Crafting an Architectural Blueprint: Principles of Design for Ethnographic Research

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The purpose of this article is to enrich our conceptual understanding of ethnography through principles of design by offering a blueprint for ethnographic ways of knowing. Drawing on published ethnographic research, this article develops and defines principles of design that help facilitate the process and product of ethnographic research. Through the metaphor of an architectural blueprint, we consider the epistemological value of identifying foundational principles supporting ethnographic research and writing. The architectural blueprint offers a foundation for creating, writing, revising, teaching, and evaluating ethnographic scholarship. The article closes with a discussion of the utility of the metaphor as well as how other metaphors that currently guide ethnographic research could be used in tandem with the blueprint metaphor.
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Establishing criteria for evaluating ethnographic research has been a highly contested practice. In fact, *criteria* has been described as a term that "separates modernists from postmodernists, foundationalists from antifoundationalists, empiricists from interpretivists, and scientists from artists" (Bochner 2000:266). This separation is rooted in a binary opposition that collides against the desire for some traditional ethnographers to find terms that are adapted from quantitative standards for evaluating the worth and contribution of empirical research. Words such as *generalizability*

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and *replicability* can be inappropriate for conceptualizing qualitative inquiry and do not fully capture the intent and aims of ethnography. Because of this separation, some scholars have proposed that the term *criteria*, as it is defined by a modernist empirical scientific model, is not relevant and may be stifling to ethnographic research (Bochner 2000; Clough 2000; Denzin 2000; Ellis 2000; Richardson 2000a).

Despite the debate over the value of criteria or even the word *criteria*, many ethnographers are able to articulate ways to evaluate quality scholarship. Describing ethnographic writing, Goodall (2008:143) suggests that we as readers judge a tale by scholarly truth and literary beauty, and that "readers bring in their own interpretive resources to make sense of them." Ellis (2009) judges her work by how effectively she develops others' characters and interrogates her own identity, motives, and actions. Poulos (2009:27) sees narrative conscience in ethnographic work as "a way of approaching the writing of (auto)ethnography that emerges from the synergy of the ethical and the mythical impulses that reside deep with each of us." Finally, Ellingson (2009:5) offers "crystallization" as a map of the terrain for qualitative research:

> Crystallization combines multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent text or series of related texts, building a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that problematizes its own construction, highlights researchers' positionality, makes claims about socially constructed meanings, and reveals the indeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes them.

Ellingson's crystallization offers a way to blur the boundaries between art and science in our ethnographic research and create aesthetically pleasing texts that "require an engaged reader who can be motivated to think and act by your artistry and analysis" (pp. 155–56).

Instead of identifying a set of criteria that prescribe certain standards of excellence for an end product, our purpose is to enrich our conceptual understanding of the principles of ethnography by creating a blueprint that facilitates movement from research design to written manuscript and beyond. By doing so, we create an array of possibilities for the ethnographic process including research and fieldwork, as well as writing and revising. In addition, the blueprint offers stability for ethnographers to sustain the rigor necessary to produce quality work.

Through this article we propose an *architectural blueprint* for designing, conducting, writing, and revising ethnographic research. First, we explain how we came to the principles of design as an architectural blueprint. Second, we provide a table that explicates the architectural metaphor by describing these principles. Third, we review a sample of ethnographic studies to demonstrate how these principles function and strengthen research. Finally, we close with a discussion of the value of the architectural blueprint metaphor, elaborating its connections to symbolic interactionism, explicating the metaphor's limitations, and evaluating other metaphors that could guide ethnographic research or be used in tandem with the blueprint metaphor.

THE PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

Originally the concept of these seven principles was a one-page document titled "Criteria for Ethnographic Research" and used for ten years by one of the authors to teach ethnography. These "criteria" were drawn from a comparison of ideas, arguments, and beliefs developed from multiple ethnographic researchers and theorists. During our early conversations for making these seven criteria into a journal article, we found an interesting discussion in the literature emerging about the "criteria" of ethnography. We decided it was more useful to conceptualize these items as principles or characteristics rather than criteria. Instead, we discovered that the principles could be visualized as aspects of a blueprint—something that inspires, structures, and evolves through a process that guides ethnographers in constructing their ethnographic products.

From there we examined research on design principles in architecture to see if our blueprint metaphor was comparable to conducting ethnography. As we read about architecture and architectural design, we understood that the work of the architect offered insights about our work as ethnographers. An architectural blueprint is a plan, a draft, a design, but it is also a muse map (Madison 2005) that tentatively lays out what we want to construct—a first version to be filled out and polished later (Greenberg and Howe 1913).

Having conducted ethnographic studies, we knew design was not a linear process but adaptive and creative (Pongratz 2003). Hence we agreed that questions that arise during shifts from design to draft to final ethnography should not be "solved in a series of independent sequential decisions, but in an integrative and holistic approach" (p. 97). In this way, we view the blueprint as a tool that can help guide the researcher/architect through the interwoven and cyclical steps of designing, conducting, and writing ethnography. It also provides images of what that final product *could be*. The synthetic-analytic process of drafting a building is considered "an aggregation of connected units; system and coherency must therefore prevail in its representation . . . [where] all elements should be carefully studied by themselves and in relation to one another" (Greenberg and Howe 1913:7). Even though architects may reconceptualize blueprints by drawing on, erasing, crossing out, and adding to the original design, they still have essential elements included in every building that are necessary to keep the building from falling down. Similarly, we could see from reflecting on our own ethnographic experiences that designing, writing, and implementing can change as more data is collected, as we write about our observations and as people read and reflect on our texts.

