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Abstract

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Keywords

Poetic Inquiry, Participatory Research, Newfoundland, Arts-Informed Research, Research Ethics, Feminist Research Methods, Social Justice

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Collaborative Poetic Processes: Methodological Reflections on Co-Writing with Participants

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This article illustrates how the author engaged in a collaborative poetry-making process with two participants, Margaret and Mary, in this feminist qualitative research study exploring women's experiences of displacement, as loss of sense of place, in Newfoundland, Canada. The author evaluates some of the key successes of this type of process, including credible representation of participants' experiences and reciprocity in the research process, as well as some of the methodological and philosophical tensions surrounding co-writing with participants that emerged during the poetry process. This article will be of particular interest to researchers and students who are looking for ways to collaborate with participants in crafting poems about their lived experience in poetic inquiry work. *Keywords: Poetic Inquiry, Participatory Research, Newfoundland, Arts-Informed Research, Research Ethics, Feminist Research Methods, Social Justice*

This article outlines my methodological process in engaging in a collaborative poetry-making process with two of the women who offered their stories to my research project exploring Newfoundland women's experiences of displacement (see Manning, 2016, 2017a, 2017b). I first became interested in poetic inquiry and other arts-informed methodological approaches to research during my undergraduate degree, finding they aligned well with my commitments to doing research that has relevance and impact outside the academy. In this particular research project, using a collaborative poetic inquiry process offered a way for me to involve the participants in the research beyond simply collecting their stories in interviews, as co-writers of poems based on their experiences. Having the poems present within the wider work also allowed me to provide a different "way in" to the research and its findings for the participants, as well as interested community members and policy makers, who might otherwise find the complex academic language that characterizes many research outputs inaccessible or overwhelming.

Unlike other qualitative methodologies, very little work has been published on precisely how to do research using poetic inquiry, leaving those who are new to the methodology to flounder through existing finished products to find a process that works for them in their research (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2009). I have explored poetic methodologies over the last five years in three different research projects. I have reviewed the limited literature on different methodological processes of poetic inquiry (see Butler-Kisber 2012; Glesne 1997; Lahman 2011; Petersen 2012), and arrived at a place and a process that works in the context of my own work. This is a contribution that hopefully can be of use to others as they find their way to their own poetic inquiries.

Why Use Poetic Inquiry?

Poetic inquiry belongs to a group of methodological approaches known as arts-informed methodologies. Storytelling, drawing, video, photography, and performance theatre (among others) also belong in this group. Eisner (2008) writes that arts-informed research methodologies recognize that "empathy is a means to understanding, and strong empathic

feelings may provoke deep insight into what others are experiencing" (p. 6). For this reason, arts-informed methodologies are well suited for social research that aims to work for social change. Despite taking different artistic forms, Cole and Knowles (2008) propose that arts-informed research methodologies are united by a set of common defining elements. These include: using an art form that makes sense in the context of the research; valuing the imagination in the inquiry process; the researcher taking an active role in shaping the art form while ensuring reflexivity; and aiming for audience engagement as a key outcome of the research process. In short, arts-informed methodologies create research that is "accessible, evocative, embodied, empathetic, and provocative" (Cole & Knowles, 2008, p. 60). These imaginative forms allow readers or audience members a different way into the research that challenges the conventional ways of presenting social research (Jacobsen, Drake, Keohane, & Peterson, 2014).

As a feminist researcher, I have a commitment to doing research that is accessible to the people and communities I work with and has the potential to contribute to social change. As an academic and a writer, I know the power of language to effect change in the world. As a poet, I dwell in emotion and take guidance from the heart, recognizing in my work that impact "can be achieved with resonance as much as with report" (Neilsen, 2008, p. 94). Poetic inquiry and other arts-informed methodologies extend possibilities for resonance in research and academic work beyond what is possible in academic prose. Sullivan (2012) suggests that poetic inquiry "is a complex of multiple ways of knowing, involving both conscious and subconscious processing, both attention and intuition" (p. 87). Unlike some forms of academic writing, poems make no claim to represent the totality of an individual woman's experience or to universalize the experiences of all participants (Washington, 2009). Instead, poetic inquiry creates space for multiple stories and complexity within the work (Koelsch, 2015), allowing researchers to "represent individual lives without constructing a hierarchy or rank ordering the discourses" (Petersen, 2012, p. 801).

