

Researcher as Artist/Artist as Researcher

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This is a postmodern article that is nontraditional in its form, content, and mode of representation. Upon recognizing that we share interests and common experiences as artists, we decided to collect life history information from each other about our artistic experiences. Thus we have become, simultaneously, "the researched" and "the researcher." In these conversations, we explore the ways in which we were each guided by our past, very strong aesthetic and artistic experiences. We also include the voices of other researchers and artists in our conversations as we explore the influences of art in the formation of our worldviews.

The transcribed narratives in this text—representing portions of our conversations—are intensely personal accounts of how we (Susan and Gary) have each experienced similar kinds of feelings (affective knowing) as part of both research and artistic activity. As collaborators in a life history research project exploring the experiences of untenured university teacher educators, we are engaged in framing and reframing concepts appropriate for uncovering personal history influences on professional lives—ours included. Thus, in the process of reflecting on our joint, separate, and emerging research projects, we discovered that we were each guided in our research by our past, very strong aesthetic and artistic experiences. Upon recognizing that we share interests and common experiences as artists, we decided to collect life history information from each other about our artistic experiences. We would each become, simultaneously, "the researched" and "the researcher" (Cole, 1994). Our dual, reciprocal, and reflective roles would give us, we anticipated, insights into our practice as researchers and into other elements of our professional and personal selves. We were especially interested to discover and make more explicit how artistic and aesthetic experiences and events have shaped our thinking about research. We attempt to draw parallels between elements of our lives—between our artist and our researcher selves.

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"Habits of mind," approaches to the world, or in phenomenological terms, attitudes toward everyday life, and specialized attitudes, are extensions of habits of thought that emerge and are developed in the practice of occupation, profession, or craft. (Bensman & Lilienfeld, 1991, p. xv)

Many other writers before us have drawn connections between qualitative research practice and artistic activity—for example, Eisner (1981, 1985, 1991b), Richardson (1992), and Denzin (1992)—and we invite them, as well as many artists whose voices have contributed to our conversations, into our formal, bounded text. Their voices are juxtaposed in conversation with ours, not cited as authority but, rather, included in our ongoing conversations about our artistic identities. The result is a postmodern, postcolonial manuscript (Bruner, 1993; Chow, 1993) that generates meaning not only through its content but also through the form in which the content is displayed. (Susan's narratives are contained in the left column; Gary's in the right. Collaborative writing, that distinguished by academic style and editorial voice, such as you are reading now, is aligned with both left and right margins. Contributions from other researchers, artists, and researcher/artists are presented as indented quotes.) The arrangement of the text on the page accentuates the possibility that the reader may find multiple points of entry into the text. Readers might, for example, follow the order of our presentation, or find their own point of entry, reading Susan's narratives before or after reading Gary's contributions, either before or after considering the voices of the numerous other researchers and artists who have joined the text.

Through innovations in form and content, we attempt to reject the "logic" of traditional sociological writing and to integrate conversation that is, by its nature, ephemeral in form and often irrational in its composition; the form of our presentation is our protest of the institutional tradition that accepts a hierarchy of knowledge that anoints scientific discourse and omits the arts entirely from discourse about cognitive processes (Eisner, 1991a). Although not expressly intending that the text would be performed, the conversational patterns lend themselves easily to that format (for examples of research performed before an audience, see Ellis & Bochner, 1992; Finley, Knowles, Cole, & Elijah, 1994; Paget, 1990), and an earlier version of Susan's and Gary's conversations was performed as a reading (Finley & Knowles, 1994). We imagine the text performed on a stage crowded with performers whose voices mingle in a polyphonic conversation punctuated by its complexities, contradictions, and issues left unresolved. The performance would eschew linearity, forgoing the temporal and causal restraints engendered by acts and scenes, but would instead image a free-wheeling conversation. The advantage of the written text, however, is that readers may also join the fray, comparing and examining their own experiences, assumptions, and responses (Ronai, 1992) in reaction to those of the multiple voices found in the written text (Gagnon, 1992). How rewarding it was for us when a peer reviewer (identified as

Reviewer-120) did just that, contradicting Derrida in notes in the margin of the text! We have included Reviewer-120's contradiction in the current text as a reminder that you, the reader, are also a participant in this conversation.

BEFORE VERSE 1

Prologue

Art has run like a golden thread throughout the fabric of my life
(Hall, 1993, p. 59).

Susan: As an adolescent, artist-wannabe, I took a series of lessons in naturalistic drawing. My first lesson was very short; without any instruction as to method, but with the singular admonition to "draw what you see, not what you know," I was dismissed from the studio with the direction to draw 50 trees. My first 12 sketches were very unsophisticated line drawings—I looked at a tree and drew its general proportions and added foliage characteristics insofar as you could tell if it was an evergreen or not. Having decided that this approach was extremely boring and that I was not truly "seeing" in the manner of an artist, I took a closer look at my subjects, and I noticed bark and leaf and moss. My next 10 trees were so detailed as to be distorted representations of my seeing; I was drawing what I knew about my subjects. For 18 more trees I struggled to understand the instruction to "draw what you see and not what you know." It was not until my final 10 trees that I was able to adjust my technique and draw just what I saw. And yet, the final 10 drawings were not the simplistic representations of my first sketches. Rather, in the final sketches, I recorded more accurately what I saw—the trees were not distorted by too detailed bark and leaf formations, but there were, indeed, bark and leaf formations. It occurred to me then that it was right to draw "what I see"—in order to represent—but that it was also true that the more I knew about my subject the better I could see.

Gary: Some artists are able to very quickly develop an interpretation and get it "right," the first time on paper or on canvas, and they sit back and say, "Yes, that is what I meant, that is what I assumed." Other times [the artist] has to rework and rework, and you sense that the artist is

rethinking, reworking the interpretation. It is not just simply a matter of technical skill—that may be a part of it—but it is also reworking the interpretation. So it seems to me that the connection [between interpretation and the canvas presentation] is a matter of articulation. How do you articulate your interpretation while in the act of painting and in the painting that unfolds? So the gap between your brain and the brush has to do with the articulation of the interpretation.

VERSE 1

Artists as Children/Children as Artists: Or, Developing an “Artistic” Identity

In the introduction to *The Enlightened Eye*, an explanation and advocacy of an alternative research lens, Eisner writes the following:

The title of this book, *The Enlightened Eye*, is intimately related to my life as a painter, and my life as a painter is intimately related to the ways in which I think about inquiry. Although I haven't painted for more than a quarter of a century, my engagement in the visual arts from age six onwards and my studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and later at the Illinois Institute of Technology's Institute of Design did much to shape the ways in which I think about seeing and solving problems. If the visual arts teach one lesson, it's that seeing is central to making. Seeing, rather than mere looking, requires an enlightened eye: this is as true and as important in understanding and improving education as in creating a painting (Eisner, 1991b, p. 1).

Gary: I cannot remember ever not being an artist.

Susan: My experiences with art are irretrievably wound up with my familial relationships—art, craft, and music were exceedingly important in my family. . . . My father was a wood body builder, a master craftsman in the auto industry and always did a lot of fantastic woodworking. My dad carved things and built things and had a great talent for mechanics. When I was very young, he built boats. I remember being in his shop one day when I was 4 or 5 years old, and in about 5 minutes he had carved a totem pole for me. I used to have a doll with a wooden face that he had carved. Come to think of it, I also used to carve a lot when

I was a little kid. I always had my own whittling knife and used to make little barnyard animals and trees. I made some for Mack [my son], too, when he was a toddler.

