

## Meaning making and collaborative ethnography in transdisciplinary arts

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*'They are lines not of flight, but of interaction.'*

(Ingold, 2011:63)



This paper focuses on the entangled processes of meaning making and collaborative ethnography in transdisciplinary arts. We consider how lines of interaction within these entanglements develop new methodologies and epistemologies for co-producing research and practice. Using examples from projects at the intersection of practice, research and engagement, we ask how artists and researchers can engage with communities through creative inquiry and how the roles of superconductor emerge and also merge.

Throughout our practice and our research we are concerned with questions of how to develop understandings of the possibilities for and affordances of creative practice in a research-led pedagogical environment, and what role(s) the artist has in the production of knowledge. This work is developed from our backgrounds as an artist-researcher (Atkinson) and a linguistic ethnographer (Bradley) working in arts settings.

For our individual research projects, we use ethnography as a theoretical framework to understand our creative processes, as well as exploring cultural differences and similarities through material and linguistic cultures. Within our shared practice, we draw from our epistemological commitments to creating co-produced, collaborative projects which critically engage with notions of authorship.

In this paper, we consider the possibilities of co-authorship through our own experiences of transdisciplinary collaboration and we address how these forms of collaboration contribute to and develop our practice. These processes also involve engaging the participants' experiences and knowledges to 'co-produce' arts-based research. In this way, we extend notions of co-authorship to the individuals and groups with whom we are working.

Working with young people in two inner-city Leeds wards, we use elements of photography, film, writing, and visual arts to explore ideas of home and belonging through researching local semiotic landscapes. These co-produced workshops - as 'meshworks' (Ingold, 2011) - create a generative nexus of practice, research, and engagement. This is framed through the concept of 'collaging' as a system of synthesising disparate practices, and draws on Latour's (1991[1993]) notion of 'hybrids'. Our work enables us to create spaces for dialogic reflection on our hybridity and on the research process.

Our frameworks also draw from the concept of translanguaging (Garcia and Li Wei, 2014), as an approach to communicative repertoire which focuses on individual idiolects and the role of collaborative arts practice in developing shared repertoires. Collage here is foregrounded as both arts practice and as a repertoire-based approach to communication.

By presenting this work - and the work of the young people - we consider the roles of artists and art - and how authorship and notions of ownership are subverted and questioned through this practice, creating a new space, challenging notions of hierarchy.

Ingold, T. 2011. *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. Oxon: Routledge.

Garcia, O. & Li Wei. 2014. *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*. Basingstoke, UK; New York, US: Palgrave MacMillan.

Latour, B. 1991(1993). *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.