

TRANSFORMING FEELINGS: FELT SENSE AND AFFECTIVE RELATIONALITIES IN
CREATIVE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND PRACTICE

by

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(Under the Direction of Aliko Nicolaidis)

ABSTRACT

Within the broad, interdisciplinary field of adult education, affective aspects of experience and the roles they play in learning have, thus far, not been properly theorized or researched. This dissertation first explores how John Heron's whole person theory (WPT) conceptualizes feeling as an expansive affective capacity at the root of all human ways of knowing and the wide implications this has for understanding and facilitating transformative learning. Considering how to inquire into feelingful experience, a chapter examines methodological choices experiential learning scholars have made to study Eugene Gendlin's concept of felt sense, a specific affective phenomenon resonant with WPT. A second methodological chapter documents an analysis process researchers co-created during a pilot collaborative inquiry testing ways of inquiring into feeling and felt sense that acknowledge their further resonances with philosophical perspectives on affect. Finally, this research culminates in a collaborative inquiry into creative sound practice and how long-term musical partners followed their felt senses in seeking more complex and feelingful ways to evolve their long-standing collaboration. Interludes throughout perform an artful and poetical thinking with theory, braiding the theories of whole person feeling, felt sense, and posthuman affect into knots revealing subtle

patterns and connections, including more than human relationalities. These multimodal sections also offer links out to an online portal containing videos and sounds from the aforementioned sonic collaborative inquiry, extending the aesthetic presentation of this research into more participatory realms.

INDEX WORDS: Generative knowing, Heron's whole person adult learning theory, Posthuman feminist new materialist affect, Music and sound-making research-creation, Poetical thinking with theory, Sonic collaborative inquiry

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DEDICATION

For Brandy Nicole Perry, who loved to dance, and laugh, and play. Your bright spirit lives.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Having received so much musical knowledge from him, he reminds me how 20 years ago I introduced him to Pauline Oliveros, Tony Conrad, and others, influencing his listening.
2. Pauline Oliveros (2005) distinguishes between the physical act of *hearing* and the practice of *listening*, especially deep listening. How little listening people seem to do, including myself.
3. In the early years of my life, I did not feel listened to, and singing, vocalizing long tones, immersing myself in music brought hope. Nothing seemed more hopeful than feeling those healing vibrations course through my body.
4. Delicate overtones and hidden rhythms pulled on me, secret threads I might follow into another dimension—out of the anxiety that came and settled between me and the world.
5. All manner of subtle, vibrant sounds came to the forefront—the silence becoming loud.
6. We came together over listening to and playing with sounds. I knew from your playing, you were *really* listening—feeling. I wanted to listen, too, and make you feel listened to.
7. You taught me how to listen even deeper, and nurtured my confidence to experiment with, respond to, create, and share strange sounds.
8. For 20 years, we have shared this life and ceremony of everyday sonic play.
9. Sharing what we feel and know and cannot say about sound, all it opens out to, and all it opens in us ...

The above lyrical essay began taking shape in Dr. Maureen Flint's Qualitative Data Analysis course in the fall of 2022. During this time, my long-time musical collaborator/life partner and I were conducting a pilot collaborative inquiry (CI) (Heron, 1996) into creative learning and sound practice. We were pursuing this pilot inquiry to become familiar with CI processes and potential data analysis strategies before launching our "real" study. Writing in this poetic mode helped me affectively situate myself in this research endeavor and connect to the feelings informing my desire to pursue this line of inquiry seeking to connect feeling and sonic play to experiential learning. Writing those words helped me solidify a commitment to pursuing a path that felt both important and risky. I offer them now as a first feelingful glimpse of the complex and relational more than human subjectivity, the constantly evolving whole-and-open person (the "I") composing the arrangement of words, images, and sounds you will find within. I am Shannon, and I warmly welcome you into this space of my dissertation. I hope you find this work evocative, full of speculative entanglements and imaginative threads inspiring you to experiment with new or different ways of listening and playing in/with/through our one-and-many world (Heron, 1992).

Feeling My Way to Whole Personhood

Feeling my way through the day-to-day journey of my doctoral studies led me to want to investigate the human capacity for feeling and the vital role I intuitively felt it played in my own learning. Following feeling helped me navigate the open and ambiguous terrain of adult learning literature. Attuning to aspects of my affective experience guided my zigzagging encounters with texts, helping me find what resonated with my experiences and "felt good" and hopeful or mysteriously wonderful in my body as I read and wrote and discussed with others. On the recommendation of my major professor, Dr. Aliko Nicolaidis, I read John Heron's (1992)

Feeling and Personhood: Psychology in Another Key. This led to my falling in love, in the first semester of my doctoral studies, with Heron’s experiential and developmental whole person learning theory and its passionate exploration of a transpersonal perspective of feeling as an expansive and foundational human capacity¹. The next affective pull occurred when a friend convinced me to take Dr. Bettie St. Pierre’s New Materialisms course. As we read Barad (2007) and Deleuze (1980/1987) and Braidotti (2013) together, I fell in love again. Posthuman feminist new materialist concepts and perspectives drew me in.

But first there was Heron’s (1992) concept of feeling as “resonance with being, ... the most basic capacity of the psyche to be in synchrony with all harmonic rhythms, audible or inaudible and subtle” that “works with and through physical hearing, clairaudience, and with and through other sensory and extrasensory modalities” (p. 99). I began writing about the significance of Heron’s (1992) conceptualization of experiential feeling as the capacious knowing out of which all other ways of knowing emerge, a boundless aspect of affect reaching far beyond individual emotional experience. This framing of feeling struck a deep chord in my being.

Often, my angle into understanding involved my own creative practices and the improvisatory and experimental music collaborations I participated in with my partner and in larger musical ensembles. My immediate sense in reading Heron and posthuman feminist new

¹ Transpersonal psychology emerged in the late 1960s and represented “a radical redirection from the prevailing psychological orientations of the times by advocating for the spiritual dimension of human experience” (Sohmer, 2020, p. 78). In the last published interview transpersonal psychologist and co-operative inquiry pioneer John Heron gave before he passed in 2022, he described the transpersonal dimension as “states of consciousness beyond the usual limits of the ego and personality” (Heron & Sohmer, 2019, p. 209). “[Heron’s] view is that human spirituality is tripartite—the intrapersonal within, the interpersonal between, and the transpersonal beyond—and that the spirit between persons is the central and primary dimension. It is the mediating middle ground at the threshold of, defining the status of, both the spirit within and the spirit beyond, providing a forum for their complementary kinds of opening and cocreation” (p. 209).

materialist philosophers was of, in some way, coming home. Their theories and concepts provided language that came closer than anything else I had ever read to describing the inexpressible aspects of my experiences of becoming in musical improvisation. My experiences as a creative practitioner, my sonic practices, provided entryways into understanding Heron's whole person theory (WPT), which helped me make further sense of artist-maker ways of being, knowing, and doing.

In Heron's (1992) concept of feeling as a capacity more expansive than emotion, I recognized a phenomenon I daily perceived infusing how I inhabit and move through the world and so often had no words for. As bell hooks (1994) described finding in Paulo Freire's work, I found in Heron's (1992) theory a liberating sense of theory's ability to help make personal-social connections and a sense of being included. Put a less agentic, more receptive way, my experience resonated with how Ahmed (2017) described encountering Audre's Lorde's work: Heron's theory "found me where I was; a different place from [him], yet [his] words found me" (p. 12). Being touched, moved, changed by these concepts and theories facilitated personal healing and motivated me onward in my studies with the hope of building more inclusive and ethical worlds. Still unsure exactly how this would all take shape, I knew the feelingful potential of sound would play a part.

Attuning to the Murky Felt Sense

In *Feeling and Personhood*, Heron (1992) used the specific phrase "felt sense" only twice, first to describe a vague awareness of "the participative glow of the perceived field" that remained with a person after infancy's "primal fusion with the world has long been left behind" (p. 41). I found equally intriguing his second use of "felt sense" to describe creative and charismatic states of personhood "grounded in a felt sense of both unitive being and

differentiated being” (p. 67). While I would later learn that Heron (2008) explored felt sense more deeply in a later book related to spiritual inquiry, I turned next to the philosopher-psychologist Eugene Gendlin who observed and first named the phenomenon of felt sense. Understanding felt sense as an affective capacity for accessing one’s integrated embodied holistic sense of complex environments and situations, Gendlin (2007, 2018) devised the methods of focusing and thinking at the edge for accessing and articulating felt sense. Heron (1992) cites this focusing method as a way of listening to and inquiring with “the guiding voice of immanent divinity,” or what the felt sense itself senses (p. 69).

The intoxication I experienced reading Gendlin (2007) describe felt sense as “a special kind of internal bodily awareness” and “something that you do not at first recognize,” using adjectives like “vague” and “murky,” (p. 11) lured me further. Though a noun, felt senses seemed less than solid and more like an amorphous and dynamic something emerging from in between the material objects and manifestations of actualized reality. As a verb, felt sensing seemed intertwined with creative practice and my experiences improvising and playing with sounds. I became especially intrigued with Gendlin’s (1991) framing felt sense as a non-mental capacity resulting from a direct body-environment relation beyond bodily sensing:

Your situation is not what the five senses give you. Consider: Does your sense of a situation consist of bits of color, sound, and smell, arranged by your thoughts? No, a situation doesn’t consist of sense bits ... you cannot think all of the parts of a situation separately. ... you speak and act from a sense of the whole situation. (p. 257)

Gendlin’s (2007) description of felt sense as something that “feels meaningful, but not known. ... a body-sense of meaning” (p. 11) connected me to the deep embodied sensing Nicolaidis (2022) described at the heart of generative knowing theory. The metaphor of wading

through swampy wetlands she used to describe the experience of sitting in ambiguity connects in my mind to Gendlin's murky felt sense. Generative knowing theory's processes of *in-scending*, "follow[ing] the sensations of experience ... to listen from the inside of the at-first darkness" (p. 9) of experience, and *awaring*, "naming and freeing potential, giving potential the power to become a force for action" (p. 9), echo the movements of Gendlin's (2007) focusing method. Through further reading, I made further connections between Nicolaides' (2022) generative knowing, also informed by philosophical feminist materialist concepts of affect, Heron's feeling, and Gendlin's felt sense. Next, I seek to make some of these connections more explicit by exploring how critical posthuman/feminist new materialist understandings of affect push feeling beyond the human and how these concepts of affect come to bear on this research.

More than Human Affect and Embodiment

Many affect theorists trace their understanding from Deleuze's philosophy (often via Brian Massumi's English translations) to describe affect as "the capacity to affect or be affected," a notion Deleuze used in extending 17th-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza's *affectus* (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010). Clough (2009) described affect as "not an action but a capacity for activation" and a force "subsisting in matter as incorporeal potential" (p. 48). In trying to dissociate affect from any psychological definition of it, Shouse (2005) lumps feeling and emotion together in a tidy, but unhelpful formula: "Feelings are *personal* and *biographical*, emotions are *social*, and affects are *prepersonal* [emphasis in original]" (par. 1). In describing affect as "a non-conscious experience of intensity" and "a moment of unformed and unstructured

potential,” Shouse denies the physiological realities of embodied felt sensation, leaving no room for matter, including the material reality and capacities of human bodies.²

Thus, I became aware of debates within critical posthumanist scholarship about the more than human nature of affect and the tensions related to how these philosophical perspectives on affect related to human feelings, and whether humans might become consciously aware of affects (Hein, 2016; Murriss & Bozalek, 2019). I appreciate that scholars of the Deleuzian-Spinozan lineage of affect must often address and make clear distinctions between affect as a pre-personal phenomenon not restricted to human experience and affect as psychological human emotion. Furthermore, I appreciate the need to spend time reading and developing deep familiarity with concepts so that the concepts scholars use are not “incommensurable with the ontologies and empiricisms of their methodologies” (St. Pierre, 2016, p. 9). Jackson’s (2015) blanket guidance to “Avoid affect-as-feeling,” however, seemed to impose an incommensurability between affect and feeling that my experiences, including readings, pushed back against. Jackson’s formulation seemed too simple, veering in the direction of further upholding, rather than troubling, a human/non-human binary, in particular. So, I read on.

From their close reading of Spinoza’s *Ethics*, Robinson and Kutner (2018) report “Spinoza makes clear, affect or affectus, is not an entirely prepersonal intensity that always-already exceeds our capacity to engage it” (p 15). While existing as a vital force that moves

² Shouse (2005) goes on to muddle even this concept of affect, after reiterating (citing Massumi) its prepersonal and inarticulable nature, “always prior to and/or outside of consciousness,” by citing psychologist Silvan Tompkins’ view of affect. This inclusion represents a problematic move. While Tompkins’ saw intensity as one of affect’s aspects, he situated affect as always rooted in the relational body. Rather than a flowing energy moving between bodies. Though Tompkins saw affect as able to be attached to any object, he also focused on a limited number of affect pairs (e.g., enjoyment-joy) that were physiologically hard-wired into the body (Sedgwick, 2003). Shouse does not account for these differences of definitions and views presented by other theorists of affect from various disciplines, failing to even acknowledge the complexity that exists.

beyond the personal, unable to ever be finally and fully contained within a body, affect is, nevertheless, capable of “discursive capture” as well as “rational, productive, and ethical engagement” (p. 115). Their analysis revealed how Massumi’s translation of Deleuze and Guattari’s representation of Spinoza’s affect leaves out the concept of *modes* of substance and the complex entanglement of affect in the inseparability of mind and body. Without this nuanced understanding, one also loses Spinoza’s contention that affect can not only be accessed by the rational mind, but *must* engage in dialogue with it, to arrive at more “adequate ideas” and perceptions of reality (p. 115). Their article helped me see how affect in Heron’s (1992) WPT resonates with Spinoza’s integrated body-mind view as it frames affect beyond the merely personal or human.

Rosi Braidotti’s (2013, 2019b, 2022) posthuman philosophy helped me see further connections between the capacity for tapping into felt sense and cultivating radically relational subjectivities, inclusive of the more than human. Thus, I endeavored to braid these theoretical strands together to weave a strong and vibrant understanding of the vital role affective experiencing plays in navigating complex learning situations. Looking at what affect does, rather than how it may be defined, also influenced my growing understanding. Healy & Mulcahy (2021) explored how Braidotti’s affirmative taking up of Deleuze’s appropriation of Spinoza’s concept of affect allows for educators to think affect in terms of forces flowing also within human systems and between people, open to their awareness and response. Beyond defining affect, I became led in other directions, toward other questions: *What do affects do? What do affects produce? What do affects make possible? How do affects make possible?*

Throughout this dissertation, I turn to posthuman feminist philosophers and concepts, especially those related to affect and embodiment to frame this research. While collaborative

inquiry seeks to explode certain binaries (e.g., mind/body), posthuman concepts push this humanist method to dissolve further binaries (e.g., human/non-human, natural/cultural, material/digital, empirical/rational). These concepts hold me even as I try to hold them, attempting to weave them into a larger, though never quite whole, complete, or final story, making sense of what a more than human collaborative inquiry might be and do and, so, become.

My first encounters with Braidotti's (2013, 2019, 2022) posthuman vision felt immediately resonant with Heron's WPT and CI. The ecological, radically relational vision Braidotti offers in arguing for a need to move beyond anthropocentric ways of encountering reality aligns with Heron's (1992) vision of a participatory universe in many ways. Despite his training in psychology, Heron's conceptualization of feeling seemed intertwined with philosophers who described affect as more than human intensities arising from between material bodies, including and not limited to human bodies (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010).

I began to think of Heron as a kind of proto-posthumanist, tapping into some of the same philosophical undercurrents from which Deleuze and Guattari, whose theory informs much critical posthuman/feminist new materialist/new empiricist thinking, also draw. Discovering mathematician-philosopher Alfred North Whitehead's shared influence confirmed that conceptual connections did, indeed, exist. Whitehead, whose philosophy of organism invoked an understanding of more-than-human subjectivity as a constant becoming within "a wider complex of becoming" he called an "extensive continuum" (Halewood, 2005, p. 65), informed Deleuze's ontological "plane of immanence" (1968/1994). Heron (1992), too, found Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological view that the "body is coextensive with the entire field of possible perceptions, i.e., the world" particularly resonant with Whitehead's concept of prehension (p. 113). Heron's concept of participatory feeling borrows directly from Whitehead's notion of

prehension, or “the general way in which the occasion of experience can include, as part of its own essence, any other entity” (Whitehead quoted in Halewood, 2005, p. 63).

The radical relationality this view espouses demonstrates one significant link between WPT and posthumanist philosophies. Further explicit links exist in Heron’s spiritual inquiries (Heron, 1998, 2006; Heron & Sohmer, 2019) as well as in Peter Reason’s (2023) more recent panpsychic action research, which extends CI beyond strictly human realms. Part of WPT and CI’s immanent potential lies in reaching out to the more-than-human constellations always involved in human experiencing and learning.

Posthumanist perspectives encompass feminist new materialisms and critical empiricist theoretical perspectives that emerge from poststructuralist critiques of Western Enlightenment humanism and traditional scientific ways of pursuing inquiry. Posthumanists question all hierarchical binaries, including the partition between human and the non-human as well as the required division, in positivist research, between the active objective subject (researcher) and the passive object of research/data material (research subject) (Braidotti, 2019b; Clough, 2009; Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Posthumanism’s challenge also encompasses questioning humanism’s positioning of the white, heterosexual, male experience as a normative, universally privileged standpoint. Posthumanism argues that humanism’s narrow, normative vision of who counts as human has wrought significant damage to countless excluded peoples and the well-being of most life on planet Earth (Braidotti, 2013, 2019, 2022; Ferrando, 2013, 2019).

Posthumanism, what Ferrando (2019) called “the philosophy of our time” (p. 1), involves revealing the problematic anthropocentrism embedded in Enlightenment humanist logics and decentering *Homo sapiens* as the primary knowers and agents of action in the world (Braidotti, 2019b). Posthuman scholars, particularly those drawing on new materialist thought, emphasize

the aliveness of the natural and wider material world as well as the existence of “vibrant matter” (Bennett, 2010). They surface invisible “intra-actions” (Barad, 2007) of diverse entities in events of encounter in which transforming interdependencies, relations based on mutualities, and complex multiplicities abound, creating “diffractions” of being-knowing-doing that remake the world (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 2016). From within this perspective, discrete and independent active subjects and passive objects cease to exist. Rather, all entities come into being and maintain their consistency through complex interdependencies, as they affect and are affected by other bodies or entities. The resonances between WPT, generative knowing, and posthuman perspectives lead me to argue for collaborative inquiry as a potent means of cultivating posthuman subjectivities rooted in a radically relational ontology (Perry, 2021).

Before moving on, I want to briefly note that while I do use the terms “posthuman,” “more than human,” and “beyond human” rather interchangeably throughout this work, I prefer and attempt to privilege “more than human” where possible. I do continue to use “posthuman” when discussing Braidotti’s work since she explicitly prefers and uses this term. However, following María Puig de la Bellacasa (2017),

I choose this phrasing among other existing ways of naming posthumanist constituencies because it speaks in one breath of nonhumans and other than humans such as things, objects, other animals, living beings, organisms, physical forces, spiritual entities, and humans.

This choice invokes a vital ontology of material care recognizing the reality of times characterized by “binding technosciences with naturecultures, [and that] the livelihoods and fates of so many kinds and entities on this planet are unavoidably entangled” (p. 1).³

Finding Collaborative Inquiry as a Way In

Reading various ways of describing felt sense as a body’s gestalt extrasensory perception of an entire situation, or one’s whole lifeworld, often led me to think about my own experiences of creative practice, and, particularly, of playing various forms of improvised music. Seeking and moving with felt senses seemed to come closest to the kinds of learning I felt happening in these spaces. When I finally decided to focus on inquiring into felt senses in/of creative practice and what they make possible, I knew collaborative inquiry (CI), with its foundation in Heron’s (1992) whole person theory and its emphasis on feeling, would provide a methodological foundation.

CI may be described as an artful participatory action research methodology and transformative learning practice developed out of Heron’s WPT (Heron, 1992, 1996). “Co-operative inquiry,” Heron’s term for the method, emphasized phenomenological roots, and Heron resisted aligning CI with pragmatism or any purely instrumental aims. North American adult educators who took a more critical theory and social justice approach to CI preferred “collaborative inquiry” (Bray et al., 2000; Yorks & Kasl, 2002), which is the term I use throughout. The CI process aims to be holistic by attending to a person’s full range of capacities

³ See Braidotti (2019b) and Ferrando (2013) for a clear discussion about the differences between posthumanism, antihumanism, and transhumanism. The potential to confuse “posthuman” or “transpersonal” with “transhumanism” is another reason I prefer “more than human” in this work. While I agree with Braidotti that humans ought to perhaps spend more time entertaining the possibility of a time without humans as a real posthuman possibility, I hope to avoid the anxiety and knee-jerk rejection the term “posthuman” often seems to produce for many. I also resonate with Haraway’s (2016) “com-post” for thinking with post-structuralist and posthuman theories.

and psychic needs as small groups of individuals move through phases of action and reflection around a shared inquiry, unearthing diverse perspectives and possibilities.

As the theory out of which collaborative inquiry developed, Heron's whole person theory presents a foundational thread through this dissertation. Whole person theory proposes that the human psyche possesses certain capacities—the capacity to love and be loved, to see and be seen, to know and be known, to choose and be chosen—corresponding to what Heron called an “extended epistemology” (Heron & Reason, 1997). This fourfold system accounts for knowing in experiential, expressive, propositional, and practical ways. In addition to these multiple ways of knowing, whole person theory embraces a realist “one-and-many” ontology that insists on the value of the individuated experience, even as it situates every person's existence in complex webs of diverse collective relations. Therefore, multiple ways of knowing happen in relational, or participative, *and* individuated ways. WPT pursues entangling self and other, realizing subject-object ontologies, (Heron, 1992; Heron & Reason, 1997), by enacting concepts like *entrainment*, “also known as mutual phase-locking, in which people share rhythms, vibrate in harmony” (Heron, 1992, p. 100), and *holon*, the systems thinking concept “the whole being is somehow contained in each of its parts” (p. 98).

WPT argues all ways of knowing originally emerge from a person's capacity to feel, to experience relational affective knowing through direct encounter with the material and subtle aspects of reality. All human experience, then, represents a collaboration with others in present-moment primary encounters involving ever-flowing exchanges of feeling. The distance Heron sought to impose between feeling and the body relates to his aversion to any hint of biological determinism and the common conflation of feeling with bodily sensation, emotion, and/or instinct. Heron presents feeling as a capacity originating within a body, an interpersonal force

emerging and circulating between bodies, and a transpersonal phenomenon between bodies and the cosmic divine, rather than something belonging to or created by individual body-minds.

CI intends to engage relationality, multiple ways of knowing, and the holistic capacities and needs of the human person as individuals belonging to a larger social whole as well as situated at the nexus of certain polarities (e.g., participative-individuated) (Heron, 1992). Heron (1996) believed CI's extended epistemology made it a suitable structure, unlike other action research methods, for guiding any type of inquiry related to the human condition, inclusive of the spiritual. Furthermore, he emphasized CI

moves past the limits of the transpersonal (referring to spiritual experience beyond the personal) and adds to it spiritual experience between persons (the interpersonal), and within persons (the intrapersonal). It explores the interdependent dynamic between these three basic dimensions of human spirituality—which I also call enlightenment, engagement and enlivenment—and finds the interpersonal dimension of engagement to be central to the process. (Heron & Sohmer, 2019, p. 216)

Through these descriptions, I imagined applying CI in formal and informal learning spaces, in classroom, community, and professional development contexts, and even in my personal life. I wanted to practice CI in part because it aligned with certain principles: striving for democratic participation and authentic collaboration, embracing multiple ways of knowing, and honoring collective *and* individual experiences simultaneously (Bray et al., 2000; Heron, 1996). I was encouraged by Heron's (1992) urging would-be facilitators to learn CI by gathering a group together and jumping in.

In pondering an appropriate CI for this dissertation, I desired to initiate an inquiry connected to my own curiosities and daily engagements. I felt I needed to build my own

experience, intentionally engaging with experiential feeling at the heart of CI's rigorous processes. The more I thought about the feelings of joy and well-being they gave me, the more certain I became that inquiring into the experiences of the creative sonic practices I regularly engaged was the inquiry I wanted to undertake. Once I knew this, I also knew my long-term musical collaborator and husband, Michael, should be involved. The experimentation Heron (1992) encouraged reminded me of how Michael and I approached music making. Though in some ways a familiar process, CI's structured action-reflection phases excited me because of the increased intentionality and focus it could help us bring to the creative practice we sought to refine. CI would force us to pause and to refract our experience of experiencing, hopefully creating a mattering difference, practical and processual differences that mattered.

The human participant dyad of Michael and myself made most sense for this CI because, after our close artistic collaboration of almost 20 years (most recently in our duo project, *Wet Garden*), we also felt ourselves at an impasse. As I began to think about reviving our musical collaboration, after my decision to take a break to complete doctoral coursework and the forced break that the COVID-19 pandemic imposed on public musical performances in the U.S., a pressing inquiry naturally formed. We wanted to do and make and perform together again, and we hoped to do so differently than before. *How can we collaborate musically now? What feels and sounds right for who we are together and separately and what we want to become and express in this moment?*

In many ways, we felt like we were getting to know each other as musical partners all over again. So, this became our practical problem: how to persist in our creative collaboration, how to maintain refreshed connection over time, how to transform our relations in ways that please us, bring us joy, and enable us to flourish in the present? I could not think of a more

practical problem than figuring out how to keep an intimate collaboration in a lively state. CI seemed to provide a promising path out of our creative quagmire.

While the CI could have expanded to include others with whom we collaborate musically, doing so would have deemphasized the everydayness of collaborative sound practice we were after. Doing so would have also endangered our ability to become vulnerable enough to be honest about the deeper feelings and felt senses we experienced in and through playing with sound, endangering the credibility of our findings. Not only did our pilot study around our tendency to use sustained tones generate an abundance of rich data, we determined that even a two-person CI elicited many multiple perspectives within and beyond our personal experiences. Restricting the CI to our dyad would enable us to use CI to specifically delve into the personal-social connections we plugged into, in some ways using CI as a springboard for collaborative autoethnography into experimental sound cultures and practice, as well. Our pilot CI uncovered vibrant data and surfaced complex experiences and aspects of disparate subjectivities my partner and I wanted to explore and nurture the generative potential of, including as much of our experiencing as we could.

Taking up this inquiry, laying bare my own experience and the knowing generated from within makes me feel vulnerable. Would others receive our research as a “legitimate” inquiry? Was I prepared to confront emotionally laden aspects of creative practice with my long-time collaborator and life partner that a CI was likely to emerge? (Heron, 1996). Could I connect these experiences in/through creative practice to adult learning in a way that made sense and might contribute and help move the field of adult education forward?

Ultimately, I became persuaded to pursue this path by the rich experiential knowing and felt senses of communion and joy that often emerge when I create and play with sound. Put

another way, this inquiry chose me through the “stickiness” (Ahmed, 2010) of my fascination with and curiosity about why sounds affect me and others in the ways they do, what sounds produce, and the potential I know sounds have to transform ways of being, knowing, and doing in the world. These are some of the more luminous strands of a story leading me here to explore how affective aspects of experience and the phenomenon of felt sense can influence collaborative creative learning.

Purpose and Research Questions

The overarching purpose of this research resides in exploring how affective aspects of experience, specifically Heron’s (1992) expansive concept of feeling and Gendlin’s (2007) felt sense produce creative practices and lead to learning that transforms. This dissertation undertakes this exploration to develop more complex theorizations of the potentials and possibilities of adult learning that unfolds in informal contexts, outside of organizations, including in domestic and online spaces. Through this complexified understanding of adult learning, this research also intends to contribute to formulating more robust ways of facilitating holistic adult learning through the sustained inclusion and considerations of affect, feeling, and felt sense.

In pursuing this purpose, this dissertation asks this overarching question: *How does feeling produce creative practice and holistic experiential learning?* The article-formatted chapters of this dissertation take up different aspects of this overarching question. While the upcoming dissertation overview section provides a fuller accounting of how specific chapters take up these specific sub-questions, I list them here for your convenient review:

1. *How might whole person theory’s emphasis on feeling as the root of experience expand current understandings of affect’s role in learning that transforms?*

2. *What methodological choices do researchers make in order to inquire into the experiential phenomenon of felt sense?*
3. *How can sonic research data consisting of affective, non-linguistic sounds be brought into analysis with textual data?*
4. *How do we experience the affective phenomenon of felt sense in creative learning and practice? How does felt sense and feeling inform creative learning and practice over time?*

Dissertation Overview

This dissertation features several manuscript chapters formatted for submission to peer-reviewed journals alongside more traditional dissertation chapters, multimodal interlude chapters, and links out to an interactive multimedia online portal. [Chapter seven](#) reports and discusses the findings from a collaborative inquiry into creative sound practice. [Chapter teen](#) concludes the dissertation with a synthesis of the impact and implications of this work for the field of adult education and creative qualitative methodologies. Before delving further, this section presents a brief overview of the theoretical and methodological article-chapters found in chapters [two](#), [four](#), [five](#), [seven](#), and [eight](#), and the poetical thinking with theory and other methods guiding the artful interlude sections in chapters [three](#), [six](#), and [nine](#).

Theory: Feeling in Heron's Whole Person Theory

[Chapter two](#) contains the first article, a conceptual piece exploring whole person learning theory, CI's underlying framework, in greater depth and placing it in conversation with related experiential, holistic, and transformative learning theories relevant to adult education. Specifically, it seeks to demonstrate how the conceptualization of affective experience in Heron's whole person theory extends Mezirow's (2018) transformative learning theory and

various experiential and holistic learning theories. The central question guiding this article is: *How might whole person theory's emphasis on feeling as the root of experience expand current understandings of affect's role in learning that transforms?* This chapter's specific purpose is demonstrating how and why whole person theory's nuanced philosophical conceptualization of affect and feeling matter to facilitators of learning that transforms.

This article examines the theoretical underpinnings of collaborative inquiry, locating similarities and differences between how whole person theory and other learning theories have conceptualized *affect, emotion, feeling, experience, and embodiment*. While considering how WPT extends Mezirow's transformative learning theory, it also explores the significance of WPT's rejection of pragmatic aims and its challenge to constructivist epistemology, two dominant paradigms within adult education. The introduction to Heron's (1992) realist ontology found within anticipates the surprising resonances found between whole person theory and the posthuman concepts discussed in the sonic CI report in chapter seven. This chapter was published in *Adult Education Quarterly* as an article entitled, "Participatory Feeling: Re-Visioning Transformative Learning Theory Through Heron's Whole Person Perspective" (Perry, 2021).

Methodology: How to Inquire into Felt Sense, Feeling, and Affect

Chapter four, the second article-formatted chapter, provides focuses on the main phenomenon around which the whole dissertation study focuses: felt sense. More specifically, this boundless *and* embodied aspect of human affective capacity is explored in relation to its emergence in creative practices and the learning that happens through participating in creative activities and the expression of experience in artful forms. While the article in Chapter Two explores feeling from a more theoretical perspective, this article pursues a deeper understanding

of felt sense as experienced by people engaged in a variety of artful practices (e.g., dancing, writing, creating visual art). Drawing on existing empirical literature on felt sense, this article also considers the methodological choices and considerations researchers make in seeking to understand experiences of a phenomenon as seemingly elusive and immaterial as feeling. In the context of this dissertation, this article moves toward a simultaneously more specific and more expansive focus on felt sense, emphasizing the embodied aspect of feeling that remains relegated to the background in Heron's (1992) whole person theory.

This methodological review explores two main questions: *What methodological choices do researchers make in attempting to study the phenomenon of felt sense empirically? How do the methodological choices researchers make reveal different aspects of experiencing felt sense?* Pursuing these questions in tandem, this article attempts to underline the significance of felt senses, bringing to light the roles they play in learning processes as well as why and how scholars may attend to them. This mapping of the literature intends to bring the invisible felt sense, a phenomenon unable to be directly observed except through one's own experience of it, into clearer view. Empirical studies focused on felt sense in creative experience provide important articulations of how feeling moves through and beyond bodies, illustrating embodied knowing and, sometimes, leading to learning and change. This article has been prepared for submission to *The Journal of Experiential Education*, a peer-reviewed publication focused on experiential learning in diverse contexts.

Chapter five contains another methodologically-oriented article manuscript. This one describes a pilot sonic CI that dissertation co-inquirers conducted prior to the CI reported on in chapter seven. During this inquiry, which acted as a pilot inquiry to the dissertation's main empirical study, co-researchers co-created an analysis process appropriate to their sonic inquiry

and large amounts of audio data. This additional methodological chapter details co-researcher's rationale for pursuing a method of sound collaging with a digital audio workstation (DAW) to analyze the multimodal data generated within the CI. These choices are related to co-researchers' posthuman theoretical orientation and the importance of creating a way to analyze text and audio data together while amplifying multiplicity, polyphony, extrarational and imaginal ways of knowing, and the affective nature of sound. Readers are invited to listen to a 10-minute sound collage presenting the findings of this pilot study in a sonic and poetic way.

Sonic Collaborative Inquiry Report

[Chapter seven](#) presents the heart of this dissertation study, which previous chapters build toward. This chapter includes the report of a sonic collaborative inquiry into the creative sound practices of co-inquirers, novice scholar and amateur musician (me, Shannon) and a virtuoso musician (Michael). The central question explored in this CI report attends to the following question: *How do felt sense experiences affect creative learning and practice over time?*

Desiring to pursue a topic I felt personally and cosmically meaningful, I turned to my own creative ritual practices and the theories I had encountered that helped me make sense of what participating in them did for me and on a larger level. I soon found myself thinking about my lifelong experimentations with sound, circling back to my Master's thesis focused on learning in a local experimental music community (Perry, 2011). We also faced a practical problem. We were in the common situation of having to find new ways of collaborating—of being, knowing, doing, and becoming together.

Artful Interludes

Chapters [three](#), [six](#), and [nine](#) offer artful interludes using arts-based research methods, a term I use here, following Leavy (2017) as “an umbrella category that encompasses all artistic

approaches to research” (p. 2). These interludes deepen exploration and provide aesthetic and extra-rational ways of further exploring some of the concepts and insights emphasized and revealed over the course of this research. They pick up on conceptual and material elements I felt the need to explore and play with further, beyond the prose-oriented article manuscript-formatted chapters. While also intending to provide a break of sorts from the more academic language of the other chapters, these artful interludes intend to make space for the reader to breathe, to become inspired by the nonlinguistic artifacts and artful echoes of the experiencing behind this work.

I see this dissertation, involving creative arts practice in the context of collaborative inquiry action research, as in line with the a/r/tographic and research-creation traditions of arts-based research, blending research, teaching, and creative practice. A/r/tography “suggests that knowledge of education comes from inscriptions and denotings (graphy) conducted by the artist, researcher, and teacher. All three roles must be in the research design for the work to be a/r/tography” (Siegesmund, 2013, p. 140). While resonating with this situation of the researcher as also artist and teacher, a/r/tography feels appropriate to this research focused on affective aspects of learning and practice, and felt sense specifically, because it

has opened research to what is felt before it is said. It points to the limits of language and contends that the space around language is fecund with meaning. This place of the in-between—the space not occupied by words—is sense felt. Felt sense provides us the material to make sense: our ordering of the qualitative relationships of sense that allows us to hypothesize an understanding of the world.” (p. 143)

The poetic portions of these interludes use words to express felt senses and have been inspired by a/r/tographic work centering various forms of poetic inquiry (Devarajan et al., 2022).

Likewise, this dissertation can also be considered a work research-creation (Loveless, 2019; Manning & Massumi, 2014), a form of artful research emphasizing art's processual and relational nature (Sweet et al., 2020). Research-creation sees ecologies of creative practices and acts of making as events in which doings enact and, therefore exist concurrently with and as an expression of, thinking (Manning & Massumi, 2014; Romano, 2023). Springgay et al., (2020) described research-creation as "an approach to doing research attuned to speculative middles, (in)tensions, and more than representational practices. ... accountable to an ethics and politics that are situated, relational, and response-able" (p. 901). While "research-creation" entered arts-based research literature after Canada introduced the term as a funding category "to encourage hybrid forms of activity promising to capture for research the creative energies of artists working within the academic institution" (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 84-85), research-creation challenges academic, disciplinary ways of knowing by critiquing the separation of thinking and doing, mind and body (Loveless, 2019). This research, too, enacts an orientation to thinking as emerging alongside iterative processes of creating, doing, and making.

I used a variety of artful methods related to my own personal creative practices, especially where these intersected with the sonic collaborative inquiry and creative sound practices. Lyric writing has always been part of my musical practice, since words, for me, have always jumped out of the rhythms and textures of sounds and musical sequences. Therefore, poetic reflection and journal writing made sense as ways of documenting my own affective experiencing of creative sound practice. I include these artifacts of this research's nomadic methodological processes (Braidotti, 2006; Nicolaidis, 2022) because they are important to understanding the fullness of this inquiry.

Leavy (2017) explained, “the arts can be highly effective for communicating the emotional aspects of social life” (p. 10). I have adopted and chosen to incorporate some of the fruits of this inquiry’s artful methods in these interludes for listeners/readers/viewers to better grasp the affective experiential foundation of this dissertation. I also do so because “arts-based practices are able to get at multiple meanings, opening up multiplicity in meaning making” (p. 8) while potentially producing holistic and participatory experiences for broader audiences (Flint & Perry, in press). These artful interludes create space for playing with philosophical concepts and infusing more of the rich and potential-laden theoretical engagement informing this dissertation into the body of the work. They provided a way to creatively weave in materials that resonated with, influencing me and, consequently, the dissertation, in some profound way that did not fit nicely into the other chapters. I hope these artful chapters stand on their own as affective presentations that move you to empathy, wonder, or new awareness.

Some artful interlude chapters feature visual art. Chapter three, for example, features digital visual collages. These collages were created out of and accompanied my becoming as I attempted to think through the tensions and complexities of plugging whole person theory’s concept of feeling into posthuman concepts of affect (Jackson & Mazzei, 2011). These digital collages are part of a series of 20 digital collaged images I created for a PechaKucha presentation exploring the potential of combining whole person theory with posthuman philosophy toward more than human ways of pursuing inquiry. [Chapter nine](#) features crochet pieces, and drawings, and photographs related to the sonic CI reported on in the previous chapter and discusses the production of this creative data in more detail.

Poetical Thinking with Theory

Most of the content in these artful interludes consist of research poems allowing me to “try out different analytical ideas” using experimental writing to trouble and integrate art-science, theory-practice, and other persistent boundaries and binaries (Glesne, 1997, p. 216). Poetic methods of inquiry present appropriate ways for approaching an exploration into feeling through sound because “poetry and drama come from ... song and ritual, and share an inherently oral nature” (Prendergast, 2006, p. 37). A pioneer of research poetry, Laurel Richardson (1992) finds this inquiry path “more attuned to lived experiences as subjectivity felt by the Other” (p. 135, as cited in Glesne, 1997, p. 216) and a way for researchers to become reflexively immersed in feeling.

