

Re/searching for “impact”

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Abstract

Purpose – As an exploration of how “impact” might be reconsidered, the purpose of this paper is to suggest that current contemporary understandings of “impact” fail practice and research by obscuring the space for reflexive criticality that is crucial for an individual or organisation to flourish. That it thus leads to an already predefined enculturated understanding of “impact”.

Design/methodology/approach – Offering some interrogation and folkloristic analogy of the meaning of “impact”, three brief expositions of differing arts-based praxes concerned mainly with reflection and connection, are then discussed through the lens of Ricœur’s *et al.* (1978) conflation of the hermeneutical process with phenomenology.

Findings – It is suggested that the implications of restoring, refreshing, or representing “impact” give license to a personal/professional revitalisation, and that reformulating an understanding of “impact” through re/search might offer a potential pedagogic tool, and alternative organising feature.

Originality/value – Through the introduction of inter-disciplinary thinking and praxes, the paper offers novel autoethnographic arts-based methods for personal, professional and organisational development and growth.

Keywords Impact, Autoethnography, Arts-based, Folklore, Perambulography, Praxes

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This paper is concerned with the exploration of how “impact” might be reconsidered, or indeed reimagined. The title is intended to be a bold incitement through the suggestion that simply searching for and recording impact, would invariably lead to propagating an already enculturated understanding of it. I propose instead by re/searching we might rediscover some practices that, while centrally concerned with reflection, are situated within an arts-based research paradigm that is not ordinarily associated with the contemporary, accepted understandings of what impact is and how it can be measured. Throughout this text, I will refer to reflective and reflexive practice by its etymological origin of praxes, to evoke its philosophical connections. Through brief expositions of three differing praxes and the discussion around them, this paper suggests that there are differing perspectives and understandings of impact and what it means.

The meaning of the word impact is more often than not defined as a marked effect or influence upon a process, situation or person (*Cambridge Dictionary*, 2017; *Oxford Dictionary*, 2017) and sometimes held to have negative connotations too (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, 2017). But it is nonetheless a word that has come to be used in multiple contemporary environments and spheres of work; in higher education institutions, schools, and health care organisations for example, it is a term used in the compilation of organisational rankings. On a more individual level it is used in a similar way to measure the performance of researchers, teachers, other professionals, and business people. These spheres of work and others beside them, currently imbue “impact” with a particular meaning, and consequently use it in conjunction with various mechanisms such as frameworks, metrics, and performativity or funding criteria. Thus, “impact” tends to represent the demonstrable



outcome, measurement of achievement, or wider change produced (Hammersley, 2014). There are of course academics who subscribe and would wish for the impact agenda to be furthered (Smith and Stewart, 2017). There are also those who see how these representations can and have been easily linked to a neo-liberal agenda (Turner-Bisset, 2007), deprofessionalisation (Moutoussis, 2010) and managerialism (Klikauer, 2013).

It is not the intention of this paper to interrogate these discourses or their mechanisms but instead to offer a reformulated view of impact, with them as a background, and in the context of reflective practice (práxis). To do so, I would echo and extend Klikauer's (2013) view beyond just managerialism to include the breadth of dominant discourses already mentioned, and how they are:

[...] incompatible with a human society because [they are] based on the private exploitation of human labour, represents an inauthentic ideology, damages the human Geist (Hegel), deprives individuals of self-actualisation, [are] unethical, converts human needs into commercial needs, and leads to global environmental destruction (Klikauer, 2013, p. 60).

In attempting to address such concerns, I will suggest that we might reconnect with práxes that are more compatible for a human society. Which in turn means reinterpreting and representing an understanding of "impact" as "what comes out"[1] rather than as a prescribed outcome. The less prescriptive understanding of "impact" could be seen to permeate our entire culture but in less obvious ways. This often ignored understanding of impact is aligned with a definition that recognises that impact might "move the feelings", or be suggestive of "the impression made by an idea, cultural movement, social group, etc." (*Collins Dictionary*, 2017).

