Sharing Qualitative Research

Showing lived experience and community narratives

Edited by Susan Gair
and Ariella van Luyn

Routledge

This book takes a bold approach to uncertainty, looking for new ways to bring storytelling and narrative, emotion, meaning and experience into formal knowledge. Contributors rethink the boundaries between scholarly research and everyday activism, and they're not afraid to explore some of the wilder shores of methodology. Each chapter tells its own compelling story, and the collection as a whole brings new insights to user-created citizenship and the role of the researcher.

John Hartley, *John Curtin Distinguished Professor,*
Curtin University, Australia

The book is a must for social researchers who wish to undertake persuasive community-driven research which goes beyond the boundaries of orthodox qualitative research. This book, using arts-based, narrative and participatory processes, highlights many moving life stories that can assist qualitative researcher when embarking on their research with diverse communities. I highly recommend this book to students, teachers and researchers in the social sciences.

Pranee Liamputtong, *Professor of Public Health,*
Western Sydney University, Australia

It is exciting to see the growth in the use of creative and arts-based approaches to qualitative research and this volume explores a wide range of applications of these 'alternative' methods. The rich, reflective research accounts go beyond the human: there are examples of communications with animals and inquiry that engages with Spirit. I experienced a whole gamut of emotions whilst reading the volume and was in turn shocked, amused, moved to tears and inspired.

Victoria Foster, Dr, *Senior Lecturer in Social Sciences,*
Edge Hill University, UK

Sharing Qualitative Research

In an era of rapid technological change, are qualitative researchers taking advantage of new and innovative ways to gather, analyse and share community narratives?

Sharing Qualitative Research presents innovative methods for harnessing creative storytelling methodologies and technologies that help to inspire and transform readers and future research. In exploring a range of collaborative and original social research approaches to addressing social problems, this text grapples with the difficulties of working with communities. It also offers strategies for working ethically with narratives, while also challenging traditional, narrower definitions of what constitutes communities.

The book is unique in its cross-disciplinary spectrum, community narratives focus and showcase of arts-based and emerging digital technologies for working with communities. A timely collection, it will be of interest to interdisciplinary researchers, undergraduate and postgraduate students and practitioners in fields including anthropology, ethnography, cultural studies, community arts, literary studies, social work, health and education.

Susan Gair is Associate Professor at James Cook University, Australia.

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Routledge Advances in Research Methods

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Anna Banks is Associate Professor of English at the University of Idaho. Her research and writing is interdisciplinary and she works at the intersection of ecocinema, ecocriticism and critical animal studies, often addressing aspects of the human–animal bond. She is especially interested in works involving non-human narrators and in how narrative and cinematic point-of-view affect reader and viewer understanding of the storyworlds created and inhabited by animal narrators. She is co-editor of the collection *Fiction and Social Research: By Ice or Fire*, and a member of the international editorial advisory board for the *Social Fictions Series* from Sense Publishers. In addition to her scholarly publications, she has published short stories, written plays and screenplays, and produced short films.

Sandra Bulger is an early childhood educator from Far North Queensland and is currently a James Cook University PhD student. Sandra holds a Master of Arts in writing and facilitates writing workshops for parents and healthcare professionals who would like to explore story writing as one way to navigate and reflect on traumatic lived experiences. Sandra aims to gain a clearer understanding of how connecting with one's creativity and spirituality through story writing might support transformative growth and healing. Sandra's research project draws on personal experience: 'When I faced the

heartbreak of my own baby's stillbirth, writing provided me with a safe haven where I could get in touch with my thoughts and feelings. It was through the gentle nurturing of this creative spark that I began to heal.'