Creating research poetry allowed me to play with words as “an entrypoint into expressing the inexpressible” (Lahman et al., 2019, p. 2), exceeding the ways scholars typically use words in research reports to communicate rational lines of thinking (Freeman, 2017; Heen, 2005). Pursuing this poetic path honors that “humans naturally take pleasure in rhythm and rhyme” (Lahman et al., 2019, p. 9) and advocates for poetic writing as “an act of critical theorizing, reflexive, contemplative, embodied, hesitant, resistant” (Prendergast, 2015, p. 683). In weaving research poetry throughout this dissertation, I am also seeking to celebrate the affective intra-actions (Barad, 2007) between feeling, sound, and word at the level of experience. I do so in hopes of imbuing words with greater potential to communicate moments of wonder (MacLure, 2013; Sanders and Lamm, 2022), “searching data for phrases, rhythms, and sounds that hit the heart ... leading to deeper understanding” (Thomas, 2021, p. 628). As Van Manen (2014) asserted:

When we create text with tone, then we hope that the reader will be affected by it. We experience the tone of text not unlike the way we experience the captivating effect of a compelling musical score or even a catchy tune. Like musical tone, so textual tone may leave visceral and corporeal tracts. We are literally impressed by it and affected by it; we cannot let go of its enchanting quality. (p. 267)

True to whole person theory's phenomenological roots and spiritual potentials, I employ poetic thinking to pursue how "phenomenological tone aims for the epiphanic, ... to touch our understandings of life's meaning that we experience as meaning in life" (p. 267) in its unfathomable, mysterious depths.

Poetic inquiry methods also fit the participatory nature of this research because "the desire of the poetic is to bring forward the complexity of sensation, to open up this felt space, and invite [the reader] in" (Freeman, 2017, p. 73). Poetic analysis seeks to engage the audience's senses, allowing for the conveying of experience through creative expression that "is *itself* an experience, an understanding, an event" (p. 72). Poetic thinking further resonates with this work's more than human orientation in that research poetry requires inquirers to "open their senses to all that the world—human and nonhuman—offers" (p. 77). The participatory potentials of research poetry also keep analyses of data open to revision and the possibility of different audience interpretations (Prendergast, 2006, p. 370). Poetic analyses carry potentials for sharing research more broadly, beyond academic spaces, and "certain affordances for performance and introduc[ing] audiences to theory in an experiential and relatable manner" (Thomas, 2021, p. 635).

These interludes perform a thinking with theory (Jackson & Mazzei, 2011) through poetic writing enabling an evocative and exploratory braiding of personal affective experiences

with resonant theoretical concepts, what I call poetical thinking with theory. They hold more open-ended spaces to map more of the posthuman constellations encompassed by this research in excess of what the journal article chapters could sensibly hold. The poetic experiments reflect my belief, following Richardson's (2000) poststructuralist contention, that "[t]rying out evocative forms, we relate differently to our material; we know it differently. We find ourselves attending to feelings, ambiguities, temporal sequences, blurred experiences" (p. 931).

Using poetic writing as inquiry, these artful interludes also seek to answer continued calls for more artfully presented action research (Seeley, 2011; Warwick et al., 2022). Between action research and the arts lies a "natural affinity, especially if action research embrace[s] living inquiry rather than a step-by-step progression" (Irwin, 2022, p. 3). Ultimately, I played with research poetry to pursue analysis of data materials in ways that diffract data (Barad, 2007; Jackson & Mazzei, 2011), creating crystallizations of analysis presenting multiple ways into building meaning from multiple angles (Thomas, 2021).

Conclusion

The potential significance of this research echoes and reverberates across many levels: personal, theoretical, and practical. This project, culminating in a collaborative inquiry into musical creative practice, provided a personal opportunity for me to circle back to my Master's thesis research (Perry, 2011), which explored how learning happens within informal communities of creative practice. Ever since turning in that thesis, I have regretted not including the sights and sounds of that experimental music community I was studying and attempting to celebrate. This dissertation also extends that work by, once again, focusing on the rich multimodal territory of learning through music making, this time emphasizing a more personal

level and micro creative processes of listening and playing and attending to the feelings of sounds, themselves.

Thus, this project has enabled me to become more rooted in my affective experiential knowing and to deepen artful practices I have engaged over many years, including during these years of doctoral study, for staying in touch with and expressing feelings for spiritual purposes. Pursuing this project and path became a way, authentic to my own being and becoming, of seeking to become more whole and bringing the disparate doings that make up what I perceive to be my ever-evolving self into more complex and coherent relation. This work illustrates my seeking to “enable a linking of artist and scholar” (Sellers, 2015, p. 15) by integrating these aspects of my being which too often exist in tension with and isolation from each other.

The desire to integrate these entangled affinities also emerged out of specific theoretical engagements in my process of becoming-researcher. Starting from this ground of personal experience and felt significance that I am only partially able to name and will always be unable to provide a full accounting of opens up many potential theoretical and practical implications. I seek to develop deeper understandings of how a personally enjoyable creative practice imbued with deep felt senses of meaning can connect us to our own becoming and to the becoming of other people, ideas, and materials far beyond ourselves.

CHAPTER 2

PARTICIPATORY FEELING: RE-VISIONING TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY
THROUGH HERON'S WHOLE PERSON PERSPECTIVE⁴

⁴ Perry, S. A. B. (2021). Participatory feeling: Re-visioning transformative learning theory through Heron's whole person perspective. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 71(4), 338-355. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07417136211016779>
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Abstract

John Heron's whole person theory can expand transformative learning theory by elaborating a more nuanced understanding of affect. In contrast to the vague conceptualization of affect's role and the interchangeable treatment of emotion and feeling in most adult learning scholarship, Heron's holistic theory grounds all experience in affective knowing and asserts significant differences between feeling and emotion. These distinctions challenge transformative learning theory by revealing critical subjectivity, emerging from affective, embodied experience, as prerequisite to critical reflection and presenting unitive discourse, over rational discourse, as a more viable, generative path to transformations of being. Throughout, I consider how the urgent need to develop deeper understanding around participatory feeling, in particular, relates to complex global issues like the ongoing struggle against racism and for environmental and human rights.

Since the late 1970s, interdisciplinary scholars and practitioners have used transformative learning theory (TLT) to explain and foster transformations across a seemingly endless range of contexts (Howie & Bagnall, 2013). Consequently, adult learning scholars have critiqued TLT, especially for its individualistic and cognitive biases. Many have called for deeper understanding of the complex, interdependent relationship between affect (feelings and emotions) and the cognitive processes of critical reflection and rational discourse (Cranton & Kasl, 2012; Mälkki, 2012; Merriam, 2004). The need for greater conceptual clarity around affect in TLT persists (Taylor, 2017). Adult learning scholarship, more generally, also continues to struggle articulating affect's significance beyond how it supports or inhibits critical thinking (Boud & Walker, 1993; Dirkx, 2001; Rodgers, 2002; Taylor, 2009).

Heron's (1992) whole person perspective offers a complex vision of affect that can help address some of these ongoing limitations and challenges. This holistic learning theory views feeling as the root of all human experience—of all being, knowing, and doing. Furthermore, it offers a nuanced understanding of feeling as distinct from emotion, a differentiation TLT and other experiential learning theories do not explore.

Kasl and Yorks (2002), Yorks and Kasl (2002) led the way in applying Heron's whole person theory to the field of adult education. Their analyses illustrate how a whole person perspective proves useful for understanding and developing empathy, creativity, collaboration, and spirituality in the transformation process. Other scholars have followed in using whole person theory in this way (Dirkx, 2001, 2006; McCallum et al., 2016; Tisdell, 2003). Still, though the above capacities are often listed as key to addressing many of humanity's most pressing global problems (Sygna et al., 2013), Heron's theory remains unfamiliar to most adult educators.

Therefore, this article opens up a more direct dialogue between TLT and Heron's whole person learning perspective, illustrating how Heron's multilayered vision builds a more complex understanding of the relationship between affect and cognition, including critical reflection and rational discourse. Two central questions guide this inquiry: How might whole person theory's emphasis on feeling as the root of experience expand current understandings of affect's role in learning that transforms? How might this whole person perspective complexify TLT?

Mezirow's Evolving Concept of Affect in Transformative Learning Theory

Reading the essential components of TLT in its original formulation and the specific ways scholars have pushed to expand its boundaries reveals how TLT has succeeded and failed in addressing affect's role in personal transformation. Mezirow (1991) described transformative learning as a primarily meta-cognitive process by which adults adopt more flexible, inclusive, and discerning perspectives for interpreting and responding to their experiences. Though key aspects of the theory remained consistent over Mezirow's long career, he refined many of TLT's core concepts, including frame of reference, habits of mind, and point of view (Mezirow, 2000). For example, Mezirow updated TLT's definition to include making personal mind-sets more "emotionally capable of change" (p. 7). This alteration acknowledged the central role emotions played in informing how and why individuals developed and often clung to certain mental habits that render them more open or resistant to change.

Despite this opening up to affect, Mezirow (2000) continued to view TLT as primarily unfolding through critical reflection, a mental process of thinking about past experiences to inquire into the how and why of one's habits of thinking, feeling, and acting. Some form of discourse determined the validity of one's critical reflections by testing them against alternative

perspectives. Only discourse with others could validate new frames of reference, checking whether they actually were more open and appropriate for guiding future actions.⁵

While Mezirow always upheld TLT's cognitive nature (Cranton, 2016), he acknowledged the affective components of reflection and discourse (Mezirow, 1991). For example, he immediately followed up an assertion that individuals need only a willingness to participate in discourse with a longer list of affective prerequisites: "Feelings of trust, solidarity, security, and empathy are essential preconditions for free full participation in discourse" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 12). Similarly, he stated that transformation can become "an intensely threatening emotional experience" when learners begin examining their own assumptions, beliefs, and values through critical self-reflection (p. 6). Furthermore, he conceded that "reflectivity involves reasoning and/or intuition. Both are significantly influenced by conditioned emotional responses" (p. 21). Addressing this pivotal role of affect, TLT facilitators have stressed the importance of providing supportive environments and interactions that neutralize negative emotions and promote positive ones (Kreber, 2012; Taylor, 2017).

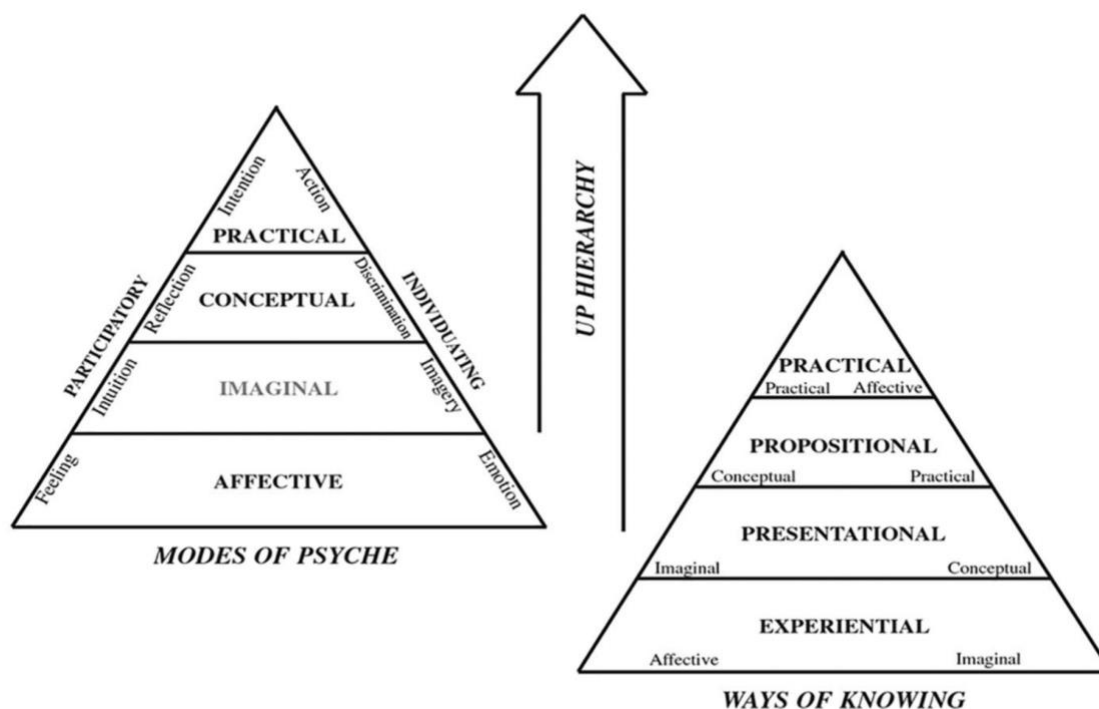
Near the end of his career, Mezirow (2018) declared: "Most transformative learning takes place outside of awareness; intuition substitutes for critical reflection of assumptions" (p. 118). He began to consider that unconscious capacities may play the more significant role in transformation. His own apparent perspective change indicated a growing acceptance of extrarational processes related more to embodied transformations of being and perceiving than to changes in articulable knowledge or immediately obvious behavior changes (Sands & Tennant, 2010; Tisdell, 2003, 2020).

⁵ Mezirow's theory focused on linguistic discourse.

In considering these alternate transformation paths, Mezirow (2000) cited Heron's (1988) insights into extralinguistic, intuitive ways of construing meaning, "as when we experience presence, motion, color, texture, directionality, aesthetic, or kinesthetic experience, empathy, feelings, appreciation, inspiration, or transcendence" (p. 3). Most adult learning scholars referencing Heron's whole person theory focus on its emphasis on imagination and creative expression as alternative forms of communicative meaning-making and bridges to affect (Dirkx, 2001, 2006; Lawrence, 2008; Tisdell, 2003; Yorks & Kasl, 2006). A deeper investigation into the nuanced affective architecture that Heron proposed supports all human experience remains to be explored. Whole person theory's complex conceptualization of affect presents an opportunity to expand Mezirow's thinking about how affect, cognition, and action relate in diverse transformative learning processes.

Figure 2.1

Heron's Four Modes of Psyche and Their Corresponding Ways of Knowing.



Note. Heron's up-hierarchy shows the affective mode as the ground of all other psychic modes. The experiential knowing it produces supports all other ways of knowing. Reprinted with permission from "Toward a theory and practice for whole person learning: Reconceptualizing experience and the role of affect," by L. Yorks and E. Kasl, 2002, *Adult Education Quarterly*, 52(3), p. 183. Copyright 2002 by Sage. Reprinted with permission.

Affect in Heron's Whole Person Learning Perspective

Heron (1992) differentiated between feeling and emotion in ways most TLT and adult learning scholars do not. For example, while Dirkx (2001, 2006, 2012) and Taylor (2009) both called for deeper understanding of affect's role in transformation processes, they treated feeling and emotion interchangeably. Whole person theory highlights differences between feeling and

emotion, which Heron presented as the two poles of affect. This section examines how whole person theory makes sense of this polarity and relates to other aspects of the human psyche, including cognition, at the heart of TLT.

Affect's Relation to Other Capacities of Human Psyche

Heron (1992) illustrated affect as the wellspring of all being, knowing, and doing using a pyramid metaphor. This visualization of whole person theory depicted the full range of human capacity in a unified framework of four levels with feeling and emotion, the affective mode, at the broad base and the action-oriented practical mode at its apex (Figure 1). Heron (1996) described the relationships between these modes as:

an up-hierarchy, in which what is above is grounded on what is below. So the practical (intention and action) is grounded on the conceptual (reflection and discrimination), which is grounded on the imaginal (intuition and imagery), which in turn is grounded on the affective (feeling and emotion). (p. 84)

This model does not suggest human learning follows a linear ascent through the various modes. Rather, it conveys the supportive relationships between various psychic capacities. It emphasizes affective capacity as the soil from which all other capacities grow. Whole person learning, then, does not present human development as a project of mastering or transcending each mode. Heron's (1992) spiral concept of learning (discussed in more detail later) involves continuously cycling through all the psychic modes with increasing attention and intention. The achievement of personhood represented a journey of integrating, rather than attempting to transcend, the four modes and the particular ways of knowing each produced.

As interdependent aspects of human capacity, each mode generates its own epistemology, or way of knowing. Feeling and emotion produced experiential knowledge, while intuition and

imagination produced presentational knowing.⁶ Meanwhile, propositional knowing exhibited by written and spoken statements emerged from the familiar conceptual mode, and practical knowing arose through action (Heron, 1992). These four ways of knowing form a more inclusive “extended epistemology” (Heron & Reason, 2008) than the conceptual and practical knowledge privileged in TLT, most formal education contexts, and Western societies at large.

Heron (1992) also offered a more novel point about affect beyond its existence as the supportive ground of all other human capacities. The ability to integrate these various ways of knowing involved more than appreciating how each psychic mode related to others. Within each mode, the whole person negotiated a continuum between individuation and participation. Becoming a whole person involved recognizing and balancing the tension between experiences of separation from and unity with others. In the affective mode, at the uphierarchy pyramid’s base, where the participatory and individuated poles lie furthest apart, Heron called these two aspects feeling and emotion.

Feeling and Emotion as Distinct Aspects of Affect

Heron (1992) defined emotion as “the fulfillment or frustration of individual needs and interests” (p. 119) which often produce observable expressions of embodied affect. This coincides with most lay and scholarly characterizations of emotion as focused on an identifiable object and indicated by some physiological response (Goleman, 2006; Tracy & Randles, 2011). Heron (1992) identified negative and positive emotions as corresponding to the frustration (grief, fear, anger, and boredom) or fulfillment (delight, appreciation, interest, and zest) of certain human needs.

⁶ Yorks and Kasl (2006) reported their students found the term “presentational knowing” confusing and preferred “expressive knowing” as a more accurate description of the way of knowing generated in the imaginal mode.

By contrast, the multiple, everyday uses of the word “feeling” connote everything from thought to empathy to tactile sensation. Heron (1992) saw this as evidence for feeling as the equally familiar, yet more obscure ground underlying all human experience. He defined feeling as “participat[ion] in wider unities of being” (p. 16) and “that unique capacity of the psyche for empathic resonance with the other” (p. 93). While humans engage participatory feeling most obviously through touching and other bodily senses, aspects of feeling “include special application to the extra-sensory” (p. 103). The body’s senses do not determine the bounds of feeling as they do for emotion. The five senses cannot account for certain participatory experiences, such as the feeling of spiritual presence or having a sense of infinity.⁷

Still, humans can become more conscious of feeling by attending to their bodies. Every instance of touch unites two beings into a single whole. Mutual gazing heightens awareness that beyond the perception of physical eyes, the quality of the other’s gaze can also be felt. Heron (1992) presented these experiences as the most obvious sensorial ways to enter into feeling, while privileging hearing as “the most total gateway for feeling” because of its more expansive, precise, and multidirectionally immersive nature compared with the other senses (p. 102). Hearing most accurately reflects his notion of feeling as “attunement and resonance” with other beings (p. 16) and illustrates an immanent reality in which “rhythm characterizes the whole of nature” (p. 98). To feel an object, a person, a situation, is to share a vibration, to create a harmonious chord.

As in the separate notes of a chord, however, one never loses one’s individual existence. Feeling, therefore, is a paradox that “celebrates unity in diversity, identification with what is

⁷ For some cross-disciplinary perspectives which have made similar differentiations between feeling and emotion, see Damasio (2018), Skoggard and Waterston (2015), and Wetherell (2015).

different without loss of personal distinctness” (Heron, 1992, p. 93). Feeling encompasses one’s conscious connection(s) to and separation(s) from the various beings in one’s lifeworld. It upholds the integrity of individual autonomy while embracing the interdependent relationships in which individuals always exist. In this way, Heron’s formulation of feeling moves beyond the hyper-localized conception of affect as belonging to and confined solely within individual bodies and experiences. Here, feeling is an often obscure, difficult to articulate set of dynamic intersubjective relations between persons and other persons and objects in their environment.

Participation always includes an individuated aspect. Feeling gives rise to individuated emotion. Likewise, the existence of an emotion implies the preexistence of feelings related to one’s connection (or lack thereof) to the wider world beyond one’s self (Heron, 1992). For example, a person who does not identify as Black may encounter the phrase “Black Lives Matter” and feel their own vulnerability, exclusion, or lack of connection to Black people and experiences, leading to anger, grief, or indifference. They may, however, remain unaware of the relation between their emotions and the underlying feelings from which they arose. As the more elusive aspect of affect, feeling often remains below conscious awareness; and, intense negative emotions, in particular, block the way to increased awareness of relational, participative feelings (McCallum et al., 2016). Nevertheless, emotions provide clues to the wider felt sense of an individual’s engagement with their total environment. As Gendlin (2007) asserted, focusing on emotion enables an unlocking of feeling, the often unconscious, mysterious, and unnamable present moment sense of embodied interaction with one’s world.

Theoretical Disjunctures

Heron’s (1992) bold assertion that all experience, including emotion, flowed from feeling helps unravel the interdependence of affect and cognition Mezirow (1991, 2000) alluded to. In

this model, reflection, categorization, and the propositional knowing that emerges from cognitive capacities never occur on their own. Habits of mind formed by the filtering of experience through affect always condition thinking. Cognition can only arise from the experiential knowing of embodied interactions with others in one's environment.

Whole person theory, then, draws a precise relationship between affect and cognition where TLT and other holistic adult learning theories (Illeris, 2005; Jarvis, 2009) leave ambiguity. In rooting human experience, including learning, in affective, present moment, embodied interaction, Heron (1992) also explicitly distanced his theory from the cognitive, retrospective bias in Kolb's experiential model (pp. 193–197). Yorks and Kasl (2002) noted that Kolb, Boud, and Mezirow all shared the belief that “experience is not the direct sensation of felt encounter but is the meaning that we make of that encounter” (p. 181). For Heron (1992), experience is the felt sense of a present moment encounter; and, denying or moving on too quickly from the reality of affective embodied experience impoverishes the individual's ability to make meaning at all (Yorks & Kasl, 2002).

But, if experience is the always-present-but-obscured felt sense, how and why do most humans lose conscious awareness of participative feeling? What does this feeling-rooted conception of experience mean for critical reflection's role in learning that transforms? To answer these questions, the next section explores how human subjectivity forms and why developing critical subjectivity is a vital prerequisite for critical reflection.

Developing Subjectivity: Emergence of the Subject/Object Split

Participative feeling often remains below the level of human conscious awareness due to learning, in early childhood, to differentiate between one's self and the various objects in one's world. In Western cultures this often includes socialization into patterns of behavior and thought

that uphold perceived separations between mind/body, self/other, subject/object. According to Heron (1992), human experience begins in a primal state wherein the infant perceives all the objects of their world as inseparable extensions of their self. Subjectivity, an individual's sense of differentiated self, begins to form when one begins to categorize objects, events, and people. The emergence of a subjectivity often accompanied a wounding event, which Heron considered a near universal phenomenon by which children discover their separateness. The subject/ object split may begin, for example, when an infant learns it cannot access its mother's immediate attention or when a child is made to abandon a certain behavior or object associated with their imaginary world. Both may be considered wounding events that disrupt the primal participative feeling state. The child becomes disciplined into an awareness of its separateness, its individuality.

Language further socialized the child into a particular sociocultural lifeworld, with its associated set of acceptable roles and habits of mind, thereby solidifying the subject/object split. Commonly, an individual's sense of self becomes solidified in a spiral of experiences that reinforce socially prescribed categories, including separateness of self from others. Often these mental frames become reified, confining future thoughts and action in predictable ways (Heron, 1992). What often becomes lost in the process of developing subjectivity is an understanding of how, as Butler claimed, following Merleau-Ponty, "there can be no 'I' without feeling" (Butler, 2015, p. 44). Thus, without relations to or resonance with other beings, one's self could not exist.

Developing Critical Subjectivity: Reunifying Subject and Object

How we understand our selves in relation to diverse others informs our most fundamental beliefs and assumptions and, therefore, how we think and act in the world. For this reason, learning to perceive beyond the separation and opposition of self/other, subject/object,

mind/body binaries represents a political project. Developing critical subjectivity does more than help us recover the reality of complex and interdependent relations; it also lays the ground for enabling critical reflection. In other words, without critical subjectivity, TLT's primary transforming processes cannot unfold. This section further explores critical subjectivity and the special role the embodied felt sense plays in its development.

What Is Critical Subjectivity?

Reason (1988), with whom Heron collaborated in developing whole person theory into collaborative inquiry, defined critical subjectivity as

a quality of awareness in which we do not suppress our primary subjective experience; nor do we allow ourselves to be overwhelmed and swept along by it; rather we raise it to consciousness and use it as part of the inquiry process. (p. 12)

In keeping with whole person theory's insistence on seeing the individual as always connected to others, critical subjectivity entails more than monitoring internal psychological processes: "critical subjectivity extends to critical intersubjectivity . . . shared experience, dialogue, feedback, and exchange with others" (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 283). Critical subjectivity emerges from within a social context and encompasses conscious feelings of belongingness or alienation within a relational landscape.

Feminist theory, too, conceptualizes critical subjectivity, also called reflexivity, within intersubjective context in ways which have profoundly influenced methodological discussions around research ethics, validity, and the relationship of researcher(s) to research subject(s; Maxwell, 2013). Feminist reflexivity encompasses becoming conscious of how power structures social systems and mediates interpersonal relations as well as how one's position relative to power influences one's experiences, perceptions, and actions (England, 1994). Ahmed (2017),

for example, described becoming aware of herself as a Brown woman, sharing similar experiences with other women of color, in the moment of being addressed harshly by two White police officers. Feminist critical subjectivity involves transformation of how one understands one's self in relation to the world.

Pragmatic criticality, too, stresses critiquing one's self through a perpetual willingness to question how one's primary embodied experiences inform one's habitual ways of knowing (Brookfield, 2018). But risk complicates engaging in this type of experimentation and maintaining an openness to alternate ways of knowing and doing. Exercising critical subjectivity often means calling into question the cultural norms and social knowledge learned in the necessary process of developing an individuated sense of self.

Critical Subjectivity and the Expansive Learning Spiral

Heron (1992) described the process by which, in Western cultures, children learn to privilege individuation over participation as a contracting spiral. As individuals learn to view objects, and themselves, as independent and separate, rather than as existing in complex, interdependent connection with others, perception narrows. By adulthood, many lack practice perceiving and expressing embodied affect and the participative aspects of being.

Many individuals, for example, who perceive the existence of systemic racism still find it difficult to locate, much less acknowledge, racism within one's self. Systemic racism, however, manifests in social forces that press on every person who grows up and lives in a racist society, shaping our being, knowing, and doing in ways we are often unaware of. Through our earliest social encounters, individuals are affected by racism, unconsciously absorbing lines of inclusion and exclusion and their corresponding assumptions as well as how to maintain or better one's social position.

Sullivan (2014) explored how racism literally produced physiological changes that bodies remember. To illustrate, she shared an anecdote about a White student who admitted experiencing queasy feelings in her stomach, which the student equated with fear, whenever she passed a Black man on the street. Sullivan argued that we must take seriously such instances of embodied affect. Rather than labeling such experiences racist, educators should recognize this articulation of felt sense as a real reflection of how human bodies feel, react to, and memorize complex, often invisible, social realities, like racism, which elude easy description and understanding. Failing to help the student, in this case, reinterpret the meaning of her bodily experience represents a missed opportunity to potentially help grow critical subjectivity. It also helps perpetuate a denial of the physiological effects and corresponding negative health outcomes Black people experience as an extension of racism (Evans et al., 2020).

The extent to which individuals are conscious of how and why they are affected, with anger, fear, pride, shame, or something else, determines how they will perceive and respond to difference. Sullivan's (2014) anecdote illustrated how not attending to the felt sense can propel an individual further along the inward spiral of perceiving the world in more and more narrow terms, becoming less open to alternate possibilities, less inclusive, less tolerant of difference. Cultivating critical subjectivity does more than merely honor the reality and grounding importance of felt sense. It moves beyond raw subjective experiences by inquiring into their nature and the limits of their disclosures.

A person exhibiting critical subjectivity might ask: Where did this felt sense come from? How did my body learn to react in this particular way? When else has this feeling emerged? What were the consequences then? Does this feeling make me more or less able to consider multiple perspectives or interpretations of a situation? Experiences that cultivate critical

subjectivity reverse the inward spiral. They initiate individuals into an expanding spiral of learning that leads to increased openness and the ability to perceive connection, participation, complexity, interdependent being, and solidarity in difference (Heron, 1992).

Toward Unitive Discourse

Cultivating critical subjectivity can help individuals become more “emotionally capable of change” by revealing how certain frames of reference connect to how we understand our selves (Mezirow, 2000, p. 7). Becoming conscious of our complex selves and what our feelings tell us about our entanglements within wider contexts enables the capacity for critical reflection. But how far does this take us in entering into discourse with others? This section investigates the possibility that the “feelings of trust, solidarity, security, and empathy” (p. 12) Mezirow listed as preconditions for rational discourse may only be achievable through participative perception leading to a unitive discourse.

Limitations of Rational Discourse

Mezirow (2000) described discourse as “finding agreement, welcoming difference, ‘trying on’ other points of view, identifying the common in the contradictory, tolerating the anxiety implicit in paradox, searching for synthesis, and reframing” (p. 13). He also listed numerous requirements for the unfolding of rational discourse. Individuals must “have accurate and complete information; be free from coercion and distorting self-deception; be able to weigh evidence and assess arguments objectively; and be open to alternative perspectives” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 77).

The central role rational discourse occupies in TLT has troubled scholars in various ways. Newman (2010) pointed out the near impossibility of assuring a lack of coercion, the inherent violence in much of what counts as discourse, and situations in which consensus is undesirable.

Butler's (2015) point that our always partial knowledge of self and others challenges the notion that subjects can ever possess complete information or be fully free from self-deception also comes to mind. Recognizing that discourse often breaks down at the level of trust, some scholars have focused on fostering the empathy and vulnerability needed to engage in discourse (Kasl & Yorks, 2016; McCallum et al., 2016). Meanwhile, Cranton and Kasl (2012) suggested that nonrational forms of discourse may invite wider ways of knowing.

From Heron and Reason's (1997) participatory view, the problem with rational discourse and TLT's constructivist foundation, more generally, lies in its view of reality, including perceptions of others, as wholly cognitive and socially constructed. This perspective, they contend, ignores material conditions which exist prior to and outside of mental constructions, denying experiential knowledge of affective embodiment altogether. From their perspective, the kind of discourse needed to reconcile subject and object in an integrated relation can only emerge from the grounding level of affect and the feeling of embodied relation. Rational discourse alone cannot validate critical reflection. The consensus which emerges from rational discourse may collude with undesirable social inequalities and stereotypes. It may do away with dissenting views and/or suppress new ways of knowing. To be truly critical, critical reflection must include critical self-reflection supported by the experiential, embodied knowing of critical subjectivity. Heron (1992) named this more open type of critical reflection "ambivertive reflection," describing it as "the midpoint where one thinks about one's psyche and the world in an integrative way" (p. 22). He called for "the cultivation of . . . post-linguistic perception and thought, in which we learn to see a unitive world and describe it in unitive discourse. In such a world subject and object are distinct, interpenetrating and nonseparable" (p. 9). But what does unitive discourse look and sound like? How does critical subjectivity manifest in unitive

discourse? The next section will help illuminate how critical subjectivity, inclusive of participative perception, may blossom into unitive discourses.

Glimpses of Participative Perception

Buber's (1970/1996) concept of I–Thou relation presented a powerful articulation of participative perception that inspired both Jarvis (2006) and Heron (1992). An experience of reciprocal I–Thou relationship involves appreciative perception of another being's whole presence. Participating in I–Thou relation entailed seeing and treating another person, idea, or entity as more than an object for achieving some personal end or individual goal (I–It relation). For Buber, a Holocaust survivor, the reunification of subject and object through the participatory feelings which infuse I–Thou relations disrupted the impulse to demonize others. The I–Thou experience defused the negative emotions of fear, hate, and anger that sow all manner of violence and division.

While these descriptions of I–Thou relation may sound lofty or remain difficult to grasp, they may not seem so when considering they describe a relationship dynamic that lies at the heart of a familiar enough feeling: love. Heron (1992) described the feeling of love as joyfully celebrating and desiring the flourishing of another's unique being as interdependent with one's own flourishing. For Heron, the ability to engage this radical, participatory feeling made personhood possible. Like Buber, he tied the ability or inability to enter into such relation to profound personal and political implications:

Love is feeling the resonance with a person, a group, a bird, the moon. . . . If we aren't fulfilled in loving, we can't adequately appreciate the imagery of our world; and then we can't achieve a real interest in understanding our world; and without this our satisfaction in making choices is impoverished. (pp. 120–121)

Here, again, we see “the reach of feeling is illimitable” (p. 18). It holds the potential for a person to connect to what lies far beyond and inside their self, to the material as well as the spiritual, to the nonhuman animal and the inanimate, to the self in other and the other in the self. In their study on the transformative potential of interfaith dialogue among people who hold different religious beliefs, Pope and Nicolaides (2021) offer one glimpse into how the shift from I–It to I–Thou relation may unfold in practice.

Expressing Participative Perception in Unitive Discourse

Communicating participatory perception demands a subversion of the subject/object split that language reifies. Reversing the momentum of a contracting spiral of understanding often proves difficult. Nevertheless, as Dewey (2005) noted, glimpses of unitive discourse emerge in the attempts of artists of all types to express various experiences of participative perception. These and other unitive experiences may occur spontaneously, as part of one’s everyday activities, or via purposeful immersion, for example, in nature. Interviews with environmental activists have surfaced unitive articulations of felt relation to the natural world that point to participative experiences beyond anthropocentrism and inclusive of the spiritual (Kovan & Dirkx, 2003). Likewise, participants in recent TLT research investigating the relationship between ecological consciousness development and psychedelic experience have articulated generative senses of wonder and unitive connection with the natural world (Bainbridge & Del Negro, 2020).

I have argued for the necessity of cultivating critical subjectivity to even engage in critical reflection. This section has explored how the multiplicity of perspectives and inclusive connections that critical subjectivity entails reflect participative perception. Critical reflection supported by critical subjectivity has the potential to produce a more open unitive discourse that

moves beyond the consensus and conformity that characterize rational discourse in TLT. The next section will explore ways adult learning practitioners have enacted whole person theory's affective insights toward cultivating participative being, knowing, and doing.

Awakening Critical Subjectivity, Cultivating Unitive Perception

How can the ability to access the wisdom of participative feeling, at the root of all other ways of knowing, be cultivated? How can adult learning practitioners use Heron's whole person theory to expand transformative learning pedagogies? Heron's theory of personhood provides an immensely practical map for analyzing and fostering transformation, especially through its articulation into cooperative inquiry (Heron, 1996, 1998, 1999; Reason, 1988).

Cooperative inquiry (also called collaborative inquiry, or CI), is a practitioner based, action-oriented inquiry methodology and pedagogy developed by Heron and others out of his whole person theory (Yorks, 2005). CI inquires with, rather than about, people by cultivating self-organizing small groups through cycles of action and reflection around an agreed on topic and actively engaging the affective and imaginal modes so often ignored or maligned in formal learning contexts (Heron & Reason, 1997; Kasl & Yorks, 2002). CI engages primary, embodied experience through various ceremonies, rituals, and repeated actions that honor and awaken participatory feeling and intuition (Heron, 1992, 1996; Yorks & Kasl, 2002). Reflection follows action, focusing on how affective experiential knowledge finds celebration or suppression in the imaginal, conceptual, and practical modes (Heron & Reason, 1997).

TLT scholars have recognized CI, among other action inquiry methods, as a promising, underexplored means for fostering transformative learning and expanding TLT (Taylor & Laros, 2014; Taylor & Snyder, 2012). Within and beyond adult education, it is perhaps among scholar-practitioners pursuing CI where Heron's ideas have received most attention (Hanlin-Rowney et

al., 2006; Kasl & Yorks, 2002; Lawrence, 2008; Napan et al., 2018). These small learning groups intend to balance the participative with the individuated personal capacities in experiments for cultivating the empathy, trust, and connection unitive discourse requires. Two ways CI accomplishes this is by boosting self-esteem and providing support for exploring challenging experiences of affective dissonance.

The role of self-esteem, which Heron (1992) called a passive emotion due to its activation in receiving the attention of another, and other positive emotions cannot be overstated in the awakening and exercising of critical subjectivity. Because negative emotions obscure the more expansive participative feelings that ground them, they uphold the perceived split between subject and object. Conversely, self-esteem, arising from the fulfillment of the personal need for love, lays the foundation for building a confident, autonomous self, one capable of recognizing and advocating for the interdependent relation of subject and object.

Despite TLT's individualistic emphasis, Mezirow (2000) recognized "the crucial role of supportive relationships and a supportive environment in making possible a more confident, assured sense of personal efficacy, of having a self-or selves" (p. 25). Dirkx (2012), too, connected the healthy emergence of an "I" consciousness with the ability to "sometimes clash with the outer environment" and follow one's inner voice (p. 119). Without self-esteem, individuals cannot challenge the world's insistence on the separateness of subjects and objects or, for that matter, any other binary or oppressive status quo. The CI group provides a nurturing container for practicing loving relations leading to intentional actions grounded in unitive perception (Heron, 1996).

The CI group also challenges individuals. It provides a robust environment for exploring paradox and the multifaceted and complex dimensions of conflicting experiences and

interpretations, including the experience of affective dissonance. Affective dissonance occurs when one's way of knowing (epistemology) contradicts or conflicts with a reality which demands another way of being (ontology; Hemmings, 2012), creating a disorienting dilemma of sorts. Through this affective disorientation, critical subjectivity may emerge and lead to personal transformation and socially critical consciousness. Recognizing this potential, Ahmed (2017) advocated sharing stories related to the awakening of one's critical subjectivity, which reflect personal experiences of affective dissonance. Telling such stories enables individuals to better understand their own becoming while helping others deepen their own critical subjectivity.

Out of his own lifelong experience facilitating CI groups, Heron (1992, 1999) offered a multitude of exercises, meditations, and rituals to use individually or in groups as well as reports of CI experiments (Heron, 1996, 1998). Through engaging with art, sharing and listening to personal embodied experiences, and other attempts to experience and express participative perception and an integrated participation with the world, CI initiates individuals into unitive discourse. Adult educators must discover and create the conditions for cultivating affective wisdom. Through continuous inquiry into how the felt sense might open up broader, deeper, and more integrated and generative ways of perceiving and engaging a world of diversity and complexity (Nicolaidis, 2015), they can expand possibilities for learning that transforms.

Conclusion: Re-Visioning Transformative Learning

I have argued here for critical subjectivity, arising from the wellspring of participatory feeling, as a prerequisite to critical reflection and a gateway to unitive ways of being, knowing, and doing beyond the limits of rational discourse. I take this stand mindful that senses of integrated, immanent, vibrant reality represent "sweaty concepts" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 12) that evade easy articulation. Cultivating and sharing critical subjectivity and unitive discourse

requires work; but this work has never been more urgent. Worldwide, people continue to experience the unfolding uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic alongside overlapping, resurgent struggles against systemic racism, state-sanctioned violence, and the denial of basic human rights on many fronts. The moment calls adult educators to help others process paradoxical, often overwhelming, present moment experiences, and determine how best to respond.

These present challenges require ontological shifts and an opening up to other kinds of knowledge—a transformation of individual human being into more complex and inclusive understandings of collective potential and human becoming. World Health Organization Director General, Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus, stressed the vital need for “aggressive action combined with national unity and global solidarity,” over the prevailing winds of competition, denial, and isolationism, to overcome the ongoing pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020). Progress in the ongoing global struggle for environmental and human rights requires this same sense of solidarity through difference and interdependent well-being. The radical potential of affect and participatory feeling, in particular, will play a significant role in facilitating the global transformation of humanity currently underway.

