To Reveal Thy Heart Perchance to Reveal the World

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Review Essay:

Ronald J. Pelias (2004). A Methodology of the Heart: Evoking Academic and Daily Life. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira. 173 + vii pages, ISBN 0-7591-0595-2 (paperback) [US $29.95, UK £22.95, EU 39.37]

Abstract: Ronald PELIAS, a professor of speech communications, employs a variety of writing methods as examples of alternative ways to do research and to share with the reader a seldom seen and seldom considered aspect of academic life: Heart. In the early chapters of the book, PELIAS sets out to establish a way to place his Heart in the foreground; baring his emotional vulnerability, his humanness, his being in the world. Later chapters of the book encompass an autoethnographic study of academic life in which the previously revealed Heart is placed in context. In this review essay I discuss PELIAS' book in relation to the larger literature on autoethnography and subjectivist research; I follow this by discussing the need for and usefulness of such alternative methods using PELIAS' autoethnography of academic life as a context.

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> *The heart has its reasons,*
> *which reason does not know.*
> Blaise Pascal

1. Introduction: The Heart in Place and Time

In my and PELIAS' references to the metaphorical heart I will capitalize the "H" to differentiate it from the references of others. The heart is probably the most written about human organ. Leaving aside its obvious place in the medical literature, it is the object and subject of literature, music, and art. The Greek physician GALEN saw the heart as the seat of the emotions; the Stoics viewed the heart as the seat of the passions; Sufi mystics see the heart as the organ of perception (ROMANYSHYN 1983). A nameless blues musician once shared, "There ain't no blues without soul; you might play the right notes, have the rhythm, but if it don't come from the heart it ain't the blues." ROMANYSHYN has written "The human heart is first and foremost a psychological reality" (p.135). A

Beethoven piano sonata played note perfect but without Heart can leave one cold. But what does the Heart have to do with research? Research as it is usually considered is often an analytic and sterile affair. Is not that the proper way? Researchers with a more positivistic bent would offer a hearty yes to that question. Many others, however, would take exception. Research without Heart is indeed analytical and sterile and provides little true understanding of what is being studied. "Science is the act of looking at a tree and seeing lumber. Poetry is the act of looking at a tree and seeing a tree. The alchemy that separates the head from the heart finds no gold" (PELIAS p.9). [1]

The Heart: it is complex, messy, prosaic, poetic, objective, and subjective. It is many things, but it is not simple. It cannot be reduced to its constituent parts to be understood; if it can indeed be completely understood. ROMANYSHYN (1983) has argued that the Heart has often been rendered uninterpretable through the fragmentation which occurs when it is looked at from a positivistic perspective, when it is seen only as an organ of the body. Rather, Heart must be approached head on, its metaphorical complexity embraced. In *A Methodology of the Heart: Evoking Academic and Daily Life* (2004) Ronald PELIAS offers various methods to embrace and reveal his Heart, not to fragment, but to revel in its complexities. What PELIAS attempts to do in this volume is very much in keeping with ELLIS and BOCHNER's (2000) view of autoethnography: using various methods of research and writing to reveal the complexity of consciousness and to make connections between the personal and the social. [2]

TIn the book under review and elsewhere (see PELIAS 2003), PELIAS has suggested that academics are rather like tourists who stick to the boulevards and five star hotels of the cities they visit without ever discovering the cities' heart, without ever knowing the real city or its citizens. In the context of academic culture, as PELIAS argues, this tendency to remain on well-trodden paths often leads to never truly understanding one's area of inquiry, understanding students, one's purpose, indeed one's Heart. Instead, authority and objectivity, the hallmarks of the academy, are emphasized and reflect the patina of stability and truth. PELIAS writes," The essays in this book come together at a time of crisis—a crisis of representation and a crisis of faith" (p.10). These crises refer to the recognition on the part of many scholars that what they once thought was "Truth," the unchanging, unchangeable world and its elements, is vulnerable and open to interpretation; it is not unchanging but shaped by language and self interests. To remedy this, PELIAS sets for himself the task of revealing his Heart, "to put on display a researcher who, instead of hiding behind the illusion of objectivity, brings himself forward in the belief that an emotionally vulnerable, linguistically evocative, and sensuously poetic voice can place [him] closer to the subjects [he wishes to study]" (p.1). All of this to reach the goals, if I understand PELIAS correctly, of demonstrating that behind the facade of objectivity there is sentiment and once revealed the Heart of the academy can beat once again. [3]