To use poetry and other artistic forms in research is a political decision, often made with political purpose in pursuit of social justice. As Cole and Knowles (2008) assert, "the use of the arts in research is not for art's sake. It is explicitly tied to moral purposes of social responsibility and epistemological equity" (p. 62). Using poetry recognizes that academic writing is not accessible to many different ways of knowing and being (Dark, 2009). Leggo (2008) states, on using poetry in social research: "Poetry acknowledges how the heart and imagination are always integral parts of human knowing" (p. 171). Many marginalized groups have effectively used poetry and related lyrical and narrative forms to claim space and assert the validity of their lived experiences (Reale, 2014). A number of well-known and well-read poets, including Langston Hughes, Audre Lorde, and Maya Angelou, have used poetry to advocate for social justice issues (Prendergast, 2009). Many researchers, including myself, who use poetic inquiry approaches in their work do so in the hope that resonance with the poem and engagement of the emotions can inspire connection and encourage at least some readers toward social action (Neilsen Glenn, 2013).

The Research Project

This article emerges from a research project exploring women's experiences of displacement, as loss of sense of place, in Newfoundland, Canada. In my research, I asked how three distinct processes of displacement — ongoing and historical colonization of Indigenous peoples, government-sponsored resettlement programs, and outmigration — could be considered related stories of displacement, influenced by related systems of power, with similar effects on women's identities and wellbeing. My interest in this research arose from my own personal experience of displacement through outmigration and curiosity about how other

Newfoundland women experience displacement. The working definition of displacement in this research was:

> A loss or disruption of sense of place, which occurs through a disconnection from home, culture or tradition… Displacement can result in feelings of loss, exclusion, and of being "out of place," "not at home" or "not belonging," affecting one's sense of identity and wellbeing. (Manning, 2016, p. 197)

Many Newfoundlanders consider themselves to be part of a collective, with a cultural and political identity distinct from other Canadians (Baker, 2012). These stories of displacement, with the exception of the colonization of Indigenous peoples, are familiar stories for most Newfoundlanders and inform their collective identity, as almost everyone living on the island has either experienced one or more of these displacements themselves or knows a close friend or family member who has. However, few link these displacements or look to their structural origins and consider how displacement might differ for people depending on their social locations.

Using poetry in my research offered one way to disrupt a notion that is quite prevalent on the island, that "Newfoundland culture unites people across social divisions based on class, religion, gender, region, etc." (Overton, 1988, p. 11). The women who offered their stories to my research clearly said that age, gender, ethnicity, Indigeneity, class, education level, and region were all social differences that shaped their experiences of displacement, their sense of being a Newfoundlander, and their inclusion and exclusion on the island. Using poetry allowed me to address those differences and explore their effects on women's experiences in a succinct and engaging way for readers.

As a methodology that aims for accessibility, poetic inquiry has a particular cultural resonance with Newfoundland as place. Cochrane (2012) writes that poetry in Newfoundland "speaks to those who do not understand the statistics of government plans and penetrates windows made by men who play fiddles" (p. 528). There are multiple similarities between poetry and the folk songs that are beloved by many Newfoundlanders, and a foundation of Newfoundland identity. Poetry can provide a glimpse into the life of another, stir emotion through a powerful metaphor or beautiful phrase, and express both the material and the imaginary within one poem (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2009). Newfoundland folk songs tell important stories of the real and imagined lives of the people and place of Newfoundland, using rhythm and metaphor to function as a form of oral history and repository of cultural knowledge (Riordon, 2004). Poetry leaps quite easily to the space carved by these folk songs in Newfoundland, much more so than conventional, theoretically-saturated academic writing, and appeals to a more diverse range of ages, education levels, and socio-economic backgrounds. This methodology would likely be a good fit for research in other contexts with similarly strong folk cultures.

