Sky, Ground and In-Between:

Metaphysical Belief Systems

That Underpin Epistemologies of Arts-Integrating Research

Holly Tsun Haggarty

Faculty of Education, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario

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Supervisor: Pauline Sameshima (Lakehead University)

Committee Members: Don Kerr (Lakehead University) and Doug Karrow (Brock University)

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Note on Style

This dissertation incorporates two style conventions, the English language conventions of the Canadian Style (Government of Canada, 2020) and the academic conventions of American Psychological Association Style (American Psychological Association [APA], 2020). However, due to its arts-integrating and dialogic nature, the work has required some unique adaptations. For example, font and spacing variations are used to create and demonstrate character and voice, as well as shifts thereof. To facilitate reading via digital media, the sans-serif font Calibri is used as a baseline and changes of voice are demonstrated either with italics or with the serif-font Garamond. The work is set so that it could be printed with standard letter-sized paper, with 2.5 centimetre margins. Canadian spelling is engaged. A terminal serial comma is engaged in disjunctive, but not conjunctive, series. To enhance reading, punctuation marks are placed outside of quotation marks, unless the punctuation is an integral part of a quotation. Citational and referencing practices align with those of APA-7.

ABSTRACT

Arts-integrating research is an increasingly engaged practice in educational inquiry, as well as humanities and social sciences. This research approach offers the opportunity to engage creative sensibilities and techniques as elements (or even the basis) of inquiry, something quite distinct from traditional positivist, often quantitative, research. Indeed, many methodologists of arts-integrating research voice resistance to traditional expectations of research and propose alternative theories of research (Knowles & Cole, 2008b). But, while the theorizations of arts-integrating research stand strongly as manifesto and movement, their fundamental grounds and assumptions are not always clear, nor well understood, and the distinctions between particular arts-integrating research methodologies have been little studied. From my prior and continuing study into philosophical assumptions of Elliot Eisner's conceptions of *arts based research* and those of Rita Irwin et al.'s *a/r/tography*, I have found that these two arts-integrating research methodologies differ in their epistemological conceptions (the former presenting a structuralist-constructivist view of knowledge and of art as a way of knowing and the latter presenting a poststructuralist-deconstructionist view in this regard), and that these distinctions arise due to differing beliefs regarding the nature of reality and being. Eisnerian arts based research aligns with what may be called a *metaphysics of presence*, while the a/r/tography of Irwin et al. espouses what may be called a *metaphysics of difference*. In either case, their beliefs may be intriguingly plotted and characterized according to constructs such as *primacy* and *unity*. This study engages a research practice both analytic and artful, which I call *creational dialectics*, and which draws on elements from the interpretive traditions of hermeneutics and phenomenology. The study report, this dissertation, is uniquely structured in that the analytic discussions are located within a many-layered artwork, which includes a comic play, cartoons, poetry and dialogical hors d'oeuvres. This study reminds its interlocutors that every approach to inquiry is buttressed by belief, and it encourages its interlocutors to contemplate the fundamental epistemological and metaphysical beliefs that guide their own understanding of knowing. From my own contemplations I discern—confess—my own leanings towards an apophatic *metaphysics of participation*.

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FOREWORD

Hello, You:

Welcome to my dissertation. I'm so glad to have you join the conversation. Please, make yourself at home. I like to imagine you sitting down in your comfortable chair, holding my work like a treasured book, enjoying a delicious beverage, perhaps a steaming cup of strong brew, a tall, cold glass tinkling with ice, or a rich, warm red.

Yes, I like to call this a conversation, though there are many who might laugh at that. I know, this is a dissertation, and as such known by other names. Inquisition, for example, wherein one is questioned and judged for one's views: heretical or orthodox. I resist the term "inquisition"; I call my inquisitors interlocutors. As in any conversation. And I ask you: inquisition, what does it mean? Does it not mean to be inquisitive, quizzical, enquiring? Does it not mean to ask questions? There are many ways to ask questions, interrogation is only one way. Interrogation is hindered by intimidation; fear renders questions rhetorical.

Inquest, that is another way to ask questions. Inquests seek to find the cause of death. In as much as inquests seek cause, in as much as death is caused by life, in as much as life is lived in the face of death, in as much as I seek to understand the meaning of life in the face of death, my work could be considered an inquest.

Inquiry, that is another way to ask questions. Inquiry suggests big questions and long answers. I like that. I don't like that it has become such a very politically charged word, though. Politically, inquiries can be more so maneuverings of power than of asking questions and listening with an open heart.

And then there is quest. Quest is a lovely word. It suggests existential questions, a hapless, hopeful and heartful hero on a mythic journey, supported by equally hapless, hopeful and heartful companions, who together take on great risks, as they seek to learn, love and live. Homer, and all his progeny. Mythic quests. But they couldn't do it alone. They needed companions, they had to share: boats, beds, breakfasts (cars, canopies, canapés), and above all, conversation. The basis of the eulogies that came later, much later.

Later, I will describe my work as hermeneutical, dialectic—other ways of saying conversation. And so, Inquisitor, will you be Interlocutor, will you be Companion, will you join in?

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Let's begin with an overview of this dissertation. You've already read the abstract, right? So, you know this work is a study of the metaphysical belief systems that underpin two methodologies in arts-integrating research, with reflection thereon. What I want to describe now is the structure of this work. In the abstract, I said that the work is both analytic and artful. It incorporates prosaic argument, but it is also an arts-integrated inquiry, and as such it includes many elements of art, such as drama, poetry, comics and dialogues. How do these elements contribute structurally to the work as a whole? It is very important to discern the holistic structure of this work to grasp the artistic unity of the whole. I'm going to explicate this structure, but—spoiler alert!—if you would rather figure it out for yourself, then skip the following explication and go directly to the next section, the proem.

You might just look at this dissertation as titled *Presence and Difference: Metaphysical Belief Systems That Underpin Epistemologies of Arts-Integrating Research*, as a comparative study, and structured as a typical dissertation:

<u>A Dissertation</u>

- Abstract

- Acknowledgments

- Note on Style

- Table of Contents

- Foreword

- Proem and Prolegomenon: dramatic divergence from the work

- Addenda: the body of the work

- References

- Afterword: additional discussion about the work

- Judgement: a place provisionally left blank for the outcome of the defence

If read this way, it seems that, in spite of some oddly named sections, the only thing important is the prosaic essay. It seems that the only important thing is the "body" of the dissertation, centrally located in the division that is oddly named "addenda", and that consists of chapters oddly called "exhibits". Read this way, the artwork might seem like distracting intrusions, which could just be skipped, the work assessed for strength of argument and accordance to traditional expectations of a scholarly essay.

You might think of the art just as decoration.

Or you might look at this dissertation as a literary work, entitled *Sky to Ground and In-Between: The Inquisition of Holy Mi.* As a literary work, this is a story about the inquisition of a

doctoral student, and all of the sections of the work serve as elements of that trial: the confession of the defendant, the evidentiary references, the examination of the defendant, and so on, leading up to the final judgement. As a trial, the work is structured like this:

An Inquisition (That Looks Like A Dissertation)

- *Administrivia of the Judicial Institution* (Title, Copyright, Acknowledgements, Table of Contents)

- *Initiation of Court Proceedings, Memorandum of Claims Under Inquisition and Plea of the Defendant* (Abstract, Foreword)

- *Media Report* (The Proem); from an anonymous source

- *The Trial* (Prolegomenon, the play, *Aporia*); the inquisition of Mi

- *Exhibits from the Confession and Defence of the Defendant, Mi* (Body of Dissertation); with prosaic assertions, accompanying comic epigraphs, dialogical discussions and poetic interpretations

- *Additional Evidentiary List* (References)

- *Trial Transcript of the (Cross) Examination of the Defendant, Mi* (Afterword)

- *Trial Judgement* (Judgement)

Forsooth, there's a reverse trompe-l'œil here, a dissertation that appears formally constructed, but within which plays a work of the imagination (which has already begun). *Sky, Ground and In-Between: Metaphysical Belief Systems That Underpin Epistemologies of Arts-Integrating Research.* There's a double entendre: you find here a prosaic essay, a comparative study of the metaphysical beliefs in two arts-integrating research methodologies, but you also find an integrated, artful reflection thereof. Through the deliberate, delightful ambiguity of double entendre, all the parts relate and the titles merge. So, there is a trial, of a doctoral

candidate, (intradiegetically Mi, extradiegetically me). Trial proceedings are found

*intra*diegetically in the play, which refers to exhibits, which *extra*diegetically follow the play and

form the prosaic arguments of the dissertation. The comic epigraphs, offering thematic links,

serve as a reminder that the prosaic sections are still in the trial, still in the art.

Even now, Dear Inquisitor, you are already in the art!

"Oh there you are! Thank goodness. We haven't got much time."[1]

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[1] The visual images in this work were created using the digital animation program at Pixton.com.

PROEM

This is how she has fantasized a doctoral defence to be:

In a classroom, that same room where she's seen others step forward. In attendance are the candidate, her advisor and her other committee members, the internal examiner, the external examiner, and a chair. There might be a few audience members. Perhaps the candidate's mother, husband or best friend show up. Or perhaps she tells them to please not come because that will just make her more nervous. Nowadays, the examiners often don't even show up in person, but are digitally connected. In fact, the entire classroom might be digital. So, the candidate will gesticulate in front of a camera. Which makes her even more nervous.

So how it goes is that the doctoral candidate presents a review of her studies. She gets exactly twenty minutes, no more. An electric buzzer will stop her if she goes over. Then her examiners ask her questions. She wonders where they got their questions from—they weren't any she thought of to prepare for. She answers as best she can. Several times she goes red, her eyes fill up with tears. She hopes the examiners don't notice that. She tries to hold it together. She is at an inquisition that will decide her life. But the inquisitors don't act fierce—if anything they seem a little bored—no, board, trained to look impassive.

After the inquisition, the candidate is sent out of the room, as are the members of the audience. They hover around her. Her husband has a box of tissues and his best camera. He also brought flowers, but he left them in the car because he thought that would be presumptive. He hopes they aren't wilting.

Meanwhile, the examiners deliberate.

Eventually, after an agonizing wait, a messenger is sent to bring the candidate back into the room for the verdict. She hopes it will be, "Congratulations, Doctor!" And she'll cry, "Holy, Me!!!"

But she may never even get to that defence. Because the way the system works is that well before she faces final judgment, there are other adjudicators who stand by, with sharp thoughts and the power to axe.

Not everyone has as dramatic a defence as Mi. But perhaps if every dissertation, every defence, were a life-and-death-facing experience, then its relevance would be assured. And perhaps, every dissertation, every defence, *is* a life-and-death facing experience. Perhaps, ultimately, every dissertation seeks the same thing: the meaning of it all.

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abstract

what I propose
to do is to think
about what is
and what is-not

reading the lyric
of air around me
and listening to winds
from beyond

that curl from time
that sweep from place
breathe now
breathe again

I can't see the wind
but I feel her
still
echo

PROLEGOMENON

The Saint, the Clown, the Stranger and Mi.

APORIA: AN INQUISITION INTO THE NATURE OF BEING

Characters

<u>Mi, aka Holy, M'amie</u>: a middle-aged woman, doctoral candidate about to defend her PhD thesis, wearing professional clothing and well made up, nervous, overly earnest, Canadian.

<u>The Stranger</u>: a man past the bloom of youth; a man of mystery—he says he does health science research but is he a lab tech, grad student, junior scientist or Nobel laureate? He wears jeans and a t-shirt, with a tool belt; he is intense and abrupt in thought and actions; he has a hard-to-place foreign accent (to Canadians). (This character could be translated into a female version.)

<u>The Clown, aka Gilles</u>: a man dressed in women's clothing, with make-up like a feminine clown and very realistic breast bulges, yet balding, with a comb-over; he is quick and careless (subversive, irreverent); has a French-esque accent (for example, a Canadian joual), but in his role as a clown readily imitates other accents. (This character might be played by a person of any gender.)

<u>The Saint, aka Doctor Angelicus, Tommy</u>: a man wearing a pair of white athletic shorts, white sneakers and a cross around his neck; no shirt; his very buff body is well revealed; he's a big, slow guy; he comes across betimes innocent, reluctant, pompous; he's used to slow, formal discourse and has a hard time gaining a footing in an argument with the quick-witted Clown; has a Latinate accent.

Setting

This play is set in a classroom of a university. Along the back (upstage) wall of the classroom is a large window out of which we see clouds and sky. Also along this back wall are some classroom artefacts (such as a shelving unit and a display board). Angled in the corner (upstage left) of the back wall is a large whiteboard (digital image screen). Nearer the audience (downstage) is a desk or worktable on which is placed a computer and a spiral-bound book, and at which is a chair. Distributed throughout the stage are clusters of desks and chairs. There is a door to the classroom downstage from the back, windowed wall. The members of the audience look in through the invisible fourth wall. The date is the spring of 2021.

Action

The play opens with Mi at the computer, trying to figure out the computer/projector system. We can see the opening page of a PowerPoint presentation, but the slide is messed up. (This continues to happen.) The screen images are a palimpsest of doodles and hand-scrawled notes over the neatly typed font of the original presentation. Instead of reading "Aporia: Not Your Usual Defence", it has been over-written to read "Aporia: Doubt Is Not a Defence". Also, the system is making strange noises. (And this continues to happen.) As Mi works her digital phone in frustration, the classroom door opens. The Stranger appears. He is holding a big cardboard box and a gym bag. He stops just inside the doorway, blinking, as if the room is coming at him, rather than he to the room.

Mi: Oh there you are! Thank goodness. We haven't got much time. Is this the set up?

Since the stranger has made no move forward, Mi goes to him, grabs the box, brings it over to the computer desk, and puts it down. If you pay attention, you'll see the box is labelled "Camus Laboratories" and notice the biohazard warning signs on the box. The man seems taken aback by Mi and stands in place, hands out, as if still holding the box.

Mi (tries to open the box, but it's taped down well): I thought I just needed right lines. I have to change the whole system? (She peeks into a free corner.) What is this? Looks like a bomb in here.

The Stranger (recovering from his surprise): What do you mean set up? Who are you? (He is oscillating back and forth, as if he wants that box, yet held back by some power, afraid.)

Mi (realizing she has made a mistake, trying to replace the tape): Oh my God. I'm so sorry. I thought you were I.T. coming to help.

The Stranger: I want my box back.

Mi: Of course. So sorry. (She holds the box out to the Stranger, who snatches it back.)

Mi (hopefully): Do you know anything about computers?

The Stranger (smiling strangely): Yes, something.

Mi: It's just that I don't have much time.

The Stranger (speaking more confidently now that he has his box back): No, you do not.

Mi: Never mind. I'll practice without. If you see I.T. wandering around, tell them I'm here.

But the Stranger doesn't leave. He puts his bag down on a chair and his box down on a desk and, standing behind the desk so that he is facing Mi, gently pulls back a flap of the box.

The Stranger: This *is* Room 2034?

Mi (picks up her spiral-bound book—well-marked with colour-coded stickers—and tries to shoo him away with it): Yes. I'm trying to practice.

The Stranger: Go ahead. I won't be long.

Mi: Look, my final defence of my dissertation is in *one* hour. And the examiners aren't exactly sympathetic. If you want to come back later, fine, but right now I need to get ready.

The Stranger holds up one finger as he fiddles within his box and bag, while Mi watches in frustration. Then the PowerPoint shifts to a new slide—it shows a clock with a face and upper body of a clown, the clock hands are the arms of this clown, twirling around and round as the clock sings the circus song (na *na l* nana *na* / na*na* / *na na* / *na*). Mi goes to the computer to try to fix the blasted thing.

The Stranger (delicately projects aerial antennae out of the box and then sits down and checks his timepiece): Okay then. Got an hour to kill. Go ahead, try to change my mind.

Mi (puzzled): Change *your* mind?

The Stranger turns to look at the whiteboard behind him; the image has changed to an author page, showing an image of Mi, but underneath it reads "Holy Sun".

The Stranger: Is that you?

Mi: Not exactly.

Stanger (muttering to himself): Code, of course. Social science gibberish.

He studies the slide. Mi taps on her spiral-bound book in an exaggerated gesture, like a judge calling a court to order. The Stranger moves a chair so he can see both Mi and the screen, then sits down.

Mi: Okay, I'm just going to pretend you're not here. (She turns away from the stranger, to address the empty desks.) Welcome to my dissertation defence. I begin with contextual narrative—who I am and why I took on this re-search. (Reading from a cue card she has pulled from the book): As a life-long artist educator—

The Stranger: You're a teacher? You must be retired. You look too old.

Mi: —I have worked not just in school classrooms, but classrooms of life—libraries, community centres, hospitals—leading workshops where arts activities were the medium for learning.

Stranger: You mean like how you learn math by singing songs about mice?

Mi (To the stranger): Yes, anything! Math, physics, physiology. Solar system piñatas. Chain of infection as a Hopak dance. (Now to the empty desks): And a question I'm often asked was "How is this art a way to knowing?" A good question, which I love to think about, and which brought me to graduate studies.

Mi turns toward the whiteboard as she tries to get the next slide up. The technology is not responding well; after repeated clicking, up pops a slide with face shots of two people, and underneath the images, where the caption should be, is a scrambling of letters and symbols.

The Stranger: What's "abr" and "a/r/t"?

Mi (puzzled and frustrated at how her slides are so jumbled): The names of two theories—arts based research and a/r/tography.

The Stranger: Theories? They sound like viruses. (Now, the slide changes so that the names "Rita" and "Elliot" appear, although their last names are still a jumble of symbols, ^%$#@? and @#$%^!) Oh, Rita and Elliot. They sound like pets. Which one is Dalowz?

On the image screen, the two face shots are drawn over with whiskers and ears.

Mi (drawn now into engagement with the stranger): Deleuze? Neither. That's Rita *Irwin* and Elliot *Eisner*.

The Stranger: But the memo said you studied Gilles Deleuze. (He pronounces Gilles so that it rhymes with miles and Deleuze as Da-lowz, so that the name sounds sort of British, sort of American, or is that German? Russian?)

Mi: Deleuze. Well, eventually. In my master's I compared these two theories for what they said about art as a way of knowing. But what it came down to was their metaphysics. So, in my doctoral study—

The Stranger: Metaphysics? They let you study that? Felix is right; social science is nuts.

Mi: I don't mean metaphysics, the occult. I mean metaphysics, foundations of belief.

The Stranger: I don't care what you believe. I don't believe in God.

Mi (clicking, clicking at the computer): Would you just stop interrupting? I'm having a hard-enough time here. I compared two fundamental belief systems that inform Western epistemology, *the metaphysics of presence* and *the metaphysics of difference*.

These two terms come up in a PowerPoint slide, along with two images. One is a painting of a religious figure, a monk in a white robe and black cape, with a tonsured haircut and a golden orb encircling his head. The other is a photo of a middle-aged man with a well-lined forehead and a comb-over; he holds a cigarette and an ironic grin, and the edges of the photo are softened with a smoky haze.

The Stranger (under his breath): Blood-suckers?

Mi doesn't answer as the sound of a loud argument distracts her, as well as the Stranger. They turn to look over toward the classroom door.

Voices: Equivocity! Univocity! Equivocity! Univocity! Equivocity! Univocity!

While Mi and the Stranger study the classroom door, Mi annoyed, the Stranger alert, you see, rising into view in the window in the back of the classroom, a red balloon. Then body parts rise into view: haloes, heads, shoulders. . . The figures face each other, mouths and gestures in action—this is where the voices and argument are coming from. Meanwhile, the figures

on the whiteboard screen change. The religious figure loses his robes and becomes a tonsured bodybuilder. The smoking man transforms into a femininely attired clown. At the window, the two figures (apparitions? beings?) seem so intent on their argument that they are oblivious to their location outside the classroom until with a whoosh (a push?) they fly through the window and land in a heap on the classroom floor. Mi and the Stranger pivot around.

The Stranger, the Saint, the Clown and Mi: What the hell/heavens/fuck/heck?

As the two unexpected visitors climb up from the floor, we see that the two resemble the new images on the screen, at least in their intriguing attire. But the body builder has wings and the clown has one large helium balloon on a string, as well as a retro purse, a glossy A-frame with a snap closure.

The Saint (looking around appraisingly): Gilles, I think we have a problem. (He pronounces Gilles in two syllables, like Geel-lays, with a soft Roman "g".)

The Clown (looking around in awe, especially at the white board, and continuing to do so over the next bit of dialogue): Well, would you look at this—this *is* different!

The Stranger (cowering, and backing up as if to hide/protect his box): Who are you? What do you want?

The Saint: Don't be afraid, Sir. We come from heaven; we bring tidings of great joy.

The Clown: We do? No, we don't. We are not *from* heaven!

The Saint communicates to the Clown with an intricate sign system, trying to hush the Clown and explaining why he must hush, but the Clown obtusely gestures back a total lack of understanding.

Meanwhile, Mi has been backing away, too, creeping downstage and literally crawling toward the door. She's more than halfway across the room when the Stranger notices her, and jumps, straddling her like a horse.

The Stranger: Get back I say! Over to the window! Both of you! Take one step closer and this lady's gonna get it!

The Stranger reaches into his waist bag and pulls out a syringe.

Mi (projecting her voice to the door): Help! Someone! Help me!

The Stranger shows Mi the syringe and she shuts up. The visitors back up toward the window they came in from, hands up. The Stranger calms somewhat.

The Clown (in a loud whisper to the Saint): Getting what? Who? Who's getting what? What is this, Tommy? (Then, with sudden realization.) Tommy! I have a body! I have boobs!

The Clown joyfully checks out his mounds. The Saint, too, takes a glance at his body. He looks not so surprised as pleased.

The Saint: *Ecce homo!* Gilles! (Scoldingly.)

The Clown is trying to peek at what's under his blouse and skirt. A phone, with an old-fashioned bell-tone rings loudly. Everyone reacts differently to the sound. Mi stares at the door; is help on its way? The Stranger looks over to the computer desk where Mi has left her cellphone, but that phone is silent. The Clown scans the walls for a telephone. The Saint looks pointedly at the Clown. The ringtone is coming from the Clown's handbag! The Saint, like a magician demonstrating obvious transparency, snaps opens the purse, reaches into it and pulls out a phone, a brightly-coloured old-fashioned plastic play phone, with handset and rotary dialer. He gestures a what-should-I-do and the Stranger indicates he should answer it.

The Saint: Doctor Angelicus speaking. . . Is that you God? . . . Is this what I think it is??? . . . Santi Pietro, Paolo, Maria! Another Wonderful Life! I can't believe you threw me here without warning! And with that clown! . . . Why didn't you send Clarence? This is his thing, not mine! Does this mean the other mission is off? . . . Well, would you tell me exactly whom I supposed to save? . . . Hello? God?

The Saint steps forward, holding out the phone as evidence.

The Saint (speaking slowly, sounding both uncomfortable and patronizing): My Dear Man, we are not here to harm you or anyone. We are angels and we just got sent from God (motioning to the speaker end of the handset) because someone(s) here wants to kill someone(s) and God wants us to save those someone(s). So, let us be logical and figure that

out. Do you want to kill yourself? No? Yes? Maybe? Does this woman want to kill herself? No? Do you want to kill this woman? Yes, maybe? Do you mind telling us why?

The Stranger: First tell me who you are. No lies or I stab this woman.

Mi collapses onto her forearms, hands together as if she is trying to protect her head. Or pray.

The Saint: I already told you. We are angels.

The Clown: Since when have I been an angel?

The Saint (shrugs): Since God said so—though you haven't got your wings.

The Stranger: Is this a joke? Is this a costume party?

The Saint: Neither, *Domino*. I do not jest and I do not attend secular festivities. (He glances at his attire and gestures an excuse.) It was short notice. *Habeas corpus?* One has to incarnate into some body—I wager these were the first ones available.

The Stranger (to the Clown): Are you a he or a she?

The Clown: I . . . can't remember. (Looking at his body and speaking with some doubt): They?

The Stranger (getting off Mi's back and pulling her up onto her knees): Do you know who these guys are?

Mi: No, I don't . . .

The Stranger: Then how come they're in your presentation? (He points to the whiteboard, where the photoshopped images are still in view.)

Mi: I don't know. . . I didn't do that! Are you guys supposed to be—my philosophers?

The Stranger (staring at the images on the screen and looking over to the fly-ins, comparing): Is one of you supposed to be Dalows?

The Saint: I am Doctor Angelicus, eminent theologian, angel first class; and this is—

The Clown: *Tout fou!* The Doctor thinks I'm the illness and he's the cure.

The Stranger (yelling, and shaking Mi, who he still holds with a strong fist): Is one of you Da-louse?

The Clown (wincing at the aggression): Well if one is da louse, is the other da scalp?

The Stranger (pulls off the cap off the syringe with his teeth, spitting it at the angels across the room): That's it; she's getting it.

The Clown: Okay, Okay, let's be serious. Are you trying to kill this woman or cure her? Just asking. Because if you're going to kill her, why jump so soon? I mean, *merde*, why not have a little fun with it? Like cats do.

The Stranger: I detest cats.

The Saint: Let us be logical! You want to hurt, harm or amortalize this woman, ergo, in sequitur, you must feel you have been hurt, harmed, or mortally threatened by this woman, Madame—?

The Stranger: She calls herself Holy but—

The Saint: Ah, you are not sure; not entirely sure of the facts. Would not, then, an inquisition be in order? Wherein we set out the accusation and the evidence, before coming to judgment.

The whiteboard screen shows an image of a medieval inquisition: a hierarchy of black and white gowned inquisitors, a sobbing woman, soldiers with torturous implements at the ready. The Stranger studies the image as if it is a decision map.

Stranger: Yes, we must have a trial. There's still the better part of an hour. But I must be the judge.

The Stranger makes a show of brandishing the syringe.

The Clown: But aren't you the victim, the plaintiff?

The Saint: —As you wish. Since you are in power. Though will you not require advocates? Scribes, to take down the testaments.

The Clown: Yes! (To the Saint.) I will prosecute! You defend.

The Saint (indicating his naked torso): But don't we need robes?

The Clown: And those roll-curl wigs?

The Stranger: Just stay back. You two, over there, us here.

The Saint and the Clown go over to a grouping of desks and sit down, angled toward the audience. The Saint arranges the plastic phone as if he is at an office desk. The Stranger forces Mi into a chair, pulls out a pair of handcuffs from his belt pocket and cuffs Mi with her hands behind her back, attached to the chair. Then he sits behind her, up on a desk, so that he is higher up than, and in opposition to, the Saint and the Clown. All can still see the whiteboard and the box, just beyond them, toward the back wall.

The Clown: All rise for the judge. (The Clown and the Saint stand up; Mi sort of gets up, chair at backside.)

The Stranger: Sit down!

The Clown: Righty-ho!

Pause.

During the following, the Saint notices a notebook and pen in the desk and, after studying the pen to figure out how it works, proceeds to take notes. The Clown discovers a compact in his purse. He snaps open the mirror, adjusts his makeup, likes what he sees.

The Saint (whispering a prompt): The charge? The accusation?

The Stranger: Yes. This woman stole from me!

Mi: I did?

The Saint (to Mi): Do not speak unless spoken to. (To judge): Your Honour, you say this woman stole from you. I call the judge as witness. Your Honour, please state your testimony before the court.

The Stranger (moving from judge's bench to floor): This one who calls herself Holy. That is not her name. She is a follower of Dalowz. Dalowz, that-that "post" modern cretin, that man who never did a single experiment in his life. Under his name, she claims a "social" science. Science is *not* social!

The Clown reacts to "'post' modern cretin" as if stung, and starts to retort, but the Saint claps a hand over his mouth to silence him.

The Saint: Could we clarify? Is your accusation rather fraud, defamation or libel?

The Stranger: Yes, that too! She refutes that HPV causes cancer; she refutes the vaccine. Felix and I won noble prizes and she says there is no proof!

The Saint: I'm not entirely following. What's HPV? It's certainly not—

The Clown: Hippie partner vacillation?

The Saint (shaking his head, going thumbs up to down): *Hoc pollice verso.*

The Stranger: Human papilloma virus. It's an oncovirus—carcinogenic. Felix and I made vaccinations. Till we lost our research money when they said that—according to Da-lowz— they make people sick.

Mi: Could I speak?

The Stranger and the Saint: No. / Not yet.

Mi (speaks anyway): With all due respect, I think you're railing against the wrong person. I don't consider myself a social scientist. I've never even applied for research funding. I don't study HPV, or any other cancer.

The Stranger: You're not one of these ranting, raving anti-science anti-vaxxers!? (He pulls some sheaves of papers from his gym bag and sticks them in front of Mi's nose.) You don't know these papers!? You don't support this screed?!

Mi (shaking her head as she scans the papers, print-outs of academic publications): "Deconstructing The Evidence-Based Discourse in Health Sciences: Truth, Power and Fascism". . . "HPV Vaccination Discourses and The Construction of 'At-Risk' Girls". . . "Urgent Call for a Moratorium on Vaccination Against HPV". Ge-ne-vieve Rail et al.? I've never heard of these authors or these works. My children were vaccinated. Look if you let me present my dissertation; if my slides would work.

A new slide pops up. It shows an image of Mi at a beach. The caption says, "Research in progress. Do not disturb." The Saint smiles placatingly at the Stranger.

The Clown (pointing to the new slide): Oh, evidence! Is this Exhibit Number 1?

The Stranger: I don't think so. No, I don't think so. You're trying to placate me, distract me, beguile me. The fact remains: this is a wishy-washy faculty of education; she adores that anti-science Dalowz.

Mi: I wouldn't say I *adore* him; I think he is important to study.

The Clown nods proudly.

The Stranger: He is not important. He is frivolous. He is trivial.

The Clown frowns sadly.

The Saint: Yes, he's silly. He's a clown, yes. (The Clown pouts at the Saint.) And he's dead, gone. So why do you let him bother you?

The Stranger: He is a louse, feeding off the work of others. He has taken over universities. He has destroyed science. He has ruined my life. That is why I'm going to get my revenge. Give me that balloon!

The Stranger takes the Clown's balloon and all cringe, expecting the Stranger to burst the balloon with the needle of his syringe. But no, he brings the balloon over to his box, waves his syringe in warning, carefully slides out a wire and attaches the balloon to it. He peeks into the box, and then at his timepiece, and then at the screen, which shows an image of a digital clock, reading 40 minutes.

The Stranger: Ha Ha! Everything is set, you know! This whole building is going to blow up, and all of us with it, in exactly 40 minutes (he points to the image of the clock)—or immediately, if I just—(he indicates popping the balloon with the needle of his syringe).

The Saint and Mi: Noooo!

The Stranger nonchalantly sashays back to the seat of judgement.

The Clown: Hostie! We better hurry up and finish this trial. I mean, I'm dead already, but I was hoping to find a place where they serve stiffs drink—s-stiff drinks.

The screen image changes back to the beach picture, but now it shows beachscape only, no people. (Henceforth, after the screen shows a particular image, it reverts to a beautiful beach image, water, waves, island, sky, etcetera.)

The Saint (gesticulates his frantic uncertainty to the heavens): God, God, God! You have got to talk with this clown. He is not taking this seriously. He is not helping at all!

Mi (to the Stranger): May I speak?

The Stranger (gesturing with the syringe): Go ahead.

Mi: Umm, Mr., Sir—

The Stranger doesn't offer a name.

Mi: I'm sorry you didn't get your research funds. I have no idea why that was. But it had nothing to do with *my* research. In fact, I think if you heard my whole defence you'd see why, and you'd agree—Deleuze is only a part of it, only a part. I'm not his *apostle*.

The Stranger: So, tell me, none of us is going anywhere for 40—(he checks his own timepiece)—38 minutes.

Mi: To start, my research is not scientific, but philosophic. It doesn't look for facts, it asks why. What's the point? What's the point of doing research if you don't know why you're doing what you're doing?

The Stranger: I knew what I was doing. Saving lives.

The Clown: Ha! That's ironic!

Mi: Right, Sir—because you believe—believed—that was worthwhile. My research researches belief. What is it about lives that makes them worth saving? What is life?

The Stranger: You know you're kind of like my mother? Do you go to church?

Mi (avoiding the questions): Research is underscored by belief. Beliefs about life, reality, being, knowing. Beliefs about how everything works, at its most basic, most ultimate. That's what I studied. And what I found was two fundamental belief systems that guide Western ways of knowing: the metaphysics of presence and the metaphysics of difference.

The Clown: What do you mean, you *found* them? Were they not already there?

The Stranger (doubtfully, as if Mi is recounting a strange scientific theory or a primitive cosmological myth): I have never heard of any of this.

Mi: Well, experts on these belief systems are right in this room. I'm going to call two witnesses, who can speak to this better than me. (Motioning who is who.) For the metaphysics of presence, I call on the philosopher Thomas Aquinas; for the metaphysics of difference, I call on the philosopher Gilles Deleuze. (She uses the French pronunciation of this name.)

The Stranger: What?! You *are* Dalowz?!

The Clown: It is you who say that I am.

The Stranger (jumps up): You villain! Destroyer! Supplanter of reason! I will kill you!

The Stranger leaps to the Clown and makes to stab him with his syringe. But the desk between the Stranger and the Clown serves as a barrier. The Clown picks up a chair to use as a shield. The fight continues. The phone rings. They freeze.

The Saint picks it up, says hello, pauses, listening, and then holds it out to the Clown. The Clown picks up the phone with one hand, still guarding himself with a chair. The Stranger lunges at the Saint, who jumps back and grabs a chair himself for protection.

The Clown: *Allo*, who's this? . . . Yeah, really! . . . How come you never have spoken to me before? Always Doctor Angelicus, Doctor Angel— . . . You will? Eh, that's great! (He covers the phone with his hand and turns to the Doctor Angelicus, very excited.) He says if we succeed, I'll earn my wings!

The Saint: Give me that phone. God, do you know what you're doing? That Clown doesn't even have a brain; what will he be like with wings?!!

The Clown: It's not like I'm the only one who got knocked on the head. Na-na-na-na-na!

The Stranger (taking advantage of their inattention to grab the phone): Give me that! Hello? . . . There's no one here! I knew it! No one gets messages from plastic play phones. (He glances to the screen, which shows a clock indicating 27 minutes.)

Mi: Guys, the time! Maybe you don't care, but I—

The Clown (now solicitous): Righty-ho, how can we help you?

Mi: Could you please explain your metaphysical positions to this man, the judge? Clearly and concisely. In—like a minute?

The Stranger makes his way back to the judge's bench.

The Saint: You expect us to explain in one minute what we have been theorizing for eons?

Mi: Please! Time is of the essence!

