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# **Living the Questions: Dispatches From a Life Already in Progress**

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A Volume in:  
Landscapes of Education

*Series Editors:*  
William Schubert and Ming Fang He

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# Living the Questions: Dispatches From a Life Already in Progress

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*By*  
**Wade Tillet**



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*For Darrel and Dyrell*



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## SERIES FOREWORD

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# LANDSCAPES OF EDUCATION

William H. Schubert and Ming Fang He

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In this book series, we explore panoramic landscapes of education. We invite a wide array of authors from diverse theoretical traditions and geographical locations around the world to ponder deeply and critically undulating and evolving contours of educational experience. We perceive contours of educational experience as landscapes that cultivate and are cultivated by who we were and how we become who we are as individuals and as humanity (Nussbaum, 1997). We engage with complex hills and rift valleys, rocky roads and serene pathways, war torn terrains and flowering gardens, towering trees and wuthering grasses, jagged cliffs and unyielding rocks, flowing rivers and uneven oceans evolving with flows of life that shape our perspectives, modify our ideas, and forge our actions. Building upon John Dewey's (1916) *democratic conception of education* and William Schubert's (2009) *ideals of love, justice, and education*, we perceive landscapes of education not only as schools but also as *gathering places* (Dewey, 1933) for humans to pursue worthwhile living. We honor the poetics of landscapes of education flourishing with divergence, convergence, diversity, and complexity of experience.

We look for authors who can move in new directions. We open dialogue on educational issues and situations of shared concerns. We create a space for educational workers such as public intellectuals, scholars, artists, and practitioners to engage in inquiries into education drawn from multiple perspectives such as art,

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music, language, literature, philosophy, history, social sciences, and professional studies. We welcome cross-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary, and counter-disciplinary work. We look for possibilities that are fresh and poetic, nuanced and novelistic, theoretical and practical, personal and political, imaginative and improvisational.

We expand parameters of educational inquiry substantively and methodologically. Substantively, books in this series explore multifarious landscapes wherever education occurs. Such explorations provocatively portray education in schools, workplaces, nonschool settings, and relationships. Methodologically, we encourage diverse forms of inquiry drawing on a wide array of research traditions, approaches, methods, and techniques such as ethnomethodology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, rhizomatics, deconstructionism, grounded theory, case studies, survey studies, interviews, participant observation, action research, teacher research, activist feminist inquiry, self study, life history, teacher lore, autobiography, biography, memoir, documentary studies, art-based inquiry, ethnography/critical ethnography, autoethnography, participatory inquiry, narrative inquiry, fiction, cross-cultural and multicultural narrative inquiry, psychoanalysis, queer inquiry, and personal~passionate~participatory inquiry.

We also feature works that amplify the educational value of mass media such as movies, DVDs, television, the Internet, comics, news comedy, cell phones, My Space and Face Book, videos, videogames, computers, and the World Wide Web. We hope to explore how we learn through such electronic frontiers in vastly new ways with little tutelage. We hope to encourage creative improvising, problem posing, critical inquiring, and joyful learning illuminated in these new ways of learning though electronic frontiers which are often suppressed and repressed in schooling. We hope to acknowledge the power of human beings to learn without lesson plans, manuals, worksheets, standardized tests, acquisitive rewards, or external standards.

We encourage expansions that move beyond Western orthodoxies to embrace landscapes from the Eastern (Asian), Southern (African and Latin American), and Oceanic (islandic) worlds. We especially want to see renditions move into *third spaces* (Gutiérrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995) and *in-between* (He, 2003, 2010) that push boundaries, shift borders, dissolve barriers, and thrive upon contradictions of life. It is our intention that the works featured in this series reveal more of the world-wide landscapes of cultures, ideas, and practices that transgress dominant Western ideologies and their corporate and colonizing legacies. These works have potential in developing transcendent theories of decolonization (e.g. Tuhiwai Smith, 1999/2012), advocating the liberty of indigenous language, cultural rights, and intellectualism (e.g. Grande, 2004), shattering *monocultures of the mind* (Shiva, 1993), overcoming perils of globalization, and inventing a better human condition for all.

