Part VII

Embodied Performative Methods

Embodied research – or perhaps I should say, more accurately, research that is explicit about its embodied nature – is a twenty-first century phenomenon. So is performative research. There is a body of literature on each, but as yet very little overtly connecting the two types of method, even though that seems like quite an obvious link to make. As Jennifer Leigh and Nicole Brown say, in their book *Embodied Inquiry* (2021: 45–6):

> Where Embodied Inquiry is concerned, the physicality of moving and improvising, or the creation of collages or other artful representations helps participants and researchers become aware of their bodies and their being-in-the-world, which in turn provides an important starting point for further exploration of embodied experiences.

The chapters in this section make links which at first sight could seem surprising and perhaps unlikely to be fruitful: hidden pregnancy and opera; whiteness, anti-racism and performance art. Yet the usefulness in research of this kind of approach was noted over fifty years ago by sociologist Everett Hughes who liked to make and learn from unusual comparisons (Hughes 1971).

Catherine Conlon investigated the experiences of Irish women who chose to conceal their pregnancies. In collaboration with colleagues from her university's music and carpentry departments, some of her data was turned into seven miniature operas. These were performed as an opera installation in and around a box representing the Catholic confessional, over five hours in a public square outside Conlon's university in Dublin, Ireland, as guerrilla performance art with no warning of its arrival or departure. Spectators could enter the box, one at a time, choose a number from one to seven, and experience that mini-opera. People could also hear the music and see some of the musicians from outside the box, and benches were brought from around the university for them to sit on if they wished. In contrast with the pregnancies of Conlon's participants which were hidden and silent, the installation was visible and audible to anyone in that Dublin square at that time.

Katalin Halász created a performance installation at the Roskilde festival in Denmark as part of her research into whiteness. The aim was to perform anti-racist white femininity with a focus on 'the affective register' of emotions and relationships. The installation, 'The Chamber of

White', included a video with images of white women, including icons of white femininity, plus some of Halász's own art projects, and some footage of white men enacting violence and superiority. Halász acted as Cinderella, working with a heap of white, black and brown beans, selecting, sorting and remixing them in an endless loop of never-finished 'women's work'. Visitors were able to come into the installation, watch the videos, interact with Halász/Cinderella, and join in with her unending task.

Some might question the inclusion of these chapters in a Handbook on the grounds that the methods would be almost impossible to replicate, or even for their originators to repeat. I make no apology for their inclusion because I think they are useful in two ways. First, they show what is possible for researchers who dare to take opportunities and risks. And second, they are out and proud about the roles of imagination and serendipity in research. So I present these chapters to you, not for emulation but for inspiration.

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16

Pregnant Box

What Happens When Opera Enacts an Embodied Analysis of Concealing Pregnancy

Catherine Conlon and Evangelia Rigaki

Introduction: desperately seeking method

This chapter discusses a project that originated as policy-commissioned research initiated by Health Service practitioners to address concerns about recurring presentations of 'concealed pregnancy' to health care settings in Ireland. Research was commissioned to marshal evidence towards reducing the incidence of this 'problem'. I conducted the study, interviewing thirteen women about their experiences of concealing pregnancy. Engaging with the commissioned or applied policy process evoked for me Buroway's (2004) conceptualization of policy research as applied or 'instrumental knowledge'. A process in which knowledge making is premised on a positivist paradigm that accepts the possibility of direct access to a singular 'reality' while ignoring theorizations of connections between 'knowledge' and power and the implications of conceptions of subjectivity for knowing the social world (Buroway 2004; Lather 2010; Bacchi 2012; Shortall 2013). A paradigm with the effect of placing the inquiry in the realm of governmentality of women's fertile bodies.

Much previous research had tended to pathologize women concealing pregnancy. I used an interpretative approach drawing on cultural sociology and my analysis argued that the women in the study could be seen to be 'carrying their pregnancies differently' for reasons shaped by social and cultural processes (Conlon 2015). However, when I presented this analysis in formats familiar to my discipline of social policy – a policy research report, a PhD thesis and academic conference papers – the responses generated kept the women in the study 'in the frame' and tended to reinscribe them as pathological. These two-dimensional written formats seemed incapable of carrying the meanings women's embodied tellings had evoked for me during the research fieldwork and analysis.