Anyway, my father also made cigarette and pen boxes, and knickknacks, and such. To make extra money, he consigned with a couple of shops to make special-order picture frames. A lot of these had hand-carved designs, although some things were done with tools, auger and awl types of things, and several power tools. At first, I just hung around the shop, swept up, handed him things, and so on. After a while, I got the knack for telling different kinds of wood, their weights and qualities, and for judging lengths, so I got to be a lot more useful. Eventually, I did the setups and some of the hand carvings. . . . I did a few designs for patterns that were carved into picture frames. Mainly, I sanded the wood by hand to a polish.

On my recent visit to my mother's home [in New Zealand], I talked with her about my artistic development. . . . She was not able to offer me many insights at all, apart from saying that, in some way, I emulated the artistic practices of my father and, in other ways, my actions as a young artist simply emerged "out of the blue" as it were. Certainly Dad sat me down and showed me. . . . I well recollect him giving me a kind of lesson, for example, on pencil shading. He showed me how, by sharpening my pencil in a particular way, holding it at a particular angle, I could shade in on the paper itself. Or, I could get a lot of fine lead shavings or particles on another piece of paper and, then, with my finger or a cloth, could smudge and shade to the "right" intensity. Such lessons were always about technique. They represent my fondest memories of Dad.

The significance of material in the productive realm of artistic learning is considerable. Unless one has developed at least some control over the material which one hopes to use as a medium for artistic expression, it is unlikely that the material will ever achieve the status of a medium. This means that an individual must have developed skill not only in the management of material, he [sic] also needs to have developed skill in the handling of tools necessary for working with the material (Eisner, 1985, p. 81).

I started taking art lessons in my grandmother's studio when I was about 10. [I took formal art lessons there and with another artist until I was about 16 or 17.] I suddenly fell in love with sketching and carried sketch pads with me wherever I went for about the next 5 years. It is very

difficult to capture the experience and put it into words. I was a real "outdoorsy" kid and my favorite things to draw were from nature. I can vividly remember tactile images as much as anything, the feel of birch bark, the smoothness of sanded wood, the silkiness of wool used in weaving, . . . these tactile images are foremost in my recollections of artistic experiences.

In a sense I had a realist artist's eye and I usually tried to develop realistic portrayals of something—landscape, machinery, architectural images. . . . Yet I recollect at one level great imagination going into my work that was beyond realism—in the sense of imagination beyond something that could visually or physically be seen in the real world.

When my daughter Kay was six, she, like so many other children, insisted on drawing arms in such a way that they extended horizontally from the middle of the torso. One day I asked her where arms leave the body and she immediately assured me that they emanated from the shoulder. I then asked her if she could draw them in that way and she readily complied. I assumed that we had negotiated a developmental milestone: now that her knowledge was aligned with her graphic repertoire, there surely could be no reason for her to insist on locating the arms at the center of the torso. But I was wrong. Kay immediately drew another person, with the arms once again coming out of the center of the body. "I know that's not the way you want to do it, Dad," she said sympathetically, "but that's the way I like to do it, at least for now" (Gardner, 1980, pp. 72-73).

We can't know Kay's reasons for preferring to draw the arms of her human figures coming from the center of the torso; perhaps she had just recently mastered the use of her pencil in drawing and was less concerned with the subject of her art than with her control of the medium, or perhaps arms were the aspect of the torso that she chose to emphasize in her portraits. The anecdote strikes us most powerfully, however, as an example of a time when formalistic expression was awarded greater importance than connotative expression. As children, we too were taught to most value art that "corresponds" most closely with "truth." Consequently, we tend to thrill at Kay's purposeful disregard for perspective in her figures, a drawing preference that calls to mind cubists' figure-ground relationships, and that reminds us, each, of our own experiences trying to satisfy the search for truth in representation that was expected in our early artwork.

The more I think about it, the more I think I was really constrained by the expectation placed on me by peers and some teachers. They typically said things such as, "You are so good at drawing [meaning reproducing images realisti-

cally]. . . Draw us the school, the town, the . . ." or whatever. It seemed their expectation of me was that I should simply produce realistic images in my artwork. I think of the time I received an oil painting set—from my auntie and uncle. I must have been about 10 or 11 years old. It took me ages to get out of the mode that I thought was expected of me—which was to do representations, in fine detail, of something that I could "see." In fact, it may have been that without the oil colors I never would have got out of that wholly representational or objective, fine grained, detailed mode. Yet, when I looked back on those very early oil paintings, even they were bound by the traditions of others, and I soon stopped using them.

To make public what is private some vehicle must be employed; these vehicles are forms that are used to represent the conceptions that have been achieved or that are formulated through the process of expression. Because conceptions are related to the information provided by the senses that are used in conceptualization (we can recall visually or kinesthetically, audially or tactually, for example), the problem of expression is one of transformation. How shall experience, that is, say, tactile, be conveyed or made public in a way that does not vitiate its content? How does one move from the qualities of a particular experience into the public realm without destroying the meaning that the experience provided in the first place (Eisner, 1985, p. 236)?

Our recollections of our early experiences with art are rich with vivid memories of the sights, sounds, and smells of home life. For instance, Gary remembers the distinctive features of his front door that make him proud, still, of the aesthetics of his boyhood home. Similarly, Susan recalls the feel of a hunk of coal pressed hard against her hand as she drew childish primitives on the sidewalks around her neighborhood. And, in the process of our reflections, we have each discovered that our earliest instances of aesthetic appreciation may be our recognition, even as children, of the aesthetic qualities of the *places* where we grew up.

I was struck by the general unaesthetic human-made environment that I grew up in but, yet, it was an environment that had these odd little places, these quite aesthetically pleasing components. [As a young person] I had always found the front room fireplace in the living room at home, for example, aesthetically pleasing. It was a large arch. It had very smooth multicolored bricks yet with quite a heavily textured pattern set below the shiny surface—perhaps even an art deco pattern, in that it was built in the 1930s—and the way that the mantle piece fitted on top of

the fireplace was also very pleasing to the eye. And then there was the detail of the fine crafted woodwork around the front door—I always liked that. It was the delicately balanced relationship between the glass and the wood paneling that I liked. Appropriate proportions! I always used to think that we had “the best glass door in town.” It may have been so. It still looked great when I visited a few months back. So it was that I had these kind of strange little appreciations for the aesthetic and yet, even back then, the small rural town did not have too much about it that was aesthetically pleasant.

The symbolic meaning of architecture can be profound, as it is in the case with places of worship and important public monuments. But the language of buildings can also convey more mundane messages: where to go, what is important, how the building is to be used. It is easiest to discern the function if it is absent or if it is misinterpreted (Rybczynski, 1989, p. 161).