2. Ways to the Heart and the World

In the first 10 chapters of this slim volume PELIAS slowly reveals his Heart by sharing his childhood experiences in New Orleans; describing his physical body and its idiosyncrasies; recounting his experiences in the Vietnam War; telling about his relationships with his children and wife; sharing his relationships with friends and lovers. These are the events, among others, that compose PELIAS' Heart. Each of these stories is told using various styles of writing: autobiography, poetry, dialogue, and monologue. This is done, in part, to reflect the multi-layered natures of the Heart. In sharing his Heart PELIAS expects to allow the reader to make a connection; to see that Ronald PELIAS is much like the reader; to find the "nexus of self and culture" (PELIAS p.11). Further, in using various genres of writing PELIAS endeavors to demonstrate the usefulness of self disclosure and writing as methods of research. This approach requires self-reflexivity (ALSOP 2002) and a blurring of distinctions: inner, outer; forward and backward (ELLIS & BOCHNER 2000). [4]

3. Subjectivism

Subjectivism as an approach to research is most often emphasized in postmodern, structuralist, and post-structuralist thinking (CROTTY 2003). CROTTY explains that from the structuralist stance any meaning an object of research comes to have arises not from the object but, rather, is imposed upon it by the subject (i.e. researcher). Hence, the subject is the meaning maker, and whatever meaning is imposed may come from a seemingly endless source of experiences. As CROTTY writes, "... meaning comes from anything ..." (p.9). The subject, or researcher, is foregrounded, as knowledge generation is seen as based upon her or his subjective experiences (PREISSLE & GRANT 2004). [5]

The subjectivist stance to research is clearly more holistic in contrast to the fragmentation and reductionism often practiced in positivistic research. A further critical distinction can be made between these two approaches. Positivistic research seeks to find regularities and consistencies in nature, and to establish laws to account for these regularities and consistencies, whereas subjectivist research embraces irregularities and inconsistencies. Instead of seeking merely a single interpretation of a phenomenon as in positivistic research, the subjectivist seeks multiple interpretations (PREISSLE & GRANT 2004). [6]

Similarly, the subjectivist views accepted academic discourse as having a dampening affect on subjectivity, with its emphasis upon theory construction and law-like formulations. Arguing that traditional forms of research often misrepresent or even ignore the subjective experiences of research participants, the subjectivist researcher embraces these experiences (PREISSLE & GRANT 2004). This is why numerous representations of knowledge may be employed. If writing a poem, creating and reading a dramatic monologue or dialogue pave the road to understanding, then do it. As ATKINSON (2002) explains, whatever form a life story may take, it must be in a "style that is most comfortable to the person telling it" (p.125). Or as CAREY (1989) has stated, scholarship must be

embedded in "the time and place of its creation" (p.148). The mode of [re]presentation is critical. If, as the subjectivist claims, we import meaning to reality, to our engagement with reality, in order to understand that engagement in a research context requires meaning making that is fittingly relevant and multi-layered. The "multitude of voices, thoughts and feelings," to use HORSFALL's (2001, p.88) phrase, must be adequately represented. The distillation of experience through the filter of positivistic science often leaves experience fragmented and decontextualized and ... Heartless. [7]

Autoethnography is an exemplar of subjectivist research (PREISSLE & GRANT 2004). However, it is a little understood method. This lack of understanding is due to the many guises it may take: e.g., personal narrative, first person account, ethnographic short-story, and so on (REED-DANAHAY 1997; WALFORD 2004). For instance, ELLIS and BOCHNER (2000) view autoethnography as being concerned with maintaining one's personal identity over time. HAYANO (1979), often credited with originating the term, conceived autoethnography as applying to the study of groups to which the ethnographer currently belonged, in other words, the native qua ethnographer. [8]

PELIAS takes an autoethnographic approach in this book. In his use of autoethnography, the sharing of Heart is critical to the generation of knowledge and understanding; and, as noted above, the researcher imbues the researched with meaning; data are never separated from the Heart of the researcher (PREISSLE & GRANT 2004). Integral to this revealing of Heart is describing relations with others, laying bare one's emotions, and being honest about one's faults in the context of one's research. Also critical is the use of multiple forms of knowledge representation: for example, poetry, performance art, and creative non-fiction. Much in keeping with DAY's (2002) construction of self using multiple voices, PELIAS uses multiple genres of writing; rather than keeping to one narrative representation, PELIAS engages many. As CROTTY (2003) and PREISSLE and GRANT point out, in subjectivist research it is the researcher who places meaning on reality by connecting it to one's own past employing different forms of representation. This is vital as researchers embracing the subjectivist approach view knowledge representation as dynamic, changing with each genre used. The variety of representations helps to reflect the complexity of whatever is being explored. There are many examples of self revelation and study in the context of research, most notably DENZIN (1987a, 1987b) and ELLIS (1995). [9]