We also highlight activist and social justice oriented research (e.g., Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009) and personal~passionate~participatory inquiry (e.g., He

& Phillion, 2008) that engage participation of all citizens, encourage respect, innovation, interaction, cohesion, justice, and peace, and promote cultural, linguistic, intellectual, and ecological diversity and complexity. We celebrate postcolonial feminist work (e.g., Minh-ha, 1989; Mohanty, 2003/2005; Narayan, 1997) that explores migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place and responses to influential discourses of racism, sexism, classism, and colonialism. We also feature ecofeminist inquiry that explores the intersectionality of repatriarchal historical analysis, spirituality, racism, classism, imperialism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, anthropocentrism, speciesism, and other forms of oppression (Mies & Shiva, 1993).

Books in this series focus on the what, why, how, when, where, and for whom of relationships, interactions, and transactions that transform human beings to different levels of awareness to build communities and public spaces with shared interests and common goals to strive for equitable, just, and invigorating human conditions. We seek explorations of the educational aspects of relationships (e.g., family, friendship), international, transnational, or intercultural understanding (e.g., exile, diaspora, displacement, indigenous knowledge), and circumstances of living (e.g., poverty, racism, alienation, war, colonization, oppression, and globalization). We want to see how languages, literacies, communities, homes, and families shape images of life's *mysteries and events* (Ulich, 1955), such as love, tradition, birth, death, success or failure, hopes of salvation, or immortality. These educational dimensions of life dynamically influence and are influenced by life in and out of schools (Schubert, 2010) and in-between (He, 2003, 2010). Through engaging such pursuits, this book series illuminates how human beings improvise lives (Bateson, 1989) and commitments in diverse, complicated, and often contested landscapes of education.

Unlike more definitively crafted book series that explicate inclusions and exclusions with ease and precision, our invitations continuously expand. The depths and breadths of landscapes where we live surpass everyday gaze and complicate static analysis. We showcase books that bring a sense of wonder and surprise, make the strange familiar and the familiar strange, and evoke what we do not expect. We do not narrow or define the topics of this series. Rather, we open doors to new perspectives, diverse paradigms, and creative possibilities. We invite authors to surprise us with their insightful ideas of what has been, what is, and what might be. In this volume,

Wade Tillett takes up the question of how to live—not in some abstract sense, but in the urgent present. Tillett realizes that how to live is a question that each of us is already asking—and answering—moment-by-moment. These texts offer surprising discoveries of how we are already inventing solutions to living in multiple and discontinuous worlds through our daily actions. By examining small specific pieces of daily life, Tillett explores how we navigate through tentative, multiple, and often contradictory positions. Among many situations artistically explored are visiting a church, narrating a family movie, exposing students to a nearby school, re-working

a found sculpture, taking a licensure exam, attending a protest, and waiting for the El. By juxtaposing multiple voices and images, Tillett attempts to see how, in both method and content, the texts themselves act on the worlds and lives they describe.

Tillett narrates from many perspectives: teacher, researcher, writer, artist, architect, activist, parent, theorist, and struggling protagonist of his own life. As such, many readers sharing such roles will immediately find connections within the book. For researchers struggling to find workable qualitative methodologies after poststructuralism, the experimental methods employed here may provide welcome inspiration. However, the book seems aimed not so much at particular disciplines but at anyone who, like Tillett, is actively searching for how to live. Anyone involved in such a search will likely find hope and ways forward in his methods that look at life as we are already living it (Backcover).