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the field of togetherness can be sustained—

whatever the two people are doing
 standing
 holding hands
 gazing into each other's eyes

feeling is a change process¹⁴

not a noun
 a verb
 a sequence

to or from or about something—
 implicated in situation¹⁵

Gendlin goes back to Heidegger's feeling— a form of understanding¹⁶
 how the body lives and feels
 crucial form of holistic knowing

aesthetic—larger than words
 more than any category of
 patterned knowing
 the lifeworld in its excess
 before interpretation

the world—a complex set of environmental, social, and affective ecologies¹⁷

emergence from the immanent—¹⁸
 rather than emanation (domination) from the transcendent

feeling—internally opaque¹⁹

no good way to think about
 why focusing leads to information
 how feeling could contain
 information about situations
 why feeling brings change—

¹⁴ Gendlin (2018, p. 90)

¹⁵ Dewey (2005/1934, p. 69)

¹⁶ Todres & Galvin (2008, p. 568)

¹⁷ Braidotti (2019, p. 45)

¹⁸ Heron (1992, p. 11)

¹⁹ Gendlin (2018, p. 90)

feeling—the series of changes
 made by impacts
 of their renditions of
 how the body was
 the series of bodily re-recognitions

affect arises in the midst of²⁰
in-between-ness
 in those intensities that pass body to body
 (human, non-human, part-body, and otherwise)
 in those resonances that circulate about
 between and
 sometimes stick
 persistent proof of a body's
 ongoing immersion in and among
 the world's obstinacies and rhythms

affect, feeling, felt sense
 incalculable subjects²¹

²⁰ Gregg & Seigworth (2010, p. 1)

²¹ Lather (2016)

CHAPTER 4
TOWARD MORE HOLISTIC EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION: LEARNING WITH
FELT SENSE EXPERIENCE²²

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Abstract

Background: Most experiential learning theories, including Kolb's influential experiential learning cycle, disregard the vital role affects play in learning processes, thus limiting experiential education's horizons. Due to their obscured, often invisible nature, educators need more robust methods for helping students access and express affect, including feeling and emotion. **Purpose:** This article reviews methods experiential learning scholars have used to understand felt sense, a specific form of affective experience conceptualized by philosopher-psychologist Eugene Gendlin, to imagine more holistic experiential education practices.

Approach: The methodological review analyzes 11 studies focused on how felt senses mediate learning in ongoing participatory practices that are embedded in the everyday life activities of participants, beyond the short durations of most experiential education programs. **Conclusions:** Participatory arts-informed methods were most often used to successfully surface the complexities and multiplicities experienced with felt senses. **Implications:** To attend to felt sense experiencing, experiential educators should incorporate artful activities, broadly defined, to materialize primary experiences and express the affective and aesthetic knowings they contain. Facilitators should also adopt personal contemplative and expressive practices in preparing themselves to provide appropriate learner support and feedback, especially in emotionally charged learning situations.

Keywords: holistic experiential learning, Gendlin's felt sense, Heron's whole person feeling, affective experiencing, participatory learning

Affective aspects of experience, from relational feelings to embodied emotions, play pivotal roles in learning processes (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007). Transformations of human being, thinking, and doing, including growing empathy across differences (Kasl & Yorks, 2016) and developing increased response-ability within ambiguous situations (Nicolaidis, 2022) rely on affective capacities (Taylor, 2001). The dominance of Kolb's experiential learning theory (KELT), however, perpetuates a cognitive constructivist bias within experiential education (Morris, 2020) that diminishes lived experience by failing to account for its affective dimension and the profound educative potential therein.

To enact a holistic experiential education “addresses[ing] students in their entirety-as thinking, feeling, physical, emotional, spiritual and social beings” (Carver, 1996, p. 9), experiential educators need theories addressing this breadth and depth of human capacity. Therefore, this article explores experiential learning theory beyond KELT's narrow conceptualization of experience (Meyer & Seaman, 2021). This broader view reinstates experience as living experiencing (Gendlin, 2018), a potential-laden “capacity to perceive and address ill-structured problems, tolerate ambiguity, make warranted judgments, and act while continuously seeking and refining further information” (Eyler, 2009, p. 27). Michelson (1998) argued “re-membering” experiencing's embodied nature remains vitally important because: “Our emotional, sensual, and physical being informs our knowledge of both self and others, and makes accounts of the world available that are less distorted” (p. 223). Without attending to affective capacities, people cannot thoroughly cultivate relational perceptions leading to critical subjectivity, a prerequisite to democratic collaboration, critical reflection, relational dialogue, and authentic participation in the world (Perry, 2021).

Therefore, this article first examines KELT and other experiential learning theories (Boud & Walker, 1993; Jarvis, 2006) before turning to John Heron's (1992) whole person theory (WPT). WPT presents an integrative approach to understanding affect in the relationship between experience and learning. This section also explores how WPT's conceptualization of experience as unfolding in a primarily affective domain invokes shifting away from persistently dominant ways of thinking about learning as disciplinary knowledge acquisition. Next, a methodological review section examines how experiential learning scholars have attempted to conduct empirical inquiries into felt sense (Gendlin, 2007, 2018), a specific aspect of affective experience resonant with WPT's concept of feeling as the root of all knowing. This review assumes analyzing methodological patterns, perils, and possibilities experiential learning researchers pursued and encountered can inform more holistic pedagogical practice. Following a report of review findings, some implications for designing and implementing more holistic experiential education receive further consideration.

Theorizing (W)holistic Experiential Learning

Critics of KELT discuss its problematic treatment of experience as "concrete," as a discrete and decontextualized object learners can reflect about from a retrospective distance (Seaman et al., 2017). KELT's separation and opposition of "concrete" experience and abstract conceptualization and reflection in its learning cycles ignores reflection as an experience and the abstractions always already present in experiencing processes (Meyer & Seaman, 2021). These shortcomings relate to Kolb's simplification of Dewey's notion of experience and overreliance on a small portion of Lewin's T-group processes wherein researchers act as impartial observers providing reflective feedback on participants' interpersonal interactions (Miettinen, 2000).

Influenced by Gendlin (2018), Kolb and colleagues have refined earlier articulations of KELT to reflect a shift away from concrete experience and toward an expansive concept of “experiencing,” more inclusive of affective capacities and realities (Stock & Kolb, 2022). Thus, they have revised KELT’s assumptions about the content of experience as existing in two separable forms (concrete and abstract) and experiential learning as involving two distinct processes (reflective observation and active experimentation) (Tomkins & Ulus, 2016). Stock and Kolb (2022) explore, for example, less concrete aspects of experience, identifying felt sense, flow, mindfulness, and absorption, and their associated literatures, as parts of affective experiencing. While these revisions align with Gendlin’s (2018) own concepts of felt sense and experiencing, Heron’s whole person theory provides the clearest articulation of feeling as a way of knowing and how feelingful experiences lead to learning.

Heron’s Whole Person Theory as a Holistic Experiential Learning Theory

Transpersonal psychologist John Heron’s (1992) whole person theory (WPT) pays unparalleled attention to affective experiential knowing as it exists in expanding spirals of lifelong learning to perceive more complexly (Perry, 2021). In WPT, experience involves a direct encounter with one’s whole environmental situation and exercising the participatory capacity for feeling in relation to one’s world. The affective experiential knowing emerging from within this living relation produces a pre-cognitive experiential knowing providing the foundation for all other ways of knowing: expressive, propositional, and practical. This placement of feeling at the root of WPT’s extended epistemology influenced the development of experiential learning theories that sought to articulate the role of affect more clearly (Boud & Walker, 1993; Jarvis, 2006).

Heron's view of experience as a direct encounter placed him at odds with Kolb, Boud, and Mezirow's shared perspective that "experience is not the direct sensation of felt encounter but is the meaning that we make of that encounter" (Yorks & Kasl, 2002, p. 181). While still deemphasizing the body, WPT resonates with Michelson's (1998) view of learning, "as the product of an embodied, social selfhood rather than of a disembodied mind," encompassing more than "a moment of dispassionate self-reflection" (p. 227). In the context of Fenwick's (2001) discussion on various ways to approach experience, WPT integrates constructivist, psychoanalytic, situated, critical cultural, and enactivist perspectives in complex and novel ways.

WPT understands experience as direct encounter, therefore resonating with Dewey's notion of primary experience as "composed of material interaction with the physical and social environment" (Miettinen, 2000, p. 65). KELT's presentation of what Dewey called secondary experience as "concrete experience" imposes hard limits on how experience can be thought. This situation lies at the heart of Heron's (1992) pointed critique of KELT:

The notion of feeling is nowhere defined or elaborated ... it is merely there in some vague, unspecified and ungrounded way to underpin the idea of concrete experience ... nowhere properly explored, beyond the idea of direct apprehension. Likewise there is no adequate phenomenology of perception, which is tied far too closely to reflection ... Intuition and imagination get exceptionally short shrift in the learning model presented. (p. 194-195)

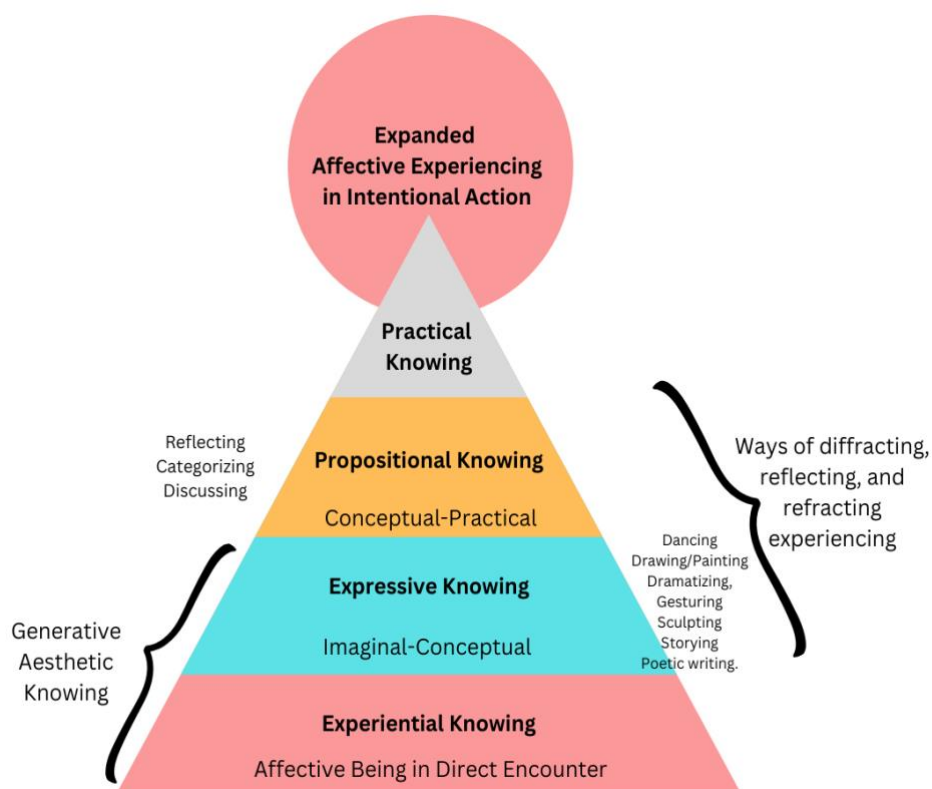
KELT leaves out of experience what Heron takes to be the heart of experience and experiential knowing: feeling.

In WPT, experiencing begins in the affective mode and the human capacity for feeling, an expansive and relational aspect of affect reaching far beyond body-bound sensing and

individuated psychological understandings of emotion (Heron, 1992). Figure 1 illustrates how affective experiential knowing leads on to imaginal knowing, perceiving and intuiting patterns within memories, dreams, sensations—one’s entire field of perception. Imaginal knowing, in turn, supports and makes possible propositional knowing, including linguistic communication, critical thinking, reflection, and dialogue about abstract concepts and categorical discernments. Finally, propositional knowing, if properly supported by the levels below, informs the specific intentional actions performed at the level of practical knowing, which opens to further affective experiencing.

Figure 4.1

Heron’s Multiple Ways of Knowing Up-hierarchy with Multiple Ways of Processing Experience



WPT's situation of feeling as a primary capacity of human psyche, at the very foundation of experiencing and the key to all other ways of knowing available to human consciousness, marks a distinguishing contribution to theories of experiential and transformative learning. A second major contribution lies in WPT's emphasis on expressive knowing through embodied aesthetic practices (e.g., drawing/painting, drama, poetry, dancing, movement/gesture, toning/sounding/singing) as a bridge between often unconscious affective-experiential knowing and the conscious and rational propositional knowing privileged in European-North American societies (Heron & Reason, 2008; Seeley & Reason, 2008; Yorks & Kasl, 2006).

The implications of engaging expressive knowing are vast, with consequences for how those interested in accessing and articulating affective aspects of experience might do so using diverse artful activities. WPT reveals aesthetic knowing, involving an imaginal translation of affective experiencing, as a generative capacity carrying potential for expressing (Nicolaidis, 2022), including what KELT's cognitive approach to reflection cannot. In this formulation, artful practices become primary channels through which a more immersed, embodied form of reflection, what Heron (1992) termed refraction, might take place.

Reflective observation of and abstract conceptualization about concretized experience in KELT takes place at the level of propositional knowing in WPT. WPT's emphasis on expressive knowing, however, accords expressive ways of knowing and doing a privileged position in the translation of primary experience. Refracting direct feelingful experiences through embodied artful practices and playfully engaging "material interactions with the physical and social environment" (Miettinen, 2000, p. 65) invokes additional primary experience while helping translate experience into more affectively grounded propositions and intentional action. Giving voice to the potentially deep significance of expressive ways of knowing, Yorks and Kasl (2006)

state that “[e]xpressive ways of knowing provide empathic connections for learning-within-relationship” (p. 52). Using WPT, their work reveals the power and potential of artful methods to work with affective experience to cultivate empathy across vast social and cultural differences which often provoke strong negative emotions (Kasl & Yorks, 2016).

Heron (1992) cited felt sense as directly related to WPT’s concept of feeling. Meanwhile, Gendlin’s (2007, 2018) emphasis on felt sense as a way of knowing from which transformed understandings and actions may unfold resonates with WPT’s grounding of all other ways of human knowing (practical, propositional, expressive) in affective experiential knowing. The next section further explores Gendlin’s concept of felt sense.

Gendlin’s Felt Sense, An Affective Aspect of Experiencing

Gendlin (2007) introduced the term *felt sense* to describe a specific affective-embodied experience and form of knowing he observed in successful psychotherapy patients. With colleagues at the University of Chicago, Gendlin observed how these patients experienced initial difficulty verbalizing their troubles. By engaging a slow and accepting process of continuously checking in with how their bodies felt as they tried to name aspects of initially nebulous feelings about a whole situation, patients often moved toward changed understanding (Claxton, 2006). Healing depended on whether the patient learned to tune into and inquire with an inner felt sense Gendlin (2007) described as “a special kind of internal bodily awareness” and “something that you do not at first recognize” (p. 11). Initially, a felt sense “feels meaningful, but not known,” providing “a body-sense of meaning” (p. 11), as when a person has a vague feeling of rightness or wrongness about a situation they cannot quite explain. This “[k]nowing-in-action often takes the form that Jeanne Bamberger and [Schön] have called a “felt path”: as we type on a keyboard or play a musical instrument, for example, our performance follows a pattern of next-next-next”

(Schön, 1992, p. 124). This description illuminates how felt senses imply directional movement, attempting to move the body toward continued material coherence and flourishing (Gendlin, 2018). Elsewhere, Schön (1987) discusses how professional artisans' keen felt senses constantly evaluate processual rightness or wrongness through difficult-to-articulate affective-embodied knowing in action.

Felt senses often remain invisible and/or below the threshold of consciousness, part of learners' tacit knowing (Polanyi, 1958) in part because they go beyond the body's five senses. Rather than referring to discrete bits of separable sensations, felt senses encompass holistic embodied feelings of being in continuous dynamic interaction with multiple elements of a complex, ever-unfolding environment (Gendlin, 2018). This involves all that flows between bodies in their entwined interaction within an environment, including the implied, or virtual, presence of memories, histories of past interactions, and future-oriented desires. Thus, Gendlin's concept of felt sense goes beyond the more momentary or episodic nature associated with psychological emotion or mood. Felt sense requires a new understanding of all bodies as "living process ... not only occurring but as also always *implying* [emphasis in original]" (Schoeller & Dunaetz, 2018, p. 132) a complex sustaining context.

Observing that accessing felt senses could be learned and, therefore, taught, Gendlin (2007) developed a focusing method encompassing six movements: 1. Clearing a space, 2. Feeling a felt sense, 3. Finding a (sonic, visual, or gestural) handle corresponding to the felt sense, 4. Resonating between the felt sense and the handle, 5. Asking the felt sense what it needs, 6. Receiving whatever wisdom or insights come. Through this method, designed for co-counseling and peer therapy contexts, implicit embodied feelings can become conscious, explicit knowledge. Embodied cognition researchers have used focusing to connect systems of knowing.

For example, Claxton (2006) described how focusing helps “[t]he word-scape and skill-scape become more congruent with the [memory-based] net-scape, and thus actions are more likely to be effective and thoughts more satisfying” (p. 356).

To extend the creative and healing potential of focusing beyond therapeutic contexts, Gendlin and colleagues developed a 14-step Thinking at the Edge (TAE) process (The International Focusing Institute, n.d.). TAE begins with focusing to find a felt sense and builds on Gendlin’s (2007) contention that felt senses always “carry forward,” directing the body in particular directions as well as catalyzing linguistic expression. TAE’s process of searching for verbal articulations of felt intends to surface different, new ways of understanding and expressing experiences of specific situations and phenomena involve cyclical zigzagging. Claxton (2006) describes the synergistic combination of using exploratory writing in a TAE process:

You let a vague, messy felt sense of the problem form, and then write a paragraph or two about it. Boil that down into one sentence, even though that doesn’t really capture what you want to say. Identify the key word or phrase in that sentence. Write down the ordinary definition or usage of that word or phrase, and see what it is about the usage that doesn’t ‘work.’ Next, go back to the felt sense and find another couple of words that might do better, and write down what they mean. (p. 358)

After a series of further cycles like those described above, one should arrive at a fresh constellation of words whose connections can be further pursued toward different and/or more holistic understandings. Both focusing and TAE aim at accessing felt senses to articulate new understanding and, in TAE’s case, generate new language for the complex nuances of situated, embodied experiences.

Organizational culture and learning scholars have also found felt sense a useful concept even as they have also struggled deploying methods for studying the phenomena. Aesthetic leadership scholars, for example, emphasize the ability to assess situational meanings through one's felt sense as crucial to leadership practice (Hansen et al., 2007). Taylor (2002), however, found most organization members exhibited "aesthetic muteness," an inability to discuss their felt senses of everyday work-related interactions. The study illustrated the multiple problems with interviewing people about felt sense experiences. Taylor struggled to phrase questions about felt sense, and when participants grasped the questions, they often had trouble verbally communicating any felt sense. Finally, because felt senses of shared encounters often differed considerably among participants, Taylor cautioned that the ability to receive, remember, and express felt sense experiences depended greatly on the level and quality of attention participants brought to a situation.

Accessing and articulating felt sense, feeling, and other affective aspects of experience requires more than traditional inquiry methods like participant observation and interviewing. Heron's (1992) WPT and Gendlin's (2007, 2018) felt sense see affective aspects of experience as vital ways of knowing through which people attune to the fullness of being in immersive relation to their whole environment. While trained in branches of humanistic psychology, their concepts of feeling and felt sense resonate with posthumanist/feminist new materialist philosophical perspectives of affect as a force of material-discursive of human *and* more than human becoming (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010). Like critical posthuman conceptions, their theories disrupt hierarchical binaries (e.g., subjective/objective, culture/nature, human/nonhuman, discursive/material, empirical/rational) in favor of complexity and multiplicity with potentially radical implications for experiential education practice. The following methodological review

explores research methods scholars have used to aware and express affective experiencing to discern how educators may learn from these inquiries to develop more holistic learning experiences in their specific contexts.

Review Methodology

Studies included in the methodological review center Eugene Gendlin's (2007, 2018) articulation of felt sense, ensuring shared understanding of a term often used without citation. All studies collect empirical data in seeking to understand the phenomenon Gendlin called felt sense as an affective aspect of experiential learning in ongoing participatory practice (Hartelius & Ferrer, 2013). Studies focused on experiences of artful practice (e.g., music, dance, and visual arts), creative professional practice (e.g., architectural and engineering design, academic research), as well as unconscious, everyday, and deeply personal practices (e.g., interpreting journalism, constructing new ways of being after cancer treatment).

Focusing on studies centering ongoing practice allowed for examining felt senses of experiencing more embedded in everyday life and occurring over longer durations than a single workshop, retreat, or university course. This criterion seeks to emphasize felt sense in iterative learning processes rather than the content, retrospective artifacts, and end products of experiential learning (Chapman et al., 1992). Ongoing participatory practice also ensures participants possess a level of active and sustained engagement needed to access felt sense, thereby avoiding one of the most challenging methodological hurdles for researchers of affect (Taylor, 2002).

Relevant studies were located by searching general and education-related databases, including ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, ERIC, Education Research Complete, and Google Scholar. The search involved using combinations of the following key words: "felt

sense,” “Gendlin,” “experience,” “experiential learning,” “experiential education,” “practice-based learning,” “creative learning,” “creative practice,” “artmaking,” “arts practice,” “making,” “designing,” and “design thinking.” Restricted to peer-reviewed articles and dissertations published since 2000, the initial search yielded over 150 studies. After an initial round of reading abstracts, and an additional round of more in-depth content reading, only 11 of the located readings were found to fit inclusion criteria and admitted into the review sample.

Findings: Accessing and Articulating Felt Senses of Experiencing

This section presents review findings, detailing methods scholars used in empirical inquiries aimed at accessing and articulating felt senses. Table 1 presents inquiry methods reviewed studies employed alongside the findings these approaches yielded.

Table 4.1

Methods Used to Access and Articulate Felt Senses in Creative Practice

Study	Topic/Question	Methods	Findings
Archetti (2022)	“What effects has the media portrayal of migrants in COVID-19 coverage had on the migrants in Norway during the time of the pandemic?” (p. 984)	Content analysis (of media artifacts); Researcher self-inquiry through embroidered collage guided by Gendlin’s TAE and focusing processes	Consuming journalism involved feelings related to belonging, identity, and connections to place and society. Arts-based and self-inquiry methods revealed the breadth and depth of experience often concealed in interviews.
Britten (2015)	“Exploring how [coaching] clients use metaphor to make sense of, and thereby find meaning in, their experiences of coaching” (p. 18)	Phenomenological interviewing focused on eliciting metaphors; Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)	Participants used spatial and bodily metaphors to convey experiences of coaching sessions, growth, and psychological coaching space. Coaching space metaphors revealed an intense qualitative approach to time facilitating safety and play.
Gerge et al. (2017)	“the developmental process of women being treated for gynaecological cancer” (p. 7)	Multi-step intermodal arts methods with participant-created aesthetic responses (painting/drawing, poetic	Intermodal arts approach enabled expression of emotional difficulties. Visual expressions produced “more

Study	Topic/Question	Methods	Findings
		writing) pre-surgery, post-surgery, and in a follow-up seven months later; Researcher-created poem synthesizing participant responses	profound understanding of the affective qualities of [patients'] felt sense experience" (p. 8).
Kossak (2007)	"the embodied experience of professional musicians and practicing expressive arts therapists engaged in improvisational sessions" (p. 1)	Multiple group and dyadic musical improvisation followed by visual art or poetic response followed by interview. Researcher-created visual art and poetry.	Reaching attunement sense of connection to an in-between and a 10-step process: 1. Warm up, 2. Seek safety, 3. Initial risk (forward movement and retreat), 4. Increased risk and vulnerability, 5. Misattunement, 6. Relational connections and empathy, 7. Relaxing the mind and flow, 8. Sonic entrainment, 9. Embodied consciousness shift, 10. Attunement
Mahar (2021)	"What are artists' experiences of engagement in an intermodal expressive arts process?" and "How does engagement in non-verbal intermodal arts ... influence participants' articulation of tacit, felt sense awareness associated with their creative process?" (p. 9)	Three-part intermodal arts process with participants engaging three artistic modes (visual, sound/music, movement/gesture); Semi-structured phenomenological interviews focused on sensory experience.	Combining arts modalities "heightened sensory experience for the amplification of implicit awareness" (p. 9) and engaged non-linear awareness of time.
McCauley (2018)	"... ways in which architects and privately developers rely on the 'felt sense' to carry property development projects forward" (p. 10-11) through specific gestures	Phenomenological interviewing informed by practice theory (Nicolini, 2012; Van Manen, 2014) and Gendlin's concept of gesture.	Small gestures coalesced to form metaproceses of architectural design practice. The problem-solving metaproces revealed the wide relational web of practice. The design metaproces zoomed in on specific materials, bodies, and practices. "Skillfull practitioners heed the felt sense and employ the underlying gestures of 'letting go', 'connecting', 'listening' and 'receiving,'" (p. 265) to negotiate within design processes.
Pais (2021)	Examining Thinking-at-the-Edge as a method to "tune into the realm of affect from a performer's first-hand perspective"	Phenomenological interviewing using Gendlin's Thinking at the Edge (TAE).	TAE can access felt sense and reveal affective dimensions of practice terms, thereby creating new ways of thinking, imagining, and theorizing practice.

Study	Topic/Question	Methods	Findings
	(p. 1-2).		Metaphors were often used to describe felt senses pointing to relational being.
Peisl (2016)	“examin[ing] felt sense as a tool for making the prearticulated qualities of affect and feeling more tangible” (p. 129) in dance practice	Researcher self-inquiry of choreography and dance practice; Content analysis of dance performances	Attending to accessing and expressing felt sense “raises affect up through the layers of perception to a more tangible and sharable level” (p. 131).
Rappaport (2013)	“[h]ow both direct experience of and artistic expression are necessary to convey dimensions of experiential meaning, not accessible through words alone or others’ authority” (p. 97)	Intermodal arts practices (painting and poetry) for researcher self-inquiry	Intermodal creative practices can unfold different aspects of felt sense and allow for a first-person experiencing and embodied knowing.
Tobin & Tisdell (2015)	“the role of embodied learning in the writing processes of creative writers” (p. 215)	Participant journaling about felt senses and experiences of participant-chosen body awareness exercises and creative writing; pre- and post- narrative interviews; thematic analysis	Reflective journaling about felt senses of writing after engaging body awareness practices produced greater consciousness about links between writing practice, bodily movement, and well-being. Ritually attending to the body and listening to felt sense facilitates carrying forward creative processes.
Wu (2014)	“what will arise in a movement practice, across territories of practice and theory, if the emergence of movement is explored, discussed, and understood in terms of qi-energy” (p. 1)	Practice as Research (PaR), Stream-of-consciousness reflective diary writing	The body’s internal sense of qi-energy corresponds to felt sense experiencing. Attuning to qi and felt sense both entail a receiving attitude enabling awareness of a vibrant field between self and the cosmos, leading to “infinite possibilities” and “unknown subtleties” (p. 66).

Methods used in reviewed studies fell into five main categories, with many using multiple methods:

1. Arts-informed - expressive methods borrowing processes from arts fields;

2. Self-inquiry - methods aimed at uncovering researcher experience and reflexivity, including affective reactions and memories, assumptions, biases, and sociocultural positionality;
3. Phenomenological observation and interviewing - Observing embodiments of subjective experiencing and interviews designed to evoke reflections about participants' experiences of specific phenomena;
4. Content analysis - Interpreting form and meaning of multimedia artifacts and performances; and,
5. Multi-methods - Combinations of 1–4 above.

Because methods often overlap, these categories should not be considered entirely distinct. For example, when researchers engaged in artful methods, this often led to self-inquiry, Likewise, as also shown in Table 2, most studies combined artful methods with other, more conventional qualitative methods. Multi-methods here denote these types of research designs combining two or more methods categories.²³

Table 4.2

Reviewed Studies of Felt Sense in Creative Practice by Method Category

Method Category	# of Studies	Studies
Arts-informed	10	Collaging and embroidering (Archetti, 2022)
		Dancing/choreography and body movement (Peisl, 2016; Wu, 2014)
		Painting, drawing (Gerge et al. 2017; Kossak, 2007; Mahar,

²³ Multi-methods here differ from mixed-methods wherein quantitative and qualitative methods are brought together. Only Gerge et al.'s (2017) study emerged out of a larger mixed-methods randomized control medical trial.

		2021; Rappaport, 2013)
		Writing, poetry (Gerge et al., 2017; Kossak, 2007; Tobin & Tisdell, 2015; Wu, 2014)
		Sonic improvising (Kossak, 2007)
		Thinking-at-the-Edge languaging (Britten, 2015; Pais, 2021)
Phenomenological observation and interviewing	5	Britten (2015); Kossak (2007); Mahar (2021); McCauley (2018); Pais (2021)
Researcher self-inquiry	4	Archetti (2022); Gerge et al. (2017); Kossak (2007); Rappaport (2013); Wu (2014)
Content analysis (of multimedia artifacts and performances)	3	Archetti (2022); Peisl (2016); Tobin & Tisdell (2015)
Multi-methods (combinations of other categories)	10	Archetti (2022); Britten (2015); Gerge et al. (2017); Kossak (2007); Mahar (2021); Pais (2021); Peisl (2016); Rappaport (2013); Tobin & Tisdell (2015); Wu (2014)

Arts-informed Methods

10 of the 11 studies used artful methods, borrowing practices from various expressive arts traditions to expand knowing about and through affective experience. These include studies using Gendlin and colleagues' Thinking at the Edge process (Britten, 2015; Pais, 2021) to subvert conventional rational uses of language by languaging from within felt sense. Playing with using words in figurative, non-representational ways "carr[ies] a powerful experiential charge and ... can generate valuable knowledge" (Britten, 2015, p. 25) about affective states.

While review criteria dictated participants should be involved in an ongoing participatory practice, this condition did not dictate using an arts-informed method to generate or analyze data. That most reviewed studies employed artful methods likely relates to “practice as research” being an emergent form of inquiry originating from within creative arts fields and at the center of contentious debates around whether and when arts practice constitutes research. Practice as research involves Schön’s (1987) “reflection-in-action” and theory-practice integration (Barrett, 2007). Studies also employed expressive arts methods because of researchers’ assumptions about the potential of aesthetic expressions for bringing out elusive and/or invisible aspects of experience.

Researcher Self-Inquiry

When researchers participated in creating artful expressions in generating or analyzing data, they also engaged in self-inquiry and deeper considerations about their embodied sense of self in relation to research materials and interactions. Participant-researchers producing aesthetic responses to direct encountering, Dewey’s primary experiences, resulted in the most nuanced articulations of felt senses as particularly sequenced (Kossak, 2007), many-layered directional forces in motion (Peisl, 2016), and imbued with sociocultural and historical residues (Archetti, 2022).

Rappaport’s (2013) contention that “[f]or the value of arts-based research to be recognized further, we need to help others understand the value of self-enquiry as a research tool” (p. 103) testifies to the intertwined nature of artful methods and self-inquiry. Like the practice as research approach Wu (2014) used, other practice-led and auto-forms (e.g., autoethnography) of research belong in this category. In Rappaport’s (2013) words: “Nothing

could have taught me about this level of opening the heart except by reflecting on the art itself and the unfolding moment-to-moment direct experience of the [artmaking] process” (p. 100).

Phenomenological Approaches & Content Analysis

Five studies used phenomenological interviews and observation and/or interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). All except for McCauley (2018) paired phenomenological methods with an artful method. Both studies enacting content analysis augmented this approach with artful methods to produce deeper understanding about affective experience (Archetti, 2022; Peisl, 2016). In Archetti’s case (2022), artful analysis through researcher-created embroidered collage enabled the researcher to discover their own sense of journalism artifacts depicting immigrants, enriching analysis by grounding it in the researcher’s personal affective experiential knowing.

Multi-methods

As aforementioned, enacting phenomenological and content analysis methods alongside artful methods proved a popular and potent combination. Kossak’s (2007) study on processes of attunement provides a great example of how employing multiple types of methods creates multi-dimensionality in representations of findings, helping reveal felt sensing’s complex and multifaceted nature. It also produced resistance when some participants refused to engage in some methods. Using multiple inquiry methods, however, may also help avoid Britten’s (2015) experience that some participants found speaking about their experience in the metaphorical terms the researcher’s interview questions demanded quite difficult. Therefore, while artful methods may “reveal aspects of the participants’ experiences which probably would not have been made visible by a more conventional interview procedure” (p. 25), variations in participant ability and preference also matter.

Discussion: Incorporating Participatory Feeling and Felt Sensing in Experiential Education

The prevalence of expressive aesthetic methods in these empirical studies resonated with WPT's assertion that expressive knowing creates pathways for accessing and articulating feeling (Heron, 1992) and moving beyond experience's surface. Given these insights about engaging in feelingful direct encounters, or primary experiencing, with specific practices, this discussion section explores implications for facilitating experiential education.

Using Intermodal Aesthetic Approaches

In reviewed studies, specific arts-informed methods emphasized different aspects of feeling/felt sense and affective knowing (Mahar, 2021): "Only certain images, music or dance symbolize the meaning [of a given experience or situation] accurately" (Rappaport, 2013, p. 98). Therefore, multiple options for responding and learner choice about how to engage with and respond to feelings were important. Mahar's (2021) intermodal study found affective experiences may more readily come forth by nudging participants to engage modalities they are less familiar with. Such unfamiliarity may produce disorientations that initiate the pausing, listening, and experimenting involved in transformative learning processes (Taylor, 2001). Experiential education facilitators might, then, consider how intermodal arts-inspired methods might help learners express feelingful experiences and reveal the complexities of primary experiences (Heron, 1992; Meyer & Seaman, 2021).

Facilitators must decide, if incorporating intermodal arts strategies, which ones make sense in relation to instructional aims, and whether and how specific directions should order learners' engagements. Kossak's (2007) professional musicians resisted creating visual or poetic responses following sonic improvisations, and, when they did, these elaboration activities did not deepen meaning-making. This resistance may relate to Heron's (1992) assertion that, of the

body's senses, hearing comes closest to feeling.²⁴ Hearing and listening, unlike vision and seeing, involves the entire body in its complex connections to a whole environment (Oliveros, 2005). Scholars often use sound-related metaphors to describe felt sensing processes as “listening to,” “attuning to,” and “tuning in” (Gendlin, 2007; McCauley, 2018, p. 96; Peisl, 2016, p. 136; Rappaport, 2013, p. 97). The awareness generated through sonic play or dancing to music may embrace a wider experiential sense than other arts modes open to (Kossak, 2007).

Across professional and personal everyday practice domains, studies of embodied, tacit, and/or affective knowing and the lived experiencing of practical processes used aesthetic methods to surface and articulate affect. Experiential educators aspiring to more holistic practices should find useful pedagogical strategies in these methods. Aesthetic methods also attend to how experiencing always involves interconnections of memories, environments, and discourses within and beyond the physical body and what is materially manifest and observable to the senses in present moments. The process of uncovering these entanglements constitutes what Dewey called a participatory “undergoing” of experience initiated by aesthetic knowing, a generative way of knowing comprised of affective and imaginal capacities. In *Art as Experience*, Dewey (2005/1934) explained:

The esthetic or undergoing phase of experience is receptive. It involves surrender. But adequate yielding of the self is possibly only through a controlled activity that may well be intense. ... Perception is an act of the going out of energy in order to receive, not a withholding of energy. To steep ourselves in a subject matter we have first to plunge into

²⁴ Heron (1992) asserted: “Hearing in the perceptual/imaginal mode of the psyche is very close to feeling in the affective mode. Feeling, as resonance with being, is a capacity *sui generis* [emphasis in original], but its prime representative within perception is hearing. ... hearing by its nature suggests access to states beyond ordinary consciousness: it reaches across the threshold into the unknown” (p. 101).

it. When we are only passive to a scene, it overwhelms us and, for lack of answering activity, we do not perceive that which bears us down. We must summon energy and pitch it at a responsive key in order to *take in*. (p. 55)

Aesthetic approaches allow us to “plunge in” to receive affective experiential knowings. The consequences of not could not be higher: inadequately perceiving the world and, therefore, unable to appropriately respond, to engage in ethical and authentic participation.

Methods embracing aesthetic knowing connect learners to embodied feedback information Gendlin (2018) located in felt sense. They bring learners face-to-face with Dewey’s (1938/1968) notion that “every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after” (p. 35). Diverse contemplative and expressive methods, therefore, provide ways for materializing hidden assemblages of virtual presences and their educative potentials (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987).

Facilitators Engagement of Accessing Affect in Practice

Rather than calling for a “minimal guidance instruction” approach (Meyer & Seaman, 2021), the more holistic experiential education this article advocates requires facilitators adopt greater intentional awareness and use of aesthetic knowing and expressive doing. As Bill Proudman asserted, any program of holistic experiential education “allows numerous opportunities ... to connect the head with the body, heart, spirit and soul” (Chapman et al., 1992, p. 20). While methods borrowing from the expressive arts often lend themselves to playing with and moving affective and imaginal knowing forward, incorporating these need not be intimidating. Simple deep listening activities (Oliveros, 2005), storytelling, and inventing metaphors are all aesthetic practices applicable and accessible to most learning contexts.

Despite the common conflation of experiential education with fully self-directed learning or a hands-off instructional approach in some contexts (Tomkins & Ulus, 2016), facilitators' responsibilities include providing learners quality feedback and creating opportunities for meaning-making experiments (Eyler, 2009; Joplin, 1981). Schenck and Cruickshank's (2015) co-constructed developmental teaching theory, informed by recent neurobiological research, includes more than human environmental participants as sources of potential feedback. Their theory also aligns with Joplin's (1981) spiral model in asserting that "the front end of learning involves non-conscious processes of appraisal, attention and affect" (p. 83).

Therefore, particularly in the beginning stages of learning, holistic educators must make enormous efforts to guide learners through affect-focused activities, providing appropriate feedback for connecting affective experiencing to learning. Stock and Kolb (2016) illustrate the level of focus required in describing the intensity of attention facilitators of equine-assisted experiential learning bring to the learning situation, particularly in letting a situation unfold and becoming disciplined in knowing when *not* to intervene. The opposite of minimal guidance, this facilitative capacity requires facilitators becoming an instrument of presencing, able to better attune to instructional moments and learner's feedback needs through the honing of their own felt sense capacities.

Simply asking about feelings is not enough to produce holistic experiential education. Experiential educators need methods to help learners recognize and materialize subtle, often unconscious, implicit aspects of experiencing. Centering affect in experiential-based instruction requires facilitators exhibit vulnerability, maintain openness to unpredictability, and shed control-oriented practices (Tomkins & Ulus, 2016). To achieve this type of increased focused attention, critical reflection, and spiritual understanding feeling often opens to, holistic educators

should commit to cultivating some form of personal contemplative/body-spirit practice (e.g., meditation, sound walking yoga) (Watson, 2013). Based on several reviewed studies connecting felt sense to posthuman concepts of affect (Archetti, 2022; Peisl, 2016), and following Riley's (2020) outdoor experiential education example, facilitators may also find inspiration engaging with posthuman theories of affect (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010).

Re-Imagining Enacting More Holistic Experiential Education

This final discussion section imagines how specific experiential education programs described in the literature might be re-imagined toward greater holistic enactment. Gardner's (2021) used various contemplative methods for increasing mindfulness and present-moment awareness alongside reflective writing journals with undergraduate service-learning students. In this university context, "writing emerged as a central mechanism for change," allowing students' awareness of feelings to enter into exploratory written descriptions as Gardner encouraged them "to just write whatever came to them and 'see what happens'" (p. 157). These methods enabled learners to tap into affective embodied knowing in service-learning experiences with older adults, leading to students' revised assumptions about aging. Gardner's emphasis on writing and narrative analysis of learners' reflective journals, however, missed opportunities to uncover feelingful experiences students might not be comfortable or able or ready to express in words. The complexities and nuances of experiences which may find more adequate expression in some other mode (e.g., image, sound), though rendering them less ready for narrative analysis, become abandoned potentials of experiential learning. Explicit instruction around and/or presentation of multimodal forms of reflection, visual journaling, and curation of audiovisual materials may add depth to student reflections and learning from experience.