The Clown: Let's do it as a duel. On the clock. Whoever finishes first dies; whoever finishes last dies. . .

The Saint: Your humour is not appreciated! Wi-ings!

The Clown: Ooo-kay. A duet. That song about ontology?

The Saint (sings an excerpt from the Nicene Creed in Gregorian chant): I believe in one God, the Father almighty; maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

The Clown: Not that one! (He dances as he sings.)

> A long, long time ago when the earth was green,
> Plato was a-thinking 'bout how it came to being;
> *Who* first had the Idea for rocks and trees and bees;
> And how they come to wreck his fun with stingers and scraped knees.

The Saint: You changed the lines. And the tune.

The Clown: And I can't do harmony. Tommy, you never stop complaining.

The Saint (to the Clown): And you never stop bothering. (To Mi): Absolutely, I can explain. Firstly, there are not, in fact, two metaphysics. Just one eternal truth and one misguided reject—

The Clown (interrupting with the second verse of his song): Aristotle found the bottom, but then he got stuck. Aquinas asked for veritas, but what he got was muck.

Mi: Cut! You two have been in eternity too long. I'll do it myself. Could you pass me my notebook?

The Clown (picking it up, but keeping it): Ah, more evidence! Exhibit number. . .?

Mi rocks her chair until she can better see the Stranger. Her now extemporaneous speech is illustrated on the screen with images of the philosophers she describes.

Mi: Sir, metaphysics is about understanding *everything*, eh? Well, our Western model of "everything" began with ancient Greek philosophers, even before Plato and Aristotle, as they wondered not just about the world they lived in, but about existence itself. They asked, what does it mean *to be*? What *is*? What *is not*? Primarily two main issues arose: What is the ultimate cause of beings and what is the fundamental nature of their being? Before Plato, a guy called Heraclitus thought that ultimately there is nothing but change, flow—you know, you can never step in the same river twice. Then another guy, Parmenides, said that's nuts, you're saying that what is not, *is*. Parmenides theorized being as sameness, as unity. The discussion continued. . . Plato and Aristotle recognized that most things we know are finite and caused. Caused by what? Something *un*caused, they reasoned. Caused beings are part of the changing, lived-in world, but as much as they are selfsame, they partake of the unchanging oneness of the universal creator. Plato called this creator the One, the Good. Augustine recognized the One, the Good, as his Christian God. And the West thought the matter was settled.

The Saint nods in agreement: And then?

The Clown: War!

Mi (shaking her head): Yeah, world war.

The Stranger starts: The war to end all wars.

Mi turns to him.

Mi: Where are you from, Sir? Your accent?

The Stranger: A little island. No one's ever heard of it.

Mi: What do *you* call it?

The Stranger: We call it Our Island! And until that war, we paid neither taxes nor allegiance to any other power.

Mi: Like Cyprus, Guernsey?

The Stranger: No, not like that! Well, sort of. They split our island apart. We were never the same again.

The Clown: Metaphysically?

The Stranger: What?

Mi: He's thinking theory, Sir. After World War II, many Western philosophers began to rethink the basis of our Western culture. How could such destruction occur? They wondered about our notions of existence itself. The philosopher Heidegger said our traditional metaphysics is based on identity, which he called "presence". But Heidegger said identity isn't drawn from God, but from the very earthly workings of logic; that identity comes from the thinking of opposites; that the identity of one thing comes by rejecting its opposite: I am this and you are that. I am high and you are low. I am good and you are bad. So much division, so much rejection, so much war. Why, asked Heidegger, why can't we just let being be?

The Clown: Those pernicious binaries! (Expectantly): And then?

Mi: And then, thinking about how opposites are used to oppressively fix identities, the philosopher Derrida said they never do fix, that meanings keep sliding. They never hold still.

The Clown (miming): Oily, eely feelies! (Expectantly): But *then*!

Mi: Deleuze. Yes, Deleuze plays a part. Deleuze was happy to bring metaphysics back. But not as presence. As difference. Deleuze said the ultimate principle is not presence; not sameness, but difference. (The Clown chimes in and recites with her.) *The only thing that is the same is difference.*

The Clown (to the Saint): That explains my amnesia!

The Saint (to the Clown): Brain damage.

The Saint (to Mi): Not bad! But you didn't talk about the five proofs. About transcendence.

The Clown: Immanence.

The Saint: That being is equivocal, but we do know God, analogically.

The Clown: Univocity.

The Saint: Equivocity. Analogicity. Participation.

The Clown: Univocity. Metonymy.

The Saint (snapping at the bow around the Clown's neck, untying it): Unity. Universality.

The Clown (pulling off the silk and flicking it at the Saint): Particularity.

The Saint (snatching the scarf): Teleology.

The Clown and the Saint chase each other around the room continuing this word-by-word argument, this dialectic of their respective positions and criticisms. Guilt. Nihilism. Spontaneity. Revelation. Assemblage. Choice. Rhizome. Tree. Determinism. Affirmation.

Logic. River. Soul. Anus. Good. Random. Immortality. Opium. Angels. Angels. It doesn't matter if they run out of words; they just start their argument all over. The Stranger jumps up onto the desk; he's piqued but unsure; is this just a ploy, a power play?; he holds his syringe like a javelin, on guard, ready.

The Stranger (to Mi): Holy, *this* is what you studied? Felix says *I'm* delusional? Why don't you just say what's real is real and leave it at that!?

Mi: If you mean what's real is empirical—measurable, observable, regular, explicable, reducible to fact, abstractable to theory, then you are talking about universality, in line with a metaphysics of presence.

The Stranger sort of nods as the Saint, still cavorting, flicks the scarf overhead like a banner.

The Saint: Point! Alleluia! (He flicks the silk scarf around his neck as if it were a prize.)

Mi: But if you mean what's real is strictly material, what do you say about birth and death? Birth is a random recombination of genetic material? Growth is change? Death is a dissolution of carbon molecules, water and other what-have-you? Ready for recycling? Then you are in line with a metaphysics of difference.

The Stranger sort of nods. The Clown whistles and raises a pointed finger over his head.

Mi: What do you choose?

The Stranger: Umm, both? (Starts): No, not both! You're trying to make me like both of them, agree with you, care for you. No! I won't. What's real is real until it is not! I judge. Killer doctors! Killer clowns! No! (To Mi): You choose.

Mi: But my point is just—

The Stranger: No! Who's the imposter? You judge.

The Saint and the Clown halt. The Stranger signals that they must stand in front of Mi. They do so; they hug.

Mi: But they both—

The Stranger: No! Judge. Kill the heretic and you will be free!

The Saint (to the Clown): It's just a body.

Mi (to the Stranger): That's a devil's choice and you know it. How could I trust you?

The Saint: Scylla and Charybdis. Not to mention that it would be on your soul for eternity.

The Clown: Hawk and buzzard. And your action could change the universe—for the worse.

The Saint: No, think Solomon.

The Stranger: There must be a death!

Silence.

The Stranger: Okay, you asked for it.

What follows seems to happen in slow motion. The Stranger lifts his hypodermic weapon, draws his arm back, takes aim, shoots. Mi ducks within her chair. The Saint and the Clown jump apart. The needled syringe sails in the air toward the balloon.

The Clown: OWWW!

The Clown falls to his knees and then staggers back up. The syringe is sticking out of his forehead.

The Clown (stumbling, wobbling): Oh, Christ! That hurts! *Jésus*, that hurts! Fucking headache! Bodies hurt! Just like before! My brain's exploding! (He falls to the ground, writhes, goes still.)

The Saint: Gilles! Gilles!

The Saint throws himself at the Clown. First, he tries to shake him back to consciousness, and then, realizing that the Clown is not breathing, starts CPR. The Stranger jumps closer to look.

The Stranger: Oh my God! That's not what happened to me!

Mi: To you???

The Stranger: It's just a shot of HPV vaccine. I was going to jab that lousy anti-vaxxer. And *then* bomb her. And this whole, lousy place!

Mi: But why would *you* take it? HPV, it's for girls?

The Stranger: As proof. Felix didn't believe me. But my vaccination was better than his! My mice didn't die. They were super-mice! Immortal! Until he slaughtered them.

The Saint (still performing CPR): I doubt you stabbed them in the head.

Suddenly the Saint lunges forward, grabs the Stranger around the groin and pulls him off-balance, swings him around the room, drops him to the floor and wrestles his arms behind his back.

The Saint: Holy, help me tie this guy up.

Mi (trying to twist herself out of her handcuffs, rock herself over to him): I'm locked to this chair.

The Saint: Urgh!

The Saint grunts, pulls off the silk scarf, still wrapped around his neck, wrangles the Stranger into a chair and ties him into it. Then he stands back, breathing heavily, arms folded across his chest.

The Saint (to the Stranger): Now who's the judge? Now what do you say?

The Stranger: 16 minutes left.

Mi (energetically trying to get out of the chair): Mama, Mama, Mama.

The Saint (to the Stranger): Where's the key?

The Stranger: What key?

The Saint: For the handcuffs? To let the lady free.

Stranger: I can't.

The Saint: Seriously? What lingering grudge could you hold against her? Clearly, this Holy-lady did not steal your research grant. Her study, though knotty, is only trying to be of help. Plus, she looks like your mother. How could you hurt someone who looks like your mother?

The Stranger: She does look like my mother. Maybe I should let her go. But I haven't got the key. After I handcuffed Felix, and trashed the lab, I threw all the keys down a sewer.

The Saint: The bomb! Must stop the bomb!

The Saint runs over to the desk by the whiteboard, where the box has been left. Tries to figure out how to open it.

Mi: Careful. It might be rigged.

The Saint: Be logical. We have 15 minutes left. (Updates via gestures from the Stranger.) 14 min—13 minutes. *Ergo,* what have we to lose?

He carefully removes the balloon and hands it to Mi. He opens the case. A snapping sound as something flies out.

The Saint (jolts back): A mouse trap? You rigged the box with a mouse trap?

The Stranger: Felix keeps many in the lab. To prevent interference.

The Saint looks into the case. He pulls out something that looks like a rocket, like something a boy would build, in his garage, with his father's tools. Lots of dials and doo-dads. A long muffler made of—the hose from a dryer? The Saint places the contraption on the desk, pointy side up, and extends the muffler tail out.

The Stranger: You've got it upside down. It sits in that base.

The Saint (rearranging it as directed): Hmph. Mechanicals were never my forte. (To Mi): Do you know anything about bombs?

Mi: Is there an on-off switch?

The Stranger: Don't bother. There isn't one. One way only. Just like the handcuffs. Just like life. And it's not a bomb. It's an anti-seismometer.

(What is he talking about?)

The Stranger: You know, a seismometer measures earthquakes. My device causes them. In (checking) 12 minutes my anti-seismometer will blast down through the ground. The earth will quake. Buildings will shake. The whole university (he says it like universe-city) will collapse, fall into a deep crater, and be no more.

All stare in awe at the device. (Except for the Clown, who has already fallen into the abyss.)

The Saint: So we just wait for death, then? Shall we pray?

The Stranger: None for me, thanks.

Mi puts her head down, lips moving silently. The Saint picks the mouse trap up off the floor, fiddles with it, as if lost in a tangent of logical disputation, until he is able to reset it, and then he carefully puts it back down on top of the device. But then he stands back, sadly surveying the room, his failed mission.

The Stranger (suddenly, defensively): Felix said those mice aren't your pets, you know. He said my work was sloppy. He meant *schizo*. But that's not allowed. Does death hurt?

The Clown (starting to moan, to writhe): Death! It hurts! Oh, death! (He lumbers up and stumbles forward, but like he's still dead, like a zombie, but not with arms stiffly forward.) Life, *c'est la galère!* You can't breathe! You want death! You pray for it! You jump! Eyes wide open all the way down! Too fast! The brick wall a blur. The air a hurricane at the face, though the day was calm. Skull hurtling like a meteor. Cement like a gaping tomb! Cranium exploding. (He slaps his right forehead, where the syringe is). OWW! God damn! (His head falls to the side, his hand covering one eye.) I can see! I can still see! Brains splattered all over the pavement, like a waiter with a big bowl has tripped on the stepstones, hot soup streaming, flowing, oozing into cracks, trickling away like rhizomes. I see the blood congealing. And a massive migraine claws at my thoughts, pulls at my consciousness. I fight to hold on. *Le jour de la gloire, la gloire?*

The Clown crashes back down to the ground, immediately still. The Saint rushes to his side. This time he does not attempt resuscitation; he just cradles the Clown in his arms and rocks him. Both the Stranger and Mi are tied to chairs. All form a silent tableau.

The Saint (softly): It doesn't always hurt. Some people just close their eyes, open their arms, and drift on soft feathers until the angels come to bring them home.

Pause.

The Stranger (to the Saint): Was it like that for you?

The Saint (rocking the body of the Clown): I was a patient man. I had to be. My task was to answer questions and to question answers. I was a slow and heavy man, but just so were the questions that came to me. What is the beginning? What is the end? (Speaking to himself/his friend/his God.) *Prima facie. Creatio ex nihilo? Ex nihilo nihil fit? Sine causa? Nulla ratio? Nusquam?* But—*gratis*—I had visions. Joy in my final hours. There was a gate, a house, a door. And Lord, you bid me enter. Solace after a long journey. Grace before meals. Your bread. Your wine.

A time of silent prayer.

Mi: I have a little grandson. He's still a baby. He calls me "Mam-mee". That's what hurts most. I'll miss him. He won't know me. (To the Stranger): Don't you have family, Sir?

The Stranger: I did. Once. Not anymore.

Mi: You said I looked like your mother.

The Stranger: She died. What more is there to say?

Mi: You loved her. She was beautiful. . . Like your island . . . Like your mice . . .

The Stranger: Yes, she was beautiful. . .

He is lost in thought for a while; then he sighs and looks over at Mi.

The Stranger: I will tell you. I may as well. We're all goners. It's a story from before I got mad, from when I was still innocent. When my mother and father were still alive. I was

happy. I was young. The girl I loved lived next door. Our Island was beautiful. God! You think your hills here are beautiful? No, they are nothing! Our island was one big mountain that rose out of the sea. The sea blue, forever blue. The shoreline was all rock, cliffs and cobbles, and many little harbours where we left our boats. The girl and I would dive into the clear water for white starfish shells and then run up the stair-cut mountain to give them to our mothers. We were like the mountain goats, running up and down the mountain all day long. There were no cats or dogs on the island. No fleas, no bed bugs, no lice. We kept mice as pets. The goats were our friends. Sometimes our mountain would rumble, our hammocks would rock, our tables would sway, our tea would spill. But we were not afraid. Not until the scientists came. They measured our island with strange tools that clicked and beeped. They called us to a meeting. In the church, the only place that could hold all of us. They said there was a fault with our mountain. That one day, very soon, very soon, there would come, not a rumble, but a massive quake, and the mountain would split in two and fall into the ocean. They said we must leave Our Island. The girl-next-door left with her family. But my parents refused to leave their home. And my mother cried the day I said I too must go. Away. To study science. To gain the power, the certainty of truth. To know exactly when the world would end. I studied science. I studied physics. But still, I did not know. And my mother died. And my father died. And still, I do not know.

Silence. Then a voice erupts from the floor.

The Clown: Good morning, Fanny. Oh, it's a great day! Breathe that fresh air! Um, it feels good. Oh, *Cherie,* what a dream I had last night! (The Clown sits up.) Oh, not a dream. I'm still here, Not-in-heaven, with the doctor, the Stranger and the metaphysician. Well, I do feel good. God, I feel good.

The Stranger: You've got a needle stuck in your brain.

The Clown: I do? How about that? (He jumps up, flings his arms open wide.) I got a needle stuck in my brain! God, I feel good. Tommy, I remember Fanny! I remember Paris. The whole *arrondissement.* I remember who I am. I remember everything. Every word I ever wrote: "The self is only a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities." I wrote that—*A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.*

The Stranger (now taking on a tone of regret): El-ev-en minutes.

The Clown: Ten minutes! We can do this! I feel great! No headache! But my boobs, man, they tingle. Ah, maybe these are my wing buds? Tommy, I feel singularly. Weird. Vibrations. Oh, my chest? My heart! My soul! Tommy, here I go—

The Clown breaks into a spasmodic dance that begins with slow writhing and increases in intensity until he crashes to the floor, still seizing.

The Stranger: Again!

The Clown's arms and legs twitch, slowing in intensity. Then his whole body goes limp.

The Saint (earnestly sad): Stay down, Gilles. You don't need another apocalypse.

Mi: He's still moving. Something's moving. What's moving?

The Stranger: His boobs are squirming!

The Saint: Oh my soul!

There is indeed a strange movement under the blouse of the Clown, The lights in the room flicker like strobe lights. Strange shadows flicker across the room. Then, from out of the folds of silk, from out of the heart, from the very essence of the Clown, jumps a little gray mouse, which scurries haphazardly across the room as the other three call out, concomitantly, voices overlapping and interrupting.

The Saint: Gilles, Gilles, calm down. It's Okay. You just turned into a mouse.

Mi: A mouse? What? The Clown reincarnated?

The Stranger: Here, Mousie. Here, Sweetie.

The mouse jumps under Mi's chair as Mi wriggles in fright, then dashes over to the Stranger, pausing to sniff his shoes and socks and pant cuffs, then circles around the Saint, and then runs up the desk where the anti-seismometer perches.

The Saint: No, Gilles! Please. Don't go there!

The Stranger: No, Mousie. Not good.

The Saint makes slow, cautious movements toward the mouse, trying to entice the mouse toward him. The mouse checks out his outstretched hands. But there is neither sugar nor cheese there. The mouse scurries around the upside-down rocket.

The Saint and the Stranger and Mi: No, Gilles! No!

The mouse smiles and runs up the upside-down rocket. What is this little contraption here? Is that a fluff of dust, or a seed? Mmmmm—snap! Mouse and trap are flung into the air and circle around like a midway ride before plopping down at the feet of the Saint. The Saint bends down, extricates the mouse from the trap, picks up the furry, gray body and holds it close, patting it gently.

The Saint: Gilles, oh, Gilles. This is my fault! Why did I set that trap? What was I thinking?

The Stranger: Oh, no, Mousie? (He struggles to reach with his bound hands.)

The Saint moves away from the Stranger and huddles over the little, limp mouse, murmuring. But then he turns back, looks at the Stranger and the Stranger looks at him and they communicate wordlessly. The Saint brings the mouse to the Stranger and puts the mouse on his lap, then folds into a nearby chair.

Stranger: Oh Mousie. Sweet Mousie. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. Oh, Mama. Papa. I should have done more.

All sit in silence. It feels like a funeral wake, bodies in prayer, individual and communal, carried on the rhythm of breath and air.

And interrupted by a loud strident beeping. Like a fire alarm, and at first the Saint and Mi scan the walls. The PowerPoint flashes red like an alarm light. But the noise is coming from the rocket. The Stranger stares at it, frozen. Then his whole body jerks in an overwhelming seizure.

The Stranger: The countdown! One minute till doomsday!

Mi: Do something! Help! Help!

The Saint (realizing): I can fly! Yes! I'll fly that bomb up and away from here.

He grabs the anti-seismometer with both arms and bounds toward the window.

The Stranger: Stop! Wait! Take your Mousie with you!

The Saint: Gilles!

How could Tommy forget his friend? He leaps back, shifting the anti-seismometer awkwardly to his hip so that he might hold the mouse in one hand. But he's in a panic, the anti-seismometer keeps slipping; where can he put the remains of his friend?

The Stranger: No! Wait! You're holding it wrong! Stop, let me take it! I'll go with you!

The Saint: That's a generous, though tardy offer, and one I cannot effect. How could I hold you, too, let alone bear all this weight and fly.

The Stranger. No, don't you see? We'll turn it upside down. Nozzle down, auger up. Then the anti-seismometer will become a rocket and blast us to heaven.

The Saint: Are you sure? This is neither logical nor plausible—nor sanctioned.

The Stranger: But I'll be a martyr, not a murderer.

The Saint sighs, sets down the device and works on untying the knots that bind the Stranger to the chair. The beeping gets louder and faster, as does the flashing red light on the screen.

The screen of the whiteboard begins a countdown.

Mi: 10-9-8…

The Saint flings the scarf as the Stranger is released. The Doctor Angelicus scoops up the furry body and the Stranger grabs the device. They run to the window. The Saint jumps up onto the windowsill and then helps the Stranger up with his free hand. The Saint steps outside, hovering there with outstretched hand while the Stranger, holding onto the rocket with both arms, aims it up and out.

Mi: …4-3-2-

The stranger jumps.

There is a loud, whooshing noise, a keening that gathers to an unearthly howl, like a chorus of angels at doomsday. Wind blasts through the window with such great force that the furniture rattles and the hair of Mi is whipped about like a flag left out in a storm. The screen looks like a television set hit by lightning—patterns of grey-black-white roil randomly. The remains of the Clown, his blouse and skirt, are caught in a gust and sail out the window. Mi's chair churns back and forth. From outside the room, comes the sound of things sliding, colliding, crashing. Then, slowly, the howling drops to a moan, revealing the sound of tinkling glass, or tinkling rain. Mi's chair rocks softly as her hair falls untidily around her face. The sound hushes to that of a heartbeat, echoed in the patterns on the screen. Mi breathes slowly and deeply and evenly, as if counting her breath, as if checking to see she is still alive. She looks straight ahead as if she can see herself mirrored in the fourth wall of the room.

Mi (in a raspy voice): I'm still here.

A phone rings, shifting the soundscape. Mi looks around, it's that plastic toy phone, across the room, flashing and ringing. Mi strains to get at it, but is unable.

The phone goes to a recording: I'm tied up right now, but if you'd like to leave a message, please go ahead after the tone.

Beep.

A voice, different from any of the characters, a woman's voice, motherly: Hello. . . Sweetheart? . . . Are you there? . . . I just wanted to talk, but if this isn't a good time, perhaps later?

A click.

Mi: Well, this is an aporia.

႒

ADDENDA

"Oh, evidence! Is this Exhibit Number 1?"

EXHIBIT 1
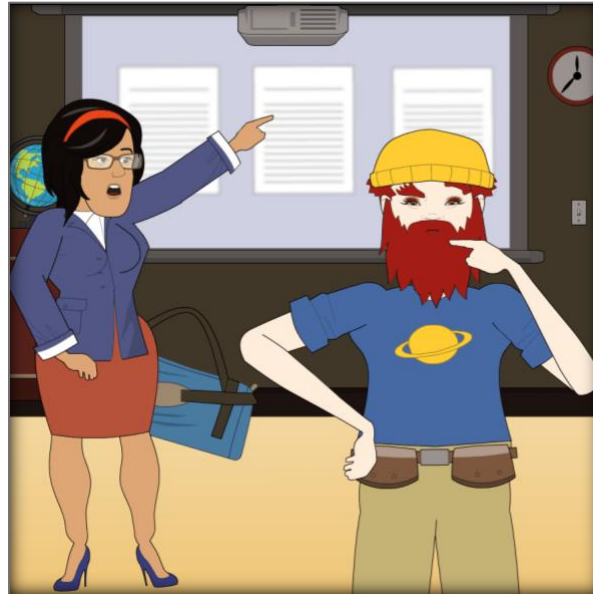
"Metaphysics? They let you study that? Felix is right; social science is nuts."

Research Questions and Rationale

Hello, Dear Interlocutors. Thank you for coming to my defence.

I begin with questions. What is it I want to know? My doctoral questions have emerged

from my life experiences, so perhaps it would be best to start by narrating a little about myself.

I am a middle-aged woman, middle-sized around the middle, old enough to dye my hair, young

enough to get away with it. I have had the privilege of working as an artist-educator, invited to

schools and community institutions, such as libraries and hospitals, to facilitate arts-integrating

workshops. I say arts-integrating, because mostly I was not asked to teach an art form per se,

but to engage an art project in the interests of a learning objective. So, for example, I presented

perspective drawing as a means of exploring changing perspectives in persons with brain

injuries. A question often asked was how a particular art project would fulfil a learning objective

of the organization—how would the art be a way, a means to, knowing?

How is art a way of knowing? This was the meta-question that brought me to graduate studies. I investigated this question, in my prior inquiry (Haggarty, 2015), by analyzing and comparing the contrasting epistemological theories of two arts-integrating research methodologies (Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography). As such, the meta-question expanded to many more specific questions: How do two arts-integrating education research methodologies view knowledge itself, and how do they regard art as a way, route or means to knowing? What claims and assumptions about the nature of knowledge, explicit and implicit, are made by each of these research methodologies? How do their conceptions of art, of knowledge and of the epistemology of art compare? How may their formulations be interpreted and evaluated? What beliefs, values and constructs are they based on? What epistemological issues do they raise? For what or for whom do they best serve? And how might they serve me?

Later, I'll review those findings; for now, what is important is that I realized that, ultimately, their conceptions of art as a way of knowing differed because their belief systems differed, not only their beliefs about knowledge itself, but their beliefs about reality, upon which their epistemological beliefs hinged. I could see that something very big and important was going on. I completed my master's research piqued by further questions, which I decided to take on as a doctoral study.

Thus, the findings of my master's study provided the premises of my doctoral study, but also beget its questions. And what were these questions which prompted my doctoral inquiry? Having realized, in my prior study, that Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography not only differ in their views of art as a way of knowing, but differ in these views

due to their differing meta-belief systems, I wondered what are these said belief systems?

Neither methodologies describe their belief systems directly, systematically, but from their

asseverations—for example, Eisner resisting certainty, yet allowing for stability of knowledge,

and Irwin et al. resisting order altogether, and from specific directions in a/r/tography in this

regard—I was led to literature on ontology and metaphysics, on notions of presence and

difference, and to the classification of their belief systems, respectively, as a "metaphysics of

presence" and a "metaphysics of difference". More on that classification (and characterization)

later. For now, I present my research questions, firstly, prosaically:

- What is entailed in the notions of a metaphysics of presence and a metaphysics of difference? From whence and why did these belief systems arise and what is their significance?
- How are these belief systems reflected in the epistemological enunciations or indications of the methodologies of Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography?
- How may these belief systems be critiqued?
- How may I describe my own metaphysical orientations, and how are they reflected in my understanding of art as a way of knowing?

And then, poetically:

> *If i could know anything i desired…*
>
> what is life? i would ask
>
> what is this life that i take part in?
> and who am i?
>
> what is the sense of one?
> is it the same as all?
>
> what does life mean?
> and what do i mean?
> and does it matter what i mean?

does it make a difference if i know?
do i make knowing
or does knowing make me?
am i or do i or shall i?
and was i?
will i be? and what will?

do i need to know how life works
to live right?
do i guess?
and if i guess right
am i still right
if i change
and what was once me
is me no longer?

and you too?

ঙ

Dear Inquisitors/Interlocutors, are you asking yourself, who cares?

That's a question often asked in the academy. And when you ask who cares, do you mean

a) why should you, someone, anyone, care about the issues of the research? Or do you mean

b) why should you care about what *I* have to say regarding them?

Regarding the former sense, a), I think everyone should care about this research, because

it is about belief systems, and I think everyone ought to take some time to think about what

they believe. I think this is especially important for researchers. When embarking on a research

quest, when taking up a methodology—a way of trying to answer research questions—it is

possible to take the philosophical entailments of the methodology for granted. And especially

with a very procedural approach to research (for example, the scientific method), it is possible

to go ahead without any metaphysical pause (suggests P. White, 2009). Yet, the underlying

beliefs are still there. What does the methodology purport about knowledge, and about

knowing? What does it take as grounds and warrant for its purports? What criteria does it

establish for evaluation? Ultimately, the answers to such questions come to statements of

belief.

So, if you are a researcher, whether in arts, education, humanities, social science or

science, what you do will always depend on philosophical assumptions, and therefore this

discussion may interest you. And if you are an arts-integrating researcher, you may find this

research interesting because it disambiguates between two such methodologies, and may help

you, too, to discern between them. Or if, perhaps, you are an arts educator, following this study

in order to think about art as a way of knowing, you may likewise find it intriguing to explore

the relationship between knowledge and belief. And if you are my mother, or another member

of my family, or a devoted friend, not only will this work facilitate our dinner conversations, but

I assure you that your audience participation experience will be much more like that of Mater

Monica than that of Signora Aquinas or Madame Deleuze.

But if you mean the latter sense, b), why should you care to know what I, in particular,

have to say about belief systems in general and in arts-integrating research inquiry in particular,

then to that I will say, in keeping with hermeneutical inquiry, that the point isn't to be new or

definitive, but to contribute to the conversation on this subject.

Philosophers have been discussing belief systems since belief first became a topic for

philosophical discussion. That will never stop. There will never be a definitive end to the

discussion, even if Bertrand Russell thought he had put up a stop sign. From Hume to Derrida,

philosophers thought metaphysics was dead and gone, but it was present, all along (Grondin,

2012). I happily chime in.

—And I'm happy to listen.
—Did I hear something?

EXHIBIT 2

"The scientists came.
They measured our island with strange tools that clicked and beeped.
They said there was a fault with our mountain."

Methodology

Dear Inquisitive Persons, before I can describe to you what I found on my quest, I must describe the nature of my quest, the approach I took in seeking answers to my questions.

I need to describe my methodology. But what do I mean by methodology? What's a methodology?

If you look at the word etymologically, you see that "methodology" is a conjoining of "method" with "ology" (Oxford English Dictionary [OED], 2001). The suffix comes from the Greek word λογος (logos) meaning "the study of". And the primary word, method, derives from Greek prefix, $\mu\varepsilon\tau\alpha$ (meta), meaning "beyond", and the noun $\dot{o}\delta\dot{o}\varsigma$ (odos), meaning "way" (OED, 1989d). So, it seems like a method is a set path to knowledge, and a methodology is the study of such paths. But, in fact, the term has an ambiguity about it: it is used to describe a particular

research approach, the theoretical framework that informs a research approach and, also, the study of research approaches. Because of the ambiguity, the terms method and methodology are used overlappingly. More procedurally based types of inquiry, as in the natural sciences, as well as in traditional research in the social sciences, tend to speak of "method" (e.g., Bryant, 2014, p. 116). But with the focus on epistemological reflexivity, with the qualitative turn, "method" moved to "methodology" (Evans et al., 2014, p. 181).

In spite of its ambiguity, I engage the term methodology, after its common current conception in social studies, as a strategy for answering one's research questions, a strategy that resonates with a theoretical framework or *paradigm* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2005; Lincoln & Guba 2011; Lincoln et al., 2018), and that leads to, or incorporates, a research design or *approach* (Creswell, 2007), as well as particular processes or methods (see Creswell, 2007, pp. 15-24; Crotty, 1998, pp. 3-7; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, pp. 12-13; Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2005; Lincoln & Guba 2011; Lincoln et al., 2018; Morgan, 2007). This usage of the term methodology connotes an awareness that research is never just the blind following of a procedure manual, never a matter of convenience or whim. Rather, it is an awareness that one's epistemological perspectives, that is, one's perspectives regarding knowledge and how it may be attained, entail philosophical assumptions about reality, whether or not the researcher is aware of these assumptions. This awareness is one commonly asserted by scholars of methodology (see for example, Creswell, 2007; Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln,

2011; Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2005; Grix, 2004; Hay, 2007; Johnson, 2005; Kivunja & Kuyini 2017; Lincoln & Guba 2011; Lincoln et al., 2018; Ludwig, 2016; and Scotland, 2012).[2]

In his research guides, Creswell (2007) commends the self-reflexivity of a researcher being aware of the beliefs she brings to her research practice (p. 11), and of engaging a research practice concomitant with those beliefs. Hay (2007) puts it more strongly, cautioning that "no ontologically neutral epistemological claim can be made. In other words, to commit oneself to an epistemology is also to commit oneself to a position on a range of ontological issues" (p. 117). But Crotty (1998) recognizes that elucidating one's theoretical framework is not easy, and he offers the following advice:

> A study of how other people have gone about the task of human inquiry serves us well and is surely indispensable. Attending to recognized research designs and their various theoretical underpinnings exercises a formative influence upon us. . . . It makes us much more aware of what is possible in research. . . . We evaluate their presuppositions. We weigh their strengths and weaknesses. . . . One of the established methodologies may suit . . . us. Or perhaps none of them do and we find ourselves drawing on several methodologies, moulding them. . . . Perhaps we need to become more inventive still and create a methodology that in many respects is quite new. (p. 14)

What informs my methodology? What are my influences? What do I bring forward? What are the epistemological beliefs and practices of this inquiry? Let us consider such questions.

Firstly, if I look at the bare bones of this inquiry, the questions it explores, I see it as conceptual, one that looks to understand, delineate and distinguish constructs of belief. It is also evaluative, contrasting tenets of belief, as well problems and contradictions of belief. This

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[2] See Exhibit 3, a contextual review of arts-integrating research for further discussion of the philosophical provenance of this awareness.

inquiry involves close analytical reading, and yet it is also synthetic and speculative, as I consider the puzzles of beliefs and work toward discerning my own metaphysical belief system.

This description sounds like a work that could be characterized as a critical essay of humanities scholarship, but that would hardly characterize this work. I recognize this research as an interpretive inquiry, as one that follows the qualitative turn from positivism, in this case, from the valuation/expectation of conceptual inquiry as comprised of the rational, logical thought of an objective, impartial investigator aiming for absolute, unequivocal certainty, to one that recognizes that no human investigator can achieve a view that is impartial, from "nowhere", and thus to one that allows for and incorporates the individual, the subjective, the ana-logical, the idea-logical, the ideational, the intuitive, the imaginative, the creative. Thus, it looks to meaning rather than certainty.

In developing my own research approach, and considering its philosophical framework, I have considered and drawn from multiple methodological theories. For example, in my prior work investigating epistemologies of Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography, in my need to engage a way of knowing to look at ways of knowing, I developed a tripartite, interconnecting methodology that drew from both critical and creative domains. It included the educational criticism developed by Elliot Eisner[3] (1991, 1994b, 2002), the heuristic inquiry of Clark Moustakas[4] (1990) and the synaesthetic-processing model of artistic knowing of Alma Hawkins[5] (1991). In this present work, I bring forward many of the epistemological

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[3] American educator and theorist: 1933-2014.
[4] American psychologist and philosopher: 1923-2012.
[5] American dance educator and dance therapist: 1904-1998.

constructs of these theorists, as I work at deepening and integrating my epistemological understandings.

Eisner's educational criticism suggests a useful frame for a critical study (of an educational phenomenon/issue/concern), with sequential steps of description, interpretation, evaluation and thematics (Eisner, 1991, pp. 88-89; 1994b, pp. 225-236; 2002, pp. 188-189). The final step involves a consideration of themes, issues or questions arising, which, in my prior study, prompted a realization that the epistemologies of the arts-integrating methodologies I investigated ultimately drew from ontic belief systems, a realization which has prompted this current inquiry. In this current study, while still engaging the critical actions suggested by Eisner, I do not specifically engage his frame of educational criticism.

