(Re)searching Sculpted A/r/tography:

(Re)learning Subverted-knowing

Through Aperetic Praxis

by

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Abstract

(Re)searching Sculpted A/r/tography is an invitation to walk with a sculptor who wished to understand his pedagogical and artistic practice as an artist/researcher/teacher (A/R/T) through an arts-based exploration into praxis.

Through a methodology based in journaling and autoethnography, and the introduction of a new overarching methodology a/r/tography, this research shows the results of following the process of artistic praxis-in-action. It was while this dissertation was being written that a/r/tography, as a concept, was being articulated by the six researchers who helped inform this research.

How would I illuminate the process of coming to artistic understanding so that readers could empathize with how an artist creates? I demonstrate this question by literally putting myself in the way of the process of writing this dissertation. Since artistic engagement is not easily explained I take the reader for a pedagogical journey utilizing writing as a metonym for building a sculpture. What is my question, and how do I find a question are themes that I explore through the process of researching my own doing.

This dissertation records, through writing, my process of living an artistic inquiry. It records six months of the messiness of my thinking and lingers self-reflexively and interrogatively in the research site of my practice as researched and my research site as practiced. During the inquiry, cracks emerge that help the reader understand how this messiness leads to meaning making. The mystery of the disjunctive process is foregrounded, predicated on my belief that it is through disjuncture that learning occurs. There are two examples of extreme disjuncture floating amongst the waters of much messiness. I show that without the surrounding currents these moments would not happen.

A need for a whole body/mind/spirit connection for a grounded artistic understanding is also made evident through a reading of this text.

Through a process of literal, metaphorical and metonymic cutting I build a sculpture / installation out of text. This text is textu(r)al, a hybrid of text and texture, built from words and fonts. I consistently utilize five fonts which I conceive as similar to various bits of string or wire that I use to build a sculpture. These are visual connecting devices and help compose the texture of the page.
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Dedication

In thanks to my wife
Jean Elizabeth Rasmussen
an artist
whose journey
is always beginning
and my parents
Joy and Tony de Cosson
without whom
mine would not have started.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Kit Grauer and my committee members Dr. Rita Irwin and Dr. Carl Legge whose prodding, cajoling and questioning produced a magical environment to work in. They embraced my project with enthusiasm, directing me to dig deeply into my subverted knowing.

To my wife Jean, for all the support she has shown me throughout this endeavour. To my children, Kristin, Nicolas and Thomas who have helped me understand what true learning is all about. And to my parents, thank you for being there always.

I thank also the CUST faculty and all the support staff who have consistently gone out of their way to help me, to all of you I am truly indebted.

To Dr. Nora McCardell I thank you and the administration at OCAD for having started me on this journey.

To the dogs, Jaala and Chesca who have taken me on some wild adventures but always brought me back.

And to our garden which has been there all my life, in a constantly changing world it has only grown more solid and meaningful.

I thank also my fellow graduate students with whom this has been a wonderful journey.

Let us all walk in a pedagogy of peace and happiness.
A Curatorial Note Placed (carefully)
aesthetically even
just to the left and a little lower than the eye might comfortably read
our bodies moving,
bending, folding
performing
just before/at the same time

upon entering the installation
(as text before you)
page upon page of installation further alluded to

To ease our (possible) fears, with sign posts
to look out for, to know where we are;
where we are going

To help navigate,
for those not sure of what to expect.

In large letters

ART CANNOT BITE, have no fear

"Your oldest fears are the worst ones" ¹

January 19, 2003

I finished a full edit last night, five straight days of back-breaking work, and still there is more, and on it goes..... but that is another story, one you may choose to enter as you crack an unknown spine, this reading, a possible place of disjuncture (my thesis peeks out). The effort here is to help you enter the space / place of this installation, a curatorial hand, offered in light of Mieke Bal’s (1999, 2001) notion of “quotation.” To give you sign posts, however vague or veiled (Derrida, 2002), that may not be so evident when immersed within, amidst, the text or textu(r)al rendering, page upon page.

A text that could be termed ‘a working hermeneutic,’ in that it strives from the outset to create the necessary structure to enable you (dear reader) to follow the process of my doing – my coming to (inter)understanding. The doing of this writing as living inquiry, to stay inside, amidst the process, much as a sculptor often builds a sculpture from within. In this sense the hermeneutic is a continuous functioning whole – it belongs to the nature of the installation itself.

Bal (2001) alerts us to the notion of visual arts continual quoting into/from historical (both past and present) context, and although they (visual arts) are traditionally nonverbal and thus quotations may not be authenticated, they are, never the less, embedded in the art. She goes on to tell us that:

quotations stand for the utter fragmentation of language itself. ... thus thickening rather than undermining the work of mimesis. This concept of quotation turns the precise quotation of utterances into the borrowing of discursive habits, and as a result, intertextuality merges into interdiscursivity. This interdiscursivity accounts for pluralized meanings–typically, ambiguities–and stipulates that meaning cannot be reduced to the artist’s intention. (p. 272)

I “quote” Jessica Stockholder (1998) as an installation artist to whom I see this dissertational writing as having a discursive relationship. That in a sense I mimic her mimesis through a form that is disruptive. She rips through walls and floors (the literal ‘framework’ of the gallery), I rip / tear–cut– into my journaling framework to reveal the studs of myself as intellectual being, through personal narrative, interspersed with intellectual abutments that create an imbedded structure / form.

This notion of building from within refers to the concepts, snippets, quirks and quarks of the initial forming of an idea that becomes a sculpture. How does this happen? I asked myself. How does an artist arrive at a finished work? I reasoned that if I stayed amidst this aporia I might open, by ripping and tearing, a way into the he(art) (oh, I couldn’t resist!) of my praxis. Although, to be honest, this was one of my changing inter(under)standings of the voyage. This hugging of praxis, my friend, my nemesis, for it was praxis (praso) that became a-new for me.
Ah, I hear you sighing, “this isn’t helping, it seems convoluted, why not come right out and say what this is about, then I’ll know and I can read the conclusion and that will be that.” Sorry to disappoint, but there is no conclusion in any traditional sense of closure and finality. Yes, I (un)cover and (dis)cover things on the journey, however, the emphasis of my endeavor is to draw you into ‘a reading’ of my meandering journey.

- This dissertation attempts to stay inside the aporia (difficulty) of the process of doing an inquiry of my practice as researched and my research as practiced.
- This is a messy place of inquiry.

OK, OK, enough beating around the bush. I do wish to help you. I don’t want to put you off before you’ve even begun. I am going to offer the sign posts, as I promised, and tie up a few loose ends in the process.

- I will also venture to say that I do offer a Curatorial End Note to help pull some findings out of the bushes.

February 1, 2003

I used journaling (Janesick, 1999) as a means of collecting my primary data and a scaffold on which to hang multiple, intersected, collected and found writing fragments. I set my rules of engagement and the rest was left to the process of doing.

- For six months, January – June 2002, I wrote every day.
- I bought an apple iBook laptop to facilitate this ‘directdata’ (as I like to call it) collection.
- I then cut (de Cosson, A., Adu Poku, S., Irwin, R. L., Springgay, S., Stephenson, W., & Wilson, S., 2002), tore, slipped and worked back into this document, using it as a foil to fight against, to weave anew (Wilson, in press), to have resistance with / through.
- To use the text to create new seams (Springgay, in press).
- As a sculptor I need resistance to build from / with / into / through.

For the past five years of my doctoral program I have been involved with A/R/T/S, an arts-based research group. We have met on a regular basis and have presented at numerous

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4 These six people formed the core of our A/R/T/S (artist/researcher/teacher/scholar) research group over the past five years. There have been different combinations but it has been productively stable.
conferences. I interweave ongoing *living inquiry* (Irwin & de Cosson, in press) of our collective work into the seams of disrupted journaling.

- The aporias are made transparent as we struggle with our unfolding methodology.

I work from a position of *a/r/tography*, an emerging research methodology that the A/R/T/S research group has actively been developing as I have been writing / experiencing this dissertation. It has grown as I write, it is in a sense a *living methodology* that is growing out of our discussions / reflections / interrogations / and conference presentations.

- *A/r/tography* allows for divergent, transformative artistic knowing to move through our research as a living practice.

Dr. Rita Irwin coined the term within the midst of our research group. She has written on its methodological implications and states (in press, pp. 29-30):

*A/r/tography* is a living practice of art, research and teaching (A/R/T): a living métissage; a life writing, life creating experience. Through attention to memory, identity, reflection, meditation, story telling, interpretation and representation, artists/researchers/teachers share their living practices ... are searching for new ways to understand their practices as artists, researchers, and teachers. They are *a/r/tographers* representing their questions, practices, emergent understandings, and creative analytic texts. They are living their work, representing their understandings, and performing their pedagogical positions as they integrate knowing, doing and making through aesthetic experiences that convey meaning rather than facts. Their work is both science and art but it is closer to art and as such, they seek to enhance meaning rather than certainty (see Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 751).

February 2, 2003

Another edit completed and also a run through for citation correctness, etc. It never ceases to amaze me that I can take quotes and not have the book, or miss the page number, or some other relevant piece of the puzzle. And so with missing bits hounded down, and even a few librarians tracing books that are mysteriously delivered to the Education Library, I continue on this last stage, this curatorial handle. (This service, it seems to me, that of library books being

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delivered, is one of the best kept secrets of the university. My advice, always wish the book you want is on loan, as then it will be recalled and delivered to you [almost] on a silver platter.) Oh, but I digress. You (may well) say, “What does this have to do with the sign posts?” “Just a flavour,” I hastily respond, “a soupçon of what to expect.” For as Van Manen (1989, 1990, 1991) reminds us, the thoughtful anecdote has the ability to connect to the phenomenological.

- That which is given ‘attention’ (Weil, 1951, 1956) can teach us to see a-new.

**A little autobiography:**

I am a sculptor who has taught at the college level for over twenty years. I have shown in many national and international exhibitions.

- My interest in this dissertational writing, although arts-based, was not to make art in a way I already understood (sculpture), but rather, to construct a sculptural installation through words, intertextu(r)aly (a hybrid of text and texture).
- In the process of writing inquiry (Richardson, 2000; Rasberry, 2001) I proposed an opening, a blossoming into an unraveling of my praxis, to make it transparent, if you will.

Easier said than done, indeed! However, be that as it may, I stuck with it. A journey, a walk, a pedagogy of learning.

“We must lay in waiting for ourselves. Throughout our lives. Abandoning the pretense that we know” (Pinar & Grumet, 1976, p. viii). This strikes me as the root of all inquiry, that if we know before we commence, why commence at all? As Smits (1997) reminds us, “Gadamer emphasizes the importance of remaining open to experience in our encounters with the world. Hermeneutics is not about the recovery of existing or previously inscribed meanings, but the *creation* of meaning” (p. 286).

- The praxis of my comfort in non-comfort is studio-based art practice.

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6 I was, however, making art for and in/with our research group. These processes of performance and video work formed the basis of our collective presentations at many conferences. A list of all the presentations and publications can be found in appendix I. I was also involved in my own artistic work, alluded to on p. 193 of this document.

This work is an, as yet, unresolved inquiry into how to work from/in/with the land, acknowledging aboriginal claim to both it and to the cedars and rocks I wish to weave and ground myself within. This is an aporia I am just beginning to write myself into. I look forward to an unraveling of under(inter)standing (yes, this adjunct[ed] hybrid word is interchangeable, neither preface holds power over the other).
I am well trained in the serendipity of trusting (McNiff 1998a,b) implicitly in the process of art making’s ability to lead me. I felt comfortable within the house of qualitative research; qualitative research is studio practice. Everything I experience, struggle with, intuitively act upon is a subjective qualitative equation, one that as I continue within my studio practice I have learned to engage with on equal terms. As is apparent in Rhonda Watrin’s (1999) succinct analyses of the similarities between the two modes of working:

Qualitative research, like art, describes and interprets details of lived experience. ... The process is an unfolding of a concept, an interpretation of vision that translates into techniques, skills, and modes of expression. ... Creating art, like qualitative research, is a problem-solving process, a combination of thinking and sensing intuitively that leads to insight. In qualitative research and artistic creation the end product is determined by the means. (pp. 94-95)

- An artist knows that a point of disjuncture is a point of learning.
- It was my thesis to put myself in the way of disjuncture and track amidst aporias using words to ‘build’ an installation that asks for immersion in that ‘reading,’ on the part of the viewer/reader, to experience the passion of praxis at work.
- I proposed to engage with and amidst my process of doing my practice as researched and my research as practiced.
- It was my intention to witness that agonizing struggle of the early stages of writing, to engage knowing it is a ‘free fall’ (Haskell, 2000).
- I proposed to be open to a pedagogy of learning in / through praxis.

February 3, 2003

- Education is being becoming.

To achieve a balance of push with pull is sometimes the hardest part of all. As Carl Leggo said, “It’s out of balance,” referring to an early draft of my dissertation. Oh, I had to struggle with that one, what was out of balance with what? An age old question, an artistic conundrum, possibly solvable through extreme disjuncture, forced understandings through flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). That a balance of form was still to be achieved, I knew. I was still working on that. However, I was challenged to define my terms of balance as I wished them to

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7 Dr. Carl Leggo at a committee meeting January 9, 2003.
be understood. What is it about balance that we like? And what role do asymmetrical and symmetrical balance play in our overall understandings within aesthetics? How does one enhance texture for instance, or highlight a point of intensity? That some of us are more drawn to one or the other is a given.

There is a possibility that the long, circling, incessantly questioning beginning can be viewed as out of balance with the rest. I would argue that it is a necessary asymmetrical contingency that allows for the build up to an eventual reckoning with this very overloading. It is like a long and exquisitely winding driveway to a large house that you know is there but you cannot see for all the trees. This enthralling and sprawling entrance lays the groundwork for the sudden appearance of a façade so wondrous you almost wish it had remained hidden from view, as you realize that you can never come upon it unawares again. “Is this too grand a gesture?” I ask myself. No, sometimes it is like that, so powerful is the change that occurs.

This is to tell you that indeed there is a ‘change of pace,’ a new texturing, that this convoluted, abstracted, continually punctured weight, that is the early reading, is necessary to allow for the weight of change that is to come. That without this large mass, the other does indeed topple. Balance prevails.

It is a push/not push, a living contradiction, to my mind an Aoki aporetic (see p. 171 of this document).

To know precisely is impossible. To know how, or why, or when, is unknowable. As Weil (1951) would word it: “She fell into the hands of God” (p. 163).

- This dissertation tries to open up the process by which we come to these insights.
- My question: If I set up a process and allow it to run, will I discover a-new?
- By staying inside and allowing the messy to out, I try to allow others to enter.

I find new meanings writing through the data (Richardson, 2000), by cutting, and forcing new hybrids to form.

- It is through the working eclectic of a/r/tography (Irwin, in press) that this dissertation finds form.

A form that is built as a sculptor would build. Using words as building blocks, words found in different sizes, textures and configurations. It is in through a forming of these disparities into chunks of language that meaning may be formed.
I wish you luck on your reading, weaving a feathered journey, a pedagogy of walking softly.

- The entire work is a cutting, threading, weaving of multiple writings into a single whole, an installation.

I provide sign posts of a walking metaphor to our pedagogical awakenings. I position ‘walks’ and metonymic images as markers of progress. It is suffice to warn you that you need to have ‘read’ at least five walks, broken and punctured as they may be, before you will encounter significant change. Indeed, five metonymic images passed as signs leading to change, as building blocks solidly grounded, integral to the whole, that yes, change is on the horizon.

- I predict a way out, or is it in?

A query I encounter on my final walk into a labyrinth that helped me feel the comfort of staying inside knowing / finding there is always more (as we all know) but sometimes are reluctant to embrace as it does mean work! Yes, work on all our parts. I as writer, deliverer of contextualized metonyms and metaphors. You as reader, decoder of meaning, always vigilant to our shared understanding “that meaning cannot be reduced to the artist’s intention” (Bal, p. 272).

- You are free to arrive at your own intertextu(r)al awakenings.

I leave the final walk to you, the interpretive walk out (or is it in?) the forest. To understand through doing, that can only come after the walk has been made. A long meandering stroll, to be sure, but one I would suggest well worth the effort. As James Elkins (1997/2000) says, “Meandering is gentle, steady, unpredictable change. … And meandering is furtively autobiographical” (pp. 176-177).

Bring a friend and a dog, if you have one. I have always found a dog transforms a mere walk to an enterprise of continual forced attention to the most interesting nooks and crannies. And a friend we need to bounce our ideas off, in mutual trust.

“Sight and insight go hand in hand, and both friendship and pedagogy are based on a suspension of certainties” (Bal, 2001, p. 277).
A note on the images Metonymic Moments that accompany this text:

I believe the most crucial piece of information is to say that there is a deliberate placement and order to these images, a progression, to which I wish to draw your attention. By doing so I heighten their ability to act on both the text and you, dear viewer / reader. I would also say they are similar to the rest spaces in sheet music, points of deliberate change in tempo, visual contemplations. As Weil (1956) said, “Placing of silences in music; they have got to be at the center of something. … To arouse a state of expectation. To wait for a sound which shall fill to overflowing—and let this sound be a silence” (p. 64).

It is also important, however, to note the following:

On entering an exhibition some viewers like to read the accompanying catalogue essay as they commence with their viewing, others like to view and then to read, others may not wish to read any notations, preferring instead, to come to their own conclusions. All are valid ways of entering into a dialogue with art. To facilitate these various and different approaches, I offer you a choice, you can flip to A Curatorial Endnote, p. 212, now or at any point through your reading, or simply arrive there close to an end point of your journey. A sign post of your progress through the messiness of my mission to follow the process and action of my practice as research and my research as practiced.

Further notes on the images:

Metonymic Moments were produced with an old, inexpensive, ‘point and shoot’ SX70 Polaroid camera. I have worked with this camera for many years. I am drawn to the rich colour of the SX70 format and I enjoy the ability to manipulate the picture through the lens of the camera. These images are not computer generated but ‘natural,’ in the sense that they are produced on site, in nature. The camera allows me, with very crude shutter manipulation (three settings), to capture, with hand and body movement, the composition I want. This is a practiced art, learned through much experimentation; praxis informs my actions.

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8 I fall into this later category, going back to see the work again, and again, a sort of hermeneutic of checks and balances against my perceived interpretations and someone else’s, an intellectual game which I greatly enjoy. I can spend a whole day in a large contemporary gallery and often do, taking the time to formulate my ideas and then ‘testing’ them against some written text. I find this a fascinating exercise in comparative thinking.
Let us begin then

a journey

through

a walking

metonymy

that explores

textu(r)al sculpture

(installation)

as a pedagogical

(a/r/topographical)

mode

of / in

research
(Re)searching Sculpted A/r/ography:

(Re)learning

Subverted-knowing

Through Aporetic Praxis

Seven

SX70

Photographs accompany this text

One

metonymic moment captured

a frozen state,

only to move once again beyond the frame

of concrete understanding

These photos run as an imagistic (poetic) reference to the text. They are stand-alone pieces that trace a known/unknown place of being, offering starting/ending points, however in reality, offering neither. There is no beginning or end, simply a commencement with that which is and at another point a ceasing.

It is an illusion of modernism to think, we as beings, are in control, instead of being part of a universal unfolding, which we join for a short performative time.
"...the dilemma (is) how to share ... without directly telling" (Towers, 1998).

If one tenet of postmodernism was to realize that the hope pinned to modernism was expired, that there was no 'one' way to interpret, see, analyze, but rather to be open to the multi-layered meanings that are inherent in a constantly changing wor(l)d, then the post-post(non)modern is to say yes to possibilities of a multi-dimensional reading and be challenged by what lies ahead. Whatever 'ism' it becomes, there is hope found in an enactive engaged-with wor(l)d, allowing the process of involvement, with 'attention,' (Weil, 1951a,b) to become our teacher.

This dissertation illustrates my pedagogical interest, my "hermeneutic wager," if you will, in a non hierarchical - non linear, visual representation of language/text: a pedagogy that accepts that there is no one answer, but equally knows that as each creative act solidifies, so a new one opens.

As a mobile fills liminal space in its continual search for perfection, so can a curriculum of art be built on liminal spaces to create a complex 'whole-becoming,' an installation\(^2\). As such I am interested in the visual presentation, the sculpture of text on a page - the over-all visual language as well as the over-all interpretive text/language.

\(^2\) An Installation according to the Oxford Dictionary of Art, (1988) is: “an assemblage or environment ... specifically for a particular exhibition” (as cited in Reiss, 2001, p. xii).
An Entrance Way

Through the multi-leveled and 'open' text, Eco (1989) suggests that there is neither a beginning or end, "no privileged points of view, and all available perspectives are equally valid and rich in potential" (p. 18). A liminal space provides a framework for others to grasp at this complex 'whole-becoming,' this installation.³

That the text presented may be read in many different ways (it may indeed mean more - less – other) to those who read it, is the 'wager.' Wor(l)ds demand to be read and (thus must be) organized in a manner in which they can be engaged with, and it is in 'engaging with,' that further 'thinking' is evoked to suggest meanings implied in the signs of the wor(l)ds. I do not want to direct, I only wish to 'shepherd' (Towers, 1998).

This writing has its roots in philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer, 1965/1986), in which text is continually (re)worked and (re)interpreted at every reading. I utilize autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) as a mucilage to pull threads together through a narrative of journal writing (Janesick, 1999) and writing as research (Richardson, 2000; Rasberry, 2001), concurring with Hatch and Wisniewski, (1995) and Stewart, (1997, 2002) who view narrative as a powerful medium that creates meaning. These are all subsumed into a newly defined methodology of a/r/tography (Irwin, R. L., & de Cosson, in press).

I am not interested in anarchy, however, subversion has always attracted me.

To be subversive suggests that you accept the governing body, the 'facade' if you will (what is set up as the 'front' or 'facade'), at the same time, however, looking for ways to undermine this facade without toppling the entire edifice, as it can still be of use as the 'new' is built. As the artist Mark Pauline (1989) said, "You do indeed have to bite the hand that feeds you" (video dialogue).

Perhaps art ... can help us, a little bit, to continue to live. Collapse and disintegration produce new creative power which creates some-thing new. Recycling. Artists interpret the new contexts at the same time as they rebel against them. (Chambert, 1995, p. 16)

³ Installation: Many contemporary artists are no longer interested in static stand-alone structures as sculpture, but rather, are interested in a totality of space(s), an over-all interpretation. That is what artist Jessica Stockholder asks us to consider when she goes through the walls of the gallery, out the windows, down the halls and into the ceilings. Her question, “Where does the art stop and the rest begin?” Well, I too am asking that you (dear reader) see this writing as not just sculpture (this concept is more fully developed as we continue our stroll) but as installation. That it must be considered in its totality – this is not to say that smaller ‘chunks’ cannot be inspected in their own right, but they must always be brought back (out) to the whole for a full view.
"What begins to take shape is a non-linear, open-ended, testimonial, paradigm-shifting practice" (Frenkel, 2001, p. 36).

"What seems rather obvious now, ... was Eisner's explanation of how understanding is mediated by form: What we know and how we know are inextricably related" (Butler-Kisber, 2002, p. 232).

4 Oh I like this, I read it the other day and scrawled enthusiastically under the highlighted text, "This is my dissertation!"

It is a matter of swimming with the tide or maybe finding its rhythms and forms.

5 As I swam this afternoon I was seeing myself cutting through the water and I felt yes this can be done. It is a matter of finding the threads and sewing this together. That is what I see. This is a sculpture and the printing of 145 pages gives me a beginning. It was like, "oh look, I did do something" - a text from January through July 2002. The printing of it made it real, made me excited to see. "See," I say to myself, "there IS something." Much not of use but as I move through it - read (re) read – re fathom the text, I say

"YES, THERE IS A WAY FORWARD"

I START TO HIGHLIGHT THE BITS THAT RESONATE AND PULL THEM TO THE FOREGROUND.

As I swam I was seeing a cutting through - a cutting of the text into useful and not useful. I am highlighting as I go through - finding the pieces that self resonate (after all that is what I set out to do); to follow the process. It has now come time to place it for others to see/read. This dissertation writing, as game, as fun, as play, as something that can grow and be manipulated through more than one set of “I’s - (eyes),” allowing a finished sculpture - a finished text to grow through, a walking with/in the text by eyes gleaning, allowing a creative form to materialize (possibly) – a generative possibility, let us all agree. I pull out my hard copy of 'The Hermeneutic Dialogic,' (de Cosson, 2002, CD-ROM insert) with its highlighted section referring back on itself, and I am reminded that Pinar (in press, p. 14) points out that it is "In this phenomenological space de Cosson explores, creates, recoils. He tells us disarmingly, that ...

(my own words, once again, for me to question):

I am

(researching)

the process

of my own doing"

(As though I might forget my quest, my journey, my walking pedagogy.)
Another Self Portrait
written in small gray stones
on a corroded concrete slab,
observed while walking May 31, 2000.

"Of course the author of a self narrative is writing a story that is not yet finished"
(Barone, 2000, p. 124).

As questions become more and more
specialized and emphasis is increasingly
placed on the histories of material things,
what, if any, will be
the role of poetry and the energies of
subversive understanding?
(Jipson & Paley, 1997, p. 120)

Walking the campus has proved to be my introduction to the mapping of the ecology of the area. I walk to see what is going on, to put together an over-all understanding of the 'new' that is the ever changing campus. This 'walking', is similar to what this writing is, a way of mapping the (un)known into a conceptual whole, that always has areas as yet undefined, as I am not able to walk every where at once. It is a continual process of piecing together the fragments and flashes of insight and comprehension. The map is in a constant state of being (re)drawn. This is a postmodern understanding, one that does not hold with certainties, that knows shifts are continual.

See Appendix II for an outline of ARTE 565B - Artist as Teacher / Teacher as Artist, a graduate course I taught in the summer of 2001 at UBC, in which we engaged in a 'walking pedagogy' for teaching and learning. This concept of 'the walk' as a pedagogical place to unravel and reflect on personal understandings forms one of the multiple spines of this writing. The British artist Hamish Fulton (1999) whose foundational philosophy to his work, 'No Walk, no work,' reminds me, when writing his syllabus for an advanced course in visual arts, Is it Today, Yesterday or Tomorrow?, (at the Fondazione Antonio Ratti, Como, Italy) that "we have focused our research on the idea that the only anthropological and physically complete way to adhere to reality, what Merleau-Ponty called 'the flesh of the world,' is walking" (p. 115).

It acts as metonymic sounding board to the textu(r)al exploration as we walk our pages.
Yesterday as I walked the dog I remembered the bridge that topped our wedding cake. We talked a lot about bridging.

(The bridge; a green aquarium type fish swim around and around lazily blowing bubbles.)

Our bridge never sat in an aquarium, instead it sat on a shelf in the living room of our then house.

One day it fell, I don't remember the circumstances of the fall, only the fact that the bridge broke in two with a number of shards.8

(the bridge broke in two - discarded shattered shards.)

8 I don't like the “with a number of shards” it is a too ‘mouthy,’ number into shards seems awkward, maybe it’s that shards already implies number, so it should be “with shards” but that seems wrong too, maybe shards is simply an awkward word, but still I cling to it, play with it, try it turned, tuned, into new configurations: “the bridge broke into shards”? I look up shard on the desk top computer “debris from threshing.” I’m sure there is a more extensive meaning that goes with shards of china or pottery, as in anthropological findings, but if I take the desk top computer meaning no wonder the word doesn’t fit, its synonyms are all ‘softish:’ waste, shell, crust, pods, husks, chaff, refuse. (I am in my daughter’s apartment and I don’t know where her dictionary is, I could check out the library later). Then in a bolt (in fact twenty or so minutes later after getting a phone call, brushing my teeth, having a piece of toast, I come back and HOW ABOUT “shattered shards” with discarded as in the bridge broke in two - discarded shattered shards. Yes I feel that could be the line, the implications are implicit in those two words proceeding shards, there is a pathos, loss, injury, hurt, even though an inanimate object, the bridge metonymically connects to my inner self. There is truth resonating in those words that I wish to acknowledge. I (re)write the line in non italic text below the existing line to help you (dear reader) have a window into my process of writing.

I am not going to track every word change as that would engage us in an exercise other than my intent, however, it does talk to the never ending poetic search for wording our lives in ways in which we feel the comfort of knowing ‘that’s it, that’s what I am endeavoring to say.’ Always mindful of Ronald Pelias’ (1999) reminder that: ...

(1) analysis is always filtered through a perceiving agent; and (2) analysis can never exhaust its subject. ...

‘the crisis in representation’ ... emerges from the increasing skepticism in the modernist belief that we could get it right, that we could nail down, once and for all, the truth. But as Trinh Minh-ha explains, ‘One cannot seize without smothering, for the will to freeze (capture) brings about a frozen (emptied) object.’ ‘Seizing’ and ‘freezing’ are gestures that seek to control and master but ultimately misrepresent and oppress. This follows from the recognition that to represent is to speak as a located self, one who is situated historically and culturally and who is invested in certain discursive and ideological practices that obscure by privileging the present and silencing the absent (p. x).

Pelias goes on to support and call for poetic renderings in research writing precisely because of this postmodern dilemma. The poetic allows for a more ‘open’ (Eco, 1989) reading of the text and “can establish a metonymic connection to the performance event by privileging the experimental and the artistic” (p. ix).
I fixed the bridge, gluing it back together, it once again sat, however, no longer the shinny new model, more a worn and lived version of the same thing.

a marriage, a partnering, a life

how to get to an other?
find our way?

A Liminal (s)p(l)ace$^9$ of Swimming$^{10}$

Once again it is the swimming that helps (me) mediate this text. Today I swam the pool with its blue yellow glow that my goggles accentuate. I was seeing the rough water of all the other swimmers as the turbulence that I have been feeling while I endeavor to discover the form that this mass of text must slither into. For indeed it is this that is the overarching concern, not the immediate, not the everyday, but the unifier of all the days. The thread that allows tentacles to glide throughout the text, to open to the sculptural pedagogy, to open to flow.

\[ F(r)o(r)m . \]
\[ page to page \]

"Trying to summit a mountain"

I also saw turbulence as similar to Haskell’s (2000) notion of ‘summitless mountains’ (p. xxxii) in which she suggests, from my perspective, a similarity to Gadamer’s (1965/1986) horizon metaphor, for she helps us understand how when climbing or “trying to summit a mountain” we often reach a crest that we thought was the summit but is not, and that indeed the summit may be many hours, indeed a journey, still ahead. As I swam through these turbulent

$^9$ (S)p(l)ace a hybrid world implying both an object and an area at once. It is a metonymic word, in that it cancels itself out, the space will always escape the place, one implies the other, one cannot exist without the other, it is the negative to the positive. A place is contained, but it must have space to exist. Space exists by the boundaries which contain it. Can space have a boundary and still be space? A (s)p(l)ace is neither a space nor a place; it exists in-between the two, Homi Bhabha’s (1990a) ‘third space’, Trinh Minh-ha’s (1992) ‘third level of meaning’ or ‘hybrid space’.

$^{10}$ See p. 66, note 9, of this document for further development of this theme.
waters today I could see into calm depths below and I once again was awed by the water’s ability to hold me in its peaceful buoyancy. Swimmers left as I swam and the calm of the depths began to take hold on the surface and I thought, “Yes, I can come through the turbulence and find the peace of the calm. The calm that comes with(in) the ‘freefall’ that is the grounding metaphor of Haskell’s (2000) work. She goes on to suggest, “Instead of trying to grasp and ground-----through asking what does this tell me, ... I ask you to trust the unknown, the moments of freefall. Step out into unfamiliar territory where our goal is to summit some far off mountain” (p. xxxi).

There was no thinking it was just this.  

She had eyes and she was blind ...

It moved on so fast she could see herself see. She saw sight coming

What was not is  

(Cixous, 2001, pp. 3-8).

In ‘Nobody Nowhere,’ an autobiography of living with(in) autism, Dona Williams (1993) writes this marvelous statement, “What kind of ‘mad’ I am.” This change of syntax intrigues me, thus I am trying something new (for me). I am downloading a file from a program that I listened to today. I want to find what she said about art and the way she could come to understanding through art. I will pursue this. I know I want to find this reference as it strikes me as wonderful.

11 “Just before swimming I started to read and there I was with highlighter marking text and I knew this is what I must do. I must now read this tomb of writing and allow the ‘process out’ (research journal, October 10, 2002).

12 The she is I, it is I who am blind, but as in Cixous’ story of the myopic woman (turning as we read, to be herself) who lives to have the tissue, the veil of blindness removed, so will the tissues lift - (IS lifting, as I write)

into the silent, air conditioned transformed silence of the SCARF night.

(SCARF is the acronym for the Education building at UBC)

13 Sunday, January 27, 2002 – A celebration of Peter Gzowski, on Tapestry, CBC Radio Canada.

14 I tried to download the Tapestry program from my home computer utilizing a dial-up connection, not realizing the futility, it appears to have jammed at 743KB of 5.9MB with a note saying ‘Waiting for Data’ (these numbers meant little to me at this time). But now at 7 minutes it
In subsequent research into Williams’ (1996) writing I find other delightful twists that have metonymic and metaphoric quality in their lightness and response to art and its function in her life. For her, art “can be used in a ‘Simply Be’ way,” and she goes on, “Brushes need not be used in art and one can merely be encouraged to touch colour and *join with it through covering oneself*” (p. 84, my italics). She also equates this with the art of writing when she says, “I discovered ... all this unknown knowing ... *through* the automatic and sort of preconscious expression I found *through* art, music and writing” (p. 137, my italics).

I have a new mission, I am being called to do something else but I don’t know what it is (yet).

I want to explore “through.”

Can I explore through others in a group?

Can it help me unravel the unknown? Can we get closer to it by being together in conversation?

**A Continual Bridging**

A new door has opened - it grows as I read, the threads are connecting to new thoughts as I find the texts that support this newness. Not new for those who are in that space of reading, but has an ‘error’ message. I subsequently switched to a high speed connection so as to facilitate this form of immediate Internet research. There is an ongoing struggle with technology throughout this dissertation, as its changes happen so fast and I run to keep up. I was simultaneously working at bringing high speed connections to graduate offices. We subsequently got the connections, but in the midst of its acquisition the process was exquisitely frustrating. I leave in notes to this affect through out this text not because it was overly arduous or even that I didn’t enjoy it in retrospect, it is simply that *in the midst of process* one cannot always see the use of it.

A tenet of this dissertation is exactly this need to stay in process, it was my concern to document it and in a sense *put process to the test*, could it live up to the trusting that I believed it could? This attention to process can lead us to new understandings, that it is *through the process of doing* our praxis that we learn. In this case I now understand the significance of 743KB of 5.9MB, but I still struggle with the ongoing avalanche of computer advancements.
for me, it is once again the experience of a vastness of sea, opening before me and I feel so small in its sight.

However, I take heart in Maxine Greene's (1995) words, "... to learn and to teach, one must have an awareness of leaving something behind while reaching toward something new" (p. 20).

This is an exciting thought, that imagination can be nudged into places I do not know anything about. Instinctively I already know them, have comfort with them, these new thoughts that strike so quickly. However, it is the putting into words that is new, where the imagination will soar and take new ground as the story (thus far) extends itself outward to embrace that which is new, a continuing disjuncture (Jarvis, 1992).

* A raven cuts directly through my vision
  heading arrow-like down the garden*

---

15 I see my garden. When I (re)read this text it is conjured in all its lushness and fecundity of nature's growth. My parents have 'built' this garden, my father especially in his concrete stone work which is a chronology of dates, etched into the liquid form, now aged and formalised into the garden's structure. Did he have the whole 'plan' when he started to arrange the rocks?

No,

he simply followed the contours
built day after day
to a memory
filled with my 'helping'

When we had a garden apartment added five years ago, so that my wife and I could be close to them for their aging years, I had the 'S' curve stone wall moved and repositioned so that it could be incorporated into the new structure. My father thought I was nuts to spend so much time on a “bunch of cement and stones.”

To me there was a significance of memory to be preserved

I am sitting at my desk high up on the third floor of our sloping lot. This 'office' was my youngest son's bedroom until two years ago when his size dictated he should move to the larger spare room/office. It had been my father's office/dressing-room since he bought the house in 1949, with a brief (shared) ten year intrusion when it was my first bedroom.
over my father's head
drops white
as it swoops upward
narrowly missing
his balding scalp

(Re)searching collectively (through) A/R/T

The A/R/T collective watched, '4 Corners' together on Friday (the first of our planned by-monthly meetings to continue our group research project and to ready ourselves for our accepted performance/presentation at The InSEA World Congress August, 2002, in New York City (see Appendix I). An hour to set up – (the usual problems of equipment not working), however we did get it going at about five minutes to three and watched for an hour. I noted in my research journal (January 24, 2002): “hey this isn’t bad, it really does pull together, it seems to be connected in ways that we never knew.” I am interested in this, ways that we never knew. That we created meaning that is beyond our doing as individuals and beyond our immediate understanding.

There is a gentle continuity
in a garden
played full
of living memory

16 Too much memory to write, the overwhelming state of parenthood, the pedagogy of the moments lost but others found, another paper, another time.
17 A/R/T or A/R/T/S (artist/researcher/teacher/scholar) is the acronym for a group of graduate students and professors who have met regularly since October, 1999, when we organized and hosted an arts-based research exhibition, January 6-29, 2000, at the Lookout Gallery, Regent College, University of British Columbia entitled A Pied: Exploring Artist/researcher/teacher Praxis. A symposium on the subject was held on January 29, 2000. An example of the sculpture I researched through can be found on p. 149 of this document. There is a publication from this conference: Irwin, R. L., & de Cosson, A. (Eds.). (in Press). A/r/tography as Living Inquiry. As a collective we have continued to meet on a regular basis to work through the difficulties and challenges of arts-based research and have presented at various conferences (see appendix II). A good example of our work, Performing the A/R/T/S: A pedagogy of self, can be found in Poetter, et al., (Eds.). (2002). In(ex)clusion: (Re)visioning the democratic ideal (available at http://education.wsu.edu/journal/).
To gather the participants’ thoughts about this could be interesting.

To find some old notes, the struggle of the beginning. I know I thought at points that we really were up the creek with this notion of cutting together our various selves. I always figured it would work, however the sinking feeling, at some of those early practices, that disaster was lurking, still haunts me.

Questions to walk through.

What did you think of those early practices?

Were there points in our rehearsals when you thought it wasn’t going to work?

What were the most enjoyable points in the process of A/R/T?

What is this data collection of daily writing going to offer?

Use what you know. Do what you know. Don’t expect yourself to be something you are not.

Use technology - but don’t get caught by it...

Stay on the outside;

look for the metonymic moments,

allow the process to continue to unravel as we meander down its path

“Whatever crosses our paths unexpectedly can be viewed as an infusion of the creative spirit in our lives. ... What appears to be most foreign may in fact have the most to offer the re-visioning of the enterprise ” (McNiff, 1998a, pp. 126-127).18

18 McNiff’s (1998a, 1998b) writings were most helpful to me as I formulated my concept of process. The notion of following it, and allowing it space to blossom was greatly supported when I discovered his books on arts-based research and artistic process.
I walked the beach in the snow today
an inch of fresh whiteness
touching the ink black water that laps the white line progressively upwards.
I looked back over my steps, from rock to rock - balanced precariously – dangerously even
(research journal, January 26, 2002)

Canadian singer Bruce Cockburn says in an interview with Sarah Hampson (2002) in The Globe and Mail:
"I found the journey, and the journey is what I’m interested in. It’s analogous to molecular motion or subatomic particles. Everything is in motion all of the time, and the motion is what’s real.” He jabs a forefinger into his forearm. “I can poke at this and I can feel it and I can see it but all of it is a bunch of electromagnetic waves, so, you know, what am I really seeing?” (p. R3)

Light slowly drains from this day of white
as dense green
dark spots
in trees
glare out from the forest
that surround us.
I walked the dogs this morning
they frolicked in the freshly falling snow.
With more being called for.

Tea Time
I go downstairs
to put the kettle on
and make six-minute tea.
Jean is saying “you must begin; do you want to set up in here?” As I write in our bedroom and look out over the garden - I have ideas of taking over the back bedroom.

January 26, 2002

After the amazing snow fall of the weekend we have a sun filled morning rising - that glinting in the sky and fluffy white clouds that read as soft as the snow, large puff balls cling to the tops of trees; newspapers suggest records were broken, my tree trimming of Saturday is hard to believe.

It just is

(in a ‘Simply Be’ way)

January 28, 2002

Jean tells me I must set up my room today - I must begin. I nod, ‘yes’ - knowing she is right, but still stalling. Where is the right place? Is it up here with the amazing view, or is it my son’s now empty room? The back room, my old room. Yes, I hadn’t thought of that until this

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19 Jean is my wife of 20 years now. She has seen me write my first thesis for an MFA at York University in 1982 (the year of our marriage). Watched as I struggled to be the working artist in Toronto, where I worked with a renovation company and created sculpture whenever - wherever I could. I got a more suitable job as an Arts Education officer at the Art Gallery of Ontario, as the ‘living sculptor’ in my den, visited by up to three school groups a day. I put on a show for them, opening up the living creative pedagogical process of what it was to be a sculptor. My favorite consolation of this job was the hidden benefit of coming in early and having the entire empty gallery to wander researching(ly). One of the most profound experiences took place in The Henry Moore Galleries. I still take Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) students to this space and relate the story of how I could feel his spirit quite palpably walking through his plaster casts on my silent morning wanderings - those pieces that he had personally run his hands through in the making of them, unlike the finished bronzes that were created by foundries. Jean also actively prodded me into my wrestling match with an MEd thesis on creativity, achieved in 1994 while on the faculty of OCAD. Jean is once again forcefully but with gentle fingers engaged in this ‘terminal’ event. It is through her being meshed with my process that I find strength and meaning.

20 A room occupied, until very recently, by my eldest son, now at university, but who at the time of this writing last year was in England attending the same school as his father, grandfather and great grandfather.

