

## Gonzo autoethnography: The story of Monkey

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### Abstract:

The present study explores the norms of community that are re/produced in the liminal leisure space of a formerly fan-organized music festival. Guided by the concept of *communitas*, we examined the manner in which fans attempted to exercise their agency in the construction of the weekend *against* the structure imposed by the promoters. To do this, we developed a creative analytic practice we call *gonzo autoethnography*, which draws inspiration from Hunter S. Thompson's gonzo journalism and sheds any claim to objectivity to blend social critique and satire to tell the story of the phenomenon of interest. To do this, we rely on a totem from the music scene to embody the connections, concerns, and frustrations of the devoted fanbase. As such, this particular case offers leisure scholars an opportunity to explore the limitations of fans' agency in affecting participation in meaningful leisure activities through a nontraditional lens.

**Keywords:** creative analytic practices | leisure | gonzo | music

### Article:

#### The story of monkey<sup>1</sup>

*"It never got weird enough for me."* – Hunter S. Thompson

Every show I<sup>2</sup> had ever been to with Arlo, he had that damned stuffed monkey. Arlo was an old-pro; he estimated that he had been to more than 300 Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons' (JJJ) shows, having seen his first one in 1987 when Jerry was still playing with his first band, Little Women. It had become a running joke with his friends in the music scene; at one point people would bring him a new stuffed monkey to every show. His girlfriend put the kibosh on that once their living room started to look like a jungle. But that original monkey, the one that was here tonight, *again*, he was okay. He had been around the block with Arlo and his presence, unfortunately, assured that the song about the monkey would never be played by Jerry Joseph again. At least not as long as that damn monkey was in the vicinity.

Monkey was hanging out with Arlo on the first day of the Dixie Mattress Festival (DMF; 2016), a festival centered on the music of the Jackmormons. I mean that literally: the monkey was hanging from his neck, equipped with a mini disco ball around *his* neck. I asked Arlo why he still brings that monkey to shows being that its presence essentially guarantees the song will not be played if Jerry catches sight or wind of Monkey. His response was, “*The song ain’t gonna be played anyways. But if it were, Monkey would be awfully pissed to miss it.*” I could not argue with that. I had ascribed life to many of my most treasured inanimate objects in the past. Of course, I was 7 years old when I did so.

Monkey was full of spirit for this year’s rendition of Dixie. Last year’s installment was supposed to be the last. After seven years, the promoters, Kirk and Kelly, a husband and wife team, decided to step away. It was a labor of love that often ended in a lighter bank account. After last year’s rendition, everyone was hopeful that someone would take the reins and keep the festival going. It had become a very important mechanism in the functioning of this fan community.

As the adage goes, “Be careful what you wish for. It just might come true.” Someone did indeed step up to put on Dixie again: Jerry’s band and their production company. This was curious on a number of levels. For one, they had tried to host an annual festival in the past, and it fizzled out after two attempts. For another, their intentions were to skirt much of what was so special to the festival in the first place: put on by fans, for fans, centered on the music of the Jackmormons, and free from any sort of “official” oversight. At the past festivals you could do *whatever* you wanted. It was kind of like international waters. This rendition was attempting to be both a profitable event and to cater to a wider swath of music fans. The festival, that was named after one of the band’s songs and centered exclusively on their music, was rumored to be moving to a model where the Jackmormons were no longer going to be the main attraction. This could potentially be good for the bottom line, but it would be counterproductive to the functioning of the fan community.

This past year the promoters introduced other notable bands into the lineup, they shortened the sets of the Jackmormons, they installed VIP camping, seating, and food, they hired outside security, and they expected the fans to alter their daytime plans to meet the expectations of the production team. In the past, the days were for fellowship, getting reacquainted, side trips and adventures, all with the purpose of building the cohesiveness of the community. Nighttime was for the band and its music. But this year there were other musicians performing throughout the day. The new Dixie crew wanted to push the model to resemble the music festivals that now scatter North America every summer. They wanted to be something they were not, something they could not be, and most importantly, something the fans did not want them to be.

