the images they produced. In doing so, we aim to challenge extractive readings of children’s photographs, or a glossing over of their important messages. We also hope that through playing with this zine, readers will come away transformed, with new understandings of health and care. Will you join us?

There are no right or wrong answers to the activities presented here. Rather, we hope you can explore the paths you create for yourself in the worlds of each of these photographs. In this way, you can imagine how you might integrate play into the methods you use to approach your research questions in order to fully consider participants’ worldviews that they offer in the research encounter.

To start:

Please draw a character of yourself:

QUICK! DRAW A SHAPE! ANY SHAPE!

Draw two smaller shapes inside of that shape! Those are your eyes.

Draw a letter, a number, or a punctuation mark for your nose.

Draw two random shapes for your ears!

What mouth does your character want?

Draw the rest of your body, and don’t forget a cool outfit!

Give your character a name, any name.

In asking you to draw yourself, we would like you to become what scholar Michael Taussigt calls a “maker-viewer” who not only views images but engages in conversation with images in a deeply personal way.

From Michael Taussig, “What Do Drawings Want?”, Culture, Theory & Critique, (2009): 265. 50:2-3, 263-274, DOI: 10.1080/14735780903240299

Exercise drawn from Lynda Barry, Making Comics (Drawn & Quarterly, 2019).

[Image description: unopened bags from the Lego Ideas Flower Bouquet Set, and coloured pencils, on a tablecloth. Caption reads “Photo by Cinderella”.]

Please draw your character slam dunking a basket ball.

Amazing! Now, please hold the bottom right corner of the this page and flip the page back and forth. Watch what happens to the photos as you do so.

[Image description: Delphox preparing to jump and throw a basketball.]

[Image description: Delphox mid jump, throwing the ball.]

[Image description: a photo of a tabby cat. Caption reads “Photo by Delphox”.]

These were photos submitted by Delphox, a 9 year old in our study. He told us that his brothers took these photos. His brothers wanted to play with him most days, even when he preferred to be alone. Opportunities to be alone were rare, however, as his entire family were enforcing strict stay at home rules due to his younger sister’s immunocompromised status. In this instance, Delphox let each brother take one photo so that neither felt left out.

When discussing the photos with Eric over Zoom, Delphox suggested that if Eric ’’ play with them” it could be like a video of him shooting. Eric then played with the images by flipping back and forth between them, just like what you just did. This made the photos seem like they were moving, like in a video.

To continue playing, please think about these questions:

How does play reveal how relationships influence health in Delphox’s life?

How could photo-taking be a form of care?

What do you learn about Delphox’s family context through playing with these photos?

Methods note: Delphox and Eric’s interaction is marked by playfulness. Maria Lugones defines playfulness as “an openness to being a fool, which is a combination of not worrying about competence, not being self-important, not taking norms as sacred and finding ambiguity and double edges a source of wisdom and delight.”   At ease in the interview, Delphox and Eric’s playfulness altered the methods and opened new avenues for knowledge creation. Jean has written about the importance of researchers attuning and responding to the playful ways children use and alter research methods as offering wisdom into children’s experiences. In Delphox and Eric’s encounter we see both wisdom and delight, as the movie they create offers insight into Delphox’s practices of care.

For the next activity, please read the dialogue below that occurred between an interviewer and participant Rainbow Glitter Unicorn Sparkles, age 8. Sienna interviewed Rainbow Glitter Unicorn Sparkles and her sister Noodles, two sisters with high energy who bantered often. Over Zoom, Sienna saw and heard details of their life – scheduling conversations, snack requests, light disputes between sisters. Not wanting to intrude, Sienna drew on the photo on the screen. This dialogue is what happened when, after disputing with Noodles, Rainbow noticed the drawings:

[Interviewer draws on the photo]

Rainbow: Can you give it wings?

Interviewer: Yes…where’s this car flying to? This electric car.

Rainbow: This car is flying to heaven…

Interviewer: Do you think health or care relate to heaven in anyway?

Rainbow: If you’re good then you go there, and if you’re bad then you don’t So you have to be good and healthy.

Interviewer: What does it mean to be good and healthy?

Rainbow: To eat stuff that would be good and healthy and sometimes eat non-healthy stuff for a [treat]…And the car can talk by the way.

Interviewer: Oh woah, what’s it saying?

Rainbow: It’s saying ‘Be healthy’

Draw this car going to a healthy place of your own.

Image description: A drawing of a car in an empty white square on the page

Methods note: Much research with children is ethnographic or participatory, and premised on proximity and co-presence. A challenge of virtual interviews is that they can feel distanced and superficial. At the same time, they can also feel invasive and voyeuristic, with researchers’ and participants’ home environments and dynamics on display. Sienna drew on the screen to respectfully disengage from the family conversation, making her decision to disengage both visible and understated. Sienna’s drawing eventually brought Noodles’ and Rainbow’s attention back to the photo, who noticed drawings appear and playfully guided Sienna on what to draw next.  Drawing, in this case, held potential to maintain rapport and bring interviewees back to the digital interview space. Digital interviews may prevent the physical closeness and togetherness ethnographic researchers are accustomed to, but creative methods and their playful potential can also facilitate co-presence and closeness in a digital space.

[Image description: A photo of a tree line. Caption reads “Photo by James”.]

Cinderella (10 years old) sent in the photo below and said that it related to health because the shoes allowed her to exercise and go outside.

Then Sienna asked where Cinderella usually wore these shoes, and Cinderella responded that she wore them to walk on a trail near her house.

[Image description: a photo of black Puma running shoes.]

Please draw your character in this environment as well.

[Image description: A drawing of empty shoes in an empty box on the page.]

When Sienna began to draw the trail and surrounding forest on the whiteboard feature on Zoom, Cinderella began to share a story of consoling her friend after her father passed away. Cinderella described how she talked with her friend and gave her the space to share about her dad, who Cinderella never met. Cinderella said that talking with her friend while on their walks helped her friend “get it off her chest,” and Cinderella “[got] to know his personality and seeing how he was and their relationship with each other.”

How did Cinderella’s story go beyond her understanding of health as “getting outside”?

Where did your mind go while drawing?

Methods note: Here, Cinderella and Sienna played with the photo itself, transforming its meaning. Photos are not straightforward imitations of children’s worlds. They are always open to interpretation. Cinderella and Sienna embraced multiple interpretations and the ambiguity of meaning within the photos through drawing on them using the Zoom annotate function. Michael Taussig has identified that drawing provides “a zone of mediation” and a “means of getting close to” the object drawn. As Sienna drew on the photo, Cinderella took her onto a path and along on a walk. As they walked together through the drawing, the meaning of the photo changed from simply linking “outside” to health, to outside as a space for giving and to show care. This play—as all play— is characterized by transformation which, to quote Schwartzman, “gives shape as well as expression to individual and societal affective and cognitive systems. These are play’s products, and they are extremely consequential.”

Now, please consider the image below. What do you feel when you look at this photo?

[Image description: a jellyfish floating in the water.]

When talking about this photo, 13 year old Josh explained, “when I look at jellyfish, for some reason, I see just a major calm and quiet setting, like swimming in an open water,” and that a friend could show him this photo if he was worried about a test or bad grade and it might calm him down.

Methods note: Josh used his photo of the jellyfish to explain how a friend could show it to him to calm him down. This moves the methodology of photo-elicitation beyond the notions of photos-as-representations and sources of elicitation. Here/Instead?, he showed the agency of the image—that images do things.  Jean (Hunleth 2019) has written about how children do things with images they create as part of research projects, based on D.W. Winnicott’s suggestion that play creates a transitional space of creativity and communication, and that image creation and circulation between people can serve as a form of play. What children do with images during a project—such as showing their uses or gifting—should not be diminished or viewed as outside of data collection. This is true also of adult participants in image-based projects, and such using and gifting offers critical insight into relationality.

Thank you for going on that playful journey with us!

We hoped you had fun and learned a lot about both what children had to say about health and care.

To conclude, we would like to say that play as a mode of research can:

Transform power dynamics (not escape them)

Lead to new types of data, or texts

Offer an approach to listening to children rooted in context

Provide new or different understandings of children’s lives

[Image description: photo of clouds. Caption reads “Photo by Rainbow Glitter Unicorn Sparkles”.]

[Image description: photo of grilled cheese, carrots, sliced banana, sliced apple, and sliced strawberries. Caption reads “Photo by Chicken Wing”.]

[Image description: A drawing of Jeff, Tooth Fairy, Chicken Wing, Phoebe, and James.]

We will be making future zines based on this project! They will focus on rurality, health, and care as they are understood by children. If you are interested in learning more, go to issuu.com/hunlethlab or check <https://hunleth.wustl.edu/> for more updates.

[Image description: a photo of Delphox preparing to throw a basketball, with an outline around them, and an outline around their future, jumping position. Inversion of initial photo.]

Cover photo by Tooth Fairy

# Precarious Methods - Contingency, Research, and Burnout

By: The Lecturers’ Committee (Guy Schaffer, Jen Cardinal, Brandon Costelloe-Kuehn, Jarah Moesch, and Chris Tozzi)

About us:

Explanation of voice:

This is a collaborative project from five lecturers in one department at a mid-sized research school. It has come out of shared conversations over a few years. Most of this zine has been pulled together by Guy, based on the insights of everyone else on the team. So while some of the thoughts are from a collective “we,” there are also moments where Guy is just sharing his own process in assembling these reflections. If you’d like to contact us, we’d like to hear from you: [precariousMethods@gmail.com](mailto:precariousMethods@gmail.com).

About the drawings:

Explanation of vision:

Many of the drawings you see here are replicated throughout this zine: drawn once, then copied, pasted, & resized. While this provides visual continuity, the purpose of doing so is that the illustrators recognize that our institution, and academia as a whole, don’t recognize us as true researchers and academics, but simulacra -of what we might have been- had we only done all the things that the system claims are possible, but are not, because of that very system. The faces are obscured, for our knowledge of replaceability within our department, our school, and academia.

Illustrations & design:

Jarah Moesch & Guy Schaffer

We are all overwhelmed.

There are five of us on The Lecturers’ Committee. Our meetings are a mixture of kvetching, finding ways to lighten one another’s loads, and imagining much better ways to do this work. We leave the meetings a little more animated, a little more ready to either do our jobs or run away from academia and start a landscaping business (we’ve thought about this a lot).

Research is one of the overwhelming things about our jobs. All of us were attracted to our job postings because they gave us space to do research: we teach 3 courses per semester, rather than the 4 courses common for lecturer positions. In the research/service/teaching calculus, we’re expected to do about half the research that professors do.

But what does it look like to lead half of a research life? And given that contingent faculty like us absorbed the extra teaching and service demands of the pandemic, when are we expected to do this research?

Still, we’re doing research. We go to conferences, we submit to journals, we review articles, we write book manuscripts, we get grants, we revise, we resubmit. In part, research is a survival mechanism motivated by the uncertain expectations of our jobs. But we also want to be part of our scholarly communities. We’ve got research questions that animate us and a desire to tell stories that will be useful for the communities we’re part of.

The purpose of this zine is to describe what research means to us, and how we do research when faced with \*gestures around\* all this. Why do we research the way we do? What does research feel like? And how do the temporal/institutional/affective contours of our current situations shape the ways we do research?

The “experimental methods” that are going on here have been going on for a while, as research productivity has been demanded of (some parts of) an expanding contingent workforce. Contingent faculty have been experimenting with new ways to find time in a day to do research, new ways to fit research into an uncertain academic future. In our own experiment, we’re trying to step back and examine the context in which we do research, and do research in a way that actually fits the material conditions of our lives.

We’re just a few lecturers in our own awkward little institutional position, and we don’t presume to speak for everyone. While our jobs are contingent, we have the privilege of three-year contracts, benefits, and a sympathetic department. Our experiences are not universal. We’re really interested to hear how other contingent faculty make sense of research.

[Image description: A riding lawnmower and a CAT dozer.]

If you’d like, you may use the space below to answer the following questions:

1. What does it feel like when you do research?

2. What does it feel like when you’re not doing research, but you know you should be?

3. What does it feel like when there’s no time for research at the end of the day?

4. What does it feel like when you’re tired of a project but you can’t move on?

5. What does research feel like when nobody else cares about your work?

6. Where do these feelings come from? What do they do?

Public feelings: overwhelm:

Ann Cvetkovich describes “Public Feelings” as an approach to scholarship and activism that starts with emotions, and treats those emotions as central to politics.

Public Feelings is about rethinking activism in ways that attend to its emotional registers, including the frustrations that come from trying to keep activism and scholarship together. (7)

Public Feelings approaches the impasse as a state of both stuckness and potential, maintaining a hopefulness about the possibility that slowing down or not moving forward might not be a sign of failure and might instead be worth exploring. (20-21)

This zine comes out of a shared feeling of overwhelm that we’ve felt together, and that we’ve sensed among other faculty. Given the focus of the conference, we’re particularly interested in how this feeling intersects with research practices.

One of the goals of this zine is to look at our feelings about research and try to understand where they come from, what they do, what they can do if we feel them together.

Image description: stacks of papers and a CAT dozer

Academic precarity:

“Contingent faculty” refers to academic faculty with nontenure- track jobs: adjunct instructors, graduate student instructors, lecturers, postdocs, or visiting professors.

Contingent faculty lack the job security of tenured or tenure-track (T/TT) faculty; many of us are on short-term contracts, and it’s easier to fire us mid-contract. Contingent jobs are paid significantly less than T/TT jobs, and often lack benefits.

Many contingent positions are listed as teaching positions, without research expectations. Even without formal requirements, many contingent faculty face pressures to do research in order to demonstrate their value. Margaret Steig Dalton writes that “Faculty may be paid to teach, but they are judged on their research” (2006).

The American Association of University Professors in 2016 reported that contingent faculty made up 73% of the instructors at colleges and universities, up from 55% in 1975. Contingent faculty are cheaper to hire and easier to fire than T/TT faculty; we make more sense in the neoliberal university.

The members of TLC are all contingent, but we have multi-year contracts, benefits, a sympathetic department, and (some) support for research. In this sense, our jobs are much more secure than other contingent faculty.

Methods:

When our zine abstract got accepted to the DIY Methods conference, I told a friend about our proposal and how excited I was to get working on this. They pointed out the irony: “wait, so you’re doing research on the fact that you’re too overwhelmed to do research?”

One of our goals here is to do research in a way that respects the reality of burnout.

The idea of “patchwork ethnography” has been really helpful for us. Developed by Gökçe Günel, Saiba Varma, and Chika Watanabe, who describe a research approach attuned to the actual working conditions of researchers:

By patchwork ethnography, we refer to ethnographic processes and protocols designed around short-term field visits, using fragmentary yet rigorous data, and other innovations that resist the fixity, holism, and certainty demanded in the publication process. (2020)

We’ve been interested in a research process that works with the materials, time, and energy that we actually have, instead of trying to meet a set of standards that is beyond our reach right now.

[Image description: stacks of papers with a meat thermometer.]

Participants: We said we would reach out to our “networks” to find other contingent faculty to talk with. But we quickly realized that our networks weren’t as expansive as we’d imagined. I could think of four people who might possibly fit the bill. When my network didn’t respond, I was pretty stumped: how was I supposed to get data?

Our networks are shaped by contingency: we don’t have the time or resources to travel and meet other academics in person. We barely even have time and energy for online events. And we don’t always have the time or energy to keep up the connections we do have.

I (Guy) talked with Jen about this, and she had good advice: maybe this is an opportunity to ask what counts as good or bad data, what counts as research? Where did I get the idea that conversations with coworkers aren’t an important way to produce better stories about the world? Where do we develop our ideas about what “real research” should look like?

So in the end, it’s just the five of us lecturers.

Data collection: We’ve been talking about these issues for a few years now, so it’s not like we expected a lot of surprises. Still, I (Guy) wanted to have a focused time for recording our thoughts. We scheduled a 1-hour meeting and I came up with a list of prompts.

An important model here is the feminist consciousness-raising group (CRG). The CRG was designed by feminists in the 1970s to cultivate a situated understanding of life within patriarchy, and to mobilize action toward change.

The conversation led itself into much more interesting territory than I could have expected. While the last few years have made me feel stuck in a trap, talking candidly with my colleagues about our problems left me feeling energized, like new things were possible. I didn’t want to record anything, so I just took notes as well as I could, and ran them by the group before coding.

Analysis: I tried a few of the free qualitative coding platforms, but they’re all pretty clunky. And this is the first time I’ve had data to code since my dissertation, so it didn’t feel reasonable to pay a few hundred bucks a year to have access to the good coding software.

I never really learned how to code properly–I came to STS from the sciences, and my graduate program focused on theoretical research training–how should you think about research? I taught myself qualitative analysis when I was asked to take over a social science methods course.

Anyway, I iteratively coded the rough transcript until I came up with a list of 15 themes. I’ve selected seven of those themes to examine in the following pages.

“filling in the gaps”

Contingent faculty “fill in the gaps” in terms of departmental /institutional needs that aren’t being met by T/TT faculty.

When T/TT faculty want to take time to pursue research, contingent faculty pick up the slack, learning to teach their courses or performing their service duties:

Over three years, I’ve had to do 11 new course preps. Someone else is teaching the class that I taught most recently b/c that person is TT. I need to do a new course prep and they don’t. I’m not teaching [class] anymore, because a TT faculty member wants to teach it. She had a book manuscript she wanted to work on so I had to put my work aside. I’m expected to do this so someone else doesn’t have to. The emotional aspect is so draining.

It doesn’t even occur to me to feel bad about being asked to fill in for someone else when they want to do research. I still feel a feeling of “thank god I’ve got these scraps.”

We make sure the department keeps going. This feels so important to our employment that it feels scary to turn down any request to step in and fill in the gaps.

Part of contingency is just taking on those fill-in things–we can’t ask the TT people b/c they have so much to do. [There’s] a strong pressure, a lot of uncertainty–do I have to say yes to this thing, b/c if I don’t, I won’t be seen as helpful, a team player, have enough service things. We don’t know what it takes to keep our jobs!

We’re there to fill in a service, a filling in the gaps service. Our job is to fill in those holes, to make sure that everything is running.

In her Maintenance Art Manifesto (1969), Mierle Ukeles describes “two basic systems”: development and maintenance. While development is valued as progress, brilliance, “pure individual creation,” maintenance is seen as lousy, mindless work–”keep the dust off the pure individual creation.”

Image description: five people holding themselves up on bookshelves, with more bookshelves, and much larger people, on their heads

This rings true for fill-in-the gaps laborers like us, who often need to “keep the contemporary [university] groovy / keep the home fires burning.” Sue Doe and collaborators describe contingent faculty as “the firetenders” in their 2011 study of contingent experiences. In a 2015 study of contingent faculty in Women’s and Gender Studies, Melissa Fernández Arrigoitia, Gwendolyn Beetham, Cara E. Jones and Sekile Nzinga-Johnson characterize contingent teaching as feminized labor: flexible care work done by disposable, underpaid workers.

While the maternalized adjunct body can be relied upon without being valued, it is also a flexible body - a body that can bend and shape itself around whatever departmental or student need arises. (96)

“what counts?”

In faculty evaluations, our research is quantified in order to figure out whether we deserve promotions, raises, or to have a job at all. We don’t know the formulas that relate our research to our employment or pay; we’re not even certain there is a formula. Nonetheless, the idea that a specific kind of productivity “counts” shapes what we do.

We don’t know what it takes to keep our jobs!

we don’t know what counts, we don’t know who is determining that, we don’t know if we fit into the category of who it counts for. Even if there’s an unspoken rule about how things count, does it count for us???

It’s possible that nothing really counts, and the terms of our employment are more about institutional convenience than merit.

Very few lecturers across the institute publish anything. They’re not getting fired, so I assume nobody’s gonna fire me if I don’t publish. And if I publish, I could still get fired!

We spend a lot of time thinking about how to subvert the system of “what counts”--how to count things otherwise.

We’re determining what counts, what’s viable, what's necessary.

It’s survival to sorta reclaim who determines what counts.

But the real goal here might be to move beyond counting.

what if self-care, community care, care for students, etc, is not so that it will count?

precarity / uncertainty:

Our three-year contracts offer us more stability than most contingent faculty–than most workers, tbh. But we still face a lot of uncertainty around our employment.

There’s no way to prove that you’re good enough to stay somewhere. I was talking to [redacted], they said it wouldn’t be hard to find someone…

The promotion process is really unclear. Co-authored articles? Raises? Need to be nationally / internationally famous to be promoted?

Being on a search committee feels like we’re hiring a replacement! / Digging our own graves.

Uncertainty contributes to feeling like we need to fill in the gaps, to make sure we always seem like “team players.”

After colleagues got fired, it feels like I have to say yes to everything.

At the same time, it can make it difficult to invest in our work.

I’m not gonna sign up for a conference if I’m not sure if they’re gonna pay for it!

Some of us recognized power in this precarity.

Knowing that I’m replaceable has helped me in a way. I can be angry but I can just say no to stuff if I need to.

I do what’s gonna benefit me, and is gonna have a clear and reliable benefit. My approach to precarity and contingency is to be more selfish than I was.

In their essay, “We are all very anxious,” the Institute for Precarious Consciousness identifies anxiety as the dominant affect of this phase of capitalism. Precarity leaves most people with a deep but unspoken feeling of uncertainty about the future. The authors argue that “what we now need is a machine for fighting anxiety”: something that can allow us to recognize anxiety as a public feeling, and to imagine an approach to the world that comes from outside anxiety.

Obviously, it’s hard to get outside of anxiety. But we were interested to think through what this might mean for us.

I feel like what we’re saying is that the survival strategy is to shift toward the wall hanging that says “the journey is the destination”--we can’t think of what this is gonna do for us, we need to think about what we want to be doing.

I’m seeing two big categories that don’t quite work–trying to scheme, wiggle, game the system, play by the rules so they don’t fire us. The other thing we do is just do what we love, what energizes us… but also beware how “do what you love” plays into extractive labor relations etc… but still, I’m more into the second line of thinking.

digging our own graves and composting ourselves.

[Image description: an office with a cluttered writing desk.]

insecurity / self-esteem

In contingent positions, it’s easy to think less of yourself.

guilt and overwhelm--I feel like I'm failing to keep all the plates spinning when this happens.

It doesn’t even occur to me to feel bad about being asked to fill in for someone else when they want to do research. I still feel a feeling of “thank god I’ve got these scraps”

I heard the reviews as “this is terrible, don’t bother.”

Sometimes it feels like there’s a fundamental difference between the brilliant research that gets published, and the research we’re able to write.

In grad school, I was reading the most famous 1% of scholars. The “household” names, or the lesser known ones with an academic buzz. It relates to a celebrity culture…. We get unrealistic expectations of what it takes to get published.

Research as a brilliant thing, not a kind of labor.

Chris connected this to a widespread assumption–often subconscious–that T/TT faculty are just better researchers than contingent faculty, and that they deserve their spot in the institutional hierarchy. He described this as “a self-fulfilling prophecy” and wanted to push back on that assumption:

I published my books, didn’t become dumber or lazier since leaving the tenure track, I just have less time to publish and it informs my mindset.

I can guarantee you are worth it! If you were in a TT job you would also publish!

It felt good to hear this.

Outflows and Inflows

Living in a state of overwhelm makes us very aware of our energy supplies. The care work of teaching has felt like an endless demand during the pandemic.

Increased need for care, which falls on those who teach the most, and is exhausting. Care for students not just as students navigating your class, but as young people navigating the toppling world.

Teaching ends up being a huge amount of work–there’s always more work to do, it’s not like you just finish it.

Teaching has taken much more energy and given me much less energy because of the separation from students. I feel like I'm just pouring ideas into the aether, rather than like, in a community of thought.

I think of the amount of emotional labor that I’ve put in w/ my students over the last two years, the time and energy I’ve put into that means less time to put into other things.

Our positions have also made it more difficult to do the things that nourish us, to connect with other scholars or to feel our own personal motivations to do research.

I have to remind myself I'm excited about [research]...But it's hard to find space for that, and the extra labor of reminding myself.

Part lack of institutional support for contingent faculty, part pandemic conditions-- it has been so difficult to create and expand inspiring networks of scholars in my field…

How do we find nourishment in this context? How do we find energy to do the work we want to do? We came back to the idea of collaboration as an important strategy here.

it’s not just that collaboration is a tactic, a strategy, in an instrumental / productivist way, it’s what we love…

We talked about trying to move toward the things that give us energy, “doing what we love,” while at the same time recognizing that this too can be captured by the energy-extracting elements of our jobs.

I’m seeing two big categories that don’t quite work–trying to scheme, wiggle, game the system, play by the rules so they don’t fire us. The other thing we do is just do what we love, what energizes us… but also beware how “do what you love” plays into extractive labor relations etc… but still, I’m more into the second line of thinking.

It reminds me of self-care, in the end the frame is often that we can be more productive–what if self-care, community care, care for students, etc, is not so that it will count. Maybe this is more about a manifesto–see this as valuable.

I feel like what we’re saying is that the survival strategy is to shift toward the plaque that says “the journey is the destination”—we can’t think of what this is gonna do for us, we need to think about what we want to do.

Fred Moten and Stefano Harney’s idea of the “university undercommons” has been helpful here: what are the places in the university that offer alternatives to neoliberalism? Where is there space in the university for sharing and finding support?

International Relevance:

As academics, we’re supposed to know what concepts and questions are trending in our fields, but it takes time to stay on top of what’s cool, what’s “internationally relevant.”

We don’t often think of reading published research as an important part of the work (or have the time to do it justice).

We don’t have the time or capacity to worry about what’s trending, figure out the cool work of internationalizing our research.

How are you gonna do this work in an international context without funding?

We shared a sense that the cool research is taking place at a larger scale than what we have access to. Our local work with neighbors and students has been meaningful to us. But this work feels awkwardly specific to our context. We don’t know if it’s ever going to be internationally relevant.

What makes you famous is being able to go across boundaries. The local is being totally discounted, except in an international context. There’s a weird tension; if you’re doing international work, not local work, you’re not doing the work that’s generative.

See Matt Brim and “local” research being undervalued. Including very local (ourselves, our own conditions).

How do we think about local work in this context? What would it be like to prioritize our own personal senses of what’s relevant, grounded in our own worlds?

A strategy that might pan out in no other way is to look at the utmost local.

Collaboration:

We like working together. Sometimes, it feels like the only way to work.