Another pedagogical meander that finds its way into this (textual) al threading.
moment. My room from when I was 7 or 8 till 15, when I was moved to the ‘playroom’ in the basement, a much larger and more independent space with its own entrance and washroom.

(Yes I was given privilege. I still have privilege.)

as I look over the garden and contemplate others –
what they have in comparison

“WITH WRITTEN OR TYPED EXPRESSION ONE IS FACE TO PAPER, IN THE COMPANY OF ONESELF, NOT FACE TO FACE AS WITH SPEECH, IN THE COMPANY OF ANOTHER PERSON”
(WILLIAMS, 1996, P. 119).

Back to the room. It is dark, it is the back, however it was once mine so I must reclaim it, to have somewhere dedicated to the enterprise. It could be the university, I do have an office there but the idea was to have two spaces for this. I will have the office at work.

AND I WILL HAVE MY SPACE HERE – (JEAN PUSHING ME) –
SHE KNOWS TOO

to get this ship on the water
I have to set sail
I can no longer afford to wait around at the water’s edge
I must launch

I know I have a journey to record.

There are all these little bits that have to be culled together. I seem to really want to find Dona Williams’ (1993) ‘Nobody Nowhere.’ I want to hook into something. However, I also know I have to stop the running around. I need to focus on the thing at hand, it isn’t out there, it’s in here.
A Need To Make Contact

- Find soul -

It is Williams’ words I (re)search for. She talked about the arts and their ability to ‘speak’ to her with spaces of understanding. There is something in that I want to get into – through.

The how of our performance for instance. How does it work? What is it that is working? not working? Maybe some interviews of outsiders. As we were watching it I was thinking, how can we be critical of our own work? I am in it, how can I see it?

How can any of us see it?

I need to make a list of priorities, a project is underway but it has left me out. I am running behind not really knowing how to do it. It has left me in a space of not knowing - of wondering why I am even attempting to do it. Am I simply going to collect lots of this self-referential writing that doesn’t seem to want to go anywhere? I remind myself that I am writing to find out what I think,

...to allow the research process a pedagogical opening...

I am trying to allow the space for something to find its way out –

...I am trying to let it talk to me...
A New (r)evolution.

I (re)search the stacks of the living library
armed with little bits of paper
that have scribbled numbers of referenced books.
some in areas that I know and others vistas to sudden new connecting places on a journey.
Now so many books pile around me, fascinating, erudite books, so many which were not on my lists that fell into my lap, or were passed by others on similar but divergent journeys.
Many to become centers of my discovery.
A longer and longer bibliography attests to this mounting avalanche.
some to be forgotten.
some to become backbones
to my evolving self as it traverses this land of research.
pedagogy and love.
These books made it clear that I am joining an already established,
albeit constantly fluid fraternity of like minded (re)searchers.
all struggling to find new ways of finding our pedagogies within the mantle of the arts.

Arts based, arts-informed, the A.R.T.S.

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21 (yes, capitalized for the emphasis that (text)u(r)/al-isation
As a place of

Performing

research.

A Reality Of Self Dialogue Performances

Self-dialogue is the building block to a true motivation to share and any true interest in others. Most people have that self-dialogue from the time they are born, maybe earlier. They are aware of having thoughts, feelings, body sensations, body connectedness. They are aware of their power to use their own conscious mind, to access

gives to the "performative reading"

as the eyes absorb the oversized letters and opens,

dear reader,

the notion of the text performing as something other than text alone,

but rather as a whole that interacts with itself.

that the visual layout of the text to the page is important.

22 "(As we shall see, the mobile slash between and / or, and / and, or /and, or / or, is a singular border, simultaneously conjunctive, disjunctive, and undecidable.)" (Derrida, 1993, p. 23).
thought and feeling and the means not just because it came from their own understanding and feelings, but because they are able to monitor it and guide it with intention and will. (Williams, 1996, p. 230)

I want to sick it up -
I want to barf it out -
I want to let this dragon free -
I want to sweat IT OUT -
I WANT TO DISLODGE IT FROM MY GUT -

I WANT IT EXORCISED

I WANT TO CONNECT

TO THAT PLACE THAT HAS PASSION

FOR WORK THAT IS IMPORTANT TO ME

INSTEAD OF SIMPLY being DIRECTED with NO MEANING (TO ME) -

THAT WILL ALLOW A SPACE FOR MEANING TO COME OUT

To (re)enact THAT (S)P(L)ACE

That was the sick(ing) up\(^\text{23}\) - the retching of the performance that was the reality of the moment. The walking of a pedagogy of 'lost and foundness.' The being lost on the trail, not

\(^{23}\) This literally, in an enacted metaphoric sense, happened at the 2\(^\text{nd}\) Annual Conference on Curriculum & Pedagogy with Arts-Based Educational Research, October, 10-13, 2001, Victoria, BC. I was part of a presentation Four per(form)ing: (Art)ticulations in educational research. I presented a video of walking pedagogy and related the story of my being lost/not lost in the nearby park the evening before. In this same presentation, which had a free form performance pedagogy frame-work (Jenoure, 2000) one of the active participant observers enacted being sick as a metaphoric clearing of her blocked teacher self. I mirrored her action to help work through the metonymy of the moment, all the time not knowing where we were going as this was not in the script, (although the openness of it did allow for these forms to develop and we were challenging the audience to become engaged with us, by passing stick-it notes to write on and
knowing where I was, knowing I was very close, that the trail must connect, that the trail did connect, that the trail was the one I should be on, however I could not see it - I could not find the space to connect to where my head told me I was. That I had to turn around because time was running out –

because time was running out –

I realize that I might be unsafe -

that I might not be able to find my way - that I had to go back into what I knew - I had to allow myself to know before I could connect the unknown - that the unknown cannot connect the unknown - that for connections to be made there must be knowns even if vastness exists between them as we strive to pull the threads into an ever more encompassing web - that it needs to be safe, have pullable threads of connecting

that allows us all freedom we strive for

send back into the performance space and by passing the video camera into the audience for them to shoot any frames they felt relevant). While I was mirroring, another member of our group talked her through her turmoil of a persistent classroom struggle.

This was a powerful joining of the blurred line between audience/performer roles that demanded a great deal of pedagogical trust and openness from all involved. The ‘vomiting’ was resolved with a joining of hands and a letting go of the desire to control the outcome of the performance, both on our parts as performers and the audiences part by not needing to know where we/they were going to end up (for the teacher this also related to her need to heal her broken classroom/school relationship). This corresponds to Jenoure’s (2000), notion of transcendence. She is referring to jazz musicians but I would argue the same can be said for any performance that truly honors the role of living inquiry (Irwin, & de Cosson, in press) as research. As one of the early proponents of performance art Allan Kaprow (1993) stated, “art is a weaving of meaning-making activity with any or all parts of our lives” (p. 216), which would seem to me to be a good starting point for any living inquiry. Transcendence, Jenoure (2000) writes,

demonstrates the surpassing of the confines of what seems possible into the realm of the seemingly impossible. … which then takes on a life of its own. … they experience the ability … to surpass the limits of their own technical skills. … It inevitably has a profound effect … on the audience as well. … This stage requires the total immersion and resignation of the ego and personal interests for the greater purpose of aesthetic and oftentimes spiritual transformation. (p. 23)

This lived experience that I refer to here has certainly been one of my more powerful experiences in presenting performative material. The presentation had form but the form had spaces for the material to come alive in unexpected and new ways. This way of working has the ability in McMahon’s words, as quoted in Garoian (1999), to cut “through the immobilizing effects of theory [and conventional schooling] with creative acts” (p. 29).
that the subconscious needs to be able to be free
that it needs to fly
that it needs its (s)p(lace

that writing will find a place of rest 24

What is my mission?

I am endeavouing to put into place the bits and pieces swirling about using myself as
a place of reference and the format and construction of the text itself as an expressive
element of performative text. For as Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner (1996) remind us' "...
the points of first-person accounts is to help us understand how we've been constructed
traditionally by social science texts as passive and unengaged readers" (p. 23). As Ronald
Pelias (1999) emphatically states "... continue, find a label: autobiographic ethnography" (p. 3).

pulled, pushed and punched into shape,

shape found

FORM GIVEN

indeed 25

24 Oh the brightness of sun on snow.

25 "Looking is what saves us"

(Weil, 1951a, p. 192).
Would Voice Recognition Software Help?

How do I get to the place I want to be? When I am left to worry about stupid things - I simply want to allow the flow to happen - to enter the zone that I know I have been fighting - that (s)p(l)ace that I get to on my walks, that sometimes I wake up in the night and the dreams are there, that I know I am close but still I wait on the side lines. Is this the day I start?? Is this the day that allows me to enter the (s)p(l)ace that I WANT/need, feel?

The phone rings and the trance is broken. It is this continual breaking of the flow. I have to do this somehow with the nurses and Ma coming upstairs. I need both spaces, just because I set up the back room doesn't mean I cannot be anywhere else, just means that is the place to 'Put' this thing.  

OK fast
Oh yes! the sun breaks and is a stunning winter wonderland.
(I realize the new nurse coming today thought she was talking to my Dad.)

26 For the longest time I refused to name it a dissertation, preferring to make only side-ways oblique (metonymic?) references to it. Jean would play, 'You know, that thing your doing,' as she instinctively responded to my need not to name, not yet, not till I'm ready. Setting the dates makes me ready. "I AM WRITING MY DISSERTATION." I say loudly with gusto, (although no one is around to hear). I've been here for five years, that is long enough!
shape found
form given
indeed
New shape-form.

Two

Spaces moving out
from red dots
Blurred
This I know from years of building sculpture.

I know a blank page through my pedagogy, through my teaching.

Through experiences of Exercise #2, for example, in the first step into sculpture,

'Pulling form from a 2d surface.'

In which I ask my students to cut out six similar sized Shapes

and then create a freestanding form in space,

not using any external connecting devices.

Once the cut and slot method is discovered they quickly give form, and see new shapes.

And then comes the much more difficult part of having to work.
form into a self-pleasing, aesthetic reference point as much a gaining as a moving through

I run spell check which also has the added bonus of making me reflect on what is here. I have to reconnect to the spaces I have already created. I have to find the meaning in the random text. I have to engage in/with through the writing.

I have to disengage from the university.

Just like Stephanie said, "Oh Alex, he's not around."

The brilliance is mind boggling (if heeded).

I have the clock running, somehow from the phone call of the nurse, to now, I have jumped almost three quarters of an hour. My foot is cold, I can feel it, I need to turn the heat on but I hate this idea as I see $$ going out the window.

Yes, it gets more brilliant by the minute.

27 Rita Irwin stated on October 3, 1999, as recorded in my research journal, "Once you know you know, you cannot go back and say that you don't know," referencing this process of a continual expansion and unfolding of understanding. There is never a point where we can say, "I have it all now, I can stop." This creates frustration, as the desire to lock it into place sometimes overwhelms this 'knowing'.
(There is the call to do the book thing, there is the call for L.T.T.A.\textsuperscript{28} I must stop them from being priorities and find a way to make them the background.)

THAT IS WHAT JEAN IS TELLING ME TO DO,

"YOU MUST START"

"Just like I don't want to go to work, you don't want to start, you have to set up the office in the back room today!!"

Jean gently nudges me in morning stillness (her 6:45 departure for work)

coming quickly to a halt, a stop, as Lyn Fels (1999) pointed out in her reference to David Applebaum's suggestion "that 'the stop' is the moment of arrest in which a person recognizes possibilities of action which embody both choice and risk" (p. 10).

at each new threshold of doing

I was constantly looking for this place of disjunction that forces me to go forward. At each step, at each new threshold of doing, as Conference after Conference faded into one another something was happening, there was a growing - this understanding, 'interstanding' as Taylor and Saarinen (1994) would have us understand those interdependent meanings as they unfold and coalesce to form new and expanded meanings.

\textsuperscript{28} L.T.T.A. is the acronym for 'Learning Through The Arts ™' a research project launched by the Royal Conservatory in Toronto. Dr. Rita Irwin and Dr. Kit Grauer spearheaded the research program at UBC that I have been involved with since the fall of 2000.
It is like trying to dissect this moment of being
into a place that falls neatly
into this and that
when it doesn't
(easily).
However, I shall pursue this as so much has changed in such a short time.29

I feel like I am a totally different person, as though two disparate parts have colluded into a new self. Something that was always separated by a 'wall', a wall of fear, or unknowing, or not wanting to trust myself as able, the well was shut down for a long time. I am not a performance artist, although if you look at my resume, pre 1985, I listed performance works as prominently as sculpture.

Ahhhhhhhhhhh

(I smile),

but ---

I put the horse before the cart,

"Let the cat out of the bag"

so to speak.

29 Well not so short when you consider I’ve been dealing with this issue for over twenty years. I simply didn’t realize that I was. It is this nut of change, this moment of perceptual nuance, when something is no longer what it was, as the ‘interstandings’ have profoundly shifted and changed the optics of what I now perceive to be the core of my understanding. I see with new filters, a changed lens; however, I wish to look, it will never be that which it was.
running ahead of my shadow,
a shadow
too large,
going to overwhelm
you (dear)
reader.

This linear subjective writing that has to have, at least, an order to it, so we can pursue
this together, so that I don't leave you out of the picture, after all, that is what
I endeavor
to do,

draw

you

in 30

not leave you out in the cold,

drying up on an over heated
sidewalk,

to question

motives

30 Oh .... this is so hard as it can equally drive you away. I know this. There is a part of
you that (possibly) finds all this rearrangement of text irritating and superfluous to the
relevant information you want out of this text. However, I find the more I set the challenge
of 'alternative writing' to my art students, I see newness of 'reading' that challenges my
own pedagogical notions, and I feel overjoyed.
in performative doing

finding its pedagogy in the ability to draw us on
and be careful not to simply be
"agents for this system of power"  

This is but a start, a stab at the concept, a (re)release of pent-up energy that cannot be discharged exclusively on the page.

Am I going to give into some prescribed edition of this and that and on and on, or am I going to try to get at a (s)p(l)ace that I wish to engender? I cry out, Yes! Yes! I know, but I could so easily ASK FOR MORE TIME,
allow the need to become

obsequent,  

OR ... OR, the Big

STICK TO THE SCHEDULE,
THAT IS WHAT DRIVES THIS WRITING

If I accept a new schedule, experience tells me I will lose momentum. Building sculpture under pressure is what I have always done. I hate it. I fight it. I find as many ways to get out of it. Similar to that expressed by an artist/teacher research participant;

I know that personally, I put all kinds of things in my own way. Like I've got to do the laundry, I've got to water the plants, and I've got to pick every fucking scale off every leaf on the plant; I can invent a million zillion reasons why I can't work. But eventually I have to do it.  

---

32 While looking up a word I still cannot find, which sort of meant to hide, but in a fuller way, Obsequent fit like a glove to silken fingers gliding - "flowing into a subsequent stream in the opposite direction to the original slope of the land" (Hanks, 1986/1979, p. 1062).
I have also asked myself whether doing art improves my research. And I am emphatic in saying that it does. I am not merely looking, I am seeing. ... that what I write, the end product, responds, not corresponds, to what I see and understand. (Finley & Knowles, 1995, pp. 131-132)

that lush fur of gray/blue dust

January 29, 2002

The amazing thing is there is still snow on the ground and it still sits at the freezing temperature of yesterday. So a very unusual, for Vancouver, state of affairs, we have snow that has stayed. I got the drive way cleared yesterday and found out some ... (A segment on University applications for my eldest son).

Through (my) gap in the trees I see a freighter heading out towards Vancouver Island. There is the glimmer of sun, what's going on? ...

(A section on other obligations [possibly] not pertaining to this project).

... I do feel like I always have something else to do rather than what it is that I am supposed to be doing. I know part of it is that I need to set out some kind of schedule, some kind

34 I should note that I did get the drums put away and the room ready. I started collecting rocks on the desk, maybe the room is simply a symbol, a metaphor, a metonymic (s)p(l)ace! For the project the clearing of the space is symbolic to the beginning. I may not ‘use’ it as I envision (I don’t in fact envision using it), well that isn’t the truth, the problem is I don’t know how I am going to use it so it feels like I am not going to use it. However, I already am using it, THAT is the point.

It is a use/not use thing.

I put yesterday’s rock on the table.

These are symbols of movement...

35 How can one ever know this at the time, qualitative research teaches us to be open to all that is going on in the chosen research site. If that research site is self then where is the cut off point? The Stop. The process of reflective (re)assemblage of previously written data allows for the winnowing of (possibly) [this is subjective let us be clear] less useful material.

As I continue the cutting (editing) process.
of, do this by then, do this by now, etc. But I get caught with not knowing what it is. However, a loud voice yells,

"Yes, you do, just get on with it."

Is it the same as going to the studio? By putting myself in the way of it will I be able to tap it? By trying to configure the space of my day to allow the path to be transfigured will I open to that which I am trying to get to? What is that? What am I trying to do?? What is the mission of this endeavor?? Can I use past writing or is it all new? Where are the chapters?

(Oh sometimes I am overwhelmed by the hugeness and un-see-ability of this ...

I am buoyed, however, when I remember Joseph Beuys' (1997) words, a great German artist/teacher and researcher (although academia was not ready to include artists into this category in his life-time), who when talking of how a sculpture takes form said,

the sculpting process - that is, to form things - cannot begin with the equipment. The process must begin with thinking; ... it must have already reached a certain intensity, to be then "informed" or transferred onto another material. You should not at all pay attention to tools, equipment or materials, but to the point, at which the forms arise. This point must be made aware, observed and trained. (cited in Staeck & Steidl, pp. 214-215)

I am in the process of thinking through writing, form takes shape in the reflective aftermath, in that intensity of long edits yet to come.

Art is often most successful when the artist doesn't fulfill his intentions, when he gives up on the thing he wants to do and just does the thing he can do

that lush fur of gray/blue dust

A sculptor who takes raw words as material and fashions them into a form.

As Louwrien Wijers (1996) alludes to in *Writing as Sculpture*, “it was Joseph Beuys who made us think of thinking as sculpture” which allowed her to conceive of her written text as “mental sculpture’ you are holding in your hands” (p. 7). I concur with this conceptual notion of this object as form, and the thinking transference from page / text - textu(r)ality to you dear reader, creates a new space / (s)p(l)ace that has no boundaries and is akin, as I have previously stated, to contemporary artists’ notions of installation work.

Every now and then I have a flash of what this is going to look like, as though it is percolating under the surface of itself, that the threads will weave themselves closer to a whole, as the connections become more clear, as I perform this task,

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37 From my research journal, July 9, 2002:
When I awoke this morning the notion that it is a matter of ‘mapping’ was at the forefront of my waking walking mind. I had brought it from the recesses of the dream world, a residue of nightly thinking. It is a matter of ‘mapping’ or ‘putting into place’ the disparate elements of the (re)search, to put the ‘mapping-into-place’, said a waking voice.

When one hasn’t been to a certain location but looks at a map, one can discern an understanding of the area that we are going to journey into; however, if there is no existing map, we go forward, walk, explore, connect past to present in a continual hermeneutic and then create the map from our experience of being there.

**We can build a mapping through our bodies,**

through our memories,
our (hi)stories, our experiences, of being becoming in the performative state of being alive,

to (re)connect the recollection of being.

Conversely if we already ‘know’ the map it may take away some of the adventure of the discovery. It needs to be a joint effort,

between the known and the unknown, to get to the ability to make ‘new’. As Philip Taylor (1996) reminds us,
this creative endeavor of placing the
words that create meaning
by their interconnectedness,
of their being there
in black and white
to form
a meaning

I keep seeing rocks. There is a vague idea of my daily collection of rocks, something this morning about ...

"Walking Rocks"

Every time I walk the beach
I see the rhythm of my footsteps
as though they were something profound –
as though this walking on the earth
is more than I understand

I must stop at the library today to see if they have the book. I could also do an Internet search. That is one of the rules that I must begin. To have as a real rule, that is ...

this morning writing.

"When experience is constructed only in terms of identifiable and reducible parts, the possibilities open to people as they interact ... are diminished" (p. 8).
I get pulled to the computer - to e-mail, but I know that will not help me. It only eats up my time, I must allow for real time to be spent. That means every day coming to write even as I get pulled by all the other ideas.

Oh do this, do that, go to here, do this, do this, do that
and on and on
this self destructive monologue

It almost becomes an obsession to not do this, to not sit down and write the ideas out - to rattle on until I do find some meaning in the chaos of my mind. It is as though I can feel it just around the corner, but hiding too deep. Williams (1996) talks about the power of the arts, allowing for metonymic spaces to breathe - that there isn’t a didactic monolith - that there is a multiplicity that allows for growth and that “the works of the few which were exceptions seemed buried like a scattering of jewels in a vast expanse of mud” (p. 248).

I too have found the ‘jewels’ in my (re)search to be glittering wonders.

The setting of the schedule –

to find the schedule

This finding of a schedule slowly came and I found the rhythms of daily writing, getting beyond the mundane and into the reflective.

The same is true for these many edits through the text, setting some dates and pushing the process into a mold, to allow a form to emerge through the process of writing/(re)writing and reading/(re)reading,
a tangled web of building towards a final (temporary)
form on an ongoing journey...............

38
they must be resisted to allow me **to get spaces on to paper.** That the paper becomes what it needs to be, a space of remembrance, that the space is allowed to grow, that the ‘monkey mind’ is realized and we begin the rhythm of writing to find what I think, what I feel, what I want to say.

*That a space is allowed to open*

*not held by the strictures of known spaces*

*but opened to new beginnings*

"My subconscious mind did not abandon me, nor did it permanently take over the space in my shoes" (Williams, 1996, p. 250).

"It is through self that artists bear their signatures and are able to interact in the world" (Watrin, 1999, p. 94).

I love these days. Every day I say thank you to the spaces that I walk in - the air I breathe - that I know I am blessed in this way - that I say I love being here, I love the trees, I love the space that I am allowed to be in.

*I feel my back.*

*Can I write in such awkward positions?*

(Re)searching collectively (through) A/R/T (continued).

*What did the viewing ‘4 Corners’ do for me? For us?*

*What was the reaction? What did we learn?*

The flow of the screens[^39] was a pleasure to watch. I loved watching all four flow down, to have that continuity from one screen to the next, it was like a water fall – Oh, there's an idea.

[^39]: On Dec 6, 2001, the A/R/T/S research group presented *Performative Liberation: A Multilectic Inter/intrastanding of Pedagogy.* (An excellent overview of this work can be viewed at [http://education.wsu.edu/journal/](http://education.wsu.edu/journal/)). At this performance I set up four static video cameras in each
What would they look like stacked and let flow up and down, that could be very interesting to try out. I should make a note to do that.  

(I should be doing this kind of flowing inquiry where understandings are given time to seep from me.)

That is the studio way / artists’ way.

I have been forgetting the studio. I have been letting the University take over. I wish to make the campus my studio. I wish to allow the creative process into this work so that indeed I am building a sculpture, that I am indeed letting the process be the dictator of what I do (research journal, January 29, 2002).

I got into the flow, or more correctly it was something that found me, that allowed me to enter the frame of the screen, to remain actively interested in the work. As to the actual words being spoken I barely listened, other than to find comfort in the lull of a known. Sometimes I (re)entered the ringing words of loss through Sam’s mother, Rita’s drawings, Wendy’s Grandfather, Stephanie’s students. I was struck by my use of my wedding shoes and the walking dog segment. How much walking, the pedagogy of movement through, was finding outlets within and without my conscious mind, winding its way into the performance. I remember when I first performed the shoes and how right they felt. I introduced them after seeing Stephanie perform her ‘red shoes.’ I threaded red cotton as she read from her text with the swaying of her body to accentuate the rhythms, “That red. Stop don’t love yet. That red. Red of anger. Inner red.” The group had talked about the possibility of all of us playing with/in the metonymies of our personal relationships to contextualized footwear within the performance dialogues.

Our individual walkings, our soled (souled) pedagogies of freedom

corner of the room to capture the real-time performance from four quadrants. There were also four hand-held digital cameras that were used by the performers and the audience to get inside our performative collectivity. It is the real-time video pieces that are being referred to here. We were viewing them for the first time and had set them up next to each other to play simultaneously on 27” screens. The effect of collapsing the performance space into a horizontal line was fascinatingly mesmerizing, it provided an entirely new way to see our work and propelled us on a new avenue of research.

(Well I have, haven’t I? I am (re)reading it is an instructive note. Have I tried it like that? No, but the memory of the horizontal line of intersecting, intercutting, same but different moments of time, is enough to convince me that there are always new ways of looking.)
I HADN’T REALIZED HOW WELL OR SEAMLESSLY THEY FLOWED

It was effective to have these disparate parts flow into / through one another.

Maybe I need to look at the film again and ask different questions of it. What would they be? Maybe I simply need to do that so that I can allow the space of the performance to grow inside me. Maybe I need to record more of that space, the sitting, the moving around, the being in the midst of the unraveling (which is what I intend to do) but because it is always in front I sometimes get nervous about its eventual outcome, and get thrown outside its circumference.

I took film of us watching - filmed the space, maybe I need to view that again. Maybe I simply need to keep watching, keep the vision attached to the work

so that I CONTINUE to walk through the spaces –

I re(look) at the tape of us watching the tapes of our December 6, 2001 performance, now a camera’s (i) eye, a researcher’s eye, (re)searching for a glimmer of understanding. We are confident of the process, we march ahead with ideas, plans, new forms of data presentation.

Stephanie has sent a copy of the text with images to the C&P Conference Proceedings (Poetter et al., 2002) and we debate different ideas for future work on this project.

Stephanie asks, “But is it activism?”

We are all engrossed in the watching, we are drawn in even though we have performed this many times now, but this is the first time we have watched our own performance.

We are amazed at the amount of laughter. “It’s as though there was a laugh track.” Wendy muses. Rita cannot understand what is funny, “What are they laughing at?” We speculate on the performative nature that the static cameras miss.

“We are pushing the research community to look, see and feel differently.” I respond, “We are endeavoring to change consciousness.”

We agree to meet again in two weeks. 41

One of Rita’s immediate responses after the viewing of ‘4 Corners’ at our Jan. 24 research meeting was: “This could be the piece that we show for New York,” 42 thinking of our need to produce something for the InSEA conference in August. That there was a raw power in letting the work speak for itself was at first an attractive and challenging concept; however, it

42 From research tape Jan. 24, 2002.
didn't take long for our group to come up with far more intricate confrontations that would continue our play with performative pedagogy (Garoian, 1999).

There was a desire to (re)engage with the work from new perspectives. Wendy wished to engage with a self critical dialogue with performers other than herself; as she said, “I want to be the critical voice.” Sam was interested in pursuing further personal reflections through memory. Stephanie wanted to engage in more critical shared reading, and I was interested in the possibility of more inter(action) with the video document itself, either in the form of further performative work interspersed into/through the video or further work on the video document itself. Rita was interested in a possible (re)introduction of written reflective dialogue at this post-viewing stage as informed by a single (outside) reading source. She suggested that this would be similar to the action researcher’s continuous rounds of reflective writing that feeds the process of understanding (Irwin, Mastri, & Robertson, 2000).

We were also excited about the possibility of Patti Pente (re)joining our group. She had worked with us a year previously and had seen our Dec. 6, 2001 performance and could provide a voice as outsider which would definitely add to the texture and depth of our enterprise as we headed towards our two conferences in Victoria and New York. We were also beginning to realize that through the use of technology our individual contributions to the whole could be represented and exhibited at many conferences without the need for everyone to be in attendance. This was a very powerful idea for cash-strapped graduate students and something we have subsequently taken full advantage of.

Other Business Continues . . .

I go out to the school I am presently doing LTTA research at . . . (A large section detailing work for that project and the necessity of buying good virus detection as we are being plagued by viruses through our graduate student e-mail server list which I administer) . . .

And on we go . . .

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43 I have been engaged in multiple edits of this document and have been deleting large sections of text from the journaling component. For a full methodological explanation of this see, A Point of Extreme Disjuncture: Peril or Hope?, p. 131, this document.
Walk  Time

I must walk, ... - ... yes, ... I have said that walking keeps me fit, and helps me find
connections.

I must break this run-along of words to walk my body.

It seeks an internal logic, one that may be filled with ambiguity, tension, and contradictions. Held against the external world, it may echo or challenge everyday understanding. Its account, then, is a temporary diagnosis. It illustrates the possible.  
(Pelias, 1999, p. xiii)

(The body, the thing I haven’t yet introduced.)

too early,

I let too much out.

I had it. I knew I had unraveled the layers of the problem and penetrated deep into its heart. It was like one of those conundra, sent out in competition by mathematicians to challenge their rivals. However formidable in appearance, however deliberately designed to perplex and confuse, yet there is always a simplicity at their core, and the art of victory lies in careful thought and a calm working through of the outer reaches until that center is arrived at. Like any army laying siege to a castle, the skill lies not in a wide assault around the perimeter, but a gentle probing of the outworks until a weak spot of the defenses—for there always is one—is revealed. Then all the strength of the attack can be focused on that one point until it gives way.  
(Pears, 1998, p. 474)
I go and pick up my son and his friend from their skiing afternoon.

As I sit down to a quiet dinner which Jean has kindly left out, my mind drifts to the idea I had earlier about using the ‘4 Corners’ videos as running water. I run this idea over in my mind’s eye. 44

I take pleasure in the idea. I ‘see’ it cascading down as a waterfall. I think about my statement quoted below from my research journal notation after Feb 1, A/R/T/S group meeting:

\[
\begin{align*}
& I \text{ wanted to (re)see the performance.} \\
& I \text{ want to change the 'art' of it.} \\
& I \text{ want the film} \\
& \text{ to start speaking} \\
& \text{ in a} \\
& \text{ NEW WAY.} \\
& \text{ A (DIS)JON TED (re)view,}
\end{align*}
\]

44 I know I have read somewhere in the last three days

"it isn’t the 'I' but the 'eye' that knows”

I need to find this.
This will mean going out to the recycle box
to get the week’s newspapers
to see if I can find what has been surfacing
at least three times a day.

I have, however, been ignoring it as I know I don’t actually have the reference.

It is interesting how these things cross and then get lost and then jump out.

"Hey, you need me”

and then not to be found,

maybe it was in a ‘New Yorker’

when you can’t remember what it is that you cannot remember,

had to write that as I washed out a plate
that needs to be put away
before I head out to see a film.

Better go or I’ll end up being late.
I want to see if others would also re (see).

I was thinking this as I ate and listened to the radio not paying great attention to either. The Canadian Literary Awards is on and this year a Vancouver writer has won, and he was also a painter. I picked up my plate and moved closer to the radio, I want to hear this guy. I am moving before I analyze why. But at the same time I am asking the question in my mind,

Why? 'I just want to hear,' I respond.

There is a deeper voice,

'I am trying to write and I am also an artist.'

'See,'

it seemed to say,

'an artist can write.'

The other point is I had been in this thinking about the film of A/R/T, and then moved, and then almost forgotten, and then I really wanted to remember, but it was illusive, so I ran back to the radio and then I ran upstairs and got the computer to get the ideas down, to really do this:

*TO FOLLOW A PROCESS OF A DISSERTATION BECOMING (of a self becoming)*

Taking the laptop to the movies. I get excited by this idea. Maybe tomorrow I buy the carrying case so I really can carry it around which was the original idea.

"The influence of form on content and content on form cannot be underestimated." 45

---

45 Norris (2000), p. 44.
Where are the Chapters?

The rocks?
The pedagogy?

“One lesson the arts teach is that there can be more than one answer to a question and more than one solution to a problem; variability of outcome is okay.”\textsuperscript{46}

Libraries of knowledge

But how to contain the excitement of all that has unfolded, all the enigma the stacks reveal, the wonders of knowledge\textsuperscript{47} held on those shelves that a web search never satisfies. It isn’t real, the web, it has no texture, only a screen. Yes, I print off the finds and that at least is more tangible, but still not real, not like the following of letters and numbers, down, down, down-along, up, that focus of endless spines growing, overwhelming, astounding, grounded in history.

I have always loved libraries; I remember my youngest son saying to me one evening two years ago

\textsuperscript{46}Eisner (2002), p. 196.
\textsuperscript{47}I’m not even sure it is knowledge, but if not, what is it? Other’s thoughts? Collections of other’s ideas that I search through to find the kindred spirits that talk my language, that seem to reflect back what I am thinking. What I am looking for. Which I know is continually in flux. So why search, when tomorrow it changes again?

\textit{This is the crux of it.}

\textit{It is a constant vigilance necessary to survive with intellect in tact.}

The scholar as aesthete is nothing more than and nothing less than a negotiation of personality, an actor who turns life into art. (Petias, 1999, p. 3)
"I like the library, it lets me work"

I was almost suspicious, he must be doing something else, but then, I thought, I should be the first to understand, to really understand, to know what he means. The library nurtures growth, allows for connections not otherwise made. To put the NX's together, the PN's and the LB's, find cracks in-between the sudden jump of an unannounced book that seems to glow from the shelf.

"Yes, me, take me, I am what you are looking for"

even with a list it is always the unexpected find that marks the true reward of the library search.

There is a reassurance in knowing there are others on the same search.48

To hear a voice

"Yes

someone has already written, already placed in text,
has already been thinking exactly what you’re just now thinking."

48 Having walked similar paths

there are the intersections
the crossings
the cuttings

and a (re)applying of past (know)ledge

to constantly recreate ourselves a-new
Only now piecing together what so easily fits this moment. I cannot understand how I never had them together before. How does this work? How is it that we can know and not know, at the same time, in the same room.

Ideas still not weaved together, sitting with their spines spruced, side by side on a shelf they leap

out

two words Performative Pedagogy. Yow!! There it is, I don’t believe it, I grab the dull brown, no it isn't brown, what colour is that? A dull flat red brown, but that isn’t right either. I don't know what colour it is and read the sub title 'Toward an Art of Politics' and think, wow, as I struggle under the weight of large volumes of books on the German Postmodernist artist/teacher Joseph Beuys.\footnote{I feel I saw Joseph Beuys in Washington DC at an International Sculpture Conference in 1979, however it was a video tape in a crowded bar of a recent talk/action that he had performed in Halifax. I remember being drawn into his German accented English, the circling logic of his art as an economic theory. I wanted that tape and so talked to the promoters of the exhibition/performance. In this talking (performative action) I became further engaged and thus I have this memory that somehow allows me to believe I did talk to Beuys.}

"The whole idea is that if knowledge is socially constructed it doesn't have to occur with someone who has more knowledge, it has to be with someone who has as much commitment to the process" \footnote{Jipson & Paley, (1997), p. 209.}

I walk too quickly

Where are the guts to these thoughts on pedagogy and curriculum?

Back to the walk, fresh air that must be forced into the lungs to keep the body healthy, to get the heart rate up and keep it there. To remain healthy, to remain able to write a minute more

a more second
When we work now, we try to find colorings in our writings that we abandoned so long ago (in the lives we abandoned so long ago?). Finish is no longer anything. Stopping and starting get confused. Direction? We did that. Leave everything rough and uneven now so you can see the spaces in between where things don't connect and don't force them. Where your mind struggles to translate what it sees anyway. Could that be a practice? Stumbling, along the way, or crawling, we work with whatever occupies us. It can be anything and everything. Take what you find on your way (or in your way), and put it there too. (Jipson & Paley, 1997, n. p.)

I really must go -

I get caught in the (re)reading, the editing, the constructing of textu(r)al text, and time slips by and the walk/run can become a distant memory. I shall stop now and don the clothes of a runner, remembering as I do so Pinar and Grumet's (1976) assertion that the term curriculum is derived from the Latin currere 'to run the course' and how Garoian (1999) takes this and brings it into the performative (s)p(l)ace when he writes, "the existential experience of currere, like the liminal, contingent, and ephemeral conditions of performance art pedagogy, is predicated on embodied experience" (p. 130).

I want to do this -
I want to Bridge
I want to find the way through the problem
of not understanding

I keep thinking there must be a way to get into the problem
of finding out where I am

Walk Two

January 30, 2002

A wonderful walk with Jean through the snow-covered trees, a walk that allowed time to
talk, to reflect, to neutralize the hurts that can grow in a marriage that is not cared for. It is this
caring, this pedagogy of nurture that is always present on our walks. It is the healing (s)p(l)ace
for us. We walk every weekend and any other days we can. We walk in the snow before it melts
away as we know it soon will, this fleeting moment of nature’s passing whim in which we are
magically embraced. We still have snow over the gardens, its blanket softly clutching the earth,
its mother’s

warmth holds tight

safely embraced

nature to nature

each feeding the other.

As David Jardine (1998) reminds us:

Awakening from Descartes’s nightmare is not a matter of simply developing a tolerance
for ambiguity. It requires of us a love of ambiguity which is at once a love of the


generativity of new life as a gift bestowed from the earth. We can only hope that it is out

of this love that educational theory and practice is born. (p. 31)

And distraction continues with the foibles of office politics. A fellow graduate student gets us
money which is more work and the Internet ports are still not up and running

“OK - OK,

I’ll make the list”
I go to a lecture given by the artist Gu Xiong, ‘Making an Art in a New Place.’ We watch a video,\textsuperscript{51} a series of pre-programmed questions. Why did you come to Canada? Why don’t you go back to China? Etc.

\textit{Dear Kit and Rita,}

\textit{Carl suggests a meeting Jan 9 or 10, 2003}

\textit{Are you available either of those days?}

\textit{Time preferences?}

\textit{Cheers Alex}

(e-mail correspondence Nov. 23, 2002)

Notes from Gu Xiong continued:

Banff is beautiful, Banff is not \textsc{real}

Welcome to Vancouver

We clap

Looking at slides Gu narrates his life’s story through his art.

(I provide a (re)telling of Gu’s telling, (appendix III) taken from my notes of that evening. This is not a vetted story but rather the threaded narrative of my memory and notes taken, thus a smattering of his personal journey of change and transformation as it illustrates Jardine’s (1998) call to “bear witness to the lives we are living, … (and in) keeping the world open and enticing and alive and inviting” (p. 2), to illuminate a pedagogy of hope and renewal.)

“Under water you have to find ways to survive.

Cowboy restaurant - Cultural flows” (Gu, UBC presentation).

\textsuperscript{51}Stephanie later refers to this presentation in our Feb. 1, 02 research group’s meeting. She saw a relationship to the audience that we don’t see in Gu Xiong’s video, but know is there by the sound track, and our ‘4 Corners’ video work, in which we do see the audience as they are framed by “the theatre in the round” as Rita saw the video’s reenacting structure resembling. The relationship to audience is a continuing interest to the group as we realize the power of the performative to engage and transform pedagogical desires through its “open methodology” (Garoian, 1999, p. 25) and grounded research structure which we equate closely to action research methodologies (Irwin et. al., 2000; Carson & Sumara, 1997).
February 3, 2002

A full sunny snowless day to continue my garden work of pruning. I have taken all the dead branches off the weeping willow and today wrapped them into bundles for putting out for recycling collection day. As I was working I was thinking I should gather the books that I need. One of the books that came to mind was Terry Jenoure’s (2000) jazz inspired pedagogy, I know there is good stuff in there for me to use.

I come in to find Jean has started a fire, I am invited to have tea in this room I love. (It’s the proportions, they are perfect.) It isn’t a large room, I stop for a moment to put another log on the fire. I am listening to Miles Davis’ Sketches of Spain, followed by something that I don’t know. I am tantalized by a voice that is different and an opening line that sings as follows:

on this day that god (sic) has made you offer
your hand and I give you mine
these simple words sail over our lives
I breath this vow and solemnly swear

52 Why do I insist on retaining Gu’s lecture? I had thought I was going to eliminate it, cut it from this text and assign to the ‘take outs from main document’ file. However there was such rich texture in his weaving of a personal life-into-art in his outsider reflection that he gives from an insider now perspective reminding me of my own place and the lenses from which I am seeing the world. How powerful these are and how easy it is to assume a hegemonic view (with no intent of doing so).

Gu reminded me to always (try) to look from another (as yet not thought of) perspective. This is a postmodern calling and one we must strive to heed; not to let our understandings be subsumed by labels and accepted norms, once again hidden under a curriculum of (pre)scribed learning outcomes that limit imaginations, freedom and lived learning.

From this perspective I choose to keep this Gu (ian) interlude as an example of walking through personal art pedagogy and freedom.
There is a haunting violin melody *singing* within the text and I wonder, who is this? It wasn’t fitting into my known lexicon. It didn’t sound like anything I knew or that Jean would have on, too (slightly) off center. Jean comes in, I ask her who it is and she says, “Well, it’s yours.” “No it isn’t,” I respond, “I don’t know who it is.” “It is yours, do you want me to take it off?” she asks, “No, but who is it?” She goes into the study (now computer room) and brings me Terry’s CD, “Oh yeah, so it is,” I answer.

I had bought the CD in Victoria after their performance/discussion at the Curriculum and Pedagogy Conference. It was a wonderfully freeing, jazz pedagogy inspired, inquiry based session, using the violin and dance movement to elicit discussion of the role of creativity in the classroom and how to better encourage us to infuse it in our own teaching practice. As Jenoure (2000) says, “teaching the mechanics of style was secondary to what I believed was most essential, which was helping my students unravel and tap their unique, expressive potential” (p. xvi).

*The whole conference was excellent.*

Maybe I will reconsider my decision of not going to the next one. However,

I know I cannot go before I get a substantial way along......

(In/with this writing)

A little later I listen to a CD by Christopher Reynolds, an artist/teacher, whom I met in Texas at the previous Curriculum and Pedagogy Conference (Nov. 2000). I remember his shout of “what about the artists?” They were such wonderful full-felt words. He says in his album notes:

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54 What the room was called when we were kids. Hey an idea, these rooms can become areas of discovery, I can write to each of the rooms, the memories, the old names, the new names, the changes that have transpired. (No longer such a compelling idea.) It is interesting how ideas can seem so right at one moment and so drained at others.

To discern good ideas from bad ones this is an art in itself.

I know from experience that when a group of people come together to enhance creativity in a spirit of group trust, risk-taking, ... true education occurs. ... One part of it is the sense of being released from the past, while the other is the sense that one is participating more consciously in the future of creation, the creation of the future. It is a form of initiation in the classic sense where you are separated from your former life, move through a transformation and return bearing a boon. (n. p.)