In realising this alternative perspective of what impact is, what it means, or how it is understood and represented, I will invoke three autoethnographic methods that operate as drifts or open explorations. Each of these will be offered as a case study and then discussed as a whole, before giving some concluding thoughts on the implications of these methods. The three methods I intend to discuss are Phrónetic Vlogging, Ekphrasis, and Perambulography. I will use a comprehensive literature review throughout as proposed by Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2016). This will allow me to take account of these arts-based methods' multi-modal and digitally dynamic qualities. Specifically, I will include QR codes within the text to direct the reader to non-textual examples or references.

While Heidegger's (1962) thoughts were drawn upon, particularly in the exposition of the Phrónetic Vlogging case study, and Bausinger's (1961) theoretical framework was used elsewhere, it was the hermeneutic phenomenology of Ricœur that seemed most relevant and appropriate when I began to analyse these methods for discussion. In advance of introducing these case studies, I will give some specific attention to my provocation of "impact" as critical thinking in organisations, as an organisational tool, and of its pedagogic potential both formally and informally. In the hope that when the ideas are animated, it is clear how an alternative perspective addresses those issues highlighted by Klikauer (2013).

Primarily, the suggested práxes are centrally concerned with meaning making and how this in itself can be an organising feature. The centrality of this concept was inspired by Alvesson and Gabriel's (2016) work upon "grandiosity", that takes the perspective that practitioners, and organisation and management discourses, even within academia itself are today discussing unremarkable, commonplace organisational occurrences in grandiose, and remarkable terms. We see the everyday usage of words in the workplace such as: mission, best-practice, vision, strategy; phrases like closing the loop, knowledge intensive, dynamic network; and of course – impact. This specious language has become the norm in many spheres of work to describe simple and ordinary organisational constructions and debates:

A perpetual noise of information and pseudo-symbols swallows meanings. As a result, authors like Baudrillard have argued that the world of contemporary consumption is full of signification and

empty of meaning, consumerism becoming a black hole into which meaning disappears (Baudrillard, 1988; Alvesson and Gabriel, 2016, p. 467).

While Alvesson and Gabriel’s (2016) article argues that contemporary societal flaws, such as narcissism, strengthened by consumerism have led to “grandiosity”; I would further this by suggesting that the “grandiosity” of “impact” creates significant limitations for the critical reflexivity of organisations, management, research and individuals (Hammersley, 2014). Such limitations lead to the creation of false expectations, which are solely geared towards an appreciation of “value if it makes a direct and demonstrable contribution to policy or practice” (Hammersley, 2014, p. 345). This in turn only destabilises organisational and individual performance and learning. The metaphoricity and narrative of this “ripple effect” perspective though, if challenged, might enable individuals and organisations to make sense of their world. One way of conceptualising “impact” then, is as an organising feature; as a way of making sense; a way of connecting; as metaphor and narrative of social reality itself.

I certainly would not be the first to suggest that story, poetry or art could be used to research social reality. Djerassi (1998) promoted the idea of co-composed prose, which might allow practitioners the opportunity of exploration nearly two decades ago. As a community, the practitioners worked with dilemmas and perspectives that would perhaps be taboo or unacceptable to discuss at other times. The important psychological aspects of this will be discussed later on. Djerassi’s (1998) “science in fiction” was by no means the only example of this either. Research into the benefits of collaborative storytelling have also been undertaken in more recent years (Gabriel and Connell, 2010) with experiments in something akin to “renga”; a Japanese style of poetry that comprises of multiple verses, of which, each is written by a different person. Furthermore, the field of fictionalised ethnography has long been a methodology of the discipline of organisational studies since Watson and Czarniawska first explored it at the end of the last century and onwards (Czarniawska, 1999, 2004; Watson, 2000a, b, 2004). These varying arts-based methods and methodologies allow participants to search for his or her own voice and jointly find, express, and own, an articulation of it within a text. We also see cultural organisations, like Storyhouse in Chester, UK, embracing these methods and asking fundamental social questions, such as: “Who are we?” And, “How do we want to live?” Such collaborative metaphor and narrative based standpoints could be recognised to contain pedagogic worth in terms of being transformative at an individual and organisational level, but also in terms of being a means of management learning.

