



## City Research Online

### City, University of London Institutional Repository

---

**Citation:** Pace, I. (2021). Autoethnography as Critically Engaged Practice: Methodological Concerns and Case Studies relating to Notation, Genre, and Aesthetic. presented at the Music Diaries Conference, 7 Jul 2021, Thessaloniki, Greece.

This is the presentation version of the paper.

This version of the publication may differ from the final published version.

---

**Permanent repository link:** <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/30388/>

**Link to published version:**

**Copyright:** City Research Online aims to make research outputs of City, University of London available to a wider audience. Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the author(s) and/or copyright holders. URLs from City Research Online may be freely distributed and linked to.

**Reuse:** Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge. Provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

---

---

---

City Research Online:

<http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/>

[publications@city.ac.uk](mailto:publications@city.ac.uk)

---

**‘Autoethnography as Critically  
Engaged Practice: Methodological  
Concerns and Case Studies relating to  
Notation, Genre and Aesthetic’**

**Music Diaries International Workshop Festival  
7 July 2021**

**Ian Pace,  
Reader in Music, Head of Department  
City, University of London  
ian.pace.1@city.ac.uk**

# Ethnography and Autoethnography

- *Ethnography*: the study of peoples, social and cultural practices, values and environments, in the form of writing.
- *Autoethnography*: turns the lens on the researcher themselves and their own cultural milieu, practices, values and ideologies. Sometimes (wrongly in my opinion) conceived primarily as a *method*.
- Ethnography commonly employed as a strategy by ethnomusicologists.
- Classic ethnographies grew from immersion within the cultural environment being investigated, then detailed analysis of the data found.
- But now the term is used to denote almost any research with data sourced from living participants.

## **Anonymous (ethnographically sourced) senior UK musicologist on ethnomusicological work**

‘The best ethnomusicologists I have worked with have strong critiques of authenticity narratives, skepticism about the general way the ethnographic method is conducted, read books (including historical writing and writing about history) and use various kinds of theory that pervade other kinds of humanities scholarship. The worst simply show what look like lovely holiday snaps, give a pseudo-literary, ‘atmospheric’ narrative about their trip, and quote their interlocutors at length, nodding sagely.’

# Autoethnography - definitions

- Karl G. Heider, 'What Do People Do? Dani-Autoethnography', *Journal of Anthropological Research* 31/1 (Spring 1975), pp. 3-17.
- David M. Hayano, 'Auto-Ethnography: Paradigms, Problems, and Prospects', *Human Organization* 38/1 (Spring 1979), pp. 99-104.
- Stanley Brandes, 'Ethnographic autobiographies in American Anthropology', *Central Issues in Anthropology* 3/1-2 (1979), pp. 1-15.

# Autoethnography - definitions

- Karl G. Heider, 'What Do People Do? Dani-Autoethnography', *Journal of Anthropological Research* 31/1 (Spring 1975), pp. 3-17.
- David M. Hayano, 'Auto-Ethnography: Paradigms, Problems, and Prospects', *Human Organization* 38/1 (Spring 1979), pp. 99-104.
- Stanley Brandes, 'Ethnographic autobiographies in American Anthropology', *Central Issues in Anthropology* 3/1-2 (1979), pp. 1-15.

John Van Maanen, 'An End to Innocence: The Ethnography of Ethnography', in Van Maanen (ed.), *Representation in Ethnography* (Thousand Oaks, CA, London and New Delhi: Sage, 1995), pp. 8-9

1. Confessional ethnographies
2. Dramatic ethnography
3. Critical Ethnographies
4. Self- or Auto-ethnographies

# Autoethnography - definitions

Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner (eds.), *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing* (Walnut Creek, CA, London and New Delhi: AltaMira Press, 1996).

# Autoethnography - definitions

Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Boechner (eds.), *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing* (Walnut Creek, CA, London and New Delhi: AltaMira Press, 1996).

Art: I think we can break free from the quagmire of these messy distinctions by becoming more pragmatist. We need to ask, "What do we want ethnography to do? How can other people use our work?" Michael Jackson urges ethnographers to see the binaries science/art and fact/fiction as mutually necessary and inextricably connected. If we tie ourselves down to rigid rules, we lose the flexibility of adopting different discursive strategies depending upon our circumstances and purposes. Jackson's emphasis on the rhetorical demands of ethnographic research helps avoid the temptation to trivialize important differences between art and science. To make science more artful doesn't mean art and science become one and the same activity (*A phone rings, interrupting the conversation.*)

[...]