4. The Culture and Mystique of the Academy

In chapters 11 through 17 PELIAS places his Heart in the academy. (Chapter 13 was co-authored with Elyse PINEAU.) He relates his experiences with colleagues and students as a professor of speech communication at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale (USA). As I read these chapters I kept relating the material to my own experiences as an academic. I found myself laughing and wincing, imagining myself in many of the situations PELIAS describes. Preparing to write this section, I found that the most effective way to do so might be to relate

some of what PELIAS writes about to my own experiences; writing an autoethnography of sorts. [10]

When I entered college, as many beginning college students, I was in awe of the campus, the people, and all of that knowledge. But what I noticed above all was the perceived mystique of my professors. Who were these people who knew so much? To me they were mysterious figures. Everyday they would enter the classroom and tell so much that I did not know: quadratic equations, Aquinas, Jung, and so much more. Certainly they were not like everyone else; they knew so much. And the books I had to read, they, too, had a certain mystique. But the books I would own would slowly reveal their secrets to me. Still, the professors remained a mysterious lot. Transferring to another college I found the professors there just as mysterious and I graduated still under their spell. The situation in graduate school grew even worse. Despite getting to know some of my professors they were even more mysterious to me. [11]

Then I received my PhD and became a professor myself. No more mystery—the mystique gone. I still get toothaches and my heart still gets broken; I have not changed. Of course, I knew that my professors in undergraduate and graduate school were much like me, the only difference being they had read a few more books than I had. I looked at them as intellectual heroes who invited me into a world that I was, until then, reluctant to enter. I mythologized them, knowing objectively that they had warts too. Warts and all, many are still heroes to me. [12]

Teaching brings me great joy, but there are days when I walk into the classroom not wanting to be there or not quite sure just what it is I am going to talk about that day. Do I know as much as my students think I know? I doubt it. I have read a few more books than they have. When we enter a classroom either as student or instructor we bring with us our Selves and our Hearts which inevitably affect how and what we learn and teach. I interpret the material I teach through many prisms. My students see the Self that listens to jazz and classical music; who reads literature and poetry; who goes to foreign films; as these are but a few of the prisms through which I interpret what I teach. I cannot put on the facade of knowing the truth. [13]

Sometimes there are connections to students; they get what it is that I am talking about and that is what makes teaching a great joy. So too is the challenge of helping students who do not get it. However, in my role of professor I am certain many students see me as a fount of information (the person with the "right" answers), perhaps even mysterious, even strange, I dare say. Attempts to dispel the mystery undoubtedly fail. Whether I want it or not, my Self and Heart are shrouded in mystery. It is not easy to cast off that shroud. [14]

PELIAS succeeds in vividly describing the joys and pains that come with academic life. It is in these chapters that PELIAS evokes the academy that I find most compelling. Most academics would feel some connection to the tales of the academy PELIAS shares; he certainly succeeded in making a connection with me. How many of us have journals piling up that we want to read but cannot

because of too many other pressing matters to tend to? What PELIAS' autoethnography allows is the creation of a "space for dialogue," to use DAY's (2002) expression, between the reader and the author. Creating such a dialogue allows the reader to place her/himself within the context the author shares and, once in that context, to reflect in relation to the time and place so created. Thus, PELIAS' evocation of the academy presents a context in which I, as reader, can reflect on my life as an academic. As RICHARDSON (1994) suggests, "Evocative representations" allow for "a textual place for ourselves and our doubts and uncertainties" (p.521). [15]

What would someone unfamiliar with the academy make of these chapters? They are very specific to academic culture. To one from outside, they offer a vivid depiction of the life of an academic and may lead to a fuller understanding and appreciation of such a life. What we have is a work tied very closely to a specific person within a very specific context. What PELIAS has accomplished requires great self reflexivity. Much of what we do as academics on a daily basis is often in peril of becoming mechanized. Many of us have had professors who have used the same yellowed lecture notes for 20 years. Their teaching styles have remained static with little obvious reflection. [16]