Returning to the psychoanalytic aspect mentioned earlier, Bronner (2015) notes how Freud called for greater synthesis and collaboration between psychoanalysis and the knowledge, beliefs and values of everyday people: in short, between psychoanalysis and folklore. This synthesis has resonance with the suggested wider societal need to have expectations of impact that are more pragmatic and realistic, or down-to-earth; and appreciated in a more ethical way rather than merely fiscally: Djerassi’s (1998) publication mentioned earlier, was after all entitled: “Ethical Discourse by Science-in-Fiction”. The benefits of this synthesis though perhaps need more elaboration. In 2007, Bronner, invigorated Dundes critique of folklorists for only relating traditions’ outward, observable outcomes, or performances from a conscious level, rather than analysing the psychological reasons for producing them: asking why those creative practices and performances emerged from the unconscious (Bronner, 2015).

In the same way that Freud and Dundes suggested that whether something was a relic, or passed on orally was arbitrary in its being folkloric, “impact” defined solely through outward, observable outcomes could also be viewed as arbitrary, in all senses of the word. In both cases, I would also reject these arbitrary notions as the reasons for the manifestation of inhibitions. Instead, the “play-frames” (Bateson, 2000) that the manifestations occur inside of might be seen as reason enough: how they permit individuals “to do and say things that

would be difficult to do outside the frame, or reality dominated by the moral super-ego” (Bronner, 2015, p. 22).

Dundes (2007) maintained that everyday folklore provided life with a means of projecting trepidations and anxieties onto traditional forms, as it is a harmless arena in which they can be articulated. Similarly, the use of story, narrative, performance or other types of art-based practice usually understood as types of comedy, play, or the creative act, lessen the possibility of distress, being publicly ostracised, or condemned. These *práxes* can also be laden with ideas that are risqué, absurd, political, or confrontational without creating an unproductive atmosphere, as was the aim for Djerassi’s (1998) “science-in-fiction”. The use of creativity within a culturally traditional field requests the participation of the audience, one in which fiction offers impartial license to explore or address potentially contentious, embarrassing, dangerous, inflammatory or taboo topics: a place where one might explore a just anger for example.

These practices therefore, illustrate how certain emotions that can routinely be labelled as a provisional singular psychological disorder and as the root of a social disorder (Lindebaum and Gabriel, 2016), or dysfunctional organisation, can actually, if nurtured in a safe place, maintain a moral and/or restorative social order or organisation. Such explorations provide a dimension of information that commonplace assumptions of what “impact” is, and means, might miss (Hayes and Doherty, 2017). To paraphrase Lindebaum and Gabriel (2016), a world without such emotions would be, perhaps, an obedient, submissive and acquiescent world, but it is unlikely to be a just one.

So, in summation of this specific provocation of “impact” as an organising feature, I would reiterate that while exploring these emotions and recognising that creative processes are clearly at play in the case studies, that “impact” in these instances is viewed as making sense, as critical thinking, or organising through *phrónesis* rather than merely creating. All these aspects concern learning and thus demonstrate the latent pedagogic potential of the methods too.