So when it came time to get ready for the first night of three Jackmormons’ shows, Monkey had to try something new. Sure, his song was not going to get played, but he was going to remind the band why the fans were there: to recreate the spirit of community that formed around this band over decades of involvement, travel, sacrifice, and pure love of the music. Jerry and the band cannot control the community, but they do benefit from its existence. This was something the production team appeared not to have considered in its attempts to change the model of Dixie. To this end, this project endeavors to describe the unique power dynamic that exists between JJJ and their fan community.

To capture the essence of the indulgence of the DMF, we took the road “less traveled” to tell the story of that weekend. The majority of fans at Jackmormons’ concerts are in their late 40s and early 50s, and most have been seeing the band perform for 10 years, 15 years, or longer. So when a beloved fan-run event was usurped by the very band the fans love, and then changed to be a fraction of its former self, it was easy to understand why the fanbase would be concerned. But just as this was the case, the fans were also reliant on these music-filled weekends to uphold their fan community; without them, there is no mechanism to maintain the connections they built over years of shared experiences.

### **Monkey’s coming home**

I was standing behind Arlo who was wearing the knapsack that Monkey slept in. A crowd of 200 or so fans packed in, many close to the stage, some on the periphery to hide in the shadows of their indulgences and the reaches of the soon-to-be chaotic sound. The stage was thinly dressed in décor, with only the bare essentials evident (amps, drums, guitars), indicating that what was about to happen was not for the feint-of-heart. The onlookers eagerly awaited the impending jumpstart to their hearts that would be delivered through channeling the spirits of Robert Johnson at the crossroads. Jerry walked out, plugged in his guitar, and took one violent strum; the sound was reminiscent of a jet flying low, but at high speed. And just as that strum echoed through the bones of all those in attendance, a flash of light blinded us in the dark countryside of rural Oregon. As if on cue, Monkey popped his head through the zippered pack:

“*Fuck yea!!!!*” Everyone looked around to see who could possibly scream so loud as to shut out Jerry’s demon-coated attacks on his guitar; all anyone saw were looks of astonishment as everyone tried to recover from the blinding light and cacophonous mixture of rock n’ roll and an indiscernible voice.

Jerry bellowed obnoxiously, “*Move it, you little shit,*” and the sound echoed throughout the dark, damp field. This was not the opening lyric to any of Jerry’s songs, yet no one knew to whom it was addressed. With all attention now turned toward Jerry, but without any music playing, the fans began to froth at the mouth for rock n’ roll. They had been waiting all day for their next fix, and something — or somebody — was keeping them from it. But who?

At about that time, Jerry screamed for security and a number of dimwitted ruffians ran up to the stage ready to answer to his cry. But just as he was about to tell the foot-soldiers who or what to remove from the stage, the crowd’s frustration, impatience, and drug-addled gusto turned from the uncertain and onto Jerry. He looked at the crowd and then back again at his henchmen and told them to stop. He ordered them off the stage and appeared as if he was going to handle whatever matter it was that was keeping him from rock n’ roll decadence. As Jerry looked back at the crowd, he could tell that they had their sights on him now. He was the one transgressing on their good time, not some foolish interloper.

“*Not so fast, friend. You throw me out and you’re going to have a world of hurt from that gang out there,*” said Monkey. Jerry and Monkey stared at one another menacingly, each stepping slowly closer until the only possible outcome would be a flat-out street fight. Monkey spread his

tiny body out as wide as he could, bared his fangs, and put on his thousand-yard-stare. The hairs on Jerry's neck stood up so straight that they glistened with sweat in the dim glow of the stage lights. Jerry then looked past Monkey to the crowd, who by then were teetering on the edge of pandemonium, quivering for rock n' roll but ready to roll up their sleeves. Jerry mumbled, "*At least get out of my way.*" Monkey smiled triumphantly and extended one arm with a "thumbs up" sign to the crowd who cheered wildly. The other arm faced Jerry with his middle finger extended. Monkey wasn't going to back down, and he decided he should be a reminder for the duration of the weekend to his friends that they needed to stand up for what they had helped create. Monkey walked over to the two stage monitors Jerry used and took his place for the weekend. Then he said to Jerry, "*Okay, you can start now.*"

What Monkey represents in the fanbase of this music scene is continuity, dedication, travel, lived experience, the building of friendships, and a point of reference. Much as other tokens, catch phrases, and idioms of past participation have found their way into the scene, Monkey wears the crown as the most dedicated, and longest lasting, of all Jerry's fans. So in the spirit of building traditions through music and fellowship, why would the band and their promoters try to buck the system?

