

**Embodying Exile: Performing the “Curricular Body”**

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In

*Curriculum and the cultural body*

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### Multiple Rhythms: An Introduction

This essay is a multidimensional performance montage that incorporates and embodies intertexts, subtexts, and visual texts. It utilizes both image and text in an effort to extend the rhythm of live(d) curricula of the cultural body<sup>i</sup> with living inquiry. It includes excerpts from field notes, a journey that I spoke aloud as I filmed myself in trance, still video images<sup>ii</sup> of a performance ritual, and the voices of artists, theorists and educators combined with academic writing.

Trance and ritual are significant in my practice as an artist/researcher/teacher. Through trance I enter a rich and provocative waking dream state that allows me to step outside of my “normal” self, opening up new possibilities. Ritual is the structure that I create, explore, learn and teach within. The texts of this essay are intertwined and relational echoing the experience of performing ritual as one moves in and out of trance. As each page is encountered, the texts can be read as linear and/or non-linear. I have found that the “curricular body” is not easily accessed or read when perceived solely through a rational, controlling mind within linear space. Each page reflects simultaneously the multiple curriculum texts of this inquiry.

### Writing the Living Inquiry: Together<sup>iii</sup>

I am overwhelmed as I try to piece together the many layers of art, performance ritual, trance, video, text, and theory in connection with the cultural body, curriculum, spirituality, and education. I am forced to write. “[I]n working with words, you have to remain alert to the double empowering and enslaving potential of language” (Minh-ha, 2005, p. 152). I can’t write in integrity alone with words. “[I]t is necessary to show the mechanisms of language, the way it functions and operates in the creative process” (p. 152). I write dialectically.

The creative space of the arational<sup>iv</sup> (Bickel, 2005; Bickel & Fisher, 2006) guides me into relationship with my other. Luce Irigaray (2004) calls this “double willing,”



Flying is woman’s gesture—flying in language and making it fly. (Cixous, 1975, p. 356)

3 bell rings

I find myself at the top of a path    with stairs below me    looking down  
into the gully at the trees    I walk down the stairs that lead to the ocean    feeling

...I wonder how to sustain a relationship between us, between two made from body and language, between two intentions participating in an incarnate relationship which is actualized by flesh and words. In this double willing, *I* and *you* remain always both active and passive, perceiving and experiencing, awake and welcoming. In us, sensible nature and the spirit become in-stance within the singularity and evolution through the risk of an exchange with who is irreducible to oneself. (p. 22)

How can Irigaray’s words seduce me and silence me simultaneously? I’m at once attracted to her relational aesthetic and intimidated by her linguistic sophistication. But I must risk the exchange, and allow the dialectic rhythm to begin. “Rhythm should then be taken in the larger sense of the term, in its aesthetic, social and spiritual dimension” (Minh-ha, 2005, p. 152).

In the aesthetic rhythmic process of writing and re/researching for this essay the inquiry has shifted its orientation. In response to my dilemma with words I move beyond rationality and reasoning and return to living inquiry in the moment, to the art images and the trance text that together performs each page. As an artist/researcher/teacher I have worked with trance for the past eight years and experience trance as a performative ritual that takes place within an altered state of consciousness. I encounter it as an active form of meditation that is not focused on the concept of stilling the mind, which predominates in most traditional Eastern meditation (Suzuki, 1975). The active mediation/performance of trance is a place of expanding the mind’s imaginary; where “[w]e perform our becoming, and become our performing” (Driver, 1997, p.114). Within the interstitial space of trance the mind can imagine and hence practice performing the body outside of limiting and “regulatory norms” (Butler, 1999, p. 234). Jean Houston (1987) in her work within sacred psychology teaches trance as an inquiry method of “gaining ...knowledge from...states of consciousness that are deeper than your ordinary state...that can avail you of more subtle and comprehensive knowledge (p.173).



