Arts-Based Research in Practice:

Towards a New Mode of Address across Harmony and Disharmony

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アートベース・リサーチの実践：

調和と不調和が交差する新たな表現に向けて

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概　　要

　テレビ、映画、インターネットなどのメディアが我々の日常生活に及ぼす影響は大きい。デジタル・テクノロジーの普及、進歩とともに視覚文化は発展し続けている。近年では、視覚文化に注目し、写真、映像、音楽等のアートを活用した研究の必要性が論じられている(Sullivan，2005年、Hickman，2007年)。このような研究は、アートベース・リサーチと呼ばれるものである。

　本論文は、「調和と不調和が交差する狭間で：ビジュアルアート・ワーク」と「調和と不調和が交差する狭間で：コンセプチュアル・ワーク」の結合を通して、アートベース・リサーチの実践を試みている。前者は、写真と詩（著者自身による制作）で構成された作品である。宮本武蔵の『五輪の書』の思想をもとに、五輪（地、火、風、水、空）の書パフォーマンスを行った映像作品『The Art of Becoming（生成変化のアート）』（2012年制作）から抽出した静止画を英語詩と織り交ぜている。後者は、その作品の根底にある概念についての詳細な論述（コンセプチュアル・ワーク）である。ビジュアルアート・ワークとコンセプチュアル・ワークの両者を融合することにより、科学／芸術、文字／映像、西洋／東洋という境界を越えた地点から発信する新たな研究アプローチを提示する。

キーワード：アートベース・リサーチ，メディア，視覚文化，映像制作，越境性

Key words：Arts-based research, media, visual culture, video/film production, transnationality

In all arts and sciences, rhythm is not to be ignored. There is even rhythm in being empty. ... Harmony and disharmony in rhythm occur in every walk of life. ... Know the rhythms of spatial relations, and know the rhythms of reversal. (Musashi Miyamoto, *The Book of Five Rings*, 1994, p. 30-31)

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1. Across Harmony and Disharmony: A Visual Artwork

Earth

Figure 1. Still from *The Art of Becoming*. 14 minutes digital video. 2012. © Hiroko Hara, 2012.

Earth:

Standing in front of a sheet of plain paper and taking a deep breath

Calligraphy is not simply about writing words with a brush

It is storytelling, telling you not one but many stories

Colorful stories are being told between a calligrapher, a brush, and paper

Can you hear and see the stories born from there?

Fire

Figure 2. Still from *The Art of Becoming*. 14 minutes digital video. 2012. © Hiroko Hara, 2012.

Fire:

Drawing a stroke by brush

It is a stroke of passion to express oneself, of spirit like a burning fire

In the handwriting, the line here and the line there link together

If my brush is taken away, I will scrape up materials and make a new one

Then I will start writing once again

Wind

Figure 3. Still from *The Art of Becoming*. 14 minutes digital video. 2012. © Hiroko Hara, 2012.

Wind:

An icy, nipping wind is blowing and trying to freeze up my body, mind, and soul

I blow on my hands to warm them and grab a brush with my numb fingers

Then I resume writing to expose what it is that is very cold

Listen carefully to what is hidden by the strong wind

Many voices, many stories

Water

Figure 4. Still from *The Art of Becoming*. 14 minutes digital video. 2012. © Hiroko Hara, 2012.

Water:

At night after the sun goes down, the seawater begins sparkling with many lights

There can you see a green light reflecting on the water?

A man named Gatsby compared it to his dream and tried to grasp it in his hand

Here I grasp an ink-laden brush in my hand

Then a drop of ink drips on paper like raindrops pouring into the ocean

Void

Figure 5. Still from *The Art of Becoming*. 14 minutes digital video. 2012. © Hiroko Hara, 2012.

Void:

Now standing at a point where the past, present, and future meet

Voices of benevolence are calling: "Dare to see in darkness, dare to hear in silence"

Take a look at the handwriting on paper

Can you see what is in-between the stroke here and the stroke there?

The real transforms itself everlastingly

2. Across Harmony and Disharmony: A Conceptual Framework

Nowadays, it is impossible to disregard the impact of various media including television, movies, and the Internet on our everyday lives. Nicholas Mirzoeff (1998) calls this circumstance "visual culture" and suggests that it should be dealt with in earnest in the academia. Looking at the realm of education, some thinkers have pointed out the predominance of the tradition placing a value on scientifically approved data and the written text (Dewey, 1934; Reid, 1966; and Eisner, 1972). In other words, there has been an imbalance between scientific knowledge production and art forms/practices related to visual culture.

