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Teasing Transcription: Iterations in the Liminal Space between Voice and Text

Teasing Transcription: Iterations in the Liminal Space between Voice and Text

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Abstract

These pieces of writing and the corresponding collection of objects were born out of what was supposed to be a traditional qualitative research project. At the transcription stage, I got caught. Tied up. I couldn't make what I was supposed to be making, so this was made instead. Through technological, material, poetic, and artistic shifts, I considered what it meant to transform an interview from conversation, to sound bite, to various versions of 0000s and 1111s, and perhaps back again. Ten re/presentations of a single interview were created. From these re/presentations, I considered how validity and reliability privilege cold and static representations and how other versions (some of which were also cold, if not static) might work to disrupt our notions of re/search and re/presentation. And, then I wondered how/why all this might come to matter.

Keywords: representation, post-qualitative research, transcription, responsibility

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This paper was originally conceived and accepted for ICQI 2016. I broke my leg three nights before my presentation and needed surgery. Because of that accident, I did not complete/write/present the paper until ICQI 2017, and therefore, came to place(s) in my thinking that are, I know, quite different, from where I would (maybe) have been then. Perhaps, this paper could be thought of as a transcription/translation of the conference presentation that took place on May 20th, 2017, and I know it cannot represent that event. What I said and did on that day has been adapted for the page, citations added to fit the practices of publication versus presentation, what must be written versus what can be said, what can be shown versus what is felt or goes unnoticed.

This writing and thinking was born out of the liminal, the spaces between research and life, talk and text, speaking and reading, author and reader¹, which is the only space there is.

¹ Though I list these binaries and refer to the space between them, I recognize that they do not have fixed meanings or locations. I do not think of the liminal as a finite linear space between two concrete points where text and talk, for example, are two cleanly separated things. Text/talk intra-act, and I am interested in working the liminal, the sensory in and around talk/text. So, I think between and intra-action together. Barad (2014) describes intra-action as “cutting together-apart (one move) in the (re)configuring of spacetime-mattering; differencing/differing/differencing” and also refers to the concept of “re-turning as in turning it over and over again – iteratively intra-acting, re-diffracting, diffracting anew, in the making of new temporalities (spacetime-matterings), new diffraction patterns (p.168).” For me the work in the liminal, in the between is the work of intra-action and re-turning, taking *text*, for example, and considering the ways that it might look, act, be.

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Lingering in the infinite betweenness allows for entangled and exciting and anxiety producing relations. Though I might have thought at one time that my research could be cleanly separated out from my life, the past year and a half have made that painfully unthinkable. I have been remade through this research and continue to ask questions because of it that will perpetually remake me.

This remaking has often gone unnoticed by me as it was happening. I have at times looked back and thought how did *I* get *here*. Liminal is defined as “of, relating to, or situated at a sensory threshold: barely perceptible or capable of eliciting a response” and “of, relating to, or being an intermediate state, phase, or condition” (“Liminal”, n.d.). Sometimes (maybe most times) I didn’t know what I was between, but this (re)search was always and is still between art and science, truth and fiction, researcher and friend, and and and. There are no recognizable borders between these pairs. I construct them as I go, and they morph. Perhaps, I feel them, at times, barely.

I think of transcription as operating in the liminal. I consider with Benozzo, Bell and Koro-Ljunberg (2013) that “perhaps data is less an object than a passage *between* objects” (p. 310), not a seeking to get *from* one object to the other, but the moving about in the betweenness.

I intend for this paper to be read as an intermediate state, not a final anything, but a thinking space between. As a reader, I invite you to interact with objects that you will encounter below. I hope that you will consider them as objects at “a sensory threshold” that perhaps will elicit a response. Perhaps, you will move through them in a linear fashion, perhaps you will skip

some or many of them if they do not move you. Perhaps they will remake you in some way. I hope that you will linger on some, a “minor form of doing” (Manning, 2015, p. 62) not to know what I *mean* or what I might have wanted to *say* but to activate a different sort of listening and attention.