In doing research about deeply emotional phenomena like displacement, a poetic inquiry methodology allows for representations of women's lived experiences that engage the mind, heart, and body (Prendergast, 2009). Poetic inquiry, unlike more conventional research methods, does not require researchers to limit themselves to coding, quoting, and categorizing as the only methods of data analysis and presentation. It invites us to play with language and to let our imaginations and our expressive selves be free, recognizing that crafting a logical argument is not the only way to make meaning (Neilsen Glenn, 2012). Poems leave space for our intuition and our hearts, and permit us to make unconscious connections and associations with the language and rhythm used in the poems, knowing that "a good poem can linger in the body long after we have forgotten a report" (Neilsen Glenn, 2013, p. 148).

This resonance is a key strength of poetic inquiry as a methodological approach to research. In physics, resonance occurs when the vibration of one object produces a sympathetic vibration in another object. In poetry work, the term resonance is often used to describe how a poem can have a deep emotive impact or trigger intense feelings for a reader or listener, often because the poem shares an experience they can relate to (Gannon, 2009; Kooser, 2005). In this article, the term resonance is used both in this sense of a subjective impact on an individual, as well as to describe when there is a strong affinity between a representation of an experience in poetic form and the experience itself, or between a form of representation and a particular context.

Why Use Collaborative Poetry?

As a poet, I often feel unsettled when writing about the experiences of others. I understand my role as interpreting their experiences to (re)present them in a form that opens possibilities for their experiences to resonate with other people (Galvin & Todres, 2009). As a feminist, I wonder if I can ethically represent a participant's experience, if I am presuming too much or wielding too much privilege in the act of trying to write about the experiences of others. As both a feminist and poet, I question if it is their genuine voice coming through as the speaker in the poem, or if their voice is subsumed by mine and I have not noticed. I am uneasy and afraid that, despite my best intentions and care in crafting, the resulting poem will be artful but not resonate, or worse, simply not be relevant to the person whose experience it represents. McKay (2002) writes that thoughts of uncertainty about voice and representation are important concerns in any feminist qualitative work. Thinking critically and reflexively about our own positionalities and relationships with participants are important parts of doing research in pursuit of social justice. Mertens (2009) suggests that negotiating the terms of the partnership with participants, ensuring reciprocity, and involving participants in multiple stages of the research are good strategies for transformative research. Pillow and Mayo (2012) state that, for feminists, "writing and choosing how to tell the stories of our research are political acts as well as places of responsibility—as we code, theme, and imagine our data, we are, in essence, writing and constructing our text" (p. 197). For poetic inquiry, Neilsen Glenn (2013) offers a set of ethical goals for poets writing about others: "to be humble, to understand the limits of our role, to do no harm and to accord the same degree of respect and dignity to others as we would have accorded to ourselves" (p. 138). Despite my commitment to reflexivity, those doubts still linger when I write about an experience that is not my own.

A collaborative poetry writing process has been my attempt to alleviate some of these doubts, contribute to a reciprocal relationship with the women who participated in my research, and ensure that my ethical obligations as a feminist and poet are met. In following a collaborative process, I recognize that including participants in research decisions and asking for their approval of the way their stories are used in the research is good feminist practice (Preissle & Han, 2012). I also recognize that women are experts in their own lives and significant tensions can exist between researcher and participants about representations of lived experiences by those perceived as outsiders (Marshall, 2002). In a way, our collaborative process challenges traditional relationships between researchers and participants, claiming that participants are just as entitled to shape the representation of their experience within the wider work, and indeed are partners in the poetic process. This collaborative process, a type of co-production, fits within the tradition of transformative research for social justice (Mertens, 2009). Durose et al. (2011) argue that co-production can help meet social justice aims in research with communities. Mertens (2009) asserts that two features of transformative social research are involving participants in data interpretation and shared authorship. In this project, involving participants in the creation of the poems as an interpretation of their experience and

acknowledging their co-authorship of the poems are examples of these processes. Horsfall and Titchen (2009) write that using creative processes in research "promotes different understandings and outcomes of whose and what knowledge gets to count, and of what types of knowing or researching are worth more than others, than is often encountered in research products and processes" (p. 158). Using co-production with participants within the creative process amplifies this transformative effect. Most importantly, this process allows me as the researcher to collaborate with participants without imposing my view or interpretation, which alleviates some of my ethical dilemmas about representation.