Reynolds' and Jenoure's CD's both listened to without my being aware that they were on the player. I had been thinking about them while I worked outside (literally and metaphorically). It is this synchronicity and attunement to the moment that they espouse and here I was living it.

I am feeling a little sick, upset stomach, I woke this morning not feeling well and also a vague recollection of a dream of some work being done on pedagogy.

Memories from a dream

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56 In the midst of the process the pedagogically inclined will find even nightmares are infected.

57 To look in a chronological order,
as some did occur in a sequential time structure,
which now blurs into oneness of a moment,
that is the now I am in,
however,
this 'now'
would not exist without all these moments strung together.
The arts are a means of exploring our own interior landscape. When the arts genuinely move us, we discover what it is that we are capable of experiencing. ... they provide resources for experiencing the range and varieties of our responsive capacities.

(Eisner, 2002, p. 11)

Three

shifting on loose sands
that lush fur of gray/blue dust
Art is freedom

Listening to Jenoure (1999), I was reminded of the connection of freedom to a creative process, how important it is to allow freedom to blossom. When asked by a participant at a recent conference what my definition of art was, I surprised myself with an unequivocal and speedy response: “Art is freedom.”

I have come to realize that I believe and act on this definition more and more, if art is not a freedom to do, to think, to express, to create without boundaries, then what is it (for me)? As the jazz musician Nachmanovitch (1990) says: “To follow your own course, not patterned on parents, peers, or institutions, involves a delicate balance of tradition and personal freedom, a delicate balance of sticking to your guns and remaining open to change” (as cited in Piirtro, 1998, p. 70).

Again I quote Reynolds (2000): “I imagine creativity ... to be offering a way for individuals to flourish in their lives in the sense that they live more from their originality than from their conformity” (CD liner notes, n. p.).

“Art demands that we pay heed”

February 15, 2002

It is the day after Valentine’s and the computer connections in ‘The Palace’ are supposed to be up and running. How many times is it now? How long have we been doing this? How many e-mails confirming the structure? And still I cannot get connected to the internet.

It simply goes on and on…………………... This whole thing has a life of its own.

(I am searching for a structure, a way of putting meaning to this endless file of meetings and get-togethers.)

59 ‘The Palace’ is the name given to an area that graduate students have offices. I was a Peer Advisor for two years and was involved as we took steps to get internet connections supplied for personal computers.
60 This is not to suggest that I did not enjoy my tenure as Peer Advisor or my time as a graduate student, for indeed it was a rewarding experience. I am simply acknowledging the very real frustrations that are sometimes a part of our work. That all these differences feed into myself as a researcher self are important, that research is not isolated from life.
This is interesting,
I am writing with Donna Williams (1995/2001) talking,
as I finally was able to download the interview which I had heard on the day I began to write.
She has beautiful ways of putting words together,
I find it fascinating. (I'm not sure what I do with it.) I think it's a matter of trying to remain away from the text,
To allow her voice to resonate – to pass into my being
don’t want to simply write what she writes.

She is talking about a mirror as
"a repertoire of acting normal rules . . ."
&
"It was like using yourself as a puppet . . ."

Art is what I do-
Art is what I breathe
Art will find me
Lost in walking trees
Art can hold me
In balance
with the rest that is -
Art is what I do -
Does it get lost?
Yes it does

*That ‘Living Inquiry’ (Irvin & de Cossens. in press) necessitates embracing the whole being.*
In the labyrinth of doing
But it always pulls me back
As does the view from here – now to over there over there
I teach art – I teach art to reach deep(ly)
Into others – I touch others / they touch me
We grow together understanding through doing
It is praxis that holds
builds us
walking us through
The spaces, unknown, but strong\(^{61}\)

“come and see me buzz on a pink street light . . .

I see all the blades of colours in the grass like a mosaic . . .
I am sometimes physically tickled by a colour . . . the music

I feel very very free . . .”
she says\(^{62}\)

“Not to read. To read the non-reading” (Weil, 1951a, p. 63).

We had an interesting A/R/T/S group meeting today, joined by an original member, Patti, who was in the A Pied group\textsuperscript{63}. She had seen the Dec. 6, 2001 performance and so could talk to us from outside the circle of doing. She confirmed for me how much there is to learn from this listening to an outside\textsuperscript{64}.

"Artful living, artful writing; connecting with purpose to help each other transcend and to grow through inquiry. Connection, embodiment, transformation, transcendence" (Neilson, 1998, p. 280).

\textit{Artist/researcher/teacher/scholar}

I am working with four words - I will crack them all \textit{take artist, crack it Art / Ist}

\textbf{Performative sculpture (writing)}

\textit{Move in the cracks}

It is the moment of formless form - that moment of doing what has sat gathering intensity inside - that 'knowing' place of being becoming that is pushed over/into/within the context of the place of presentation.

\textit{How do I capture this (s)p(l)ace, a space/place?}

(Open to writing between the lines, opening to the writing-self that will write in me, towards that which comes forward as I feel)

\textsuperscript{63} See footnote #17.

\textsuperscript{64} See appendix IV for example of ‘outsider’ paper presented and performed at the 31\textsuperscript{st} InSEA World Congress, August, 2002, NYC.
pressure to write. To search inside for connections to the world beyond this body, to something that finds rhythms in the way the page is filled. I write the text that becomes the syllabus dependent on the spaces. I want to crack them. I see the spaces, not the words.) Research journal entry, June 12, 2002.

“Autobiographical research aspires to understand the experience of the individual from the point of view of that individual” (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995/1996, p. 411).

I am trying to crack this place I am in, this artist / researcher / teacher, (Rita pointed to a missing –

(researched place)

- scholar.

How did we miss this?

And on it goes ....

A continual hermeneutic in its circling forward and

there is always more to find

as we piece together shattered shards

Maybe when cracked the researcher self will open to this (s)p(l)ace, this scholar who is trying to find the hook, the thread that ties, binds, and places meaning over the whole – Maxine Greene(1988) wrote, “aesthetic experiences ... involve us as existing beings in pursuit of meanings” (p. 293).

so that I may sleep

knowing a veil is that much lighter

than it was,

this veil of tears

that will not dry

as it pours out its heart
(in a manner)

just

beyond a scope of doing.

"If you only knew how fatigued I feel at these revelations and unveilings, how many I have to put up with, how badly I put up with them when they are to do not only with opening onto this or that but onto the veil itself, a veil beneath the veil, like the thing itself to be unburied" (Derrida, 2001, p. 39).65

All the senses have to be used in another way - you must read between words, look between things, feel between senses (Kemps, 1999, p. 31).

How far will I go in a trance of light glow-screen?

Words,
senseless,
now a way through
cracking them open

65 To allow creativity its flow in (text)u(r)al glory.

I believe that one of the (s)p(l)aces cracked by the performative is the artist-self.

Artistic studio practice engages a performative self that cannot be anywhere else.
February 16, 2002

I have a terrible cold and I must teach tomorrow. I will head home now. We got a gold medal for skating so that was good news. I am all stuffed up.

So much to do, I can feel it getting ready to be forced out. I have the next three weeks where I am going to write every day, where I will pry open a space to capture that which is there but still held inside.

\begin{quote}
Where is the structure? The elusive form, too early, too early I intone, haven't decided - more I do not know (just around the corner).
To put on hold all else, give myself a deadline get a draft to work through.
\end{quote}

February 17, 2002

These dreams keep coming as though I am working at night in my sleep. The night before last was all forest and streams. There was a very strong image of rocks in a streambed. There was a strong line of rocks. Had it been made by human intervention or was it natural? (In the dream

\footnote{I do this \textit{(at last)} eight months later after attending a November 8, 2002, FOGS (Faculty of Graduate Studies) meeting expressly to get Doctoral Candidates on track with time lines that must be adhered to meet desired convocation dates. It was crystal clear to me that I was ready to submit a draft and that I could now face a realistic time line as the material was here. However, a contradiction looms, for at the same time I was writing this footnote I also knew I wasn't at that point. It is a matter of keeping myself attuned to an end even though still beyond my immediate grasp, which if fully acknowledged could be an insurmountable climb. So yes, I fool myself, or rather, I use simple means of self deception to keep, once more, Gadamer's (1965/1986) \textit{horizons close}, or Haskell's (2000) \textit{summitless mountain} near.}
this was an important question.) A dreaming statement about it makes no difference, which isn’t quite the point, as of course it would, but it was more that you cannot see/know the difference. It was a strongly physical, natural line. I can see it clearly, they were black from the water and there was a tree lying to the side which amplified the line. Was nature capable of such perfection? I don’t know and that was the point. There were other pictures too. These images were of this writing (in the dream) or at least related to it.

The notion of their effortless subtle intervention:

Then again last night I dream this dissertation. Suddenly the other writings formed into tangible space in my mind, I once again realized I have written this before, get to the punch, use what you already have and I saw the pieces forming together, articulating a structure.

Anecdotal Sculpting:

That piece for jct is a perfect chunk\(^{67}\), it talks about my ideas of writing AS sculpture.

I had known this

but not as clearly as it came through the dream (ing).

It is a matter of finding the text - pulling / pushing / cajoling - seeing

if it pulls together or falls apart.\(^{68}\)

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\(^{67}\) ‘Chunks’ are what Dr. Robyn Stewart, a visiting scholar from the Department of Visual Art, at The University of Southern Queensland, referred to sets of text that can be built with, similar to the concept of bricolage at a meeting with graduate students, Oct. 2, 2002.

\(^{68}\) I have held to this idea. As yet I have not added any chunks of text outside of this journaled / collected / inserted text that I have been working on as a whole. This is because it is this text that I am working, shaping, forming, molding into a whole and importing a text from outside has not yet found a place. The chunks that are waiting outside of this one are already formed, already have the stamp of publication on their pedigree (as with this previously published jct piece) their provenance is thus strong. I shan’t manipulate them any further. However, I believe this interlude does signal an opportunity to introduce one of these outside chunks into the mold. The structure is solid enough to house, with pleasure, this (re)making into new. The constant growth and change that this living document breathes into its own shaping as form takes hold.
Anecdotal Sculpting:
Learning To Learn,
One from Another

Garry Rasberry is a poet who teaches. I am a sculptor who teaches. He integrates his poetry into Writing Research/Researching Writing through a poet's i (2001) in an inspired manner. Garry challenged the traditional format of the dissertation for his Ph.D. (1997) and delved into uncharted waters, darting in and out of various 'styles' as they suited the process of writing.

Writing Research/Researching Writing through a poet's i is a revised and updated version of the same delight I found when I first read his dissertation in the fall of 1998 and began my own journey down the Ph.D. path. He inspired me then and continues to do so, with works exploring performative pedagogy at American Educational Research Association conferences (2000, 2001).

The work presented here is a 'visual performance' of texts inspired by Garry's work. In a sense it is a review. In another sense it is 'parallel play.'

Similar to the hundreds of exhibitions that take place throughout this country every month, one of a kind works of wonder that too few people get to appreciate, their vision is often spread through the written word.

Experimentally,
'giving'
s p a c e to grow——
slowly,
looking for rhythms.

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68 This section has been published in jct: Journal of Curriculum Theorizing. See de Cosson (2001).
Prologue

on

STYLES

I agree that APA and other 'styles' are useful. We need to understand each others' referencing. We justifiably want to believe in the 'authority' of what we are reading. Recognized 'styles' help us in this regard. But do we have to be so rigidly controlled by them?—so controlled that we cannot step out—step around—step sideways, or for that matter, do the 'tangle-tango.'** The 'tangle-tango' is exactly what Rasberry does in his autobiographically hermeneutic process. Though his process is complex, it is also clear—we can 'understand' it.

It is grounded, he goes to great lengths to keep us informed—to tell us what is happening, without being didactic. He invites us into the 'tangle' in a loving, caring manner—he does not threaten us—he coaxes us forward, gripping us in the process.

Rasberry's artistic medium of poetry falls easily onto the page, sculpture is not so immediately accommodated. I do, however, introduce sculptural elements that have conceptually larger domains, and by 'pushing form,' and using what I term a footnoted hermeneutic approach, I attempt what is personally new.

I saw a boy, his 'yellow head,' a bare foot dangling—caught in the spokes of his brother's speeding bicycle. I froze.

I rose to the challenge of Rasberry's 'slippage.'

** This is in reference to Rasberry's use of the word 'tangle,' his wordplay and his introduction of the notion of 'wordshopping.' (see* note #4).

Astrand, a hair (a thread) ties time of being to being becoming.

* See prolonged Connelly quote (p. 67) of this document.
Session 1

I see something, but I don't know what it is:

In *By the Light of Anecdote* van Manen (1989) discusses how the anecdote can be both a pedagogic tool and a methodology: "anecdotal narrative allows the person to reflect in concrete ways on experience and thus appropriate that experience. To anecdote is to reflect, to think... *anecdoting* ... prepares the space for hermeneutic phenomenological reflection and understanding" (p. 232).

The research methodology that we choose as educational researchers shapes our understandings of our landscape(s) (Fels, 1998, p. 28).

When is a page not a page?

"You've just got the big swimming pool, and man, is it deep."

"I am writing about a group of people who spent a great deal of time writing; this needs to be stated explicitly, no matter how obvious it may seem" (Rasberry, p. 73).

"... my "researcherly" text provides an invitation to interpretation-made-more-visible, as well as more question-able; it offers ways to become curious about time, ..." (Rasberry, p. 149).
Session II

Cut²

With long hair there are longer intervals between cuts than with short hair - more possibility to remember the circumstances. For instance, on our last weekend in France after an eight month sojourn in May of 1997, the cut was held on a windswept, two foot wide top floor deck of an apartment building suite we were being lent. The deck looked out over the sand washed beaches of St. George de Didon, merging with the beaches of Royan. The same beaches and town that the Allies bombed to oblivion at the end of the second world war.³ (The hair now grows gathering the frays of intelligences, awaiting the next cut ... my dissertation defence?) Garry Rasberry's hair grows too ...

"... both in learning to teach and in learning to talk / write about time from the middle of the tangle;⁴

(*Rasberry dwells on this notion of the 'tangle'—the 'tangle' that he is obsessively embroiled in. He suggests, correctly in my opinion, that it is only by staying in the 'tangle' and reporting on it from within, that he can remain truthful to his quest, which is, "a study of the self studying education" [p. 106].)

it is an invitation to consider how we are made different through the relations that researchly texts make available. Researchly texts offer ways to address these kinds of questions by inviting us to become curious about our own learning, our own writing (our own sculpture), our own researching. Researchly texts create new conditions of learning that enable the making of insight, the ability to discover what it is we are learning, writing, (sculpting), researching, through a reading of our own experience of researching" (Rasberry, with my inserts, p. 149).

² Since Daily Cuts and Ties (1978) I have been utilizing hair growth as a time documentation device (see Lupri, 1985).

³ Royan's cathedral of Notre Dame was rebuilt, between 1953-1957, as a symbol of renewal. It is a modern structure in the best sense of the word, still the focal point of the city. It is truly a glorious space to be in - to breathe in. It is a soaring central clerestory of poured concrete topped with a sway back roof. (Calgary's Saddledome is a more pronounced version of the same concept). The then 'state of the art' engineering produced a wonder of visual delight. Still apparent forty years later, even if showing its age in cracks and mildew. I spent hours sitting - breathing - being in the fullness of this structure. (The shards of light that penetrated the interior, as the immense organ blasted thunderous discordant sound, sent shivers up my spine.)

³ full memory, cutting hair.
I have read this before -
I have never read this before -
this is 'monkeymind' clearing to 'wildmind.'

Reading *Writing Research/Researching Writing through the poet’s i* reminded me of the 'experiences' of reading and listening to the musician John Cage. I first read *Silence* (1973), a paperback containing writing and lectures from 1939-1961. I listened to him read from *Rotunda* in 1985, in Toronto, at a New Music series.

Ra-ta-ta-tat.

What I perceive to be the similarity between Rasberry and Cage—Cage and hermeneutics—is the circular repetition of ideas in a sequentially accumulative manner (serial music) with constant variations. *Silence* can be opened and read at any point: it is multi-layered, it works concurrently with itself. It is a book of 'Hyper Text' before the medium existed. Gary refers to the need for his book to be enhanced with the "click here" miracle (p. 76).

Wildmind writing *is* 'flow'.

I enjoy footnotes. To become involved in the text, the text as paper, as tangible object, as sculpture.

"I am trying to check my habits of seeing, to counter them for the sake of greater freshness. I am trying to be unfamiliar with what I’m doing" (Cage, 1973, p. 106).
Session III

The sun streams warm;
as I catch
the 'Blue Bus'
over
the Lion's Gate
I want to let go:

(white bus pink bus rain bus blue bus)

I want to be able to write densely, clearly, freely.
To think again of the power of language.

There were moments when I was swimming in
his prose, as effortlessly as in a lake on a
perfectly clear day.

I 'flipped a coin',
so to speak,
to begin.

I see the "... broad stone wall flicking alive small
green flames of Lizards" (Connelly, 1993, cited
in Rasberry, p. 13), and continually, a talisman
through the labyrinth [tangle] of researching the self
researching.

snaking below the high balance
—people
"featureless, really, at this distance" (Connelly,
1993, cited in Rasberry, p. 33)
walking—running.

7 Rasberry invites us to,
"Read/Write/Read the text
in whatever way you see
fit" (e, p. 22). After an
initial 'roaming' I settled
to fully engaged reading,
reading footnotes as they
were entered, relishing in
the 'knowing' that I was
enjoying it. I no longer
wondered if I should be
reading another text, my
monkeymind hovering
over and above my
readingmind insisting that
there must be another text,
somewhere over there,
which will be MORE
engaging, MORE amusing,
MORE my thesis.

9 The notion of swimming in a
lake and being in a state of perfect
balance with nature—at a liminal
point—in water we ARE IN
nature), is taken from a telephone
comment I heard recently on
CBC radio. The topic was to
relate a seminal moment you
knew through your body. That
moment of oneness, I would
conjecture, is universal, as we
float in the embrace of water,
however, the difference for me
lay in the articulation of being
'held' by the water—suspended,
if you will, between heaven and
hell, life and death—held in
amniotic perfection by nature
herself, this image was related in
such a manner that it is now
charged with meaning. It is this
'body knowing' which Connelly
eludes to when she writes, “The
thud bangs in my bones as I
realize what I've seen”
(Rasberry, p. 44)
There could be evil
lurking below
in the corner of the dark forest,

"Still, from the wall, the scene gleams, glazed
over, lovely. But the view includes the road,
which I watch in amazement. The thud bangs in
my bones as I realize what I've seen. A child and a
car have collided with the grace of birds; it was
choreographed, her skipping down off the path
and the black swoop of mettle speeding around,
catching her at the waist. Her screams mistaken
for a seagull's. There are thirty people behind me,
oblivious as I watch a shadow dyeing the road (it
does not even appear red—simply dark, like dirt
spilling from a bowl of yellow flowers, her head)"
(Connelly, 1993, cited throughout Rasberry—
This extended quote is found on p. 44)

as a river flowing—pedagogical
cleansing the rocks as it passes).\(^{10}\)

"Although our pedagogy is not usually
life and death, still there is
the shadow" (p. 44).

In the writer's workshop studied by
Rasberry - in the writer's workshop utilizing the
concept of 'wildmind' writing, the preservice
teacher was given the freedom", the s p a c e
to write. We experience the preservice
teacher's early hesitation at such liberty, watch
as it falls away over the course of the study—
over the course of the course (wordplay-
wordshopping)—the reader becomes enthralled
with the realization that this workshop suc-
cceeded! That these preservice teachers did
begin to write away from monkeymind, that
wordplay began its magic on the blank page,
began its process of winding towards that which
it had not been before ...

\(^{10}\) As I read Rasberry,
there were two
distinct occasions
when my monkeymind
interrupted my
reading with, "where
is Connelly's wall—I
want the wall—I need
to feel that peace of
reading the wall."
Both times I was
rewarded, within a
paragraph, by the
rhythm of her lines
coming back to haunt.
I felt I was in touch—
in tune, connected to
Rasberry's work on
another level—a
poetic level? There is
that rhythm which is
poetry, which is his
writing, which is
research, which is
sculpture.

\textit{yellow flowers}

\textit{'yellow head'}

\textit{yellowflowersons}
"... writing is what you cannot know before you have written: it is preknowing and not knowing, blindly with words" (Cixous, 1993, cited in Rasberry, p. 14).

I know this class. I have taught this class.¹²

It is the class that creates freedom for the student to find their inner creative self, while still adhering to, and meeting the curricular expectations. The class gave the space to breathe and discover.

I learnt as much as my students.

It pushed the students out the doors; to the parks, to the islands, to roller blade, to fly, to collect, to grab at life as it fleetingly passed. To comprehend the narrow edge that is Gadamer's (1986) horizon.¹³

¹²I taught 'Explorations,' a course, much as the name implies, to encourage the student to explore outside of the confines of the other mandatory art classes; a class that was outside the art paradigm. To engage in discussion as art, research as art, ethnography as art, personal reflection and narrative as art. The class hinged on an 'open discussion with moderator' format, discussions built—following the threads'.

This format was enacted to inhibit (or at least lessen) monkeymind. Each student had to 'LISTEN LOUDLY' —to add to the 'whole.'

¹³Hans-Georg Gadamer's study of philosophical hermeneutics talks of the never static horizon line, as you gain knowledge the horizon is pushed, never to be reached. The horizon is in perpetual motion in a thinking, active, creative being.
Session IV

The edge that is the real.

"Well you know this is all baby-sitting, if you really want to be an artist get out there and be one" said an influential professor in my BFA program. This seemed to undermine the entire enterprise that we were engaged in. However, I now understand, this is your degree, not mine, you must make of it what you will.

London, England, 1977-78. I am working for a year at Sothebys, training in the etiquette of the trade. I have recently completed my BFA and adore this vibrant city, exploding with art and culture, but not ‘feeling’ like I fit the mould. Although I greatly appreciate antiques, I do not like to appraise them. I love to run my fingers over ancient objects, to ‘feel’ their being. An object is imbued with history whether it be from the sidewalk or a castle, however, this system only wants the castle’s goods. This I understand, I simply don’t want to join. I must be well dressed, wear a tie and look respectable at all times, this too I accept. This is part of the game, however, I am fighting inside, this is not how I want to be.

I begin a documentation series of hair and ties, simple subversions. I allow a forelock to grow—combed into the whole—invisible, but equally independent, a daily change of tie—not visible—hidden under the guise of normality. They fit with no threat—but with a thread. Their subversion is limited to ‘knowing,’ and few do. This does not change the photographic action of placing into historical context. The months pass. This self knowledge feeds the spirit within.

Later in 1978, I am at a colleague’s party. He comes towards me, pulls at the forelock not held down by the vigour’s of protocol, he jabs at me, “why do you have this thing? why are you doing this to us?” I don’t remember my words, I only remember the feeling of wanting to let go.

Rasberry’s students were pushed to try out their wings and see that they could fly. It was successful as an ‘enabling’ class in that it gave students the opportunity to grab what they could find in the raw moment, to bring back and to reflect upon the found—the gathered—the collected bits and pieces of their lives—of others’ lives—the ‘tangle’ of all our lives, to work together as a group.

Rasberry preferred to use the word ‘invited.’ This invitation was supported and nurtured by the ‘group’ and a cushion was created so that the student did not feel the ‘push.’

There was engagement in process.

Jarvis (1992) talks to this ‘tangle’ in his existentialist statement: “Human beings are always in the process of becoming...time does not stand still, and so the process of becoming continues for as long as there is life” (p. 101). This suggests constant development and change (within the tangle) are necessary components for learning. It is in being and becoming that the authentic reflective person presides, expressing independent thought to arrive at a creative and critical state. When considering this in relation to teaching, Jarvis makes an interesting point: “both creativity and criticality imply that nothing should be beyond the scope of reflective thought and nobody should stand above or beyond the possibility of contradiction...” (p. 114). Jarvis quotes Freire to further illustrate this point: “Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teacher” (p. 144).
"to swim in the liminal pool"

I can see clearly my tall host going to a drawer and returning with scissors. In a slurring blurred manner he threaten to cut, to emasculate. My inner self screams, this is not what this is about. I stand still—a pacifist’s stance. My challenge provokes (unintentionally).

He cuts, gone, thrown to the ground. My thread to self, my thread to what I wanted. I don’t remember how I felt (immediately), betrayal most probably. But how could they understand? I had never talked about it. The depth of commitment, an action that was holding me in its arms of other-ness, that was giving meaning beyond the every day—connecting me to a world beyond mere commodity, threading me to a world of sculpture.

I can only help you on your way and while I’m doing that, I’m baby-sitting.

It still feel it was harsh. I tell my students, I preface it with story to soften the blow.

Learning to Learn

"... It suggests, contrary to many of our pedagogical assumptions, that learning to teach has more to do with learning to learn. Teaching and learning are in this way profoundly connected" (Rasberry, p.108).

This ‘learning to learn’ is similar to Gadamer’s (1986) reflections on the dialogue with art. It is the edge of one’s being that must be continually in motion towards that which has not been created, to be in the game. This is the essence of the creative self when engaged: learning to learn. This is what Writing research/researching writing through a poet’s i does.

The freedom to find self is so foreign in the pedagogies of the contemporary classroom, its curricular value is so questioned, so doubted ...

... “Oh you’re in Playdough Leggo’s section. I heard it was slack-assed” (Rasberry, p.175) ...

not seeing the depth, the trust, the freedom, the reality of the play.

* I I ‘saw’ footnotes and text running concurrently—(side by side)—two stories coming together, held by a common denominator, a writing of research, a research of writing. I ‘saw’ space to breath. I ‘saw’ time slowing down as text takes hold, as time is inverted by the very nature of words, on paper, being read as something new. As meaning is found in the reflective moment of each individual’s connection with words.

The ‘play’ that is yours dear reader.

*2 I wanted to footnote the footnote. Now that I have reached the conclusion of this small writing, I could go on, but I must stop. This has already taken more time than it should. That is good - that is bad. I become obsessed with the drafting and the redrafting, the hermeneutic process, I can print new versions, try new configurations, but I must call a halt.

*3 Talking to myself after I’ve been writing and rewriting for weeks. I constantly return to Rasberry and become overwhelmed with the depth of the work. How it places itself so succinctly into the field, how the hermeneutic approach is substantiated by my continual obsession with it. I really do want to unravel it, not so much to get at his meaning, but because I know it reflects my meaning.
**Epilogue**

'ISAYAGAIN: (to write this)
It's like building a sculpture. I take raw material workshop it for prolonged periods of time, until I 'feel' the connections I am making begin to gel. What was an empty 'page', *space*, configures into something with meaning to itself, circling back hermeneutically to you (dear reader).

*3 “Never does one open the discussion by coming to the heart of the matter. For the heart of the matter is always somewhere else than where it is supposed to be”


Hair once living now claims its *space* as sculpture with anecdote, anecdote with sculpture.
To call for imaginative capacity is to work for the ability to look at things as if they could be otherwise. To ask for intensified realization is to see each person's reality must be understood to be interpreted experience - and that the mode of interpretation depends on his or her situation and location in the world.

(Greene, 1995, p. 19)
February 18, 2002

I write to Jazz, a perfect rhythm for hitting the keys, to see if I can find the spaces that I want to open. I said I will write for the next three weeks straight, collect everything! There is the debriefing I want to do with the research group, some interviews and voices from other places.

Oh to allow the generative spaces to form.

There have been other dreams too,

other pullings of the spirit forward.

These last few days have been full of my being sick. I am teaching my regular Saturday class; feeling a little better I went, but by the time I got home I thought I was going to collapse.

My eyes were watering, nose running and filling at the same time:

The strangest part is the nosebleeds;
from no where
blood flows.

I’ve been reading things that point me in a direction. I’ve been talking to people, I can feel my mind churning – “see, everything is pointing to where you’re supposed to be going” my inner voice chides, keep your faith in the project.

“But I often don’t get it down, well not like I want to; as soon as I pick up the computer, it seems to dissipate into such simplistic ramblings!!”

This process of doing...

It’s like I have to listen to my own words - to listen to my own teaching. Let go ...

let go

Follow and you will find

“Yes, of course there is always that - the fear that indeed there is nothing, that it’s just a blank sheet and there isn’t anything there to see.”

A haphazard fragment from jazz pop tune floats through my buzzing head:

Birthday cloths hit the floor and explore those Popsicle toes ...

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70I teach a Fundamentals of Sculpture class at The Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design.
Talking to a fellow graduate student the other night I hear myself going on and I think, hey that sounds good, you’ve got to write that up. Sounds like you do know what you’re talking about and then it runs away again. That seems to be the way of it, as I try to cruise into another zone - to go somewhere else in my writing self.

As I was saying, I’ve been fighting a cold for the past five days and feel like it gets better and then I seem to drop down again.

*Walk in the trees this morning.*

What questions should I be asking?

I have to remember what I am doing here. I am trying to stay inside, to transmit the reality of the writing process as research. Yes, that’s it,

the fire slowly burns out and my feet can feel the chill of the rising heat line.

*My head too hot
My feet too cold

Maybe a nap

I can feel my eyes getting heavy,

(sometimes a little nap is a good thing).

*LOTS OF THIS GETS TOSSED
BUT EVERY NOW AND THEN I TAP INTO SOMETHING THAT NEEDS TO BE SAID
and then I get to harness it, maybe even going further than I knew I would or could.*

Looking out the window of the living room just now, with the fire burning behind me, in an almost too hot room (still working on my flu remedy). My youngest son comes home asserting that he too is really sick. I make him some chicken noodle soup. I see the stream flowing gently and I drift back to the dream and think, maybe it’s telling me to see it here. That I need to stay centered right here - right inside this space. Part of my problem has been this flitting around, trying to find where to start. It was as though once again I’m being told,

*Here it is, just look and see, in here, the space is open –
if you want it
you don’t have to go somewhere else
to find what you want –
it is inside*
As I went for a walk with Jean I suddenly felt an overwhelming thought wave

Yes, I am doing it

this is what I am doing,

being in the midst of process - what I said I would do, - I am.

It was like I had suddenly seen through to the other side. It is similar to listening to Olympic medallists reflect on visualizing gold, well I am visualizing this over. Frustration can be allowed in, however, on the whole, I feel tranquil

in the doing of this. 71

This space,

my living room,

a place to sit and write with a fire burning.

(I must plug this computer in tonight as I am down to 30 minutes. The battery life is still an illusion of time that somehow is there and then is not. I get sucked into University politics, this whole thing with ‘The Palace’ and its use, I find myself being more and more aware of how much of myself is eaten up by things that have little relevance to this writing.)

Orange pedagogy:

If I never know what I am building why am I driven to build it?

sculpt it?

write it?

71 This refers to the embodied space that an artist creates from. When an artist creates he/she is subsumed into / through the process.
Once we see the mold on an orange,
that lush fur of gray/blue dust,
it is already dead, it has rotted from within,
from the core out it falls prey to the elements.

a truth,

once you can see mold, it may be a cancer. We must find it with/in a 'metonymy of place,' hidden behind the walls of text and explanation, that Cartesian feeling of safety, that illusion of knowing, as though any one can actually 'know.' Know what? We know much. We know as much as the collective consciousness wishes to know.

No more, no less
what happens when we crack an orange?
what falls out?
released
smell
strength of smell
fills nostrils
and
demands recognition
not to be let off the hook
that easily

The orange, once decked with white fuzz of mold spores, is already lost (to eating).
As mold starts below the surface, the orange has already been 'used or eaten' by the mold itself.
“We go to performances, ... when we want the unexpected, the dark, the comic the inexplicable. ... when we want borders between our daily lives and our imaginative lives to bend and blur a little” (Etchells, 1998, p. 31).

"There is little point in cutting off the moldy parts thinking you are ridding the cheese or bread or orange of the mold, it is already present throughout. That is why a moldy piece of bread, even though only visually moldy in one place, will still taste of mold, the mold has already taken over." So said Dr. J. Mayer-Smith in animated conversation, as she explained the molding process, having spied a moldy orange in Rita's bowl. Her excitement was palpable, her pedagogy alive and vibrant.

Contemplating the mold on the orange, not only for its esthetic beauty, which had been my response to the phenomenon, but now for an organic understanding of a whole culture that I had not considered previously. As Dewey (1934) insists, heightened awareness to all aspects of life are the hallmark of true experience:

Instead of being shut up within one's own private feelings and sensations, [experience] signifies active and alert commerce with the world; at its height it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events ... Because experience is the fulfillment of an organism in its struggles and achievements in a world of things, it is art in germ. (p.19)

Crack it / Crack it

Is there a code to crack? To hold down and then decipher in some new way?
(I do anything and everything to avoid the writing)

to avoid placing secrets to the page

72 (June 4, 2000)
73 What are the questions? How do I open to the question of my own doing?
I want to allow the sculptured textural text to grow in front of me. To see it grow in my
mind’s-eye, to allow the performative to become....

For the metonymic to flow from those hidden (s)p(l)aces,
needing to be filled with the channeling of spirit/thought
spaces in between the artist / researcher / teacher / scholar.

(I don’t feel connected to any of them)

I feel embedded in them all,

I have become subsumed in the A/R/T/S process.

“This is good” (an Levinism)

But I want to crack them. I want to find generative feeding ground. I don’t want
‘curriculum as plan’ I want LIFE. I want the word to become alive. In Aoki’s (1996) words:
In our curriculum landscape, it is a space that knows planned curriculum and live(d)
curriculum, a space of generative interplay between planned curriculum and lived
curriculum. It is a site wherein the interplay is the creative production of newness, where
newness can come into being. It is an inspirted site of being becoming. (p. 11)

“This performance is an ethnographic account presented on behalf of myself in the
hope of some understanding” (Pelias, 1999, p. 10).

Understanding.....

I love theater for this reason, to see the performative word, to see the world made flesh
through acting/action of people, to see real, living, breathing persons on a stage is a place of
energy and transformation, to realize that this is new, has never been seen before, in this unique
manner. As when I see 'the paper creations' of my students when they do the first 'folding paper' exercise. I know we are reaching a place of performative belonging. The pedagogical challenge is to keep that space of open creativity embodied (alive to each student).  

One of the most enduring themes in science and philosophy is the tension between what cannot be known and expressed. I believe that this gap is the most basic energy of the creative spirit, and I see no reason to resolve or bring closure to the tension.

(McNiff, 1998b, p. 31)

February 19, 2002
Last night's dream was trees. I was working on bamboo.

I know I must write immediately on waking, as now I can’t quite recall and I feel a pressure to get onto other things.

It was something about parts of the bamboo being dead. I cut before I understood what I was doing and eliminated the only two live branches on the tree. I thought I was doing the right thing only to find out that it was wrong. How often does that happen?

I wanted to capture that metaphor but instead I turned on the computer to look at e-mail and then just as I was finishing that the phone rang to tell me....

74 (Next day as the sun shines someone on the bus said:
"Such a beautiful day, it's hard to work inside. Why couldn't it rain all next week?"
This doesn't make sense since he was working this week any way, or at least it didn't make sense to me.)

I love to leisurely listen to the conversations of others
The sun comes out, I can go outside and do some work at tying up yard-trimmings, an hour or so of fresh air, and then I have to get Jean’s pills.

An interesting thing here is the prescribed ending that may be on its way. I will be forced out of my office, which I need to be as I have had my four years, my time is up. I was envisioning using the destruction of the space as a metaphor for what it is I am trying to do. The tidying up of loose ends that can no longer be left out to dry –

as with all of these I get the idea and then it dies (rather the idea is planted and I seem to forget that a seed takes time to germinate - patience as a virtue sometimes forgotten in this exercise).

I have one kid home sick today and the other should just .................

And on and on we go ...........

I am not fully recovered from this cold. I still feel a little out of it, at the beginning of the day think, oh yah, I’m much better, and then it seems to creep back in that I am not better yet. My back is killing me and my eyes are still watering.

Oh well at least I am writing something, but maybe I’m wasting my time with this.

No, because this is what I said I would do, follow the process to see where I am\textsuperscript{75}. It’s that thing of thinking we can actually know that gets us in trouble; it’s hard to let go of the certainty principle. I am tired, I feel like I could sleep forever and then when night comes I wake up and want to read all night.

\textit{A quickly scribbled note to myself in anticipation of escaping the clutch of the writing:}

\texttt{I know I am close to an end}

\texttt{something will out}

\textsuperscript{75} The problem here is that I am writing from inside, knowing that I will have time to go back and (re)read, edit, (re)edit, again and again,

\texttt{form and create,}

\texttt{(but I still doubt / don't doubt the process)}.

This, however is also what I wanted to capture, what is usually edited out, I wanted to leave in, it seemed this struggle would tell me something. As yet I am still feeling for it, but I (do) trust the concept of being able to build once I have something to build with.

\texttt{The pedagogical building blocks are being formed as I write.}
Watching the Olympics last night I saw an interview with Kelly Law of the Canadian curlers and in it she talked of being in process. (I will see if I can find that quote. I am trying to fix the Word program on the other computer as the scroll bar has mysteriously disappeared.)

Everyday I wake up and I think, this is it, I am going to start today, and every day I feel the slide of other things taking over. I feel a sort of nervousness that I am once again going to allow myself to be eaten up, but then I am reminded of the process, that this is all part of it. I have no control - well that is crap! Everyday I say to myself, I need a goal.

What I am referring to here is that place when a creative project takes over my life. I know this (s)p(l)ace well from my years of studio work. I both enjoy and dread it. It is so consuming that it affects all aspects of my life. I cannot deal with the regular everyday calls when I am in this (s)p(l)ace. Everything gets subsumed by the project. This (s)p(l)ace is not good for my marriage, my responsibilities to work and teaching, as it does not favor outside disturbance. I know that I will need to book off real blocks of time, to allow this, envelopment in process, a place (s)p(l)ace to be nurtured.

I am fortunate to have a place on Denman Island that I can disappear to. I bring all my food, I take the dog, and I can quite literally see no one for two weeks at a time. It is here that I have come for three large chunks of time to wrestle this text to the ground. To allow the process of sculpting the text into a dissertational form to take place. Without this ability to write in an enclosed, disruption-free zone, it is very difficult for this to happen. If you are interested in an excellent study that visually reveals this concept, I refer you to Cawelti, Rappaport, & Wood, (1992), Modeling artistic creativity: An empirical study.

It seems an opportune moment to place a lengthy quote from Trinh Minh-Ha (1991) as it pertains to a collection of everyday thoughts, trials and doubts as I followed this process, my research methodology (as cited in Neilsen, 1998, p. 112):

Like the outsider, she steps back and records what never occurs to her the insider as being worth or in need of recording. But unlike the outsider, she also resorts to non-explicative, non-totalizing strategies that suspend meaning and resist closure. ... She refuses to reduce herself to an Other and her reflections to mere outsider’s objective reasoning or insider’s objective feeling.... She is this Inappropriate Other/Same who moves about with
Those research help tips I plastered on the wall all talk about goals
and I know it’s true.
Without the goal it disappears
I will be lost again.

A gorgeous day. Maybe I will walk with my lap top along the water’s edge, maybe I’ll see if I can combine the process with the doing. I sit as the computer crunches in a reloading of Microsoft Word.

Yet at the same time, I as a scientist, I understand that this body is a result of material interactions. So, where do we start? Is mind first, or is matter first. Well, maybe part of the answer is that there is a circle there, that keeps going around, and the problem is trying to separate it by cutting it at one point in time. (Varela, 1996, p. 289)

Just like the Olympic hopefuls have to visualize the end result, so I keep visualizing an end of this process. The cycle is finished.

Time for the next chapter!

It is funny how quickly this has changed

how all of a sudden

I know I am finished

(Yes, an intentionally cracking [placed] footnote number as it may help disrupt this cocky notion).

always at least two/four gestures: that of affirming “I am like you” while persisting in her difference; and that of reminding “I am different” while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at.

77 This is an absurd entry, I am not even a quarter of the way into the collection of text data, or my target set of writing-time. What I am getting at is:

a feeling of.....

I have started

and a starting

infers a finishing.
I think I am possessed with writing something new when in fact I want to write something quite old. I want to enter a world that is (possibly) lost, shattered by the stress and strain of a contemporary world view of consuming and eating beyond our abilities.

And yet I work by the beach

*bring a laptop to the water’s edge*

To remain in the aporia, this place of the struggle, as the reading becomes one and my wife says, no, stick to it, as I insist that really I ought to be at home tonight as she has been with the kids the past three days and I feel the guilt, but no, she insists that it is fine. I know deep inside

that she’s right, that I do have to stay with it/in it.

I do have to push the writing out through holes

and recesses where it sits awaiting release.

**Walk 3**

I had to escape the house -
as I walk with the dogs,

I realize

that is what studios are for

I am writing in the dark, only the letters in front of me to help me on my way. I wish to conserve the battery life, so I turn the screen off as most of the time I don’t look at it any way. I try to write every day - I try to find a rhythm to it, seems I am constantly thwarted, but that is an old story

*I want to enter a new story*

*I have yet to find the flow*
that allows the writing to find itself
to find that place that is deep inside
so I left the house realizing
that

is what a studio is for
- it is outside the ‘house,’ the ‘home,’ that place of family, that always seems to gobble up time.

Coming to the beach can be my studio

My place to create that which is already there, but is still new for me.
Where was it I was reading about not liking competition, no it wasn’t reading, it was watching a video on the Canadian artist Jessica Stockholder (1998). She talked of the notion of criticism not sitting well with her, that talking with students about their art was not about some game of negative analysis of the form, but rather, a generative discourse, a moving forward through the process of doing. I have always felt the same way about criticism. That it should indeed be a generative experience for all, a moving forward through the process of doing that gently elicits an inner being from the depths of the student-becoming-artist, an ongoing pedagogical hermeneutic.