my feet and      the balance of each step as I go down      *breath*  
wandering down the steps      walking under a tree      a fallen tree  
coming down to the flat area      I can hear the waves of the ocean      as I

Trance is the embodiment of a female sentence for me. Within my trances I often meet the other, my double, my ally, my guide. One I can fly with. I offer this rhythmic female sentence in the form of a trance in this essay unfettered by punctuation and grammar, flowing from page to page. The trance - I fantasize, lives and expresses the theory that French feminists, Helene Cixous and Irigaray embody in their writing. As I read their text I feel that I am reading what has come from my own unencumbered state of trance, from my own performing body in ritual. I let go with Cixous (1975/97),

She doesn't “speak,” she throws her trembling body forward; she lets go of herself, she flies; all of her passes into her voice, and it's with her body that she vitally supports the “logic” of her speech. Her flesh speaks true. She lays herself bare. In fact, she physically materializes what she is thinking; she signifies it with her body. (p. 351)

My body, which is never static and never a “subject” alone, propels me to extend my writing with images, letters, words and sentences that refuse restriction and confinement. The body has multiple locations and representations, the objective body, the subjective body, and the cultural body. I situate the performing body within the cultural body. The cultural body is the body in communion or relation. To isolate the performing body into the subjective or objective realm alone is to send it into exile.

### **Reflecting on Living Inquiry**

The cultural body inhabits, while simultaneously constructing, curricular space. The body requires its own multidimensional “live(d) curricula” (Aoki, 2003, p. 2) encounters to counter/act the tendency to limit it to simplistic abstract, linguistic, conceptual and political binaries, or moralities. To explore this live(d) curricula I draw from an intensive three week graduate seminar on living inquiry,<sup>v</sup> where I bodily explore the themes of place/space, time, language and self/other (Meyer, 2005). Living inquiry as expressed by Dr. Karen Meyer (2005) is,



get closer    I come out to the clearing    and stand up on a log and look out  
                  *deep breath*                    I walk across the rocks with my bare feet feeling the  
stones            I'm walking into the water till my feet are touching sand            *deep*

...not a philosophy of life, a methodology to be followed, or an analytical tool....it is simply an inquiry into how to live with the quality of awareness that sees newness, truth, and beauty in daily life. (p. 11)

Each day during the course, through video, I document performative flashes of my life. Within this individual live(d) curricula I struggle to place myself as an artist/researcher/teacher within the academe and the world. Through the engagement of my body with the camera, digital film editing, and performance ritual, the moments and gestures of live(d) inquiry become curricular places of learning.

The performance ritual of my lived curricula of the body takes place on the last day of a graduate class within the education building on the university campus. This is the first time all of the collected pieces of the living inquiry come together. I’ve not practice this. This performance ritual is invoking an altered live(d) curricular space, disrupting hegemonic classroom curriculum and space. My body performing on the ground is central to the teaching.

As my colleagues/witnesses enter the room their senses are engaged/confounded with the chaos of technology; as computers, projectors, and video cameras are set up and tested by volunteer technicians. Extension cords snake across the floor, requiring careful maneuvering of their bodies as they move through the space. I invite a multidimensional act of witnessing from my colleagues, as my white clad body becomes the screen upon which the edited video material is projected. The presence of my physical body interacting with the technology of multiple digital residual images of the body and places expands the curricular element of this living inquiry. I read aloud as I write words on the floor, the multiple video soundtracks overlap and compete with my spoken voice. The authority of the moving/performing body is the focus in the center of the room.