I aspired to find a format for telling the analysis that could carry those meanings and turned to a collaboration with a Creative Arts practitioner in my university, Dr Evangelia Rigaki, from Trinity College Dublin's School of Music to realize that.

Evangelia created an opera installation entitled 'Pregnant Box', seven miniature operas and a wandering choir staged in a confession box in Trinity College Dublin in September 2014, written in response to my research. Addressing what policy research looks like after post-humanism, the instantiation is theorized (in the afterward (Lather, 2013)) as constituting an enactment assemblage generating an embodied analysis involving an entangled web of being, meaning and sound. 'Afterward' refers to the work of Lather (2013) who addresses what qualitative research looks like after what she calls 'various "deaths" and "returns"' (p. 634). The 'turns' or ontological developments Lather refers to are: linguistic, structural, critical, deconstructive, rhetorical, cultural, narrative, historical, ethnographic, postmodern, ethical, visual, pragmatic, policy, theological, material, affective and neo-pragmatism as well as increased attention to participatory community-based research, often feminist. The 'many announced deaths' (Lather 2013: 634) are of the subject, of theory and of the university itself while the 'returns include the real, the empirical, and, one of my favorites, objectivity after deconstruction' (Lather 2013: 634).

Lather (2013: 635) goes on to talk about qualitative research in the afterward these turns, deaths and returns as 'QUAL 4.0 as becoming in the Deleuzian sense as researchers who, weary of a decade of defending qualitative research and eager to get on with their work, again imagine and accomplish an inquiry that might produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently. . . . In this methodology-to-come, we begin to do it differently wherever we are in our projects. Here, the term "post-qualitative" begins to make a certain kind of sense (St Pierre, 2011).' This is the qualitative inquiry terrain I sought to work from in this project.

In conceptualizing the 'Pregnant Box' opera installation performance as an iteration of analysis 'in the afterward' here I seek to reflect on its 'effect' as a methodology of becoming in the sense that I did not see how it would transpire as I progressed the project, particularly in ontological terms. In this chapter, I seek to draw out some of the effects I argue it achieved. That the 'guerrilla' staging engaged the unwitting citizen/audience in an instantaneous, collaborative and ongoing process of knowledge building. In the enactment of the opera installation the essentialized research subject and essentialized audience were broken down and data, analysis and re-presentation were reframed as partial and always in process of re-membering. That the 'becoming' method had the effect of de-centring all elements to the research process in an enquiry concerned with the study of surveillance, regulation and cultural appropriation of (women's) fertile bodies as well as points of resistance and 'speaking back', and ultimately that new ways of knowing (fertile subjectivity) were glimpsed.

Interrogating data and subjectivity after post-humanist ontologies

Engaging firstly with conceptualizations of what qualitative unstructured interview data represents or how it is constituted entailed firstly engaging in an interrogation of the knowledge-making process I pursued within the applied policy research project, the prelude to engaging with creative practice. Post-humanist ontologies have been to the fore in destabilizing the 'data' upon which qualitative interview research is premised. Post-humanist theories of the subject interrogate the ontological basis of knowledge claims of interpretive, qualitative methodologies positioning the subject as unified, conscious, agentic and rational (Braidotti 2013). Lather (2013) depicts this as involving us '[thinking] differently mean[ing] to work within and beyond the reflexive turn, to problematize inquiry, to redefine objects as more in networks than in single sites

(Barad 2007), to trouble identity and experience, and what it means to know and to tell' (Lather 2013: 638).

A crucial break is proposed between humanist conceptions of individuals or bounded, rational actor subjects and poststructuralist/post-humanist accounts of subjectivity as precarious, contradictory, in process. Subjectivity is re-conceptualized here as continuously being constituted and (re)constituted in discourse each time we speak or think. And at the same time limitations to discourse as an ontological basis for knowing the subject or experience is also acknowledge for its inability to attend to 'non-conscious and non-cognitive dimensions of experience' (Blackman 2016: 2). For example, Kruks (2001) points out that framing the theoretical debate on the subject as either the unitary, coherent, essential self of the Enlightenment, or the decentred, discursively produced subject in process. It overlooks the contribution of existential philosophy that offers an epistemological approach to 'experience' and thereby exceeds the boundaries of the discursive so as to include knowing; acting; relations with others; emotion and affect; and embodiment. What Kruks (2001) characterizes as 'modalities of experience that in themselves, elude speech – and yet which we come to "know" through forms of non-intellectual, embodied, cognition. For we often experience what is not only unspoken but even unspeakable' (2001: 14).