Phrónetic vlogging

That I might more clearly define what I mean by *phrónesis*, the first case study offered as an example method will be Phrónetic Vlogging. Phrónetic Vlogging is an approach to develop *práxis*. Vlogging is simply recording thoughts, ideas, and reflections through video. In this case though, it is a performative, reflective approach, which is chiefly concerned with *phrónesis*. This has numerous definitions and understandings: often defined as the virtue of practical wisdom, or intelligence. More specifically it is the capacity for moral insight to recognise what moral decision or application would be most conducive to the good of oneself or others. It was considered in Greek philosophy to be different from other understandings of the virtues of wisdom; it is considered, perhaps more traditionally as “prudence”. Alternatively, McEvilley (2006) has proposed that the best translation is “mindfulness”. Regardless of the exact translation, an aspect of reflection can be seen to run throughout these definitions.

Heidegger (1997) proposed that the modes of understanding: *póiesis* (art), *theoría* (theory), and *práxis* (practice), were most readily appreciated through a set of matching modes of knowledge. *Póiesis* corresponding to *téchne* (craft), *theoría* with *sophía* (intellect), and *práxis* with *phrónesis* (practical wisdom). To Heidegger *phrónesis* was the principal mode of knowledge, anticipating *sophía* – theoretical knowledge - the mode of knowledge, which is arguably most associated with the impact agenda, being most readily called upon through evidence-based research to support it.

Working *phrónetically* allows individuals and organisations to be proactive in their engagement with understandings, concerning the functioning and structure of societies, imperious and specious overall language.

Through Phrónetic Vlogging, I have found a way of exploring práxis, through a personal professional lens. As an exercise, it allows me a space to critically question how “I” as teacher undertake my work, and manage to maintain the integrity of “I” as human being. It provides a space to challenge the ethics of a practice, not just competency or efficiency. To decide if I agree morally, ethically, and in relation to my own educational philosophy about what and how I am asked to work, whether by society, government, policy, colleagues or line manager. It provides the space all professionals need to enquire, reflect, and explore their thoughts and feelings about what the right and good thing to do is. Moreover, the space to understand the complex nature of one’s beliefs and values, culminating in one’s identity and what the impact of one’s identity might have on an organisation, and in this case how one consequently perceives impact too (see the QR code below for an example of Phrónetic Vlogging).



Ekphrasis

The second case study used Ekphrasis as a process of reflexive practice. It was originally inspired by Benjamin’s *et al.* (1999) work in two different ways: first, in the way in which he talks of the need for us as individuals to create a narrative to understand time and history. These narratives, and the choices we make in constructing them, like what we should include (exclude), seem to me are ways of metaphoricising our being, and deal therefore crucially with our identity. Coming to understand our beliefs, values and expanding our appreciation of how we connect, as with Phrónetic Vlogging, is significant, and in this instance, the impact of our relationship with nature is too. It also raises questions regarding sustainability. The second way that Benjamin’s *et al.* (1999) work was an influence was through his interaction with Klee’s painting; his conception of history was in itself Ekphrastic:

A Klee (1920) painting named *Angelus Novus* shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress (Benjamin *et al.*, 1999, p. 249).

I have recently been concerned with the writing of the folklorist Bausinger (1961) and his theory of folklore in a world of technology. Specifically, how he views folk culture as expanding as a result of technology and our resultant changing relationship with nature. I explored his ideas through creative practice. These explorations have resulted in ekphrastic poems containing metaphors that have helped me to understand the tensions of connectedness and again how identity might affect a community or organisation. Ekphrasis is writing produced as a rhetorical exercise, typically in response to a work of visual art;

in this case, it is a description of the feelings, ideas and experiences of viewing photographs of the natural world that I have taken throughout my life.

Being part of a research circle[2] unexpectedly gave me the licence to create poetry that was purposefully written quickly, and left unedited (see the QR code below, for an example poem and photograph of the exhibition and anthology of “Playing with Ekphrasis”). I was able to capture my initial raw thoughts. These poems analysed the same three “horizons” that Bausinger did in his theory of expansion: The spatial, temporal, and social. While the social horizon was the horizon I kept returning to most frequently in my thoughts, I found that the temporal and spatial were unavoidably and integrally intertwined with it. For example, metaphors of constellations came about to express an understanding of time, and archipelagos to appreciate the spatial aspect; both inexorably led to considerations of the social, “be-longing” and the tension between identity and community.