*Performance Ritual Environment<sup>vi</sup>*

Two LCD projectors and two computers are on either side of the room facing each other. The performance ritual is taking place in the center of the classroom on the



<i>breath</i>	I am at about my waist in the water	I see some seals that are	
not far in front of me to the left	watching me	<i>deep breath</i>	I dive
into the water swimming out	my legs thrusting me forward	my arms	

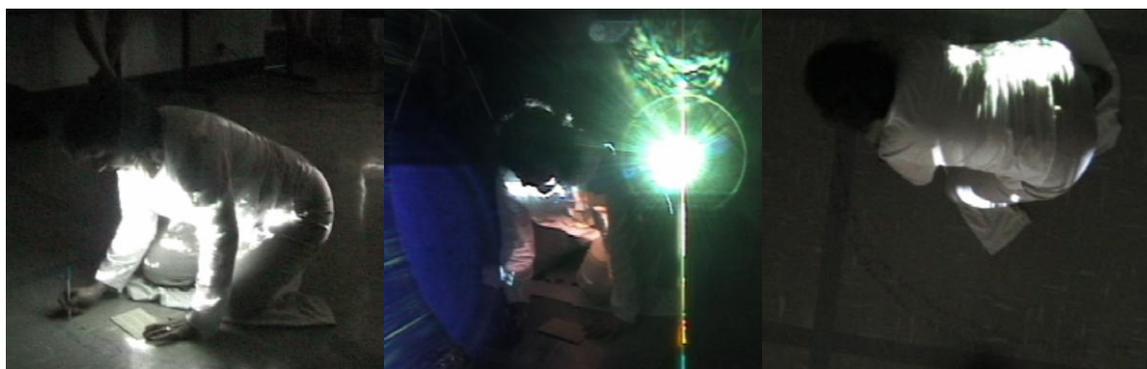
floor. Videos project onto either end of the room; on one side onto the chalkboard and wall, and on the other, onto the curtains and wall. Tables and chairs line the outside circle of the room. My colleagues enter the room and sit on tabletops or on chairs. Two classmates video the performance ritual, as earlier directed by me, from different locations in the room. One video camera is stationary on the ceiling directly above me. One classmate holds the damp cloth and will pass it to me at the appropriate point when I signal in the performance ritual.

*The Performance Ritual Script*  
(approximately thirteen minutes in length)

I invite the class to witness the performance ritual with diffused attention and instruct that they can move around the outside of the circle as they witness/attend to the performance ritual. I read the following quote<sup>vii</sup>,

There is so much to attend to that one must look with diffused attention so that meanings on many levels, some clear and conscious, some not, may be absorbed.  
(Beittel, 1989, p. 17)

I enter the center of the space and kneel down upon the white t-shirt that reads “Art is Vital.” Projectors are turned on projecting the performative moments of my documented living inquiry. One video projects onto the front, the other onto the back of my body. The images include my hands typing at my computer, me reading a poem in the forest, me in performance ritual in a gallery, and me drawing in the studio. My body casts shadows onto the images that are projected onto the walls. I reach to the floor, pick up the blue marker and write (and read) three quotes. My spoken voice joins the two sound tracks that are playing on the videos. I spin around on my knees clockwise as I write in a spiral around my body. Text moves closer and closer to me as I write. I read quotes out loud consecutively without citing the author. The quotes are from texts I read during the course.



pulling me forward                      swimming    swimming                      the seals are  
motioning me to follow them            I follow the seals as they swim and turn and go  
up and down I follow their each movement    *deep breath*                      its great

And she crashes with an explosion of glass and wood, then falls onto a back stairwell, tumbling, bouncing down stairs, bleeding, broken. But still alive. Trinity tries to move. Everything hurts. “Get up, Trinity. Get up—just get up!”  
- Trinity in *The Matrix* (Wachowski & Wachowski, 2000)

Now the very attention you give to a problem is the energy that solves that problem. When you give your complete attention – I mean with everything in you – there is no observer at all. There is only the state of attention which is total energy, and that total energy is the highest form of intelligence. - Krishnamurti

Experience and art, therefore, participate in negativity: they arise from the nothingness between one state of being and one coming into being. Becoming, for anything that will be alive and whole, engages in a freedom not foreseen or foreseeable. One philosopher has referred to art as the free becoming of being.  
- Kenneth Beittel