Lather (2010) attends to more than that which eludes speech in calling for a new empiricism that works the ontological turn to take up Barad's (2007) call to 'make matter matter'. Lather (2010) invokes Houle's (2009) vision for working the ruins of feminist standpoint theory through a materialist reading of Derrida towards 'truly strange, beautifully fresh possibilities' that might 'become direct, close, palpable, imagined' (Lather 2010: 82 citing Houle 2009: 185). A move away from 'a subject-centred transcendentalism [] toward strategic intervention out of a theory of non-subject-centred agency of networked relationalities' (82) wherein 'relational materiality' features (83).

Turning to narrative

Applying the critique above to the knowledge generated constitutive of the commissioned research report was on the one hand devastating in its effect of questioning the report's 'validity'. The iteration of 'validity' engaged with here refers to Lather's (1993) vision for 'the conditions for the legitimation of knowledge in contemporary postpositivism' (673). On the other hand, the critique offered an opportunity for productive on-going engagement with the data on the grounds that diverse and evolving social science ontological and epistemological theory and practice give rise to diverse knowledges with validity related to the ontological ground from which knowledge generation proceeds. This critique did not invalidate the knowledge generated in that applied policy research analysis, but rather articulated out the ontological ground from which it emanates, and posits it as *one* iteration of meaning generated, rather than a definitive iteration. Working constructively with these critiques, I embarked on a project of continuing to engage with the data that entailed two moves to shift the ontological ground on which the inquiry was located and to productively hear the data anew.

The first move was to re-frame the interview data using post-humanist conceptualizations of subjectivity by turning towards the terrain of narrative methodologies; a ground on which the subject is decentred. Narrative methodologies are inherently aligned with creative practice. Doucet and Mauthner (2008) posit a 'narrated subject' developed out of the relational ontology underpinning Gilligan's (2006) Voice Centred Relational Method (VCRM). From a relational

ontological vantage point, the voice of narration is proposed as polyphonic, always embodied, in culture and in relationship with oneself and with others. Building from this, Doucet and Mauthner (2008) posit 'selves-in-relation' embedded in a complex web of intimate and larger social relations characterized by interdependence rather than independence (Doucet and Mauther 1998: 142). They develop an iteration of the VCRM directed at translating this relational ontology into concrete methods. The method entails a data analysis process that explores individual narrative accounts in terms of how the data represents the narrators' relationships to themselves, their relationships to the people around them, and their relationships to the broader social, structural and cultural contexts within which narrators live.

Doucet and Mauthner's (2008) approach to listening is centred on a set of basic questions about voice: who is speaking and to whom, telling what stories about relationships, in what local, societal and cultural frameworks? With these framing questions in mind, the text is read multiple and successive times for different 'listenings'. Each listening is intended to guide the listener in tuning into the story being told on multiple levels, and to experience, note and draw from his or her resonances to the narrative.

Attuned to the critiques of the subject as multiple generated by diverse ontological positions, my own experience of employing the method raised a question about the emphasis on 'how to listen'. This posits listening as beginning when the researcher sits down with the interview data transformed into a transcribed, textual format. The first experiential listening event taking place during the encounter between the participant narrator and the researcher listener is elided. Yet I had been deeply affected by the embodied experiences of that first embodied listening to the embodied narrator at the moment when the research participant generated the data for that recording. Riessman acknowledges this listening to narrative experience, and highlights attention to the role of affect in listening:

> when we learn to listen in an emotionally attentive and engaged way, we expose ourselves and enter the unknown with new possibilities and frameworks of meaning. (Riessman 2008: 27)

When giving an account of her experience of interviewing women in South India, Riessman noted how her listening, constituted in her emotional response to what she was hearing, was saturated with prior concepts, such as gender and generational hierarchies in India (2008: 27).

