Feasting on Possibility

Process Work Research in Postmodern Times

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Satisfaction of one's curiosity is one of the greatest sources of happiness in life.
Linus Pauling

Abstract: What is research, and where are lines of definition usefully drawn if researchers are to be able to communicate with each other effectively? What does Process Work research encompass, and where does it stand within the broader research community? This article explores these questions, with reference to examples of Process Work research.

I came to research later in life. Or did I? In my early years, I was fascinated by the natural world around me, the creatures of the salty mudflats and freshwater streams near my home. I wanted to be a marine zoologist, a veterinarian, a scientist, until I learned that these would require aptitude in math and science. In lieu of mathematical ability, I studied my math teacher, a woman of terrifying genius and disposition, who held up her stockings with elastic bands and foamed at the mouth when riled. I studied my Latin teacher, she of flaming hair and temper, eccentric wearer of shoes that did not match. Who could understand her fierce fury, her bursts of kindness and humor? In nature and in school, alone and in company, in humdrum places and holy ones, I tried to understand people and other mysteries, seeking answers and experiences that would satisfy my curiosity about life. I wondered and pondered, read, dreamed, explored, and experimented. I went blank, spaced out, and wrote poems in the middle of the night. In my forties, I went back to school and developed a passion for academic research, while simultaneously embarking on my studies in Process Work. When did I first become a researcher? When does anyone?

Becoming a researcher can mean many things. What we are fascinated by, and how we go about investigating it, varies widely, and is influenced by cultural factors as well as personality and life experience. It is an unfortunate reality that many who were schooled in the tradition of modern western science are denied the identity of the researcher, and view research as antithetical to exciting discovery. A "one size fits all" approach to research, fashioned from the unquestioned tenets of positivist science, has left many feeling out of shape and out of sorts. Positivism, a philosophy of science predominant in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is characterized by the pursuit of objective truth. For decades, positivist science dictated a narrow view of what should be viewed as valid research, and how it should be conducted. Although many of its discoveries and achievements have greatly benefited humanity, its shadow has also lain heavy on the curiosity and originality of aspiring researchers of human experience. Its rigid adherence to prescriptive methods of objective measurement

and quantification has sometimes limited exploration of the richness, peculiarity and mystery of human life. This has led some of us to believe that what we are interested in is "not real research," and that the particular orientations and talents we have for inquiry and representation are somehow inferior.

In the postmodern era, a relativist philosophy of science holds increasing sway. Relativism is founded in the idea that reality cannot be known separate from the knowing subject, and is shaped by the lens through which it is viewed. This opens up a diversity of epistemological and methodological choices for the researcher, a smorgasbord of ways to satisfy our curiosity about the world, and to creatively represent our discoveries to others. In these times of broadened possibility, where are lines of definition usefully drawn if researchers are to be able to communicate with each other effectively? What methodological choices are currently available to researchers? What constitutes Process Work research, and where does it stand within the broader research landscape? To address these questions I will begin by offering a definition of research that conveys the broadened scope of human sciences inquiry in the 21st century. Next I will give a brief overview of the array of philosophical and methodical choices that are available to researchers wishing to blend their unique capacities and interests with established avenues of inquiry. In the last part of the article, I will consider what Process Work research might encompass, discuss its relationship to established methodologies, and identify some distinguishing characteristics. I hope that these ideas will provoke further discussion on what constitutes Process Work research, since I believe that fully answering that question is an ongoing project to which process-oriented practitioners around the world contribute through their own practice and research.

Defining Research

In its broadest sense, the word "research" means "to look again." It can be used to describe any pursuit that enables us to investigate something more closely. In this sense, any of us can consider ourselves researchers, since from our earliest years, we have learned about the world and ourselves by looking again at whatever piques our curiosity. The human sciences grew out of people sharing common curiosities, and looking again and again into specific aspects of human life. They developed more specific definitions of research in order to frame inquiry in various disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, social work, anthropology, and education. Such definitions are underpinned by a range of assumptions about knowledge, and shaped by a variety of research traditions. For the purposes of this article I have chosen a definition of research which conveys the breadth, specificity and relational nature of human sciences research. This definition serves as a useful basis from which to explore methodological possibilities for researchers in general and for Process Work researchers in particular.