We applaud with our hearts and souls that Wade Tillett's innovative inquiries help us to keep asking central curriculum questions about what is worthwhile, why, and for whom as we continue to live our lives in an unjust world. Wade Tillett invites us to see that such great questions are embodied and lived through concrete and contested texts of experience beyond asking. Living the questions helps transcend inquiry boundaries, transgress orthodoxy and dogma, dive into the complexities and contradictions of life, embody a particular stance in relation to power, freedom, and human possibility, and promote a more balanced and equitable human condition that embodies cultural, linguistic, and ecological diversities and pluralities of individuals, groups, tribes, and societies conducive to the flourishing of creative capacities that invigorate intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual existence for all.

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# FOREWORD

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First, scraps. Postcards: Satchel Paige. Big feet; Hopper's Morning Sun. What is she thinking? The Creation of Adam. Is God reaching forward or pulling away? The gap is art. Gandhi. Pretention. My own. A photo. Jennifer and I in Budapest, my arms around her. Why so tight?

Wade Tillett's book

I don't know what to say. I have nothing to say. Say nothing. What should I say? I don't know what to say.

I wish I could draw.

This is brilliant; I could never have written this.

He reads a lot. I wish I read that much. Reading scares me. Borders went bankrupt.

He cited me. Smooth.

I want my kids to write on a wall. I'm such a bad parent.

For god's sake, Wade, just fucking write. Quit talking about it.

Yes, yes, scratchy rain.

I read, "To point to the real is to be a vampire." I think about this story, told to me by my hiking guide in Sarajevo: one day during the siege, I came back to my apartment, exhausted from having to find water and food and supplies for my family. I lay down on the couch and tried to nap, but some teenage boys had taken advantage of the lull in the shelling and had set up a ping pong table in the court-

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yard outside my window. They were making a lot of noise, laughing and shouting, the ping pong ball bouncing back and forth. I was extremely irritated, and angry at the boys. Suddenly, an artillery shell fired by the Chetniks from the mountains exploded in the courtyard. I was knocked off my couch. When I recovered, I looked out the window. The ping pong table and the teenage boys were gone. All that remained were body parts. On the pavement I saw a brain, still pulsating, still thinking.

I go to the bathroom.

Yes, yes, we are always making curriculum decisions.

For god's sake, Wade, just fucking write. Quit talking about it.

This is brilliant; I never could have written this.

Don't tell me what to do.

Wow, he even got Schwab in there.

Where's the love?

Why didn't I think of that? I wish I had thought of that.

I don't understand.

Why didn't I think of that? I wish I had thought of that.

I read, "Death is resolution." I think, "So, sayth the living." I say, "Bullshit."

I'm a better poet than he; he's a better poet than I.

My grandfather drove a tractor too, but he was a prick.

This is a mind-fuck. I don't want to read it.

This is brilliant. I want to read it.

I wish I could take photos like that.

My ex-wife calls. I have a dissertation hearing at one. Give me a break, I can't change.

I wonder what Wade's wife is like.

You made that up.

This is brilliant; I never could have written this.

The man behind the curtain said, "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain."

There's no place like home but you can't go home again.

Why did I put it off?

Why did it put me off?

I wish I were an activist instead of a hypocrite.

Traffic on the Eden's looks pretty good.

Oh for Christ's sake, Who the hell are you talking to?

I love God, but I want a cigarette.



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# PREFACE

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Snapshots have been taken, footprints have been left, ink has been committed to the page. I have found that the smallest event or detail is enough to spark reflection that is sculpted by my underlying desires and beliefs, producing a silhouette of my own uncertainty.

The degree to which I have found myself looking back at me in my questions has been somewhat alarming. The specificity of my own subjectivity, perception, reality, and, most troubling, my image of other, makes me wonder to what degree my interactions with others are interactions with myself. If, after looking at the world, I find my chisel marks on all of it, to what degree is it a world?

The question, as Latour (1993) asks, is if we now know reality as a product of belief, can we still believe in it to the same degree – can we still make reality productive if we are conscious of our own role in the gap?