Earlier that weekend when Monkey arrived at the venue, he jumped out of Arlo's truck after a long drive from Flagstaff, Arizona. Dixie was yet again in a new location, and while one might assume this could affect the continuity of the weekend, it never did. The "spirit of Dixie" was in the music and the fans; nothing else really mattered.

Monkey quickly galloped to the check-in table, though no one was there. He wrapped his furry knuckles loudly on the plastic surface, impatiently trying to get the attention of someone. Slowly, and in a somewhat agitated fashion, a member of the band's promotion team piqued his head around the corner and said, "*Yea? What do you want?*" Monkey turned up his lip and glared a fang, clearly frustrated by the poor customer service. He barked, "*Give me my bracelet. I'm ready to add to my collection.*" The roadie fumbled around through a box and produced a strip of paper bracelets, nothing like the ornately produced rubber bracelets of all the year's past. Monkey shouted, "*Wait, wait, wait! Where's the nice ones? Are those for rookies or something?*" The roadie stared blankly at the stuffed animal, unsure if he was awake; it had only now settled in on him that he was talking to a toy. Monkey continued, "*Nevermind. Where's somebody who knows what the hell is going on here?*"

Even though this year was being hosted by another team, most people expected to add another rubber bracelet to their collection. For all the previous Dixie's, every fan in attendance was given a colorful rubber bracelet embossed with the name and year of the festival. It was common for the fans to wear the bracelets from every year they attended to the following year's rendition. While seemingly a trivial component, it represented another break in the link of tradition. It signaled that the new promoter's attention was on other things, such as having a VIP space and separating the fanbase into a class system. Monkey was displeased.



The campground at Dixie has always been known as “Trenchtown,” named after Bob Marley’s neighborhood in Jamaica. Many of us were hanging out in Trenchtown around 2 am after the first night’s concert, buzzed from booze and chatting up a storm. I stepped back and took a sip of my beer, trying to hone in on where I should intervene. As luck would have it, Monkey ambled up to me and said, “*Were you at the first Dixie?*” Before I could say “*No,*” Monkey lectured to me, “*Well, you should’ve been. It was great. It really was a vision to behold. Have you ever read Kirk’s ‘The Vision’ statement from that first year?*” I had read it, but I did not recall its specific contents. Kirk had written up a statement before each year’s festival telling the fans what it was about, who should be there, why it was important, and how special this community was. “*The Vision*” statement stated how these fan-run events were unique, and we should not take them for granted. In short, if you were a true fan of the Jackmormons’ music and you consider yourself a

member of the fan community, then you should not miss out. Monkey went on: *“All seven were similar, but that first one, that first one really set the mark for us to follow. It gave us something to think about it. I read it every day for like two months before going to that first Dixie. By the time the festival started, I was primed and ready.”* I mentioned that I knew the sentiment and tone of each missive, and then was reminded that there was not a *“Vision”* statement this year. Monkey continued, *“That’s right. And do you know why?”* Not waiting for me to respond he looked at a crumpled up piece of paper and began to read:

This show is being put on by people like you for people like you. There will never be the pursuit of profit, rather the goal of providing shows in a festival type environment for the folks who want to see Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons, but not at a festival performing behind and alongside a lot of other bands... Growth is secondary. Maintaining the uniqueness, the special experience is the primary purpose...