Art: Maybe there needs to be more screaming about the atrocities people experience. We admit that education can hurt, especially when it makes you question your values and behavior. The way I look at it, well, some of these personal narratives are written by people who have suffered in silence for too long. I mean, our polyglot world includes child abusers, and drug pushers, and homeless people, and harassers, and racists, and wife beaters, and people with HIV and Alzheimer's and on life support. Many people live in a world where death is just around the corner and life feels worse than the alternative. Hey, there's a hell of a lot to scream about even in polite society.

Carolyn: (*Stands abruptly and looks around the room*) Where did Sunya go? I'm going to scream if Sunya is peeing on the floor again. Sunya! (*Suddenly Sunya bounds into the living room from the hallway, water dripping from her face. The other dogs awaken and start looking for toys.*)

# Autoethnography - definitions

‘...a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context . . . . Both a method and a text, as in the case of ethnography.’

Deborah E. Reed-Danahay, ‘Introduction’, in Reed-Danahay (ed.), *Auto-Ethnography: Rewriting the Self and the Social* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1997), p. 9.

# Analytic Autoethnography

Leon Anderson, 'Analytic Autoethnography' *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35/4 (August 2006), p. 375.

...ethnographic work in which the researcher is (1) a full member in the research group or setting, (2) visible as such a member in the researcher's published texts, and (3) committed to an analytic research agenda focused on improving theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena.

Key features:

(1) complete member researcher (CMR) status; (2) analytic reflexivity; (3) narrative visibility of the researcher's self; (4) dialogue with informants beyond the self; and (5) commitment to theoretical analysis.

# My definitions

1. Ethnography of a community of which the research is a part.
2. Self-documentation, often for cathartic or therapeutic purposes.
3. Self-documentation accompanied by wider contextualisation and critical self-reflection.

3 can be called *self-critical practice and critical writing on practice*.

For performers, simply *critical performance*.

# My definitions

1. Ethnography of a community of which the researcher is a part.
2. Self-documentation, often for cathartic or therapeutic purposes.
3. Self-documentation accompanied by wider contextualisation and critical self-reflection.

3 can be called *self-critical practice and critical writing on practice*.

For performers, simply *critical performance*.

‘The conscious and deliberate *exploration* of an artist’s aesthetic universe is how I define “artistic research.” It is obvious that, since artists are the only ones who have unmediated, direct access to their own aesthetic universe, artistic research can only be performed by those artists themselves.’

Bart Vanhecke, ‘A New Path to Music: Experimental Exploration and Expression of an Aesthetic Universe’, in Darla Crispin and Bob Gilmore (eds.), *Artistic Experimentation in Music: An Anthology* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014), p. 94.

# Documentation of Practice – other problems

- Diaries and obsessive documentation. Some things can be charted better with hindsight.
- Wider value of documentation for its own sake?

See also <https://ianpace.wordpress.com/2015/12/16/those-300-word-statements-on-practice-as-research-for-the-raeref-origins-and-stipulations-academic-butt-covering-or-more-problematic/>

# Documentation of Practice – other problems

- Diaries and obsessive documentation. Some things can be charted better with hindsight.
- Wider value of documentation for its own sake?
- Ethnography mostly consisting of unexpurgated documentation (maybe organised into bureaucratic boxes) with minimal interpretation or critical analysis - self-legitimizing. Stronger rationale needed.

See also <https://ianpace.wordpress.com/2015/12/16/those-300-word-statements-on-practice-as-research-for-the-raeref-origins-and-stipulations-academic-butt-covering-or-more-problematic/>

# Documentation of Practice – other problems

- Diaries and obsessive documentation. Some things can be charted better with hindsight.
- Wider value of documentation for its own sake?
- Ethnography mostly consisting of unexpurgated documentation (maybe organised into bureaucratic boxes) with minimal interpretation or critical analysis - self-legitimizing. Stronger rationale needed.
- Documentation of ‘collaborative process’.

See also <https://ianpace.wordpress.com/2015/12/16/those-300-word-statements-on-practice-as-research-for-the-raeref-origins-and-stipulations-academic-butt-covering-or-more-problematic/>

# Some examples of collaborative process documentation

Within the existing literature, the collaborative practice's ability to affect the individual is regularly reflected on: nevertheless I was surprised at the length to which this particular collaboration developed my own understanding of my instrument. My excitement at this process of discovery had an element of the childlike to it as I playfully explored new aspects of contemporary technique. Firstly, this process drastically reduced the distance between the composer and the instrument: included in my exploration, X was able to join in my excitement and able to include the results of this in the piece. Secondly, there was an increased feeling of intimacy with the work. I was invested in the project in an even more committed way, as it had expanded my own understanding. The details of this process will be further explained and explored below.