Dobbins and colleagues' (2021) report from a higher education international study abroad context presents another example for how an experiential education program might pay greater attention to affect and feeling. Instructors taught students how to “learn from [coffee farmers in a Guatemalan non-profit farming cooperative], their culture, and their agricultural practices” (p. 398) by using mini ethnographic case study (MECS). While “students noted, due to the MECS design, they were able to personally instill a greater sense of service and reciprocity to the community ... than would have otherwise occurred,” (p. 405), researchers' narrative profiles show students mostly refining theoretical understandings. Opportunities for engaging learners' affective experiencing were lost.

Instructors could have included more recent innovations extending traditional ethnographic observation and interviewing through nonrepresentational autoethnographic methods (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). This method excels at uncovering affective experiencing by using personal storytelling to show self-society connections. Given the international exchange involved, such a pedagogical decision could have moved learners to greater awareness about what they were unable to express in the local language and other feelings, including tensions, experienced in the cross-cultural learning context. Likewise, instructors could have offered contemplative exercises and body-oriented prompts, like the ones Gardner (2021) offered learners. Instruction in appreciating and creating expressions of affective experience could have augmented MECS instruction, encouraging students to value aesthetic knowing as a way to greater reflexivity and life-wide meaning-making beyond disciplinary ways of being, knowing, and doing. These speculative pedagogical extensions intend to help educators imagine ways to move learners beyond easily observable or expressible surfaces of experience toward more ethically oriented and holistic inclusion of affect as a vital component of learning processes.

Conclusion

Experiential education's radical potential lies in beginning with embodied and contextual complexity (Joplin, 1981) of present moment experiencing (Gendlin, 2018). The methods used in the empirical studies reviewed illuminate potential strategies experiential educators might use to design and implement more holistic experiential education courses, programs, and workshops. While artful methods figured prominently in how researchers articulated felt sense in these studies, facilitators need not become art teachers to acknowledge, honor, and incorporate affective experiencing. They should, however, appreciate aesthetic knowing and recognize expressive activities as primary ways of accessing affect and felt sense and for diffusing interpersonal tensions around potentially polarizing or affectively charged encounters and topics (Kasl & Yorks, 2016).

This article aimed to provide pedagogical inspiration for pursuing more holistic experiential education by looking at how researchers of felt sense have tried to understand affective experiencing and its relationship to learning. In practice, attending to affective and imaginal capacities will look different depending on one's specific instructional aims and context. The vital importance and potential of affect in learning processes and the need to provide explicit facilitation around affective experiencing, however, remains across diverse holistic experiential education contexts and endeavors.

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CHAPTER 5

CO-CREATING A SONOPOETIC COLLAGING METHOD²⁵

²⁵ Perry, S. A. B. & Pierce, M. S. Submitted to *Qualitative Research* (03/01/2023).

Abstract

This paper presents an artful analysis method the authors co-created with more than human collaborators to make sense of a collaborative inquiry (Heron, 1996) into their creative sound practices. They discuss how audio data materials and affective experiences led them to experiment with sonic and poetic methods of analyzing their data and presenting findings. The authors map their methodological trajectories in search of a robust approach to exploring sonopoetic aspects of creative experience and practice and offers an audio collage created from this process. Finally, the article considers some wider resonances of employing sounded methods in qualitative research.

Keywords: sound methods, sounded methodology, poetic sonic analysis, collaborative inquiry, sonic autoethnography, audio collage, sound-based qualitative research, affective methods, more than human inquiry, cut-up poetry

How do we treat non-linguistic audio data?

What might one do when sounds matter in analyzing and presenting your study?

What can you do when transcribing sonic data doesn't make sense?

How do we analyze sounds and texts together?

In late summer/early fall of 2022, we started a collaborative inquiry (CI) (Heron, 1996), a form of participatory action research, into our shared creative sound practice. We are long-time creative collaborators who have made music and performed together for almost twenty years. Michael is a virtuoso musician, while Shannon is an amateur musician and novice adult learning scholar interested in the role of affect and felt sense in learning through creative practice. In preparing for our first public performance since before the COVID-19 pandemic hit two-and-a-half years prior, we engaged this inquiry as a pilot study for a larger CI we planned to conduct for Shannon's dissertation research. Since this performance focused on generating sustained tones, our pilot CI asked: *What do sustained tones do?*

Unearthing Our Data Assemblage

Taking a post-qualitative approach means we are “using theory to determine ... what counts as data” (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Whole person theory from which CI developed, situates the pre-linguistic, often unconscious affective information imparted in “direct” experiential encounters as the most primary data, which imaginal expression makes more conscious and communicable (Heron, 1992). Posthuman feminist new materialist perspectives of reality as complex and relational, inclusive of the vibrant immanence of nonhuman actors (Braidotti, 2019) and the unseen-but-present virtual forces animating intra-actions between diverse bodies (Barad, 2007) also informed our inquiry. The materials we count as “data”

revealed themselves over time, in and through our practices of sonic play and our intra-actions with sound “objects” that dissolved ourselves as rational, individuated subjects.

These resonances folded the meaningful feeling parts of our inquiry, our “data,” into “multiplicit[ies] of being and knowing,” unsettling various boundaries and binaries, connecting data with (rather than separating it from) everyday life, theory, and our embodied subjective experiencing as researcher-participants (Nordstrom, 2015, p. 170). For example, past experiences, present feelings as recorded in poetic reflections, audio recordings of our collaborative practice, and commercial recordings of other artists producing similarly sustained tones were all connected and informing each other. We saw our data as “an assemblage continually rearrang[ing] a loose grouping of things (e.g., words, ideas, people, objects)” (p. 167) from which we could artfully assemble different meanings and potentially new understanding. Rather than a new random assortment of objects, an assemblage implies living circuits of always-in-flux potentials for producing more affective and ethical ways of being, knowing, and, ultimately, doing in the world (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987).

In preparing for our performance, we audio recorded our sound experiments and wrote poetic reflections of our affective experiences of solo and collaborative immersion in sonic play. Our artful reflections mostly took the form of poetry due to our shared past experiences writing poems and song lyrics. Discussing our individual poetic reflections during reflection meetings, which generated further sonic data, we connected our experiences to the audio recordings of our musical practice *and* to a range of other cultural materials informing our past experiences and memories. Therefore, we counted as data resonant audio and video recordings of musics from around the world that experiment with sustained tones (e.g., Indian classical music, minimalist rock, drone) and interpenetrate our consciousness. Likewise, we included related books, articles,

liner notes, and online texts as part of the invisible web of materials informing our creative practice. Shannon's written memos recording our experiences of the CI process generated even more textual data. Our daunting question became how to artfully and collaboratively approach analyzing these diverse empirical materials.

This data assemblage pushed us to understand and articulate how our experiences of playing with sustained sound involved complexities and multiplicities reaching beyond the human and connected to posthuman concepts of affect as a living force moving between bodies (e.g., Deleuze, 1968/1994; Whitehead, 1929/1979; Woods, 2020). Some materials illuminated direct connections to the posthuman concepts of affect we felt resonated with our sound experimentations.²⁶ We found inspiration in research using sonic methods to explore complexity, paradox, and the multiplicity of experiences, beyond neat linear narratives and/or individual subject positions (Arnfred, 2015; Gershon, 2013, 2020; Flint, 2021). We also experienced "listening [a]s a qualitatively different experience than watching, that often requires a kind of slowness and attention that text and video do not" (Gershon, 2013, p. 259). Furthermore, "slowness and attention" were the same qualities sustained tones, themselves, seemed to demand and cultivate. For these reasons, we decided creating a sonic experience and sharing our findings in the form of an audio collage presented an ideal way to illustrate affectively experiencing sustained tones.

²⁶ For example, blog posts on the website of Peter Blasser (2014), who designed and built the modular synthesizers we used to create our sustained tones for this performance, reference Deleuzian concepts. Blasser's instruments feature idiosyncratic and puzzling designs, even by the standards of the weird world of modular synthesizers. Controls are labeled by colors and/or sigils instead of words, helping users escape well-worn technical pathways. Also, the circuits themselves do not follow the usual conventions of signal flow, embracing chaotic interaction and feedback instead (Ciat-Lonbarde, n.d.). These characteristics make Blasser's synthesizers uniquely suited to exploring the types of slow sonic fluctuations that fascinate us.

Sound Collaging as Analysis

Shannon began clipping and compiling sound materials from our data assemblage into a project in Adobe Audition, a digital audio workstation (DAW).²⁷ Working in a DAW allowed for analyzing sonic data while staying close to its affective content, rather than textualizing and, thus, decontextualizing it, as coding would have required (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Rather than employ linguistic signifiers to label bits of sonic data, we arranged and rearranged sound materials on a horizontal and vertical field, setting sounds and sounded words in dialogue across a sequential timeline of multi-layered tracks. This process helped us discover resonances while attuning to dissonances within resonant clusters, rather than grouping similar data into themes or categories. As in Flint's (2021) study, where "audio compilation became a methodological project of exploring entanglements with materialities beyond human bodies" (p. 3), sound collaging pushed us to explore dynamic and complex relationships between various human and more than human participants, including sound itself. Our sonic analysis process enabled us to acknowledge sounds' affective agencies (Gershon, 2020), including capacities for provoking powerful emotional responses (Arnfred, 2015; Gershon, 2013).

This sonic mode of analysis kept us close to our sound data, challenging the subject/object, researcher/researched split posthuman scholars seek to dismantle. Through repeated listening, we engaged in a visceral re-experiencing of sonic data, becoming re-affected by specific moments and allowing our embodied selves to connect with the data through senses of wonderment (MacLure, 2013). These felt senses informed what we chose to cut into or out of the sound collage. Because sounds penetrate the whole body, our continuous listening inquiry

²⁷ While Adobe Audition is available via Adobe Creative Cloud subscription, free DAWs, including Audacity and Reaper, are available for download online.

into how we were being affected by individual audio snippets alongside the whole emerging sonic composition offered a collaborative, embodied way to analyze the data. As the sound collage took shape through listening, re-listening, adding, subtracting, and rearranging, we experienced this sonic analysis process and presentation as a highly immersive way of conveying affective experiencing.

We continued to struggle, however, with incorporating our textual data into our unfolding analysis. Shannon began recording herself reading bits of inspiring text data we had collected from books, articles, and liner notes. This process of “sonifying non-sound information” (Daza & Gershon, 2015, p. 642) imbued printed words with sonic form so that they could be woven into our emerging sound collage.²⁸ While this initially felt like a strange move, it also revealed the peculiarity inherent in the common research practice of transforming human experience into text to tame and, thus, render it recognizable as data.

While satisfied with this method of using embodied wonder (MacLure, 2013) once again, to select relevant pieces of texts to sonify, the poetic reflections we generated after engaging in our creative sound practices called for something different. They remained outside our emerging sound collage analysis. We now turn to how we pursued a more posthuman poetic analysis process to incorporate these poetic reflection texts and further complexify and integrate our sonic analysis.

²⁸ An entire field of researchers employ sonification, “a way of representing data using a continuous stream of sound driven by changes in values that results in an audible difference in the sound. Sonification results in an auditory feedback model that is both ambient and informative and can direct actions. It is used in environments where large sets of information need to be analyzed hands-free or vision-free” (Droumeva et al., 2007, p. 174). See St. Pierre & Droumeva (2016) for an example of sonification of air pollution data.

Weaving in Posthuman Poetic Threads

Poetic approaches to analysis specialize in conveying felt senses and human emotions as well as the complexity, non-linearity, and polyvocality of lived experience, including the more-than-human co-creation of reality (Freeman, 2017). Poetic approaches also produce experiences and create opportunities for readers to co-create meaning through imaginative interpretations and responses informed by their own experiences and situations. In considering how to analyze and incorporate our poetic reflections of creative sound practice into the emerging sound collage, we employed a poetic mode of thinking.

Rather than coding or comparing the content of our poetic reflections in a search for patterns or themes, we responded to them by collaboratively creating further poems. We saw this as one way to invite the openness and mystery of poetry and poetic analysis into our sound collage, exploding it with further multiplicities of meaning, connective possibility, and potential. Our first attempts at creating found poetry (Prendergast, 2006) from the poetic reflection data disappointed. The process relied too much on our conscious decision-making without yielding any new or surprising revelations, thoughts, or images. We felt ourselves consciously seeking lines, phrases, patterns, and themes already percolating in our minds in support of arguments we wanted to make (Holliday, 2007). We needed a method more suited to the loss of control we were striving for in making music with sustained tones.

A reflection from Michael on how William S. Burroughs' employed extreme cut-up methods to surface novel, even nonsensical, word configurations (Burroughs, 1963) inspired Shannon to run our poetic reflections through an online cut-up text generator. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) describe Burroughs' method, which they experimented with, as "the folding of one text onto another, which constitutes multiple and even adventitious roots (like a

cutting), [and] implies a supplementary dimension” (p. 6) toward rhizomatic connection. This digital tool chopped our poetic reflections into three-word, five-word, and seven-word fragments and generated 10 single-spaced, double-sided pages of cut-up stanzas. Having invited a more-than-human force into affecting our poetic text data, we returned to allowing our embodied wonder to guide us (MacLure, 2013). We each took a random five pages of text and used colored pencils and pens to notate areas of the printed, digitally cut-up text that surprised us or moved us to laughter. Finally, we arranged these marked sections of recombined text into thematic poems.

Even reading the raw cut-up text, we felt joyful awe at the surprising and beautiful phrases produced. The digital cut-up seemed to express all the feelings the original reflections described, but in new, different, often more affective ways. Certain phrases, whole stanzas, even those bordering on non-sense, felt infused with deep significance, as if a more-than-human intelligence was collaborating, participating, and playing with us. Throughout the process, we felt amazed at the arrangements of words that emerged, how alive they felt, and how they sometimes conveyed our experiences better than we did.

Using an online cut-up generator to activate our poetic analysis did a few things. First, though not random, the program created a spontaneity we felt lacking in our initial attempt to create found poetry from our poetic reflections on practice. This algorithmic intervention breathed unpredictability and surprise into material we felt too close to, having created the poems ourselves. Second, using the online cut-up generator invited an additional beyond-human perspective into our analysis, echoing the way we invited machines into our music-making. The posthuman nature of our creative experiences and sound practices required more than for the two human participants to compare and contrast tandem found poetry (Burdick, 2011) produced from

their reflections. Finally, the cut-up generator provided a way for us to mesh our ideas and impressions together, letting go of who wrote what or whose reflections belonged to whom.

We created our analysis in/with/through sound collaging. Throughout the process, we remained attuned to opportunities for sonifying certain bits of our textual data, including pieces of the poetic reflections on practice we had subjected to our posthuman cut-up method to form new poems. Where we noticed a need to complexify our emerging sound collage, we added these sonified poetic fragments. Where the sound collage seemed to call for a bridge between one constellation of ideas and another, Shannon wrote additional poetic narration. Zigzagging between audio and text data, we revisited, rearranged, and layered pieces of audio in the DAW, composing thematic strands in relation to the whole sonic mapping. In the process, we co-created a novel analytical method for illuminating the sonopoetic, “the mystery that drives the impulse for human sonic creativity” (Hullick, 2013, p. 174), a quality we argue lies at the heart of all creative experience and practice.

What Do Sustained Sounds Produce?: Sound Collage Transcript

Our sound collage travelled beyond our original CI question, responding to the parallel question of what sustained tones produce in us and others. Below is a transcript of our sound collage, which we encourage you to [listen to here](#).²⁹

In the early years of my life, when I did not feel heard or seen, nothing seemed more hopeful and solid than singing, vocalizing long tones that vibrated my body and whole being. This especially became true when, as a teenager, the anxiety came, alienating me from the world and from myself.

Pandit Pran Nath, *Ragas of Morning and Night* (1986) (_____, 2019)

²⁹ Originally created for the International Association of Autoethnography and Narrative Inquiry’s (IAANI) 2023 virtual conference, the sound collage mostly uses the pronoun “I,” expressing a particular framing of our collaborative inquiry data from Shannon’s point of view.

Out of this experience also came a gift: subtle, vibrant sounds came to the forefront, attuning me to the ubiquity and immersive qualities of sound (Voegelin, 2021).

Grounding myself with and through sounds helped me learn to cope with the complexity and often overwhelming nature of life.

Sounds of cicadas fade into sounds of our playing (XoMxcted / DTB, 2017).

I became a listener and, eventually, a creator of music that often incorporated sustained tones, sometimes reveling in minimal drones, always playing at the supposed boundaries between music and noise (Hegarty, 2007; Thompson, 2017).

Having worked with my musician partner to create such sounds for over 15 years, we embarked on a collaborative inquiry (Heron, 1996) to explore *why* our music so often embraced sustained tones.

This thread through our music has followed us through time, beyond genres, as it does in the larger figured world of musics from around the world.

We've found that playing with sustained tones opens up portals for not just contemplating, but enacting the paradoxes found in each living present moment, and exploring the polarities and tensions implicit in creative practices.

There's a struggle in the mind to sit,

Pauline Oliveros: What was it that I was hearing? I was hearing all of the insects and birds and animals that were sounding. And, I liked the cicadas very much. All different kinds of things that I heard (Red Bull Music Academy, 2016).

Sound excerpts from Jimi Hendrix's "Machine Gun" (Hendrix, 2020), The Velvet Underground's "Venus in Furs" (RiMa, 2012), and Tony Conrad's "Four Violins" (uuves, 2016).

to heed the moment,
to dwell,
the fear of sameness,
the compulsion to change,
to not fall into a rut,
a static rhythm.

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Kali Malone: The sort of struggle in the mind
to sit, sit with something for longer than
you're comfortable with—this is something I
learned a lot from Pauline Oliveros's work.
She has this one piece that's hold a note for as
long as you can stand it. And, then, once you
can't stand it, change it (Hargreaves, 2021)

A change in tones.

Because sounds travel in waves, regardless of
how stationary anything might appear to be
They produce ever-evolving, omni-directional
surges of vibrational affect (Gershon, 2020, p.
1163).

Even if I want to dwell in sameness
it still evolves slowly
with or without my intention
with or without my intervention.

Listening to and for the subtlest variations you
notice how much is going on, how in the
sustaining of sounds, from moment to
moment, no two moments are ever the same.

You begin to notice ...

sequential stasis
convulsive stillness
every moment differs
every wave is different

Terry Riley: By that repetition, you start
noticing details in the landscape that you
wouldn't notice if it just went by once (Le
Drone, 2015).

Kali Malone: The richness of experience that
can emerge from a very seemingly limited

musical choice is actually super vast
(Hargreaves, 2021).

Embracing stillness, dwelling, and creative
stasis
we notice ourselves falling
into meditative states
and the slowing of time—

We experience other ways of knowing ...

Terry Riley: I'm an antennae.
Nothing originates with me.
It doesn't start with me.
It comes into me.
There's this feeling like
maybe before you begin to play
you don't really know anything.
And then you sit down and suddenly
information starts pouring in, so ...
(Le Drone, 2015).

You begin to wonder about other ways of
being ...

In the feedback loop I feel lost
don't know how
so how could I control--
isn't letting go following?
isn't that exciting?

No one knows, but
we're tunes
in me subtle motion
you have to listen

banging
a gong calling
awakening myself
going from being and what is song
I leap
from one to plateau
to where the sound has potential to go

the possibility
self-generating twitterings forming according
to its own intensity

I love it when someone says our music sounds
like a soundtrack—music that evokes an entire
landscape, like sounds that tie to a whole

Tones descending.

living world, and stretch and leave space for
imagination.

I hope that's what they mean.

We want to find sonic spaces that set
imagination free, communicate in ways that
affect one's imagination, setting it in motion,
allowing ourselves to be lured by our own
imaginings, hearing emergent patterns of
space and time, inviting others to imagine—
inner worlds
other worlds
potentials, possibilities

Hoping to make sounds that are, in Eliane
Radigue's words

“The shimmering of water,
at the same time absent and multiple,
oriented to an outside
whose image lives reflected
in the inner universe” (Radigue, 2013).

Eliane Radigue, *Adnos I* (Herbert, 2010).

We are also seeking
with our whole bodies
searching patiently for
sounds that please us

ASMR Cooking Sounds (The Vegan Corner,
2017)

not so unlike the deep embodied listening
of those participants of online social media
spaces engaging the phenomenon of
Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response, or
ASMR,
seeking sounds that affect
pleasurable responses in the body
electric shivers across the skin
the cool tingle down the back
a communion of listeners seeking sounds
that soothe, relax
sounds that heal (Smith & Snider, 2019).

And I think, too, of how sustained tones

having become commonplace presences
 in everyday life
 through the commodification of ambient
 music
 have shaped popular listening habits.
 In 2020, the most listened to recording on
 Spotify was white noise (Beery, 2020).
 Millions listen to celestial white noise,
 treating sustained tones
 as wallpaper
 as background
 to modulate the whole affective field
 environment-body-mind
 for carving out a private pace
 for studying and concentrating
 for falling asleep and dreaming
 seeking connection in isolation, building
 pandemic cocoons, soothing anxieties,
 soundtracking their being
 with static, with white noise, with sounds to
 dream to
 together and apart

And we're back at the beginning
 where *why* entangles with so much dreaming
Why do we create sustained tones?
 ultimately, it comes down to that
 we dream
 of sounds we want to hear
 sounds that for some reason
 our bodies desire
 and desire us
 we dream in listening
 in playing
 searching in the unknown
 for the internal sounds that make us feel in
 some way good
 sounds we want to hear
 to sustain this feeling

Celestial white noise (Relaxing White Noise, 2015).

Tony Conrad: Because I love long durations. I love long durations in music... (Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, 2012).

i dream
 of infinite possibility
 a sound world
 keeping a beginner's mesh
 pulling self-generating twitterings
 into paradox waves—free—
 plugging into the rug

Eliane Radigue (translated from French): In the beginning, there was a certain music that I wished to make. It was this particular music and no other (Mekonin, 2012).

seeking in the dark
for sounds that help us
find and see our selves
help us
remember what we love

a chaotic vortex
engine roaring
animals

sounds that help us dream of remaking the
world into one
wherein this resounding feeling-sound
helps open up a way to something different
new, gentler
a world of deeper listening
a world in celebration of deeper feeling
a world attuned to sound

Sounds of leaves crunching under foot.

forgotten objects
old acquaintances
retracing our pasts
resurfacing memories
another feeling another memory
our experience of remembering
something important
something elemental

Wider Resonances of Attuning to Sound

Our experimental and iterative co-creation of a sonopoetic analysis process harmonized with the CI method we engaged in gathering and generating our data. Whole person theory's argument for hearing as the bodily sense closest to the human capacity for feeling also influenced our decision to stick closely to sound data and produce a sound collage (Heron, 1992). This experiential learning theory's expansive and participatory conceptualization of feeling sets it apart from other adult learning theories (Perry, 2021) by understanding feeling beyond psychological individuated emotion. Heron's (1992) concept of feeling as an affective capacity through which people achieve wholeness by remaining incomplete and open to

transforming through attuning to the in-between spaces and subtle and spiritual aspects of intra-personal, interpersonal, and transpersonal experiences. Feeling as “resonance with being” (p. 31) resonates with posthuman concepts of affect and connection to sound (Braidotti, 2019; Gershon, 2013). Our presentational choices sought a participatory embodiedness honoring this theoretical grounding as well as the sonic and affective nature of our inquiry. Refusing to become separated from the sounds of our inquiry argues for sound’s ability to convey complexities and textures of affective experiences and moments that words cannot.

For us, this sonopoetic posthuman methodology facilitated “the cultivation of ... post-linguistic perception and thought, in which we learn to see a unitive world and describe it in unitive discourse. In such a world subject and object are distinct, interpenetrating, *and* [emphasis added] non-separable” (Heron, 1992, p. 9). Thus, it enacts and echoes the one-and-many ontology described by posthuman theorists (Braidotti, 2019; Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). Analyzing and presenting our data in this artful way honors the implicit knowing of felt sense (Gendlin, 2007) and the materiality of affective embodied experience while also including our theoretical, textual, and linguistic data (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Our process acknowledges and embraces the layers of creativity, complexity, chance, non-sense, and more-than-human intra-actions intersecting and penetrating our field of inquiry.

Our sonopoetic method also responds to a need to cultivate the affective capacities for flourishing in the 21st-century world: the ability to dwell in ambiguity, to develop ethical responses to complexity, and to act in collaborative relations with diverse (human and more-than-human) others (Nicolaidis, 2022). Engaging embodied ways of knowing in sticking close to our sound data kept us attuned to affective intra-actions and relations, including the cultural reverberations of sound, and guided our ethical decision-making (Gershon, 2020). The specific

multi-layered, iterative process we describe here also enabled our becoming intra-actively shaped by sounds through an embodied dwelling in and with them (Barad, 2007). The methodological significance of our sonopoetic process also lies its modeling a sonic research-creation pushing beyond many of the problematic inheritances of sound studies. Our sonopoetic collaging presents the sonic in richly contextualized, multi-layered, more-than-representational ways. Open to researcher presence and subjectivity, our sound collage includes the sounds of our voices and bodies and compositional choices including arranging and effecting sounds to amplify their affectivity for listeners (Shannon & Truman, 2020).

Submersing ourselves in the sounds of our data allowed us to discover, express, and celebrate the posthuman entanglements implicit in creating sustained tones with wooden synthesizers amid the noisiness of hot Georgia nights, thick with the lush song of cicadas. The creative methods forming our sonopoetic analysis kept us in constant conversation with our more-than-human collaborators and a shared radical inner awareness of our complex and infinite relations to the whole natural-cultural-technological environment. In other words, sonopoetic analysis helped us cultivate posthuman subjectivities aware of the world as “an ensemble composed by *zoe*-logical, geological and technological organisms—a *zoe/geo/techno* assemblage (Braidotti, 2019b, p. 47). Finally, our sonopoetic method allowed us to explore the sonic possibilities for moving autoethnography, arts-based, and practice-led research beyond the rational individual subject of conventional humanist qualitative research (Findlay-Walsh, 2018; Jackson & Mazzei, 2008; St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014).

Ultimately, pursuing a sonopoetic analysis affirms the existence and rich potential of diverse ways of being, knowing, and doing that may someday produce a more just world. As a product of this process, we hope our sound collage expresses our own experiences in ways that

invite listeners into their own creative embodied experiences with and through sound. We hope to have illustrated here one sonopoetic analysis method gesturing toward a world we dream of:

*a world
of deeper listening—
in celebration of deeper feeling—
attuned to sound—*

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CHAPTER 6

INTERLUDE II: MORE THAN HUMAN COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY

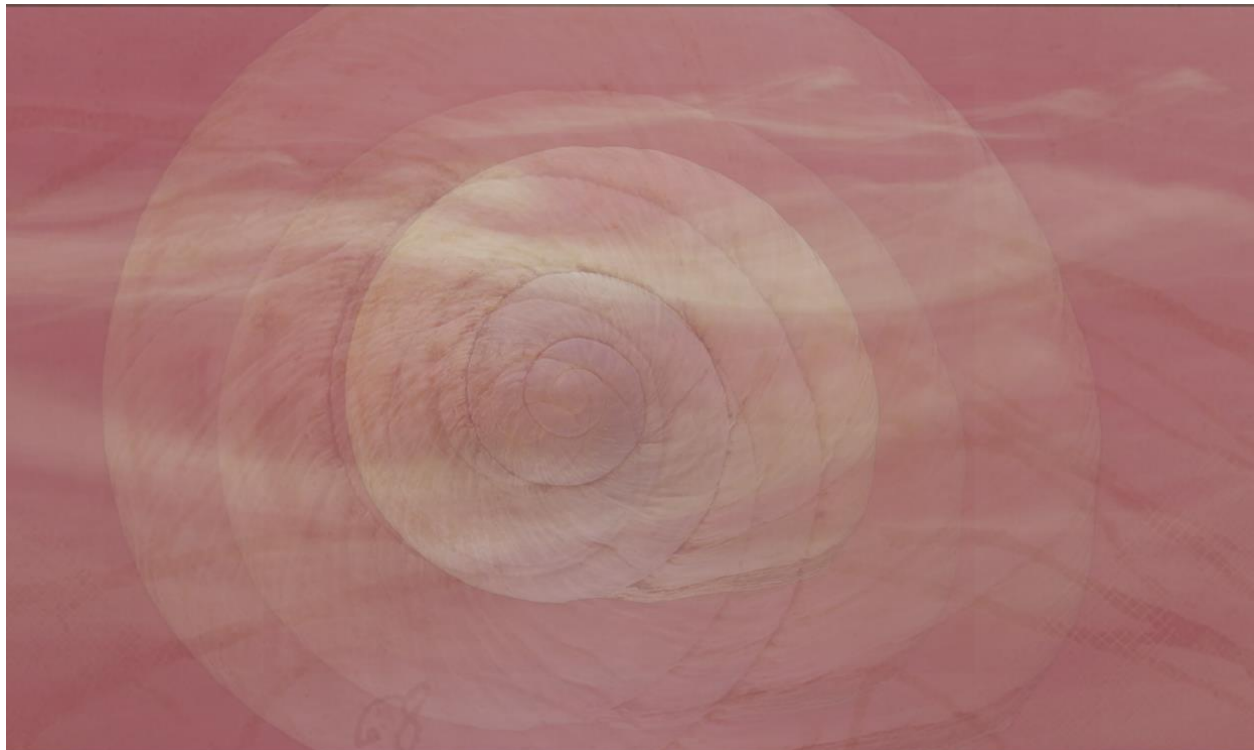
epidermis—the most superficial where³⁰
organism ends—environment begins

things inside the body—foreign
things outside belong—must be taken possession of

if life continue—

Figure 6.1

The Ethical Opening Outward



Note. I created this digital collage with Adobe Photoshop using: [H. Zell, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons](#); [Leonardo da Vinci, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons](#); [Martin](#)

³⁰ Dewey (2005/1934, p. 61)

[Falbisoner, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons](#). This collage was part of a series of collages I created for a PechaKucha presentation at the 2022 International Transformative Learning Conference.

seeking—two or more people willing³¹

to (re)search

their own experience—

to become

co-subjects *and* co-researchers

willing to be vulnerable?

to risk response-ability?

willing to participate³²

creatively deciding

what—how we will inquire

how we will make sense

—of all this—

this we-who-are-in-this-together

this we-who-are-not-one-and-the-same in all this—³³

Deleuze and Guattari trekking across *A Thousand Plateaus*

were many more than two³⁴

in qualitative inquiry, we accept the validity of an *n* of 1

singular experiences matter

in systems thinking—holonomy³⁵

whole being somehow contained

in each part

in more than human perception

singular as always more than one

³¹ Heron (1996, p. 1)

³² Reason (1988)

³³ Braidotti (2019).

³⁴ Deleuze & Guattari (1980/1987)

³⁵ Heron (1992, p. 98)

a group—individuals sharing³⁶
 an interdependence of fate

we've discovered each of us as several—³⁷
 quite a crowd—
 and we are
 aided, inspired, multiplied

by all this—
 resounding life-world

willing to dance circles
 action-immersion-connection-refraction³⁸—diffraction
 to follow incensing spirals³⁹
 to break sense

before trying to make sense
 of the swallow who swooped down⁴⁰
 in the vault
 participating in the ritual
 this moment
 a felt sense— unspeakable
 not-yet known

seeking—

a more extensive continuum⁴¹
 a more expansive life-world
 more than we can say
 more than we can knew—

willing to imagine
 creatively decoding

³⁶ Lewin (1939, p. 165) as cited in Burnes (2004, p. 982)

³⁷ Deleuze & Guattari (1980/1987).

³⁸ “The embodied person has to act in the world of persistent intractability. The physical realm is resistant, refractory, and often disruptive: it can readily frustrate the physical effort” (Heron, 1992, p. 79).

³⁹ Nicolaides, A. (2022).

⁴⁰ Heron & Sohmer (2019).

⁴¹ Halewood (2005).

undoing our doings with
 and what *should* we look at?–
 and how *should* we ask?–
 and what can *we* possibly make?–

posthuman plugging in opens⁴²

doors of paradox
 wholeness arrives–
 in disassembling prehension
 in radical recognition of body
 as timeless reality
 as multiple
 as open

whole being
 more becoming
 wild and far-flung
 seeking connection
 infinite potential relations in
 constant flux

inquiry—a tapestry⁴³
 tacit knowledge the warp
 propositional knowledge, the woof

of tinkering
 along the endless spiral—of becoming—
 becoming more self and part
 of a one-and-many whole
 in every moment new possibility
 for wholeness as a one who's never whole

⁴² Jackson & Mazzei (2011)

⁴³ Heron (1981a, p. 32)

CHAPTER 7

TRANSFORMING FEELINGS: A MORE THAN HUMAN COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY
INTO CREATIVE LEARNING THROUGH FELT SENSE AND SONIC PLAY

“For nothing is good, unless you play with it.” – Funkadelic, “What is Soul”

Our inquiry into creative practice began with a situation affecting our everyday lives. We, the co-authors, grew this inquiry out of a shared desire to transform our collaborative music making practice and reinvigorate our over 15-years' of experimenting with sounds and performing in musical ensembles together. In other words, we began with our personal experiences and our feelings about reviving a creative collaboration after a subdued period while Shannon pursued doctoral coursework and Michael cultivated other musical projects.

Thus, in the tradition of action research, our inquiry did not spring from a problem or knowledge gap in the scholarly literature (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). We were “not driven by data or theory, but by astonishment, mystery, and breakdowns” (Brinkmann, 2014, p. 722) and by the gap we noticed between our shared desire to collaborate in more unpredictable and satisfying ways and our then current processes and perspectives. This inquiry began in Shannon’s wonder at how CI’s feelingful processes already seemed at work in our creative practices and, especially, in the continuous commitment to experimentation with which she saw Michael approach his musical craft as a calling, day in and day out. Therefore, we did not seek to inquire into a topic, or research *about* something, but to pursue a kind of inquiry in motion, research *with* a particular set of materials and processes constituting our sonic practices. Our

desire to change how we enacted our creative collaboration led us to what Heron called a “mature CI ... about a purpose, an intention to do something, to take transformative action” (Heron & Sohmer, 2019, p. 209), a transformative rather than merely informational CI (Heron, 1996).

Our prior and ongoing experiences as participants in various musical groups led us to encounter affective dimensions of experience, feelings and embodied, holistic felt senses, as guides through complex sonic situations. We intuitively knew that feeling informed our creative practice, accompanying and underlying evolutions of our doing, enabling us to somehow improvise through musical conversations in all their ambiguity and complexity. We were not quite sure *how* felt senses moved us through creative processes or facilitated our creative learning together. We found Illeris’s comprehensive conception of learning as “any process that in living organisms leads to permanent capacity change and which is not solely due to biological maturation or aging” (Illeris, 2018, p. 1) resonant with our more than human perspective. In this simultaneous knowing and unknowing, we began our collaborative inquiry (henceforth abbreviated as CI; see the introductory [chapter one](#) and the latter sections of [chapter two](#) for more details on the structures, protocols, and underlying theory of CI) to inquire into these overarching question: *How do we experience the affective phenomenon of felt sense in creative learning and practice? How does felt sense and feeling inform creative learning and practice over time?*

In recent years, more scholars within the field of adult education have focused on feeling in learning and change processes (Dirkx, 2001, 2006; Lawrence, 2008; Yorks & Kasl, 2006). However, focus on feeling remains largely absent in reports of even first-person action research, and scholars grapple with the sharp difference between feeling and reflections of feeling and the

way translating feeling into written accounts, in particular, breaks a holistic experience into pieces (Heen, 2005). This CI report into felt sense and creative sound practice responds to calls to strengthen the relationship between art, aesthetic knowing, and action research (Irwin, 2022; Seeley, 2011; Warwick et al., 2022). We specifically respond to Bradbury et al.'s (2019) call for more “action research that transforms (ART),” and studies enacting “experimentation, learning, and doing something that has never been done before” (p. 8).

Some arts-based researchers see a more integrated relationship between artful and critical action research than may be apparent to others. Keifer-Boyd (2011) describes arts-based research as “a hybrid form of action research based in art processes, and/or art based in action research processes,” insisting that “[s]ocial justice arts-based research is critical action research, with the ACTION emphasized as a palimpsest, or a continued layered process” (p. 5). Likewise, a number of arts-based interventions employing diverse art modalities have been enacted as part of action research projects across a variety of contexts (George, 2014). However, more work to thicken these connections within qualitative and action research communities remains. Therefore, this study seeks to go beyond surface levels of doing to engage with theory and the murky depths of experience. It does so to enact and imagine ways action inquirers might become “Artists of the Invisible, working to create spaces which are potentially transformative” in diverse contexts and on many levels (Seeley, 2011, p. 83).

Our inquiry illustrates how CI process, underpinned by Heron's (1992) whole person theory, provides a generative way for pursuing the five main tenets of Bradbury et al.'s (2019) action research for transformation (ART) manifesto (1. “knowledge creation ... to support our collective thriving on this planet”; 2. “transcend[ing] rationalist empiricism and acknowledg[ing] our whole selves as relational beings”; 3. “start[ing] ‘here’ with ... felt experiences ... and

development toward mutually transforming power”; 4. “working participatively ... including multiple ways of knowing-for-action”; and 5. “integrat[ing] personal/reflexive, interpersonal/relational and impersonal knowledge”) (p. 9). These aspects of the ART manifesto resonate with Heron’s whole person perspective as well as the posthuman emphasis on the collective flourishing of all life, relationality, the dissolution of binaries, and creative experimentation. Thus, this CI also connects how the radical relationality espoused by the ART manifesto links whole person theory-infused action research with posthumanist philosophies alongside emerging adult learning theory (Nicolaidis, 2022).

The synthesized findings and discussion of this research will interest adult educators, qualitative methodologists, and action researchers focused on

1. the role of felt experience and aesthetic knowing in holistic experiential adult learning;
2. feelings’ potential for expanding action research and adult education beyond the distance a persistent constructivist paradigm imposes between subject and object (Nicolaidis, 2022);
3. how posthuman theoretical perspectives lead to new methodological possibilities and implications for adult educators; and,
4. CI’s potential as a form of spiritual inquiry (Heron, 1996, 1998; Reason, 2000, 2023) in lifelong and life-wide contexts (inclusive of dyadic configurations like a creative marriage, with vibrant natural and everyday found objects, and in day-to-day informal and domestic spaces) that may overlap and spill over into other life contexts.

Intending to facilitate larger CIs in the future, Shannon desired to engage a first-person inquiry into her own behaviors, feelings, and practices to better help guide others in their own first-person inquiries. She also knew that while “we need second person (or

‘us’) research in order to be effective in first person research” (Taylor, 2004, p. 84), experiential educators should develop their own affective capacities in order to facilitate second-person research (Watson, 2013; Heron, 1992, 1996). In thinking about a personally meaningful practice to inquire with, Shannon kept returning to the long-time collaborative sonic practice she shared with her partner, Michael.

Undertaking an inquiry related to our shared musical practice would be more than a mere academic project. Such research, she felt, carried the potential to transform her daily life and ways of doing with and relating to each other as well as allow her to integrate academic and artistic identities. Such an inquiry would allow us, as co-researchers and co-participants, to respond to the specific impasses we felt at this stage of our musical partnership and a shared feeling that our collaborative processes needed reimagining. We also realized the strength of past musical collaborations with others often relied on the underlying inquiries we, as a couple, were pursuing together in response to and in excess of the larger collaborative group.