From the time I was 2 years old until I was about 10 or 11, we lived in this big, nasty, rambling old house with all kinds of cubbyholes to hide in and attics and hallways. You would be running down a hall and it would turn and there would always be some neat place to hide. There were things to love in that house. It had a banister to slide down and a big stone fireplace. It was also two doors down from a coal and lumber yard where we used to play, which is also undoubtedly why my parents wanted to move out of there. [We moved] to the countryside to a very nice house by 1960s standards. It was a large ranch with a lot of white walls; it was carpeted, whereas in the old place there were hardwood floors that, when they were waxed, you could slide on. In the new place, we had cubicle rooms that were all shaped the same way and everything looked just alike and it was a much nicer house. People would come and say, “Oh, what a nice house.” It was just a horrible change as far as I was concerned as a kid. We lost what was aesthetically pleasing about the other one. Yes, now we have this wonderful pristine box to live in. . . . I think there is something in the story that gives you a sense of what I think is aesthetically pleasing.

In a chapter titled “American Place and Scene” where he discusses the development of aesthetic values, Tuan writes the following:

Reflecting on the hometown of her childhood, Xenia, Ohio, Helen Satmyer writes: “Children are not aesthetically blind; we could not have thought that view [from the viaduct to the familiar

houses] beautiful. Yet I am convinced that we must have resented any criticism of it. It was home: the same, day by day, year after year—eternally, we should have liked to believe." One's home or hometown need not be beautiful by artbook standards. Other values may be more important, such as comfort and security, a haven of human warmth. Yet, even in the most humdrum town are moments of beauty. "You passed the doctor's office, and were at the corner of your own street, where you turned west, and saw the trees arched against the sky" (Tuan, 1993, p. 144).

Our childhoods, immensely powerful for the ways in which our minds were impressed by notions of the artistic and the aesthetic, continue to play out in many facets of our thinking about researching. We have discovered that these early artistic and everyday experiences have made a difference in the way we think about perception, interpretation, and forms and media, and in our research. As children, we learned the subtle skills of seeing aspects of our subjects in abstraction to their whole. We learned that it is impossible to fully represent in art what we perceive in life, and we learned to value imaginative representations for their expanded dimension of including that which cannot be seen, but is intuitively grasped. We learned to rely on our senses to understand our subjects and our media—the sight and feel of a piece of wood or a tree, the way paints look, feel, and smell in their application.

As researchers, we are still interested in portraying our sensibilities to persons and places as we construct the topographies of our research and academic endeavors. We are interested in describing and analyzing lives within their respective contexts. We are striving to find a place and a medium in which we can engage more freely in finding creative solutions to traditional research dilemmas. We are trying to make the relationship between our relatively commonplace, everyday experiences and orientations more congruent with the actions and perspectives of our researching selves. We seek to bridge the gap between practice and theory, as it were, in the work we do as members of society and as members of the academy. Ultimately, we seek greater levels of authenticity in our researching actions.

VERSE 2

Artists as Students/Students as Artists: Or, Classroom Experiences

Gary: I am sure I did, but I cannot recollect ever painting or drawing before [attending] school. I have no substantial recollections of the "time before drawing."

I went to school the day of my fifth birthday. I can well recollect the polished, softwood floors that felt like they had splinters on them, and they did. But the floors were good for painting on, and big pieces of butcher paper were always painted on the floor in the primary grades. There, knees on the bare wood, we painted large-scale group murals. Around the wall of each pastel-colored classroom—light green usually—were a series of large blackboards that were also easels. They were in rows and were built into the walls of the room so that each presented sloping surfaces at child height—I guess maybe up to 4 feet high—and there was a mechanism to hang your paper from so as to paint on a hard, secure surface where the work could not be disturbed by a careless gesture. I well remember being absolutely in awe over these things, and it was a great honor to have your name printed in a semipermanent paint on the top corner of the surface every year as you went into a classroom. I remember in Primer Four [or approximately first grade] that my blackboard-come-easel was allocated on the one wall opposite the clerestory light source—so it was a really bright space where I had to draw.

I remember the large containers of powdered poster paint that I used to mix up. From very early on, I was often asked to mix these paints. It may have been because I was so much bigger than all of the rest of the kids—although I was the same age—and that the teacher thought I took more care. I don't know! Whatever the reason, I became a kind of teacher's helper when it came to "art time." Art was the thing that I really excelled in.

I don't recollect ever having problems in school with math or English or reading, or anything else, but I do remember being in a privileged position with respect to art. So, right from age 5 and the first months of school, I was regarded as the class artist, which meant that, at some level, teachers appreciated my art. I cannot recollect whether the kids appreciated it in those early years, but teachers appreciated it. (Maybe because it was more realistic, I don't know.) I have no recollection of what I produced in those very early years, but I *do* know what it felt like.

Susan: I was never the class artist, although I always envied kids who were. Even after I was painting, drawing, and doing pen and inks outside of school, with success in terms of having won prizes and even having sold a few items, I was not particularly successful in school art classes. I think

the primary aim of those in-school classes must have been to teach students, or reward students, for following directions. I wasn't real keen on that. My out-of-school art experiences were extremely rewarding so, by high school, I resented the type of classroom art instruction I was given in school. One thing I did learn in school that had a lasting impression was collage making. I started making collages with Macklin [my son] when he was very young and now, 16 years into his life, we still frequently make collages at home. Of course, the range of materials and even the level of creativity that goes into these is far superior to any collages I produced in high school art class. Lately we have even designed and are building some "junk to art" furniture that is in the nature of collage work.

I remember the [primary school] classrooms, in particular, as being incredibly visually stimulating. In fact, I have some [pictures] of classrooms that are exactly as I remember them. (A colleague gave me a book recently by Elwyn Richardson, called *In the Early World*, published in 1964, and it depicts a New Zealand art teacher at work in the 1950s and 1960s, and the images are *exactly* like mine.) In the 1950s and early 1960s, art was very much in the forefront of curriculum development in New Zealand schools. There were lots of opportunities to do painting and drawing. We spent a lot of time doing linoleum cuts, for example, which meant coordinating hand, eye, and knife actions and then printing the cuts in various colors, and so on. That also translated at a later point into wood blocks. And, very early on, there was lots of potato printing, transferring fairly primitive images onto paper. Printing was a really sensual part of my artistic experience at school. Invariably, the kinds of colors that were available, and which we were encouraged to use, were the kinds of colors that were often present in traditional Maori art work. Blacks, various shades of gray, various shades of red, and fairly somber earth colors. But there were also primary colors as well.

In these classrooms, there were easels around the walls—even in the classrooms for the larger kids—and there were lots of wires to hang art from. Art was always displayed. The halls of the school had lots of places for displaying work. While there were lots of art materials at school, there were also lots of artistic materials at home, and so I kind of naturally had a familiarity with artistic media before I ever went to school. Dad had lots of different

kinds of papers, pencils, various brushes, poster paints, water color paints, and tempera paints.

I attended a . . . poor school [especially in the early elementary grades] and there were very few art supplies available to students. Gary, you mention having had easels in the classrooms—by contrast, I didn't know what an easel was until I started taking studio art lessons. I remember getting my first set of crayons. I was a first grader and they came in little boxes of about 12 and varying sizes up to about 128 colors. I was the only kid in my first grade with the big box. . . . Coloring in the lines was big in school. I was terrible at it, and had trouble learning the mechanics of penmanship. I did enjoy finger painting in lower elementary, and in upper elementary, I was one of two students who decorated the back chalkboard with a scene at the beginning of each month. The teacher would choose a seasonal picture, often of our town or something that represented Michigan, and we would recreate it in larger scale on the blackboard, using colored chalks. Not exactly a creative pursuit!