Publishing with other people–if I’m accountable to co-authors, I do it, and prioritize it. When it’s just me, I don’t prioritize it.

At a bare minimum it necessitates the time to have conversations with colleagues/friends/research collaborators in order to understand how these dynamics are generative.

Took 5 years to get an article ready–so I don’t have the solo published articles.

But collaboration doesn’t get the same kind of credit as solo work–it doesn’t always “count.”

It’s a strategy, but also a stress and a problem that those don’t count for as much. It shouldn’t count for ⅕ of an article.

What if we consider collaboration as a method–not just a strategy for making do in a context where we can’t do it alone, but an approach that generates its own unique values?

it’s not just that collaboration is a tactic, a strategy, in an instrumental / productivist way, it’s what we love… it has inherent value.

The community stuff–I love to collaborate. The art and design world I come out of is all about collaboration! What does it look like to say that collaboration is of utmost importance?

Composting collaboration! It’s all about collaboration.

“DIGGING OUR OWN GRAVES AND COMPOSTING OURSELVES”

[Image description: a meat thermometer, a shovel, a rake, and an awl.]

It’s possible that turning away from institutional definitions of productivity is digging our own graves in the game of “what counts”. If that’s the case, we’re hoping to compost ourselves.

Donna Haraway, Astrida Niemanis, and Jennifer Mae Hamilton have turned to compost as a tool for understanding our relationship with the past and present. A compost heap is a machine for turning abject stuff (rotting food scraps) into potential (living, nutrient-rich humus).

For us, composting is a powerful metaphor for a specific way of responding to the present: a radical acceptance of our current moment, accompanied by a rejection of hegemonic futurity, in favor of self-determined steps toward new ways of inhabiting the world.

We’ve come out of these conversations with a renewed sense of the importance of “starting where we are.” Let’s use the methods we can use. Let’s write as our own exhausted, under-resourced selves. Let’s compost contingency.

The voice of scholarly writing often projects a relatively comfortable, implicitly tenure-track position from which to describe the world. The reader assumes that the author has time, resources, and mental capacity to just, like, do research. This voice doesn’t capture our experiences as contingent faculty trying to do research in the neoliberal institution.

Overwhelm, uncertainty, insecurity, isolation, disconnection, and burnout are part of the contingent academic standpoint. Instead of seeing these feelings as obstacles to good scholarship, what if we tune in to burnout as part of our research?

How can these feelings help us cultivate solidarity with other precarious laborers, or with students?

What can they teach us about the structures in which we publish?

How can we find new methods and research questions that are rooted in the emotional currents of contingency?

READING LIST:

American Association of University Professors. 2012. “Resources on Contingent Positions.” AAUP. October 3, 2012.

this is just some data

Arrigoitia, Melissa Fernández, Gwendolyn Beetham, Cara E. Jones, and Sekile Nzinga-Johnson. 2015. “Women’s Studies and Contingency: Between Exploitation and Resistance.” Feminist Formations 27 (3): 81–113.

recommended if you’re curious about contingency–detailed, insightful report on a series of panels featuring contingent faculty in women’s and gender studies.

Cvetkovich, Ann. 2012. Depression: A Public Feeling. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

recommended in general–this book examines political depression, and totally transformed the way i look at bad feelings.

Dalton, Margaret. 2006. “A System Destabilized: Scholarly Books Today.” Journal of Scholarly Publishing 37 (4): 251–69.

Doe, Sue, Natalie Barnes, David Bowen, David Gilkey, Ginger Guardiola Smoak, Sarah Ryan, Kirk Sarell, Laura H. Thomas, Lucy J. Troup, and Mike Palmquist. 2011. “Discourse of the Firetenders: Considering Contingent Faculty through the Lens of Activity Theory.” College English 73 (4): 428–49.

very detailed study of how contingent faculty do labor.

Günel, Gökçe, Saiba Varma, and Chika Watanabe. 2020. “A Manifesto for Patchwork Ethnography.” Member Voices, Fieldsights, June 9, 2020. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/a-manifesto-for-patchwork-ethnography>.

a quick and inspiring read for anyone with an interest in finding new ways to do research in the interstices!

Hamilton, Jennifer Mae, and Astrida Neimanis. 2018. “Composting Feminisms and Environmental Humanities.” Environmental Humanities 10 (2): 501–27.

this is a good exploration of the “compost” metaphor.

Haraway, Donna Jeanne. 2016. Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene. Experimental Futures: Technological Lives, Scientific Arts, Anthropological Voices. Durham: Duke University Press.

obviously it’s great, it’s haraway, but like i don’t feel like i need to highlight it.

Institute for Precarious Consciousness. n.d. “We Are All Very Anxious.” We Are Plan C (blog). Accessed July 8, 2022. <https://www.weareplanc.org/blog/we-are-all-very-anxious/>.

examines anxiety as a public feeling–definitely recommend if you’re feeling uneasy about feelings of uneasiness

Moten, Fred, and Stefano Harney. 2004. “The University and the Undercommons: Seven Theses.” Social Text 22 (2): 101–15.

this is good, i think, but i’m not smart enough to understand it all the way.

Ukeles, Mierle Laderman. 1969. “Manifesto for Maintenance Art.” New York, NY. <http://www.feldmangallery.com/media/pdfs/Ukeles_MANIFESTO.pdf>.

in the recent turn toward maintenance studies, Ukeles is often overlooked. her manifesto is just bonkers brilliant tbh.

The Lecturers’ Committee

[precariousMethods@gmail.com](mailto:precariousMethods@gmail.com)

# Reading Lake Superior

By: Allison Fulton and Grace Hayes

Seeking new methods of argumentation and scholarly exchange to support an anti-hegemonic agenda, we made a chapbook that developed in an through site specific creative field work. The idea for the chapbook arose from our recognition that the institutional limits placed on us during the pandemic drastically changed not merely the physical ways we practice research but also the intellectual trajectory is available to us. How did our lack of emergent encounters with colleagues, strangers, and the natural world limited what we could understand or extrapolate from text we were reading? How was our writing practice hemmed in by returning to the exact same domestic location every day? We became critical of the journal article and monograph format that humanists traditionally published in because these generic forms do not take into account how the site dash which we define as the physical place where publications are produced dash significantly shapes the published arguments. So, we ask what new ways of knowing might emerge if we changed the published form.

To construct the chapbook, we took Lake Superior: Lorine Niedecker’s Poem and Journal, Along with Other Sources, Documents, and Readings (Wave Books 2013) to five field locations and read aloud the titular poem in full. At each site, we brought a piece of cardstock on which we took field notes, collected found objects, drew images, and recorded soundscapes. In this making process, we were struck by the ways in which the chapbook page itself mediated the site. For instance, when Allison took Lake Superior to a local coffee shop, she read the poem and assembled the chapbook page at an outdoor table where she was seated next to two woman who were having a long conversation about their relationships and families. Reading that page of the chapbook later on, she realized how much they are ambient conversation had influenced her interpretation of the poem. This moment highlights how the sites were always mediating our interpretations of the primary source, Lake Superior. It leaves us with the question: what is last in published scholarship when sites are not legible to the researcher or the reader due to institutional expectations and daily routines?

The process of making the chapbook was valuable in many ways. For us as collaborators, we were pleasantly surprised at how the same research method could be carried out by each of us individually and resulted in dramatically different finished forms depending on site (you will notice how visually different are interspersed pages are). for Allison, this making centred research method was a welcome estrangement from typical non tactile humanistic methods. And by gathering found objects and plant life, grace homed in on the material affects her sites had on the process of reading. The grocery list and Post-it notes from her “pandemic desk” reading embody the quotidian demands that circulate in the underbelly of many scholars’ sites.

We don't have many suggestions for how to read this Zine. The only two reading practices that we encourage our 1) to read the chapbook in full at different sites and 2) to take site notes as you read. The back cover has been left blank for you to take these notes on, but feel free to write directly on pages themselves.

Whether you're a humanist, scientist, or social scientists, we hope that this scene provides you with an opportunity to reflect on and in your well-trodden research and writing sites. Enjoy the process!

Allison & Grace

Davis, CA

Pandemic Desk:

[Image description: collage of Post-It notes of various lists, including a grocery list and one with a title “big advice”. There is a pencil sketch of a person reading a book with a plant in the foreground overtop of the notes.]

Southside Park:

[Image description: a hand drawn and hand written image of a map of Southside Park, with illegible text in different areas of map.]

Lake Michigan:

[image description: a closeup of a Gatorade bottle wrapper and plastic ring on the ground.]

Voorhies Office:

[Image description: a handwritten note that reads: in what ways does a book have a home, or permanent place of residence? In my office, iBooks home is on the green metal bookshelves and in my argumentative brain. Try as I might to just exist in the sounds + feelings of the poem as I read it aloud, I was unconscious kicking into close reading mode by mining the text for groups of words, alliteration, punctuation, etc. I immediately picked up on:

alliterative strings of words pulling lines across the page and through the mouth, mimicking the movement of water.

emphasis on individuals (Radisson, Marquette, and Schoolcraft) as if their bodies + actions or sort of integral to the Lake in some capacity

switch to the “I” speaker at the close of the poem dash have they been at the Lake this whole time?

Halfway through field notation I realized that I've been absentmindedly staring at a rock taken from the shores of Lake Superior. It's cool to the touch, and my warm hand leaves sweaty marks across the surface that then fade quickly. How much of the human presence around the lake defines it for Niedecker? For me? Questions to continue floating with.]

Lake Superior:

[Image description: collage of seemingly found objects, including small rocks, dandelions

Coffee Shop:

[Image description: a handwritten page which reads:

“I could barely hear myself read the poem

two women next to me- their conversation comes in and out of Niedecker’s words

long hair

who's driving

granite land

Montessori

entered the Mississippi

I worked with

wild pigeon

I was joking

to the savage maws

I don't know what it is

tobacco in//inland then

Niedecker wrote this poem after doing a tour of the lake and surrounding states with her husband- Al

The woman next to me says she's divorced. A man walks up to the person sitting on the other side of me and tries to talk- they are very uninterested.

Where is Al in this poem? Has he been changed into rock? How much did al, on the move, shape Niedecker 's view of constantly moving rock.

Niedecker experienced without the lake. I experienced reading the poem the lake during a week where I've mostly been alone. No Al by my side, just these coffee shop women talking about their kids and husbands. How do I read this poem differently in solitariness? Makes me return to the “I” at the poems close standing out in (text cuts out).”]

Airplane:

[Image description: a scan of a lined sheet of paper with a hand drawn map of Lake Superior and Lake Michigan. Text reads “Place-less on the airplane- July 4th, 2022

Not much to gather except a hum

and the smell of my own breath

wafting upward, trapped by my mask.

It seems the sun has been perpetually setting, and yet the fireworks are visible.

I’m thinking a lot about where I’ve just been:.]

Pandemic Desk:

[Image description: a page, roughly painted black, with text that reads:

“Worker reflexes

every

Kaiser brain scientist

long hair

long gun

long canoes

through which we successfully passed

socratic body work

My dear one”. ]

# Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Secondary Analysis and ‘Second-hand’ Data as a Lower-Carbon Method

By: Julia Hamill

Introduction:

During my graduate thesis, I was interested in exploring the role of food, and talk about food, as an identity resource in transcultural interactions, particularly drawing from my experiences long-distance cycling in Pakistan and Tajikistan.

Due to administrative restrictions on student travel to this region – and shortly afterward, the COVID-19 pandemic – I focused my thesis on secondary analysis of two sets of pre-existing and publicly available texts: a collection of oral testimonies (created between 2000-2002) and a narrativized autophotography project (created between 2011-2012).

These ‘second-hand’ research artefacts turned out to be rich and productive sources of qualitative data in their own right – unexpectedly, even more so than any primary data I might have created with participants on my own.

Technically, this is less of a DIY method and more of a “don’t-do-it-yourself” method. Although the concept of secondary analysis – the re-use of existing data to answer new research questions – is not new, this method remains underutilized, particularly in qualitative research, and may be perceived as less ‘legitimate’ than primary field research (Goodwin, 2012; Heaton, 2008; Hughes & Tarrant, 2020; Irwin, 2013; Moore, 2007; Ruggiano & Perry, 2019; Thorne, 1998).

[Image description: a gesturing elderly man holding a machine.]

This zine has three aims:

First, to advocate for secondary qualitative analysis as a lower-carbon research method.

Second, and most importantly, to reflect on the ethical, epistemological, and practical implications of using second-hand qualitative data, drawing from my own experiences as well as the existing literature on secondary analysis as a research practice.

Finally, to encourage researchers to make research artefacts (such as the testimonies and photographs I analyzed) publicly available for others to engage with, rather than treating these artefacts as single-use or proprietary.

Everything You Want to Know About Secondary Analysis

Secondary qualitative analysis is a broad term, which can encompass many different research practices. In general, it involves the re-use of existing data to answer new research questions.

For instance, you might return to your own data to examine a new research question that was not part of your original study, or you might seek to use or compare datasets that you had no role in creating (Heaton, 2008; Irwin, 2013; Thorne, 1998), as I did. Scholars typically consider these to both fall under the umbrella of secondary analysis, though they may draw distinctions between them as sub-types within this category. In this zine will focus on the latter, although the considerations may be similar in other contexts of qualitative secondary analysis.

An important note before I continue: I’m certainly not arguing that we do away with primary research, nor am I arguing that use of second-hand data is appropriate for every research question:

“Clearly, the mere availability of an existing database should not be the only consideration when designing secondary studies with new research questions.” (Thorne, 1998, p. 553)

Indeed, one of the first considerations to ask yourself when considering second-hand data analysis as part of your research design is the same question you might ask yourself about any other methodology:

Is this an appropriate method and source of data to help me answer my research question? What do I think I will be able to learn from this research artefact, and what do I anticipate not being able to learn from it?

Some research methods, such as interview or focus group transcripts, are more amenable to secondary qualitative analysis than others (for example, ethnographic research).

Secondary Analysis as a Low Carbon Research Method

Re-purposing existing research artefacts tends to be inherently less carbon-intensive than conducting primary research. It can be done from anywhere, without the need for travel, which has implications for accessibility and affordability as well as emissions.

Examples of where I did my research: the back of a car parked outside my apartment…

…and a hammock in the park down the street.

You don’t need to be physically able to travel to another country/region/area. In fact, you don’t necessarily have to be able to travel outside of your house. For folks with health or disability considerations, constraints due to COVID risk, family responsibilities, financial limitations, secondary data analysis can open up research possibilities that might not otherwise be feasible. In addition, as Ruggiano and Perry (2019) note, it can also reduce “the burden of participation from research participants and community partners” (p. 83).

Along the same lines, creating ‘primary’ data requires investments of both time and money. As Thorne (1998) notes:

…because qualitative data generation is typically an intense and exhaustive process, each database may well represent a significant investment in knowledge construction. (p. 547)

Re-using data, like re-using material goods rather than buying new ones, gives us an expanded return on these investments because it “allows for the generation of new knowledge without the costs of administration and implementation of additional data collection” (Ruggiano & Perry, 2019, p. 82).

Had I been able to travel to Pakistan, the carbon footprint of a round-trip flight between Toronto and Islamabad would have been around 1300-1500 kg CO2. According to Natural Resources Canada, this is equivalent to the energy consumed in electricity by one home an entire year. While the internet and computing resources I consumed while conducting research remotely are not insignificant, I likely would have used these resources either way.

Ethical, Epistemological, and Practical Implications of Second-hand Qualitative Data

So, how does one actually go about conducting secondary qualitative analysis in a way that is ethical, coherent, and methodologically sound?

While I’ll touch on some of the literature here, I’m primarily going to share my experiences as an example of what can be done using second-hand data, and how. Many academics have discussed potential methodological and ethical problems with secondary qualitative analysis, but “less has been written on how sharing and SDA [secondary data analysis] of qualitative data is actually conducted by scholars” (Ruggiano & Perry, 2019, pp. 81-82) and most publications using secondary qualitative analysis focus on the findings rather than the process (Long-Sutehall et al., 2010).

In my thesis, I used discourse analysis to examine ‘food talk’ in the context of two different representations of a community called Shimshal in northern Pakistan: a set of 35 transcribed and published oral testimony interviews, and a set of 401 publicly available photographs with accompanying narratives.

The first of my source materials, the oral testimony transcripts, were produced in Shimshal between 2000–2002, under the coordination of a British development organization called Panos (Mountain Voices, n.d.b). These were collected shortly before the completion of a link road connecting Shimshal to the nearest highway and focused on the community’s concerns about the social changes the road might bring.

An excerpt from an oral testimony (with my notes)

[Image description: an annotated transcription.]

The second resource I drew on were narrativized photographs created by community members in 2011 and 2012 under the coordination of my thesis supervisor David Butz, third committee member Nancy Cook, and a community organisation called the Shimshal Nature Trust. These narrativized photographs form self-representations of the participants’ perspectives on and experiences of social change brought by the link road almost ten years after its completion (Cook & Butz, 2020).

From the collection of narrativised photos, “Gift for Marriage” by Mirza Aman

[Image description: a man loading goats into a vehicle.]

My research focused on representations of food and identity in transcultural contexts, while the oral testimonies and narrativized photographs were created with a focus on mobility and social change in mind. Before deciding to use them in my project, I read through all of the texts and photos to establish that there was enough talk about food and identity in both to provide both interesting, relevant, and useful sources of data.

[Image description: a collage of a scared pizza slice and a scared hamburger running while a sad-looking lemon asks “Please leave me out of this”.]

Through this preliminary reading I found that food talk was a recurring feature of many of the testimonies, photos, and narratives, providing me ample appropriate material in order to answer my research question. Indeed, part of what made these two sets of texts so interesting is that because they were constructed for other purposes, they allow me to look at how people happen to talk about food, not how they were asked to talk about food. This enables my research to examine instances of food talk in texts where people were not directed to talk about food, but in which they chose to center it themselves.

These existing texts offered richer sources of food talk than I would have been able to access conducting interviews over Skype.

Image description: a cartoon of someone finding gold in a fanciful garden (one also growing solar panel and wind turbine plants)

In addition, they also offered me access to a greater breadth of transcultural representations of food and identity at different moments in Shimshal’s recent history of mobility and modernization.

Ethical Concerns

“Although research subjects may well have signed a consent form that was sufficiently vague as to permit secondary analysis, the complex question of informed consent is especially problematic in secondary qualitative research … whereas subjects may have volunteered to share their experiences about a phenomenon for an identified purpose, a radical departure from that stated purpose could well violate the conditions under which consent was obtained.” (Thorne, 1998, p. 551)

[Image description: two hands holding each other in the dark.]

Ethical issues – in terms of consent and confidentiality – are one of the primary concerns scholars have identified regarding secondary qualitative analysis.

In my case, I was working with research artefacts that had both been explicitly created with the intent of being publicly published and shared.

The oral testimonies were translated and put online; at the time of their creation, the Shimshal Nature Trust also planned on using the recorded interviews to produce locally-broadcast, Wakhi-language radio programs, as well as their own English-language booklet (Mountain Voices, n.d.a). Although this never materialized, Shimshalis – whether participants, interviewers, translators, or onlookers to the project – were aware that whatever was said in the testimonies would be heard by both fellow community members as well as an international audience.

The autophotography project was initiated (in part) in response to community members’ desire to update their public self-representation a decade later. The community (and later, participating photographers) asked that participants’ testimonies be credited to them by name, and that the researchers involved would help the community make the photos and narratives publicly accessible within the community and internationally (D. Butz, personal communication, April 27, 2021).

All photographers agreed to have their photos and summaries of their narratives included in a book based on the archive, which was published in 2020 with narrative summaries in English, Wakhi and Urdu (Butz & Cook, 2020). A digital version of the book is posted in the Brock Digital Repository for international access.

Image description: a drawing of multi-coloured, elongated mushrooms woven together

Since both data sets were published publicly, my access to them did not require further ethics board review from the university; and given the circumstances of their creation, as well as the alignment between my research question and the original projects through which they were made, we felt that the use of my data did not violate community members’ formal or informal consent to participate in either project.

Epistemological Concerns

So for me, the biggest ethical concern of working with secondary data – and indeed, in working with any data – is how to understand it in a way that respects those who are represented in it: as Thorne (1998) argues, “…the notion of what the research claims to represent about an individual or population has significant ethical overtones” (p. 552).

Underlying my research question were questions of how representations of food and identity are shaped by transcultural interaction, and how we can meaningfully understand these representations – particularly when they are the artefact of research interactions. But, in many ways, understanding the representations contained in a set of interview transcripts or a collection of narrativized photographs is not so different from endeavoring to understand representations seen in a documentary film or newspaper article meaningfully. In both cases, attention to the contexts of their production – including how they are created, whose voices are included, and how their contexts may influence what is said in them – is essential.

I suggest that understanding any representation meaningfully – including those found in secondary qualitative data - requires an autoethnographic sensibility, which recognizes articulations of food and identity as self-interested, self-conscious self-representations produced in particular contexts for particular audiences.

[Image description: a photo of a man holding out his hand to shake over a photo of himself.]

What is autoethnography?:

Autoethnography is an “﻿epistemological orientation to the relationships among experience, knowledge, and representation” (Butz, 2010, p. 140). There are a number of overlapping conceptualizations of autoethnography in the literature, all of which strive in some way to collapse the conventional binary between researchers as agents of signification and research subjects as objects of signification (Butz & Besio, 2009).

I draw on a conceptualization that was initially developed by colonial discourse analyst Mary Louise Pratt (1992), who conceives of autoethnographic texts as self-representations strategically performed by subordinated groups in order to intervene in the understandings of dominant outsiders, using those outsiders’ own language and idioms as a tool of resistance.

Drawing on Pratt’s work, Butz and Besio (2004, 2009) developed the concept of ‘autoethnography from below’ for use beyond the context of relations shaped specifically by colonialism by using it to refer to instances in which the “accustomed objects of research produce self-representations that are meant to intervene in ethnographic and other dominant discourses about them” (Butz & Besio, 2009, p. 1667). This makes the concept of autoethnography relevant to a broad range of circumstances where people who are often the objects of other people’s representations – such as participants in academic research – produce their own self-representations.

An autoethnographic sensibility, then, provides an epistemological framework for:

(a) understanding what is said in the texts as strategic, self-interested, self-representations, as well as

(b) attending to the ways in which self-representations are influenced by the affordances and constraints of the contexts or ‘assignments’ in which they are articulated.

In the context of secondary data analysis, this means that self-narrations and performances of identity can be understood more fully by considering the context of their production and reception (Butz & Besio, 2009). This is particularly important when considering formal representational interactions such as the oral testimony and autophotography projects, the kinds of representational interactions that make up academic research.

Reflecting on the characteristics of the formal transcultural interactions which facilitated the production of the transcripts and photos I analyzed, and how these interactions influenced participants’ self-representations, offered an important analytical resource for my research question, as it enables me to reflect on and discuss how talk about food and identity in my texts is necessarily situated and partial.

[Image description: a drawing of multiple people overlaid in one head.]

This epistemological approach shifts the emphasis of my research onto the encounter itself: instead of conducting research ‘on’ participants, I was interested in the interaction that is taking place between participants and outsiders like development workers and academic researchers, through the lens of secondhand data like the oral testimonies and autophotography archive. In the case of my research, there were multiple “research interactions” to keep in mind: the interactions that produced the oral testimonies; the interactions that produced the autophotography archive; and my own interactions with the photographs and English-language texts that resulted from these prior interactions.

By using an autoethnographic sensibility to inform my discourse analysis, I was able to position the epistemological characteristics of what my research participants say in the context of various transcultural interactions (Butz & Besio, 2009).

The individual contexts of each of my two sources – how, why, with what resources, and in what knowledge governance context they were constructed – differed in important ways, and the conclusions I was able to draw from what is said in each of them was more meaningful because I was sensitive to the autoethnographic and transcultural characteristics of the texts.

So, a crucial part of conducting secondary qualitative analysis is examining the representational, methodological, and epistemological contexts within which your research artefacts were created, as situating texts in the social circumstances of their production makes a difference as to how they are understood (Dittmer, 2010).

An example of a photo and field notes of the narrative summary (in English), with some of my early notes

Image description: a photograph, typed notes, and handwritten annotations

Representational context:

First, examining the representational context of my own second-hand data involved attending to significant events taking place at the time the data was created, as well as the broader context of representational or research interactions within the communities or individuals who participated.

In order to understand the oral testimonies more productively, for example, it was useful for me to situate them within Shimshal’s history, since the testimonies were created during a period of time in which the community was engaged in conflict with a newly created national park that threatened much of their pastureland, making traditional grazing practices illegal with no consultation, compensation, or community governance. This conflict, too, needed to be situated within a tradition of colonial and developmentalist discourses that portray the Shimshalis as incapable environmental stewards, which meant that how Shimshalis were represented – and represented themselves – in transcultural interactions was an important part of their struggle for control over its ancestral territories and pasturing practices.

Particularly given that I was neither present nor involved with the community during the time period, understanding as much of this context as I was able to piece together from the academic and non-academic English language sources I had access to was essential to understanding the oral testimonies in a more sensitive and meaningful way.

[Image description: A drawing of someone holding an empty cardboard box at a birthday party.]

While one might argue that my lack of first-hand experience with the context that shaped the research artefacts I analyzed presents a limitation to the conclusions I was able to draw, I do not consider this to be significantly different from ‘primary’ data analysis because our knowledge is inevitably always situated and partial. As Irwin & Winterton (2011) argue:

Concerns that secondary analysis is undermined by lack of access to contextual data available to primary analysts suggest an idealised conception of the completeness of the original researcher’s awareness of relevant contextual data during the research process. (p. 17)

Methodological context:

Examining the methodological context of how your second-hand data was created is another key part of how to situate them within their contexts of production. For both the oral testimonies and the autophotography project, this involved looking at descriptions of the projects, of their purported aims, and how the projects were used by participants to represent themselves to a particular audience.

[Image description: a photo of a well-stocked shop, with a man selling something to a younger girl.]

“Amir Baig’s Shop” by Shaheen Karim

I also tried to consider the social circumstances of authors and interviewers in the data (for example, who is speaking, and who is not speaking; their gender, age, and position; who is interviewing, and what their relationship is; how might this affect what is said and why).