"Does a full room and generous applause mean we all agree?"78

Anne Schaef’s (1998) ‘Living in Process’ brings our awareness to the fact that in contemporary society we are all so lost within the process of living, that the process of the world is not allowed to live. Is it possible that it is similar for our schools? That it is a process of pedagogy that we are being forgetful of? With all the emphasis on results-based learning we forget the fact that there is a process that needs to be taught through. There is no finished curriculum to life, there is no end (to life) before our death, which we cannot experience, as Derrida (1993) helps us understand with his “Is my death possible?” (p. 22) However, as Nicholas Davey (1999) helps us realize,

Art can neither be a matter of merely producing and looking at tactile sensible objects nor can it be turned into science of ideas which the Cartesians dreamt of. If art were the former, it would be nothing other than a mindless process of material production and not art. For art to open our eyes to the world it has to do something other than remain in the purely sensible. (p. 8)

(Re)searching collectively (through) A/R/T Continued

It is the process of our A/R/T/S group that I am most interested in; how we move from here to there. We have now met four times. One general debrief of the Dec. 6 performance from which we decided to view the ‘4 Corners’ as a unit, then to debrief that and then meet to look at the articles that Stephanie brought to the table (we were joined at that meeting by Patti Pente).

I tape these discussions, using both video and audio, sometimes together, most regularly using audio format. I have used both formats as it gives me a richer set of data to analyze. Different lenses, different points of view. I keep a research journal of field notations, both before and after each session. All of these various formats I use to amplify memory. I can listen to a tape of a session and (re)immerse myself in the moment of the present of that process.

We are moving forward
we are creating
every session brings new insights

“The definitions of things are changing in every context... Is it called something simply because of some other identity category?” (Rita, research group transcript, Feb. 15, 2002).

“A NEW WORK OUT OF all this collected video data

THAT IS

I CAN FEEL NEW WORK

brewing

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WILL BE

I do know what it will be

(Research journal, Feb. 15, 2002)
"I really like the idea of working with images directly from the video, you can (re) research the research of the research."

(Patti, research group transcript Feb. 15, 2002).

THE CAPS KEY keeps getting hit.

‘Yes,’ (refereeing to footnote 78) that is what I am doing - then I get back to the writing and it seems - no –

I am simply writing to fill space

but that isn’t true either.

My pedagogical self has been (re)newed and (re)found as the performance theorist Richard Schechner (1993) likes to inscribe words because of performances

"twice behaved behavior" (p. 1).

But lets get back to where I want to be, where I want to situate my pedagogy within the work that I want to do.

I started by trying to put a (re) in front of words, that seems so important, to (re)inscribe the past, to put together that which has already taken place, that the performative may be (re)found in a place of telling. Yes, that’s it,

79 I often think of Rasberry (2001), when he elucidates on writing’s self discovery process as,

opportunities to entertain certain kinds of obsessions through writing and rewriting the real not-real, the present and not-present. I am interested in the ways that writing provides opportunities—creates conditions—that allow us to bring our attention to lived experience and, in turn, change—express and/or construct—our experience(s). I am interested in the ways that writing provides opportunities—creates conditions—to think about practice. (p. 61)
so that others may see the process more easily, metaphorically that is, because none of this is easy, it just feels that way when on top of the mountain, but there is no way you are going to stay there, it is always toppled by the next and the next and the next –

To ever think
I will mount a mountain
see clearly
I know is an illusion
(sometimes)

Crazy dogs come barreling back to me
spraying rocks all over the place.

ART (as trust)
(I find myself at a loss.)

Maybe it’s the A/R/T group that I am learning to trust in a new way. I don’t have to be in charge, that maybe something comes out whether I feel like I am pushing it or not. Can it work if we all simply meet? Well no, I do believe that there has to be real desire for it to move forward to find the new work. However, we cannot understand before we get there, this can be hard for those wishing for some kind of sure ness of place, a place that says, ‘yes, I know where I am going.’
the modernist notion of 'Knowing' as in,

"It's all right, Jack"

that feeling of closeness - that it all turns out all right in the end.

_The Hollywood dream of Technicolor ladies_  
_and little boys_  
_all perfectly decked out_  
_in shorts_  
_the model citizen._

I don't want that. Why don't I want that? Seems counter productive ...

It’s the constant contradictions, the knowing/not knowing/knowing of a post-modern condition that feeds a creative enterprise. 80

_Ahhh..._  
_Sun shines through_  
a blackened cloud  
_with wonder held -_  
a gentle water flutters soft.

_I see parades of rocks_  
_lined by a tree -_  
_far off laughter_  
tickles my ear.

80 "The most fundamental cause of artist’s block is connected to the inability to simply let go of premeditation. To pre-meditate is to strive to make something before it is made. Creative expression doesn't work this way. Creation is a process that cannot be programmed" (McNeill, 1998a, p. 65).
Chesca eats a shell
and distant rumbles held
extended echo
abruptly stops.

I look down the beach
as Jaala does
and I see nothing -
but I can hear voices in the rhythm of the sea
and seagulls gently
on iron coloured water
land.

Can we make a new sculpture / installation? Can it have meaning? Already I know
the answers to those questions. Of course we can!!

Because we have convergences to swim through

I can see we will arrive at new work. The process of the convergences allows new work to be
continually moving forward.

(and again there are those loud noises out there in the water)

Oh the sun is fine and reflections make all golden the heat on my face forced smile, as
everything feels good and on it goes …

a breeze
a sound
a place of comfort

Where is the pedagogy of this? Where is the meaning? (to continue on down a trail of
trees?) My mind drifts to its own place of stasis, always into process, as it must, for it can never
sit still, all of this is in constant flux. It allows for diversity and wonder. I sit on rocks
thou(sands) of years old. I sit against a log maybe 75 years old. I breathe air that is new/old, one
big organism that pulsates and breathes with me and I with it.
From the eye of this storm, what is / was is always on the verge of becoming something else.

Words won't stick (Pollock, 1998, p. 73).

A connection to the environment in which I live
is a pedagogy of life.

I shuffle as the stones get cold under the cotton of my trousers.

A reddish rock proclaims—“see me? I've been washed for months, years, ions and slowly I melt away and new ones are formed.” The notion of the slowness of time; never ending change, always present, never letting go, meandering along a road - as I try for the trance of writing that will allow me to forge deeper into that which I am thinking.

I want to go—
to dig deep into the depths of my soled soul.
To allow spirit to find places of being
beyond flapping birds’ wings
that sweep over me as I sit, slightly leaning forward,
to relieve the growing tension in my back. I have been
sitting (maybe) too long now.

I need to move - to pick myself up.

Both dogs are here, “hey you’ve been sitting long enough,” one nuzzles my chest, “I thought we were going for a walk - I thought this was walk time, not sitting time,” the other tosses her head. They give up on me and start their wander and sniff routines. The sun no longer heats my face and a breeze picks up and makes me feel a little cooler and a shadow returns to the keyboard and I once again feel the heat on my face as a cloud shifts.

I take a deep breath. I find a rhythm does help when you start writing to fill a void that is a space, that is a volume, that is a day, that is a dissertation. A volume as a cube of text that is filled with the thoughts of so many, such as Hilton Als (2002), who writes for the New Yorker.
I read his review yesterday of Kennedy writing on the use of the word 'Nigger.' I have difficulty with contemporary black youths (re)appropriation of the word. I intellectually understand their argument of reclaiming a word that is theirs and thereby (re)honoring it, to give it back its dignity. I respect that as an intellectual stance. However, when my son insists on full volume, heavy bass, black hip hop artists, who’s lyrics ‘f... this and n..... that,’ I have a much harder time accepting an intellectual argument. I want to say, “turn that off. It’s derogatory, nasty and why do you listen to it?”

At that moment, however, I am reminded of my own youth and how I loved bass, and the upper registers of a whining blues guitar, of a Johnny Winter Blues Band or a Jimmy Hendrix or Eric Clapton on Blind Faith and the drumming and bass of Grand Funk Railroad and Black Sabbath. Those bands I cherished and would play on my portable record player that my mother had bought for me, as she seemed to understand my need to have music more than my father did. These memories nurture a pedagogy of acceptance of change,

*those stone's ions rubbed*

and youths need to have their own styles that push against the norms of the resting mass.

*this change and (re)change is how it must be, always is, to remember this, to live this, to allow a living inquiry to be there at all times.*

*Educational inquiry is entering a time of the liminal—a threshold space—a time of abundance, imagination, and possibility. Of course, we can argue it has always been this way. We are always becoming; but perhaps we are a little more willing now than we have been to accept that we walk on shifting ground.*  (*Nielsen, 2002, p. 209*)

*That was wild, I just got buzzed by a helicopter. It came right into the beach and sort of did a little dip to me and then continued its inspection of the coastline. It seems to be flying close to shore all the way to Lighthouse Park.*
"When someone reflects in action, he (sic) becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case" (Shön, 1983). ⁸¹

Five

Maybe I should be collecting threads instead of trying to weave with wool.

Another storied shifting ground

I was filling a bath to relieve the tension in my shoulders when I had a premonition, the sort of déjà vu that this was a dream or rather I was at the edge of a dream.

I liked the sound of that:

\[ \text{the edge of a dream} \]

It was the water splashing, its spray against the white enamel bath tub that I have washed in since my childhood, the remembered films of my sister and I standing naked together about 3 and 5 years old. We used to love to watch that film and then one day we became embarrassed by it, those changes of maturity,

\[ \text{that lost innocence of tender youth.} \]

My sister had all the old films transferred to video, we could now have them transferred to CD. \( \text{And on it goes...} \)

Back to the dream and the water and the white tub and the speck of bath dirt that I was endeavoring to remove with the spray when all of a sudden I was \text{on the edge of a dream.} \ It was rich and full, a real story. How is that connected to this dissertation collection of data that I need before I can even begin to try to do something with it?

\[ \text{oh but it rang true} \]

I immediately headed upstairs to get the thoughts on paper before I lost the moment and now I need to get back downstairs before the bath overflows - trying to keep up with the rush of it all, as it cascades down the stairs into new territory. I hear the dreaded words, \text{it is a cold bath,} how time changes when I want it to remain constant and I cannot follow the way it goes. Now I cannot even have the bath that I was looking forward to, everything conspires against the living that one wants (sometimes). I really do find it hard to believe that bath went from empty to full in such a short time, usually I am on top of those sorts of things, in fact I was on my sons’ case about always filling the \text{bath too full and now I’ve done it myself} and my shoulders are still painful

\[ \text{I need to relax} \]

\[ \text{the one place I find it easiest to relax} \]

\[ \text{suddenly lost,} \]

\[ \text{oh the pain of it all} \]
However as McNiff (1998b) soundly reminded me,

Art-based research generally does involve more ambiguity, risk and uneven results in terms of end product. But the outcomes tend to be more creative, less mediocre, and more conducive to advancing the sophistication of practice. The final studies are distinctly individuated expressions, more likely to be different from one another than similar. Most important, art-based research corresponds completely to the benefits and difficulties of the process being studied. (p. 38)

But still I bite myself

Where am I going with this incessant writing? Believing that there really will be a space of finding something else and in fact ending up at the same place again but still pushing forward, trying to find the next place that I want to go to. Where is it? Where is it that I am trying to get to, in all the hustle and

BUSTLE OF THE EVERY DAY WORLD

To simply let the rhythm of words pour forth

is there any merit in this?

is there any use in this head bashing?

only to succeed where all else fails - where the underwater begins to lap over the edge of the sink and I lose all track of the initial edge that I was looking for - the edge of the dream that I am trying desperately to see if it bubbles back up to the surface, that it may find a way of adapting the edge into a field and thus begin to unravel and begin to write anew - there is an edge of frustration at losing the bath I wanted. I must have had too much of a mix of cold in the water.

Oh well, that is the way of the world.

"In order to Live in Process, we simply must participate in our lives" (Schaef, 1998, p. 99).

No, it isn’t. It has nothing to do with the world, it is a dream I am trying to recall. It doesn’t want to pop back in, it seems to want to remain on the outside and be called back into question

as soon as I go away

"Sometimes," I said, "I write poems, but there is always something wrong with them. They never quite say what I mean them to say, and then I think of how many good poems there are already in the world, and I realize that what I’ve written
doesn't add very much to what's already been said. So I just throw the poems in the stove. That way, at least, they will be useful. In their own small way they will help to keep me warm. So I try to make use out of something useless.” (Wright, 2001, p. 233)

I enjoyed the sentiment of this previous quote, to make use out of our trials

In the artistic,

nothing wasted, all of use in different and varied ways, that words can add to the worlds good.

I look at my trees this way. Today my neighbour said that's what

"I tell my son, just keep on planting, I say to him." We had a long conversation about all the trees he has planted on his property. "I know all of them, all of them have a story. You see that one over there, that was driven over, that's why there's that hole there, I've had to replant them many times.”

82

A long process of doing the word check and thus half (re)reading, (re) entering the spaces forgotten, (before this now) and how different it always is, and how much the same. A here/not here. Through (re)creating (in mind, on paper) - these spaces

82 Mount Arrowsmith suddenly looms
orange- pinked behind
hallowed
forcing
foregrounding
an image of memory
Often hidden in cloud swirls or deep gray mass
now and then surfacing into reality
I know it's there
Now once more
hidden
do change. It is making concrete or rather giving 
form to formlessness

An aporia made transparent?

"No, you are not French Canadian"

the confusion of such a statement in a young boy's mind

I always see that on the winding street up to our house. I was maybe 8-10 years old, when the confusion of "NO! you are NOT French-Canadian" struck. As we are of French decent, and I was born in Canada which part wasn't French, or Canadian for that matter? I was totally confused with this (s)p( )ace of being. It was precisely the hybrid (Bhabha, 1990a) that I wasn't (apparently) allowed to be, even though my family name is French and I was steeped in family history, able to tell little friends with great glee the rhymed off statement of my Great Great Great Great Great Great,

("yes, that's five greats!")

Grandfather being guillotined,

that I was able to flick this off, as a young boy,

probably as drawn to the slight cache of such a statement as I was to

"My mother's 102",

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83 I see this at a precise bend in the road, as it steeply winds to the right outside the driveway of my grade five ‘girlfriend’ (a story for another day, of the competition with my best friend when he informed me that he too thought she was beautiful! yes another day of memory, also large, also at this spot in the road, a road I still walk daily to catch the bus to the University).

There is no person that I remember at this spot, simply the statement’s memory sits there. Is there a tangled web to my young passion? Did I believe she would think less of me as a French Canadian?

All the confusion of youth that plays out in so many places, at so many moments. The autobiographical moments of pedagogy that we can (re)live. To search out the meaning inherent in these (s)p( )aces that can be opened by the fact that we write.

84 The voice of the excited child in grade two trying to make sense of all the various numbers, times and events of a life.
not understanding the consequence of such numbers all in a row in grade two, what they really meant, as I sat in the back of the Hillman that our Mother drove, or maybe it was the Vanguard, (I remember both these cars with great affection, the Hillman had a fuzzy brown interior like the soft coat of a teddy bear, whereas the Vanguard was a good solid vinyl white, with red seats. I used to run my teeth on the window sill, creating long jagged edges of peeled auto body paint, its silver metallic unearthing an elusive attraction, as we drove along, free,

\[ \text{(in those days before seat belts)} \]

to roam the back and challenge my sister to duels

\[ \text{that lush fur of gray/blue dust,} \]

to pour over seats,

our bodies comfortable

\[ \text{a smoothness} \]

firm to sit and play on, the seats, red and white with a piping to separate two colours (that hybrid place that allowed two colours to sit side by side and yet be separated and distinct).

\[ \text{Hybridity spreading} \]

S.\(^85\) expressed the notion of racism coming from our deep seated fear of hybrid races, that it is in the pureness of lineage that we feel protected. That it is the loss of this fear that leads to real non-racist being in this world.

\(^85\) A fellow graduate student, from the Maldives at the southern tip of India, who drove back from a CSSE Conference in Edmonton with Sam Adu-Poku (now Dr.) and me. We talked to pass the time.

There was quiet when we were simply speeding along determined to do the trip in 13 hours. After a hushed silence S. said quietly, "There's a bear." "What?" I say, "I saw a bear," she said again, "sitting on the side of the road." I turn the van around in disbelief and sure enough there scuttled the bulbous body of a young black bear. The excitement in the van amongst my companions, Sam from Ghana and S. was palpable. This was 'real', we were seeing black bears,
Who is to say?

One is colour bound and the other country.

France, England, Spain, Egypt, all places my father’s family had lived since being hounded out of their native land by Napoleon's forces for Republican rule.

(There are losses on all sides.)

*The Republic of France is not interested in 'owning' their past, an unjust execution of many of its citizens by Guillotine.*

**Autobiographical Notes**

My fifth great grandfather was executed for not being able to produce the papers for his Town house, called La Maison Noble d'Esconge in the ancient town of Bourg. This was a simple revolutionary pretext for stealing land from under him. He was a wealthy land owner and a nobleman with vineyards and other properties. In 1792 he sent his son away as the area was no longer safe with the following words as remembered by his son, some 60 years later, in 1854:

> Be thankful to providence, my son, that I have had the forethought to put my estates into such a good condition of cultivation and produce as that they are now in, rather than to have obtained for myself an easy income by investments in the Clergy or Municipal Loans or other funds of a similar nature, for I foresee they are going to abolish and destroy all those institutions; but land, at least, they cannot deprive us of, and we shall always be able to live on its produce.' Alas! my unfortunate parent did not foresee that scarce two years would pass away before "they" would incriminate him without cause, and behead him, to possess themselves of his property. (p. 7)\(^86\)

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\(^86\) de Cosson, Alexandre-Antoine. (1854). *Description of my models.* Printed by G. Witt, 7 Earl's Court, Leicester Square, London. In this publication he describes the three models he fabricated from memory, he says "I began and completed them in from fourteen to fifteen months' time, being in my 84th and 85th years." He introduced the pamphlet thus "these Models represent with great accuracy, though on a very small scale, the four Estates that belonged to my Father,
My fourth great grandfather, his son, fought against Napoleon as a Major in the National Guard with the Royalist Army that the French Princes, the brothers of King Louis XVI were assembling at Coblenz. This futile attempt to ward off the obvious resulted in his capture and imprisonment at Calais where he escaped to England to join the Émigrés.

Why do I include this interlude of family autobiography? A patriarchal one at that! Because, I believe, it sheds light on my father's comment, not to excuse it. But to allow for a broader interpretation. A (his)torical (con)text

"No! You are not French Canadian."

My fourth great Grandfather managed to make a great deal of money selling potions to the still wealthy aristocrats who had escaped France with wealth in hand. He returned to France in his 80s to buy back the confiscated land, only to find it broken up into too many small holdings with extensive property damage and destroyed buildings.

He settled instead in Saint-Denis close to Amboise, in a house called the l'Hermitage where he died an old man of 98 leaving three children. It was his faithful daughter Julia who transcribed his autobiography while caring for him in his old age and who inhabited the house well into my second great grandfather's time.

Why stray into/onto paternal family history?

the site of the body,

the site where danger lurks,

where fears dwell

Monsieur le Chevalier François Honoré de Cosson, who was put to death by order of the Revolutionary Tribunal, established at Bordeaux during the Reign of Terror, under Robespierre."
And he goes on "My Father's property was then confiscated and sold-to my loss, I being his only son. My children having been to visit my native country, and seen the Estates which had belonged to their Grandfather, I conceived the idea of endeavoring to represent them on so small a scale, so perfectly and minutely do I recollect them."
we inhabit a thread connecting the pedagogies of our bodies,
our storied lineage coupled by the fibers of our bodies
to past Grandmothers (fathers)
stories flow through the viscera
the very bones
deep deep places
of hidden meaning that a slow burn of a life-time
find one strand at a time. 

as we strive to define ourselves to each age,
sometimes ravaged by the will of a time,
at others able to prosper and be successful in a new land.

My Father’s "No! you are not French Canadian," was a reaction to western Canada’s stereotypical understanding of what that term meant. To be called a “French Canadian” had

"We all carry with us in our bodies, minds and hearts the memories of those moments in our lives which changed us forever." (Bailey, 1997, p. 137)
derogatory connotations. French Canadians were looked down upon. My father, a business man on the edge of a new country, in the early 1950s was not a 'French Canadian,' but rather, an upper-class, Cambridge educated entrepreneur, who realized early on that his hybridity, his French Connection, if you will, must be placed in the correct context.

"No! I am not French Canadian!"
"No! I am not French Canadian!"
"No! I am not French Canadian!"
"No! I am not French Canadian!"
"No! I am not French Canadian!"

Until there is a silence in these words that fall on deaf ears

My father said these words to protect me from what he perceived as prejudice towards a group of individuals. The underlying prejudice found in, "No! I am not French Canadian!" was only successfully thrown off after the success of the 'Quiet Revolution' of the 1960s, when hippies and drugs were the curse of my parents very sober concepts of propriety.

My long hair and denim shorts held together by threads.

Patched of a hundred colours
my mother touched with trepidation
knowing their disintegration potential
after washing

another thread would do the trick!88

88 Found in a vending box, an almost two year old section of newspaper with an article of a young, upwardly mobile 'Hollywood Actor' from Vancouver who had his van broken into and his belongings stolen. The headline, "Actor Loses His Childhood" caught my eye. How can you lose your childhood? I wondered. His journals and childhood photographs were stolen and he
I loved to sew those shorts,
with no denim left,
only patch upon patch
that held a fabric lost
in patterned chaos.

In my mind I still have those shorts
somewhere
boxed
hidden
in a vast domain of past

Is it as simple as education?

That if we were succeeding as a nation, to educate in the broadest possible terms, we would be addressing these issues and finding answers.

that lush fur of gray/blue dust

I manipulate the text .............

was offering a (re)ward to retrieve those precious wor(l)ds, those wor(l)ds that transcribe us – him, enough to know he has lost his childhood. To ask "Why?" as Maxine Greene (1995) would have us do, as she calls for a (re)imagining of education in the broadest possible way. She calls for "... breaking free, a leap, and then a question" (p. 6).

Who are those who steal a life?
a future?
in senseless damaging action.
The racist, homophobic, school yard bully.
I read Philip Taylor’s (1996) ‘Doing Reflective Practitioner Researcher in Arts Education,’ not reflection on action, he says, but most importantly in action. He finds support in Shön (1983) whom he quotes,

When someone reflects in action, he (sic) becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case. (p. 28)

February 20, 2002

I am so frustrated .... (A long section detailing my frustrations and anger over obligations I have undertaken as a graduate student) ...

... and so the circle keeps pulling and there is no answer, only the frustration of it, so once again I say breathe deeply; yes I will go back to the drawing board and see where it goes. To allow myself to move through it. To allow the healing of the breath;.... slowly let go and not respond right away. To somehow find the positive in what I feel is a sea of negativity, as the rain falls and Jean tells me ...........

I want to throw it all out, it seems to get worse and worse, not better. Yesterday I was ... Oh this is useless. I am supposed to find that cool place of detached serendipity to allow myself to move forward into a place of positive work on my self. What is all this (re)telling me besides I want to escape this self-mandated process?

This is constricting. This does not allow freedom. I keep having visions of L’hirondell\textsuperscript{89} and La Part Dieu,\textsuperscript{90} places where I felt immense peace, where I felt like I was connecting to a larger whole, not being pulled apart by the mish mash of it all.

The role of imagination is not to resolve,
not to point the way,
not to improve. It is to awaken,
to disclose the ordinarily unseen,
unheard, and unexpected.\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{89} My family and I spent an eight month sojourn here in the heart of the French country side, 1995-96.

\textsuperscript{90} A lay-order of Christians who provide retreat centers throughout the world, started in France by Father Eberhard in the 1960s. I worked on a retreat site building walls for the room’s block when I was 18 and have been back to visit as a cousin of mine is a member of the order. It is a profoundly peaceful place.
I can take the dog for a walk in the rain and feel the cool air on my cheeks and generally breathe in this wondrous day as the books pile up and I feel the chill of no heating in the house. My conservation measure is 16 degrees Celsius from 8:00 - 4:15 in the afternoon. Sometimes even I, the champion of "put on a sweater" to my kids, feels the cold freezing my toes. I squirm and find another sweater to keep the fingers going. I have three closed down rooms that are also part of the conservation and yes, our fuel bills are lower.

A long conversation with Jean as I try using the computer to connect at the same time as I write and low and behold it works.\textsuperscript{92}

\textit{And so we go on...}

February 21, 2002

I got to the meeting at about 1:00 and found a relaxed group that was sitting .... (more graduate obligations imputed as a record of action taken throughout the day).... Once again the computers are not working or rather the internet connection from my office is not working. How many weeks now have we been doing this?

February 22,

I write every day in my head. As I walk I write. As I go to sleep I write. As I drive I write, and it always sounds so much better than when I start writing on the keyboard. However, as a Native Indian Canadian writer on CBC said the other day, "Turn the computer on." To her that was a revelation after months of a dry spell where she was praying and asking her ancestors for advice on how to move forward, and she literally heard a voice that said,

"Turn your computer on and maybe I can help you."

\textsuperscript{91} Greene (1995), p. 28.

\textsuperscript{92} We had just installed high speed internet and I was doubtful of its ability to function as advertised.
How is it so different, this writing in one’s head? It’s true, as soon as I sit down to write it gets jammed, and all those lyrical words of wonder that had been flowing seem to dissipate.

As I walked this morning I thought of all the organizing I have been doing to help myself write. I cleared the back room to have a space to dedicate to writing. I cleared my office at UBC and filed all those reams of papers that forever sit on my desk there. And here I am back at my desk in office at home. This is where I most like to be. My original room in this house; the one that I was first given. My father’s dressing room and my room combined, with a magnificent view of the garden, an eagle’s eye view as the dominant feature, and my desk sits right at the window that opens out to this vista of nature.

Today it rains and the stream is filling, a torrent of white foam, a rushing flow rising as the rain continues. The sound also amplified, sometimes I don’t hear the constant rushing, although it is one of those things I really do notice when I go up to Denman, the silence of those days is always startling. Here we have a constant rush in the background, a sort of white noise that cuts out all other surface noises, we seldom hear traffic except for the occasional blare of sirens and heavy trucks.

So back to these spaces I have been working on to help me write. The desk in the back room is now filled up with papers. However, I know I could never write in there. It was an image I had of strewn papers and books, and being able to leave them there undisturbed from one day to the next, that was most attractive.

*We believe action-orientated inquiry can be used to identify, study and solve real life problems. Education experiences should provide students with opportunities to make personal and contextual connections between their own experiences and significant everyday situation.*

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As I look down, there is a heron walking slowly up the stream, one can feel its immense concentration, I run for the camera, (it doesn't want to work). I watch as the heron climbs down the bank and stares intently into the cascading rushing water and suddenly strikes. Walking away from the bank in its long beak a flapping fish, about 6 inches of rainbow trout, the same species we used to catch as kids and fry up as a real treat and testament to country living. I look again and the heron is gone, the fishing trip over, the need to move on more important, but it will be back.

That was a treat

feeds into the theme

it's all here in front of me

I simply need to become more aware

and allow the process to unfold as it should

it's about attention

To have an impact on our students is what we as teachers are interested in. We strive to have them see, through our eyes, a life worth living. We are called to the content that is behind, in front of, incorporated in, an art work, we wish the transcendence to be life affirming and transformative. But the engagement must be there, there must be an interaction on behalf of the viewer, (our students as we teach) they must be drawn into that liminal space, drawn into that place that has meaning outside of self, and object found in-between

in a hybrid space

that exists only as we exist with and in contact with

the object

the event,
The arts, as Denis Donoghue says, are on the margin, "and the margin is the place for these feelings and intuitions which daily life doesn't have a place for and mostly seems to suppress .... With the arts, people can make a space for themselves and fill it with intimations of freedom and presence" (cited in Greene, 1995, p. 129).

I went to a Faculty meeting yesterday and gave my official 'peer advisor' opinion about the need for offices and adequate desks for grad students. However, I personally feel a change can be a positive development for all concerned, as the bottom line is, we do not use the space well. This can be a win for all.

Graduate students as part of the process of change.  
(sounds good to me)

Yesterday, as I drove to this meeting through the Stanley Park causeway there on the left hand side of the road my attention was drawn to movement...........

a young girl in black
is swirling
throwing her arms
in the air

She had a walkman on and was dancing in the pouring rain, swirling and twirling as she leapt down the pavement - there was pure joy in her movement and exuberance in her step. It looked wonderful. I think of the Canadian artist Janet Cardiff's (2001) walking-story art, her use of movement of an observer-participant to gain entry into her art, a place in which we become engaged viewer/participants. We cannot simply observe, we must be in attention.

94 It is necessary that we engage in inquiry which calls on an understanding of our whole signifying beings. (Neilsen, 1998 p. 201)
To experience a Cardiff work such as "A Large Slow River" (2001) one dons a pair of head phones attached to a walkman. A tape commences and we are invited by the speaker to walk with her through a many storied landscape. These stories are literal, in that we walk out of the gallery into a garden setting, tracing footfalls with the speaker, and metaphorical, as she engenders past illusions and a magic of events real or imagined, that thread a narrative of the present with past and future, as we walk with the artist through her enlivened imagination. But that is it! We are walking with the artist. Our bodies are alive to the textu(r)al reality of understanding Cardiff's art through our bodies. This is what Lynn MacRitchie (1998), in her chapter adroitly titled The Sincerity of Event realizes, when she talks of performance artists "allying themselves with a tradition of expectation that going live would allow their work access to areas of experience only available within the lived moment" (p. 22).

These thoughts reminded me of our own performance work, as captured on '4 Corners.' It was when we invited the audience to cut into our performance site that we all felt a powerful moment of disjuncture, it blurred the lines between us and them and brought us to a heightened moment of interaction. Similarly when Patti, Rita and I (de Cosson, et al., 2002, August) presented our new hybrid work95 in New York, we realized that it was the performative that was missing. I wrote in my research journal, August 24, 2002, after the presentation, “our session went well – (I think) – it isn’t as dynamic as the performance.” I continue to think about this....

Through engagement in the practice of a visual art, we may well be predisposed to conceive of research and writing as a practice—a creative practice with which we live—and which has the potential to inform and subtly transform our living (Montgomery-Whiche, 1997, p. 226).

A
(new-found-place-of-being-in)

95 Hybrid in the sense that our latest 'performance' now stood as a series of i-movies that we individually and/or collaboratively made from the (re)searching process we carried out on the video tapes from '4 Corners.' We had created reinterpretations of the work through the manipulation of digital imagery using the computer and i-movie editing programs to (re)examine our past performance site. We each created new lenses to (re)vision the work. They are hybrid as they ride together joined by common parenthood – us / performance / video-tape / (re)editing and cutting, birthed by new processes to becoming-a-new.
performative moment makes sense, it is not some abstract space - a theoretical reference. Schön (1983) is now a concrete person. Horizons expand and meaning is made manifest as words keep tumbling out to capture rapture in discovery-a-new.

In this multi-layered world of the post-modern, a term so thoroughly used up, but still new and threatening to others, that in its hybridity it is both feared as an unknown intellectual game, and as a term already consumed with

*that lush fur of gray/blue dust*

Throw it away for over use, for simply not reflecting the reality of our lived experience of today, however, we do understand its use, we see *in* it a term loaded with cultural baggage.

*A new millennium, we move into an age of Internet(ed) possibilities. The so called ‘information highway,’ only coined by Vice President Gore within a presidential term, old hat to us in the western hemisphere who can talk of LAN connections and fiber optics, watch ‘real’ TV - as though there isn’t real life happening out there – (an adventure on an island to see who is left who will collect the money?) As though there aren’t ‘real’ people in the third world - in Africa, dying ‘real’ deaths from starvation - malnutrition.*

*This complacency must be challenged, this hegemonic first world of talk talk talk must be (re)connected to ‘real’ life - the world of ‘real’ learning that includes empathy for others less fortunate.*

96 Schön’s notion of ‘reflection-in-action’ is important to many researchers working within performative inquiry. Its relationship to praxis, how theory cannot exist without practice, that the two are intertwined in a perpetual dance for (and in) understanding, to come to a point of ‘interstanding.’
not watching idiotic-mindless shows, on a saturated TV network in hundred-channel-universes, 
blatant empty rhetoric of stations that seem to not care, 
as the population doesn't care.

Or do care, 
do horribly care 
but find it so difficult to do anything about.

The rhetoric of poverty marches 
turned on themselves 
as the guilty ones.

that lush fur of gray/blue dust

How have we got to this consumer nothingness, this consumer blindness?
With 'Buy Nothing Days', a one day event once a year, 
as though to buy nothing should be so novel. 
Why must we shop every day?

Why are the malls the only place of community for our young people?

that lush fur of gray/blue dust

I have come to the conclusion that there is no way to do 
anything for mankind other than through art. In order to do this 
I need an educational concept; I need a concept of perception theory; and I must negotiate ... The teacher-pupil relationship must be changed, eliminating the idea that the teacher had knowledge and that the student must simply sit and listen ... This means the elimination of learning and teaching as institutionalized forms of behavior. In an interdisciplinary school
the system of teaching and learning has to be an oscillating one. (Joseph Beuys, cited, De Domizio Durini, 1997, pp. 42-46)

Where does this leave me?
no further along,
feeling left in the cold

ideas that had been,
now dried up and left to tend to themselves.97

97 This is in reference to the fact that I can write in a ‘moment’ what might take hours, days, weeks, months even, to edit, cut, slash, tear into new orders of understanding. For instance, the section you just read on poverty and a TV(ed) universe exists as a muddled text that is gushed to paper - I can know its meaning through the reading but to get it readable for others is another story. It is there that the work lies.

I begin to understand better my repeated use of the phrase, that lush fur of gray/blue dust, a constant reference to the mold that is all encompassing, that has already consumed by the time we see a bloom of dust on the surface. So it is in writing, we write before we know – in knowing.

One of the premises of this writing is Goldberg’s (1986, 1990) sense of learning through the act of writing – (her monkey-mind writing). We come to understand ourselves through this process. Writing needs to be honored, it has to find its place in dialogue with the paper. The paper

This paper (you read from /with / in)

forms itself
by being written
as it is being written,
there is no other way.
Just as

there is no other way to build a sculpture.

I have ideas that sit on the periphery of the doing.

It is a praxis of event, the performative moment of doing, in which we learn, in which we find the answers to our questions, in which we find the questions to our answers. It is the continual flow in research of being, in being-becoming, that draws us forward and allows for growth. I again quote Cixous (1993), “writing is what you cannot know before you have written: it is preknowing and not knowing, blindly with words” (p. 38).
February 23, 2002

I am not feeling like I am tapping into the energy I need to write, to get down in and feel the flow through my arms, to connect directly with my muse, to feel the pulse of life come through my arms as though propelled forward with a mind of their own. 

There are different thoughts I want expressed but find the head full – nothing seems to want to take hold

February 24, 2002

You see if I don’t write I will be caught in doing other things. It is always the case. A rule that I hear all the time, you must write before you can have anything. I have a faith in that. If I simply sit and wait nothing will happen.

I open “Navigators,” Theresa Jenoure (2000), a wonderful rumination on jazz pedagogy and curriculum. In it she says,

Jazz improvisation is a system of spontaneous composing. It is process orientated and requires ideas be instantly organized, which does not allow a return to previously stated ideas in order to undo them, only opportunities to expound upon them. (p.15)

Although I have no idea what that whole will be, I know I must write every day, that my obligation to this is paramount, it is the only way to see it at work, as so much happens so quickly and the changes are out of the bag before I have time to reflect on what it means, knowing also that that is not part of the problem.

The Heron Calls

(to rework some pervious days meanderings)
I have often thought about this phenomenon which occurs so frequently in the lives of all men that we almost fail to notice it anymore. How often have I had a question on my mind, and picked a book at random off the shelf, often one I have never heard of before, yet found the answer I seek within its covers? (Pears, 1998, p. 619)

February 25, 2002

Now I have a headache. So I am going to have tea and take an aspirin.

A different view. I sit in the dining room and look north up the mountain. Sometimes, when the air is clean we get a clear view up towards Cyprus Bowl, not that we can see it as the trees are there, however on those perfectly clear days, when it has snowed the night before, it can be spectacular.

My father calls me, “Alex,” “Yes,” I answer, he calls me again, his hearing not what it used to be, “We just watched a Heron catch a fish” he tells me from below. I head down the stairs so he doesn’t have to come up, he’s 91 years old and has lived in this house for 55 years. “Did you see that?” he continues, “In all my time, and all the Herons’ I’ve watched in the stream, I have never seen one catch a fish before.” I tell him that I too have watched this occurrence unfold, however, it turns out we have watched different events. I saw the Heron catch a fish down by the bridge, he saw it catch a fish up very close to their garden apartment windows. He makes a perfect imitation of the bird tossing back its neck, as it throws the catch down its throat. It is truly amazing how they do it.

I was awed by it, but I don’t think I realized I had never seen it happen before. I think my father is right. It was the first time I saw a Heron catch a fish in the garden,

and we saw different occurrences of the same phenomenon.
February 26, 2002

Looked after my mother this morning, took her out. We went to a plant store she likes in Edgemont Village and she talked about many things: the last time she was there and how comfortable it is to be driven. Funny stuff. As Jean reminded me yesterday, we don’t know how much longer we have with them. We need to take full advantage, (attentively, I might add).

I hooked her up to her old school in England via the Internet.......... the marvels of technology are almost beyond their comprehension as is ours to fighting a war (her youth was war, she served her country in MI6 [British secret service] she often returns there now).

On my desk is

“woman is the path --- dancing”

A note to myself to remember to write about that young girl I saw dancing in Stanley Park. When I first read the note I didn’t recall its exact location and was instead simply moved by the words in isolation.

woman is the path

The sun pours down. I get ready to take Jaala for a walk. I need to take advantage of the day’s beauty and also feel that I have written something. I woke with the nagging question that I

100 I can see it clearly, even today as I sit trying to make sense of these collected writings. She was twirling on the side of the road as I left the bridge and entered the causeway.

I look up and realize the fog that has been hemming me in for the past 24 hours has lifted and it is now simply a dull and overcast day.
am not getting anywhere. However, a clear voice said, yes, this is exactly what you are supposed to be doing, gathering data to work from.

I am allowing the filtering of the text, through my body, to acquire meaning as I venture forward through all that it is that I do.

I want to stay inside the process. (To stay inside the hermeneutic of it.) Is there any validity...?... oh stop! I cannot stand it when I get off on those tangents. Ma was intrigued this morning as we spent time together using the Internet, what to me is almost a given, is of course (extra)ordinary to her.

*Carl is giving a concert March 2. Maybe Jean will be able to go ....*

*I am going to sleep for over an hour or so and see if I feel better*

So I slept, does it help?\(^{101}\)

No I feel worse,

sort of stuck in a hole of my own making,

this text that has no middle, beginning, nor end, only the endless typing that could hold me forever.

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\(^{101}\) Yes, sleeping does help. I know I have to go through the transition from sleep to work - it may take an hour or more, but in the long run, yields more productive writing. I have learnt this over the years: there is a certain point at which there is no point going further, and that if I'm really tired to lie down, sleep and then go through the hassle of waking and beginning the whole thing again. There is a refreshment that takes over and my brain *does* feel like it can think, that it clears the cobwebs and fuzziness away. I see it as a renewal process. The enemy of this process is time, without a feeling of limitlessness in regards to time there is always the fear that it is going to get squeezed and run out. Of course limitless time is an illusion too, yet I cling to this idea.

To allow the process of writing to have its needed space, I try to have no other assignations, (of course this is close to impossible, however, Jean has repeatedly sent me away to Denman Island where at least I have a chance to sit with myself and the computer). Forming and (re)forming, through constant reflective inquiry a changed self-a-new.
“All problems come back to the question of ‘time’” (Weil, 1956, p. 216).

[Point when it all feels useless, when collapse is imminent, when the idea of staying within it (re)routes and no longer seems feasible.]

“I hope to stimulate a kind of silent conversation that may move readers to discover what they have to say once they attend to their own situations, to the actualities of their lives ... Consciousness always has an imaginative phase, and imagination, more than any other capacity, breaks through the ‘inertie of habit’ (Dewey, 1934, p. 272) ... the classroom situation most provocative of thoughtfulness and critical consciousness is the one in which teachers and learners find themselves conducting a kind of collaborative search, each from her or his lived situation ... Once we can see our givens as contingencies, then we may have an opportunity to posit alternative ways of living and valuing and to make choices.” (Greene, 1995, pp. 21-23)

As I tried to explain to my eldest son's

“What you writing, Dad?”

“Oh I'm trying to write inside the aporia.”

A blank look:

(a response reading I often hear/see)

Trying to stay inside the aporia:
“I can’t get to it,”

wanders and meanders to reach a point,

an understanding

an understanding

(a comprehensive over-view,

a meta view)

“there is some sense to this.” 102

So I will head out

for a brisk

walk

#

5 103

“As we confront our cherished dualisms and jump into our wholeness, we can live our

process ... It (Dualism) shorthands reality and misses the essence. ”

(Schaef, 1998, p. 126)

102 It isn’t that I simply want a litany of words - there is sometimes an inkling of what it is I am looking for. There is the narrative, there is the story, there is the reason for the words, they have a function, their story weaves its way out and onto the page, the meaning only becoming clear as I fight the text into submission. As I continue the ‘reading’ hour after hour, day after day, the meaning oozing out as though held by elastic to itself. There is a real feeling that it doesn’t want to come out, or that I don’t wish to understand. A half truth, as I know the commitment involved in finding the answers, the hours of going over and over to find, understand, and decode meaning.

103 Of course there were many more. But in this context of creating a framework, using numbers helps in the feeling of sureness of intent. And a reminder that 5 was a critical number in the curatorial forenote.

The numbers stand as an ordering device and order is what we need here.
Jung's Process of Individuation, seeing the differences by dividing the opposites and then seeing there are no opposites is something I remember seeing as a very young man. I realized chaos was simply reordered order. This realization gave me a great sense of satisfaction, which lasted a long time, settled many questions, and liberated me to do what it was that I needed to do.

I am
(researching)
the process
of my own doing

"In the interpretive bricoleur's world, invention is not only the child of necessity, it is the demand of restless art. The methods of qualitative research thereby become the 'invention,' and the telling of the tales—the representation—becomes the art" (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p. 1061).