How the Process Worked

Women were recruited through snowball sampling in my personal and professional networks. Seven women were invited to participate in a semi-structured interview to share their experiences of displacement. At the beginning of the interview, I discussed my research methodology and let the women know that I hoped that we could represent a part of their story in the form of a poem in the research. Each interview lasted anywhere from 25 minutes to two hours and was recorded using a digital voice recorder. After transcribing their recording, I invited women to review the transcript of their interview and asked if they would like to participate in a collaborative poetry co-writing process for the poem based on their stories. Two women, Margaret and Mary (pseudonyms), indicated that they would like to participate in this process. The other five declined for reasons including lack of time or interest and feeling less than confident in imaging themselves as the co-writer of a poem (despite hearty encouragement on my part). The women who chose not to participate in the co-writing process reviewed and gave their consent for me to use the poems that I had written based on their transcript after checking that they felt the poem resonated with their experience. Both the co-written and sole-authored poems appeared as "poetic interludes" in the final research product (Manning, 2016), to provide concise snapshots of the experiences of the participants. Like musical interludes, the poems provide a transition between sections in the wider work. Their purpose is to invite readers to take a step back, to remember that there are multiple ways of knowing and being, and to reconnect with the materiality and emotion that cannot be separated from experiences of displacement.

As Margaret and Mary both live in a different province from me, our co-writing occurred over the phone and via email. Mary had some previous experience in writing poetry; however, Margaret did not. As a first step, each woman and I spoke on the phone to determine what kind of story she wanted the poem to tell in relation to her experience of displacement. Did she want the story to be about one specific memory, experience or event? Did she prefer that the poem portray a bigger story about her life and displacement? Did the story have to be chronological or was she okay with it jumping back and forth in time? Before this phone call, I asked the women to read through their transcript and start thinking about these questions. Together, in that initial conversation, we began the process of identifying the lines, paragraphs, images, and metaphors in the transcript that best supported or provided insight into the story she wanted the poem to tell. The process from that point looked a bit different for each woman, due to their respective time commitments, ways of learning, and preferred communication methods.

In relying on the participant interview transcripts and recordings as the primary source of inspiration and language for the poems, our process fits in the "vox participare" (voice of participants) tradition of poetic inquiry scholarship (Prendergast, 2009, p. xxii). The process we used can be described as a kind of collaborative found poetry or poetic transcription. Butler-Kisber (2012) describes found poetry as "the rearrangement of words, phrases and sometimes whole passages that are taken from other sources and reframed as poetry by changes in spacing

and/or lines (and consequently meaning), or by altering the text by additions and/or deletions" (p. 146). Poetic transcription is a specific kind of found poetry, using interview or focus group transcripts as the source for the poem, effectively transcribing a participant's experience in poetic form (Glesne, 1997). Our process differs somewhat from other forms of poetic transcription or found poems, such as "I poems," which have a set structure where each line begins with an "I" statement (Koelsch, 2015), in that participants were directly involved in co-writing the poems about their experience, and we did not limit ourselves to a specific poetic form.

Margaret's Poem

Margaret grew up on a tiny outport community on a small island in Newfoundland. She lived there for much of her childhood and early adult life until 1966. It was then, after she had married and started a family and while she was pregnant with her second child, that her community began to be resettled, a process that was strongly encouraged by the government. Even while living briefly on other areas of the island, for education and her husband's job, she considered her little community on the island "home." Margaret resettled to a larger town with her family and says that, while she does not regret resettlement, it did substantially affect her life and the lives of other community members.

