

4-22-2014

The Role of Aesthetic Artifacts in Creative Writing Research: Casting Student Identity Narratives as Cultural Data

Christine I. Bailey
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Follow this and additional works at: <http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Bailey, Christine I., "The Role of Aesthetic Artifacts in Creative Writing Research: Casting Student Identity Narratives as Cultural Data" (2014). *Theses and Dissertations (All)*. 123.
<http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd/123>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Knowledge Repository @ IUP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations (All) by an authorized administrator of Knowledge Repository @ IUP. For more information, please contact cclouser@iup.edu, sara.parme@iup.edu.

STUDENT HAS RESTRICTED ACCESS TO FULL TEXT OF THE DISSERTATION.

ONLY COVER PAGES AND ABSTRACT ARE AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME

THE ROLE OF AESTHETIC ARTIFACTS IN CREATIVE WRITING RESEARCH:
CASTING STUDENT IDENTITY NARRATIVES AS CULTURAL DATA

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Christine I. Bailey

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

May 2014

© 2014 Christine I. Bailey

All Rights Reserved

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of English

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Christine I. Bailey

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

March 26, 2014

Signature on File

Patrick Bizzaro, Ph.D.
Professor of English, Chair

March 26, 2014

Signature on File

Resa Crane Bizzaro, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English

March 26, 2014

Signature on File

Chauna Craig, Ph.D.
Professor of English

ACCEPTED

Timothy P. Mack, Ph.D.

Dean

School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: The Role of Aesthetic Artifacts in Creative Writing Research: Casting Student Identity Narratives as Cultural Data

Author: Christine I. Bailey

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Patrick Bizzaro

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Resa Crane Bizzaro
Dr. Chauna Craig

Drawing upon a postmodern ethnographic approach, the modes of inquiry into this qualitative study included observation and data analysis in order to represent a particular community of students: first year college freshmen from a mid-size, religiously-affiliated university in the southern United States. The methods included artifact retrieval/analysis of student narratives (identity constructs in creative forms) as well as demographic surveys from nine sections of first year composition classes from the spring and fall semesters of 2013. Fifty-seven student narratives, written in aesthetic forms, were analyzed in order to learn what the creative writing pieces revealed about student identities.

The study addressed the following research questions. First, how do students identify themselves through creative forms? Through metaphors, images, and subjective musings? Second, what do the patterns or themes that emerge from these creative narratives reveal about the presented self of the student? After codes/descriptors were determined using grounded theory, the creative narratives were categorized into six types or data sets. Next, the findings were presented in both a conventional form as well as in an alternative mode of data representation: a young adult novel. The six data sets from the study both informed and guided the six characters within the novel.

The rationale for using aesthetic forms of data seeks to consider, for one, how creative pieces can promote researchers/teachers' understanding of student experiences and identities. Second, by recasting the data in the form of a young adult novel (an alternative, unconventional form of data representation), the sharing/telling of a culture within the fiction genre can provide productive ambiguity. By asking students to express thoughts and feelings through metaphors and images in creative works, and in turn doing the same myself as the researcher, I offer individual, complex human experiences in what Jerome Bruner calls "alternative possible worlds" (109).