I was able to develop this context through:

academic literature published on these sets of texts

print and online materials written by the development organization that initiated the oral testimony project conversations with my supervisor and third reader, who coordinated the autophotography project and whose ethnographic experience in Shimshal helped to contextualize my sources, both in terms of their circumstances of production as well as some aspects of the texts themselves. I used citations for personal communications where relevant in order to highlight instances in which I am drawing on their ethnographic knowledge as a resource.

Finally, given that I was working with already existing data, I found it useful to reflect on not only the epistemological framework that formed the basis of my analysis but also the epistemological approach used by those involved in its creation. I explore the latter by examining the published aims and methodological design of each project, while the empirical and representational context I developed earlier helped shape how my own understanding of the epistemological characteristics of each set of texts.

In place of a “methodology” section to my thesis, I offered a “methodological and epistemological context” section, in which I provided readers as much detail as I could about the secondhand data I chose to analyze, why I felt it was an appropriate resource to help answer my research question, how this data came to be created, and how this contextual background shaped by understanding of it. 

Conclusion

Qualitative secondary analysis may offer us opportunities for much more extensive collaboration in our work, for expanded development of our emerging theories, and for extending our capacity to critically scrutinize the bases on which our diverse interpretations…are constructed.” (Thorne, 1998, p. 554)

I hope that my thesis research provides an example of how existing, publicly available visual and textual artefacts can be a rich and productive source of qualitative data.

Using two existing sets of publicly available texts – the oral testimony transcripts and autophotography archive – allowed me to examine shifts and continuities in the relationship between food talk and identity across a longer period of time than I would have be able to study had I conducted fieldwork as originally planned. Using these two sets of texts also allowed me to examine two different sorts of transcultural interactions, which I would not have been able to do on my own either.

[Image description: a photo of a dark room with barrels, bags, and jugs stockpiled inside

“Attabad Tragedy’s Impact on Life in Shimshal”, by Sakhawat Ali.]

Neither the oral testimony project nor the autophotography archive were designed with a particular focus on food or food-talk in mind, yet food talk was a recurring feature throughout both sets of texts.

 Using these sources for my thesis offered me the unique ability to look at how people choose to talk about food in circumstances where they have not been directed or asked to do so. Drawing attention to this element of the texts allowed me to contribute a new perspective to existing research on these materials, highlighting how research artefacts can be valuable resources to help answer new research questions.

“Semn and Boqla” by Nadir Shah

[Image description: a photo of two shallow bowls of food.]

Thus, rather than understanding my use of these existing texts as some kind of ‘lesser’ substitute to conducting first-hand fieldwork, I see them as rich sources of qualitative data in their own right, offering a distinctive set of affordances for conducting research. In particular, I suggest that existing research artefacts – in combination with an autoethnographic sensibility – offer great potential for those interested in studying how formal representations are shaped by transcultural interaction, because they can help construct more nuanced conceptualizations that integrate the different contexts, affordances, and audiences of representational assignments.

References:

Butz, D. (2010). Autoethnography as sensibility. In D. DeLyser, S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M. A. Crang, & L. McDowell (Eds.), The SAGE handbook of qualitative geography (pp. 138-155). SAGE Publications.

Butz, D., & Besio, K. (2004). The value of autoethnography for field research in transcultural settings. Professional Geographer, 56(3), 350-360.

Butz, D., & Besio, K. (2009). Autoethnography. Geography Compass, 3(5), 1660-1674.

Butz, D., & Cook, N. (Eds.). (2020). Road construction, mobility & social change in a Wakhi village.

Cook, N., & Butz, D. (2020). ‘The road changes everything’: Shifting gendered mobilities, spaces and subjectivities in Shimshal, Pakistan. Gender, Place and Culture.

Dittmer, J. (2010). Textual and discourse analysis. In D. DeLyser, S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M. Crang, & L. McDowell (Eds.), The SAGE handbook of qualitative geography (pp. 274-286).

Goodwin, J. (Ed.) (2012). SAGE secondary data analysis. (Vols. 1-4). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Heaton, J. (2008). Secondary analysis of qualitative data: An overview. Historical Social Research, 33(3), 33–45.

Hughes, K., & Tarrant, A (Eds.). (2020). Qualitative secondary analysis. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Irwin, S. (2013). Qualitative secondary data analysis: Ethics, epistemology and context. Progress in Development Studies, 13(4), 295–306.

Irwin, S., & Winterton, M. (2011). Debates in Qualitative Secondary Analysis: Critical Reflections Paper (Timescape Working Paper Series, 4). University of Leeds.

Long-Sutehall, T., Sque, M., & Addington-Hall, J. (2010). Secondary analysis of qualitative data: A valuable method for exploring sensitive issues with an elusive population? Journal of Research in Nursing, 16(4), 335–344.

Moore, N. (2007). (Re)using qualitative data? Sociological Research Online, 12(3).

Mountain Voices. (n.d.a). Pakistan. http://mountainvoices.org/pakistan.asp.html

Mountain Voices. (n.d.b). The project. http://mountainvoices.org/intro.html

Pratt, M. L. (1992). Introduction: Criticism in the contact zone. In Imperial eyes: travel writing and transculturation (pp. 1-11). Taylor & Francis Group.

Ruggiano, N., & Perry, T. E. (2019). Conducting secondary analysis of qualitative data: Should we, can we, and how? Qualitative Social Work, 18(1), 81-97.

Thorne, S. (1998). Ethical and representational issues in qualitative secondary analysis. Qualitative Health Research, 8(4), 547-555.

A note on form:

Echoing the collage of different data artefacts that my thesis brought together, this zine is a collage of text and images that was cut and assembled by hand in the spirit of screen-free engagement.

Except for photos from the autophotography project (attributed to individual photographers), images were taken from various magazines.

Zine written & created by:

Julia Hamill [jh19pj@brocku.ca](mailto:jh19pj@brocku.ca)

# Remix to Resist - Using Methods Creatively in the Age of Projects

By: Jussara Rowland, Vasco Ramos, and Clara Venancio

The projectification of research design:

In recent decades, the use of research projects to coordinate and fund research has become increasingly common, impacting science production in significant ways. (Baur et al., 2018). As the research project became the model around which scientific work is managed and organised, it also changed the configuration of research practices in terms of structure and temporalities. The project format provides a structure that allows for planning, accountability, and comparability. However, large-scale projects often increase research bureaucratization

by imposing a framework that incentivizes the segmentation and quantification of the research process, affecting its design, implementation, and outputs (Fowler et al. 2015). In particular, highly structured projects, such as those supported by major funding bodies, operate with a set of “artifacts” such as work packages, milestones, sub-tasks, deliverables, roles and responsibilities, that shift the logic of research from discovery to delivery (Felt, 2017). While this way of organising work supports higher accountability and facilitates collaboration between different teams, it effectively segments inquiry and risks fragmenting the research process as it incentivizes work around specific tasks (work packages), with specific goals, deadlines, and coordinators. The articulation of these tasks should always be considered. However, research does not always follow expected paths, and pre-defined timelines, instruments, methods, and outputs can sometimes make this integration more challenging. This risk of segmentation is particularly significant within qualitative research design, where different stages of the research process are often interrelated and where data collection, analysis, and dissemination tend

to have blurred lines.

What is a work package?

Work packages (WP) are a key element in large project management, which breaks a project down into smaller blocks. The content of each WP is defined in terms of objectives, descriptions of activities, timetables with milestones, outputs, and deliverables. WPs are assigned to teams who work simultaneously or sequentially, following the defined steps and completing them by the specified deadline. When all teams complete their individual work packages, the whole project comes together and the objectives have been achieved.

Adapted from “Fact sheet 3: Planning of Content Work Packages” (Chafea - European Commission)

Social research as creative practice:

Everyday social research used to be very far from assembly work. However, in contemporary academia, a growing part of research work is carried out within the framework of structured projects with a strong emphasis on tasks and deliverables. When the logic of research shifts from discovery to delivery, there is a stifling of creativity that can ultimately lead to a deep transformation in the nature of research practices. Finding opportunities for exploration and intellectual ingenuity becomes, then, a necessary act of resistance against the apparently irreversible and unstoppable tide of research projectification. But how can we make space for creativity, curiosity and exploration and connect different moments within highly structured projects?

Creative and visual methods are lauded for permitting researchers to recast questions, often allowing space for non-verbal abilities and, to varying degrees, interacting with research subjects’ interpretations, which may lead to a wider representation of viewpoints (Kara, 2020). However, within the current environment of highly structured grants, even “offbeat” techniques are not immune to bureaucratization, leading to rather uncreative, even tokenistic uses. Resisting projectification, therefore, means instilling ingenuity in our research practice, regardless of technique.

Creativity can be fostered using the remix approach to methods presented by Markham (2013). Drawing on bricolage, remixing entails engaging with methods in a way that creates compelling arguments rather than seeks definitive answers. It means acknowledging the tentative nature of the scientific endeavour and shedding light on “below-method” activities, for example, showing the backstage, sharing partial renderings, and borrowing from disparate and perhaps disjunctive concepts. Markahm’s says that methodological creativity includes 5 activities:

Interrogate

Generate

Borrow

Play

Move

A remix approach stresses the need to creatively (re) combine methodological artifacts or even rewrite findings and breakthroughs according to audiences. It is, above all, about finding ways of communicating effectively — i.e., being understood without compromising scientific validity. Remixing challenges us to be creative in everyday research and goes against extractivism as a mode of scientific production, as it fosters an artificial and counterproductive segmentation of research and an accumulation of unused data.

What i learned from the cuidar project:

CUIDAR, Cultures of Disaster Resilience Among Children and Young People, was a Horizon 2020 financed project (2015-2018) coordinated by Maggie Mort from the University of Lancaster. It included five European countries - the United Kingdom, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece - and had the partnership of children’s charity Save the Children. Its main aim was to promote the inclusion of children and young people’s perspectives in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) (Mort, M., Rodríguez-Giralt, I., & Delicado, 2020). The project had a staged approach and was designed around several work packages that involved steps of involvement of children and young people with civil protection stakeholders. Throughout this process the project made use of numerous participatory tools to work in a playful and meaningful way with the children and young people, but also stakeholders and audiences (Rowland et al., 2020). The data generated in this process however was not contained within one specific phase, it followed with the children during the project, creating connections between its different steps. It was also often borrowed for subsequent dynamics allowing for the emergence of new interrogations and insights.

[Image Description: four boxes connected by arrows, labeled, in order (typos original): “Dialogues with chieldren,” “Muttual Learning Exercises,” “National Policy Debates,” “Child-Centered Disiaster Risk Management Framework”.]

This process of generate, play, interrogate, move, borrow was essential not only to ensure the quality of children’s participation, but also for the involvement of stakeholders. Material produced during the Dialogues with Children were presented at the Mutual Leaning Exercises, results from the Mutual Leaning Exercises were discussed in the National Policy Debates, outputs from the National Policy Debates were repurposed on the CUIDAR Finale. As part of this event, national and international stakeholders learned about the Child-Centered Disaster Risk Management Framework, but also had the opportunity to interact with participants, findings and artifacts, adding to the project’s under standing of children’s participation in DRR. The use of visual and participatory methods played an instrumental role in creating this space for this exploration throughout the project.

What I learned from the FFHT project:

FFHT was an ERC funded research project, proposed by Rebecca O’Connell, which sought to understand the effects of widening income disparity and rising food costs on the food practices of families in three European countries (the UK, Norway, and Portugal). Its objectives included elucidating the roles and responsibilities of adults and children regarding food in low-income families; exploring children’s experiences and perspectives of food insecurity at home and school; comparing experiences across and within countries (rural vs. urban; national); and identifying important factors in explaining such differences. The project applied a mixed-method comparative case study design. It included a range of methods: secondary analysis of large scale surveys; in-depth qualitative interviews with parents, encompassing household budgets and checklists of coping strategies; semi-structured interviews with children, with drawing methods being used as alternatives. A second stage of qualitative methods, aimed to develop more concrete knowledge of everyday food practices, included kitchen tours

with adults and photo-elicitation interviews with children, who were given cameras to document their eating. All these steps generated a huge amount of data that was analysed in an integrative additional work package, and from which derived the projects’ main contributions (see: O’Connell, Knight, and Brannen, 2019; O’Connell and Brannen, 2021). My takeaways from FFHT, in terms of methodological creativity, relate to two main points. First, it is fine to be flexible in implementing qualitative methods—an ethical stance that respects participants’ abilities and preferences—whose main purpose is only to answer research questions. The second relates to Markham’s concepts of interrogate and play, which were accomplished in different ways: while individual case analyses were developed by national researchers, input from other researchers was sought, resulting in (re) interrogations – what does food poverty mean in other contexts? How does it play out in everyday life? Children were also involved in several playful ways: when giving voice to their own photo accounts of everyday practices; and in focus groups where photos taken by children were used to discuss habits across countries (i.e. data was borrowed and moved within phases). This approach yielded lively and embedded interpretations, and was instrumental in developing compelling accounts of how food poverty is experienced in different countries.

Remixing as resistance:

Research is unpredictable: it is often a “messy” sequence of tentative efforts and experiments, even when some of its final outputs look very shiny. In the meantime, there are numerous dead-ends and sets of new interrogations that fit uneasily within the pre-defined project structure contained in a project agreement. For researchers, there are challenges. It can be difficult to complete projects on schedule while maintaining the ability to think creatively and pursue new ideas; it can be challenging to stay open to new connections between the different moments of the project while following pre-defined timelines. It can be hard to remain open to serendipitous findings in a highly pressured academic environment.

Markham’s remix approach to the use of methods gives us an interpretative lens to look back on our work in these projects and reflect on the value of their affordances (in terms of data, findings, and breakthroughs) at different stages of the process. The ways in which methods were used within these projects allowed us to better understand and explore issues related to Children and Young People’s Participation in Civil Protection and Food Poverty. But these projects also created spaces for methodological learning—from which we as team members benefited—allowed room to generate new questions and actively involved a variety of audiences.

The fact that both projects provided us with this opportunity to learn and develop these methodological insights is not fortuitous. Both engaged with children using interactive or participatory approaches, regarded as better suited to accessing their modes of expression and communication. Moreover, many involve play and imagination, i.e., finding ways to be creative, activities that are associated with childhood and adolescence, and whose importance seems to wane as we grow older and strive to become competent professionals.

Lessons learned during our stay on these projects have informed our own outlook on science and participation in subsequent research projects. We argue that it is vital that we acknowledge the processual nature of science, creating space for remix opportunities. Moments and activities like the ones described here should not only be recognised and made visible, but they can also be actively promoted as forms of resistance against the worst effects of projectification.

References:

Baur, N., Besio, C., & Norkus, M. (2018). Projectification of Science as an Organi-

zational Innovation. Em W. Rammert, A. Windeler, H. Knoblauch, & M. Hutter (Eds.),

Innovation Society Today (pp. 341–370). Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.

Chafea - European Commission. “Fact sheet 3: Planning of Content Work Packages”.

Retrievd from: https://ec.europa.eu/chafea/health/beneficiaries-corner/project-man-

agement/factsheets\_en.htm

Felt, U. (2017). Under the shadow of time: Where indicators and academic values

meet. Engaging Science, Technology, and Society, 3, 53-63.

Fowler, N., Lindahl, M., & Sköld, D. (2015). The projectification of university research:

A study of resistance and accommodation of project management tools & tech-

niques. International Journal of Managing Projects in Business. vol.8

Kara, H. (2020). Creative research methods: A practical guide. Policy Press.

Markham, A. (2013). Remix cultures, remix methods: Reframing qualitative inquiry for

social media contexts. Global dimensions of qualitative inquiry, 63-81.

Mort, M., Rodríguez-Giralt, I., & Delicado, A. (2020). Children and young people’s

participation in disaster risk reduction: Agency and resilience. Policy Press.

O’Connell, R., & Brannen, J. (2021). Families and food in hard times: European com-

parative research. UCL Press.

O’Connell, R., Knight, A., & Brannen, J. (2019). Living hand to mouth. London: Child

Poverty Action Group.

Rowland, J., et al. (2020). Participatory tools for disaster risk management with children and young people. In Children and Young People’s Participation in Disaster Risk Reduction (pp. 117-150). Policy Press.

REFERENCES:

Baur, N., Besio, C., & Norkus, M. (2018). Projectification of Science as an Organizational Innovation. Em W. Rammert, A. Windeler, H. Knoblauch, & M. Hutter (Eds.), Innovation Society Today (pp. 341–370). Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.

Chafea - European Commission. “Fact sheet 3: Planning of Content Work Packages”. Retrievd from: https://ec.europa.eu/chafea/health/beneficiaries-corner/project-management/factsheets\_en.htm

Felt, U. (2017). Under the shadow of time: Where indicators and academic values meet. Engaging Science, Technology, and Society, 3, 53-63.

Fowler, N., Lindahl, M., & Sköld, D. (2015). The projectification of university research: A study of resistance and accommodation of project management tools & techniques. International Journal of Managing Projects in Business. vol.8

Kara, H. (2020). Creative research methods: A practical guide. Policy Press.

Markham, A. (2013). Remix cultures, remix methods: Reframing qualitative inquiry for social media contexts. Global dimensions of qualitative inquiry, 63-81.

Mort, M., Rodríguez-Giralt, I., & Delicado, A. (2020). Children and young people’s participation in disaster risk reduction: Agency and resilience. Policy Press.

O’Connell, R., & Brannen, J. (2021). Families and food in hard times: European comparative research. UCL Press.

O’Connell, R., Knight, A., & Brannen, J. (2019). Living hand to mouth. London: Child Poverty Action Group.

Rowland, J., et al. (2020). Participatory tools for disaster risk management with children and young people. In Children and Young People’s Participation in Disaster Risk

Reduction (pp. 117-150). Policy Press.

Acknowledgements:

Jussara Rowland took part in the CUIDAR project—CUIDAR Cultures of Disaster Resilience among Children and Young People. CUIDAR received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No. 653753. For all that she learned during the project, Jussara would like to thank Maggie Mort, the project coordinator, and her colleagues from the UK, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. A special mention to Ana Delicado e Ana Sofia Ribeiro, her teammates during fieldwork in Portugal.

Vasco Ramos participated in the Families and Food in Hard Times project (FFHT). FFHT was a project to Rebecca O’Connell (UCL) and supported by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/ 2007–2013), ERC grant agreement number 337977. Vasco would like to thank all FFHT colleagues in the UK, Norway, and Portugal for everything that he learned by participating in this project. A special mention to Mónica Truninger, Fábio Augusto, and Sónia Cardoso, his Portuguese teammates.

Clara Venâncio is a Designer and Research Assistant in the CLAN project – Children-Animals Friendships: challenging boundaries between humans and non-humans in contemporary societies. CLAN was funded by the Portuguese Scientific Foundation [PTDC/SOC 28415/2017]. For the learning experience brought to her by participating in this project, Clara would like to thank the entire CLAN team, especially Verónica Policarpo, the project coordinator. She would also like to thank Jussara and Vasco for the invitation and collaboration in making this Zine.

# 

# Resisting in and Through the Material - or, Critical Making at the End of the World :(

By: Nikki Fragala Barnes, Farrah Cato, Keidra Daniels Navaroli, Abigail Moreshead, and Anastasia Salter

About Us:

Nikki Fragala Barnes (@bynikkibarnes) is a PhD student in Texts and Technology at UCF and the Bradley-Otis Fellow at the Rollins Museum of Art. Barnes’ practice is collaborative, hybrid, experimental, disruptive, and intersectional.

[Image description: A photo of Nikki.]

Farrah Cato is a Senior Instructor in the English Dept and PhD student in the Texts and Technology program, both at UCF. She likes to do lots of crafty things and tries very hard not to let her pets boss her around.

[Image description: A photo of Farrah.]

Keidra Daniels Navaroli is a McKnight Doctoral Fellow in the Texts and Technology PhD Program at UCF who balances her time as a scholar and curator with keeping two tiny humans out of trouble [aka parenting].

[Image description: A photo of Keidra.]

Abigail Moreshead is a Texts and Technology PhD candidate, editor, and English instructor at UCF. She collects, problematizes, and tears up (for art’s sake) books as physical objects.

[Image description: A photo of Abigail.]

Anastasia Salter is an associate professor of English at UCF despite objecting to most canonical literature, and is overly fond of writing books and playing weird video games.

Image description: Vaguely cubist art of Anastasia

Introduction:

Bethany Nowviskie's pivotal essay points toward the value of "resistance in the material," noting that "tensions and fractures and glitches of all sorts reveal opportunity," but that those opportunities in turn require us to maintain "control over [William] Morris' crucial triad: our material, our tools, and our time" (182). Her words particularly resonate in a moment when time has been disrupted by the restructuring of workdays by Zoom and always-on communication technologies, which in turn amplify the ceaseless demands of academic and domestic labor.

Drawing on Natalie Loveless’ “manifesto for research-creation,” How to Make Art at the End of the World, and the digital humanities-infused practices of critical making, we turn to the material to disrupt the technical and push back against the ongoing centricity of the peer-reviewed journal and traditional academic conference as the markers of research productivity. We look toward the feminist tradition of craft communities, where activist and resistant making practices, such as the crafting of masks, has thrived during the pandemic for inspiration in rethinking the materiality of our fields and our concept of the value of personal expertise versus communal knowledge-sharing and making.

This illustrated chapbook features field notes and archival fragments reflecting on a range of conceptual and completed resistant material projects, crafted by our five contributors. This includes Nikki Fragala Barnes' mapping exploration of un/real and non/real spaces; Farrah Cato's feminist resistance “Tool K(n)it” exploring the embodiment of resistance and activism; Keidra Daniels Navaroli's comic/codex tracing ancestral heritage through Audre Lorde's concept of biomythography; Abigail Moreshead's exploration of the materiality and politics of (playing with) old writing technologies; and Anastasia Salter's fusion of code and textile in a series of generative feminist computational crafts. Combined, these projects make an argument for making-as-methodology—for the exploration of “resistance in the materials” itself as a means of knowledge creation that challenges the primacy of traditional (exclusively text-based) academic practices.

Mapping as Method:

Nikki Fragala Barnes

Making maps and mappings is a human practice that remains to be exhausted. An iterative, interactive expression of represented space functions as procedural method for finding and losing one’s way, though perhaps generatively. Here, maps are more process than tool, and in their limits,  they foster understanding, insights, and relationships. The search for operational orientation is both the metaphor and the material for bridging theory-making and critical methods.

Lin’s 2018 A River is a Drawing, reimagines the agency of the water marking the terrain as it draws itself. Lin approaches this work by drawing three-dimensionally, using satellite, sonar, and microscopic imaging as data and material for the sculpture series (NYC-ARTS).

This is a method of transforming material and meaning to more thoroughly research the properties and principles of what a river is, what it does, what it reveals and conceals. This is the work of research: processing data iteratively to surface patterns, insights, and relationships via tools with embedded affordances and constraints.

[Image description: A photo of pins, captioned “detail of Lin’s Hudson”.]

It is the method and material that researchers examine from within the system of tensions and resistances – mapping observations and drawing conclusions.

Text is placed on screen and page; an object emerges constructed as image and textscape. Concepts and ideas mapped and coded as alpha data are now co-present in the minds of both researcher and reader. The sequence and strength of the argument develops just as a chemical activator causes an image to become visible and permanent on paper. So the concepts and mechanics of mapping, making marks, and developing images coalesce as theory and practice of textuality – an active understanding of material research method as procedural.

[Image description: A photo of a person holding a bundled baby, with numbers labeling spaces, captioned “2009 photo of the writer as diagram map, from a book of homes (2022)”.]

This builds on my earlier collaborative work arguing that “[m]aps are insufficient when they do not bring us all the way. Even digital, satellite-enabled and -supported technologies fall short in real time, as signals and projections glitch during construction and a variety of other reasons. Yet, it is exactly in real time, this present moment, when we require an accurate, complete mapping to navigate literal and conceptual spaces. In the iterations, the refresh button, the reconfiguration of other mapforms insights populate, are revealed, yet only partially, of present concepts and relationships. Our identities and experiences are portable, mobile, dynamic. We search for more productive processes. We are left wanting as they fail again” (Barnes and Dixon). I extend this work here reframing maps and mappings as collage / assemblage, leaning in to the making [read: piecing and layering] of zines as research method.

Image description: A piece of writing that spirals around the middle of the square page.

I read Minor’s work (above) as a map of stitched language, placing the reader with them, inside a map, making a way home.

Applying Minor’s 2018 work published in Diagram in the form of a Log Cabin quilt square, she states, “A quilt is an old way to say something to very few people. Now, in the screen age, most people know how to read in scraps. I like what happens when a new media tries to embody an old literacy” (Minor). Minor pieces together narrative fragments, driving the reader to follow the constricting map toward its red-heart center. By assembling the scraps of story, both mundane and profound, Minor crafts a collaged experience that echoes the labyrinthine journey.

In Data Feminism, D’Ignazio and Klein map their process, as well as the project itself for writing their book, by designing their research agenda and the goals for their components. By emphasizing a prescribed path, the authors created a map into an unknown landscape – the completed manuscript. Once at this end stage, they tasked an auditor to apply their anticipated metrics in a process that can accurately be described as discovery (D’Ignazio and Klein). So, even though they wrote their text with these self-created guides in place, they did not possess complete knowledge of their evaluation until after the audit. This reflexive stage also serves to inform the past, showing that the final book did not meet its authors’ aspirations, calling into question the problematics of neglecting iterative evaluations. The authors did not revise according to the findings, accepting a book grounded in reimagining data as feminist practice and succeeding only partially, according to their own metrics.                               The page itself becomes the landscape for locating one’s pathways, an externalization of complex interiorities.

We map to examine.

The Resistance Pack: A Craftivist’s Tool K(n)it:

Farrah Cato

Image description: Different colours of unravelled yarn

In what began as an innocent exercise in curiosity, my “Craftivist’s Tool K(n)it” afforded me an opportunity to consider how craft materials can offer valuable insight into resistance and activist work. This exercise in using natural, easy-to-obtain colorants to dye bare, plain white yarn also functioned as a project in Critical Making. Matt Ratto explains that hands-on, process-oriented, reflexive, and collaborative work—the kind that includes “an ongoing critical analysis of materials, designs, constraints, and outcomes”—is what critical making is all about. It functions as a method by which researcher-makers can (re)consider the connections between a variety of social, cultural, and technological systems. In the case of my yarn-dyeing experiments, it also became an opportunity for me to revisit Bethany Nowviskie’s “Resistance in the Materials” as a metaphor for activist, or what Betsy Greer terms “craftivist,” experiences.