In much discussion of teaching, there is an assumption that a radical difference of kind exists between work which is variously called "creative," "imaginative," or expressive—work which is about children's feelings and sensations—and, on the other hand, work which is distinguished as "factual" and which concerns the "real" or "outside" world (Melser, 1964).

And

I think it's a very bad thing that people aren't made to study art. Whole generations of people in England went to schools where they had no visual education, and you can see the results all around us. Visual education is treated as unimportant, but it's of vast importance because the things we see around us affect us all our lives. . . . Art training sharpens the visual sense, and if people's vision is sharp you get beautiful things around you. . . . It makes a vast difference to a city, to a country (Hockney, 1976/1988, p. 29).

Our artistic experiences were each very different: different in location (indeed, we grew up in different hemispheres), resources, and variety of opportunities in and out of school, family composition and support, relationships with others, and our various levels of intimacy with the familiar, natural, and human-made landscapes, to mention just a few. Yet, as learners, as students, we were driven to express our artistic selves. For Susan, that expression came in multiple forms and multiple media, including plastic arts—drawing and painting, collage and assemblage and utilitarian arts—weaving and sewing; and performance, ice skating and school theater. For

Gary, such expression was more focused on the visual elements of representation.

Schools were the places in which we were alternatively encouraged and discouraged from pursuing artistic endeavors. They were the places where majestic visions were inspired, where boundaries were imposed on the forms and media of expression, where new worlds of other peoples and ways of living were unfolded, where we were urged (pressured) to conform to the norms of our peers and other less artistically sensitive adults. Schools are both sweet and sour in the palettes of our distant memories. And, as parents, we have seen our children surf on the waves of inspiration and mire in the mud of mediocrity that are alternatively the socializing milieu of schools.

At Bradford Grammar School we had just an hour and a half of art classes a week in the first year; after that you went in for either classics or science or . . . and you did not study art. I thought that was terrible. You could only study art if you were in the bottom form and did a general course. So I said, "Well, I'll be in the general form if you don't mind." It was quite easy because if you did less work you were automatically put in that section (Hockney, 1976/1988, pp. 28-29).

VERSE 3

Viewing the World/Worldviews: Or, Developing Perspectives

Gary: It is difficult to articulate the influence of aesthetics on my worldview. I guess there probably is a particular aesthetics to which I ascribe. I am a product of the aesthetics [evident in] the southern part of New Zealand. When I think of "landscape," an appreciation of landscape, there is an aesthetic response. My response has to do with openness, it has to do with movement, with drama, with light and the interplay of light and form, shape and movement, and clouds moving, and their dynamic density, and the time of day, and the season. There is an aesthetics of space, of landscape, that has to do with all of those things. Primarily a sense of the panorama as opposed to, let's say, that which I see when I am in Michigan, where it is difficult to get panoramic views for the most part because vision is blocked by close-at-hand objects.

I know that when I began painting [as an adult], I was immediately attracted to particular kinds of landscapes. I

never realized the unifying element of those landscapes until several years after I began painting seriously. Invariably it was all of those things that I have just mentioned and when I articulated them, I did not do so thinking of the particular response I have just made. So, in other words, when I think of good paintings in terms of the landscape tradition, they represent the qualities of the landscape where I grew up. And further, in my endeavors to create landscapes with watercolor paint and paper, I am often drawn to reproduce the power of drama as represented in the kinds of landscapes familiar to me from my childhood.

Panoramic scale offers the possibility of an all-round vision: a sensation of being "in" rather than "in front of" a landscape. But it also poses formal problems for the painter, since the eye has a natural inclination to concentrate in the center of the field of vision. For all-round vision to function convincingly, the eye must sweep a field which extends considerably beyond the center. The artist's problem is to create a space and a surface that conduct the eye to the outer limits of the painting (Barnett, 1991, p. 96).

Our conversations always take place in Gary's office. The office is really two small offices, or perhaps a very large walk-in closet and an office. The rooms form a U shape, with the door opening (at the bottom of the U) between the longer parts. Two large windows open the space out toward Lorch Hall and while we talk, Susan sometimes gets preoccupied with watching students and professors come and go through that building's entrance. The space is very much Gary's own—it "bears his signature," so Susan claims. "It is a personal space within an otherwise institutional setting. Art is everywhere: many watercolor paintings, Gary's Papua New Guinea photographs, children's drawings, postcards, and other reproductions, a small pile of stones on a shelf just above eye level, arranged 'just so.'" Other memorabilia are "carefully placed" around the room. Susan maintains that even the arrangement of furniture is "artful." Gary has misgivings about the constraints of space and the "packed in" feeling that it imbues. Floor to ceiling bookcases form a semihexagon in the larger of the two rooms. There is a desk and (an interrupting!) phone in each of the rooms and in the larger of the two, a small round "conference" table is in the center of the hexagon-shaped space.

Sometimes we work at the desk, other times we sit together at the round table. Each time we work together, Susan begins by allowing herself "to inventory the now familiar artifacts of Gary's life—the stones, the artwork, favorite book titles." For a long time, Susan wondered how she came to be so comfortable in this crowded space that so clearly belongs to someone else. Eventually, it hit her. "It was the art, the symmetry—it was the balance that Gary has achieved in this very special space." Susan relates to the space as

she might to a painting, or to a stage design. The room is itself Gary's artistic creation. And, it was this "viewing" that propelled her to think about us exploring our artistic and aesthetic heritages.

Susan: Folk art, useful things that are also artistic things, my father's Pennsylvania Dutch influence, is one aesthetic tradition [to which] I probably relate. Until rather recently, I fantasized that I would hand-make furniture for a living. My experience with folk arts is rather eclectic and includes material and clothing design [including some clothes that I wear currently], weaving and sewing, as well as carving and other woodworking. Only recently would I have identified "making things" as artistic experiences, even though the experiences [of painting or of carving, for instance] generate a kind of aesthetic enjoyment for me. I suspect that my reluctance to classify these activities as art is a manifestation of a classist [and sexist] society in which art objects are displayed rather than used, which devalues those artistic renderings that serve useful purposes.

Harper's *Working Knowledge* (1987) is a narrative and photographic representation of the working life of Willie, a mechanic and "tinkerer" who lived in the woodlands of upstate New York. Willie reminds Susan of her father, another tinkerer and mechanic, but one who also worked with wood. She notes that depictions of Willie's work could equally describe her father's way of "making things," methods that Susan learned from him, then, and that she now applies in her research.

Willie's working method builds on a detailed knowledge of materials and develops precisely the kind of tactile, empirical connection that leads to smoothly working rhythms, appropriate power and torque, and the interpretation of sounds and subtle physical sensations. . . . All presentations of Willie's work in this book reflect to some degree the theme of the unity of work, the marriage of the hand and the mind, in solving practical problems (Harper, 1987, p. 118).

In life history research, as well as other qualitative research, the researcher is the artisan, building up, layer upon layer, detailed knowledge about the individuals and communities studied, seeking the kind of empirical connection that allows the researcher to interpret meaning in the subtle word, phrase, or gesture of those around her. Like Willie, the research artisan depends on "deep knowledge" of materials, builds skills through corporeal knowledge, and defines herself and her place in the community through the work that she does.