Maybe I also expected my representations of living to resonate with others if not in subject matter, then in degree of specificity and complexity. Somehow I thought that opening up questions, discussing the blindness of our construction of reality, and representing the complicated uncertainty of daily activities would be a step towards a more meaningful and frank discussion. Perhaps I even mistook this approach for honesty on my part. These assumptions have been somewhat dislodged. The multiple modes of life I have described seem to be completely foreign to some readers. Some have stated flatly they see no value at all in this

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The view from the upstairs bedroom of my grandma-in-law's house in Maple Heights, outside Cleveland, Ohio.

writing. Exploratory texts in the first section have been rejected as devoid of answers and content, while other analyses have been rejected as devoid of theory. Such critiques might stem from a basic difference in philosophy. I believe reality and theory, perception and belief, content and method cannot be neatly separated. An afternoon of making sand sculptures on a beach, a trip to a church, a home movie, or a train station necessarily involve questions of body, belief, reality, and perception. Sometimes the context is backgrounded, as with sand sculptures on the beach, and sometimes it is foregrounded, as with the train station. In any case, I have been convinced that many do not share my desire to see life as a (re)search, to open up questions of micropolitics, faith, and the real.

I must remember that I am among these.

Limits provide a body.

If I outlined the borders of this text, the avoided, the excluded, I might come up with a truer image of what living is like, of what I hold near and dear, of what I am not willing to put up for questioning.

I am not nearly as malleable as I imagine myself to be.

In the end,

I am fearful of this project extending to include too much of my life.

Sure, I said I wanted a convergence of theory and life. But then, I didn't choose to write this as an autobiography. Instead, this is an autobiography that claims not

to be one. Through selection, I create representations of a daily life that imply a whole far different from the one I live. I fear I have created something that sounds too positive, too upbeat, too unbounded, too removed from the actual privileges I shamefully and shamelessly participate in daily, yes in my daily life. Yes, hypocrisy is inevitable, but is it inevitable that I wield hypocrisy as a weapon?

[I needed] to become capable of a sustained encounter with currently oppressive formations and power relations that refuse to be theorized away or fully transcended in a utopian resolution — and to enter into the encounter in a way that owned up to my own implications in those formations and was capable of changing my own relation to and investments in those formations. (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 308)

Lightfoot locates the intellectual as local and specific, attempting “qualified but continual resistance from within the power structure” (1996, p. 30).

At some point partway through this project, I wrote that

by finding the personal that is political in my own life, I am necessarily careful and committed. I am less likely to speak brazenly or burn bridges. I leave things open because my time isn’t up. I portray the multitude of shades and forces and contradictions. And of course, I hide what I’m not willing to show. Truth is contested ground, so I think Ayers’ idea of presenting something that feels honest is a good metric (2001).

On that metric, I have failed.

I publicly chastise my desire for a unified life, while privately I leverage inequities to my advantage. I carefully sculpt the dis-unity of my daily life with this text. Said another way, repeatedly I struggle against my desire for unity as if that is what I really wanted. (Never mind that it is impossible, regardless. It’s a sort of “oh, if only I didn’t want to be so good” dis-ingenuity.) Maybe it’s just what I wish I wanted. Or what I wish everybody else thought I wanted.

I am trying to do the run-around, to cut you off at the pass, dear reader, before you actually take my words and turn them back on me. I am hoping to brush you off with a calm and confident, “I am already aware of that critique...” Or maybe by making it look like the narrator cannot be trusted by design.

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# DISPLACING

## An Introduction

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...have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer. (Rilke, 1903)

How to live?

Not in some abstract sense, but in the urgent present.

What are the processes by which we create meaning? Where do these lead?

How do they work?

Anyone's life, including my own, if lived in a particular way, is a (re)search, a way "to search or examine with continued care; to seek diligently" (1913 Webster's definition of research). I hope that the act of paying more attention to my life as I lead it will increase its meaning, like learning to draw is really a way of learning to see.