Research can be defined as "a disciplined inquiry process" with three main identifying features: questions, context and method (Arts and Humanities Research Board, 2002). Research questions specify what is to be investigated. Research context pertains to research and writing that has been done in areas related to a topic of inquiry, and specifies how a research project will contribute to the advancement of creativity, insight, knowledge and understanding. Research methods provide ways of addressing and answering specific research questions, and include a rationale for the particular methods chosen.

According to this definition, research also has three key characteristics: accessibility, transparency and transferability. Research is accessible because it is a public activity, open to scrutiny by peers. It is transparent in the sense that it is clear in its structure, process and outcomes. It is transferable in that it is useful beyond a specific research project, because the project is applicable in principles (if not specifics) to other researchers and research contexts. This characterization suggests that research is an inherently relational and communicative process, a kind of conversation, which takes place between the researcher, the research partici-

pants, the wider community of researchers, and other interested parties. Even when it is conducted in relative isolation, as when an individual researcher explores some subjective phenomenon, the meaning and purpose of research is realized in community and communication with others.

Distinction between Research, Creativity and Practice

Research, creativity and professional practice often overlap, and at their broadest level of understanding, may be difficult to tell apart. For example, in daily practice, a psychotherapist may conduct research and exercise creativity in any number of ways, such as learning more about human nature or her chosen modality, or coming up with new ways of working. A visual artist or writer who makes art for a living blends creative and professional practice, and draws on anything in life as research material. A researcher may choose to investigate professional practice and inevitably uses creativity in the research process. While acknowledging this broad overlap, however, it is also useful to identify how research is distinct from creativity and practice. As defined above, research is a disciplined process, a relational activity, whose meaning is realized in a public context and in communication with a wider community of researchers. Creative output can be produced, or professional practice can be undertaken, as an integral part of research. For example, a research project can have a variety of outcomes, including written material, performances, films, broadcasts, exhibitions, teaching materials, and other forms of creative representation. However, creative activity and professional practice are not necessarily accessible to peer scrutiny nor do they necessarily involve communication with a wider audience, in which case they do not come within the definition of research offered here (Arts and Humanities Research Board, 2002). From this point of view, it is the relational nature of research, its communication with and accountability to a wider community context, which distinguishes it from other creative and professional activities.

A Feast of Possibility

Under the characterization of research offered so far, today's human sciences researcher can encounter multiple possibilities in the design and execution of a particular research project. A feast of methodological possibility spreads out like a banquet before the hungry mind of the researcher. Learning more about these possibilities makes the researcher's task of satisfying his or her hunger much easier and more straightforward. As a chef draws on established culinary traditions and personal artistry in preparing an excellent meal, a researcher combines established research methodologies and personal inventiveness in designing and implementing a research project of high quality. Research design includes identifying a research problem, formulating research questions or hypotheses, and selecting philosophical perspectives, strategies of inquiry, and research methods to best address the research problem. All of these shape the "who, where, what, when, and how?" questions of research design and possible ways of answering them. They affect choices in sampling and site selection (who takes part in the study, where it is conducted, and within what time frame), ways of obtaining data (such as interviewing, observation, and documents), approaches to data analysis and interpretation, and ways of representing outcomes (examples include reports, journal articles, dissertations, manuals, films, performances) to an intended audience. A great deal has been written on these topics in the past few decades (see for example, Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c), and detailed discussion of them is beyond the scope of this article. In the next section, however, I will provide a brief overview of these areas, in order to show the rich array of choices with which the researcher is presented at the outset of a research project.