The idea that aesthetic feeling is a quality of process affords a simple yet compelling account of both its generality and indi-

viduality. On one hand, the pleasure taken in aesthetic experience generally can be attributed to its characteristic process—that is, the play of impulses at the fringe of awareness. It is a kind of recreation. On the other hand, the specific cast of this pleasure in the individual case can be attributed to the particular form taken by this process. Aesthetic thinking never takes precisely the same course, nor does it wind up in the same place (Sandelands & Buckner, 1989, p. 110).

I think another powerful influence on my sense of the aesthetic would be the western literary tradition—children’s classics—Twain’s *Tom Sawyer*, *Huck Finn*, and *Prince and Pauper*, Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*, all of Dickens’s tales but especially *David Copperfield*. I read all of those books and many, many others as a child. Gary, do you remember when I told you about playing little and playing big? Playing big was acting out the stories we read and made-up variations on those stories. We made props, dressed up, played out many of those stories. We took on characters and became those people. That type of play may have been my strongest influence as a developing artist.

Literature was certainly an influence on my later love for theater. . . . Literature and theater are intricately connected for me. For example, I have rarely seen a play that I haven’t previously read. In fact, some of my strongest experiences with art have been as patron. I frequent art museums and galleries and attend plays at Stratford’s Shakespeare Festival [in Ontario, Canada], Broadway theaters, and theaters in and around Ann Arbor and Detroit. Soon I will have seen every play in Shakespeare’s canon. Concert going is my connection with music—in addition to an extensive collection of recorded music at home. I frequently attend concerts and performances of music ranging from classical to jazz and blues, to rock, and more recently have taken a very active interest in alternative music. I am very much a part of an aesthetic tradition of “patron of the arts.”

I perform you look. You watch me. I let you watch. You know that I am letting you watch. I know that you know. What I perform, if it were not under the influence of your eye, would be mere doing. The difference between doing and performing is nothing at all, no *thing* at all, but a reciprocity of seeing and being seen. In the theater, your eye creates what it sees, which is really there, but for you. If you look away, it will be something different; if it were different, you would look away (Huston, 1992, p. 26).

The locations of our experiences, the experiences of our worlds—and the place of art in the development of our artistic and researching selves—have profoundly influenced our thinking and being. How we view the world and who we are as adults, parents, teachers, teacher educators, scholars, researchers, and community members is the sum total of our prior experiences, and the meanings we have derived from them, coupled with the visions we have for our futures. Within such a multifaceted construct, we strive to be coherent in the expression of our individual and common worldviews, our individual and common agenda, and our individual artistic identities.

VERSE 4

Artists Working/Working Artists: Or, Doing Art/Doing Research

In American culture it is the female who is supposed to be responsive to visual aesthetic qualities. For many segments of the population interest in arts for males is something less than masculine. Boys are supposed to be interested in more manly things (Eisner, 1985, p. 149).

Susan: In my family, only the women “did” art. My grandmother was an artist. My great-grandmother was a pianist who taught private lessons on piano in her home and played organ in a local church. I vaguely remember that she also played violin and guitar. And she was a rather good watercolorist. . . . My great-aunt attended Julliard, but never made a career of music. By contrast, what my father did was considered to be craft, woodworking. It was very heavy-duty stuff. Women painted and played pianos and things like that in my family and so, growing up when I did, with women’s rights, women’s liberation being important social issues, I did not particularly want to be exactly like those women. While growing up, I was very politically active too, so I think maybe I was avoiding the whole “parlor arts scene.”

I wanted to be a career woman and “make it” in a “man’s world.” And besides, the arts that I was most drawn to—woodworking, clothing design, even my experience as a competitive ice skater—were all in areas that were not clearly arts, but were degraded as being craft or [in the instance of skating] sport. For me, painting was a parlor art. [It was] something that “nice” girls did to wile away

their leisure time, like in a nineteenth-century novel. In retrospect, when I think back on my days in my grandmother's studio, I'm rather embarrassed to admit that I thought of her as something of a parlor artist gone overboard. I didn't really think of her as an *artist*. She demonstrated no proclivity for the arts until she was about age 40 when she took up painting [and sculpture] with a vengeance. She has since displayed her artwork in jurored shows, sold literally hundreds of paintings and figures, and has taught art for over 30 years now. She's well over 80 and teaches community college, adult education, and younger students. She teaches in schools and gives private lessons. Still, that she was a career artist completely escaped me as a young person.

That's my own gender bias, if you will, thinking of art as something women did, but there's another side of gender bias, too. When I was a kid, my family built a new house. I was really interested in architecture and went with my mother to visit the architect at his office. He was an elderly man—I remember thinking he wasn't very nice to kids, but he showed me around his workplace and how drafting worked, and so on. Then, at the end of our conversation, I told him I was interested in becoming an architect. I don't remember his exact words, but they amounted to, "architecture isn't a field for girls." . . . I never returned to wanting to be an architect. . . . Except—I haven't thought about this in a long time. When I was in high school, I wanted to take wood shop really badly. As you know, I did a lot of woodworking at home. My father wasn't at all the type to go to the school and complain, but he went to the school and the school board about this. Still, I wasn't allowed to take the shop course—it was home economics instead, because of being a girl.

Ever alert to any new angle that will shed light on our phenomenon, we look constantly at how each of us constructs the other out of the bits and pieces of history and meaning our culture makes available to, or forces upon us, including race, gender, and class and the structures of patriarchy (Denzin, 1992, p. 27).

Gary: My gut response as a 15- or 16-year-old—and even as a younger [boy]—was that I wanted to become a visual artist. I never had an artist role model, someone who had devoted his full energies to becoming an artist.

From time to time, there were people who passed through my life that gave me glimpses of artists' work. One

of them was Dad's cousin who happened to be the art teacher in the school. Yes, one could become an art teacher in the school, but my father's cousin unfortunately did not seem to be a productive artist. I wasn't impressed! It so happened that my science teacher—about the time I was in the equivalent of Grade 7 or 8—was also an artist. I imagine he was in his 40s at the time and he was coming into his own as an exhibiting artist. With considerable interest, I watched his work develop. I can still remember the thrill that he obviously experienced at finding and taking hold of this new avenue of expression. Soon after that time, he left teaching and became a full-time artist.

Culture also directs people's vision; it offers both constraint and empowerment. . . .

Sight guides every step of our practical life. Everything that comes into our field of vision is interpreted to enable us to navigate through space and do the sorts of things that need to be done. But the capacity that empowers us in practical life may also be a condition for aesthetic appreciation; the two spheres are not always separate and distinct. . . .

Practical life and aesthetic experience intimately intermesh in another way—so commonplace that we hardly give it a thought—in our natural inclination to do our tasks . . . with efficiency and skill (Tuan, 1993, pp. 99-100).

Even though I quit pursuing "art" seriously, I did continue to draw and paint throughout high school. A portfolio of some of my work was used to waive a couple of courses in arts and humanities [in college]. By then I had a child and time was pretty limited. I've never worked seriously at any art since; that is, I've never pursued a career in art, but I am an active patron of the arts. [And] I sketch constantly; for example, in my notebooks, and always take class notes in pencil to protect against smearing ink because I draw so much during classes. Also, making things out of wood, designing and making a few unique items of clothing, collage and furniture making, are all part of my everyday life, even if I haven't always thought of these activities as "making art."

Nevertheless, despite my misgivings about a career in art, art has always been an important part of my life and I have never been able to live without it (Hall, 1993, p. 61).