Garden Memories

I'm looking at the tree I have recently topped. A mountain ash that is growing out of an old stump, one of the three first growth stumps that we have, that I keep thinking I will resurrect from the ivy and other stuff that clings and binds –

... and I'm not even sure that it is really what I want ...

but to be up in the tree, sawing and cutting in this brilliant sun is what it's about. To feel my body working, to feel the aching muscles and know I am pushing this aging carcass to move a little further. My father's words help:

"There is enough to do right here. You don't need anything else.
You can stay busy just keeping up with the needs of the garden."
Oh how right he is.

Always the pressing need to keep up with the writing.

that I must write this

I must see myself

in Process —

that it is in the doing

that I will find

Gadamer's (1965/1986) horizon

and my being becoming.

Climbing the old trunk, to get to the new tree that is growing out of the old stump, I am brought face to face with the memory of one of my tree forts, a platform really that I had built at the top of a second growth Douglas Fir that had grown out of a first growth stump. It was about fifty feet high.

I vividly remember the climb, and the large branches that let me slip from one to the other in a sort of soft sweeping fashion, as I descended, jumping from layer to layer.

My parents were away and I had been climbing this tree more than usual. A new tree was an adventure, unexplored, always a treat. At that time we had at least half a dozen really big trees in our garden, most of which I had climbed, although there were some I was scared of, their size intimidating me, or I simply hadn’t gotten around to their challenge. This particular one was very close to the house, so this may have had something to do with it, knowing my mother was never that happy with my tree climbing exploits. There was, however, always the lure of the top - that exhilarating view as I broke through the upper layer and saw the sea and the ships in the harbour. That view that was closed to us below, in our dipped topography, our streamed landscape, our slightly colder lot surrounded as it was in the towering trees of our neighbours.

(My mother's words, "it's always 5 degrees colder at home because of the stream.")

... And so it happened. My parents are in Mexico on their annual holiday (once a year they would go for 10 days for "the nearest to a European experience and half the cost," as my
They loved going. We children (my two sisters and I) were usually left with a nanny, “black beetle” being one who spoke no English. We were less than kind, bouncing around, refusing to do anything that she asked us to do, after all we couldn’t understand! but we knew, oh yes we knew. I can still see us at the top of the stairs, singing, “You can’t catch us, nya-nya-nya-nya-naa” (a sort of sing song, combined with dancing around and around). It was one of those truly mean things that children do with no idea of the pain caused. I feel the guilt to this day. (One of those things I would wish to heal if I had the chance).

YA but back to the tree

... with my arms still sore from the work I have just done, hanging on to the top branches to cut the Mountain Ash down to size. It is taking sun from the pond, another project on the go, a resurgence, in a sense. To get it to fill with water. The growing Mountain ash takes sun light from my newly planted Gunnera Plant, that in twenty years can be huge but not without sun.

I am working at getting this tree down to size and in so doing I am also remembering the platform I built at the top of the 50 foot tree that used to be there. In this sense, these flowing memories are the footnotes to my life: they recall one on top of another, the learning in the garden, the love of the land, the ease of being in nature, the joy surrounding the forest’s call.

We’ve had numerous bears in our garden, the very thought of which terrifies Jean. However, for me it talks of our closeness to nature and our connection to our pioneer mothers and fathers and our first nations sisters. It reminds me of the legacy we must work to preserve, so easily destroyed, never to be re grown.

The first growth stumps remind me of the immense size of the trees and forests that were removed, ancient cedars that would have dwarfed our house. The vastness of the forest floor can be visualized, imagining the stumps grown to full size, our house nestled between towering wonders. Just having the remnants of these ancient forests stirs my soul.

To work at clearing the growth that blocks the stumps visibility is part of an ecological pedagogy that I am practicing. My hands must be dirty. I must partake of scrubbing the land: as reminder that my work may help us save the planet from ourselves.

104 So called because she dressed in black. She was a widow, I now realize, and coming from Europe it was the fashion, but we thought it was very strange and a little scary.
106 My sister bought a similar small plant after I did. Hers is over 8 feet high, while mine has hardly changed in height. Telling me clearly it needs more sun.
I had a chair up there (in my tree-fort). I sat on a platform, no bigger than 1.5 m x 1.5 m (my tree-fort) and I sat and I had the most stunning view. It was an absolutely amazing thing - to simply look – to stare out over the tree tops, at boats and birds and see/sea for miles.

I lived it.

I can still feel the exhilaration of the looking breathing freedom.

My parents came home and were horrified at the height of my sitting. I was told to take it down. I was 7 or 8 years old.

"Living in Process means that each person and each moment is unique in itself while being embedded in the entire process of the All" (Schaef, 1998, p. 78).

So much learning has happened for me in this garden.

I almost drowned when I was four or five

A pouring with rain day\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{107} As I write this, my parents head out for a walk. My mother is shoeing my father ahead of her, as she doesn’t want him to knock her over, as he has the dog on a leash, and the dog is a nut case and jumps excitedly around and around and does indeed pose a threat to my mother’s precarious balance. Off they go with over 55 years of marriage. What is amazing is their ability to still be
My arms hurt, maybe I aught to get on with some more of the tree work, could pull out the ivy - get right down to the root of the problem however there is always the fear that it may not be what I want.

(This computer screen upon which I write my daily journaling is so much better than my old one. Even with the screen illumination turned all the way down, I can see it. In fact all the way down is about as good as all the way up was with the old one.)

I need to do more work. Although this is work, I want to work in the garden and get a bit further with the tree –

my arms are sore. IT ALMOST GETS HARD TO WRITE ...

Am I anywhere near staying inside the process??

(I was going into U.B.C. today when I thought, “no, I can’t. I need to stay here. I have enough to do here.”)

YES I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR THE SPEAKER TODAY, BUT WHAT HAPPENS THEN IS I GET NOTHING DONE AND THE DAY HAS PASSED AGAIN, AND THEN I am upset with myself.

I need to let the writing rip every day.

It is the doing (writing) that counts.

(I thought I might go to a film tonight, see ‘Lord of the Rings’ before it disappears from the big screen.)

I am getting tense from this writing.

I need to let go, stop, do some stick dragging. I will do a little more before I stop for tea. Jaala comes over to give me a lick, to try to get me to take her for a walk.

The pedagogy of my life, to live as though it were the last, most important, day.

there in everything they are doing, they are alive and even though she suffers from severe forgetfulness (old age dementia, or Alzheimer’s) she still has the ability to move forward.
Jaala gets very insistent. I will stop - we head off the porch and walk into the distant sunset

Gadamer's horizon beckons.

"You cannot know till you've lived with it."  

Did some more chopping at the top and started pulling vines and I catch the last rays of sunlight on the island and I realize white computers are not the best for grubby work, sort of like white floors, but we now know how temporary these units are. If I get five years from this I will be doing well. A few smears, what the hell? I bought this laptop computer so that I could do this, haul it around, report on daily activity, living activity. The sun moves. I can feel its shadow leaving me with a cold embrace as it descends behind the neighbours trees. I realize the sounds

108 "You cannot know till you've lived with it," was my mother’s constant refrain when I would try to hurry her to a decision, when I was organizing the building of their garden apartment 6 years ago. It used to drive me nuts, as I didn’t have the time. It just had to be done and we needed to make decisions now, not later. However, as I hung the assegai spears on Denman I realize I have spent 10 years getting to the project. I kept reconsidering where they aught to go. I have now put them up where I always knew they would go but needed "to live with" them in my mind to 'know'.

This notion of "having to live with" is similar to this process of writing a dissertation. I have been living with these texts for the last five years, the last three seriously. It is always forming and (re)forming in my mind. It is a fluid, changing thing, that morphs into new spaces as I continue. I am, at last, finishing a full read through, through the spell check that forces the (re) reading of the text.

I feel I have lived through/with it.

I 'feel' I know what I need to do.

I now see the beginning text that will talk to the building of a sculpture, the process of fluid movement through the various objects I am building with, never knowing, but always going forward, slowly circling into the centre of meaning with the work, pulling, squeezing, forcing. By this process things come alive that may otherwise sit disused, not connecting as threads are pulled tighter to stitch connections.

I see the metonymic pictures as headings: I see more expletory pictures within the text.

"The doing kind, not the knowing kind" (Salzberg, 2000, p. 181).

109 So called as the stream splits at the head of a small land mass that holds the trunk of a second growth Douglas fir. There is a bench that was part of one of my first installation works, Colour Curtain Walkway (1979), Alberta: Banff Centre.
The beauty of the world is the mouth of a labyrinth. The unwary individual who on entering takes a few steps is soon unable to find the opening. ... he walks on without knowing anything or hoping anything, incapable even of discovering whether he is really going forward or merely turning round on the same spot. But this affliction is as nothing compared with the danger threatening him. For if he does not loose courage, if he goes on walking, it is absolutely certain that he will finally arrive at the center ... Later he will go out again, but he will be changed, he will have become different ... Afterward he will stay near the entrance so that he can gently push all those who come near into the opening. (Weil, 1951, p. 164)
of the plane overhead meld with the stream and I feel good. My shoulders hurt, not hurt so much as feel used, working hard to pull out ivy. My mothers curse is the ivy.

“Once it takes hold it will envelop everything.”

Getting closer to the pond:

west coast sailing
small craft - racing
in protected bays

Boys I sailed with my father as a boy

The sea’s pedagogy
Teaches

Coasts connected

Generations feed by watered sea air

Excerpt from poem ‘Tony my Father, Tony my Friend.’ See appendix V.
**Branches radiate from a dark center:**

I have had the idea of resurrecting the pond for at least two years, in fact I took some video of the idea but I lost my enthusiasm as it was too daunting a task. The sun is fully gone now, although when looked at you can still see it in the trees, gleaming and making those branches radiate from a dark centre. I have started to reveal the trunk under the ivy. It is always difficult to go so far, you never know, disturbing the status quo on these things can dredge up anger from any corner. My mother may decide she doesn't like it, my wife may be appalled, however, in another respect, none of that matters. I want to see the trunk again, maybe find the St. Francis that we hid in an alcove half way up the trunk, an original sculpture by an artist friend of my mother.

I remember going to visit her, somewhere miles away, with the ensuing car ride stories of money and marriage problems, (it seemed our buying the sculpture had something to do with helping) and the stresses of having lived a hard life, (related to her husband not being a strong provider, “not like your father”) an underlying theme.

We would go out to get St. Francis fixed, (this seems to have happened more than once as the memory looms larger than a once off occurrence). I don’t think the sculpture had been fired. It may have even been a prototype for a piece she was going to do for my mother. There was always a little tweaking to do, or a fix-it from a fall, so it would remain away for a few months and then we would once again take the drive to retrieve it and then St. Francis would be back in the trunk, half way up in its nook, looking happy.

One year the vine’s over growing was so intense that St. Francis was lost, hidden beneath the growth.

*I half believe he is there now, as I clear I am expecting an appearance.*

The real test will be to see if I can find the nook that St. Francis sat in.

*I begin to cool off as the sweat condenses on my back and arms.*

The sun is almost completely gone now, sliding gently down to the center of the tree and any second will dip behind the house. I catch glimpses as I look up and try to type at the same time. There it goes, a white ball with lines of branches through it. I can still feel that glare which makes seeing anything else impossible and still a glory hole to fall into and slowly slowly gone and only a moment more - one more glance and it will be gone - still it hangs on and so do I expecting a flash of rays to be lost and a deep sigh - I breathe a deep satisfied good day feeling –
OH, so glad I didn't go to listen to ecology and pedagogy
that I lived it here in my own back yard where the miracle lives, were I can feel all. I must
do more of this, although they say it will rain tomorrow, another reason I wanted to get out
today, as the rain is not great for climbing trees.

Really the last glimmer
Dives with a burst
glimpsed as a spark - a shot and a move
I had forgotten how much the sun moves horizontally as it sets.
Hence it moved through the tree

I can feel us tipping

as we turn onwards

and the tree comes darker back

a fly comes next to my cheek and I really am getting cold.

The desire to capture is strong,
to stay with this moment of being,

this Merleau-Ponty (1970) truth,

that is being

here Now.

Or as Baba Ram Dass (1971) would remind us,

the simplicity

of a doing,

such as a racking of

leaves on a roof

Feeling an understanding

of what that could mean -
(realizing teaching is the same thing) -

to reach a moment of being

neither hot nor cold

just sings

To do with rhythms of sounds

a pulse of the stream

that doesn’t stop,

that roars on

and makes me feel good

inside

The heart soars;

and unity is one

felt deep

as writing warms me

My fingers reach for a Franck (1973) insight of being

for a pedagogy of existence

of being with a moment-world

in unity with trees as they bud

I can only attempt to keep up.
This work is only the tip of an ice berg and allows me to move into a doing, which is a clearing of space, to see more, to be aware of the first growth trees as a fundamental aspect of this space, this garden, and allows me to move to a place of being in it.

_of knowing it - of experiencing it_

On a level I have never reached before. If I can see the first growth stumps I will reveal an aspect that remains hidden, that will allow me to relive the spirits of this (s)p(l)ace - of this garden. I will release from the binds of the vines these ancestors that my father attempted (as a new immigrant with pioneering spirit) to chop away as eyesores and limiting his ability to tame the wilderness, (but soon gave up when he realized the magnitude of the task). If I can disrobe them I will unearth me, it will allow me to see more than I have ever seen here. I have my tree fort just behind me. It too needs work, I need to be here in the garden, it needs standing alongside the writing.

I must find the balance of the two, after all it isn't a duality, it is beyond dualities. I know that it is never this or that, although it is easy to get caught in this duality of thinking, a trap as it allows for no where to go, it doesn't allow for growth, the (un)duality allows me to move within, to a third space, to the other space, the space that isn't this or that.

An *Aoki*

**It is neither this / nor that**

I understand this now, it is neither this nor that. Sounds easy, but you have to feel it - you have to understand from a place that is deep, it allows that space to grow as it slips away and I can feel my butt getting numb from the cold seeping in, and the too long sitting. I want to go get a cup of tea, to move the bones out to another place.

Jaala looks at me and wags her tail. I wave to her - her tail goes faster -

'Yes' she seems to imply,

'come on, I want dinner, and it is getting cold.'

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111 An excellent paper that acts as a synopses of Aoki's thinking over many decades of teaching was presented at the 2001 AERA conference in Seattle, Washington, entitled _Re-reading metonymic moments with/in living pedagogy._
We are born with a sense of an internal balance that will tell us exactly what we need at each and every point in our lives if we only retain the ability to hear and to listen. (Schaeff, 1998, p. 139)

February 27,

Oh that marvelous sun of yesterday has left and a grayness returns which makes me feel gray. All that power I felt yesterday left and I feel abandoned and sad as though it were all pointless, which it may well be. But I will try to muster the strength to write as it is what I have said I will do. Without the writing there is nothing and if there is nothing, well what would I have to work with? So I am upstairs and I have a big folder next to me with all sorts of arts-based research papers. I know I need to delve more deeply into them, but boy am I fighting that one, I seem to have no desire to get into it at all. I will crack it, allow the page to open where it will and see what relevance may spill forth.

Hermeneutical self-creation

I need to take Jonathan Glover, the Oxford Philosopher, to heart when he talks of hermeneutical self-creation. His call for an emphasis on the role of the ‘inner story’, cited by Randall (1995) in his The Stories We Are: An Essay on Self Creation, “brings us to the heart of Glover’s thesis: ‘the interaction between self-creation and the inner story about the past’” (p. 42). This call to get to know our inner self can only be helped through a strenuous amount of self-reflective writing, mandated daily, to follow the process of a life as lived. A phenomenological approach to self-study. I grapple through the text of my own day, to come to terms with a pedagogy of learning through daily events, through frustrations of e-mail for instance, which may allow for spaces of movement, out from under their incessant continuance.112 I used to like e-mail as it allowed me not to be interrupted as telephones did. But now I loath turning the computer on and seeing the dreaded 17 unread messages in the last three hours or worse still, being thankful for the space in time.

112 I look for opportunities in the server connection delays to open myself in self-reflective prayer,
after a day or so, 48 unread messages. Now admittedly many are simply information only and do not need to be answered,

but many do.

it’s the sifting and seemingly endless parade of them.………

I zap off an answer

and on I go………

A Point of Extreme Disjuncture: Peril or Hope?

December 11, 2002.

A melt down last night as I continued with my editing schedule. I scrolled through the remaining 140 pages of this document. I got very depressed by it. “It’s too long,” I loudly chastised myself. I was having a bath to try to relieve the tension in my neck and back after five days of editing that seemed to get nowhere.¹¹³ “I cannot afford an hour a line! I play with the poetics of a small stanza. I really enjoy this when I am doing it, but it will take the next two years and that’s not what this is about.”

For instance I spent a long time with:

DOGS/Walking

Ahhh………

Sun shines through a blackened cloud

with wonder held –

¹¹³ This is subjective and momentary, as of course I was getting somewhere. But this entry acknowledges that I am still far from my desired form. In the moment of the doing there are many periods of extreme doubt and disjuncture, of being without direction. This must be lived through, a Living Inquiry (Irwin & de Cossio, in press), to arrive at a point of knowing.

Clarity only arrives after an extreme bout of doubt it seems
a gentle water flutters soft.

I see a parade of rocks
lined with a tree –
far off laughter tickles my ear.

Chesca eats away
and distant rumbles held extended echo
abruptly stops.

I look down the beach as Jaala does
and I see nothing –
but I can hear voices in the rhythm of the sea
and seagulls gently
on iron coloured water
land

I played with this small text for a long time,\textsuperscript{114} it had been played with twice before, it's still not quite where I want it. What is it that can drive me to want to play with the rhythms of words, and the sounds that are produced when voiced from mind to page and back again, into the universe, when read aloud. I read my sister 'Tony my Father, Tony my Friend'\textsuperscript{115} the last time I was on Denman Island for an editing session and I could feel the words coming alive with the voiced expressiveness, the

performative came alive.

It made me realize for the first time how important it is to publish, that just as with sculpture, words do not live until others can read them. Or for that matter, have it read to/for them. Thus I understood the importance of poetry reading to the lived poet's life.

\textsuperscript{114} And even now, December, 16, the original on pp. 88-89 has been edited further, words, words, words, how long I play them as "teachers begin to reassess traditional, academy-driven notions of what counts as knowledge about teaching and who has the authority to know" (Neilsen, 1998, p. 141).

\textsuperscript{115} See Appendix V.
I have flickerings of thinking I may read these aloud one day, to try to understand more clearly what happens in that performative state.

To see what the audience thinks. I understand it with art but I am still feeling my way with writing. I am unsure of it at the same time I am drawn to continue it.

However, I don’t have the luxury of endless days, to compose and play with minute changes of rhythm that are only places of rest in a tangled web of writing about self, that is trying to find a place of composure. A place of rest, to feel satisfied with, to know I have done my best. (oh, so childish!, but a truth, there lies a pedagogical imperative!) That is all I ever ask of my students, that is a measurement through which they all must wiggle. Where is that point of best(ness)? when to quote Godwin (2000), “that’s often the best it can be” (interview, no page number).

I set new rules and drew out a schematic of a possible outcome. I will take out at least 60 pages of text. I will reorder the overall plan to allow for more interruptions to the existing edited text, to encourage multiple entry points. That the need for some sort of overarching order is paramount, and simply continuing with hermeneutical self-creation is not what I want this to be. I feel I may be close to an end of internal dialogue, the predominant self-talk as recorded over the six months of data collection.

I envision having a greatly reduced or rather selective winnowing of daily writing. I begin again cutting throughout the text. The text needs to be more performative!!

However,

I am remembering an early exhibition of mine in which I said to the video camera recording the event, “I’m a maximalist as opposed to a minimalist, I collect

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116 Suit and Tie: The Ethics of Everyday Work, (1979), The Library Gallery, The University of Victoria, BC.
everything in a day as a record of its being and then translate the accumulation into art."

However, through the ensuing years, working as a sculptor and teacher I have also learned the necessary art of reduction, both as a practical endeavor for survival and also for aesthetic purposes.

Last night I realized very clearly that I need to bring out the scissors (as metaphor only!), that the building blocks are over stressed, and I must eliminate some large chunks. I know for instance that the long dog story (yet to come) must be eliminated and possibly the long investigation of my connection to church and the embodied learning embedded in its traditions. It may be for another paper, fuel for further writing, but outside of this context. I conceptualize reducing the over-all length of the journaling, but retaining entries as signposts to the linear progression of time and our reading/writing through it. As so much additional text has been ‘pushed,’ threaded, weaved into the journaling text in subsequent editing (cutting) sessions this progression is, in fact, an illusion. But a useful one all the same, as it helps our connection to the project to ‘think’ we have a handle on its construction. For a while, in this writerly building, I retained dates on edited sequences interspersed throughout the linear journal entries, but I subsequently deleted these dates as they became disruptive to the over-all ‘installation’ of the text. To your fluidity of mind, dear readers. A primary objective is to retain a flavour of the ongoing, but also to open the text to other flavours.

To unburden the text of some tangle,
that some light may be shone on other aspects.

For instance, to allow space for an example of an arts-based text on my process as a sculptor and its similarity to this text in how the building blocks are incremental,
experimental,
always on the edge of failure,
the unknown beckoning with ever gleeful open arms. ................

A form materializes from a dreaming..............
I will now go back and (re)work the (the already) worked and go forward and re (work) the yet un (worked) future text

A Form IS Growing

an impression, a glance, a flutter, (these metaphors of light) I open the text to footnotes and weave in ongoing insight

(this unfinished journeying).

I wanted to explicate the difficulty (aporia) of being in the midst of the process. I wanted to track the process of trying to come to terms with an autoethnographic study that enables the hermeneutic of the struggle to be visible, the twists and turns of an open ended project that is deliberately not being pre-selective. That is, deliberately keeping the process from being pre-determined, that wants to allow the free form of creative expression to be alive in the midst of the process. Within these parameters however, drawing the threads tight enough to create a free standing (in sculptural terms) object in space (the textu(r)alization of the page, read as object). With content, once opened, that speaks to research and methodology.

These are difficult desires to give form to. The struggle has continually been this. How to honor the methodology of open dissertational formation and still pull tight enough so as to have the form visible to those who endeavor to read within the confines of the page, within its moment of time.

In effect to honor the reality of time, the tangle of time, knowing that it is in this temporal space that we find the answers to our puzzles. I wanted to track this, to open this up, to get inside it. ‘To follow the process of my own doing’ in the site of my practice as researched and my research as practiced. An insanity, (maybe).

To reiterate, last night was melt down time. I felt hugely overwhelmed by the magnitude of my project, the impossibility of the mission. It is too big. I must cut, simply to get a handable\textsuperscript{117} object, a mass that I can manipulate. As with sculpture, if it gets too big it may be more than I can cope with, and I like to be able to manage the structure myself.

\textsuperscript{117} A colleague of mine uses this word to describe a sculpture that is of hand size and he credited the word to a teacher of his. I have also heard that the sculptor Henry More referred to his small maquetts in this manner. I have always liked the sound of the word.
It takes time to write and time to read. Each demands of the other certain obligations. As the author Gail Godwin (2000) puts it in an interview with Brigitte Weeks about the writing process:

Whenever you write something, you are in a particular landscape in your life, a mental and spiritual landscape. If you write with intensity, then that landscape is fixed in the writing. That’s often the best it can be. And if you’ve done it well, then you will go forward to another place and you’ll be in a different creative mental and spiritual era. You can’t go back and redo those kinds of things. (from a reader’s guide epilogue, n. p.)

As Mieke Bal (2001) reminds us “concepts are the tools of intersubjectivity,” she goes on to remind us that intersubjectivity is a concept in itself and that concepts must be clear and that each “concept is part of a framework, a systematic set of distinctions-not of oppositions” (p. 260) that can be used to help a “detailed analysis establish(es) a kind of intersubjectivity, not only between the analyst and the audience, but also between the analyst and the ‘object’” (p. 261). The object in this case is the narrative of daily writing collected over a six month period. For Ball:

I have considered the theory of narrative—narratology—a relevant area of study precisely because narrative is a mode, not a genre; because it is alive and active as a cultural force, not just a kind of literature; because it constitutes a major reservoir of our cultural baggage that enables us to make meaning out of a chaotic world ... and last but not least, because narrative can be used to manipulate. In short, it is a cultural force to be reckoned with. (p. 260)

This is similar to the A/R/T research groups contention that a/r/tography is a research methodology that allows the living present to come alive through the research process. That it draws threads of daily confusions and allows for divergent collisions to create anew. That the generative power of a/r/tography as a research methodology lies in its refusal to be tucked away with an easily condensed set of rules to follow, that it embodies the metonymic spaces that slide effortlessly out of view as soon as they are too closely pigeon holed. We see this non-definitional construct as a powerful place of working within. Each person who works from within a/r/tography

118 The concept of a/r/tography was coined by Professor Rita Irwin and introduced to our A/R/T/S research group in the spring of 2001 through an article she had written for a conference presentation (Irwin, in press). We have worked collaboratively to further developed it and continue to present our work using its methodological understandings as a framework. (See Irwin & de Cosson, in press.)
is encouraged to fabricate their own frames on which to build. That ambiguity is a powerful point of entry. Through the confusions that are brewed, new fermentations are fostered that may bring alternative understandings to the work that is presented.

It is from this perspective of not knowing/knowing that I am changing the framework from within. I see clearly that there is too much weight. I trust my intuitive process that cries loudly, "jettison text." The boat is top heavy and is on the verge of sinking, the sculpture too weighty and dead in its tracks. What invites scrutiny of an object are multiple entry points and worked surfaces balanced within an integrated overall aesthetic.

The night is black. In the pitch of night I can feel my way when I have a memory, a trace-knowing, an inclination of direction from past meanderings. I cannot, however, navigate a pitch black path that I have never walked before. I must count on memory and past learning to force myself outside the safe path and venture onto a more ambiguous path that can illicit excitement and thus draw me (carefully) forward. It is trust in a knowing/not knowing that I must play with, on the edges of this knowing, as the aporia is the meeting point. It is this pathway that I wish to follow, that I may be able to find connecting devises to bridge together a work that has meaning to itself and to an outside, an engaging substance for others to enter. A/r/tography must have aesthetic underpinnings that shine through.

A/r/tography strives to be individuated and strong, providing a lattice that endeavors to embrace the entire work. It cannot be seen to crumble near the top or at the edges. A/r/tography does not expect or even advocate closure in a traditional sense. A/r/tography hopes to ask as many questions as it answers. A/r/tography anticipates generative discourse from the substance of the work. A/r/tography does not wish to be elitist but may be perceived as such as it is a concept and as such does agree with Bal (2001) when she writes:

concepts, or those words that outsiders consider jargon, can be tremendously productive. They help articulate an understanding, convey an interpretation, check an imagination run wild, enable a discussion on the basis of common terms, perceive absences and exclusions. For me, a concept is not just a label that is easily replaced by a more common word. (p. 260)

As such, I am working from within the generative spaces that the forward slashes inhabit by separating art into artist/researcher/teacher. That place in which I write from a hybrid that floats and finds comfort in the continuing dialogue with self in an ethnographic study that proceeds to pull at itself and (re)order the order to find a point of stasis.
February 28, 2002

Went to church this morning. The priest has been away for most of this week so a group gathers and does a liturgy of the word. At first we were a little awkward in that we are so used to being lead …

(I start a long section that traced the daily attendance at morning mass through the Lenten season. I brought the computer into mass and tried to write from within the service, I wrote after and before services, it became a measure of my daily writing as I began a pilgrimage through Lent.)

Two of the strongest points of learning from this research which the writing richly demonstrates are the embodied understandings I’ve had through daily kneeling. I began to understand the body having its own knowing (Springgay, 2002, In press). I wrote later this morning:

My Lenten practice is to try and go more often during the week, well to go during the week at least three times, to engage with the liturgy in a more truthful way, that is to be IN the liturgy and that can only happen if I am in this theory/practice place. I must be in practice or it simply does not work. Then the other part is being in practice that is meaningful to me and not simply someone else’s theory/practice loop.
I sat and recited the prayers after the service. There is always a group who stays to do a decade of the rosary with its wonderful repetition of words. One side responds to the other, with a switch after each decade. I love being in it, doing the prayer and saying the words out loud in a group. It is practicing meditation similar to Satsung the sitting meditations of Zen and Buddhist traditions. The repetition of prayer. It is the breathing that gets synchronized to the words and the body is in sync with the words, it is a whole body meditation, it **is Theory IN practice.**

*It came to me loud and clear, that is what I have to have, without it*

*I am lost in a sea of words that have no substance.*

That is why the garden practice is so important, it isn't just doing yard work, it is body interaction with nature that allows me to see more clearly my connection to it. Through memory, the past's life story that I have through my (re)activated memory of my past creates my new story, that is constant by being becoming - ongoing - that challenges me to see beyond the here, into the deepness of the moment.

December 12, 2002

I start the deliberate elimination of 100 pages, some will be **cut** back into the main text as new interruptions into past linear flows. I feel a sense of elation as I ponder the elimination of vast reams of collected text which until now I felt committed (compelled even) to using. Similar to one of those rules I sometimes set my students. “...... And you must use all material.” In a sense, I still am as I have a ‘**collection file**’ for the unused text sitting on my computer desktop. With my students, I often help them see that a pile, aesthetically placed to the side, can work strongly, as it talks back to the object and still fulfills the criteria without cluttering the dynamics of the work itself.

All of a sudden I feel a chill as I remember a section of transcript from our Feb 15, A/R/T/S group meeting. Patti is commenting on how she felt as an outsider looking in on the
work, that we should have done more with the papers we were reading from. The concept of cutting up the text as we read them emerges from this conversation as an integral solution to the (now) perceived dilemma.

I realize that is what I am doing now

and the interweaving of the projects feels meshed.

I quote from the transcript of A/R/T research group meeting of Feb 15, 2002

Patti: “How wonderfully in sync the readings were with the movements of the body and people cutting. But I remember thinking at one point that something has to be done with the ACT of reading … don’t take it away necessarily, but do something with the papers in your hands … what you’re doing with your hands, I thought that was very important.

Alex: “Because we weren’t conscious enough for that as even to be looked at ..”

Patti: “when you cut … I could tell there was some connection …”

Rita: “I understand you, we could have cut up our scripts ..”

Wendy: excited voicing of “oh oh oh” and excited murmurings from all of us.

Patti: “eha something that connects to what there is your doing.”

Stephanie: “We don’t have to do it literally either – what we are doing now as we go back in is metaphorically cutting it up -”

Alex; ‘I like this here, there is a nice quote here on that (reads from ‘Repositioning the Body’ a text by Garoian, (1999) we have been discussing)

They enable members of the audience to conceptually, emotionally, and often physically penetrate the art work (p. 23).

(I have written on the side of my copy of this text as I (re)read it now on Dec 11, 2002, CUT in capital letters.)

Patti: “And that was so nice when people were handed the scissors.”

Stephanie referred to what we are engaged in with our research project as ‘metaphoric cutting.’ We continue the cycles of ongoing research in a hermeneutic of (re)searching. This
notion is fundamental to the concept of a/r/tography, as it encourages risk taking, change and elimination of perceived boundaries.

To cite again from Garoian, (1999) as he cites Sayre (1998) borrowing Derrida’s concept of ‘undecidability’ he suggests performance art finds meanings by

“explosive, ricocheting and fragmenting throughout its audience. The work becomes a situation, full of suggestive potentialities, rather than a self contained whole, determined and final” (p. 23).

December 13, 2002

This point of disjuncture, this dislocation from the project, was exemplified by finding myself floundering in doubt, made more acute when I awoke from a terrible night. The howling wind of 80-100 km/hr had pounded my disturbed sleep and the electricity had gone off for eight hours. I was disillusioned, I once more felt the vastness of the unknown stretch in front of me. I want to try and pull the focus back. I want to try and show how the past thirty-six hours has produced a calming of doubt. How the process is running as it should.

It is the continued reading and reflection that allows for a healing of the break, the cut, the tear. That in reading, I find succor through others thinking. In reading and (re)reading self and others I am able to once again, sally forth (intentional implied pedagogy). It amazes me how (with attention) I can draw solace from where ever I am,

**to find relevance in the moment.**

I believe it is this constant hermeneutic cycle of reflective internal dialogue that is the research that is the point of this dissertation writing. I contemplate anew Pears’ (1998) wonderful lines of serendipity,

I have often thought about this phenomenon which occurs so frequently in the lives of all men that we almost fail to notice it anymore. How often have I had a

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question on my mind, and picked a book at random off the shelf, often one I have
never heard of before, yet found the answer I seek within its covers? (p. 619)

Or is it? Is it not more our openness to finding ways through our own aporias, our own
paths towards meaning making (an a/r/tographic strength). For instance, as I struggled with this
sudden point of change, this chasm of difference, from intent of function to the reality of what
needs to be done, I read the following interlude in (Booker Prize) shortlisted Ahdaf Soueif’s
(2000) *Map of Love*. I quote it at length as it seems to me to express that place of being

*in and through learning and research,*

(she is referring to an old Coptic church in Cairo):

I returned to the Mu‘allaqah again and again, and as my familiarity with it grew
— as I came to know the figures in the paintings, and their expressions and attitudes
became things I recognised rather than discovered, as my ear became attuned to the
eastern sound of Coptic chanting or the muffled hush of the empty church broken
only by the odd Arabic call from the courtyard without, and nose ceased to be
surprised at the oddly tinny edge of the incense — as my familiarity with the church
grew, so my consciousness increased of the effect it was having on my heart and on
my soul, an effect that I can only describe as a sense of increased spaciousness
without myself, as though the age of building, the years it had hung as a hallowed
space between its twin Roman towers, were working its way into my soul and I too,
somehow, was becoming a part of that great tract of time. I cannot express this
better, but its effect on me is deep — and I pray enduring — peace. (pp 90-91)
To me this eloquently expresses how we learn through our continued engagement with that which we wish to know. It is not enough to simple know (of) the words, or concepts, as Bal (2001) reminds us “concepts that are (mis)used as labels lose their working force” (p. 261). We must feel and know through this intuition to trust what it is that we know. This is much more difficult than it sounds as it is dependant on that learning moment, that moment of failure/success, that moment all artists know. The cry of ‘this is not working,’ known deep in the bones, and the dread of this grows until the shout is too large and

form must be rebuilt.

Valerie Janesick (1999) also uses a sculptural metaphor, and although I differ in my working methods, as to me sculpture is more to do with both ‘adding’ and ‘taking away,’ however this nuance does not change my finding solace in her observations:

I often use the metaphor of journal writing as sculpting. Ages ago, when I took a sculpting class working with clay, one of the techniques sculptors use is whittling away at portions of this part of the piece or that part and every day as you sculpt, the piece takes new form. In a very like manner, the journal writer is also doing this. The written text of the journal evolves, is reshaped, and for the purposes of the researcher, becomes a way to clarify,

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120 This notion talks to me of the difference between a postmodern sculptor and a modernist sculptor. The post modern sculptor is most probably an eclectic mix of many ‘isms,’ is interested in the addition of material, the adding of fragments either found or manipulated and is often exhibited as an ‘installation,’ that all encompassing fully worked environment that sprung from the 1970’s experimental use of marginal and outside art spaces and “although the term ‘Installation art’ has become widely used, it is still relatively nonspecific” (Reiss, 2001, P. xiii). We can, however, take The Oxford Dictionary of Art’s (Chilvers & Osborn, 1988) definition as a close proximity to what can apply to installation, as a “term which came into vogue during the 1970s for an assemblage or environment constructed in the gallery specifically for a particular exhibition” (p. 253).
reinterpret, and define much of our work. Given that readers of this journal are interested in qualitative research techniques to some extent, this technique, journal writing, may offer a way to illuminate what the researcher is studying in a highly disciplined and deeply personal way. (p. 565)

A snake sheds its skin: A metonymic understanding

Another aspect of this point of disjuncture and change, is reflected by my journal entries recording the nights dreaming of Dec. 10/11, 2002

The storm rages still – electricity out for about eight hours last night. A dream: I am married to an East Indian woman whom I don’t live with nor see in the dream – I visit the family not understanding why they dislike me so much. After an interlude in the house, I try to talk to the mother who appears to dislike me the most. She is from the upper class, very formal and beautifully dressed in traditional Indian garments. I enter her shop/room/boudoir to try and talk with her about the skins we all have. She has bolts of cloth hanging from the walls, paisleys are predominant. I run my hands over them trying to make an analogy between the cloth and the skin of a reptile. “A snake sheds its skin,” I say, with profound implications, (although in the dream I do not know what these implications might be). We are both sitting on the floor. She strokes me in a seductive manner which I find disturbing, as it breaks my illusions of her class and accepted etiquette etc. She touches me as I pull the material from the bolt and wrap myself in it. She is evil (I feel) this is wrong (I feel) – we continue talking and nothing further happens.

I awake with these images in my minds eye. I begin to write the above in my journal and at this point I begin to analyze the possibilities of meanings.
A snake sheds its skin – Does it grow a new one? Or is there simply a ready made skin below? –

This shedding seems to reflect what I must do – **shed chunks** –

**find the new skin below**

(I capitalize as it clarifies through the writing)

_I flash in excitement_

"come and see me buzz on a pink street light"¹²¹

(is what I wrote in my journal which I continue to copy from below as I grapple with the dilemma I find myself muddled in).

Inside the aporia of my own being becoming – How can we know what is relevant and what isn’t? Why should this have any more barring than all the rest? – It is this ongoing, not being able to let go – maybe this is the problem with not being objective (even though from a post modern perspective we accept that an objective stance is not possible) – We still play with the notion that we are capable of objective vision even though we know we cannot be.

Krzysztof Wodiczko’s (1989) words echo in my brain, “even though we know it cannot be” (Video interview).

_This was my intent, to stay midst the aporia of my own doing._

**WELL HOW DO I GET OUT?**

If every move is predicated by a past and affects my future, how do I dislocate it from the fires of self?

This is the wonder of it.

However, I do need to call a halt, even knowing its post modern dilemma – It is simply a slice

(referring to this

[text]u[re]alization

of a dissertational endeavor)

and I can look at it as such –

view other sections.

I think the hardest part for me is the letting go of the process that surrounds the understandings. That it is only through all this text that questions are found (however small). However, questions without context seem barren – So what I’m trying to do is retain the integrity of process, analyses without loss of process. What use is this?

What use is ‘a snake sheds its skin’? without all of the previous two days of struggles?

To me it is rich in the undertow of knowledge –

It goes back to process and the trust of process. Yes, a snake looses its skin – a whole self to reform anew - the same yet different -

a same/not same Aoki (ism) (1993, 96, 99, 2001) for me
always a metonymic – although in a dictionary definition not strictly “the crown” standing for a member of the royal family as head of state. And yet, it is a metonymic as one is not the other and yet they are – the past skin was a future skin is a past when shed
— One skin stands for another — one slips through the other and it will happen again and again

*one slips through the other*

I see the skin, that total embodied (empty) was whole skin, as a metonymic space, a concept when understood thus.

*What is the pedagogy here?*

*What is the teaching here?*

It is a pedagogy of renewal and transformance — It is teaching in curriculum of sameness/never sameness. As an example, I have taught the same course at OCAD for going on twenty years, but it is never the same, it is always new. It is *lived curriculum* Aoki (1996, 1993) which generates this renewal of sameness/not sameness. I shed the past and am in a new — but same —

**But:**

*Isn’t this the same for every day*  
*as I shed skin particles I leave a whole  
( empty) body’s worth  
that can live like a snake skin  
in imaginations  
of a recreated self.*

Once again I wish to quote an extended passage from Ahdaf Soueif (2000) as she presents a journal entry from one of her characters in the multi century jumping epic. In this case it is Anna from whom we shall hear (read? has written?) an upper class English widow who has gone to Cairo after the death of her husband in 1899. Much of the reconstructed narrative takes place through Anna’s journal entries, letters home to England and other characters’ journals. Anna, as expressed in this entry, dated 19 March, 1901, knows the power of her writing to unravel her own thinking to herself, much as I am endeavoring to do with this entwined self-dialogue that I have been engaged with (intently) for almost a year now.
Oh how I wish it were possible to go without sleep entirely, or that the hours of each day would be doubled, that I might have time to see and feel, and then still have time to reflect on it, to let the impressions wind their way through my mind, settling here and there in small, shining pools, or merging with other thoughts and progressing towards some great conclusion! And then again I would have time to write it all down, to record it all, for in that act, I have found my thoughts clarify themselves and what starts as an hysterical babbling of impressions resolves into a view, an image as lucid and present as a painting. (p. 210)

An (Illustrated) Example of Disjunctive Learning

At this point it seems prudent to introduce a section of writing that will illustrate, from the perspective of the artist, the process by which discovery is made through disjuncture using artography as a framework. The artists’ self struggle is what makes the creative process real. It is a matter of going through to find self understanding. This is the point of an educational setting. To encourage risk in the safe confines of a classroom or studio, with a supportive peer group to catch you if you fall.

Whether in writing, or sculpture (as in the next example) the outcome is similar, it is a tiring and painful process, but the transformation is real and worth while, answers to questions are formulated and new aesthetic combinations are understood. An art piece can find a point of resolution that would not be there if a disjuncture is not lived.
The hermeneutic dialogic: Finding patterns midst the aporia of the artist/researcher/teacher (Rewrite #7 in this context)

"Passionate knowers use the self as an instrument of understanding, searching for new methods to sophisticate the way the self is used in research" (Kincheloe, 1991, p.41).

"The hermeneutic dialogic: Finding Patterns midst the aporia of the artist/researcher/teacher"

The title that delighted one wakened night

"But the question of knowing what it means 'to experience the aporia,' indeed to put into operation the aporia, remains" (Derrida, 1993, p. 32.).