Andrea Bundon is Assistant Professor in the School of Kinesiology at the University of British Columbia (Canada). Her research interests include critical disability theory, inclusion/exclusion in sport and the use of digital qualitative methods. Most recently, her work has investigated the social impacts and legacies of the Paralympic Games and the experiences of athletes with disabilities within a largely able-bodied sport system. Her research on athletes with disabilities and the Paralympic Movement is published in *Disability & Society* and the *Journal of Sport & Social Issues.*

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Susan Gair is Associate Professor and Head of Social Work at James Cook University. As a committed qualitative researcher and social work academic, she has undertaken research projects exploring many sensitive issues with minority groups and communities. Key areas of her research include child adoption policy and practice, advancing social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultivating insider perspectives. A new area of research interest for her is preserving intergenerational relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren. Her interest in creative writing was prompted by debates emerging around representation and authentic voice in qualitative research, and her growing interest in providing spaces for

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Tamar Hager teaches in the Department of Education and Gender Studies at Tel Hai Academic College, Israel. Critical feminist methodology, art sociology, fictional and academic writing are core issues of her academic research and writing. In 2000 she published a book of short stories, *A Perfectly Ordinary Life* (in Hebrew), and in 2012 her book *Malice Aforethought* (in Hebrew), in which she attempts to reconstruct the elusive biographies of two English working-class mothers who killed their babies at the end of the nineteenth century.

Donna Hancox is Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing and Literary Studies and the Research Leader for the Creative Arts at Queensland University of Technology. Her areas of research include transmedia storytelling, technology and social change and digital disruption in publishing, and she has published on these topics in international journals. In 2013 she was a Leverhulme Visiting Fellow at Bath Spa University and is the Australian Project Editor for The Writing Platform. Currently, she is the Chief Investigator on a three-year Arts Queensland-funded grant titled Writing the Digital Futures.

John Paul Healy is Lecturer in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences Charles Sturt University. His research interests include social work education, ability, ageing, qualitative methodology and the sociology of religion. He is also Associate Researcher with the Public and Contextual Theology Strategic Research Centre (PACT; www.csu.edu.au/faculty/arts/theology/pact).

Elizabeth Heck has a background in short-film making, community media and secondary media education. Passionate about the media and learning, she is a PhD Candidate in the Creative Industries Faculty at the Queensland University of Technology. Her research delves into the community uses of co-creative media as a useful means for investigating the role of creative expression in social learning systems. Her research also explores related co-creative media practices of citizen journalism and audio content creation.

Sharon Moloney is women's health practitioner, hypnotherapist and researcher who specialises in fertility therapy, birth preparation and a range of reproductive and other issues. Her PhD explored female spirituality, specifically

women's experiences of menstruation and birth as spiritual phenomena, and her findings have been published in national and international journals, as well as book chapters. Sharon has a private practice where she works with women and couples to dismantle fear of birth, birth trauma, reproductive losses, postnatal depression, reproductive surgery, IVF and fertility problems. In addition to her client work, she supports midwives to practice sustainably. Sharon has an abiding fascination with mind–body medicine, the energy laws of nature and things of the spirit (www.sharonmoloney.com).

Vicki Saunders (BPsych, MPH) is a Gunggari woman with connections to the Maranoa region of Southern Central Queensland. She has lived in North Queensland for over 20 years and in more recent years has been an associate member of the Collaborative Research in Empowerment and Wellbeing team in Far North Queensland, a PhD candidate within the Centre for Nursing and Midwifery Research, James Cook University (JCU) and a Team Investigator within the JCU-led Building Indigenous Research Capacity project, Centre for Public Health, Tropical Medicine & Rehabilitation Sciences. With a background in psychology and public health research, she has been involved in a range of creative projects with Indigenous and community-based organisations across North Queensland. Her research interests include creative or arts-informed research methodologies and Indigenous social and emotional wellbeing, with a particular focus on empowerment, capacity building, mental health and recovery.

Monica Short is Lecturer in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Charles Sturt University, a member of the Believing in Peoples Living with Disabilities Research Community, and volunteers as a social researcher with the Bush Church Aid Society. She has worked for over 20 years in large government organisations, in roles ranging from generic social work positions to management, mostly in rural locations. She is interested in the dialogic exchange of ideas between social work, sociology and theology. Monica has published in the areas of community engagement, (dis)ability, field education and religion.

