

## Editorial: Overview of the Performative Social Science Special Issue

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**Abstract:** We write this Editorial Overview having traveled together and separately through the articles in this Special Issue and offer it as a roadmap for your own exploration of the Issue. We are hopeful that you will use it to guide your reading, returning to it often, and that you will stop at each article to explore what it has to offer you. Enjoy the journey. Don't forget to collect souvenirs and remember to leave something of yourself.

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This Special Issue on Performative Social Science (PSS) focuses on methods and techniques that have recently been added to the qualitative researcher's toolbox. These articles represent scholars who are courageously developing arts-based research methods that facilitate both the generation and dissemination of new knowledge in order to investigate deeper and reach wider audiences. "Performative," in the widest sense of the word, has become a "working title" for the efforts of social science researchers who are exploring the use of tools from the arts in research itself and/or using them to enhance, or move beyond, PowerPoint conference presentations or traditional journal submissions in their dissemination efforts. Those engaging in this new "performative social science" are often shifting existing boundaries or transforming them through relational processes. [1]

This Special Issue brings together a seminal collection of 42 articles that respond to the following queries. 1. Theory—where is PSS coming from and where is it going? 2. Method—what are the methods of PSS and how are those methods changing the way that we do research? 3. Ethics—what are the ethical concerns of PSS and how do we ensure that participants/subjects in performative research are ethically represented? 4. Evaluation—who reviews PSS, how can PSS be appraised and what constitutes "quality", particularly within academic frameworks? This Special Issue also provides a wide range of examples and manifestations of Performative Social Science arising from various disciplines/subject areas, realized through a wide variety of approaches to qualitative research practice. [2]

Throughout the co-editing of this Special Issue, (as with any new thinking), we have grappled with the potential inclination to incorporate these innovations into previous work through categorizations, matrices, and so forth. We would like to think that we have resisted that temptation and, instead, have left the possibilities of this new turn or movement open for discussion and future development. This

Special Issue presents experimental pieces that use different kinds of digital and written contributions which move this publication beyond the normal constraints and layouts of paper-based journals. It contains over 100 photographs and almost 50 illustrations, as well as 36 videos and two audio-recordings. Diverse textual forms of representation include over 50 poems, three scripted conversations, and a play. This Special Issue showcases an impressive range of methods, techniques and philosophical underpinnings. Central to this sea change in thinking about research and its dissemination is a renewed consideration of our audiences and how to widen them and/or further engage them in a participatory research process. [3]

From the beginning, this Special Issue has been an international endeavor. The Call for Abstracts listed six editors from Australia, Canada, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Throughout the process, the editors worked together on the many decisions involved in such an undertaking. This international character culminated with 42 articles written by contributors from 13 countries (Australia, Austria, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, New Zealand, Spain, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America) and written in three languages. At least one editor was assigned to work with each contributor, not as a co-author of the paper, but rather, serving as "First Audience" to each contribution. [4]

Kip JONES and Mary GERGEN set the tone for this Special Issue by opening with a conversation, bringing us their reflections on their own histories of doing Performative Social Science, and personal reflections on how they view the current status of PSS efforts. They allow us—even invite us—to engage in the discussion—to change the course of the discussion. Brian ROBERTS then presents us with an encyclopedic and much-needed historic context for PSS and looks to the possible futures for this movement. [5]

Shifting to the world of organizational consulting, Martina BATTISTI and Tanja EISELEN describe how performative methods can be used in this context. They particularly report on some creative processes used to inquire into a specific case within a not-for-profit organization and reveal dynamics that might otherwise remain hidden. Sally BERRIDGE invites us to contemplate some of the process issues that emerge in a performative (creative) PhD and reflects on performative work in the context of academic research, while Birgit BOHM, Heiner LEGEWIE, and Hans-Liudger DIENEL take us on a journey of applying PSS, using the "Citizens Exhibition", a method integrating qualitative methods such as interview and text interpretation with artistic-aesthetic methods such as photography and film, as an example. [6]

Sarah BUTLER invites us to walk with her through the *Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery* in Montreal to experience the performance work of Olivia BOUDREAU. We are asked to explore the questions raised by the uncertainty of the event and the emotions it evokes. Devika CHAWLA engages the emotional language of poetry as she explores her "*sideways mystory*", and Scott CHERRY returns us to

the performative in the context of theater and discusses parody, using as an exemplar the performance of a self-help book. [7]

Gil DEKEL uses names and sounds to take us into spaces of silence with no names. Peter DIRKSMEIER and Ilse HELBRECHT identify the paradox that PSS must deal with and the complexity performance enables us to address as a research method. Anja DOORNBOS, Marloes VAN ROOIJ, Maaïke SMIT, and Suzanne VERDONSCHOT aim, in their article, to encourage researchers to design research in which researchers and practitioners co-produce knowledge that can advance theory and practice in a given domain. They present a model for this and eight different methods that support the learning process through the different stages. Next, Kitrina DOUGLAS and David CARLESS allow us inside their reflections on their own journeys in PSS and identify some qualities that the performative social science researcher may need. They discuss the importance of nurturance in a PSS researcher's development. We continue with Lis ENGEL, dancing in the moment and with the movement of everyday life. [8]