Perambulography

The third case study offered, looks at a praxis I have called Perambulography. It is important in the explanation of this practice to give some context: The rural county of Cheshire is the place where I grew up, and where my immediate family and ancestors are from. I was interested in drawing a connection between this landscape and my sense of belonging: to understand the impact of a landscape on a person’s sense of belonging and/or identity, quite literally by drawing. I wanted to capture an understanding of the landscape that avoided the romantic and sentimental, that instead allowed for an expression of psycho-geographical understanding: of the kind that would be reminiscent of a *dérive* (Debord, 1956), Benjamin’s (1997) *flânerie*[3] or perhaps even the Japanese practice of Hanami, or “flower viewing”, a traditional custom of relishing the short-lived beauty of flowers, but in a broader sense. The drawings that I would undertake though needed to represent my journey through the natural world with immediacy and thus I would try to avoid capturing and expressing a particular subject or singular moment with any emotional reaction. This would be crucial if Bausinger’s (1990) concern of the depreciation of nature to something that is merely appreciated was to be avoided. These drawings would be affected by each footstep, stile, gate, or passing tree. They would be a direct interpretation of the land, a felt, lived, and recorded experience. The ultimate goal was use these drawings as a graphic score for composition in order to present the experience in a way, which might resonate with listeners.

The first problem encountered was how to draw continuously so that the drawing was a record of uninterrupted reactions to the environment. To solve this I built a machine (see the QR code below for a video of me using the device) that would enable me to wind a spindle of paper over a drawing board whilst walking. The drawings that came out of this process were mainly expressed through the artistic element of line. This though served a useful function in terms of interpreting the drawn lines into music, as was my intention; they could be readily represented as a solo melody line. In turn, this led to a second dilemma, the drawings made were significant due to them being done on a walk from my own home, but they lacked the connection of belonging somewhere i.e. having walked a walk many times;

being familiar with a landscape; or the sense of connectedness one feels when treading the ground one’s forbears have trod. To tackle this issue I took the same walk multiple times, and drew instead upon acetate. The films of acetate could then be layered on top of one another so that each walk could be viewed simultaneously; linking again to the metaphor of a constellation and our understanding of time. The original walk drawn on paper was placed behind to give a background so that the acetate drawings could be more clearly seen.



This multi-layered approach (see the QR code below) offered a temporal polyvalence, in keeping with Bausinger’s (1961) temporal expansion and Benjamin’s (1997) conception of history as an individual’s recollected and compiled experiences. What came out was also reminiscent of Garner’s (1997) explication of how time, memory and feelings are inextricably linked, thus allowing a space for a sense of belonging to resound. It also functionally gave the opportunity for this to be represented in harmonies, counter-melodies, and even polyrhythmic elements during the interpretation of the graphic score for composition: ultimately therefore providing the greater possibility for impact in the composition, which would in turn allow the composition to resonate more deeply with the listener.



Discussion

Ricœur contributed in numerous ways to philosophical thought, but there are three aspects in particular that will help in the discussion of the three cases studies previously outlined: they are his combining of the hermeneutical process with phenomenology and his appreciations of time, and of language.