(a spoon carefully placed on the plate, the sound soft and hard all at once)

Over the past eighteen months, I have grappled with questions of what an interview transcript could, should, or ought to do and how the transcription(s) of a particular interview functioned in my life and research. Questions about voice, interviews, truth, text and transcriptions are not new and qualitative researchers have engaged with them for decades (e.g., Jackson & Mazzai, 2008; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999; Roulston, 2010). Some have questioned the rigor and accountability in transcription processes. Poland (1995) wondered about the trustworthiness of transcriptions and drew attention to “errors” in verbatim transcriptions while acknowledging transcription as interpretive. Bucholtz (2000) described transcriptions as, “representational insofar as they offer a version of events and a portrait of the participants in those events” (p.1444). For, Bucholtz the “interpretation of a recording cannot be neutral; it always has a point of view” (p. 1441). Bird (2005) describes the transcriber as “a social and political being; [and] any act of transcription produced by such a being must of consequence be subjective”(p. 227-228). She also encouraged more attention to how qualitative researchers conform to conventions and directly address and acknowledge transcription as a crucial part of data analysis and interpretation. It is clear that within the field of qualitative research, the complexity of transcription has been acknowledged, and transcription is recognized as a political and interpretive act of representation, yet it is still tempting to take up and use transcribed texts

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as placeholders for truth. Without attention and intention, the intermediate and interpretive status of transcriptions is easily forgotten.

With alternative representations and a foregoing of conventions, the interpretive status of transcription has been brought into focus. A poetic representation cannot be mistaken for truth because it does not attempt to take a stable form. Richardson (1997) wrote of her work with poetry to represent participant talk,

by violating the conventions of how sociological interviews are written up, those conventions are uncovered as choices authors make, not rules for writing truths. The poetic form, moreover, because it plays with connotative structures and literary devices to convey meaning, commends itself to multiple and open readings in ways that straight sociological prose does not... Knowledge is thus metaphored and experienced as prismatic, partial, and positional, rather than singular, total and univocal. (p. 142-143)

In this paper, I intend to produce knowledge that is partial and prismatic. Knowledge that admits its failures and opens up new ways of thinking. Manning (2016) wrote, “poetry facilitates an opening onto the as-yet-unparsed. It moves with the as-yet-uninhibited, finding ways to bring to composition the force-of-form. In this way, it does exactly the opposite of chunking—it hinges back to the field” (p. 161). The working of the liminal does not strive to define the edges or borders, it strives to complicate the middle, to keep it complex and uncertain, not pulled too much to one side or the other, or the other.

Interspersed through the text that follows, you will find ten figures created from one interview. Ten iterations that violate conventions and stretch the space of transcription and my thinking about representation and the materiality of text and sound. These figures and the

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accompanying journal entries, poetry, and other images “hinge back to the field” to work the liminal spaces of transcription and research.

(some brisk movements, sweat)

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There are only ten minutes between conference sessions at ICQI. A small space in time. I know it will be too tight. I have ten rolls of paper², ten portraits, ten orange labels. I push the desks away from the wall, then pull one back and stand on it.

I stretch up and tab a piece of tape at the top of the roll and let it drop. It unfurls to the floor and rolls until it hits a chair leg. The next one falls into the chair and then rolls over it and onto the

² The ten scrolls of paper were the ten iterations of the interview transcript that were produced through this process: 1. Original transcription with my messiness and mistakes; 2. Original transcription collaged with images and my notes; 3. Musical translation of audio; 4. Screenshots of image produced by the recording software; 5. Original interview audio converted to txt file; 6. Word count of transcription produced through wordle.com; 7. Shelia's unrecorded words hand stitched on cloth; 8. Photograph of Shelia smiling, converted to text file; 9. Iteration of possibility; 10. Rev.com transcription. These iterations came to be through my intra-action with the text, audio, people, couch, wine, images, keyboard, cloth... Some were directly derived from ideas in Kenneth Goldsmith's (2011) *Uncreative Writing*. With each scroll I also hung a self-portrait produced over the course of the research. These were drawn quickly (approximately five minutes each) in my bathroom mirror. I was practicing looking at myself and thinking of how I might come to see myself differently.