PELIAS' self-reflexivity, the baring of his Heart, provides space for the reader to do likewise. How we negotiate ourselves within our spaces is a complex, multifaceted process that often leaves little time for reflection. However, when a mirror is held up to one's self, one must pause. Autoethnography engages writing as "an act that enables us to define our worlds, our cultures our experiences in our own words" (HORSFALL 2001, p.91); writing, as MITCHELL and CHARMAZ (1996) propose, in which the author serves the dual roles of narrator and actor. This, I believe, is akin to ELLIS and BOCHNER's (2000) notion of autoethnography as a blurring of distinctions: The narrator qua actor; the actor *qua* narrator. [17]

HANSEN (2004) writes of a poetics of teaching in which he contrasts the mechanics of developing a curriculum, assessing students' performance, managing administrative tasks, and so on, with a holistic view that emphasizes the aesthetic, intellectual, and moral facets involved. For many years in the United States, classroom teaching was seen as transmitting knowledge to students who entered classrooms as empty vessels waiting to be filled by the teacher. HANSEN (2004) argues that such a mechanistic view of teaching often leads to aloofness on the part of teachers and misunderstandings about what education means on the part of the students. A poetics of teaching reveals the interconnectedness of the aesthetic, intellectual, and moral dimensions of the role. In recent years educational researchers have begun to consider teacher cognition, affect, and motivation (see PUTNAM & BORKO 2000). For many years research on classroom learning focused primarily upon student learning. It is now recognized that teachers, good teachers, continue to learn and grow with their students. HANSEN points out that many administrators and policy makers believe that the only legitimate way to understand the teaching process is by conducting comparative experiments: a process of merely contrasting the instructional

"styles" of teachers without ever exploring the complexities of the teaching-learning process. As HANSEN suggests, a poetics of teaching can illustrate how teachers' lives can be enriched by teaching. A poetics of teaching allows the teacher's voice to be heard for the first time—to see that there is a beating Heart under the scholarly exterior. [18]

PELIAS' autoethnography can contribute to this literature. In contrast to the positivist approaches that many educational researchers have embraced in the past, PELIAS' book reveals the human, the affective in teaching. Teaching at any level can become a mechanical process. With countless demands on their time, teachers from elementary schools to graduate faculties may come to see teaching as an intrusion. A consequence of this is a "streamlining" of sorts in which instruction is kept to a minimum: lectures over projects; multiple choice examinations over essays and all this with student involvement discouraged. PELIAS confronts this "streamlining" process head-on. While few solutions are offered, PELIAS exhorts himself (and us) to continue to try and get it right through an approach that is multi-layered, as noted previously. Either through dramatic dialogue or poetry (just two of the many genres of writing employed) PELIAS attempts to engage the reader. I got the sense that PELIAS is hoping that readers will exclaim as they read, "That's me!" That recognition being the first step in revealing, not the analytical heart, but the Heart that beats and gets broken, the Heart that is so often shrouded in mystery. [19]

YOSHIDA (2001) writes a moving reflection on his efforts to bring art and literature to the discipline of psychology. Trained in the "science" of psychology, YOSHIDA became disillusioned with the positivistic, scientistic nature of much of the discipline. For a period of 10 years, from 1971 to 1981, YOSHIDA and a group of teachers and researchers, in a collaborative effort that went by the name Kyojugaku-kenkyu no kai (Association of Pedagogical Study), undertook the study of the teaching practices of Japanese teachers. YOSHIDA's initial goal was to apply psychological theory to the study of teaching practices. He recounts that "it did not take too long before [he] became aware of the powerlessness of psychological theory [that he] had mastered up to that point" (p.199). He found that psychological theories did not provide any insight into actual teaching practices. This left him with a deep sense of disenchantment with the discipline of psychology, asking what is the use of psychology if it "had nothing to say to practicing teachers and nothing to help them in their daily tasks" (p.199). YOSHIDA discovered that what helped teachers most was the sharing of their "teaching stories." These narratives were shared in ways similar to the ways other literary works of art are shared. Psychological or pedagogical theories played no part in these stories. Most helpful were their narratives and other literary works that allowed them to reflect upon their practices as teachers and that allowed them to share those practices with others. Again, we see a self reflexivity through narrative. "Teaching stories" provide spaces in which authors and readers may connect, in which evocative representations of teaching provide instances of inward and outward looking. The recognition that someone's "story" is much like your own is significant on many levels. In one instance it provides a mirror into which we can gaze to see ourselves in the context of our practice. The author's

context of practice becomes our own; the author's successes and failures can be our own. It is a dialectical process between the experiences of the author and reader. It should be a process of discovery. The experience of "being there," to use CRESSWELL's phrase (1998, p.21), is integral to this. [20]