Embodied listening with affect

I wanted to explore how I could harness that affective listening memory that featured for me as a stronger ethic for knowledge generation from narrative for how the role of both narrator and listener are acknowledged. The 'Listening Guide' (Gilligan et al. 2006) is premised on the belief that the polyphonic voice of a person is always embodied, in culture and in relationship with oneself and with others. Also, that we are relational beings, that our sense of self is inextricable from our relationships with others and with the cultures within which we live. We tell and listen in ways that are both embodied and relational. Blackman (2016) notes how 'theories of affect invite reconsideration of the role of the body and embodied forms of sense-making in our being and becoming' (2016: 2). This evokes Lather's (2010) proposed methodological praxis of 'embodied' analysis 'that takes on the impasse of the linguistic turn via a 'new empiricism' that . . . is a co-constitutive intra-actionist ontology' (2010: 81).

This new ontological terrain provided the space for me to acknowledge how my experience of listening to women's narrations was deeply embodied. The 'listening' process involved an affective, embodied engagement attending to the text-words as spoken by the embodied narrator, accompanied by her gestures, modulations, (dys)fluencies, tears, features, dress and more besides, within the research encounter and my affective responses in listening. That is, an encounter choreographed by me as researcher during which I listened from within my own (pregnant as it happened) body. Listening and re-listening to women's narrations illuminated the place of affect as my body and embodied forms of sense making stepped into spaces in the encounter when language or discourse failed the woman in her attempt to articulate the why and how of carrying her pregnancy. The lack of language or discourse *and* the affective component of listening meant that some knowings generated during the research encounter between myself and women narrating concealing pregnancy were not captured in the 'data' of the research as represented by interview transcriptions.

Continuing to engage with each woman's story during hours of listening to their disembodied voices or reading their disembodied/dis-voiced transcribed words, I was attuned to how each listening was re-embodied in my mind-body memory stores, or the affective traces of our encounter on my body. As I read/heard a woman's words I would recall how she held her body or her facial expression or otherwise told with her body as well as her words. The affective responses of my own body to the process of listening featured as crucial to the interpretive process. Women's embodied narrations shifted what had previously been framed as individual relations to gender, sexuality, fertility and pregnancy towards what Weedon (1987) portrays as 'socially produced, conflicts and contradictions shared by many women' as well as subjectively generated acts, intentions and volitions (Kruks 2001). Having regard to the affective process of listening, I would argue, extends the ontological premise of Doucet and Mauthner's (2008) 'narrated subject' to the '*embodied* narrated subject*ivities*' and shifts the site of knowing from dis-embodied data representing subjectivity to a process of 'embodied listening'.

Embodied narrated subjectivities entangled in enquiry

So how can 'data' be constituted to acknowledge 'embodied narration' of teller and listener? Mazzei's (2013) conceptualization of interview data as voice without organs (VwO) proposes data as an entanglement that seems capable of containing embodied forms of listening and coming to know. Under this conceptualization Mazzei (2013) argues there is

> no separate, individual person, no participant in an interview study to which a single voice can be linked – all are entangled. . . . we decouple voice – words spoken and words written in transcripts – from an intentional, agentic humanist subject and move to VwO, voice thought as an assemblage, a complex network of human and nonhuman agents that exceeds the traditional notion of the individual. (2013: 734)

Mazzei posits interview data as an enactment among research-data-participants-theory-analysis, an entanglement that is not neither bounded nor singular.

> [Research participant's] words, her voice, do not exist apart from her or me but in the VwO, the knot of forces between the material and semiotic and the time of the interview and the time

of our lives. Her words enable an encounter in which my own and others' voices flow into and are entangled with other materialities, which, in humanism, we often call 'lived experiences' but which I call here VwO in order to resist essentializing such experiences and voices. (2013: 737)

While Mazzei's (2013) vision of data as co-constitutive, intra-actionist ontology resists essentializing experiences and voices, the challenge shifts then to consider how this resistance can continue in the 'doing' of representation. I am arguing that the 'Pregnant Box' constituted an analysis and representation 'becoming'. The format of the staging of the opera installation constituted an entanglement between the audience and the interview data so that it in turn constituted an enactment among research-data-participants-theory-analysis-*audience*. This extends Mazzei's (2013) vision for representation in line with a post-humanist ontology achieved through an entanglement between research-data-participants-theory-analysis. This is achieved by bringing in an unwitting audience/public to witness and participate as audience in an embodied, re-enactment of empirical qualitative data, a move that constituted a second turn to materialize the empirical.