In *Revision* Ellis (2009:12–13) decided that her portrayals "change as we age and have new experiences . . . as others respond to the stories we tell and tell their own, [and thus] we expand and deepen our understandings of the lives we have led." Similarly, architecture is considered a "living art and as such must give evidence of life and growing in its makeup . . . like a tree deeply rooted and rising majestically (Greenberg and Howe 1913:20). Ultimately, we saw these alterations facilitating

TABLE 1. Principles of Design

		Columns						
		Multivoiced	Critical	Reflexive	Embodied	Catalytic	Dialogic	Temporal
Beams	Linkage	Diverse	Stirring	Bridging	Interactive	Empowering	Engaging	Enduring
	Tension	Competing	Ethical	Adaptive	Descriptive	Moving	Changing	Shifting
	Context	Questioning	Exposing	Revealing	Evocative	Awakening	Relatable	Playing

movement from theory to practice, from practice to product, and from the words on the page to conversations that change lives. Architecture, like ethnography, is a "harmonious combination in a structure of utility and beauty" (p. 69). Just as the most creative buildings must adhere to building codes, the most creative ethnographies adhere to ethnographic writing principles. After all, a building will fall with only one beam, and ethnography will not make sense if it only includes pages of dialogue.

Eventually, we chose to describe our blueprint using exemplars from current ethnographic scholarship in edited books and such journals as the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *Symbolic Interaction*, and *Qualitative Inquiry* that revealed core epistemic values as they were applied to ethnographic practices. We proceeded in this manner because Seale (1999:472) argues that "practicing social researchers can learn to do good work from a variety of examples." We read through forty-five published ethnographies, traditional to creative, and picked exemplars that showed how our principles come to life within the final ethnographic product. Our aim is not to distinguish the forms that ethnography can take but to suggest that no matter what the form (e.g., critical, performative, autoethnographic), these principles may guide the research and writing process.

At the heart of this blueprint are seven columns, the original seven "Criteria for Ethnographic Research." Through our own ethnographic processes, we concluded that it *was* these elements that formed the initial ethnographic structure and design. Viewing these columns, or vertical support, allows researchers to see and name what it is that supports ethnographic practice from the ground up. The names of each of the seven columns are not original to this piece, but together represent the process ethnographers engage in as they design and conduct their research *as well as* the textual products they aim to construct, including texts that are multivoiced, critical, reflexive, embodied, catalytic, dialogic, and temporal (see Table 1).

Connected and interwoven among this colonnade are three conceptual beams that offer balance and symmetry in both the ethnographic process and the product (again, see Table 1), including linkage, tension, and context. These three beams represent what Haraway (1988:583) refers to as "situated and embodied knowledge," allowing us "to become answerable for what we learn how to see." Haraway continues:

> Politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge

> claims. These are claims of people's lives. I am arguing for the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity. (P. 589)

The beams focus our attention on knowledges that are linked, that reveal tensions, and that help us understand context.

Building from Haraway's notion of "situated and embodied knowledge" and reading through quality ethnographic studies allowed us to conceptualize how each beam worked in relation to the columns. We kept finding a pattern of three knowledges balancing each of these exemplars and were able to define them according to their action within the ethnographic text. First, the *linkage beam* works to create a bond between the researcher, his or her research, and the reader. Second, the *tension beam* utilizes the varying array of thoughts, positions, realities, descriptions, and moments to form structure within the complex nature of interaction. Third, the *context beam* unites the framework of lived experience in order to build a sound edifice. As a result, each beam sustains, reinforces, and unifies the seven columns. Essentially, the beams draw connections among columns just as they illuminate intersections among the columns, and together create the principles of ethnographic design.

These seven columns and three beams support a solid infrastructure for sense making (Weick and Sutcliffe 2007) in ethnographic research, from topic conception to published ethnography. Weick and Sutcliffe describe this as a process of mindfulness or "a struggle to maintain continuing alertness to the unexpected in the face of pressure to take cognitive shortcuts" (p. 19). What Weick (2001:9) suggests about sensemaking in organizations is true for ethnographic research: "The problem of sensemaking is compounded because the terrain keeps changing and the task is to carve out some momentary stability in the continuous flow." The principles of design are thus created by the interaction of the columns and beams, and foster an infrastructure that "makes sense" of the endless possibilities and options ethnographers may employ with this blueprint. The architectural metaphor with the seven columns and three beams offers stability within the complex variations of the principles of design in ethnographic research. In the following seven subsections, we provide interpretations of what it means to craft an ethnographic blueprint through the principles of design.

Crafting a Multivoiced Text

The multivoiced column incorporates the *diverse*, *competing*, and *questioning* principles of design. The diverse principle connects the multivoiced column with the linkage beam by researchers engaging in conversations, conducting interviews with participants, and making note of observations heard, seen, thought, or felt in the field. The competing principle joins the multivoiced text with the tension beam when researchers provide exemplars that "express a tale of two selves" (Bochner 2000:271) or stories that utilize multiple angles of experiences (Richardson 2000a). Finally,

the questioning principle attaches the multivoiced text with the context beam when researchers examine subjectivity and realism by including data that raise contradictions. By identifying the diversity, competition, and questioning principles within the array of voices collected from an ethnographic study, researchers are able to more fully present, examine, and analyze the communicative patterns within a culture.

In this first research exemplar, Fox (1996) presents three viewpoints on sexual abuse. She includes the voices of the victim and the offender, and her reactions and reflections on their responses as well as her own experience with abuse. This example shows how a traditional ethnographic methodology can be represented using an alternative form.

> Sherry—Victim
> I didn't testify against
> him because of limitations. They would have
> ripped me up one side
> and down the other for
> the details of my abuse.
>
> Ben—Sex Offender
> I loved her, you know.
> you see we really had a
> good relationship. And I
> think this is the reason she
> couldn't testify against me.
>
> Karen—Researcher
> (How could they have a
> good relationship. I feel sick). (Pp. 335–36)

The diversity within this text allows readers to link the understanding of a complicated issue through voices that are often overlooked or left out. The opinions of offenders in sexual abuse experiences are stigmatized, shunned, and in many cases seen as irrelevant. The diversity of these juxtaposed voices illuminates aspects of sexual abuse that some readers may have never considered even existed. Fox's ethnographic text reveals dynamic complexities of opposing viewpoints, and in the process our own response to these diverse voices becomes juxtaposed with theirs.

The divided format of the quotes highlights not simply diversity but also the competing nature within a multivoiced text. The three voices compete for the audience's attention and consideration because of the scattered way they are placed physically on the page, but also because their words create tension by illuminating each voice individually, in reference to the others and in reference to themselves. In crafting a multivoiced text, researchers invite the reader to reevaluate personal opinions about participants in the study as well as herself or himself as the architect of this manuscript.