5. Discussion

In this the last section of my review essay I will make general comments about PELIAS' book in the context of writing as research, and then discuss issues that the book raises concerning the nature and meaning of research and data in the social sciences. [21]

RICHARDSON (1994) writes:

"It seems foolish at best, and narcissistic and wholly self-absorbed at worst, to spend months or years doing research that ends up not being read and not making a difference to anything but the author's career. Can something be done? ... How we create texts that are vital? That are attended to? That make a difference? One way to create those texts is to turn our attention to writing as a method of inquiry" (p.517). [22]

PELIAS, I believe, has made an effort to do just what RICHARDSON (1994) suggests be done. As he states, "I seek another discourse, one that will still have an edge, that could say what needs to be said but would do no harm. I want a scholarship that fosters connections, opens spaces for dialogue, heals" (p.2). What PELIAS has written can, I would argue, make a difference and my subjective experience of the book attests to that. Nonetheless, I am a sample of but one individual; in conventional social scientific writing my experience of reading the book would be of no moment, nothing to set store by. This raises several inter-related issues concerning what counts as data and research in the social sciences. [23]

ALSOP (2002) makes the point, "All ethnographic writing transforms the multi-channeled real life experience into the linear form of the written record" (para.53). When we write of our multi-layered selves we attempt to translate our unique experiences into a form that others can understand. In translating from one language into another, regardless of how faithful the translation might be to the original language, meaning is lost. A similar difficulty arises when translating our experiences into written form. Regardless of how eloquently one may write, the translation will ultimately fail, as the linear form, to use ALSOP's phrase, cannot adequate accommodate the complexities of our experiences; all that we are left with is an interpretation, and are often expected to accept that one interpretation. RICHARDSON (1994) would suggest that ethnographies are shaped by discipline-based writing conventions. Among other elements, many ethnographies displace the author to an impersonal omniscient observer of reality. RICHARDSON also makes the point that most academic writing is mechanical, often shorn of any creativity and any sense of the author's sensibilities. [24]

EISNER (1991) explains that our representations of research and observation are not fixed but, rather, are shaped by two factors: 1) The form in which we choose to represent data. Textual representations of data create a different world from one, for example, represented in photographs; and 2) our research and observations are shaped by a conceptual framework. EISNER makes the crucial point, "... language, like all other forms of representation, is constitutive of experience, it is not merely a conveyor of it" (p.28). However, most scientific texts are presented, or are believed to be, conveyors of knowledge. It is this conception of scientific writing, I presume, that has helped to turn scientific writing into the mechanical process that it is. Autoethnography can serve as a way to enrich the written record and to blur the distinctions between literary and scientific writing. [25]

The goal of autoethnography is to foreground the researcher, to reveal the multiple levels of her or his Self. It follows that one way to do this is to engage in multiple forms of communication: poetry, dramatic dialogue, monologue, theatrical performance, and film. These are but a few examples. As RICHARDSON (2000) has written, "Knowing the self and knowing about the subject are intertwined, partial, historical ..." (p.929). As ELLIS and BOCHNER (2000) state, "... authors privilege stories over analysis, allowing and encouraging alternative readings and multiple interpretations" (p.745). The "researcher" casts her/himself in the duel roles of actor and narrator. [26]

Autoethnography has been criticized for its perceived lack of logic and empirical claims (WALFORD 2004). From my reading of WALFORD I imagine that he maintains the distinction between literary and scientific texts, with scientific texts paving the road to the truth. Precision and clarity are the hallmarks of a good scientific paper. Janet CORBIN, interviewed by Cesar CISNEROS-PUEBLA, discusses welcoming alternative modes of representing research as long as they are tied to sound concepts and theory. CORBIN appears to maintain the distinction between the literary and the scientific:

> "I am going to write a novel, I will write a nice juicy novel with lots of sex and action. I suppose I could base in on people I've known. ... [Still] I can't see making a change in the way nurses practice based on some novel that I might write, even if I gathered the information for the novel from interviews. The difference ... is the degree of creative license that one can take" (CISNEROS-PUEBLA, 2004, para.31). [27]