He asked me if he should go on. I said, *“No.”* I got what he was getting at. Then Monkey spoke up again and said, *“What do you see happening here that isn’t in line with what I just read?”* I said, *“Well, for one, the Jackmormons aren’t as much a part of the festival as they once were.”* Monkey replied, *“Bingo.”*

Most of the fans spent the final day down on the river as temperatures crept up into the high 80s. Bands were lined up from noon on, and while there were nationally recognized musicians playing, the field in front of the stage was about half as filled as it should have been for the number of tickets sold. But Monkey was there, still holding down the fort on the stage between the monitors. With his arms outstretched he yelled to the masses, *“Go, be free, my friends. Make this weekend what it should be: a celebration of our community. The Jackmormons don’t start ‘til 9 pm.”*

When it came time for the Jackmormons to play their final set of the weekend, the band brought up on stage one of the musicians from a group who had played that afternoon. Jerry said, *“We’re going to bring out Eric from Dragondeer who played earlier today. They kicked ass, but none of you would know that because you were all down at the river.”* Everyone was used to Jerry throwing a tantrum. He often chided people from the stage, especially if they were talking up front, belligerently drunk, or yelling obsessively to play a certain song. But this time I caught a few people shake their heads and roll their eyes. It was easy to infer at that moment that they were just fine with their decision to enjoy the company of their friends. Yes, they came for the music — Jerry’s music, and his music only — but what made the weekend extra special was the friends they shared it with.

When the final note ended, earlier than advertised I must add, fans walked back to Trenchtown in silence. Monkey jumped off the perch he had maintained for the weekend and onto my back, holding on to my ears like the reins of a horse. He tugged on my lobes and I stopped, both of us turning back to the stage one last time. Monkey blew a kiss to Jerry, and Jerry caught it and then blew one back. They shared a chuckle and then Monkey prodded me forward. We walked the remainder of the distance in silence until we approached the after-hours celebration at Trenchtown; then Monkey catapulted off my back and somewhere into the night. I heard a loud

cheer and a beer being cracked open and knew that everyone was being regaled by stories from Monkey's heroic weekend.

Worn out from a great weekend of camaraderie and revelry, many had to start thinking about returning to the "real world" sooner than preferred. As if on cue, Monkey said, "*Jerry's a dick.*" We all laughed and the conversation soon turned to all the hours of Jackmormons' music we had expected to hear but were shortened. Typically over Dixie weekend in the past the band played roughly 14 hours over four shows in three days. This weekend we got three shows in three days and maybe eight hours of music.

I said, "*Well, another one down. What did y'all think? Think it'll happen again next year?*" No one spoke at first, and those that were having their own discussions abruptly wound them down as if a dinner bell had been rung and captured their attention. Monkey interjected, "*You know guys, they can do whatever the fuck they want. It's their right. But they better not call it Dixie and try to pass it off as such. This is our festival. It was done for all of us. Not for their agenda. If you want to do it your way, call it something else.*"

I had a 7 am flight the next day, so I wasn't planning on getting much sleep and decided to see if people needed any help tearing down so they could hit the road early the next day. Arlo's camp was in need of breakdown, so I helped him pack up his kitchen stuff. Monkey was sitting on the bumper of Arlo's truck, and the little beast began to sing to me: "*We will sing his praises, kneel before his throne. Clap your hands together, monkey coming home.*" I looked at him and said, "*Huh?*" Monkey responded, "*Those are lyrics from my song. It's time to go home.*" I then asked Monkey, "*So was it a good weekend?*" He replied, "*Of course it was a good weekend. I love you people. I love this band. Did they miss the mark a bit? Yea, they did. But even though they made some missteps, the weekend still happened. If it hadn't, it would have been one less weekend that I could have spent with all of you.*"



## Epilogue (*scholarly treatment*)

### Creative influence

In this article, we developed a creative analytic practice (CAP) (Parry & Johnson, 2007; Richardson, 2000) we call *gonzo autoethnography* to explore the ephemeral moments of fans attending a festival for the rock band Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons. It is in this conceptual effort that we drew on Hunter S. Thompson's (1971, 1979) method of storytelling to narrate how communities expressed the sentiment of their shared leisure experience. Parry and Johnson (2007) asserted that the personal and social meanings of our participants are the most important depiction of the lived experience, trumping any attempt at generalization. But sometimes those sentiments get lost in the fray or do not resonate the way we hope they would, thus suggesting that an injection of authorial creativity may be warranted at times.