I was always very much in awe [of artists], but I never knew what artists did in terms of working full-time. I could never conceptualize that. So, I was never able to convince my

teachers or parents that being an artist was what I wanted to do, and I was steered away from it. Even now, some 33 or 35 years later, I still get kind of annoyed at the way people tried to help me unlearn my artistic vision.

. . . For me, as a young adult, it was architecture that brought together my interest in art with my interests in landscape and people. [Becoming an architect was but an intuitive response to my environment, something that has only recently become apparent.]

There are inherent limitations to depicting three-dimensional space on two-dimensional paper. Unlike a painter, who manipulates his medium directly, an architect works with representations, not the real thing. He imagines a cube, but he draws a square in plan, and in section. He can draw a three-dimensional cube, as seen from the outside—or from the inside—but only from a single vantage point. These drawings are at best partial representations of the movie that is running in his imagination. Space is the stuff of architecture, yet it is impossible to depict completely—or to experience—except in a completed building (Rybczynski, 1989, p. 47).

In the early 1980s, I decided to go back to Fiji (where I had worked several years earlier). I literally threw away my single lens reflex camera. I bought some Speedball pens (like my father had used), ink, and some watercolor paints (like he had also used) and decided I was going back to Fiji, not as a tourist or as an expatriate, but as someone who would hang loose and get to know the people and the landscape in a new way.

I simply wanted to know another Fiji—one different than the one I had known as a school administrator. I essentially just sketched—in a fairly sterile sense it now seems—architectural renderings of the landscape. They were very simple, were done quickly. Yet I found that I saw things very differently and that I became engaged in different kinds of conversations with people. For example, as I sat on the waterfront in Suva painting some rusting derelict island steamers, almost immediately there was a crowd around me and I interacted with these people in a way that was new to me. They wanted to know why my vision was so, why I was painting the vessels. Why? Why? Why? These painting opportunities gave me occasions to interact with people who turned out to be incredibly insightful about my artistic vision and my cultural sensibilities. . . .

My painting [activities] in Fiji were quite substantial and, as I often do, I visited art galleries. I discovered that there was an exhibit by a compatriot artist at the New Zealand Embassy and so I went to the exhibit and got into a conversation with the artist. His work was vibrant. The medium was also watercolor. It was very free flowing, at one level, and very expressive and yet, very controlled, an apparent contradiction I know! By the end of the visit, he had arranged for me to have an exhibit of my work. So here I was all of a sudden again being "artist as exhibitor," which was something I had always been in primary [or elementary] and secondary school. I had an exhibit and much of my "very primitive" work was sold. By then I had moved to Utah in the United States and as I came back and continued work on a doctoral degree [and associated teaching activities], I decided to take [artistic production] more seriously. Subsequently, en route to interviews or observations with teachers, I would stop on the way and paint—and on the way back, I would paint again. Pressures of time forced me to work quickly and with economy in my brush strokes. I found myself to be a "real" artist again, an avocation or vocation that I had never acknowledged before as an adult. I probably did more painting than anything that particular year—that was the year I did over 200 pieces. My preparation for dissertation research moved slowly.

Consider the experience of a musician. The musician interacts with music and instrument to create art. Musicians who fail to connect with their music or instruments may at best reach a certain type of technical accomplishment but will never be true artists. They do not make "seamless" the connections between self, music, and instrument. Music is not automatic to their experience but is practiced (Collins & Chandler, 1993, p. 182).

And, a watercolorist's perspective:

To me, it is simply the question of whether or not I can find the thing that expresses the way I feel at a particular time about my own life and about my emotions. The only thing that I want to search for is the growth and depth of my emotion toward a given object (Wyeth, quoted in Wilmerding, 1987, p. 39).

Susan, earlier you talked about "something clicking," finding a point where the process works for you. Somewhere, the experience of producing art really "clicked" and really worked for me, and I felt incredibly empowered by my ability to express myself. It was interesting that the time

that this happened was the time I was struggling to become a researcher and having great difficulty with the process.

My assessment of myself is that my passion for and understanding of art and artistic experiences are far stronger than my abilities to create that passion for others [to view and experience], and that, for me, that distinction is probably the dividing line that separates the true artist from those who enjoy artistic endeavors. It is the difference between intellectual appreciation and creative ability.

. . . That was what I thought [earlier in our interviews]. Curiously, [in the year] since we began this practice of reflection about our artistic selves, I have become increasingly confident in describing myself both as artist and as researcher. I have been writing poetry [some of which was performed in *The Mindscapes of a Community of Researchers: An Interactive Theater Presentation* at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) annual meeting in New Orleans, 1994]. I have created several pen and ink drawings. And now I am working on a series of auto/biographical collage and assemblage art pieces that depict themes in my research about beginning teacher education faculty.

. . . My assessment of myself today is much different than it was in our earlier conversations. I am now far more confident of my identity as an artist. In part, I think that is because this self-reflective research has allowed me to say, "Yes. I am an artist." And I can say, "Yes. I am a researcher." But I have also discovered that my researcher self and artist self are not separate. I am simultaneously artist-as-researcher and researcher-as-artist, whatever specific task I am engaged in. When I am building a collage of images of a person's life history, I have heightened awareness of which experiences were most defining in that person's life. Even the materials that I choose must in some way record the social and political life, even the personality. The art of collage is a search for visual images to re-present life; the art of research is the search for written images that equally re-present life. Sometimes the images that I seek to represent about a life are the same, regardless of the medium, but other times one or the other medium allows me greater expression.

I have also asked myself whether doing art improves my research. And I am emphatic in saying that it does. I am not merely looking, I am seeing. When I write, I am acutely aware that language is my medium. And I believe that

what I write, the end product, responds, not corresponds, to what I see and understand.

The points of time and space at which I really blossomed as an artist came during periods in which I was "forced" by circumstances—spatial, locational, personal, financial—or by relatively uninformed choice to explore the use of new materials, new media: pencil and paper, to pen and ink, to opaque watercolor, to oils, to transparent watercolor, to pastel, to acrylic and canvas. The boundaries of space, time, and even nations, once broken, moved my artistic self to view both my abilities and the world differently. Painting in the South Pacific Islands, the Intermountain West, the Midwest, and the Maritime Provinces of Canada, . . . all evoked subtle and not so subtle emotional responses, borne out in the different palettes and changes in energy and mood of my artistic work. And, of course, these changes were but reflections of the physical topography—the landscape, the light, the hues and shades of the vegetation—of my existence and the emotional responses of my heart and soul.

By the time we were in high school, each of us was strongly drawn to artistic avocations and vocations. Susan wanted to enter the fields of architecture and art, Gary into art. Not knowing how to answer or overcome the societal and familial pressures that pushed us away from artistic pursuits being central in our emerging professional lives, each of us pursued lives and lines of employment and further education that alternatively either squashed our artistic vision or nudged our artistic development in unexpected ways. But meanwhile, as we have traveled the pathways of our separate lives, we have in fact redefined the tenor of our artistic selves. As we reflect, we have redefined ourselves as artists. We are artists working as researchers as much as we are working artists.

The act of "doing art" is part of our everyday experiences, whether we image a pirouette on the ice, flick the wrist in the articulation of a sweeping brush stroke, design for an evening jacket with bold imprints and textures of appliqué, sketch preliminary architectural concepts in preparation for the bathroom renovation, arrange the furniture in the office or study, prepare a canvas for painting and sketch out the subject matter, applaud the actors on center stage, wander paths over the local topography in preparation for representing the landscape of our mind, pen the organic details of the fallen autumn leaves, interview other teacher educators or teachers, or develop an organizing structure to represent our research report for peer review. At every turn we engage in artistic endeavor. Such a view of our personal and professional lives rests in the fact that despite how others define us, *we* see ourselves as artists, and artists "do art."