Brett Smith, PhD, is Professor within the School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Birmingham, UK. His research focuses on disability, sport and physical activity. He is also interested in the development of qualitative methods and methodologies. His research has been published widely in leading journals and books. Brett is co-editor of the Routledge book series dedicated to qualitative research in sport and exercise. He is also Associate Editor of *Psychology of Sport and Exercise* and actively serves on seven editorial boards. He is co-editor of *The Routledge International Handbook of Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*. Brett is founder and former Editor-in-Chief of the international journal *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*.

Ariella van Luyn is Lecturer in Writing at James Cook University, Queensland, Australia. Her research areas are oral history, fiction, creative writing, practice-led research methodologies and regional writing communities. Her papers have appeared in a number of journals, including *Text* and *Oral History Australia Journal*. Her short stories have appeared in *Southerly*, *The Lifted Brow*, *Overland*, *Voiceworks* and *Tincture*. Her manuscript was short-listed for the Queensland Literary Awards 2012.

Daniela Vávrová is Adjunct Research Fellow and Director of the AV Lab at the Cairns Institute and School of Arts and Social Sciences, James Cook University. Since 2005 her field site is situated in the Ambonwari village of East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea. Her PhD thesis, *Skin Has Eyes and Ears*, an audio-visual ethnography in a Sepik society, explores how people shape and are shaped by their social and cultural environment through their sensory experiences. Beside the written thesis, she also made a feature-length film as part of the thesis, which was screened at several ethnographic film festivals around the world. Her specialisation is visual anthropology and experimental filmmaking. In 2013 she co-founded ALTAR (Anthropological Laboratory for Tropical Audiovisual Research) at the Cairns Institute. See more at http://rachel.reflectangulo.net and http://www.cairnsinstitute.jcu.edu. au/research/altar/.

Nina Woodrow has a background working as a language and literacy educator and a history of involvement in oral history, community theatre and storytelling projects. She is a practitioner, researcher and educator who designs socially engaged arts-based projects to facilitate collective aesthetic responses to social issues. Nina is currently a PhD candidate in the Creative Industries Faculty, Queensland University of Technology. Her current research interests focus on the intersection of urban philosophy, performed ethnography and cultural responses to refugee resettlement support.

Introduction

Showing and feeling community narratives

Susan Gair and Ariella van Luyn

Undertaking qualitative research is about making a choice to uphold narratives over numbers. It is about hearing, showing and amplifying narratives because this approach best suits the specific issue researchers want to illuminate. Boundaries concerning what constitutes qualitative research are expanding rapidly, in part due to an embrace of collaborative and arts-based methods. Similarly, doing research with communities has been understood as engaging with participants in their home locality; however, in the age of burgeoning digital networks, 'community' can have infinite configurations and meanings. We understand community to be any collective with similar experiences that together can be considered to make up a community under study. The core essence of arts-based participatory, qualitative research is research *with* and *for* such communities, rather than research *about* them.

Complex social problems have no easy answers, and for qualitative researchers the focus is on gathering rich narratives framed in the narrative owners' meanings and sharing them in a readily consumable way. Qualitative researchers are particularly concerned with representing narratives in such a way that they can be understood by, and benefit, the communities from which they emerge. Qualitative researchers and participants contribute to an interwoven collection of authentic narratives that can engage and inspire communities of participants, researchers, and readers who may seek a greater good through shared narratives (Liamputtong, 2007; Riessman, 2008). As Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou (2008) argued, narrative research converges in the possibility of having micro-social and micropolitcal effects through the collective local knowledge it produces. This potential socio-political edge to qualitative research particularly may be the case with arts-based approaches to participatory, community research endeavours.