Our Island
(Margaret's Story; co-written with Margaret)

I thought our whole place was our island in Placentia Bay
Where I grew up
We had a two room school
Most people fished for a living

In the winter, people stayed close to home
Men keeping the fire going
Women cooking fish from the summer
Children out sliding, skating on the pond
It was a different kind of fun

Nobody had any idea of resettlement
Til the parish priest mentioned a petition
The older people were in shock,
Upset and could not comprehend
I understood, was more accepting

The government took the coastal boat away
Part of Smallwood's greater plan
We packed up and left for our new home
My flowerpots tipped on the deck
As we sailed up the bay
On a boat packed with possessions and people

Our new community welcomed us,
There were lots of resettled folk
My children got a better education,

Could play sports, make new friends,
We were closer to the doctor, shopping centres
We did well in this new place.

Going back home was devastating at first,
Seeing everything falling down.
The harbour was lonely,
Only a few fishermen in the cove.
We spent manys a summer down there
My children loved being on the island
Berry picking in the fall of the year
Friends who had left came back for the season
New friends came too.

I don't regret resettlement
But our little island will always be home.

[Note on terminology: "Manys a summer" is a direct quote from the participant. The pluralizing of "many" is common in Newfoundland dialects.]

Margaret and I were able to write most of the poem in one long telephone call. Many of the words in the poem come directly or indirectly from the interview transcript and we shaped them in in a poetic form to create a stanza. Table 1 below contains an example from Margaret's story that shows how this process worked, with the pieces of the transcript that influenced the poem highlighted in bold in the left-hand column and the relevant poem stanza situated to the right for easy side-by-side comparison.

Table 1. Margaret Example A

Transcript Passage	Poem Stanza
Margaret: …So, that was **devastating to see how everything was falling down** and everything was really so **lonely** and everything. Just **a few fisherman** there and no other activity in the **harbour** at all, you know. Author: Mhmm. Do you guys go back often? Margaret: We went back. After that, we got a cabin. My father, friends of ours had my father's store that he had out on the water, out over the water, so then they had moved that down to another part of the harbour. And they gave it to us so we did it up as a cabin and **we spent manys and manys a summer there** after that, summers and falls there. Because my husband was a lightkeeper out on [nearby island] and he used to work one month on, one month off.	Going back home was devastating at first, Seeing everything falling down. The harbour was lonely, Only a few fishermen in the cove. We spent manys a summer down there My children loved being on the island Berry picking in the fall of the year Friends who had left came back for the season New friends came too.

And so he had the time to go down and renovate and do up the cabin and we spent a lot of time there, and **berry picked there in the fall of the year.** It was really nice. Yup, very very nice. Author: And you would bring your kids with you? Margaret: We would take the kids down as much as we could, you know, and they'd be out of school all summer and that. **They loved it down there, brought some of their friends with them too**…	

As we spoke on the phone, Margaret told me the pieces she thought were most important and the poem started to take shape. I jotted down some things she said that did not come up during the interview but resonated with me during our conversation on a piece of paper. In particular, there were some clarifying details and several small anecdotes that I thought would fit well in the poem and enrich the lines that came from the transcript. Stanzas three and four were developed using this method, with Margaret's approval to my paraphrasing and quoting of what she had said earlier in the conversation. Below again is Table 2 with an example of this process, showing the transcript passages and the resulting poem stanzas. The left-hand column shows, in bold, the words from the transcript that influenced the poem and in the right-hand column, the stanzas with the words that came from our phone conversation are underlined.

Table 2. Margaret Example B

Transcript Passage	Poem Stanza
Margaret: … Well we resettled in 66. I had one child, 9 months old, and we had just been married one year. So Joey **Smallwood** resettled the whole island and we had no other choice, only to resettle. And we came up to [name of new community]…. [several pages of transcript later] Author: …And how did that process happen in the community? Margaret: Well, uh, after, actually it was very secretive at first. **Nobody had any idea of resettlement until our parish priest said that there would be some people going around with a petition**, to see if, how many people wanted to resettle. And that the priest would be moved from [name of home community], which was, the	Nobody had any idea of resettlement Til the parish priest mentioned a petition <u>The older people were in shock,</u> <u>Upset and could not comprehend</u> <u>I understood, was more accepting</u> <u>The government took the coastal boat away</u> Part of Smallwood's greater plan <u>We packed up and left for our new home</u> <u>My flowerpots tipped on the deck</u> <u>As we sailed up the bay</u> <u>On a boat packed with possessions and people</u>

parish priest was our lifeline for health and wellbeing….	