According to Thompson (1979), gonzo journalism is "a style of 'reporting' based on William Faulkner's idea that the best fiction is far more *true* than any kind of journalism — and the best journalists have always known this" (p. 106). Thompson went on to say that this:

Is not to say that Fiction is necessarily "more true" than Journalism or vice versa – but that both "fiction" and "journalism" are artificial categories; and that both forms, at their best, are only two different means to the same end... True gonzo reporting needs the talents of a master journalist, the eye of an artist/photographer and the heavy balls of an actor. The writer must be a participant in the scene, while he's writing it... Only a goddamn lunatic would write a thing like this and then claim it was true. (pp. 107–108)

Speaking of Thompson's writing style in his seminal "gonzo" piece, "The Kentucky Derby is Decadent and Depraved," *The Boston Globe* editor Bill Cardoso said in 1970 that Thompson's use of the first person, his manic reporting of events, and the blending of fact and fiction to document a "true" story was cutting-edge and innovative; it was "gonzo journalism" (Hirst, 2004). Thompson embraced the moniker and applied it to his unique style of journalism for the remainder of his writing days. It is in this conceptual effort that we borrowed from Thompson's long and illustrious career to apply his method in a slightly more rigorous and academic way to tell the story of what happened in a leisure experience when we shed our understanding of what it means to "do research." To borrow from Thompson's (1971) classic work, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, "But what was the story? Nobody had bothered to say. So we would have to drum it up on our own..." (p. 12).

### Theoretical perspective

*"We don't cover the story, we become the story."* – Ralph Steadman, Thompson's *illustrator*

Since the bulk of data collection took place in the interstitial moments of the music festival, it would be appropriate to ground any philosophical understanding of this liminality in Victor Turner's (1969) groundbreaking work on the concept of *communitas*. Turner outlined three



primary forms of *communitas*: normative, ideological, and spontaneous, the latter of most importance to our focus on subcultural affiliation's ability to affect fan sentiment and practices as represented through Monkey.

Spontaneous *communitas* is "richly charged with affects, mainly pleasurable ones" (p. 139), which occur in the ephemeral moments of shared participation in a meaningful leisure activity. When freed from the mundanity of their everyday lives, the liminal and fleeting moments of *communitas* that take place in leisure possess the potential to grow community due to the excitement of participation in celebratory events, like music fan communities. Turner's liminal stages of *communitas* are effective in creating significant shared moments of interaction between fans where meanings are constructed and subcultural languages, norms, and totems are established to reinforce the bonds, and importance, of affiliation and participation through music. It is in the liminality of *communitas* where we see a "transformative experience that goes to the heart of each person's being and finds in it something communal and shared" (Olaveson, 2001, p. 105); in this instance the music of Jerry Joseph and fan community built around it.

In this article, we focused on the small but tightknit music community to showcase Turner's liminality in the "betwixt and between" moments of fan participation that helped establish our conceptual gonzo autoethnographic endeavor. Music scenes are composed of ephemeral, yet regenerative, spaces that serve as an inviting forum for people with likeminded tastes to build social relationships that affect their sense of self (Driver, 2011). While the episodic interactions that occur in a music scene are fleeting by their very nature, music scenes and fan affiliations endure for long durations and, in many cases for decades, and possess the ability to be positive markers of self and growth through stability and continuity for aging fans (Taylor, 2010). The fans who comprise music scenes are both subjects and objects of their interactions with themselves, their fellow fans, and the music as well as the totems that are established through personal and communal investment in their beloved leisure (Harmon & Kyle, 2016). In this instance, the collective fan sentiment is captured and reconstructed in a way that sheds any claim to objectivity to blend social critique, humor, factual liberties, and satire to tell the story of the fan community through its beloved "mascot," Monkey.

This distinct epistemology of *gonzo autoethnography* required foregoing the structural aspects of popular contemporary forms of understanding and representation of data to tell a story outside the lines of traditional, positivistic representations of research (Lincoln & Guba, 2005), embracing aspects of how reality is socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Caron (1985) said of Thompson's writing style that "facts were fuel for his imagination" and that gonzo journalism insisted on the writer's involvement with the phenomenon to insert moments of absurdity to tell a more entertaining story. "The Story of Monkey" is based in equal parts absurdity and imagination, as well as the shared histories and complicated meanings derivative of being a member of the fan community.