I complete the writing and move into a sitting meditation for about four minutes while the two videos continue to play and project onto the front and back of my body. These images continue projecting the performative flashes of my daily living inquiry, such as me drawing at my easel, ripping up a book in my studio, a conversation about writing an article with my partner, a videoed movie clip from the documentary *Derrida*, and me in the gallery giving an artist talk. Before the videos end, at a word cue from one of the videos I sit up on my knees and a classmate passes me a damp cloth. I press the cloth to my face before I retrace my movements of spinning counter clockwise on my knees, erasing the written text on the floor with the damp cloth as I spin in reverse. I sit upright upon completion and non-verbally acknowledge the class for attending/witnessing and pass out Beittel quotes (that are printed and rolled into scrolls) from the pottery bowl. I listen to responses from the class and we immerse ourselves in a rich dialogue.

In the theoretical exploration below I draw from a variety of sources whose art

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being able to stay under as long as they do                      not needing to come up for  
breath just swimming under the water free                      then I pop my head out and I look  
around me                      the sky is beautiful a fuchsia pink                      the shore is

and theory integrates the live(d) spiritual, cultural and curricular body: contemporary women performing artists (Belmore, 2005; Wilke, 1989); curriculum theorists (Huebner, 1999; Pinar, 2004); feminists (Cixous, 1975; Irigaray, 2004; Minh-ha, 2005) and, art educators (Beittel, 1979; Springgay, 2003). I weave together texts drawn from these artists, theorists, and educators to create a bridge for the exiled curricular body to travel across.

### **Live(d) Curricula: A Spiritual Way**

As a spiritual feminist my understanding of culture is embedded in historical and contemporary cultural traditions and practices of religion and spirituality. Likewise as a curriculum scholar I find myself most at home amidst curriculum as aesthetic, phenomenological, gendered, and theological<sup>viii</sup> text (Pinar et al, 1995). The spiritual-political dimensions that William Pinar (1975) wrote of in his early writings on *Currere* and its emancipatory agenda, has called for and continues to call for “[t]he study of identity [that] enables us to portray how the politics we had thought were located “out there,” in society, are lived through “in here,” in our bodies, our minds, our everyday speech and conduct” (Pinar, 2004, p. 30). Similarly, Dwayne Huebner reminds us that our ability to be open to the evolution of spirit in society is the “fissure” that has the potential to transform our institutions and society. He states that:

The condition for experiencing the spiritual is openness and receptivity. This experience requires acknowledging one’s fundamental vulnerability and accepting that one can be overpowered and transformed. This openness and receptivity is a fissure, a “fault” in our knowledge and current forms of life. (cited in Hillis, 1999, p. 345)

Openness and vulnerability are qualities that I strive for in my practice as an artist/researcher/teacher. My art practice is one of learning through exposing myself/body as part of an “aesthetic and spiritual process.” I am further encouraged to deconstruct



way in the distance            I rise myself out of the water            straight up and I'm  
now swimming in the air    moving towards that fuchsia sky    I say farewell to the  
seals who are watching me            and I head towards the mountains

notions of power through my study of American visual and performance artist, Hannah Wilke. Feminist art writer Joanna Frueh (1989) wrote exquisitely of Wilke’s art:

Wilke believes in physical, psychic, and emotional self-exposure as aesthetic and spiritual process.... [Her] performances are unfoldings, undressings of the soul.... Wilke’s movements are excruciatingly slow, heightened erotic tension, maximizing the strength and grace needed to “dance” her way through the emotional ambiguity of each piece, all of which exorcise, but not to oblivion, the agonies of being a victim, as a woman, as a lover, as a consciously sensual body.... Wilke’s movements may seem rehearsed, deliberate, ritualistic, but they are spontaneous.... Expressionist gestures impelling and alive in a naked woman.... Through gesture, Wilke uses her body as a literally and figuratively moving site of revelation. (pp. 17-18)

Wilke’s art continued to evolve over the years through performance and “undressing of the soul” until her death through cancer. The deterioration of her body was as much a locus of inspiration and inquiry as was her beautiful, youthful, and healthy body. The impact of her work on my art has been the permission to take the creative risk of being seen and vulnerable without shame.