The second multivoiced text exemplar, Ellis (1995), writes about an experience she had returning to the field after her previous research has been published on the same group of people. The following conversation is between Ellis and one of her former participants, Betty. Through their discussion, Ellis and Betty begin to raise questions about what was written in the article and the impact this article has had on the participants in this community.

> "Hum," I chuckle, grunt, and sigh at the same time, rolling my eyes back and tossing my head. "Betty, that's not true. I haven't made a cent and I never will." But she's right in that I used them as an opportunity to advance my career.
>
> "You said all ten-year-olds had screwed."
>
> "No I didn't," I replied adamantly.
>
> "Such common talk. I didn't know you was like that. Did you screw at ten?" When I don't reply, she demands, "Answer me, did you?"
>
> When I say no, she continues, "Okay, see. Would you want someone writin' this about you?"
>
> "No. But I didn't say everybody had sex at age ten."
>
> "I can show you where you wrote it," she shouts.
>
> "Okay show me." Now I am yelling as loudly as Betty. I follow her as she marches ferociously to her trailer. I *didn't* write that, did I? (p. 82)

Diversity is provided by linking at least five voices in this excerpt (1) the voices of the participants in the original study, (2) the "voices" represented in the published text, (3) Betty's voice challenging the published text, (4) Ellis's voice defending the published text and (5) Ellis's reflexive voice questioning and reflecting on what she is defending. These multiple voices create tension by blending competing viewpoints that "challenge a dominant, realist reading . . . by providing space for marginal experiences to be expressed" (Fox 1996:331). This excerpt takes us to the heart of what it means to construct ethnographic research by questioning and challenging master narratives that often simplify experience and context. This example highlights how presenting the multiple voices of researcher and participant enhance understanding of interaction.

By crafting a multivoiced text, researchers/readers gain a deepened and multifaceted comprehension of their experiences and those of their participants. Multivoiced texts "capture and evoke . . . the complex, paradoxical, and mysterious qualities of subjectivity" (Ellis and Flaherty 1992:5). By constructing ethnographies that incorporate the design principles found through the connection of a column with beams that represent linkage, tension, and context, opinions are revealed in situations that evoke the past, present, and even future projections. These principles may move readers to critically question the ethnographer's beliefs as well as their own. In these two texts, voices become perspectives of different times and different places that link the diversity of interaction, reveal underlying tension from competing voices, and raise questions of context. However, as their knowledge increases, ethnographers also become cognizant of the underlying assumptions that both they and their participants hold.

Crafting a Critical Text

The critical column represents the *stirring*, *ethical*, and *exposing* principles of design. The stirring principle connects the critical column with the linkage beam when researchers examine text that ignites emotion or action or both in the reader. The ethical principle unites the critical column with the tension beam by forcing ethnographers to be responsible for learning more about the perspectives of the people they study as well as their own. In conducting fieldwork and presenting data in the final ethnography, researchers must be cognizant of the power differences inherent in their relationship with their participants.

The exposing principle joins the critical column to the context beam when ethnographers investigate the complexities of age, gender, race, nationality, class, sexuality, disability/ability, religion, and other salient identity markers. Research crafted using a critical lens is able to produce an ethnographic product that is ethical (Bochner 2000; Richardson 2000a) and has the ability to promote social justice (see Frey 1998). Ethnographies designed to create critical texts draw the reader in by relentlessly examining notions, thoughts, actions, problems, environments, and so forth that readers had not thought about, been aware of, or taken time to examine before.

The first exemplar of a critical text is Alemán's (2003) engaging examination of the stigma associated with aging and romantic relationships. She utilized a three-year ethnographic study of a retirement community to examine the dialectical tensions of romance and aging.

> Morrie said, "You know, I can't do much, but I like to kiss and cuddle and touch and stuff." I [Bertha] told him I like to too. He loves to touch. He likes to touch in public so everyone can see, but he doesn't want people to see him coming out of my room. He has people to account to. I don't. (P. 33)

This example highlights the intersections of identity markers by stirring emotion in the reader. Linkage to emotion from text is drawn when readers see an elderly women struggling with the tension between physicality and disgust, particularly in relation to her communication with her male partner. While people may be tangentially aware that these problems exist, a stirring of emotion may be found only in the upfront and "in your face" value inherent to a critical text. Alemán creates tension through her ethical and accurate presentation of this woman's thoughts and feelings about romance, and in her descriptions of how an aging body should be presented. This exemplar also emphasizes how a critical text can blatantly *expose* context by describing how society's negative views on aging can marginalize and stigmatize an elderly individual's voice. To understand cultures in novel ways, ethnographers craft ethical narratives that stir responses in the reader, by exposing communicative practices that affect different, and often marginalized, groups of people.

Besides creating emotional responses to injustice, these texts expose complexities in political, social, and cultural life (Fine et al. 2000). The second research exemplar of a critical text is an autoethnographic poem from González's (1998) collection of poetry about her experiences observing a Native American community.

And somehow she feels noble
for defending an Indian way
when her friend only wondered if she was okay
yesterday she was white.
When she looks in the mirror
she sees feathers
and turquoise
fringe and frill around the
nothing
she saw before
and she is frightened to take them off
because even in her noble
lack-of-eye-contact
newfound Indian ways
she still sees
No one.
(P. 489)

González exposes the contexts from which people walk the boundaries of identity while desiring to cross over and become someone else. The poem questions fixed identities, makes us think about blurring those borders, and challenges the ethics of "taking on" another person's identity by linking it to readers as if it were their own. Through these challenges González stirs a reaction within readers that may be exciting, happy, uncomfortable, or even painful to acknowledge. Acknowledging internal tensions make us ethically responsible to explore notions of others' identities. Additionally, this example highlights the underlying politics of González's observation, showing how cultural misunderstandings permeate her own "workspaces, disciplines, friends, and family" (Richardson 2000a:932). This critical text demonstrates how the researcher, because of the potential for these misunderstandings, represented in the ethnographic product an ethic that illuminates her observations in candid ways.