I write

I want to write in the aporia

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122 As when I build a sculpture, the surface of a plane is activated by the texture that is at play, so does a page come alive with the performativity of the fonts at play. In my opinion, their rhythms and interactions enhance the readability and enjoyment of the text. 123 There are a series of 20, digitized SX70 photo-documents spaced throughout the text. These do not reflect the 'objectness' of the original SX70 prints, their saturated colour and richness, just as they did not reflect the 'objectness' of the original installation (art work) they were endeavoring to capture (it was never the intention to do so), however they do enact a strong 'memory', a (re) capturing that enables a researchers' eye (i) to consider their (s)p(l)acement in this document. These SX70's were originally used in the installation to record the temporality of the autoethnographic research methodology, (that of being in the gallery, reworking the piece and recording the process on a regular basis). Examples of SX70's in the installation can be seen in these images. They have come to represent a reflective process as they are both in and of the working praxis of the installation. They can now stand as an arts-based component of the original work (and can have further reflective considerations placed upon/within them, indeed more writing calling). However, it is not the intention of this ‘chunk’ to dwell 'outside,' but rather to keep my research centred on "the goal ... to enter and document the moment-to-moment, concrete details ... (as) an important way of knowing" as Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner (2000, p. 737) encourage us in their explorations of autoethnographic research. If arts-based educational autoethnographic research is based 'within' as Patrick Slattery (2001) would have us consider, then these SX70's are potentially visual reflections of that state, and this text endeavours to 'open' just a 'crack' of this arts based potential

a window through a/r/tography.
that my research places itself. In the point of disjuncture - when in praxis, while engaged in the pedagogy of the work that is sculpture - the place where (my) meaning becomes and belongs in its progression forward on the journey to anticipate meaning out of the curriculum of being that finds itself doing what it is called to do.

To present an embodied moment in the studio process of art making, that validates my embodied understandings, through the pedagogy of being becoming.

The hardest part is non form or formlessness.

Can we imagine or know this state of non being?

It is Derrida's (1993) question: "Is my death possible?" (p. 21)
The dictionary falls from the place/space - (s)p(l)ace - I had placed it moments ago after looking up 'syntagm' from (Derrida, 1993) "where do we situate the syntagm 'my death', as possibility and/or impossibility of passage?" (p. 23) not that it makes any difference to the aporia of reading Derrida. The denseness of the over-all, is far larger than bits of text taken 'out' trying to create meaning - the continual hermeneutic of meaning-making.

I come back to the challenge of marking the progress through Derrida's Aporias (1993). I like the notion of the place of difficulty kept alive by the fact that I haven't got there - wherever there is. Reading it guaranteed placing me in/with aporia. Whenever I think I have an opening and I enter the text to pick a quote to 'hang it on', 'it' disintegrates.
This 'it' is the same but different in both cases. The former is the paper as a concept, the latter is the 'hanger' for the concept. This constant destruction of the 'very heart of the matter' makes the project difficult but not impossible. Word-windows that Derrida seeks out, to work over and under, to find new ways around a (the) problem of aporia. Can I retreat from the mission? or am I driven on to find ways through the border land (Minh-Ha, 1992) that is inherent in this space of not knowing/knowing (simultaneously).

I am

(researching) the process

of my own doing

I know a work
I don't know a work, a metonymy of place.

Remain hidden from vision stay running ahead or behind.

Needing its ambiguities its betrayals
to stay afloat.

Even in aporia

I come to

understand

its function.

1. 2. 3.
T wrote this, - (deeply) - I feel so far from it now, as though I have lost the point of entry - I am fighting something inside that will not let me be - that seems to want to hold me down, that does not want to let go - to let being be, as it were.

How do I (re) enter?

Find pressure points that spew guts for penetrated dialogue with a place to write from.

What is my mission in the here and now?

I want to propose ...

"Praxis is work that interacts with life and community concerns and is contextualized in human values. It is practice united with theory, subjectivity united with objectivity, action united with value" (Cary, 1998, p. 28).

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Weekly Research

There was a point in our research group’s weekly gathering where one significance among many, was forced open - namely, the importance of the other. This 'opening' had its
incubation while I attended a presentation on Self-Study/Action Research: Is it REALLY Research?, where Cynthia Nicol (2000) speculated that self-study wasn't so much about self as about the other, for without the other, the self was redundant. This circling from other, to self, to other, to create meaning finds a home in philosophical hermeneutics and phenomenology. When engaged with/in art, it is in the circling from viewer, to art, to viewer that meaning is made. This hermeneutic that Susan Sontag (1966) called for as an 'erotics' in "Against Interpretation" is an engagement with the reality as found without the calling of external meaning, it may be of a 'truth', a 'truth' to that moment, to that group, to that understanding as it manifests itself. This meaning is universally true to that moment.

Our research group was in a research cycle of creating meaning in and of the work we were doing and in our continuing dialogue with(in) it. For many art teachers their artist self is often neglected, hidden, even repressed, to conform to the 'norm' that is the teacher. We were in the researching process of validating our doing as artists, through each other and our work.

That we were in the presence of research in our weekly meetings became abundantly clear to me as I enthusiastically cajoled a
fellow group member, "You are doing research, you are because you are here and that is what we are doing," as s/he questioned labeling our work research, choosing instead to label it simply art making (feeling more comfortable in a familiar place) and not research (this more difficult place in which we wished to dwell). For me it was the moment of being in and of 'the other.' In Hans Gadamer's words, I was "in the game" (1974, cassette recording, OISE).

As a seagull lifts
effortlessly
from an angled white roof top
of my vision

"Theory is not limited to but includes textual discussions and analysis set within and/or alongside visual imagery of educational phenomena and/or performance" (Irwin, in press, p. 27).

I centre on meaning

recessed (gently)

(hidden)

depthy

not to shut down the process before it has begun!!
spaces (in)between

as a child lights a flaming torch

(softly)

in a burning night

"... the integration of text and image is an act of borderland pedagogy, a way of sharing a third space between knowing and ignorance" (Irwin, in press, p. 28).

.........................

I want to be in that which cries out from deep within..........................

I envision a certain work I need to do -
I see
plaster & rocks -
I see them wrapped and held

I see two becoming one

(Journal Notation, Morning, January 21, 2000)

I awoke this morning with an image

bridging

a connecting of one to another.

I saw the wires connecting from the large tower to the smaller tower.

(Research journal, written before studio work, morning of January 21, 2000)

I shall use video and SX70 photography to document the task as an action
I will document the reality a moment of fulfillment
a vision/concept - constant since I started.
    I knew this part,
    but I don't know the whole -

the whole must change in the moment of doing -
the whole is my dialogic with the work,
the research,
the rigorous being that contemplates the strategies for movement within a predetermined
number
of coordinates
of action.
(Research Journal January 5, 2000)

I envision flat lines of art
research to be-lying dormant

awaiting the call

I want my being subverted, tantamount to 'knowing' inside

As though I might find an answer in the deepest depths that are soul. How can I go deeper? How can I settle the quarrel once and for all, (impossible you quip) let us fly in light mind, as though angels (which we are), but how to get the light to shine always, not only in an abstract sense, but in the reality of the moment of being, to allow the spaces to
open, to feel the pure joy of the sun as it passes over head, as though singing - allow birds to be singers - way up above the formless universe

The hard part is to actually get over to the gallery and do the work before the entire day has slipped away in otherness.

(Research Journal January 16, 2000)

(The following is from my research journal written on January 22, the day after the studio action to which this writing is referring)

I place the video camera onto the tripod as I am doing this the concept for the work changes, I suddenly see the top of the broken figure as part of this 'work' - Change Again - I dismantle the second tower, get out the work box that had been the 'middle' of the tower, retrieve the working tools from its chest - spread them - order them - I feel comfortable in this praxis of body knowing - 20 years of sculpting has taught me my process

I'm conscious of the camera, I can feel its capturing eye - but I'm comfortable - I settle into the plaster work of joining the rocks - the plaster is doing what it should do -

I need to lift it - as I am wrapping under the rock - I balance it on the marble block and one of the plaster role boxes.

I need more plaster as I have finished the roll I am working with - I open the next box of plaster -

I cut - unroll
hold the figure in place -
dip and apply - working as it should -
as I know by the feel that my hands understand before my mind does- but very quickly I know the feel is wrong - this roll isn't working right - I feel tense - I realize my body is not comfortable - I am very conscious that it's not working - the plaster goes pebbly - instead of visceral, tacky, with a slippery contact - as I know it with my hands - I'm holding the figure in one hand realizing this isn't behaving as it should - I am very self aware -
There is an argumentative inner dialogue which ran something like this:

"let go!"
"follow the process!"
- as my mind races
"Just let it go!"

"You can get some new plaster - come back later -"
"NO!"
"I want the figure on the rock."
"But it is not working!"
"Let go!"
"Which am I to let go of?"
"The concept altogether?"
"The material not working?"
"Go with the flow!"
"Which flow?"
"This isn't working!"
"Let Go - Find another way!"

"Yes, but if you just wait and get fresh plaster it will work really nicely"

I can feel the pull to stop - an equal pull to continue
to find the way through -

I try further down the in the plaster role, maybe it was just a bad section -
but no same thing -
pebbly -
doesn't dry!
doesn't do anything -
I'm worried now - but equally
I will allow it to be -
Wire comes into play -
The piece grips and everything changes around it. Suddenly it is working - the wire holds
it becomes
the centre of the second tower -

the rest has to work for it now
Stamps, coin and cup are removed - too much baggage

This is a sculptural process. It is a continual working through, not knowing where I am
going, but needing to push on through the constant aporias. Watching the video document shows
only an artist at work, it appears confident and self assured there is not the slightest indication of
the anguished fretting internal dialogue as presented above.

Learning (in) praxis
I feel the need to write to that (s)p(l)ace - to write to the learning that has taken place as
I've struggled to hold the three hats of artist/researcher/teacher.

I have learned how hard it is to stay midst these three, to stay afloat, with all in
simultaneous motion. I'm teaching three courses, doing research, being in the aporia of my praxis -

I (re) learned what I already know, what we all know, as artists, that art learning is an
embodied practice learned through praxis. As a teacher of art I must always stay vigilant to this
'knowing'.

As a teacher I am also reminded of the power of the student as 'other,' that without this
'other' constantly reflecting back to me my (re) learning I am nothing. Without the 'other'
honored as equal in the circling hermeneutic of learning and (re) learning I will become
ungrounded.

Praxis (re) shows me - (re) learns me through the moment of being in that (s)p(l)ace of
not knowing - I (re)learned something I say all the time in my teaching - that it is in the letting
go that we find, that we cannot be found until we are lost. Yes that is what I have learned - I
learned, (re) learned what I know but forget or hung onto too lightly.
I remember vividly knowing the work before I started - I knew what I was going to do. I saw it. I wrote it. I (pre)wrote it - So I'd know or rather have a record of what I was going to do knowing it would change was part of my research agenda - to be in the aporia of my own doing.

It was so simple - I really did believe I was going to do what I set out to do - I had no notion nor (s)p(l)ace for a change outside the confines of the degrees of change that I was prepared for - that once the material failed - well that was another thing - on one level I was not prepared to stay the course.

I was (pre)programmed to believe that the plaster would operate as it always does - I truly was taken aback - not prepared.

I had to push myself through the moment of turning back allowing the disrupter to become operative, to not allow it to dictate a ceasing of my work. The power of that moment was a subversion to myself, a (re)learning, a (re)confirmation of what I know but equally what I forget, or rather, without the (re)learning in praxis my teaching is merely rhetoric.

"Without the reflexive researcher role - the relationship of praxis to teaching would be lost from the conscious equation - from the place where it really matters, from the why of the entire thing - what it is - How this 'triality' artist/researcher/teacher connects."

(Reflective research journal notation January 25, 2000)
a wish to travel
light..
to find that which turns up
as I run
through under brush.
as I find full trees
saps
of life
calling me
forward
&
stones
grounding
me

Cling to the pedagogical ecology!

"The Line I trace with my feet walking to the museum is more important and more beautiful than the lines I find there hung on the walls" (Rubin, 2000) the Viennese architect Friedensreich Hundertwasser inscribed this on the wall of the KunstHausWien museum dedicated to his work.

This notion of the importance of the moment of being inside the process of being

"Don't go backwards,
don't turn away
from these messy secret tales
that no method can outrun and make all right,
as if they did not speak to us,
as if we did not hear them,
as if the agencies of the world
were always just our own."
(Jardine, 1997a, p.165)
I awoke this morning
with an image
bridging
- a connecting

of one
to another.
I saw the wires connecting
from the large tower
to the smaller
tower.

I am
(re)searching
the process
of my own doing

"If we dare to engage in the dynamic process of looking at the field (of education) using new tools and questioning those areas which have been uncharted and treacherous, we may enter insecure territory, but one that holds layers of meaning we may not have otherwise encountered" (Fischman, 2001, p. 32).
I know a work
I don't know a work,
a metonymy
of place.

Remain hidden from vision
stay running ahead
or behind.

Needing its ambiguities
its betrayals
to stay afloat.

Even in aporia
I come to understand
its function

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124 The digitized SX70's represented here form a part of a performative sculptural installation I began on January 6, 2000, at the Lookout Gallery, Regent College, University of British Columbia, as part of an arts-based research exhibition entitled A Pied: Exploring Artist/Researcher/Teacher Praxis. A symposium on the subject, was held on January 29, 2000, at which time a working model of this text was presented along side the original video data on which it is based. To view an alternate colour version please see; de Cosson, A. (2002). The hermeneutic dialogic: Finding patterns amid the aporia of the artist / researcher / teacher. ajer The Alberta Journal of Educational Research, xlviii (3), article on CD-ROM insert. A similar version can be found in: Irwin, R., de Cosson, A. (Eds.). (in press). A/r/tography as Living Inquiry. Victoria, AUS: theLearner, Common Ground Publishing.
Theory practice / praxis under(inter)standings:

There are, as I said, long long sections of writing that must be left for another day of editing, another day of understanding, another day of interstandings, as a dissertation can only handle so much. What they do reflect, however, was my growing commitment and understanding of my project. How deeply embedded I became in my practice, of yard work, daily writing, and prayer (which has an affinity to daily writing and self reflective research) all embodied through practice. What I hope to tease from these endless pages of collected data are those that talk to the richness of the experience of coming yet closer to an embodied understanding of practice, its connection to praxis and its usefulness to teaching and learning in the studio/classroom setting.

February, 29 2002

I will venture off to try skate/writing, I look forward to reading it later. As Randall (1995) says, “just as the events of my life are changed in the experiencing, so the experiences of my life are changed in the expressing” (p.55). It is this ‘expressing’ in which I am interested, the writing through the experience of my doing, how the expressing, in this case the text, that is then modified and changed through building of a sculptural understanding to create a new meaning as text units or chunks are walked, skated and stacked in relational positions.

That was it: walking is learning through Practice / Praxis

These walks are forming

a pedagogy

I am understanding my desire to deal with this walking pedagogy, to understand why I am so drawn to it, that it is walking as practice, it is feeling through the body, that walking talks, it allows me to know in a real way. It helped get closer to such questions as:

Why do I have to walk every day? Why does my body cry out if I don’t? Why is it so important to my balance?

How is it connected to sculpture, research and teaching?
That even when I don’t want to walk I do, even when my mind is saying, you don’t need to do this, I go. I write through the aporias of the daily not knowing/knowings.

**To the roots of finding meaning through praxis**

(Denman Island)

The immense pleasure of being here – a retreat – a peace – a silence. The fire warms my right side and the hum of the fridge takes over my left ear. The crackle of the fire at a lower note on the right and tea sitting on the milking stool.

The deliciousness of this moment, wanting to have it forever, knowing the impossibility of such a desire– knowing this escape is only an illusion. However, I feel the growth of spirit to handle the rougher edges of my life – I feel the spirit coming alive, that which feeds me, my self, my being-becoming-meaning.

I am endeavoring to clear a stump from its clinging soil so I can lift some of the root out of the septic field. It is slow work, digging out roots, as I cannot see where they go. They are always beneath the soil, I can guess at their general direction but a root can veer suddenly down, left or right – over, under, entangle, spur a new growth – all covered – all below the surface. As I scrape and claw, shovel and disturb the earth, to flush out roots, it feels like I am getting nowhere. I am not moving. I had a rush of *knowing loneliness as a physical unit, as a three dimensional presence*, it was all tied into this effort to unearth the root and this not seeing where / how / when its completion would materialize. This loneliness was also tied to knowing *‘the enormity of this work,’* and do I even want to do it? (I know it must be done or risk creating problems with the septic field.) It’s also tied up in anger (small) at myself, as I could have plucked the seedlings with a twist of the wrist when I did the others. How many times in life do I have to learn the same lesson? of hindsight, of foresight, of knowing and not acting, too tired, too busy, too stupid. I had known I was letting these saplings *through*, and for some reason, which I cannot now fathom, I let them grow.

We sometimes create problems that need solving by our own diligence *through praxis* (Pearse, in press, 1994).
**Praxis(ed) time:**

The notion of time, of a fleeting moment passing, our loss, if not utilized to its fullest. The filling of time with just the right ingredients of work, play, engagement and stress. There are longer and shorter units inside this editing week (which is simply another unit of a larger whole). I feel like I’m much better at the smaller units – the units that go into one day for instance, or even the smaller ones of the here and now, the working through of writing this paragraph, right now, right here, the circling back on it, the (re)interpretation, the struggle to unearth its meaning. As I do with the root; not knowing its way, glimpses of a larger picture feed a continued struggle to unearth roots to deeper meaning. The earth is then smoothed over and a possibility of new seedling’s germination is once again born, a cycle of earth’s being-becoming beyond our interference.

Our praxis is human time, these units of days, minutes, weeks, years, life-times, all adding to a whole that does not end. Human time is finite, this is the crux of it, as Derrida reminds us with his question of knowing our own death. We can play with this concept but we cannot truly know it. However, it is our understanding of it (or rather our knowing of its finality) that gives our life its unit, its time meaning.

"Praxis is theory and practice."

I write as I continue this fireside rumination. Art is praxis, praxis is practice and theory - *theory through practice.*

I look up praxis only to discover that it falls to the practice side of the equation. Both the Collins and Chambers dictionaries have it on the practical side of professional practice as opposed to the theoretical, the *Oxford English Reference* (Persall & Trumble, 1995/1996) simply states “the practicing of art or skill” (p. 1138), this begs the question of how I have it so embedded in a liminal space between the two, practice and theory. Its etymology provides me with added assurance of it not being situated in a liminal space, but that it is embedded in a place of action, “from medieval Latin from Greek, = doing, from prasso do.” This helps me see *praxis through theory* set up as a binary ‘in opposition to’ theory.

When I set about looking up praxis a few moments ago, I said, “but I must have looked it up so many times before,” almost dismissing *my ACTION, my PRAXIS* from
happening. As I was to subsume to my theory already accepted (by myself) – thereby eliminating further learning.

Praxis is how we learn

it is

a

going

through

action

Thoughts on praxis and A/r/tography

Praxis is what artists do; all the theory in the world is not going to make interesting work. So it is praxis that calls me, in fact this purer form (if we can use such a term) is even more relevant. In many ways it is clearer. Keeping it in a liminal space as I had been doing diminished its power, as it was neither this nor that, and yet it was a fundamental word for our research. Maybe I did have a clearer notion of it once and then it got enmeshed into a liminal (messier) meaning, which still held appeal as it encapsulated that inseparable place of theory/practice (that I wished to emphasize). In fact maybe no word is better. Allow the hybrid space, that (s)p(l)ace between theory and practice, to remain a nameless space, (as many things are that occupy the liminal), the in-betweens of our stated (s)p(l)ace of study is the space where

A/r/tography can slip soundlessly

(possibly occupying)

for a/r/tography is a liminal

centre

a neither this nor that.

The why of our A/R/T acronym lies in this conundrum. We call it a/r/tography to dig deeper; it houses different meanings to all of us. The most consistent is this digging, this archeology of sifting through the layers of our praxis to discover meaning, or at least place a

125 Often a powerful (s)p(l)ace, many times demonstrated in this text.
layer of meaning, however illusive – meaning for whom? to whom? Who is our audience? Who do we want to affect change with? How does this change come about? Can a/r/tography change viewers? How useful is this if they are left in a state of not knowing? Maybe it is rather a state of not knowing/knowing and thus a generative one that opens to further possibilities and new understandings. As Dr. Ted Aoki said after our Dec, 5, 2001 performance at UBC,

*I was really delighted with your performance. I was very much taken with the series of aporetic moments and the series of transformations, not only of the art but of the artists himself or herself through the series of anecdotes that you have given us. I am just spell bound to experience a presentation such as yours, congratulations.*

Ted recognized that it was *through the aporia* (difficulty), of the collective selves that are performing that the spaces open and come alive for generative growth. We invite viewer/participants into our praxis, as artist/researchers/teachers and give them art to contemplate, art that has *transpired through* the process of our collective beings-becoming. It is a collective growth, it is interdependent and larger than the individual parts

*growth through individual praxis feeding a whole*

“*Artists with their skilled perception, collaborative experience, understanding of special relationships, empathetic abilities, unconventional thinking and openness to the abnormal, illogical or overlooked will lead the way to a richness of social research that is currently underused*” (Kiendl, 2002, p. 61).

Artists develop theory *through praxis*. I feel secure in what I have always believed – that the power of art falls in the doing – the praxis – that once I can free my students to engage in their praxis, *their prassos*, they are liberated and begin their individual journey through art making to self understanding and growth. Just as our A/R/T/S research group continued to develop new material out of the existing praxis data to produce radically altered art as research *through* our collective praxis.

*Meaning does come out of the words*
That meaning does come through the play with words, a praxis of words, is also part of this process. I have gone back into past chunks of writing and read what I now have forgotten, a strangely haunting endeavour as it dredges up pieces of (hi)story that would otherwise be lost. What makes these pieces of personal past important? A good question, and indeed they are not all important, however they do help point to the terrains and paths that have been investigated on the journey, and thus I can open up the process for others to have a glimpse of the inner workings and the possibilities, as new elements get discovered.

It is this hermeneutic of continual cycling backwards and forwards, this research, this a/r/tography, that engenders new meanings. A good example of this is from journal entry March 1, 2002:

(Research journal reflection)

It isn’t about trying to get sense from an outside source, it is about putting the pieces together for me to understand where I am in the process of my own life, my own being-becoming, using the process of writing (a praxis of writing). Putting pieces together that will allow me to enter new understandings. I want to be able to know that, yes, I did mine depths that I haven’t before, that I may indeed be getting ‘inside’ Glover’s ‘inner story’, ‘real, inmost story’ (see p. 180) and “thus, my self-creation is tied to my self-story, which means if I change my inner story, I change me” (Randall, 1995, p. 52).

These changed ‘self-stories’ are found at each horizon line (Gadamer, 1965/1986) as I journey from one to the next. Understanding is not a finite equation, it is a continually expanding one. The summitless (Haskell, 2000) mountain metaphor plays perfectly into this metonymic space, as the words cancel each other out. There cannot be a summitless mountain, and yet as a metaphor we can conceptualize it, a metonymic moment of grasping/not grasping an understanding. A dissertation is such a (s)p(ace), for each step walked earns a new understanding of where the previous step has been and still leaves future steps blank.

Our walking pedagogy is summitless
Another day of this brilliant sun shine and I find myself racing towards the finish line and I have to remind myself to stay focused. To heed my own words. It is the walk that counts, neither the getting there nor the anticipated satisfaction of having done, but to remain in the presence of the work. To enjoy the process, to feel the body in action / doing, to feel the presence of action in / through / with the body. As I kneel in the morning, I am reminded that it is in the action of doing through the body that I come to understand what is the doing. This praxis of body / mind / soul / (self).

Yes we walk this understanding

To understand my own world

I have always been this way; that is why I am a sculptor. Not to build large objects for other people, but to understand my own world. As Ross Laird (2001) reminds us in his excellent lament “spoken through” (p. 63), the craft of wood working, “without a spirit of discovery, the work is just a technical exercise” (p. 31).

My grade two teacher would order me to “empty my pockets,” as I always had them full of bits of string, wire, cork and other (useful) bits and pieces, so that I could build desktop wonders behind a raised book, there creation may well have related to the lesson at hand. However, my teacher only saw stuff to confiscate as I wasn’t “paying attention” to what she wanted me to learn. She,

not seeing what I was paying attention to. Those spaces in-between that she could not see, as Schoemperlen, (2001) helps us understand in her contemplation,

Ordinary Time is all these days that blend one into the next without exceptional incident, good or bad; all those days unmarked by either tragedy or celebration.

Ordinary time is the spaces between events, the parts of a life that do not show up in photo albums or get told in stories. In real life, this is the bulk of most people’s lives. But in literature, this is the part that doesn’t make it into the book. This is the line space

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126 Oh, I hated to go to her desk, as to me she had an overpowering smell, (from my young nose’s impressionable perspective) an old person smell that I reacted strongly to. I remember staying away from her as much as possible.
between scenes, the blank half-page at the end of a chapter, and the next one begins with a sentence like: Three years later he was dead. (p. 160)

I am intrigued with how many spaces turn up. How attracted I am to them, to these nothing areas and how I am almost jealous when others talk about them. How I want them to be all mine and I don’t want to share them. These enigmas that I understand so easily and yet don’t understand. It is that calling to spaces that have no clear boundaries, that are not definable precisely because they are only spaces and spaces have no defined area. Or rather the defined area is subjected to what is around them. By moving one, the space will change, it is a negative that is created by a positive, that always exists but also never exists, or rather cannot be controlled in the same positivistic manner that a known can be.

This is the attraction, this is what pulls

How to get closer to that negative space and not be confined by a positive? It is what we do not see that is important. I hear Canadian sculptor Krzysztof Wodiczko saying, in response to a New York City poverty activist’s negative understanding of his poverty inspired ‘Vehicle Project,’ (1987), “This is precisely what it should be, in that it should not be, it is in its impossibility as an answer that its meaning lies.”127 I too strive for an impossibility, I do not want to be confined by a known, but how then to write and produce an unknown?

It rains a peaceful drumming on the roof. I realize this is the first writing on the new computer. The key board is pleasant, and I also realize I will not be able to do extensive writing at this position, I can see my wrist already tightening.

One of my strongest memories in my grade two class still shines through; I remember vividly a picture on the wall. A picture hanging in the corner over by the counter with the pencil sharpener. A picture of a path meandering up a mountain, rocks and boulders stopping the way, the symbolism clear, a rocky path we tread, but we can get there. That was a reassuring picture, one that talked to me, I understood instinctively that journey. I saw already various rocks and precipices that I would encounter on my way. It talked of a peaceful journey, that it wasn’t in gaining a mountaintop, but in the walking through / with / in our lives, that peace was

engendered. For my grade two soul this was a reassurance, as I felt I too could walk the path and get to wherever it was I was to go. I was not a successful student, I didn’t do well, but I always looked back and saw that image as a place of hope. The image of a path walked, however rocky, was worth walking for its own sake, there does not have to be external motivation, to walk is to walk.

My grade two teacher was an ogre who killed any ounce of creativity in her class and in me. However, she did give me a visual image that I clung to as she drew the classes’ attention to my misbehavior or lack of abilities, (in her eyes), as once again she confiscated something buildable from me. She never enquired what it might be for, or how it may have been significant to me. But here is the rub, I would most probably have been unable to answer her anyway. It was not about language, it was about the doing that I was involved in, I wasn’t trying to articulate with words, either written or spoken. I was articulating through my doing, almost an autistics’ instance of another language, that no one wanted to understand.

Not until much later, in university, did I discover there was another language, one that demanded expression in something other than words written or spoken.

Oh the tyranny of the text, the power of these letters to hold attention as they make quick linear connections to our cognition cells that eagerly eat them up.

And now I choose these symbols to wrestle with, to play with, in a tangled dance of metaphor and metonymic spaces

to try and crack some new space of seeing, of learning, of understanding

As Eric cracked open a (s)p(l)ace of connecting to a young student from Ecuador, by talking to him in Spanish, honoring his place in the class as they created amazing sculptures out of clay (Grauer, Irwin, de Cosson, & Wilson, 2001, n. p.).

I was never encouraged to build an answer to a problem in any material other than pencil and paper, my natural medium relegated to the rubbish bin.

Art allows for communication that can continually change and fragment anew. Text can also do this, but so often it is hijacked to serve the hegemonic hierarchies of the status quo. Many teachers do endeavor to crack the spaces, to use art in their classrooms as points of freedom and not restraint, but there is little freedom in the continual drive to achieve conformity by yet another standardized tested level of excellence.
I call for us to walk care(fully), stealth(fully) forward
walk carefully, a/rr/fully and with freedom

I don’t want to be a leader, but what is a teacher if not a leader?
I set the walk and I try to lead well
so the journey is one of peace and discovery
that we all grow from

A WHOLE
A PLACE OF GROWTH FOR ALL

“Sometimes, all we need is the willingness and our inner process will do the rest”

This is what I am endeavoring to provide,
a (s)p(l)ace
for space to collect
data as writing
which is then a subject of work
as I endeavor to come to terms with it

I am drawn to quote Ellis & Bochner, (2000)

“To show how important it is to make the researchers own experience
a topic of investigation in its own right” (p.733).

To show the importance of art in writing in text which is a subject of work
still so little gets done it gets confusing.128

“I’d rather move forward, yet I’m aware that in my creative work there are times when the
momentum departs, energy dwindles, the safe passage vanishes,
and all comes to shuddering halt” (Laird, 2001, p. 80).

128 Such a long walk! I forget that I am walking! It is the accumulation of one step after another
that makes the walk. The walk does not exist in my mind, it can only exist one step after one step
along the path towards an often allusive destination. “The texts are facts for the walker and
fiction for everyone else. Walking into distance, beyond imagination” (Fulton, p. 29).
As I (re) read this text I am struck by the aporia of it. I wrote in my research journal (October, 30, 2002)

"I read Derrida still with a thick fog but every now and then with glimmers of exactitude."

Oh the sun grows hot
This not that – that not this
To get to the nub – to brush the surface

I will endeavor to crack the nut that is my body - knowing that I need to be in it at all times. Do I then walk with the computer more as a metaphor for what I connote? or do I go out and get the computer chip applied as fast as possible so that live data feeds can continue at all time of night and day

and then where would I be??

Kit Grauer, my advisor, laughingly responds,

"I used to sleep with my lap top to get the thoughts transferred." 129

Again kernels of truth, if I am really in it I need to be with it,

to allow the through to have space.

The physicality of walking with it does enhance this notion, I do feel connected like I have never before - the electronic version of the diary with additional powerful capabilities. The ability to gather digital images and simply drop them in.

(I see the images encroaching the text,

the text blending with images,

the two becoming one with the whole130)

this I know I may do

I keep seeing it. I see this version of text and image running together, the blurred steps, the swinging leg, I can put them in. But more often they become the markers of the text: they are the signifiers. The points of (art)iculation that we played with in Victoria.131

129 Hallway meeting March 23, 2002.
March 2, 2002

Jaala is scratching the door

I will use it to go for a walk and have a chat with Lori, one of my mother’s caregivers. Well I missed her as she has headed down to the garden apartment again and I don’t want to disturb their peace and quite. My parents are planning to go to Denman tomorrow, a good idea as the change is good for Pa. And Ma, well she thinks she is there half the time anyway. Yesterday morning she woke my father at 6:00 am. with worried words, “we have to go over the other side, we must hurry or we will be late for the funeral.” Today she was insisting on going to church, as it must be Sunday (it is Tuesday).

*It is these that my father sees …*

And still with absolute patience he looks after her,
he cooks, he shops, he baths her,
he truly and deeply loves her.

I am mindful as I watch them in these final years together, hoping that I am learning a pedagogy of patience and love that I may bring to my teaching, my life and my vision for our collective future.

*(Oh such deeply personal revelations, I feel the pain of their writing, knowing I am talking of death.) How are these useful to a dissertation?*

I ask over and over again.

Still I dwell amongst these passages - drawn into them, editing, (re)editing, finding rhythms, allowing them to talk back to me, allowing a spirit of truth out.

*“In my own creative practice a particular moment arrives when the work begins to breathe with its own life, when its shapes and turns cannot be claimed entirely by my hand”*  
*(Laird, 2001, p. 63).*

I must walk the dog, not fair to her, she is now whining

OK OK!!

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Now at the beach and I read Ellis & Bochner (2000) and realize I saw them perform this at the Learning Love Conference\textsuperscript{132} and how powerful it was to hear Carolyn perform through the death of her brother.

Reading of the cycling backwards and forwards, around the (s)p(l)aces of being in, I suddenly see

\begin{quote}
\textit{a dream}
\end{quote}

\textit{was it last night?}
\textit{I don’t know}
\textit{feels recent}

\textit{And it sits static as an image of self}
\textit{going to other, to self}
\textit{(and the ‘other’ is self)}

\textit{In a perpetual circle which precludes movement}
\textit{AT the time it was a form of night-mare but}
\textit{also a warning}
\textit{It had that}
\textit{BE AWARE}
\textit{(Type)ography}
\textit{fringe to it}

What does it mean? I think it is to do with the reflexivity of the concept of autoethnography. How in fact you cannot live constantly in that state, as then you (I), our eyes (I’s) are not, cannot be alive!!

To be alive I have to be in the moment of the moment. This came to mind in this morning’s prayers, as I entered a meditative state and \textit{suddenly I am the research self} and I am looking at me doing prayer and I know I cannot be in that place and also inhabit the contemplative - meditative, the two are mutually exclusive. I had to relax through it, words of “allow the thoughts to pass through you, come back to your centre.” A centre which is meditative, which flows into the prayer and becomes all there is, \textit{a moment of prayer takes over in ‘flow’} (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Another image that recurs a lot, as I write through this

\textsuperscript{132} UBC May 4-6, 2000.
thinking, is the study I used for my masters thesis,\textsuperscript{133} being immersed in the process of doing,\textsuperscript{134} so that all else becomes secondary.\textsuperscript{135}

Literal to \textit{sleep} with the computer as I did the other night\textsuperscript{136} and to bring it with me as I walk so that I can respond to the moment of thoughts

\textit{that seem to propel me forward.}

The sun is HOT ... and the sound of the surf is a constant in the background/foregrounding ships nestled out there and Jaala does her gruff bark, as she seems to pick up some smell

The tide is out and a cawing of a Raven is answered back and forth, and I hear sounds of snowshoes on the snow

I suddenly realize I must go snow shoeing.

Another form of walking to try in the quite of the mountain that looms so strong behind me.

\textit{Put your ear to the line, closer to the words. Listen. There are other texts called and recalled in the research text. The intextuality shadows, hovers, and sometimes illuminates. Hear the echoes below the text of multiple voices, multiple discourses. Smell the other contexts in which these words have lived. (Luce-Kapler, 1997, p. 194)}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{133} de Cosson, (1996), \textit{Creativity and the Working Artist/Teacher: The Relationship}. Unpublished Masters Thesis, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario. \textsuperscript{134} Cawelti, S., Rappaport, A., & Wood, B. (1992). Modeling artistic creativity: An empirical study. \textit{The Journal of Creative Behavior}, 26(2), 83-94. \textsuperscript{135} I utilized data generated by the research of Cawelti, Rappaport, and Wood (1992). The data were generated by a group of 5 faculty members from The University of Northern Iowa, recognized for their expertise in the arts (a painter, a poet, a sculptor, a novelist, and a photographer). They were asked to respond to the following statement: "In as much detail as you like, list the things that you did, thought, or felt the last time you created an artistic product." The researchers produced three models of the creative process, each building on the previous, with the resultant third, being in my opinion, an excellent illustration (text/visual) of the creative process. Model three presented a "multi-dimensional view of the creative process: time, space, observativity, and consciousness" (p. 90). Model Three utilized a visual mapping device along the bottom of the page linked to text segments above. Both the visual and the text were interrelated so that they harmonized into a comprehensive "picture." This was a powerful rendition of the complex mechanism involved in the creative process. \textsuperscript{136} Having a DVD reader in the laptop facilitates the viewing of film while snuggled in bed with the low flicker of light not disturbing Jean.}
Breakdown of a word (etymology) or how we understand more deeply

Autoethnography, (auto) self, (ethnos) culture, (graphy) writing

As in research process.

Self and culture writing (research) is what I am doing.

"reflexive ethnographers ideally use all their senses, their bodies, movement, feeling, and their whole being---they use the "self" to learn about the other"

(Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 741).

Both dogs are now barking. At what?? There is nothing there. As they state their presence to the world. Nuts they are.

*My body tells me to move on.*

Yes that is it, I must finish the walk.

I have been tying the tree trimmings into three-foot bundles that are required for recycling.

They make such exquisite objects, they embody a/r/tography, a/r/tography embodies active thinking, they are the esthetic considering of the practice of Yard Work.

They embody praxis. *Pedagogy of process*

I photograph them, however without sun they cannot shine – light so important to their being - living things of beauty.

Still I record them; I know each bundle represents about twenty minutes work, so as I put bundle after bundle out for collection, I can (re) think time.

A part of me wants to keep them - to put them in a gallery – but that isn’t it either. They need to go on their way - they have a place to go (to become mulch that we can buy back from the municipality!). For me it is the process of *doing* that is important; I no longer want to cling to the product, but rather recognize the process and then to let go – *LET Go*

So it is not just “letting go of a concept” (as in the gallery idea above), it is letting go of the object all-together. ‘Ah yes,’ you say, ‘but didn’t you just say that you took photos of them, isn’t that the same thing??’

*Well I’ll have to think about that*

Jean should be home momentarily, as we have a date.

We will go for our walk and then to see ‘*In the Bedroom*’, which has garnered good reviews.
The sun dips behind clouds and the chill returns, but a fine day otherwise.
A little more tidying up before she comes home.

Jaala winces, she comes and puts her head in my face as if she is saying something but I’m not sure what it is. Could be, I want to go in it’s cold, could be, I want you to feed me.

“We create ourselves through memory. ... We work this way when we are concerned to share our perceptions of what it is to be an artist ... Central to this way of working ... is the role and articulation of memory.” (Stewart, 2002, p.1)

In reminiscing about her transition to becoming a writer, Margaret Atwood (2002) muses, “It wasn’t the result but the experience that had hooked me: it was the electricity.” She goes on to say “my transition was from not being a writer to being one was instantaneous, like the change from docile bank clerk to fanged monster in ‘B’ movies.” She goes on to tell a story by asking the rhetorical question, “Who do you think you are?” in relationship to a young girl (herself) who can learn a poem easily. Her teacher has her rewrite each line three times and stay in after school to complete the task. The young girl was not to think she was in any way better than anyone else in the class, “the teacher’s attitude is one that all artists in Western society of the past two hundred years, but especially those in smaller and more provincial places, have found themselves up against” (P. D8)

A breeze and a view of the sea,
I must home to breakfast, I am starving.
Jaala sighs deeply behind me, the comfort of the back seat taking hold.

The rest of the day becomes a blur as I try to catch up on sleep
Knowing how grumpy it can make me. I have the breakfast, eggs, ham and tomato on bagel, very nice way to start the day. I then start to read Fox & Geichman (2001), Creating Research Questions from Strategies and Perspectives of Contemporary Art.

An excellent call for arts-based research to reach beyond mere decorative and to use the concepts and ideas generated by contemporary art to push the research to more dynamic insights.

Where is the laughter? Where is freedom? in educational research, the authors ask. “Why is educational research so energy-less, so absent of freedom and play” (p. 45). The authors suggest that contemporary art can shake us up, confront, destabilize and they wonder why can’t our research do the same?

“Another boundary used by contemporary art

is the physical excitement of the maker,

the physicality of the making” (p. 37).  

I then fell asleep for an hour to wake to that groggy place of not knowing and fuzz that is the brain and it all feels a wash out

**A/R/T meeting March 8, 2002**

The following is from my research journal:

We turned the tapes on trying to get them into sync and then letting them run, the performance being viewed for the second time by our group and for the first time on tape by ‘our outsider’ Patti Pente, who has joined us (she had watched the Dec. 5, performance). We watch, but have determined that this time we will interrupt, deconstruct, play with at will, as we see fit, as the tapes play. We know we want to get this thing unraveled, that we want to use it as a catalyst, we have talked about this, we know this can move us in a new direction.

We watch for maybe five minutes when Patti suggests this is when she would “zone out” (her words). I thought she was talking about in the actual performance that she watched, but no she is talking about the experience of watching TV.

*We begin to play*

Wendy wonders about the esthetic of the monitors, could we get all four on one giant projection screen? An idea developed from something Rita suggested. Patti and Stephanie like the monitors. Patti interjected “all teachers know these, they are classroom

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138 This talks to me of the making, building and forming of this visual (text)u(r)ality of writing. The physicality of the making that creates this sculpture / installation / text.
connecting, they are an everyday esthetic’ (Research tape March 8, 2002). Patti suggests human intervention with the monitors, bodies in-between the monitors the ‘spaces.’ Stephanie goes up and places herself into the space, interrupts the dialogue on the screen. We are paying no attention to the dialogue, we are having a very engaged (re)dialogue through /with / in the piece, the piece is generating the dialogue.

*Without the tapes playing we would not have proceeded as we did.*

We ask why we are watching it in a row, why not from the four corners? The TV’s get pulled out into the center of the space and rearranged into four, looking out to the four quadrants, forming a cross in the middle of the space. We continue to dialogue as the performance unwinds on the tape. From somewhere comes the notion of working in an artist, how we reference artists and how each of us may bring these into the conversation. How contemporary art can free us. I bring up the article I have just been reading¹³⁹ as it seemed to talk to this issue. How contemporary art gives us permission and begs us to move out of old formulas into new dynamics that are not tried and true, that push us to ask more questions than to state understood answers. That embrace the difficulty of understanding, that it is not linear, that it is multiple and multilectic. We begin to understand that what we were working for is informed by contemporary art. What can we offer to contemporary art? Where do we fit in?

We were thinking of bringing artists into the dialogue, not to explicate them but to have them as part of the dialogue, to have them feed into our understandings / understandings of the group dynamic. We are all informed by different artists, different areas of the vast contemporary field. So much choice. We all want this work to inform our own movement forward, that the research be stimulatingly generative, productive to each individuals needs. There was excitement with this idea of bringing in the ‘outside artists’ how we see them grounding us, giving a framework.