The efforts to redress the disproportionate division between science and art take an alternative form of qualitative research, which is called, "arts-based research". Scholars have proposed various arts-based research methods (Greene, 1995; Paley, 1995; Fischman, 2001; Barone, 2003; Sullivan, 2005; and Hickman, 2007). Maxine Greene (1995), for instance, focuses on the key role that the arts play in cultivating imagination and thereby enriching the qualitative aspects of human life. Greene portrays the possibility of the arts as follows:

> As I view and feel them, informed encounters with works of art often lead to a startling defamiliariza-
> tion of the ordinary. What I have habitually taken for granted——about human potential, for example,
> or gender differences or ecology or what is now called 'ethnic identity' or the core curriculum——
> frequently reveals itself in unexpected ways because of a play I have seen, a painting I have looked
> at, a woodwind quintet I have heard. (1995, p. 4)

Hence, Greene suggests that the arts make it possible to destabilize the norm influencing the perceptions of gender, ethnicity as well as schooling. Acknowledging the impact of Greene's work on the latter-day qualitative research, Nicholas Paley (1995) presents a model of arts-based research by integrating four concepts. The first one is "nonobjective artistic practice" which means "an inquiry that resisted analytic objectification by merging educational thinking with … an artistic practice" (1995, p. 8). Regarding the second concept "bricolage," Paley goes into the details of it:

> Through the address of bricolage, images can be constructed to serve allusive rather than argumentative purposes. … Images can be 'read' as text. Text can figure as image. Visually, bricolage provides the potential to repoliticize analytic shapes, opening criticality to less partitioned space. (1995, p. 9)

In addition to these concepts, Paley uses "polyphonous voice" and states that "… this form of address displays an elasticity, layeredness, and reversibility in vocal status …, thereby exploring a range of associations generally excluded (repressed?) from conventional analytic discourse" (1995, p. 10). The last one is "the rhizomatic" originally introduced by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1986). According to Paley, this concept implies "… bringing into discursive play the idea of a work of art as a rhizomatic assembly of densely entangled crossroads, passages, galleries, and heterogeneities, complemented by the method of multiple analytic stances …" (1995, p. 12). He describes the potential of interweaving these four concepts in his qualitative research as follows:

> Linking these modes of address … generates a forum for a series of enunciations that are normally not found in official educational discourses. In their non-sequential improvisations, indirections, and visual reference, these enunciations denote a particular kind of inquiry——one that shifts attention to a criticality funded by multiple representations of educationally configured realities …. (1995, p. 13)

Here Paley suggests that bringing the arts to the core of research allows the emergence of an alternative inquiry upholding criticality instead of generating normativity.

Inspired by the progressive works of the thinkers as such, I created "Across Harmony and Disharmony: A Visual Artwork". It is composed of a series of images and poems. The still images are excerpts from my film entitled *The Art of Becoming* (2012). The film I produced seeks to demonstrate not only the intricate ways in which the identities of global citizens are constructed and transforming continuously, but also the fluidity of such identities constantly shifting beyond boundaries and across spaces and intersecting with gender, race, ethnicity, age, class, and religion. Performing global citizenship, which I consider akin to transnationality, is key to my video/film production as well as research. This is due to my cultural roots and routes I have been taking. Umeko Tsuda, the founder of higher education for women in Japan, delivered a congratulatory address in 1913 at a graduation ceremony at Tsuda College in Tokyo. Ninety years later, I was at a commencement at

Tsuda, with my dream to be an educator with a global perspective like that of Umeko, the first Japanese woman who studied abroad. In the Japanese Meiji era, when there was a wide gender gap between men and women, Umeko was sent to the United States. Upon her return to Japan, she was shocked to see Japanese women being treated as second-class citizens. In 1900, to improve women's status in Japanese society, she established a higher educational institution for women so that they could be independent and educated critical thinkers.

After my graduation from Tsuda College, I have been putting myself in global settings. One memorable moment in conducting my research project was when, in a gathering I was invited to, a mother of a Cambodian family I knew grasped my hand without saying a word. The silent exchange between us shows the possibility that a space for mutual understanding can be created. This incident crystallized my career goal to become an educator actively practicing global citizenship and working for the creation and evolution of an alternative space—a transformative space where I can work collaboratively with a great variety of global citizens towards human rights and social justice, focusing on gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, ability, and so forth.