Coemans, Wanga, Leysen and Hannes (2015, p. 34) discussed arts-based research methods as incorporating a range of data collection and data dissemination strategies, including but not limited to images, collage, sculpture, drama, dance performance, poetry, fiction, soundscape and exhibition. They further noted that arts-based methods cultivate processes of critical reflection, where the community learns to see 'private troubles as public issues' (Coemans et al.,

2015, p. 34, citing Purcell, 2009) and creates ideas for their own lives and for the benefit of the community, in turn inducing community action and change. According to Foster (2012), arts-based research methodologies offer researchers the opportunity to address power relations within the research process by reducing the focus on the spoken and written word and instead looking at other means of communication. Foster (2012) noted that arts-based methods 'allow participants to engage their imaginations and creativity; they facilitate empathy, and challenge misconceptions by giving insight to their audience into aspects of their lives' (p. 533). Community narrative research often can mean that invisible and unspoken narratives from 'harder-to-reach groups' (Coemans et al., 2015, p. 34) become spoken and heard, and the power in the narrative is conveyed from the researched, through the researchers, to interested readers.

Yet critiques exist of qualitative researchers' claims of participant empowerment and enabling voices to be heard. Some might argue that such claims infer that communities could not speak for themselves prior to being the subjects of an enabling researcher. In addition, such claims can raise questions about the ethics of research, including the appropriateness of researchers upholding their own interpretations of community narratives, and issues of authenticity, genuineness, meaningfulness and exploitation (Plummer, 2001). More recently, the increased use of digital tools to collect, analyse and share narratives could raise further questions about inappropriate digital mediation, data commodification and possible negative ramifications of contributing to a diminishing gap differentiating public and private spheres. These are valid ethical concerns for increased and ongoing researcher reflection. In our embrace of community narrative research work in this collection, we define community in its broadest sense, and uphold and showcase ethical, creative, highly collaborative arts-based and narrative approaches.

In addition, these concerns must be considered alongside an understanding that contemporary qualitative research is aware of its own highly constructed nature, and that the community narratives at its heart are complex and nuanced. In this context, the researcher engages in a double act of attempting to amplify narratives in an authentic manner, while at the same time understanding their own role in gathering, interpreting and representing these stories. Artistic representations of research often deliberately draw attention to the highly subjective and interpretive nature of their own construction. Visual, oral, aural and textual narratives are complex documents that cannot be understood simply. An oral story, for example, demonstrates that speakers are 'capable of elaborate and sometimes confusing methods of constructing and narrating their own histories' (Grele, 2006, p. 59). Participants' stories, and their sense of identity, may change over time, in turn changing their narratives (Thomson, 2011, p. 305). In other cases, researchers may have no direct means to access community narratives, such as the case with animal narratives, and must rely solely on inadequate and all-too-human means of representing identity (for further discussion, see the chapter by Banks in this collection). In this context, those working with

community narratives may respond to critiques of authenticity by documenting, exploring and highlighting the constructed nature of their source, and their own role in the shaping and presentation of research data.

While digital tools and platforms offer diverse means to represent, share and amplify community narratives, consideration should be given to participant privacy and welfare. The internet generates a proliferation of digital art and cultural products, such as memes, where images, text and audio are modified and sometimes commoditised without the original copyright holder's permission. Qualitative researchers have a responsibility to ensure participants understand the potentials as well as the risks of online environments before consenting. In addition, copyright licences like Creative Commons embrace the potential of the digital environment to share narratives beyond the local or print-based. Such agreements allow sharing, and an option to permit modification, while still acknowledging the original storyteller. Too pronounced an emphasis on the digital can potentially risk missing the local, place-based, and embodied aspects of narrative, or exclude certain populations. However, as the chapters in this collection suggest, many researchers working with communities are still deeply concerned with these visceral and embodied aspects of narrative. Indeed, changes in the digital environment seem to draw attention to the embodied or hybrid nature of narratives.