Ricœur *et al.* (1978) conflation of the hermeneutical process with phenomenology means that hermeneutic analysis considers more than just text. That it also critically considers the relationship of self with everything else beyond that self. Hermeneutics then, for Ricœur (1978b) becomes a perspective that acknowledges the connection between the self and the symbol. The relationship is one in perpetual tension and neither can be understood in separation. Each one of the *práxes* can be seen to accentuate a particular interpretation of “impact”, which concurs with Ricœur’s hermeneutical understanding and what should come out of it as a process. Put simply this accentuation is self-understanding:

In proposing to relate symbolic language to self-understanding, I think I fulfill the deepest wish of hermeneutics. The purpose of all interpretation is to conquer a remoteness, a distance between the past cultural epoch to which the text belongs and the interpreter himself. By overcoming this

distance, by making himself contemporary with the text, the exegete can appropriate its meaning to himself: foreign, he makes it familiar, that is, he makes it his own. It is thus the growth of his own understanding of himself that he pursues through his understanding of others. Every hermeneutics is thus, explicitly or implicitly, self-understanding by means of understanding others (Ricoeur *et al.*, 1978, p. 101).

Each of the *práxes* prioritises the conflation of the self and “other”, through a meaning making exercise: whether it is through the moral and ethical dilemmas of *Phrónetic Vlogging*, and the tension between one’s personal beliefs and values with those that one’s profession presents as an obligation; the tension between community and identity that was explored through *Ekphrasis*; or the relationship one has with a place and the natural environment explored through *Perambulography*. These explorations of self-meaning and other-meaning are essentially intertwined projections of existence itself. Therefore Ricoeur *et al.* (1978) depiction of philosophy as a hermeneutical activity has resonance with my provocation of understanding “impact” as a meaning making exercise. Furthermore, how “impact” might then also be perceived to be an organising feature of an organisation in terms of how we can individually and collectively seek to expose the meaning of existence through phenomenological interpretations of culture (be that from either a folkloric or organisational perspective):

This is why philosophy remains a hermeneutics, that is, a reading of the hidden meaning inside the text of the apparent meaning. It is the task of this hermeneutics to show that existence arrives at expression, at meaning, and at reflection only through the continual exegesis of all the significations that come to light in the world of culture. Existence becomes a self – human and adult – only by appropriating this meaning, which first resides “outside,” in works, institutions, and cultural movements in which the life of the spirit is justified (Ricoeur *et al.*, 1978, p. 106).

To expound these latter points a little more, it would help to recall how these meaning making exercises, these hermeneutical processes, are actually reflexive practices: *práxes*. The emphasis is not on the outwardly observable outcome here, but the meaning, perception or understanding of the self that is realised by engaging with the external other. The understanding of self is indirectly realised through the process of hermeneutics. The Cartesian *cogito* of course is in contradiction with this, as it is a position that “grasps itself directly in the experience of doubt”, and is “a truth as vain as it is invincible” (Ricoeur *et al.*, 1978, p. 106). The point I would make here is that the *práxes* of these case studies (and others like them) discover the self through different means. As Ricoeur would likely echo, the means of discovering self is through the interpretation of the signified. For me, the goal of hermeneutics therefore, is to re/search, reinterpret, restore, refresh, reinvigorate and reflect upon one’s own meaning. This process, manifested in such *práxes* represents a reformulation of “impact”.

The process of reformulation itself also bears some significance in relation to Ricoeur’s thinking in that it has utilised metaphoricity in a generative way (Ricoeur, 1978b, 1984). The use of language in an imaginative or novel way, demonstrates how he recognised its creative power to regenerate meaning (Dauenhauer and Pellauer, 2002). As such, I hope to have reconceptualised the contemporary, standard understanding of “impact” from being merely the outcome-driven contribution, to a self-meaning or meaning making understanding of the term that is connected to organisation. The “grandiosity” (hubris) of the impact agenda steered an understanding of “impact” “from a state patronage to an investment model” to facilitate performance pay or research funding (Hammersley, 2014, p. 345). Perhaps by restoring and reintroducing the meaning of “impact” with an integral human facet; as something fluid rather than fixed; and as containing pedagogic potential for organisation, we might address some of Klikauer’s (2013), Hammersley’s (2104), and my own concerns of the distorted view and expectations that current