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It would be convenient to say that the outcome of my research is the changes in how I live, and that writing will document these changes so they can be shared with others. But it isn't that simple. The act of representing and examining, is one of the primary engines of change. (Re)search functions as "...an attempt at modifying one's way of being through the act of writing" (Foucault, 1987, as cited in Schaafsma, 1998 p. 265).

Praxis, the merging of theory and practice has been described by many, including Aristotle (Smith, 1999), Marx (1845/2002), Freud (1901/2007), and Freire (1986). Similarly, Lefebvre (1947/1991), Debord (1961/2006), and Vaneigem (1967/1979), have written about theory in everyday life. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau explores the theory involved in a riding a train or walking in the city (1980/1984).

Praxis sounds awfully holistic. Tear things apart. Avoid a conclusion. Offer multiple paths. Show the big mess that is the present: a collection of paper scraps, underlined quotes and to-do lists. If this seems like you've got no solid basis but rather are operating under multiple forces, then you're succeeding.

John Dewey (1916/2005) defines education as modifying life (experience is the word he uses) to both add to life's meaning, and be able to modify life even further (p. 47). Many education research streams situate research within an active environment of which the researcher is a part, as in currere (Pinar, 2004), deliberative reasoning (Schwab, 1978), embodied research, action research, teacher research, teacher lore (Schubert & Ayers, 1992), and arts-based educational research.

So you are attempting to synthesize practice and theory?

No. I want to look at the effects of theory on life and life on theory.

William James (1902/2002) collects personal narratives of religious experience and looks at their structure. More broadly, a goal of many forms of spirituality is to make this life spiritual (have meaning). Some forms of Christianity work to create a heaven on earth, or to put the Holy Spirit within us as we live daily, or to see our daily world as mystical. Life becomes both spiritual and real, both meaningful and observed. Zen Buddhism describes a meditative life that values the present moment, where meaning and reality are doubled onto each other.

Artistic paths, too, attempt to discover a meaning in daily life. Later in life, Marcel Duchamp stated that living itself had become his artwork.

Why do I desire life as art? Do I desire this?

Aren't the discontinuities what makes life interesting?

So, there is much writing about the everyday, about how method should match the message, about the personal being political, about finding openings. What is perhaps not so common is a broader representation of these concerns situated here and now in a life as I am living it.

## LEARNING

What would a curriculum be like if the curriculum began with the problem of living a life? (Britzman as cited in Whitlock, 2007, p. 1)

A life is not something planned beforehand and then followed at the appointed hour. A life is all-encompassing and always in-process. We are always making decisions about how to live, curricular decisions, whether or not we realize it. One way to examine this ongoing process is through what Pinar describes as the method of *currere*, where “slowly and in one’s own terms, one analyzes one’s experience of the past and fantasies of the future in order to understand more fully, with more complexity and subtlety, one’s submergence in the present” (Pinar, 2004, p. 4). If Dewey’s definition of education can be simplified to the question, How to live?, then Pinar’s method starts with the question, How am I living? After all, the question of how to live must always be answered from within a life already being lived. How to live is always already being answered by all people through the living of our daily lives.

Here I would like to highlight two of the consequences of seeing the question of how to live as already being answered by how I live. First, an enormous burden is lifted because I do not have to wait to find the right answer before I act. I am not starting from scratch. Instead, I can look at how I am living already and modify that. Second, immediacy is placed on my research. I can’t wait to find the right answer before I act. I have to make modifications as I discover things I feel I need



My family's house in Chicago when my children were young.

to modify. My life is passing now, and each moment spent living is a moment spent living an answer to my questions.

For my purposes, I define curriculum as the act of selection. I put my focus on curriculum as a verb more than a noun, on the act of selecting more than the selected, on the how more than the what, on the question more than the answer.

Method: to be a poet, within the process (Roberts, 2002).

A (re)search is a self-conscious exploration.

A (re)search of curriculum then, is a self-conscious exploration of the act of selection, an attempt to self-consciously select.