Heuristic inquiry draws from phenomenological philosophy, and it is this philosophy, as well as another closely related philosophy, namely hermeneutics, that most strongly guide my epistemological framework and current inquiry. Phenomenology and hermeneutics—both entail philosophical traditions from which research methodologies have been developed. As these traditions have overlapped, so have the methodologies applied from them. Let's discuss each tradition, and what it is I appropriate from them.

Phenomenology is widely understood as originating in the philosophical project of German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), although the terms phenomenon and phenomenology predate his usage, and were implicated, for example, in the theorizations of both Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (see Rockmore, 2017; Schuhmann, 2013). Husserl's philosophy, in turn, influenced the philosophical work of two other German philosophers, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002).

Husserl's project may be understood as an attempt to theorize knowing itself. Do things really exist or does the mind create them? Husserl tried to move away not only from what he considered a dogmatism of realism, the unquestioned presumption of a direct correspondence between thought representation and its external objects, but also from an understanding of knowing as transcendental idealism, the presumption that knowledge is a creation of mind. Like Kant, Husserl theorized an interplay between consciousness and appearance, and created a philosophy of mind. Husserl's project consisted of determining how consciousness may effect a rigour that allows for apodictic knowing. Husserl followed Descartes' method of reductively discerning what might be intuited undoubtedly as a clear, distinct perception. Like Descartes, Husserl moved to the a priori of consciousness, yet Husserl added to Descartes' notion of the *cogito* that of the *cogito cogitatum*. Husserl noted that the mind doesn't just think, it *thinks about* something, it is intentional. Husserl posited that objects, and others, are likewise intentional, they appear to the mind as phenomenon. Husserl felt that by training the mind to look without presuppositions, phenomena could be apperceived in their essential natures (see Husserl, 1931/1960 and Husserl, 1913/1982).

Husserl's theory of phenomenology was very attractive to the human sciences, such as psychology, which already in his time were showing dissatisfaction with and movement away from the empirical sciences. Husserl's phenomenology promised an approach that would allow one to research, and to know with confidence, essential features of lived experiences. Husserl's approach has been developed into research practices and guidelines by a number of human science researchers, including Michael Crotty (1996), Helena and Karin Dahlberg (2003, 2020), Amedeo Giorgi (1970, 2007), Max van Manen (2007, 2011, 2014, 2015) and Clark Moustakas

(1994). Phenomenology continues to be strongly engaged in human and social science fields such as nursing, health care and social work, and is also engaged, though less often, in education and sociology. As a methodology, phenomenology is typically characterized as one of descriptively summarizing the lived experience of a phenomenon in a cohort (e.g., Dowling, 2007; Caelli, 2000; Creswell, 2007). As a practice, phenomenology often appropriates terminology and notions from Husserlian philosophy, such as *phenomenological reduction*, *imaginative variance* and *synthesis* (ibid).

What I take from phenomenology (de rigueur) is a supposition of essences, knowledge of which may be gained by the course of research. You might ask, what are *essences?* Husserl provides no one single definition of essence in his works, although this notion is core to his project. I find that he clearly draws from the Western philosophical tradition, from Plato, for example, noting essence as *eidos*, as ideational (e.g., Husserl, 1931/1960, Section 34, p. 69). And while he recognizes the "thingness" of Aristotle's essence, Husserl pushes essence from thing (object) to phenomenon, to *cogitatum* or *noema*—to a cognitively constituted description of the invariant qualities of a phenomenon, the qualities without which the phenomenon would not be (e.g., Husserl, 1973, p. 341; see also K. Dahlberg, 2006; Zhok, 2012). Also unlike Aristotle, Husserl's essence does not entail a rational fixation of definition, but is the picture that emerges from the intentionality of the phenomenon itself coupled with the projection of "empathy" (Husserl, 1931/1960, Section 59, p. 136) and acts of "free phantasy" (Husserl, 1913/1982, Section 4, p. 13) of the intuiting ego. Also, while Husserl felt certain of the indubitability of self-aware consciousness (the cogito), he was nonetheless aware of the changing nature of the life-world (e.g., Husserl, 1931/1960, Sections 15, 58) and the revisional

nature of its syntheses (e.g., Husserl, 1931/1960, First Meditation, Section 6, p. 15; K. Dahlberg, 2006).

But of all of Husserl's notions, it is that of the phenomenological reduction that presents most cause for discussion. The phenomenological reduction (and its correlate terms *epoché*, *bracketing* and *transcendental reduction*), occupied Husserl's thought throughout his life, as this is the process by which Husserl suggests that the presuppositions of the natural ego could be bracketed, set aside, "enpocketed" (put into *epoché*), in order that consciousness, reduced to its apodictic transcendental ego, might come to apodictic intuitions or syntheses about the essential nature of the object of its apperceptions (Husserl, 1931/1960, Section 9, p. 22). Husserl believes that

> only if my experiencing of my transcendental self is apodictic can it serve as ground and
> basis for apodictic judgements; only then is there accordingly the prospect of a
> philosophy, a systematic structure made up of apodictic cognitions, starting with the
> intrinsically first field of experience and judgement. . . . By epoché we effect a reduction
> to our pure meaning (cogito) and to the meant, purely as meant. (Husserl, 1931/1960,
> Section 9, p. 22, Section 23, p. 56; see also Section 34, "Fundamental development of the
> phenomenological reduction. Transcendental analysis as eidetic.")

In spite of Husserl's extensive explication of the phenomenological reduction, and his efforts at directly training his students and assistants in his method, the notion remains difficult and elusive. I have found that few methodological treatises explain how to accomplish this bracketing of presuppositions, some just treating it as a fait accompli (like Nike's *Just Do It*). Others intriguingly describe it as akin to transcendental meditation, as a state of detachment gained only by rigorous practice in solitude (Moustakas, 1994; Puligandla, 1970). Many researchers appropriate and reinterpret the notion, along with other aspects of

phenomenology. Thus, I have found bracketing/phenomenological reduction/epoché described in various ways: as setting aside the "sedimentations" of culture in order to attend to the pre-reflective immediacy of an experienced phenomenon (Crotty, 1996, 1998); as self-reflexively noting and turning away from preconceptions (Caelli, 2000); as the "bridling" of assumptions and "slackening" of expectations to allow the phenomenon, in its co-constituting intentionality to emerge (H. Dahlberg & K. Dahlberg, 2003; K. Dahlberg 2006); and as an attitude of wonder and astonishment, as being open to the limitless horizon (LeVasseur, 2003; Moustakas 1994).

The work at re-appropriating Husserl's notion actually makes good sense to me. While I see the meditative approach to a transcendental ego as conceivable, I cannot say, even as one who practices meditation regularly, that I have ever attained a state of pure detachment. The descriptions of Dahlberg (2006), LeVasseur (2003) and Moustakas (1990, 1994) more aptly describe how I relate to bracketing: not as one of eliminating bias or subjectivity, but as opening to possibility and to co-intentionality. I note that these three theorists all relate an experience of bracketing as akin to how I see the practice of poetic inquiry, as being able to perceive and portray a phenomenon in a newness and strangeness that is satisfyingly illuminating or resonating.

Psychologist Clark Moustakas not only wrote an excellent and still useful guide to phenomenology as a research methodology (1994), he also appropriated and reinterpreted phenomenology in the methodology he called heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990) or heuristic inquiry (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). This is a methodology that resonated with my epistemological framework in my prior study (Haggarty, 2015) and continues to do so. In his methodology of heuristic inquiry, Moustakas integrates phenomenological philosophy with

other influences, such as the existentialist theories of Martin Buber and the humanist cognition theories of Carl Rogers, Michael Polanyi and Eugene Gendlin.[6] Moustakas describes a process of inquiry that looks to gain an understanding of essentials through an emphasis on the researcher's self-reflection. I conceive of Moustakas' methodology as entirely refocusing the phenomenological reduction/epoché from one of a mind, transcendentally detached, to one of a self, still rational, but also subjective, relational and creative.

Moustakas' methodology of heuristic research is explicated at length in his well-received and still popular 1990 book, *Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Applications*. Moustakas elaborates steps or phases of research that demonstrate inquiry processes of the heuristic self: *initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, creative synthesis* and *validation of the heuristic research*. A quality that is retained over all of the phases is that of focused reflection, or *indwelling*, "the willingness to gaze with unwavering attention and concentration into some facet of human experience" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 24). Indwelling is also described, in contradistinction to logical analysis, as an action that is "conscious and deliberate but not logical or linear; [and by which] one follows clues wherever they appear and then dwells inside them expanding their meaning and associations until a fundamental insight is achieved" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 24). Through this focused reflection, the researcher moves from "vague and formless wanderings" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 47), to the development of insights regarding the essence of the phenomenon being investigated. Moustakas' (1990) interprets essence here as "constituent qualities and wholeness" (p. 24). The

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[6] Some life-lines: Martin Buber, 1878-1965; Carl Rogers, 1902-1987; Michael Polanyi, 1891-1976; Eugene Gendlin, 1926-2017.

researcher develops a "unifying picture" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 47), which Moustakas suggests may be expressed through a creative synthesis.

Husserl's phenomenology was taken up by philosophers such as Eugen Fink, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Luc Marion, all of whom also reworked the notion of the phenomenological reduction. For the purpose of explicating my methodology, it is pertinent to note the phenomenological notions of Heidegger. Husserl's one-time student and successor at the University of Freiburg, Heidegger's life work was directed toward understanding the nature of being, which he asserted as the fundamental point of phenomenology (Heidegger 1975/1988, Sections 7-9). While the object of Heidegger's phenomenology differs from that of Husserl, his usage maintains some basic characteristics, such as a quest for essence, the de-sedimentation of suppositions of the uncritical attitude, and a stance of unwavering focus (Heidegger, 1975/1988, passim). But Heidegger redefines phenomenological reduction as re-duction, as a leading back to essence, as not just transcending the natural attitude (of "naïve and common sense") toward the transcendental ego, but going further, to the being of this being. Heidegger's phenomenology requires not only a "phenomenological reduction", but also a "phenomenological construction" and a "phenomenological destruction" (Heidegger, 1975/1988, Section 5). Another significant difference between the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger is the latter's emphasis on horizon as a temporal as opposed to a spatial point of view (1975/1988, Section 4). From such gleanings, Heidegger comes to an assertion that understanding is an interpretive—hermeneutical—process (1975/1988), and as such is not free of suppositions. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger (1927/1962) describes the process of interpretation as inevitably bearing "a

fore-having, a fore-sight, and a fore-conception" (Section 32, pp. 191, 193), and, furthermore,

that understanding might best be described through the metaphor of a circle (Section 32,

"Understanding and Interpretation", pp. 191-195; see also Grondin, 2002). Heidegger's

philosophy has been described as a hermeneutic phenomenology (Grondin, 1995; Gallagher,

1992), and it is the hermeneutic aspect that has relevance to my epistemology.

Heidegger's reworking of phenomenological issues such as the reduction was picked up

and extended by Heidegger's one-time student at the University of Freiburg, Hans-Georg

Gadamer, whose philosophy jumped from a hermeneutical phenomenology to a philosophy of

hermeneutics. Before further discussing Gadamer's epistemology and its connection to my

methodology, let's start with an orientation to hermeneutics itself (for amplification, see the

following, from whom my notes are drawn: Gadamer, 1989b; Gallagher, 1992; Grondin, 1995;

Moules, 2002; Usher 1996; Zimmerman 2015).

Hermeneutics as a discipline, a field of study, far pre-dates either philosopher.

Hermeneutics is a theoretical framework with a long history, but one that has not been

engaged as much in social sciences as in the humanities. The word, hermeneutics, is

etymologically connected to the Greek God Hermes, bearer and interpreter of messages

between mortals and immortals (OED, 2014b), and its genealogy can be traced back to ancient

Greek philosophy, to Aristotle's work on linguistic categories and functions, *Peri Hermeneias*—

usually known by its Latin name, *De Interpretatione.* Hermeneutics has traditionally been

associated with theories of how to (rightly) interpret texts, especially sacred texts.

Hermeneutics as a means of inquiry is significant in many belief traditions, for example, in the

Abrahamic traditions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) as well as in Buddhism. As with

phenomenology, hermeneutical theorizations developed in the 20th century as a movement

from natural science to human science, from a reaction against positivism as a method of

inquiry to an explication of interpretation as a way of knowing. Hermeneutics grew into a

prominent epistemological philosophy through the work of many theorists, including

Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Hirsch, Habermas, Derrida, Levinas,

Ricoeur and Kearney, each of whom have developed particular constructs and are associated

with particular types of hermeneutics.

While the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911)

was focused on method and epistemology, that of Gadamer was focused on concept and

ontology. His project was not to establish a practice that might ensure validity of the

interpretive understanding of text, rather to show how interpretation of text—writ large—is a

universal mode of human understanding, an event that inevitably engages suppositions as part

of its condition (Gadamer, 1989b; Grondin, 1995). Gadamer (1989b) questioned the supposed

objectivity of the "scientific method" (p. 515), the self-sufficiency of the logical proposition

(pp. 343, 454), as well as the purport of the phenomenological reduction:

> Merely superseding the validity of the objective sciences [is] no longer enough, for even
> in a perfect "epoché"—bracketing the being posited by scientific knowledge—the world
> still remains valid as something pregiven. (p. 238)

For Gadamer (1989b), the lifeworld simply cannot be bracketed. Gadamer believes that

knowledge begins as a cultural inheritance, that "consciousness is historically effected" (p. 336)

and thus, that presuppositions are inherent and inevitable. Furthermore, according to

Gadamer, presuppositions—prejudices as he calls them (ibid)—can be productive, if dealt with

appropriately. And the appropriate way is via the hermeneutic circle, which Gadamer

elaborates as an epistemic operation in his 1960 work, *Truth and Method.*

Gadamer develops his notion of the hermeneutic circle from the traditional hermeneutic

notion of part and whole, which he conjoins with a notion of horizon that he appropriates from

Husserl and Heidegger (Gadamer, 1989b, Chapter 4). The whole-part is a paradox of

understanding: that one can only understand the part from a sense of the whole, and the whole

from a sense of the part (Grondin, 2002; Moules, 2002; Usher, 1996). This is a specifically

hermeneutical idea, one that arises from traditional approaches to understanding sacred and

canonical texts (ibid), and it stands contrary to the logical way of knowledge via reductive

analysis and to what logic would see as a fallacy of circularity (Mantzavinos, 2016). Gadamer

(1989b) suggests that a reader understands a text by approaching it from the whole of her prior

understandings and expectations, that the reader who approaches a text with openness will

fuse her prior horizon with that of the text and leave the text with an expanded horizon

(pp. 238, 301-307). When Gadamer (1989b) speaks of "text" he acknowledges text as more

than written word, invoking, rather, the symbolic as a universal texture of the life-world

(speaking, for example of the "hermeneutic universe", pp. xxiii, xxvii). With the hermeneutic

circle, Gadamer highlights understanding ontologically as a human universal, and operationally

as dialogic. Gadamer's construct of understanding not only bears presuppositions, it also bears

uncertainty and incompleteness. Thus, Gadamer (1989b) emphasizes hermeneutics as

dialectical, as a cycle of questions and answers, a cycle that is recursive, incomplete and

iterative, in which a text is always considered to be an answer to a former question, and

another interpretation is always possible (pp. 355-383). Gadamer believes in truth and insists

that truth is not relative (Gadamer, 1989b, p. 444), rather, that with good will (Gadamer, 1989a) interlocutors with multiple perspectival interpretations may dialogue their way, not necessarily to unanimity of agreement, but to common or consensual understandings.

Just as the phenomenological reduction is something that has been reworked by research theorists, so it is with the hermeneutic circle. Moules is, to me, one such theorist, whose appropriation of a philosophy of hermeneutics offers a thoughtful explication of how she sees its connection to methodology (qua epistemology). In her 2002 article, "Hermeneutic Inquiry: Paying Heed to History and Hermes: An Ancestral, Substantive, and Methodological Tale", she begins by highlighting hermeneutics as a "substantive philosophy rather than a strategic method" (p. 13). Moules describes hermeneutic inquiry as a "conversation where we commit to listen with openness, deference and respect" to "what is said and what is silenced" (p. 3). Moules says that her hermeneutic inquiry "begins with the experience of being addressed by the topic" (p. 13), of letting "what is in play move forward" (p. 13); that "there is necessarily a deliberate showing of questionableness, intentionally allowing the topic to guide the direction of the character of the work" (p. 13). The textual work she describes as "the reading of something back into its possibilities"; of "reading and rereading . . . for . . . perturbing and distinctive resonances, familiarities, differences, newness, and echoes" (p. 14). In characterizing a good hermeneutic interpretation, she says that it is something that "expand[s] possibilities of understanding" (p. 14) and "takes the reader to a place that is recognizable, having either been there before, or in simply believing that it is possible" (p. 17). I find Moules' (2002) reworking of the hermeneutic circle fascinatingly reminiscent of Moustakas' (1990) and

LeVasseur's (2003) interpretation of the phenomenological reduction: all three speak about openness, about intuited wholeness of qualities and about unlimitedness of horizon.

It's this connection between the phenomenological reduction and the hermeneutic circle that, to me, creates the overlap between phenomenology and hermeneutics, a parallel also noted by LeVasseur (2003). The two philosophies may be looked at distinctly, as with Laverty (2003): one may be seen as about elucidating "organizing principles", and the other about describing "historical meanings". They may be (usefully) taken in different directions, into human science versus humanities. Or, they may be looked at in fusion, as with van Manen's notion of hermeneutic phenomenology (2014, 2015) as a "profoundly reflective inquiry into human meaning" (van Manen, 2011, "Inquiry"). While I relate to the notion of an overlap between phenomenology and hermeneutics, I am still able to note what I draw from the latter, as I develop my own methodology.

To start, I note that what I take comes from certain lines of hermeneutics, from what Gallagher (1992) classifies as *traditional* and as *moderate* hermeneutics. From traditional hermeneutics, I take the notion of text as an object of study, and interpretation of text a method of inquiry. Traditional hermeneutics (e.g., that of Schleiermacher and biblical exegesis) suggests that while there may be an essential meaning to a text, this meaning may be difficult to ascertain. What we can do is try to examine the text with a congenial attitude, to try to understand the perspective of the text's "author(s)"; we can also note that the text's significance to a reader may differ from that intended by the author (Gallagher, 1992). Traditional hermeneutics also focuses on literary texts, or texts written in literary styles. Many of the documents I have engaged in this inquiry are likewise literary, as is this dissertation itself.

Traditional hermeneutics also emphasizes the importance of exegesis and exegete, recognizing that a text may gain in clarity from an apt interpretation that explicates this meaning helpfully and satisfyingly for its reader/audience (Duffy, 1998). I have engaged many exegetes in attempting to understand key philosophical notions of this inquiry and the philosophers who are keenly associated with them. In my citations, I make note of both theorists and exegetes of philosophical constructs. And I note that theorists are often exegetes, and exegetes are often theorists. I also note that in hermeneutics, inasmuch as interpretation is part of an ongoing and never-ending process, an "infinity of dialogue in which understanding is achieved" (Gadamer, 1989b, p. xxxi), it is never entirely right to speak of a primary text—for all texts are secondary. This is another reason why I engage both theorists and exegetes in my citations.

In conceiving of my own methodology, I also draw from that which Gallagher (1992) refers to as moderate hermeneutics, the category in which Gallagher also places the hermeneutics of Gadamer. In alignment with Gadamer, I acknowledge that "fore-structures" via inherited traditions, cultures and beliefs (illustratively, metaphysical belief and worldview) are part of the human condition, and that inquiry need not to attempt to eradicate them, but rather, to work reflexively with them. That is what I am doing as I look back at the metaphysical belief systems as fore-structures of methodology qua epistemology. What I especially garner from Gadamer (1989b) is his description of the quest for meaning as *dialectical*, by which he means a process that is prompted by questions, is fenced by opposing propositions, yet proceeds congenially, dialogically, as it reflects on the conflicts, tensions, contradictions and paradoxes of meaning (pp. 355-383, 452-468). This is indeed what I try to do in my inquiry. Also,

I note that Gadamer's *Truth and Method* is strongly ensconced in the humanities; his

demonstration of hermeneutical knowing engages artworks as primary exemplars. In this work,

Gadamer also creates a fascinating parallel among tradition, language and play as interpretive

modes and ways of being.

Hermeneutics is a wide field, and there are also aspects of hermeneutics that do not

resonate with me. Hermeneutics is a textual-based inquiry, and this textuality has been

incorporated philosophically—philosophically, but not unequivocally or unanimously. A key

debate in (the textuality of) hermeneutics has been whether the author of a text is a person, or

is the system of language itself. This is a debate which merges with a larger debate regarding

the ideologies of construc*tion*ism versus construc*tiv*ism. *Constructionism* is a term that has

been coined to describe the belief that the self and the utterances of self are constructions by

external forces of society, of culture, and of language as a system within culture (Barker, 2004a;

see also Botella & Herrero, 2010; Talja et al., 2005,). Constructionism is distinguished from

constructivism, the belief that the self, in concert with other selves, is the agent that constructs

(Crotty, 1998, p. 58; see also Botella & Herrero, 2010; Mahoney, 2003; Talja et al., 2005). The

debate between these two belief positions shows up in discussions of hermeneutics writ large,

and in interpretations of Gadamer, in particular.

"Being that can be understood is language," says Gadamer (1989b, pp. xxxi, xxxii, 470).

This notion (of interpretation as mediated through language) has sometimes been interpreted

as constructionist, that Gadamer's statement must mean/agree that the human individual is a

construction of "a cultural and social system that tends to reproduce itself" (Gallagher, 1992,

p. 242), and that language is the chief servant of ideology (ibid). Such a perspective *is* found in

what Gallagher categorizes as *critical* and *radical* hermeneutics, orientations he finds

characteristic to Habermas and Derrida, respectively. In the perspectives of these two

orientations, an individual is constructed and constrained by a symbolic power system. The

point of interpretation, for both critical and radical hermeneutics, is exposing the faults of the

system—its oppressive domination, for critical hermeneutics, its self-contradictions, for radical

hermeneutics. But is this the point of Gadamer's hermeneutics? Two of his exegetes think not.

 Grondin (1995) calls the primacy/agency given to language in continental philosophy an

"inflation of language" (p. 141) and demonstrates concern that ascribing this to Gadamer takes

away from the latter's appreciation of humanism. Grondin (1995) sees humanism in Gadamer's

sense of the motivational structure of language, and in Gadamer's avowal of humanity's

openness to fullness of meaning. Gallagher (1992), while very sympathetic to Gadamer and the

centrality of language, and while noting that "meaning requires language to manifest itself"

(p. 119), moves away from a constructionist interpretation of language in describing

Gadamerian hermeneutics. Gallagher (1992) notes that Gadamer states that language cannot

be studied as a structure because to do so would objectify language as an external thing—

impossible, he says, as language never exists outside of the self (p. 101).

Myself, I find that Gallagher's (1992) locutions demonstrate ambiguities in Gadamer's

notions of language, which sometimes present language as something external to the

individual, something that controls us, yet other times, as something living and subjectively

experiential. Describing Gadamerian hermeneutics, Gallagher (1992) refers to language as a

"way of being" (p. 113), a "medium between interlocutors" (p. 106) and a "vehicle of tradition"

(p. 106). Gadamer (1989b) himself describes language varyingly as something with which we all

belong and participate (pp. 86-87), as something like play (p. 287), something which one must

trustingly engage for it to be productive (p. 103). Overall, I interpret that Gadamer's notion of

understanding as mediated by language does not entail being structured by language:

> That language and world are related in a fundamental way does not mean, then, that
>
> world becomes the object of language. . . . It is true that the historical "worlds" that
>
> succeed one another in the course of history are different from one another . . . but, it is
>
> always a human—i.e., verbally constituted—world that presents itself to us. . . . Tradition
>
> is not simply a permanent precondition; rather we produce it ourselves inasmuch as we
>
> understand, participate in the evolution of tradition, and hence further determine it
>
> ourselves. (Gadamer, 1989b, pp. 447, 444, 293)

Furthermore, reflecting on these depictions of language and the textuality of

understanding/hermeneutics, I find I resist the constructionist position regarding language,

culture and knowing. I find the notion of linguistic constructionism makes of language an

autonomous, agented force, rather than a human creation. I find the belief of constructionism,

of language, as of culture and social structures, problematically removes human individuality,

creativity, freedom and agency. Furthermore, when this constructionism is coupled with a

sense of suspicion regarding social structures, it prompts an unproductive, alienating paranoia,

as Sedgwick (1997) has noted. I think that while language reflects culture, it does not determine

it, as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has argued (see Pinker, 2007, Chapter 3). What is conditioned

with respect to language is that it is a human given (Chomsky, 2006; Pinker, 2007).

Gallagher (1992) also notes that the constructionist perspective that regards received

tradition as an oppressive condition that needs unmasking and amending is characteristic of

what is called, after philosopher Paul Ricoeur, the *hermeneutics of suspicion*. A *hermeneutics of*

trust, on the other hand, recognizes the givens of received tradition, and of the fore-

knowledges (pre-judices) that come from that, but looks at these as positively productive

(pp. 21-22). I aspire to a hermeneutics of trust, a quality I find pre-eminently valued by

Gadamer, along with the quality of *good will* (Gadamer, 1989, p. 33), that

> one does not go about identifying the weaknesses of what another person says in order
> to prove that one is always right, but one seeks instead as far as possible to strengthen
> the other's viewpoint so that what the other person has to say becomes illuminating.
> (Gadamer 1989, p. 55)

I note that throughout his work, *Truth and Method*, Gadamer (1989b) clearly highlights the

individual as a willing interlocutor in an interpretive dialogue that leads to mutual

understanding:

> Conversation is a process of coming to an understanding. . . . All understanding is
> interpretation, and all interpretation takes place in the medium of a language that allows
> the object to come into words and yet is at the same time the interpreter's own language.
> . . . To reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself
> forward and successfully asserting one's point of view, but being transformed into a
> communion in which we do not remain what we were. (pp. 387, 390, 371)

In summary, my methodology engages features of both phenomenology and

hermeneutics. It might be characterized as *interpreting essence*.

I think that elucidating essence is neither uncovering a fixity, nor fixing a notion, but a

seeking to delineate the qualities and principles that aptly construe a thing—object, idea,

phenomenon. In this case, the phenomena of which I am interpreting essence are metaphysical

belief systems, common Western belief systems, belief systems in arts-integrating research

methodologies, and my own belief system, all of which are, in turn, enunciations of the

phenomenon that is reality/world/being.[7]

Although I am seeking to interpret essences of phenomena, I recognize that things

change, and points of view shift, expand. In human matters, I think knowledge, even

"objectivist" knowledge, comes by interpretation, and I take a wide view of interpretation as

involving a range of rational processes including analysis, description and evaluation, as well as

creative processes including intuition, tacit recollection, imagination and synaesthesia, and also

subjective processes such as perception, reflection and reflexion. Ironically, I find that

phenomenology focuses more on the subjective and transcendental lived experience of the

knower, seeking essences, while hermeneutics focuses more on the universal process of

interpretation, in which the knower takes part. In this way, they complement each other.

While phenomenology and hermeneutics both put forth critical and creative ways of

knowing, and encompass many aspects of my epistemological framework, I think that a good

term of reference to describe the epistemological scope of my methodology is *creational

dialectics*, a term that encapsulates all that I have described above. As such, my inquiry is one of

engaging in a dialogue with prior texts, those of theorists of arts-integrating research, and those

of metaphysical philosophy, and those from scholars who study methodology itself

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[7] If it seems odd that belief systems are considered phenomena, note that a phenomenon need not be the perception of an external, material object or event. Consider what phenomena are examined by Husserl and Heidegger, these two founding phenomenologists. I would say that Husserl investigates the phenomenon of consciousness, along with the phenomena of epoché/bracketing/reduction, while Heidegger investigates the phenomenon of being, along with others such as aletheia and technicity. A phenomenon may involve the interpretation of any human experience or occurrence, which may be entirely immaterial, such as beliefs or belief systems. Other such immaterial human experiences/occurrences that have been studied include caring (Noddings, 2013), and loneliness and love (Moustakas, 1972).

("methodologists" per se), in order to interpret the essences of (the phenomena that is) their fundamental belief systems, to reflect on the tensions between them, to consider the meanings that may come forth, and to do so artfully.

That this methodology, creational dialectics, is artful is no little matter. Supported by my phenomenological and hermeneutical sources, creational dialectics is an arts-integrating methodology. I visualize my dissertation (the synthetic presentation of my inquiry), as an art-work that incorporates prosaic elements in the rendering of thought. To some of you, the work may look like an extended essay of description, argument and evidence, with interesting, although not necessary, decorative elements—some drama, some poetry, some graphics, etcetera. Or perhaps you will feel the most satisfaction at the rendering of theories and philosophical constructs into their essentials. The processes of research, all those heuristic phases described above will not be obvious. The years of reading and thinking, the formless wandering, the imaginative variance, the moments of insight, and the iterative re-views and re-visions, have become subsumed into the palimpsest of the final write-up. Still, Interlocutor, you might consider the individual sections of the inquiry as rounds of hermeneutic interpretation, and every edit another round, you here in the latest. The sections might also be thought of as *exhibits*, like art installations, up for a show and then down again, ephemeral, transitional and relational, as we are.

> —*Or exhibits as in evidence? As you make your points to me.*
> —Ah, hello!—yes, that too.

☙

Limitations of the Inquiry

Some further issues to discuss include limitations of this methodology and what this

methodology proposes with respect to evaluation of research.

With respect to limitations, I note that every research inquiry has limitations, and that

these emerge principally from methodology. This is because every methodology is a delimiting

of perspective and practice. Every inquiry has a scope and a point of view. This inquiry is

bounded by the scope of the questions it seeks to investigate. It takes on an interpretivist point

of view regarding knowledge that directs the inquiry. It acknowledges the subjectivity of the

inquirer, her inherent particularity that emerges from her particularly lived experience of the

lifeworld. At the same time, the inquiry accepts the essentialization of phenomena, and

believes that they may be arrived at through interpretive, intersubjective, dialogic inquiry.

Had this inquiry taken on another epistemological framework, such as positivism

(Willingham, 2012), or critical theory (Denzin, 2017), or new materialism (Snaza et al., 2016), its

inquiry would have taken a different path, and its answers would have presented a different

perspective. However, a different epistemological framework would also likely elicit a different

range of questions. For example, a positivist approach to arts-integrating research

methodologies might be interested in a conceptual analysis of the methodologies and rebutting

their resistance to empiricism and rationalism. A positivist approach might also be curious

enough to engage in statistical studies regarding measurable aspects of arts-integrating

research, such as the prevalence and demographics of such research, and its influence on

measurable curriculum outcomes. On the other hand, an approach of critical theory might be

interested in investigating how arts-integrating research has been applied in the critique of

social theory or perceived injustices in education. As a philosophy, this approach might also want to trace the influence of social theory and practices on arts-integrated inquiry. Instead of examining methodology qua epistemology, it would examine methodology with respect to agency, either how it is acted upon, or how it acts upon. While I recognize that other approaches may have distinct contributions to the topic, I am confident that the approach I am taking is likewise distinct and distinctly productive.

ॐ

Evaluation of the Inquiry

This brings me to an important issue: how may this inquiry be evaluated?

I assert that evaluation is particular to methodology, that the evaluative expectations of one methodology may not work well for another, due to differing epistemological constructs. This is borne out by historical discussion (to be taken up at greater length in subsequent exhibits). Positivist inquiry, once the pre-eminent approach to research, extended what were once considered gold standards of evaluation, that of *validity*, which considers whether the results of a study accurately represent reality, and that of *reliability*, which considers whether the results may be reproduced and generalized (Golafshani, 2008; Morse et al., 2002). Pre-eminent methodologists Egon Guba[8] and Yvonna Lincoln (1981, 1985, 1994) famously reinterpreted these criteria to work with qualitative research, offering credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, instead. However, Lincoln and Guba (2005) later changed their minds, finding these criteria not a good fit after all, and instead suggesting

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[8] 1924-2008

that *authenticity criteria* would be a more appropriate way to consider the trustworthiness of qualitative research (p. 207). Since the turn to qualitative research in social and human studies, qualitative methodologists have continued to consider and elaborate criteria for evaluation of their own approach in particular, or for qualitative research in general (Ravenek & Rudman, 2013).

Eisner is an example of a methodologist who has considered the issue of evaluation and assessment of research (as of curriculum) at length. Eisner (1995) decried the use of standards qua measurement (in both research and in curriculum evaluation), preferring the notion of criteria instead. As with Guba and Lincoln, Eisner's earlier reflections parallel those of positivist research, suggesting "referential adequacy" and "structural corroboration" as criteria (1994b, pp. 240-241) for the evaluation of research. Later, Barone and Eisner (2012) suggested a number of flexible, holistic criteria: incisiveness, concision, coherence, generativity, social significance, evocation and illumination (Barone & Eisner, 2012, pp. 148-154).

How might my own inquiry, with its methodology of creational dialectics, be evaluated?

Obviously, the criteria of validity and reliability are not a fit for my research approach, which seeks meaning rather than certainty and allows for subjectivity of the researcher. On the other hand, this allowance for subjectivity of interpretation does not intend to suggest that the research endorses solipsism or relativism.

Inasmuch as my methodology is phenomenological, one of seeking essences, Eisner's criterion of cogency is apt, particularly in this case, where the essences are of systems of belief regarding the nature of reality. Cogency lends credibility to a belief and to a belief system. A

construct gains credibility when it makes sense, fits together with other elements of a system, and entails sensible consequences.

Cogency remains important in hermeneutic inquiry as the researcher studies prior horizons, considers their relevance, and reinterprets them from a current vantage point. Other criteria are also important in a hermeneutic methodology, criteria which relate to Guba and Lincoln's recommendation of criteria of authenticity. Meaning-making in hermeneutics is a dialectic process: a dialogue that not only deferentially considers the meaning of prior statements, but also deals with the inevitable tensions of interpretation. As mentioned already, Gadamer asserts that good will is a necessary quality of a hermeneutic dialogue, as well as openness to possibility. In this way, a hermeneutic dialogue may come to shared meanings, to truths that are neither imposed nor absolute.