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ground. Images taped to the collage are peeling back, coming undone. The iterations without scrolls are absence, anti-space. The cloth stands out amongst all the clean white paper. It is a “natural” beige with dark golden thread- the kind used for jeans.

I wonder who they might think I *am*³ because of this stuff, something, someone between artist (I wouldn't dare say it), student, author, technician. I wonder if they think I am crazy. I feel a little crazy with my bags of paper, my self-portraits, heart racing, trying to get it all up and at the same time thinking, this doesn't matter. Who do *I* think *I* am? What am I trying to prove? Does all of this stuff somehow legitimize my presence in this room....

Do I need to be legitimate? Legitimate what?

Scholar, student, person, artist, researcher? What might that look like?

It is time to start.

(sigh)

I gave my talk. Teri, who came to watch, said it was like a jazz performance. She said that I should have video recorded it. I bumbled and shook. I was overwhelmed by the stuff. The wall

³ I am particularly drawn to Manning's (2016) take on I. "This does not of course mean that there is no 'I.' It just means that the 'I' cannot be located in advance of the event, that the 'I' is always in the midst, active... 'I am' is always, to a large degree, 'was that me?'" (p.37).

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covered. The wireless speaker with the music, the words in front of me and in my head, the people, the haphazard chairs, splayed about, the too cold room. I was distracted by the music. It was so un-rhythmic and then suddenly rhythmic. It was jarring to hear the music that was created to re-present my conversation. I couldn't help but think of him, headphones on in his office chair, playing me *then*. And here I was *now*, playing me. Standing in front of this audience. Is that how I sound? How do I sound? I struggled to talk over/with/around the music originally created to speak to an intimate conversation, a one on one conversation, not a talk like this. All my words, her words, our bodies, absent; and all their faces staring back. The mandolin hung in the air, haunting.

(a communion wafer melts, bland on my tongue)

After the session, they all walked over to the stuff on the wall. Reaching out and touching it tentatively, gently, as though it were precious. I hadn't treated it that way necessarily.... Were they drawn? What mattered in it/of it? Was it my talk that made them interested, or the stuff of the intra-action? Did they feel obliged to attend to it because I had put it up? Did they gaze out of obligation or responsibility or interest?

(finger reaches hesitantly for golden thread)

Talk to text. Recorded voice to transcription. Transcription to music, to illegible chunks and symbols. Uploaded, downloaded, pasted and posted. Unrolled and rerolled and packed and

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carried in checked baggage. And now back to text to manuscript. Spoken words reverberated in particular place and time with stuff and music, pinned down on the page. Frozen. Captured.

(a response to the first transcription)

Typing with my eyes closed barely breathing listening to voices and background noise and my fingers on the keys

My nails are too long

My wrists are marked by the edge of the metal wrapping on this box

Pinkies stretch to pause to play back to remember

Fingers fly and know not what they do

Data emerges

Chunked and clunky neverending

No time for periods or capitals or paragraphs

Do we speak with periods

With capitals

do I say

What are you up to today?

Or

what are you up to to day

the computer autocorrects

is it the computer who makes my W big

what if I want it small

can you hear me

is my voice clear

have you captured me on

audio, on

keyboard, on

screen,

in 00000000s

and 111111s

what's my file name

what folder is my home

I am keeping my broken down broken up version with the stops and starts and mistakes

Maybe ill have to make another one for someone

But im keeping mine

Can I keep the cursor's blinking line if this goes to print

It says, what next

We're not done

Hey give me back my little w

(air conditioner turns on in the room, making her hard to hear)

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This work began without my asking. It happened upon me and wouldn't let go. I did not decide to write a paper about transcription. I would venture to say that this isn't a paper about transcription. It began because I knew my participant. I knew her well. She is a friend. As I typed her transcript, I was struck by its flatness, my striving toward some perfect form, trying to do *it* right. No matter the form, it could not represent her. So, I began again with Wanda Pillow (2003), "How do I do representation knowing that I can never quite get it right?" (p. 176).