understandings of “impact” propagate. So that unobscured understandings of the relationships between re/search, policy-making and praxis might be seen. That, “instead of fuelling the narcissism of students and instructors with ever more grandiose claims and hyped-up intellectual gizmos, could rediscover the importance of unspectacular, craft and versatile learning, imbued with humility and a tolerance for imperfections and uncertainty” (Alvesson and Gabriel, 2016, p. 471). I am reminded again here of the humility, and personal psychological catharsis of a community’s folklore, and how it is similar to how one might appreciate an individual’s praxis using arts-based methods in relation to organisation. Collective engagement has individual benefits, which in turn shape the collective. Returning to Bausinger (1961) is also helpful in realising this expanded, versatile, alternative perspective of what “impact” is, what it means, or how it is understood and represented: we might view re/search processes at the very least as an elaboration of the complexity of the meaning of “impact”, that it can be reinterpreted as “the provisional, partial and contingent nature of solutions”, that “tend to be dismissed as unnecessarily complex and inaccessible” (Hayes and Doherty, 2017, p. 123).

Re/search champions versatility, inter-epistemological acceptance, and diversity of knowledge types, understandings, and thus ways of reinterpreting “impact”. Our metaphors of understanding are different and in accordance our expectations should also be.

Implications for research and praxes

Having reflected upon the methods and the implications of the proposed understanding of “impact”, there are some common implications that to my mind determine what re/search looks like regardless of the method employed. Phrónetic Vlogging for example, I would hope, offers more than a typical reflective journal because the product is dynamic, it is a sincere, intense, vibrant and convincing interpretation of my exploration as a researcher and practitioner, and as a performance it seeks to generate insights for the researcher, practitioner, and audience that are impossible for conventional qualitative methods to achieve (Ackroyd and O’Toole, 2010). The method can be more readily shared due to its digital nature too. All the methods search for validity through authenticity as much as plausibility. Each method attempts to determine generalisability by virtue of whether a (singular) individual is able to shed light upon (universal) cultural processes which one is otherwise unacquainted with (Ellingson, 1998; Ellis and Bochner, 2000).

As such, autoethnographic methods offer rich and powerful models for conceptualization and perception, models that not only ask for audience participation in a sensory and emotional way, but also cultivate deeper relationships between those engaged by demonstrably enriching the dynamic products and processes of qualitative research (Jenouire, 2002; Leavy, 2009).

As methods that allow for open exploration, research of the types detailed might take any direction and will yield infinitely different yet personal results. The purpose of such approaches has been discussed throughout the paper but if we were to reduce it to simple terms, it should be undertaken to create meaning, to connect, to challenge, to provoke, and to share, but chiefly to inject humanity into our research and praxes.

Each method can be used on an individual basis, but there may be ways of developing them in a more collaborative usage. I would suggest that using these autoethnographic arts-based methods might give the practitioner, researcher, employee or manager an “approach to address a range of complex questions concerning their lives and the lives of others” (Bartleet, 2015, p. 444). They could easily be used in a variety of research or workplace scenarios, for example, in change management, problem or conflict resolution, or simply coming to know ones ethical position as an individual or

organisation; and of course in terms of business or organisational structures that need to grow, diversify, streamline, unify or shrink, in a way that centralises humanity rather than prioritising outcomes.

The three case studies offer methods that exist as embodied modes of enquiry, and evocative ways that research findings might be represented (Bartleet and Hultgren, 2008), either in the workplace, pedagogically, or within academia itself.

Notes

1. A concept I am indebted to being introduced to by Prof. Allan Owens.
2. I am indebted to Prof. Tony Wall, for the valuable opportunity of being part of an “Ubuntu” research group.
3. Benjamin’s (1997) flâneur is particularly apposite, compared to other variants because he saw the flâneur as a symbol of the estrangement of capitalism and of the city. His archetype met its end through consumer capitalism. I would offer a resurgence through revolution, possibly by dérivant through the natural landscape rather than undertaking the usual understanding of a dérive, which is to drift through an urban landscape.

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