In view of the qualities and characteristics of creational dialectics, the encompassing criterion that I put forward is that of *value*, and as such, I propose that, for my methodology of creational dialectics, evaluation is a matter of *valuation*. In extending this criterion, I draw etymologically from the meaning of the word "value" as the root morpheme of the compound "evaluation" (OED, 1989c). I note that definitions of the word "value" show that it may be construed both as a quantitative measure, as in the current value of the Canadian dollar, or as a qualitative estimation, as in the value of friendship (OED, 1989e). I engage the latter sense.

Thus, to consider the value of an inquiry is to consider its qualities and conditions, to consider the significance of its elements to its whole, to consider its importance and usefulness, and from that consideration to judge its worth. Of course, that judgement will not be an objective, absolute measure. It will be an interpretation, subjective, and perhaps

intersubjective. I propose, therefore, that value might be subdivided into two fields, that of

internal value, the significance of an inquiry for the researcher, and *external value*, the

significance of the work for its interlocutor(s). In keeping with the dialogic (and dialectic)

features of my methodology, I maieutically put forth the following lists of questions as a way of

elaborating the criterion of value with respect to my inquiry.

Internal Value

- Have I answered my research questions? Am I satisfied with my responses? If not, has
  my dissatisfaction in itself been productive?

- Have I learned from my proposed study? Have I developed in my understanding of the
  topic I proposed? Am I satisfied with the long conversation I have taken part in? Do I
  feel that I have connected well to my topic of study? Do I feel successful in my
  interpretations of the metaphysical constructs that underlie Eisner's arts based
  research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography? Do I feel that I have grasped, or successfully
  grappled with, the natures of the metaphysics of presence and difference? Have I
  teased out the ontic issues that inform these perspectives? Have I generated new
  insights, commentaries, evaluations or resolutions? Am I happily surprised by
  unanticipated discoveries? Or, do I remain puzzled and bewildered—and do I share this
  *un*knowing?

- What do I do with my gleanings? How do they affect my understanding of art as a way
  of knowing and a means of research? Am I satisfied with my integration of arts into my
  dissertation? Do I feel that the art is a meaningful, productive way of responding to my
  questions?

- What do I do with the meanings I have come to? How does this study affect me, my
  values, my worldview and my poetics?

Or, put another way…

What's it worth to me?

Years (years!)
at desk and screen
and when I think of the outcome—
what? a citation, an index, a digital drop,
a paper salutation—
I'll be gray when I'm done, one hundred
percent, with liver spots, skin tags,
lumbago.
(What rhymes with lumbago?
Adagio, arpeggio,
lumb-dumb-hum…)

When the tedium thrums,
I look out my window,
for the consolation of view.

My lot is wooded with the benefice of neglect:
natives have treed the flower beds
(seeded, needled, rooted, barked)
to constant distraction,
ravens wheedle overhead,
sparrows twitch a moment's perch,
and two squirrels dash—
swish-swash—gray chasing black—
up trunk down—leaf-meal scuttle—
fence jump—wire skitter—leap—

and isn't that what I want:
a scrap, a stake to state
(estate, testate, tungstate)
I've found my ground, even if shook now
and cracked and leaving?

External Value

- Have I answered my research questions in a manner that is cogent, engaging and productive?

- Is my study useful to others? Does it help others to understand the field of arts-integrating research? Does it help explain and validate art as a way of knowing? Does the comparison of the metaphysical issues that underlie Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography help others in choosing and implementing an art-integrating research methodology?

- Does the study engage others in philosophical discussion? Does the interpretation and comparison of the metaphysics of presence and difference bring new insights or resolutions or surprises? Does it work in ways unanticipated? Does it prompt questions for further discussion?

- Does the artwork prompt meaningful insights to the research?

Put another way…

do you ask

what keeps the sun at it?
up & down   day & night
not that you don't appreciate
the art of sunrise/sunset

crystal-dewed
starts &
rose-swirled
regrets

but do you ever ask what the sun herself thinks
as she burns a trench across the sky?   is she proud?
does she holler?   does she sigh
as she hides behind spilling clouds?

or   do you interrogate the very words
rise up down she
deride the (pathetic)
fallacy of this poem?

do you still the sun   a-
void her
confine her fire to a vacuum
inanimate   indifferent?

and in spite of this abstention
do you wonder yet   what *is* the sun?
—
sun *is* only what sun is not?
not moon not earth not stars   not dark   not questioned

    —by the way, do you see that
    flotilla of dust motes?   bobbing
    like harboured boats   in the sun spray
    over the window sash   hmmmm

do you wonder if you've had it all wrong?
that the sun isn't *there* at all   not
up away beyond but
here now

do you ponder what this present-
ing of sun
might mean   here   now
about—

the purpose to the lifelong repetition of day   both
whether your frame of self is solid   altogether
an ever-changing wriggle of reactions   also
if you construct the sun   and/or   the sun, you?

if you ask such questions
and come here for answers
be advised that my work offers
neither eclipse nor illumination

i offer no answers
just the release of conversation
as we spin into orbit   blinded
brilliant

☙

Note, Dear Interlocutors, that although I apply the criterion of value/valuation to my particular methodology and inquiry, this criterion may readily be applied to any qualitative inquiry. (Haggarty, 2015, 2019).

> —*Interlocutor sounds strange to me. Don't know about any others, but you can surely call me Friend, Dear One. I can't say I followed all you talked about, especially the part about the German philosophers, but I like that line about a conversation where we listen with openness and respect. It reminds me of church.*
> —I like that image of church as conversation. It reminds me how much I used to love reading in the quiet of the library stacks, feeling surrounded by the spirit of so many authors and their ideas. Nowadays, working at home, in my study, I sometimes just feel alone, wondering if anyone will ever actually read my dissertation. So, I appreciate you joining me here.
> —*Thanks. Nice to feel I can contribute something. Can I ask another question?*
> —Of course.
> —*What's a palimpsest?*
> —Ah. Literally, it's when you layer many levels of writing one on top of the other, through consecutive pennings or inkings.
> —*Like when you try to write a love poem to your crush, but you can't get the rhymes right, and you end up with hundreds of really good one-liners?*
> —That's the idea.
> —*So, when you speak about formless wandering, moments of insight and so on all being drawn into the palimpsest of the final write-up, you're talking about your art process as well as your writing drafts? Like, this is what would be your research method, your alternative to what scientists call scientific method? Instead of that, you have those steps of immersion, incubation, illumination, synthesis and so on?*
> —Yes, but maybe scientists are the ones with the alternative to an always-already.
> —*Ha! But can you describe to me how this art process worked for you, the layers before the final copy.*
> —Well, it looked heuristic. Like a long, quiet dialogue. Long periods of me listening to text. Long periods of me thinking about text. Ideas, back and forth, but not just in words. Conversations in my mind. Images. I'd be reading about Aquinas or Deleuze, for example, and their faces would appear to me, Deleuze with his comb-over and Aquinas

rubbing his smoothly shaved scalp above his monastic crown. And they'd start saying things. Impromptu. Though, in the case of Deleuze, they'd often be very abstruse. And I'd be annoyed and tell him so. And in would pop Aquinas and he'd try to correct Deleuze. And soon it would get very heated, and often hilariously hyperbolic. Such clowns! I'd grab my journal to write down their quips. But when I'd sit back and re-watch the two, I'd see how the two had become friends. Especially when faced with a stranger! And I'd chuckle, and I'd think, I should work these dialogues into my dissertation—they offer so much.

—*So, you didn't start off saying, for example, I should write a play because that would be the best way to illustrate the difference between metaphysics of presence and difference.*
—No, the art forms evolved as my study kept unfolding. Like a conversation in which you're really interested in the topic, but don't know in advance where the dialogue is going to go—you're just open to the possibilities. The flow of thoughts brings you to an intersection, strange and yet spot-on. Like the fairy tale hero, who sets out just following his nose to find his destiny.

—*Oh! Like when you're walking the dog and she stops at a fire hydrant and you remember you forgot to pay that parking ticket?*
—Ha ha, yes, associative thinking! To me, creative incubation is like walking on that first snowy day. When you're all caught up in the magic of the weather: the cake-frosted bushes, the ice-washed air, the tickle of snowflake on tongue—

—*The squelch of slush underfoot and the cars mounded high as laundry baskets.*
—Okay, if that's your walk, a different walk, I see. Maybe weekend versus weekday? But, either way, might you not look back and see your boot tracks, where you've come, and where you might go? Points become lines, lines connect, a shape appears, maybe an outline, maybe within the lines, maybe outside the lines. For example, it came to me how many philosophers have used the metaphor of a tree to explain their concepts, and how all these tree images could interact, play poetically with each other, to illustrate different versions of metaphysics.

—*Okay, I think I get you now. Never did much art, myself, but cooking and gardening were like that, for me. An opening to possibilities.*
—Did they lead to insights? Did you understand essentials of something or other through them?

—*They led to lots of freezer bags and Mason jars. And a realization that a homemade pickle makes a sandwich exquisitely gourmet.*
—Mmm. Egg salad or tuna?
—*I could go for either.*

EXHIBIT 3

"Do you know anything about bombs?"
"Is there an on-off switch?"

Contextual Review of Arts-Integrating Research Methodologies

Dear Interlocutor(s): I've presented my research questions, talked about the importance of my research, and discussed how I have gone/am going about responding to my research questions (that is, described my methodology). What's needed now is background context to my topic of inquiry—an investigation into prior horizons. My aim in this section is as follows:

1) review the historical and polemical context of the emergence of qualitative research in general, and of arts-integrating research methodologies in particular;

2) describe Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography with respect to their provenance, and concomitantly note the literature in which these methodologies are presented and critiqued;

3) discuss the reception and engagement of these two methodologies, and of arts-integrating research in general, and point out how this contextual review shows a need for my inquiry.

Historical and Polemical Contexts of Arts-Integrating Research Methodologies

In my prior study of Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography, I characterized them as methodologies that stand in resistance to positivism (Haggarty, 2015). Historically, these methodologies may be seen as arising out of the qualitative turn, the movement, by researchers in social sciences, from quantitative scientific research to qualitative interpretive research, a movement that prompted the so-called "paradigm wars" that began in the 1980s (Gage, 1989). Perusing prominent educational research journals of the time, such as *Educational Reviewer*, the publication of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), shows the intensity of the debate.

You might think that positivism, so rejected in the qualitative turn, had been ever-dominant in education research, but this is not so.

> *—Are you suggesting that art as research isn't actually new? That there was a time when* arts *were the norm in the academy?*
> —Funny that you put it that way. The word "academy" comes from the name of Plato's school of philosophy (OED, 2011). And what research form did they use in this academy? Dialogue, replete with rhetorical arts! Poetry was a well appreciated way of knowing in ancient Greece, a genre to which drama, narrative and lyric were subsumed, and which was usually enjoyed as performance, the written word engaged only for mnemonic purposes (see Augustine, ca. 400/2008, p. 92; Grondin, 2012, pp. 6-7; Havelock, 1977, 1986). Unfortunately, art as a form of research got lost along the way.

Scientific research in education (Canadian and North American) took prominence in the 20th century (Gage, 1989; Lagemann, 1997; J. K. Smith, 1983). This could be seen as a social phenomenon, an outcome of increasing socialization and state sponsorship of education requiring administration and evaluation for effectiveness (MacKay & Firmin, 2008). But why *positivist* research, with its rational, empirical, objective, systematic, reductive, quantitative methods? Because scientific methods had increasingly creating desired achievements in

domains such as medicine, agriculture and industry, they were increasingly trusted and sought

as the certain route to knowledge, even in fields such as education, which had hitherto been

considered part of the humanities, and not amenable to the scientific method (Jardine et al.,

2008; Lagemann, 1997; J. K. Smith, 1983). The application of growing psychological sciences,

particularly behaviourism and statistical inquiry, to education research and curricular

development became encapsulated in educational models such as that of Tyler—curriculum by

standardization of outcomes—and Thorndyke—curriculum by measurement of said outcomes

(Lagemann, 1997). Trust in positivist research only increased with the tensions of the 20th

century "world wars", "cold wars", "science wars" (Carrier et al., 2004) and "space wars"

(Bortnick, 1989).

Nonetheless, in education studies (and in other social sciences and human sciences),

there were reactions against perceived problems and shortcomings with positivist research,

and these were increasingly voiced from the 1980s on (Gage, 1989; Lincoln & Denzin, 2003).

Erickson (1986) pointed out that positivist science misses out on the "immediate meanings of

action from the actors' point of view" (p. 120). Erickson is just one raindrop in a torrent of

researchers who felt that the prescribed neutral, objective "voice from nowhere" of the

scientific method, although expecting to gain a "voice from everywhere", actually finds only the

typical, that positivist science reduces diversity to that typical, and in doing so fails the atypical,

whether that be of the minoritarian voice or the local voice (see Lather, 2004). Denzin and

Lincoln (2003) characterized this failure (after Marcus & Fisher, 1986) as a "crisis of

representation" and a critical "moment" in the qualitative turn from positivist to interpretive

inquiry.

However, reactions and critiques in themselves do not constitute new research approaches; such transformation comes from new understandings of what constitutes knowledge and valid research (J. K. Smith, 1989; Phillips, 1983; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Ultimately, methodologists draw on epistemology, on their beliefs regarding knowledge and knowing. Philosophers who were influential early in the qualitative turn include Wilhelm Dilthey and Max Weber (1864-1920), both of whom argued that social sciences and humanities require a method different from that of the natural sciences, one based on a construct of knowledge as interpretation rather than as certainty (J. K. Smith, 1983; Gadamer, 1960/1989). The qualitative turn in research also drew on a number of emerging epistemological notions, such as the value-ladenness of knowledge (Weber, 1904/1949), the underdetermination of theory (Duhem, 1914/1954), the theory-ladenness of knowledge (Duhem, 1914/1954; Kuhn, 1962/1970), the ontological commitment of theory (Quine, 1948), and the incommensurability of theoretical paradigms, as prompts to epistemological shifts (Kuhn, 1962/1970).

Informed by such epistemological notions that challenged the tenets of positivist science, researchers began to develop research methods based on alternative philosophical frameworks—or paradigms, to engage the coinage made popular by Guba and Lincoln (1982, 1985, 1994, in appropriation of the philosophy of Kuhn, 1962/1970). One early example is the method(ology) of grounded research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967); another is naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1982, 1985).

Subsequent epistemological assertions influenced further methodologies. These included the position of the Frankfurt school (including philosophers Adorno, Marcuse and Horkheimer), that knowledge is not neutral, but normative, and that critique likewise ought to be

prescriptive. This position has guided critical research and critical pedagogy (e.g., Popkewitz,

1984, 1997). Another influential position was that of post-structuralism (as illustrated in the

philosophy of Derrida and Foucault), which interrogated source and stability of ideas. This

position was hardly apparent in the early debates of the 1980s, but it became increasingly

influential at the turn of the 21st century and formed the basis of the theory and practice of

deconstruction (Birns, 2000; Eagleton, 2008, pp. 127-150; Klages, 2006, pp. 53-62; Lodge &

Wood, 2013, pp. 107-123; Thomson, 2006, pp. 298-318).

Research methods proliferated as new epistemological frameworks were elaborated.

Also, new journals were established to reflect philosophical positions regarding the nature of

research. A recent online guide to qualitative research journals lists well over one hundred

academic periodicals (Chenail, 2020), many of which were established in the later 1980s or

1990s, in an effort to allow discussion and publication of qualitative research. One example is

Qualitative Inquiry, a journal that Denzin and Lincoln were instrumental in establishing in 1995,

a journal which is still devoted to the assertion of qualitative research methodologies. Many

arts-integrating researchers have published articles regarding their methodologies in this

journal.

The proliferation and assertion of methodologies has been a source of protracted

tensions, as opposing sides have argued for the validity of their epistemological positions, and

critiqued opposing views, in ongoing debates—the "paradigm wars" (Gage, 1989). For example,

Phillips (1983) complained that arguments against, and labels of, positivism incorrectly

understand and attribute the varying provenances and notions of the term, and unfairly put

forth and conflate extremisms of Comtean positivism, logical positivism, absolute empiricism

and behaviouralism, which he feels results in an anti-realist, relativist instrumentalism.[9] And in

1994, when an article by American physicist Alan Sokal, published by a postmodern journal,

turned out to be a hoax, it ignited a fierce attack against the validity of qualitative research

methods (see Carrier et al., 2004; Sokal & Bricmont, 1998; Swartz, 2014). However, the

critiques have not stopped qualitative methodologies from proliferating (Lather, 2006), and

they have not stopped, perhaps only goaded, the debates.[10]

The paradigm wars were/are not just enunciations and denunciations of particular

methodologies and paradigms. There have also been contestations of the very notions of

methodology and paradigm. For example, *pragmatic* theorists have argued that no paradigm is

needed to guide method, and thus that research methods are never incommensurable; that it is

only helpful, workable results that matter (Burke-Johnson & Onwegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2007).

The notion of method itself is disputed by anti-methodology theorists who argue against

procedure as something that might be known in advance (Nordstrom, 2017). The notion of

paradigm as a belief *system* is also disputed by post-structuralist methodologists who argue

against the tenacity of belief itself. This position will figure largely in the discussions of this

dissertation. It is also seen in methodologies of *performativity* (Morison & Macleod, 2013),

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[9] In this article, Phillips (1983) eventually directs this critique towards Eisner's thought, which at this point were formulations regarding the limitations of scientific research and behaviourism in arts education (e.g., Eisner, 1981).
[10] Controversies continue, especially when positivist and post-structuralist research conclusions collide. For example, Geneviève Rail generated a great deal of controversy over her call for a moratorium on the Canadian human-papilloma-virus vaccination program (Dyer, 2015; Rail et al., 2015). Rail has critiqued ideology in public health programs, engaging a post-structuralist analysis that draws on Foucaultian, Derridian and Deleuzean theories (Holmes et al., 2016; Rail et al., 2015). Apart from generally critiquing evidence-based medicine as a "fascist structure . . . outrageously exclusionary and dangerously normative" (Holmes et al., 2016, p. 180), Rail and colleagues have specifically queried "whether public health is advanced when HPVV discourses transform healthy bodies into 'at-risk' bodies and when the fear of cancer is instrumentalized in the pharmaceuticalization of public health" (Rail et al., 2015, p. 622).

which argue for action rather than belief as a fundamental principle, and whose methods often consist of discourse analysis of culturally performed identity (for example, gender identity, as with Butler, 1990; or racial identity, as with Bernstein, 2011). The argument against tenacity of belief system is also seen in methodologies of new materialism (Hickey-Moody, 2020), which understands life is an unfolding of material forces, as opposed to personal agency.

It is in this field of protracted methodological debate that arts-integrating research methodologies emerged.

The Provenances of Eisner's Arts Based Research and Irwin et al.'s A/r/tography

Both Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography emerged out of the qualitative turn in research and the reconceptualist turn in curriculum (Pinar, 1975), and their methodological enunciations may be considered as chiming into the continuing debate that is the paradigm wars. Let's consider Eisner's arts based research first, as it was the first of the two to emerge.

Eisner's theorization of art in research began in the 1980s, early in the qualitative turn. Eventually, Eisner coined the phrase "arts-based educational research" to generically describe a qualitative research approach that engages the arts (see Barone, 2006, 2008; Barone & Eisner, 2006; Wang et al., 2017). Both the term and Eisner's own methodological understandings emerged out of his long work of discerning and theorizing the arts as a way of knowing distinct from that of positivist sciences.[11]

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[11] As can be seen in the citations, Eisner sometimes collaborated with his former-mentee, Tom Barone.

Eisner's resistance to tenets of positivism is strongly seen in his engagement with the ongoing paradigm debates in *Educational Researcher*, to which he contributed not only articles (e.g., Eisner 1981b), but also rebuttals (e.g., Eisner 1981a; also cf., Phillips, 1983 with Eisner, 1983a) and other discursive commentary. Eisner's work began as curricular theory (as can be noted in his many books) and his methodological elucidations came about in consequence of his conceiving of curriculum and how curriculum may be studied. This trend can be seen in his major book titles: *The Educational Imagination*, in which Eisner (1979/1985/1994b) discusses the design and evaluation of curriculum programs; *Cognition and Curriculum,* and *Cognition and Curriculum*, *Reconsidered*, and *Arts and the Creation of Mind* (2002), in which Eisner (1982/1994a) discusses concepts of mind and representation—and the implication of the arts for both; and *The Enlightened Eye*, in which Eisner (1991/1998) extends his thinking of the arts as a way of knowing to qualitative research into education. Consider a couple of specific examples of Eisner's track from curricular theory to qualitative research. As a promoter of arts in curriculum, Eisner decries the Tylerian standardization of curriculum objectives (Eisner, 1983b, 1995), and this follows into his refutation of research as a necessarily standardized linear procedure (Eisner, 1992). Likewise, Eisner's focus on how art is cognition, albeit cognition looked at as a non-linguistic, qualitative process (Eisner, 1994a), follows into his notions of arts-based qualitative inquiry.

In terms of research methodology, I find three thrusts to Eisner's theorizations. I note that Eisner began by predicating qualitative research and the engagement of the arts in qualitative research (e.g., Eisner, 1981b, 1983a, 1992). Eisner (1991/1998) then extended the specific research practice of educational criticism, a practice that is advanced by the researcher's ability

as connoisseur (qualitative interpreter). Finally, as the engagement of the arts in research became more legitimized and established, Eisner put forth the term "arts-based educational research" (Barone & Eisner, 2006), which he presented as an umbrella term for arts-integrating inquiry methods or approaches, a theoretical basis of which he had already been expostulating, and which he continued to do (e.g., Barone & Eisner, 2012). While I note these three thrusts in Eisner's theorization, I also note their conceptual cohesion. Thus, when I refer to Eisner's arts based research, I refer to the composite of his methodological thinking.

Eisner's influence has been strong. His curricular concepts have been, and continue to be, well taken up in the literature. Engaging examples just from the *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*,[12] one can find engagement of notions of Eisner in the following recent articles: Kumar and Downey (2018), in support of their argument against instrumentalization of education; Reingold (2018), in support of an argument for self-development through the arts; and Lowan-Trudeau and Fowler (in press), engaging Eisner's notions of the implicit and explicit curriculum. Eisner's methodological constructs have been as influential as his curricular constructs. This is highlighted by the fact that the term *arts-based research (and its abbreviated form ABR)*, and the expanded term *arts based educational research* (and its abbreviated form ABER), became, and are still widely used as, umbrella terms to describe arts-integrating research.[13] As such, it is paramount to note that in my study, I must distinguish the specific methodological theorization of Eisner from that of the umbrella terms,

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[12] Note: The Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, or JCACS, is a publication with which I have been employed as an editor since taking up doctoral studies, a role which has fit well with my inquiry into discerning the fundamental relation of belief to knowledge.

[13] And to make things yet more complicated, Arts Based Educational Research is also the name of a special interest group of the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

in spite of their nominal co-incidence. I do this in two ways: firstly, by engaging the possessive

qualifier, as in *Eisner's* arts based research, or *Eisnerian* arts based research, and secondly, by

dropping the adjectival hyphenation, following a practice I found in some later writing (viz.,

Barone & Eisner, 2012).

Eisner's work opened the door for further conceptualizations and appellations of arts-

integrating research approaches. Leavy (2017) includes a list of 29 such terms of reference (p.

3), including those of two made-in-Canada approaches, *arts-informed research* (Knowles &

Cole, 2008a) and *a/r/tography* (Irwin, 2008). Other terms strongly engaged and elaborated in

Canada to reference arts-integrating research include *poetic inquiry* (e.g., Prendergast et al.,

2009; Sameshima et al., 2017) *life writing* (Chambers et al., 2012), *literary métissage* (Irwin,

2004; Hasebe-Ludt et al., 2009) and *parallaxic praxis* (Sameshima, 2006; Sameshima et al.,

2019). In my prior and current studies, I have focused only on the methodologies of Eisner and

of Irwin et al. because their contrasting philosophies make for productive comparisons. Let's

turn our attention to the provenance of a/r/tography.

A/r/tography emerged in the noughties, as a methodology spearheaded by Rita Irwin of

the University of British Columbia, but enunciated in collaboration with many others.

A/r/tography is collaborative on many levels: not only are the theoretical articles of

a/r/tography multi-authored, but the term itself demonstrates a sense of multiplicity and

blurring of identity. A/r/tography unwraps to *artist/researcher/teacher* conjoined with

"graphy"—*writing* (see Irwin, n.d., 2004). A/r/tography emerged out of the desire of artists who

were teachers as well as university scholars to enunciate a methodology that brought together

all of their life roles and identities in integrated ways of meaning (Irwin, 1999; Bickel et al.,

2010). A/r/tography was influenced by ideological currents of the time and place of its creators, including feminist theories along with reconceptualist and Indigenous curriculum theories (Irwin et al., 1998; Bickel et al., 2010). Epistemologically, I find that the ultimate influence on a/r/tography is that of post-structuralist thought (Haggarty, 2015), in which the other influences reside. As a post-structuralist methodology, a/r/tography is deliberately situated in resistance to, and outside of, traditionally dominant epistemology, not just the epistemology of positivism, but also of traditional Western constructs of knowledge (Irwin, 2003). A/r/tographers describe themselves as marginalized, yet also describe their "borderlands" as a place of productivity (Irwin, 2004). A/r/tography highlights knowing as an embodied, ever-erupting relational event (Irwin et al., 2007).

The methodology of a/r/tography has been asserted through a number of articles (e.g., Bickel et al., 2010; Irwin, 2003, 2004, 2013; Irwin et al., 2006; Springgay et al., 2005; Springgay, Irwin & Kind, 2008), as well as two anthologies (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, & Gouzouasis, 2008), which also provide exemplars of its use. While the early focus of a/r/tographical writers was on enunciating the research methodology itself, more recent works show increasing applications of a/r/tography to curricular studies: as a curricular model or pedagogical practice (e.g., Carter et al., 2011; Leggo et al., 2011; Leblanc et al., 2015; Smitka, 2011; Wiebe et al., 2007); as a means of studying teacher education (e.g., Kalin et al., 2009; Kind et al., 2007, Sinner, 2013); and as a concept of mind (e.g., Boulton et al., 2017). As a specific methodology, a/r/tography has been well engaged, particularly in Canada (and most particularly at Irwin's alma mater, the University of British Columbia), where it shows strong usage in graduate scholars (e.g., Bickel, 2008; Carter, 2012; Darts, 2004; de Cosson, 2003;

Pecaski McLennan, 2007; Pente, 2008; Springgay, 2004) and emerging scholars interested in applying arts-integrating research to educational studies (ibid).

I have found that the presentation of a/r/tographic methodology has not been subject to the same scrutiny as the epistemological notions of Eisner. Is this because scrutiny has subsided? Or, is this because a/r/tographical articles have been published in journals more supportive of their methodological and philosophical orientations, journals such as *Qualitative Inquiry*, which serves more as a presentational than a discursive site? Other reasons? (Further discussion follows.)

Not surprisingly, considering its embracing of change as fundamental feature of knowledge, some authors associated with the enunciation of the methodology of a/r/tography have moved on, for example Barbara Bickel, who has subsequently focused more specifically on feminist scholarship and feminist research approaches (e.g., Bickel, 2014; Bickel et al., 2019), as well as Stephanie Springgay, who has subsequently focused on developing post-qualitative research approaches (e.g., Springgay, 2020; Springgay & Truman, 2018; Springgay et al., 2020). However, Irwin has continued to be a/r/tography's masthead and bellwether. Now two decades after its inception, a/r/tography still presents with a radical vigour.

Reception and Engagement of Arts-Integrating Research Methodologies

Let's further consider the contemporary reception and engagement of arts-integrating research methodologies. As mentioned already, there has been burgeoning interest in arts-integrating research since its inception in the 1980s as part of the qualitative turn. Here are some indicators of the increasing interest in, and engagement of, arts-integrating research:

- the increasing number of methodological enunciations. Here are some metrics: the inaugural issue of *Qualitative Inquiry* contained an article about engaging the arts in research (Finley & Knowles, 1995); the October-November, 2020 issue has an article about engaging the arts in research (Koro et al., 2020), as well as a call for arts integrated research on the theme of "Ethics in Research-Based Theatre: Stories From the Field"; using the keywords "art", "research" with Boolean operator "and", using this journal's search function, gives 955 hits (or an average of 38.2 mentions/year).

- the proliferating nomenclature of terms of reference engaged by methodologists (e.g., Leavy, 2017, p. 3; Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014, pp. 4-11);

- the increasing number of monographs or anthologies dedicated to particular arts-integrating research methodologies (e.g., Barone & Eisner, 2012; Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Springgay et al., 2008; Prendergast et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2012; Galvin & Prendergast, 2016; Sameshima et al., 2017);

- the development of associations, such as the Canadian Society for Education Through Art (CSEA) and the Arts Researchers and Teachers Society (ARTS), a special interest group of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies (CACS), and Arts Based Educational Research, a special interest group of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), as well as the development of ongoing conferences, such as the International Symposium of Poetic Inquiry (ISPI);

- the emergence of journals devoted to arts-integrating research, such as the *Canadian Revue of Art Education*;

- the increasing uptake of arts-integrating research in educational studies conferences and journals. Here's a metric: in the first issue of the *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, one article shows some arts-integration (Upitis, 2003); a special issue in 2020 (in press) on walking pedagogy shows arts integration in 14 of the 16 pieces;

- the increasing number of guidebooks to the field of arts-integrating research (e.g., Butler-Kisber, 2018; Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2018; Knowles & Cole, 2008b; Leavy, 2009, 2014, 2017; Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014; Sullivan, 2005);

- the increasing engagement of arts-integrating research in graduate studies theses and dissertations. Those a/r/tographical are mentioned above. Some arts-integrating theses and dissertations that influenced me as I was working on my graduate studies include the following: Fels (1999), a performative inquiry; Marchese (2010), a narrative inquiry; Mosher (2007), an arts-based heuristic inquiry; Sameshima (2006) an epistolary bildungsroman; and Shidmehr (2014), a poetic inquiry;[14]

- the necessity of meta-reviews of arts-integrating research or particular methodologies thereof (Sinner et al., 2019; Sinner & Conrad, 2015; Prendergast, 2015);

- the significant quantity of arts-integrating research in scholarly journals. Here are some interesting metrics, based on entering various methodological keywords of this dissertation into the Google Scholar database:

    "arts based research"—3,600,000 hits (with Eisner at the top of the list);

    "heuristic research"—2,510,000 hits (Moustakas at the top);

    "metaphysics"—1,550,000 hits (Heidegger at the top);

    "phenomenology"—1,250,000 (Giorgi at the top);

    "hermeneutics"—555,000 hits (Gadamer up there);

    "life writing"—52,000 hits (no one I know);

    "deconstruction"—18,400 hits (Derrida, but not on top);

    "a/r/tography"—2,900 hits (Irwin et al.);

    "poetic inquiry"—2600 hits (Prendergast et al.);

    "arts-integrating research"—438 hits (guess who?).

Is arts-integrating research outsider or insider, reactionary or mainstream? Something I have noticed in my review of the literature is that while the literature on arts-integrating research proliferates, it generates surprisingly little critique. Most of the literature on theory in arts-integrating research is presentational, and responses to these works—as in editorials or

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[14] The field has come a long way since the 1996 AERA meeting in which Elliot Eisner and Howard Garner debated "Should a Novel Count as a Dissertation in Education" (Saks, 1996).

book reviews—likewise tend to be supportive of the methodologies rather than provocative.

Examples of such supportive review include Miller (2010), in response to a conference

presentation of Vicki Kelly, Erika Hasebe-Ludt, Carl Leggo, Nané Jordan, Anita Sinner and

Cynthia Chambers, as well as Siegesmund (2012), reviewing Eisner. Have the paradigm wars

abated? Have the issues changed (Carrier et al., 2004)? Has the dominant voice shifted? Is

qualitative research now the norm? Do arts-integrating research methodologies just circle

within their own coterie, happily legitimate within their own paradigms, ignored by other

academics? While Cahnmann-Taylor (2008) complains that arts-integrating research is not only

ignored but also rejected by educational funders (p. 6); Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund

(2018) vaunt the ever-growing successes of arts-integrating research (and continue to complain

about lack of funding). Although my literature search found negative reviews of early

enunciations of arts-integrating research, such as that of Phillips (1983) or Pariser (2009), which

critique the validity of arts based research from a positivist point of view, a/r/tography has

been subject to very little negative critique. One exception would be jagodzinski and Wallin

(2013), who critique a/r/tography from a postmodern point of view. This lack of critique seems

a loss, to me. I think that, although we could do without acrimony or oppressive foreclosure,

the cycle of statement and response, both within and without, is beneficial for the field of arts-

integrating research.

In my review of the literature, I did find a number of works that examine and analyze the

theoretical constructs of arts-integrating research, (including Conrad & Beck, 2015; Leavy, 2009;

Pente, 2013; Rolling, 2010; Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014; Sullivan, 2005; Wang et al., 2017).

They each have fascinatingly distinct notions and assertions regarding arts-integrating research, and I'll describe them in chronological order.

- Sullivan (2005), borrowing from Habermas, puts forth a triadic epistemology of art as "technical, contextual, and critical", which he explicates, respectively, as knowing in order to control, knowing in order to interpret, and knowing in order to transform (p. 95). Sullivan maps this notion and others onto visual representations, such as the fold (p. 94), the braid (pp. 103-106) and fractals (pp. 106-107), visuals that he thinks are epistemic, in themselves.

- Leavy (2009), in her book, *Method Meets Art: Arts-based Research Practice,* places arts-integrating research methodologies as emerging from the qualitative methodologies of ethnographies, from their effort to evocatively represent researched phenomena.

- Rolling (2010), using the Kuhnian concept of paradigm as the beliefs, values and rules that govern a community of practitioners, reinterprets the collection of arts-integrating research practices as a collective paradigm—in which one characteristic is that it is "postparadigmatic" (p. 109).

- Pente (2013) engages art to consider art, experimenting with the aesthetics of rot. She takes the multi-synaesthetic image of decay, using its qualities of death and finitude to present a/r/tography as a shift from "a Cartesian philosophy of . . . absolute truth" (p. 5) to one "acknowledge[ing] the finite human condition . . . in which uncertainty is the norm" (p. 7).

- British researchers Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2014) offer a comparative historical and functional overview of arts-integrating research, engaging nomenclature I have not seen elsewhere, with terms such as arts-related research (their umbrella term), arts-informing research, arts-engaging research and arts-inquiring pedagogy. They consider arts-related research to be a methodology that "transcends arts and social science in order to reflect diverse human experience" (p. 14). They muse that "in terms of philosophical and methodological positioning arts-related research sits within and across post-modernism, constructionism and constructivism" (p. 3). They perceive

crucial turns in the development of arts-related research, in a movement from organized to blurred to disruptive aesthetic practices.