VERSE 5

Qualitative Knowing of the Artistic/Artistic Knowing of the Qualitative: Or, Being Coherent

Before qualitative research can truly become art, the researcher and research must be linked together. When this occurs, research is no longer a tool to pay the bills, but is part of the lived reality of the researcher. Research and researcher are no longer dichotomized and fractured but serve as an integrated whole (Collins & Chandler, 1993, p. 182).

How is a an artist a researcher and how is a researcher an artist? We began these reflections to satisfy our interest in discovering how we were each guided in our research by our past, very strong aesthetic and artistic experiences. We thought at first that perhaps "researcher as artist" was an analogy and that our reflections would highlight comparative aspects between doing art and doing research. We expressed an interest in drawing parallels between our artistic and our researcher selves. Through the process of reflection, we each discovered that our personal (artistic) and researcher selves were and are "one self" (Bruner, 1993). We have discussed the qualitative similarities between thinking as artists and thinking as researchers primarily as they relate to the features of perception. Eventually, we have come to recognize that perception and cognition are not separate mental processes but, rather:

Perceiving and thinking require each other. They complement each other's functions. . . . Perception would be useless without thinking; thinking without perception would have nothing to think about (Arnheim, 1986, p. 135).

Gary: If we try to define the artistic experience as taking in some kind of information about context, however conceived, and reforming it and representing it in another way, as artists are we as researchers, vehicles for that transformation of information? Assuming that is what happens, we are going to feel that we have told the story, painted a picture. We have interpreted for others a particular experience or observation or representation. I was thinking about the researcher being a vehicle for transformation in context. Consider a person who is doing some other kind of research, relying on some kind of interpretation determined by statistics, by some statistical relationship. I am wondering what or who is the interpretive medium then? Does the mathematics or the [computer] program become the interpretive medium, or in fact, is the researcher still the medium? I am wondering about that . . . also because

good art, the work of the artist, generates an emotional experience and, at some level, it grabs your gut and you say "Yes, it turns me on."

Artists are thoughtful people who feel deeply and who are able to transform their private thoughts, feelings, and images into some public form. Because the ability to do this depends on the visualization and control of qualities, it may be conceived as an act of qualitative thought. As a process of using qualitative thought to solve qualitative problems, such a process can be conceived of as depending on the exercise of qualitative intelligence (Eisner, 1972, pp. 115-116).

Susan: Is there an aesthetic [or artistic] intelligence or separate, aesthetic [or artistic] literacy? Or is the artistically inclined researcher, like other artists, limited in her success by the necessary combination of being in the right place at the right time, having the right materials, and even having opportunity? Whatever you do [e.g., paint, perform, or research], it seems all things have to line up at the same time for an artist to demonstrate her artistic intelligence or to build her artistic literacy.

My thesis is straightforward but not widely accepted. It is that the arts are cognitive activities, guided by human intelligence, that make unique forms of meaning possible. I shall argue further that the meanings secured through the arts require what might best be described as forms of artistic literacy, without which artistic meaning is impeded and the ability to use more conventional forms of expression is hampered (Eisner, 1985, p. 201).

What opportunities (are available) for researchers to become artists? Is life-long (or at least school-long) socialization to a scientific paradigm throughout the educational experience too great a barrier for most (qualitative) researchers to cross? And is there a necessity for the audience of artistic qualitative research to be aesthetically literate in order to appreciate its qualities?

The necessity of the aesthetic attitude makes bold the point that art does not evoke or cause aesthetic experience. No matter how compelling the art object, there can be no aesthetic experience without a willing and able beholder. At the same time, it is clear that attitude by itself is not enough. There is still a need for the right kind of object to support aesthetic experience. Both the art object and aesthetic attitude are facilitating conditions for aesthetic experience; they are necessary and encouraging but not sufficient (Sandelands & Buckner, 1989, p. 115).

In discourse about art, both the sculptor and the painter are given the title "artist," and no one has any real difficulty allowing that sometimes a sculptor paints rather than sculpts, choosing to work in a different medium. One does not anticipate hearing the sculptor say that their painterly self, rather than their sculptor self, created that piece of artwork. The description of artist as researcher is a function of medium; functionally, what artist-researchers do is analogous to what artists do.

I am describing research and I am also describing my art. I am looking at the landscape [painting] on the [other office] wall behind us. The cast of yellows, the sunlight—there are pyramid shapes and sand dunes. Realism blends with interpretation, and I also see that combination in your research. You are drawing some conclusions, you are writing a story, you are analyzing, but at the same time the realistic "telling" is highly interpretive.

The relationship between seeing and writing, and writing and seeing holds, *a fortiori*, in all of the modes through which human conception and expression occur. The concepts we learn in mathematics facilitate forms of cognition that can have their expression in music. Pythagoreas is perhaps the most stunning example. What we are able to understand through poetry can contribute to the creation of penetrating theory in the social sciences. The mind draws upon a variety of forms of knowing to give birth to ideas, and these ideas, I am arguing, need not be expressed in the modes within which the conceptualization has occurred (Eisner, 1985, p. 127, original emphasis).

The work of a [qualitative] researcher is also analogous with that of an art critic. As soon as you start to make meaning from someone's life, to interpret their words or their actions and write your views on their experience, however sympathetically, then you have become a critic.

Educational criticism is part of a tradition that has long flourished in the arts and humanities, in philosophy, and later in the social sciences. . . . In the realm of art, critics follow artists. That is, critics do not provide the specifications artists are to fulfill; their relationship to artists is not one of architect to builder. Rather, critics are commentators, interpreters, evaluators, and, at their best, educators. In the realm of art, critics often focus on the context in which the work was produced to enable the reader to situate in a field of ideas that makes its perception more acute (Eisner, 1991b, pp. 121-122).

Actually, there are many analogous roles: researcher as curator, researcher as art historian, researcher as art critic.

If we were to think about some of those activities (or are they really metaphors?), we could describe many aspects of research practice. We could even add more—researcher as artist, researcher as medium, researcher as art judge, researcher as patron. That is interesting. All of a sudden, all of those terms, all of those metaphors have taken on some new possibilities to describe what it is I do.

The artist must prophesy not in the sense that he [she] tells his [her] audience, at risk of their displeasure, the secrets of their own hearts. His [her] business as an artist is to speak out, to make a clean breast. But what he [she] has to utter is not, as the individualistic theory of art would have us think, his [her] own secrets. As [spokesperson] of his [her] community, the secrets he must utter are theirs. The reason why they need him [her] is that no community altogether knows its own heart. . . . Art is the community's medicine for the worst disease of mind, the corruption of consciousness (Collingwood, 1938, p. 336).

Do qualitative researchers facilitate the work of others? Especially, do qualitative researchers help people express themselves? Yes, I think it is like that. For instance, in the context of arranging paintings for an art exhibit, what a curator is doing is trying to place each artwork in its best light. If the artist intended an image to be viewed in light, you have to put the painting in a lighted area. If it is a dark painting, then putting it in a bold light might cause reflections that distort the picture if this positioning was contrary to the artist's conceptions. As curator you have a responsibility to present the art in the way the artist would have wanted. The analogy fits with participants in qualitative research as well. It is the researcher's responsibility to be true to the participant's intention in the presentation of the research information.