CORBIN (CISNEROS-PUEBLA 2004) admonishes against an "anything goes" attitude in social science research; however, she states that researchers can experiment with multiple forms for representation as long as they are theoretically and conceptually grounded. Without this grounding, according to CORBIN, qualitative research diminishes its usefulness. For CORBIN, among the goals of the social sciences is to bring about change, "to shape events that constrain people" (p.9); without a firm theoretical base social science lessens its effective-ness. If I understand CORBIN correctly, for a piece of writing to count as a report of research it must meet the criteria of validity and relevance (HAMMERSLEY 1990). If research is going to serve as agent for change it must be based upon

systematic procedures and presentation. These objections raise fundamental questions about the nature of research and data in the social sciences. While it is well beyond the scope of this essay to delve into these critical questions I would be remiss if I did not briefly discuss them. [28]

The great British actor Charles LAUGHTON when asked why he acted responded that he wanted to show people who they really were because they did not know (CALLOW 1987). A great actor on stage or on the screen can hold a mirror to our faces allowing us, if we are willing, to see who we really are. And, one would hope, learn about ourselves and others. Great literature has the same potential; stating this seems almost trite. A work by KAFKA, BECKETT, or MANN can stir some of us to our very cores. Narrative in its many guises serves as a means to go beyond our facades and reveal our Hearts, to teach us something, to effect change. This kind of writing is fictional, yet it deals with intensely human dilemmas. In contrast, we have scientific writing that is linear, objective and factual (RICHARDSON 1994). Fiction as a writing convention has suffered assaults aimed at it's being just that, fiction—of not reflecting the "real" world. Scientific writing, in contrast, has been held up as providing a true unencumbered view of the world. Each discipline has very rigid formats to which authors and their journals must adhere. There are rhetorical and formatting conventions that must be followed for a manuscript to be considered worthy of publication. These rhetorical and formatting conventions shape the story the author is trying to tell, often leaving the moral of the tale shrouded in objectivity. [29]

Books such as PELIAS' and other similar works (see RICHARDSON 1997) boldly confront those challenges. They present us with a mirror into which we must gaze, if so inclined. If I follow PELIAS, he has presented his Heart in order for us, the readers, to better understand our own, thereby allowing and helping us to affect change within ourselves and ultimately within those around us. But is it research? [30]

The reasons for doing research are voluminous. It is done to answer an important question or to test a hypothesis; it is done to get another publication and tenure; it is done out of genuine curiosity or to effect change. These are but the most obvious reasons for doing research. Whatever the reasons for doing it, at some point, we want to share the results and observations of our research. As EISNER (1991) reminds us, the conceptual framework that guides our research and how we choose to present it will shape the final product and what we present to the world as our research. [31]

The range of research topics embraced by the social sciences is staggering—ranging from the minute to the behaviors of large groups of people. The wide range of social science research should lead to the recognition that we need at our disposal multiple methods that will allow us to effectively carry out our inquiries. An important confounding factor in all of this is that we are the subject of our research. This self-reflexivity is what makes social science so interesting and important and, at the same instance, so difficult. The adoption of methods from the natural sciences has made our attempts even more intractable. We are

much more difficult to understand than a subatomic particle (which is rather willful enough). As GIORGI (1970, p.197) claims, we are "the perceivable perceiver, the touchable toucher, the sensible sensor." Our lives and our experiences are multi-layered and complex; to smooth out the rough edges of our unruly existence is to miss the opportunity for true understanding. Standard academic writing does just that; it standardizes our experiences. The only effective means to attain true understanding is to utilize as many ways as are appropriate in order to overcome the scientism that permeates many of the social sciences. As EISNER (1991) eloquently states:

> "The belief that only through a standard prescribed procedure can a useful description, interpretation, or evaluation of the world be secured dismisses what novelists, film makers, historians, and anthropologists have provided through their works. The most important work in these fields depends upon personal insight and interpretation, not simply upon following a set of replicable procedures" (p.50). [32]

Our realities are many. To reduce them to a formula or numbers in a table is to extract from them their meaning and complexity. This is not to discount experiments and quantification. They have their place. However, following CROTTY (2003), we should not simply pluck a research approach off the shelf, nor should we embrace an "anything goes" attitude. We need to be guided by concepts and theory, as CORBIN argues (CISNEROS-PUEBLA 2004). What is incumbent upon us as social scientists is to reflect upon what we consider valid research and data. At present, our views tend to be narrow. Our ways of understanding must reflect the multi-layered and complex realities each of us inhabits and that will reveal a beating Heart. [33]

> *From the heart may it return to the heart.*
> Ludwig van Beethoven

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