Marcia ESCOBAR NIETO and Roberto FERNANDEZ DROGUETT introduce us to the performative work they organized around the 1973 Chile *coup d'etat* commemoration march, in order to intervene in it and to promote new ways of remembering the past. We then meet Jeff FRIEDMAN who links with a Maori student (Catherine MOANA TE RANGITAKINA RUHA GWYNNE) in New Zealand to literally "move" the story of her life, code switching between different forms of representation. Elements of this process are revealed both through video and theorizing on what this might mean for Performative Social Science. [9]

Nel GLASS presents a series of artworks and describes how the creation and engagement with artwork in research can be a dynamic process that invites reciprocity, and Luis Felipe GONZALEZ GUTIERREZ proposes metaphors, visual narrative sequences, and interactive artistic forms for the presentation of psychology research results. He argues that these forms invite the spectator to share and to understand important concepts in the consolidation of social forms of construction of the daily reality. Felicia HERRSCHAFT develops a notion of "performing proximity" where artists use their practice to engage participants in the creation of their artwork. This process, HERRSCHAFT argues, helps artists change artworks and consequently the wider social world. Gunilla HOLM and her students discuss photography as performance, as an ethnographic research and dissemination method. [10]

Next, Debbie HORSFALL describes how a group of community workers, activists, and academics came together to use performative methods to explore issues of resistance and difference. The article describes the creative development of a script and performance where social change is celebrated. Also celebrating, by remembering, Rebecca M. KENNERLY takes us with her on an emotional pilgrimage to roadside shrines on highways in the United States and in cyberspace. This journey is also one of coming to better know our connections to each other in death as well as in life. [11]

Jennifer L. LAPUM presents her personal journey in researching identity using poetry-enhanced prose and photography to visualize and make us feel her story. LAPUM discovers how creating both artifacts amplifies the transformative nature of autoethnographic research. Also sharing her stories of discovery, Karen V. LEE presents us with a picture book of memories and a movie that she uses to cope with missing her daughter who leaves for a one-week camping trip with her father. [12]

We then meet Patrick J. LEWIS who discusses what makes a good teacher using a documentary film that takes interpretative themes emerging from interviews and presents them with images of good teachers from popular films. Warren LINDS and Elinor VETTRAINO blend visual and textual materials together to disclose how the performative can be inquiry focused. Bringing into play Augusto BOAL's *Theatre of the Oppressed*, they provide exemplars of their work and further elaborate this practice through theoretical contextualization. [13]

Sarah MACKENZIE, drawing on one particular experience or series of experiences, brings her emotions from being a researcher on the margins to the writing of her article, and she invites us to bring our emotions to the reading of it. MACKENZIE might take comfort in the work of Michelle MILLER-DAY who discusses the need for new means of disseminating research. She identifies and describes translational performances and offers suggestions for how such performances might be evaluated. [14]

Maggie O'NEILL writes about working with artists to bring forth the stories of asylum seekers. Her work explores themes of identities, home, and belonging. Also creating a space for voices to be heard, Guylaine RACINE, Karoline TRUCHON and Merdad HAGE use an experiment to bring forth the messages of seldom-heard voices—non-status immigrants in Canada. This article recalls and records a call or an action for social justice. Frances RAPPORT makes visible the often invisible in social science research and creates an empathic response to Holocaust survivors' testimonies through poetry. [15]

Returning to the physical environment, Frances RAPPORT, Marcus A. DOEL, and Paul WAINWRIGHT emphasize ambiguity and difference rather than attempt a focus on certainty and similarity as they take us inside the unique space of a GP's (General Practitioner's) workspace. Then, Sabi REDWOOD gives us pause with a characterization of research as a violent act. REDWOOD envisages hope for research, however, within the potential of PSS. That hope is continued as Yvonne ROBINSON identifies transformative and transgressive moments in research conducted with ex/recovering addicts/alcoholics and how performative methods may help make such moments possible. [16]

David D.J. SANDER SCHEIDT uses voice both as noun and as verb, and coins his term *[au]/[o]-tophonography* for his examination of voice, and Claire SMITH performs her recovery from a traumatic brain injury and takes us into that recovery through the characters she creates for the script of her play. Following, Ulrike STUTZ notes the importance of the dialogue in qualitative research and

uses *site specific art* to explore everyday rituals carried out in public spaces. James VALENTINE uses the power of story to document and celebrate the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. *OurStory Scotland*, the name of the project, indicates who is telling whose stories. [17]

Natasha G. WIEBE draws on her Mennonite and Pentecostal background to create her *Mennocostal Musings*, poetry that explores her understandings of identity, faith, family and community, while Helle WINTHER draws on student experiences and voices to reveal the intersections between social, cultural, and personal learning. Informed by notions of practitioner research, narratives are constructed to reveal a body poetic where students find words and creative expression to reflect on sensate experiences that are also pedagogical. [18]

We begin to draw our articles to a close with Patricia WOLF and Peter TROXLER who introduce us to the un-conferencing approach and to a specific *unconference* format, *UnBla*, and provide examples of one event organized and its outcomes. They discuss different theories and approaches from the social sciences and establish links between them and the method developed. Finally, Ainslie YARDLEY uses the metaphors of *bricoleur*, patchwork maker and weaver to help us piece together our own understandings of research. [19]

Our aim in this Special Issue was to bring thoughtful reflections on, and manifestations of, Performative Social Science. We aspired, perhaps some might say foolishly—but joyful fools we are with the results—to establish a foundational reference for the performative turn in social science. We believe we have achieved it, as Kip JONES says, "one download at a time," but we leave it to the readers/listeners/viewers—you, the audience—to respond. [20]

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