Through a spiritual, feminist, arts and body-based practice one allows oneself to be overpowered and in that sense transformed and empowered. My living inquiry performance ritual may have seemed rehearsed but similar to Wilke’s performances, it was simultaneously revelatory and ambiguous. Wilke (cited in Frueh, 1989) wrote in an exhibition catalogue of the significance for women artists, “...to insist on the feelings of flesh, its inspiration, its advice, its warning, its mystery for the survival and regeneration of the universe” (p. 141).

A more recent influence on my art practice and knowing is the provocative and emotionally charged work of indigenous Canadian installation and performance artist Rebecca Belmore. She views performance art as being a medium that crosses traditional and modern elements –“a medium both indigenous and international.” Her bodily



propelling quickly through the sky  
that’s in the mountainside  
towards that cave

there’s a cave that I’m heading towards  
*deep breath* I keep propelling myself  
it gets closer and closer the

presence in her performances carries a powerfully charged energetic, often magnified body made present through physical exertion. Her “work calls forth a sense of loss for something absent [without nostalgia], while creating an energy of resistance” (Bailey & Watson, 2005, p. 8). Belmore (2005) in an interview speaks of her use of the arational domain and altered states as,

... the state of dreaming and what our minds are capable of... when we are not stopping ourselves... I like the idea of seeing ”sleeping” as a site of where there is tremendous possibility.... Perhaps that is where I would like my performances to exist. I’m fully aware of what I am doing, but at some point I am dreaming. Maybe. (p. 25)

Both of these artists challenge the notion of docile and silenced female bodies regulated within a rationalistic, chaos-avoidant, consciousness. My own use of trance and art ritual processes equally subverts while opening new possibilities. Through performing vulnerable and powerful gestures with their bodies they call us to question and resist what we are told is “truth,” the “truth” that stops us from being fully aware and present in our lives.

### **The Cultural Body as Sacred: Embodying a Female ‘Sentence’**

My years of working with the body as an artist, both representationally and performatively, has led me to understand and acknowledge the body as sacred. By sacred I mean honoring, receiving, and holding reverence for the spirit of mystery. Ritual theorist Ronald Grimes (1995) clarifies that, “Sacred” is the name we give to the deepest forms of receptivity in our experience” (p. 69). Elizabeth Grosz (1994) maintains: “If bodies are objects [subjects] or things, they are like no others, for they are the centers of perspective, insight, reflection, desire, agency” (p. xi). I would add sacredness to her insights on the body. We are intimately connected to our body and at the same time experience it anew each day. Grosz continues her thought “It is the ability of bodies to always extend the frameworks which attempt to contain them, to seep beyond their



circle gets larger                      its the entrance                      I’m inside the cave    there’re  
candles set up as mine are in my home                      there’s a woman sitting in the  
midst of the candles                      I’m standing at the entrance watching her

domains of control... (p. xi).” The body is simultaneously self and Other, and neither.

The premise of my art practice is that humans have evolved into a place of being in exile from their own bodies, and in that, exiled from a body-based knowledge. I have long struggled for a voice from a body-based knowledge as a female and an artist in this world. I am dedicated to visually reading, writing and ultimately embodying a female ‘sentence.’ The intention behind the art I create is to locate female narratives that read body symbols and illuminate the body as a sacred source of text and knowing. As well, I am interested in the body as a battleground, and a site for re-imagining what it means to be a woman. Irigaray (1991) articulates these connections when she writes, “It is important for us to guard and keep our bodies and at the same time make them emerge from silence and subjugation” (p. 43). My deepening challenge is to confront the traditional ‘sentence’ structure that has held the feminine body in exile from itself, rendering Her silent.