(a slight shift of the shoulders)

The crisis of representation is not new (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In a conversation that took place between Deleuze and Foucault in 1972—and was later transcribed by Donald Bouchard--Deleuze says, "representation no longer exists" (Kay, 2006, para 4).

So, what do we do? Do we stop representing, stop using traditional methods completely, stop transcribing? Can we? Perhaps, we turn Pillow's question around-- I do representation knowing I can never get it right. This project began with me trying to show that there is no right in representation or in transcription. Despite all this experimentation, these iterations, I have not gotten closer to truth. Instead of seeking a truth, I consider what might happen if I linger with the participant- and linger with the "data"? What might working the liminal do? Can I do "right" by her, not capture her but take responsibility in the task of being in relation with her, own the complexity of relating and of knowing?

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It was my stark and obvious failure at representing her that led me here (I think). I seek to show that representation always fails, and yet, it clings to us. For me, at least, representation is a hard habit to break. The failure of representation is built in. That does not mean it is easily abandoned.

(fingernail moves across skin)

To represent others, I have been taught to re-sort, categorize, construct from scraps, piecing together bits of data, bumping them against each other, perhaps a contradiction or a complement. Which pieces come together to show them? To represent you? To which category do you belong? How does the code book construct you? What do I produce? Whose machine am I? Was I not built by this system, that I imagine I might change? Aren't I still the perfect tool? Striving to be a perfect student?

I wonder. I freeze, incompetent. I resort to poetry. There, it is always a failure and always a truth. Multiplicity lives there, of interpretations, of meanings.

In the multiplicity, I am moving, yet still, stammering to say what is true, and knowing that is an impossible task.

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No. 2- Privileging the eye/I.

(First run of transcription with collaged images derived from google search. For each search term/topic I printed the first 10-15 images that google produced. I then glued and taped them to the transcript and reread/listened to the audio and took notes on the transcript.)

(jaw tightens almost unnoticed from across the room)

St. Pierre says of traditional research methods, “Words become quasi numbers,” “brute data,”

(St. Pierre, 2013, p. 224). I posit words are at times more brutal than numbers because of their pretending.

The original transcription was from a study that I conducted as part of the requirements for Qualitative Research Methods 2 and 3. I broke all the rules.⁴ I went to a school I knew well. I interviewed a friend.

⁴ I did have IRB approval...

period	1	00:00:00	1	00:00:00	1
minutes	3	00:23:12	1	minutes	1
seconds	1	00:23:12	1	seconds	1
minutes	1	00:23:12	1	minutes	3
seconds	1	00:23:12	1	seconds	3
minutes	3	00:23:12	1	minutes	1
seconds	1	00:23:12	1	seconds	3
minutes	1	00:23:12	1	minutes	1
seconds	1	00:23:12	1	seconds	3
minutes	3	00:23:12	1	minutes	1
seconds	1	00:23:12	1	seconds	3
minutes	1	00:23:12	1	minutes	1
seconds	1	00:23:12	1	seconds	3
minutes	3	00:23:12	1	minutes	1
seconds	1	00:23:12	1	seconds	3
minutes	1	00:23:12	1	minutes	1
seconds	1	00:23:12	1	seconds	3

No. 6- Counting Data= 8,332 words
(Word count produced through wordle.com. The transcript (iteration 1) has 8,332 words. There were 17 pages of words, there was some repetition due to spelling errors and typos.)

(soft laughter slips through a smile, she tilts her head)

I'll tell you a story of Shelia, my first participant, my friend. I have the interview guide in my hands. As I look at the her, I want to keep her safe to protect her, yet I need to take from her, her data, her words. I am awkward and apologetic. I take notes here and there of things I want to come back to, threads I want to pull. While simultaneously, I also look to the interview guide to make sure that I get everything I came for, to make sure I finished. I resist this in principle, yet I enact it. I am between versions of myself as researcher- who I am supposed to be, who I think I should be. I am uncomfortable.