The work of art stems from the artist, so they say. But what is an artist? The one who produces works of art. The origin of the artist is the work of art, the origin of the work of art is the artist, "neither is without the other" (Derrida, 1987, pp. 31-32).

What aesthetics can one recognize within qualitative research and how is one to acknowledge those aesthetics?

I am wondering whether much of the research that we do has any artistic value because, in fact, the qualities of artistic experience, experience of artistic practice, are removed from the sterile environment in which we have purportedly done research.

Or is it that artistic value and expression is subject to the constraints of academe? In order to present research according to convention, [it may be that] you merely articulate what fits the mold, the established norm, for conventional publication. And the rest of the interpretation, the part that does not fit the mold, is not articulated, ever, anywhere. It is lost information merely because there was no available medium, or there was no form for expression, available in the academic context. Could it be that "formula" presentation of research information renders the work of the researcher to the realm of draftsman, rather than creative artist? I am not saying that research can't be art, but it often isn't, for pragmatic reasons.

If, therefore, one were to broach lessons on art or aesthetics by a question of this type ("What is art?" "What is the origin of art or of works of art?" "What is the meaning of art?" "What does art mean?" etc.), the form of the question would already provide an answer. Art would be predetermined and precomprehended in it. A conceptual oppression which has traditionally served to comprehend art would already, always, be at work there: for example, the opposition between meaning, as inner content, and form (Derrida, 1987, p. 21).

What question does not constrain? (Reviewer-120, 1994)

It reminds me of art classes—trying to get that realist thing down. Yes, you can produce some "like" images. Drawing a horse! It looks like a horse but if it does not [capture] . . . the energy, the power of a horse, it is not good art. If that happens in research, if in the process of interpretation, you lose the energy and the emotion, the humanness, then the research is not good research. Even when we first talked about collecting and presenting data in this paper [that is, "Artists as Researchers/Researchers as Artists"], we discussed whether or not we could present dialogue in parallel columns [in a publication]. The fact that we may be constrained as to the form in which we present our research puts some limitations on its artistic aspects.

Writing sociologically is usually subject to the limitations of institutionally set rules for academic discourse; the rules create a frame or institutional boundedness within which we discourse, so that the sociologist is limited to saying only those things that fit into the framework of those institutional rules. We are trying to move outside the institutional frame and, theoretically, to extend our discourse to include that which lies beyond established boundaries.

I have breached sociological writing expectations by writing sociology as poetry. This breach has had unexpected conse-

quences for my sense of Self, which may be of sociological and methodological interest to others struggling with alternative forms of representing the sociological. By violating the norms of sociological production and dissemination, I have felt the power of those norms, their role in suppressing lived experience, and the exhilaration of writing nonalienating sociology (Richardson, 1992).

I have to admit that one of the things that has happened to me is that I am losing interest in producing research reports and work that are seen as being simply good, solid research, research that adheres to all the conventions. Increasingly I am finding that researching practice has to be something that I can get really excited about. I say this not only in the context of the process of doing it but also in representing the work. Telling the story, the research story, is for me increasingly more important and is something that I want to take more artistic license with. At one level that is, in a sense, where some interpretive researchers are going. We are beginning to place our feelings squarely in the research process, the research story. The researcher has a life and influence that is complex, interconnected with all that goes on within the researching process. Researching is not something you do in a vacuum and it is not something that is devoid of a whole lot of messy, intricate, personal constructs.

[Notions of panoramic landscape] have a lot of impact on not just my research but also the way I try to be. I try to be more open about things at some fundamental level: about where I am strong or where I am weak as a researcher, about the kind of ways I am willing to include others in my work or willing to be included in their work, and about my unwillingness to stick to narrow, predefined rules and regulations simply because "That is what is done."

I am wanting to make the definition of "artist" more encompassing. I hope it would be artist as painter and writer or writer as artist, et cetera. I would hope that some people might identify other than simply "academic writing" in my researching. They might say, "Yes, this person has clearly brought an artistic quality to this writing." So for me, art is really wrapped in my presentation of self. I say that because in all of my professional work, being an artist is integral to that work. I wanted to be an artist. I have

always thought of myself as kind of a frustrated artist. In my teaching, I was renowned for doing lots of drawing on the board, lots of work that was regarded as "art" or representing "artistic thinking." . . .

If we acknowledge that when I am working on a personal research project I am the interpreter of the various phenomena that I observe, then I am like an artist. This is because I am in fact deriving meaning from that experience, and I am articulating in a particular way the experience, as an artist might do visually or in performance or in music.

I worry very much about defining qualitative research as art because I don't want access [to the research] to become even more elitist, classist. If aesthetic literacy or advanced aesthetic sensibility were prerequisite to practice within the paradigm, *entrée* could become even more elite [than it is now]. Exclusivity creates boundaries that I am opposed to establishing or crossing. . . . It seems to me that research should have something in common with furniture making—[that which is produced] should be highly useful. Shouldn't its value come more from its usefulness rather than from its "artfulness"? Can its artfulness increase its usefulness?

Cannot a work transcend its social function? Is it really true that most works of art are "useless"? Don't they serve a variety of social functions? Why is the function of covering a bed less honorable than the function of providing status to a wealthy investor? . . . Art does not depend for its identity on absolute distinctions between itself and work that is useful, decorative, or integrally related as ritual or model to the life of a social group. Feminist practice thus expands the range of things we consider to be art (Lauter, 1993, pp. 23-28).

It is also possible that the process of collecting and presenting these narratives will profoundly influence the nature of our work as researchers. Could seeing ourselves as artists who re-present (illustrate and interpret) educational situations spark our creative intelligences? Will we find new ways to blur the distinctions between representations that are regarded as art and those that are regarded as research? Agee and Evans (1988) and Whyte (1961) are only two examples among the many researchers whose work in the social sciences is also uniquely artistic. Look further to the work of documentary photographer Walker Evans whose portrait of American experience is comparable only "to the novels of Melville and Twain, to the poetry of Dickinson and Whitman, to the paintings of Eakins and Ryder" (Fonvielle,

1993, p. 5). Consider also descriptive ethnographic narratives such as told by Ridington (1993), the sociological poetry of Rose (1993) and Richardson (1992), or the story-telling quality with which Henry Louis Gates, Jr. presents his memoirs of childhood in *Colored People* (1994). Or, by way of contrast, consider authors whose autobiographical and oral history accounts bear the label "art," including autobiographical painter Charlotte Salomon (1941-1942; cf. Felstiner, 1994) whose "Life or Theater?" collection depicts her experiences as a Jewess in Nazi Germany, or poet Ntozake Shange (e.g., *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*, 1975), or playwright-performer Anna Deavere Smith (1994) whose *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* dramatizes over 200 interviews with Los Angeles residents following the city's 1992 riots. It is time for us, Susan and Gary, as educational researchers engaged in the framing and reframing of concepts appropriate for uncovering personal history influences on our professional lives, to expand our definitions of research activity to encompass the aesthetic—to observe, to interpret, and to illustrate, with an artist's eye—to pursue boldly a broadly conceived notion that extends the answer to the question "what is research?"

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