Focus of Inquiry

All research begins with a problem or focus which pertains to a particular area of interest, context, and purpose. In the early stages of research design, the research problem is described and either a hypothesis or a central

research question is formulated. A hypothesis is expressed as a propositional statement, which invites subsequent theory testing, causal explanation and generalization. A research question is expressed as an open question, and invites rich description, inductive analysis and interpretation. For example, a researcher interested in testing the effects of aging on brain function might start out with the hypothesis: "Aging causes memory loss." If the same researcher was interested in exploring, describing, understanding or generating theory about aging and memory, an appropriate research question might be "How do the elderly experience memory and memory loss?" Research hypotheses and questions may come from existing theory, review of the relevant literature, professional concerns, or personal experience. They motivate, guide and structure the inquiry, inviting various methodological considerations, such as which paradigmatic frameworks, research methods, and strategies of inquiry are best suited to their investigation.

Paradigmatic Framework

Research questions and their investigation are inevitably grounded in a paradigm of inquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (1998b) define a paradigm of inquiry as:

> a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines for its holder, the nature of the "world," the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, as, for example, cosmologies and theologies do. (200)

The paradigmatic framework of a research project is influenced broadly by the cultural background of the researcher, and more specifically by the research culture in which the project is designed and carried out (for example, an academic institution, a professional or organizational setting, or a learning community). Basic to this paradigmatic framework are philosophical ideas about existence (ontological assumptions) and knowledge (epistemological assumptions) that shape a particular research project at the deepest level. Paradigmatic frameworks are not necessarily apparent to the researcher, particularly if he is new to research, or is accustomed to working within an unexamined philosophical frame. It is therefore useful to reflexively examine the philosophical assumptions out of which a particular research project will grow, even though it is not necessary for the researcher to have a comprehensive knowledge of philosophy. As good soil helps a garden to flourish, a clear sense of the philosophical grounding of a particular research project facilitates its design, furthers the internal consistency of the project and helps to prevent problems in its implementation.

Towards this end, it is helpful if the researcher takes time initially to consider the lens through which she views the world, particularly her beliefs about knowledge and its acquisition. Is knowledge something that exists, like ore in a hillside, waiting to be mined? Or does the metaphor of journeying, rather than mining, more accurately represent knowledge acquisition as a co-creative process, shaped by subject and context? (Kvale, 1996). These two metaphors of "researcher as miner" and "researcher as traveler" represent a positivist-relativist dichotomy in philosophical assumptions about knowledge, but by no means exhaust possibilities in this area. Various shades and combinations exist, depending on the degree to which a relativist perspective and sociopolitical critique is embraced.

For example, various perspectives layer a relativist "canvas" (Schwandt 1998: 223) founded in a tradition that aims for understanding of meaning, as opposed to experimental verification. Interpretivist, constructivist, social constructionist, critical and emancipatory perspectives can be distinguished on this canvas (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998b). While many researchers identify with one or other of these perspectives, and conduct all of their research from within its frame, others view them as subsumed beneath a broadly pragmatic meta-frame. Researchers adopting this position believe that the philosophical framing of inquiry is best dictated by practical considerations (Hoshmand, 1994).

Research Methods

Research methods in the human sciences can be broadly divided into two categories of inquiry: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative inquiry seeks causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings. This type of research is especially valuable for summarizing large amounts of data and reaching generalizations based on statistical projections. It usually incorporates large scale sampling procedures towards this end (Ponterotto & Grieger, 1999). Creswell (1994) defines quantitative research as "inquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analyzed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory hold true" (3). Qualitative research is less easily defined than quantitative research, since various definitions, with differing theoretical and practical emphases, are found in the literature. Denzin & Lincoln (1998a) offer "an initial generic definition" of qualitative inquiry:

> Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals lives. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand. (2-3)

In her comprehensive and widely cited work, Tesch (1990) lists over 40 types of qualitative research and presents a detailed taxonomy of approaches. She observes that in general, definitions of qualitative inquiry tend to reflect the influence of underlying interpretive perspectives. Common to much, if not all, qualitative research, are a flexible and emergent design, sample selection that is non-random, purposeful and small, and intense or prolonged contact between researcher and participants. Eliciting understanding and meaning from the participants' perspective is often a main purpose. The research orientation tends to be holistic, complex and contextual with an emphasis on understanding "how." Data are largely non-numeric, though may include interpretation of numeric patterning, or some form of counting of non-numeric categories. Findings tend to be in the form of rich description of context, players and activities, and in the form of themes, categories, typologies, tentative hypotheses and theory derived inductively from the data (Jones, 2000).