Critical texts have the ability to create debate and dialogue because they invite authors to make ethical decisions about what to include in the final representation of the article (Richardson 2000b). Madison (2005:5) describes this ethical responsibility as "a compelling sense of duty and commitment based on moral principles of human freedom and well-being, and hence a compassion for the suffering of living beings." Hence the critical text incorporates principles that stir the researchers' and readers' opinions, beliefs, and values, expose the assumptions and prejudices that many people hold, and demand ethical accountability and justice for the cultures ethnographers study. Crafting a critical text often leads to the inclusion of many voices from different places and times that expose the injustices affecting the people we study. As ethnographers learn about these injustices, the time to reflect on them and their personal experiences arises.

Crafting a Reflexive Text

The reflexive column encompasses the *bridging*, *adaptive*, and *revealing* principles of design. The bridging principle connects the reflexive column with the linkage beam when ethnographers acquire knowledge about their own thoughts, feelings, and opinions by being aware of how they came to write their texts and how data were gathered (Richardson 2000a). The adaptive principle fixes the reflexive column with the tension beam by allowing researchers to craft methodologies to interrogate how they are positioned in the text—physically, ideologically, and emotionally. The revealing principle unites the reflexive column with the context beam when ethnographers record reflexive notes in a field notebook, computer, journal, diary, or even scraps of paper. When presented in final ethnographies, reflexive field notes can "provide a snapshot" (Ellis 2004:343) of what the researcher was thinking during fieldwork, thus fusing "complexity without privileging one form of inquiry over another" (Minge 2006:123). This fusion of inquiry creates a text whereby the reader may better understand the scope of the researcher's aims and more wholly examine the researcher's claims. Past research has described these types of texts as engaging a "standard of self-consciousness" (Bochner 2000:271). Thus the reflexive column is designed to utilize the bridging, adaptive, and revealing principles to minimize the distance between the author and the audience.

Reflexive texts challenge readers to reconsider how ethnographic studies are carried out. In their article, McCorkel and Myers (2003:199) examine and compare two cross-racial ethnographic studies to understand how the researchers' positionality influences the "structure and substance" of racial privilege in their research.

> After Terry and Sandra, I restructured the interview schedule to flow from specifics . . . to general questions about race and gender. Reordering the questions did not erase the tensions in the interviews. My whiteness communicated information to the black members that I neither expected nor investigated for some time. Thus, the interviews were still flawed. For example, here are fieldnotes from a subsequent interview with another African American member, Sarah:
>
> I don't think this was a very in-depth interview; it could have been done by questionnaire. Which is unfortunate, but these women are busy. She took my questions seriously and answered them. She wasn't up for probing. I didn't get a single—maybe one—story out of her.
>
> I rationalized the tension by the fact that Sarah was very busy, that my tape was running low, and that I had arrived late. All of these factors exacerbated rather than explained the difficulty of the interview. In actuality, my unexamined whiteness and my ignorance of the norms impeded rapport. (P. 219)

By revealing how information is gathered, the ethical issues are raised and the authors' judgments and self-awareness are represented (Richardson 2000b). Revealing the complexity within authors' understanding of their positioning provides a contextual account of the research process. McCorkel and Myers were not objective, distanced, or politically removed from their participants (Goodall 2000). Rather, they bridged connections between their reflections about their positioning before, during, and after conducting interviews. Additionally, McCorkel and Myers adapted their interview

guide, process, and results to reflect the tensions aroused. These adaptive connections stimulate "interplay between producing interpretations and challenging them" (Alvesson 2003:14). By examining this interplay, reflexive texts bridge gaps between theoretical understanding, practical design, and pragmatic uses of ethnographic research.

Often ethnographic research prompts ethnographers to bridge connections between themselves and their audience. In this second autoethnographic research exemplar, Ellingson (1998) wrote about her experience with bone cancer. This excerpt illuminates her reflections on her pain and her family's decision to leave shortly after they have come to visit her in the hospital.

> Dad and Mark leave early to beat the storm home, and, with a lump in my throat, I watch them go. They take my presents with them, since I have no use for them in the hospital. *How can they leave? Why didn't Mom come? When will this end?* I think bitterly to myself that they all care, but then they get to go home. It is not their bodies pierced with needles. Too weak to make it to the toilet on crutches, having to use a bedpan. Schedule determined by blood counts and temperature. Leg aching, stomach queasy, buttocks numb from sitting in the bed day after day. (P. 506)

Ellingson bridges emotional links to her audience by questioning the behaviors of her family members. By including this reflexive narrative she is able to draw readers into her experience, prompting them to empathize in ways they may not have known were possible. This exemplar reveals context to readers by describing communication as something that may be happening while we are thinking and feeling all at the same time. By transitioning from her family leaving to her thoughts of "Why didn't Mom come?" to depict specifics of her "leg aching, stomach queasy, buttocks numb," Ellingson presents interactional tension that actively adapts to the reality of human experience. She "turn[s] back on . . . [herself] the lens through which [she is] interpreting the world" (Goodall 2000:137). This "turn back" allows her to interrogate her feelings about her disease, her family, and her future.

The reflexive column forms connections with beams that represent revealing, adaptive, and bridging, thus creating a relationship between reading and understanding that allows for a greater awareness of the interactive practices researched. By writing about their feelings and thoughts, researchers draw readers in and help them see the researcher not only as a scholar but as a person communicating within the same world. A reflexive text utilizes various opinions, viewpoints, and voices to reconsider ethnographers' positioning, often creating linkage, stimulating tension, and marking context for readers. As texts are modified and interrogated, ethnographers revise their writing to craft research that is felt throughout the readers' minds and bodies. Through reflexivity, ethnographers critically examine the choices they make from the beginning to the end of their research.

Crafting an Embodied Text

An embodied text, or column, includes the *interactive*, *descriptive*, and *evocative* principles of design. The interactive principle attaches the embodied column to the

linkage beam by engaging the reader and researcher and bringing them close. The descriptive principle joins the embodied column with the tension beam by presenting the data thickly, lushly, and utilizing all five senses both during fieldwork and in the final ethnographic product. The evocative principle unites the embodied column to the context beam by presenting the lived experience that exemplifies a "credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the 'real'" (Richardson 2000a:254). Hence, through both design and completion of these projects, the texts strive to interact, describe, and evoke an embodied sense of the researcher's lived experience that readers too may experience (Cresswell 1998).