# Some examples of collaborative process documentation

Music notation (whether in the score or the sketches) was the principal field of exchange and negotiation. In any working session, members of the quartet had to ensure that they grasped the intention behind Y's demanding writing, could track potential errors or problems in notation, and at the same time could find a fingering that would enable them to deliver an acceptable performance on the fly. Conversely, in the immediacy of hearing the musicians' sonic production, Y had to judge the degree to which it matched her intentions, and to decide whether any shortcomings either were a temporary consequence of the sight-reading process or stemmed from a more serious misunderstanding that needed her intervention. Every plenary session therefore displayed its fair share of mutual analysis through reading and listening, sometimes leading to substantial interactions and verbalizations that would break the forward momentum of the rehearsal and call for decision-making.

# Notation

Ian Pace, 'Notation, Time and the Performer's Relationship to the Score in Contemporary Music', in Darla Crispin (ed.), *Unfolding Time: Studies in Temporality in Twentieth-Century Music* (Leuven: Leuven University press, 2009), pp. 151-192.

- Rejection of 'positivistic' model of notation as indicating a singular result, then stylisation, interpretation is an added extra.
- Fundamental question of how one *reads* notation.
- Notation instead delineates a range of possible practices by a process of exclusion and difference.
- No 'right' way to play a triplet, but there are some ways which would definitely be 'wrong'.

# Notation

- Developed this model out of frustration with positivistic assumptions about notation and scores in existing performance cultures, and which also informed some theoretical writings, such as those of Roger Marsh or Roger Heaton, or some of the empirical musicology of Nicholas Cook and others.
- To simply ‘hear what one writes’ assumes some singularity of what is ‘heard’. Removes the performer from the equation.
- Myopic model of performance, resembles some of Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt’s polemics from the mid-1920s on the virtues of mechanical instruments.



# Ian Pace, *Das hat Rrrrasss* (2018)

59 momentarily synchronised with piano 11

you are quite ri-dic - u - lous

*f poco a poco cresc.*

*f poco a poco cresc.*

7:6

7:6

60

16:11

Detailed description: This image shows a page of a musical score for the piece 'Das hat Rrrrasss' by Ian Pace. The score is divided into two systems, measures 59 and 60. Measure 59 features a vocal line with the lyrics 'you are quite ri-dic - u - lous' and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes dynamic markings 'f poco a poco cresc.' and a 7:6 ratio. Measure 60 continues the piano accompaniment with a 16:11 ratio. The score is written in a key with one flat and a 6/8 time signature.

# Ian Pace, *Das hat Rrrrasss* (2018)

19

95

6:5

dep - u - ty played a - long.

17  
16

*f* (upper part) 9:7

10:7

*mf* (upper part)

*p* (lower part)

(L.H.) 7:4

L.H. 9:8

17  
16

17  
16

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a piece titled 'Das hat Rrrrasss' by Ian Pace. The page is numbered 19 in the top right corner. The score begins at measure 95. It features three staves: a vocal line at the top, a piano upper part in the middle, and a piano lower part at the bottom. The vocal line has lyrics 'dep - u - ty played a - long.' and includes a 6:5 interval marking. The piano upper part starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a 9:7 interval, then transitions to a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic with a 10:7 interval. The piano lower part includes a piano (*p*) dynamic marking and a 7:4 interval. The score concludes at measure 17, with a double bar line and the number 16 below it. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 7/4.

# Sylvano Bussotti, *Five Piano Pieces for David Tudor* (1959)

**V<sub>b</sub>) piano piece for David Tudor 1**  
(Tutto nell'orbita del pp, sempre)

The score is divided into three sections, each with a time marker:

- Section 1: 15''
- Section 2: 30''
- Section 3: 45''

Additional markings include "MD" and "MS" on the left side, and "1.5.1959" at the bottom right.