There is a great deal of discussion in the literature on quantitative and qualitative methods, and how they are best distinguished. Some researchers associate quantitative research with the positivist paradigm, and qualitative research with any of a number of relativist frames. Others see them as methods which may be framed from various philosophical positions. As Brannen (1992) comments:

> The distinction between qualitative and quantitative approaches to research is best represented, not by the analogy of a crossroads of dichotomous choice, but by the analogy of a complex maze where we are repeatedly faced with decisions, and where paths wind back on one another. (52)

One approach to negotiating this maze lies in adopting a pragmatic meta-perspective (Hoshmand, 1999; Patton, 1990), which regards all data that can contribute to an understanding of a particular topic as worthy of consideration. Various philosophical stances may be taken in combination with qualitative or quantitative methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), depending on the issues raised by the question and the context and complexity of analysis, rather than on the type of data available, such as numbers, text or a combination of both. Elaborating on this pragmatic approach, Ponterotto and Greiger (1999) propose "a symbiosis between qualitative and quantitative

methods in a merged research identity" (55). They suggest that qualitative and quantitative perspectives represent different worldviews, with different languages, often accompanied by a sense of tension, or gap. They also suggest that one can become bilingual and bicultural in one's research identity. The choice of the research paradigm is dependent on the specific nature of the research problem and on the current state of knowledge in the field. Having a bicultural research identity and its related competencies allows the researcher more flexibility and options in both gaining a perspective on a research question and planning its investigation (Jones, 2000).

Strategies of Inquiry

Strategies of inquiry, or research traditions, help to refine the framework of a particular study, and shape how the researcher goes about collecting and interpreting data. They tend to be associated with qualitative research methods. Examples include phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, case study, biography, and action research (Merriam, 2002). Phenomenological researchers study the ordinary "life world." They are interested in the way people experience their world, what it is like for them, and how best to understand them. They study their own experience and collect comprehensive, detailed descriptions from their respondents. These descriptions are submitted to a questioning process in which the researcher is open to themes that emerge and develop into a full and in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 1990). Ethnography (Wolcott, 1994) explores the nature of social phenomena. It tends to emphasize fieldwork, participant observation, small samples, unstructured data, and analysis primarily in the form of verbal descriptions and explanations. Action research (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985) is an educative, problem-focused, context-specific and future-oriented approach to research. It involves a change intervention, and a cyclic process in which research, action and evaluation are interlinked. Aiming at improvement and involvement, it is founded on a research relationship in which those involved are participants in the change process. Grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1997) is a research strategy for developing theory that is grounded in systematically gathered and analyzed data. It is characterized by a method of constant comparative analysis, and involves generating theory and doing social research as two parts of the same process. By no means exhaustive of the full range of strategies of inquiry that are available to the researcher, these brief descriptions of a few research traditions are intended to convey some of the ways in which strategies of inquiry frame and guide a research endeavor.

What is Process Work Research?

Where does Process Work research stand within this landscape of 21st century human sciences research? What are its defining elements, and how may it be characterized in relation to the meanings and methodological possibilities discussed so far? Is Process Work research distinguished by a particular focus of inquiry, or by specific philosophical underpinnings, strategies of inquiry, or methods? In the remainder of this article I will discuss various ways of defining Process Work research as they relate to the aspects of research described so far. In conclusion, I will identify an overarching characteristic, which I believe gives Process Work research its own unique flavor.

Focus of Inquiry

One definition of Process Work research hinges on its focus of inquiry. From this perspective, a particular study may be considered Process Work research if it is investigating an aspect of Process Work theory or practice, even if its research design incorporates philosophical assumptions, strategies of inquiry and research methods from the broader spectrum of human sciences methodologies. For example, a Process Work research project might draw on developments in the field of qualitative inquiry to explore or describe phenomena related to the practice of Process Work, or it might test Process Work theoretical concepts and principles using a quantitative approach. Such studies enrich and enlarge the body of Process Work theory, and develop its practical applications,

while also communicating Process Work concepts and practices to the wider research community. For example, Morin's (2002) study is identifiable as Process Work research by virtue of its focus on Process Work concepts. Framed by a post-positivist, quantitative approach to inquiry, the study investigates the relationship between physical health and "rank," as defined in Mindell's (1995) approach to working with diversity and conflict in group and community settings. More examples of Process Work as a focus of inquiry can be found in other theses and dissertations of Process Work students, whose research has focused on various aspects of Process Work theory or practice (see for example, Vikkelsoe, 1999).