A significant portion of my living inquiry was the act of filming and editing the digital video. Shana Fried (2003) in writing on the work of poets Adrienne Rich and D.H. Lawrence suggests that,

...film provided a strategic move for subverting language and the limits placed on it.... Limits on gender and sexuality as constructed in language were undoubtedly challenged, deconstructed and redefined in each of their writing. (p. 151)

In an effort to address the confines of language that I continue to experience as a female artist/researcher/teacher, I turn to the living inquiry field notes that reflect my on-going battle with language in my inquiry process.

Notes on the porch in the morning sun:

*It is not often enough that I have space for this in the morning. I love the luxury - so much of life is a luxury. I work hard – I get caught up in the anxiety and I keep moving – doing my best to let go of the anxiety as I move on. But my body does hold the memory of the places/spaces I have been in, and it makes the final command to stop and empty.*

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she's meditating      she knows I'm there      she allows me to come in      I come in  
and as I sit back to back with her inside the circle of candles      I light  
the candles that are on my side of the circle      each flame igniting each

*Language is the surface structure*

*Language is our expression of our alienation between each other*

*Language is so inadequate – How do we express?*

*Language comes to us as it disconnects and distances*

*And so I write for these language field notes. I am completely uninspired to do anything creative around language. Maybe I will rip up words. Just spend the time ripping up words. That is what my artist does. That is what is most appropriate. “Be skeptical of all ‘texts’ (verbal expressions); they are distortion of experience and “require a depth hermeneutic.” Beittel (1980, p. 50)*

### **A/r/tography as Ritual**

Living inquiry is one of the six renderings<sup>ix</sup> found in the practice of a/r/tography (Irwin, de Cosson, 2004; Springgay, Irwin, Kind, 2005). Stephanie Springgay (2004) describes “renderings a[s] performative gestures of meaning making” (p. 43) that “allow for the complexity of meaning; they un/ravel in un/certainty and ambiguity” (p. 42). At the same time they offer locations of pause for reflection or assessment while engaged in the inquiry. A/r/tography engages the roles of the artist/researcher/teacher in a self-reflexive inquiry that is led by the making of art and writing. The back slashes between the letters signify the interrelationality of the three identities. Springgay (2004) wrote of the lived a/r/tographic sensibility as “life open to inquiry that is aesthetic and embodied” (p. 43) where art is related to as “... constitutive, intercorporeal encounters that produce and transform knowledges as a process of exchange” (pp. 117-118). A/r/tography offers a location for me to challenge the limiting classical and modernist aesthetics of form, order and beauty and to engage an art aesthetic that is in relationship with self and others—a practice that follows the art process and is curious about the space between, around and inside the: mind/body, rational/arational, secular/spiritual, writing/art, and ritual/education. *A/r/tography as ritual* draws the practices of the artist/researcher/teacher into the sacred frame of ritual. Reverence and respect, along with an attunement to rhythm are significant features of ritual.



wick we sit back to back with the circle of flames around us I can feel her  
open clear mind and the vastness of it we just sit together in this  
vast space inside this cave inside this space there's some kind of root

The term [ritual] usually refers to a coded social performance such as a ceremonial practice established by tradition or a religious service.... But that’s only one dimension of the ritual. Making a video, for example, is to engage in ritual—both the rituals of new technologies and those of creating and structuring images.... In other words, rituals serve as a ‘frame’ whose stabilizing effect, experienced through repetition in cycles and rhythmic recurrences, allows us to see things with a different intensity and, ... to perceive the ordinary in an extraordinary way. (Minh-ha, 2005, p. 135)

A/r/tography as ritual makes visible, and is responsive to the arational and aesthetic relationships between the body, art, space/place, language, time, self/other, ritual and education. Research supports the significance of ritual as a site of learning and transformation (Driver, 1997; Shorter, 1987; Zigler, 1999). I locate my a/r/tographic practice as ritual within,