Innocent and curious though it may have initially been, the process of naturally dyeing yarn led me to several unexpected considerations, including:

A recognition of how the materials, both textile and colorant, behaved (or didn’t) under a variety of conditions and stressors and, more importantly, how the materials’ reactions, both compliant and resistant, provided examples of how to do activism differently

An opportunity to practice anti-capitalist, anti-consumerist, environmentally-aware work. After all, as Chris Csikszentmihalyi notes in “Sixteen Reflective Bits”, "Making is always a political act, even if the denotative utility of the thing made is not political”

Thought exercise #1: a reconsideration of the relationships between power and both active- and passive- resistance

Thought exercise #2: how and why textile work is so often undervalued and underappreciated as simply “women’s work”

Thought exercise #3: how and why, from an economic, efficiency, and labor-oriented standpoint, synthetic dyes would be more appealing, practical, and lucrative

Thought exercise #4: how traditions of knowledge, especially those connected to “women’s work” are shared and built upon, and how this is not simply an exercise in critical making but also one with roots in feminist collaboration

[Image description: Different coloured bundles of yarn.]

Mini skeins for your Fall Resistance projects!

Colorways, which may not show true here in the transfer from material to photo to riso printing process, include (from left to right):

“Madder and Madder”: perfect for channeling your outrage. A rich orange skein dyed with madder root.

“Fuel Up” and “Boost Up”: two light brown skeins, one solid and one streaked, to feed you energy. Dyed with black tea.

“Trust Yourself”: useful for projects that require you to stand your ground, even in the face of resistance. A deep brown-gray skein dyed with indigo powder.

“Shifted Course”: for projects that require a shift in tactics or new negotiations. A rich yellow skein with purple flecks and dyed with alkanet root and turmeric powder.

“Restore”: for projects that heal and restore your soul. A lovely pale yellow dyed with chamomile and calendula flowers.

My colorways reflect what I gleaned about activism from the dyeing process. For example, some “fugitive” dyes will not permanently adhere to the yarn unless the yarn is first treated with a mordant. These fabrics may submit initially, but ultimately will resist until or unless conditions suit them. The choice of textile (wool, cotton, etc.) impacts how accepting or resistant it is to the dyeing process. Some colorants produce unexpected colors (avocado pits yield pink dye; untreated indigo powder results in taupe or green hues). Some colorants are more aggressive, infusing the material quickly; still others require long steeping periods. In one instance, when a purple did not materialize as expected, I restarted the process, intending to force instead a deep, rich yellow produced by turmeric; the result was a deep yellow with purple flecks throughout. I could not force the result I wanted because both textile and colorant materials resisted the imposing of my will over their inherent properties. Questions about the nature of power, passivity, and resistance abound.

[Image description: tools for dying yarn.]

[Image description: Yarn in the process of being dyed.]

DO IT YOURSELF!

In the spirit of collaboration, shared knowledge traditions, and making-as-method for both thought and action, I include here some DIY resources for creating your own resistance textiles. Use whatever is handy: yarn, t-shirts, pillowcases, towels, or socks. White works, but testing lightly-colored textiles may yield interesting results.

All Natural Dyeing: https://allnaturaldyeing.com/

Beginner's Guide to Natural Dyes: https://lacreativemama.com/beginners-guide-natural-dyes/

Rosemary & Pine Fiber Arts: <https://www.rosemaryandpinesfiberarts.de/dye-yarn-with-natural-dyes/>

Engage in this process as a playful enterprise! As Shira Chess argues in Play Like a Feminist, to play, whether via game or craft, is a profound feminist act of protest and resistance. Even the act of dyeing textiles becomes an opportunity for us to playfully practice material resistance.

[Image description: A knit bowl with an “R” at the bottom.]

In a reflection on transformation, healing, and self-care in the age of COVID, artist Indira Allegra’s “A Letter from Penelope” encourages us to “reach for whatever material feels like it is touching us back.” In Critical Making fashion, she emphasizes process over product, noting that “craft is not about the object,” but rather, is part of a critically-reflexive, meaning-making journey. Whatever the material is, however our hands engage it, we should seek out whatever it has to teach us.

[Image description: A collage of speaking figures, an ocean, floating lips, and a boat.]

EXPLORING MYTH & COLONIAL HISTORY:

Keidra Daniels Navaroli

“To whom do I owe the power behind my voice…to whom do I owe the symbols of my survival?”

In Zami: A New Spelling of My Name (1982) Audre Lorde introduces the concept of biomythography to inclusively (and radically) define her experience as a first generation American and Black queer woman in Harlem, New York. The book is a meditation on intersectional identity that merges myth, narrative, and personal history to, according to Monica B. Pearl, “merge self and community, to find a place for self in community, [and ultimately] to find home.” Likewise, my Exploring Myth & Colonial History project is a platform for the exploration of familial connections – a reclamation, through a combination of text and image, of distortions to my sense of personal and diasporic community.

Lorde’s influence within the genre of Afrofuturism reflects the overwhelming impact of literature within the movement. However, as an art historian and curator, I also advocate the importance of visual literacy in knowledge systems. As Donna Haraway explains, "vision is always a question of the power to see – and perhaps the violence implicit in our visualizing practices…”. Zami represents an inseparable fusion – symbolism that I exploit through the medium of collage. The following project reflects a visual exploration of my colonial journey, acknowledging the “lost” ancestors (both African and European) whose destinies were transformed by the past and whose descendants work to shape an inclusive future.

Image description: A collage of speaking figures standing in an ocean

The Process:

The formal qualities of my piece are inspired by the collaged paintings of modern artist Romare Bearden and the comic-inspired lithographs of contemporary artist Enrique Chagoya. Both men use their work as a means of exploring the impact of colonialism, segregation, and racism. I wanted to research similar themes, using the results of a personal Ancestry DNA test to guide what I depicted.

I started the project by collecting and cutting magazine pages, reducing images, in a René Descartes-inspired fashion, to bodies and body parts. I plotted the designs of the composition with mockups that included four distinct but interconnected vignettes – Africa, Europe, The Middle Passage (Atlantic Ocean), and the U.S. I purchased watermarked paper and painted an ocean to connect each story. The vignettes are formatted to resemble a Mesoamerican codex and meant to be read from right to left. Historically accordion-like codices were used by Mesoamerican cultures to record daily life and document important events, such as the Spanish conquest of the Americas. I applied this visual format to the conceptualization of my own diasporic history.

Playing with Typewriters: Inky Fingers, Gendered Labor, (im)Perfect Text:

Abigail Moreshead

I tried to fix my grandfather’s ca. 1948 Royal Deluxe Quiet manual typewriter.

It was hard. But in doing so—in messing with the material that creates other (textual) material—I explored the meaning of this machine and the possibilities for playing with it as a research method, having revelations along the way that would not have occurred without this material and its resistance.

This manifesto and the accompanying images bear testimony to the power of getting messy with a typewriter as a research process and to the hands and labor who have worked on this machine, or others like it. This manifesto makes four arguments:

The typewriter is political.

In its early days, artist and textile designer William Morris, quoted by H. Halliday Sparling, “condemned the typewriter for creative work,” claiming it interfered with the necessary relationship of pen to paper, a philosophy that comes with obviously narrow assumptions about what creative work is and is not and who has access or ability use “creative” techniques.

The politics of the typewriter are gendered.

The intended user of the mid-century American typewriter is a woman. As Margery Davies says in Woman’s Place is at the Typewriter, by 1930, more than 95 percent of stenographers and typists were women.  The manual of my Royal Deluxe Quiet, in depicting a young, professionally and femininely dressed woman that we can assume to be a clerical worker, is making a statement about who the intended user of this device is.

As I played with the tape of my Royal Deluxe Quiet, I was imagining that, in the days before IT departments, women who were particularly adept at fixing typewriters were their office’s IT departments. This reality disrupts  deeply ingrained stereotypes around gender and technology.

[Image description: A photo of typewriter keys.]

[Image description: An old, retro-looking newspaper ad for the newest “quiet de luxe model” typewriter.]

On the following page, see how the intended user of the typewriter has finely manicured nails, while the reality of working on a typewriter is…inky fingers.

Playing with the typewriter is political.

As forms like concrete poetry show us (and contrary to Morris’s assertion that creative work requires pen and paper), the typewriter is itself a creative tool. To play with the typewriter means playing with the text it will produce. As Lori Emerson’s analysis in Reading Writing Interfaces reveals, typewriter interfaces are more visible, alterable, and playable than that of newer writing technologies like the Ipad, where interfaces are concealed behind proprietary fixtures, and tinkering is therefore limited.

[Image description: A photo of fingers stained with ink after working with a typewriter.]

The obsolescence of the typewriter has created new expectations for the text we produce.

In Track Changes, Matthew Kirschenbaum describes how the advent of word processing software has created an expectation of perfect text; clean copy was one of the selling points of word processors from their earliest days.

Playing with a typewriter, for the modern user of word processors, is anxiety-inducing. A mistake can’t be backspaced; it can only be crossed out, whited-out, typed over, or started from scratch. The “perfect,” auto-corrected texts produced by word processing software of today do not reveal the myriad mistakes–and therefore the labor–that went into crafting the document.

Image description: A photo from the inside of a typewriter instruction manual

tech + text/ile: crafting with code:

anastasia salter

[Image description: Various artistic renderings of QR codes.]

In How to Make Art at the End of the World: A Manifesto for Research-Creation, Natalie Loveless invites us to “mobilize the artistic as a sensibility and approach attentive to how form makes worlds.” The worlds we make in the digital humanities are built of code, code that in turn has been shaped (and frequently locked down) by a Silicon Valley culture inescapably linked to a white masculine world view (as Safiya Noble’s essential work reminds us.) To quote Janet Abbate in the timely Your Computer is On Fire: “coding is not empowerment.” To break out of the creative patterns that code and technology sets us - to form more inclusive worlds for the digital humanities and reimagine our relationship with the machine - requires literally thinking outside the “box.”

Textiles offer us a means of unraveling existing coded relationships between text and technology, and in the process remaking them and ourselves: crafting with textile is iterative and experimental. “Blocked Connections,” a collaboration with Anne Sullivan, is shown here in stages reflecting that process: QR codes were designed in collaboration with the machine; cut by automation, then reassembled by hand in preparation for sewing. The end result is both machine readable and materially malleable - a union of text/textile and tech.

[Image description: Various artistic renderings of QR codes.]

My process for melding tech and text-ile starts with feminist code, and moves into material objects. It frequently involves fits, starts, and breaks - from unreadable quilted QR codes to the challenges of making the digital imaginary material. But I believe the process fundamentally reshapes my relationship with code, digital humanities, and even pedagogy.

code to text/ile: why?

Feminist code breaks conventions of programming. Kate Compton’s open source Tracery, a grammar for generative play that can construct everything from sentences to memes to scalable vector graphics, is an intervention that can be used to plan everything from embroidery to quilts and beyond. The code shown here winds together traditional elements with Compton’s crafted vocabulary. Bonus: the Tracery website tutorials are pink and sparkle, and there are zines.

Material making encourages humility and collaboration. To quote Garnet Hertz’s zine on “Making Critical Making,” we “do things the hard way” to practice “inventiveness,” and ultimately “the process of being humiliated by things you think are easy or mindless is a valuable experience.” (Textile making is particularly good at getting us all to think about the cost of that bedspread, mask, or suit…)

Textiles offer a “cozy” antidote to alienation. At a time of increased isolation, war, pandemic, political and social upheaval - we need to find new ways to make meaning in our classrooms and research. For me, textiles offer a physical embodiment of that search for meaning - and when we make space for that traditionally domestic materiality in the humanities, we invite other changes with it.

Pictured: Stages of making “Re:Traced Threads”

the humanities are not OK.

[Image description: a face-mask (in the style of COVID-19 non-medical cloth face masks) with “this isn’t ok” written on it.]

we need resilient making for 202X and beyond

This collection of zines is itself a reminder that conferences need re-invention: having myself hosted four events since the pandemic hit (two online conferences; one online NEH workshop; and one hybrid feminist conference), I have found myself constantly longing for the material while struggling with the impossibility of it. Zoom boxes and an increased reliance on corporate platforms for sustaining academic community (themes I take on with Emily Johnson in our new book Playful Pedagogy in the Pandemic: Pivoting to Games-Based Learning) threatens to further minimize and isolate the arts and humanities.

The same pressures push on our classrooms, our labs, our maker-spaces, and our research: but let’s face it, those spaces already needed a confrontation. The corporate university’s unending willingness to embrace technology without reflection means contracts for the metaverse are coming soon to a campus near you. The pressure to abandon the material for a world of code will only increase.

I’m not saying the answer is, for everyone, “get thee to a sewing machine.” For me and my practice, the answer is more nuanced: look to craft communities to imagine the collaboration of the future, and in resisting the push for immateriality, to find--as Bethany Nowviskie suggests--”the resistance in the material.”

Pictured: “Masked Making,” a collaboration w/ Lai-Tze Fan and Anne Sullivan

Works Cited:

Abbate, Janet. “Coding is Not Empowerment.” Mullaney, Thomas S., et al., eds. Your computer is on fire. MIT Press, 2021.

Allegra, Indira. “A Letter From Penelope.” American Craft, Spring 2021, https://www.craftcouncil.org/magazine/article/indira-allegra-letter-penelope.

Barnes, N.F. and Dixon, M. "An Unmappable Present: Texts and Theories that Fail and Collaborative Wayfinding." Society for Textual Scholarship’s International Interdisciplinary Conference: Cultural Mappings. 26-28 May 2022, Loyola University Chicago, IL.

Chess, Shira. Play Like a Feminist. The MIT Press, 2020.

Csikszentmihalyi, Chris. “Sixteen Reflective Bits.” Critical Making, edited by Garnet Hertz, 2014, http://www.conceptlab.com/criticalmaking/.

Davies, Margery. A Woman’s Place is at the Typewriter: Office Work and Office Workers, 1870-1930. Temple University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv941x5s.

D’Ignazio, C., and Klein, L. “Our Values and Our Metrics for Holding Ourselves Accountable.” Data Feminism. The MIT Press, 2020, pp. 215-221.

Emerson, Lori. Reading Writing Interfaces: From the Digital to the Bookbound. University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Greer, Betsy. Craftivism: The Art of Craft and Activism. Arsenal Pulp Press, 2014.

Haraway, Donna. Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature. Routledge, 1991.

Hertz, Garnet, ed. Critical Making. Telharmonium Press, 2012.

Kirschenbaum, Matthew G. Track Changes: A Literary History of Word Processing. Belknap Press, 2016.

Lorde, Audre. Zami: A New Spelling of My Name: A Biomythography. Crossing Press, 1982.

Loveless, Natalie. How to Make Art at the End of the World. Duke University Press, 2019.

Minor, Sarah. “A Log Cabin Square.” Diagram 18.2. New Michigan Press. https://thediagram.com/18\_2/minor2.html. Accessed 1 July 2022.

Noble, Safiya Umoja. Algorithms of Oppression. New York University Press, 2018.

Nowviskie, Bethany. “Resistance in the Materials.” Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016, edited by Matthew K. Gold and Lauren F. Klein, University of Minnesota Press, 2016, pp. 176–83.

NYC-ARTS Profile: “Maya Lin: A River is a Drawing”: A trip to the Hudson River Museum to explore the site-specific exhibition “Maya Lin: A River is a Drawing.” NYC-ARTS. 6 Dec 2018. https://www.nyc-arts.org/showclips/145081/nyc-arts-profile-maya-lin-a-river-is-a-drawing. Accessed 5 July 2022.

Pearl, Monica B. “‘Sweet Home’: Audre Lorde’s Zami and the Legacies of American Writing.” Journal of American Studies, vol. 43, no. 2, August 2009, pp. 297–317.

Ratto, Matt. “Critical Making: Conceptual and Material Studies in Technology and Social Life.” The Information Society, vol. 27, no. 4, July 2011, pp. 252–60.

Sparling, Henry Halliday. The Kelmscott Press and William Morris Master-Craftsman. Macmillan and Company, Limited, 1924.

Nikki Fragala Barnes - nf.barnes@ucf.edu

Farrah Cato - farrah.cato@ucf.edu

Keidra Daniels Navaroli - knavaroli@knights.ucf.edu

Abigail Moreshead - abigail.moreshead@ucf.edu

Anastasia Salter - anastasia@ucf.edu

Created for DIY Methods 2022 and the Low-Carbon Research Methods Group

# Salvaging

By: Janna Frenzel & lee wilkins

salvage [verb]

1. to save goods from damage or destruction

2. to try to make a situation better

salvageable [adjective]

1. if something is salvageable,

it can be saved

2. able to be improved from a bad situation and made good again

Cambridge Dictionary

Who salvages, where, and why?

What makes salvage a viable and necessary, practice?

What is the relationship between salvaging and reuse/transformation?

If salvaging means saving something, what exactly are we saving it from?

How do we define what is worth salvaging?

What can be improved, or made well again, through salvaging?

How does salvage preserve value, and for whom?

This zine investigates practices of salvage as a way to intervene in systemic problems around waste. We interview two intiatives in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal, Recyborg and Concordia University Centre for Creative Reuse (CUCCR), which tackle the idea of salvage from two different perspectives. Our conversations demonstrate some of the ways organizations attempt to intervene in the consumer pipeline that encourages buying new objects rather than reusing or modifying existing ones.

While terms like “circular economy” and “zero waste” have become catchphrases in public policy debates and academic work around low-carbon transitions, we suggest that salvaging is different. We understand it as less institutionalised, more improvised, rooted in Do-it-yourself or Do-it-with-others approaches. Salvaging circumvents or even opposes convenience. As a method, it requires us to slow down research/-creation processes to allow for searching in different spaces for the materials [thoughts, arguments] needed to create an artwork or to build an object [write a text, build theory]. Salvaging influences the shape of possible outputs or conclusions based on availability rather than on demand. Salvaging diverts materials from landfills and prevents the purchase of new ones, thereby potentially reducing extraction.

[Image Description: A destroyed keyboard ejects the letters “RECY” and “BORG”.]

In Montreal, in a neighborhood called Hochelaga, a small storefront can easily be walked past if you don't know what you're looking for. The shelves inside are stacked high with a bizarre array of electrical parts, motors, old TV remotes, and power supplies arranged into roughly like categories. We first stumbled across Recyborg while looking for places in the city where we could salvage parts for our solar panel projects, and wondered what motivates these folks and how they run their operations? We chatted with one of the creators to find out.

Hochelaga-Maisonneuve location:

3811 Sainte-Catherine Est

Montreal QC H1W2G3

Canada

Pointe-Saint-Charles location:

1900c rue le Ber

Montreal QC H3K 2A4Canada

info@recyborg.comtel: 438-506-2240

janna & lee: What is Recyborg?

François Pedneault: Recyborg is many things: it is a non-profit worker cooperative located in Montreal, Canada; it is a place where one can drop off recyclable items; it is store where one can find a variety of used goods, hardware and spare parts; and it is also a welding and repair shop! We’re located in the Hochelaga neighbourhood, and we’re soon opening a second location in Pointe-Saint-Charles at Bâtiment 7, a collectively run building complex that hosts many different workshops, projects, and co-ops.

J & L: What’s the history behind Recyborg?

F: It started with me scrapping metal, working from an old leaky basement. It was an attempt to put together logistics with a truck to pick up the material, recycling, and e-commerce - selling on the used market through websites such as Kijiji or Facebook Marketplace. Then in early 2020, as a team of three we formed a “société en nom collectif” [general partnership] and opened the Recyborg shop with regular opening hours, along with the online store on our website. We also have an Etsy shop now as an outlet for décor accessories.

The name “Recyborg” was inspired by sci-fi, and the whole DIY-metal-electronics connection seemed to fit perfectly. Since we opened, it has been going really well. We were able to stay open during the pandemic lockdowns because we were classified as a hardware store. E-commerce really took off, and new people who were already customers at our store joined the team. Among them are an electromechanical expert and audio technician. We already had two professionally trained welders on the team. It is important for our recycling process that we cover a wide range of areas of expertise: we need people who know what they’re doing for sorting the materials that come in, for setting prices … people who can quickly tell apart items that are easy to repair from those that are not, who can identify what’s a lost case that we should not waste our time on. The more knowledge we have, the better.

In 2021, we officially became a non-profit cooperative. The coop form reflects our collective values and how Recyborg had already been running before formalizing this status. We’re organized around horizontal principles and unanimous decision-making. The non-profit aspect came with the field we’re working in. We didn’t want to give people the impression like, give us all your stuff and we’ll make good money with it.

J & L: What are the materials you work with, and where do they come from?

F: Our inventory includes electricity and plumbing hardware, appliances and appliance parts, audio and video equipment, electronics, bike parts, tools, and arts and crafts materials. The items at our store are either donated, found on the street, or collected through our pickup service at the request of individuals or businesses who want to get rid of stuff that they have stored in their garage, for example. Every object that comes in is sorted according to the 3RV principle (Reduction, Reuse, Recycling and Valorisation). Bulky items are mostly sold locally, while smaller parts are also shipped to customers both within and outside Canada.

[Image description: a cartoon car battery.]

J & L: Who are the customers that come into your shop?

F: Mostly it’s foot traffic from the neighbourhood, people who are looking for general hardware items. People from further away usually come for very specific parts. Generally speaking, our customers are looking for cheap stuff, for specific parts or items for a specific project, or they are motivated by ecological values, like wanting to divert materials from landfills.

There’s a rising interest in reuse and repair, people want to avoid buying things new. Many are struggling to pay their bills, so we provide a more affordable alternative for sourcing things they need. Some customers are artists and people who are looking through scraps for decoration – a great outlet for items or parts that don’t actually work! We have a lot of those :)

[Image description: shelves full of assorted parts.]

[Image description: a cartoon remote control.]

J & L: Is there a specific infrastructural gap that Recyborg helps fill?

F: There’s a lack of accessible drop-off locations for recyclable items, especially in an underserviced neighbourhood like Hochelaga. Recyborg brings a drop-off option closer to the people - which is something, but still far from enough! Discarded things that can’t go into regular household waste usually have to be brought to one of the city’s Ecocentres, and there are only few of them and they’re often far away. It is not feasible for people who don’t have a car, or who are unable to go during their opening hours. So people end up putting their stuff on the street and often get huge fines for not disposing of it properly, even though they don’t really have an alternative.

For electronics specifically, we accept and process items on behalf of the Electronic Products Recycling Association (EPRA).

The second important aspect is that we provide affordable spare parts that are usually expensive, or difficult or even impossible to find because manufacturers don’t supply them. For instance, we strip discarded home appliances and then reuse the harvested parts to repair other machines and then sell them. So, in a way we are doing DIY troubleshooting to expand the lifespan of machines for a little bit longer. This is important because repair options for appliances are declining; repair services are either completely absent or unaffordable.

We’re also starting a more formal repair service so that people can come in with their own items they would like to repair. For now, we are limiting it to a certain range of objects that can easily be fixed, like fans or toasters. We are not going to tackle the items that are very difficult or even impossible to repair – like printers, they were simply designed to fail.

J & L: How can people find or contact you?

F: We’re always looking for more people to get involved in our operations and to build partnerships, so just send us a message if you’re interested!

https://recyborg.com/

https://www.facebook.com/Recyborg-106330014441259/

https://www.etsy.com/ca-fr/shop/RECYBORG

Image description: shelves full of assorted parts

Salvaging is the act of looking for, picking up, receiving, or harvesting objects and materials that would otherwise go to waste.

Salvaging happens on the streets, in backyards, garages, storage spaces, basements, and other inconspicuous places.

It is often (but not always) informal, improvised, and spontaneous.

It requires a certain attention, dedication, and perseverance and time. It is less convenient than going to a regular store or ordering something online.

Salvaging is connected to practices of repair, maintenance, and re-valuing.

It is not part of grand schemes, although it can be institutionalized to some extent to figure as part of broader strategies.

Salvaging is not (necessarily, only, always) an act of necessity. It is (also, sometimes, potentially) an act of pleasure. It is an attempt to live well within/despite dominant extractive conditions and the climate emergency.

Salvaging means preserving the embodied carbon locked in an object, as well as the labour that produced it.

Salvaging builds on cooperation and collaboration. It does not exist completely outside of capitalist logics but allows for circumvention/subversion to a certain extent - giving things away for free, or forming a worker’s coop that makes salvaged goods and services available in an accessible and affordable way.

Salvaging as a mode of inquiry, a method of sorts, means uncovering structures and mechanisms of (non)circularity within prevailing capitalist conditions and institutional frameworks and policies – and to identify and explore alternatives that circumvent, challenge, or transform them.

[Image description: A sign for the CUCCR (Concordia University Centre for Creative Research).]

In downtown Montreal, close to the Guy-Concordia metro station, the Concordia University Centre for Creative Reuse (CUCCR) runs a space called “Used Material Depot”. Here, discarded materials and items from all over campus are organized, stored, and made available for free – from pens and paper to maps to art works to kitchen supplies. It is also a space that hosts workshops and making sessions. Anyone can visit and go treasure hunting.

Concordia University Center for Creative Reuse

1200 Rue Guy, Montreal QC H3H 2L3 Canada

janna & lee: How did CUCCR start?

Anna Timm-Bottos & Arrien Weeks: Anna used to work as a high school arts teacher and saw first-hand how hard it was to keep the classroom well-stocked with materials. As part of her MA, Anna looked at different models of reuse initiatives where materials would be given away for free or on a pay-what-you-can basis. While still writing her thesis, she submitted a proposal to get a similar initiative off the ground here at Concordia. It was supposed to be a pilot but has since become a well-established institution on campus.

[Image description: a cartoon map.]

J & L: What’s the structure behind CUCCR?

A and A: The two of us are paid staff members. We also have one work-study student, an internship program with about six interns per year, and students who are part of the university’s “Sustainability Ambassadors” program. So there are different educational opportunities connected to CUCCR.

Generally, our goal is to encourage people to look at materials in a different way, to spark a DIY upcycling and reuse culture. We invite people to run workshops, to share skills and knowledge, and organize events around certain materials or activities.

[Image description: shelves full of assorted parts.]

J & L: What’s CUCCR’s relationship with the university?

A & A: CUCCR has been actively involved in the development of the university’s zero-waste plan. We insisted on reduction and reuse principles to be a big part of the conversation. Luckily the lines of communication at the institution opened up and we were able to disrupt the autopilot mode of discarding unwanted items straight in the dumpster out back.