Turning to creative practice to extend research entanglement to include audience

In this second move to entangle the audience in an embodied enactment representation of empirical interview data process, I was seeking a methodology capable of acknowledging the role of affect in knowledge making. The entanglement proposed by Mazzei (2013) discussed above was aspired to *as well as* exploring the proposition of audience as also part of the entanglement. A method capable of materializing the empirical by re-presenting the data in an embodied format but crucially in a method that could keep meaning-making open. This involved moving the inquiry into the terrain of presentational knowing, the expression and communication of experiences in images through visual arts, music, dance, movement, poetry, drama and storytelling. When employed as a method for knowledge generation, presentational knowing is considered to be an emergent method (Leavy 2008), a means of accessing answers to complex research questions and revealing subjugated knowledge (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2008). Presentational knowing methodologies are, however, usually engaged for generating or producing (often co-producing) data using presentational formats for the intention of capturing and building further meaning or theory through that knowledge (see e.g. Godden 2017). Could a presentational knowing be used to re/present an iteration of meaning making by research, from data interpretation, in a way that also created space for continually emerging meanings? What would this look like?

In an experimental move, I brought my inquiry into the domain of the creative arts and joined the Creative Arts Practice Research Theme at my university, Trinity College Dublin. There I told members about my project and what I wanted to do. Dr Evangelia Rigaki from the School of Music became captivated by the project. She believed that bringing the data into the medium of opera with which she works could mobilize the affective ethic I strived to achieve. I shared with Evangelia my written, textual analysis of one woman's narrative of concealing pregnancy using VCRM (Conlon 2015). Evangelia as a creative practitioner translated my articulation of meaning of one woman's concealing pregnancy narrative presented as a social science written text, taken together with my testimony of the affective ethic into an embodied materialization in the form of

opera installation. Evangelia's interpretation was intended to open up the process of meaning-making to bring the audience into the entanglement, in the afterward (Lather 2013). Evangelia invited her long-standing collaborator, W.N. Herbert, to write the libretti (i.e. the words for opera). Each interpretative move by my creative collaborators, Evangelia and Herbert, as well as soprano Lori Lixenberg, flautist Joe O'Farrell, conductor Orla Flanagan and the Mornington Choir, brought the analysis to a further remove away from its disciplinary origins of social science.

'Pregnant Box' opera installation

Evangelia conceptualized an opera installation, a piece of performance art entitled 'Pregnant Box', comprising seven miniature operas written for one audience member at a time with a wandering choir, staged inside a specially constructed confession box. Inside the box, the audience member sits in the central chamber, the place of the confessor listening to the sinners. This evoked specifically Catholic imagery and in turn the dominant Catholic influence on Irish social policy, teaching and culture since the foundation of the State in 1922. The effect of the Church's influence was associated with highly repressive attitudes and harsh treatment of women, particularly those pregnant outside of marriage, throughout the twentieth century by both the Church as an institution and by the State and its agents (see e.g. Inglis 1998). On entering the confession box, the audience encountered on one side a soprano singing the libretti portraying the internal world of the pregnant woman. On the other side, a flautist accompanied the soprano but with stunted, broken sounds rather than a more usual melodic tune. Outside, following the Greek chorus tradition, a wandering choir sang choral pieces again scripted using women's words where they were portraying feeling judged by the outside perspectives of others. A short video of the performance is available at: Pregnant Box Installation – Extract – YouTube (Rigaki 2015).

Four of the libretti were short, stunted extracts from the woman's narrative all included in my VCRM analysis write-up (Conlon 2015):

Jesus, you can't put on a bit of weight in this town but everyone thinks you are expecting ...

If the fridge needed moving I'd move it. I never ate a thing in the hope that I'd miscarry the baby and I never told anyone ... I booked a holiday and everything over to America thinking the flight over would make me lose the baby too.