(lips against glass, tannins on my tongue)

As I typed up the first interview, I was a couple hours in when I looked back up at the rough text. I was using InqScribe, which allows me to slow down the playback to 60%. What am I missing of the other 40%? Our voices are elongated and strange. I still can't keep up with the typing. There are two panels, one with the controls for the playback and the other a plain box where the text sits. In that box, there were these piles of letters chunked together. As I listened to Shelia's voice, that didn't seem right. It didn't match⁵ the cadence, the rhythm of the talk, so I started using the enter key to break up the text along with her rhythms, her pauses, her enunciations. It began to look like poetry instead of transcription. It came alive and seemed more resonant of her. I became aware of my entanglement with sound, machine, text, body.... I paused to write

⁵ Here representation clings to me. I was resisting traditional formats perhaps, yet I was at the time seeking a "better" version something closer to Shelia.

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the text on page 10 of this paper. I decided to let the transcript remain messy, to think of it as a tracing of my wondering. I scrolled through the transcript moving quickly from the chunky piles of text to the more sparse lines below. They looked to me like the reading from an EKG, the heartbeat of the interview, the life that was in it. Maybe, I'm a romantic.

(brow furrows and the talk speeds up, frantic)

I thought at the time-- this seems better, closer to what was, who she is. Yet, I have to undo that as soon as it passes my lips. There is no closer to Shelia. Representation is troubling me, making me less certain. "Data is fluid, a chameleon, able to take different 'shades' of meaning based on the perspective of the researcher" (Koro-Ljungberg, 2015, p. 47).

No. 4- When does a sound become a sound?
Hot mess (sound transcription from audio of interview). This image shows the original audio on the right and the recording produced by Denis on the left.

(an intake of breath)

There are reverberations of qualitative textbooks playing in my mind.

Be a good researcher. Write it down word for word. Get the thick description. Don't stray from the interview guide, don't talk too much, don't give it away. Capture it, and bring it home, a trophy from another era.

Some nagging question (s):

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How much is in the spaces between words,
in the glance,
the sigh,
the silent swallowing of thoughts
too dangerous to say?
And what can we show, how do we make it matter?

(a small plastic toy held out in a child's hand, an offer for being seen)

I wondered, what other ways could this look? Unsurprisingly, I did not at first think, how else could this sound (Daza & Gershon, 2015)? I did think in multiples, in iterations. I wanted to stretch this data to its limit. To produce it beyond containment.

“What we take to be graphics, sounds, and motion in our screen world is merely a thin skin under which resided miles and miles of language” (Goldsmith, 2011, p.16).

One iteration, number 5, the original interview audio converted to .txt file, produces 11,976 pages of text. I was, as St Pierre would say,

“calling data into being” (St. Pierre, 2013, p. 223).

No. 3- Hot Mess by Denis Gainty, PhD. Blue Grass Japanologist
(Drum, mandolin, and symbol composition based on audio and visual response to first 10 minutes of the recorded audio.)
Audio file can be found at
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8nRF6eOsFpccW5Qd0I2MTZXRIk/view?usp=sharing>

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“the morass of language does not deplete, rather it creates a wider, rhizomatic ecology, leading to a continuous and infinite variety of textual occurrences and interactions across both the network and the local environment” (Goldsmith, 2011, p. 32)

I wondered if I had gone too far?
And, I thought with Goldsmith, “How
can we discard something that might in
another configuration be extremely
valuable? As a result, we become
hoarders of data hoping that at some
point we’ll have a “use” for it”
(Goldsmith, 2011, p. 29)

No. 5- Privileging Text. Blurring Meaning
*Original interview audio file was converted to txt file.
11,976 pages of text were produced.*

I was hoarding this new “data,” stacking it up around me. I was trying to be productive, useful. Create something. Make something. When I ran out of things to make, or I got tired of making, or I ran out of ideas, like a good academic, I turned to theory, to literature, to others who had thought this before me, worked it...