*They are the moldings of our philosophical perspectives.*

Autres territoires

I think of the Montreal artist Sylvia Safdie who Gerard Wajcman (2000) refers to as “an artist of earths” (p. 51) and how many times her rocks and ground (as in, of the earth) embracing works come to me. Also the German artist Wolfgang Laib. These are two artists who get close to what I want to express. It is that groundedness that I want in my work. That I see connecting to my Yard Work. That these artists give me a philosophical grounding. I suggested I never used to look for that. I was interested only in building, in getting on with it. In the doing of my prassos. In the early days of my career I wasn’t interested in constituting my work within a framework of ‘others.’

This interest in the other and working collectively is new for me. The work of the A/R/T research group is truly collective for without the ‘us,’ without the collective, it doesn’t work.

“One might say the equation for these pieces would be something like 1+1=3; perhaps this is the magical equation for all artistic creation” (Wajcman, 2000, p. 68).

For instance, in the previous research meeting, how did we get to that moment of talking about artists? Who interjected what? (My research notes indicate that it was me who said artists.) But that is irrelevant, as I wouldn’t have interjected it without the previous comment, which was predicated on the previous and so on all the way back, to where? It is possible it went back to the careful negotiating of the starting dynamics, when someone referred to me as director. “Well, we were waiting for our director,” I heard as I entered the room. This touched a nerve even though lightly said and really had no significance other than it stuck with me. I don’t like to think of myself as such. I like to think of this collective as amorphic with a moveable form, that shakes itself out leaderless. That we all have different and diverse contributions to make through our varied understandings.

This was reiterated in this research session when we talked of where and how this work was affecting us, and what we thought we might do with it. Sam often throws in a conjuring (as in magic) remark that shifts the whole discussion and stimulates further movement. For instance, Sam reminded me today of the extreme autobiographical nature of all of our contributions when he talked of his mother. His need to relate to her, to comment again on that relationship and the understanding of his pedagogy and art making in the process of being in this group. Sylvia talked of her deepening understanding of her teaching through the process of the work on this collective. For me it reinforces the importance of process, that without our meeting and...
discussions, like today, we would not be moving, creating anew. The hermeneutic, as Stephanie likes to remind us, is vital to this work. We are connecting through praxis with the work.

When it was suggested that we meet next Thursday at Western Front, I didn’t want to go. “No, I am trying not to meet, “I must write,” I said. “No meetings.” (This was at the beginning of our meeting when I was feeling a conflict between my roles, the role of writing this and my role as member of this group. I was feeling protective of my writing space, how hard it had been to get myself into it.) And then after this enlivened, dynamic hour of talking over / through the tapes it was suggested that we meet the following Friday at Western Front where we would also have an A/R/T/S meeting. I suddenly wanted to go. Somehow this made sense to me, being drawn by the dynamics of the group, the stimulus of the discourse. How these things change

I hadn’t seen a connection before and suddenly there is

Although there had been a voice at the back of my head

saying “it may be good writing material”

This notion of the traveler on a mission of discovery, not always knowing, directionless, questioning, wondering where the ‘start’ is written by Wajcman (2000) as he contemplates Safdie’s nomadic collection of world traveled natural objects which he correctly observes “are less instances of dreamy or adventurous drifting than the silent memory of the great migrations which have drawn the map of the world” (p. 67). Safdie asks the questions of the viewer, the hard questions of identity and place, knowing full well that she cannot give answers, that for her “the work in progress of art appears to come like an echo or an answer to the work in progress of the world” (p. 67). This sentiment is echoed by the Israeli/American artist Michal Rovner (2002), “It is very dangerous to have fixed ideas about things, because then you don’t allow for change. The basis of change is the ability to create. If we stop making something new out of what there is, we are not alive anymore” (p. 141).

And:

Sometimes leaving means taking distance. But not always, because to take distance supposes that we leave a place that belongs to us, really our own, forever and for always, from which, if we leave it, we would now be more or less close or far, at the mercy of the wind. There are other travelers for whom leaving a place does not

140 An artist run contemporary gallery in downtown Vancouver that has been at the forefront of local artistic expression for many years.
necessarily mean distancing themselves, because they don’t ever really know where their place is, which one it is, because it’s perhaps up ahead, or elsewhere, because their place is perhaps where they have never been, where they might never go, because perhaps it’s the journey itself. (Wajcman, 2000, p. 66)

March 29, 2002.

Do I keep writing or go to church? I can miss but it was to be my practice through lent, this is where I get confused, as I need to write but I also need to live my practice and which takes precedent? I write and feel the flow, will I be able to come back and pick it up or will it have faded into the background as the day’s needs grab on as they always do. The phoning, e-mail, the needs of this and that. But this is the point, to stay in this difficulty, this aporia, and find the rhythms of these events and to flow (easily) through them

I am to leave right now!!!!!!

I arrive a few minutes late, another woman says as we slip in, “well we almost made it,” referring to almost being there in time to participate with the opening prayers.

A very powerful over taking of the whole body as I was kneeling.

The part that now most people stand through, but we used to kneel and my body remembers that, so it wants to kneel, it feels comfortable kneeling, so I kneel and I am overwhelmed by the horror of the wars, the misery, the death, the anguish of the world. The killing of Afghans in the name of God. I yell “it doesn’t make sense!” tears come to my eyes. I ‘feel’ the pain of it, the enacted pain.

Their pain, parents, friends, teachers, lovers,

of lost teenagers in fast cars.141

Pain flooded through my body and I was transported

I ask, what can I do and a dream comes back. Vivid. The section where I am looking at an art show of a friend’s work. (Not someone in real life but a dream friend.) Who has put up a show at Mercer Union or some such place in Toronto. I go to the exhibition and I am seized with the feeling that he/she has stolen my idea. Which of course he/she hasn’t. It is a sort of still life of everyday objects laid out with esthetic appeal. Tea pots and bits of garbage in tableaus with defined areas of staging

141 In the last few days there has been a rash of young people killed in recklessly speeding cars.
An Installation

I feel immense jealousy as I realize that this person has more guts than I.

As Elliot Eisner (2002) reminds us, “This shift from the supremacy of the theoretical to a growing appreciation of the practical is a fundamental one because it also suggests that practical knowledge cannot be subsumed by the theoretic; some things can be known only through the process of action” (my bolding, p. 214).

I had thought this piece, this dream, but I don’t put it out there, therefore I loose.

It is the same in all disciplines, publish or perish.

But then yesterday I was working on how to let go.

Ah, but you still have to show

the letting go

That’s interesting!

There was also a loud voice.

“You are an artist that is what you need to be doing.”

If

I don’t have the tangible component, whatever it may be, I will have failed my mission in this arts based investigation.

There is still so much that doesn’t go together, it is sort of like the constant question of religion and do I really believe etc.

But that is not the question. It comes back to the doing. Without the head and its dictates of thinking - if I just do, I do well, but if I think it, I cannot answer.

I never have been able to.

I remember that was always the most difficult question when I was first in art school. If I tried to answer the why question, I couldn’t. Well that isn’t true,

it simply made no sense to me to ask it,

compared to the doing of my work.

So there lies an answer to how I learn.
How I work.

That it has to be in balance, that I need to know what it is that I am doing by doing it.

If our work is to become contemplative, we must be free enough from things to be able to respect them instead of merely exploiting them. ... In a word, our work ought to be a dialogue with reality, and therefore a conversation with God.

(Merton, 1961, pp. 80-81)

I have been inputting through the rosary - as they repeat the words they flow over me. "For the sake of his sorrowful passion," repeated many times. These people know a whole 3/4 of an hour of prayer, it flows as different people take turns leading. I have looked for a copy of the text, as I wanted to be able to join in. But it doesn’t seem to be written, I mean it must be, but I haven’t found it.

So they learn by doing?

I have learned one new prayer (almost) as we repeat it throughout the rosary, and I can say it with them, I cannot repeat it here, as I haven’t the starting place.

But they do

So I breath, and once again there is sun out there. I was up as the sun rose and touched the green tops of the trees and I gave thanks to wonder.

I was reminded of the mornings in Banff when I would rise to see that pinking of the mountains at sunrise, always a glorious event and then into the studio and a mornings’ work. After four hours I was allowed to go out to do other things (my self-imposed rules). That is so much part of it, to do the writing before I get taken over by all else and I get lost and used up.

So I am sticking to this, I will continue to write in the mornings and I will push the rest back, so that I don’t lose my spirit in it.

April 3, 2002

Unexpected twists and turns:

"We must walk to discover"

I am pleased with how that final project for my Sculpture Fundamentals class is going. I think I have finally solved a problem I have had with the integration of the last three projects to make them a whole integrated work for my students. Often it doesn’t come together. It did for
one class maybe four semesters ago. I analyzed why that worked and subsequent ones failed. I had in fact tried this before but still it failed. I realized the real problem is in the plaster ‘form’ making a relationship to the hand/face/foot casting, which is successful, and the household object dismantle part, that I really like, but sometimes is just a tack on at the end, becomes a time filler, and not an integrated part of the over-all.

To help students understand, I spent more time explaining how we were wanting to combine these projects, that right now we were simply making the components, that we don’t know how they will connect, as we have never ‘walked’ this path before.

We know there is a map and we know there is a trail.

However, as it is all new, we must expect unexpected twists and turns

I made the motion of feet walking over my extended upward turned hand with the fingers of my other hand.

“We must walk to discover,”

I say

Spirituality grows in classrooms when teachers see themselves as agents of joy and conduits of transcendence rather than merely as licensed trainers or promoters of measurable growth (Suhor, 1999, p.16).

It is time to take the drawn\textsuperscript{142} bath.

\textsuperscript{142} I always wonder about this word, why to ‘draw’ a bath, to ‘draw’ water. I look it up in my trusty Collins (Hanks, 1979/1986) dictionary (pp. 464–465) and get blown away, this word is large with 44 sub entries, from “1. to cause (a person or thing) to move towards or away by pulling” to “7. to cause to flow: to draw blood.” Followed by the one I most readily understand and in fact always see, as in I see drawing a bath in this context. “8. to depict or sketch (a form, figure, picture, etc.) in lines, as with a pencil or pen, esp. without the use of colour; delineate.” Through various unknown (to me) meanings such as “26. Billiards. to cause(the cue ball) to spin back after a direct impact with another ball by applying backspin when making the stroke.” Now that is a specialized meaning, almost as esoteric as some educational research, however if you
“Like any good photographer, Mann is drawn to the images that speak to her, that make her wait for revelation” (Ais, 1999, p. 100).

I have been here longer than I thought, or rather I don’t seem to get as much inputted as I would have thought - time changes - I’m not sure I like the loss of the doing of the prayer, what this writing the process entails.

It has allowed me to input this text but it has lost me the moment of prayer. I may not be able to go out with the same feeling of peace that I have received on other days. But then part of this is to change the order of things, to still get the writing but in different ways. It means tomorrow I will make sure that I am part of the prayer, no writing. Everyone has left and the church is once again quiet. I also know well that place of calm, that place of contemplation where I can sit and simply be.

are a billiards player it is possibly a common understanding. This is it isn’t it? It is all about context. As Neilsen (2002) so eloquently reminds us,

Know, finally, that our truths, our facts, our ethical stances, our positions may be helpful and instructive—even useful and for the better good—but only for now. Contexts change, we change. Just as we learn from the stories that rest on our bedside table or live in our communities, we learn from all the truths we try to capture and all the perspectives we entertain. Recognizing impermanence does not mean abandoning our conviction, our wisdom, or knowledge about what to do in the here and now. Meaning is transitive and unreadable, as Fred Wah (2000) argues, meant only to be made. And once we name it, it dissipates. ‘Meaning generates and amplifies itself, beyond itself, but never forgets.’ (p. 213)

And another (unknown to me) “43. U.S. and Canadian. a small natural drainage way or gully” and finally, because I still find it amazing that there is so much in a simple thought known that can be unknown (as I should have known as that is the premises of this work – this journey -)

“44. a defect found in metal castings due to the contraction of the metal on solidification.” To top it all off its etymology is also a mysterious, from Old English dragan; related to Old Norse draga; Old Frisian draga, Old Saxon dragan, Old High German tragan to carry. (I then have to look up Frisian and discover it was a language spoken in NW Netherlands and the adjacent Frisian Islands and that it is “the nearest relative of the English language” (p. 609).

Oh so much I do not know......
"It is time for painters, sculptors, visual artists of every discipline, to write down their thoughts and their impassioned insights" (Caruso, 2001, p. 21).

As Valerie Janesick (1999) tells us in her reflective ruminations on journal writing:

The notion of a comprehensive reflective journal to address the researcher’s Self is as critical in qualitative work due to the fact that the researcher is the research instrument. ... I have always seen journal writing as a major source of data. It is the data set that contains the researcher’s reflection on the role of the researcher, for example. It is a great vehicle for coming to terms with exactly what one is doing as the qualitative researcher. (p. 506)

I have done two hours of reading this text, it both fascinates me and horrifies me. I get the feeling that there is something here and at the same time there is nothing. I vacillate between elation and dismay.

I do perceive a stirring of a kernel(ed) idea that is dormant in the process. I can feel that indeed the material is here. That if I can find enough thread of the right colours and the right sized needles it is possible to stitch together.

To create a patch work quilt, that can be a bricolage; a collage; that an over-all is a position to aim for, a locking together, a fusing with a literature review as a glue-top, to bind and hold, as a cover to a book, as stepping stones in a river. As Francoise Lionnet (1989) reminds us, “métissage is a praxis and cannot be subsumed under a fully elaborated theoretical system. Métissage is a form of bricolage” (p. 8).

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143 Charles Sahor (1999) asks us to consider how we might bring “experiences that profoundly connect us with our inner selves, other individuals, and nature” (p. 12) into our curriculums and classrooms.
It is possible that the rain I hear pouring outside will allow the energy to flow. I read about the trees that I have gone to look at on this trip and know that they are very close to not surviving as it has been a hot dry summer, this rain is desperately needed. I read of the pond, I think of all the lost fish and the fact that they are now hibernating, and how my eyes hurt and my back hurts, and how I was going to stop this over an hour ago! But that is why I am here to forge through to keep myself at

the grind stone
to see what can be done

This afternoon I walked with my sister through Lindsey Dickson Conservation Forest. It took ten years of organizing, lobbying, fund raising, and endless letter writing to save this forest from development. My sister was one of the tireless volunteers who stuck with the project even when it sometimes looked like a hopeless cause.

I am reminded of my ‘wrapped rocks’ art project that I have been working on through this writing (another level not to uncover at this writing, another story, another writing).

I should take them inside, protect them from the rains, I think to myself, frowning, although maybe it’s good for them to be outside, for the cedar to be wet, dry, cold, to continue its dialogue with nature.

Simone Weil: to have attention

“A work of art is something which is unlike anything else. It is art which, best of all, gives us ideas of what is particular” (Weil, 1978, p. 59).

Simone Weil was an important philosophical find for me. Her understanding for the need to have attention for an object and to not be fearful of an unknown concur with two guiding principles in my teaching philosophy. Her belief in learning through looking, as a way to understanding, is akin to hermeneutics and Gadamer’s understanding of an art object. Weil tells us that an object will ‘talk back,’ that interpretation comes out of being with attention, that we do
not need to smother with intellect, and "whoever goes through years of study without developing
this attention within himself has lost a great treasure" (1951a, p. 114). That understanding, and
thus meaning, will come if we allow enough time for an object to speak to us, "it is a question of
uprooting our readings of things, of changing them, so as to arrive at non-reading" (1956, p.
312).

Attention, taken to its highest degree, is the same thing as prayer

(1956, p. 205)."""

According to Weil (1979) looking unflinchingly into the void is only the first step. In
'Reflections on the Causes of Liberty and of Social Oppression,' Weil expresses regret that
although as an intellectual she'd been trained in "reflection" (detached, critical thought), she'd
never been trained to focus on a problem or thought without distraction, yet at the same time
without becoming mesmerized, giddy, absorbed to the exclusion of all else.

How do we look into the void without being attached to the end result of our looking? In
a posthumously published essay, "Réflexions sur le bon usage des études scolaires en vue de
l'amour de Dieu" ("Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies With a View to the Love of
God," pub. in Waiting For God, 1951a),145 Weil gives clear instructions. Noting that, when she'd
been a teacher, her students thought attention was "a kind of muscular effort" (p. 109) involving
brow-wrinkling and breath-holding, Weil suggests that true attention

consists of suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty, and ready to be penetrated
by the object; it means holding in our minds, within reach of this thought, but on a lower
level and not in contact with it, the diverse knowledge we have acquired which we are

144 "Method for understanding images, symbols, etc.," she notes in her journal (1956?), "Not to
try to interpret them, but to look at them 'til the light suddenly dawns.'... In the end illusions are
scattered and the real becomes visible" (p. ). I absolutely adore this quote, but as you can see I
neglected to correctly record the page number and I question my date attribution as well. I have
scanned her 1956 Notebooks I and cannot find it. Hence I take it out of the main text and softly
place it tucked (slightly) under the line, that hybrid division of page, one from another, these two
half's’ of the same, yet different, thing, out of the way, in the hopes that you will read it without
prejudice (and yes, indeed, I may yet find the correct page number to infill the missing blank.
Maybe a (s)p(l)ace, as yet not understood).

145 Something that interested me is the different titles of the same book. Waiting for God the
American edition, Waiting on God the English edition, slightly different formats. The American
dition is supplemented by a foreword. They both put the title down to the choice of a Latin or
Greek translation. I prefer ‘on’ as its more ambiguous and suggests the mystery of the event.
forced to make use of. Our thought should be in relation to all particular and already formulated thoughts, as a man on a mountain who, as he looks forward, sees also below him, without actually looking at them, a great many forests and plains. Above all our thought should be empty, waiting, not seeking anything, but ready to receive in its naked truth the object that is to penetrate it. (pp. 111-112)

Simone Weil continues in the same essay to give us further insight into how she perceives the all important attribute of attention in her discussion of school studies:

Happy then those who pass their adolescence and youth in developing this power of attention. ... The soul empties itself of all its own contents in order to receive into itself the being (or object) it is looking at, ... only (those) capable of attention can do this. ... (and finally) Academic work is one of those fields containing a pearl so precious that it is worth while to sell all our possessions, keeping nothing for ourselves, in order to be able to acquire it. (pp. 114-116)

I want to take one last walk to illustrate the notion of learning in praxis. That it is in the process of doing, and writing the doing, that clarity comes home to me.

*It is as important to walk out as it is to walk in*

([first learning]

*Yes, there is a second

A Labyrinth Walk

'The last two times I have walked the labyrinth here¹⁴⁶ I have always got to the centre and then quickly left the labyrinth thinking, “Yes, I know this, I know this,” and so not taking the time to walk it out [the (re)threading (back)threading] and thus, I now realize, throwing it away.

*Today I realized a fundamental...*

*It is as important to walk out*

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¹⁴⁶ My sister and I built a labyrinth on her apple orchard farm, Denman Island, at the end of the summer of 2001.
This talks to the importance of process. If you (I) don’t complete the process then I (you) get lost. If I don’t resolve the issues that the process exposes, which are confronted one at a time as I work through this textu(r)al writing / reading / researching, I could loose sight of the centre and then the project is in jeopardy (not lost but not found).

That I may be in the centre and I hadn’t seen it is an intriguing notion. How do I find my way back out?

(and now the wind threatens to haul the lap)... got placed form a past writing

This has left me puzzled but somewhat relieved, I actually think I may have stumbled on my problem.

I must return to the labyrinth and give it some time

TO WALK IN

TO WALK OUT

SLOWLY.

I climb a glimmering blossomed cherry tree and I take some shots from there
I have been walking the digital camera too

it has

WALKED INTO THE CENTRE

AND OUT

with me.
I have time before I need to go to catch the ferry; I could use the video camera. I am not sure for what, however I go and get it out of the car, it has the film already loaded and has 80 minutes of battery time and a 60 minute film.

I begin with the entrance and a slow pan of the rings. I still didn't know what it is that I want to use the camera for. I begin the entrance off the labyrinth, I think of Simone Weil's (1951) “the beauty of the world is the mouth of a labyrinth” (p. 163). I see this more clearly as I realize how I have been stuck at the mouth and forgetting to begin the steps inwards, that yes there is a goal, the centre is a goal and the (re) stepping, (re) walking the path to the outside is also a path with a mission. I need to be walking out too. So I am still filming and I am walking, I realize that I have the clock and the film running, I can see how long this takes. I use the camera to follow my footsteps and in attentive contemplation I walk.

The centre cherry tree, the variations of the grass, the stops and starts of the walk, the investigating of the rocks that make up the path way, investigation of the sticks and shells on the turn points. Jaala was bounding in and out at intervals, I reach the middle at the 13 minutes mark and I spend some time there, I begin to circle, watching the trees whirl in the viewfinder.

I begin to twirl faster

I REALIZE

I am

GETTING DIZZY

and I keep going thinking that I am going to slow down when I get to the point to stop. Instead, however, I begin to topple, I fall almost out of the circle, but held inside by an invisible force. I feel the whirling head of the camera slowly find ME and then I get up and I begin the
walk out again with various investigations on the way. I see rocks close up. I see Jaala doing strange running. I go deep into the rocks and the grass and some close ups of the tree, almost going into the trunk, it feels good.

I am almost out and the time is now at over 33 minutes and I am surprised at the advance of time to such a great degree. (I was aware of the passage of time but still not aware at the same time. It sort of passed in a blur.)

Do I want to see the film? Yes/No. That isn’t the issue…

I feel like I have begun to walk the path out from the centre.

What did I find at the centre? That is a question that could be asked.

Maybe one doesn’t need to know the answers to questions just keep the questions coming.

So a cup of tea. My face is burning up.

Maybe finding the way out is not the issue. What’s wrong with staying inside and finding what’s going on in there?

“Finding the way out will set the framework.” I said. But is this really what I wanted? Do I indeed need that? or should I in fact be back into the text and getting deeper into the labyrinth instead of trying to tidy it up?

I do need some structure, this I will agree, but is it possible that the muddle is more to the point?

Maybe I am at the centre

I cannot see

I need to start (threading) back out.
An Afterglow

A/R/Tography: A way of walking with/in pedagogy

I want research that begins in a place of unknowing,
with a leap of faith,
a courageous willingness to embark on a journey.147

The churches of Europe,
in France
(as I rode to various medieval ones)
dotted the countryside where we stayed
at L'hurondelle
in 1996.

As a maker of myth,
self leaves its handiwork everywhere in memory.148

All that stone, much restored to former simplicity and glory, some still heavy with gothic
and late 19th century tapestry and statuary so busy. It was the restored and stripped-bare stone
white interiors that drew me most. I was absorbed into the simplicity of space itself - taken away.
Just the walls and years of collected prayer
(I could feel the power held)

There must have been thirty churches that I could easily reach by bicycle and as I got to
know the area better, and went further a-field on those bike treks, I would have as destinations
the finding of a church that I hadn’t yet seen –
always an adventure - always a wonder.
The images flow through

147 Leggo (1999), P. 120.
head stones, ornate capitals, (carved medieval stone mason’s own faces\textsuperscript{149}) often appearing mixed with the fantastical and other demons and magical beings curling around eating the tail of a serpent, climbing ladders of Jacob’s descent.

- And angels flying over the arches
  Yes - light
  radiating
  (through)out
  as benches invited our resting

And I sit in the church I was baptized in, confirmed in, but not married in. I didn’t think about it at the time as something I would want to do. I still viewed this space with some hostility, which with aging becomes nostalgia. However these feelings are not merely nostalgia, there is the presence of past that lives here, my past, rather than historical past, this is living-breathing past (for me).

When was this church built?
I have a feeling it is around the time I was born.
My two sons and daughter were baptized here so they too are connected.
Done then to meet family expectations as much as anything,
now I am happy as I realize my parents will have their funeral at this church.\textsuperscript{150}

They are going to drive to Denman today, he at the wheel.\textsuperscript{151}
Jean worries, I worry, (it’s similar to the worry a parent experiences with their kids).\textsuperscript{151}

\textsuperscript{149} That need for self portraiture always evident. To reflect ourselves to others, and thus understand ourselves better.

\textsuperscript{150} (Oh this death again)

Such a big one!

I know they cannot go on indefinitely, that even though my father is healthy at 90/91

I see the tiredness of caring for my mother
(sometimes) loudly on his face

\textsuperscript{151} Today, December 22, as I edit, is his 91\textsuperscript{st} birthday, which he insists we must not celebrate, which of course we do.
I cannot say no, it isn’t up to me to stop their going or his driving.

(not yet, anyway)

It is the last vestige of their freedom.

Every time I think, this could be the last trip –

they must go.

And I must get home

as I said I would be there to help them pack

and do the car.

Home I go.

Thank you church for providing this space at the back,

for being in flow of thought

I am back at my desk: the sun unfortunately gone now.

I have got my parents off on the 12:30 ferry.

“Language is a constitutive force,

creating a particular view of reality and of the Self” ¹⁵²

as

I read that I think, ‘yes, that is why I am doing this, I understand more through the process of doing the writing - writing tells me where I am.’¹⁵³

¹⁵³ I have used a journal for this process for years, however since beginning the PhD program my once quite orderly journals have become skewed, my process of discovery through writing wasn’t happening in the same way. There were so many ways to collect information, my journals became sparser, however this wasn’t due to less collecting, I was also collecting on my laptop, ‘direct-data,’ I liked to call it.

The material was collected over a period of six months, January – July, 2002. I set myself the task of paying attention through daily writing ‘researching the process of my own doing’ or self inquiry into my praxis through the process of writing.

I envisioned it as Crean (2001) says of Emily Carr “painting the forests from the inside out” (p. 176.). Emily Carr (1971) wanted to understand native imagery from the soul of its creator, as she said “the Indian caught first the inner intensity of his subject, working outward to the surfaces” (my italics, p. 211). I envisioned this process as an opening of spaces for growth and understanding, learning through doing. I did not realize how much a praxis it would be. I did very little (re)reading and no editing of the collected text until it had sat for a further four months allowing myself distance from the data collection. The possibility that this could enhance
As I walked earlier I was thinking about being true to myself.

What does that mean?

Slightly in response to the dream of the sculpture and my not doing what I need to do, that I am often doing someone else’s work when I must do my own.

And yes I don’t always know what that is

but does that mean I don’t do it??

So back to Laurel Richardson’s

language is a constitutive force

statement.

I looked up constitutive as it is one of those words that I feel, but my need to read a definition is strong, (its etymological functioning)

And it’s simple and short, “able to form or appoint.”

“Yes,” I think, “of course it is there/here, because that IS WHAT LANGUAGE DOES. ”

Precisely what I am doing with this collection of text.

It is that relationship to the building of a form

(yet unfulfilled, but there/here,

[there in my mind])

I DO KNOW WHAT I WANT THIS TO BE

I can see it in my minds eye

illusive, but there.

What

FORM?

Does this writing take?

That thread(ing) wor(l)d - that wor(l)d I spend so much time with in Elementary Art Methods class - the crux of the living/breathing world.

Many have problems differentiating it from shape, its 2 dimensional cousin

a more subjective(d) (re)searched glance, as time does heal and distance does the heart grow fonder, all of which are bound to help the (re)writing – cutting, ripping, tearing – (re)forming, that is the work of this project.

its partner (in crime).

AND HERE IT IS IN LANGUAGE
THESE BUILDING BLOCKS

Images do not stay within discrete disciplinary fields such as ‘documentary film’ or ‘Renaissance painting’, since neither the eye nor the psyche operate along or recognize such divisions.\textsuperscript{155}

I go outside to see if the garbage collection has come / is coming - as I hear the roar of the engines coming up the hills. Indeed the recycle box collection has come and gone. They no longer take aluminum. (Has the market fallen out of that?) We used to collect it. More and more seems to be going back into the landfill.

\textit{However that isn’t what I wanted to see, my interest was/}
\textit{is in the tree-bundles.}

\textit{(Oh the sun has just reappeared from the cloud cover)}

It is those carefully bundled yard trimmings that I want to document going.

\textit{Oh I have too much attachment to them}
\textit{Let go – Let go}
\textit{(a lament is cried)}

But equally I am not going to hang around all day waiting.

But then I hear once again the pull of the engine
a loud diesel cry of opportunity
I run to the street
camera in tow

Once again not yard trimmings

\textsuperscript{155}Rogoff (2000), P. 30.
but rather, real garbage.

I play with the shadows of self

(that I

that writes)
on tree-bundles

‘Oh yes! I like that’ I say

I disappear INTO the bundles

As indeed I am

I made the string bound bundles that I want to hang onto

that I feel I need to keep.

But I know I equally do not.

The sun is hot,

air cold,

70% chance of snow last night

40% by this morning

and now brilliant blue sky

A burning sun

Reading more Laurel Richardson (2000):

“I write because I want to find something out.

I write in order to learn something

that I didn’t know before I wrote it” (p. 924).

On metaphor she says,

“Like the spine, it bears weight, permits movement, is buried beneath the surface, and links parts together into a functional, coherent whole” (p. 926).

(I like this. I crawl beside it.)

Why do I like it?

It’s the same language I could use to describe the images I want to use/ am using, they help hold the whole - they are a spine (of sorts) too.
I want many spines
I want multiple holding devices
I want different ones to create tension / interest.
I want you (dear reader) to have many ways in,
one may be through the text,
another through images,
another through structure,
another through the feel of the whole

*Thing*

"Into a functional, coherent whole"

AN INSTALLATION!

Yes, that’s where we are headed ...

*The emergence of visual culture as a trans-disciplinary and cross-methodological field of inquiry means nothing less and nothing more than an opportunity to reconsider some of the present culture’s thorniest problems from yet another angle.*\(^{156}\)

Getting close to the time I can do some yard work.

To use my body.

"*Let your body stir, if your mind is still becalmed.*"\(^{157}\)

I will do e-mail this evening. I refuse to get eaten by it and if I go in now I will be doing it for the next couple of hours. There are a few things I have to do in the village but I think those too can hold off till later.

As I sat here I thought, ‘yes that’s it, I am in it, this is the place, I don’t need to go anywhere else. I can find out enough right here: (always running around looking elsewhere - when the place is right here, now.)

\(^{157}\) Seth (1990), P. 368.
Writing is not self-expression: writing is self construction.\(^{159}\)

Finally I was in-tune with the yard-trimmings recycle truck.
Oh, not a happy camper,
his response to my magnificent bundles so lovingly created:

"There's tons like this,
Everybody's doing it!"

"Well you haven't been around for a few months, so it builds up,"

I respond

"Did your landscaping crew do this?" he asks incredulously,

"No, I did."

(He misses the beauty of my work,

I wanted him to see)

"All knowledge is constructed."\(^{160}\)

He hauled the bundles into the back - at the same time activating the compression chamber to

swallow them up. He was sweating,

didn't look fit enough for this kind of work.

(It will be the next thing they say we have to pay for.)

Enough of that! I want to get out and do an hour or so work, hence I will fold this up and allow myself to use my body in another way.

This body -

happy today

in this rhythm of reading-writing/working/walking/researching


A rhythm that is the praxis of a/r/tography

I can look at this first growth tree stump and see the work.

It slowly takes

Form

From

out of the layers of ivy that I methodically pull away

stuff into recycle bags

haul up to the road

As I worked this afternoon and got further and further into the stump I got to the deep furrows where the old roots plunge into the ground and I suddenly remember being a small boy and seeing the same things then and they were scary places - maybe the rats were down there - at the same time they were mysterious places of darkness and intrigue.

Maybe treasure there or passageways to other worlds

Deep recesses of memory.

The tree (that was) as metonymic space

standing strong - hiding (shading) other meanings

The tree as metaphoric

_Grounded_

rooted with(in) multiple new growth - at least four different trees growing

out of it -

cedar, pine, cherry, mountain ash, huckleberry and ivy

all draped in honey suckle,

black berry and fern,

a glorious jumble of fecundity

Needing some care and safety to help it be

I have left it for a number of years as I felt it needed to be

_Free_

Of human intervention

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161 I _feel_ the cries of our first nation elders in these giant earth clinging magnificence.
Let nature do
its own thing
(so to speak)
some order(ing)
tease out a pedagogical trunk of wonder.

As we tease out theory
finding methodological ways through

"We try to build a theoretical structure, which we then experience as a structure, which has a form and a foundation, which we then experience as an edifice, sometimes quite grand, sometimes in need of shoring up, and sometimes in need of dismantling, or, more recently, deconstructing." ¹⁶²

"Is the tree mine?"
I ask hesitantly
knowing, of course,
that it isn’t
as nothing is,
as we injure this world more painfully yet

"we create ourselves through memory" ¹⁶³

How about walking?
Walk to what you can walk to.
Walk around if you have nowhere to go. ¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Richardson (2000), p. 927, she uses italics to emphasize the building/architectural metaphor.
¹⁶⁴ Seth (1999), P. 368.
I write myself deeper into this tangle (Rasberry, 2001) of text, as blocks to be collected, as I would material in the studio, before I can begin the process of building a sculpture. As though I am wandering the neighborhood collecting those choice pieces of cast off material.

Collecting sometimes by colour
sometimes by shape
sometimes by intrigue

These objects gathered in space
to look for form,
that I work

...an alchemy begins.
(you and I)
a process of connecting
finding meaning
through memories of self.

The interruption of the dream will always remain improbable, like the end of the journey I'm still flying toward. ¹⁶⁵

Carol Shields (2002) novel “Unless” provides a perfect description of the notion of *form* that I have been working for in this a/r/tographic dissertation. I (almost) leave you with this to distill my working methodology. The italics are mine.

... and this is what's so wonderfully uncanny. I know where you're going with this. Now, don't please, misinterpret my words. What I mean is, I know and I don't know. You haven't given anything away, you've been astonishingly stern and strict with the reader, letting him or her do no more than sniff and conjecture. But the *form*, and I am speaking of the *form* in its universal aesthetic sense, is so solidly there, and so is the sense that the *form* will complete itself in the only way it can. (p. 241)

*Artists perceive patterns in new ways, find sensuous openings into new understandings, fresh concepts, wild possibilities.*

*Artists help us subvert the ordinary and see the extraordinary.*

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Seven

For a moment the haze clears
I see clearly

sun browned grasses
A Curatorial Endnote

Looking Through the Image Series

Metonymic Moments.

(Using Images to Understand a Process)

One storied text to travel by ...

Findings

amidst meanderings

of a Sculptor/

(artist)/researcher/teacher.

(Who stayed within the parameters of

his stated path

of researching his own messiness of mind

and praxis

opening to his practice as researched

and research as practiced.)

Generating unfolding understandings

of methodological underpinnings

in

a/r/tography.

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As the images Metonymic Moments have slipped past with a gentle flip of the wrist, let me now take a moment to reflect on the use of the seven images that I chose to accompany this text. I believe, as I said at the end of the Introductory Curatorial Note, the most crucial piece of information was to say that there was a deliberate placement and order to these images, a progression, to which I wished to draw attention. By doing so I hoped to heighten the images ability to act on / with / through both the text and you, dear viewer / reader.

It was my desire to embody through images, an understanding that you may not have been aware of, a subverted-knowing if you will, that was acting on a subconscious level to help solidify your comprehension of the work presented to you. This is often how artistic creations work.

- Art can act subversively to enhance understanding that we do not always recognize as apparent.

These images perfectly represent, in a visual form, what you have been reading in a textu(r)al form. Let me explain how I understand this relationship because it can open to a reading of the dissertation that is at once simple, and yet one that has profound implications in our understanding of an active art curriculum, research with artistic underpinnings (a/r/tography) and pedagogical callings for teachers to learn from artists.

The images in this text can act independent of it (even though embedded in it), that is part of their strength. They act as independent verifiers of metonymic practice. That I learned through them, is a truth my body 'knows' every time I (re)see them. That the action necessary to create them is vital to their existence speaks louder than words; it is embodied in their very presence. My autobiographical hand - the hand that writes this text – creates these images through an embodied action. My embodied movements / vibrations are inherent in the resulting grounded, 'of / in nature,' images.

- The images are not just intellectual framings of nature, they are produced through the movement of the body.
- The images are embodied photographs.
- The images depict an embodied curriculum of pedagogical walking with / through nature.
It was through my interest in representing the metonymic that I came to perfect my praxis to produce these images. It was dwelling in the midst of the question of how to visually represent that which may stand for something else that I captured the series *Metonymic Moments.*

Through these images I am suggesting that metonymy allows for 'a sliding,' which opens to a (s)p(l)ace of potential. As Rogoff (2000) reminds us:

> Visual culture thus opens up an entire world of intertextuality in which images, ... are read on to and through one another, lending ever-accruing layers of meanings ...(and) what we have begun to uncover is the free play of the signifier, a freedom to understand meaning in relation to images.... (pp. 28-29)

Let us consider an analysis of these images as it may help increase our understanding of why I placed these into the text, and at the same time shed light on some findings of this dissertational writing – writing as sculpture- sculpture as research. I remind you that this represents but one ‘reading’ of many.

Images 1 & 2, are the same subject, however, in Image 2 the blurred state is enhanced, as are the subsequent 4 images. I would suggest the metonymic potential is heightened in these blurred (s)p(l)aces. The slippage is greater, the flow larger, the intellectual possibilities expandable.

However, before we continue with an image analysis I would like to hark back to Bal’s (2001, 1999) notion of ‘quotation.’

I would like to suggest just such a ‘quotation’ from *Metonymic Moments* to the photographic work of the Israeli-born artist, Michal Rovner. Rovner makes large blurred photographs of people and spaces, these images sometimes look as though they are flying in a dusty nebulous space, about which Rovner has said, it is "about being taken out of context, being detached. It's about being in between ... ."

To interpret a blurred image a viewer must 'fill in’ the missing parts, literally make them up using their imaginations, drawing on their gathered past to do so. Since all of us have such varied conglomerates that form our collected her(his)tories, the stories we ‘imagine’ into Rovner’s images are as different as are our pasts. This is similar, for instance, to ‘cloud staring’ practiced by young children. In a fleeting moment, when the swirling formations freeze into an

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167 It was in a paper I wrote for Dr. Ted Aoki, *Following the process ii: A non-modern interface,* that I first developed these metonymic images.

exactitude that is immediately seized upon, they pick out a dog sitting on the back of the flying dragon, for instance, and their best friend insists it’s a duck jumping a fence. These images change again and again, and by the time they have come to an agreement the form has shape-shifted into yet another fancy. A moment stretches into something else and on and on, never-ending, a hermeneutic circling into a continual beginning.

However, if we read a curatorial essay on Rovner’s work we discover her art is usually interpreted from a political stance of displaced peoples, the diaspora. Her blurred images help viewers to enter the troubled waters of the Middle East. Her images are disturbing but not ‘upsetting.’ The boarders of the worlds’ displaced have no delineation; a blurred line we face every day.

Rovner’s images are visually enhanced by her intertextual lingerings, as Nicholas Mirzoeff (2000) notes "the diasporic visual image is necessarily intertextual, in that the spectator needs to bring extratextual information to bear on what is seen within the frame in order to make full sense of it … both within and beyond the intent of the producer of that image" (p. 7).

I would suggest a similar motivation in my use of the blurred Metonymic Moments. These images are open to multiple interpretations, they embody an intertextual lingering. They all have a singular starting place, the land, they are of a grounded pedagogy. That we can ‘see’ into their blurred picture frame is a given, however a given that can flow outwards, in ever changing cycles of meaning. The first and last images are ‘recognizable,’ in that the image is stable; we know they are of the land. The images bracketed in-between have more ambiguity and the metonymic space alluded to by the title of the series allows for further slippage. This is a deliberate attempt to capture visually the workings of metonymy, to allow something to stand in the way of, in front of, but still pointing or veiling a known.

- This is similar to this dissertation. There is known/not known. These images allow for an opening of the imagination, to (possibly) wander off the page and even through the page via the image into an embodied world of ambiguity and multiplicity.

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169 I have intentionally not capitalized as it is used in the sense of a dispersion or spread acknowledging the Diaspora in its very root.
Bear with me, for a moment, while I take you on a ‘reading’ of the images, remembering, as stated previously, that this ‘reading’ is only one of many possible interpretations. It may find resonance with how you have already related to them, or it may not, in either case additional reflection can act as a catalyst of further thinking and possibly lead to deeper understanding of their function in this dissertation.

On the right hand side of Image 1, the foreground of the picture plane is dramatically enhanced by the diamond shaped negative spaces of a wire fence which can be ‘seen’ as veiling a dark void. This foregrounding is interrupted, stopped (Applebaum, 1994) if you will, by the disappearance of the fence into the grasses on the left. A fence ‘veils’ our entrance into a void only to be folded into nature. Nature subsumes the man made, reminding us that nature can teach if we listen carefully, with full attention (Weil, 1951). How often do we sit on a beautiful day surrounded by beauty and not see it? How do we draw ourselves back into seeing with a full embodied eye? How do we teach our students to see through embodied spirits? These are the questions being folded into the grasses. These are the same questions that I am folded into as I climb my trees that I have been writing into / through this dissertational writing. “…it is body interaction with nature that allows me to see more clearly my connection to it” (p. 139, this document) I write, as I unravel theory folding into practice.

- The metonymic image allows for slippage that opens to ambiguity and multiple possibilities of new meaning making.

Image 1 is almost perfectly triangulated by the wire lines of diamonds running from the upper right corner to the bottom left, and grasses at the bottom right up to the upper left. This x(ing) of the space is given solid credence by a strong visual slash (the stick) across the upper section of the picture.

\[ \text{A crossing} \]
\[ \text{and a possible cutting} \]
\[ \text{with a slash} \]
\[ \text{leaving a void} \]
\[ \text{between diamonds.} \]
The center is acknowledged by a cluster of almost indistinguishable red dots (the very berries of life).

So much potential in a static image.
The mind can play in the beauty of the world,
it can come to terms with self
through a walking pedagogy.

- I find “the walks are forming a pedagogy” (p. 167). I discover my own rhythms through the daily walking. The hours of contemplation needed to formulate new ideas are born through the body, they are an embodied curriculum of learning through doing the physicality of walking. This walking deliberately created space, carved out of the rest of the day, a (s)p(l)ace for thinking through my body as I walked the writing of my practice as researched and my research as practiced.