I drove at 100 miles an hour all around the town I just wanted to kill myself because I was so mad they told mammy because I had this plan made out. No one would ever have known I was after having a baby.

So for Monday and Tuesday I cried and I didn't I cried for the two days solid mammy was up the walls she didn't know what was going on or anything.

Another libretto was composed by Herbert, inspired by his affective response to reading the VCRM analysis of one woman's concealing pregnancy narrative:

Inside this box
I am a box for life
Inside your vox
I have no voice or choice

Inside this nox
I am the knock of life
Inside your night
I am the wife of light

There were seven libretti making up the seven miniature operas with the number seven purposely chosen by Evangelia for its association with ancient Christian notions of the Seven Sins. The conductor of the wandering choir remarked on how the scores with the libretti were written in a cross-like formation that struck her as resonant with the part played by religion and persecution in the performance, evoking again the harsh treatment of women by Church and State referred to above (see Figures 16.2 and 16.3 below).

The performance was staged in the Front Square of Trinity College Dublin as part of College's Discover Research Event in September 2014. It ran over a four-hour period from 5 to 9 pm. People entering Front Square, which is a public space, were not forewarned it was there. The opera installation was a piece of guerrilla performance art, arriving without announcement and gone without forewarning. The confession box was hastily assembled by college carpentry staff who supported the project. Benches from the college were lent to the performance and placed in rows, like church pews. People entering the space could sit and watch the performance as a whole from the sides or take a more central position and sit in one of the pews signalling more engagement with the project, or participate fully and enter the confession box to hear the libretti as well as the choir.

A single audience member entered the confession box. The door closed and the space was lit only by the natural light coming from outside through the cross shape cut into the door. Two hatches slid back. On one side sat flautist Joe O'Farrell, on the other mezzo-soprano Lori Lixenberg. Lori asked the audience member to say a number between one and seven. Whichever number they chose, unbeknownst to them, selected one of the seven miniature operas for Lori and Joe to perform. Lori's powerful mezzo-soprano voice sang one of the seven libretti carved out from the plain words of the woman's narrative in operatic style. Evangelia remarked on how these 'brutal, ugly words' of the plain everyday usurped the opera tradition itself, more used to using highly stylized language and in Italian. The libretti also indicated the singer would make inchoate sounds within each performance, murmuring or slapping her tongue behind her teeth.

The power of the mezzo-soprano reverberated around the small, enclosed space and flooded out through the hatch while Lori's face and body remained hidden from view. A disembodied voice. On the other side, flautist Joe O'Farrell accompanied not with the usual rich, melodic bass or light and airy notes expected of a flute but rather inchoate sounds without melody that punctuated the ruptured sound of the mezzo-soprano.

Outside the Mornington Choir, conducted by Dr Orla Flanagan of Trinity College Dublin, performed the choral pieces singing Libretti representative of how the woman portrayed herself as viewed by the outside world such as 'This Girl'. The interview quote was 'A nurse just came out and announced it to the waiting room. She said "Oh this girl isn't, she has to see a social worker she isn't happy because she had a one night stand and it isn't her partners' child.'

The choir served as 'the chattering classes'. As the evening grew darker the conductor experimented with movement and choir members wandered around in erratic formations visible only by the spindly reading lights illuminating their scores, while making their sounds eerie and

Figure 16.1 Choral score for 'This Girl'.

Figure 16.2 Choral score for 'Inside'.

Figure 16.3 Photo of performance showing the confession box, choir and audience.

menacing. All that evening over the four hours of the performance people queued continuously to enter the box and stayed to watch the performance as a whole evolve.

Evangelia's conceptualization of a confessional staging for the performance was a site where 'relational materiality' (Lather 2010: 83) may be possible. The simultaneous representation of inside and outside evokes Clough's portrayal of 'lives where the inside and the outside collide into each other . . . leaving a body undone and a self without grounding . . . the destructive effects of trauma' (2016: 2).

The confession box was evocative of deep cultural resonances particularly when placed in conjunction with the absent/present *imagined* pregnant body/ies. People who viewed the performance spoke of finding it unsettling, haunting and claustrophobic. Some recalled women from their own families or communities rumoured to have concealed a pregnancy and reflected on ways they were implicated in that woman's fate. Many mused on how we as a society can be implicated in people's individual crises. Musings that seemed to be prompted by the embodied encounter with the materiality of the box and embodied artists singing the women's words implicating the audience in an embodied entanglement of data.