After drafting the initial poem on the phone and reading it aloud several times to make sure Margaret was happy with how the poem sounded, I sent her a written copy in the mail two weeks later and asked her to read it over one more time to give her approval. I had made several small changes to tighten the poem's structure and rhythm, such as cutting unnecessary articles and some double adjectives, adding punctuation, and changing verb tense. These changes were made because I am very conscious of a tension in the poetic inquiry literature about the quality of poetry in poetic inquiry. The consensus is that good poetic inquiry must contain good poetry, or at least poetry of an acceptable aesthetic standard (Dark, 2009; Prendergast, 2009). Tightening the language, avoiding sentimentality, and suggesting we choose lines with powerful metaphors and concrete images for the poem are part of that process (Kooser, 2005).

Mary's Poem

Mary is a Métis woman who moved to Newfoundland recently. She was quickly welcomed in by her Newfoundland community and adopted by friends. Mary says she has felt out of place and different in most places she has lived throughout her life, including some Indigenous communities, but something about Newfoundland's sense of place, people, and culture makes her feel at home.

New-found-home
(Mary's Story; co-written with Mary)

I am slow to call myself a Newfoundlander
It's more than a screech-in on George Street
I was not born here,
Been here only 3 years
But I've been taken into the community

My mom was raised on the Nez Perce reserve
Her family is Montana Métis
Her grandfather a student at St. Peter's Mission
Where Louis Riel taught on the run

I married a Makah man
I didn't fit in on his reserve,
My only role was as his wife
And our kids' mother
It wasn't my Aboriginal culture.

I lost a lot in a hurry
Eighteen months to be exact
My dad, then a divorce, the death of my mom
Watching my support system and identities sinking away

I wanted to strike out somewhere new
Out here on a visit six years ago,
Everyone was treating us like locals

I'd never had that experience anywhere, ever.

In a tiny outport, I was taken in
Told I was family.
My friend considers me her sister
As we joke my mom was a Newfoundlander in witness protection
She passed on a lot of that old English and Irish heritage
Preserved here on the island.

With my light colouring, I've been told
For a white girl,
I sure know a lot about Natives.

I'm a proud Métis woman
Though don't often find space to say it out loud
The rest of my family leave it hidden

[Note on terminology: A screech-in is a touristy ritual to become an "honorary Newfoundlander," which traditionally involves kissing a fish, consuming "screech" (a type of rum) after saying a Newfoundland phrase.]

Mary and I started the poem on a telephone call and continued developing it via email, due to Mary's busy schedule and her preference for having the text as a visual in front of her. In the initial telephone call, Mary told me about the different pieces of her story she wanted to be featured in her poem and we discussed the ways her poem could be laid out. After our call, I went back to her interview transcript and found the lines that referenced the events Mary wanted to share in the poem. I chose the words and phrases that most clearly described the experiences she wanted to illustrate and shaped them into stanzas as we had discussed. An example of how this process worked is shown below in Table 3. As above, the pieces of the transcript that influenced the poem are highlighted in bold in the left-hand column and the relevant poem stanza is placed to the right for easy side-by-side comparison.

Table 3: Mary Example A

Transcript Passage	Poem Stanza
Mary: **I wanted to strike out somewhere new**, and, start over and get a fresh start. And I came **out here for a visit in 2009** and like I said, even you know, the very first day, my son and I came here even on our one week visit and **everybody was treating us like we were locals**, you know. And it was so bizarre cause **I had never had that experience ever, anywhere** [laughs]. What was just supposed to be a visit turned into, you know, the first scouting mission to actually live here.	I wanted to strike out somewhere new Out here on a visit six years ago, Everyone was treating us like locals I'd never had that experience anywhere, ever.