In a conceptual piece that sought to outline what gonzo ethnography *might* look like, Sefcovic (1995) said that gonzo journalism was sensationalistic, "vividly descriptive and rabidly opinionated," and relied on "extreme" forms of ethnographic observation and storytelling (p. 20). For Sefcovic, gonzo ethnography in practice would then:

Reject the notion of any privileged vantage point for observation, insist on recognition of the participatory dimension of the researcher's role, and urge experiments with research methods and reporting practices that can liberate and empower general audiences. (p. 21)

Building off of Sevcovic's work, Wozniak (2014) detailed his use of the gonzo ideology in his work with Kurdish police forces to create what he called "gonzo sociology." Wozniak said that the point of gonzo sociology was to go where others had not and "reopen the space for wild, immersive, and messy research which captures the imagination" and still delivers the message, albeit in a nontraditional manner (p. 471).

Humphreys (2005) said that finding the "ultimate truth" in a story does not require accuracy so much as the meaning that is taken away by the reader. In our reliance on a stylized CAP representation of storytelling, we attempt to reflect the social meanings rather than try to reduce those meanings to generalizations (Parry & Johnson, 2007). Berbary (2011) stated that:

CAP changes our expectations of research because rather than disconnect and reduce experiences, it instead encourages involvement, inspires curiosity, creates inclusivity, and constructs depictions that remain in the thoughts of readers in ways that traditional representations sometimes do not. (p. 195)

CAP is supposed to be "unruly" and creative; pushing society out of its complacency and comfort zones to look at life through multiple lenses and question what we think we "know" (Ellis & Bochner, 2006). As there is no absolute reality in leisure (or life), it should be our goal as mouthpieces of the public to investigate all the places where subjectivity and lived realities may hide (Hemingway, 1995). Researchers who accept multiple realities and embrace new methods of discovery and representation help to "diffuse" their authority and share it with the public, inviting them into the larger discussion on lived experiences and meaning making (Parry & Johnson, 2007). The positivistic school encourages the status quo of the separation of the creation of a public knowledge from the public. CAP and autoethnography help to "undercut conventions of writing that foster hierarchy and division" (Ellis & Bochner, 2006) by rhetorically dethroning the researcher. Gonzo auto/ethnography takes it one step further by putting the spotlight on the absurdity of hierarchy and the status quo in research (Hughes, Bridges-Rhoades, & Van Cleave, 2017; Lather, 2013; MacLure, 2013; Mazzei, 2013; Nordstrom, 2017).

Drawing off Turner's (1969) work on liminality and with an eye to the future of research embracing postqualitative and posthumanistic strategies (Lather, 2013; Lather & St. Pierre, 2013), perhaps we have entered our own period of scholarly liminality where the meanings of lived experiences and the representations of those experiences as scholars are both "betwixt and between" what was and what will be. MacLure (2013) said that contemporary representations in qualitative research are suffocating and limiting, stating simply and assertively that "this needs to change" (p. 658). Consider this approach a heed to that call and a challenge to the brave to embrace *gonzo*. Thompson said that the only people who can explain "the edge" are the ones who have gone over it. Maybe it is time to push what we *think* we believe about scholarship over the cliff and see what comes of it.

### **Methodological approach and reconstruction of data**

We devised a novel method of data collection we call “conversation netting” where, with permission from the participants, the recorder was turned on for hours at a time in social environments where the phenomenon of interest was likely to be discussed. This yielded a significant amount of unusable data due to the prevalence of conversations that were irrelevant or appeared trivial. But it also kept open the door for the possibility that some thread might arise that was extremely valuable to understanding the phenomenon at hand, including the importance of involvement in the leisure experience for the individuals and the fan community.