Interventions in public spaces, in my own daily life.

Movies. Texts. Images.

Plans. Paths. Crumbs.

Learning is the change that occurs as the act of selection constantly displaces the location from which we originally selected.

I want each text to explore modes, create interventions, and change myself, my perception, and my world (Eisner, 2005, p. 60). I want to make my life useful. I want the process of research to be part of the context, to act, to perform (Denzin, 2003a; Garoian, 1999). I wish to “help others create their own lives” (Schubert & Ayers, 1992, p. 4). I want to move “people to action and reflection” and create a “field of shared emotional experience” through copformance and coparticipation (Denzin, 2003b, p. 470).

So, you want communion?

The texts are to perform in two ways. First, each text as ongoing process/product will serve as a tool of reflection for some of the involved participants. In this regard, the research is related to community or participant based research, action research, teacher research, and autoethnography. Second, each text as a final product attempts to represent the context and problems to people not directly involved. Such a representation attempts to place the reader in a position in which s/he feels compelled by gaps to act and create her or his own personal meaning (Iser as cited in Barone, 1998, p. 75).

Locate within and complicate the everyday.

Within any situation I am involved emotionally, physically, analytically, and spiritually. My reflection exists in each moment. Practices are not set in advance (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 6). The product and process are continuous, informing one another.

The means cannot be overlooked in order to arrive at an end.

[Deliberation] treats both ends and means and must treat them as mutually determining one another. (Schwab, 1978, p. 318)

How to live is essentially a methods question.

What happens when methods turn on themselves?

Foucault explains that not only are means and ends mutually determined, but so are subject and world. Each micro-decision operates within a complex web of



power structures; micro-powers build and support stable discourses and power relationships. We are in the process of making ourselves and our worlds as social constructions. The self we seek to free is constructed of the very power relations, the limits/possibilities, from which we desire to escape (1995).

If the experience of knowledge in the making is also the experience of ourselves in the making, then there is no self who preexists a learning experience. Rather, the “self” is what emerges from that learning experience. (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 2)

Selves and worlds are created simultaneously, through mutual genesis (Bergson, 1913/1998). Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) theorize that the self is constructed of many machines, and that the borders of these machines do not conform with individual bodies. A “self [is] not as a thing inside an individual, but... a process or activity that occurs in the space between people” (Freedman & Combs, 1996, p. 34). The creation of the real, also, is neither individual nor arbitrary; it is a social and physical construction.

The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-change can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice (Marx, 1845/2002).

The changing of self, the changing of world occurs every second.  
This coincidence rarely acts as a synthesis.

## STRUCTURE

The structure of this book attempts to follow the logic of the (re)searches it contains. As Said (1975), Benjamin (1928/1979), McLuhan and Fiore (1967), and Barthes (1977) advocate, the method reflects the content.

A fractured and complicated approach allows me to try out different modes in different domains, and avoid synthesizing the entire text under a (sovereign) truth. This under-construction sort of format has precedents in performance art, architecture, poetry, film, qualitative research, and curriculum studies.

### *Juxtaposition*

Kershaw describes “order within disorder, disorder arising out of order,” an “interweave of actions,” and “constructing a dramaturgy that stress[es] qualities such as multiplicity, discontinuity, abrupt eruptions of dramatic intensity, sudden shifts and changes of direction, tempo or focus” (1999, p. 99). These methods reflect and inspire “...a rediscovery of the now ...a rediscovery that all knowledge exists on the threshold of and in the interaction between subject and object; a rediscovery of ambiguity, of contradiction, of difference....” (George quoted in Kershaw, 1999, p. 14). Ambiguity is not just in the opening, but also in the necessity of closing, of having something recognizable – a language to move through. To (re)produce a self, I must create something recognizable, and yet hope to open

that self to new forms. My diverse essays here include a certain core that ties them together; this core is also a liability as it could be the beginning of orthodoxy, or the root that is attacked. In Susan Krieger's *Social Science and the Self: Personal Essays on an Art Form* (1991), she "roams freely around topics, breaking our sense of the externality of topics, developing our sense of how topic and self are twin constructed" (Richardson, 2003, p. 519).