I thought with MacLure (2013):

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“Method is much less assured in dealing with quasi-linguistic stuff such as Hannah’s silence, and all the tears, sneers, sighs, silences, sniffs, laughter, snot, twitches or coughs that are part of utterances. Interview transcripts seldom record what eyebrows, hands, shoulders or crossed legs are doing, and if they do attend to such features, the aim is usually to point to what they ‘mean’ – that is, to bring them within the compass of representation” (p. 664)

And St. Pierre (1997):

“if emotions are data, then what is the method that produces them?” (p. 181)

And with Barad (2003):

“What compels the belief that we have a direct access to cultural representations and their content that we lack toward the things represented? How did language come to be more trustworthy than matter? Why are language and culture granted their own agency and historicity while matter is figured as passive and immutable, or at best inherits a potential for change derivatively from language and culture?” (p. 801)

And with Masny (2016):

“The assemblage functions according to a relationality of differential elements through affect. The assemblage reconfigures and a diagram of a different assemblage emerges. How might these elements connect when there is no pre-selection? Elements come together in an assemblage based on a problem at hand, drawn from the flux of experiences of life.” (p. 3)

And with Manning (2016):

“Contemplation, understood as the act of lingering-with, of tending to a process, is a minor form of doing. It attends to the conditions of the work’s work. Contemplation is passive only in the sense that this attending provokes a waiting, a stilling, a listening, a sympathy-with. This

sympathy is enveloped in the process... attuned to the fragile art of time⁶. Contemplation, operative at the edges of perception where the conscious and the nonconscious overlap, activates times of its own making..." (p. 62-63)

And Sommerville (2016):

"Any method of attending to affect, such as through the examination of the video, cannot simply be a matter of containment, interpretation, meaning, signification, or representation because the event cannot help but produce 'affective resonance, attunement, that is, the intensifying or the dampening of affect' (Clough, 2009, p. 49)" (p. 1168)

...and I was no closer to knowing *the* thing I was *supposed* to know about representation. Instead, my knowledge was pleasantly partial and prismatic. I did not have one idea of representation and what it could/should do and who I could/should be as researcher, instead I have an infinite expansiveness of ways to think it and be her.

(interlude on lines)

*i am squinting at the light all around
illuminating something, but always the wrong things*

⁶ The fragile art of time is compelling for me to think with. I wonder how this paper would have looked if I hadn't broken my leg. Twelve weeks on crutches forced me to linger with this project, this thinking. It slowed me down, made me attend differently. What did that accident do to not just shift the timeline of my work on this paper, but also the way I thought myself? How does the publishing of this paper fix it, freeze it (and *me* as *author*), in some way out of time?

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*on back roads between
Smithfield and
Richmond*

*my father taught me to look at the white line at the edge of the road
watching for the green eyes of deer
or fox
listening to stories of old girlfriends and transmissions
destroyed by fields*

*don't look straight on or you can't see
i look behind in the mirror
flip the switch for night driving
again a blur
an outline
thick*

*im not sure where the real line is
there is a ghost of a car
i know it is there but i don't believe it
i never trusted mirrors
a drivers ed teacher telling me not to look over my shoulder
use your mirrors*

*i still dont
searching elsewhere for some clearer version
some
bit of
truth*

As I thought the iterations, I struggled with how I might get past -maybe not past- around- or maybe different than- traditional representation that relied

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on text and language? Even the iterations thought with Goldsmith, which offered startlingly different versions of transcription, were based in text.

(a short three part whistle, turns a head)

It came as an accident. Denis told me about calling his daughter across the playground at school. He called her name a couple times, and she didn't turn, so he whistled the rhythm of her name to call her. Then we wondered together, what does a conversation sound like in music? He was a musician, so I asked him if he would try translating the audio recording of the interview into tones/sounds/absent of language with me. This, which thinking with the whistle led to generative questions.