Enacting data as opera installation: embodied affective relational material instantiation

The staging in such an iconic public place transformed the project into something the public could not fail to see. The performance of the concealing 'data' as an opera installation is proposed here as an embodied materializing of data that instantized and made visible the inquiry as an affective intervention where the audience encountered the data. This constituted a sonic re-telling of the data as an ontogenic[1] re-enactment which Gershon and Ben-Horin (2014) propose as a

research praxis wherein the arts are a means for conceptualizing, understanding and expressing science in another pushing back at the false binaries of mind/ body and emotion/reason. Through a 'data as enactment assemblage', both essentialized research subject and essentialized audience are broken down and the 'heroic author' is displaced (Lather 2014).

Data is reframed as partial and always in process of re-membering via sonic, materialized re-telling constitutive of the ontogenic re-enactment engaging the audience in an ongoing process of re-telling. The opera installation constituted an embodied, materialized, relational analysis wherein the audience is brought into an entangled web of being, meaning and sound that de-centres all subjects involved in this study of surveillance, regulation and cultural appropriation of women's fertile bodies. This embodied, affective, materialized, instantiation of data affected a disturbing of borders and boundaries between self and other, inside and outside, material and immaterial, past and present (Blackman 2016) or colliding inside and outside (Clough 2016).

Creative practice as embodied entangled analysis

Addressing what policy research can look like after post-humanism, the instantiation is theorized here in the afterward (Lather 2013) as constituting an enactment assemblage generating an embodied analysis involving 'an entangled web of being, meaning and sound'. The 'guerrilla' staging engaged the unwitting citizen/audience in an instantaneous, collaborative, open-ended process of entangled knowledge generation. In the materialized, embodied re-enactment, essentialized research subject and essentialized audience were broken down and data, analysis and re-presentation were reframed as partial and always in process of re-membering. The method de-centred all elements to the research process in an inquiry concerned with the study of surveillance, regulation and cultural appropriation of (women's) fertile bodies as well as points of resistance and 'speaking back'. New ways of knowing (fertile subjectivity) were glimpsed as well as new methods of creative practice that encompass the entangled research envisioned by Mazzei of data-as-enactment assemblage but extended beyond researcher-data-participants-theory-analysis Mazzei envisaged to include audience/public. The creative practice method described in this chapter was devised in process as experimental, instantiation to explore its possibilities. While re-creating this performance is not anticipated from documenting the method, the purpose of reporting on it is to demonstrate the potential of creative collaboration.

To end, a note on ethics. This creative practice collaboration was not intended to generate an arts-based representation of the research findings. Rather I embarked on it because my more familiar practices of written and oral representations of the data/analysis had not been able to mobilize the affective components I, as researcher, had witnessed within this research process. I was haunted by their absences. By how their absences meant that these more familiar social science formats of representation had the effect that research 'subjects' or participants were always 'othered', under suspicion for their 'abnormal' practices during their pregnancies.

The iteration of analysis achieved in the 'Pregnant Box' opera installation entailed *not* representing a participant's overall narrative but rather spotlighted key moments that distilled and captured the affective power of key turning points in stories. The operatic form of presentation did not risk identifying one person or their story. Evangelia's composition together with W.N. Herbert's libretto conveyed only very short extracts of quotes from interviews that either individually or together did not jeopardize anonymity. Ethics seemed to work differently in this

project. It was driven by a reflexive ethic on my part as researcher to find a form of output from the project that would deflect attention away from the 'non-normative' behaviour of the pregnant women concealing pregnancy that seemed to captivate audiences. The operatic form comprised confessional staging with audience as confessor, powerful embodied sound, and stunted libretti in the miniature opera format emphasized affect over detail. In so doing, it displaced the woman from the centre of the frame and widened the audience's perspective in a move that for my purposes finally achieved a greater ethic of (re)presentation.

Note

1   For Gershon and Ben-Horin, ontongenic refers to ever-emergent moments of ontology that lead not only to other experiences of being but also to experiences of knowing (2014: 3).

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