Vital to responding to critiques of community-based research is the importance of ensuring research problems emerge from the communities themselves and the research relationship is one based on mutual exchange and applied outcomes. According to Jagosh et al. (2015, p. 725), community-based participatory research is an approach in which researchers and communities form genuine partnerships for knowledge production and as a means to tackle important community issues. Key to the success of such research are trust, sustainable relationships and a 'ripple effect' towards transformative change. In this chapter, and in this book, narrative and arts-based research with communities is understood as a joint venture in which parties to the research share construction of meaningful narratives, and promote wider empathic engagement, new knowledge and transformative growth and change. Qualitative, narrative approaches uphold the importance of listening to, respecting and amplifying the voices and meanings of communities who previously might not have felt heard (Liamputtong, 2007). Stories are honoured, subjective meanings are privileged, and the collective storytelling highlights insider perspectives that can raise awareness and contribute to social change (Bohlmeijer, Kenyon & Randall, 2011).

Creatively sharing stories is understood by many to be therapeutic in contexts from cathartic healing, through to community engagement and activism (Jacobi, 2004; Pennebaker, 1997). Storytellers, through a diverse range of creative methods, can bear critical witness to untold stories in a way that can build community, generate debate, support the enactment of agency, spark resonance and contribute to collective meanings (Schaffer & Smith, 2004). Different from 'once upon a time' stories that most often signal a moral rather than an authentic

account, qualitative community narratives most often are upheld by qualitative researchers as a powerful, authentic means of affirming insider perspectives and contributing to improved lives. Qualitative researchers also acknowledge the often messy, fragmented and temporal qualities of these stories. Telling, crafting, sharing and reading stories can facilitate reflective insight for readers, participants, researchers, practitioners, social policy analysts and a wider public audience.

For qualitative researchers, emotive research topics, and the chosen means for data gathering and dissemination, represent a huge spectrum, from gathering and presenting raw participant narratives, to jointly constructed narratives, crafted, thematic data presentation, to more visual approaches including documentaries and photography, and to kinaesthetic data collection including performance. Many qualitative researchers support the notion that empathically gathered and presented narratives enable stories to be told and heard, enable those in the broader community with 'common wounds' to gain strength, comfort and affirmation, and enable those with no exposure to the insider experiences to gain heightened awareness (Liamputtong, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Other writers have been sceptical that heartfelt narratives would always be heard, and would always transcend differences to bring about changed attitudes (Gair & Moloney, 2013). Nevertheless, many authors agree that emotional stories shared by those who have lived the experience enable audiences to gain increased understanding from an insider perspective (De Cruz & Jones, 2004; Foster, 2012).

Increasingly, qualitative research is concerned with end-user impact and practical outcomes. Many researchers have turned away from more positivist, scientific approaches to researcher-driven inquiry, and towards more creative means to address real and complex social problems. Working with communities is integral to this endeavour. Community voices can assist researchers to identify and illuminate problems from multiple perspectives. Multiple, arts-based and narrative methods also allow these stories to be told through diverse mediums, acknowledging that community knowledge may come in many forms. Methods that encourage story sharing, particularly with communities who are marginalised or silenced, are a compelling way to help communities feel heard. Stories of lived experiences have the potential to challenge grand historical narratives and promote social inclusion. Increasingly, researchers require a sophisticated methodological toolkit for gathering, analysing and sharing such stories. Participatory, arts-based narrative approaches in community research promote integrated participation that begins at the study conceptualisation stage and continues beyond the dissemination of findings stage to the meaningful application of the findings in concrete, applied ways.

This book provides many inspiring examples of diverse methodologies for working with important community stories. As acknowledged, narratives can be fragmentary, emotionally charged, chaotic, challenging, complex and contradictory. In addition, lived experiences might not easily be captured in any one form and multiple approaches to gathering stores may be needed, such as

combining text, images and sensory data. Indeed, by emphasising multiple ways of knowing, arts-based research questions the capacity of any one form of communication to fully capture and understand complex social phenomena. New digital tools and arts-based community approaches have increased our capacity to enrich the gathering and sharing of insider stories constructed in shared interactions between storytellers and the wider public.