We are now also involved in the conversation around purchasing policies. For example, we would like to see the university only buying from manufacturers that have a take-back program and offer repair options and replacement parts. Nothing is set in stone yet, but hopefully the institution will move in that direction.

[Image description: a cartoon bucket.]

J & L: Where does the material at the depot come from?

A & A: It comes from all over the university: from offices, studios, departments as they transition into a new space, locker clean outs and student residences. There is such an abundance of materials that universities accumulate; we see this especially toward the end of semester. And the materials are very diverse. When we started out, some people didn’t really believe that folks would want to use the things we were collecting. But by putting them all in one space and showcasing them, by celebrating their beauty and making them free and easy to access, we saw stuff fly off the shelves!

We also pass on items to other community organizations or schools. Clothing, for example, goes to Dans La Rue, Resilience Montreal, or other shelters. Art supplies sometimes go to public art hives. Metal scraps are sent to a specialized recycler.

J & L: What do people make with the materials they pick up from the depot?

A & A: All sorts of things – there are no limits really! Recent examples are beeswax wraps and bags made from upcycled curtain fabric that we had received from one of the residences. We are a non-academic space so we encourage people to use materials from the depot for all kinds of things, but obviously they can also use them for school.

J & L: Who are the people who pick up materials from the depot?

A & A: Most of them are fine arts students. But we are seeing an in­creasing number of engineering and business students as well, who get materials for building prototypes or conference supplies.

During the fall and winter, materials and supplies for coursework are the most popular, along with apartment items. Over the summer, many community members from outside the university come in. Things slow down a bit during that period and people have time to work on projects, like building a desk.

It takes a lot of energy and time to source different kinds of materi­als, so it’s great that we can offer so much variety. Sometimes peo­ple come in with a list of items they are looking for, but they find different ones here, get inspired and re-work their plans.

J & L: How do you keep track of how material goes in and out of the depot?

A & A: At check-out, we weigh the items and identify roughly what materials they are made of, and that data goes into our statistics. That way we can visualize the quantity and diversity of materials we divert from the landfill, showcase what we’re doing, and convince people and the institution that there’s a good case for reuse and reduction.

Anyone can take materials from the depot free of charge, but they have to be a member. Subscription happens through a simple online form. When people check out items, we ask how much they think they would have spent on the selected materials had they bought them new. This is a subjective estimate and doesn’t have to be an accurate reflection of store prices, of course. Nonetheless, it is informative because we get an idea of what the community is saving by using our depot. Together, we’ve saved hundreds of thousands of dollars. And we learn to appreciate the value of certain things—during the pandemic, we really learned to appreciate the value of wood, for example.

[Image description: shelves full of assorted parts, especially tripods.]

J & L: What’s one of the weirdest items you’ve ever received?

A & A: One time we had about a thousand small beach buckets donated from an event. It was the sort of kitschy item that one would assume people would only get one or two copies of for their kids to use. But people ended up doing amazing things with them, like creating a planter shelving unit or turning them into an organizer for paint brushes. It was real repurposing and transformation, and that’s what we’re trying to promote: find something to do with these random things! Make something new!

Find out more about CUCCR:

http://www.concordia.ca/cuccr

https://www.facebook.com/CUCCR/

<https://www.instagram.com/cuccr/>

How to salvage appliances & dead batteries:

Most people have a toaster, and toasters often break. They are very easy to fix, and even though its cheap to buy a new one, you can save yours from being thrown away! The most common issue with toasters is that they need to be cleaned. Because they are both one of the most mechanical, and one of the most likely to produce crumbs in your kitchen, most toasters can be fixed easily, and just need to be taken apart careful and cleaned.

Fix your toaster: First, we need to know how it works. The bread is placed in the carriage, which is lowered into the chassis using the lever at the side of the toaster. When the carriage reaches the bottom, it latches in position and a switch is activated to start the heating process. A thermostat determines how long electric current will be sent from the power cord to the heating elements. To get your desired toast, a thermostat is set with a knob or lever. When the desired temperature is reached, a solenoid (a spring loaded mechanism) turns the current off, releasing the latch and allows the carriage to spring up to its original position.

Image description: a diagram of a toaster

Image description: a close up of a fan

To fix your broken fan, first turn it on and see if it moves at all, sputters, or makes a sound. Unless the fan makes no noise when you turn it on, the problem is almost always that it needs to be cleaned.

Fix your fan: Open up your fan and look at where the blade connects to the bearing and motor. Fan blades gather a tremendous amount of dust and debris that then settles behind them as the air gets pulled in. Its not unusual for the bearing that the fan blade unit turns on to become so clogged it won’t move! If you can see dirt in the small gap, clean it using your fingers and the side edge of a flat head screw driver. Then, plug the fan in and turn it on for just a moment to see if the fan blades will move.

You can also spray lubricant into the connection between the fan blade unit and the bearing. Turn the blades and spray again, do this several times. Wait a few minutes, then plug the fan in for a brief moment and test it.

Image description: a photograph of a toaster

Image description: an electrical circuit

Salvage batteries: This circuit is called a Joule Thief, and is a voltage booster that can be used to squeeze power out of dead batteries. It can increase the voltage of a power source by converting a constant low voltage signal into a series of quick pulses at a higher voltage. You most commonly see this kind of circuit used to power LEDs with a “dead” battery.

You'll need:

- A ferrite toroid core

- A few wires

- An NPN transistor 2N2222, 2N3904, or similar

- An Led

- A1k ohm resistor

- A used AA battery

We would like to thank the Low-Carbon Research Methods Group for initiating the “DIY Methods 2022” zine making conference (what a cool idea!), and for support with printing and shipping logistics.

Big thank you’s also go to François Pedneault from Recyborg and Anna Timm-Bottos & Arrien Weeks from CUCCR for their inspiring work and taking time to share it with us!

This zine was researched and written on unceded Indigenous lands in Tiohtiá:ke (Montreal). The Kanien’kehà:ka Nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy is recognized as the traditional custodians of these lands and waters. Attendees from this conference, physical printing and production of the zine is happening accross Turtle Island and around the world. While territorial recognition is necessary, it is inadequate without restitution and reparation. We encourage anyone who is unaware of the history of the lands they occupy to learn about land acknowledgements in places like:

https://nativegov.org/news/beyond-land-acknowledgment-guide/

https://native-land.ca/

https://www.artsmidwest.org/resources/ideas-hub/going-beyond-land-acknowledgments

Should we decide to sell copies of this zine in the future, all proceeds minus print and shipping costs will be forwarded to Indigenous Climate Action. <https://www.indigenousclimateaction.com/>

Image description: a drawing of a fan

# See it, Touch it, Rub it, Lick it - How to Study the Curb Stop

By: Alexandra Lakind, Ro Lundberg, and Aaron Walker

[Image description: A person crouches on a dirt path, taking a picture of a metal grate labelled “water”.]

[Image description: four metal grates marked “monitoring well,” “water,” “water” and unmarked.]

I kneel and lick the metal circle. I don’t think you’re supposed to lick the street. The metal might be too hot. Or, if it’s very cold, will my tongue stick? I’m worried about germs. I looked up a study of bacteria on 1061 public surfaces: it suggested handwashing not licking. But now I know what it tastes like.

The creators of this zine have been engaged in multiyear collaborative projects comprised of music, dance, and visual art centered on water infrastructures’ socio-cultural complexities. We have created and shared choreographies, musical scores, multimedia exhibitions, and guided walks. Currently, we are exploring the curb stop: a shut off valve in a water pipe that runs from a water main to a building, common in the United States.

The curb stop marks the division between publicly and privately owned pipes, demarcating who is responsible for maintenance. You can spot curb stops in a city street, sidewalk, or even a front lawn. These circles hint at vast systems underground, the settler legal landscape physically manifesting for those above. Property systematically includes and excuses based on what is considered inside or outside. Pipes work to shelter potable water from contamination. Yet water corrodes pipes; it picks up lead and carries it to the tap. A responsive government agency will replace corroded pipes. But they often stop at the curb stop. This arrangement leaves countless people without safe drinking water if property owners don’t replace the remaining section. As this example shows, the curb stop is a fascinating node. It is a portal into contemporary conceptions of property: not a clean line but a messy (mis)management of sanitation and health.

Like the city’s water infrastructure, my body contains hundreds of invisible systems carrying water and waste. The cast iron circle on the pavement. The iron coursing through my body, my blood, anemic, why not lick it? I am not trespassing but reabsorbing the public into the private.

We arrive at this project from our artistic practices and varying forms of engagement with Science and Technology Studies. What constitutes a “research method” in and across these domains is ever-changing. In the 2001 Handbook of Science & Technology Studies, a chapter by sociologist Gary Bowden muses on the way scholars write about “methods” in the field: the most common being strategies for data collection and analysis. Perhaps this sounds straightforward; however, combine this definition with expansive notions of data and analysis, and you enter a complex maze. Strategies for gathering information and making sense of it are limitless.

People come to their methods from their unique lives, particularities that inform what they think, know, feel, and make. Our artistic mediums matter greatly to our methodological considerations. We learn through color, repetition, sound, movement, and play. As we study the curb stop, we process what we are learning collectively and in ourselves – analyzing through artistic modes of expression.

Water like music and dance pass through you. All are with you. They are you. Though when recalled, they are diluted in memory. These are methods of balance and extension: a tipping point, disobedient rupture, ephemeral intervention.

So much of knowledge production comes down to paying attention. In the case of the curb stop, and water infrastructure more broadly, paying attention means wading through the multiple regimes that render it invisible. Methods shape what we include and exclude. The experiential engagements in this zine can incite cross-disciplinary questions: why is it spray painted? where did the metal come from? who made it? who benefits from it?

The following pages are by no means an exhaustive account of the methods we’ve used, but an invitation to play with and pay attention to the curb stop.

See it

[Image description: A metal grate (curb stop) between two feet.]

Observe it

Draw a picture

How does it look?

Measure it

[Image description: three curb stops, measured against a hand.]

How big is it?

Compared to what?

By what scale?

Name it

[Image description: three different curb stops.]

Are there curb stops where you live?

If so, what are they called?

Can you come up with other names?

Touch it

[Image description: a circular depression in the ground.]

Use your hand, foot, or paw

What does it feel like?

Dance it

[Image description: a “detour” road sign.]

Balance on it

Circle it

Can you map

your movement?

Rub it

[Image description: charcoal rubbings of several curb stops.]

Make a rubbing next to ours

Lick it

[Image description: a person licking a curb stop.]

How does it taste?

[Image description: a curb stop half buried in the foreground, with three people standing together in the background.]

# Sick Futurity

By: Lyndsey Beutin & Cal Biruk

[Image description: A Queer Tarot Guidebook, and a variety of medical devices on a table.]

Table of Contents

Welcome

Before there was ‘method’: On orientations and beginnings

Numbers, Matter

A poem by Cal

Fieldnotes

Excerpts from Lyndsey’s 20 years of notes on health care encounters

Reimagining ‘method’: On photo elicitation, interdependence,

and moving beyond numbers

Photo elicitation – a sample

How to Live with a Pandemic: A guide for people just

discovering the contingency of the future

Interlude

On COVID, underlying conditions, and sick futurities

Interlude

Rethinking Carb Counts: Carbs as Relational

References

Collective Photo Elicitation Exercise

Sick Futurity published by Sicko Queer Canaries Collective

Hamilton, Ontario, July 2022

Cover includes image of Queer Tarot deck by Ashley Molesso and Chess Needham

Welcome

This zine showcases experimental methods and embodied forms of knowledge production that challenge dominant discourses about chronic illness and common methods of quantifying care, with specific attention to living with diabetes in North America. We problematize the narrative of “surveillance for care” in diabetes management by utilizing photo-elicitation interview methods that give type 1s space to imagine thriving futures beyond living-by-numbers (A1C tests, blood sugar monitoring) used in healthcare settings. In so doing, we challenge narrow definitions of wellbeing that naturalize neoliberal healthism and racial capitalism. The project envisions what a future of wellbeing for all would look like if sick and disabled people’s perspectives were centered. This is sick futurity for everybody’s freedom.

Sick Futurity is inspired by an organic collaboration that has prioritized queer care over biomedical technology during five years of conversations between Lyndsey (a type 1 diabetic for 20+ years, and more recently a media studies & Black studies scholar) and her partner Cal (a non-diabetic medical anthropologist and science and technology studies scholar). Our collaboration is itself an experiment in what we call ‘radical interdependence as method.’

This is Cal’s drawing of a koala. Cal started calling everything related to diabetes “koala” to make sick talk feel warm, cute, and playful instead of sterile, medicalized, and like constant accounting.

[Image description: A koala saying “Koala says: Write what your body knows!”]

Before there was ‘method’: On orientations and beginnings

Lyndsey: Let’s talk about what brings you to the project.

Cal: What brought me to the project was you, because the universe brought us together and that’s how I came to understand what some of what it’s like to live with type one diabetes and all of the ways in which the various technologies impinge on the everyday, linear flow of life that many people take for granted.

One of the earliest memories I have of you and type one is the first time that we slept together and you took your [insulin] pump off. I asked you about it because I hadn't really seen one up close; it was lying there detached from you on the bed. And I remember you seemed kind of ashamed of it and didn't really want to get into why you had to wear it. Since then, I’ve learned so much from our conversations about bodies, health, technology, care, and chronicity.

[Image description: three medical devices.]

As a medical anthropologist, I’ve always been interested in assumptions about what health is. The idea that health is something that should be achieved as if it’s a merit system has always bothered me.

As a transmasculine person who doesn’t always fit into the world, I think a lot about medicine and discourses of health and bodies and norms and how they inevitably impinge on us and our self-conceptions. I’ve really appreciated how you live in a way that confounds or challenges dominant neoliberal ideas of health, rooted in ableism, heterosexism, racism. Just through living your life, I’ve witnessed you doing all of the theoretical and methodological work and thinking that decades of medical anthropology and science studies literature and scholars are working out, often in a more abstract and less embodied way.

Cal: What about you? What brings you to this?

Lyndsey: I’m glad that you brought up the beginning of our relationship because one of my memories of our early dating life in Philly is a time I came back from the endocrinologist and I was really upset about my A1C being high. I was in...I almost said Tim Horton’s but, no, I was in a Wawa, haha. I called you on the street corner and I was mad and frustrated about getting a bad grade for diabetes management, so to speak.

And then, you took an approach that I had never experienced before. You said it’s just a number, it can’t tell you what your health is like. I remember you said something about me being grounded, or balanced, and an interesting thinker and that was part of good health. I remember feeling so cared for in that moment.

I haven’t thought about that in a while, but it speaks to this long burning hunch that we have co-developed through conversations about numbers and diabetes. So much of my daily life is living by the numbers, and especially before I met you, that was the predominant way of understanding success, failure, shame, and blame in illness. This one number [A1C] stands in as the indicator of everything else: how you’re doing, how you’re managing, what your future outcomes will be in terms of complications [from diabetes].

[Image description: An image captioned “What is A1C?” with text saying “The goal for most people with type 1 or type 2 diabetes is an A1C below 7%”.]

But what brought me to this project initially was that I wanted to do something about surveillance. When I was in grad school around probably 2013, I took a surveillance studies class, and I remember that the visiting professor would always respond to my critiques of surveillance by saying, “surveillance can also be used for care.”

She would inevitably use health surveillance as the example of surveillance for good. I remember finding this deeply troubling and problematic as a type 1 who was connected to several surveilling devices. Especially in the early 2010s, I was very worried that the mass collection of diabetic data through these devices and proprietary software would be weaponized against us by health insurance companies denying claims if blood sugars were out of range, etc.

I also found it very patronizing – here we are talking about all the negative implications of biometric surveillance via wearables but then the rhetorical rejoinder was like, “there’s a silver lining: it can also help sick people.” And so from that, I have kept this idea in my back pocket [Cal: in your back pocket with your pump!]: to use the experiences of type 1 diabetics who wear insulin pumps, and who have lived through different iterations of diabetes technology, as a way to push back against this really simple idea of “the good part of surveillance is to help sick people.”

And relatedly, I wanted to use a creative ethnographic visual method to create broader visions of what diabetic freedom could mean, could look like. Annemarie Mol, in her book The Logic of Care, does a nice analysis of how diabetes technology advertising mobilizes a discourse of freedom – look how normal and untethered your life can be if you use our device! – but in reality, the technologies, and diabetes management in general, is very demanding. It controls your life [pun intended].

Cal: Right.

Lyndsey: So, I wanted to use a photo elicitation method where diabetics would take photographs of what freedom could look like or does look like for them, and then use the photos as prompts in an interview process, which would create a visual archive of life beyond the numbers.

What connects this project to my research in critical race studies is the desire to imagine broader horizons of freedom for everyone, including sick people.

The different racializations of the figure of the type 1 and the type 2 diabetic are very revealing. The type 1, racialized as white and middle class, uses technology to turn them into a complete, otherwise wholly rational liberal subject, who just needed a technological “fix.”

The type 2 is figured as non-white, poor, a ‘bad subject’ who puts themselves at risk through their pathological choices, and is to blame for their poor health. The imagined race of the type 2 figure also shifts in relation to the cultural context and the national imaginary of marginalization. In the U.S. the “bad diabetic” type 2 figure is predominantly Black women, and in Canada, it’s predominantly Indigenous people.

Since I think about race and liberal subjecthood a lot in my research, the relationships among freedom, technology, and race become crystal clear in the discursive construction of diabetes. I also write about the memory of slavery, so I see a lot of historical and structural connections with sugar.

[Image description: a picture of a “Plantation Raw” sugar packet.]

[Image description: A note on a background of green leaves. It reads:

“NUMBERS, MATTER

The black case on the desk, opened to reveal a sword to prick a finger, to slice a number from skin

“What is THAT?” “Are you okay?”

high/low, number-centric beating heart & breathing lungs

A monkey’s prehensile tail wrapped around enumerated states

HEALTH, metrical enigma

A joey wrapped warmly in a koala’s pouch

making room where the world doesn’t.]

poem: Cal Biruk

blood: Lyndsey Bentin

[Image description: A recipe page for “Vietnamese Shrimp Lettuce Wraps with Cucumber Slaw and Peanuts” covered by “Field Notes”.]

“March 18”

“today was terrible I was feeling bad+grumpy+tired on my bike rider over thinking sugar was high. but just checked and it wasd 145 after 2 pieces of pizza so YAY! today was terrible i had a meltdown on the phone with Cal after trying to make all my doctor’s appointments+none of them worked out. CGMS still is not scheduled, eye dr. not available to june 2 dr. cardillo booked so long+now won’t be able to go because in LA - nobody helping me!!! but everybody blaming me for not doing better. its all terrible. there’s nothing to be done → powerlessness. Plus i’ve been feeling like crap+my skin is all rashy

[Image description: A recipe page for “Steak Bulgogi Bowls with Kimchi Pickled Cucumbers and Crispy Rice” covered with a note from “June 2, 2016”.]

EYES ALL OK!

writing big because still dialated [sic]+cant really see - todays insight: most want to reclaim+repurposes is my overactive imagination of the future \*\*\* all the tango diabetes has given me the one I most want to reclaim+repurpose is my overactive im

Sticker of a jellyfish

Reimagining ‘method’: On photo elicitation, interdependence, and moving beyond numbers

Cal: Since it sounds like the genesis of the photo elicitation method for you comes from a frustration with limited constructs or imaginary of freedom, I wonder if you could talk a little bit about how you see those ads you mentioned constructing freedom or how you see dominant discourses about technology and diabetes constructing freedom and how it relates to your broader interests in the liberal subject and its conscription into other projects? And speculate maybe on what kinds of things do you think people will take pictures of or what, for instance, might you take a picture of?

[Image description: A diagram of the PHOTO ELICITATION METHOD.]

Research participant takes photo in response to prompt - for example, what does a future of freedom look like to you?

Image is viewed by research+participant

Researcher asks “how does this image depict [concept] for you?” during interview - amazing insights+conversation results

Lyndsey: I love using creative methods and after I learned about photo elicitation, I’ve always wanted to have a project that uses it. I think its theoretically interesting in this project because it destabilizes photography. Visual studies and Communication studies have known for a long time that the photographic object, that objectivity itself, is constructed. But the idea that photographs capture reality objectively remains very prominent in society. So, I like the idea of asking people to take a picture of an imaginary future. By photography’s logics, that should be impossible, right?

I thought that prompt would lead to some interesting conversations. I assume people will take very abstract pictures, but I am also hoping that people will take pictures of mundane aspects of their life. I could imagine someone taking a picture of the bathtub, which is a place where you have to disconnect from all of your devices in order to go in. I don’t think any type ones necessarily want to be disconnected from our devices. They are literally what keeps us alive, but I could imagine someone taking the prompt in that direction.

I could imagine the opposite direction as well. People who are the quintessential figure of the successful type one who isn’t slowed down in any way, despite having to wear all these devices and stuff. You always hear these heroic stories about type ones. They are supposed to be our models for overcoming [Cal: This reminds me of Eli Clare’s discussion of the dominant image of the supercrip in “The Mountain”], and I could imagine someone taking a picture of doing something amazing while having all their devices on them or something like that, you know beating the disease through the technology.

I would probably take pictures of practices that ground me. I could imagine taking pictures of my garden, and then the interviewer asks me: What made you take this picture? I could talk about medicinal herbs, but not in the hippy dippy way that diabetics hate. (When you first get diagnosed, in activist communities it’s very common to hear you should just use herbs, which of course would not work, and you would die.) I think that would be an interesting photograph because the herbs are not about a cure for me. They are about a connection to the land. Gardening does actually lower your blood sugar numbers it turns out, and why does it do that? Because you’re calm, and anything that reduces stress can be a really powerful way of managing diabetes. Doctors and nurses are starting to talk about the connection to stress, but for the majority of my time as a diabetic, it was not discussed, which I always found ironic because living with diabetes is stressful!

In terms of the construct of freedom, my favorite continuous glucose monitor is called the Libre, right, literally “free” in Spanish. The company that makes the Libre is called Freestyle. Free, free, free. So it’s all of this construction of trying to free you from the imprisonment of being sick or disabled or something.

But the funny part is that all of this freedom actually means being tied to all these devices which are produced through, you know, massive capitalist industries and have all kinds of profit motives that are not the same as health-based motives. Why is there incentive to care for type ones? Because it’s such a lucrative industry to make devices for type ones. So, I think the discourse of freedom is quite interesting and very rooted in liberal enlightenment ideas.

That brings me to something that is really important about our collaboration, which is in addition to you taking the approach of a medical anthropologist which has helped me think about my own sickness beyond the numbers. You also bring expertise about the literature and interest in the theoretical questions that are being asked. I’m not a medical anthropologist and I’m not very interested in being one, but I know many times you have said to me, “you should have been a medical anthropologist” because of different things I’ve said about diabetes just from processing my experience. We didn’t formalize our co-researching relationship until I had a complete freak out when trying to read the literature about diabetes to work on the surveillance for care project. I didn’t like reading it, I didn’t like reading about my own illness that I didn't know about and all of these non-diabetic researchers seemed to.

I felt that some of the stuff they were saying was not correct, I felt that some of it overly dramatized certain aspects in ways that if you actually live with it if that’s not how it feels.

But mostly I just felt so overwhelmed by reading about all of these horrible futures that await me with diabetic complications. So, I just couldn’t do the literature review and I shelved the project.

But having you involved in the project provides an opportunity for not only theoretical intervention, but to do some of that aspect [reading that literature] which is also in line with your training as a medical anthropologist.

I see that as a form of radical interdependence as method, that lived insights about sickness can make theoretical intervention in the literature with the help of an allied and legit trained researcher on those topics, haha.

Cal: Your interest with coming up with creative methods to think about bodies, health, chronicity, it fits into a moment where people are increasingly conscious of the limits of thinking about health as a thing that is contained within our skin or within our body (here, Michelle Murphy’s ideas in “What can’t a body do?” especially come to mind).

There is a move toward thinking about health as distributed in the world by all kinds of structural forces and inequalities. As an entity that is unequally distributed and constructed to uphold the status quo. So, our method that we’re trying out is in contrast to a kind of clinical investment in converting bodily processes, things happening within the body, bodily lack, say, into numbers and then using those numbers as a representation of a person or a person’s body. With this project we’re interested in thinking differently about the body or even moving away from this idea of the contained body as the locus of health or illness.

Photo elicitation – a sample

Prompt: Take photographs of your diabetes supplies, including any old technologies that you still have but no longer use.

[Image description: a photo of diabetes supplies.]

This is a picture of the first continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) system from Medtronic. Medtronic’s CGMs are the worst and they are way behind the innovations of Dexcom. I have always used Medtronic products and I was an early adopter of its CGM. It was the absolute worst!! Look at that needle!! It hurt like hell, did not insert well, and did not work well. I was miserable wearing it. I couldn’t sleep, the alarm was always going off. I decided to stop using it, and I felt so guilty about that. Like, I somehow wasn’t doing everything in my power to help myself if I didn’t subject myself to that torture device, which was also not very accurate. Thinking back on that mentality now, it strikes me as so disordered – the medical apparatus would have you believe that not sleeping and being miserable is somehow BETTER FOR YOUR HEALTH. As much as I hated that thing, I love that I was an early adopter of the technology and that I kept it in my archive of obsolete diabetes technologies. I mean that needle is epic, even for people who deal with many needles, injections, and insertions every day. I want to give that needle an award. MOST PAINFUL AND LEAST EFFECTIVE BLOOD SUGAR MONITOR award goes to….

Actually, this photograph gives you an overview of my museum of obsolete diabetes technologies. I am not sure why I find it so fascinating to have all this stuff, but I think it has something to do with how many technologies I have been a part of in my 20+ years of being a diabetic and how they were all promoted as the last hurdle in diabetes management until we get a cure. Well, that cure is not coming. And these technological innovations seem to know no chill, lol.

[Image description: a photo of diabetes supplies.]

There’s something about living on the cutting edge of technological innovations that never quite work well enough and definitely never live up to the hype. Experiencing this cycle year after year, innovation after innovation, gives you a real insight into the mystique of technology for freedom – it’s complete bullshit. At different points I have really resented having to lug all these supplies around. I used to keep the old ones as backups, like even if they are old, they would work in a pinch, if I lost access to health care for any reason. It was a burden because I’ve mostly lived in collective houses or small apartments without any storage space, so I have often fashioned my diabetes boxes into furniture. Like this trunk.