How do you make a sound that speaks? How do you transcribe with instruments? How might that transcription/translation function?

I watched him playing the mandolin transcribing my voice and Shelia's with it. I was moved. I wondered at it. Is it a gift? Then I felt guilty for asking him to commit this much time to this project, the uselessness... Hopefully in Manning's (2015) take on it,

A pragmatics of the useless is dedicated to uselessness, to practices that have not yet been defined in accordance to value imposed from the outside. A pragmatics of the useless celebrates the fact that we do not know where a thought can take us. It delights in study for study's sake. (p. 206)

No. 4- When does a sound become a sound?

(Hot mess recording with words screenshots of track of original recording and music.)

I asked him, “Are you having fun?” I want it not to be work, this creation. He smiled. It was a gift, he said, to be invited to play. We talked about the work. He explained that one drum side was me, one was her⁷. (He was representing then- the pull is strong.) He noticed while listening that when she began to talk there was a particular rhythm, a thinking and pondering that was slow- then explaining that was fast, and then a hesitation, another slowness around serious topics like Ebola and Michael Brown.

I think the clash of symbol sounds too harsh. He’s not getting it right. What instrument should represent me? How could you choose that one?⁸ Now, I am participant, object of study, subjected to the whims of the interpreter. Then, it sounds right—perfect, after I get used to it. It has become

⁷ Though I was trying to think representation differently and to trouble it. It kept coming back to me. Sneaking up on me. One drum *was* her. One *was* me.

⁸ There I am pulled into old ways. This text was a journal entry written as Denis listened to the recording and played along. There was nothing for me to do while he worked, so I wrote. In rereading these words, I note my desire to be represented accurately- to be seen for who I am/was. Though I have been taught to resist essentialized and humanist versions of the self, I still have the desire to be seen, noticed, attended to- in ways that align with how I see myself- or perhaps more accurately how I see myself becoming.

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the sound of my voice. I have accepted it as me. (Do we yearn to be represented, given this much attention?)

(feet kicking as I lay on my stomach)

Soft and hard, intense, and I hear wood- malleable, metal clang

Movement of body to represent bodies in conversation –

clack clack clack clack clack.

Louder now. Is that his confidence building or the interview gaining momentum?

Violin/mandolin is the most complex voice, the most nuanced.

So, how can it, might it speak for us? Soft and wordless. Wordless and emotive-whispering, shouting, being heard. Crying, calling.

He listened with drums and mandolin and then watched with symbol- and listened- played to the spikes on the screen- the technology told him when to play- when to strike versus our voices.

He said, “I started to try to repeat it back, to play after your voices to echo them, then I just started to play with you all in a space of creation.”

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No. 7- Parting words, not recorded

(Thread on cloth.) This is a gift, really a gift.

Hand stitched words said by Shelia after the recorder was turned off at the first interview.

(almost silent tears in the dark music venue)

I did not intend to go down this road, to produce all this stuff, and yet I did. Was that reasonable, scholarly? How did this exploration, this play, function in my thinking/researching? How might it function for you as reader/listener? In considering how to make a better representation, or whether to make one at all, and seeking some other kinds of truth or ways of knowing, I fear I lost the participant completely. Perhaps this is the point, since she could never be represented fully. She is always already lost to me. And the representations have always already failed.

I am not the only one who has lost data:

“Maybe we lost the data altogether or data has already moved elsewhere, becoming full of new silences, secrets, and splinters, losing the reader and misleading the creator” (Benozzo, Bell, & Koro-Ljungberg, 2013, p. 315)

and data is not the only thing I have lost over the course this study. So, what do I hope that this work will do? Make evident (again- differently) the messiness that’s absent from a neat transcription page. Make more evident- the always entangled and material intra-action between researcher/participant/text/machine/technology.