Eliciting an empathic connection between researcher, participant/narrator, writer and reader is a core precept of qualitative research. That is, the intent behind the sharing of stories is most often to transmit rich experiences in ways that enhance collective understanding and awareness. Liamputtong (2007, p. 182) confirmed that the hoped-for effects of qualitative research are to 'capture the lived experience' and to 'make a difference'. Equally, Harris (cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 299) inferred that storytellers, including qualitative researchers, seek to appeal to the audience to connect in personal, empathic ways to the narrative. Some authors, including Lather (2009), Watson (2009), and Watts (2008, p. 8) have raised 'ethical issues of [in]sincerity … and the commodification of emotion … within sociological research'. However, others have argued that empathy is a critical component of qualitative, collaborative and participatory research (Bondi, 2003; Gair, 2012; McDonald, 2001; Neuman, 2006; Sheppard, 2004). Cultivating empathy is a repeated theme in many chapters in this collection. Drawing a parallel to the work involved in community development, qualitative research can be seen as a front-line, grassroots activity where relationships are core to the outcome.

As such there may be fears of getting too close in qualitative research (Rager, 2005). Rowlings (1999) first conceptualised qualitative researchers and participants in a close mutual research collaboration, before acknowledging the paradox of 'emotional distance' in a researcher role (p. 171) and in the end accepting that a researcher was neither detached [out], nor enmeshed [in], and ideally was 'alongside and with' (p. 177) participants in weaving collective narratives. De Cruz and Jones (2004) suggested that researchers can be insiders, outsiders and sometimes both, while Deyhle (in McKinley-Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000) asserted that an insider view can evolve over time and will be enhanced through researchers proactively aligning themselves with research participants. Almost two decades earlier, Mies (1983, p. 123) similarly promoted a 'conscious partiality' in qualitative research, by seeing through the eyes of participants, although as Watson (2009, p. 115, citing Shuman, 2006) cautioned, ethical qualitative researchers must admit and make transparent their textual constructions and representation.

It is clearly evident that ethics is at the core of arts-based and narrative community research. Confidentiality, informed consent, participant welfare and potential risks and harm are all key considerations, while rigour, credibility, transferability, acceptability and critical reflection are paramount to the trustworthiness of the presented findings. In what might appear to be an incongruous statement, even fictionalised findings need authenticity, credibility and 'a ring of

truth'. According to Diversi (1998, p. 132) and others, 'fiction has the potential to render the lived experience with more verisimilitude than does the traditional realist text' (see also Vickers, 2010). The core content of all chapters in this book appeals to the reader to use this diverse collection of creative research approaches as a springboard into your own meaningful, innovative, authentic research where compelling community narratives can be documented to inform the work you do, the communities you live in, and the work of others.

For example, in Chapter 1, Andrea Bundon and Brett Smith explore how the rise of the digital age has expanded not only the tools available to scholars doing digital storytelling, but also how we think of the communities and how we understand them as embedded in larger networks. The chapter is empirically informed by their experiences of undertaking innovative narrative-based research with young, British disabled athletes, coaches, managers and parents from a local football programme.

In Chapter 2, Nina Woodrow describes how a storytelling project brought together a group of four women from refugee backgrounds in the process of resettling in Brisbane, Australia, to explore life narratives using visual arts and participatory video. The project grew out of a partnership with a local non-government organisation providing support and advocacy for refugees and asylum seekers.

In Chapter 3, Cecilie Haagensen documents how lived experience and community narratives can be incorporated into performance work. This case study demonstrates how working with memory and life narrative through performance can be a sense-making activity.

In Chapter 4, Anna Banks focuses on sensate ways to evoke the emotion of felt experience in non-human animals and, by extension, to inform the human–animal bond. She explores autoethnographic narratives that seek to understand the world from the point of view of animals. This chapter considers the way storyworlds evoked by various narrative forms allow us to more deeply understand non-human animals as individual characters in their own human-linked communities.

In Chapter 5, Ariella van Luyn, Susan Gair and Vicki Saunders explore poetic inquiry, identifying it as a means for extending the translation and creative expression of research topics, and research processes and outcomes, including the lived experiences of researchers.