Over the course of a three-day music festival in rural Oregon (DMF), we enacted “conversation netting” at five different junctures: three hours after each night of music (roughly midnight to 3 am for three nights) and for three hours in the evening (roughly 6–9 pm) before the main concert (the Jackmormons) was to start on the second and third days of the DMF, a Saturday and Sunday. While this was not the first time we used conversation netting, it was the first time data were analyzed. Since 2012, the first author has “netted” nearly 50 hours of unscripted dialog from the fans, often focusing on the importance of the music, the band, and the fan community to each individual’s quality of life.

### Data representation

Keeping with the spirit of Thompson’s (1979) gonzo journalism, we have blended elements of social critique, self-deprecation, and satire to tell the story of the phenomenon encapsulating the music scene of Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons through the eyes of a singular and much beloved figure in the fan community, a stuffed toy named “Monkey.” Berbery (2011) said that the “construction of characters by composite” can lead to a more significant impact of the purpose and potential of the research (p. 190). It is in this endeavor that we embraced aspects of the “tall tale,” which is part interplay between the teller and the audience, and part manipulation of the conventional approach to understanding (Brown, 1987; Caron, 1985; Wonham, 1993). Hunter S. Thompson (1971) was a master at this, and with all deference to his prowess in his craft, we attempted to emulate his playful style of writing. For Thompson, the personality of the finished piece was just as important as the event being considered. Therefore, we have incorporated sarcasm, humor, factual liberties, and, at times, profane interpretations to draw the reader in by giving a truly and openly subjective account of what “happened” at the DMF.

To do this, we analyzed the hours of data that were “netted” through informal conversations in the liminal and “off-peak” hours of the DMF. Every quote attributed to Monkey is something that was either said by a fan throughout the weekend or, in many instances, was an amalgamation of the sentiment that was shared in the community. We embraced Lather’s (2013) assertion that in “*Qual 4.0*” different knowledge is produced differently, and the “knowledge” we were attempting to convey was not something that could be “known” in a static manner; it was concurrently historical and fluid and up for interpretation (MacLure, 2013). Much as Lather and St. Pierre (2013) encouraged us to question our attachments to the status quo of qualitative research methodology, this novel method of data capture and representation allowed us to show the “agential force” of the fans in a stylized interpretation of the “discursive construction” of their collective lived experiences at the DMF (Mazzei, 2013, p. 737).

In this effort we attempted to “deterritorialize” the conventional approaches to qualitative research through the assembling of data that allowed for a “moving constellation” of what it means to know something, a concern consistently raised in the face of positivistic understandings of social phenomena (Nordstrom, 2017). Mazzei (2013) indicated that in posthumanist inquiry, “data and voice” are “agents in their own right” (p. 739). Extending Deleuze and Guattari’s (1983) concept, the *Body without Organs*, Mazzei gave us “*Voice without Organs*,” which is a “different kind of voice, an assemblage, one that does not emanate from a singular subject but is produced in analysis” (p. 733). As was displayed in “The Story of Monkey,” we embodied that call literally (Berbary, 2011).

While we understand that neither the story nor the stylistic manner of storytelling will appeal to all scholars, we nonetheless stand by the “truth” and importance of Hughes et al. (2017) assertion that there should not be a standard set of criteria for evaluating the merit of scholarship. The meaning is in the response (Ellis, 1995); therefore, it is up to the reader as an individual to diagnose the merit and applicability of the substance of the leisure scholarship, the methodology, or the story to their scholarly needs and their communities of inquiry.

### **Postscript**

The DMF did not happen in 2017; the band members realized they had gotten in over their heads, and their production team abandoned the attempt to co-opt the festival. Fans rallied together in a valiant attempt to save DMF in 2017, but their efforts came up short. This did not result in the complete demise of Dixie, however, since the original promotion team, Kirk and Kelly, were reminded of the importance of the festival to the fan community. On the final night of the band’s annual New Year’s Eve run in Portland, Oregon (December 31, 2017), Kirk and Kelly announced that Dixie would be revived for 2018; a venue had been secured and the planning had started. That night, the Jackmormons’ played their song *Monkey* for the first time in more than 15 years.

### **Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

### **Notes**

1. If you are uncomfortable “smashing the box,” this story is not for you.
2. The pronouns “I” and “me” refer to the first author throughout.

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