Paradigmatic Framework

Process Work research can also be defined by virtue of its paradigmatic framework. Process Work may be seen as a paradigm in its own right, in that it posits a worldview, or set of basic beliefs that define for their holder the nature of the world, the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts. Much of the ongoing development of Process Work theory and practice has come from research conducted in this vein by Arnold Mindell and his colleagues. As a paradigmatic innovator, Mindell has developed the theoretical concepts and practical interventions of Process Work which constitute the beliefs and practices of the paradigm. Amy Mindell's (1995) identification of "metaskills," or feeling attitudes, as key elements in Process Work practice, is another example of this kind of Process Work research. The Mindells and their colleagues have conducted research with the paradigmatic frame of Process Work over the 25 years or so that the modality has been developing.

Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

Since Process Work is an essentially phenomenological, experiential approach to personal and interpersonal discovery, it might be assumed that Process Work research would take a predominantly qualitative approach to inquiry. In fact, like their depth psychologist predecessors, Mindell and his colleagues have long used qualitative methods in their approach to research, even when this was still viewed as "unscientific" by mainstream psychology. Heuristic research, a recently recognized form of phenomenological inquiry that uses qualitative methods in its investigation of the subjective experience of the researcher (Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 1990), has been popular amongst Process Work researchers for years. Qualitative methods feature more prominently than quantitative methods in the Process Work literature, and quantitative methods appear to be more marginal in the Process Work research community, in contrast to the privileging of quantitative methods in the wider research community. However, in recent years, Process Work research has also incorporated quantitative methods, or a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Thus, neither qualitative nor quantitative methods can be seen as defining characteristics of Process Work research, which may incorporate either or both, depending on the research topic and related design considerations. For example, Hauser (2000) studied the effects of a Process Work intervention on heroin use, using a mixed methods design that incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Strategy of Inquiry

Although still young and relatively unformulated, Process Work research is developing as a strategy of inquiry or research tradition in its own right. As philosophical phenomenology gradually developed into the distinct methodology of phenomenological research, the paradigmatic framework of Process Work is gradually giving rise to a research tradition of its own. Founded in the tradition of phenomenological and Jungian analytic inquiry, Process Work is in the process of making its own research procedures and processes more explicit. For example, unique approaches to the collection of nonverbal, unconscious data, and to the interpretation of data based on Process Work structural analysis, are emerging out of Process Work theory and praxis. A clear formulation of the Process

Work research tradition has yet to be made, and would itself be a valuable research project.

Process Work Research as Creative Emergence

While recognizing that the definition of Process Work research is still a work in progress, I have suggested three main ways in which Process Work research may be defined: by virtue of its focus, or its paradigmatic assumptions, or as a tradition of inquiry in its own right. The Process Work researcher can also select from a range of methodological options, both qualitative and quantitative, from the wider field of human sciences research. Having escaped the methodological restrictions of positivist research, Process Work researchers stand before a feast of complex choices that can be as bewildering as they are daunting. How do they go about making and proceeding with these choices? In the remainder of this article, I will answer this question by identifying a fourth defining characteristic of Process Work research, which I have termed "creative emergence."