The first research piece is an example of an embodied text. This piece describes Rambo Ronai's (1998) experience of returning to the stage as an erotic dancer. This excerpt describes a memory of the time when she went back to dancing after a period away from it.

> I am frightened and scared, internally trembling with the adrenaline rush of it—nauseated. What am I doing to myself? Men are at their worst in situations like these—nasty, creepy, slimy. It's in a bar. They'll be drunk and hard to handle, with vomit beer breath or gin stench that triggers a headache every time I smell it. I'll get stage fright and they'll take advantage of it, reach out and grab me, hurt me. (P. 413)

Rambo Ronai's description of the scene pulls the reader into the tensions of that moment. We can feel, see, hear, smell, and touch everything that she does. Furthermore, the embodied text evokes the reader's emotions through a detailed description of the context. We are scared for Rambo Ronai, worried about what is going to happen to her, and angry that men at the bar may treat her inappropriately. Scenes such as this are created in the process of writing as the ethnographer interacts with their texts considering a full awareness of their bodies. Consequently, the final product created leads us as readers to become more fully aware of the knowledge, tension, and context of our own bodies (Ellingson 1998). This awareness of the body is often absent in social scientific research but it is integral to the interacting, describing, and evoking of emotions present in embodied texts. Ellingson (2006:302) posits that

> once language has taken place, meaning is created, assigned, even imposed on the body, and we need to acknowledge that our languaging of experience and ideas can be thought of neither as somehow reporting pure bodily experience nor as purely disembodied knowledge.

Hence the way knowledge is created during the research process has everything to do with the way the body feels. In fact, as the ethnographer interacts with individuals before, during, and after the data is collected, their conclusions may change because of the responses and reactions that they receive in regard to their body.

Ethnographers' embodied texts react and interact as they communicate with their participants. The second exemplar of embodied text comes from participant observation and interviewing at the Tariq Khamisa Foundation (Miller, Geist-Martin, and Cannon Beatty 2004). This excerpt is from a larger study that included observations and interviews examining nonviolent communication and the implications of

implementing peace instead of violence. The example includes a storied version of field notes in which one of the authors is teaching a group of underprivileged children.

> The room is cool, the heater blows in the corner. Kids sit in different chairs on the floor and in front of their desks. "It smells like an old person and fish in here!" I find myself leaning toward my clothes, worrying that I am the one who smells like an old person (or maybe it's my patchouli?) "Why you wearing a raincoat Mags?" a boy asks, his hair an afro with a blue pick sticking out of the side of his bushy hair. He is looking right at me, head cocked sideways looking intently with squinty eyes and a half-open mouth. "YOU should know by now I dress differently, but this is the way I am comfortable." I answer confidently, but suddenly I am internally embarrassed by my long brown coat that used to be someone else's short dress. "Yeah, she's different" remarks Brian. "Definitely different" someone else repeats and almost chimes in at the same time. The heat is flying out of the vent in the ceiling and seems to be hitting me in the face, drying my eyes. My face feels like red looks. (Miller et al. 2004:302–3)

This exemplar reveals how ethnographers who write embodied texts from their field observations not only provide detailed descriptions of the research setting and evoke emotional responses but also interact with people, and therefore knowledges, in the settings they observe in ways that foster reflection. This text describes how the researcher's body feels and changes as she communicates in the research setting. As the author interacts with the children in the classroom, she describes the physical changes in her body, evoking emotions in herself and the reader. These details reveal how embodiment is not static; it changes through communication with others. The piece also highlights the importance of writing embodied texts even if they are not included in the final ethnographic product. Through writing this story, the authors came to a different understanding of their experiences at the foundation. However, this understanding may simply be necessary for the ethnographer's future writing and not included in the final manuscript.

Embodied texts interact, describe, and evoke with both mundane and stimulating communicative situations. Bochner (2000:270) proposes that embodied texts show a "concern not only for the commonplace, even trivial routines of daily life, but also for the flesh and blood emotions of people." By creating these embodied texts, ethnographers strive to recognize and interrogate the mundane and the spectacular observations as both integral and equally important to their research. Through thick descriptions, ethnographers not only bring to life the cultures they study but also include multiple voices and reflections. They expose critical perspectives and uncover reflections and responses to how the researcher's body feels. In the process, their ethnographic research becomes a catalyst for our own behavior.

Crafting a Catalytic Text

A catalytic text, or column, involves the *empowering, moving,* and *awakening* principles of design. The empowering principle fixes the catalytic column to the

linkage beam by interrogating the implications of the findings and examining how the data will empower the reader through links to new types of knowledges. The moving principle attaches the catalytic column to the tension beam by providing a deeper understanding of an issue that encourages individuals to promote change. The awakening principle unites the catalytic column to the context beam by pushing the reader to question moral sensibilities and pushing the researcher to question her or his ethical positions during process and product. Catalytic texts reveal new ways to understand complex historical, social, and communicative issues while moving the researcher and reader to question their moral positionings. These texts also provide what has been described in past research as catalytic validity (Mullen 2003; Richardson and Lockridge 1998; Seale 1999).

Catalytic validity describes texts that raise questions about how "inquiry can mobilize audiences to some sort of action" (Mullen 2003:168). Interestingly, catalytic texts also empower members to act in new and different ways (Seale 1999). These types of texts create "an emotional, spiritual draw to bigger questions, mysterious questions, way beyond what initially intrigued the author" (Richardson and Lockridge 1998:335). Therefore the ability to generate catalytic texts has distinct implications for researchers, writers, and audiences.

Catalytic texts open the senses of researchers, participants, and readers to novel ways of knowing. The first research exemplar is a study by Lindemann (2007) that included participant observation and interviews with homeless street vendors in San Francisco. This interview excerpt describes the challenges that face street vendors when they perform a homeless identity. The participants struggled with appearing homeless enough to have someone buy a newspaper from them but not homeless enough that people would be disgusted or afraid.