Based on their experiences seeking attunement through musical improvisation in larger group and dyadic configurations, Kossak (2007) remarked that:

In a duo it is simpler and at the same time more intimate. As in any dyadic relationship, the pathways of communication are more direct than in a group setting, which can create more clarity and closeness. It can also create more direct miscommunication or vulnerability. (p. 92)

With a desire for clarity and closeness pulling us and accepting “when co-researchers engage in fundamental re-visioning of their life practices this *necessarily* [emphasis in original] stirs up emotional disturbances ... restimulat[ing] archaic patterns of fear, rage, and grief” (Reason, 2000, p. 11), we opted for dyadic vulnerability. After all our years of collaborating, we still

experienced instances of miscommunication and unwillingness to be vulnerable in certain ways as contributors to our collaborative impasse. Because of the intimate experience of felt sense and the risk involved in seeking to access and articulate the feelings we might find, we sought the more intense relating dyadic configuration.

Restricting our CI to ourselves enacted a willingness to delve into being highly vulnerable with and potentially misunderstood by the other as well as a willingness to engage difficulties we had been avoiding. Due to these dynamics and given our purpose also involved deeper listening—learning to listen to ourselves, to each other, and seeking to perceive and interact with the world in otherwise nomadic, rhizomatic ways, restricting our CI to two human co-researchers made sense. Chapman and colleagues (1992) note that “[d]yads give students the opportunity to be listened to, rather than to be questioned or evaluated by others” (p. 22). We listened to the conditions under which we personally felt we experienced greatest creative flourishing in deciding to pursue a dyadic inquiry. This involved recognizing our inquiry trajectory should respond to personal learning practices and preferences and that may fall outside ways of knowing privileged in more formal learning contexts (Shannon, 2023).

Many of the exercises Heron (1992) offers in *Feeling and Personhood* involve partners because “having a partner means you get supportive and enabling attention” (p. 7) alongside turn-taking practice providing the same to another. Our dyad allowed us each the airtime necessary to play with and discuss new actions and processes while pursuing maximum vulnerability and openness as we sought to transform practice through deeper and deeper listening and iterations of creative response, rather than comparative evaluation. Our posthuman theoretical engagements further primed us to perceive how individuals were always more than one (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987), always existed as multiplicitous subjects (Braidotti,

2019b). We possessed an intimate awareness that we each already embodied and enacted multiple identities and perspectives as well as sometimes conflicting desires and viewpoints, etc.

Our CI found further affirmative inspiration in Barbara Langton and John Heron's (2004) *Cookbook for Dyadic Inquiry*. This guide discusses ways to incorporate CI into every aspect of a life partnership through the regular performance of specific rituals at various intervals for pursuing inquiry guided by love and creative practice. Their approach weaves individual and shared practices into the rhythms of the everyday, shaping their creative actions and interactions with others, including in and through other dyadic and larger group CIs each were involved in together and separately. Their cookbook inspired us to explore ways our two-person group might also use CI as a generative structure, approaching collaborative decision-making as “core spiritual practice” for “continuously discover[ing] who [we] are and who the other is, where one stands and where the other stands” (Heron & Sohmer, 2019, p. 215).

Bringing CI home, literally, highlights possibilities for action-oriented inquiries within the spaces and relationships in which we live and already engage. We assume vital learning takes place within families and other intimate relationships and that ways of being, knowing, doing in these configurations are significant. Our study, furthermore, seeks to acknowledge the real practical problems faced by many long-term collaborators at some point, whether in personal or professional creative practice situations: how to sustain a relationship, how to unfold new ways of becoming within it, and how to ensure continued flourishing together.

Data Assemblage

Our CI includes both extant data as well as data we generated ourselves as co-researchers and co-participants in a shared inquiry into sound practice. In chapter five, we detailed [the data assemblage we worked with in co-creating a sonopoetic analysis method](#) to incorporate audio

with textual data and remain as close to our sonic data as possible throughout the analysis process. Table 7.1 below depicts our data assemblage as an inventory table for easier perusal of the materials we count as data in pursuing our question of the role of felt sense in our collaborative creative learning.

Table 7.1

Sonic Collaborative Inquiry Data Inventory

Data Material	Type	Description
Musical and video recordings	Extant & generated	Audio and video recordings co-inquirers create using instruments, digital audio workstations (DAWs), samplers, smartphones sound/video diaries. This data category includes online content produced by other musical artists, content we created and posted ourselves, and content others have posted related to our musical collaborations.
Relevant published literature	Extant	Books and articles discussing relevant theory and resonant texts cutting across the disciplines of philosophy, social psychology, education, anthropology, and sound studies. Includes digital materials as well as print materials featured in CD and record liner notes that provide information about musical history or the personal experiences of musical artists.
Audio recordings of CI reflection meetings	Generated	Field recordings/sound diary (Duffy & Waitt, 2011), Recordings of CI reflection meetings
Co-researcher reflections	Generated	Reflective artifacts created while making music or directly after daily practice. This has most often taken the form of fragmented and poetic prose.
Initiating researcher memos	Generated	Memos about the process of conducting the CI and analyzing CI data.

Spirals of Analysis

Analyzing our multimodal data required a multi-pronged approach involving further artmaking, diffracting our experiences of sounding into poetic, sonic, and visual forms, allowing us to braid across modalities, stitching resonant pieces together in an evocative tapestry. We followed a [poetical thinking](#) approach to sensemaking with our data.

We attended to our sonic and textual data in a multi-step recursive process involving:

1. Research poems documenting our listening back to audio-recorded reflection meetings and reflective journals using an adapted form of The Listening Guide (Gilligan et al., 2003) informed by the “zones of subjectivity” of Braidotti’s (2019b) posthuman perspective and Wilber’s (1997) integral theory and “territories of experience.”
2. Pursuing a poetical thinking with theory approach combining our poetic transcriptions from step one with found poems created from mostly theoretical texts resonating with our inquiry.
3. Composing digital sound collage performances that combined our experimental sound practice recordings and other multimedia text data (e.g., YouTube videos) with the sonified poems produced in steps one and two.
4. Creating a multimodal digital portal for presenting our sonopoetic analysis, in all its fullness, alongside visual aspects of our inquiry, the invisible and influential presences of theory, and our process of poetical thinking with (whole person and posthuman) theory.

Spiral 4: A Poetic Relational Listening Guide

The Listening Guide (LG) (Gilligan et al., 2003) presented a way to analyze the linguistic audio data generated from our CI reflection conversations and deeply explore affective dimensions of our complex subjective experiencing of creative musical practice. Developed by

psychologist Carol Gilligan and colleagues by analyzing interview transcripts in inquiries related to women’s development, the LG is a “relational, voice-centered, feminist methodology ... differ[ing] from other means of analysis in that it places emphasis on the psychological complexities of humans through attention to the voice” (Woodcock, 2016, p. 1). Like CI’s cyclical process, this analysis procedure involved rounds of listening and re-listening to audio data. The LG, thus, extended the poetic analysis we conducted in our pilot study (see [chapter five](#)) by providing a structure of focused rounds, which we adapted to our inquiry’s needs.

Due to the LG’s strong focus on the individual human voice and subject, we adapted the method to listen in to the more subtle, relational, and more than human dimensions of experience we found in our initial listening-reading of our inquiry’s audio and text reflections and consistent with our theoretical orientation. The chart below summarizes the steps outlined in the original Listening Guide (Gilligan et al., 2003; Woodcock, 2016) alongside the adaptations we made to enact what we call the Poetic Relational Listening Guide (PRLG).

Table 7.2

Comparing The Listening Guide and Adapted Poetic Relational Listening Guide

	Gilligan et al.’s (2003) Listening Guide	Poetic Relational Listening Guide
Round 1	Listening for plot, main actions, narrative arc, and what happened.	Listening for plot, main actions, narrative arc, and what happened (or the exterior-individual or behavioral quadrant of Wilber’s (1997) four quadrants of consciousness model).
Round 2	Focusing on the speaker’s use of the “I” pronoun and constructing an “I” poem from these.	Focusing on how co-researchers’ pronoun use maps to the interior-individual (intentional), interior-collective (cultural), and exterior-collective (social) quadrants of Wilber’s (1997) four quadrants of consciousness model and Braidotti’s (2019b) zones of subjectivity.

Round 3	Listening for tension of contrapuntal voices.	Listening for polarities. The three-column poetic output includes perspectives from each side of the polarity continuum and a middle column featuring integrated perspective.
Round 4	Synthesizing the previous three listenings into a coherent analysis.	Listening for irrational, beyond-human perspectives by running the poetic outputs from the previous three listening rounds through a cut-up process to generate a cut-up poem (Burroughs, 1963).
Round 5		Synthesizing the previous four listenings into a coherent analysis in poetic form.

Our first major adaptation to the LG occurred with the construction of the “I” poem in round two, which involves writing out every instance in a particular excerpt where a speaker in an interview recording and transcript uses the pronoun “I.” Creating a poem of these fragments while also attending to how the speaker uses pronouns like “you,” “we,” and “they,” is intended to reveal the speaker’s subjective experience (Woodcock, 2016). In expanding the application of the LG to the analysis of student reflection papers, Petrovic and colleagues (2015), for example, also expand the “I” poem with three additional columns for a speaker’s use of “you/your/yourself,” “we/us,” and “they/them/their/others.” The authors explain this move enabled the creation of poems with more nuanced mappings of how a speaker’s specific use of pronouns may mark subtle shifts in perception, reveal who or what the speaker is referring to, and convey emotional distance or other feelings. We follow this move with a three-column format that includes first-person singular, first-person plural, and third-person plural. This we conceptualize as overlaid with integral theory’s four territories of experience (Wilber, 1997), helping us map potential uses of specific pronouns to subjective experiencing of internal states, cultural connections and solidarities of “we,” and persons, factors, worlds considered to be

external but part of a sphere of potential impact. While within the realm of human subjectivity, this system also reflects the way “[p]osthuman subjects establish relations on at least three levels: to one’s self, to others and to the world” (Braidotti, 2019b, p. 45) and act from within this complex nexus rather than based on individual intention or reason.

The PRLG’s round three roughly follows the same process as Gilligan et al.’s (2003) LG, which involves listening for contrapuntal voices. Adopting the language and concepts of whole person theory and posthuman philosophy, I thought of this round as listening for polarities (Ferrando, 2019; Heron, 1992) and the notion of a middle way to explore between seemingly opposing ends or forces, the PRLG’s main innovation here is creating an additional three-column poem.⁴⁴ The three column format intends to spatially convey the seeming opposite sides of felt tensions while, in the middle column, allowing space for a third possibility to emerge.

The original LG ends off with a fourth round wherein the previous three rounds are synthesized with other inquiry materials in an ambiguous, and therefore difficult, process that researchers using the method must improvise or “make [their] own way through” (Petrovic et al., 2015). By contrast, our PRLG’s fourth round of listening takes analysis a step further by inviting in an irrational, technological, beyond human voice in the form of an online cut-up generator. The PRLG’s fifth listening round, then, becomes the place where all previous rounds, inclusive of the results and potential insights created by the cut-up generator, converge in a concluding synthesizing poem. This fourth round of the PRLG is a posthuman listening, extending relationality to an extrarational, though not random, force, opening inquiry findings up to the

⁴⁴ Ferrando (2019) asserts that posthumanist concepts, like rhizome, develop outside “any essentialism, polarity, or strict dualism” and, rather, operate through “relying on a hybrid, mediated, and process-ontological perspective” (p. 6). It’s important to note that while we do, like Heron (1992), use the term “polarity” to describe specific tensions of feeling which arise from within our human experiencing, the complex, overlapping intersections of multiple affective polarities move through many experiential territories, beyond any rigid dualism.

forces of complexity, chance, and surprise. We found that this more than human round surfaced combinations of words that surprised us and added new directions and textures to our analysis. Some of these are included in the poems featured in the online project portal as well as in the spiral narratives featured under the findings detailed later in this chapter. While discussed separately and sequentially here, it should be noted that we constructed these relational listening poems, including the more than human cut-up poems, concurrently with our creation of our first stage of sound collaging and website creation discussed in our spiral six below.

Spiral 5: Poetically Cutting in Theory with Text Data

The poetical thinking with theory outputs of this spiral of analysis produced another [poetic synthesis](#), now weaving theoretical literature on learning, aesthetics, affect, and sound with our CI findings. These follow the narrative description of our action-reflection spirals (1–3) produced from interacting with our data using the Poetic Relational Listening Guide in the first analysis spiral (CI spiral four) just discussed. The necessity of infusing resonant theoretical literature back into our analysis informed this phase wherein we used a poetical thinking with theory process as another stop along the way to analyzing our data in its fullness. Poetic outputs of this poetical thinking with theory became the basis for this dissertation’s [final synthesizing poem](#)—where we artfully unfold our CI’s findings in poetic form while communicating connections and implications in more straightforward prose footnotes.

The poetical analysis undertaken in this phase, the output of which are featured in the chapter eight synthesis poem and artful interlude that follow, extend the poetical thinking with theory approach outlined in chapter one. That section discussed how the artful interludes contained throughout the dissertation featured found poetry chiseled from specific theoretical texts and often incorporating several texts in conversation with each other (Prendergast, 2006;

Thomas, 2021). These research poems document my researcher journey of becoming steeped in and developing familiarity with the multiple theoretical threads informing the design and implementation of the sonic collaborative inquiry we ultimately pursued. The synthesis poem and the poems in the interlude following differ slightly from the research poems found in earlier artful interludes, which consist of found poetry in resonant theoretical texts. Spiral five's synthesis poem includes found research poetry composed from theoretical texts (which, from a post-qualitative perspective, we may also count among our inquiry's extant data) and adds poetic translations of our written CI reflections and transcribed reflective discussions.

As the most integrative text-based synthesis of our CI (our next analytical spiral took our analysis back into the realm of sound and beyond the confines of this dissertation's text), this poem dives deeper into the connections between theories of feeling/felt sense and our experiences within our sonic CI's specific movements. We drew inspiration from Thomas's (2021) poetic juxtaposition method, which involves "setting poetic representations of data alongside poetic renderings of theoretical literature so that relationships between the two can be intuited for deeper understanding" (p. 627). In this case, the qualitative data consisted of the poetic materials we previously created in applying [the PRLG](#) to our poetically written reflections and transcribed reflective dialogues.

Shannon gathered and then printed excerpts from the literature she deemed affective and significant to our CI, cutting these into small cards for easier engagement. Working together, we began pasting theoretical fragments we felt resonated with bits of our poetical transcription data to a large newsprint page. As we selected and pasted theoretical texts, we discussed our interpretations of them, how they related to other already pasted texts, and recalled pieces from our relational listening poems previously produced using the PRLG. When we found lines from

our PRLG poems that resonated with a pasted text, we wrote those out by hand on strips of paper or directly onto the growing text collage.

Spiral 6: Sound Collaging Sonopoetic Diffractions

The poetic output synthesizing our CI's participant-generated data and the theoretical texts with which our inquiry most resonated and drew inspiration receive further consideration in spiral six. Unlike [our pilot inquiry's culminating sound collage](#), we did not record ourselves reading aloud parts of spiral five's theory-laden synthesis poem or the poetic outputs from the multiple rounds of spiral four's PRLG process which fed into it. All these, however, became more indirect inputs for this final phase of our sonopoetic analysis, wherein we returned to some of the audio interviews with musicians and sound artists as well as scholars of affect and sound who inspire us. As we began assembling this sound collage with these materials and recordings of our own sonic play during the CI's first three spirals, we decided sonifying our poetic analyses would be superfluous. Cutting in the voices of these sound players and scholars offered another, often simpler and more relatable, way of speaking many of the insights our poetic analyses revealed, adding another layer of data. Focusing on these voices also allowed us to include more of the cultural materials and sonic data informing our inquiry and lifelong sound practice, and creative collaboration, which would otherwise be missing in this work. For aesthetic purposes, we also hoped to create a spacious composition and, therefore, sought to avoid an oversaturation of words or a potentially overly disorienting or anxiety-inducing experience for listeners.

With sound clips, mostly from YouTube videos, featuring the artists and scholars whose work and ideas most resonated with our inquiry, we cut up these fragments and methodically and experimentally arranged them using a digital audio workstation (DAW) alongside the sound recordings generated from our sonic practice (including field recordings, instrumental play, and

synthesized sounds). Through multiple careful listenings, we became familiar with parts where distinct voices resonated, where one seemed to be picking up on or extending a similar idea, etc. We went back and forth collaboratively arranging and rearranging these fragments to form a composition that felt right to us. As in our pilot study, we sought to make a diffractive sound collage, to create an affective, integrative, and multimodal celebratory artifact to conclude our CI's formal analysis in a playful way, open to further ways practice might extend theory and vice versa.

While this sound collage represents the final stable piece of our analysis, we resist here the temptation to weave in our yarn, or “finish off” our analysis. Rather, we leave hanging threads, potential portals for the continuation of our analysis by turning our sonic data into audio samples we can use again and again in future musical performances, future iterations of analysis with the potential for unlocking even further recombinations and insights. We have loaded these samples into digital samplers and made them available for participants of an experiential exposition of this dissertation held prior to Shannon's dissertation defense in April 2024. We open further potential for future iterations of analysis by [making the audio samples generated from our sonic CI available as digital sample pack](#). Anyone may download from our CI's online portal and use our field recordings and synthesized sounds for their own performance or research purposes. With all the distinct elements of the sound collage available, anyone can re-perform and re-mix elements of our sonopoetic analysis in novel and continually evolving ways so that new recombinations might potentially emerge further insights.

Composing the Multimodal Online Portal

The constant zigzagging and combining of and experimenting with methods of approaching our inquiry into how felt sense experiences influenced our creative learning and

collaborative practice could not be expressed in words alone. From the outset, we knew the messy, complex, multimodal nature of our inquiry focused on collaborating with and through sound would require some sort of multimedia platform. Desiring to make the fruits of our inquiry as accessible to as wide of an audience as possible and in acknowledgement of the more than human world in which we live and the theories guiding our research, we created an interactive online portal. Only in such a digital, globally accessible space could we present the supporting auditory and visual artifacts we created to amplify the affects moving through and shaping our CI experience. Composing this multimodal online portal extends the spatiotemporal and participatory potentials of this inquiry by providing a permanent location for distant audiences to explore, become immersed in, and actively participate in the inquiry. The online portal also keeps the inquiry open-ended with the possibility of further materials being added to its archives and/or this artful presentation being contextualized in different ways at future points in time.

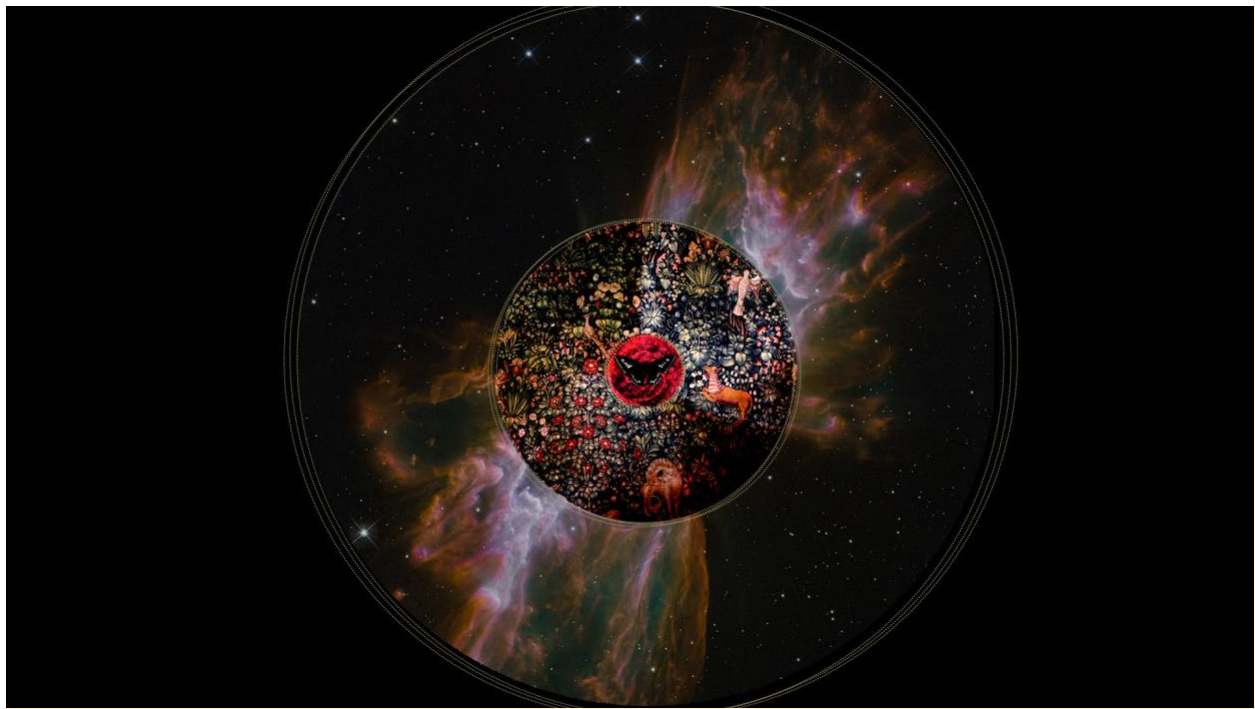
We harbor no illusions the artful presentations in this online portal, even taken as a whole, could ever fully express or account for our CI's affective complexity, insight, or impact, including on our selves. Even the most multimodal, high-quality, and immersive presentation could never fully express or give a full accounting of our CI's complex, multi-layered processes. Nor could it wholly convey our affective experiences of traversing the various zones of posthuman subjectivity and entangled polarities we lived in this inquiry as we engaged in deep experiencing of listening and creating with sound. Nevertheless, those wishing to dwell with the vibrant materials of our CI and with the mysterious intensities of our sonic inquiry to inspire their own creative practice should dwell with those artful presentations rather than continue here. Doing so will, we think, provide you a connection to the data and immersion in more affective entry points for creating more of your own felt sense of the nature of our inquiry, its tensions,

and learnings. We might even suggest you may find all you need there and choose not to return to this text.

In the end, we hope to increase the likelihood readers will be moved by our inquiry into the affectivity of sound and creative collaboration. This more artful presentation of our inquiry integrates the zigzagging of our full CI through action, reflection, and analysis and the corresponding methods found within these spirals, which each produced their own learning. Click the Figure 7.1 collage below to access the multimodal online presentation of our CI.

Figure 7.1

Transforming Feelings: Collage Link to the Sonic CI's Multimedia Online Portal



A Narrative Following of Felt Sense Through Spirals of Inquiry

To answer our question of how felt sense experiences affect creative learning and practice over time, Table 7.3 below presents the specific felt senses which appeared in our inquiry's three main spirals:

Table 7.3*Summary of Actions and Felt Sense Experiences During Each Learning Spiral*

Spiral # & Duration	Action	CI participants experienced felt senses of
1 – January – May 2023	Exploring possibilities with traditional and non-traditional instruments and objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● playing as delightful, healing, and rejuvenating to the body. ● resistance to the pull toward imposing goals, to make playing useful. ● the vibrant sonority of objects. ● frustration about the CI process.
2 – June 2023	Playing with rocks, metal, water; abandoning traditional instruments and conventional structure; simplifying while staying musical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the vibrant sonority of objects. ● deep participation in interactions (including more than humans). ● needing to let go of appearing skilled and knowing. ● trying to break free of old habits, conventions, expectations, fears. ● potential collaborator (including audience) reactions and response.
3 – July – October 2023	Interweaving bass and guitar prepared with objects with conventional playing and transitioning seamlessly between the two. Integrating prepared playing with synthesizers. Finding combinations of composed and improvised that feel free and open.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● learning to play across tensions and polarities (attuning to relational vibrations, amplifying for increased affectivity) ● possibilities for furthering the vibrant nature of objects. ● new collaborative processes emerging. ● inquiry's fluidity with other life-wide cycles. ● the more than human spiritual nature of the inquiry. ● freedom and free expression in community. ● becoming in tension and pain. ● creating more feedback loops, feeding outputs into inputs.

Seeing our actions alongside the felt senses which accompanied them allows us to begin making connections between our felt senses and our different actions as we moved through our spirals of creative practice. The most significant felt sense throughout our inquiry was the feelingful knowing that objects and sounds themselves were imbued with vibrant inner worlds

and agency in their encounters with various materials, including us humans. We also became attuned to the between spaces, the supposed silences, the subtle and spiritual aspects of our inquiry, as synchronicities extended spirals and the feelings emerging from within them pointed to larger relations and connections.

In this section, we weave together fragments of our poetic analysis to consider the question of how felt sense affected or guided our creative practice and the actions of our collaborative inquiry time. The bullets which appear in neat tabular form above hopefully come to life in a way that allows you, the reader, to walk alongside us as we experience the subtle and unexpected twists in the spirals of our inquiry, our deep-felt senses and the wide connections they implied, and how these feelings informed our inquiry's trajectory.

Although we unfurl these spirals sequentially, intending to relay a chronologically coherent report of our experiencing over time, living through the intensities and rhythms of this inquiry felt much more fluid, confusing, and nonlinear than this narrative telling implies. Likewise, the seemingly clearly defined beginning and endings of our numbered spirals obscure the recursions and overlaps that occurred across these periods of time, including the picking up of inquiry threads brought with us from prior years of collaboration. [The pilot inquiry we co-researchers conducted](#) prior to the beginning of the spiral presented here as the "official" beginning of this CI, also informed the reflections and actions of our "spiral one." We had begun to grow tired of the lack of air or space in the direct recordings of sustained tones we had been focused on. Like many of our past changes in collaborative direction, a desire for difference and fresh air fueled our creative decision-making to pursue specific actions, reflecting a following of felt sense across space and over time and our desire to bring in more of the outside world.

Spiral 1: Feeling Out (January–May 2023).

*just playing
creating in relation
out of infinite possibilities—
focusing on a small thing
knowing playing as an action important in itself
one little attenuation can change the whole—*

We entered our CI having conducted a pilot inquiry exploring possibilities of generating tones using synthesizers. We desired a way out of that landscape that felt, in some ways, alien, inaccessible, or claustrophobic. So, for this phase, we decided to play with possibilities, including collecting audio in real-time from the physical world through microphones and piezo transducers. We attempted to keep our plan open enough that we felt free to change the way we played, including the instruments and objects we played with from day to day, depending on how we were feeling. While intending to make the inquiry feel low pressure, this flexibility also added to our feelings of frustration regarding the inquiry, especially when we pursued our individual practices apart from each other. Were we still in the same action? Were we writing enough reflections? Where were the bounds of our inquiry if they also included our individual musical practices and playing with other people in other musical configurations? We often forgot we were attempting to conduct research on our process. What was our question again?

Shannon struggled with separating the larger research question about feeling and felt sense from the question we were pursuing as collaborators, our CI's question. Eventually this led to our reconfiguring our understanding of our inquiry and what we were asking. While we came with various interests, reflected in the questions we surfaced during our initial reflection meeting in January 2023, we came to understand our day-to-day question as something along the lines of: *How can we and do we want to collaborate now?* While not including the words “feeling” or felt

sense,” this CI question certainly implies our more expansive research questions: *How do we experience the affective phenomenon of felt sense in creative learning and practice? How does felt sense and feeling inform creative learning and practice over time?* The integrated differences and similarities between the question we were pursuing in our CI and our larger research questions related to feeling’s roles in learning made them difficult to untangle.

We decided to take as long as we needed to find our way and to focus on just playing whatever we were inclined to play together on the given day. The predominant feeling during this period was frustration with our struggles to make enough time to play together. Shannon, pulled by words, the need to read and write as part of sustaining her academic work, and the conceptual ways of knowing privileged in academic spaces especially struggled in this regard early on. Michael played much more but struggled during this time with our inquiry questions and process.

For Shannon, the most significant learning, the felt sense she arrived at by the end of this spiral, related to the struggle to make time to play: an unshakable sense that playing is important in and of itself. Shifting between the conceptual ways of knowing required in graduate-level coursework in education and the affective and imaginal ways of knowing this inquiry required, often proved difficult. The idea that making music as an adult was silly, a waste of time, particularly as related to its economic value, that it was, generally speaking, not a profitable or practical pursuit threatened the belief in the importance of play. This was not as much of an issue for Michael, who was continuing, rather than working to rekindle as Shannon was, a strong and continuous daily practice with sound. Michael had no problem playing without a goal, without any practical purposes in mind. While Shannon experienced resistance to playing, she found the more she engaged in free play, the more she desired to do so. With time, as she eased into this

spiral of inquiry, she also noticed that play revealed itself to be important in and of itself through experience—in how it felt to play, how it seemed to bring joy to her body, a quickening of the whole spirit, a happy leap into uncertainty, into the unknown.

There was no way to this learning except through playing; and, the more she played, the more meaningful the activity became. Just doing it. Making yourself start, if you had to. The felt sense of meaning, of this activity being important and healing for the body, being a way through which one may begin to become whole, to check the consistency of one's feelings against something larger than one's self. The belief in the power of play goes hand in hand with a belief that even irrational, seemingly silly, or insignificantly small actions may have profound effects further down the line.

This first spiral about our CI also led to learning that a particular animal was influencing and informing our inquiry—our cat, Psyche. One of the reasons Shannon realized she gravitated to very quiet singing and just singing less, in general, was because loud singing disturbed the cat who shares the house where we play. Though we do not always capitulate to this participant, we do try to minimize any agitated meowing. So, her presence does register in our inquiry, as well, and she exerts some agency as a beloved animal participant of the domestic space in which we perform our daily creative practices. We do adapt our ways in response to her preferences and observe her to gather information about sonic elements of the space we may not be attuned to. So, the cat becomes the most obvious non-human animal participant in our inquiry. Our mixes register some of her affective responses and, in some small way, her affinity for the soft amplified scraping of granite rocks and bright watery sounds inform what we try to do a little more of.

knowing playing as an action, important in itself

*playing just to play
 playing with other ways
 playing one thing—*

Spiral 2: Letting Go and Listening to Vibrant Objects (June 2023)

This dense spiral of learning began in June 2023, after five months of playing with possibilities for collaborating musically together now. The overriding felt sense dominating this spiral of our inquiry involved the vibrancy of objects, exploring and reveling in their vibrational affective possibilities, the sounds of the most accessible and elemental materials: rock, metal, water. This focus on objects carried over from our noticings in the previous spiral about what moved and brought joy to our bodies, made us wonder, and seemed pleasing to the cat. Paying attention to the subtleties of sounding objects, Shannon wondered if this was what it was like to hear as a cat and even put herself in the speculative mental space of hearing as a cat, becoming cat.

Our poetic analysis produced the following interaction poem illuminating some of the outward surface of our CI an observer would have seen during this period of intense creativity:

*letting go
 deviating from structures
 no traditional musical instruments, synthesizers, or vocals
 creating dynamic environments for interacting
 playing found objects*

*focusing on natural sounds
 rocks, metal, glass bottles and bowls of water
 spending hours
 thinking smaller, going deeper,
 sitting with
 underwater vibrations, ambient air sounds*

We did many things with the subtle sounds of these objects, amplifying them with piezo microphones affixed to metal plates or hydrophones, microphones we dropped into mason jars and bowls to pick up the sounds of water pouring or metal clanking.

As the poem indicates, this spiral saw us make several aesthetic decisions in how we wanted to explore collaborating together. Striving to abandon the need to control with composed elements or songs, or to impress with technical skill, or even utilize conventional instrumentation, we felt our inquiry and collaboration would benefit from abandoning these trappings of sonic practice altogether. We tried starting from a place of deep listening, wherein rocks and metal and water could come to the forefront, and sounds, the very elements of musical expression, might be explored as vibrant sensations. This felt authentic and free to us both. This allowed Shannon, particularly, to free her mind from the anxieties about needing to play the “right thing,” not making mistakes, needing to be in control while also breaking the inclination to appear skilled, good, worthy, and in control. Meanwhile, this focus on non-musical elements enabled Michael to escape his instrumental habits and delve further into processing possibilities:

*delay lines stay open as we play with objects
as a pattern we find pleasing emerges
we close the delay lines
we store and loop these moments
on multiple delayed channels of a mixer
looped and real-time, unique and ephemeral
fading in and out over time
a singular performance*

The sensation this produced was one of *submersion*. This word appeared in Shannon’s notebook in early June to describe what we created—about a week before the world became familiar with a variation of the word via the unfortunate event of the Ocean’s Gate submersible imploding in the North Atlantic Ocean near the site of the Titanic’s sinking. Such synchronicity

felt significant, if a little disturbing, as we delved deeper into the unknown in our quest for novel sounds, hoping we, ourselves, did not implode or become permanently disconnected from the familiar. We had the thought on multiple occasions how similar our sounds might be to the creakings and clankings described on the news as the mysterious sounds being detected by rescue efforts—patterns that might indicate attempts to communicate from the murky depths. All this seemed to intersect our CI as much as the regular summer thunderstorms and waterfall of cicada sounds that grew louder every day, as we moved deeper into the hot Georgia summer.

The host of the show at a venue called Bolo Bolo, where this spiral concluded, called our sonic creation a “protective watery dome” that, through the sounds of an early evening deluge and under the deep pink grow lights and the plants they nourished, set a low-key and contemplative mood for the rest of the evening. The rainstorm that broke out suddenly as our set began became an unexpected but articulate collaborator. The force of the raindrops hitting the metal roof of the building transmitted vibrations through our contact microphones, creating a dense granular waterfall of resonance. Much of the beginning of our set consisted of just listening to this surprising and effortless more than human music. Present, as well, were some of the felt limitations of using piezo electric pickups, or contact mics, to capture vibrations directly. Because they do not capture air the way regular microphones do, we were back at one of the limitations we felt at the beginning of our inquiry, having come out of our pilot inquiry with sustained tones: our music had no air. We felt like we were in a submarine. We possessed a shared felt desire to give it more air. In other words, we wanted to introduce space, to create a musical experience with more room to breathe.

While playing with a small collection of objects does set a certain set of parameters, our shared felt sense throughout this spiral of our CI was of the limitless potential this limited palette held. We were leaning into our learnings that:

*the sonic inner worlds objects contain are real and accessible to us—
we have to trust the process and the objects, themselves
we have to trust the audience to grasp and receive
we have to trust our instincts*

Attempting this, we pursued:

*thinking smaller, going deeper
layering, circulating, disappearing
manipulating feedback
creating a dynamic environment for interacting with rocks

letting go*

Spiral 3: Feeling Free: Playing Across Polarities (July–October 2023).

This three-and-a-half month-long spiral, from July to mid-October 2023, involved “preparing” instruments, guitar and bass guitar, with everyday household objects and materials found on daily walks (rocks, seashells, rusted garden stake, mysterious metal trinkets) and folding their sounds into our new way of doing. The event of the strings of an electric instrument elevated, depressed, scraped, and hit by all manner of metal, glass, wood, and stone objects extends the instrument’s range of possible sounds. Instead of relying on piezo microphones to pick up the delicate subtleties of object sounds, we were now relying on the instruments’ pickups to amplify the sounds of objects laying directly under or over the instrument, dampening one string, creating tension in another. This is what we mean by “preparing” our instruments.⁴⁵ While

⁴⁵ Though composer John Cage coined the term “prepared piano” and often receives credit as a pioneer of using the techniques described above, he was inspired by another composer, Henry Cowell, and many other composers and musicians, including ones outside the European classical tradition, had previously used similar techniques (Deng, 2015).

we were playing instruments we were most familiar with—Michael having played guitar since he was a child and bass guitar having been my primary instrument in many bands and musical projects—we were attempting to extend our usual ways of playing.

In our previous spiral, we had explored potential ways to create affective and musical performances using the vibrant sounds of rocks, metal, and water. We allowed ourselves to be guided by our felt appreciation for these specific sounds and the calming and wonder-full feelings these sounds gave us when we attuned to them and made efforts to listen. This spiral carried over the previous spiral's experiential lesson about the vibrancy of ordinary objects and affective musical potentials of elemental materials by integrating them with commonplace and widely recognized musical instruments.

We initially thought of this time as consisting of two spirals, one in which we focused our prepared instrument playing in the context of a larger band and another in which we pursued the further possibilities for prepared instruments as a duo. As we began to analyze our written reflections and recorded materials, we began to see this entire time as one of learning to play with preparing instruments as well as ways of going back and forth between prepared and conventional, improvised and composed, consonant and dissonant ways of playing.

We felt more intrapersonal and interpersonal tensions during this spiral than any other time during our CI, which mostly related to the difficulties we experienced balancing free and improvised playing with more composed and conventional approaches. We wanted to maintain the sense of excitement and exploration of free improvisation on prepared instruments while retaining enough conventional musicality to provide a welcoming and enjoyable atmosphere for the listener. We want listeners to feel welcomed but also challenged.

it's punishing to an audience to make them sit through that

*it can be punishing for an audience
but we don't want to capitulate to people's desires*

We desired to communicate and move an audience while also staying true to our desires to be free to experiment with sounds in creative and, sometimes challenging, ways. Shannon, for example, struggled with an unexamined assumption related to freedom: *I have this notion that not repeating is freedom*. As the poetic analyses from this spiral show, though, it did not take long before she felt the confining and limiting aspects of solely playing in a prepared way.

*using objects in different ways
then running into tensions
finding timbral limitations
plucking too-familiar rhythms
limitations to intensity*

Though we navigated numerous tensions during this period, our focus remained on formulating new or different ways of collaborating by integrating the polarity of conventional and prepared playing alongside related polarities. For example, the polarities between incorporating composed or planned elements and embracing a wholly improvisational approach oriented to free expression. Our poems reveal our desire to go back and forth as well as a belief that doing so was crucial for producing more affective and enjoyable communications with outside audiences. They also reveal feelings of discomfort communicating different aesthetic desires or visions with other collaborators. We both experienced feelings of frustration with ourselves during challenging musical situations alongside the feelings of gratitude and pleasure at listening back. Listening, again, from another perspective gave us the opportunity to recognize that a situation that might feel “bad” in the moment could also feel “good” when we returned to listen together later. Listening from a different space and time, created potentially transformative feedback.

*listening back
frees me from thinking in terms of good/bad, categorizing sound as good/bad
how liberating it can be to be in unknowing*

*i was listening in the car
what did you think after listening?
i loved it*

*listening back frees me
into unlearning, relearning*

*as we listened back
we all felt really good about the recording*

Very often we felt listening back made us feel more confident about our practice and what we had done, how we had performed. In this way, the various recording devices we used in our practice became participants, revealing a different perspective and the very slippery and subjective nature of our own experiencing and how difficult it sometimes is to trust one's feelings in the moment.

I never really trust my feelings

Trust, too, revealed itself as something we were seeking—something we need and are seeking to cultivate to feel free. Trust in our process. Trust in each other. Trust in ourselves.

*trust you'll know where to go next
trust, no matter what, you can change it
trust
when I'm able to get there, I feel free*

Spiral three's poems illustrate the sometimes-painful tensions related to our musical practice and collaboration we experienced during these months. How much can we expect or demand of audiences, how much engaged participation and deep listening can be arrived at when we, ourselves, find over and over again that:

*listening is hard
you just always have to struggle*

*you're always in danger of lapsing
you're always in danger of your thoughts*

But, perhaps, that's the point and partially behind our not wanting to capitulate to an easy engagement. Either way, we do seek to move ourselves and others.

This spiral saw us arriving at the fruits of our inquiry: finding a new way of collaborating that felt more spacious and integrative and outside an easy or expected language or expression.

We were both really surprised when playing in more unconventional ways,

*with objects, felt so exciting and limitless.
it's exciting to me, like a new horizon*

i don't feel like it's limited

i see all these different possibilities now

Sticking rocks and drumsticks and garden stakes and some of the same everyday household objects or materials found on walks over and under our strings tapped into timbres and percussive sounds that made the instruments sound unrecognizable. Of course, our research poems also make clear we experienced many other moments encountering the limits of exclusively playing prepared instruments.