This work, which is a combination of a visual artwork and a conceptual framework, is my attempt as such. A philosophical framework proposed by Musashi Miyamoto underlies "Across Harmony and Disharmony: A Visual Artwork". Miyamoto led a life as a samurai, went through training diligently, and as a result, he formulated his own school of swordplay. To pass on his philosophy of swordsmanship to future generations, Miyamoto started to write *The Book of Five Rings* in 1643 and completed it before he passed away in 1645 (Wilson, 2001). It is composed of the five scrolls: Earth; Water; Fire; Wind; and Emptiness (translated by Thomas Cleary and published in 1994). Miyamoto elucidates the reason he named each scroll as such. The first scroll "Earth" is the base which explains prerequisites for living as a samurai and mastering swordsmanship. Miyamoto introduces his own school of swordplay and the basics, and illustrates how to put them to practical use in the scroll of "Water". The third scroll "Fire" elaborates on how to gain victory in all types of battles by applying the technique of his school of swordplay. In the scroll of "Wind", Miyamoto analyzes critically other schools of swordplay and their methods of fighting. In the last scroll called "Emptiness", Miyamoto likens the awakening he reached after having mastered the essence of swordsmanship to emptiness. Miyamoto suggests that it is important to continue to train oneself physically, spiritually, and intellectually by "… taking emptiness as the Way …" (1994, p. 143).

Why did Miyamoto entitle the scrolls as such? William Wilson (2001) points out the influence of Buddhism: "The Five Rings, which is both the title and forms the structure of the book, refers to the Buddhist theory of the Five Elements …" (p. 31). The world view of Zen Buddhism, in particular, has an impact on Miyamoto's writing, as Wilson remarks: "It is clear in *The Book of Five Rings* that the Zen Buddhist insistence on absolute personal

experience and transcendence of the interfering self is one of the touchstones of Musashi's thought" (2001, p. 31). As Miyamoto named the final scroll, *kū* is the essential concept in Buddhism. In English, there is more than one way to translate the term *kū*. For example, Cleary (1994) and Wilson (2001) interpret it as "emptiness", while Kenji Tokitsu (2004) uses the term "heaven or space". According to Daisetz Suzuki (1996), *śūnyatā* is the original term meaning *kū* and he explains that "... *śūnyatā* is not a negative term, as might be suggested, when it is translated as 'emptiness' or 'void'" (p. 313). Suzuki suggests that awakening to this concept means rising above the binary system: "*Śūnyatā* is experienced only when it is both subject and object" (1996, p. 315). Hence, in this study, I refer to "void" as the term embracing the positive meaning and function, which can show a way to transgress binarism.

While applying the Five Elements to describe his philosophy, it is noteworthy that Miyamoto never neglected broadening his horizons. Tokitsu indicates that Miyamoto devoted all his energies to "... express[ing] himself in painting, calligraphy, and various handcrafts, as well as in the art of combat" (2004, p. 5). Thus, it is clear that Miyamoto attached importance to not only martial arts but also other types of art. The way I placed the Five Elements in order in my video is slightly different from Miyamoto's, and the project of mine makes no reference to martial arts. However, Miyamoto's philosophy derived from practicing the diverse forms of art is useful for this study presenting a model of arts-based research.

"Across Harmony and Disharmony: A Visual Artwork" lays greater emphasis on video/ film production and still images resulting from it above other artistic practices. As a researcher/filmmaker, I am convinced that video/film production has the possibilities as a new mode of address in research. However, there is a need to maintain a critical stance on this rather newer expression form. In her essay "The Cinema", in comparison with literary works, Virginia Woolf (1996) interrogates critically the nature of film, which was a new-comer in those days, and poses questions:

> Is there, we ask, some secret language which we feel and see, but never speak, and, if so, could this be made visible to the eye? Is there any characteristic which thought possesses that can be rendered visible without the help of words? (p. 35)

As a response to the questions Woolf raised above, I discuss the significance of performing calligraphy in my video. *The Art of Becoming* shows myself performing calligraphy (*sho*), that is, writing the Five Elements—Earth, Fire, Wind, Water, and Void—in *Kanji* with a brush. In the book *Shodo: The Art of Coordinating Mind, Body and Brush*, William Reed (1989) argues that practicing calligraphy is closely related to the view of Miyamoto asserting the importance of endeavoring to reach one's Way since a calligrapher acquires "... how to calm the mind and rejuvenate the body, through constant discipline and practice in the techniques of the Way (*dô*). Shodo is the 'Way of Brush Writing'" (p. 23). I chose to perform

shodo in order to visualize my own Way as a researcher/filmmaker as well as embody being and becoming of global citizens.