> People have a stereotypical perception [of homelessness]. They think a homeless person goes around wearing a rag [she performs pulling an imaginary blanket over hunched and shivering shoulders, holding her hand out]. People think you're a drug user, an alcoholic. . . . People would tell me, "You don't look homeless." And when I got my cell phone . . . I'd say, "Look, motherfucker, I *am* homeless, and just because I decide to stay clean and save a little money and decide to do something productive with my life doesn't mean that I ain't homeless." (P. 53)

The complicated tension between "looking" homeless and "not looking" homeless awakens the ethnographer and the reader to the moral implication of a new issue in relation to the context of homelessness. This text also moves the reader to feel compassion for the street vendors by illuminating the specific behaviors (i.e., hunching, shivering, or pulling on an imaginary blanket) with which they are stereotypically associated. Furthermore, in some cases this text may empower people to give back to this marginalized group by highlighting their daily challenges and struggles.

A second exemplar of the catalytic principle reveals how research is designed to empower readers to believe that they can make a difference by helping them understand complexities faced by participants. In this example, Cherry (1996) writes several reflections on his experience of having a friend diagnosed with AIDS. He

presents perspectives that help the reader to understand living with this disease and dealing with the loss of a loved one.

> I've done some stuff that I'm not proud of, who hasn't? But a family, that's what's nice. I always wondered what it would be like to come home and have a dad there. I don't want Christopher wonderin' the same thing. I still say to myself, "Dad, where were you? Where were you to teach me to shave—to show me how to fight?" It's not stupid to want that, is it? But fucking Tammy, she says it's hard on her. What about me? This shit's stressing me out. And one thing I can't have is stress. Stress is what kills people who have this disease. (P. 30)

By revealing the complexities of his experience, Cherry moves readers to consider their own relationships with their children. Through an autoethnographic voice, the author not only awakens readers to AIDS's context and empowers readers to understand new types of knowledge, but he illuminates how struggling with disease can affect people's everyday decisions and move their own familial relationships into tenuous positions. After reading this article, some people may actually change the way they take care of their bodies or communicate with their children, which is the essence of a catalytic text—it compels researchers and readers forward to action.

Catalytic texts empower, move, and awaken readers engaged with the final product, as well as ethnographers conducting field research. During the collection of data, the researcher "will direct this impact so that those under study will gain self-understanding and self-direction" (Kincheloe and McLaren 2000:297). This type of research is an ethic of engagement (Mullen 2003) leading scholars' move past neutrality toward their object of study (Lather 1991), similar to critical and reflexive texts. Especially in places of unrest, the researchers invoke this principle to raise questions and present multiple viewpoints (Mullen 2003). Catalytic texts reveal how ethnographic research is "committed not just to describing the world but also changing it" (Denzin 2000:261). In the final product, ethnographers move people not only to learn about the cultures they study but to explore, assist, and more fully participate in these cultures. Another way to explore new cultures is by enacting dialogue and conversation.

Crafting a Dialogic Text

A dialogic text, or column, incorporates the *engaging, changing,* and *relatable* principles of design. The engaging principle connects the dialogic column to the linkage beam by presenting the ways different cultures and knowledges participate in the communicative practices of dialogue. The changing principle unites the dialogic column to the tension beam through the inclusion of conversations in the field, interviews, and focus groups that change the way they think about various tensions that arise during process and product. The relatable principle joins the dialogic column to the context beam by capturing conversation within the scenes in ways that readers identify with the characters and the sites under study. Ethnographers that utilize dialogic texts include segments of talk that draw on real-life experiences in

their research. They bring forth personalities and dimensions of conversation that highlight communicative practices that ethnographers and readers recognize and understand.

A dialogic text can be explained by addressing both the prescriptive and the descriptive approach to dialogue in past research. A descriptive approach considers any and all human communication as dialogic (Stewart and Zediker 2000). In other words, subtleties such as silences and nonverbal exchanges engage readers to become aware of the significance of these communicative behaviors. Conversely, a prescriptive approach classifies a certain type of interaction as dialogic, implying that not every conversation is dialogue, rather "dialogue emerges from conversations" (Kim and Kim 2008:56). A dialogic text reveals the differences and similarities between dialogue and conversation by engaging narratives that raise questions.

The first example of a dialogic text is a piece written by Goodall (1989) that uses the metaphor of detectives to present an engaging conversation about organizational communication.

> "I'll have a double vodka martini," Call me Ed orders, "with Absolut."
>
> "I'll have unsweetened ice tea with extra lemon," I add. In the old days I would follow the alcohol lead but I always felt mildly foolish when I did it. Before that, on cases like this one, back when I was just out of graduate school and really poor, I drank the booze because it was free.
>
> Call me Ed leans forward, his Rolex catches the light and sparkles. "I saw Phil Davis at the Heritage Club last week," he grins, "and when I told him about my little problem he recommended you." (Pp. 42–43)

This text relates the reader to the context by including dialogue that describes a familiar and routine type of conversation. Furthermore, the author consciously decided to include dialogue that captured a specific communicative process. In other words, this segment of dialogue was strategically chosen as an exemplar of how uncertainty in initial interactions may look in conversation. The author also engages through sentence structure, word choice, and a creative format, providing the reader access to the knowledge and experience of getting to know this character. The section also changes an otherwise normal initial interaction into a mysterious conversation that reveals implicit tensions between the characters.

Dialogue is more than just a simple back-and-forth conversation. In this second research exemplar, an interview study was conducted with college students new to college campuses, examining how this experience affects the participants' abilities to engage in conversations with their peers. This excerpt reveals how dialogue helps to not only relate and engage the reader but change the participant's opinions.

> It scares me. I mean, it's been a long time since I've had to just walk into a new place full of strangers and walk up to someone and say, "Hi, I'm so and so. Do you want to be my friend?" It's been a long time since I've had to use that kind of skill. I don't know if I still remember how to do that.
>
> These seniors want new friends, but not too new. In other words, they envision meeting new people, but not people that are *too* different. They are looking for

> "kids like me." Above all, they want to feel "comfortable." They try to imagine what it would be like to be at a particular college as they look at books or visit a campus. One student said, "They sent me their freshman book," and I looked at the people and I said, "You know, I really don't know if I would fit in here." (Karp, Holmstrom, and Gray 1998:261)

Through dialogic texts, readers witness changes in characters. During these changing moments, the goal of the text is not to persuade (Stewart, Zediker, and Black 2004) but to create an exchange of multiple viewpoints (Montgomery and Baxter 1998). This text points "to a particular process and quality of communication . . . which allows for changing and being changed" (Cissna and Anderson 1998:10). In these exchanges, the participants engage with each other and researchers to cocreate their realities. Specifically, this exemplar highlights ways the self is changed through dialogue (Kim and Kim 2008). As the new students meet and relate to each other and the context through dialogue, they begin to feel more confident in themselves and less nervous about their first time in college. Also, the ethnographer helps craft this impression by using specific interview questions and interviewing techniques. Thus the dialogic text is crafted both during field research and in the final ethnographic product.