*i also feel a coldness and isolation here
the limits of communicating with prepared instruments
timbral limitations
limitations to intensity*

This particularly tense shift happened, then, toward finding ways of integrating this new sound palette with field recordings, more feedback loops, and sampling in our collaborative process and creative products to create more inviting sonic media artifacts.

Our inquiry ended at the Athens Institute of Contemporary Art (ATHICA), when Michael played a set of his synth project, sweetearthflying, with Shannon joining for the latter part of the

performance. In this performance, Shannon played prepared bass, producing some of the sounds being filtered through Michael's synthesizers, adding a set of additional external elements into the cybernetic ecology he had patched on the spot and was now actively experimenting with. At this point, we felt we had established a new way of collaborating with prepared instruments and understanding our aesthetic vision and how we could enact processes that played at the intersection of many polarities. We saw ways of integrating further actions that served our desire to amplify the subtle and spiritual through sound, create processes integrating multiple feedback loops, and expand listening and collaboration as far as we could imagine.

More than human presences accompanied this ATHICA performance, which was held outside as part of Athens, Georgia's annual autumn Porchfest, a massive multi-neighborhood block party with multiple stages and bands. During the first half of Michael's performance, Shannon heard a hawk but never caught a glimpse of it until she saw the bird's enormous wings reflected in the red tortoiseshell pickguard of her bass as she began preparing the instrument with a circular metal object and a garden stake. We felt honored and encouraged by this "spontaneous animal participation" (Heron & Sohmer, 2019, p. 210) which occurs, as well, in other spiritual CIs and often feels significant to human participants. Other collaborators during this performance included the looming clouds and potential for rain, which created an eerie and electric atmosphere.

There were the other bands playing on sound systems blocks away, distance smearing their songs into reverberating tones and textures with which our spacious and pointillistic sounds had to contend. For this outdoor performance we, ourselves, used a larger than usual PA system. Hearing our explorations amplified to that volume level outdoors was a very different experience. More volume equals more feedback equals playing with more delicacy and restraint—

feedback in both the audio sense (the interaction between microphones and speakers) and the biological sense (our bodies collecting information about events and surroundings and our minds interpreting that information and telling our bodies how to respond). All these more than human elements informed how we played.

Michael commented on how the reflective aspects of the CI process allowed us to come to this new place of doing that also diffracted into changes in how we moved through our days and experienced everyday being and becoming in practice. We began in the woods every day, became better at slowing down and noticing, of finding new ways of integrating and creating feedback loops. These opened new ways of collaborating and further extended our collaborations in more than human directions, to include the animal, the technological human-non-human, as well as our local natural environment and wider ecological networks (Evans, 2020). Our felt senses led us to slow the frequencies of our music from the dense impulse train of a droning wave form to brittle irregular scrapings and splashings resonating in natural and artificial spaces.

Spirals 4–6: Learning from Our Spirals of Analysis

As described [earlier in this chapter](#), enacting our multi-layered artful analysis resulted in further rounds of focused action and reflection we consider to be our CI's spirals 4–6. In this section, we offer a brief discussion of what we learned from enacting these methods and improvised adaptations of existing poetic methods which resonated with our project. We consider each analysis method in terms of the participatory potential and limits we found and the further insights for developing our collaborative creative process through additional sonic experiments they produced. These analysis spirals also evolved our thinking about how we desired to enact our musical collaboration in live performances and mediated artifacts.

The [Poetic Relational Listening Guide](#) we adapted from Gilligan et al.'s (2003) Listening Guide arose from the complexities we found in our experience which we could not adequately present by simply enacting the original method's "I"-poem procedure. Being the experiencers we were observing as co-researchers *and* also the sole human co-participants of the study gave us a keener sense of the complexities behind the speaking "I" subjects we found in our discussions and written reflections. Our adaptations enabled us to map how our use of "I" traversed more internal and externally experienced events, our use of "we/us/ours" attempted to build a new collaborative culture or reorient our collective perceptual orientation, and instances of "they/them/their" related to other specific forces and presences we perceived in the world. Producing such a mapping enabled us to experience a material expression of sources of tensions we felt as we dwelled in the possibilities of certain resonances, deepening our understanding.

This analysis phase led to other artful practices emerging as meaningfully connected to our sonic CI, as well. Crochet entered the mix as another long-time crafting practice Shannon engaged in. Shannon connected crochet to the relational concepts of knotting and creating knots, the symbolic and real power and productions of a knot. Each knot in a crocheted piece only exists in relation to and because of other surrounding knots with each knot contributing to an overall design while playing a singular and essential part. She played with crochet's potential to create very lacy and irregular patterns filled with holes, 3-D forms, and freeform shapes juxtaposed with grid forms, differentiated patterns of rhythm, perception of time's passing, experiments with passing time. We found the form of our learning within the CI, like an expanding spiral within a complex lattice, also resonated with the physical forms and potentials of crocheting and, especially, Irish crochet.

Shannon's use of crochet here intends to model our experience of CI as like traversing different paths and creating, through our spirals of inquiry, blooming constellations illuminating specific knots in an extensive more than human latticework reality. Our home office printer/scanner enabled Shannon to further play with presenting these crocheted presentations of our inquiry learning in liquid visual ways and using the digital artifacts produced by this digital machine. As the bright white scanner light moved from one side of the glass to the other, Shannon simultaneously dragged her crochet across the scanner bed, desiring to convey the always-in-motion nature of the material-discursive latticework of creation (Nachmanovitch, 2019) co-researchers perceived through feeling and the "speculative lattices" we sought to create in response (Bateson, 2022).

Figure 7.2

Crochet Creation #1

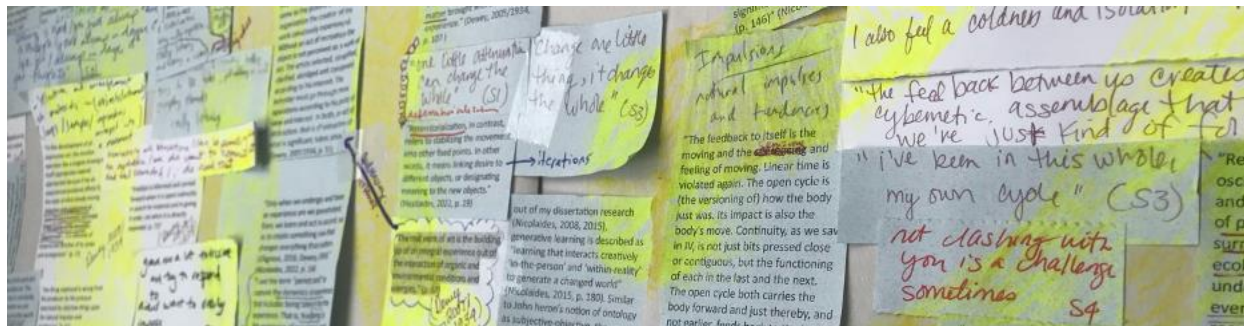


The poetical thinking with theory we next engaged involved playing with the textualized data outputs of the PRLG alongside the theoretical texts also guiding our inquiry presented other challenges. While CI aims for maximum participatory engagement in aspects of implementation and analysis, Shannon was much more familiar these theories and concepts which she felt resonated with our inquiry, than Michael was. While Michael interacted with Shannon's curated excerpts of theoretical texts, playing with those which also resonated with him, these snippets, taken out of their original context, sometimes confused him. The resulting questions and conversations, however, led to productive places, new insights, and deeper understandings of our inquiry and data analysis.

After assembling this text collage and gluing poetic fragments to a large piece of cardboard, we reached another impasse about how to enter this mangle. Michael had the idea, inspired by the theories and processes supporting our inquiry, to use highlighters to create a spiral through the data (see Figure 7.3) as an entry point. Drawing a spiral and a parallel beam, he colored in between these two lines to create verso and inverso sides of the spiral. We used these paths to enter the data anywhere we pleased, leaving open the option of moving forward and backward, weaving connections between the poetic transcriptions of our data and our selected theoretical text fragments.

Figure 7.3

Spiral Cut-Up Used to Enter into Our Poetic Juxtaposition Collage



Our next impasse related to differences of poetic style and Shannon's desire to create a synthesis poem that flowed in a certain way, illuminating some kind of process or path that "made sense." We relate this difficulty to Jackson & Mazzei's (2011) remark that "plugging in requires ... intimacy with *both* the data and the theory" (p. 5). Having been steeped in the theoretical literature in felt sense, affect, and experiential learning for years preceding the inquiry, Shannon possessed a deeper intimacy with the theory. Therefore, Shannon composed the first draft of the poetic synthesis and Michael conducted extensive edits and elaborated the prose footnotes.

One of the major impacts of this inquiry on our practice has been unearthing new possibilities for sampling and discovering and inputting further feedback loops into our music. Many of our insights for how to innovate practice happened during these spirals of analysis we have just discussed. Even after the main action-reflection-diffraction cycles of our first three spirals had concluded, we were still engaged in incorporating the aesthetic ideals we had negotiated, through practice, over the course of our collaboration, into our practice. From November 2023–February 2024, during which we moved through spirals of analysis, our analysis process developed alongside the refining of our musical collaborative process. In both,

we aimed to keep processes open-ended as we discovered new feedback channels, and different ways we could harness affective potentials we perceived in our materials.

Propositional Insights & Practical Provocations

In translating CI insights and implications to wider audiences and, particularly, academic audiences, some reports offer propositional insights and practical provocations gleaned from the spiral learning process (Hanlin-Rowney et al., 2006; Heron, 1998). The following chart synthesizes the propositions and practical provocations which arose during the spirals of our CI. We call them practical provocations rather than implications because these statements do not attempt to prescribe what any other CI should do, only what arose for us in the context of challenging how we might collaborate and pursue our sonic practices differently. Nevertheless, these provocations may provide inspiration to other CI groups with similar interests in slowing down, creating spaces for noticing subtleties of sensation, and delving into the deeper affective aspects of experiencing.

Table 7.4

Propositional Insights and Practical Provocations of Our Sonic CI

Spiral	Propositional Insights	Practical Provocations
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Playing is an action, important in and of itself. ● Your body learns. ● What you are driven to do has meaning. ● Playing, you don't want to be goal oriented. ● One little attenuation can change the whole. ● A seemingly random thing creates a pattern. ● It's really important to do in a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Short-circuit the option to control. ● Avoid progressions. ● Let certain things be out of control, following their own logic. ● Play just to play. ● Play with other ways. ● Play one thing. ● In relation, create things you would never create alone. ● Do to feel happy and grounded. ● Feel what moves it.*

	<p>passive way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It's really important in the body.* ● I feel grounded shaping with extreme need.* 	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discomfort is part of the ritual. ● Leading is leaving space. ● Feeling good doesn't always happen in the moment. ● Listening back, you sometimes find you were doing exactly what you wanted. ● We aspire to freedom. ● It's all going to layer. ● It's hard to break the inclination to appear skilled, good, worthy, and in control. ● As you play, pleasing patterns emerge. ● Objects have a rich inner life. ● It's always a bit scary when it's time for a pattern to change. ● We have to trust our instincts. ● We have to trust the audience to grasp and receive. ● We have to trust the process, the objects themselves, the inner worlds they contain. ● And also, trust the sound.* ● All sounds have a unique and complex pattern. ● Field recordings, air, make the music breathe. ● The main way we learn and understand is by interacting. ● A body loves the tickle.* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sit with it. ● Interact with rocks. ● Deviate from structures. ● Let another lead. Let go. Let it happen. ● Lead by leaving room for emergence. ● Put little things into orbit. ● Think smaller, go deeper. ● Find a place for two drastically different sounds. ● Follow feeling, not too much planning. ● Breathe, drawing attention to fusing inner and outer horizons. ● Change how you listen. Change what you notice. ● Pay attention to what's unspoken. ● Hear everyday object sounds. ● Listen in to feel inspired.* ● Aware you in and out.* ● Do this: the very unpredictable.*
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sometimes you act and explain and nothing happens. Sometimes you act and explain and something happens. ● Emphasizing difference produces affective impact. ● Taking away can add 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Play what you don't know. ● Throw in something random and make it work. ● Become new instruments. ● Explore nonlinearity, forfeit control. ● Use it as a color tool. ● Play unconventionally, then play

	<p>something.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We don't want to lose the feeling of freedom. ● We want to communicate. ● The potential for impact lives in going back and forth. ● You don't have to know everything. ● Change one little thing. It changes the whole. ● The feedback between us creates this cybernetic assemblage, with a mind of it's own. ● We're following. ● Atonal sounds can be musical and affective. ● Responses and thoughts an exploration enabled every time.* ● Calm it was when I was playing.* ● You can have freedom and structure. ● You have to go through tension to actually communicate. ● Improvisation presents a different social vision. ● Music is a way of communicating with god. ● Listening is hard, a struggle; you're always in danger of lapsing. ● It's easy when somebody's not speaking up. ● In dyads, there's more space. ● Repetitive sampling feels good, playing little subtleties.* 	<p>conventionally. Go back and forth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consciously engage with a more than human consciousness. ● Feel what the system (or sound) wants. ● Change one little thing. ● Make something work. Stick with something until it works. ● Embody a line of flight. Become rhizome. ● Connect inside and outside. ● Play in a way that sounds off or goes against the grain. ● Create feedback loops. ● It's limiting, too, free.* ● Play the tension. ● Have both. ● Leave space. Let it breathe. ● Get more varieties of texture. ● Walk in the woods. ● Stay in communication. ● Create iterative improvisations. ● Take your time in the process. ● Think from the standpoint of the actual sound. Where does it want to go? What does it want? ● Discipline yourself not to fill up all the space. ● Keep doing it.
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Note: * indicates a proposition created by the cut-up poems generated during cycle five of the poetic relational listening guide of the data analysis process used to analyze the verbal and written reflections generated in the sonic collaborative inquiry.

“Value! Don’t Evaluate!”: Considering CI Quality

In this section, we attempt to assess the value of our research using the CI process as a structure for unfolding a research-creation (Loveless, 2017; Manning & Massumi, 2014) type of arts-based research, an emergent inquiry rooted in feelingful doing through, in our case, sonic practice. Nietzsche via Erin Manning (2008) provides the proposition we have chosen as this section’s title, which we have returned to, like a mantra, as we attempted to consider validity in the context of our work. “Value! Don’t Evaluate!” involves a remembrance that “Valuation is not evaluation, which happens from the outside as the undoing of the work’s process. Value is immanent critique expressive of the work’s potential. A work’s value is the way in which it expresses relationality” (p. 7). In line with research-creation, we agree with Richardson’s (1992) contention that the poetic “problematizes validity, reliability, and truth ... stripping those methodological bogeyman of their power to control and constrain” (p. 704). The poetic analysis and representation of our CI honors the kind of transgressive validity Richardson proposes, and “resituates ideas of validity and reliability from ‘knowing’ to ‘telling’” (p. 704) what we found most moving, resonant, and affective, seeking resonant validity (Todres & Galvin, 2008).

CI’s value rests in cultivating and testing-through-doing the alignment of all of one’s multiple ways of knowing (affective, imaginal, conceptual, and practical) in and through practice (Heron, 1992, 1996). “The primary outcome [of a CI] is not a thesis but enhanced human behavior in the unfolding of personal, social, and environmental development. A written account of this primary process is a secondary outcome” (Heron & Sohmer, 2019, p. 209). In other words, enhanced critical subjectivity manifests in doing (Reason, 1988). While mindful CI’s primary purpose lies in transforming action (Heron, 1996) and more expansive ways of aligning affective experience with practice, this boundary-spanning research also exists within an

academic context and purpose. Therefore, we explore here how our CI used specific procedures for enhancing the trustworthiness of our findings.

No CI can fully attend to all validity criteria (Reason, 1988) or enact all the procedures Heron (1996) lays out in “seek[ing] to free the various forms of knowing involved from some of the distortions of uncritical subjectivity” producing “a lack of soundness” of findings (p. 131). Some of these validity criteria, like research cycling and attempting to balance reflection and action, are baked into the CI process, and we made decisions along the way that enabled us to attend to as many criteria as we could. Among the several validity criteria Heron (1988, 1996) suggested CI groups ought to aim for, our CI attended to:

1. *research cycling*—enacting alternating phases of action and reflection with various parts of an inquiry to produce feedback that is used to guide further action;
2. *divergence and convergence*—co-researchers perform the same and different actions within or across cycles to attend to various parts of or the whole inquiry;
3. *authentic collaboration*—all participants become comfortable with the method and achieve equal footing with the initiating researcher(s) in decision-making in action and reflection phases throughout;
4. *challenging uncritical subjectivity*—being able to challenge other CI participants in their interpretations (e.g., ignoring aspects of experience revealing the inadequacies of an action);
5. *management of research countertransference*—employing ways of “surfacing and processing repressed templates of past emotional trauma, which may get unawarely projected out, distorting thought, perception, and action within the inquiry” (Heron, 1996, p. 60–61);

6. *balanced reflection and action*—ensuring participants adequately alternate between imaginal and propositional knowing of reflective phases and the experiential and practical knowing of action phases without dwelling too much in one or the other;
7. *chaos and order*—avoiding prematurely concluding, simplifying the messiness of or providing an easy answer to a complex inquiry;
8. *transformative changes*—the ways in which participant ways of being, knowing, and/or doing become altered in a transformative CI.

Research Cycling, Divergence, and Convergence

As Heron's CI reports often did (1998), we take these three related criteria together. Research cycling has to do with whether sufficient cycles were conducted for exploring the inquiry question. While we present our CI as having consisted of three main action-reflection spirals, we might have divided these up into further cycles based on the small differences of action we undertook. For example, we initially divided up the three-month period of what we call spiral three into two distinct spirals, one in which we focused on exploring our new methods with prepared instruments within larger musical ensembles and another returning to the duo. Following the research cycling process through spirals of action and reflection did allow us to play with many ways of collaborating, with each spiral opening up new collaborative configurations and different ideas to try out. That our spirals of action moved us in more satisfying directions, helping resolve tensions we initially struggled with in attempting to rekindle our collaborative musical work and arrived at a new, inspiring process to work from attests to our CI's quality.

The multi-layered poetic analysis we enacted produced additional learning spirals further extending the quality of our CI. Only in the analysis phase, what we consider the fourth through

sixth spirals of our formal inquiry, did we begin to understand the fuller extent of what we had learned and how our collaborative processes had changed. The analyses we produced in these spirals produced further evolutions in creative practice and the insights underpinning them. By our CI's conclusion, we had no doubt that we had come to a more solid and expansive place and understood how our different practices folded into a new emerging process and aesthetic path.

The balance we feel we did achieve between divergence and convergence contributed to our arriving at these new ways of interacting with various materials and each other. Across spirals, Shannon engaged in her own individual practices of writing songs, singing, making iPhone field recordings and recordings of sound practice with bass and guitar. Michael engaged in his own individual sound practices patching synthesizers and playing guitar. Shannon also attended more to verbal reflections. These divergent practices allowed us to explore individual desires and felt tensions and play with ways of incorporating these into convergent practices when playing synchronously together, with Shannon taking on more of the role of sound producer and Michael focused on audio processing through synthesis. Verbal reflections influenced editing processes (e.g., reflections about feeling submerged led to enhancing these sonic elements in audio editing), our processes influencing each other and the whole.

The divergent practices of our individual spirals also met in our collaborations as members of larger ensembles, which while a divergence from our dyadic CI project, fed back into this research and informed our reflections and next actions. These more individual-oriented and socially situated divergences both produced feelings with additional information about likes, dislikes, and future desirings, converging back into our dyadic CI and helping move it forward.

Authentic Collaboration

As this CI constituted part of Shannon's doctoral research, there are elements of its process, particularly during our analysis spirals (4–6), that she designed and implemented with less input from Michael. However, even the products of her initial analyses of research materials, including audio recordings, transcripts, and written reflections, were fed back into their recursive analysis process. Thus, Shannon left room for Michael to participate in the poetic analyses produced using the Poetic Relational Listening Guide. Using pens and markers, we interacted with these poetic analyses from each CI spiral, marking up, doodling, and writing further notes around lines that moved us or felt significant. The poetical thinking with theory process of cutting up theory excerpts allowed Michael to also engage with the theory informing the design and analysis of the CI. A mark of authentic collaboration may be his remark that many of these fragments and the concepts they sketched seemed intuitive or already familiar to him. In addition to conversing daily about the theoretical perspectives Shannon saw as informing this research, the co-researchers also discussed relevant concepts and ideas on a daily basis throughout their inquiry.

Throughout the inquiry, Michael had a say in every aspect of the CI, contributing to decision-making during every phase and at every level. At the conclusion of the inquiry, he expressed feeling equal ownership of the process, having affected all actions, and offered significant insights in every reflection period, as well. He indicated feeling he had a high level of input throughout, partially due to the CI process being so resonant with his own standing creative practice. This reflection confirmed for Shannon the rightness of her intuition, prior to initiating the CI, that because our shared creative practices already closely followed CI processes, authentic collaboration with Michael would be achievable.

Challenging Uncritical Subjectivity

One of the strengths of this CI rests in our ability to push each other as partners to each exercise a whole person critical subjectivity in furthering our creative endeavors and creative sonic practice. Neither of us had a problem playing devil's advocate. When emotional disturbances, feelings of depression or alienation, or even physical pain, interrupted our ability to immerse ourselves in attentively listening, receiving and responding to the present moment sonic experiences, we discussed this openly. The inability to do so with other collaborators in our attempt to expand our CI at one point in spiral three, knowing our inability to continue challenging uncritical subjectivity openly, led us to continue with our dyadic inquiry.

*it's easy when somebody's not speaking up or
somebody's getting walked all over*

Our durable relationship, including years of collaborating with each other amidst much tension, gave us the trust to be honest about when our felt experiences differed in some way. While this did sometimes introduce tensions into the inquiry, we have a history of working in and through tension behind us that made us courageous in sharing differences of feeling and opinion. During our analysis phase, especially, our difference of engagement with theory became an obstacle to authentic collaboration that we improvised around by creating new procedures and modifying established ways of conducting analysis toward more participatory directions.

Some may argue a two-person CI renders is less rigorous or less valid for restricting available perspectives to two human vantage points. We, however, extended CI through our theoretical orientation and practices that allowed us to go beyond the conscious knowledge of our two individual selves and attend not only to "what happened" but also how what happened was informed by multiplicities of past experience and future desire. For example, the first-person inquiries we engage in alongside our collaborative creative practice make room for the autoethnographic, the way our individual memories,

beliefs, experiences intersect with larger cultural, environmental, and social systems. In other words, our dyadic CI left room for these supposedly silent or inert objects to speak, to reveal their vibrant potential, to affect us and our further doing.

Managing Emotional Projections

Years of collaborating and intimate acquaintance enabled us to call out instances wherein we suspected the other to be engaging in some sort of emotional projection resulting in an inhibited ability to exercise critical subjectivity. We engaged in ritual meditations to soothe some of the anxieties related to collaborating, opening each collaborative session, whether in the reflection or action phase, with rituals like Heron's (1992) mutual gazing, to enhance attunement and readiness.

Over the course of our CI, we also both began therapy to work through past emotional traumas, which we did feel fed into some of our continuing collaborative frustrations with each other and with other collaborators over the years. We realized this was needed when Shannon felt Michael becoming increasingly agitated upon listening back to some of our recorded reflection discussions. Realizing the extent to which Michael hated to hear himself talking and the negative feedback loops this was creating in his person and in the CI, she began listening to and transcribing recorded reflections by herself, when Michael was not home.

In her own work with a therapist, Shannon confronted long-seated problems with her inability to receive feedback in a non-defensive manner, particularly from Michael, whose virtuosic musicianship she sometimes felt intimidated by and jealous or resentful of. The active discouragement she received in pursuing artful activities as a child created unresolved anger she needed to work through in order to develop greater confidence in her abilities and internal authority and desires related to creative pursuits. Her struggles with letting go enough to play and

believing that engaging in musical activity was inherently worthwhile directly related to her need to reframe how art and music were seen as impractical wastes of time within her childhood home. Therapy enabled her to explore memories and unhelpful patterns of thinking underlying her inability to sustain enthusiasm and engagement with musical activities over long periods of time, despite genuine love for music and her proclivity for songwriting.

Michael meanwhile worked through the psychological baggage of having played music professionally, spending much time with older musicians, throughout his early adolescence, and his frequent dislike of hearing himself play guitar. These experiences contribute to his ongoing resistance to professionalism in his current music practice, his commitment to pursuing a more personally authentic relationship with the guitar, and preference for collaborating with visual artists and novice musicians. Working through these issues allowed him to better understand the deep loathing he often felt when he heard in his playing the tendency to impose musicality on sonic situations, which also drives him away from those wanting to pursue music professionally. Acknowledging this baggage Michael brings to every musical collaboration formed a big part of managing emotional projections.

Heron (1996) warned that the very act of initiating a CI, the process of inquiring into human conditions, tends to surface the kinds of past emotional traumas which we have shared presented themselves in our specific inquiry. Thus, our CI, initiated to inquire into our collaborative musical practices led us to pursue further inquiries into our personal affective capacities. Our therapists became unwitting participants in our CI, helping us manage these past emotional traumas which contributed to our collaborative impasse and influencing us to understand our actions differently as we initiated personal actions and reflections for healing. This enabled us to both become more confident in our desire and ability to pursue music we both

felt to be personally authentic and satisfying even as it eschewed inherited musical conventions and challenged others.

Balance of Action and Reflection

The reason for embracing CI was because we had for too long in our collaboration relied on continuous action without taking time to pause and reflect on those actions, their consequences, and the implications of these on our desire for future playing. We also realized that Michael had a tendency toward action while Shannon tended toward reflection. Not surprisingly, perhaps, these same dynamics cropped up in different ways in our CI, with Michael constantly working on sonic experiments and Shannon playing more sporadically and much less.

Shannon also became frustrated at certain points during the CI because of her assumptions and expectations around reflection necessarily involving creating written documents. Michael, however, understood his audio recordings of practice to be reflections in themselves. There were also phases of our CI where we engaged in intense bursts of action (e.g., our second spiral in June 2023) and when our reflections came more from recordings of reflective chats than written reflections. There were also periods, however, when we were engaged with more musical collaboration beyond the bounds of our CI and failed to record our sonic interactions as a dyad.

All in all, we felt we achieved a high balance of action and reflection, or diffractive sharing of experience. We believe we were helped in this regard by having our CI's spirals marked by public performances that also motivated us toward communicable articulations of our evolving collaborative journey. These performances propelled us to find ways to share snapshots into our sonic practices, which also pushed us toward more regular reflective discussion. The embeddedness of our inquiry in our daily lives also helped infuse more reflection into our

practice, enabling us to have informal chats at our leisure about various components of our inquiry and future actions. For this reason, the CI often felt like every day consisted of a spiral of action and reflection as we tried out small experiments, no action too small to try.

Shannon also had to assume certain responsibilities typical of a lead researcher in order to achieve a balance of action and linguistic forms of reflection. In addition to recording our inquiry chats, she also took up the responsibility of jotting down notes from our non-recorded chats as well as her reflections about these. This paralleled her growing understanding that recordings of collaborative musical practice were meaningful expressive reflections, themselves full of information.

Chaos and Order

As aforementioned, the everyday nature of our CI, entwined with the daily activities and practices of our lives together, contributed both to the chaos and order of the inquiry. Chaos related to the overlapping of personal inquiry spirals (e.g., emotional, creative, academic, etc.) with our shared CI, which itself overlapped with shared inquiries with others. While CI imposed more order, especially structuring and making more structured space for reflection within spirals and in later spirals wholly dedicated to analysis, Heron (1996) would likely characterize our CI as a Dionysian one.

We did very minimal planning of actions beforehand, finding it difficult, for example, to stick to a single specific action connected to a propositional insight from a previous spiral. The more daily nature of our collaborative interaction and inquiry along with our shifting attentions and interests and desire to frequently try new experiments made this impossible. While trying to bear in mind our learnings from previous spirals and how we were attempting to use these to

inform present actions, we ultimately tuned in to our felt senses in the moment to determine the specific sonic interactions we would pursue together on any given day.

As we moved into our CI, we realized that, in many ways, our question about how we wanted to collaborate now related to our desire to strike a satisfactory balance between chaos and order. This manifested as balancing, for example, free improvisation with composition and more structured approaches. In our collaborative musicmaking, we fought the tendency in improvisational music to impose a musical order on an exploratory, open, or wandering sonic conversation.

In our experience, especially those in confident possession of musical skill, who call themselves musicians, must fight the temptation to impose a riff or musical phrase they think needs to be there, needs to be heard. Often, this quickness results in missing an unfolding rhythm or subtle emerging melody. Players engaged in deep listening, however, may still act on an eagerness to emphasize subtle sounds, and, if able, may rush to emphasize what they hear, imposing a musical agenda that deprives the music of room to breathe.

We have found pursuing slowness and sitting with the chaos and complexity of musical improvisations and training our attention on listening to a situation's musical agenda, the sonic immanence of an environment or event in all its fullness, brings its own fulfillment. What nature creates, or what sonically just comes together in many situated environments are more texturally, melodically, and rhythmically complex than anything we could intentionally create. We feel we achieved a balance between chaos and order in part because our inquiry led us to directly consider how to achieve this balance. Following our felt senses led us to consider how to listen deeply enough to perceive the texturally, melodically, and rhythmically complex qualities of the environment sounding around us and ways to appropriately respond with this "context" as a

vibrant collaborator. We did so by moving slowly through each session of improvised sonic play and slowly through the cycles of our CI, not willing to sacrifice the complexity or chaos by imposing premature order.

Transformative Changes

Lyle Yorks asserted Heron’s (1992) “phenomenological-based theory of personhood” (Kokkos et al., 2015, p. 309) enabled a more holistic vision of transformative learning. Our experience enacting this sonic CI confirms this method, built out of Heron’s whole person theory, did, indeed, lead to transformations beyond the cognitive, inclusive of the spiritual and subtle (Heron, 1992, 1998, 2006). Building off of the argument made in [chapter two](#) about collaborative inquiry as a process for enacting deep transformations of being and becoming, we evaluated our CI in terms of Hoggan’s (2016) typology of transformative learning outcomes. We sought to collaboratively assess whether our CI did, in fact, produce ontological changes and what other transformative outcomes it also produced. Table 7.5 below outlines the transformative outcomes we felt most described the changes we sensed in tracking felt sense and seeking new ways of collaborating.

Table 7.5

Our Sonic CI’s Transformative Learning Outcomes

Outcome Type	Specific Change
Worldview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seeing how feedback loops drive processes throughout nature and society and inform human experience and learning
Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Becoming a different kind of musician, enacting new sonic processes (e.g., playing prepared instruments; playing extra-musical objects, field recordings, and audio processing) ● Recognizing emotional/social hindrances to authentic collaborative interaction ● Growing empowerment to express the self-in-relation’s

Outcome Type	Specific Change
	changing desires and needs
Epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased openness to and trust in “non-musical” sounds, events, and patterns and the musical potential of everyday objects ● Attunement to more than human and subtle presences as collaborators in inquiry ● Mapping of movements between territories and polarities of experience that inform feeling and felt sense as affective ways of knowing ● Valuing aesthetic knowing and engaging multiple forms of creative expression as methods for accessing and articulating the dynamics of affective experiencing
Ontology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deeper appreciation for more than human events and complex ecological interactions as aesthetic experiences ● New awareness of sonic potentialities hidden in everyday objects (e.g., trash, debris) ● Listening more deeply to surrounding environment ● Increased empathy for collaborators’ experience
Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Daily time in nature ● Daily sonic practice ● Taking field recordings outdoors and using them in our music
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deeper capacity to process chaotic, complex situations

Hoggan (2016) describes depth, breadth, and relative stability as ways of describing the extent of the transformative learning produced. As the table above outlines, we identified specific changes in each of the transformative outcome types identified by this typology. We take this as evidence of the depth of the transformative learning which took place in our CI. The breadth of our CI, indicated by the extent to which these identified learnings spilled over into other areas of our lives beyond our collaborative relationship and the context of our CI, also proved significant. For example, the increased capacity we have found to advocate for our self’s

needs and desires in collaboration have spilled over into other areas of and relationships in our lives.

Some of the changes noted above (e.g., becoming aware of sonic potentials in everyday objects and day-to-day activities) are inherently pervasive and, therefore, exhibit breadth by traveling with the body across bounded moments of space and times. Likewise, while it is difficult to offer a final statement on the relative stability of these changes, the behavioral changes identified have been ongoing now for many months. Changes in worldview, epistemology, and ontology seem more developmental and permanent, difficult to imagine being forgotten or easily diverted away from. We can imagine changes of self, behavior, and capacity seem to us most vulnerable to failing to achieve long-term stability with change to context and environment.

Enhancing Collaboration

We add this criterion as one specific to the aim and purpose of our CI whose overarching question might be phrased: How do we want to/feel good about collaborating creatively now? As a spiritual inquiry in conscious embrace of our interdependent existence and dynamic relation as two persons within a vast more than human web, the extent to which the CI enhanced the relational capacities of participants should matter in determining our CI's quality. We co-researchers related honoring embodied interpretations to resonant validity (Todres & Galvin, 2008) with each other and our whole perceivable environment. Rather than pursuing correspondence, resonant validity is “about whether the embodied interpretation *carries forward* ... into the embodied shared horizons where we can meet in understanding in plausible and insightful ways” (p. 580). In other words, in what ways did the inquiry lead to new paths and ways for interactive relation?

We found the CI process opened us to new ways of collaborating that felt right to our embodied felt senses. In addition to re-membering playing music often as a vital action for feeling good, in general, playing experimentally, with as attentive and open an awareness as possible and expressing our experience of these actions, opened deeper understanding about affective knowing. Uncovering how feelings moved across specific zones of subjectivity (Braidotti, 2019b), or territories of experience (Wilber, 1997), and according to specific polar forces revealed resonances and tensions pushing us to pursue new actions. Playing objects and prepared instruments and incorporating more field recordings and using them in different and more complex ways, playing with feedback loops were all ways of collaborating anew we found. These changed our creative process, led to our new ways of doing, intentionally seeking to negotiate tense polarities, resonances, directionalities, and intensities of movement across zones of subjectivity we found beneath felt sense.

Our seeking to find stability at the nexus of these forces of feeling that emerged from our inquiry took the form of awaring (Nicolaidis, 2022) creative aesthetic experiences that, through sonic material, echoed our own perceived vibrant intra-actions. This seeking of forms for integrating complex depths and rich multiplicities of affective experiencing also leads, we found, to cultivating deeper more than human relational consciousness, Braidotti's (2019, 2022) posthuman subjectivity. This is also the ability to engage in Heron's (1992) unitive perception.

Our changes of process could be outwardly seen as changes in behavior, as we began a daily habit of walking in Oconee Forest Park and, later, the State Botanical Garden of Georgia, both parks and natural areas affiliated with the University of Georgia. We especially delighted in spotting the great blue herons at Lake Herrick and listening to the frogs in the wetland areas of the garden leading up to the Middle Oconee River. We both feel that one of the most profound

listening experiences of our lives happened in one of these swampy areas in mid-March when a chorus of frogs singing sustained tones fading in and out at different frequencies, producing sounds reminiscent, to us, of throat singing and the sustained tones of Éliane Radigue's (1998) works for synthesizer. In the woods, we walked, we sat, we listened, and we recorded our wanderings and what we found affective in the world around us on videos taken on our iPhones.

Previously, collaborative music making and walking in the woods had been separate activities. Now they became entangled, doing them together nudged us to explore the polarities they touched on and enact nomadic movements across zones of subjectivity. Playing with tensions, discovering the richness of difference, the productiveness of diving into feeling and the generative knowing that may at first find best expression through aesthetic knowing and experience. Our impasse dissolved as we engaged in diffractive dialogue around these feelingful forces, became more empathetic about how we experienced these differently, and experimented with, eventually uncovering, new ways of doing that “felt good.”

While our overarching question concerns the role of felt sense in creative collaborative learning, our second-person CI's duration allowed us to unfold our question over time and in iterative spirals (Reason & Bradbury, 2008), allowing other tacit questions and concerns to emerge into conscious focus. These included: *How can we collaborate in a way that promotes flourishing between ourselves and within our wider relational network?* We found ourselves relating to the contention that “quality action research is concerned with human (and more-than-human) ‘flourishing’” (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 4, as quoted in Seeley, 2011, p. 84) and Seeley's (2014) insistence that “we need to expand our consciousness in order to address the issues of our time, broadening the very idea of mind in order to address the problems that our societal norms impose on us and the more-than-human world” (p. 329).

Our specific practice of creating with sonic materials, led us to a spiritual collaborative inquiry (Heron, 2006; Heron & Sohmer, 2019) resonating with Peter Reason's (2023) more recent collaborative work on pan-psychic action research and extending collaborative inquiry beyond strictly human realms. Whole person theory and collaborative inquiry, as a holistic action research method and process of unfolding holistic experiential learning, hold the immanent potential to cultivate more relational ways of being, knowing, and doing. They are social ritual technologies (Perry, 2022), "techniques of relation" (Massumi, 2016, p. 78), we can use to help us sustain ethical awareness of the complex ways our experiencing always already entangles with a whole resounding more than human universe.

CHAPTER 8

A POETIC SYNTHESIS

What follows is a poem synthesizing the process of undergoing our experiencing of creative practices playing with sound and the complex textures and processes of making with sound these produced. This artful presentation intends to show how following feeling surfaced polarities and tensions and movements across territories of experience (Wilber, 1997) and zones of posthuman subjectivity (Braidotti, 2019b), reaching toward deeper understanding. The following synthesis poem is a creative act intended not to obscure but to communicate in a different way, potentially productive of new possibilities.

Readers will no doubt notice that this poetic synthesis departs from conventional ways of presenting synthesized findings of social science research in placing expressive knowing front and center. This intentional move honors our CI's theoretical foundation in Heron's (1992) concept of feeling and Gendlin's (2007, 2018) felt sense. The reversal this creates places the conceptual knowing typically privileged by academic discourse in smaller text below while the presentation of aesthetic knowing and poetical thinking with theory assumes the more prominent place above. A footnote accompanying the opening line of each stanza composed with a theoretical text attempts to directly tie each theoretical distillation to our other CI data materials and analytical constellation.

In hopes of producing an aesthetic experience of our synthesis for ourselves and others, we choose to communicate in a poetic form while including citational information and prose exposition and analysis in our footnotes. We hope this creates a sense of wonder, as it does for

us, and urges readers downward in search of more. At the very least, we hope to create an echo of our zigzagging experience playing, listening, and listening back, following feelings and their recalibrations in feedback loops, including those of our own creation—the sensations permeating our CI from beginning to the last spiral of analysis.

As Richardson (2000a) wrote almost a quarter century ago, “How we are expected to write affects what we can write about. The referencing system in social science, for example, discourages the use of footnotes, a place for secondary arguments, novel conjectures, and related ideas” (p. 7). Our reversal of the conventional uses of footnotes in academic texts, then, pushes back against conventional social science writing, refusing a singular linear path in favor of more relational webs. We break from APA format to make relational ways of knowing more possible.⁴⁶

In terms of formatting, we use spacing and italics to set off the poetic renderings of participant-produced data on the right from the theoretical found poetry left non-italicized on the left. We also follow Thomas (2021) in using footnotes to cite theoretical materials and resonant extant literature to enhance readers’ aesthetic experience. For clarity’s sake, each of the stanzas in the synthesis poem that features text from an “outside” source draws on a single text. Furthermore, echoing the found research poetry in previous interludes, in attempting to stick closely to the words of the authors of these texts, we only stripped away words to arrive at a core meaning for each text excerpt. We did not add our own words to these stanzas.