[Image description: a photo of a trunk full of diabetes supplies.]

Actually, one year I went to Burning Man and designed a diabetes bench as part of our camp’s installation that was reimagining NYC’s Astor Place as car-free (this was circa 2007?). The bench was a resting place to check your sugar and treat a low. Inside it had all the supplies you would need to change a pump site or give an injection. I thought of it because I hated lugging my supplies everywhere, but I always went low in NYC from long days of walking all over town and if by chance my pump ripped out and I needed a new insertion, I could be an hour+ by subway to where I lived in Brooklyn.

All of this to say that the collecting of this archive did not start as an archive, it started as protection in the face of health care precarity and then it turned into mutual aid design for access and now twenty years on it feels like a museum or at least a collection of knowledge waiting to be mined.

I’m not sure what to do with it, but I’ve been wanting to do some kind of diabetes art installation for years – the stuff is so much a part of our everyday – so I am hoping this project and talking to other diabetics about their stashes and archives of old technologies will guide that project.

[Image description: “Sketches for Burning Man Bench, circa 2007” with the annotation “free medical supplies in all benches everywhere! places to sit down, eat a sugar, take a rest for all”.]

Interviewer: What does this image depict for you? What were you hoping to capture in this image?

[Image description: Two packages of the FreeStyle Libre, one labeled “USA,” one labeled “Canada”.]

When I was pulling out all my supplies for this photo project, I saw these two laying in a drawer next to each other. The Freestyle Libre is the absolute best CGM. It was kind of my gateway drug to getting back on the Medtronic sensor for the third time.

(Every iteration of sensor, Medtronic claims it is better than the last, and they all suck, ever since 2012 or so. It confuses me to no end why they can’t make it better when there are so many other styles that work better on the market. This is a point I often make to diabetes drug reps – if diabetes management wasn’t a for-profit business, they could share and integrate technologies which would give diabetics better care than what we currently have. What we currently have incentivizes long-term pump brand loyalty because you have a stockpile of extra supplies and you can’t mix and match supplies across companies, and each company’s pump + sensor has some positives and some negatives. None of them have every good thing, which they could have if they worked together for care instead of for profit and market share, sigh. It’s really so simple, but it’s points like this that make me know there will never be a cure, which they told me when I was diagnosed in 2001 that would be DEFINITELY here in 5 years. I blamed Baby Bush and his maniacal fetal cell/stem cell shit for a while but now I think it’s just fucking capitalism, baby).

OK, back to the Libres!! My first Libre was when I lived in Ohio, it was a 10-day and it cost about $225 US for 3-month supply with good insurance for the sensors, the scanner was also like $200, I think? My first scanner was a total dud!! It did not work properly and the scanner took forever and I was like WTH here we go again with false promises of technology helping me!!

I called the company and they sent a new one which worked great and I was LITERALLY IN LOVE. It was easy to insert by myself, no tape, no calibration, and I loved the zing! Of the scan – funny for an anti-capitalist, but I always wanted to be a grocery check-out girl when I was a kid, so I took perverse pleasure in scanning myself like a check-out item.

But then, FreeStyle discontinued the 10-day and changed to a 14-day sensor, so now I had to RE-BUY a new scanner (which just a few months earlier was a “one-time investment”) and my burgeoning stockpile of extras (you can make your stash last a little longer if you skip 1-3 days in between changes, which over time builds up very slowly to have a few extras) was no longer compatible with the new scanner.

Then, a few months after that I moved to Canada to start a new job. They had the Libre in Canada, but my U.S. scanner was not compatible with the Canadian sensors and I couldn’t get the U.S. sensors here. So, I had to buy ANOTHER Libre scanner. The products are identical. You can see from the package in the picture. There is literally NO REASON why they should be incompatible. The same corporation is making money from it, it’s the same model. The problem would be very easily solved by making all diabetes products have two modes – the European sugar number system (mmol)—the one used in Canada—and the US sugar number system (mg/dL). In the early days when I was first diagnosed, the glucometers had both modes and you selected which one at set-up. I think they’ve done away with that now, so dumb.

The good news about the Canadian Libre is that they were covered by my supplemental pharmacy insurance (which is paid through my academic job), so I went from paying $225 USD for Libre sensors to paying $3.99 CAD/3-month supply. I cried the first time I picked them up at the pharmacy.

[Image description: a screenshot of an instagram post of the first purchase of scanners in Canada.]

But, because the devices are literally identical, I had to mark the two boxes USA and CANADA to not get them mixed up. I’ve been a border abolitionist since the early 2000s when I first got involved with migrant farmworkers in the U.S. South, and I think this story is a simple example of why all diabetics have a vested interest in destroying all borders and global capitalism.

How to Live with a Pandemic: A guide for people just discovering the contingency of the future

[Image description: stashed diabetes supplies.]

1. Trust that no one is taking care of your future except you.

2. Stockpile your supplies little by little until you have enough

to survive the revolution.

3. Share your resources and fight like hell to dismantle health profiteering.

[Image description: A face mask, with newspaper headlines about COVID over it, and the annotation “NOT US, motherfuckers!! We’ve been keeping ourselves alive IN SPITE of you…” in response to the headline “Who Is Most Likely to Die From the Coronavirus?”]

[Image description: A picture of a tarot card labeled “ten bottles” and a crocheted duck badge. The duck says “Joy is the delighted feeling of kicking it with friends on a sunny afternoon, legs splashing in the water.”]

On COVID, underlying conditions and sick futurities

Cal: You had a very strong reaction to discourses about ‘underlying conditions,’ especially in the early days of the pandemic. Being that diabetes was one of the most prominently mentioned underlying conditions, do you want to talk about that?

Lyndsey: I had a very strong reaction to the COVID discourses because I felt like there was discussion around saving and protecting the most vulnerable, which seems like the right thing to do, and was. In many cases, it was a narrative mobilized by disability justice activists and people on the left, to tell people, presumably non-sick people, that the reason they should care or wear a mask is because of someone else’s vulnerability. That really infuriated me, because, you know, I know how to survive a plague already! I already have had to come to terms with an unknowable and uncertain future.

And the fact is, everyone has always had an unknowable and uncertain future. But if you haven’t had something in your life that’s forced you to grapple with that – it could be a breakup or divorce or chronic illness or state violence or family members in jail or yourself in jail – If you haven't had to think about the future, through one of those experiences or positions, you likely have this mirage that you can save your money for retirement and that retirement will come and that you will be healthy in your retirement and that you know that there’s this future that’s waiting for you, waiting for you to arrive, fully able to participate in it.

For chronically ill people and for type ones in particular, all of this medical obsession with good numbers is in pursuit of fending off an unpleasant future; all the stuff about numbers is to prevent diabetic complications, such as going blind, losing feeling in your extremities, amputation. Things that won’t kill you but will change your life significantly.

Complications are constructed by the medical establishment as the ultimate worst thing in the world. And that’s not to make light of diabetic complications. I get nervous about losing my sight. I know for sure that I will not live long.

I know for sure that whatever my quality of life is in the moment is as good as it’s going to be. But what that means for me is that you have to seize the moment, you have to take care of what you can, when you can, you have to do your best, don’t put too much pressure on yourself, go on vacation, live your best life, you know, all of those things have to happen now. There’s no delaying it for this kind of white middle-class notion of once I retire I’ll travel. I think what we’re seeing with climate catastrophe and with COVID, more people are having this sense of a secure future destabilized. A lot of people coming to terms for the first time with not having full control over their bodies or over getting sick or protecting themselves.

For people who live with chronic illness, that’s our everyday, we already deal with that all the time. In my case, in particular, because I’ve often had precarious employment in one way or another, in the US context, meaning nonprofit work that’s short-term and low paid, insurance benefits that aren’t great, or that are great but that could change at any moment. It means that I've had to come up with a lot of strategies for creating a backup supply of insulin and medical stuff.

Cal: Yes, we notice that stuff, those boxes, every time we move! You have brought them with you from place to place.

Lyndsey: And because I’m also an activist and anarchist, I have for a long time been trying to make sure I have a steady supply of devices, so that I can last as long in the revolution as possible. By which I mean the fall of capitalism that we are fighting for will also have very extremely urgent, negative effects on my ability to survive. I take it on myself and through community to take care of these things beyond the state, beyond the corporation, beyond health insurance. With the COVID narratives, I was so mad: How dare you people who consider yourselves healthy, the ones who make insurance, primarily in the US context, more expensive for sick people. How dare you people do this and tell people to take these precautions [like wearing a mask] in the name of keeping me safe when nothing that you do historically has kept sick people safe. In fact, it has structurally harmed us. On top of that mutual aid became a big thing during the pandemic on a wider scale, which was great. People were getting hip to it. But again, from being chronically ill, and from being involved in mutual aid-based projects in many different forms for many years it was annoying watching these normative, status-quo-preserving people waking up to the fact that the state will not protect them, but then congratulating themselves for being the heroes to save sick people. No, absolutely not. I know some other disability justice activists have said: we’ve been asking for work from home accommodations for forever and it was never possible and now it is because everyone needs it. This is an example of the type of thing I’m talking about in a way. It’s frustrating because it reinforces that all these other worlds are possible and that they are withheld because marginalized people want them.

Cal: Yeah, and it seems that by virtue of the title of our zine, sick futurities, you’re thinking about the fact that sometimes the solutions, or the most creative ways of thinking about a problem, don’t necessarily come from authoritative or validated methods. With COVID, you and other sick people already knew how to survive a pandemic. You’ve already had a stash of all your supplies.

This was useful when everyone was hoarding and buying up all of the alcohol wipes that we were looking for in the pharmacy section of the grocery back in 2020 for your injection or insertion sites. Luckily, you have creative and tinkering methods of your own to be able to access things like that in a moment driven by a mindset of scarcity rather than sharing.

Some of what you were saying made me think about how the terms method and methods always presume something formal and visible and validated. We’ve had a lot of discussions about seeing all these talks people are giving about COVID advertised to us in our inboxes. They’re all, or mostly, rooted in “proven” methods like surveys and interviews. Public health researchers, clinicians, sociologists, what have you. I was just thinking about how I hope that our study comes from a place of the pre-existing knowledge set that doesn’t view the people who might talk to you as research subjects whose data or numbers or stories we want to extract. Wanting to think of them as interlocutors or view the ‘interview’ more as an exchange where there are kinds of common ground that exist. (Of course not completely common ground because it’s not like everyone even in Ontario has the same experience living with type one).

[Image description: three sealed Alliance alcohol wipe wrappers.]

Lyndsey: Yeah. I think of the alcohol wipe shortage as a perfect example of the type of rage that I was having. Everyone is invoking this mythical figure of the diabetic who can’t take care of herself, who needs other people’s care, who is just the sad sap hunk of fat who can’t help themselves. As if everyone’s going to mask up to save us because we can’t save ourselves, but then in the same breath, those people are buying up all of the alcohol wipes. Alcohol wipes are one of the really basic things that diabetics need to make sure that we have clean injection sites.

This goes into your argument in the article you wrote, Cal, “‘COVID containers’ in pandemic mediascapes,” that people were never trying to help diabetics, they were always just trying to containerize and purify their own self or their own space or their own family. Don’t invoke us and then actively do things to make it harder for us to live! I’ve gotten infections before from injection sites. It can cause a fever, it can cause an infection. And imagine getting infected sites during COVID before we knew more information. You’re getting a fever and you can’t get to the doctor and you need antibiotics. It’s such a small thing that alcohol wipe, but you couldn’t find them anywhere and I remember you and I even asked the pharmacist, “next time you get a shipment can you hold some back for diabetics who actually are the ones who need them.” What the hell were people doing with alcohol swabs anyways?

Cal: Swabbing their phones and wiping off their groceries.

Blaming the Uber drivers who brought their groceries for potentially giving them COVID. [Laughter]

[Image description: someone taking a box of alcohol wipes out of a shipping box.]

[Image description: a collage of Google Image Search results for “MEDTRONIC SENSOR” with the caption “the figure of the perfect White type 1 is everwhere - just add technology. with this many perfect white girl stomachs to populate with medical devices, who needs a cure? not medtronic!! to a tune of $5 BILLION in net income in 2022 alone.”]

[Image description: the Nutrition Facts label for a Pancetta BLT Pasta.]

Rethinking carb counts: Carbs as relational

Lyndsey: The notion of a carb is relational. It is not an objective scientific count of something. It’s a relationship to my pump, my ratios, my body, and my life.

A recipe could say that a meal has, for instance, 103 carbohydrates, which is calculated by some scientific measure, I am sure.

But, it’s possible that I will appraise a meal that says 103 carbs and tell my pump that I am actually eating 75 carbs, because I have an embodied sense that estimating 75 instead of 101 will prevent my blood sugar from dropping too low, and I’m usually right. So, then, did that meal have 75 carbs, or did it have 103?

The number itself is relational.

Diabetics rely on what we call the “carb ratio,” which is the ratio of the amount of insulin your body needs to synthetically process the carbohydrates you eat. The standard ratio is 1 unit of insulin covers 15 grams of carbohydrate. So, you need to learn how to count carbs in every meal that you eat. If I eat a sandwich for lunch, that is usually 15 carbs per slice of bread + a few carbs for the filling, so I might estimate 35 carbohydrates. You then multiply your carb count by your ratio to figure out how many units of insulin you should take with the meal. In insulin pumps nowadays, the carb ratio is put into the settings, so you just type in 35 carbs, and the pump delivers the appropriate amount of insulin.

[Image description: a picture of an insulin bottle taken from the Canadian $100 bill.]

Insulin (“one of the best known Canadian medical innovations”), image from Canadian $100 dollar bill.

But, carb ratios vary dramatically by person, by food, by activity, by stress, by literally every other thing in addition to the content of the food. In order to calculate your carb ratio, you eat something pre-packaged like a Lean Cuisine frozen lunch. Then, you test your blood sugar two hours later. If your sugar is high, that means your carb ratio is not giving you enough insulin, so you need to adjust the ratio. A lot of time is spent learning how to more accurately estimate carbs and fine-tuning your carb ratio.

But, what all of this misses, is that carbs are not a universal thing that exist outside or beyond the body that can be empirically measured. It’s all made up. It’s all a proxy for a much more complex relation.

For instance, if you were drinking alcohol with your carbs, your blood sugar will spike and then drop, so less insulin is better. If you sat on the couch while eating, if you got in an emotional argument over dinner, if you have your period, if you ate right before or after exercise, your ratio will be different in all these scenarios. Doctors would be the first to say that carb counting is not an exact science, we do our best and it’s a rough estimate. But, nevertheless, what people imagine is that we’re trying to overcome our human flaws to get closer and closer to the real, objective carb amount that is outside the body waiting to be counted.

This assumes the real carb exists and we, just because of human error and complexity of life, we haven’t yet mastered these complex carb ratios. I don’t think that is what is going on. You said earlier that we should move away from arbitrating whether numbers are good or bad and instead see data as part of the self. I think this approach would help us see that there’s no such thing as carbs, there’s only a relationship to carbs.

Cal: What you’ve just said makes me think of Karen Barad’s ideas (Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter & Meaning). I don’t know if you’ve ever read her work; here, your method—the process by which you have come to your ideas about carbs as relational—is embodiment, not reading the existing literature. This idea that things do not exist except in relation to and entanglement with other things and processes is what she calls intra-action. Your ideas about carbs as relational make me recall that when we lived in Oberlin [Ohio], we started doing these meal delivery services. We wanted to do this bougie meal service but we also thought it would be helpful because it gives the full carb count for the meal on the recipe sheet.

The idea was it would help you with accurate carb counting. And now we’ve continued these meal deliveries with a Canadian based company that also sends us the recipe cards. I always read you the number of carbs on the recipe before I throw the recipe away when we finish cooking it but I think how you’re articulating it is really great because it turns out the carb count on the page is not as helpful as it seems.

The carb itself is this unit, this metric that’s so moralized. It’s caught up in so many different discourses. The fact that most diets have people obsessing over not eating carbs, for instance, or the feminization of certain kinds of alcoholic and other kinds of drinks that are carb-free or low carb. There is also this assumption that carbs are bad for diabetics which we’ve talked about in terms of the low carb meals we order. They’re terrible for you, because there’s not enough carbs, but they are marketed as healthy.

Lyndsey: And funny enough, I rarely ever put the exact carb number that they say on the recipe card in my pump. The carb ratio and the carb counting is a lot of math, like constant math. Some of that is taken away if you have a meal kit or if you have the pump that does some of the math for you.

But nevertheless, it is a felt embodied relationship to what a carb is for your body that you accumulate through experience over time. You know I have been feeling for a while that my carb ratio [pre-entered into pump] is kind of off. But we haven’t changed it because my doctor looks at my numbers and is like you never go high after meals so your carb ratio is perfect.

What she doesn’t factor in is that I’m creating some kind of coefficient, in my calculation, to offset it. I know that if I put 103 carbs for a bowl of pasta that I have historically estimated was closer to 75, I would go low, even if 103 is actually the “correct” carb count. I am able to make the mental coefficient adjustment because of embodied practice. The carbs might total to 103 by some dietary metric, but that is not what that amount of carbs is to my body. And that could be true for various reasons, because of recurring lifestyle patterns of drinking, exercise, eating late, or whatever it is. But you don’t necessarily need to know why or what causes it if you let go of the idea of the external objective carb. If you let go of that, you can learn to trust your embodied knowledge and accumulated intuition that you know what any given carb is for YOU in any given moment.

Cal: Right. That’s your method. And it’s kind of like you’re beating the algorithm in a way but the algorithm never knows because you’re always correcting it. I think this example helps us contest the idea that numbers somehow reach the threshold of ‘real data’ and that stories or embodied experience are just a fluffy complement to this real data.

Lyndsey: Yeah, I’m interested in our project discussing how embodiment makes the data better, which is similar to your argument in Cooking Data, that the fieldworkers’ [in data collection projects in southern Africa] improvisations are what make global health data good.

Cal: Yeah, the invisible kind of tinkerings and modifications and learned corrections are what make these systems work, even as systems try to eradicate them [the tinkerings] because the system wants everything to be smooth and the same and to claim it works on its own and works the same way in every instance and for every person.

Another thing we could also talk about is your little koala journal where you record down ideas and feelings and notes on appointments, all related to diabetes. Maybe that could be part of the archive, because you were talking about the blood sugar number logs you did when you were younger, before digital upload technology made them obsolete.

[Image description: A sticky note that reads:

“‘The body archive is an attunement, a hopeful gathering, an act of love against the foreclosures of reason.’ Julietta Singh, No Archive Will Restore You p. 29.]

But even though you rely on the pump and your closed loop system to do a lot of that work now you still have material artifacts [analog objects that don’t get coded as ‘technology’] that you seem to really like.

The journal is cute and has stickers in it and it reminds me of why you put radical message stickers on your glucose pills bottle to make the bottle look less ‘medical’ or ‘sterile’. That journal doesn’t look like a medical thing. It looks like a happy little thing that doesn’t have anything to do with carbs or numbers.

Lyndsey: Cal, you made me that journal! With a beautiful inscription from the poem “Health” by Rafael Campo:

“We need a health pandemic…We’d understand the moonlight’s whispering. We’d exercise by making love outside, and afterward while thinking only of how much we’d lived in just one moment’s time, forgive ourselves for wanting something more…”

[Image description: a person on a rope swing at a beach.]

[Image description: a person riding a bike away from the camera, with flowers in their backpack.]

Collective photo elicitation exercise:

[Image description: a photograph of a flower bush.]

#1 In what ways does this image evoke sick futurities for you?

Send us a postcard with your answer to:

Sicko Queer Canaries Collective

286 Locke St. S

Hamilton, ON L8P 4C1

Canada

#2 What do sick futurities look like to you?

Send us a digital image (with commentary if you like) to:

sickfuture@gmail.com

Google image search:

“medtronic sensor”

References:

Barad, Karen. 2007. Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics

and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning. Duke University Press.

Biruk, Cal. 2018. Cooking Data: Culture and Politics in an African Research World. Duke University Press.

Biruk, Cal. 2021. “COVID containers in pandemic mediascapes: Discursive economies of health, bodies, and race in North America.” Anthropology & Medicine Dec 21:1-18.

Campo, Rafael. 2010. “Health” [poem]. Access at: https://poets.org/poem/health?mbd=1

Clare, Eli. 2015. “The Mountain.” In Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation. Duke University Press.

Jacobs, Andrew. 2022 April 3. “Covid and diabetes, colliding in a public health train wreck.” The New York Times. Accessed at:<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/03/health/diabetes->covid-deaths.html

Mol, Annemarie. 2008. The Logic of Care: Health and the Problem of

Patient Choice. Routledge.

Murphy, Michelle. 2017. “What can’t a body do?” Catalyst 3(1):1-15.

Rabin, Roni Caryn. 2020 March 12. “Coronavirus threatens Americans

with underlying conditions.” The New York Times. Accessed at:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/health/coronavirus-midlife-conditions.html>

Rabin, Roni Caryn. 2020 April 23. “Nearly all patients hospitalized with

Covid-19 had chronic health issues, study finds.” The New York Times. Accessed at:<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/23/health/coronavirus-patients-risk.html>

Serkez, Yaryna. 2020 June 4. “Who is most likely to die from the

coronavirus?” The New York Times. Accessed at:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/04/opinion/coronavirus-health-race-inequality.html>

Singh, Julietta. 2018. No Archive Will Restore

# Static Women

By: Darcie DeAngelo, with Arrington Johnson

In the early aughts and in the 90s, I made zines from stolen office supplies. I would staple sketches and comics and musings together and distribute copies. My first ethnography project meant being alone and walking a lot. I noticed statues on my walks, but avoided the men. I was interested in the women. I made walking maps which helped me think about gender, mobility, and memorializations. Now I present 3 fieldsites here with walking maps of women statues. I also show how noticing statues and walking enters my pedagogy, with an undergraduate student in my visual anthropology class who wrote and filmed one statue in Norman, OK. The statues, like a focused event, like a ritual, show us something about a place.

[Image description: A labeled street-map of Dublin, with images of statues superimposed on it.]

Legend: “The Ladies (Statues) I met Walking Dublin”

Nameless goddess - Burlington Rd

Catherine McAuley - Baggot St

Molly Malone - Grafton St

Countess Constance - Luke St

“Also of interest”

The slave women of the Shelbourne Southside

The nailed prayed of Merrian Square

The Ladies of Dublin

The intrepid feminist blazes through the streets of Dublin, adventuresome, buxom, muscular glory. She walks footpaths in desperate search of the women of Dublin. (St. Brigid was a goddess of fire. St. Padraig was a bishop.) But that doesn’t matter now. Because both patron and patronness are dead and we look instead to the historical figures that mark the Dubliner’s common way and image history. Under trees is a goddess, whose nudity reminds us that she is fictional, and therefore allowed her hawk. The intrepid feminist appreciates her curly pubes and over-proportionate thigh muscles. She gets to thinking: why are the female statues teachers, nuns, sex slaves, or dominatrixes? Why do the slaves of Shelbourne have such Nubian lips or Egyptian hair? (St. Brigid was a goddess of fire but also a priest ordained by accident. Did she wear a habit or a collar? Who is crossdressing?) Just today I walked Baggot St. and saw a woman on the I usually see on the street with a cup in her hands—beneath the canal bridge and a man held her and another man watched. Was she selling her sex? Being raped? Having fun doesn’t seem like an option, does it? Intrepid feminist walks on…

[Image description: images of statues labeled with the streets that they can be found on, and commentary on their physical appearances.]

“Women of Norman”

Olivia - S. Flood Ave

Sphinx - Elm Ave

Homeward Bound - Parrington Dr

Reclined Chae - Elm Ave

Women of Norman:

It is hard to reconcile feminism with work. The problem is capital or patriots or something. In OK the university surrounds us with statues. The women, as usual, are not clothed. A week ago or months ago or centuries ago or yesterday or TOMORROW the governor has suggested that doctors, should they find a fertilized egg outside of it/they should be (if it is ectopic), they should make every attempt to “reinsert” it. I wonder if abortion is murder, is self-defense allowed? I wonder if my students, many of whom are Christian, including my collaborating author, know what to do if something starts to poison their bodies. I worry no one has thought of this. I worry they have. The women of Norman remind me of the ladies of Dublin in 2004. They also thrust their breasts at passersby and they also do not have reproductive rights, powers over their modes of (re)production or their modes of gender/categories/who are they? It changes the ways in which I teach and I tell students to attend to statues—look at things we don’t look at. Someone has suggested taking down confederate men and replacing them with Dolly Parton. Do they know that in Cambodia you just put a scarf on a soldier to make him a goddess? Surely our goddess Dolly will not mind, beloved as she is by drag queens who already transform their bodies. When we walk we can see things we don’t when we drive we see states we fly over when we fly we travel far enough for statues to undermine gender and sacred dichotomies do my students know? I am surprised and worry when after telling me she has been assaulted, a student says: ‘I’ve found a Christian counselor.’ We should be suspicious of these clothed women. Did the artist of the sphynx statue know she should have come from Africa? Ethnography walk and flies.

By Arrington Johnson: This is Sphinx, a robust, bronze, statue of a quadrupedal woman with wings and a tail which can be found on display at the Fred Jones Jr. museum at the University of Oklahoma. I first came into contact with Sphinx while doing fieldwork for a project in my visual anthropology class. This project included a media portion for which I chose Sphinx to be my star. From my work with Sphinx I learned that to classify as an interaction, there does not always need to be shared words, an interaction can be as simple as shared time in a space together. An interaction can be observation and thought about something in front of you. During my day to day fieldwork with Sphinx, I never quite felt like I was alone. After reading "What do museum objects want" by Diana J. B. Young, I concluded that my feelings of fellowship around this statue were because the eyes of the statue seemed to look into me just as I looked into them. After drawing that connection my fieldwork began to feel differently. Visiting this statue day after day became more than just a commute from my house. It became an interaction. I got to the point where I was greeting her everytime I arrived on site because I was so comfortable in that space. I was interacting as well as making a connection. While putting all the parts of my media piece together and assessing the shots I had taken I began to think, "what would the statue want to be shown?" "what parts of her would she want to be accentuated?,” these ways of thinking really took my project to the next level, and for me personally, has given all statues the characteristic of intractability that I had never before perceived. - Arrington Johnson

My student’s project tells me about gaze and the act of looking - she shows how looking at statues is different from most undergraduate experiences with walking? Her statue becomes the star of my Norman map.