Dialogic texts are engaging, changing, and relatable in their presentation of communicative interactions and conversations. By presenting dialogic texts in their studies, ethnographers help their readers understand their cultures on deeper levels. What is more, ethnographers have the ability to play with these realities by presenting the temporal process.

Crafting a Temporal Text

The temporal text, or column, includes the *enduring*, *shifting*, and *playing* principles of design. The enduring principle joins the temporal column to the linkage beam by presenting stories that reflect "the nonlinear process of memory work—the curve of time" (Bochner 2000:270). The shifting principle connects the temporal column to the tension beam by collecting and presenting data from various moments that reveal the various tensions between each situation. The playing principle attaches the temporal column to the context beam by revealing the passage of time in the context through its multiple, juxtaposing, and not necessarily sequential form.

Temporal texts include dimensions of duration, sequence, and frequency (Fludernik 2003). The best way to reveal the dimensions of temporal texts is to make "apparent the complex interrelationship of different types, or orders, of temporality" (p. 119). The first research exemplar is from a study on correctional officers by Tracy (2005) that included observation and interviews.

> Before WM Officer Nick Axel agreed that I could shadow him during "rounds" of inmate cells, he warned, "You've got to be careful, because they'll try to distract you so that someone can go warn someone else that I'm coming." Just as he predicted, inmates distracted us twice. While Axel was able to deflect the distraction, an inmate who complimented my shoes sidetracked me. After the incident,

> I noted in my research journal, "It's this line between not doing what inmates tell you, but joking/throwing them off without being rude. I haven't learned it—but most officers are experts at it." (P. 268)

This example moves from a warning by the officer to the actual incident where the researcher was distracted and, finally, to the researcher's reflection in her journal. By placing these three moments next to each other in the same paragraph, the author shifts the reader back and forth through different dimensions of time and various tensions of the researcher's experience in the field. Through this movement, the interrelated dimensions of time by are revealed as the researcher plays with the sequence and duration of these memories—juxtaposing them.

Temporal texts move back and forth through different moments, conversations, voices, and memories. In the second research exemplar, Trujillo (1998) writes about his grandmother Naunny and how he and his family remember her. Throughout the entire article he shifts back and forth between a visit to Naunny's grave and the other interviews and observations he has collected. The first quote is a description of the visit to the grave, and the second quote is from the author's reflections about an interaction with Naunny when he was in college:

> Uncle Chuck, Time, Lance, and I scanned the many graveyard markers in the general area where Naunny was buried. The first one we recognized was the gravesite of Charles Trujillo, Naunny's first husband and Uncle Chuck's father. Charlie, Sr. died in 1934 at age 32, when Uncle Chuck was just seven years old and father was four.
>
> I have very similar recollections of my grandmother's identity as giver. When I lived in L.A. during my undergraduate years in the mid-1970s, Naunny always found a way to slip me a $10 or $20 bill whenever I visited. Most of the time, she would just grab my hand, put in the bill, then squeeze my hand until I agreed to take it. (Pp. 348, 350)

In these two quotes, it is clear how the notion of time continuously shifts between one event (visiting Naunny's grave) and multiple reflections and memories of moments with Naunny—illuminating the tensions of each experience in relation to the other. Trujillo plays with the context by moving between diverse moments that help the reader process and understand the interrelatedness of these stories in interesting ways. In fact, the ability to shift through time allows the piece to endure or stay with the reader long after it has been read.

It has been argued that when flashbacks and shifts in time are utilized the comprehension process of readers increases (Therriault and Raney 2007). The way a temporal text becomes enduring is through the concept of reading time. According to Fludernik (2003:120), this type of time includes "not only the number of hours spent turning the pages of a book; it additionally comprises the expectations and interpretative moves of the reader, the suspense moment, the computing of alternative outcomes or developments, and the emotional consummation of narrative closure." In other words, the inclusion of time in its multiple forms can have an immense impact on the reader and writer, not just initially but over time.

These temporal texts are enduring, shifting, and playing throughout their design and implementation. Temporal texts shift between multiple voices and critical perspectives as they play with the past, present, and future. A different kind of reflexivity emerges as the ethnographer begins to understand how the passage of time has affected his or her research and how his or her opinions have changed. In fact, Ellis (2009) suggests that ethnographic design does not end even after the time of publishing. Ethnographers can still go back to, reflect on, and point out gaps in their past research.

Summary

The principles of design provide a process that is twofold—rigorous and imaginative. Bochner (2000:267) stated that "we get preoccupied with rigor, but are neglectful of imagination." While this may be true when criteria are prescribed, we argue that the principles of design facilitate both rigorous and imaginative research. By providing "guidelines" we offer ethnographers ideas about "how they might proceed with their own studies" (Seale 1999:465). However, unlike standards or criteria, these principles of design are not set in stone. They offer intersecting columns and beams that reinforce and hold up the finished creations. The principles of design foster "the development of one's own 'style'" of ethnographic design, writing, and implementation (p. 467). Inevitably, ethnographers make decisions and choices that "fill in" their design with their own unique expertise, perspectives, and discoveries.

BETWEEN DESIGN, PROCESS, AND PRODUCT: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Our principles of design form an architectural blueprint that fosters harmonious combinations. Similar to architecture, the structure that each ethnographer/designer crafts is a combination of utility and beauty. Utility is defined as the "function, or purpose, of a building" (Greenberg and Howe 1913:68). Thus each ethnographic process and final product has a distinctive function or purpose based on the ethnographer's goals and her or his vision of that specific project's future. The uses of each project are varied and complex, and thus the utility of each ethnographic study cannot be explicitly defined in this architectural blueprint. Each ethnographer/designer will use the blueprint differently. However, the blueprint will guide researchers to find their own function and purpose for their research by incorporating the columns and beams.