⁴⁶ The seventh edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2020) followed by my department and many education journals for manuscript formatting, continues to limit the potential use of footnotes as tools for pursuing alternate or speculative paths. The manual states that while content footnotes should “supplement or enhance substantive information in the text; they should not include complicated, irrelevant or nonessential information” (p. 40). While we believe our footnote contents to be both essential and relevant, we used many of them to explore complexities and find footnotes ideal for such purposes.

All these choices intend to invite readers to engage in nomadic readings and, therefore, create multiple different experiences based on the reader's own sense of wonder and purpose. We hope a superscripted numeral accompanying an affective line or a moving stanza might arouse readers' curiosities, leading them to desire to know more and wander to the rationally oriented sensemaking prose below. Such movement echoes the back and forth between the multiple ways of knowing co-researchers experienced in unfolding the inquiry and the zigzagging "lightning bolt spark of creation" (Mazzei and McCoy (2010) as cited in Jackson and Mazzei (2012). In this way, we attempt to "challenge the rigid boundaries of what counts as academic writing through the construction of a multilayered text ... intentionally expand[ing] the process of composition to welcome the unknown, while also inviting readers to actively engage meaning making" (Sterner & Fisher, 2020, p. 66). We also intended to leave room for the possibility readers might glean sufficient understanding from the poetic synthesis and be empowered to bypass the prosaic interpretations we offer, if they so choose.

Before you begin, you should know this is an experiment. That means it may not work. It may fail to hit you where it counts. In other words, you may not be moved. All this said, we invite you to forge ahead fearlessly, willing to play with this poetic synthesis of our inquiry. Be willing to sit and spend some time, even within a tiny arc. Let's begin to follow the felt senses of our sonic play, diving into the depths to see what we can learn about how the feeling of doing so enables and informs the next creative move:

feeling is a change process⁴⁷
not a noun

⁴⁷ Gendlin (2018, p. 90). Our CI began with a hypothesis, informed by years of experience as sonic creators, that feeling played a pivotal role in transforming our musical practices and processes over time, helping us learn to be more affective creative communicators. Anyone pursuing a creative art over time faces the question of how to extend one's expressive practices to avoid stagnation. Our shared experience was of continuous readjusting to our constantly changing feelings and responding to what they revealed about changing conditions.

a verb

a sequence

a sound

constantly shaping
there's so much potential to play
what you like
what you choose
what you crave to hear and like to play

we can't do this the same way
how do you leave room for emergent possibilities?

went back to our very first thing
got immersed in sound
in states of unknowing
introducing new sounds
becoming new instruments

it's always a little bit scary
when we feel it's time for a pattern to change
trust when we feel it's time to change
trust you'll know where to go next
no matter what, we can change it
change one little thing, it changes the whole

the drift away⁴⁸

from participatory feeling
 is not inevitable

the field of togetherness
 can be sustained—

whatever the two people are doing
 standing
 holding hands

⁴⁸ Heron (1992, p. 33-34). Our sustained musical collaboration relates directly to the participatory feeling we have always found in playing with sounds together. Returning repeatedly, across the years, to collaborative sonic practices is one way we have sought to continuously stay connected in a “field of togetherness” which we do experience as a mutual and intense practice of attuning to present moments. As Heron expresses here, we find these moments of attunement through participatory feeling to be fragile and fleeting, in need of constant attention, particularly in a culture which privileges speed, individualism, and constant attainment over slow attunement. We experience this attuning through feeling because this process enables making things *we could never make on our own* and opens potential *new way(s) of playing together*.

gazing into each other's eyes

they enter the domain of feeling
 the feeling of togetherness
 mutual
 intense
 present
 and gently ineffable

*i believe in people coming together to vibrate
 coming together
 to make this thing we could never make on our own
 everyone is in music
 everybody's also listening and in harmony
 it's such a different social vision
 we're finding a new way of playing together*

this invisible world requires slowing down⁴⁹
 softening toward
 the sensations
 experience reveals

*slowing down
 playing in this unconventional way might be a way
 to slow things down, keep quiet
 stay with the nuanced stuff
 listening, playing, responding*

Mere activity does not constitute experience.⁵⁰
 change—meaningless transition unless
 consciously connected with
 the return wave of consequences which flow from it

*i was already getting frustrated and bored
 i couldn't hear it was doing much
 listening back frees me from categorizing*

⁴⁹ Nicolaides (2022, p. 1). CI provided a methodological structure for our slowing down. While we have collaborated musically for many years, we had never pursued such a rigorous process of slowing down to explore the feelings and felt senses guiding our desires to change or pursue different creative actions within the context of our collaborations. We both saw this research project as an opportunity to refine our collaborative creative capacities and become better vessels, better antennas, better receivers, to enhance our receptivity of potential to become better at creating clearer, more affective sonic experiences for ourselves and others.

⁵⁰ Dewey (1916) as cited in Nicolaides (2022, p. 15). Thus, our CI took us beyond mere activity, allowing us to respond to the sense that continued doing, without any sort of extended intervening pause, would only result in too much replication of what we had already done, of doing in the same ways that no longer felt satisfying. Merely doing more would not change our practice or honor the feelings of our present experiencing of dissatisfaction.

*thinking in terms of good/bad
listening back
finding exactly what we wanted
not realizing we were doing it*

undergoing experience—the descent into⁵¹

become intertwined with
already-there potentials
gifts of mystery
waiting to be received
beneath experience

*don't be goal-oriented⁵²
just play
letting go
thinking smaller, going deeper
space-time diving
playing is action, important in itself*

the esthetic undergoing phase of experience⁵³

receptive surrender
yielding of the self
through controlled activity

*i'm increasingly anxious
am I playing the right thing?
i was able to rise above those feelings
i should be letting go of all that
loose myself from thinking about notes*

⁵¹ Nicolaidis (2022, p. 4). Descent into experience requires openness. You don't get there by planning it all out and staying safe within already-known realms. When you descend, you accept the risk, the very real chance you might get lost.

⁵² Our inquiry surfaced how vital was the action of playing, immersing oneself in creative play, without a goal. As we analyzed our materials, we discussed how we have always made our best music together by spending long periods of time just playing around without goals, allowing surprising combinations and integrations to emerge, and trusting that by following our individual and collective intuitions, our sensed movements of wider felt sense and aesthetic knowing forming, we would arrive at something "good." While, as we will explore, we attempt to move beyond hierarchical binaries, including good/bad, we did tend to use "good" to describe a feeling of creating something appropriately expressive of our experience and an affective experience in and of itself, capable, perhaps, then, of also affecting others, productive of other possibilities. This resonates with Dewey's (2005/1934) notion of aesthetic experiences and objects.

⁵³ Dewey (2005/1934, p. 55). The aesthetic undergoing phase of experience requires us to lose all the baggage of received musical knowledge and getting beyond our personal skills and seeming confident. For Michael this involved letting go of the need to put one's self and ego into it, for Shannon, getting beyond "good" and "bad" as related to conventional musical rules. What Dewey describes here as receptive surrender encapsulates exactly what we try to do in making affective sounds beyond our ego and need to be seen as the knowledgeable musician or composer. As our poetic data illustrates, playing becomes a sweet release from the prison of one's own self.

*this moment of the bells
 i did then go into more-than-human consciousness
 our becoming
 bells becoming overtaken possessed
 experimenting feeling
 shiftless–unsure*

*i try not to fight or impose something
 i just try to follow it and what it wants to do next*

in-scend⁵⁴
 the movement of inquiry
 follows the sensations of experience–
 to undergo it
 a practice of inquiry
 into the ontology of experience
 ambiguity
 entanglement with past, present, and future
 that does not try to resolve

playing with sounds, we experience in-scending

*we have to trust our instincts
 we have to trust the audience to grasp and receive
 we have to trust the process and the objects, themselves
 the inner world they contain is real and accessible to us*

the world–⁵⁵
 a complex set of environmental, social, and affective ecologies

moments and places⁵⁶
 charged with accumulations
 long gathered energy

⁵⁴ Nicolaidis (2022, p. 9). This is “a word of [Nicolaidis’] own making.” Enacting CI and playing with sounds were our specific ways of in-scending, of descending in the depths. Our insistence on creating our soundscapes from the ground up, live, ensures we are unable to simply “go through the motions.” Innovation and new directions are always emerging in the moment, fantastic and dangerous. Playing live, an element of danger always has to be there. The audience must share this difficult and fragile experience with us. We and the audience must feel the risk; there is a necessity of undergoing experience.

⁵⁵ Braidotti (2019b, p. 45). Playing allowed us to feel out the invisible world around us from the inside out.

⁵⁶ Dewey (2005/1934, p. 24). The specific Ciat Lonbarde instruments we use store currents. Currents are being stored and being built up and released at different times. When patching synthesizers, we are playing with flows that model the dynamics of environmental, social, and affective ecological systems.

sound is a diffractive agent⁵⁷

listeners hear
 morphological resemblances to other sounds
 analogies to other practices in their culture

learning begins with being, not doing, not action⁵⁸

*when i don't do it*⁵⁹
i get really depressed
when i do it i feel grounded and happy

perception is not the combination of five separate senses⁶⁰

feelings and perception make up one sequence
 feedback—the moving and
 the sensing
 and feeling of moving
 linear time violated
 continuity—the functioning of each in the last and the next

the open cycle
 carries the body *forward* and

⁵⁷ Wargo (2020, p. 444). Sometimes the synth sounds like a bird, sometimes it sounds like an air conditioning unit. Sometimes the sounds produced from playing with prepared instruments sound like techno or dance music or some kinds of ritual music. Sound is ambiguous and when performing abstract music, everyone is having a different experience of the sonic landscape being created.

⁵⁸ Nicolaidis (2022, p. 131). Modeling social dynamics. We're embodying to observe them. We're not doing anything much, if anything, we're simply allowing something to be. Using voltages and currents to create webs of influence and chaotic interrelationships that are too complex for us to understand but that model observable dynamics in nature and society. We're creating a situation where they can be, and then observing that. We're being with, we're listening, we're being influenced by all we feel and thinking about how we can respond and have an exchange with this more than human model of ecosocial reality. Maybe we made a frog swamp out of our synth patch, maybe we've made birds chirping. With our actions we're thinking, asking, grasping: How can we respond to the rhythms of nature, influenced by harmonies and rhythms around us rather than create from our egoic selves. Peter Blasser's instruments (Blasser, n.d.; Ciat-Lonbarde, n.d.) excel at modeling webs of interrelationships and interdependencies and tangled webs of influence.

⁵⁹ Music is how we cope with the distressing aspects of life, including chronic illness, our form of stimming. We would rather do this than anything. We have both struggled with depression and anxiety throughout our lives and these experiences intra-act with and affect almost all other parts of our lives, including throughout this CI. Arts-based research methods have evolved in parallel with arts-based therapy (Leavy, 2017) and the long tradition of using arts and music for therapeutic, healing purposes (Eggermont, 2020; Goldman, 1988; Rappaport, 2013).

⁶⁰ Gendlin (2018, p. 93-94). Everything gets filtered through your feelings. Feeling of moving through space and time in gathering elements from past experience, desire for future experience. Containing a directionality and intensity of flowing experience, of carrying forward by filtering through many layers of feedback and feed forward (what we want in the future) simultaneously. The perceptive act of attuning to movement of felt sense/feeling is a practice of listening to this complex concert of movement beneath the bare surface of our experiences. This listening is difficult, entailing constant struggle. We listen deeply to the phenomenon and behaviors of chaotic synth patches for the same reason we listen deeply to environment—to become more open and influenced by the rhythms and harmonies in the worlds around us rather than only creating from our selves.

feeds *back* to the body what it was

perception is an act
the going out of energy in order to receive

*listening is hard
you just always have to struggle
you're always in danger of lapsing
always in danger of your thoughts*

generative knowing⁶¹
humble, vulnerable
an open state of relatedness
receives sensations
not shying away is a radical act of learning
generative

in deeply unconscious states the body⁶²
through feeling
interacts with all beings
some kind of psycho physical feeling

Whitehead tries with prehension
all material events take account of each other
prehend each other's emotional tone

the body a set of material events
interacting with all others
the person sits on
a great subconscious prehension of everything

there are many dimensions inside

⁶¹ Nicolaidis (2022, p. 131). We experienced generative knowing resonant with how other scholars describe aesthetic knowing. "Through aesthetics, new ways of being able to talk to others emerge" (Siegesmund, 2013, p. 149). Siegesmund reminds us that Spivak's philosophy frames aesthetics "as a discipline of *ab-use*," a disruption of the rational and pragmatic logics of useful knowing whose use lies in deploying imagination as "a deconstruction of use: a deconstruction of givens" (p. 148). Dewey (2005/1934) believed aesthetic experience held the potential to reorient personal desires, changing knowing through an opening of perception.

⁶² Heron (1992, p. 32). Through playing with sounds, we arrive at insights that help us better understand space and texture and how to communicate within groups of people, including when to step back and try to listen more holistically. Playing with sounds helps us listen to nature and also interrogate the supposed boundaries between nature and culture, the human and the more-than human. We're plugging into an electrical grid, but we are creating a culture that is a part of nature and following the rules of nature. Listening to the synth patch influences how we listen to nature and vice versa. Experiences listening more closely to our natural environs, help us look beyond melody or harmony, for different interactions and patterns. Listening to the vast sounding world in this way encourages us to be more open and receptive to what the synth will do as we interact with it. Interact with it. We let it influence us, then we seek to influence it, responding to the natural flows and processes we feel and hear going on.

harnessing dimensions of color and texture

to connect inside and outside

recognition is perception arrested⁶³

the beginning of perception

we fall back, as upon a stereotype, some previously formed scheme

encountering the unknown takes practice⁶⁴

intentional paying of attention

intentionally encountering the experience of the unknown

ruptures knowing

you learn the instrument

you unpatch

you repatch

you have to learn a different instrument now

perception is an act of reconstructive doing⁶⁵

consciousness becomes fresh, alive

playing

sitting with

giving room to breathe

create an environment

leaving space

not building linear

to be with⁶⁶

the rhythmic realities of being with sound

during a performance

simply walking down the street

becoming-in-resonance-with

⁶³ Dewey (2005/1934, p. 54). Listening goes deeper than recognizing patterns that you can manhandle into a human-centered vision. We're trying to go beyond recognition. We're trying to perceive more than we know or are capable of knowing—opening our perceptions wider, letting in more of the outside world.

⁶⁴ Nicolaides (2022, p. 8). We came to realize that our sonic collaboration and sound experiments were ways of iteratively encountering the unknown and creating further conditions for doing so.

⁶⁵ Dewey (2005/1934, p. 55). Perceiving is a form of playing and sitting with. Spending time enough to give objects room to breathe and, thereby, come alive so they appear as fresh, enlivened in one's consciousness.

⁶⁶ Wargo (2020, p. 442). When a sound "feels good," a movement of sympathetic vibration, or resonating, becoming-in-resonance-with touches, moves, connects two or more bodies. More than metaphor, resonance here becomes an accessible physical experience we are able to replicate, experiment with, and, thus, test through intentional action and experiencing. Listening is an act of seeking resonance, becoming-in-resonance-with.

*making inner and outside meet
sounds make come alive an inner landscape*

experience is heightened vitality⁶⁷
at its height
complete interpenetration of self and world–

the fulfillment of an organism
art in germ

similar to Heron’s ontology–subjective-objective⁶⁸
interpenetration of person and cosmos
complexity that cannot be resolved

*the feedback between us creates
this cybernetic assemblage
we’re just kind of following.*

the distinctiveness of personal being⁶⁹
orchestrated within a wider unity of being
the more it resonates with this extended field
the more its uniqueness is enhanced
like a color whose tonal quality is amplified
within the whole composition of the painting
Within the One there are Many

*i like when things kick back
i like to play things that sound off*

⁶⁷ Dewey (2005/1934, p. 18-19). The feeling of playing is, for us, one of “heightened vitality” and perceiving all we experience as “going on” beneath the easily observable and explainable aspects of what constitutes an experience, including, as aforementioned, the movement of past experience and desires for future experience attaching to present moments and conditions.

⁶⁸ Nicolaidis (2022, p. 18). This movement of feeling characterizing vital being also encompasses the capacity for experiencing intimate connection with the entire becoming of the cosmos, for sensing one’s personal unique individuated connection to a vast and largely unknowable cosmos of differentiated manifestation and being, inclusive of visible and invisible worlds. This felt sense of becoming in cosmic connection emerging through playing and listening are what makes our inquiry also a spiritual inquiry.

⁶⁹ Heron (1992, p. 68). “I regard spiritual inquiry as a process of co-creative communion with the divine, involving human mediation of the immediacy of divine presence. By divine, as we have seen, I mean that astonishing presence that transcends, includes and is immanent within, all manifest realms, both subtle and material.” (Heron, 2006, p. 11). Spiritual inquiries, ultimately, involve perceiving the entangled subjective-objective reality characterizing one world wherein many differences enhance the quality of a unity as well as the distinctiveness of personal being (Heron, 1992). We felt such descriptions resonated deeply with what we attempted to create musically, especially in improvising with others. In the context of our musical practice, we enjoyed the dynamic of “going against the grain,” or differentiating from the one, deviating from the expected or predictable, grabbing attention by introducing dissonance, adding a tense element in order to enhance the whole.

or that go against the grain

ugly under other conditions⁷⁰
 extracted from the conditions under which it was repulsive
 transfigured in quality
 becomes a part of an expressive whole
 the contrast adds piquancy, animation
 increases depth

*i made all the horrible sounds before
 i could make it sound sweet
 you meditate on bad sounds
 as a listener and creator*

*a million examples of
 music not supposed to be beautiful but
 how you define consonance and dissonance
 it also depends on context*

sonic knowledge stands in excess of⁷¹
 unintelligible to conventional language
 able to hold the inexhaustibility and inclusivity of sound

bodily knowing a feel for a situation or problem⁷²

bodily felt, more-than-conceptual knowing is very precise⁷³
 [William] James showed in 1890
 very precise

⁷⁰ Dewey (2005/1934, p. 100). We often found recontextualizing a horrible or ugly sound, incorporating it into a new musical context, a way to reach the heightened vitality of experiencing for ourselves and open up greater potential for such experiencing to our listeners. Remixing, recombining, potentially changing perceptions of what constitutes consonance and dissonance by playing with the context.

⁷¹ Voegelin & Wright (2022, p. 36). The movement of feeling we resonate with here relates to our feeling of sound's expansiveness and flexible ability to help us make ever wider connections through our willingness to listen to and sit with sounds. We often wondered at how combinations of objects produced the sounds they did and why they felt a certain way. Often, we did not know how to describe these sometimes intense feelings.

⁷² Sometimes the qualities of a situation we seek to assess are not there, or they belong to the invisible world beneath experience (Nicolaidis, 2022). They belong to the virtual aspect of objects and events, and include their past histories and memories, what they were, as well as their desires and hopes and fears, or where they aim to go, what they are on the way to or in the process of becoming. So much more exists in any given situation or attached to any particular thing or object than meets the eye or can even ever be fully explained. We need creative methods such as this poetic presentation of a sonopoetic analysis of a sonic inquiry.

⁷³ Gendlin (2018, p. xii). Our feelings, or felt senses, are the sensations beyond the five senses of our perception of our embodied perception of moving across vast territories of experience and navigating the polarities found therein. As Gendlin (2018) tells us, felt sense is precise in the account it gives of our present moment experiencing, including information related to directionality and intensity of experiential flows. These movements reach toward both images and words, clues as to the outlines of a whole situation and what these movements are attached to in the present moment (as also connected to past memories, experiences, and learnings as well as future desires and hopes).

though it doesn't have a single pattern

What is sensible makes sense through resonance⁷⁴
 affects and thoughts resonate
 within and between systems

Resonance is
 produced by oscillations of vibration
 something in and out of phase with itself and
 its surrounding nested layers of ecology

everything resonates with itself and other things
 in ways that are not predictive
 usually patterned

kitty likes rocks, scraping, tinkling water
the microfreak loves the tickle of birds, leaves
i love screwdriver
i love this thing for that

An experience has a unity⁷⁵
that meal, *that* storm
 that ruptured friendship
 a single *quality* pervades
 in spite of variation of constituent parts.

what do we want to do?
we want to communicate
we want listeners to feel inspired

in the normal course of events⁷⁶
 a phasic movement between
 times of togetherness and separate activity
 times of shared talk and action
 occasions which oscillate in and out
 of participatory and individuated states

i've been in my own cycle
not clashing with you is a challenge sometimes

⁷⁴ Gershon (2015, p. 463-464). A recurring question in our inquiry: *What in me is vibrating with this?*

⁷⁵ Dewey (2005/1934, p. 38). This feeling of experiencing as also a unity drives the desire to express an experience as well as the belief that an experiencing may be expressed in an affective expressive form.

⁷⁶ Heron (1992, p. 31). We experienced in specific moments and throughout our inquiry, periods of being and becoming together and apart. Another question appears: *How does any expression of our experience account for these phasic movements between participatory communion and individuated personal aesthetic desires?*

The quality of any experience has two aspects⁷⁷
 an immediate aspect of agreeableness or disagreeableness, and
 its influence upon later experience

*knowing feeling good doesn't always happen in the moment
 being in that discomfort
 we record it—
 listening back
 finding exactly what we wanted
 not realizing we were doing it.*

sometimes these polar states elegantly integrated⁷⁸
 luminous conversation
 engagement through music, art, and ritual
 provide some of those moments
 deep integration
 relating

*i just love prepared stuff
 able to express more
 to connect inside and out*

i also feel a coldness and isolation in this space

*prepared guitar just sounds
 it's hard to make it
 i want a challenge
 i'm doing it*

resonance⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Dewey (2005/1934, p. 27). In pursuing our creative sonic practice, we felt engaged in a second-order cybernetic process (von Foerster, 2003) of listening back, hearing our work, and using feeling as a guide for making decisions about what we like and do not like in what we're hearing. We tried to stay cognizant that how we receive also changed from day-to-day depending on what we had been exposed to and how we had changed in the intervening time. Feeling became a filter in guiding a refining process, and the qualities of space and time become collaborators in our experiencing. The repetition of a recorded performance at a different time, and often in a different space, produced different perception, different possibilities for receiving the same performance out of our control (Deleuze, 1968/1994).

⁷⁸ Heron (1992, p. 34). In our shared experience, we perceived the one-ness of creation in terms of multiplicities of overlapping polarities, "mak[ing] it relatively accessible as the di-unity of immediate perceptual experience" (Heron, 1998, p. 24). What we loved when we listened back often related to achieving an integration of polarities we did not realize we were feeling in the moment. For example, achieving a balance between letting go to follow a cybernetically patterned flow out of our control and being *very judicious about choosing, shaping with extreme prejudice*.

⁷⁹ (Gershon, 2015, p. 463-464). The transversal movement across polarities and supposedly clear cut categories (e.g., material-discursive, past-present-future) creates feelings of resonance.

a particular kind of internal relations and
the relationship between internal and external relations

*fusing inner and outer horizons
field recordings make the music breathe
situates in physical place
making inner and outside meet*

posthuman subjects establish relations on at least three levels⁸⁰

- to one's self
- to others
- to the world

it's really important in my body

*i'd hear harmonic elements in what you played
it helped me play differently*

you like the way the air sounds?

music is a way of connecting with the essence of everything

being (a felt experience of experience) and⁸¹

the environment (forces of experience
human and non-human,
all matter)

interact

in unanticipated ways
to bring forth learning.

*came as a surprise to me when atonal plunkings felt so captivating
i didn't want to stop*

⁸⁰ Braidotti (2019b, p. 45). Posthuman subjectivity involves the capacity to integrate these territories of experience, to move nomadically across these zones of experience in our being, knowing, and doing. For us, playing with sound cultivated our own posthuman subjectivities as we became aware of how our felt senses related to movements of our conscious attention across these forms of subjective relation alongside our internal movements to integrate these. Posthuman subjectivity takes seriously the body's capacity for sensing, through a filtering of what is important to its health and sustenance while also remaining perceptually open and, therefore, aware of the potential for changing one's doing.

⁸¹ Nicolaidis (2022, p. 14). Our feelings about performance and musical events, including recorded practices, also change depending on the space we are in during playback/re-amp. This opens a feedback loop between our present and past listening selves as well as between the actual spaces and times in which the (re)cordings are occurring. Recursively feeding results through more processing increases the agency of the listener. We enjoy this approach because the results tend to have more "space" as subsequent iterations chip away more sonic material and add more air and distance. This is especially important since many of our objects require piezo amplification in order to improvise on speakers without too much audio feedback.

*i delighted
i wasn't thinking about notes*

*we're both surprised
playing in this way*

Awaring–freedom to activate potential creatively⁸²

inspires action
ways of being and becoming
the seeing in the dark
naming and freeing potential
giving potential the power
to become a force for action

*finding the words for
finding what feels good*

*how does this change how you listen in the world?
how does this change what you notice in the world?*

what counts is what we *do*⁸³
not what we receive
starting, traveling, returning to a starting point
holding on to the past
 carrying it along
the movement of attention
 backwards and forwards

*If we listen back
spots we really like*

⁸² Nicolaides (2022, p. 9). In awaring, “the culmination of a generative knowing, ... potential is activated in a multiplicity of ways that give flight to response-able actions” (p. 9). Our whole CI process—the multiple experiments we decided to undertake as actions as well as the multiple methods we improvised and enacted to analyze our data—are all technologies of awaring, bringing the generative knowing of our in-scending into conscious articulation in order to share the fruits of our inquiry. We experienced our CI as a process of naming, and likened this to what Heron (1992) called developing a “post-linguistic consciousness” (p. 172). Our sonopoetic analysis methods became tools for awaring through naming and using words to free potential and the virtual becoming of reality rather than reify concepts and fix reality into stable actualized forms. In other words, we intentionally use words to break the habitual ways of recognizing and interacting with the world, to awaken perception.

⁸³ Dewey (2005/1934, p. 106). We have been conscious throughout, especially as they were experienced as pain points, that what we did differently was attempt to more fully document our ever-widening conceptions of what counted as collaborative musical actions, to intentionally go back and listen together, to diffract our experiencing through listening and the sharing of our feelings and thoughts in the moment of listening-playing as well as in the moments of listening back. This increased backward and forward movement activated a stronger sense of how and what we were bringing in and breaking away from past experiences and what this meant in terms of forward desirings, future directions, and, ultimately, next experimental action. These often ended up being what gave us greater degrees of freedom in terms of moving back and forth in bridging felt polarities and their inherent tensions.

*going back
picking out*

*i went back to playing the more percussive
you can pull things out and go back to regular
i'm back around to feeling pretty good*

art unites the relation of doing and undergoing⁸⁴
outgoing and incoming energy
that makes an experience
elimination of all that does not contribute
to mutual organization
action and reception into one another
selection of just the aspects that contribute to their interpenetration
a work of esthetic art.”

*moving back and forth between prepared and conventional
integrating
we do want to communicate and feel connected
abandoning all structure
can be punishing to an audience*

if the present is a complex process⁸⁵
critical thought cannot stop at critique
needs to move
to the creative actualization of the virtual

we want it to be good

⁸⁴ Dewey (2018/1934, p. 50). Drawing on Richard Shusterman’s (1992) analysis of Dewey, Barrett (2007) asserted that “the key term for understanding the relationship between experience, practice, and knowledge is ‘aesthetic experience’” (p. 115). Situating creative practice in such a way reinserts aesthetics back into the realm of everyday life, seeking to heal a rupture between art and science and the relegation of aesthetics to realms of “high” or “fine” art, commercial gallery spaces, and the experience of art to one of contemplation rather than deep and vital integration in daily life. This Enlightenment configuration of reality resulted in obscuring “the work that art does in transforming experience and extending knowledge” (p. 116). Barrett noted that John Dewey’s *Art as Experience* “brought science and art closer together by suggesting that in the flow of experience ideas are encountered in much the same way as we experience material objects” (p. 117).

⁸⁵ Braidotti (2019b, p. 63). Our responding in present moments must account for, mustprehend, other beings–human and more than human–in other times, past and future, and spaces, recognizing the one-and-many reality of the world (Heron, 1992). Braidotti (2013) explained that the creative act “constantly reconnects to the virtual totality of a block of past experiences, memories and affects, which, in a monistic philosophy, get recomposed as action or praxis in the present. ... making concrete or actual the virtual intensity” (p. 166). Any work of art, or aesthetic awaring, aspiring to enact and cultivate posthuman subjectivity would attempt to account for and integrate these present-absent aspects of experiencing, vital components and collaborators existing in the invisible world beneath the experience of experience. Braidotti (2017) calls this affective world the “*zoe/geo/techno-poetic dimension*–embodied in literary, artistic, and cultural practices [which] cannot be separated from broader geopolitical and theoretical considerations” (p. 11).

*feel wild and free
embodying a line of flight
becoming a rhizome
present and fully responsive
don't want to capitulate to people's desires*

artists work a vague idea and emotion over⁸⁶

bringing to birth
a long period of gestation
emotion and idea transformed
through acting
being acted upon by objective material

as material becomes
a medium of expression

*sitting with
i have to sit with it and play for hours
becoming chicken, becoming bells*

we act, then undergo the consequences⁸⁷
we do something to the thing
then it does something to us in return
unfolding
different possibilities revealed

*thinking like a bird
came after the movements*

creativity cuts across and intersects all living matter⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Dewey (2005/1934, p. 79). Working over an initially vague idea emerging from invisible worlds of affect is not easy. Even now, we struggle to pull together, to integrate the seemingly infinite complex threads that feed into our own sonic CI. In working these vague ideas, transforming feelings into aesthetic material forms, we have found it necessary to play with a multiplicity of forms and ways of doing.

⁸⁷ Nicolaides (2022, p. 16). Our CI's spirals of action-reflective diffraction and further spirals of diffractive analysis across multiple aesthetic forms have all involved feedback loops of acting and "undergo[ing] the consequences" of the generative knowing our experiments produced. We allowed ourselves to receive the elation and frustrations, the smooth and striated spaces (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) of our inquiry, listening to the felt senses imparted by our bodies during our doing. Through to the last spiral of analysis, this feelingful way of moving through our CI did do something to us, revealing different possibilities for further collaborative doing.

⁸⁸ Braidotti (2019b, p. 66). We expanded our perceptions of who counted as collaborator, the agency and vibrant "aliveness" of the "objects" we collaborated with to create the sonic landscapes we wanted to hear, and how we could use space and time as additional collaborators, integrating feelingful elements of experiencing the invisible world. Through our inquiry's spiral, our felt senses surfaced "an interconnected network of patterns. Suddenly a fresh universe of thought and feeling is born... pathways become a portal into Indra's net: the jeweled lattice of interrelations that encompasses the cosmos but is reflected from myriad points of perception" (Nachmanovitch, 2019, p. 131). From neural nets that "provide a highly organized, but dynamic substrate for the brain to adapt" to

each organism, a single variation
 creativity – the faculty of the imagination –
 the key
 the transversal force

*really listening and
 hearing a room
 trying to respond
 plugging into global network
 environmental sounds
 iterative improvisation
 going to the lake
 just walking around*

the expressiveness of art⁸⁹

a thorough and complete interpenetration
 of the materials of undergoing
 and of action—a reorganization of matter
 from past experience

Reterritorialization—stabilizing the movement⁹⁰
 linking desire to different objects
 or meaning to the new objects

*playing the tensions
 communicating visions
 escaping expectations and tired manifestations*

new or disequilibrating experiences (Sanchez et al., 2023) to the organization of materials on the global Internet, to the complex, non-grid-like development of city blocks (Efland, 1995), lattices exist as familiar and ubiquitous organic formations for distributing complexity. Conceiving of our inquiry’s movement as spirals within a lattice felt right. Specific performances, artifacts produced, and even ways of doing became knots in the lattice—an intersection where many threads entangled, intra-acted, pushed and pulled, providing tension and intensity, and enabling more nomadic awarings (Nicolaidis, 2022) of our movements through the latticed world, beyond human-made figured worlds (Holland, 2001; Perry, 2011), inclusive of wider swaths of the more than human continuum (Guyotte et al., 2023). These become knots commemorating new nomadic figurations.

⁸⁹ Dewey (2005/1934, p. 107). We attempted to build these reorganizations of perceptions into our evolving processes of doing. For example, the insight about needing to incorporate field recordings into our music related to the desire and need we felt to infuse the music with air, to situate it in specific places, to invite in additional complexity and more than human potential. We hoped such reorganization of matter and experience might present a similar experience, for listeners, for integrating inner and outer worlds, leading to potentially new perception, insight, and possible action.

⁹⁰ Nicolaidis (2022, p. 19). We also arrived at the insight about using samplers as a way of “stabilizing the movement” of experiencing while retaining the playful improvisatory iterative experimentation that produced it and made it “good” to us. While Michael had played around with using samples in previous incarnations of musical collaboration, new ideas for ways to use these objects and their potentials in our music emerged during the final analysis spirals of our CI. We began to see our new, more satisfying ways of doing resulting in recordings, videos and performances that adequately expressed our evolving collaboration as stable “knots” in a vibrant lattice work, the constantly on-the-move “*zoe/geo/techno*” assemblage (Braidotti, 2019b; 2017).

Crickets became desirable⁹¹
 their stridulating calls
 deemed pleasant sonorous addition
 for dwelling and peripatetic acts

cicadas, crows, the katydids
chickadees, mourning doves,
*the red-tailed hawks, the frogs*⁹²

the full extent of technological impact on our daily lives⁹³
 our sense of subjectivity
 our imaginings

cultivating what increases capacity to relate
 to enter processes of becoming⁹⁴

resonance as a means for⁹⁵
 valuable for
 considering ideas
 affect and process

relevance tend to consensus perspective
 limiting closed systems

resonance accepts all ideas are possible
 provides a space for critique

⁹¹ Voegelin & Wright (2022, p. 29). These listenings were slowing downs that began as receiving and ended up reorienting our relationship to place and the ways we could imagine places manifesting in our music. The more we listened, the more ways we found for integrating this aspect of our physical context as a collaborative more-than context.

⁹² These animals with whom we share space as fellow inhabitants of our particular geographical location also mark the summerness of this moment. Their appearances before our eyes and in our fleshy ears and in the ears of our recording devices and the sound recordings they produce all figure into how “the presence of place became a co-inquirer” (Heron & Sohmer, 2019, p. 210) in a CI.

⁹³ Braidotti (2019b, p. 32). We find it amazing to use machines to synthesize sounds, model cybernetic systems, and enact ecologies of complex relations, to use technologies to liberate posthuman subjective potentials. These are ways to be in affective intra-action *with* rather than in completely receptive or action-oriented relation, collaborating with technologies to enact posthuman collaboration. We feel drawn to the affective potential of the analog and digital tools and instruments and ordinary objects we use to create our music and how they make possible our making music out of our control, subverting our conscious will and decentering the drive to assert human agency, intention, and rational control.

⁹⁴ Braidotti (2019b, p. 474). Art has the ability to help us do all this and promote an affirmative ethics Braidotti calls for. One of our mutual goals as collaborators has always been moving slowly and even more slowly. Machines can help us move even *more* slowly and leave even *more* space. The point isn’t the machines themselves, but what they can help us do and *not* do.

⁹⁵ Gershon (2015, p. 465). Sound gives us the ability to think with more than the dominant concepts like relevance. Resonance as material and felt reality, presents a concept with certain possibilities for enacting an affirmative ethics.

*it's important to you
it's really important to do
the most important thing
it's really important in my body
knowing playing as an action, important in itself*

the inexhaustibility and inclusivity of sound—
a currency of doing together⁹⁶
being-otherwise that leads to
 knowing-otherwise
 boundless community in its polyphonic potential

*coming to awareness
i feel really free and
this is fun*

subjectivity as an assemblage has consequences⁹⁷

decoupled from transcendental reason
unhinged from dialectics of recognition
the immanence of relations

the sonic—another avenue for wonder⁹⁸

questions of listening and hearing
concern sociocultural constructs
what sounds can mean

*not song songs
they should come out of our jams
it should feel organic
not like we're forcing songs on it
going back and listening and picking out
a bunch of songs and the rest jams*

⁹⁶ Voegelin & Wright (2022, p. 36). Our practice with sound over the years and extended in and through our CI allows us to play within uncertainties, to become more comfortable with encountering the unknown, for acting and experimenting without seeking to foreknow (Nicolaidis, 2022). Beyond the potential to produce pleasure, joy, and healing feelings in our bodies, playing with sounds are the ways which have chosen us. These sonic practices are ways which most move our particular bodies, for whatever reason, and allow us to become otherwise through a seeking to know otherwise through deep and deeper listening to the “boundless community” involved in our experiencing.

⁹⁷ Braidotti (2013, p. 80). Discovering ourselves as multiplicitous assemblages within and without, we grow our potentials for our empathic relation beyond the human as we perceive resonances and intensities of affective relations. We find ourselves in a middle, constituted by already-there feedback loops, past and future forces, experiences, selves. Massumi (2016) described the virtual presence of futures and how the “future has a kind of felt presence, an affective presence” that exhibits “a pulling of the present, already pregnant with pastness, out of itself, from within its own event” (p. 60).

⁹⁸ Gershon (2015, p. 461). *We want to communicate something about making*. With sound, we can explore the forces behind what we perceive as movements of feeling, our sense of felt shifts (Gendlin, 2007).

freely improvised stuff

unlike sight

omnidirection

requires attentive filtering

rather than reframing or

panning directionality

finding satisfaction in handiwork⁹⁹

caring for materials and tools

genuine affection

artistically engaged

that's why we're taking our time

that's the process

you have to let it breathe

you can't just impose songs

you have to jam freely

see what emerges

generative knowing¹⁰⁰

nomadic

fluid

in motion

across many territories of experience

rises from beneath

the invisible world

ways of being and becoming

that activate creative potential

encounters with the not-foreknown

⁹⁹ Dewey (2005/1934, p. 4). We continuously found new ways to make the music dynamic and accessible, to not venture into too cold or alien terrain. Prepared instruments provided new ideas at first, but then began to feel too distancing and same-y. Exclusively using synthesizers is the same way. We sought new ways of translating these alien approaches into recognizable configurations that can produce unique, pleasurable, sensual reactions reliably. Using samplers and DAWs will help us add further dynamism in integrating sounds from a variety of sources, filtering and affecting sampled sounds, and creatively recombining them in potentially infinite ways in real-time and recorded performances. We arrived at this new process through in-scending into the affective aspects of our experiencing playing with sound. The artifacts we have so far created from it and future performances we will create are awarings—our creative actualizations of virtual possibilities for creatively expressing and integrating the resonances, tensions, and multiplicities of our felt senses.

¹⁰⁰ Nicolaidis (2022, p. 2). Sound presents one way, our sure way of following feeling and felt sense in order to access generative knowing and swim in the many territories of experience in all their more than human complexities and entangled polarities. In the invisible world beneath the surface of experience, focusing on felt sense may lead to more integrated relational perception and, ultimately, to actions, to doings, however small, more informed by resonant feeling. Our CI's generative knowing led to integratively awaring the complex forces beneath our collaborative impasse and how they related to movements across territories of human experience and posthuman zones of subjectivity.