- Conrad and Beck (2015) suggest that the field of arts-based research should be articulated as its own disciplinary paradigm, and toward that aim they suggest philosophical assumptions that might be shared by all practitioners, at levels including the ontological, the epistemological and the axiological. Conrad and Beck suggest that arts-based research is grounded in an ontology that understands human beings as fundamentally creative, aesthetic and relational. Epistemologically, Conrad and Beck suggest that an aesthetic knowing is "sensory-perceptual-emotional" and as such is primary to "linguistic-cognitive knowing" (p. 11).[15] Axiologically, Conrad and Beck emphasize relationality, both in celebrating human flourishing and working against social oppressions.

- Wang et al. (2017), noting the increasing popularity of arts-based research, offer a straightforward structural classification framework of arts-based research, categorizing it into three "families"—research about art, art as research, and art in research—and portraying it largely as a pluripotent *tool* that might be used by qualitative researchers interested in expanding the possibilities of their socially engaged craft.

In spite of the diversity, and even incompatibility, within and among the above assertions, I do find that they all have something in common: the urge to asseverate arts-integrating research in terms of philosophical constructs. It seems to me that what is going on is a shift: from paradigm war to paradigmatic inquiry. What has captured the attention of researchers is awareness of paradigm itself, of the theoretical frameworks and belief systems that guide

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[15] I found that Conrad and Beck, in putting forth an epistemology that allows for "multiple ways of knowing", also make seemingly incompatible statements, for example, stating that an arts-based research paradigm includes both "organizing and imposing meanings" as well as eschewing concept-production to instead provocatively address problems (pp. 10-11). I think that this points to the difficulty in trying to put forth unified philosophical assumptions in a diverse, heteroglossic field.

understandings of knowing. That awareness has led not only to scrutiny of one's paradigm, but to the possibility of elaborating new paradigms, new frameworks of belief and new approaches that extend from those frameworks. St.Pierre (2014) describes the current situation as an ontological turn, a post-poststructuralist or post-qualitative focus on the nature of reality.

My current study is a timely extension of this paradigmatic focus and ontological turn. While other studies have enunciated the paradigms of their own arts-integrating methodology, or explicated that of others, my study is meta-paradigmatic. In comparatively analyzing two arts-integrating research methodologies, my study not only analyzes the belief systems these methodologies, qua epistemologies, disclose, but in doing so, it reflects on the basis of knowledge in belief, particularly metaphysical belief. The reflection extends yet further, as this study enables me to closely examine my own belief systems and methodological approach to inquiry. Note, however, in this study (as I will subsequently explicate), I will engage the term *metaphysics* in place of the terms paradigm or ontology.

One more comment: the epistemological and metaphysical constructs of Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography will be further discussed and compared in subsequent sections. As such it is important to keep in mind that although they are compared as if on par with one another, these two methodologies emerged at different times and maintain different scopes of influence. A/r/tography emerged 20 years after arts based research, at a time when the intensity of methodological debate had subsided, and certainly at a point when qualitative methods had gained ascendency. Eisner's theories of knowledge, and his application of them to curriculum and to arts-integrating research have been widely

received, by mainstream curricular discourse. A/r/tography, on the other hand, while intensely

appreciated as a methodology, has maintained a reactionary and regional feel.

> *—Wow, I had no idea that the academic world was so—what did you call it?—polemical?*
> —On one side, the scientists; on the other side, the qualitative researchers?
> *—Yeah, ? I kept imagining the university like a wrestling ring, with muscled-up prize*
> *fighters. All jumpy in their corners. Waiting for the bell, to spring out each other.*
> —Wanna bet how it all turns out?
> *—Oh, I'm happy just to watch from the ringside.*

EXHIBIT 4

"You mean like how you learn math by singing songs about mice?"

Prior Research: The Epistemologies of Eisner's Arts Based Research and Irwin et al.'s A/r/tography

Welcome to the next exhibit of my dissertation. This exhibit provides further background to my current inquiry—namely, the findings from my prior inquiry, which, as I have mentioned, are what prompted the current study. My master's research was a quest to study how art is a way of knowing, which I investigated by examining the epistemological enunciations and indications of two arts-integrating research methodologies, Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography. To learn at greater length what I elucidated, I invite you to read, at your pleasure, my master's thesis (Haggarty, 2015). For now, I offer this brief commentary and précis.

The methodological writings of Eisner and of Irwin et al. do not set forth epistemologies per se; they do not formally put forth "a theory of knowledge and understanding, especially

with regard to its methods, validity, and scope" (OED, 2014a). However, as accounts of how art might be engaged as research practices, they do make epistemological assertions, which a close reading reveals.

Both methodologies share some epistemological understandings, although they also present key distinctions. As I mention in the previous exhibit, the theorizations of Eisner (and Barone), and then those of Irwin et al., arose in the context of the qualitative turn in research. Both methodologies resist positivism, along with the notion of knowledge as dependent on rational, empirical, objective, systematic, reductive, quantitative methods or practices. Why would they resist such practices, long honoured as routes to promoting or attaining certainty? Because neither Eisner, nor his colleague Barone, nor Irwin, nor her a/r/tographic colleagues conceive of knowledge as certainty. Instead, they all use the qualifiers "uncertain" and "meaning" to describe the kind of knowledge/knowing that arises from art (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Eisner, 2002; Springgay, 2002; Springgay et al. 2005). In moving away from certainty (that capital-T truth), Eisner repeatedly uses the words "enhancing" and "enlarging" to describe this "uncertain meaning" prompted by arts based research, while Irwin et al. engage a multiplicity of divergent, shifting descriptors, including the very words "divergent" and "shifting" and "multiplicity", to depict the "uncertain meaning" prompted by a/r/tography. In either case, the descriptors used relate to their epistemological frameworks.

I will next describe these frameworks, and their epistemological engagements, in further detail. But before I do so, I would like to make a comment on my use of the locution "way of knowing" in this study (as in my master's). This is a term which I acquired from the literature, for example, in the 1985 book, *Learning and Teaching The Ways of Knowing,* edited by Eisner.

This work, an anthology, does not prescribe a definition of "way of knowing" because its very point is to recognize plurality and diversity of knowledge, that "the roads to knowledge are many" (p. xi) and that many modes, such as the practical, formal, scientific, spiritual or aesthetic, may be involved in attaining knowledge. Yet, I note that this locution, though well established, is problematic for some. For example, Ruitenberg (2012), in a volume that interrogates the notion of epistemological diversity, critiques the expression "ways of knowing" as "vague" (p. 101) and "ambiguous" (pp. 15, 16). Ruitenberg suggests that the expression functions as a metonymic trope for worldview and that it would be incorrect to ascribe distinctness of knowledge or of knowing to what is more primarily a set of beliefs about being. I think that Ruitenberg's description of the phrase "way of knowing" as ambiguous is apt, yet I think that it is the very ambiguity of the locution that gives it strength (Empson, 1949). The locution, at least in regard to "art as a way of knowing", and at least with respect to the methodologies of this study, affirms "way of knowing" not only as a process of coming to know, but also as a collective practice, one based on mutually ascribed-to beliefs that have implications to knowing and knowledge. It is the very awareness of the entailments of belief, of the framework-dependency of knowledge, of the cohesive inter-relations in understandings of art, knowledge and knowing, that renders the locution so allusively evocative.

Here is a summary of the ways of knowing that I discerned in reading the methodological writings of Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography.

Arts based research, as conceived by Eisner, refutes objectivity and the quest for certainty (Eisner, 1992). Eisnerian arts based research is a methodology of cognitive pluralism and constructivism; it sees both art and knowledge as meanings—uncertain, and yet enhancing—

that are constructed, both individually and interactively, and as symbolically transacted (Eisner 1994a, 1994b). The epistemology of this arts based research elaborates a model of this transaction of knowledge (and of coming to know) from subjective perception to symbolic expression (Siegesmund, 2004). In doing so, it focuses on non-discursive symbolism: how knowledge/meaning may be transacted entirely qualitatively (non-linguistically, non-algorithmically) from perception to expression (Eisner, 1994a). This arts based research also focuses on the idea that, with art, knowledge is epistemically imagined, not only by the pre/suppositions of the artist, and by her cultivated, qualitative judgments, but that knowledge is both afforded and constrained by the medium/media through which it is known (Eisner, 2002). Terms coined by Eisner to elaborate art as a process of coming to know, include *connoisseurship* (1994b), *epistemic seeing* (2002), *qualitative reasoning* (2002), *somatic knowing* (2002) and *rightness of fit* (2002). Key constructs of Eisner's arts based research are seen in the following quotations.

- Artistic approaches to research are less concerned with the discovery of truth than with the creation of meaning. . . . Truth implies singularity and monopoly. Meaning implies relativism and diversity. (Eisner, 1981b, p. 9)
- Generalization is possible [through art] because of the belief that the general resides in the particular and because what one learns from a particular one applies to other situations subsequently encountered. (Eisner, 1981b, p. 7)
- What one is able to experience through any of the sensory systems depends, for example, not only on the characteristics of the qualities in the environment but also on one's purposes, frames of reference . . . anticipatory schemata. (Eisner, 1994a, p. 25)
- The limits of our language do not define the limits of our cognition. (Eisner, 2004, p. 7)
- The kinds of nets we know how to weave determine the kinds of nets we cast. These nets, in turn, determine the kinds of fish we catch. (Eisner, 1994a, p. 41)

- The arts teach students to act and to judge in the absence of rule, to rely on feel, to pay attention to nuance, to act and appraise the consequences of one's choices and to revise and then to make other choices. (Eisner, 2004, p. 5)

The a/r/tography of Irwin et al., on the other hand, not only refutes positivism's quest for singular certainty, it also rejects structuralism's expectation of order, stability, categorization and generalization of truth (Irwin, 2003). For Irwin et al., meanings are always uncertain, divergent and shifting. Their methodology of a/r/tography resists the use of dichotomy as an essential cognitive organization strategy (Irwin, 2004). Instead, and borrowing from a number of post-structuralist philosophers, particularly Derrida and Deleuze, a/r/tography looks to knowledge as emerging from beyond—or rather, *in between*—dichotomies (Irwin, 2004), in the disruption of stability, in the absence of transcendence (Springgay et al., 2005), and in "rhizomatic relationality" (Irwin et al., 2006), a term which I interpret here as unpredictable, yet meaningfully productive encounters with others. Such notions are entangled in the epistemological motifs of a/r/tography, such as *metonymic métissage*, *thirdness*, *liminality*, the *in-between*, *absence*, *fold*, *complication, rupture, stutter*, *assemblage* and *multiplicity*. Because a/r/tography refutes order, its elucidation of art, of knowledge, and of coming to know are not easy to follow. In "A/r/tography, A Metonymic Métissage," Irwin (2004) offers the following epigrammatic definition of art: "Art is the . . . reorganization of experience that renders complex the apparently simple or simplifies the apparently complex" (p. 31). An a/r/tography manifesto proposes six pivotal concepts, which to me describe not so much practices but conditions of knowing, the term "concepts" neologized as *renderings* that include *contiguity, living inquiry, openings, metaphor/metonymy, reverberations* and *excess* (Springgay et al., 2005; Springgay et al., 2008). These renderings are not systematically explicated, but rather unfold in

deliberately non-linear discursive fragments and jumps, as the a/r/tographers enact their understanding of art, knowledge, and coming to know, as inter/dis/ir/ruptive events. Key constructs of Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography are seen in the following statements.

- In the past, dichotomous thinking separated categories of thought and often placed one form above another, leading to hierarchical considerations. . . . If we resist this favouritism . . . we are moving to a more complex intertextuality and intratextuality of categories. . . . to a multilectic view that encourages thirdness, an in-between space that exists between and among categories. (Irwin, 2004, p. 28)
- There are spaces between and spaces between the in-between. (Irwin, 2004, p. 31)
- [A/r/tography] proposes an understanding of arts-based research as enacted living inquiry, which we call a/r/tography. . . . It is a tangential thread; perhaps a thread that has become un/stitched, un/raveling its own existence into new beginnings. (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 899)
- Loss, shift, and rupture are foundational concepts or metonyms for a/r/tography. They create openings, they displace meaning, and they allow for slippages . . . they become tactile, felt, and seen. (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 898)
- [Artistic] gestures exist only in the moment of encounter and exchange between [the artist's] actions and the actions of viewers as they make meaning of such actions. (Springgay et al., 2008)
- A/r/tography becomes a passage to somewhere else. (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 909)

Just as neither the writings of Eisner, nor of Irwin and her a/r/tographic colleagues, explicitly discuss theories of knowing (epistemology), nor do they explicitly discuss theories of reality or existence (metaphysics, ontology). The terms, metaphysics and ontology, are rarely used in their methodological documents, and neither methodology sets forth a theory of reality. Yet, both are inherently metaphysical, and a/r/tography expressly so. What I mean by this is that while both methodologies, as with all research approaches, cannot help but reflect

ontic beliefs, a/r/tography's concept of knowledge, in its resistance to positivism, strikes at the beliefs that undergird Western epistemology (viz., not only knowledge being rational, but also, knowledge being stable) and premises its epistemology entirely on a turning away from these beliefs. The methodological documents of Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography are very focused on ideation whereas those of Eisner's arts based research are focused on explanation. Both resist positivism, but whereas Eisner posits alternative explanations to positivist causality, pluralizing, for example, the meaning of cognition (Eisner, 1994a), a/r/tographers eschew explanation, explanation itself (as reductive, predictive and universal) being contrary to their ontological beliefs.

If this sounds like a/r/tography is decidedly difficult to comprehend, yes, dear Epistemologues, it is. It is difficult to follow because, firstly, a/r/tography, adamantly postmodern, eschews linearity. Furthermore, it is difficult to follow because a/r/tographical theorizations toy with ideas, always tossing and turning them, but never interested in pinning them down (and sometimes not even attributing them). A/r/tography is both declamatory and indefinite: declamatory in its resistance to positivism, declamatory in its allegiance to post-structuralism, intensely inquisitive about alternatives to positivism, but resistant to denoting or containing them. Only by dwelling with a/r/tography, being immersed in it, and reading around it, does the a/r/tographical point of view unfold. Context and provenance are crucial here: to understand a/r/tography's ontology, one needs to step back to look at these philosophical influences.

Stepping back and into the philosophical frameworks that have influenced Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography is what I am doing in this work.

—Yeah, let me see if I've got it right. That first one, that "arts based research", doesn't like the way of science, but does think that art can create a message for all, or at least for some others. Like da Vinci's Last Supper. One artist but many viewers, who know that that painting points at God, God sitting down with us, sharing the food of life, bread is now body, wine is now blood. But the other methodology, "a/r/tography", thinks that no message just sits there forever, the meaning is in the event, in the breaking of the bread. If you weren't there, you just can't get it. So, da Vinci is flogging a copy, or the copy is another event? Never mind, don't answer that. You said you did research about art as a way of knowing. Did you include art too?

—Yes, I did! In my prior study, I engaged poetic inquiry. I used poetry to describe, interpret, compare and evaluate the ideas I encountered as I investigated arts based research, a/r/tography and art as a way of knowing. Here are two of the poems.

Getting It

What do I do when I do this:
scribble these lines,
dribble them, stumble over them,
worm them, squirm them,
leap frog hop them,
chop
them,
stay the rhymes
play them like a fish line?

I guess I hope to catch some sense,
pour it into a four-quart jar,
perch it on the mantelpiece,
throw a party, sip martinis,
call it Art.

Is that what I do when I en-art my mind?
for no big reason, mind;
urged on not by hunger,
no raving thirst to save the waters—
change, blame, tame the waters—
just age old wonder
about all that is this warty world.

Is that enough?
must I shout, dart about,
art-act the page,

re-tra-ct,
spell it out,
space
the
lines
into
lists,
ist-tw em-th art-ap
restart, impart?

Well I will, if you wish,
to help you catch my drift,
though we could rather swim like fish:
(eyes)) ((askew)
gazing sidewise always,
yet ably able to see the wiggle—
    and get it.

ૐ

Wholly

It isn't enough to know, just *thinking*
If I think, therefore I am
And if I am, herefore I stand
So I must know with all mine own.
With my own eyes, I must see the fit
With my own ears, it must sound right
How can I know, unless I sniff
and smell who before me has known?
How can I know, unless I taste?
Always I hope for lemon gelato or crème brulée
but what if it tastes like an aspirin stuck sick
in the back of the throat?
What if it tastes like the mucous of a snail trail?
I've not tasted snail snot—
What would that taste like?
And what it touches like—
I must be able to run my fingertips over its texture
Is it smooth or rough, and in what way—
smooth as the glossed glass of Toronto skyscrapers?

or smooth as a cleaned, creamed baby's bum?
rough as scraping my elbows on pavement?
or rough like the wool tweed of a fiddler's cap?
And feel the pattern—
Is it regular, repeatable, as the two-times table?
Are there unexpected breaks
fractures sharp as shattered glass?
Or fissures of eroded time?
It isn't enough to know with my brain
with grey convolutions, synapses and straw-coloured fluid
cerebral
I must know with my heart
With my bones, my blood, my bladder, my bunions
I must know within my self.
With whole, wholly, self must I know
I must strip to nothing and stand on the edge
Open armed, I must spin full circle
Let sun wind rain me, weather me
wrinkle me
whistle me
whisk, whiz
whoosh.

ॐ

—*Good poems! They might be about you, but when I hear them, I feel like it's me experiencing. The snot was gross, but the gelato was tasty—hadn't had either in a good, long time. Is that a pun on your name? That you're whole, wholly, holy?*
—It's what I'm named after. . .
—*Mmm. "Holy is she: / the light that ever shines / the green that ever grows / the voice that calls you home / the boat that brings you there." Our Lady the Muse. What* is *art?*
—That wasn't a question I asked of my research, though a question my research might well ask. I think it is framed here, assumed here, *as* a way of knowing.
—*Is that opposed to a* product *of knowing?*
—As a way to knowing, it may include both process and outcomes of the process, I dare allow. But maybe as opposed to a decoration, a curio, a commodity.
—*Something you pay to own or look at? But people pay for education and buy books.*
—Yes, and I suppose that people might learn something from a decoration, but there is probably still a difference in how they are valued. Academic research, like poetry, rarely makes the best-sellers list. Though I wonder if that's partly because academic art, being "academic", is a specialized, not generally accessible, kind of knowing.

—I think you just said that if art's a way of knowing, it's also a way of believing. So if research is believing, is a research report a prayer?

—Ha ha, metaphysics is as praise and petition? Maybe, but are we getting beyond ourselves?

—Oh then, maybe later. For now, one more question: What was your take-away?

—Awe, astonishment, a pique and an itch. As I mentioned in my exhibit on research questions, I realized that, ultimately, the conceptions of knowing in these methodologies differ because their belief systems differ. I will take up this point in my next round.

—Ah, a cliff-hanger!?

EXHIBIT 5
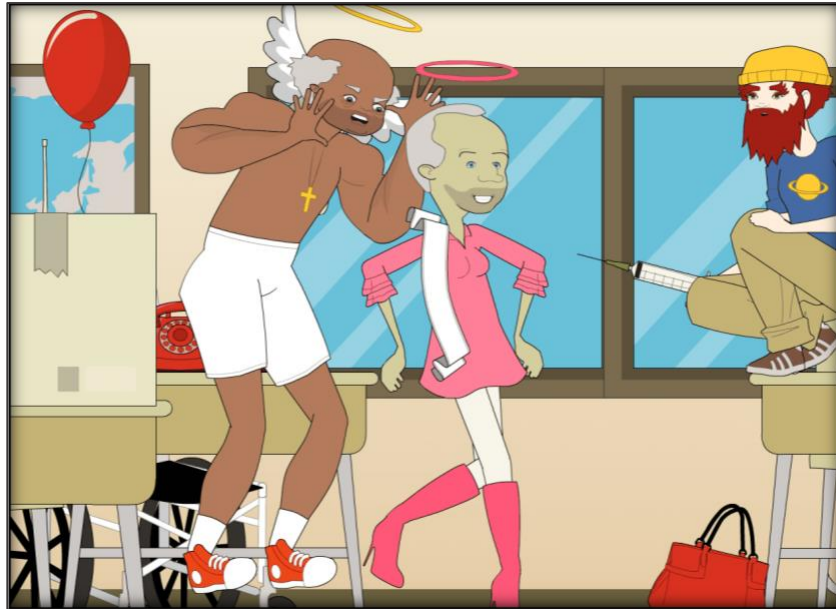
"Equivocity!"
"Univocity!"

Conceptual Review of Relevant Terms and Notions in Metaphysics

As I was charting the different notions regarding knowledge and knowing in Eisner's arts

based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography, it came to me that the reason their

epistemologies are contrastingly different is because they hold contrastingly different beliefs

about reality. I recall a pivotal movement in this regard, when I was reading the introductory

chapter in *Being with A/r/tography* by Irwin and Springgay (2008). I was having a hard time

following their point about how multiplicities are singularities and vice versa. In following their

references, I was led the writing of Elizabeth St.Pierre, a theorist who squarely recasts

methodological issues not just as epistemological, but as ontological:

> Over the years, it has become abundantly clear to me that methodology should never be
> separated from epistemology and ontology (as if it can be) lest it become mechanized and
> instrumental and reduced to methods, process, and technique. (St.Pierre, 2014, p. 3)

In other words, St.Pierre is stating that belief is inseparable from methodology, from research. St.Pierre labels her focus an "ontological turn" (2014, p. 2), distinguishing it from the "qualitative turn" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), the antecedent movement away from the hegemony of quantitative research in the academy. Recasting a/r/tography's notions, such as that of *singularity, multiplicity* or *relationality,* as ontological assumptions reframed them for me, suggesting a different road to take in trying to comprehend this methodology. I wondered if a/r/tography would be more comprehensible as an enunciation of belief than as a way of knowing, or if comprehending its metaphysical assumptions would help elucidate its epistemology.

My plan in this section is to present and delineate the two contrasting belief systems that were brought to my attention by the methodologies of Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography, which I refer to as the *metaphysics of presence* and the *metaphysics of difference*. Phenomenologically speaking, I will delineate their essential notions and positions. Hermeneutically speaking, I will interpretively review their provenances. But my first task is to review and disambiguate between the terms of reference involved.

Terms of Reference—Provenances and Preferences

What is the term we use to refer to "a set of belief regarding the nature of reality, existence and life"? The answer is that there is no single term. A number of terms are possible, such as ontology, metaphysics, worldview, paradigm or ideology. A review of these terms (Haggarty, 2018) demonstrates many conceptual differences among them and many dimensions to the constructs they delineate. All of the terms refer to adhering beliefs, but the adhering may be loose or tight, the adherence may be individual or collective, and the belief

tacit or studied. For example, worldview is often used to describe individual, inchoate

convictions, as opposed to argued tenets (Naugle, 2002). Paradigm is often used to describe the

doctrinal matrix of a scientific or research community (Kuhn, 1962; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011;

Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2005; Lincoln & Guba 2011; Lincoln et al., 2018). Ideology is often used

to describe the justification and application of beliefs into social action or policy, such as

political, economic or educational systems (Blackburn, 2016; Chandler & Munday, 2020; OED,

2010b), but these beliefs are based on understandings (ideas) of how *society* does or ought to

function, and are not necessarily ontic.[16] While the terms paradigm and ideology both figure at

different points in this study, the two most philosophically fundamental terms I have come

across are *ontology* and *metaphysics*, and it is these two terms which require further

discussion.

Research theorists and research handbooks often engage the term "ontology". For

example, I found this term preferentially engaged in Creswell (2007), Crotty (1998), Grix (2004),

Hay (2007); Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), Ludwig (2016), Scotland (2012) and St.Pierre (2014).

However, Denzin and Lincoln (2011), Guba and Lincoln (1994, 2005), Lincoln and Guba (2011),

and Lincoln et al. (2018), while they do engage the term "ontology", show a preference for the

term "paradigm". Johnson (2005), similarly, engages the term ontology but prefers another, the

term "metaphysical perspective". Crotty (1998) offers a typical definition: "Ontology is the

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[16] The term ideology does become an ontic term of reference in the Marxist theory of dialectical materialism,
which understands the world as existing independently of our (idealist) perceptions of it, and that both the world
and the world qua society have been driven historically by revolutionary changes wrought by contradictory forces.
In this sense, ideology is the truth function of power, the (illusory/false) ideas by which those in power maintain
their dominance (McLellan, 1986). One thing that has emerged from Marxist theory is the connotation of ideology
as polemical. We speak of the ideological not only as conviction of one set of ideas, but as the refutation of others
as wrong.

study of being. It is concerned with 'what is', with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality, as such" (p. 10).

Dictionaries and encyclopaedias, however, cross-reference the term "ontology" with "metaphysics". Compare these two definitions:

- "The term 'ontology' derives from *on*, the present participle of the Greek, *einai*, meaning, to be. It is the inquiry into all aspects of being qua being" (Lechte, 2003).
- "[Metaphysics] means the philosophical study of the nature, constitution, and structure of reality, or of how things actually are, as contrasted with appearance, or how things seem to be to a particular perceiver or set of perceivers" (Iannone, 2001).

The definitions may seem synonymous, but their sources point to different perspectives and usages. The definition of ontology comes from the encyclopedia *Key Contemporary Concepts* while that of metaphysics comes from the *Dictionary of World Philosophy*. You might think the difference is new versus old, or that the difference is disciplinary. The difference here *is* disciplinary, but as such, ideological, one of ideational persuasion. Here are another two characterizations of metaphysics:

- "Metaphysics is an attempt to find bad reasons for what one was going to believe anyway" (according to logician E. H. Bradley, as cited in van Inwagen, 2015, p. 17).
- "Metaphysics is a sham" (according to the logical positivist Rudolf Carnap, as cited in Moore, 2013, p. 292).

So, who uses the term "ontology" and who uses the term "metaphysics" and why? The term ontology is preferred by post-structuralist theorists (e.g., St.Pierre, 2014). A notable exception is Judith Butler. In her performative belief system, there is no human "being", only human "doing", and so, she claims, no such thing as ontology (Butler, 1990). Pragmatic methodologists (e.g., Burke-Johnson & Onwegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2007) make a similar claim.

The term ontology is also engaged in the language of information technology to refer to the exhaustive categorization of all elements in a system (B. Smith, 2003; Maia, 2013). On the other hand, the term metaphysics is preferred by a number of philosophers, and if so, they are more likely to be analytic than continental, unless they are specialists in medieval thought or theology (thus, van Inwagen, 2015, and Owens, 1978, respectively) or in the history of philosophy and belief (Grondin, 2012; Moore, 2013; Wood, 1990). Why the difference in usage? The preferences in term usage are in themselves illustrative of ontic leanings, even if their coinages were more incidental.

Historically, the term metaphysics dates back to the first century, (Grondin, 2012, p. xxii), but after the 16th century, the term tended to be avoided. The term ontology developed in the 17th century, as a categorical clarification; it then fell into disuse and was taken up again in the 20th century (Corazzon, 2016, section 5). Further, the term metaphysics came from the title given—purportedly by Andronicus of Rhodes (Grondin, 2012, p. xxii; van Inwagen & Sullivan, 2016, n.p.)—to the collection of works dealing with what Aristotle referred to as *first philosophy*—the study and explanation of the ultimate cause and nature of existence. Andronicus' title, *Meta-Physics*, (or in Greek, τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά), was meant to suggest that it should be placed and read *after* another of Aristotle's other work, the *Physics* (Greek, Φυσικὴ), which deals with Aristotle's theorizing on the principles and causes of change, movement and motion.[17] Both the term metaphysics, and Aristotle's conception thereon held sway for

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[17] Note, ironically, that since Aristotle referred to his physics as *second philosophy*, this means that the first comes after the second, a delightful incongruity.

centuries, notably through the scholastic tradition begun by Saint Thomas Aquinas, which

aimed to use reason to justify faith (see Humphreys, 2010; Sachs, n.d.).

With the Enlightenment movement in the 17th century, however, beliefs of scholastic

philosophy were repudiated by prominent philosophers of the time. Hobbes (1651/2020) called

(scholastic) metaphysics "supernatural" and "repugnant to natural reason" (in Chapter 46 of his

Leviathan; see Humphreys, 2010, para. 9). Hume (1748/2017), even more famously decried,

> If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us
>
> ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it*
>
> *contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit
>
> it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion. (Section 12,
>
> Part 3, para. 13)

In the wake of Hume, metaphysics was declared dead, Kant its gravedigger (Grondin, 2012,

pp. 131, 153), and henceforth philosophers avoided mentioning the ghoul. The term

metaphysics acquired a pejorative connotation, as a supernatural, even occult belief scheme, a

connotation still held today (e.g., P. White, 2009).[18] Despite the repudiation, the term

metaphysics continued to refer to the study of reality.

The term ontology was coined in an effort to categorize the branches of metaphysics, by

German philosopher Christian Wolff, in his *Ontologia*, written in 1728. In an attempt to improve

the metaphysics of scholasticism, Wolff divided metaphysics into two streams, *general*

metaphysics, or ontology, which dealt with essences of beings, along with the categories and

principles that applied to all objects, and *specific metaphysics*, which dealt with eternity and

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[18] In P. White's 2009 *Guide to Research Questions* he adamantly states, "Some questions, [i.e.,] metaphysical ones, should never be asked in research" (p. 42).

first causes—God and soul (see Corazzon, 2015; Iannone, 2001). The term ontology was revived

by Heidegger, who, I assume, desired a more respected term of reference to describe his

philosophy of *being*:

> Philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology, and takes its departure from the
> hermeneutic of *Dasein* which, as an analytic of existence has made fast the guiding-line
> for all philosophical inquiry at the point where it arises and to which it returns.
> (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 62; see Crotty, 1998, p. 96).

Here are some further relevant notes on the usage of these two terms:

- Not necessarily apparent in definitions, the terms ontology and metaphysics include
  not only the *study* of being/reality, but equally, a *theory* of being/reality. As Corazzon
  (2016) says, they include both *discipline* and *domain* (section 5).
- The noun, *metaphysics*, is both singular and plural.
- Etymologically, the word ontology is derived from the Greek word *on*, meaning being,
  and *logos*, meaning word or study (OED, 2004b).
- From the Greek word *on* comes the adjective "ontic" (OED, 2004a).

What about the terms as they combine into the key phrases of this study: videlicet,

"metaphysics of presence" and "metaphysics of difference"? Regarding the provenance of the

term metaphysics of presence—in Heidegger's critique of Western metaphysics, he referred to

this tradition as a philosophy of "presence" (Heidegger, 1953/2000, pp. 216-217; Grondin,

2012, pp. 202, 216). It was Derrida who coined the specific phrase "metaphysics of presence" in

his subsequent critique of the same tradition (Derrida, 1967/1978, p. 281; see Grondin, 2012,

p. 241; Moore, 2013, p. 513). The term "metaphysics of difference" occurs periodically in the

literature (e.g., Rae, 2014). In referring to the study and constructions of belief that developed

in resistance to the Western metaphysical traditions, by Derrida and by Deleuze, some other

terms I have come across include "differential ontology" (Cisney, n.d.), "philosophy of difference" (Cisney, 2018) and "ontology of change" (D. W. Smith, 2018).

In sum, it seems that if you are of a post-structuralist persuasion, or if you are an empirical atheist, or if you wish to specifically refer to the philosophy of being, or if that is just the term most familiar to you from your reading of contemporary research textbooks, you will likely prefer the term "ontology". That sounds like just about everyone! And yet I use the term "metaphysics" in my study to refer to the two belief systems I am examining.

Through my reading, I have come to appreciate the term metaphysics. (Aside: here is an example of hermeneutic iteration, as in my research proposal I preferred the term ontology.) For one thing, I'd rather be called a metaphysician, or even a metaphysicist, than an ontologist.

> —*Because if you call yourself that people say yeah, why is there still not a cure?*
> —Ontologist—not oncologist.

Let me remind you, Interlocutor, that the term metaphysics came into disrepute because it was rejected as a domain (a theory)—it was never rejected as a discipline (a topic of study). Especially as such, I think it still holds well. I prefer the term metaphysics because it allows me parallel constructions, namely, the metaphysics of presence and the metaphysics of difference. Also, I think that the term "ontology of difference" is awkward in that the philosopher to whom it would most be ascribed, Gilles Deleuze, was actually favourably inclined toward the term metaphysics, saying (with Felix Guattari) that "the death of metaphysics or the overcoming of philosophy has never been a problem for us: it is just tiresome, idle chatter" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 9) and reputedly calling himself a "pure metaphysician" (in an interview with Arnaud Vallani, as cited in D. W. Smith, 2012, para. 1; 2018, p. 406). I would prefer the term "metaphysics of identity" to "metaphysics of presence", for the clarity and even better

parallelism of the former, but I recognize that the latter term is strongly embedded into usage. Nonetheless, later, I will describe the term, "metaphysics of presence" as a metaphysics of identity, as I further critique its meaning and usage.

Conceptual Review: Metaphysics of Presence, Metaphysics of Difference

Preamble-latory note—a reminder, Interlocutor: to explicate the essential distinctions between the metaphysics of presence and the metaphysics of difference is to differentiate what each says is the nature of reality and of being. One might ask, what is its *substance*—its foundation, its principles, its cause and its constituents (OED, 2012b; Grondin, 2012, pp. 60-63). Sub-stance transcribes literally as "what stands under" (OED, 2012b).

In this next section, I will engage in a conceptual review of these two metaphysics. Before doing so, it is imperative to point out that the domains of the metaphysics of presence and difference have been interpreted and developed by recent scholars from the metaphysical notions of many philosophers and neither is attributable to any specific philosopher. For this conceptual review, I have read a number of resources from a variety of philosophical perspectives: scholastic (Maritain 1931/2005), rationalist (Stumpf, 2003), phenomenological (Wood, 1990), hermeneutic (Grondin, 2012), analytic (Moore, 2013), as well as post-structuralist (Rae, 2014).[19]

The scholars I have engaged in my conceptual review each have their own distinct metaphysical perspectives, and their writings engage differing theses. Especially with Grondin

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[19] Two other resources I found of great help in getting a grasp on a philosophical topic, as well as references thereof (frequently by the author of the piece), are the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* and the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, both peer-reviewed and both available online as open source publications. I have especially enjoyed the articles in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, which offer a strong and clearly stated thesis on a topic, as opposed to a general summary or introduction to a philosopher or a philosophic topic.