The initial draft of the poem stuck quite closely to the words and phrases Mary used in the interview transcript, as I was shaping the poem after our phone conversation rather than during the conversation, as was the case with Margaret. I also included several phrases that Mary had

provided as clarifying context when describing which experiences she thought were most important and why during our phone call. An example of this appears in Stanza 1 and is underlined below.

> I am slow to call myself a Newfoundlander
> It's more than a screech-in on George Street
> I was not born here,
> Been here only 3 years
> But I've been taken into the community

After I had a draft of the poem I was happy with, I sent the poem to Mary via email to ask her opinion. We had several email exchanges tweaking the poem before she gave her approval. Like with Margaret's poem, I had made several small changes to tighten the poem and enhance its impact by adding punctuation and using active verb tenses in some places.

Successes and Challenges (From a Researcher's Perspective)

From my perspective as researcher, feminist, and poet, this section evaluates some of the successes and challenges from the collaborative poetry process that I have used in my research. I recognize that the perspectives from the women who participated in the poem writing process may differ from my own. The successes and tensions that I describe below may be useful to other researchers who are considering using a similar process in their own research.

The first success of this process is that it provided an effective way to tell the women's stories succinctly and convey their emotions around their experiences of displacement. In other poetic inquiry work, Petersen (2012) writes: "Poetry provided an economical way to communicate the findings of a study while illuminating the wholeness as well as the details of lived experiences" (p. 808). Margaret's transcript was just under 4,500 words, while Mary's transcript was about 8,350 words. There is a considerable challenge in trying to represent the totality of the experiences contained in the transcript in a research publication. While our collaborative poetry writing process does not allow us to represent all the minute details of those experiences, a poetic form allows a deep engagement with a woman's specific story of displacement. A similar deep engagement with lived experience might be achieved in a storytelling or life history approach; however, the succinctness of the poem is a key advantage, especially when researchers want to share the experiences of participants in a form with strict word limits. The best poems are sparse and can force us to tease out the essence of the data (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2009).

I consider credible representation to be a second success of our collaborative poetry process. This method is effective because the words in the poems signify what is important to the women whose lives are represented in the poems; they were integral to determining their poem's direction and gave their approval of the final version. The tone and voice in the poem are largely accurate depictions of the women's speaking patterns, diction, and dialect, which Richardson (1993) describes as essential in poems that represent real women's embodied lives. The mention of specific details and images in the poem also lend to its credibility (Kooser, 2005), such as Margaret's flower pots tipping on the deck of the boat and Mary's reference to her mom as a Newfoundlander in witness protection. These types of specific elements also lend to a poem's accessibility and relatability for diverse audiences, including those who have not had a similar experience or who do not read poetry frequently (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2009).

A third success of our collaborative process was that the women who participated in the poem writing process were able to build or improve upon their own poem writing skills. I have a commitment in my research to having a reciprocal relationship with participants and

ensuring that they gain something from their participation in the research, just as I gain something from having them participate. For these two women, the skills building was one piece of maintaining that reciprocal relationship. This differs from a more traditional research model, where the researcher does an interview, codes and analyzes the data, and then publishes their work without ever contacting participants beyond the original interview (Preissle & Han, 2012). A focus on reciprocity helps to counter some of the unequal power relations that exist in traditional research models and is key part of doing research for social justice (Mertens, 2009).

I consider the final success of this project to be the development and use of a culturally relevant methodology in collaborative poetry. This helped to ensure a meaningful process as well as a meaningful product for both the participants and myself. The section describing the research project explains some of the ways poetry is an appropriate fit for research in Newfoundland. Tillman (2002) writes that culturally sensitive methodological approaches are important in research with groups that have been marginalized and disenfranchised by research in the past. She says they reflect the unique values and ways of thinking and knowing of a particular cultural group and can prevent inaccurate generalizations and harmful stereotypes from emerging from the research. This culturally sensitive approach lends my research credibility in Newfoundland. Canada's (as well as many other countries') guidelines for ethical research encourage researchers to develop culturally sensitive approaches to research when working with members of minority groups (see Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research, 2014, especially chapter 9). Researchers working in other contexts with communities or cultures that have been historically marginalized might likewise find this type of methodological approach to be useful in their own work.