(chin touches shoulder)

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Carolyn Shread, Catherine Malabou's translator for *Ontology of the Accident* (2012), wrote in her translator's note, "I would like to instead think of translation itself as accident. What if translation were to accept the accident as its condition of possibility, its possibility?" (vii)

And

"it may be that the conventional protocols that aspire above all to neutrality in translation are those that are responsible for its most serious accidents, by splitting the translator's reason from her affects" (viii)

This work was accident and translation and transcription and creation and and and. I was becoming artist and seamstress and technician and academic and author and and and. In this work, I seek to open possibilities for researcher, for (my)self. I ask, what is the researcher? What possibilities are open to us to be technician or artist or to work the between-- some middle ground? What happens when we (admit that we) live in the liminal between reason and affect (we are always already there)? How have I been made through this research? "Was *that* me?" (Manning, 2016 p. 37) Is *this* me?

"Rather than conceptualize data as a potential source of information, we are interested in data for what it produces, how it moves and for how it can be lived and sensed by researchers, and how data makes us as people and researchers." (Benozzo, Bell & Koro-Ljunberg, 2013, p. 309)

I am interested in writing and research and reading for what it produces, not in a goal oriented directional way but for what it might produce if I can hold the betweenness and linger with. I reject the conception of a linear continuum between representation and reality, where we can be

No. 9- An open iteration, speaking to possibilities

(Text or voice run through a specific set of translations for a particular amount of time.) OR Ode to
Yoko Ono.

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closer or farther from the truth of the intra-action or the interview. I think, instead of the infinite space of the liminal, the broad folded and intricate expanse of between. There is so much room there to play and to be, to question-- to be messy and always unfinished.

(eyes close a bit longer than a blink)

I need representation, it clings to me, and it haunts me. It is a gift sometimes, a flash of recognition, a noticing.

After our interview (after the recorder was off), Shelia said to me, “That was a gift, really a gift. I haven’t talked about this before.”⁹ Perhaps it was a gift as St. Pierre conceptualized it, “All these others move me out of the self-evidence of my work and into its absences and give me the gift of different language and practice with which to trouble my commonsense understanding of the world. They help me move toward the unthought” (1997, p. 185).

As I think and unthink with this work, I am left wondering does this manuscript (a failed representation of my thinking) “open the way for a different kind of knowing, a knowing in the event, in non-linear event-time, a knowing that, while impossible to parse, delights in the force

⁹ This is the only quote from Shelia in the body of this paper. She was not audio or video recorded saying these words. I did not and cannot transcribe them. I cannot prove that she said this or that she said it exactly this way. Of all the words she said to me these were the ones that mattered.

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of conceptual invention” (Manning, 2016, p. 24) or does it just *refuse* to know? I don’t quite say what I want you to think after reading this. I cling to the refusal to know as a productive stance and space. I situate myself in the infinite liminal, the being inbetween.

To not know does not mean that I refuse *responsibility*. Quite the opposite, in the liminal, I cannot resort to categories or counts or easy slotting.

“Responsibility is not a calculation to be performed. It is a relation always already integral to the world’s ongoing intra-active becoming and not-becoming. It is an iterative (re)opening up to, an enabling of responsiveness. Not through the realization of some existing possibility, but through the iterative reworking of im/possibility, an ongoing rupturing, a crosscutting of topological reconfiguring of the space of response-ability.”

(Barad, 2010, p. 265-266)

In the liminal, I have to operate in relation. I delight in relation for relation’s sake. I do not know where it/I will take me/it.

This paper is not meant to provide a procedure for better transcription. In this project, I have teased transcription- played around with it, stretched it this way and that, re-turned it. I have worked to unthink what it *is* and think its possibilities. My hope is that you might re-turn these pieces of writing, the objects, the images. I hope you found places/spaces/ideas/concepts to linger with. I do not produce this paper hoping it will take you to a particular place- I produce this paper knowing that I cannot know where it might take you and perhaps I have no answers to give, but questions and objects to think with to “study for study’s sake” and be delighted (Manning, 2015, p. 206).

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