My performance of *sho* in the video is under the influence of Yu-ichi Inoue, who contributed to the development of a new movement called "'Avant-Garde Calligraphy' (*Zen'ei sho*)" (Winther-Tamaki, 2001, p. 72). In the book *Yu-ichi Works 1955–85* featuring Yu-ichi's pieces of *sho* exhibited at the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Michiaki Kawakita refers to Yu-ichi saying: "*Sho* is said to be the expression of lines but the complex and delicate secrets of *Sho* lie in the fact that lines realize themselves in the action of writing characters" (Unagami, 1989, p. iv). Hence, in performing *sho* in the video, I attach importance not to the outcome (the completed handwriting) but to the performance itself. A series of the pictures capturing my handwriting of Void (Figures 6-11) give a detailed account of how performing *sho* proceeds, thereby illustrating how a new form beyond the binary structure emerges from the combination of a calligrapher, a brush, ink, and paper. In this way, interweaving the five-lined poems with the images of handwriting the Five Elements—Earth, Fire, Wind, Water, and Void, "Across Harmony and Disharmony: A Visual Artwork" serves as an example of artistic practices, in particular, applying video/film production. Through my arts-based approach, I assert that incorporating video/film in research

Void in Sequence

Figures 6-11. Stills from *The Art of Becoming*. 14 minutes digital video. 2012. © Hiroko Hara, 2012.

destabilizes the border between the written text and the visual, and enables the researcher to propose an alternative view resisting and challenging essentialization, categorization, and dichotomization.

3. Conclusion

This work of mine holds the significance of the arts in great account and promotes the flourishing of alternative forms of inquiry free from conventional knowledge production. As a researcher whose background is in educational studies, I continue to receive an inspiration from the scholars who advocate the necessity of integrating the arts in the context of teaching and learning as well as educational inquiry. Gustavo Fischman (2001), for instance, enunciates the need to take notice of the impact of visual culture on education and combine it into educational research. In so doing, Fischman states that "[t]he incorporation of visual cultures requires that educational researchers critically incorporate the notion of inquiry and the reflection of what we see and how those images are constructed and reconstructed by all the participants of any given research project" (2001, p. 31). It is clear from Fischman's claim here that educational researchers need to pay attention to the ways in which study participants interpret and construct the visual image.

This is relevant to Tom Barone's discussion on arts-based research in education. Barone (2003) focuses on film production and pronounces that applying film in research on schooling has a potential to generate "... modes of representation ... outside of the parameters set by the prevailing master narrative" (p. 207). To achieve this, Barone indicates that it is essential to consider the intended audience of a film and the power relation between the filmmaker and the viewers. Drawing upon Stuart Hall (1980), I investigated the relation as such and argued the power of the filmmaker in producing representation and addressing the audience (see Hara, 2014).

Indeed, it is crucial to take account of the audience, as Richard Hickman (2007) asserts, laying stress on the vigorous use of the arts in educational research. Acknowledging the merit that "... the arts, and in particular visual art, can reify the ineffable" (2007, p. 315), "... the audience", remarks Hickman, "plays a significant part in the nature of any art phenomenon and it is this factor which can add another valuable dimension to the interpretation of the 'data'" (2007, p. 316). Moreover, regarding data generated through the use of the visual arts, Graeme Sullivan (2005) portrays its potential as follows:

> It is possible to consider 'the visual' not only as a descriptive or representational form, but also as a means of creating and constructing images that forms an evidential base that reveals new knowledge. Seen from this perspective, the role of visual data in research can be used to move beyond the contribution to explanatory knowledge production, and to a more ambitious state of transformative knowledge construction. (p. 180)

Sullivan thus suggests that data resulting from arts-based research can function not as the mere object to be presented and apprehended but as the driving force to promote alternative ways of thinking. In this way, the scholars elucidate the multiple possibilities embraced in the integration of the arts in research, teaching, and learning.

Applying various forms of art in qualitative research provides researchers with freedom to question and challenge the grand narrative (re)creating knowledge as the absolute truth, and to go beyond the binary system. However, in order to do so, in particular, for employing video/film production in research, it is important to give careful consideration to the issues surrounding the power relation existing between the filmmaker and the viewers, as pointed out earlier. By tying "A Visual Artwork" and "A Conceptual Framework" together across harmony and disharmony, this study proposed a novel model of artistic practice and inquiry, which can be used in the teaching and learning settings as well as educational research. As a researcher/filmmaker, I conclude this work with the hope that arts-based studies applying criticality and a multi-angled view, and challenging the barrier sustained by the hegemonic view will thrive.

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