The first challenge in this research emerged as I began thinking through how this collaborative process could work with the two women who agreed to engage in this process and what had to be covered in our initial phone conversation. I quickly realized that explaining my personal poem writing and poetic inquiry process to someone else via phone might not be as easy as I had initially thought. I tend to rely on my intuition[6] in my poetry. When doing poetry within the context of qualitative research and representing a participant's experiences, my process involves reading through the transcript and highlighting the lines, words, and phrases that resonate with me and speak to my greater purpose in using poetry in my research—typically, to tell the story or a piece of the story of a participant—and then shaping some of those highlighted pieces into a poetic form. It is much more of an individual, affective, dynamic process than a logical or static system that is easily shared with others. This process is difficult to explain to participants, especially if they may not rely on their intuition to the same extent or may process information differently than the researcher. It is important to note that while intuition often shapes the initial poem draft, I always check the poem with the person whose experience has served as the basis for the poem before sharing the poem publicly. This helps to ensure the validity of the poem as a representation of their experience in the research project (Neilsen Glenn, 2013).

The second challenge also materialized during the writing process. As with other creative forms, it is not easy to force the poem writing process to happen at a set time or be completed in a timely matter. Kooser (2005) explains that the process of writing a good poem can be a bit like fishing—you sit down and wait for something to bite, giving it time, and practicing patience. When only one person is writing a poem, this process works well. The poet can write as the fish bites, or the words come to her. When there are two people writing a poem, across different time zones, and juggling multiple life commitments, the process simply cannot happen as spontaneously. We had to schedule time to talk and write and hope that writing was possible in that moment. While it generally worked quite well, this process felt much more rigid and formal than my typical poem writing process. I was also very conscious that I was

asking for a large time commitment from participants to participate in this process, so I tried to minimize the time they would need to invest as much as possible by sticking to the more formal found poetry process, rather than aiming for a more intuitive one.

The third challenge lies in my perception of a potential conflict in my political purposes in using poetry in research and my wish for the poems to represent women's experiences in ways that they think are important, which may or may not fulfill my political purposes. Cole and Knowles (2008) write that using art in research is "tied to moral purpose, it is also an explicit attempt to make a difference through research, not only in the lives of ordinary citizens but also in the thinking and decisions of policymakers, politicians, legislators, and other key decision makers" (p. 60). When I set out to write an explicitly political poem, it often takes a different form than a poem that is meant to share an experience. However, as a feminist, I recognize that the personal is political, and that by sharing experiences of oppression or injustice, we declare that they matter and deserve to be paid attention to, which is certainly a political act. Davis Halifax (2012) writes that poetic, lyrical, and other creative forms "offer writers a feminist politics of writing that is nuanced, transformative and oppositional" (p. 117). She calls these forms of writing a "call to community" (p. 117), as they represent a stirring of emotion, create space for empathetic recognition of similarities in experiences, and can lead to collective political action that can engage the actors Cole and Knowles identify. It remains to be seen whether our collaborative process or the publications arising from this research project will result in changes at the level of community, policy, and/or decision-making.

Conclusion

Engaging in a collaborative poetic inquiry process with the women who offered their stories to this research has been a valuable experience. This type of process fosters more equal relationships between researchers and participants and ensures an element of reciprocity in that relationship by allowing participants to gain a new skill and knowledge from their participation in the research. Researchers who work with members of historically marginalized communities, or who are committed to doing transformative research that promotes social justice, will likely find it a useful tool in their methodological toolbox. As an approach to social research, collaborative poetic inquiry provides a succinct and credible representation of a participant's lived experience, in a form that is also accessible to an audience beyond the academy and is likely to provoke empathetic sentiments in a reader. This explanation of the process used in this particular research project on women's experiences of displacement in Newfoundland will be useful to other researchers who are contemplating a similar process but who may be unsure precisely how to go about it.

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