A sacred, existential epistemology [which] places us [as artists, researchers, teachers] in a noncompetitive, nonhierarchical relationship to the earth, to nature, and to the larger world (Bateson, 1972, p. 335). This sacred epistemology stresses the values of empowerment, shared governance, care, solidarity, love, community, covenant, morally involved observers, and civic transformation. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, pp. 36-37)

Parker Palmer (1983) in his book on education as a spiritual journey clarifies how:

Objectivism tells the world what it is rather than listen to what it says about itself. Subjectivism is the decision to listen to no one except ourselves. But truth [sacred epistemology] requires listening...to each other, responding to what we hear, acknowledging and recreating the bonds of the community... (p. 67)



connection where we are sitting to deep down into the mountain      *deep*  
*breath* she has not moved through my whole time of being here  
she’s solid I’d like to stay but I know I need to head back      I leave

Ritual is the sacred container that holds and supports the individual and the community in the inquiry/excavation processes of self and Other, creating a stabilizing ground for risk-taking, challenges, and new knowledge to emerge within.

### Embodying Exile: Together

...I wonder how to sustain a relationship between us, between two made from body and language, between two intentions participating in an incarnate relationship which is actualized by flesh and words. (Irigaray, 2004, p. 22)

The education environment created in the living inquiry course is based on an invitation to expand notions of being, knowing, and doing, as “an inquiry into how to live with the quality of awareness that sees newness, truth, and beauty in daily life (Meyer, 2005, p.11).” Inviting a practice of sacred awareness into learning environments is the “sacred, existential epistemology” that Denzin and Lincoln encourage to assist the formation of live(d) curricula and community. Resistance and fear often accompany deep inquiry into self and Other. The presence and embodiment of the witness in the performer/teacher as well as in the co-learners in the community is essential to moving beyond barriers of resistance and fear.

The discussion that took place after the performance ritual is charged with an intensity that makes clear the link between the experience of witnessing and performing. As the performer/teacher a surge of energy took over my voice and body as I spoke aloud and spun my body on the floor. This energy source I recognize as not solely my own but connected to and magnified by those witnessing. The responses from the witnesses below offer insight into the exchange that took place during the performance ritual.

I did not realize how forceful it was seeing images on your body. That was incredible – pow – very strong.... I was not prepared for that.

In my travels and in my interest in the sacred and place I am aware it isn't just a

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part of my self here I slide myself up straight up in the air so as not to disturb  
her or the candles I silently say farewell to her in this space and I head  
out out of the cave back out to the ocean flying

place. Sometimes it is something we bear witness to. It isn't tangible but it touches us in that same way and I felt that in my body. It touched me.

I found myself really frustrated that you had the two beautiful images and you were blocking the pictures, but then I realized you were the picture. It was coming off of you and I could see what I was supposed to see there. It was actually on you. I had to journey to that realization.

Hearing the multiple sound tracks with your voice magnified the experience of watching.

In performing a curricular body within a sacred aesthetic context, the struggle between flesh and words is both exciting and troubling. Analogous with the live performance ritual in the classroom, I transform the space/pages in this essay to accommodate the rhythmic intertextual dynamics of this inquiry that embodies the longing for an altar/ed engagement with the Other. The “risk of exchange” (Irigaray) the performing body/text enters between self and Other is a “moving site of revelation” (Frueh). The curricular body, in a spiritual context, is not a self-centered singular body. It is a relational transforming body.

I utilize the state of trance and performance ritual to subvert regulatory norms in search of live(d) curricula that is multi-modal. Upon reflection, I acknowledge that this approach sets up a tension. The performance ritual is inevitably vulnerable and self-exposing, flying on the edge of chaos, yet ritually contained. In throwing my body between the projectors and normal projected surfaces, I physically interrupt the clear reading of the data. I make impossible a single reading of the experience. How can this be pedagogical?