The Fabulous Ones:

In Siem Reap, people must walk despite the heat and on the walks you will see the fabulous ones. They are women or nonbinary folks who wear sashes. They dance. Someone tells me that apsara translates to sky dancer and these are the women who have achieved nirvana. So, they can finally go topless like Buddha (who also is said to be an old goddess and who is sometimes dressed up to turn into a grandmother spirit). In 2015, the Cambodian government passes a law that says it is not proper for women to wear revealing clothing. ‘Ridiculous,’ a Cambodian woman tells me, ‘have they seen the women on the temple walls?’ But to respect the monks, I must cover my shoulders when I walk to see the apsara carvings who dance in rows with weaving snakes or vines through their hands. You can find these women in any temple and I like how they smile at us and a the monks. These statues in Siem Reap change genders depending on how people interact with them and I wonder why the women of Norman or the ladies of Dublin do not. I walk and consider the fluidity of all the static women. The ones who are fed fruit and fanta in Siem Reap and the ones who are defaced in Norman and the ones who are ignored in Dublin. Walking and drawing as ethnographic method shows me their fluidity but also opens speculative connections-how do these laws about women collapse onto the statues? How can we mobilize them? Memorials and spirits can’t be grasped without material grounding them and our feet.

[Image description: a labeled street-map of Siem Reap, with images of statues superimposed on it.]

Legend: ‘The Fabulous Ones in Siem Reap”

Apsara Dancers - Wat Bu

Naga Aspara - Rotary Hybuuy Zo

Nonbinary Buddhe - Angkor Wat/Museum

Faceless Aspara - Angkor Wat

Back Cover

Works I think of with Static Women:

Thompson, Ashley. “Anybody: Diasporic Subjectivities and the Figure of the ‘Historical’ Buddha.” (2020): 117-131

(See nonbinary Buddha statues)

Borges, Jorge Luis. “The Analytical Language of John Wilkins” see The Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge” (1942)

(See ‘The Fabulous Ones’)

Pink, Sarah et al. “Walking across disciplines: from ethnography to arts practice” in Visual Studies 25(1): 2010: 1-7

Mariner, Kathryn A. and Miguel A. Cardonia. “Just Visiting: Curious Ethnography, Intentional Design, and Collaborative Art” in Theorizing the Contemporary in Cultural Anthropology (2021).

# Tangible. Re/Tinkering Life in DIYBio

By: Mariko Sakuragi

[Image description: a rectangular photograph of a part of a magnified petri dish. The top of the image is a blurry green with black patches. The bottom right portion focuses on the magnified specimen, which has light green vein-like structures.]

Contents

Preface

Introduction −In the Lab

Mapping “What Is Life”?

Kombucha x Kombucha: Experimental Mixtures

How to Make Homemade Mediums

DIY Lab Equipment

DIY/HACKING:

Yutaro Kawada

Venus ElectronTrap: Why Do I Want to Create a

Flytrap Cyborg that Works as a Digital Memory

Device?

Juppo Yokokawa

PCR Theremin: How to Make Useless Tool

BEING OPEN:

Georg Tremmel

Protocol: How to Make/Organize Community

Yosuke Tsuchiya

What Does Openness Mean?: Shared Culture in BioHack Academy and its Footsteps

SENSING:

Misa Haneda

I Am Not Alone: How on Earth Can We Sense and Communicate with Our Own Microbes?

Shiho Hasegawa

Visualization of Organisms in Art Contexts & Yeast-gram Play Kit

Closing Words

[Image description: The page has a light blue background and an image of a half of a petri dish. The contents of the petri dish are light green with vein-like structure and small black patches.]

Preface

DIYbio (Do-it-yourself biology) is a recent grassroots movement that purposes “democratizing biotechnologies” for citizens, which emerged in the 2000s and has gradually immersed all over the world. To expand the access to biology for everyone, the people who engage in DIYbio use

second-hand scientific equipment, “DIY” them (ex. PCR machine), simplify the protocols and the materials of experiments, and open-source every protocol and tips.

This zine was “cultivated” by the Japanese groups participated in "BioHack Academy (BHA),” an intensive DIYbio program provided by Waag Society, a maker/hacker space in Amsterdam. We are a team of people who met each other by chance through BHA. Our team consists of

art historian, media artists, design students, system engineer, maker, and food company’s worker. Though it might look strange that people with variable backgrounds and perspectives met by chance, and did biological works together, this is what is “DIYbio” ー borderless, abrupt, and unprecedented way to interrogate science, biotechnologies, and living things.

We had been confronted with the questions through BHA: what is life, what is science, and what is “hack”? The zine is the form of our “plural” answers to those questions, not only in verbal or theoretical ways.

We created our zine by following hacker ethics which regard openness, sharing and accessibility are the most important. We do not want our work to convey in one direction from us to readers. Rather, we hope it works such as open-source code: open-ended as being modified, edited, and added. Therefore, we made it replicable but at the same time editable protocols. This is the records of our activities in BHA, but also the invitation for you to be involved in our works. We aim that it has a kind of power that stimulates you to do something, keep thinking

and making.

Also, this is collaborative work. As one of the BHA participants and a Ph.D. student of anthropology who had researched DIY biotechnology in Japan, I called on the other members, then the ZINE project began to move. Because of the collaborative co-writing way, different ideas, perspectives, and aesthetics are mingled here. We dare to leave that layers since we believe that the inconsistencies seen in the zine would show the winding trajectories which we had actually experienced. That that style is our aesthetics and the right way to show what is DIYbio at the same time - which is neither linear nor organized, rather the place where unpredicted, bewildered, and joyful interactions emerge.

Mariko Sakuragi

[Image description: The page has a light blue background and an image of a half of a petri dish. The contents of the petri dish are light green with vein-like structure and small black patches.]

Introduction −In the LAB

[Image description: Two scientists are conducting an experiment in a room with dark light.]

We gathered on the 2nd floor of the building at the end of the slope in Shibuya, Tokyo. Although not well known, there is a community BioLab at the edge of the floor, which transformed the small space that used to be a warehouse. We - “BioClub Tokyo” - are the DIYbio community opened to ordinal people based there. Spent about two months, we intensively learned biology basics, made something, and conducted experiments: made mediums by ourselves, de/reconstructed lab equipment, tried PCR, sampled bacteria from circumstances and our bodies, and cultivated them. Although all participants were lay people about bio, except for Georg Tremmel who helped us as the local organizer, it was certain that we were very curious about biologies. Everything in BHA was full of newness, wonder, and pleasure for us.

[Image description (Left): A scientist holding up a jar with a medium made by agar. The scientist is wearing light blue lab gloves and the medium in the jar is transparent.]

[Image description (Lower right): Image of a scientist placing slime mold on a petri dish. An over-the-shoulder view shows a small corner of the lab with several boxes and a petri dish.]

[Image description (Bottom): Close-up of the slime mold on the petri dish. The petri dish is transparent and the mold is dark yellow in colour.]

Mapping What is Life:

[Image description: This page is a hand drawn flow diagram of different branches of what is considered life. The chart includes items such as: DNA, Society, Environment, Reproduction and so on.]

Kombucha X Kombucha: Experimental Mixtures:

Georg Tremmel: Thank you for joining me today, I would like to ask you about your recent collaboration, but before that could you please introduce yourselves?

Kombucha: Hi, thank you for having us here at BioClub Tokyo. We are Kombucha, a multispecies, symbiotic life-form, we are made up of the mother fungi, which sometimes also call S.C.O.B.Y. or "Symbiotic Culture of Bacteria and Yeast." We really like each other and live together, and we also really like Black Tea with a little sugar in it and after 1-2 weeks we expand and grow and have fun in it. For whatever reasons humans like to drink that, so they actually help to proliferate us.

Kombucha: I am also Kombucha, which is quite funny. My name comes from the Japanese words for "kelp" (=昆布, kombu) and 'tea' (茶,cha), and I am - as the name suggest - a tea made from kelp. I am famous for my 'umami' or savoury taste, also I am the original source of Glutamic Acid, which - and I am very proud to say that - revolutionized the food industry.

GT: Thank you for the introductions, I found it quite curious that although you are nothing alike you share the same name. Do you have any idea, how it came to that?

K: We have been travelling the worlds since many years, it is believed that we originate maybe in China, but then we became really popular in Russia, because of that also in Eastern Europe and especially the former Eastern Germany. And now we are quite popular all over the world. Why we are called 'Kombucha' was probably lost across these travels.

K: I find it also interesting. When you say 'Kombucha' here in Japan, everyone will think about me, we call you 'Kocha-no-kinoko, 紅茶䛾木䛾子' or 'Tea-mushroom', which I think also describes you very well.

GT: Let me ask you, how exactly did you start collaborating.

K: As you know, we were invited to BioClub Tokyo to ferment and play a little bit - we thing most people are curious about the materiality of the SCOBY and what can be made with that. But as we are already a multispecies collective, we thought it might be nice to join with our Japanese friend Kombucha as see what we can ferment together.

K: Yes, exactly. I was quite exited to join Kombucha, as usually humans just drink me with a little salt - not so exciting. I don't really have time to ferment and play.

K: So we made experimental mixtures of ourselves, starting with 100% our ourselves, then 90%

Kombucha and 10% "Kombucha", then 80:20, 70:30 and so on. We created a gradient of mixtures to find out which combination of ourselves was the most fun.

GT: One of you uses sweet tea, the other is salty and savoury, did you also ask humans to try?

K: (laughs) Yes, we did. Some actually liked it!

K: (laughs) But not many!

K: To be honest, we were not so concerned with our utility - we still don't quite understand why humans like our metabolic products - we were curious on the interaction and communication between ourselves.

GT: As I can see you all thrived and grew quite nicely.

K: Yes, we were very happy with that. We create new structures and a lot of memories!

K: For us it was excited to bring these cultures together and to ferment together!

GT: Any suggestions how we should call you now? Kombucha X Kombucha? Kombucha^2?

K & K: (laughs) Just Kombucha!

Interview conducted and transcribed by Georg Tremmel at BioClub Tokyo, June 2022

Illustration of Mixtures: 10:0, 9:1, 8:2, 7:3, 6:4, 5:5, 4:6, 4:7; 2:8, 1:9, 0:10

[Image description: Illustrated bar chart of the mixture at various ratios.]

How to Make Homemade Mediums:

Image description: This page has a yellow background with illustrated images. The images accompany the recipe to create a homemade medium and consists of abstract animals involved in cooking a meal.

DIY medium:

Contents

Water 250ml

Agar 4g

Sugar 6g

Chicken soup 2g

Homemade Medium:

Clean up kitchen first. Spraying alcohol to a measuring cup, a pot, and a spoon.

Measure what is needed.

Mix water, agar, sugar, and chicken soup in a pot.

After the water comes to a boil, turn the heat to low and cook for 2 minutes with dissolving with a spoon.

Pour into plates

Seal the plate’s lid. (Parafilm)

Cool them down until agar get hard. It will take about half a day till agar become hard.

Putting the petri dishes in the fridge might help it harden faster. And they all live happily ever after… (traditional ending to stories).

DIY Lab equipment:

Image description: A collage of different DIY lab equipment. Top left: Researchers are posing with a DIY cardboard clean box. Middle right: A cutout of a LEGO Block Centrifuge. Bottom right: Cutout of a Pocket PCR. Bottom left: Cut out of a DIY Magnetic Stirrer.

DIY/HACKING:

Despite our lives having benefited from technology to such an extent that we can no longer live without it, most of us do not really know about them. Technology is blackboxed that makes them stable but invisible at the same time. DIY and hacking are the practices that try to demystify such black boxes by (literally or indirectly) opening them and making them more accessible to feel the technology more “real” and “down-to-earth.” Plus, not just opening and sharing, adding some new, odd, and excessive elements are one of the best parts of the hack. Here, through DIYbio practice based on the common purpose of democratization of biotech, we rethink the biotechnologies surrounding our society, exploring the way to deconstruct the existing technologies and reconstruct them in new and odd ways through DIY.

Venus ElectronTrap: Why Do I Want to Create a Flytrap Cyborg that Works as a Digital Memory Device?:

Yutaro Kawada

In this section, I will describe the art work I am currently working on, why I want to realize it and how far I have made it. You can take this as an artist’s idea notebook that you can peek into.

The Venus flytrap (Dionaea muscipula) is well known as a moving plant. The leaves are shaped like a shell of clams, and each has sensors called “trigger hair”. If insects touch the sensors at least twice within about 30 seconds, the leaf will quickly close and eat them.

My plan is to “hack” this plant into a “flytrap cyborg” that can communicate with real computers and store digital data. Each leaf of the plant can have two states: open or closed. That means the leaves can store data. If the flytrap memory device is realized, it could be an interesting recording medium made of material reducible to nature.

So, what do I want to make this? I have to sat the answer is still unclear even to me. However, I would like to describe a few possible explanations. I believe this work will be inspiring because it will ask people the following questions.

Can technology extent the abilities of other living organisms, as we have done for ourselves?

Computers have extended our abilities, but only for humans. How can we use them for other beings? In fact, flytraps cab survive without insects today. They probably were necessary at a certain period in history, but not now. We can expaect that sooner or later the trap function will degenerate. Then why don’t we use the ability for us, and preserve the ability?

How can we use technology to re-design the current ecosystem while taking care of non-human beings?

To treat them as memory devices is, in other words, to let them evolve in a symbiotic relationship with humans. This could be argues the domestication of flytraps, since it will save the genetic diversity of the plant from natural selection. To make efficient use of the plants as the memory device, we would intentionally culture flytraps with a good memory or perhaps with amnesia. As a result various types of flytraps will be built into human habitats. Is this a good thing or a bad thing?

This illustration is by James Roberts, 1770.

(The background is photoshopped by the author.)

[Image description: The center of this page has an illustrated image of a Venus flytrap. The plant is growing out dark brown soil. The base of the plant has a cluster bright green leaves. At the end of the leaf is a clam-like flytrap, green on the outside, red inside. The flytrap has spikey edges. The illustration also shows a moth caught in one flytrap and an insect caught in another. The stem of this plant emerges from the cluster of leaves at the bottom. There are white and flowers with the purple base at the top of this stem. Of the seven flowers in this illustration, two are fully bloomed, two are partially bloomed, and the remaining are buds.]

I will explain what I have done so far. I wanted to connect the plant to a computer in any way. As the first step, I decided to make a bio-amplifier for measuring the flytrap’s potential )electrical signals generated in response to plant movement). An action potential can be measured by a similar device used for EMG and EEG measurement, and I made it.

Here, I will share the PCB (Printed Circuit Board) production part. I will not explain in depth how to design, but I used a free software called KiCad.

Materials:

Before you start, you need the following materials.

PCB gerber data (print it on paper with toner)

FR4 Single-Sided Copper Clad Plate

Etching solution

Oxidol

Citric acid

Salt

Acetone

Protocol:

Paste the PCB design pattern on a copper plate with acetone. Wait until acetone transfers the toner to the plate. Then carefully peel the paper off in the water.

[Image description: The image on the left is the PCB pattern (L). The pattern consists of white circular lines against a black background. Image on the right is of the PCB pattern being peeled off in water by a pen-like device. Here, the colour of the pattern lines has changed to a dark copper orange.]

Prepare a 4:1 mixture of citric acid and salt. Dissolve this in oxydol to make an etching solution. Then dip the plate into the solution.

[Image description: The image on the left has packets and a bottle of the material being used in the experiment. The image on the right is the oxydol solution. IT is a thick deep gray/silver solution.]

Wait until the copper portion is completely dissolved, then take the plate out from the solution.

[Image description: Left image is of the the copper plate placed in the oxydol solution. The plate is almost black in colour and there are no patterns visible. The image on the right is the plate after it has been removed from the solution. The bottom of the plate is discolored to orange, the edges are copper, and faint green pattern lines are visible on the top.]

Clean the board again with acetone. Drill holes and install all the necessary parts. Then you are done!

[Image description: The board is placed within a glass frame and wire and circuits are attached to the board.]

If you properly attach the electrodes of the device to the plant, you can measure action potentials. Ta-dah!

[Image description: Image of the electrodes attached to a Venus flytrap plant. The plant is in a black pot and the electrodes are attached to its stem. An inset image on the top right side of this image has device on which the data from the electrodes is being plotted in green line.]

Future work:

Since the device which I introduced here is not able to keep monitoring the state of the leaves being closed, it is still unfinished as a flytrap memory device. However, there is an idea to solve it. By applying the principle of a capacitor, I designed the following sensor just to detect whether a leaf is closed or opened. It has already been tested, and seems to be working.

For future work, not only to complete the artwork, but I would like to explore other ways to hack this plant. Genome edition is one of the options. I will continue to enjoy hacking the Venus flytrap!

[Image description: On the left is a small hand-drawn image of the capacitor. Shaped like the alphabet Y, the top two boxes of the image are the two capacitors. The capacitor on the left contains orange circles which represent positive charge. The capacitor on the right has blue circles which represent electron. Text between the capacitors labels the distance: “The distance defines capacitors. Blue circles are present at the lower end of both capacitors. An arrow points downwards along the left capacitor and upwards on the right capacitor. I curly line from both capacitors converges to connect into a small striped square box labelled as ‘Analog Digital Convertor’. This convertor is connected to a laptop.

Top right side is the image of the actual capacitor used in the experiment. Bottom right is the image of the capacitor attached to the leaves of a Venus flytrap.]

PCR Theremin: How to make useless tool:

Juppo YOKOKAWA

As a result of mutation and natural selection, there are countless species of creatures living in the earth today. Among them, the species known as Homo spiens have been making tools for millions of years. They have made and improved tools for hunting mammoths, boiling potatoes, writing Bibles, etc. Whereas living things have evolved through mutation and natural selection, the evolution of tools has been manipulated by humans like GMOs. Then what would happen if tools spontaneously interbreed and mutated?

PCR Theremin is a modification of the PocketPCR by GaudiLab with the addition of theremin functionality. GaudiLab is a company that develops and sells DIY experimental devices, and in the spirit of hackers, all of theri hardware and software have opened up. One of the DIY hardware they sell, PocketPCR (polymerase chain reaction), a series of operations to amplify specific base sequences from DNA. The online store of GaudiLab sells this PocketPCR for 99 euros, but what is interesting is the fact that next to PocketPCR, they also sell an instrument. Its name is OpenTheremin.

The theremin is an electronic musical instrument invented in the the 1920s by the Russian engineer Lev Theremin, and OpenTheremin is, as the name suggests, a DIY kit that allows you to build your own theremin.

In other words, in GaudiLab’s online store, scientific instruments and musical instruments are considered in the same category (i.e. same species) under the hacker mindset and open source culture.

Using the biological species concept proposed by Ernst Mayr, if they are the same species, they should be able to interbreed and produce offspring. Therefore, although somewhat forces, PCR theremin was created by crossbreeding the two. In PCR, chemical reactions are carried out by heating and cooling reagents repeatedly, and the role of the thermal cycler is to raise and lower the temperature according to the schedule. So I combine PCR and theremin by mapping the pitch operation of the theremin to the ups and downs of temperature.

At the end of the day, this is a very nonsensical tool, and if you play it freely, the experiment will fail, and you will have to play drone sounds for two hours to make the PCR succeed. So, can we create a purpose from this tool without the purpose of amplifying DNA or playing existing scores? A DIY “unusable too: may be a tool for reframing our thinking.

[Image description: On the left is an image of the PCR Theremin. This is a black rectangular box with a silver antenna on the back left side. The device has two silver knob-like dials on its surface. The right side of the device has a small black USB cable. There is silver connecting cable in the front. The device is placed on a white service with some data waves plotted in black. An inset image of the top-right corner of this image shows a researcher playing the PCR Theremin device. The device in this image is connected to a silver laptop.]

BEING OPEN

In couple of decades, the number of makerspaces, hackerspaces, and community bio-labs has grown globally. Those communities are basically open to all, which means it is being open to all

possibilities for encounters, collaborations, and creativities. We will explore open community and openness here. We will seek the distinctiveness of those communities, asking the following

questions: how can define the “open,” how can the community be “open”? For instance, where is the ideal location, how to transmit the information, and what kind of spirits that the member/organizer of the open community needs to be aware of?

Image description: Three researchers are working on an experiment in a laboratory. Two of the researchers are leaning over the third researcher as they are using an electric tool on something (not shown in the image). The researchers are gathered around a light brown table with several tools and a black power bank. There are white shelves with books and lab supplies in the background.

How to make/organise a Community:

[Image description: This page is styled like a page from a lab notebook. The text is hand written with markings and doodles in the margin in yellow and red.]

Project: BioHack Academy

Subject: Zine, How to PROTOCOL

Lab protocols are condensed and complete instructions that enable and facilitate the reproduction of experiments. Lab protocols are concise, they use shortcuts and abbv (= abbreviations), they expect a familiarity of the EXPERIMENTER with the MILIEU and ENVIRONMENT where the experiment is performed. Protocols are also a way of sharing, a way of enabling reproduction spreadability.

This Protocol includes the social settings and personal constellations necessary to bootstrap and run a Bio-Hack Academy.

Reagents (+agent; +agency)

A Space for Meetings

Make/Create a Lab Space

A group of interesting and strange students

Preparations:

Make/organise free talks

Make/organise open class talks

Show Examples of previous outcomes

Optional: collaborate and connect with global spaces like WAAG, HACKTERIA, BioSummit

Weekly Protocol (Repeat)

Ask students to participate in lectures

Ask students to ask questions

Ask students to make public documentation

Check + peer review

Prepare + share weekly experiment

Teach experiment. Ask taught students to teach other students

Give additional challenging homework

Invite + involve local guest speakers

Final Project

Mid-term (5 mins)

Final (30 mins)

Organize exhibition

Recorded by: George Tremmel 2022-7-5

What Does Openness Mean?: Shared Culture in BioHack Academy and its Footsteps:

Image description: This page is designed as a computer program screen. It has a black background, line numbers on th left margin and a QR code on the top-right corner. The text is written like a code, with title tags and colours representing different types of content. The tags are in blue, the title is red, and the main text is white.

Zine.md > …

– – –

layout: page

title: What does openness means?

permalink: /zine/

– – –

\*\*\*Shared Culture in BioHack Academy and its footsteps\*\*\*

\*\*Yosuke Tsuchiya\*\*

Shared Culture of hackers

There is a shared culture by [hackers] (<http://www.catb.org/~esr/faqs/hacker-howto.html>), whom expert programmers and networking wizards are called as, and those hackers open their own technologies and share them on the Internet. Hackers build the Internet and most of based technology of Computer Science. Hackers resist the monopolization of technology by big tech such as [IBM] (<https://www.ibm.com>), [Microsoft] ([https://www.microsoft.com](https://www.ibm.com)) and so on. Sharing source code or knowledge are based on this hacker’s culture.

Taking over to Fab and DIYbio movements:

And [Fab Lab Networks] ([https:/](https://www.ibm.com)/www.fabfoundation.org/), a network of digital fabrication , consist of this shared culture, as [Neil Gershenfeld] (<http://ng.cba.mit.edu/>), who called as the father of [Fab Lab] (<https://fab.cha.mit.edu/about/charter/>), teach its importance of sharing documentations in his class “[How to make almost anything] (<http://www.media.mit.edu/physics/pedagogy/fab/fab98/fall1998.html>)” in MIT. The [BioHack Academy] (<http://biohackacademy.github.io/>) is organised by [Waag Society] (<https://waag.org/en>) in [Amsterdam where is one of the longest Fab lab] (<http://fablab.waag.org/>) in the world. In this sense, the mind of BioHack Academy is also under the influence of this shared culture of Fab Lab Network, as there are so many kinds of DIY Bio hack hardware/software on the [BioHack Academy GitHub] (<https://github.com/biohackacademy>), and students who belong to BioHack Academy must make their own [documentation website] (<https://yskt0810.github.io/bha2022/>) and share what they do in each assignment.

Sharing as attitude:

However, we should keep in mind that it is not only outstanding technicians, the DIY experts or Bio hack predecessors but also citizens who maintain these shared cultures. The most important things are the attitude based on [freedom] (<https://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl-3.0.html>) and voluntary mutual help to solve problems and build things. This time, students who belong to the BioHack Academy in BioClub Tokyo, have their own different background, students, engineers, researchers, artists, and so on. Those students are voluntary helped each other. One student first learns [the methods of PCR] (<https://bento.bio/protocol/biotechnology-101/dna-extraction-from-saliva/>), then this student taught it to another students, then students wrote a detailed documents on the Internet. Those are exactly the attitude of shared culture. I hope we will grow and maintain this shared community more in the future.

[Image description: this full page, rectangular image is a close of a human hand placing a DIY device on the bark of a tree. The background of the image is blurred. Only a portion of the light brown coloured tree bark and the human had placing the device are in focus.]

SENSING:

In/out of our body, we are living along with numerous living organisms - cells, microbes, bacteria, insects, animals, plants, trees, and so on. Although it is not easy to feel or know about invisible species such as microbes, the human history has challenged it in various ways. One of the ways can be seen in science. Through BHA, we perceived organisms in a different way with specific tools in the laboratory, at home, or outside. The fungus, molds, and E-coli grow in petri dishes and the slime molds that move freely fascinated (and sometimes played with) us with their vigor of life. Inspired by these experiences, we will consider about living and dying with non-human species, the ways how humans represent them, and how both have interacted with each other.

Image description: The background of this page is a magnified object in a petri dish. The object is light green with vein-like structures and some brown patches on the top.

I Am Not Alone: How on Earth Can We Sense and Communicate with Our Own Microbes?:

Written by MISA HANEDA

[Image description: This page has a grey background and hand drawn illustrations from the text.]

My body is the place where my vital activity occurs but it is also the home of other living organisms. While the human body has 37 trillion cells, there are over 100 trillion indigenous bacteria that live in and on the human body. They get their food from our body and live there because there are comfortable, but we also benefit from them. In other words, we are so closely related to them that we cannot live without them, and we have been living in symbiosis with them without even knowing it.

In other words, my body, my life, and my way of life are jointly managed by me and others (organisms with genes that are not mine). For them, my way of life is a matter of life and death. They, more than anyone else, are the others with whom I fundamentally share my fate (although I am not yet sure if they can be called my friends). If they, as such a community of destiny, become my life counselor, I would be able to embrace something like a sense of reassurance and a little bit fun. So I would like to communicate with them and feel their presence more strongly.