(2012), Moore (2013) and Wood (1990), the point of the writing is not to summarize the writings of major Western philosophers, but to serve as interpretations of the nature of metaphysics and of metaphysical ideologies. Grondin's (2012) main point is that metaphysics as a philosophical theorization of the understanding of reality and being is not something to be overcome, but something essential and fundamental to all other inquiry, and something which strongly depends on the ongoing interpretation of constructs received from tradition. Wood's (1990) thesis is that metaphysics is the attempt to comprehend the mystery of Being, "the unencompassed but ever-encompassing Whole" (p. 311), an attempt which involves not just systematic rational theorization, but dialogic encounter, experience and affirmation. Moore (2013) takes (and takes on) metaphysics as an interrogation (of prior thought) in order to ask, determine and grant what may be said generally and novelly about reality from immanent experience.

None of the above-mentioned scholars directly engage my research questions. None of them essentialize or compare the metaphysical orientations of presence and difference. I have not found any scholars (beside myself) who take on this task. Yet all serve as strong exegetes in my task of essentializing and comparing the metaphysics of presence and difference. One reason for this is that most of them, and particularly Grondin (2012), Moore (2013) and Wood (1990), take a genealogical approach to metaphysics, looking for meta-constructs, principles for which there has been argument and/or dialogue over time.

In the conceptual review that follows, I review and cull from what has been exegetically interpreted as essential metaphysical notions of a particular philosopher or philosophy, and from what has been interpreted as their significant metaphysical notions carried forth in, and

against, the Western tradition. For each philosopher I engage, I demonstrate original sources

from which their metaphysical notions have been apprised, as well as exegetical sources that

may be helpful to others. Each subsection begins with a poeticized summary of the essential

features of the metaphysics of presence and difference, respectively.

A Conceptual Review of the Metaphysics of Presence

being is
being is selfsame
being endures
being is selfsame and enduring because being partakes of the absolute
which is infinitely selfsame and eternally enduring

❦

Since the term "metaphysics of presence" was coined by Derrida to refer to the baggage

of Western belief, it behooves us to go back to forbearers of Western thought in ancient Greek

philosophy to find its sub-stance.

Parmenides (515-440 BCE)

Let us start in poetry, with the mystical, poetic interpretation of being, by Parmenides.

Available to us as an incomplete inscription of an oral work, Parmenides' *Poem* is one of the

oldest discourses on the nature of being. In Parmenides' *Poem,* the unnamed hero (Parmenides

himself?) ascends a celestial path and meets a goddess who offers him a lofty, ennobling

revelation—the way of truth. He is told of two paths of human knowing: the way of opinion

(*doxa*) and the way of truth (*aletheia*). The goddess calls the way of opinion one of non-being,

the way of "becoming, generation and corruption" (Grondin, 2012, p. 13). The way of truth is

one of being, which is described, in contradistinction to non-being, as the way of permanence—

the "ungenerated and unperishable" (Grondin, 2012, p. 11)—the way that is "trustworthy and

persuasive" (DeLong, n.d.). The goddess summarizes the two paths:

> Listen, and I will instruct thee—and thou, when thou hearest, shalt ponder—
>
> What are the sole two paths of research that are open to thinking.
>
> One path is: That Being doth be, and Non-Being is not:
>
> This is the way of Conviction, for Truth follows hard in her footsteps.
>
> Th' other path is: That Being is not, and Non-Being must be;
>
> This one, I tell thee in truth, is an all-incredible pathway.
>
> For thou never canst know what is not (for none can conceive it),
>
> Nor canst thou give it expression, for one thing are Thinking and Being. (as translated by
>
> Davidson, 1869)[20]

Through his poem, Parmenides states a metaphysical belief: that being *is*; and non-being

is not. This might seem a truism to you, but this very notion leads to corollary beliefs—and to

dispute. Parmenides proposes that (since non-being is unthinkable) being itself always has been

and always will be. Further, since non-being is unthinkable, Parmenides also classifies becoming

as non-being. Grondin (2012) points out that Parmenides' metaphysics presents a unity

between thought, discourse and being. The goddess encourages the hero to accept the

trustworthy way of truth. The goddess might also be considered to be launching the Western

metaphysics of presence, an understanding of being, and its concomitants of identity and

thought, as selfsame and stably enduring.

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[20] I like the intimate and elegiac quality of this Victorian translation. For a contemporary translation see Gallop (1984).

Plato (428-347 BCE)

Ancient Greece held a tradition of oral discourse. This can be seen in Plato's dialogic and dialectic inquiries (often incorporating the personage of his mentor, Socrates). Plato's metaphysics is probably most known through his famous cave allegory (Plato, ca. 380-360/1997b, *Republic,* Book VI, Sections 516-517; see Makinster, 2015; Wood, 1990, pp. 135-138).[21] In his complex allegory, Plato uses a number of contrasting metaphors, such as light and darkness, ascent and descent, waking and dreaming, and imprisonment and freedom, to depict the nature of human reality, of being and knowing. Briefly, Plato depicts the sensible world as a dark cave in which its dwellers are imprisoned in the obscurity of incomplete knowledge, requiring a transcendent light, as from the sun, to enable their *enlighten*ment.

Plato's metaphysics is further detailed in his analogy of the divided line (as per Plato, ca. 380-360/1997b, *Republic*, Book VI, Sections 509-511; see Grondin, 2012, pp. 35-38). Here, Plato describes a world divided into realms, a sensible realm and an intelligible realm, also portrayed as a realm of opinion (*doxa*) and a realm of knowledge/science (*episteme*), each of which is further divided. The realm of opinion divides into a realm of images along with imagination (as "imaging-ation", not "imagine-ation"), and a realm of things along with credence in them. The realm of science divides into a realm of hypotheses along with discursive knowledge, and a realm of ideas and intelligence.

The notion of *ideas* is determining for Plato. Plato's *Ideas* (or *Forms*, or *eidos*) are sometimes depicted as standing beyond the concrete world, in a literal, celestial, duplicate

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[21] If you are not familiar with this allegory, you have only to link to Youtube for many dramatic visualizations; for its insightfulness, I enjoyed the video exegesis offered by Makinster (2015).

realm that stores exemplars, or models, from which are (imperfectly) copied earthly

manifestations, for example, an exemplar of beauty and its realization in Helen, or an exemplar

of comedy and its manifestation in Harlequin. This is simplistic. The construct of the *eidos* links

to Plato's notion of a more fundamental domain of understanding than that of the sensible. It

also allows Plato to abstract from the concrete to a representation thereof. Grondin (2012)

notes that our very idea of idea is a legacy of Platonic thought (p. 25). The construct of *eidos*

also gives the concept of type or species, another Platonic legacy, and one strongly taken up by

Aristotle.

Yet beyond the realm of knowledge is a realm which Plato little explicates, but which he

calls the One, or the Good, and which he depicts as a realm of permanence, of permanent

being, reason and worth, a fundamental realm that is also (somehow) the principle and cause

of the intelligible, sensible world (e.g., Plato, ca. 380-360 BCE/1997b, *Republic,* Book VI,

Sections 507-508; see Grondin 2012, pp. 38-45; Wood, 1990, pp. 140-146).

Plato is sometimes derided as dualistic and lost in a Platonic relationship with thought. It

is true that Plato's realms are hierarchical divisions and that he trusts the immutable intelligible

over the fickle, uncertain sensible, and that he privileges being over becoming. But it is

important to highlight, again, that Plato conceives of the realms as conceptual devices.[22] Plato's

doctrine of participation (e.g., Plato, ca. 380-360 BCE/1997a, *Phaedo*, Sections 74-75, 93,

100-101; see Wood, 1990, p. 137) presents the sensible realm as participating in and mirroring

the intelligible realm. Furthermore, Plato suggests that the intelligible pervades the sensible;

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[22] A parallel would be the device of the *Medicine Wheel*, used to depict an Indigenous worldview and ontology.

ideas are not only abstractions, they pervade reality (ibid; see Grondin, 2012, p. 30). Plato

(ca. 380-360 BCE/1997a) famously says,

> If someone tells me that a thing is beautiful because it has a bright color or shape or any
> such thing, I ignore these other reasons—for all these confuse me—but I simply, naively
> and perhaps foolishly cling to this, that nothing else makes it beautiful other than the
> presence of, or the sharing in, or however you may describe its relationship to that
> Beautiful we mentioned, for I will not insist on the precise nature of the relationship, but
> that all beautiful things are beautiful by the Beautiful. That, I think, is the safest answer I
> can give myself or anyone else. And if I stick to this, I think I shall never fall into error. This
> is the safe answer for me or anyone else to give, namely, that it is through Beauty that
> beautiful things are made beautiful. Or do you not think so too? (*Phaedo*, Section
> 100d-100e)

Plato's metaphysics, like that of Parmenides, is one that conjoins discourse, truth and

being. It is one that envisions an ultimate realm of being as non-material, permanent and

intelligible, and lending these characteristics to human being and knowing. Plato's metaphysical

schema is fundamental to Western metaphysics.

Aristotle (384-322 BCE)

Plato's metaphysics provided the basic scheme which subsequent philosophers

developed and modified. Aristotle was Plato's chief successor. Philosophy looks to find "first

principles", intones Aristotle, in both his *Physics* and his *Metaphysics*. More empirically and

systemically oriented than Plato, Aristotle modifies Platonic philosophy to account for change

and for his broader notion of cause. Aristotle's thought, I find, is always oriented around the

disambiguation and categorization of issues and fundamentals, and in this way establishing

domains of thought.

It is astounding to realize the continuing prevalence and relevance of Aristotelian notions and nomenclature (e.g., Joseph, 2002). Aristotle's enunciations of logic (developed from Platonic thought) provide cornerstones to Western reason and are a key element in the Western tradition of understanding of identity as selfsameness. Aristotle's chief premise, commonly labelled the "principle of non-contradiction" (Cohen, 2016; Jardine, 2012), is that "it is impossible for the same thing to belong and not belong simultaneously to the same thing in the same respect" (Aristotle, 350 BCE/n.d., *Metaphysics IV, 3*)

Yet, Aristotle understands being *equivocally*—that "to be" can mean many things (e.g., Aristotle, 350 BCE/n.d., *Metaphysics*, Book Zeta, Chapter 1, para. 1; Book Delta, Chapter 7; see Grondin, 2012, pp. 57-60; Owens, 1987). So, disambiguating from linguistic to metaphysical notions of being, Aristotle arrives at his notions of *essence*, *substance* and *accident*. For Aristotle, *essence* is a definitional, and therefore generic, statement of what a thing is (Aristotle, 350 BCE/n.d., passim; e.g., *Metaphysics,* Book Zeta, Chapter 4, para. 1). Substance has been so equivocally interpreted by Aristotle that its meaning is endlessly debated (Grondin, 2012, pp. 60-63). I note Aristotle's definition of *substance* as "that which underlies a thing primarily" (*Metaphysics*, Book Zeta, Chapter 3, para. 1), the quest for which might be considered the entire point of his metaphysical considerations. Aristotle, contra Plato, is eminently focused on substance as material rather than ideational. Aristotle views material things as *hylomorphic*, as conjoinings of matter and form, a notion he explicates in various works including his *Physics* (Book II), his *Categories* (Chapter 8) and his *Metaphysics* (Book Zeta, Chapters 7-9). *Accident* is Aristotle's term for attributes, which he believes are not themselves things, but descriptors of things, and he categorizes them into a nine-fold scheme including quantity, quality, relation,

action, passion, when, where, posture and habiliment (*Categories,* Chapter 4; see Joseph, 2002, pp. 24, 100) This scheme allows one to demonstrate specificity and commonality among things. Aristotle's brilliant reasoning through to four categories of cause (formal, material, efficient and final) continues to provide a useful scheme to describe aspects of being—that a concrete thing is established by form, matter, cause and purpose (*Physics,* Book II, Chapter 3; *Metaphysics*, Book Delta, Chapter 2). In Aristotle's *Physics*, in his model of empirically observable things and their movement, he develops the notion of *entelechy*, of dynamic change toward an end goal (as in the change of a seed in its development into a tree). This notion allows Aristotle to account for becoming. In this same work, Aristotle also puzzles with the paradox of time, that it seems to consist of things which do not exist—the no-longer and the not-yet—but Aristotle concludes that time is best defined as a measure of change, and thus, is an attribute only of the mortal, not of the divine (e.g., Aristotle, 350 BCE/n.d., *Physics*, Book IV, Chapter 11; see Cisney, n.d.; Söderbäck, 2013). However, in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (Book Lambda), he examines cause in the sensible world to deduce a Prime Mover as the ultimate principle of cause (see Maritain, 1931/2005; Stumpf, 2003; Wood, 1990).

Plotinus (204-270), Augustine (354-430), Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

The metaphysics of Plato carried on into the Western traditions as the Neoplatonism of Plotinus and then of Saint Augustine, whose interpretations greatly influenced Christian metaphysics, mysticism and creed (see Augustine, ca. 400/2008; Plotinus, ca. 250/n.d.). Saint Thomas Aquinas was further influenced by the logical systemics of Aristotle (which, in his 13th century world, were only just returning to the purview of Europe via Arabia) to develop a Christian theology in which the revelations of faith are supported by reason.

In his metaphysical theorizations, Aquinas develops the distinction (first noted by the Muslim scholar Avicenna; as noted by Aquinas, 1254/1968; see Grondin, pp. 91-93) between two aspects of being, namely, essence and existence, the "what is" and the "that is" (Aquinas, 1254/1968, 1267/1947; see Maritain, 1931/2005, Part Two, Chapters IV, V; Wood, 1990, pp. 181-186). Aquinas (1254/1968) notes:

> Because the definition telling what a thing is signifies that by which a thing is located in its genus or species, philosophers have substituted the term "quiddity" for the term "essence". The Philosopher frequently calls this "what something was to be"; that is to say, that which makes a thing to be what it is. . . . The term "quiddity" is derived from what is signified by the definition, while "essence" is used because through it, and in it, that which is has being. (*On Being and Essence,* Chapter 1, para. 4)

This distinction allows Aquinas to differentiate God as having an existence unlimited by essence (type, form; Aquinas, 1254/1968, *On Being and Essence,* Chapter 4, para. 6-7), and from there to elucidate God as the fullness of being, as infinite and eternal; as self-caused, self-present and self-illuminated; as both transcendent and immanent (see Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae,* passim). Up until this time being was thought of as, ultimately, a primary and timeless integrity, yes, yet also a finitely and unchanging circumscribed all-that-is (Hagan, 2015, pp. 10, 82; Wood, 1990, p. 137). Humans, as all caused things, are a species or type that answers to *what is*, whereas God is the ultimate, an "I am who am" (Exodus 3: 13). While Christian theology was greatly influenced by Greek thought, Christian theology, in turn, also influenced Western metaphysics in consolidating the ultimate understanding of substance and cause as residing in a being not only permanent and rational, but also *personal*, as characterized by goodness, and as immanent—incarnate—in the world.

—Quodlibet ens est unum, verum, bonum. The Tommies constantly chant that.

René Descartes (1596-1650)

A mystical union pervades notions of being from Greek into medieval thought. Things may be separate in their quiddity, their thisness, yet in their existence they participate with ultimate being. With Descartes, French mathematician-turned-metaphysician, a separation occurs (albeit an incomplete one). While this is often taken to be a mind/body or a subjective/objective split, and while such divisions have been influenced by Descartes, they are not primary to him. Descartes was schooled by the Jesuits and, influenced by their method of rigorous contemplation, by carrying out a process of methodic doubt[23]—*not* radical scepticism, which can be annihilating, but by carrying out a mind experiment an in effort to "perceive clearly and distinctly" (Descartes, 1641/1986, passim, but especially Third Meditation, para. 2; see Moore, 2013, pp. 31ff), Descartes arrived at his certainty of the *cogito*—I do not doubt that I think!

—Well, that's one think for sure!

Through his *Meditations*, Descartes arrives at *three* substances (says Moore, 2013, pp. 40-41)—and *two* metaphysics (says Grondin, 2012, p. 119). Regarding the former, Descartes defines substance as "a thing that exists in such a way as to depend on no other thing whatsoever" (Descartes, 1644/2017, Section 51; see Moore, 2013, p. 40). In other words, for Descartes, a substance is that which is selfsame. Descartes posits: firstly, divine substance, and

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[23] For interesting commentaries on Descartes' method see Grondin (2012, pp. 110-111), Moore (2013, pp. 29-30) and Wood (1990, p. 215).

strictly speaking the only true substance as the others are dependent on it for their existence; secondly, corporeal substance; and thirdly, created thinking substance. Each substance has the attribute of either thought or extension, or both.

The issues of independence, cause and thought result in *two* metaphysics asserts Grondin (2012, after philosopher Jean-Luc Marion). Each metaphysics is delineated by the nature of its substance and the principle of its being. Grondin (2012) summarizes the two metaphysics as that of the *cogitatio* and that of the *causa* (p. 119). The being of the *cogitatio*, is comprised of thinking substance and its principle is thought. The being of the *causa* is a truly self-caused substance and its principle is cause. One is human; one is divine.

The point of Descartes' meditations is to come to certain grounds for knowing ("metaphysics in service of science", says Moore, 2013, p. 28). But the resultant split left Descartes with an aporia: having calved off the sub-stance of the individual as a stand-alone cogito, how does he re-integrate with what he still sees as the prime substance, God? He does think there is a connection: even if the umbilical cord of his cogito has been severed, he still sees a corpus callosum in the grey matter of thinking substances. His cogito has a cogitatum: I cannot *not* think God.

"There must be as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in the effect of the cause" says Descartes, in his *Meditations*, citing the Angelic Doctor of the Church, Saint Thomas Aquinas (1641/1986, Third Meditation, para. 16; see Moore, 2013, p. 26; Grondin, 2012, p. 118). But not all of Descartes' heirs agreed. His proof of the existence of God would not

satisfy a sceptic.[24] Descartes' continued the traditional notion of identity as selfsameness, but

his separation of principles of being resulted in a philosophical tension: subsequent

philosophers tended to choose between either a principle of human subjectivity or a principle

of the absolute, notes Grondin (2012), pointing out Hume, Kant, Nietzsche, Husserl and

Heidegger as examples of the former, and Spinoza, Hegel and Whitehead as examples of the

latter (p. 120).

Benedictus de (Baruch) Spinoza (1632-1677)

Spinoza is an example of a philosopher who chooses God over an independent, thinking

cogito. But Spinoza is an irregularity in the Western tradition in that he refutes any

transcendence to being (an irregularity which resulted in an excommunication from his

Portuguese-Jewish community in Amsterdam, as well as a condemnation of his philosophical

works by the Catholic Church). In his most well-known work, *The Ethics*, Spinoza (1677/1997)

proposes a metaphysics based on immanence and rationalism. He argues that God as absolute

being cannot be separate from his creation:

> Nature does not work with an end in view. For the eternal and infinite Being, which we
> call God or Nature, acts by the same necessity as that whereby it exists. . . . The reason or
> cause why God or Nature exists, and the reason why he acts, are one and the same.
> (Part IV, Preface, para. 4; see Grondin, pp. 124-125; Stumpf, 2003, pp. 236-237).

Thus, Spinoza posits *univocity*, that there is only one substance, entirely immanent (in *Ethics*,

Part I). Thought and extension he considers two attributes of God that reside in humans as

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[24] Of course not, said Anselm, all proofs of the divine arise from prayer (as related by Grondin, 2012, p. 86; Stumpf, 2003, p. 153).

modes of being (Wood, 1990, p. 220). Spinoza suffers none of the problematic consequences of duality, but Spinoza presents a different aporia. He has no problem with establishing a connection with the absolute, as he makes God entirely immanent, but he incurs a problem of determinism (Stumpf, 2003, p. 238). For Spinoza himself, this is not an issue, as he feels that everything is governed by principles, even God, and sees freedom as the "unimpeded fulfillment of nature" (Wood, 1990, p. 221). Aristotle's notion of *entelechy*, of reaching toward an end, a goal, is replaced by the notions of *conatus* and *affect* (Ethics, Part III, Part IV). Conatus may be described as appetite or drive (Stumpf, 2003, p. 240) while affect may be described as passion, a transitional state in a body's vital force (Moore, 2013, pp. 56-57).[25] Spinoza posits a hierarchy of experience and of knowing, in which, at the highest level, one identifies with fullness of being, with the Whole itself. Wood (1990) notes the experiential nature of the levels, and their close parallel with Plato's hierarchy, described in his allegories of the cave and the divided line (p. 219). However, I note that the highest level requires, not rational thinking, but intuition.

Hume (1711-1776)

"The human mind's most essential and most liberating thought is therefore that of God, who is the cause of all that is, to such an extent that all that is cannot be distinguished from him," says Grondin (2012, p. 124), in summarizing the metaphysics of Spinoza. And this is a thought that stands in antithesis to that of Hume.

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[25] These notions become helpful to Deleuze in elaborating his metaphysics of difference.

I imagine Hume at his hearth fire, on a gloomy Scottish day, tossing Spinoza's treatises into the flames. Hume decries and tries to eliminate metaphysics, both as discipline and as domain. What need have we for beliefs? But Hume, wait! Spinoza was cast out of his synagogue for heretical thinking. Hume reaches back for the papers and burns his fingers. Ow! Now that is something Hume can know.

Hume is a thorough-going empiricist. In his most popular and accessible work, *An Enquiry into Human Understanding*,[26] Hume (1748/2017) asserts that all knowledge is built from an association of sense impressions, and all statements must be evidenced by the senses. Hume recognizes the validity of rational thinking, as self-referentially coherent, but insists on a separation between "relations of ideas" and "matters of fact" (ibid, Section 4, para. 1; Moore, 2013, p. 95). When it comes down to those burnt papers, Moore notes that even senses can be doubted. So, all this renown sceptic has as a means to understanding is "the ever-fallible investigation, through observation and experimentation" (Moore, p. 99, intoning a refrain from Hume's *Enquiry*). Investigation of what and by whom? By a selfsame subject examining selfsame things?

This might be a good moment, my Friends, my dear Philos, to remind ourselves where we are at in this review of the Western metaphysical tradition**.** It has generally been one of seeking the principles of being. In response, being has been understood as identity, and as founded in absolute transcendent being, from which it shares attributes, notably self-presence, a sameness, constancy and intelligibility of self. An exception would be Spinoza, for whom the

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[26] The only work in this genealogical review composed in English.

absolute is absolutely immanent, which would suggest that for Spinoza things may be selfsame without being autonomous. Another exception would be Hume, for whom there is no @##$% transcendence, so no $&%!! metaphysics. Let us move now to Gottingen, Prussia, where Kant has just been awakened from his dogmatic slumber by Hume.

> —*By all that cussing outside his window.*
> —Ha, ha, yeah!

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

Kant was shaken by Hume's critique of dogmatic metaphysics and by Hume's empiricism. But then he went for his daily walk about the town of Königsberg, East Prussia.

In Kant's philosophizing, he recognizes the value of experience, the value of the newly emerging scientific method. Kant notices something missing in Hume's philosophy of mind, though. He doesn't think the mind knows exclusively empirically, from sense impressions to idea. He doesn't think that knowing comes only *a posteriori*; he thinks the mind also, and necessarily, works independently of experience, *a priori.* So, Kant (1781/1998) engages in a *Critique of Pure Reason*.[27] His critical metaphysics shifts the framework of traditional metaphysics from first principles (ultimate causation) to the *a priori* structures of knowing (Grondin, 2012, p. 135; Wood, 1990, p. 250). And then he has what he refers to as his own Copernican Revolution:

> Up to now it has been assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects; but all attempts to find out something about them a priori through concepts that would extend our cognition have, on this pre-supposition, come to nothing. Hence let us once try

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[27] Composed in German. Perhaps Kant was also influenced by Hume, in Hume's choice to write in his vernacular language rather than what had hitherto been the classic philosophical languages of Greek and Latin.

whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition. . . . This would be just like the first thoughts of Copernicus, who, when he did not make good progress in the explanation of the celestial motions if he assumed that the entire celestial host revolves around the observer, tried to see if he might not have greater success if he made the observer revolve and left the stars at rest. (Kant, 1781/1998, Bxvi, p. 110; see Wood, 1990, p. 240).

Kant sees that things revolve around us rather than we, them—he realizes that we can never know *things-in-themselves*; how we understand empirical things is influenced by the nature of our reasoning. This is noted in Kant's (1781/1998) famous dictum: "Without sensibility no object would be given to us, and without understanding none would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (A51/B75, pp. 193-194; for discussion see Grondin, 2012, p. 137; Wood, 1990, p. 241). Kant (1781/1998) purports twelve categories of reason (which offer a parallel to Aristotle's categories of the properties of being, but which focus on conceptualization rather than empirical descriptions thereof), and he sorts the categories into four classes of three, the classes being quantity, quality, relation and modality (A70/B95, p. 206).[28] The mind engages these aspects of reason to make judgements and concepts.

And then it gets a little funny. Two concepts that Kant (1781/1998) notes that the mind has come up with are the notion of the phenomenal realm and the notion of the noumenal realm (see Kant, 1781/1998, A 235/B294ff, pp. 338ff). But the noumenal realm is transcendent,

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[28] Here are the groups with their subdivisions: quantity (universal, particular, singular); quality (affirmative, negative, infinitive); relation (categorical, hypothetic, disjunctive); modality (problematic, assertoric, apodictic). For more information, see Thomasson (2018).

and furthermore, it is to the noumenal realm that we ascribe transcendent notions, such as the soul, freedom and God. Grondin (2012) offers this interpretation:

> Driven by its nature, human reason is irresistibly led beyond the limits of the sensible world and asks metaphysical questions. Why is reason driven to these questions? Because it seeks to know the reasons for things. . . . Never satisfied with what is conditioned, because it does not fulfill its search for explanation, reason seeks out what is unconditioned, or absolute. . . . Humans are condemned to ponder metaphysical questions. (p. 133)

Kant calls this seeking *transcendental idealism* and he doesn't think we can do without it, not just because it is how we are structured, but because our transcendental ideas perform a regulative function. He elaborates on that in his *Critique of Practical Reason*.

> —I hear that sigh. You have a question, Quester? Wondering where this is going? If it comes to an ahah?
> —*Do I get a mint?*
> —You get "a light mint"—Western Enlightenment, that is, not the state of spiritual insight or awareness which frees a person from the cycle of suffering and rebirth.

Enlightenment (17th-18th century)

Enlightenment is considered to have been ushered in by Descartes, to be Descartes' baby (e.g., Moore, 2013). Enlightenment is often depicted as a culmination of reason into science, and empiricism into the scientific method. In research literature, it is often equated with positivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: Lincoln & Guba 2000; Lincoln et al., 2011), and so with scientism—Descartes, Locke, Hume and Newton—but there is more to Enlightenment than the scientists. Also of this era (17th into 18th century) were Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, François-Marie Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith. Ideas of the era include

- an understanding of the world as mechanistic, the heavens like clockwork, the body as a machine;

- an expectation of regular, universal laws which may be elucidated;

- a continued belief in God as the cause of this universal regularity;

- a separation of the mind as a transcendent substance distinct from that of God;

- an excitement for the prospects of reason;

- an empowerment of the individual's autonomy, rights and freedom; and

- a focus on the subjectivity of the individual (OED, 2010a, "Enlightenment").

And a repudiation of metaphysics as an antiquated, dogmatic tradition! And yet, does enlightenment entail relinquishing traditional beliefs regarding reality and being? From where does the light of enlightenment arise? For some (such as Hume), Enlightenment brings the choice not to believe in God. This actually makes little difference to the enunciations of traditional metaphysics, as the absolute is just pushed/returned to an impersonal, abstracted or unattributed cause of regularity. Enlightenment holds on to the traditional notions of being and identity. However, with the cloistering of the human mind from God, the human individual is ascribed even more characteristics of the absolute: omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence become intelligence, power and self-presence. Yet these characteristics are Enlightenment ideals, and enlightenment as idealism. Truth and certainty are ideals not always attained. With the sequestering of the self, its mind, its consciousness and its subjectivity become enigmas to puzzle over.

G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1830), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)

After the passing of Kant, three German philosophers who moved into the following century are Hegel, Nietzsche and Husserl, each of whom had profound, and profoundly distinct, attitudes toward the metaphysical.

Hegel's oeuvre picks up on Kant's sense of metaphysics as critique of thought, and adamantly pursues a metaphysics that grounds knowing, which he depicts as reason, or logic. In Kant's transcendental idealism, he speculates a knowing beyond limit, and Hegel picks this up, I think, in querying the constructive use of the negative. Hegel elaborates a philosophical methodology that proceeds through a dialectics of oppositions or contradictions toward sublation, a negation of negation, a higher level synthesis that Hegel calls *Aufhebung* (e.g., Hegel, 1812-/2010; see Horn, 2018). Through his vast work, Hegel attempts to systematize being, thought, logic and spirit. Metaphysically, he believes that being can be dialectically thought with non-being and becoming, as a spiritual entity that evolves historically, eventually culminating into one holy whole. Hegel's most well-known works are *The Phenomenology of Mind* (aka *The Phenomenology of Spirit*), published in 1807 and *The Science of Logic*, a three-volume work, published 1812, 1813 and 1816.

Husserl picks up on Kant's Copernican turn to objects as appearances, as phenomena, as manifestations to consciousness (to a *transcendental ego*). Like Kant, Husserl does not question the existence of "reality", "world" or "being"; his metaphysical quest is to discover the conditions of knowing such existence. How can we understand things, experience, consciousness? How might this epistemology be an apodictic science? Husserl is also influenced by Descartes' methodic doubt in his elaboration of suspending judgement through the epoché and phenomenological reduction—he calls one treatise *Cartesian Meditations, An Introduction to Phenomenology*. Husserl has hopes that his methodology will allow the essence of things-in-themselves to be revealed, in particular, the essence of consciousness itself as the ground of knowing (see Husserl, 1931/1960; Moore, 2013, p. 435; Stumpf, 2003, pp. 450-451; Wood,

1990, p. 216; and Exhibit 2 of this dissertation). I bet Husserl has no hint that the puzzle of consciousness will grow from the nature of the self to the nature of being itself, and that the principles of Western metaphysics will be called into question.

Nietzsche begins this process of destruction of the Western metaphysical tradition of presence, although that is not his intention, per se. Certainly, he opposes any notion of selfsameness of identity. Possibly the most quoted and most divergently interpreted philosopher ever, Nietzsche famously proclaims that "God is dead" (Nietzsche, 1887/2001, Sections 108, 125) and that "there are . . . no facts . . . only interpretations" (Nietzsche, 1883-/1967, p. 267). That "God" (or whatever is understood by "God", for example, eternal selfsameness, reason or presence) is "dead" doesn't stop Nietzsche from his own metaphysical theorizations, and he posits the "will to power" as a grounding metaphysical principle (Nietzsche, 1883-/1967), and with it a ceaseless "eternal return" (Nietzsche, 1887/2001, Aphorism 341, pp. 194-195). Nietzsche's innovative, revolutionary and nihilistic philosophy merges with his grand, aphoristic style of writing in a number of extravagantly titled works, such as his 1883 work, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None* and his 1889 work, *Twilight of the Idols, or how One Philosophizes With a Hammer*.

A Conceptual Review of the Metaphysics of Difference

being irrupts in the here and the now
being never repeats yet endlessly differentiates
being divides not into a duality of immanent/transcendent
but into one single immanence
multiplying endlessly

☙

The metaphysics of difference begins as a reaction against the metaphysics of presence, against perceived problems (inconsistencies, contradictions, enigmas) thereof. What is most typically referenced: the oppressive rigidity of binaries (e.g., Critchley, 2006, p. 31) and the tyrannical logic of non-contradiction (e.g., Jardine, 2012). The failure of Enlightenment. Going deeper, one finds deeper metaphysical beliefs: a refutation of the idea that being partakes of the absolute, a refutation of the attributes of sameness, constancy and intelligibility of the self or the thing.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

This refutation begins with Heidegger. Heidegger, like his mentor, Husserl, was interested in the phenomenon of being. However, he soon found that he was not keen on engaging the phenomenological reduction nor elucidating the nature of a transcendental ego.

In his writings, Heidegger feels that the Western tradition has been "orthotic", looking for correctness of representation, rather than "alethic", oriented toward the "unconcealment" of being (Heidegger, 1953/2000, pp. 64, 107-110, 198-206; Wood, 1990, p. 295). He proposes, extending a metaphor from Descartes, that rather than considering the cogito (the "I think", the ego) as the roots of the tree of knowledge, one should consider the "I think" as being rooted in the soil of an always-already human reality (Heidegger, 1949/1956; Wood, 1990, p. 294). Furthermore, Heidegger critiques the Western tradition as problematically examining being not through *Being itself*, but through *beings*, specifically, through the example and principle of God, the said highest being. (Heidegger, 1953/2000, p. 5; Wood, 1990, pp. 294-295). Heidegger calls this orientation an *ontotheological* understanding of being: that "metaphysics [has come] to be defined by its 'onto-theo-logical' constitution: it is only interested in beings (*onto*) which it

unifies under a principle (*theo*), using the principle of reason (*logos*)" (Grondin, 2012, p. 217;

Cisney, 2018, offers a parallel summary; see Heidegger, 1957/1969, pp. 42-74). From this

orientation, being has been looked at from the temporal perspective of constancy and

permanence, as *Vorhandenheit*, translated as "presence at hand" (as per Heidegger,

1927/1962, pp. 47-48; Heidegger, 1953/2000, pp. 206, 216, 220), or as "subsisting being-

present" (Grondin, 2012, p. 216) or as "presencing" (by C. J. White, 1996). It might also be

thought as "present-ing", as holding to the present.

And Heidegger feels that this ontotheological orientation has resulted in a problematic

belief in an eternally present self in beings and in a culture that have actually forgotten

(concealed) their past, have forgotten the temporality, have forgotten the finitude, have

forgotten the mystery of being. Rather, says Heidegger (in his work *Being and Time*, among

others), we could understand being through the construct of *Dasein*, as *being-there*, as

thrownness, as that nourishing soil, that reality that "sustains and pre-articulates the sphere of

consciousness" (Wood, 1990, p. 296). For Heidegger, the ontotheological point of view not only

closes off the abyssal ground of being, it also has dangerous consequences. It allows reason to

be used as a means of attempting to occlude death through technology, through the

dominating, tooling and harnessing (the "enframing", *Gestell*) of thought and being for the sake

of permanence (Heidegger, 1962/1977; Karrow, 2006; Wood, 1990, p. 305).

In Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, he attempts a *Destruktion* (an "uncovering",

Grondin, 2012, p. 202; Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 44) of the Western history of knowing (and of

forgetting) being, to uncover, *alethically*, (i.e., "unforgettingly"; see OED, 1902, "lethe"; OED,

2012a, "alethic") a more originary *presence* which Heidegger sources in the pre-Socratic

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thinkers, and which he describes through various terms, including *Walten* (*phusis*, "emerging-abiding sway", Heidegger, 2000, p. xiii, 15-16) and *Anwesen* ("coming to presence", Heidegger, 1953/2000, pp. 64, 75-76). His ultimate and most latterly conceived metaphysical notion is that being cannot be fixed, that we can only "let being be" (via "releasement", "gelassenheit"; Heidegger, 1959/2010; see Caputo, 1974, 1975). Grondin (2012) adeptly summarizes Heideggerian thought as: "There is Being, rather than nothing, and we are, but only for a time" (p. 202).

Jacques Derrida (1930-2004)

In spite of Heidegger's efforts in *Destruktion*, the popular image of the executioner of the Western metaphysical tradition goes not to Heidegger, but to an exegete, French philosopher Derrida. For those who examine philosophy metaphysically, that is—Derrida is more commonly recognized as a vanguard of post-structuralism, as the instigator of deconstruction, taken as a theory and practice of textual criticism (see Eagleton, 2008; Klages, 2006; Lodge & Wood, 2013). As a post-structuralist, Derrida is understood as espousing a belief in the inherent instability of meaning, a belief which has been influential in post-qualitative research (Lather, 1993; St.Pierre, 2014). Thus, the practice of deconstruction, a practice well engaged in literary critique, is aimed at exposing contradictory conceptual binaries in the meanings of texts. However, Derrida, himself, resisted the formalization of deconstruction as method, or even as critique or analysis, stating, rather, that "deconstruction takes place, it is an event that does not await the deliberation, consciousness, or organization of a subject, or even of modernity. It deconstructs itself. . . . [Ça se deconstruit.]" (Derrida, 1985, p. 3; see also Thomson, 2006). I note that the epistemological belief of Derrida in the instability of meaning is connected to his

more fundamental philosophical efforts to rebut the principle of metaphysical presence. Nonetheless, is the destroyer of metaphysics an appropriate epithet for Derrida? The deeply ambivalent and paradoxical nature of his writings lend to varying interpretations, as we shall (eventually) see.

Derrida's philosophical work is situated in a critique of a philosophical school that was very much in vogue at the time of his scholarly development, namely, phenomenology, particularly that of the triumvirate of Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger (notes Cisney, n.d., 2014, 2018; also, Norris, 1987, 2004). Derrida appropriates from all three of these philosophers— appropriates, and then subverts. From Hegel, Derrida takes on the notions of the negative and of difference as principles of reality, yet emphatically disagrees with difference being sublated into a wholeness, shuddering at that "closure", that "absolute death" of history and of thought (e.g., Derrida, 1967/2011, pp. 87, 88, 102, 115; Cisney, 2014, pp. 189-192; Cisney 2018, pp. 81-82). Derrida is inspired by Heidegger's notion of Destruktion and transforms it into his notion of *deconstruction*. Derrida intends, by his "deconstruction" not to destroy the grounding tenet, the centre, of Western tradition, only to replace it with yet another instance of grounding presence, another centre—as he thinks Heidegger has done—but to admit the very absence of presence, "the lack, the absence of a centre or origin" (Derrida, 1967/1978, p. 289). But, put as assertion, rather than negation, Derrida intends, in exposing the Western "metaphysics of presence" (Derrida, 1967/1978, passim) as "contradictorily coherent" (Derrida, 1967/1978), to recognize, instead, the actual (and "impossible") ontic condition of difference— or *différance* (Derrida, 1967/1978, p. 293; Derrida, 1972/1982, pp. 3-27). The notion of presence is something that Derrida also appropriates from Heidegger, which he explicates, not

hermeneutically through its historical context, but firstly through a critique of Husserlian

phenomenology (Derrida, 1967/2011) and next through a critique of then-current theories of

structuralism (Derrida, 1967/1976; see Cisney, n.d; Cisney, 2018; Grondin, 2012; Moore, 2013).

While Heidegger concentrates on the forgetting of finitude in his critique of Western

metaphysics, Derrida focuses on the paradox of the "present time" (a paradox which has

forever engaged philosophers). Derrida critiques Husserl for thinking the phenomenological

reduction could bracket time to a "pure moment of presence" (says Cisney, n.d., section 3a;

also Cisney, 2014; and Cisney, 2018, pp. 134-142, explicating Derrida, 1967/2011). Derrida

notes that a contradictory notion of time permeates and defines the metaphysics of presence:

that in the Western tradition, the self is considered selfsame, constant, a permanent being in a

perpetual now, only by ascribing a participation with a being outside of time (Derrida,

1972/1982, "Ousia and Grammé", pp. 29-34; Söderbäck, 2013). Derrida contends that, in fact,

any moment of presence is always thwarted by an inherent structural movement, and through

this movement, the now-moment changes, both temporally and spatially (Derrida, 1967/2011;

Cisney, 2014; Cisney, 2018, pp. 134-142). Moreover, contends Derrida, what changes is not only

the moment, but any meaning conferred to it, which must continually defer and differ, (e.g.,

Derrida, 1972/1982, "Différance", pp. 3-27). Derrida famously combines these two words, *defer*

and *differ*, into his notion of *différance*, which purports that the metaphysical notion of

presence (selfsame being and meaning) is ever disrupted in its moment of constitution: "This

condition of possibility turns into a condition of impossibility" says Derrida (1967/1976, p. 74).

Derrida's notion of différance gains traction through his analysis of structuralist theory.

Prominent at the time of his philosophical formation, structuralism is a field of thought that

explores how systems of culture, especially myth and language, provide grounding for cultural ideas and understandings, and for the individuals located within a culture. Derrida pulls (apart) notions regarding the structure of language and myth from Ferdinand de Saussure, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roman Jakobson. To wit: Saussure (1916/1986) posits an arbitrariness to linguistic signs, that their meaning is not inherent to the alphabetic or phonemic symbols they engage, but to the difference that arises from their coinages. Thus, cat differs from rat by the choice of "c" or "r". (Other examples include ontology/oncology; think/stink, liminal/minimal, and metaphysics/betafishes.) Lévi-Strauss (1955), noting that such difference permits a duality, points out that concepts tend to exist in opposing pairs. Examples of this would be cat/rat, thesis/antithesis, teacher/student, judge/criminal, saint/sinner and friend/stranger. Jakobson (1972) further notes that in a binary conceptual pair, one item tends to be favoured, that which most signifies "presence", as opposed to "absence". What Derrida sees in this is that Saussure's arbitrariness indicates non-fixity of sense (Derrida, 1967/1976, p. 44), that Lévi-Strauss' binary pairs tend to paradoxically, ironically reverse (Derrida, 1967/1978, p. 283), and that Jakobson's markedness in binary pairs shows oppressive privilege (Derrida, 1972/1981, p. 41). All told, Derrida believes this points to the lack of any "transcendental signified" (Derrida, 1967/1978, p. 280), and he notes that without that fixed centre, origin or ground—"eidos, arché, telos, energeia, ousia (essence, existence, substance, subject) aletheia, transcendentality, consciousness, or conscience, God, man, and so forth" (Derrida, 1967/1978, pp. 279-280)—the result is a slippage of meaning—supplementarity, play, différance (Derrida, 1967/1978, pp. 289, 293. (A rat may eat a kitten, a sinning teacher stands-out as the ~~anti~~thesis of a friendly criminal.)

Derrida's notion of *différance* projects a central metaphysical tenet: a principle of instability, of an incessant change, of both meaning and of being. However, this message of instability returns to its sender: Derrida critiques Western metaphysics and asserts a rupture (Derrida, 1967/1978, p. 278), but, as he argues in his exegesis of most every other philosopher, whether it be Heidegger or Foucault or Levinas, if one cannot escape the historical structure of language, nor can one escape the structure of presence:

> We are wondering about the meaning of a necessity: the necessity of lodging oneself within traditional conceptuality. . . . some indestructible and unforeseeable resource of the Greek Logos. Some unlimited power of envelopment, by which he who attempts to repel it would always already be overtaken? (Derrida, 1967/1978, pp. 111-112).

Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995)

So, there was a metaphysics of presence (of "presencing", "presenting"). And then there was French philosopher Gilles Deleuze. Arch-structure? Deleuze was not afraid of that big, bad wolf. Deleuze also reacted against the Western tradition of thought, but rather than focusing on refuting it, Deleuze established a new metaphysics, one based on difference rather than identity, on the notion that the ultimate constitutive principle is difference. This is so entirely contrary to the traditional Western metaphysics that philosopher A. W. Moore (2013) expresses his astonishment at the enormity of the task:

> Difference is not to be thought of derivatively. It is to be thought of as the fundamental character of what is given, indeed as the Being of what is given. This is not to say that difference is *itself* given. It is not. But it is that *by which* what is given is given. . . . What is given includes discrete entities and their various features, as well as assemblages in which discrete entities are interconnected in various ways. But it also includes something more basic; a multiplicity of differences, in terms of which everything that is given must

ultimately be explained. And any such explanation must therefore eschew appeal to the subject, to God, to Platonic forms . . . to a transcendent structure holding everything together, even to persisting physical objects. . . . But how is this possible? How can difference be thought of positively? That is the basic challenge. (pp. 555-557)

Let me enumerate what I find to be the basic features of the metaphysical system of Deleuze.

1.   Deleuze' metaphysics is diametrically opposed to notions of the metaphysics of presence: of identity as primary, as constitutive; of identity as selfsameness, as subsisting, and as the basis of commonality:

> The primacy of identity . . . defines the world of representation. But modern thought is born of the failure of representation, of the loss of identities, and of the discovery of all the forces that act under the representation of the identical. The modern world is one of simulacra. (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. xix)

2.   Instead of identity, difference becomes the constituting principle of Deleuze' metaphysics:

> There has only ever been one ontological proposition: Being is univocal. . . . Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs: it is said of difference itself. (Deleuze, 1968/1994, pp. 35-36).

3.   Instead of difference as a relation that distinguishes between entities, which otherwise show commonality, and instead of a thing being known by its essential qualities (as per Western onto-logic, explicated by Deleuze, 1968/1994, pp. 30-34), a thing becomes an "assemblage" (also described as a "collection", a "multiplicity" and a "enunciation" in Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987; nicely explicated as an "ever-changing nexus of relations" by Cisney, 2018, p. 6).

4.   Instead of causes, there are only irruptions and effects, the flowing and discharging of unequal forces, desires and passions that result in connections and relations, finite, temporary assemblages (Deleuze Guattari, 1980/1987), all of which Deleuze, hearkening after Nietzsche, describes as the "eternal return" (Deleuze, 1968/1994, pp. 41-42, 54-55), by which he certainly does not mean repeated sameness, but an unending process of "differenciation/differentiation" (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 207) or "becoming" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, passim).

5.   Ideas, too, are not abiding abstractions but inventions, creative responses to problems (Deleuze, 1968/1994, pp. 168-221), for "philosophy is the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1968/1994, p. 2).

6.   Deleuze' metaphysics objects to the notion of representation as thought corresponding to an object. In fact, Deleuze says "difference is not and cannot be thought in itself, so long as it is subject to the requirements of representation" (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 262, promptly adding that difference has hitherto only been understood through the "taming" of representation).

7.   Deleuze' metaphysics adamantly objects to the notion of transcendence (e.g., Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994). Deleuze states that life consists only of what is immanent; indeed, Deleuze calls his work a "transcendental *empiricism*" (Deleuze, 1968/1994, pp. 56, 57, italics mine) as well as a "radical *empiricism"* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994, p. 47, italics mine).

8.   Without transcendence there is no need for teleology; no need to look to a transcendent cause for an ultimate direction or purpose of life. Nietzsche's *amor fati* as an affirmation of the aleatory replaces Aristotle's *telos* (e.g., Deleuze, 1968/1994, pp. 7, 23, 40, 54, 198):

Deleuze . . . rejects the idea that life needs somehow to be justified, whether by some *telos* towards which everything is striving or by some transcendent structure in terms of which everything makes sense. Nature has no grand design. Nor is there anything transcendent to it. The celebration of the activity and the affirmation of life are the celebration and the affirmation of immanence. And they reside in an ethic of empowerment, a concern with how things can be, not in a morality of obligation, a concern with how things ought be. (Moore, 2013, pp. 547-548)

How did Deleuze come up with this metaphysics? Deleuze was a consummate exegete; as with Hegel, Heidegger and Derrida, he engaged in an extensive analysis of the entire Western canon of philosophy. His works critique the theories of philosophers of presence—particularly Plato, Aristotle and Hegel—and appropriate from philosophers he feels an affinity to—namely, Spinoza, Nietzsche and Bergson—in synthesizing his philosophy of difference. Deleuze is renowned for being difficult to understand (e.g., Weston, 2011, "Fold"). His writing style begins with prosaic rational argument (in his most metaphysical work, *Difference and Repetition*), but later, especially when partnering with Felix Guattari, he develops a joint, literary, postmodern style, replete with disruptions, pastiche, nonsense, bawdry allusions and neologisms (and delightful titles, *Anti-Oedipus, A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*), as he applies his metaphysical constructs to other domains such as psychology, culture and epistemology. Like many other philosophers (e.g., Comte, Spinoza and Hegel), Deleuze creates an entirely self-containing cosmology, and his thought has been taken on as religion by his disciples, his creative works treated as sacred texts and offered the adulation of imitation.

    🦜

> —That was satisfying, eh? Like a sumptuous feast, so complete, so good, you want another salutation, a grace after-meal.
> —*To tell you the truth, that was quite a lot to swallow. I'm not even sure I could summarize these two meta-physics.*
> —Allow me…

To summarize, metaphysics is belief about the nature of reality. A metaphysics looks for fundamental principles to explain the world and being. There are two common metaphysical orientations in our Western world, respectively termed the metaphysics of presence and the metaphysics of difference. Presence is the traditional view, and difference is an oppositional reaction to it. The metaphysics of presence is essentially about identity: it posits an absolute of being, an infinitely selfsame and eternally enduring One, that is the cause of created beings, and which has the attributes of thought and permanence. All created beings share in the attributes of absolute being in that they, too, subsist. The metaphysics of difference says looking to absolutes and permanence to understand being has been a colossal (and colossally oppressive) mistake. The metaphysics of difference looks no further than the material world and posits difference (change or flux) as its essential feature.

> —*Sorry, that's still too complicated for me. That Doctor Angelo tries so hard, but I still get lost. Here is how I see it. There are two ways of understanding the world. The old way was simple: God made the world. The things of the world are like God in that they are good, and if they are human (or pretty much human, like my kitties and pups), they can think. And they can love. In fact, that's the point. The new style says God is dead. So you think you can make yourself? Naah, lots is out of your control. Like the colour of your fur. Like fish swimming uphill. Like an argument once it gets going. Like losing your points, your scales, your marbles.*
> —Seems you get them back.
> —*You metastasize.*
> —You metaphysicize? Kant help but?

ॐ

I'll be describing the two metaphysics even further in the next few rounds. The two metaphysics hold many opposing notions regarding the nature of reality. If you want to have some fun, dear *Philos,* play with the lists below. See if you can join up the notions from the left column, notions arising from the philosophizing of a metaphysics of presence, to those in the right column, notions arising from the reaction against the metaphysics of presence and the positing of a metaphysics of difference. A fuller list of comparisons between metaphysics of presence and difference follows, as Exhibit 5[+].

Notions in the Metaphysics of Presence	Notions in the Metaphysics of Difference
1. selfsameness	A. assemblage
2. self, thing	B. differentiation
3. perdurance	C. flux
4. generalization	D. immanence
5. transcendence	E. singularity

Exhibit 5⁺

Tabular Excursion

A Comparison of the Features of the Metaphysics of Presence and Difference

	Features Noted in the Elaborations of a Metaphysics of Presence	Reactive Features (or Commentary) in the Elaborations of a Metaphysics of Difference
1.	metaphysics	ontology!
2.	identity	difference
3.	presence	absence?
4.	selfsameness	flux
5.	perdurance (constancy)	differentiation, unfolding
6.	self, thing	assemblage (provisional, transitional)
7.	generalization, universality	singularities
8.	abstractions	concrete specificity
9.	within	without
10.	without	within
11.	punctilinear moments	events
12.	transcendence	immanence
13.	parsimony?	rupture, excess
14.	non-contradiction	contradiction?
15.	intelligibility	creativity
16.	the absolute, the ultimate	the immediate
17.	causes	forces
18.	teleology (aims)	affects (desires)
19.	agency, choice	affirmation, determination
20.	purpose	possibility
21.	development, evolution	aleatory unfolding, "repetition with difference"
22.	being	becoming
23.	substance	trace? voice?
24.	ground	slippage, abyss, void

25.	essence	hierarchy! cf., anarchy
26.	existence	living
27.	fundamental, principle	*ontotheology!*
28.	abstraction	concrete specification
29.	rational	empirical
30.	*a priori*	*a posteriori*
31.	truth	significance
32.	certainty, plausibility	possibility
33.	coherence	contiguity
34.	logical opposition	privilege! oppression!
35.	equivocity, analogy	univocity
36.	participation	echo
37.	potential/actual	virtual/actual
38.	duality	multiplicity
39.	infinity	finitude
40.	eternity	moment
41.	immateriality	materiality
42.	self	nexus of relations, "desiring machine"
43.	unity	heterogeneity
44.	individual	assemblage
45.	concept	invention
46.	category	rhizome
47.	either/or	and
48.	commonality	disparity and contiguity (enfolding)
49.	representation, idea	dogma
50.	mind	brain?
51.	life	life
52.	aporia	aporia
53.	mystery (e.g., of a transcendent realm or being)	mystery (e.g., of an originary non-origin or a non-originary origin)

EXHIBIT 6

"Oh, Rita and Elliot. They sound like pets. Which one is Dalowz?"

**Analytic Interpretation of Metaphysics in Eisner's Arts Based Research
and in Irwin et al.'s A/r/tography**

Dear Interlocutors, we have looked at the metaphysics of presence and the metaphysics

of difference. Presence, it turns out, has to do with identity, identity as the key element of

being. As with the being of things, so the being of humans, so the being of concepts, although

the being of human beings has always been of particular interest in the metaphysics of

presence. A key feature of identity, as noted with Aristotle's principle of non-contradiction, is

selfsameness: a thing may be delineated, and this delineation perdures. Another aspect of

identity is commonality, a thing may share properties with another. Because of these

constituents, meaning can be generalized and abstracted. The key feature of differential being

is that it continually changes, that nothing ever stays the same. As with the being of things, so

the being of humans, so the being of concepts. No selfsameness, no perdurance, no

commonality (at least, no identifying commonality), no generalization, and no abstraction. Concepts are materially grounded and particular and have no inherent stability.

I contend that an epistemology, an understanding of knowing, arises from beliefs about the world, reality and being; epistemology is entwined with metaphysics. Statements theorizing methodology are statements regarding the nature of knowledge (such as the statement that knowledge is better phrased as meaning or insight) and how that knowledge may come about. A methodology proposes not just methods, means, but an explanation for why these methods are appropriate. As an explanation of knowledge (or meaning or insight), methodology inevitably entails metaphysical commitments.

The next question to consider regards the methodologies of Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography: how might each be classified (if at all) according to our dichotomous metaphysics; do they demonstrate an alignment with presence or difference?

The Metaphysical Ground of Eisner's Arts Based Research

Let me begin this discussion on the metaphysical basis of Eisner's arts based research with a reminder that I am delimiting my inquiry to his own methodological theorizations. I am not referring to the more generic label of "arts-based research". In this section, I examine the extensive theorizations of Eisner to draw my claim(s) regarding the metaphysical underpinnings of his theorization of arts based (qualitative, educational) research. I invite you to join me as I trace Eisner's thought as it develops from an awareness of the centrality of belief in curricular models to the positioning of his own epistemological beliefs. Then, from that, I'll examine the ontic alignments demonstrated in his epistemology.

Yes, the writings of Eisner clearly indicate an awareness that knowledge is always, ultimately, a belief statement. For example, all of Eisner's books begin with a notion of belief and a discussion of the origin of theory in belief. Pistic terms of reference used by Eisner include *belief*, *view*, *vision*, *premise* (Eisner, 1991), *ideology* (Eisner, 1994a, 1994b) and *framework* (Eisner, 2002). I use the adjective "pistic" to highlight that terms regarding belief are not necessarily ontic in meaning or reference. Of note, in *The Educational Imagination,* Eisner (1994b) defines ideology as the "belief systems that provide the value premises from which decisions (of practical educational matters) are made" (p. 47). This definition accords with that which I put forth in the conceptual review of terms of reference in Exhibit 5. As I noted there, ideology is not necessarily an ontic term of reference, and it is not with respect to ontic belief that Eisner engages it. Eisner uses the notion of ideology to explicate curricular models, the application of epistemological belief into pedagogical guidelines. From this discussion, Eisner asseverates his own curricular model and, then, his related epistemological beliefs.

In *The Educational Imagination,* Eisner (1994b) presents what he feels are six common ideologies in education (pp. 56-83): *religious orthodoxy*; *rational humanism*; *progressivism*; *critical theory*; *reconceptualism*; and *cognitive pluralism.* For each of these ideologies, Eisner explicates an essential belief and a correlating curricular expectation:

1. Religious orthodoxy espouses a belief in God and expects school to teach the dogmas of the faith.
2. Rational humanism maintains the Enlightenment beliefs in reason and individual autonomy and presents education as a competition for excellence in rational thinking.
3. Progressivism holds on to a belief in individual autonomy all the while accepting beliefs in biological and social development/evolution and promotes a curriculum based on opportunities for interactive problem-solving.

4. Critical theory believes that the social is a structure of conflicting powers and that education ought to expose and remedy society's often covert inequalities and oppressions.

5. Reconceptualism holds a belief in individual worth, as opposed to societal gain, and argues that curriculum is not a behaviouristic means to an end, but an experience of living.

6. Cognitive pluralism is centred on a belief in a pluralist concept of mind and envisions education as an opportunity for the valuing and the development of multiple intelligences.

Eisner categorizes Dewey's curricular ideology as progressivism and identifies his own beliefs as most closely aligning with cognitive pluralism (1994b, pp. 79-83), a curricular ideology he develops and expounds throughout all of his writing (Flinder, 2012). In Eisner's categorical scheme, a/r/tography would reside, I think, in reconceptualism and critical theory. Both methodologies stand as reactions against positivism, but are they also reactions against rational humanism, a belief set to which positivism is correlated? Let's see.

Eisner notes that rational humanism is often equated with positivism, the belief put forth by its philosopher, Auguste Comte (1798-1857), that the "universe in which we live is, in primary, understandable, and that through rational methods, best exemplified in science, the workings of the clockwork character of the world could be discovered" (Eisner, 1994b, p. 63). Eisner points out, however, that, as a curriculum, the ideology of rational humanism is one that is more aligned with the principles of Enlightenment, in particular the belief that humanity's highest capacity—and the highest possible capacity—is that of reason, which serves as a means to truth. I contend that much of Eisner's work is to postulate alternate grounds, both for curriculum and for educational research, from those of positivism, and not to oppose the

beliefs of rationalism or humanism, but to widen them. I also contend that as such, he remains within the metaphysics of presence.

In *The Enlightened Eye*, Eisner (1991) discusses a basic ontic belief premise of positivist research, that of *veridicality,* which Eisner analytically divides into three more beliefs: firstly, that the world is knowable with certainty; secondly, that certainty consists of an exact correspondence between perception and reality; and thirdly, that the way to this certainty of correspondence is with objectivity of perception (pp. 43ff). Eisner then asserts that positivist research posits both "ontological objectivity" (p. 43), which includes the first two components of veridicality, as well as "procedural objectivity" (p. 44), that third component, the way to truth, which for positivism implies the scientific method. But Eisner questions how either notion of objectivity is even possible. He highlights them as beliefs—not truths or truisms—and he notes the movement in science toward fallibilism, the notion that we can never prove truth, only falsity (p. 45), as well as the awareness in science of its framework dependency (pp. 46, 120).[29]

Eisner (1991) puts forth seven premises of how *he* thinks the world is known and what knowledge is (pp. 7-8). These premises show a clear relation to his curricular ideology of cognitive pluralism. Here are his first three premises, in quotation:

1. There are multiple ways in which the world can be known: artists, writers, and dancers, as well as scientists, have important things to tell about the world.
2. Human knowledge is a constructed form of experience and therefore a reflection of mind as well as nature: knowledge is made, not simply discovered.

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[29] That positivism is a belief structure, one among many, is well established in discourse; here Eisner relates the notion of fallibilism to philosopher Karl Popper and that of framework-dependency to philosopher Thomas Kuhn.

3. The forms through which humans represent their conception of the world have a major influence on what they're able to say about it. (Eisner, 1991, pp. 7-8; numbering as in source)

The rest of his premises connect to corollary notions. These first three premises form the basis of Eisner's belief system, premises he summarizes as follows: "The mind mediates the world, and because it does, perception itself is a cognitive event" (Eisner, 1991, p. 46).

It is noteworthy that Eisner eschews putting forth a definitive assertion regarding the nature of extra-human reality because he believes that this "world" is not knowable in itself by the human mind. "All we can ever know," he insists, "is an active mind in commerce with a world" (Eisner, 1991, p. 51). Does this mean that Eisner has no metaphysical assumptions? No, it does not. Although this quotation might sound as if Eisner is putting aside considerations of world, putting aside metaphysics as irrelevant, and focusing on epistemology instead, in that very theory of knowing are metaphysical assumptions. I argue that Eisner's theory of knowledge, his theory of cognitive pluralism, aligns with rational humanism, albeit with an expanded sense of what is rational, and that, as such, his epistemology aligns with a metaphysics of presence. I discern this from examining what Eisner presents as cognitive pluralism, more particularly, his theory of mind.[30] Cognitive pluralism as a theory of mind is a key concept throughout Eisner's works, and he draws on a number of thinkers to develop his theory:

- from Ernst Cassirer, he takes the notion that the mind is structured as a *meaning-making* device (Eisner, 1994b, p. 80);

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[30] Eisner speaks about "mind" extensively and about the need for an expanded understanding of mind (e.g., Eisner, 1994a, p. 24). While Eisner does not specifically define mind, he repeatedly characterizes it as the human structure that construes meaning (e.g., Eisner, 1994a, pp. ix-xi; 1994b, p. 80).

- from Ulric Neisser, he apperceives the biological phenomenon of the *sensing* organism (Eisner, 1994a, pp. 24-26);

- from Susanne Langer, he draws a discussion of how forms of representation may be *non-discursive* (Eisner, 1994a, pp. 70-71), that in art one can think and express concepts qualitatively, without syntax of language (Eisner, 1991, pp. 17-19);

- from Nelson Goodman, he appropriates the notion of *rightness of fit*, and extends it to a notion that, in art, one may *somatically* judge the completeness of a work (Eisner, 1994b, p. 208; Eisner, 2002, pp. 75-76, 201, 231);

- from Goodman also, he appreciates that social worlds are created from the *framework of symbol systems* (Eisner, 1994b, pp. 47, 51, 80, 208; Eisner, 2002, p. 75); and

- more generally, from Dewey, Eisner allows that meaning making, especially in art, occurs as a *transaction* in experience (Eisner, 1991, pp. 16-18; Eisner, 1994b, pp. 13-16; 36-37; 67-73).

As I review these epistemological assertions from Eisner, I garner the following metaphysical understandings, the following conceptions regarding the nature of reality and being. I note that Eisner sees minds as selves, as monads, as singular entities (somatic and sensate) existing independently of each other and of an external, material world in which they are immersed. Although these monads, in their isolation, cannot know the world beyond with certainty, nonetheless, the monads put forth their gleanings, the meanings they construe from their experiences of self, other and world. And if the meanings are not certainties, they nonetheless are circumscribed as perduring ideas, transcending abstractions, which may be taken up consensually as generalizations. The grounding for this reach to unanimity and generalizability is that all of these monads are understood to share a common makeup. *Every* mind is a perceiving, reasoning, symbolically representing, meaning-making device which desires not only to express meaning, but to share it.

Selfsameness and perdurance (along with corollary features of autonomy and agency and abstractability and generalizability) of being and of thought are hallmarks of the metaphysics of presence. Selfsameness and perdurance are likewise features of Eisner's monads, of his theory of mind, his cognitive pluralism, his theory of knowledge and his methodology of arts based research. Because of this concordance, I categorize Eisner's thought as aligning with a metaphysics of presence. Eisner's alignment with a metaphysics of presence can also be seen in noting the philosophical provenances of his theory and of the prior theorists on whom he draws.

The first philosophical provenance of Eisner is constructivism. Constructivism is well established as a common philosophical orientation to research methodology. It is well described and ascribed to by Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, in their seminal almanacs on qualitative research (e.g., Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2000, 2011), as an alternative to the established positivist approach of the academy. Interpreting Eisner's theory as constructivist is something one can find in the literature, for example, in Schwandt (1994). Something infrequently described is the alignment of pragmatism with constructivism, such as noted by Carle (2005), and such as seen in two of Eisner's key influences, Dewey and Goodman. Constructivism considers knowledge and social reality a human construction; the result of the actions of agented individuals. It is important to highlight what constructivism does not believe: that knowledge is a construction formed by social forces put upon the individual and beyond the control of the individual (which would be construc*tion*ism, or social constructionism; Barker, 2004a; Botella & Herrero, 2010; Crotty, 1998, p. 58; Mahoney, 2003; Talja et al., 2005). Metaphysically, constructivism concurs with the notions mentioned above, of autonomous,

agented individuals creating stable, common knowledge. As above, this description accords

with the notions of selfsameness and perdurance found in the metaphysics of presence.

The second philosophical provenance of Eisner (and unmentioned in the literature) is that

of Neo-Kantianism. Eisner's affiliation with Kant is seen in his frequent repeating of the same

quote: "Concepts without percepts are empty, and percepts without concepts are blind" (e.g.,

Eisner, 1994b, p. 243). The same affiliation is seen in his appropriating of notions from the Neo-

Kantian philosophers Ernst Cassirer and Susanne Langer. What metaphysical notions may be

found here? You may recall that Kant was considered the gravedigger of metaphysics, but what

Kant was concerned about was dogmatic metaphysics, what he felt (after being jolted by

Hume's empiricism) was a hitherto uncritical acceptance regarding transcendent first principles.

Kant's project was yet another attempt to find first principles, which he looked for, not within

the noumenal realm, which he found unknowable in itself, nor within the material world, which

he likewise found unknowable, but within human reason. Kant's project was to examine the

conditions of knowing, a project that has been continued by Neo-Kantians as they ask: What is

the nature of reason? What is the nature of mind? Both Cassirer and Langer move the

discussion of mind from one focused on abstract, logical reasoning to one of expanded

awareness of thought as symbolic, along with awareness of emotive and somatic sources of the

symbolic. They expand the meaning of rational humanism. Eisner draws strength from these

Neo-Kantians in his proposal of cognitive pluralism. I point out this chain from Kant to Eisner in

order to demonstrate the same metaphysical grounding: that of the "transcendental unity of

apperception" (Kant, 1781/1998, B131, pp. 246-247; Wood, 1990, p. 245; see also, New World

Encyclopedia, 2015). For all of these Neo-Kantians, first principle may be moved from an

abstract, divine, "noumenal" cause, but it remains a search for and an acknowledging of the universal, the enduring, the ultimate, the transcendent.

As with his Neo-Kantian antecedents, Eisner is concerned with discerning the nature of the perceiving, knowing self. And even though his arts based research sees meaning as perspectival, it nonetheless looks to elucidating universal essences of mind, experience and education (Efland, 2004). The notions of arts based research are abstractions of reason, albeit qualitatively, aesthetically derived. Eisner's model is one of plurality, yes, but that of the autonomous, commonly-conditioned self, thrown into the plurality of life, into a multifactorial social experience, from which many viewpoints, but also consensual insights and generalized ideas, arise.

Eisner's later work, with Barone, considers themes of postmodernism, noting that "the postmodern genie is out of the bottle" (Barone, 1995, p. 171), but Eisner makes it clear that he does not define himself through this framework. In Eisner's consideration of postmodernism, for example in his floating of additional means of justification (Barone & Eisner, 2012), I don't find a movement out of a metaphysics of identity, rather, an incorporation of themes of postmodernism into his theory of cognitive pluralism. As the ground-breaking work of Eisner to acknowledge the arts as a way of knowing, and as a way of research, achieved success, "arts-based research" became recognized as a generic term and umbrella concept, and, yet from this, as various postmodern and post-structuralist vantage points were considered, a number of methodologies, such as a/r/tography, were distinguished.

While Eisner's theory of mind is well appreciated and interpreted (e.g., Efland, 2004; Siegesmund, 2004, 2005), its underlying belief structure is little discussed. I found an intriguing

early article by Jagodzinski[31] (1983), in which he points out and critiques Eisner's understanding

of art as "organicism", "pragmatism" and "liberalism" and, as such, decries it as essentialist and

elitist (p. 45). In this article, Jagodzinski states:

> The connoisseur fallacy lies in Eisner's inability to distinguish aesthetics as a purely
>
> sensuous, bodily awareness and art which falls into the realm of meaning. . . . If one
>
> wishes to go beyond Eisner, I would claim that a more critical, emancipatory approach is
>
> needed. (p. 45)

> > —*It's like you are saying a whole lot to say very little. In the end it doesn't seem that*
> > *there is anything extraordinary to this metaphysics in Eisner.*
> > —If it is difficult to see the metaphysics in Eisner, perhaps that's because the
> > metaphysics of presence is so obvious, so commonplace, it can be hard to discern.
> > —*Oh! Because "what is strange can be so familiar and what is so familiar can be so*
> > *strange"? Viktor and Stern Tom keep arguing about who said that first.*
> > —Well, dunno about those two, but comparing the notions of Eisner's arts based
> > research with Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography may make their metaphysical premises more
> > obvious.

ℰ

The Metaphysical Basis of Irwin et al.'s A/r/tography

The belief system of Eisner may not have been much affected when the genie of

postmodernism was uncorked, but that of a/r/tography certainly was. Let's discuss.

The theorizations and position papers of a/r/tography are rarely the work of one person;

rather, they have emerged from an evolving collective of artists, researchers and teachers, as

acronymically noted in the methodology's label. One constant is Rita Irwin, who serves as the

originator and bellwether of this methodology and movement. The first appearance of the term

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[31] At this point, he chose to use upper case in the spelling of his name.

a/r/tography, that I could find, appeared in a 2003 article by Irwin, and the methodology has

been presented and theorized over a number of articles both before and since then.