Image 2, I remind you, is the same subject, the same picture source, a blurred Image 1.\footnote{This is not strictly true as two independent photographs taken even a split second apart are never the same thing, time changes everything. However, from our perspective we can accept them as the same subject matter.} We lose the x(ing) to a more generalized over-all ambiance. The fencing diamonds become ghosted into lyrical lopping lines. There is no foreground in this image only the strong right to left wavy horizontals. The red dots of the center now accentuate the undulating lines and seem to hover over a folding hole (possibly opening), red berries swimming into/out of a void. The image is opened up as more possibilities are allowed into a blurred dance. Nature, in a sense, has taken over and the dance is an interweaving of understandings.

The hovering red berries, their wavy trails active in theory, call attention to the center hole, a void in the picture plane. These \textit{Metonymic Moments}, caught as they are by the camera’s eye, my eye (i), the researchers (i) eye, provoke similar questions as the text does.

- What do I mean?
- Why am I here?
- What is my question?
• How does the research site change when viewed through a researchers eye (i)?
• How does the messiness of research open us to learning a-new?

These images are the captured pedagogy of the walking journey that was the making of this dissertation. They swirl inside the site of a/r/tography. They linger inside the self-reflexing and interrogating research site of my practice as researched and my research as practiced. They are the embodiment of inquiry that is holistic, visual representations of inquiry that is through/with/into ones wholeness of mind, body, spirit and emotions combined.

It is in the act of taking (capturing) the image that I must be attuned to all my senses, and to the world around me, all must be in balance. I must have just the right amount of body movement, in relationship to camera positioning, and to the object I wish to capture. The images are singular instances, caught for all time, of a synthesis of what the dissertation has struggled to unpack. The how, the why and the what for? As in the pealing of an onion, back and back, layer after layer until there is nothing, until there is everything – a this/not this metonymic – a holistic centering that encompasses a full personhood.

As Rita noted on a draft copy of this work, “The arts force us to be whole, to live a life of inquiry, a/r/tography is a conscious decision to commit oneself to inquiry into/through ones’ wholeness. In so doing we recommit to (re)creating ourselves over and over again.”

Through the camera’s eye I can capture a nature as it rushes by, (or rather I am often rushing by it!) These metonymic images allow the memory to sit quietly in a place of rest with nature. As Smith (1997) reminds us, when referring to Gadamer (1965/1986), “his hermeneutics supports all recent work in the study of narrative and story, which proceeds from an affirmation of the traceably constitutive nature of human understanding and its roots in recollection and memory” (p. 34).

My self is made of these collected memories and as my research journal notes:

I sat to record and the tightness of the previous writing makes me tense – But a good tension I know as “Yes,” that is why I have sat this past week – to reach an understanding, an interstanding with myself. (January 26, 2003)

This is an embodied understanding that is reflected in a tightness. This is the heart of my dissertation:

171 Note on dissertation draft copy, February 10, 2003
• It is a grounded embodied curriculum that is called for which art can help provide.
• It is through a research methodology, such as a/r/tography, that we can achieve an embodied researched understanding that honors mind / body / spirit / emotions as integral to the research process.
• That we must live / breath / walk / in the world alive to all in the present moment, to stimulate our intellect in a holistic way.
• That above all it is a call for **attention** to our daily living as an embodiment of a curriculum grounded in our relationship to / with / in nature that practices a pedagogy of inclusiveness, compassion, understanding and fairness to all.

There are four more blurred metonymic moments at fairly regular intervals throughout the reading of the first half of the text. They sit as visual resting spots – pause spaces – reflective zones – to be looked into / through / with. They work, as much art does, as spaces for you (dear reader) to take those glasses off and reflect on your pedagogical journey so far, your meanderings through / with the text, and when sufficiently rested, to once again take up your staff and continue through the struggle of my interrogation of my practice as research and my research as practiced. As James Elkin (1997/2000) notes “meandering is furtively autobiographical” (p. 177). The potential in these **imaged resting spots** is to merge my autobiographical writing with your autobiographical musings and thus “we work, we think, we write, and when we are finished, we find we have moved. The motion is not blind chance, and is not predestined logic; it is something in between” (p. 176). For Elkins’ and this dissertation,

- this is the meandering of a gentle walk open to a subverted-knowing through a pedagogy of attention.

**Metonymic Moments as Points of Disjuncture**

Are these images as benign as I have represented them in the above discussion? Isn’t it possible that they also act as metonymic cuts into the surface of the text. That they could be disjunctive in their ripping, tearing and cutting into the very fabric of the document and allow for an interruption that has its own story line, outside of that dictated by text, or imagination, yours or mine. It is possible that they exist on their own and we will never truly understand them. Only grasp at elusive points of conjecture. They pronounce their own meaning as they dance across the page and allow for a drifting mind to be open (Eco, 1989), not held. They cross their own
boarder (Derrida, 1993) line. That is why I say they should be read as resting spots, not pinned to an exactitude, but be allowed to float as a “free play of the signifier, a freedom to understand meaning in relation to images, sounds or spaces not necessarily perceived to operate in a direct, causal or epistemic relation to their context or to one another” (p. 29), to finish the quote implanted earlier (Rogoff, 2000). It is that not necessarily perceived to operate in a direct, causal or epistemic relation to their context or to one another which seems vital here. It is the opening to the multilectic intertextuality of the visual image, its ability to trigger such differences of under(inter)standings. Meaning is given multiplicity.

As Bal (1999) said in Quoting Caravaggio, she was not interested in what the contemporary artist’s she was investigating meant, but rather, was interested in her own understanding of what they meant and only contacted them after she had written her interpretations, gleanings, and intertextual lingerings. To me this is most heartening as it reinforces my own pedagogical believe in teaching young teachers to have confidence in their own understandings, knowing that they will stay open to new interpretations, new knowledge as it unfolds.

You will note as you come to the next image set, 3, 4, 5 & 6 a different pattern in the ‘pairing.’ There is a similar dynamic at work as in the first two images, however 3 is a slightly less blurred version of 4 & 5, it is not a stable image, but it is a discernable one. There is memory at play here, when looking at 4 & 5 after 3, “Yes, I’ve seen that before,” but no you haven’t, it is a-new through the shifting of the lens – (literally and metaphorically).

- That the camera does what your mind can do, that is, shift as it finds new spaces in metonymic moments.

Images 3 & 6 can be read as bracketing 4 & 5. Image 3 can be seen as a rest, pause, break, before the agitation of 4 & 5. These two could be the twirling of a whirling dervish dancer, so extreme are the lines of colour and light that swirl in a cacophony of ‘noise.’ The greens of the upper right seen as gesticulated hand movements in the extreme motion of dance. If we didn’t know what they were, from our knowledge of Image 3, these images could be Mardi Gras, so wonderful is the movement, so multiple the open text of our visual reading.

- Here lies a conundrum, it is only my insistence that they are indeed the blurred bushes of Image 3 that keeps us form knowing otherwise.
The reading that you have been engaged with in this dissertational writing, meandering along pedagogical paths, strongly supports the belief that it is through embodied grounded experience, through praxis that artists come to know (Irwin, Grauer, de Cosson, Wilson, 2002a,b). I found that I could intellectually come to understanding through my body-knowing. That it was through points of disjuncture that this knowing was enhanced and verified. For instance I wrote in my research journal (February 1, 2003): “I finished a full dissertational edit last night. How do I feel about it? It is possible there is too much front end loading, but this seems necessary to uphold my thesis.”

- I did reach points of disjuncture.
- I went through these points of disjuncture gaining new understandings.
- A point of disjuncture cannot be arrived at without extreme resistance having been reached.

This seems to have something to do with ‘an artists way,’ or is it creativity at work? I feel closer to answers to these questions, but to answer too emphatically seems to take away from the process which is the very essence of a creative being becoming.

- If I push myself hard enough I find a way through, if I don’t push then there is no hinge point – no stop (Applebaum, 1995) – and therefore no turning, that place of growth and learning.

Image 6, a high note - low note, an in-between, a transitional change of colour, from the rich reds of the previous three images to a soft green with its almost straight horizontal yellowed lines leading off the picture plane. To the right and left there is no grounding in this image, we are spun off the picture plane and onto the last image. (There is a possibility of catching sight of the whirling dervish in the lower center of the picture, we can imagine all these spiraling lines belong to the dancer before he/she tumbles out of the picture altogether and falls gasping for air on the soft grass of the last image.)

These are living moments of research that come alive when we shift our gaze and allow metonymy to work. A shifting gaze can be re enlivened with attentive change.

- “Artists develop theory through praxis.” I wrote (p. 171, this document).
Finally a point of rest is given in Image 7. A grass field photographed from grass level with the camera angled down giving the foreground a dramatic deep texture, a tangledness. However, this time it is nature itself doing the work of entanglement, the steadied camera’s eye framing a central path, a meandering that emerges from the lower center of the image up through the middle and curving ever so gently to the upper right. The foreground is a mass of possible holes, collapse before we have even begun? However, staring intently we can agree that a path is there. A path out / through / into / - we don’t need to know –

it is in the messiness that we learn, we simply need to walk out / in

(a labyrinth remembering)

• “We must walk to discover” (p. 189).

And so full circle (almost / possibly?), back to Image 1, and the red berries. These red berries, the life blood, may indeed be just out of the camera’s view (researcher’s eye), waiting for the next foray into “the beauty of the world” (Weil, 1951, p. 163),

• a living embodied grounded research site of inquiry.
• My findings were learned through an embodied praxis, “to remain in the presence of the work” and
• “This praxis of body / mind / soul / (sic)

Yes, we walk this understanding” (p. 173).
And Finally

Barbra Caruso (2001) has a great chapter in her book ‘Wording The Silent Art’ entitled ‘Letter to a Young Canadian Sculptor,’ in which she discusses the necessity of “going through the motions” (p. 183). The basic premise being that just thinking gets one nowhere, action is what counts. “It’s better to make a poor piece of work than no work at all” (p. 183).

I must remember to photocopy this for my students, it's a great motivational piece of writing.

And on we go....

April 11, 2002 (from hand written research journal)

A/R/T/S meeting, viewing the digital video clips.

One refrain that recurs in all four independently made videos

One day it fell, I don't remember the circumstances of the fall.

only the fact that the bridge broke in two with a number of shards

What I'm most intrigued with is how empowering it is to talk with others, how it all comes alive with the circle of others. I return again to Simone Wiel’s (1951) notion of the power of attention -

Above all our thoughts should be empty, waiting, not seeking anything, but ready to receive in its naked truth the object that is to penetrate it. (p. 112)

I feel my train of thought about to burst,
it is so focused.

I see the digital mass of writing I have collected on the computer as soft clay which I now have to form into something – I have described it as a dense mass that now must be pulled apart and given spaces. I see it stretched out in front of me in a sort of stretched horizontal form that
then gets chopped and opened up – spaces – breath – it is this process that allows the form to come into view. At the moment, someone reading the text, wouldn’t be able to make any sense of it.

It

has

no

FORM

Only mass (dense mass)

It is my job to give life, to allow the spring to enter the text so growth can happen – a contemplation of the mass will enliven its spirit.

Sometimes it is so powerful I can hardly stand it.

There are real extremes in the process.

I cannot see sometimes,

I feel completely lost

and then ka-zam –

wow – open – space – freedom –

as Weil (1956) says,

“Poetry: passing through words into silence, into the nameless” (p. 120).

we must be open –

A process of surrender –

A praxis of doing.

May 19, 2002

A very interesting week where so much came together. I told the labyrinth story multiple times, as it put so much into focus, especially the realization that I didn’t need to get out, that once I had located myself it was fine to stay within. (This was a further, as alluded to, second understanding from my previous one of needing to walk out.)
Talking to Carl, he quoted someone about staying in aporia (or was that me (re)interpreting what Carl said?). Anyway it was a week where I made an i-Movie that goes a long way towards pulling together my contribution to the A/R/T/S research group project.

This Is Good.

As a group we have produced four i-Movies that we are ready to take to the InSEA World Congress, August, 2002, New York City and subsequently Stephanie took to the C&P conference (our use of technology allowing us to be in multiple places).172

I think back to Patti’s interjection at an early research group meeting. And how at that time we were so far from knowing the importance of her words, to what it was to become, collectively.

“I really like the idea of working with images directly from the video. You can (re)research the research of the research” (Patti, research group transcript, Feb. 15, 2002).

“Art is theory” (Stockholder, 1998)173 slipped comfortably into place, it is holistic, co-existing.

It isn’t as a dogmatic blanket that this is stated, but rather, as a unifier,

as

art is practice is theory is praxis.

A long weekend and I buy some more fish (for my pond) to try and give the remaining a few friends to swim with. I have seen some others so I do know they exist, a cloudy day.

172 Springgay et al, (manuscript and video submitted for publication).

173 In this film the installation artist, Jessica Stockholder, talks eloquently on how she sees art as theory, intertwined and non separable. The one feeds the other; a closed loop. It was in listening to her talk that I became convinced that artists are continually working in art as theory, that is their work. It is the continual hermeneutic loop of their opus memorandum, as they create new work the telling of meaning is being revealed. Seldom do they know meaning before doing, through doing comes meaning, a closed loop. A/r/tographers recognize this and honour a working methodology that acknowledges the circling of understanding(s). That we may not be on the up side of the circle at all times is a given, hence the need for praxis to bring us ever closer to that elusive meaning making explosion. Always knowing that our art is inevitably foregrounding our intellect.
(It needs to be emphasized here that it was through the writing that I found the metaphors to see a brightness from the dim light I was in.)

That I was able to ‘write-out’

from a place of blindness

to light.

No longer so brilliant (but that is always the way), as light will slowly dim till the next crisis of meaning hits me hard between the eyes, and I have to enter the darkness, thrashing to find my way.

Is there a way to avoid this?

Is there a way to simply resolve it all?

Well yes,

Nirvana calls,

Spiritual enlightenment,

the Bodhisatta leaves

walking

sits under a banyan tree and sees the light.

Christ taught to light.

It is always there to see, without intellect, to allow all the gathered knowledge to lead me forward, to allow, as Carl said, “the process to lead you.” To stay within, but begin to pull the pieces tighter, to build a framework. At the same meeting Carl also said, with encouragement, “you have to put a finite date on this, enough letting it drift and coalesce, you need to pull the strings.”
"No more hoarding,"

he said. 174

Yes, no more hoarding, good point.

That is the present problem. How to indicate the entrances? How to invite others into the (s)p(l)ace in which I am/have been? A continual struggle,

both glorious and emotionally draining at the same time.

A methodology that allows for deep doubt and yet rich con (text) u (c) al playfulness.

Self knowing grows within the depths of unknown places we write/research to. It is this fit, this yin yang, this high and low, this dichotomous NOT/IS, that allows a third space TO GROW.

We call this work a/r/tography as Irwin (in press) states,

To live the life of an artist who is also a researcher and teacher, is to live a life of awareness, a life that permits openness to the complexity around us, a life that intentionally sets out to perceive things differently. ... a/r/tography is a living practice of art, research and teaching: a living metissage; a life writing, life creating experience. ... living their work, representing their understandings, and performing their pedagogical positions as they integrate knowing, doing and making through aesthetic experiences that convey meaning rather than facts. Their work is both science and art but is closer to art and as such, they seek to enhance meaning rather than certainty. (pp. 29-30 )

What I have engaged with through the process of this living inquiry, is the praxis of a/r/tography, cycling within and around art to create meaning, to allow a hermeneutic expansion cycling into new, to allow the process to feed itself, this is an a/r/tographer in action.

allowing form to take hold

I fixed the bridge, gluing it back together, it once again sat, however, no longer the shiny new model, more a worn and lived version of the same thing.

a marriage, a partnering, a life

how to get to an other?

find our way?

May 21, 2002

As I must relinquish the Simone Weil books soon, I need to spend just a little more time:

One of the intriguing things is how an author can move into one’s life and change perception. This transformation is well known, we assimilate the text into ourselves and it becomes us. How could I not have found her exquisite writing, “The beauty of the world is the mouth of a labyrinth” (1951, p. 163), such a strong, bold quote for all that I am doing. It talks to the underbelly, the seamless web that is the universe unfolding, and the absolute wonder of it, at the same time the vast (s)p(l)ace of loss when not found.

The teachers calling; the pedagogical walk - to lead as many as will follow to “the beauty of the world.”

As always I feel pulled in so many directions.

I must vacate the office space I have inhabited with such joy, a space with a window, a space that was mine to ruminate in, this space that I am loosing to change.

All I know is positive in change

But I fight it

(sometimes)

hugely
this directly affects me!! (and at the moment it does not feel positive)

I was angry about it last night. It’s more that I have to deal with this now and I don’t want to. The order is out of whack. I kept wondering how to make this work for me, well that gets difficult. I’m not sure if I should move my books home, or simply move them into another space, which as I say/write, I realize makes the most sense.

I simply have to move.

July 19, 2002

It is almost a month since I last wrote on this computer. I teach at Emily Carr tomorrow and then I start at UBC for three weeks.

Have moved offices again ....

But I must go to bed

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175 How fickle is the hand of fate. For a short time I occupied a much smaller desk in the new section of the graduate area. I was then encouraged to move, yet again, to another research area. At first I was reluctant, however, I did once more lug all my collected books, journals and junk into this new space.

This is where I am now writing/researching this inter(text)u(r)al dilemma and I have to state, this office is even more conducive to work. Change indeed has been a catalyst for further enhancement of form. This the point, isn’t it?

I know a work
I don't know a work,
a metonymy
of place.

Remain hidden from vision
stay running ahead
or behind.

Needing its ambiguities
its betrayals
to stay afloat.
November 20, 2002

Dear Kit and Rita,

I have written to Carl and I have discussed with both of you my hoped for time line...

I will let you know Carl's response

On November 26, 2002, Carl wrote

"In winter light" 176

As the director of visual arts and Walter Philips Gallery at The Banff Centre, Anthony Kindl, (2002) said;

If art becomes widely received as a critical element of understanding ourselves and each other — as social agent and research — we may see the possibility of art as a critical and integral base of knowledge in broader aspects of society. Beyond this, art may be seen not only as an object, but as mental space, a means that may also imagine a different proximity to and understanding of those among us who also see things differently. (p. 61)

On Tue, 24 Dec. 2002 decosson@interchange.ubc.ca wrote:....

176 This allows me to dream. To hold a candle to the light, to know that belief is there, as Carl wrote in the fly leaf of View from my mother's house (1999),

"Always live poetically."

This gives me hope.
References


Appendix I

The following Conferences Presentations all had a direct bearing on the research for this dissertation.


Appendix II
Graduate studies course outline: University of British Columbia.

I offered this course for Art Education graduate students in the summer of 2001.
It worked through many of my walking pedagogy ideas. It was a course taken primarily by
Art Education students and was offered as a 3d studio based course. All students
submitted both individual and collaborative sculpture/installation and written work.

565B Artist as teacher/Teacher as artist

We are the 'Gleaners'\textsuperscript{177}

This is a self reflective Studio experience.
We will go forward together,
our pace and our process is group dependent.

"Self-understanding and self reflection are required from which no theory will exempt (us)"
(p. 7). \textsuperscript{178}

Based on a premise that we are all Artist/teachers,
that we understand what this means.
We do not need to ask is it art?

(a dead question for an Artist/teacher)

We know the postmodern dilemma has brought us full light into a hard beam of a pluralistic
contemporary world.

Art is all around us,
it pulsates from all corners,

some feels safer than others. \textsuperscript{179}

We can not know it all, we cannot expect to know it all -

always growing

mutating
moving

sideways - backwards

\textsuperscript{177}With thanks to Agnes Varda and her wonderful documentary \textit{The Gleaners and I}. France, 2000.


\textsuperscript{179}Honey, (2001, July 21) 'But is it art?' Globe and Mail. 'But is it art?' Globe and Mail.
through and beyond
not held to a single conductor
not something bundled and sold off as a commodity

Artists will always push through to find that which is
new and exciting
living and breathing
today!

Just as there is a continual discourse in educational research
always building on recent writing and using these as stepping stones to haul up that which is
behind and that which is ahead
onto a common platform

so does contemporary art pull,
push,
cajole
us forward, along / through,

from one step to the next (walking)
predicated on the past (walking)
at the same time throwing out the past (walking)
openly
in reception of that which is ...

"We have focused our research on the idea that the only anthropologically and physically complete way to adhere to reality, what Merleau-Ponty called 'the flesh of the world,' is walking" (p. 115). Hamish Fulton (British artist-teacher).¹⁸⁰

We will walk / build / commune
Autobiography/autoethnography/narrative/me/I/self/metonymic relationships
face/body-part relationship private/public

So let us begin
with our mirror image
(our 'T' on the world)
To
build out
form within
and see
where
we are at the end.

Appendix III

Gu Xiong lecture at the University of British Columbia, Jan. 30, 2002

(I provide a (re)telling of Gu’s telling, taken from my notes of that evening. This is not a vetted story but rather the threaded narrative of my memory and notes taken, thus a smattering of his personal journey of change and transformation as it illustrate Jardine’s (1998) call to “bear witness to the lives we are living. ... (and in) keeping the world open and enticing and alive and inviting” (p. 2), to illuminate a pedagogy of hope and renewal.)

Thirty two million people live in China’s largest city. I started to do my art in the countryside there. I started at the bottom by recording my everyday life. I started to find my hope through my art about my memories. I would walk in the daytime, in the nighttime sleeping with rice in my stomach. Also at that time I learned simplicity from the farmers, a bowl of rice and they have a big grin on their faces.

I am now a factory worker, the ‘high class’ of the revolutionary machine, but there is no meaning to me. To work with those young people who could get fired for having a girlfriend or boyfriend was very demoralizing. In 1978 the universities were opened after ten years of closures, and I continued with my art studies and teaching.

We suddenly had western culture.

In 1986-87 I was invited to The Banff Center, so I left my country for the first time and came to a very strange land. I was in culture shock. After strict examination style education I found myself in a new philosophy, so different. Suddenly I have this freedom but I didn’t know how to use it.

I went to New York see ‘real’ art.

A Canadian Group of Seven exhibition had come to China in 1975, and another international exhibition in 1985. I knew of western art through these exposures but contemporary art, as shown in New York, was something completely new to me.

I have my own way to go, my own path to follow. I start to change, to make larger works. I make a very large print for the Banff Centre. The symbolic enclosures of a fence, a Great Wall of Banff, a fence print.

I return home and experience reversed culture shock. I soared above the clouds and felt western freedom clawing at my bones.

I wanted to challenge my governments professed freedoms.
How open could the government be? I mounted an exhibition which lasted three hours before it was closed down. The show was open three months before the student uprising at Tiananmen Square.

Searching for freedom I returned to Banff, (Gu has remained in Canada since this last visit).

My nomadic dream was not real, I had to come to terms with living in Canada. I came to Vancouver and found work at UBC food services as a busboy. I am now an individual in this society. The Cafeteria work starts to talk to me, crushed cans, new life, new ideas which lead to an exhibition in the basement of the Richmond Art Gallery. It reflected a transition from one culture to another.

Here there and everywhere

I have an exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery after five years in Vancouver.

My daughter connects through the land. I make a series of Rocky Mountain drawings.

I am still in enclosures. The cultural barriers in China, there is no private space, even the toilet is not private.

I make a series, “Your Zip is Down” story drawings.

I reflect on one of Mau’s great sayings, “If you want to know the history of the pear you have to bite into it.”

I had to bite into Canada.

After a year I found meaning when I re look at a photo taken when I first came,

I finally find out that I have to be an individual.

Andy Warhol’s Mau prints, at the National Gallery of Canada, are a perfect exemplar of my concept.

“You and I” an exhibition at Art Speak Gallery, has salmon swimming home. I feel I have moved to another level, a spirit level. Socks as the river - then brought it to Victoria, use their Chinese Collection. A cultural river of salmon break through, swimming in the water involves the whole body: a bridge is too easy - stay in the flow.

Bought my own house. Man made mountains - “I am who I am.”

Chinese Centre in Montreal, Chinese letters bigger than French. ‘To build up the confidence.’

White Mountain, blue sky. Bethune, every one knows him in China.
Appendix IV

The Pedagogy of Performative Liberation: A Multilectic Inter/intrastanding

By: Alex de Cosson, Rita L. Irwin, Patti Pente, Stephanie Springgay, Samuel Adu Poku, Wendy Stephenson & Sylvia Wilson.

Presented and performed at the 31st InSEA World Congress, August, 2002, NYC


Abstract

In this paper/performance, six artist/ researcher/ teacher/ scholars perform a pedagogy of self through the use of autobiographical story telling integrated with visual elements and scholarly inquiry. A pedagogy of self is understood as self understanding and self creation derived from ongoing reflection and inquiry, an important process for educators who have been immersed in a profession dedicated to a pedagogy of others. By forming a metissage of artist/ researcher/ teacher/ scholars or A/R/T/S, we explain our stories through aesthetic experiences that integrate making, knowing and doing. The four roles assumed by each person are important for this process, because they represent a range of understanding that forms an integrated whole. Ultimately, this paper/performance portrays the importance of the arts and the roles implicit in the arts, for understanding the pedagogy of self and the pedagogy of others.

Imagine. The stage is quiet. As each person assumes a role, an artifact or work of art is brought to centre stage, contributing to a collective installation. Through interweaving and interlingual acts, the six contributors perform a visual and narrative based inquiry of ‘a pedagogy of self’. As each performer narrates their stories, others in the group cut and shape the paper covering the floor of the performance space, while also documenting the process of creation by means of digital photography and video. As the work unfolds, the cameras and scissors are passed on to the participant-viewers, who in turn become an integral part of the performance.

Alex as Scholar

I awoke this morning
with the image

bridging
-

a connecting
of one
to another.
There was a point in our research groups weekly gathering where one significance, among many, was *forced open* - namely, the importance of *the other*. This ‘opening’ had its incubation while I attended a presentation (Nicol, 2000) that speculated that self-study wasn’t so much about self as about *the other*, for without the other, the self was redundant. This circling of other, to self, to other, to create meaning finds a home in philosophical hermeneutics and phenomenology. It is in the circling from art to viewer to art that meaning is made. Our research group was in a research cycle of creating meaning *in and of* the work we were doing and *in* our continuing dialogue with(in) it. We were *in* the researching process of validating our doing as artists, *through* each other and our work.

For many art teachers their artist self is often neglected, hidden even repressed to conform to the teacher ‘norm’. That we were in the *presence* of research in our weekly meetings became abundantly clear to me as I enthusiastically cajoled a fellow group member, “You *are* doing research, you are because you are here and that is what we are doing” as s/he questioned labeling our work research, choosing instead to label it *simply* art making (feeling more comfortable in a familiar place) and not research (this more difficult place in which we wished to dwell). For me it was the moment of being *in and of* *‘the other’*. In Hans Gadamer’s (1974) words, I was “in the game.”

**Patti as Audience**

As I sit, listen and watch the performance evolve around me, I am reminded by hearing Alex’s voice of the many discussions that were precursors to this moment. As a member of this research group who left for a time on a maternity leave, my return is marked by watching this performance. I come back as a member of the audience and I can see the spirals of discovery and understanding that have unwound over time. The many questions with which we began now connect us in action, word, object, and image.

**Sam as Artist**

In an art exhibition that included my ceramic sculpture, inspired by traditional African themes of fertility and motherhood, some critics discredited the fertility figures for lacking creativity and valid systems of modernist aesthetics, as well as for their so-called paganistic content. But isn’t creativity contingent and situated? And isn’t the modernist art canon a question of standpoint epistemology? Even from the standpoint of Western philosophy and psychology, there is no consensus on the criteria for determining creativity. Whilst behaviourists present a mechanistic and objective view of creativity, existentialists view creativity as a transcendental, subjective and intuitive activity. There is a connection between ones socio-cultural location and what one perceives as valid authentic and creative. The appreciation of an Ashanti fertility sculpture therefore lies within the context for which it was created and the merits underlying its creation rather than on a universal criterion. Though valid systems of aesthetics lie behind its creation, understanding the “African Proportion of Significance” holds the key for the appreciation of African art. Under this, parts of the human figure considered important are emphasized in the sculpture.
In attempt to explore and extend my understanding of the concepts of fertility and motherhood as artist/researcher/teacher, I revisit existing ideas and belief systems within the Ashanti traditional culture. The Ashanti of Ghana convey much of their ancient wisdom and cultural traditions in symbolic language forms. The meaning of art is conceptual and influenced by the African cosmological philosophy. Fertility sculptures have certain identifiable characteristics normally understood by people socialized into the Ashanti cultural milieu. Deities are linked to the fertility of the earth, crops, animals and humans. To make the deities accessible and channel their vital force for the benefit of humanity, artifacts, including religious sculptures are produced to venerate and cultivate the powers of benevolent spirits (Sarpong, 1974). European pioneers to Africa, the Portuguese, referred to these sculptures as feitico meaning “fabricated” or “false gods.” But Africans never thought of these sculptures as gods in themselves but as receptacles for the vital forces (Leuzinger, 1960).

Patti as Audience

I have seen Sam’s sculpture in different contexts: in a cardboard box, in a gallery, in his hands, and in front of me in this performance. Now Sam and the art he has made are Researcher and Research - now Art and Artist - as I watch him move and talk. He teaches me about his Ashanti point of view. His mother is honoured. This reminds me of an earlier art exhibition where complaints were expressed about the bare breasts evident in this sculpture. I think of my tiny baby who hungrily and awkwardly latched on to me so many times. I remember my bumbling attempts to cover up our breastfeeding in public. Floppy little head. Falling blanket. The surprising pain as she latched on. The relaxing glow that enveloped me. Sam’s words float back to me as I return to the performance. I lean back in my chair, and cross my arms.

Stephanie as Teacher

A student approached me today after class. We had a peer critique, a chance to share, to assess, to reflect. She had three paintings in process, was perplexed on how to tie them all together, to finish one most troublesome. I examined her pieces, talking to her about her aims and directions. They were beautiful pieces, pushing way beyond what I had hoped for from this introductory drawing and painting class. I pointed to a particular spot on one of the canvases, layers of texture and colour spilled over each other, a swirling mass of blurry shapes. Residues of her arm. I wanted more of this. She looked at me exasperated, not knowing how or why that particular corner had emerged. I encouraged play with paint and pigment, acrylic mediums, risk and time for reflection. She wanted step by step do it this way in one night answers. Criteria. Deadlines. Grades. We talked about how I might be able to (re)create this spot, how after years of building body memories I was able to return to a place of knowing, of understanding what materials might do. Yet, even for me there were no certain guarantees. I would try it one-way, failing that attempt a second until I arrived at a desired goal. Sometimes goals change en-route. New journeys. She didn’t need to mimic, to copy that particular corner. What I was asking her to do was to find that space of risk and uncertainty, to plunge deep into her pigments, to leave her mark. She spoke of the impossibility of teaching art to children. Curriculum. Assessment. Ambiguity. I spoke of the possibilities that art opened up for students in school. Risk is the
repeated refrain. A pedagogy that cannot exist in overheads and lesson plans. A pedagogy of uncertainty, incompleteness...

Patti as Audience

I fiddle with a pen and paper given to me as an invitation to participate - to write or draw my reactions. But I cannot write. I don't want to look down and miss anything. Instead, I take scissors in hand and enter into the performance. I kneel on the floor. I cut the brown paper. Cutting. Cutting. The sound seems loud above Stephanie's voice. I follow her red shoes as she walks across in front of me. I never really considered red as she presents it. Now I wonder about other colours and the power in them for me.

Sylvia as Artist

As I began to investigate, construct, and tell narratives of mothering, of loss, of grief, and of hope, both the process of research and the story fabric evolved as both written and visual; an interplay of image and text.

I began with images of seeds: Fruit ripe and full encasing seeds and the hope of new life. Seeds hidden in dark places released in death and bringing forth life again: Cycles of birthing and dying. Images of being pregnant and full; full of joy and sorrow, and of loss and grief.

Slowly, as the images emerged in cloth and in colour, warm, tactile, held in my hand and carefully stitched, I found myself imaged, and the narratives began to take shape. The first image I stitched was a green pepper. I looked at it and saw myself reflected back. Here I am cut open.

Patti as Audience

What's that in Sylvia's hand? It is small and white. She begins to speak and my body tenses. I am familiar with her story, sewn into patches of fabric. Events told in her calm voice. I tense because I know I am going to cry although I've heard about Nathaniel many times before. Her story cuts me too. She unrolls a long white bandage as she talks to us, and lays it down.

Wendy as Scholar

UBC scholar John Willinsky in his 1998 text, “Learning to divide the world: Education at Empire’s End,” traces current prejudices regarding class, race, religion, and gender to imperialism’s teachings on how to classify and differentiate ‘other,’ ‘other’ always being lesser. Willinsky discusses British colonial schooling with its lessons designed "to make obvious Britain’s right to rule" (p. 99) and to have non-British peoples believe that their culture was "of a lower grade...something of which to be ashamed" (pp. 99-100). This reading made me look for signs of assumed superiority in relatives who had grown up in nineteenth century England.
reconsidered critically materials that had been in my life for years, unquestioned: a family photograph (1920) and an article (1937) by my grandfather (H. E. Bullen) and a whaling book (1897) by my grandfather’s cousin (F. T. Bullen). The more formally educated of the two, my grandfather, was exposed to class and race assumptions while serving as one of Queen Victoria’s ten boy choristers and likely as a student at Oxford. The photograph he made shows his family having tea on the grass in the front of their house in Vancouver in 1920. It suggests a convincing civility, British style, ‘out here in the colonies.’ But he later declares in an article (1937), where he looks back at his experience singing at the royal wedding of the father of King George VI, to having had more than enough exposure to fashionable London society. He quips, ‘Thank goodness over a quarter of a century in this wonderful Canada of ours has rubbed off the rough spots, and I am now quite a human individual again.’ Moving to Canada as a young man and raising several children on his income as an early Vancouver photographer indeed might have rubbed off any sense of superiority or entitlement my grandfather may have had. His cousin, Frank Thomas Bullen, left England at age 12 to go to sea thus cutting short his formal education and apparently minimizing the contagion of racist attitudes and class-consciousness. His most popular book, The Cruise of the Cachalot (1897), as well as providing a profound understanding of whales, reveals his equal consideration of, and enlightened respect for, all the peoples he met and worked with while circling the world as a seaman.

Patti as Audience

I watch and sense the development of history and of community in this performance. Some of the faces have changed since we began our inquiry and others have remained. Zooming in with the camera that has been passed to me, I recognize many of the objects created and/or chosen to be placed on this carpet. The carpet itself is like an old acquaintance. Rolled up and unrolled into a different time. Objects carried and placed and re/placed. Meaning shifts. The performance is familiar to me – yet unfamiliar. I wonder what happens next.

Rita as Researcher

As a pedagogue, my greatest challenge is to contextualize new learning experiences within the student’s existing experiences. As a pedagogue of self, the same holds true. For me to return to my childhood experience of rape, I wrote of my memories and emotions as signs to interpreting my knowledge of self. It was a difficult process because I discovered I was adept at hiding important signs or denying any recognition of certain signs. But through gentle persistence, visually, poetically and textually, I interpreted and re-interpreted a genealogy of experience and feeling. In the act of doing so I taught myself a new interpretation of self, a self that is ready to unfold again and again.

Pedagogically, I attempt to encourage viewers to think back in time… to think back on time as a sign itself. “TIME has a cultural code, a sign, that could not be disregarded. Yet art educators often avoid or ignore the significance of TIME as a cultural sign. We take time for granted. I do not mean that we should reify time, but rather that we need to recognize the journey we have taken in and through time (Irwin, 1996-1997, p. 122).” Retrieving photos of myself as a child around the age of five taught me about my self and my family. As Duncum
(1996-1997, p. 113) has written, snapshots of happy children are used in families and in schools as a way to socially construct “childhood as universally and timelessly happy, safe, protected and innocent.” Adults desire to preserve childhood in a particular way and thus “pictures of children … are not altogether really about children or childhood. They tell us about ourselves. While we insist childhood belongs to actual children, it is also a construct which fulfills our need to place our fantasies and desires somewhere in reality (p. 114).” Snapshots of childhood in family albums help to create a sense of identity within a family unit. They help us retell our personal stories. Snapshots of my childhood confirm a happy childhood, one in which I was playful, carefree and loving. There are no snapshots of me in a state of trauma, isolated from others, lost in emotional turmoil. Alongside snapshots taken by my parents I have juxtaposed the retelling of experience and emotion, exposing an invisible history.

Patti as Audience

Gentle - I want to own the word like a mantra. I want to whisper it to myself - gentle, gentle - as a litany when I look back into how I have built my memories. This performance closes, we clap and I let out a deep breath I didn't realize I had been holding. The work of art in the center has been cut, layered and built. Everyone is milling about. With each performance, meeting, and private deliberation, this project has evolved. Doubts wobbled around in the beginning. And now I witness how time has shaped the performers and me. I move from my chair onto the carpet, smiling.

A Pedagogy of Self Performed through the A/R/T/S

*Pedagogy of self is using the power you have to create yourself.* Grumet (1990, p. 324) describes the power of personal narrative and autobiography to define and interpret experience in this way: “Autobiography becomes a medium for both teaching and research because each entry expresses the particular peace its author has made between the individuality of his or her subjectivity and the intersubjective and public character of meaning.”

This A/R/T/S narrative and visual display is an attempt to rethink theory as story (Richardson, 2000): that is, six stories that interweave autobiographies of self knowing and self becoming through the roles of artist, researcher, teacher and scholar. They are also stories that recognize the need for the ‘pedagogy of other’ alongside the ‘pedagogy of self,’ and therefore the interlingual acts of metissage go even further by adopting a notion that *theory as the A/R/T/S* is a way for explaining phenomena through aesthetic experiences that integrate knowing, doing and making. Through dialogical work amongst the roles of artist, researcher, teacher and scholar, as individuals and as members of a community, we perform a pedagogy of self in relation to others.

Authoring our own lives, taking charge of our own storylines, is the basis of transformation. Only in realizing the power to create our own lives, can we as teachers make this a possibility for our students. Only then can we lead students to believe the same notion, to encourage them to become involved in a pedagogy of self, and to continually take responsibility for creating their own lives. Pedagogy of self is learning through reflection about our selves and
our own way of learning (see Irwin, Stephenson, Robertson & Reynolds, 2000). By living a life of inquiry through a pedagogy of self and of others, we create and transform our own lives.

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Appendix V

A life-narrative (sails easily) (always) into our past/future

I was tempted to drop this as, “I haven’t got it right yet, and I already have enough.” However, it became clear why this is here and why it was important to work through. It IS a story, a journey, in Maxine Greene’s (1995) words, universal to us all, “I am forever on the way” (p. 1.). Connected past to future, for an ability of the entire writing to have a ‘ring,’ for the installation to have a hermeneutic circling back into a/r/tography, autoethnographic journaling that is this textu(r)al walking journey(ing) home. The struggle is worth it.

“In the aporia I find a mirroring of truth, however momentary”
(from research journal, July 28, 2002).

"I attach great importance to the energy that lies in a biography" Joseph Beuys. 181

(An (Inter)textu(r)al performative, to be read aloud in the rhythm as written:)

Tony my father, Tony my friend:

Well this is a friend who goes back to my childhood and going to his parents house

His university professor father

and being in the kitchen and something about him having done all the kitchen shelves

“a handy-man-around-the-house”

(something my father never was) so I was (through mother) impressed.

Then their next house on the ‘Endowment Lands’
(those simple words held such promise)

and I would come often,

(the years into manhood)

to dinner parties

wonderfully served.

(My friends’ father an amateur chef baked me birthday cakes at 16 and 38 years)

At 15 I sailed from Hawaii, (‘Maui race’ returning)

this professor as skipper of a 27 foot ocean sailor.

First day bow-held remembered

thinking

as I was thrown roughly about by already growing seas

“and I'm on this until it ends

no escape!”

I remember well the swell of leaving Maui

land receding only sea between us and

voyage end.

My father there too, and an older man 'skipper'

(the professors’ cousin)
and a hired hand
complement,
all 5 of us
sailing
straight line
for home.
sun rising
quite
morning watch
gliding

Those long
cocalmed days
sat tossing
in circles
sails luffing
that heat sun.
(flapping listlessly)

Scheduled for 14 days
took 21
water conservation
(sneak a little more)

Oh the irony

'Water water everywhere and not a drop to drink'
Celestial navigation

through

my body's

constant heal

(that is sailing)

on a continual course

home.

The pure pleasure of responding

boat in my hands

Long days

of wonder

fishing giant tuna

as porpoises schooled
to play phosphorescent at night.

Continual mast pounding

bulk head

pouring professors' soaked bunk

viscous storm waves scoured poop deck.

(Later my father

war-time naval captain

[re]tells how fearful he was for this small,
sloop-sailor.)

My father's

42 foot sloop

that he sunk as a young man off the coast of Brittany.
The coast his great great great grandfather escaped.

Then war ravaged and occupied

(My father parachuted at war)

A shore with our ancestors blood

wrecked his boat.

To sail over the reef
on a storm driven swell-tide

    cracked her spine
pictures story-tell
    the next days'
shore-lined litter.

Now his young son
on a boat

(that rode storms without grace
    cabin soaking
     fear raiser)

secure with these men
who laughed
   pipe
smoke
and talked

And the professor baked me my 16th birthday cake
on 'Puffin ii',

257
still a number of days from land fall
where my mother had been waiting with her sister

(my Aunt Dodie,
‘all the way from Scotland’)
as her men folk did this manly thing
of sailing the Pacific
in a bathtub
(to her).

A growing
experiential
coming of age

(s)p(l)ace
boat
sea
security.

Now my son sailing for six weeks
his 16th summer
tens days on a Tall Ship
west coast sailing
small craft-racing

in protected bays

Bays I sailed with my father as a boy

The sea’s pedagogy

Teaches

Coasts connected

Generations feed by watered sea air.