In Chapter 6, Michelle Duffy draws on empirical material from an innovative Australian project that explored children's feelings about sounds in favourite, everyday places, in the context of urban development. The project invited children to record the sounds of their everyday world that were meaningful to them and talk about why those sounds were collected. The children worked in small groups with a sound-design artist to create a quadraphonic sound artwork.

In Chapter 7, Claudia Baldwin and Lisa Chandler reflect on their creative use of the visual research methodology 'Photovoice' and its application in eliciting community perspectives on issues of local and global relevance. The chapter

focuses on a specific project that investigated the values and concerns of three different groups about being 'at the water's edge' in times of uncertainty due to climate change. The images then informed group discussions with the aim of clarifying concerns and shared values.

In Chapter 8, Daniela Vávrová reveals the findings of her research with the Ambonwari people of Papua New Guinea, and their cultural understandings of the visible and invisible domains of lived experiences as a single cosmological realm. By engaging in a unique audio-visual dialogue and shared visual narratives with the members of the community, her research focused on an 'exchange of vision'. This author argues how art-based qualitative research incorporating recordings, screenings, still photographs, drawings, collage and storyboards enabled entrance into the invisible domains of their lived experiences.

In Chapter 9, Sharon Moloney and Susan Gair describe Organic Inquiry, a unique, grounded research methodology that approaches research as a partnership with Spirit. In this approach, the larger research narrative encapsulates the participants' voices as visible and centralised, the researcher's subjectivity and voice and the emerging spiritual engagement during this shared journey. A distinguishing characteristic that sets Organic Inquiry apart from other methodologies is its explicit goal of transformative change for all parties to the research, including the reader.

In Chapter 10, Sandra Bulger also uses an organic inquiry approach, and introduces her own story in order to explore parental loss through miscarriage, stillbirth, birth complications or newborn death. The aim of the research was to broaden current understandings about such loss through therapeutic activities in facilitated creative writing groups.

In Chapter 11, Monica Short and John Paul Healy detail their experiences with Co-operative Inquiry. This chapter uses clear examples from a collaborative inquiry on the topic of living with a disability to highlight the unique step-by-step research, writing and reflective processes of this methodology.

In Chapter 12, Donna Hancox discusses emerging digital technologies as a means to quickly create and widely disseminate stories, using the concept of transmedia storytelling where a multiplicity of voices can be represented. This chapter outlines a project at the intersection of technology and story, and it encourages researchers to consider new ways to apply collaborative art practices to contextualise and amplify community collaborations.

In Chapter 13, Elizabeth Heck explores the public library as a space for grassroots media production. Drawing on a case study of a recent citizen journalism project at a state library in Australia, she explores other similar examples in the library sector. The author goes on to examine the nature of case study research, researcher engagement with citizen media projects, and the importance of disseminating grassroots learning to the wider community.

In Chapter 14, Ariella van Luyn examines her role as a researcher actively working to develop 'reading and writing communities' through digital tools, specifically locative literature. This chapter looks at narrative representations of

place, focusing on the way community groups use locative literature to tell place stories, with reference to a case study of a regional writing community in North Queensland, Australia.

In Chapter 15, Tamar Hager addresses a research circumstance in which existing conventional methodologies seemed inappropriate to her. This chapter is concerned with reconstructing the incoherent fragments of the lives of two mothers who committed infanticide at the end of the 1870s in southern England. This author combines academic research and writing methods including history, feminist autobiography and fiction to resolve some of the complications she faced in representing these mothers' stories to readers. This chapter shows how and why a method of integrating various types of knowledge and fiction genres worked in the absence of any other suitable methodological model.

Using arts-based, narrative and participatory processes, this collection illuminates inspiring life stories; authentic, reflective exploration; community engagement; and transformative social justice aspirations that foreground relationships of trust and unite research performers. This collection invites researchers and readers into a shared space where proactive methods demonstrate ways to advance community. To this end, we actively invite ongoing reader engagement with the authors via an online survey linked in the concluding chapter. Overall, this collection is aimed at aspiring social researchers who are interested in undertaking compelling, community-driven research that extends the boundaries and the 'reach' of what constitutes qualitative research.

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