[Image description: On the right side is a hand drawn sketch of a person wearing a hat and carrying a stroller bag. Speech bubble near the person’s face (top-right) says: “Where do we live next?” Speech bubble near their chest (left) says: “Let’s go to Okinawa to sweat more”. Speech bubble near the persons stomach (bottom right) says: “How about Shangai? Let’s eat Hotpot”. On the left side is a hand drawn sketch of a person sitting on a chair with their head rested on a table in front of them and tear drops are dripping from their face on the ground. Speech bubble near the person’s head (top left) says: “I can’t stop thinking about him… Should I end the relationship clearly?” Speech bubble near the person’s neck (top right) says: Yea, he doesn’t smell good so doesn’t have nice microbes for us.” Speech bubble near the person’s waist (bottom left) says: “Why not keep the relationship until the next person shows up?”]

I cultured E.coli with my voice keeping playing questions to them on the speakers.

Image description: Image of a recording setup with several microphones. The microphones surround a circular metallic dish.

If it is an animal, we can predict its situation by looking at whether it is standing still or actively moving, the way it breathes, its body temperature, and so on. If it is a plant, we can see whether its leaves are wilting or standing up and green, how fast it is growing. Even as for slime mold, we can predict what to do next by observing the color of its body, its daily growth rate, its shape, and whether or not it has eaten all of its food. If the color turns brown, the rapid growth stops suddenly, and the shape becomes small and lumpy, you can sense that one life cycle has ended.

On the other hand, the microorganisms are too small to see, to capture their movements, to know if they are eating food, or to see if they are breathing. Are they comfortable or stressed? The colony was certainly growing a little larger every day, but what could I sense by looking at it? At first, while the colony is expanding rapidly, at least we know that they are alive. But when the growth slows down, are they still alive? Are they all dead already? Alive, dead, even that is not clear. When I talk to them, am I getting any response from them? Or am I not getting anything across and are they not feeling anything? I cannot imagine what they are going through. What can I receive from them? I realize that I have been unconsciously able to assume what it looks like for organisms I know well, and at the same time, I realize the fact that there is no contact point or area in my current self where I can know the state of the microorganisms.

However there is one thing. While the colony was spreading, the shape was not a circle but jagged like a sun mark. I assumed that it was a sign of healthy growth under the influence of sound, but later I was shocked to learn that it was a sign of "stress" for E. coli. Was I doing something that was stressful to the E. coli...was the temperature too high, or was it too loud to keep the sound playing...? But at least, Even if it's annoying to them, they were sensing something and responding to what I did!!!

Visualization of Organisms in Art Contexts & Yeast-gram Play Kit:

Visualization of Organisms in Art Contexts

Shiho Hasegawa

[Image description: the background of this page is part white and yellow. The page also has black and white images of cut outs, a petri-dish and an eye looking through a microscope.]

In Visual Art, the unique forms, colours and movements (or their traces) of microorganisms, mainly through the presence of the artist as a mediator, bring to us not only simply a literal/ecological explanation of their life, but also a variety of information that exists in their visions, stories, and problematics; the unique nature of life, its environment, and the conditions for its survival.

They offer a means for people to understand themselves and their environment more deeply.

Experimental Project: Yeast-Trope

I tried a project to make Thaumatrope by living organism, yeast. The Yeast-Trope combines the Thaumatrope, a visual playdevice from the 19th Century to the present day, with a Yeastogram technique of transferring images using yeast. It shows the overlap between the biological phenomenon of yeast growth, the physical sensation of rotation and the cognition of afterimages produced by the human visual function.

I used an open-source Yeastotram protocol by Pavillon\_35.

Let’s play with the Yeast-Trope (Play kit)

[Image description: a Black and white illustration of the Thaumatrope. A person is holding strings attached on the either side of a drum-like circular object. There are jagged lines around the circular options and a scissor symbol to instruct how and where to cut out the figure to play with the Yeast-Trope.]

First Thaumatrope by William Henry Finton (Cited: A. Castillon, Recreations in Physiques, Paris: Hachette, 1863, 284)

How to play?

You can play the Yeast-Trope with this kit! It is a play tools based on the Thaumatrope, a visual play device that utilizes the human afterimage effect. Can you see the kanji letter “ “ (means fungi and bacteria) on your eyes?

Prepare a scissor and piece of string. (Print both sides of the photo page).

Cut the circle shape (disk) with dotted lines.

Punch a hole in each [circle] mark and thread the strings through them.

Put the left and right strings on the middle fingers of each hand. And rotate them by twisting them several times.

After the strings are twisted, pull them to the left and right, and the disk will rotate vertically.

Then, the picture on the disk appears as a composite.

Closing words:

[Image description: close up of a scientist/researcher’s hands injecting something through a syringe into an unseen object as part of an experiment.]

The zine is the traces of what we experienced, felt, and thought through our works. We hope some of it comes through to you by reading it. However, it is not the end. There is still much to be done, as several authors have noted their future prospects and goals. Experiments are insatiable quests in the first place. Our quests also will continue through numerous trials and errors, dealing with organisms and technologies. The most important message here is that

you can do the same thing we do. Please try to do the practices described here. DIYbio is open for everyone, it does not refuse to be changed and arranged. Please join us!

Authors:

Ai HIROSE

Georg Tremmel

Juppo Yokokawa

Mariko Sakuragi

Misa Haneda

Shiho Hasegawa

Yosuke Tsuchiya

Yutaro Kawada

Special thanks

WAAG Society

BioClub

# The Very Specific Guide to Anywhere

By: Marlies Vermeulen and Veerle Spronck

[Image description: hikers, bikers, and a car travel down a zig-zag path.]

Introduction:

How do you sensitise yourself to the places you enter?

What role does your smartphone play?

When have you last explored a place that you know through a new lens?

How exciting that you decided to travel with The Very Specific Guide to Anywhere. The guide you are holding is a surrealist travel guide. It is one size fits nowhere, and thus no longer requires travelling to a specific part of the world.

We, the makers of The Very Specific Guide to Anywhere, think that travel guides are an interesting medium to consider as methodological tool, because they are “discursive constructions of culture”: they point out what is worth seeing or noticing (Czeitscher & Krautgartner, 2017). Historical travel guides have been used to study what cultural narratives were deemed important or generally thought of as valuable. Today, these narratives have extended into our online realities - they take the shape of selfies, hashtags, and Google reviews.

But how could travel guides also be a tool to enable reflection on what and how we notice as researchers doing fieldwork?

You are about to figure that out with your copy of The Very Specific Guide to Anywhere.

It is time to embark on a walking tour in your surroundings, and to along the way engage in experimenting, documenting, and reflecting on how your smartphone use and local experience are interlinked - or not.

Bon voyage!

Gear List:

Hiking boots, or other proper boots

Rainy weather? Bring a raincoat!

Smartphone, with internet access, a working camera, and a charged battery

Make sure the following apps are installed before you embark on the excursion: Google Maps, a compass, timer, and optionally: Instagram

Pen or pencil

Scissors and a stamp

Some money - enough to buy a drink in your current surroundings

Recommended speed: max. 5,25 km/h (regular walking pace)

Colophon

A Very Specific Guide to Anywhere (38th edition)

Concept: Marlies Vermeulen & Veerle Spronck

Design: Marlies Vermeulen, Veerle Spronck,

Remy Kroese & Pim Lucassen

Special thanks to Peer for always keeping up the good vibes

All images are taken from the vintage map and travel guide collection of Pim Lucassen

References

Czeitscher, U. & Krautgartner, B. (2017). Discursive constructions of culture: Semantic modeling for historical travel guides. Sociology and Anthropology, 5(4): 323-331.

Peters, P. (2003). De haast van Albertine: Reizen in de technologische cultuur: naar een theorie van passages. De Balie.

Shields, R. (1991). Places on the margin: Alternative geographies of modernity. Routledge.

1.

This tour starts by going over the threshold.

Walk out of the door and close it behind you.

2.

Try to orientate yourself first. Where is the highest point of orientation that you see?

Take your phone, open the compass app. In which direction does your orientation point lie?

You will start walking in that wind direction.

[Image Description: a collage of castles and temples.]

Inset Sidebar: Did you know that smartphones come equipped with a magnetometer so that your phone can sense its orientation in space, and use basic apps like the Compass App to determine your location with respect to Magnetic North or South?

Sidebar: Did you know that the American composer John Cage wrote a musical piece entitled 4’33’’ in which no music was played for this period of time. Whenever the piece is performed, instead of silence, you start to notice that there is actually a lot of sound to listen to. Someone’s cough, a car passing by, a bird singing. Are there everyday sounds that might be worth listening to as you walk?

3.

Set a timer for 4 minutes and 33 seconds. Start walking, and while you walk pay attention to what you hear.

Sidebar: Did you know that approximately one billion people use Google Maps every day? Google Maps only uses a very narrow range of colours to represent the entire world. What is even more remarkable is that Google does not provide a legend of its maps. Yet, somehow we are capable of reading them all over the world. And following its blue line, Google Maps brings many of us to our destination time after time.

4.

What is now the highest point you see?

Take your smartphone. Open Google Maps, choose the map view so not satellite or terrain, and find your chosen point.

Place a pin.

Let the app now make a route. It will most probably propose three options to you. Choose the most colourful one. Take a screenshot. Which colours are in the map? What do they stand for on the map?

Now continue to walk your route. Walk as far as you like. And take a picture each time you notice something on your way in the same colour as the ones defined on the map.

5.

You have now arrived at your ‘Place of interest’.

A ‘place of interest’ is a place famous for its scenery or being a historical site. They are popular places in cities or countries that are considered worthwhile to pay a visit. A place of inte­rest can thus be anything from the Eiffel tower to a gas station.

Such places, however, do not simply attract interest out of nowhere; myths and stories are created around them. Travel­lers need to have a reason to go somewhere. ‘Sites are never simply locations. Rather, they are sites of someone and of something’ (Shields, 1991: 21). Already in the 19th century, adventurer and businessman Thomas Cook was aware that he needed to collect and share stories about and around places to generate interest for them - “place myths” were created (Peters, 2003: 91-92).

Take a picture of your place of interest, and, if you feel like it, a selfie with it too. Then fill out the required information:

At the beautiful … site, close to … ,

you find a … that dates from …

It is a great example of …

At first sight you … , but if you look further you might notice …

Three particulars of this place are:

1 …

2 …

3 …

[Image Description: A 1950s gas attendant looks at a map with a tourist.]

6.

At the next page of this travel guide, you can find a map. You will use it to reach your final destination.

As you will see, this map does (most probably) not represent your current location. It is a map of where this travel guide has been created. You will now use it to continue your excursion at your location.

Use the directions on the map at your current location.

Sidebar: Where did you learn to read a map? And what kind of maps were they?

[Image description: A map of several streets, with directions: first right, first left, second left, first right, second left, first right, second left, first left, second right, first left, first right.]

7.

You have reached your final destination. Time for a drink! Find the closest establishment where you can sit and enjoy a well-deserved beverage.

Are you seated? Time to document.

Complete the map you have just used at step 6 by adding the route you walked to it, starting from the threshold.

a. How did you make the map fit your location?

b. Look back at the pictures you took at step 4. Compare the pictures you took of the colours along the way and the colours in your screenshot of the map. How do they differ?

c. What knowledge did you build on when reading the map? And when you are now mapping your route?

Take a look at the picture you took of your place of interest. Draw it on the postcard. Then turn it around, write down your memories, cut it out, and send it to the person you want to share it with. a. What memories did you just write down? Why?

b. Places of interest are ‘socially constructed’. By making your postcard, you have started to construct a new place of interest. To further establish your place as a place of interest (1) upload the picture to the location on Google Maps and write a review, (2) share the picture and/or the drawing you just made on Instagram with the hashtag #guidetoanywhere and by adding the location.

[Image description: A postcard to be cut out, with the following text on it: Greetings from:

...

#guidetoanywhere.]

# When Am I Gonna Nut!!!!: Politicising Feminist Rage, DIY Media Making and Visual Practices With Asian Women as Feminist Anti-Racist Methodology

By: Helen Yeung

[Image description: A collage of photos and drawings. A drawing of “Steve” depicts him as a bald man with a wrinkly forehead.]

[Image description: A collage with two pictures of the author, “speaking” the following text.]

Kia ora and hafa adai! I'm a queer feminist scholar, community organiser, and zine-maker from Aotearoa. My research centres on feminism and gender, digital activism, DIY media production, multimodality and alternative participatory methods.

Helen is also the founder of migrant zine collective! We co-organise the collective with a group of passionate Asian migrant women, and host zine workshops, community events, pop-up libraries and digital collaborations on critical issues.

Introduction:

Welcome to my zine for the DI Y Methods Conference 2022 ! I'm excited to explore alternative ways of academic conferencing, and the idea of making knowledge more accessible through various modes of communication. My zine explores politicising feminist rage and emotions through creative workshop facilitation, DI Y media making and visual practices (mind-mapping/brainstorming, collaging, and theatre performance) as feminist anti-racist methodology for Asian women. I look at how these practices can effectively facilitate and archive politicised dialogues, and be beneficial as alternative modes of resistance. I argue these approaches could be adapted by scholars beyond conventional academic methods to guide research in achieving feminist, anti-racist, and transformative outcomes. I employ an autoethnographic perspective as a diasporic feminist, queer Asian woman, zine-maker and scholar-activist to discuss my experiences in driving a series of dialogue-based workshops in 2021 titled "Asian Women Talk About ... " in Aotearoa (New Zealand). The workshops invited, and encouraged attendees to explore, share and release their pent up anger through a series of visual practices. Topics included: dating, she and relationships; navigating feminist futures; food; and sustainability. The outputs from workshop were then collated, and distributed in the form of a community zine to various online and offline networks.

Email me

helen.yeung128@gmail.com

instagram/Website

@chinesegoth

@migrantzinecollective

<https://migrantzinecollective.com/>

[Image description: A collage with “WHEN AM I GONNA NUT!!!! (male orgasm prioritized)” and “SEX” written in large letters. A photo of the author says:

WHEN AM I GONNA NUT!!! BEST QUOTE EVER FROM THE WORKSHOP ASIAN WOMEN TALK ABOUT SEX, DATING & RELATIONSHIPS. IT WAS A MOOD. BONDING OVER BAD TINDER DATES. THE VAST NUMBER OF ENTITLED THIRSTY WHITE GUYS WHO CAN'T EVEN PRONOUNCE OUR NAMES RIGHT.]

[Image description: A collage with a cat saying “thinking about how to dismantle the patriarchy and shatter white fragility. Two faces from the collage say:

THE THEORISING AND POLITICISATION OF ANGER AND EMOTIONS HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY POPULARISED IN CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST LITERATURE. THIS HAS SHED LIGHT ON THE MARGINALISED AND ABSENT VOICES OF WOMEN OF COLOUR IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE.

THIS HAS ALSO REFRAMEO RAGE AS A TOOL FOR WOMEN TO REHARNESS THEIR POWER IN EFFORTS TO GENERATE COLLECTIVE SOCIAL CHANGE, AND ACTIVELY RESIST THE IMPERIALIST WHITE SUPREMACIST CAPITALIST PATRIARCHY.

The second sentence is said by (in the collage), and attributed to, Sophiya Sabapathy.]

[Image description: Two collages with quotes from famous feminists, with their pictures saying their quotes:

“I HAVE WONDERED HOW RAGE, SHOCK, FEAR, GRIEF, DESPONDENCE, UNBELONGING AND OTHER PAINFUL EMOTIONS COULD BE TRANSFORMED INTO EMOTIONAL SUPERPOWERS TO CONTINUE LIVING, FLOURISHING AND FIGHTING” – SHARON QUAH, 2020.

"COMMUNITIES BUILT BY WOMEN IN RESPONSE TO WHAT MAKES THEM MAD ALSO HAVE THE ADDED BENEFIT OF MAKING WOMEN’S ANGER AND COMMUNITY PUBLIC AND VISIBLE, CREATING IMPORTANT SHIFTS IN REPRESENTATION AND UNDERSTANDING." – SORAYA CHEMALY, 2018

“NOT ONLY HAS REASON BEEN CONTRASTED WITH EMOTION, BUT IT HAS ALSO BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE MENTAL, THE CULTURAL, THE UNIVERSAL, THE PUBLIC AND THE MALE…”

“WHEREAS EMOTION HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE IRRATIONAL, THE PHYSICAL, THE NATURAL, THE PARTICULAR, THE PRIVATE AND, OF COURSE, THE FEMALE.” – ALISON M. JAGGAR, 1989.

"EVERY WOMAN HAS A WELL-STOCKED ARSENAL OF ANGER POTENTIALLY USEFUL AGAINST THOSE OPPRESSORS, PERSONAL OR INSTITUTIONAL, WHICH BROUGHT THAT ANGER INTO BEING." – AUDRE LORDE, 1997]

[Image description: a picture of one of the “Asian Women Talk About…” workshops.]

Attendees were first asked to introduce themselves, and share the reasons why they signed up for the workshop. They were then guided through a range of activities to critically prompt their thoughts on each theme. This included a spectrum activity from theatre performers Aiwa Pooamorn and Gemishka Chetty as adapted from their work, in which attendees were asked to moue around the room in accordance to certain social identity categories.

This was followed by a mind-mapping/brainstorming session, in which attendees responded to a range of words associated to the workshop theme. For instance, the dating, sex and relationships session had words such as expectations, queerness, Asian men, and white men; and the feminist futures session had intersectionality, patriarchy, violence, consent, and white feminism. Attendees were encouraged to walk around the room, and add their thoughts to each mind-map. Responses were anonymous, and not limited to text, but any form of visual expression.

The anonymous nature of this exercise allowed attendees to approach each mind-map with a range of emotions, and thoughts around their identities as Asian women. Hyunjoo Jung (2014) similarly explores mental mapping as a feminist visual methodology for Korean migrant women, and how the multi-sensory nature of this approach provides participants with a sense of agency to express themselves accurately, as well as challenge the identities imposed to them by broader society.

Flick to the next few pages to see the responses given by attendees!

[Image description: Written responses, which include:

“I’ve always wanted to get with an Asian girl”

Find out all of their ex’s are Asian. How many Asian GFs have you had

always go down on guy first

My Dad had 3 wives

Just because I like feeling sexy & looking sexy doesn’t mean I want sex all the time. Just because I like sex, doesn’t make me your plaything. Just because I like being submissive, doesn’t mean I’ll bend to you.

Male Privilege and entitlement

WHY. WONT. YOU. FUCKING. COMMUNICATE.

Which is worst: White men or Asian men?

Woman being the mum and teaching men everything – these men need THERAPY!!!!!

He saved me as… “Jess (China)”

Mum saying I need to protect my “flower”

LOVE SEX BUT HATE MEN – UNFORTUNATELY STRAIGHT PLS HELP

I am not your caretaker, mother, cook, therapist. I am not here for you.]

[Image description: a picture of one of the “Asian Women Talk About…” workshops.]

[Image description: a written association cloud with “Asian men” at the center.]

As shown from the examples of the previous pages, responses from attendees encapsulated predominantly anger, and frustration towards their gendered-racialized experiences with men, misogyny, and patriarchal norms. The maps not only showcased reflections of Asian women's perceptions, and thought processes, more importantly, they become social constructed texts through which "their desires, emotions, feelings and internal contradictions are expressed and negotiated" (Jung, 2014, p. 985).

Following the mind-mapping session, attendees were invited to gather in a circle, and pose questions, share their responses or things they found relatable. The act of sharing was vital as it provided attendees with a means of validating their emotions among other Asian women. As Bell ( 1987) stated, the integration of feminist pedagogy into creative workshop sessions encourages us to validate women's sensitivity to, and perceptions about the world. This allows for a better understandings of generating feminist strategies, and solidarity through commonalities and differences.

Notably, in both the mind-mapping, and sharing circle, attendees voiced their disdain on issues commonly experienced by Asian women. This included: fetishization, orientalism, sexual expression, and expectations to assume submissive, and domesticated roles with men.

Open discussions also occurred on experiences of racism and sexism, in which attendees felt they were unable to share safely or fully in everyday settings. Explained by Chemaly (2018), such anger, when shown in institutional, political, and professional settings by women of colour, are often ignored, trivialised, demonised, or perceived automatically as a violation of gender norms. However, when provided with the correct tools, attendees were able to visually and physically unpack these grievances.

[Image description: A photo of collage making. A photo of the author says:

“Based on various responses to the mind mapping session, and various activities, attendees then created their own zine pages in reflection to their lived experiences.”]

DIY Media Making:

Attendees were given a short walkthrough on methods of DIY media making through zines as a form of resistance and activism for migrants of colour. Migrant Zine Collective’s existing publications, all of which created from past community workshops, were shown to attendees as examples. They were then provided with instructions to create an H4 zine page in relation to the topics discussed or their personal experiences.

DIY media making was central to the workshops, and is often utilised by feminists of colour to build a space for women and girls to reclaim, navigate, and self-represent their intersectional identities. The zine as a medium further provides feminist practitioners with a means to "pitch their resistance work in the micropolitical spheres of cultural production, [they offer al cheap, accessible, hands-on forms of publishing" (Chidgey, 2014, p. 103). DI Y media making is united by the affective, emotional, empowering and transformative potential of independent cultural production (Chidgey, 2014 ).

Attendees were provided with a range of old magazines, pamphlets, newspapers, and origami paper to collage their creations. Piepmeier (2009) argued that the use of cultural material and cut-and-paste techniques in zines are utilised by women of colour to subvert, expose, and resist stereotypical constructions of racist and sexist iconography in dominant culture, such as through advertising and newspapers.

Attendees sat in small groups and generated organic, unfacilitated conversations on their shared experiences while flipping through magazine pages and creating their piece for the collective zine. This exemplifies the potential of feminist rage as a means to open up the path to establish solidarity, build resistance, and forge transformative forms of community-building amongst Asian women (Quah, 2021).

[Image description: “Collage A”.]

Shown on the next pages are examples of what attendees created which centred their feminist rage. Building on their newfound knowledge, and validation from the mind-mapping session, attendees continued to openly unpack pent up emotions surrounding their lived experiences of racism, misogyny, and patriarchal forms of oppression.

In collage A, the attendee conveys her anger at imperialist, orientalist, and hypersexualised depictions of Asian women. The text, saying "love you long time" is a common racist/sexist phrase used to indicate foreign Asian woman's roles to sexually serve white men. The attendee intentionally crosses out the word "love" and replaces it with "fuck" to express her anger towards those who use the phrase. This is paired with orientalist imagery, text from a travel magazine on Japan, and text from an article voicing anti-Asian sentiments in Australia.

In collage B the attendee utilises satirical humour to express her frustrations. She collages cut- outs of white men found in magazines, likening them to the comical looking frogs in wigs. She paired this with the text "why don't you just speak up?" an ironic phrase used by white men after silencing, and invalidating her experiences of discrimination. Licona (2012) explained, the anger in zines and DIY media making results "not only from invisibility but also from the imposed subordinations, restrictions, and obfuscations of identity binaries" (p. 67).

Meanwhile, in collage C the attendee more explicitly articulates her frustrations as a queer Asian woman. She collages queer imagery from art magazines as a form of feminist resistance, along with the text, "BURN THE STRUCTURE THAT WAS BUILT BY/FOR THE PATRIARCHY."

As Licona (2012) identifies, anger is a common emotion in zines that works to redress reductive and exclusionary (representational) practices. Feminist DIY media-making in this instance has generated new possibilities of resistance for attendees.

[Image description: “Collage B”.]

[Image description: “Collage C”.]

Conclusion:

As shown in the zine, politicising feminist rage and emotions through creative workshop facilitation, DIY media making, and visual practices can be a feminist anti-racist methodology for Asian women. In particular, the visual elements of mind-mapping, DI Y media making, collaging, and theatre inspired activities allowed for alternative ways for Asian women to generate radical conversations in their struggles as gendered-racialized subjects. Additional strategies such as taking time for introductions, utilising short activities that allow for attendees to network, and asking attendees to examine particular issues to report back to a wider group all aided in creating a sense of community, and support systems for implementing social action (Bell, 1987). Beyond shared laughter, love, care and solidarity, attendees' emotions of rage, anger, grief, despondence, unbelonging, and other painful emotions were transformed into feminist anti-racist powers to generate new forms of resistance (Quah, 2020). As Larde ( 1997) asserted, women of colour responding to racism means women responding to anger, "the anger of exclusion, of unquestioned privilege, of racial distortions, of silence, ill-use, stereotyping, defensiveness, misnaming, betrayal, and coopting" (p. 7). Propelled by anger as a motivating emotion, the finished zine represents embodied resistance, and the utilisation of tactics of the everyday to express emotion, and offer alternatives to unjust social practices (Licona, 2021 ).

[Image description: An image of the zine produced by the workshop series. Caption reads “This is the zine we made!”]

References:

Bell, L. (1987). Hearing all our voices: Applications of feminist pedagogy to conferences, speeches, and panel presentations. Women's Studies Quarterly, 13(3/4), 74-80. https:/ /www.jstor.org/stable/40022012

Chemaly, S. (2018). Rage becomes her: The power of women's anger. Simon & Schuster.

Chidgey, R. (2014). Developing communities of resistance? Maker pedagogies, do-it-yourself feminism, and DIY citizenship. In M. Ratto c, M. Boler (Eds.), DIY citizenship: Critical making and social media (pp. 23-28). MIT Press.

Jaggar, R. M. (1989). Laue and knowledge: Emotion in feminist epistemology. Inquiry, 32(2), 151-176. https://doi.org/10.1080/00201748908602185

Jung, H. (2014). Let their voices be seen: Exploring mental mapping as a feminist visual methodology for the study of migrant women. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 38(3), 985-1002. https:/ / doi.org/ 10.1111 / 1468-2427 .12004

Licona, R. C. (2012). Zines in third space: Radical cooperation and borderlands rhetoric. Suny Press.

Larde, R. (1997). The uses of anger. Women's Studies Quarterly, 21 ( 1 /2), 278-285.

Piepmeier, R. (2009). Girl zines: Making media, doing feminism. New York University Press.

Quah, S. E. (2020). Navigating emotions at the site of racism: Feminist rage, queer pessimism and fire dragon feminism. Australian Feminist Studies, 35(105), 203-216. https://doi.org/10.1080/08