Creative emergence is a process of transformation that occurs during a particular research project, through the application of Process Work skills and metaskills to obstacles in the researcher's path. Such obstacles might entail facing uncertainty at any stage of the project, in dilemmas such as: "What shall I study?", "How shall I study it?", "What shall I do with my data?" or "How shall I write about what I am finding?" Or they might involve any number of other theoretical, practical or personal difficulties or experiences that crop up along the way. Research metaskills are the feeling attitudes with which a researcher approaches a research project and its concomitant challenges. As in other aspects of life, including psychotherapy (Mindell, 1995), metaskills associated with research open doors to transformation, allowing the unexpected to appear and the unknown to become known. Important metaskills in Process Work research include adopting a "beginner's mind," and "making the familiar strange" (Shapiro, 1991). With a spirit of curiosity that is central to a Process Work approach to learning, the Process Work researcher adopts a stance of openness to the unknown, and has a readiness to be informed and transformed by it. Even that which appears familiar or known is viewed with new eyes, approached with the sense that things are not always as they seem, and that there is always something more to learn.

In any research project, unknowns arise at various stages. Initially, the research topic, question or hypothesis is unknown or not clearly formulated. Then methodological unknowns abound: paradigmatic uncertainties, methodological questions about how to generate and interpret data, dilemmas about how to represent the research in finished form. Often the researcher is beset by periods of doubt, insecurity and anxiety. I think of such moments as "creative emergencies." A creative emergency may be experienced at any turn in the research process, such as initially, when faced with what to study, or later on in designing the research project, implementing it, and presenting it in some form. Valuing and believing in the emergency as a threshold of possibility, building the capacity to stay with it, and developing the disciplined awareness and skills to unlock its potential, are central to Process Work research. This attitudinal approach, and the detailed awareness technology that supports it, allow the researcher to plunge into a crisis rather than avoid it. Techniques of amplification, particularly unfolding sensory-grounded experience, help to shift the researcher from a preoccupation with the content of the crisis, and from the mind-set that created it, to a wider awareness which allows new perspectives or solutions to arise. While all researchers encounter such emergencies and find various ways of coming through them, process-oriented researchers actively embrace creative emergencies as allies in research process, and employ Process Work techniques to access their deeper "dreaming" dimensions. This generates answers to questions, solutions to problems, decisions about choices, and directions for future steps in the research process.

Through this awareness process, the Process Work researcher discovers topics she had not

known she was interested in, methods she had not considered nor deemed possible. The process of encountering creative emergencies in the context of research, embracing them and using awareness techniques to generate new possibilities, is what I have termed creative emergence. In Process Work research, it reflects and enhances both the researcher's own nature, and the nature of her inquiry process. It is like a river, flowing around bends, encountering different obstacles, creating itself anew, yet with an identifiable character throughout its entire length. Creative emergence brings depth, texture, and dimension to every aspect and stage of the research project, so that by the completion of the project, the researcher as well as the research project have undergone a process of creative transformation. At first glance this characterization of Process Work research may seem similar to descriptions of qualitative inquiry. For example, Maracek, Fine and Kidder (1997) describe qualitative research as a journey into the unknown:

> A qualitative stance invites broad-based inquiry into spaces that are undocumented in other studies… qualitative workers begin with a period of exploration and immersion, and narrow their focus. Propelled by a desire to know what is unknown, to unravel mysteries, to be surprised and jostled by what turns up, qualitative researchers embark on an intellectual adventure without a map or even a clear destination. This way of working requires giving up control, going along for the ride, not always having hold of the steering wheel—and still taking good notes. (634)

However, the distinction that can be made between qualitative inquiry and process-oriented research lies in the researcher's ability to focus on unknown spaces in herself and her project simultaneously, knowing that both are manifestations of a deeper potentiality that is seeking expression.

Creative Emergence in Practice

What does this process of creative emergence look like in research practice? To illustrate this, I will offer three examples. First I will describe an experience from my own research work, and then I will provide two other examples, composites drawn from my work with others on their research projects.