I hope to pull the modes of daily life apart anyway, break them into scraps, with little leaps, little openings in between.

In leaping poetry, the connection between lines is left up to the reader. This is similar to architecture in that it constructs a space. The reader is "empowered" to make a connection within the bounds of the lines, they are free to move within the space of the walls. This encompassing structure is a subtler, and possibly more dangerous, form of power. If we are blind to the enabling limits and see them only as increasing possibility, we unknowingly inhabit a cage. This is not to say that ambiguity or space is bad, but that both author and reader need to be aware of the construction of leaps. This awareness can be heightened by writing in such a way that draws attention to its own construction, as with language poetry (Delville, 2000). Academic texts might include not only papers, but snippets, interludes or other interruptions and juxtapositions (Lather, 2007; Marshall et al., 2007; Miller, 2005). In film also, gaps may be emphasized so as to encourage a questioning of the narratives (Russel, 1999).

The research must reference itself and its own involvement in the process.

I have boxes full of photographs, proposals, doodles, texts and notes that are somehow more interesting to look at than a neatly formatted paper. Perhaps it is the different sizes and the somewhat random relationships that occur.

Eliminate the transition words. Let the jolt awaken the reader to the jumps we are making, between you and I.

### *Displacement and Movement.*

Is it necessary, or advantageous in any way, to build in gaps into writing?

As a writer, it is advantageous to force a displacement of myself while within the process. As a reader, I must understand the words and gaps as a series of displacements, as operators within becoming. The gaps cannot be explained, even while within them. Nor can the words. For where do those words or leaps spring from?

Words and gaps are tools of propulsion and navigation within movement.

### *Multi-Modal*

Forms of inquiry are not recipes, but precedents to draw on in order to fashion inquiry for particular needs (Schubert, 2008, p. 399). A mixed-mode approach allows me to more easily merge research and life by presenting both analytic and descriptive snippets of text side by side. This juxtaposition can be interpreted by

the viewer as a sort of montage – splices that construct the idea of simultaneity in the reader.

Rather than boiling the text down into a singular writer’s voice, pull the modes apart letting each one develop its own style. Between styles, leave cuts and jumps and gaps the reader pieces together, encouraging the reader’s active role.

Nelson describes a methodology of bricolage as a “pragmatic, strategic and self-reflexive,” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 6) “multimethod” approach (p. 11). Following Schubert, I prefer the term multi-mode, as mode implies an embodied experience. Schubert advocates “using various modes of exploration concurrently” (1975, p. 116). (For some other examples of multi-mode research, see “Reconstructing Apsaras from Memory: Six Thoughts” by Judith Hamera (1996), the collage and analysis of “A Day’s Talk” by Pelias (1999), or Foltz and Griffin’s self-reflexive exploration of their personal spiritual involvement in a coven of Dianic Witches in “She Changes Everything She Touches: Ethnographic Journeys of Self-Discovery” (1996).)

In addition, some of the texts point to other non-discursive modes of research. Collecting trash out of my lawn, writing with my feet in the snow, listening and watching multiple simultaneous voices of my family overlaid on a home movie, and standing outside of McDonald’s with coupons are some of the processes and products of my research that cannot be adequately described with text or photographs.

### *Printer Error Sheets*

Scattered throughout this document, I have included selections from my collection of printer error sheets. These sheets, like scratchy scraps of handwriting, straddle the border of the legible. Like finding things in my lawn, to collect these is to practice the act of seeing, and to question the act of selecting. In addition, their dispersal and inclusion within this collection of texts is intended to blur that boundary of selection, to show that some things are lost, not included, or overwritten. Many of these sheets come from an abandoned book I attempted to write when I was working as an architect (~2000 to ~2004).

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