# Sylvano Bussotti, *Five Piano Pieces for David Tudor* (1959)

**7** vedi NOTE

**XIV** piano piece for David Tudor 4  
disegno del 1949  
adozione pianistica: 27.3.1959

**1** { S  
M  
P

**2** Battuto  
Muto  
Coperchio  
Tastiera

**3** { sequenza  
frequenza  
timbro  
durata  
intensità

**4** { u  
o  
dentro il piano

**5** ( )

**6** }

# Michael Finnissy, derivations from Johann Strauss II, *Geschichte aus dem Wienerwald*

Johann Strauss II, *Geschichten aus dem Wiener-Wald*, op. 325.  
From Introduction

**Più Lento** **Moderato**

*p* *pp*

a b a' b' c d

Second Waltz

**Walzer**

*p*

a' b''' c d''

Michael Finnissy, *Strauss-Walzer. 3. Geschichte aus dem Wienerwald*

a''' b''' c' d''

7:5 7:5 7:6 7:6

Further derivations

3:2 3:2 5:3

# Michael Finnissy, derivations from Johann Strauss II, *Geschichte aus dem Wienerwald*

Strauss, First Waltz



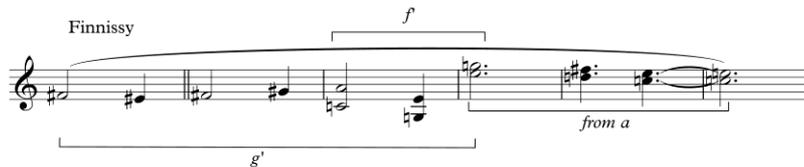
Finnissy



Strauss, Fifth Waltz



Finnissy



# Michael Finnissy, *Strauss-Walzer* No. 3, 'Geschichte aus dem Wienerwald'

Sostenuto

*p*

7:5

7:5

This system consists of two staves. The upper staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a series of chords and melodic fragments. The lower staff contains a more active melodic line. A slur spans across both staves, with a 7:5 ratio indicated above and below it.

7:6

7:6

This system continues the two-staff notation. The upper staff has a melodic line with a slur and a 7:6 ratio indicated above. The lower staff has a more rhythmic accompaniment with a slur and a 7:6 ratio indicated below.

7:6

*p*

6:5

7:5

3

*pp*

This system is more complex, featuring a dense texture. The upper staff has a melodic line with a slur and a 7:6 ratio indicated above. The lower staff has a rhythmic accompaniment with a slur and a 7:5 ratio indicated below. There are also triplets (3) in the lower staff and a *pp* dynamic marking.

# Michael Finnissy, *Strauss-Walzer* No. 3, 'Geschichte aus dem Wienerwald'

The first system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The music is written in a complex, rhythmic style with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. There are several measures with triplets and other rhythmic groupings. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The system includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

ral. ----- accel. ----- ral.

The second system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The music is written in a complex, rhythmic style with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. There are several measures with triplets and other rhythmic groupings. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The system includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. A dynamic marking of *p* is present in the lower staff.

accel. ----- ral.

The third system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The music is written in a complex, rhythmic style with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. There are several measures with triplets and other rhythmic groupings. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The system includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. A dynamic marking of *p* is present in the lower staff.



# Claude Debussy, *Préludes*, Book 2 (1911-13), No. 7

‘...La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune’

First system of the musical score for 'La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune'. It features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a harmonic accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The piece begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. There are two first endings marked with a double bar line and a first ending bracket, both leading to a common second ending. The first ending is marked with a fermata and a first ending bracket. The second ending is marked with a fermata and a second ending bracket. The piece concludes with a final chord marked with a fermata and a first ending bracket.

Second system of the musical score. It continues the melodic and harmonic lines from the first system. The treble clef part features a series of chords and a melodic line. The bass clef part provides a harmonic accompaniment. The piece concludes with a final chord marked with a fermata and a first ending bracket. The dynamic markings are *pp*, *pp*, *pp*, and *p* *marque*.

Third system of the musical score. It continues the melodic and harmonic lines from the second system. The treble clef part features a series of chords and a melodic line. The bass clef part provides a harmonic accompaniment. The piece concludes with a final chord marked with a fermata and a first ending bracket. The dynamic markings are *pp*, *m.d.*, and *pp*. The tempo marking is *Un peu anime léger*.

# Charles Ives, from 'Emerson', Piano Sonata No. 2, "Concord, Mass., 1840-1860" (1916-19, rev. 1920s-40s)

Main 'Emerson' lyrical theme.

Musical notation for the main 'Emerson' lyrical theme. The notation is on a single treble clef staff. It begins with a *pp* dynamic marking. The melody consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes, some beamed together. A crescendo hairpin is shown, leading to a *p* dynamic marking. The piece concludes with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking.

Musical notation for the first system of the piano sonata. It features two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes, a *pp* dynamic marking, and a *f* dynamic marking. The bass staff provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. Performance directions include *l.h.* (left hand), *slowly*, and *faster*.

Musical notation for the second system of the piano sonata. It features two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with a first ending bracket, a triplet of eighth notes, and a *f* dynamic marking. The bass staff provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. Performance directions include *cresc. and faster*.

*...and finally, faster with more and more motion*