In my own case, I began my doctoral research (Jones, 2000) with an interest in marginality. At first I focused on sociocultural marginalization. In trying to define marginalization, I reached a theoretical impasse about what I was studying and how I might study it further. I quickly reached places of such anxiety that I found my mind blanking out entirely. A creative emergency! One day I sat in that terror of the unknown, completely paralyzed, until I realized that what I was experiencing was in fact what I was studying. Once I embraced the experience of not knowing, I could begin to explore the experience of being in my own mind-margin, at the limits of what I knew. With the help of Process Work awareness techniques, I could hold the experience and go into it further. This process of creative emergence resulted in my coming upon a meaning of margin as limen or threshold that had not previously been the focus of my inquiry. I had not intended to study it, rather "it" emerged out of an interactional process between my known identity and ideas, and those that lay beyond my awareness. It expanded my study to encompass the concept of "non-knowing" in intercultural relationships, something that was deeply fascinating to me, and it changed me personally as well.

In the first of my two remaining examples, a research student, whom I will call "Tim", was struggling to come up with a research design which he thought would be suitably scientific. An actor by profession, Tim was very interested in mystical experience but thought that for the purposes of his research project he should abandon his love of all things mystical, and his passion for performance art, in the interests of conducting "proper research." This belief, stemming from his experiences in college, plunged him into a creative emergency. He was despondent and self-critical, almost ready to give up the project altogether. By unfolding his experiences using Process Work techniques, he discovered that he was interested in the concept

of everyday mysticism, and the river of creative emergence started to flow again. He decided to keep a research journal for one month, in which he tracked mystical experiences in his own life and worked with them in movement. He then allowed this inner work to shape the design of his project. Excited to learn about the range of qualitative methods that were now accepted in the wider research community, he was then able to select a method which was congruent with his inner experience. He decided that his project would culminate in a series of dance performances, recorded on video, with an accompanying essay expressing what he had learned. This example illustrates creative emergence as a process in which the researcher uses Process Work skills and metaskills to resolve research blocks, bring the research project into alignment with the natural inclinations of the researcher, and guide methodological choices.

One of the most frequent comments I have heard in working with others on their research projects is: "Oh! Research can be fun and exciting! I didn't think it could be enjoyable!" As Tim's story illustrates, this exclamation almost always occurs as it begins to dawn on the disheartened researcher that she and her project are not separable, and there is meaning and possibility in research blocks and obstacles. Tim realized that his deepest interests and fascinations could find expression in a research form which delighted him, and which expressed newly identified parts of himself. This is the essence of research as creative emergence, and it is further illustrated in my final example. A research student, whom I will call "Gloria", was interested in exploring altered states of consciousness. Initially, she was thinking of conducting a qualitative study of Process Work practitioners' experiences of altered states of consciousness, using a phenomenological approach. As she tried to design her study, she found herself unaccountably depressed. This turn of events was unexpected to her. She was studying something that passionately interested her, and she was approaching it in a way that felt compatible with her view of how research on human experience should be done. Why did she feel bored and unhappy? Drawing on the metaskill of "making the familiar strange," Gloria studied herself with curiosity. She looked again at her interests and beliefs with an open mind. She noticed that whenever she felt stuck, she would sit dreamily at her desk, doodling. She would make small, sharp marks in her notebook. By focusing on the details of her experience, she found herself drawn to the exacting and precise quality of the marks on her paper. Using Process Work techniques to explore that quality further enabled Gloria to access interests and inclinations as a researcher which she had not known before. She found she was interested in consciousness studies in mainstream academic settings, and that she enjoyed experimental methods and statistics. She went on to conduct a research project that incorporated largely quantitative methods.

Conclusion

In this article, I have explored meanings of research and described the main components of human sciences research in an era of expanded methodological possibility. I have suggested that there are many ways in which Process Work research may be defined: as a topic of inquiry, as paradigmatic framework, and as a strategy of inquiry. Process Work research also encompasses qualitative and quantitative methods. All of these, singly or in various combinations, may characterize Process Work research, but do not exclusively define it. An overarching characteristic of Process Work research, to revisit the metaphor of the smorgasbord, lies not in any of the choices at the table, but in the stance of the researcher as she is faced with them. This stance is one of openness to the unknown, and a willingness to dig in and enjoy the possibilities in front of her, even when they appear in the guise of something unfamiliar or difficult. Through this process of creative emergence the potential in the researcher may emerge creatively in consonance with the potential of the project. The Process Work researcher unites the curiosity of the child with the disciplined inquiry of the researcher in community.

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