Beauty is revealed through the use of this architectural blueprint in specific ways. According to Greenberg and Howe (1913:69), beauty is "an elusive principle, but its manifestations are apparent and readily recognized." Each structure, or ethnographic study, regardless of its function, must possess some type of beauty for it to be recognized, utilized, and appreciated by other scholars and readers of the manuscript. While beauty cannot be officially defined, masterpieces of architecture employ

"certain ideals which the architects tried to achieve and certain principles guided them in all their work" (p. 69). Similarly, we suggest that ethnographers will attempt to create their own pieces based on certain goals, ideals, and functions; however, we believe that the principles of design represented in joining the columns and beams can be employed as guiding the process and product of ethnographic masterpieces.

Each architectural classic, or masterpiece, has invariable and variable attributes. The invariable attributes are universal and common to all architectural masterpieces, they are "followed either consciously or unconsciously by every master designer" (p. 70). We propose that the corresponding columns and beams are the invariable attributes of ethnographic process and product. Conversely, the variable attributes are "temporary and local in character" (p. 70). Considering ethnographic research is built from the ground up, variable attributes are related to a study's context and give the specific ethnographer freedom to choose options suitable for her or his study. Using the architectural blueprint metaphor creates a vast array of variable attribute options for researchers planning, constructing, enacting, and finalizing a specific project. In fact, each ethnographer may use a combination of parts or the entire architectural blueprint to create her or his *own* specific blueprint for a study. Just as our blueprint can be written on, edited, and erased, researchers can alter their designs as the ethnographic process unfolds. The architectural blueprint guides each ethnographer/designer in various ways, but it is still followed in some format during process, product, or both. However, it is important for us to recognize that our architectural conception is not the "be all, end all" of ethnographic research or the sole sought-out structure for researchers to emulate for planning, process, and product.

While the notion of criteria is often limiting to researchers attempting to conduct ethnographic studies, it would be similarly limiting to say that this blueprint and these principles of design are the *only* way to assess and conduct qualitative study. One strength of our theoretical conception of this metaphor is that multiple ways of knowing are valid and should be sought out by researchers. This blueprint allows researchers access to multiple tools to assist their study. These *tools* may in fact be the incorporation of other metaphors for ethnographic research. For example, Ellingson's (2009) use of a crystal may be a necessary tool for researchers employing our design principles. There are different facets, angles, and views by which we understand interaction, and therefore crystallization may help researchers attempting to incorporate the multivoice column or the tension beam. Similarly, González's (2000) four seasons of ethnography may aid researchers through conducting fieldwork within their own blueprint. They may use this metaphor to understand the "inevitability of changes" (p. 642) that exist in the field as a way to cope with the continuous "heat" or exhaustion they experience. These are merely two instances of ways our blueprint can incorporate other metaphors to strengthen a researcher's study, but reveal examples of why ethnographic methodologies cannot exist on an exclusive plane of conception or structure.

The ethnographic blueprint offers specific implications for the study of symbolic interaction. First, through movement between process and product the blueprint

highlights the ways that the social environment in which the ethnographer collects data is influenced by her or his sense of self and also the larger societal culture. Second, the ethnographic blueprint reveals how meaning, particularly in the field, arises through interaction with participants and the scene and how meaning is negotiated through language. Without continual meaning making on the ethnographer's part, the movement between process and product would not be possible or successful. Third, the reflexivity allows the ethnographer to interrogate the intersections between the "I" and the "me" (Mead 1962). The "I" is more known to the ethnographer, as it illustrates how she or he acts in specific situations, while the "me" is revealed through the ethnographer's looking-glass self, or when ethnographers imagine how others view them, especially their participants. In other words, the ethnographic blueprint inspires ethnographers to take the perspective of their participants through a continual and reflexive process of observing, writing, making sense of, and reflecting on their own positionality. Fourth, through a flexible structure and a fluid movement between process and product, the ethnographic blueprint yields principles that help ethnographers engage in metaperception, or thinking about what they think. Metaperception creates stronger, richer, and more complicated ethnographies that question taken-for-granted assumptions and facilitate deeper understandings of the cultures under study.

Finally, the architectural blueprint has specific implications for pedagogy. First, by employing the metaphor of an architectural blueprint, we provide an alternative to establishing and following criteria for judging ethnography. Individuals who are new to ethnography can learn how to use the principles in their own work. For example, instructors can teach students how to incorporate a multivoice column into their field notes and also into their final ethnographic pieces. Second, the blueprint is important for pedagogy because it serves to assist and help ethnographers rather than prescribe standards of excellence. In other words, there is no right or wrong way, order, or presentation of the blueprint. As long as the researcher considers the principles of design, that is what is important. Thus, instead of stifling and limiting, the blueprint allows ethnographers to explore possibilities and utilize creativity in their research.

Third, this architectural blueprint possesses an inherent heuristic value that is related to its capability for instruction on ethnographic research methods. Novice and experienced ethnographers can utilize the blueprint as they begin, carry out, complete, revise, and revisit their ethnographic projects. This blueprint offers inspiration for designing fieldwork, conducting interviews and focus groups, or participating in the contexts of investigation because it allows each individual researcher to play with how she or he uses the principles in research. Instructors of ethnography can guide new ethnographers/designers to become more sensitive to avenues, opportunities, and moments for incorporating multiple voices, critical analysis, reflexive understanding, embodied experiences, catalytic activism, dialogic interactions, and temporal shifts. Most importantly, novice ethnographers/designers are encouraged to create their own masterpieces because the entire process necessarily includes all the principles, but not with equal emphasis and not in any specific sequence.

The principles of design illuminate an ethnographic process and product that is limitless, ongoing, and circular from the beginning of the project until the time it is completed. The entire process necessarily includes all columns and beams to create the principles of design, but not with equal emphasis and not in any sequence. Inevitably, the principles assist researchers in learning more about themselves and the communicative practices and processes of the participants.

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