*once you grasp that—play—
you can start to make—
songs*

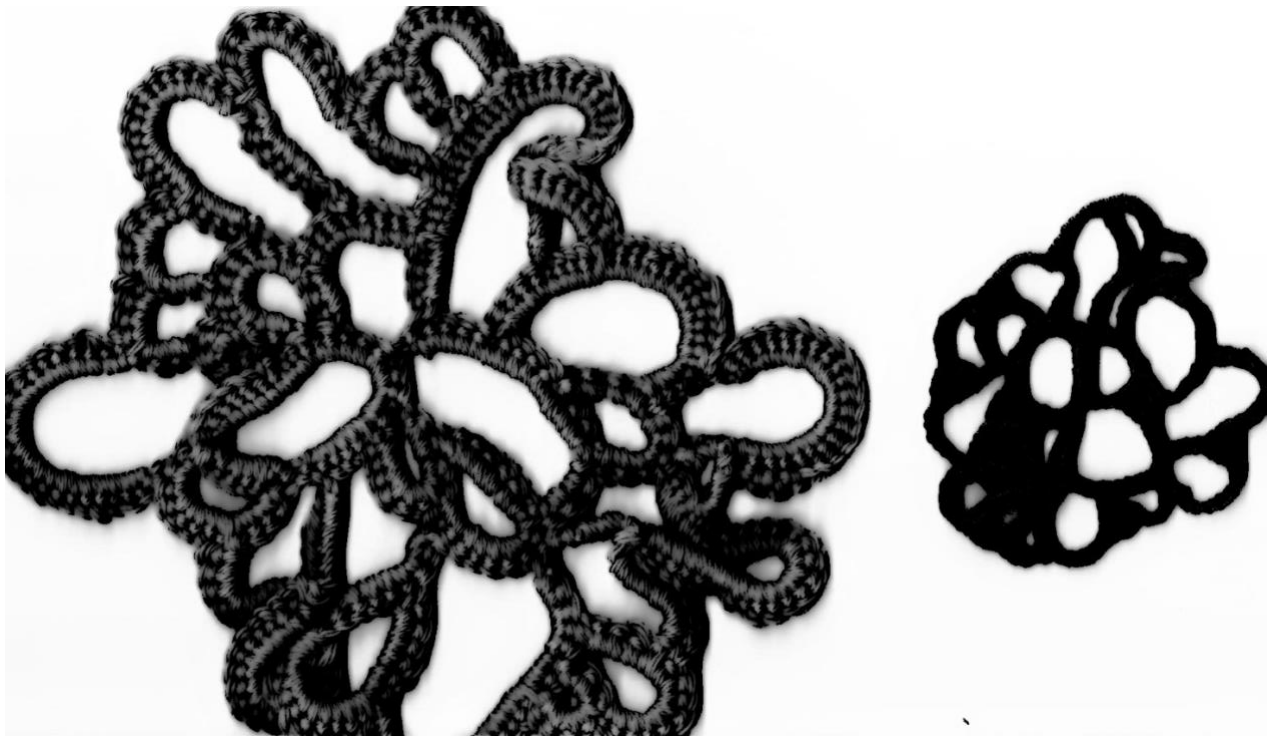
CHAPTER 9

INTERLUDE III: CREATING FEELINGFUL SOUND

Spinoza says deeper knowledge should shape norms¹⁰¹
humanity made contact with
the God and Nature *within* ourselves

Figure 8.1

Crochet Creation #2



spiritual knowing
the brain's third neural system¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Damasio (2003, p. 13)

¹⁰² Zohar & Marshall (2000, p. 7)

synchronous neural oscillations unify across the whole
 unifies, integrates
 has potential to transform—facilitate dialogue
 between reason and emotion
 between mind and body

spiritual knowing allows¹⁰³
 transforming a situation
 responding generatively
 beyond working *within* boundaries
 asking why
 working with the boundaries of my situation
 playing infinite games
 playing what you don't know

collaboration in a new key—another way¹⁰⁴
 not necessarily together
 but in the same space
 breathing in the same air
 shared desire
 to be a body
 distributed

becoming
 across variety of actors
 without faces, without ready helping hands
 but ready
 to intra-act, to say, to teach
 about this situation

particular configuration

matter intervenes
 technologies
 everyday objects
 have something to say
 sounds to make
 and sense to unmake

¹⁰³ Zohar & Marshall (2000, p. 5).

¹⁰⁴ Woods (2021)

come under the shade of this mango tree¹⁰⁵
 with deliberateness
 experience
 the fulfillment of solitude
 need for communion

while alone
 understand
 being *with*

alone proves that I understand the essentiality of to be *with*
 To be alone—a form of being *with*

music—difficult, nonreferential¹⁰⁶
 long shrouded in mystery, its effect
 on audience
 and
 on creative process

art takes creation's capacity to invent mutant¹⁰⁷
 coordinates to extremes
 engenders unprecedented, unforeseen
 unthinkable qualities of being

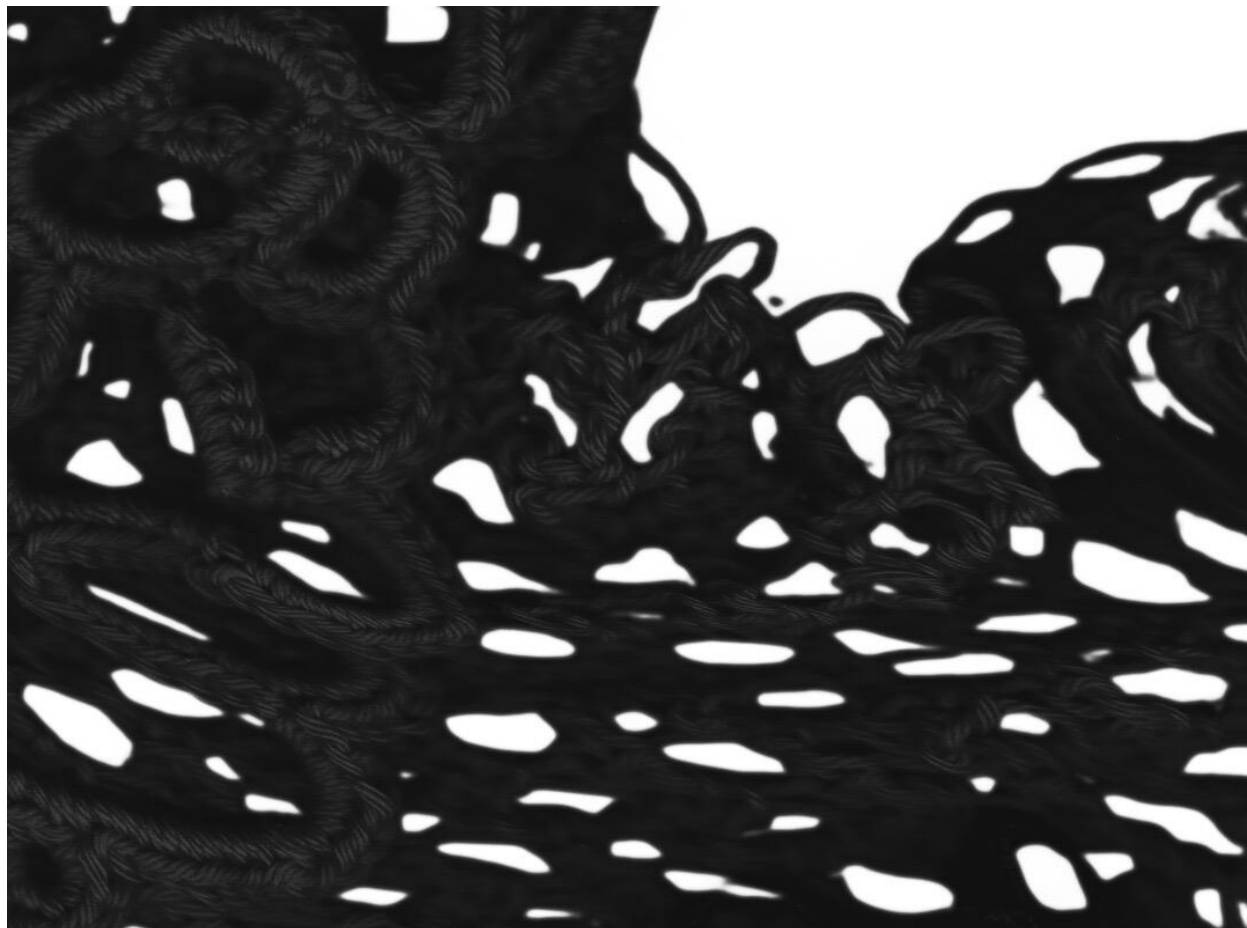
an important mutation can have “fallout”¹⁰⁸
 transversally contaminate many other domains
 the aesthetic power of feeling seems
 on the verge of privileged position
 within the collective Assemblages of annunciation
 polysemic, animistic, transindividual subjectivity
 in the worlds of infancy, madness, amorous passion, artistic creation

¹⁰⁵ Freire (1997, p. 29)

¹⁰⁶ Stévanec & Lacasse (2017, p. 5)

¹⁰⁷ Guattari (2006/1992, p. 106)

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., (p. 101)

Figure 8.2*Crochet Creation #3*

spir(itu)al inquiry¹⁰⁹

opening

cosmic consciousness

through intentional and aware

participatory cocreation

enlivenment

engagement

enlightenment

spontaneously express together

animating spirit–*life-force* within

movement, gesture, sound

¹⁰⁹ Heron & Sohmer (2019, p. 211)

pause—attend
shared *life-field*—presence between

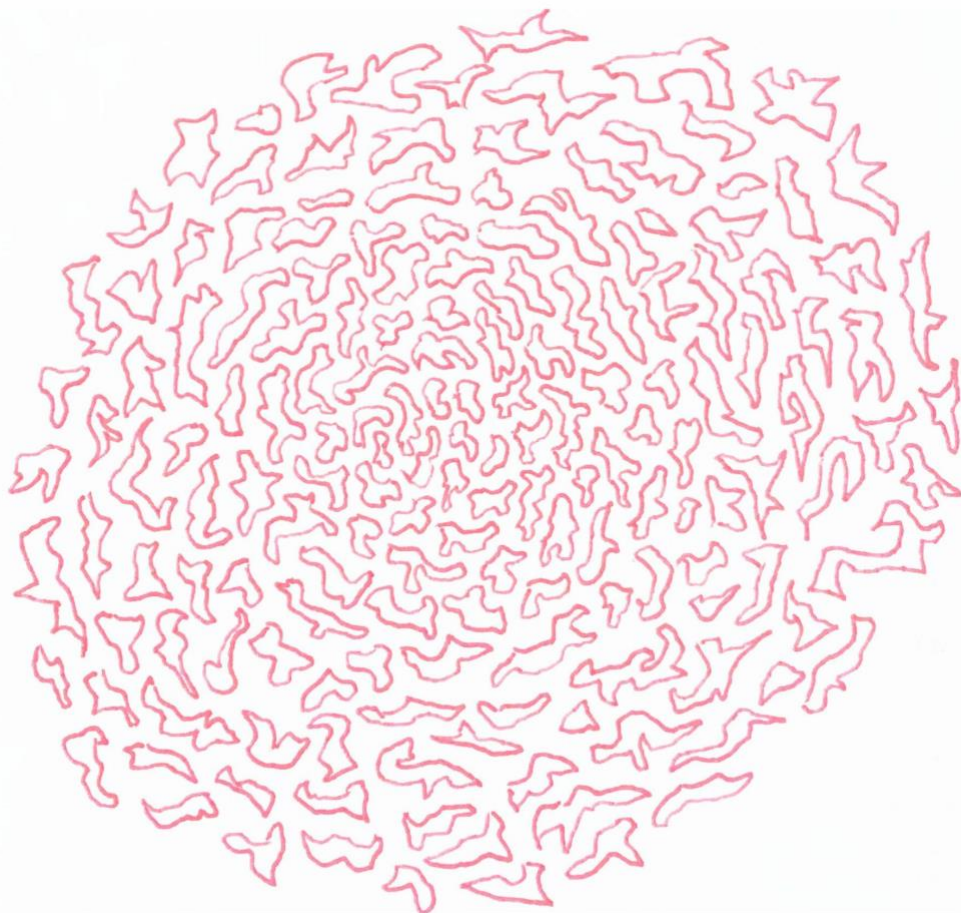
dwell attentively
 presence intensifies—opens
 all-embracing awareness

a distinctness unfolding¹¹⁰
without the illusion of separateness of being—

see only the Many—innumerable separateness—illusion
see only the One—the Many as phantasms—also illusion

Figure 8.3

Reality is One and Many



¹¹⁰ Heron (1981b).

Note. Pen drawing by Michael Pierce, created during [analysis spiral 4](#).

posthuman ethics urges us to endure the not-One¹¹¹
 of our subjectivity
 acknowledging the ties that bind us to the multiple ‘others’
 in a vital web of complex relations

difference as the principle of the not-One—differing
 the awareness that one is
 the effect of
 irrepressible flows one is not in charge of
 not-One—ontological relationality—productive
 a generative notion of complexity

humanist embodiment collapses as soon as the body expands
 beyond anthropocentric conception¹¹²

replace the unitary subject of Humanism¹¹³
 with a more complex and relational subject
 framed by embodiment, sexuality,
 affectivity,
 empathy, and desire
 core qualities

posthuman subjectivity starts with¹¹⁴
 autonomous capacity is not rationality but rather—
 the autonomy of affect as virtual force
 actualized through relational bonds

another notion of autonomy to do more with¹¹⁵
 how you connect to others and to other movements
 how you can modulate those connections
 to multiply and intensify them

always connective
 it’s not being apart, it’s being in
 being in a situation of belonging
 that gives you degrees of freedom, powers of becoming, of emergence

¹¹¹ Braidotti (2013, p. 100)

¹¹² Woods (2021).

¹¹³ Braidotti (2013, p. 26)

¹¹⁴ Braidotti (2019b, p. 45)

¹¹⁵ Massumi (2016, p. 40)

listening bodies continually in process¹¹⁶
 constituted in and through place
 the visceral–
 visceral gut reactions provide clues

how cultural systems categorise bodies–
 some comfortable–others disgusting

the aesthetic act extends–¹¹⁷
 the creative tension of contrast
 that characterizes the emergence of every action
 prolongs the suspension of the cut–
 the commotion of interference and resonance
 gives it duration so that it
 passes the threshold of perceptibility and
 is consciously felt as potential

the new aesthetic paradigm¹¹⁸
 ethico-political
 to speak of creation
 to speak of the responsibility of the creative instance

this ethical choice
 no longer emanates from a transcendent enunciation
 the genesis of enunciation itself
 in the movement of processual creation

the creation of a new social nexus
 new forms of connection
 kinship and ethical accountability redefined
 links of affectivity and responsibility
 for nonanthropomorphic organic others
 for technologically-mediated, newly patented creatures

posthuman subjects
 asserting the material totality of
 and interconnection with all living things
 understanding matter animates the composition of
 knowledge as embedded
 embodied and yet
 flowing in a web of relations¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Duffy et al. (2016, p. 52)

¹¹⁷ Massumi (2016, p. 67)

¹¹⁸ Guattari (2006/1992, p. 107)

¹¹⁹ Braidotti (2019b, p. 47)

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION: ECHOES AND REVERBERATIONS

“... feeling displaced (ignorant) at the moment one feels one should be at home (knowledgeable) *is the condition of knowledge making at its best*, the condition that drives curiosity (as a drive to *aim* rather than to *attain*), and a condition that cannot be predicted [emphasis in original].”
(Loveless, 2019, p. 47)

How does this sustained exploration into the affective aspects of experiencing, what Heron (1992) calls feeling and Gendlin (2007; 2018) calls felt sense, matter to holistic adult educators? Furthermore, what does this research offer to artful qualitative methodologists seeking to integrate artful ways of knowing and doing with social science inquiry? More specifically, how does our sonic collaborative inquiry, spilling from chapter seven into the artful interludes and external multimodal online portal, attempt to meet some of the complex social challenges of the present moment? In the concluding section, I discuss the potential reverberations or implications this dissertation has for adult education and qualitative research and how this work echoes ongoing scholarly conversations.

As I write, climate and social crises fueled by rapacious capitalist economic systems now unfold across our shared context of planet Earth alongside epidemic-levels of mental illness and burnout, suicide, and endless variations of alienation and malaise. Without explicitly speaking to these pressing problems, this work exists in complex entanglement with these challenges of the times in which we live. These forces, which may seem distant from this work, constitute invisible presences which have informed this research because they are also part of what I care about and think about day-to-day. They are also part of my world, the total environment in which

I live and breathe and depend on and, therefore, must think about how I may become more response-able within.

As educators, we can no longer ignore the potential of affective aspects of experiencing and the need to build affective capacities, like empathy (Kasl & Yorks, 2016). The challenges of our complex global problems mean more and more jobs will require creative collaboration (International Coaching Federation, 2022). This includes capacities for interacting across all manner of boundaries, between identities, categories, classes, and disciplines. Currently, in the United States, the social and geographical context in which I am situated and from which I write, the American public grapples with such hot button “culture war” issues as police violence against Black and Brown people, women’s health, bodily autonomy, and reproductive rights, transgender rights, and the U.S.’s geopolitical role. The black and white thinking employed by those who ascribe to one of two supposed sides of these complex problems has led to a breakdown of empathetic dialogue and relational capacity. I stand with Yorks and Kasl’s (2002) “find[ing] that Heron’s small phrase acknowledging emotional and interpersonal work as a precondition for empathic understanding is as large an understatement as Mezirow’s small phrase that empathy is a precondition for discussion” (p. 187).

Collaborative Inquiry as Expansive Method for Attending to Affective Experiencing

In our sonic CI, my human co-researcher and I grew our individual and shared capacities for “empathic connection” by seeking to explore our feelings-in-practice through “interpersonal-learning-within-relationship,” which opened “expressive knowing pathways” (Yorks & Kasl, 2006) leading to different propositional knowing and practical doing. Our study’s implications directly relate to its potential for cultivating an empathy that includes waking up to humanity’s embeddedness and interdependence with a vast more than human world. This research pursues

a whole human knowing which enables us to respond generatively to the more-than-human world ... through becoming more expansive and inclusive in the way we come to know and live, we make decisions and act in ways that are more imaginatively responsive to the socio-economic imperative of our times. (Seeley, 2011, p. 87)

We experienced creative learning within CI as also involving multidimensional lattice structures in addition to the spiral structure imposed by CI's phases of action-refraction/reflection. Efland (1995) proposed that while a spiral model explains how prior learning informs present learning and tracks a progressive extension of self, conceiving of learning as unfolding simultaneously within lattice structures accounts for more complexity. In more "ill-structured domains," like philosophy, where many-faceted concepts derive their meanings and becomings from connection rather than categorization, conceiving of knowing and learning as spirals within lattice structures offers a more adequate metaphor. Like the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987), the lattice opposes the hierarchical and linear arboreal view of reality and knowledge wherein sub-branches predictably shoot off from larger branches, creating siloed domains of knowledge and perpetuating categorical thinking. In lattice structures of reality, many connections between any single node or knot in the latticework are possible.

A lattice-spiral onto-epistemology values development in the context of connecting across difference and translating across disciplinary ways of knowing by locating and exploring potentially fruitful points of interdisciplinary intersection. Adopting such a structure enables a posthuman subjectivity and capacity "to see the interconnections among the greenhouse effect, the status of women and LGBTQ+, racism and xenophobia, and frantic consumerism" (Braidotti, 2017, p. 22). In our CI, each turn of the spiral illuminated an extensive, far-reaching web of naturecultural connections (Haraway, 2016). While this began by exploring the affective

connections between our bodies and the vibrant materiality of organic materials like rocks, metal, and water (Bennett, 2010), further constellations emerged in the ability of technologies (e.g., synthesizers, digital recorders and samplers) gave us to resolve the polarizations our felt senses revealed in novel ways.

Through our CI, we gained a greater sense of how the low value often placed on experimental music, conceived broadly, relates to a general devaluation of other-than-human life and (slower, softer, smaller, quieter) ways of being discordant with neoliberal capitalist logics. Thus, it offers one way, another sort of artful intervention, similar to and different from what Lafaire et al. (2022) unfold in a management education context, for creating an interspace to grow empathy as “a relational practice and a mode of knowing in itself” (p. 229), inclusive of the more than human. Like their study, this dissertation’s sonic CI cultivated a deeper “[e]mpathic knowing [that] enable[d] us to relate and respond differently focus[ing] on the relational, processual, and perhaps surprising emergence of knowing as an empathic accomplishment” (p. 230).

Our findings confirm CI’s expansive potential as a method well-suited for accessing affect. Yorks and Kasl (2002) assert:

With a focus on the lived phenomenon of experience, which is replete with feelings and tacit knowing, CI offers fresh perspective on how educators can help adults learn from their experience. We believe that this epistemology helps meld the reciprocal relationship between personal development and action in the world ... (p. 103)

CI provides practitioners with a tool we might count among our “techniques of relation” (Massumi, 2016, p. 78), a potential-laden structure for in-scending (Nicolaidis, 2022) into the nuances, the microgestures and textures residing in feelings within complex activities of practice.

Our study illustrates how CI surfaces feelings of being in complex relation, including with the affective powers of more than human forces and beings. Without some mechanism, some way to bring one back to the sensation of feeling, felt sense experiencing often remains unconscious and quickly forgotten, departed from too quickly. We experienced enacting our CI process as being forced to slow to its rhythms and the rigors of reflection it imposes on our creative process, as an enabling structure for re-membering (Michelson, 1998).

Professional situations in which a two-person team or group must collaborate within a specific practice domain might benefit from adopting a creative CI method such as we have followed and invented over the course of unfolding our dyadic sonic CI. In a higher education faculty development context, Cordie & Adelino (2020) cite Mezirow's (1995) suggestion that "discourse usually occurs during one-on-one interactions" (p. 25) as a reason they designed their program to heavily rely on dyadic groupings. Our CI experience was that the trust and vulnerability required to inscend into affective experiencing, particularly if very strong feelings or problematic assumptions or beliefs are at play, may be better cultivated and sustained within a two-person structure.

Kossak's (2007) expressive arts therapy research on finding attunement through improvisation developed from a research project with autistic persons, pointing to further potential implication of our dyadic CI in its engagement with multiple ways of knowing. Our CI honors the multiple ways of knowing adult learners, including the many grouped under various labels related to psychological disabilities or "neurodivergent" conditions, pursue for a variety of healing and therapeutic purposes. Erin Manning calls the capacity to stay with the potential of feeling's radical relationality, to sit in feelingful receptivity, "autistic perception." This way of being we practice through sonic play opens us beyond narrow and cognitively-oriented ways of

knowing. Such feelingful being holds the potential to cultivate the relational posthuman subjectivities Rosi Braidotti (2019b, 2022) argues we need to flourish in our time, which she calls the posthuman convergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Sixth Great Extinction. With links being made between posthuman subjectivities, neurodivergent abilities and potentials, and multiple ways of knowing (Holt, 2019; Shannon, 2023), including aesthetic and affective knowing, adult educators may learn much from this emerging scholarly intersection.

Advocating for Life-wide Learning to Enhance Lifelong Learning

Artfulness is part of everyday practice and creative decision-making, including professional practices performed in organizational roles (Jensen, 2022; Küpers & Pauleen, 2015). In more structured social situations with established cultural ways of being, knowing, and doing, however, it can be too easy to forget one's felt sense experiencing and result in "aesthetic muteness" (Taylor, 2002). This affective and aesthetic "connection to the actual experiential knowing about the moment is important because it helps us see the core issues in the situation. ... how we are acting with each other" (Taylor, 2004, p. 80).

Adult educators interested in informal learning in organizational and workplace settings advocate cultivating complexity thinking and abductive reasoning wherein "imagination engages in sense breaking" through "free play" (Watkins & Marsick, 2021, p. 93). While this project takes place in the personal and domestic spaces of day-to-day home life, I believe this research's illustration of the boundary-spanning potential of life-wide creative learning has more far-reaching implications.

In many ways, this project speaks to Nicolaides' (2022) call to imagine

What if adult learning were a way for creating conditions to pose different inquiries and invent alternative forms of agency that shaped a future where learning as a process of becoming was a lifelong endeavor of creative inquiry within the complexity of an ever-evolving diversity? (p. 4)

Our study suggests adult educators might benefit from acknowledging and seeking to understand how lifelong and life-wide learning involving these creative capacities are already happening in informal, community-oriented, self-directed ways among adult learners.

Heron (1992) stated that WPT's "phenomenological sources are multifarious, and I could not give any kind of reliable weighing of each, but the primary ones are: friendship, including all its special instances of personal and family relationships; ..." (p. 2-3). While he goes on to list many personal experiences and practices, I am fascinated by this mention of his closest, most intimate relationships as such vital sources of learning and catalysts of his thinking. In my own experience, I also find that, just as the personal is intertwined with the social and political, the lines between personal and professional also blur. One of my primary motivations for wanting to pursue a sonic CI with my long-time musical partner and spouse was because of how much I feel I have learned through our collaborations over the years and from watching his day-to-day creative process. These lessons about seeking oblique connections, learning to dwell in unpredictable feedback loops, and how to persist in deep listening have all profoundly shaped my whole way of being in the world.

Why do we often discount or ignore the significant learning that occurs in intimate relationships and non-organizational spaces, including in the home? Uncovering an Afrocentric feminist epistemology "in which truth emerges through care" and an ethics of care rooted in celebrating unique individual expressions, the value of emotions, and empathic capacity, Collins

(2010) notes “few Eurocentric institutions except the family validate this way of knowing” (p. 64). Homes are sites where people engage in curating material realities, ordering personal spaces in ways that creatively make self-in-mutual-relation and through an ethics of care. Seen in this way, the spaces in which people live, sleep, and often spend most of their time become home studios and, thus, sites of potential arts pedagogy and practice (Whitaker & McHugh, 2023). The rise of the Internet has certainly brought attention back around to the learning that happens at home and how these activities increasingly connect to global networks. The COVID-19 pandemic that swept the world in 2020 and has indelibly altered so many aspects of life since also played an outsized role in helping people re-situate and/or re-discover “the home as the genesis of everyday learning” (Ritchie et al., 2024, p. 334).

Our study sheds light on how and why adult learning scholars and practitioners in a variety of contexts, including human resource development, might orient to more life-wide in addition to lifelong learning (Watkins & Marsick, 2014). The success of our CI, in terms of revealing for us new ways of creatively collaborating, lived up to Heron’s (1992) characterization of CI as designed to guide inquiry into any question relating to human experience. We noticed that deeper attention to feeling as it moved through our personal experiencing and collaborative process created changes in creative practice that produced wider changes impacting other collaborators, including audiences. Our CI demonstrates how significant learning happening in one domestic space, in many ways mediated by digital communications and interactions, can overlap with more public domains of life online and in situated geographical locations. The ontological and epistemological transformations we experienced also went beyond our own intimate collaborative relationship, infusing the way we related to our

world, impacting the way we thought about potentially new ways of making music, learning, and collaborating with others.

Thus, this research suggests new arenas for unfolding adult learning research and examining, within adult education, the informal community-based learning that happens at home, including online while at home, involving the beneath of experience and its deep undergoing. There are many reasons adult education might learn from the way learning happens in these spaces. To create response-able posthuman subjectivities and people capable of perceiving a relational subjective-objective one-and-many more than human world, we need to study those who already approach life and learning from beyond the Enlightenment humanist template. Braidotti (2019a) dubs her scholarship “most Deleuzian when I call for transversal, complex, non-unitary subject assemblages of human and non-human agents, activated towards the production of possible futures” (p. 467). Our CI enacted such dispersed subject assemblages through practices of affection and care, valuing certain connections and influences which have remained underexplored.

Adopting new methods for understanding how learning happens across territories of life experiences (e.g., personal, professional, within the context of family and community life), throughout life, we uncover learning as a form of care (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017) and empathic relation as a vital source of knowing (Yorks & Kasl, 2006). Heron (1992) reminds us that love is resonance with and celebration of all that is “other.” Of this transpersonal capacity, Heron says:

Love is feeling the resonance with a person, a group, a bird, the moon. ... If we aren't fulfilled in loving, we can't adequately appreciate the imagery of our world; and then we can't achieve a real interest in understanding our world; and without this our satisfaction in making choices is impoverished. (p. 120-121)

Why should we not aim our research questions at understanding how to cultivate this capacity that goes beyond mere feeling *for* toward cherishing and holding the other as part of our self, refusing to objectify or make other, refusing the split between “me” and “you,” “us” and “them”? This study suggests adult educators might look at loving as embodied acts of empathic knowing, acknowledging this vital capacity in the places we feel and find it, with the potential to move toward greater life-wide and lifelong flourishing. Doing so requires embracing, experimenting with, and even inventing new methodological possibilities.

Learning from Arts-Informed Qualitative Methodologies in Educational Research

Building on the findings of the methodological review in [chapter four](#), this dissertation’s sonic CI models methodological playfulness as possible and necessary for accessing, expressing, and seeking to understand affective experience. In fields beyond adult education, artful qualitative methodologists have led the way in demonstrating the usefulness of arts-informed methods for pursuing affective scholarship and responding to the implications of posthuman theory and the philosophy of aesthetics on ways of researching and teaching (Hickey-Moody, 2013). Often these scholars use posthuman and feminist materialist concepts to frame how artful methods activate relational subjectivities, including capacities for empathizing and relating beyond species and acting beyond speciesist self-interest (Haraway, 2016). Any future-oriented adult education would benefit from deeper engagement with arts-informed methods’ “unique ability to capture and present aspects of the past (in memory), present (in experience), and future (in hope/fear)” (Prendergast, 2006, p. 370) in an expressive form. The potential artful methods have to help reshape perceptions of reality and knowledge by traversing supposedly rigid boundaries and categories informs our study and presents implications for adult educators.

In situating an exploration of affect within adult learning, this dissertation argues for treating affect as a phenomenon *homo sapiens* individuals possess the capacity to experience through direct embodied sensing of subtle and concrete situations. Feelings and felt sense, the aspects of affect specifically explored here are vital parts of human experiencing. Accepting whole person theory's (Heron, 1992) situation of feeling as the foundation of all further knowing and doing, affective experiencing provides the very foundation for human learning and change. Cultivating aesthetic literacies for accessing and articulating affects relate to becoming aware that personal feelings always underlie the assumptions, beliefs, and concepts driving people's actions, and how these are inherited from dominant philosophies of our cultures and times.

The field of adult education now sits at a potential-filled crossroads where it might further emphasize and explore the potentials of aesthetic knowing, experimenting with humans' affective and imaginal capacities as vital to learning beyond binary ways of knowing (Johnson, 2007). Such learning to be and know beyond polarized ways of relating and thinking are important for creating solidarities across vast social differences (Kasl & Yorks, 2016) as well as learning to relate to others, including nonhuman others (Haraway, 2016). Hickey-Moody (2016) explains the more than human potential of educators developing strategies for cultivating learners' aesthetic capacities:

Affective pedagogy is a framework for thinking through the pedagogical shift in perception effected by the aesthetics of an artwork. Aesthetic affect can be deployed to reconceptualize, or further develop, contemporary theories of posthumanism, in a manner congruent with imperatives to conceive educational practices outside identity. The affective pedagogy of aesthetics is posthuman education. (p. 258)

This research affirms CI as a malleable structure for exploring and honoring the subtle and the spiritual, for embracing the kinds of nomadic movements involved in moving individuals and groups toward posthuman consciousness. It also highlights CI's usefulness as a flexible inquiry paradigm capable of folding in many arts-informed methods and the kinds of small, locally-situated actions and experiments that Braidotti (2019b) calls for toward cultivating posthuman subjectivities.

The sonopoetic and visual artifacts housed in our sonic CI's multimedia online portal emphasize the affective resonances we felt, individually and together, as we intra-actively played within a vibrant web of entities and forces beyond human creation. One way in which artful education research pushes the boundaries of adult education research is in illuminating the agentic and vibrant nature of materials and the implications this has for their being taken seriously as research collaborators. Aesthetic artifacts, including digital materials, communicate, translate, and move affective experience.

Digital media, then, ought to receive more attention from adult educators as affective mediators possessing potentials for producing "ethical sensations" (Vea, 2019). As I have explored in discussing how posthuman educators use digital tools to create affective learning ecologies (Perry, 2023), activist media creators can make intentional decisions to amplify "feelings of direct encounter that are produced through media practices" to produce experiential "im-mediacy" (Vea, 2019, p. 1592). The aesthetic experiential work involved in receiving and creating with materials, including digital and sonic materials, represents an embodied literacy, involving embodied interpretation and resonant validity (Todres & Galvin, 2008) beyond traditional understandings of rational meaning making. Adult educators, therefore, ought to pay deeper attention to aesthetic expressions as mediators of affect and the affective potentials of

media literacy, including media creation in analog and digital realms where the potential to reach global audiences increases.

Adult educators may also appreciate our CI as a model of how research processes might unfold from inside a more artful practice-based research approach where methods are being invented along the way and in response to feeling and felt sense. Adult education needs new methodological ways of accessing and expressing affective experiencing and to invite into the field better theories for understanding how generative knowing emerges “through the complexity beneath the already intra-active intertwining of self and society” (Nicolaidis, 2022, p. 25). Torbert (2013) offers collaborative developmental action inquiry as an appropriate way of “listening into the dark” integrating first-, second-, and third-person research to approach “any and all activities in one’s daily life in an inquiring manner,” from the political to the spiritual (p. 1). One particularly resonant and potential-laden way of pursuing artful educational research is to take up methods that specifically immerse all participants (including researchers) in aesthetic practice.

Wider Implications of Practice as Research

Creative practice as research seems a productive site where theory and method meet in action and adult education scholars might meet artful qualitative methodologists and affect theorists in creating new ways of knowing in/through/with rather than about the world. Without seeking to categorize our sonic collaborative inquiry, we might consider it arts-informed qualitative research and practice-based research (also called artistic research, practice-led, practice as research) (Borgdorff, 2012). It resonates as well with research-creation, “an approach that may be applied to any combination of practice and research” (Stévance & Lacasse, 2017, p. 10) and music-creation, specifically. “A basic principle of practice-based research is that not

only is practice embedded in the research process but research questions arise from the process of practice, the answers to which are directed toward enlightening and enhancing practice” (Hjorth et al., 2019, p. 5). These approaches differ from scientific research in their “fundamental openness to the unknown, the unexpected, which can also form a corrective to what is currently regarded as valid research” (Borgdorff, 2012, p. 40).

Practice often precedes theory and our ability to rationally communicate an understanding about an experience in language. Woods (2021) showed how experimental musicians often already engage sound from a posthuman relational ontology and argues that we can and should learn from how these artful practitioners enact posthuman subjectivities. Our more than human CI revealed how our creative practice, and collaborative impasses within them, involved our perceptions and relationships with more than human participants in our sonic practice. This research path helped reveal how creative practice is a many-faceted endeavor, reaching far beyond the creative individual mind, beyond even a strictly human social scene, to one in which more than human entities of all kinds play an active, significant participant role (Glăveanu & de Miranda, 2022; Harris & Holman Jones, 2022; Roussell et al., 2022). Thus, our CI demonstrates

the importance of experimenting with what kinds of subjects we are capable of becoming.

We are indeed becoming posthuman ethical subject. We do so by overcoming hierarchical dichotomies and cultivating instead multiple capacities for relations and models of communication in a multi-directional manner. (Braidotti, 2019b, p. 63)

We consider our CI one small experiment in this effort, and the results of its influence to be aligned with disrupting hierarchical binaries and categories while constructing multiplicities of caring relation.

Our CI illustrates similar possibilities for exploring feelingful depths in reaching toward mutualities and guiding transformations on many levels, for pursuing whole person presence in the present moments in which experiencing occurs. We do so through an understanding that “being worthy of the present is not intended in a passive and acquiescent manner, but rather in an active mode, as a way of coming to terms with the present, in order to intervene in it and transform it” (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 464). This research takes to heart the limitations for using metaphors to understand complexity and that “metaphors are only as good as people’s experience” (International Coaching Federation, 2022).

Our CI as practice-based research goes beyond metaphors, to enact or model *a* way for directly experiencing and responding to complexity. Certain knowings may only be arrived at via one’s direct experience of practicing a craft or method (Rappaport, 2013). When researchers, themselves, engage in the practices and processes they are exploring, new possibilities open up for becoming immersed in affective experiencing and directly working with materials—in our case sonic materials—to develop aesthetic knowing through creative expression. Creative expressions open up potential for the insights of generative knowing to become translated, or *awared* (Nicolaidis, 2022), in artfully complex, multilayered, and extra-rational ways, and, therefore, presenting potentially response-able doings.

Hopefully, this CI provides a clearer sense of how feeling surfaces movements across territories of experience and how resonances and tensions within the intense and directional pulls of these forces of generative knowing move toward possibilities for aesthetic knowing. Philosophers, including Dewey, believed aesthetics possessed the potential to reorient personal desires, changing knowing through an opening of perception (Siegesmund, 2013). A participatory aesthetic knowing involves acts of creative expression, activities that diffract the

complex and often inexpressible ongoingness of experience into communicable form (Johnson, 2007). Engaging aesthetic knowing and creative expression as embodied refractions (Heron, 1992), rather than reflections, that diffract propositional and practical knowing and aim at surfacing the vital information at the heart of felt sense experiencing enacts an ethical stance (Johnson, 2007). Braidotti (2017) contends that

[t]he ethical ideal is to aspire to the joyful affirmation of virtual possibilities of what “we” are capable of becoming. We have to labor towards becoming a new kind of subject that is immanent to the world ... Such a subject can only become actualized together with others, in praxis, and through action in the world. (p. 21)

Woodcock (2016) asserts: “Cultural production is one avenue through which marginalized populations either empower themselves or unknowingly perpetuate traditional subordination” (p. 9). Seeking to disrupt patriarchal capitalist dynamics that privilege certain ways of knowing “require[s] methodologies that support [educators’] unique inquiries and voices” (p. 9). Helping educators become aesthetic cultural producers, with capacities for engaging in creative processes rooted in aesthetic knowing builds collective response-ability for imagining and enacting more ethical cultures based on feelingful relational ontologies. It also helps build understanding of the political aspects of media creation and consumption and how media “become direct mechanisms of control [with the] ability to modulate the affective dimension” (Massumi, 2016, p. 31). Thus, doing so builds the grass-roots capacity to build self-generating cultures (Heron, 1992).

This final implication about practice-based research also relates to the multimedia online portal and the artful methods used in this research to invite readers in and practices for deepening capacities for participatory aesthetic knowing, more generally. The artifacts of creative practices

and processes are never final statements about “the truth” of a matter; they remain soft, open to further experiencing, and recontextualization. For artists and arts-based researchers, “rather than wishing to prescribe meanings, as mediators we wish to be more open-ended by indicating the freedom for personal resonance given to audiences when one uses more poetic language” (Todres and Galvin, 2008, p. 571) or other artful means of communication. Pursuing resonant validity, we ask this research be evaluated according to “interpersonal relevance and resonance” and embodied experiences of our work, which we sought to produce through multiple artful attempts to “communicate findings in more evocative ways” (p. 580).

Therefore, audiences have a part in evaluating the affectiveness and effectiveness of this research, thereby determining its present and ongoing impacts and implications. So, at this juncture, which we hesitate to call an ending, please dwell a little deeper, allow yourself to sit a while longer with the aesthetic artifacts as well as the more rationally oriented traditional academic prose contained within and linked out from this dissertation document. When you listen with the wholeness of your personhood, perhaps feeling and thinking as complexly and widely as the most expansive posthuman subjectivity you can imagine, what moves in you?

What sticks with and feels most moving and impactful for you in your imagined expansive body, situated and spiraling in an expanding knotted latticework of your being and becoming? What can you take away from these artful expressions, from our sonic CI’s propositional insights and practical provocations, from our feelingful playing with sound, from our multiple forms and recursive processes of sonopoetic analysis? Like any aesthetic performance, this work remains open to your experiencing and, therefore, further plugging in. Thus, the full implications of this work remain unknown, a living and breathing open wholeness,

waiting to receive additional feedback loops in present and future interactions with future collaborators—including you.

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