Performing ritual as an educator fosters a relational knowing that can lead to forming a community of learners able to locate politics inside rather than outside of themselves as Pinar promotes, and as Huebner suggests, are willing to enter the fissure or “fault” in current knowledge systems to transform our institutions and society. Through



skimming above the ocean I see the seals below I'm back at  
the edge of the water and I land getting my feet wet I keep moving towards the  
trees and the pathway that leads me back up in my mind I

performance ritual “...curricular places of possibility, absence, and disruption [are] realized (Fels, 2003, p. 173).” Live(d) curricula requires that we be willing as artists/researchers/teachers to enter the multiple and often exiled realms of time, place/space, language, self/other through the lived curricular space of our bodies. Reframing the pedagogical risks of entering and exploring these domains is essential to contributing to a (re)newed vision of live(d) curricula in our art, research and teaching practices of today.



hold all these memories of my journey I head back up the stairs each  
step brings me back closer to current time as I wind my way up till I reach the  
*top deep breath* and I bring myself back to my circle of candles  
back to the present

3 bell rings

...she is the erotogeneity of the heterogeneous: airborne swimmer, in flight, she does not cling to herself; she is dispersible, prodigious, stunning, desirous and capable of others, of the other woman that she will be, of the other woman she isn't of him of you. (Cixous, 1975, p. 358)

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<sup>i</sup> Numerous women artists (including the author) have refused to separate their cultural creativity from their art and their bodies (Lippard, 1986).

<sup>ii</sup> The images in this essay are stills taken from the documentary video entitled *Living Inquiry: A Video Montage*. Video and still image editing: Barbara Bickel. Video camera work: Joanna Szabo and Barbara Bickel.

<sup>iii</sup> I do not write alone. The voices/texts of many others inform my writing. I would like in particular to acknowledge the invaluable editing assistance of R. Michael Fisher, Karen Meyer, the reviewers, and the editors, Debra Freedman and Stephanie Springgay.

<sup>iv</sup> The arational is recognized as the nonrational in a philosophical definition of mysticism but does not merit its own definition within the *HarperCollins Dictionary of Philosophy*. The *arational* (drawing from Swiss philosopher Jean Gebser and mystical traditions) is a form of knowing that includes the body, the emotions, the senses, intuition, imagination, creation making, the mystical, spiritual and the relational, alongside the rational. The arational can be found in the practices of art, meditation, psychoanalysis, the body, the senses, etc.

<sup>v</sup> This graduate course took place, with eighteen graduate students, in the summer of 2005 at the University of British Columbia through The Center for Cross Faculty Inquiry. Dr. Meyer developed and has taught this course over the past five years. Others have used the term “living inquiry” in their own way.

<sup>vi</sup> List of materials and equipment for the performance ritual:

“Art is Vital” T-shirt, damp cloth, pottery bowl, art educator Kenneth Beittel quotes rolled into small scrolls tied by twine, one blue coloured wet erase marker, two - 10.5 minute videos compiled of video clips from the original 90 minutes of video data collected exploring myself as an artist, researcher and educator through the themes of place/space, time, language, self/other, two LCD projectors, two laptop computers, three video cameras

<sup>vii</sup> Prior to this Living Inquiry course I discovered and was studying the art making philosophy of the art educator and potter, the late Kenneth R. Beittel from Penn State University. My experience of reading and coming to know his work was similar to reading the French feminists. I was deeply captivated and moved by it, yet intimidated by its depth and sophistication. This particular quote was an important guidepost for me in reading his work and I later found for introducing others to my performance rituals.

<sup>viii</sup> I prefer the term “theological,” as “a” signifies the divine feminine, according to Carol P. Christ (2003).

<sup>ix</sup> The remaining five renderings are contiguity, openings, metaphor/metonymy, reverberations, and excess. (see Springgay, Irwin & Kind, 2005 for more details)

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