As with Eisnerian arts based research, a/r/tography is presented as a methodology that

stands in resistance to positivism, but Irwin goes further than that:

> I am fully conscious of a public desire to simplify the chaotic, structure the unordered,
> and deny the ambiguous. This harkening back to the Enlightenment is a search for
> certainty and predictability, standardization and conformity. Yet there exists a
> countermovement encouraging diversity, transformation, and innovation . . . an aesthetic
> way of knowing [that] appreciates the awkward spaces existing between order and chaos,
> complexity and simplicity, certainty and uncertainty, to name a few dialectical
> relationships. (Irwin, 2003, p. 63)

What Irwin is asserting here is that the methodology of a/r/tography not only stands in

resistance to positivism, but also to rational humanism, and not only to rational humanism, but

also to belief in certainty or predictability, which sounds like resistance to belief in selfsameness

of identity, which sounds like resistance to the traditional Western worldview, *in toto.*

A/r/tography is elsewhere reiterated as "a way of disrupting traditionally upheld beliefs about

epistemology, ontology, and research" (Springgay, 2002, pp. 26-27), a means to "evoke

alternate realities" (Irwin, 2004, p. 35) via a "space for exploration, translation, and

understanding in deeper, more enhanced ways of meaning-making" (Irwin, 2004, p. 30).

Detective work is not required to uncover a/r/tography as a reactive metaphysical project;

a/r/tographers themselves make this clear.

A/r/tographers don't execute their grand metaphysical project all on their own.

A/r/tography's alternate reality and way of knowing is built from its apprehension,

appropriation and application of prior and extant philosophical frameworks and theories: "Our

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understandings of practice-based research are informed by feminist, post-structuralist,

hermeneutic and other postmodern theories that understand the production of knowledge as

difference thereby producing different ways of living in the world" (Irwin & Springgay, 2008,

p. xxi). Notice that in that statement, the authors explicitly state their work as based on a

principle of difference and subsume all of their influences into this framework. While this

statement comes five years after the article first mentioning a/r/tography, reactionary

metaphysics has always been a key feature to the theorizing of a/r/tography, even as the

sources and the theoretical focus have evolved. The notion of difference, and a metaphysics of

difference, moves from an implicit to explicit feature, as Deleuzean philosophy becomes more

prominent in a/r/tography.

I will come to the metaphysics of difference presently. Let me first point out other

movements/evolutions I have noticed in the theorization of this methodology. Firstly, I highlight

that a/r/tography has always been situated as a post-structuralist and postmodern practice.

Earlier theorizations (2002-2005) tend to draw heavily on postmodern curriculum theorists and

theories, such as Aoki's notion of curriculum as an in-between space (Pinar & Irwin, 2005),

Pinar's notion of *currere* (e.g., Pinar, 1975), emphasizing curriculum as a lived experience, and

Davis and Sumara's integration of complexity theories to curriculum (e.g., Davis & Sumara,

2014). Notions drawn from these influences, of research as a living practice and of a community

of practitioners, continue throughout their theorization to date, even as references to such

sources are relinquished. As the methodology of a/r/tography has evolved, its influences have

widened from curricular research to social research. Underlying all of the various thinkers

engaged by a/r/tographers is the influence of two philosophers, Jacques Derrida and Gilles

Deleuze, and what is most significant in the evolution of a/r/tography scholarship is the movement from the former to the latter.

Thus, earlier a/r/tography papers demonstrate a major influence of Derridian thought. This is seen in many ways and on many levels, even though, in all the articles I read, Derrida is rarely named and cited just once.

> —*Wait a second! I don't get it. Derrida is a major influence but not named or recognized?*
> —Oh, hello, Dear Interlocutor. I guess this interruption proves you're still with me!
> —*Well, I was thinking of having a nap, as I've never met your friends Elliot and Rita, but isn't that plagiarism???? Not naming your sources.*
> —No Ma'am, not if your source is a commonly known cultural element. And that's just the thing, for a/r/tographers, iterating Derrida is like Christians invoking the Holy Spirit. An unnamed something—Derrida would like that.
> —*No, no, no. When you invoke, you name. I thought theory was sacred and its rules sacrosanct. Have they read this Derrida?*
> —Yes, no, maybe. I bet Derrida's mum didn't even read him. That's the thing about philosophy. Like a sacred text, it must be read hermeneutically, as interpretation. And so we look to a paraclete, an exegete, a commentator, a translator.
> —So that's why you have so many citations!
> —Are there ever enough? I'm an *imp*oster who's afraid of being slashed, erased, banished.

Derrida pervades a/r/tography. How? Firstly, in a/r/tography's appropriation of terms such as rupture, excess, erase, margins, borders. A/r/tography also demonstrates the directing influence of Derridian thought in its critique of traditional Western epistemology and metaphysics, in statements such as this: "In the past, dichotomous thinking separated categories of thought and often placed one form above the other, leading to hierarchical considerations" (Irwin, 2004, p. 28). I think that a/r/tography, like Derrida's différance, is seen as outside, or offside, of the system it is critiquing (Grondin, 2012, p. 242), visualized in the "borderlands" (Irwin, 2004, p. 29), in an "interstitial" space" (Irwin et al., 2006, p. 71; Springgay

et al., 2005, p. 898), in a space of in-between (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2008, p. 84). And what is a/r/tography doing there? "Disrupting", "rupturing", and "unsettling perceptions" (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2008, p. 84)—of the centred, the hitherto dominant, might I infer?

Metaphysically, Derrida refutes presence, the purported stability of identity of a thing, a concept, or even a word's meaning. That this belief is espoused by a/r/tographers is seen in their disruption of language, both text and meaning. I see in/différance in a/r/tography's

- use of the slash as erasure, to multiply and nullify meanings, as in the term *in/sight* (Irwin, 2003);
- use of homonymic terms of reference, such as *in sight*, *in/sight* and *insight* (Irwin, 2003, p. 66);
- use of neologisms, such as *métissage* (Irwin, 2004; unattributed), and the very term of term of reference, *a/r/tography*;
- new coinages, for example, the use of the term *renderings* in place of *concepts* (Springgay et al., 2005);
- playing with the metaphoric coinages they have encountered in prior literature, coinages such as *in-between, without, thirdness* (passim);
- wandering, jumping style that evades cohesion; instead of buttressing a point with explication or exemplification, a/r/tographers often slide (metonymically) from one descriptive trope, or one notion, to another; a miniaturized example would be the rapid slide from notions of *dialectic* to *multilectic* to *thirdness* to *in-between* in Irwin (2004, p. 28); and
- appropriating without citation, perhaps?

I expect that what I call desultory (saltatory, disconnected) the authors would conceive as emblematic of the very nature of a/r/tography, that cohesion is eschewed as being too rational and that the desultory better relates what a/r/tography sees as the meaningful layering of a living inquiry:

Textual encounters are not analytic. . . . They are not discourses laid on top of one
another in the hopes of transferring meaning from one textual realm to another; rather,
they are interconnections that speak in conversation *with, in,* and *through* art and text
such that encounters are constitutive rather than descriptive . . . so [that] the
viewer/reader figures into the process of meaning making, adding layers of inter/textual
dwelling. Each informs and shapes the other in an active moment of lived inquiry.
(Springgay et al., 2005, pp. 899-900)

The reference to lived inquiry jostles an essential point: although Derrida's post-

structuralism is a major influence in a/r/tography, this is ultimately a methodology that seeks to

make, rather than negate (or de-construct) meaning. In her 2004 work, "A/r/tography, A

Metonymic Métissage", Irwin, although seeing herself in the margins, in the borderlands (i.e.,

identifying as the beleaguered versus the privileged), theorizes this place as one of positive

productivity. In this article, Irwin proposes the notion of *dialectic* in place of *dichotomy*,

suggesting that one could turn from an oppressive structure of thought to one that is liberatory,

one in which "categories of thought [exist] in equal relationship to one another, thereby

allowing the inherent concept to vibrate constantly with active energy" (p. 28). But Irwin

doesn't dwell in that active energy (because mightn't that render it static, Hegelian?). From

here, she moves to positing a "multilectic view" (p. 28), a "thirdness" (p. 28), and an "in-

between space" (p. 28), because "where two would be inclined to dialogic opposition, a third

space offers a point of convergence—yet respect for divergence—where differences and

similarities are woven together" (p. 29)—that is, a "métissage" (pp. 28ff).

That a/r/tography seeks to make, rather than negate meaning is strikingly evident in the

2005 article "A/r/tography as Living Inquiry through Art and Text" authored by Springgay, Irwin

and Wilson Kind. This manifesto asserts disruption, not as a critical un/de-texting of past text

(as deconstruction might be seen), but as a meaning-making act, as noted in the following two

quotes, the first using the noun, *rupture* (see Derrida, 1967/1976, "The Hinge", pp. 65-73):

> Loss, shift, and rupture are foundational concepts or metonyms for a/r/tography. They
> create openings, they displace meaning, and they allow for slippages. Loss, shift, and
> rupture create *presence* through absence, they become tactile, felt and seen. (Springgay
> et al., 2005, p. 898, my italics)

and the second, the verb, rip:

> Openings that are torn, shredded, and ripped in acts of violence and disruption remind us
> that living inquiry is difficult, that it is filled with dis/comfort and loss, ruptures of ecstasy
> and pleasure that trouble and pull at the holes of existence. These holes are not empty
> spaces needing to be filled. They are located in space and time, allowing
> artist/researcher/teachers to move within the research text, penetrate deeply, and shift
> the boundaries of perspective. It is discourse characterized by fluidity, the open interplay
> of elements, and the possibility of infinite re-combinations. (ibid, p. 906)

I offer two quotes because I find this attempt to see absence (rupture) as productive, as a

means to presence, a fascinating emblem of a/r/tography's metaphysics of difference. In this

term of reference I see a/r/tography's appropriation of Derridian theory, of différance as

shifting meaning, and of deconstruction as an act deliberatively disruptive of expected stability

of meaning, yet its distinction from deconstruction as textual ana-lysis (de-construction).

I noted earlier in this section that, in all the articles I have read, a/r/tography quotes just

twice from Derrida. Intriguingly, both times are with the same phrase, "the as-yet un-nameable

begins to proclaim itself," taken from Derrida's *Writing and Difference* (1967/1978, p. 293).

What might this singular emphasis reveal? Let's consider these citational situations. Both

citations are from substantive articles, from the 2005 article by Springgay, Irwin and Wilson

Kind, which I consider a manifesto, and from the 2008 work by Irwin and Springgay, in a summative introduction in a book on a/r/tography (Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, & Gouzouasis, 2008). I see that the first incident serves to characterize a/r/tography, while the second serves to summarize a/r/tography.

The first incident is embedded in a quote from another theorist, Irit Rogoff, and in this occurrence the authors appropriate Rogoff's coupling of Derrida's "unnamed something" to the notion of "without" (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 909). I take this action to be of metaphysical import, that in this appropriation, a/r/tography is reacting against the traditional Western metaphysics of presence—and positing an alternative—a metaphysical condition of productive absence. For more context, here is the paragraph in which the embedded citation occurs; it is placed in a discussion of interdisciplinary research, but could apply to any inquiry:

> Interdisciplinarity [or any way of knowing] needs to focus on the "unnamed something"—
> the "without". . . . Through close attention to the un/said and un/known, a new field of
> study, a/r/tography, might constitute itself. This *condition* of without is paramount in
> understanding and shaping [the] aesthetic inquiry [of a/r/tography], where encounters
> within the visual and textual are imbued with dis/comfort and struggle that allow one to
> conceive of possibilities unthought of before. . . . Concepts are not fixed definitions . . .
> not predicated on binary oppositions. . . . A/r/tographic renderings are a passage to
> somewhere else. (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 909)

The second incident couples a/r/tography itself to the unnameable, via the epistemological and Deleuzean structure of the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). In this citation, a/r/tography further develops its metaphysics from one of reacting against presence, to one of inviting difference. I invite you to read the summation:

A/r/tography is a research methodology that entangles and performs what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987) refer to as a rhizome. A rhizome is an assemblage that moves and flows in dynamic momentum. The rhizome operates by variation, perverse mutation, and flows of intensities that penetrate meaning, opening it to what Jacques Derrida (1978) calls the "as yet unnameable which begins to proclaim itself" (p. 293). It is an interstitial space, open and vulnerable where meanings and understandings are interrogated and ruptured. . . . A/r/tography radically transforms the idea of theory as an abstract system distinct and separate from practice. In its place, theory is understood as a critical exchange that is reflective, responsive and relational, which is continuously in a state of reconstruction and becoming something else altogether. (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xx)

Examining the contexts of this repeated quotation reveals a/r/tography's ontic development from Derrida to Deleuze, from reacting against the stability of meaning in Western metaphysics, to seeking and espousing an alternative metaphysics that extends an understanding of meaning and explicates a/r/tography as a way of knowing, and to locating this alternative in a metaphysics of difference. A/r/tography's movement toward Deleuzean philosophy begins, as with its adopting of Derridian theory, with non-cited appropriations of Deleuzean terms of reference (e.g., the fold, the rhizome), but then moves into an increasing usage and sourcing of the works of Deleuze.

Here is how I reckon the metaphysical r/evolution of a/r/tography, as I imaginatively project myself into the a/r/tography collective:

1. We are artists, researchers, teachers, carrying out an art-integrating inquiry. We join as a collective. We resist traditional academic research methodologies, their positivism inimical to art as inquiry (Irwin, 2008).

2. As with others in the "qualitative turn" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), our sense of knowledge is that it is not certain (Springgay, 2002) and not orderly (Irwin, 2003). What *is* it like? It is chaotic, non-linear, fragmented (Springgay, 2002); it is chaotic, ambiguous (Irwin, 2003); it is like a "tangential thread, perhaps a thread that has become un/stitched, un/ravelling its own existence into new beginnings" (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 899).

3. Is there meaning in all this complexity that is the world? Is there meaning in all this oppression that is wrought from Western thought? We try to see meaning from our positions in our post-structuralist, feminist borderlands, meaning as something in-between the rigid dichotomies of thought (Irwin, 2004; Sameshima & Irwin, 2008).

4. We engage with other post-structuralist thinkers and come up with new ideas. We learn from Grosz' feminist rethinking of corporeality (1999) and spatial marginality (2001). St.Pierre (2000) reminds us of the ontological basis of research methodologies. How about meaning as rupture, Derrida (Springgay et al., 2005)? How about meaning as excess, Bataille (Springgay et al., 2005)?

5. We realize—as with knowledge, so with life. Life is neither certain nor orderly, nor abstract. Life is lived immanently, chaotically, tangentially, rhizomatically. We like Deleuze. We cite him. We really must read more of him (Irwin et al., 2006).

6. Just as life is immanent, so are ideas, so is art. We concretize our concepts of ideas as locations (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 898) and move spaces into dynamic events (Irwin et al., 2006, p. 72).

7. What we think about thinking, what we think about life, applies to identity, of course. We are not static, orderly, rational, disembodied minds. We are immanent, experiencing beings. Our art, our research, our teaching, comes from lived inquiry (Springgay et al., 2005; Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2008). Life is lived, and so is art. Art is not a static, permanent thing to behold, it is performed in ever-changing moments of relational encounters. We link to Nicholas Bourriaud and his notion of "relational aesthetics" (Irwin et al., 2006). We intensify Bourriaud's Deleuzean affections, and coin "rhizomatic relations" (Irwin et al., 2006).

8. We don't say we are metaphysical thinkers. Perhaps we don't even know it. But we develop our metaphysics, a metaphysics of difference, through exploratory links to a number of post-structuralist philosophers. Merleau Ponty reminds us of our relational porosity, that our bodies are phenomena, co-extensive with other phenomena of other bodies (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2008, p. 86). Georges Bataille[32] teaches us an economy of excess, the surplus created when control disappears, allowing an opening to possibility (Springgay et al., 2005; Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2008). Jean-Luc Nancy helps us question whether our collective identities are universal generalities or unique particulars (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2008, pp. 87-88). Like Bourriaud, Nancy reminds that we are created through encounters with others (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2008). We most appreciate Deleuze' explanation of what we are: "divergent multiplicities, dividing endlessly" (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2008, p. 88). As post-structuralist thinkers, we no longer think of time as linear, or space as a container. We "see time and space as singular and as conditions for living inquiry that is relational" (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2008, p. 88).

9. We remember that metaphysics is about *being*; once again we reflect that we're an assembly of a/r/tographers, a community, together in living inquiry (Irwin & Springgay, 2008).

10.   But we—or maybe just some of us—or maybe just one of us—insist that we have always been Deleuzean, and that, at base, our metaphysics, our understanding of being, of life, is about *becoming*. Maybe for one of us this is a conversion experience (Irwin, 2013).

—Another question for me, Dear Interlocutor?
—*Yes, how do you know this evolution is correct? You just read stuff they wrote? What would a/r/tographers themselves say about your scheme?*
—Good question. I think literature and theory, once published, ex-ists—stands out from its authors. A part but apart, you could say. It is impossible to know a writer's "true" intention. I interpret; I try to make sense. I like my interpretation because it is coherent.

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[32] Perhaps more aptly called radical, transgressionist and surrealist, than post-structuralist: 1897-1962.

(It has a rightness of fit.) A/r/tography does make more sense to me when I view it as an expostulation from metaphysics to epistemology. As for whether the community of a/r/tography would agree with me—I expect that (from chats with practitioners) there would be wide divergence, that they are bound more so by relation than philosophy: they are artists/researchers/teachers in some combination, and they are generally postmodern in orientation, and appreciate the notion of lived inquiry.

With Irwin's 2013 article, "Becoming A/r/tography", the die is decisively (and retrospectively) cast as Deleuzean. While it is possible to appropriate aspects of Deleuzean theory, such as knowledge as rhizomatic, without their metaphysical provenance, to take on Deleuze *in toto* entails subscribing to a metaphysics of difference. I see key features of this metaphysics in Irwin (2013), in an article which, I think, is a culmination of all of Irwin's curricular and methodological theorizations to that point. In this article, there is no specific mention of a metaphysics of difference, or of metaphysics at all, as the point of the article is to enunciate a "curriculum of becoming".

This entire focus of this 2013 article is the "transformational ideas of Deleuze and Guattari" (p. 200), and Irwin quotes extensively from their works, as well as their exegetes (such as Semetsky, 2006). Metaphysically speaking, I see in this article a moving away, not just from binary-ordered identity, but from traditional Western notions of identity altogether. The article asserts a philosophical shift from *being* to *becoming*: "There can be no being a/r/tography without the processes of becoming a/r/tography," says Irwin (p. 198), alluding to prior titles of a/r/tographical works, and speaking not just of knowledge or research, I think, but of what it means *to be*. Instead of identity, seen as "grounding empirical particulars into abstract universals" (p. 200), Irwin proposes "theorizing and practicing concepts within the *movement of events*" (p. 200; italics mine). This notion is buttressed with a quotation from

Deleuze, that a concept "should express an event rather than an essence" (cited on p. 200;

taken from Deleuze' 1995 work, *Negotiations*, p. 25).

I note Irwin's redirection from substantive descriptors of identity, from nouns and

adjectives, to verbal descriptors, as the notion of identity changes from one of being to one of

becoming. As with the identity of concepts, so with the identity of beings. In this article, human

beings are depicted as emerging in the "middle of life" (p. 200), thrown into immanence,

without source, origin or cause. The individual emerges from the relations of events, becomes a

singular differentiation, but not selfsame, because the process of emergence is momentary,

and only to be repeated, and each repetition different (p. 200). Instead of the traditional

concept of the individual as autonomous, isolated in one's subjective self, Irwin declares that

"subjectivity is understood as multidimensional, collective, and plural" (p. 200).

Shifting to becoming rather than being changes the nature of time. Time is always

present, says Irwin (and elusive, p. 212). Life is not teleological—the point of life (if we can

consider there to be a point), is neither to remember nor predict, but to "affect and be

affected" (p. 212), to be open to the ever-changing possibilities of life, of learning. "Pedagogy

[or life] is no longer about what is already known but instead creates the conditions for the

unknown and to think as an experiment thereby complicating our conversations" (p. 198).

You might wonder, how others interpret the metaphysics of a/r/tography? Do others also

see a/r/tography as articulating a metaphysics of difference? Analyzing a/r/tography for its

ontic provenance is not common in the literature, but I found three relevant critiques.

Pente (2013) sees and furthers a/r/tography as grounded in metaphysical concerns. In her

article, she references a/r/tography as based in an "ontology of becoming" that she ascribes to

philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy. In this lucid and poignant work, Pente explores the aesthetic and

metaphor of decay to reflect on the fundamental nature of being: that "we are born and we

die" (p. 5). What we have in-between is what Pente calls, after Nancy, *being-with*—singular,

fugitive moments of concrete, embodied encounters, one with another. Pente's article

elaborates a/r/tography as one based in a metaphysics of difference.

Siegesmund (2012) connects to and interprets a/r/tography through Dewey, providing an

entirely different way of looking at a/r/tography. He suggests that a/r/tography's emphasis on

lived inquiry is entirely in keeping with Dewey's notion of the experiential being. Siegesmund

but doesn't go so far as to label a/r/tography as constructivist or pragmatist; just that

a/r/tography may be seen through such a lens.

Jagodzinski (2013, 2017) is exceedingly critical of a/r/tography, judging it as post-

structuralist and phenomenological, but not accurately Deleuzean. Jagodzinski (2017) says

a/r/tography doesn't go far enough into the entailments of the notion of difference to warrant

a Deleuzean label. For jagodzinski, the main obstacle is that a/r/tography is still stuck in a

humanist "posthumanism", in the "hegemonically representational and anthropocentric"

(p. 268). Jagodzinski agrees that a/r/tography shows a break from the Western tradition of

elaborating identity as essences, but does not manage to escape from the Western tradition of

the self-constituting (and self-aggrandizing) human subject (p. 268); that it allows for pluralism,

but does not escape from "human hubris [and] its "earth-destroying fantasies of conquest and

consumption" (p. 288). He points out that, for Deleuze, difference is all-encompassing and that

endorsing a Deleuzean philosophy necessitates placing the human self into the nonorganic

chaosmos and thus accepting the "disintegration of the subject by a field of forces where

identity no longer survives" (p. 269). He calls a/r/tography a "ship of Theseus": that all the

terms and notions of Deleuze show up in a/r/tography, but they are refurbishments, the

authentic original having been completely replaced (pp. 278-279). He suggests that the ship of

a/r/tography fly under its own banner (p. 279).

Dear Interlocutors, I have interpreted the Western metaphysical tradition and one

significant reaction to it. I have reviewed what is meant by metaphysics, what is meant by the

metaphysics of presence and difference. I have analyzed Eisner's arts based research and Irwin

et al.'s a/r/tography and interpreted their metaphysical provenances. What can we do with this

knowledge?

> —*Change the world? Unlock the secrets of the universe. Discover you don't know*
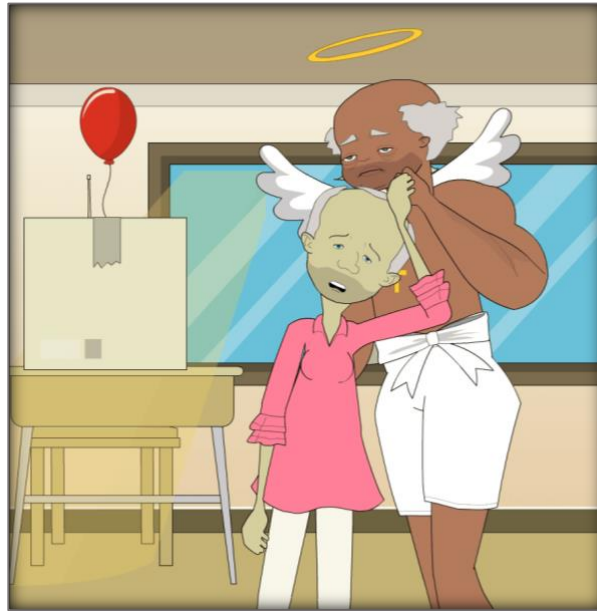> *anything, and start all over?*
> —Do you need a smoke break?
> —*Yup, smoke carries our prayers to heaven.*
> —You're going to church?
> —*I'm* in *church. Back in a jiffy from the biffy.*

EXHIBIT 7

"Who's the imposter? You judge. Kill the heretic and you will be free!"

Evaluative Interpretation of the Metaphysics of Presence and Difference

This round offers an evaluative interpretation of the metaphysics of presence and the

metaphysics of difference, and of the engagement thereof in Eisnerian arts based research and

in the a/r/tography of Irwin et al. In this exhibit, I evaluate the belief systems of both

metaphysics and of both methodologies, engaging significant critiques by other commentators,

in regard to various issues of contention, and adding my own. I also use this evaluative process

as a prompt to consider my own beliefs, one of the aims of my study. Perhaps it may likewise

serve you, Interlocutor.

In my prior inquiry, I characterized Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s

a/r/tography as alike in their resistance to positivism, yet different in their philosophies of

knowing (Haggarty, 2015, 2017). Reading more, I see more regarding these methodologies, and

my previous interpretation has changed in some regards.

I realize that my description of these two methodologies as resistant to positivism is one I have absorbed from expositions and theorizations both on and by qualitative and arts-integration research methodologies. But, having had opportunity to research and reflect on belief systems of Western tradition, and belief systems in research, I look again and I see that qualitative research methodologies/approaches are often unspecifically defined as reactions against positivism (Burke Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Phillips, 1983; Usher, 1996), or in contradistinction to positivism (Creswell, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Lincoln et al., 2011), and that this reaction against positivism is often equated to a reaction against Enlightenment (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107; also Irwin, 2003; Jardine, 2012; St.Pierre, 2000; Usher 1996).

Qualitative research approaches are indeed reactive, but what they most specifically react against are beliefs they do not share. Yes, the qualitative turn was spurned by a reaction against positivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Lincoln et al., 2011), but this was not ultimately to the *methods* of positivism, to the empirical, statistical techniques carried out by objective researchers, but to the *beliefs* regarding knowledge that underlay those techniques. And, yes, qualitative approaches are opposed to various aspects of the beliefs espoused in the movement known as Enlightenment, often to the belief in/of the world as a mechanical entity so precisely ordered that knowledge of it may be found with certainty, as long as correct ways of knowing are applied. However, opposition to this view of reality as mechanical and of knowledge as certainty might cleave to a plethora of alternative views, as indicated in the following statements of belief.

1. While the physical world is given and demonstrates regularity, the social realm is a vagarious human construction.

2. The physical world in its biological, geographical and environmental realms is an irregular entanglement of causes and effects.

3. The social realm is a manifestation of power, a power which enframes the physical world as well.

4. The social realm is fundamentally a linguistically based symbol system within which humans are structured.

5. Both the social and physical realm are illusions on their way to dissolution.

6. The physical and the social are realms whose only characterisation is relentless change.

7. All reality is but a creation of thought.

How do these alternatives to a belief in certainty align with the tradition Western metaphysics of presence? As stated, they are incomplete, but one may see the construct of selfsameness of identity, in various reactions to positivism, such as alternative #1, but also possibly #2, #3, #4 and #7. So, let me disambiguate the reactionary beliefs in the methodologies of Eisner, and of Irwin et al., not as reactions against other methodologies or movements, but as reactions against beliefs they do not share.

Eisner's arts based research began in reaction to positivism when, as an art-focused educational researcher, Eisner was working to discern a place for the arts in a positivist-centred academy (Andrews, 1989). At first, Eisner (1981, 1983a) decries the exclusive belief in certainty and objectivity as ways of knowing. But Eisner (1994b) differentiates between Enlightenment, rational humanism and positivism (pp. 62-67). And thus, Eisner (1991, 1994a, 1994b), more specifically, elaborates his methodology of arts based research as a reaction against what he feels is too narrow a view of rationalism, offering his construct of cognitive pluralism in its place.

A/r/tography's critical lens is significantly wider than that of Eisner's arts based research, focused on, and in opposition to, the "Enlightenment" (Irwin, 2003) qua "traditionally upheld [Western] beliefs about epistemology, ontology, and research" (Springgay, 2002). Yet, analyzed with respect to belief, I see that what a/r/tography is opposed to is the metaphysical belief in the fixity of identity, which a/r/tographers see as oppressive, and, with a/r/tography, look to a productively liberating belief in difference, in its stead (Irwin & Springgay, 2008).

The most important thing about philosophical beliefs is that they entail consequences; for example, they conscript research practices. This is stated as a truism by numerous methodologists (Creswell, 2007; Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2005; Lincoln & Guba 2011; Lincoln et al., 2018; Grix, 2004; Hay, 2007; Johnson, 2005; Kivunja & Kuyini 2017; Ludwig, 2016; Scotland, 2012). Eisner believes in knowledge as rational and coherent, albeit perspectively and qualitatively produced. His writings demonstrate coherence and cogency. His belief that one may generalize from a single "canonical" example (Eisner, 1981, p. 7; 2002, pp. 212-213) is demonstrated in his conviction that his own work may be persuasive. Thus, Eisner's arts based research demonstrates a belief that knowledge entails a selfsameness and perdurance. A/r/tographers theorize belief in knowledge as a production through difference. A/r/tography promotes the notion that knowledge comes through rupture, often through a deliberate dis-ruption of traditional knowledge, thought and language structures. A/r/tographical writings demonstrate disrupted language, as described in the previous exhibit. These disruptive devices, such as the contiguous placement of multiple disconnected images or metaphors (e.g., Irwin, p. 28), demonstrate a/r/tographers' belief in knowledge, and in reality itself, as a differential irruption.

My study of beliefs likewise entails beliefs. I will come to an exploration of my own beliefs presently. For now, I remind that I presented my methodology of creational dialectics as informed by theories of phenomenology and hermeneutics. Let me reflect on how this approach has been helping me to understand the subject of my inquiry (belief systems and their engagement in arts-integrating methodology).

Hermeneutically, I have been attending to prior horizons (previous interpretations) and researching via reading, notetaking, journaling, and engaging art processes such as poetry. The many sections of this work also demonstrate hermeneutic cycling, an iterative attention to prior and extant theorizations, as I interpretatively summarize, analyze, evaluate and thematize metaphysics and methodology. Each iteration allows me to ponder yet more deeply the dialectics of this inquiry. Phenomenologically, I have been discerning essential features of the phenomena that are belief systems, which, in turn, are enunciations of the phenomenon (phenomena) that is reality/world/being. As I have been reading discussions of these two metaphysics and these two methodologies, I have been keeping ongoing lists of salient and contrasting, features. Such a list is tabled in Exhibit 5[+].

Essential Elements of a Metaphysical System

Studying my list of dichotomous (and dialectical) metaphysical notions, I have reduced it to what I (creatively, synthetically) interpret as the two essential features or elements of any metaphysical system. The first feature I call *primacy*. This feature is that of principle itself, of the core beliefs that establish a metaphysical system. The second feature I call *unity*. This refers to the sequelae that entail from the metaphysical principle. I use these terms of reference, primacy and unity, because they carry a wealth of meaning, imbued from their iterative legacy.

The principle of primacy is a consideration of substance, of ground, of source, of origin, of cause. It asks what the metaphysical system believes is/are the core principle(s) that establish reality, the world and existence. The element of unity is a consideration of emanation, of communion, of con-sequence, generalizability and generalization. It asks how the principle is said of all, of how the principle applies generally—for can the proposition of belief be a metaphysics if it applies but particularly? Unity naturally extends to a consideration of *teleology*—to a consideration of the point or purpose of existence—and to a consideration of what *agency*, if any, is ascribed to entities of the world. The feature of unity also includes a consideration of *intelligibility*—of what counts for truth or meaning, of how the truth of reality is known. These two elements are satisfyingly complete to me, encompassing the fundamental and the ultimate; foundation and culmination; ground and—

—Sky? Earth and heaven? Foot and crown? Alpha and omega? Beginning and end?
Interlocutor, are you noting an irony here—that the metaphysics of difference refutes the very elements I have established as essential, that the metaphysics of difference refutes "essences", "elements" or "principles" as deluded, as the very problem of the metaphysics of presence? Yes, I realize that. But are they engaged, nonetheless? I think so.

The metaphysics of difference, as theorized by Derrida, posits as fundamental principle that which he terms *différance*. Although Derrida (1978) insists that this notion is "a non-origin that is originary" (p. 203), Cisney (2018) is nonetheless able to explicate it as "the non-originary, *constituting*-disruption of presence" (p. 134; italics mine). Sweetman (1997) notes that however much Derrida tries to put his principle of *différance* under "erasure", to destabilize its meaning by expressing this notion through shifting metaphors, such as "margins, trace, flow, archi-

writing, tain of the mirror, alterity, supplement" (p. 239), he is still, ultimately, making a claim

as to the nature of being, which Sweetman thinks may be summarized as "all identities,

presences, predications, etc., depend for their existence on something outside themselves,

something which is absent and different" (p. 236, a claim which Sweetman claims is an

unsubstantiated statement). With Deleuze, the claim goes the other way—it's the origin that is

non-originary. In *his* metaphysical musings, Deleuze does posit a *univocity* of being, that there is

something the same about everything, but that same thing is *difference*. For Deleuze, *difference*

is the basic ontological principle. Here is Deleuze explicating his principle:

> Opening is an essential feature of univocity. The nomadic distributions or crowned
> anarchies in the univocal stand opposed to the sedentary distribution of analogy. Only
> there does the cry resound: "Everything is equal!" and "Everything returns!". However,
> this "Everything is equal!" and "Everything returns!" can be said only at the point in which
> the extremity of difference is reached. A single and same voice for the whole thousand-
> voiced multiple, a single and same Ocean for all the drops, a single clamour of Being for
> all beings: on the condition that each being, each drop, and each voice has reached the
> state of excess—in other words, the difference which displaces and disguises them and, in
> turning upon the mobile cusp, causes them to return. (Deleuze, 1991/1994, p. 304)

I assert that, despite their asseverations to the contrary, and despite their strongly allusive,

ambiguous styles of writing, and despite the oxymoronic quality of their propositions, both of

these philosophers, Derrida and Deleuze, very strongly enunciate a "single clamour"—a basic

metaphysical principle.

> —*Which you will—or have—proven?*
> —Prove belief? Heck no. Which I point out, from my point of view.

An explication of these essential elements of a belief system, with respect to the metaphysics of presence and difference, as well as with respect to Eisnerian arts based research and Irwinian a/r/tography, can be seen in the following tables. The tables show an overall alignment of Eisnerian arts based research and Irwinian a/r/tography with the metaphysics of presence and difference, respectively, but also indicate some points of distinctions or non-alignment, which I think are prompts for critique, but not reclassification.

Essential Features of the Metaphysics of Presence and Difference

Element of (↓) with respect to metaphysics of (→)	presence	difference
primacy	☾ The world is not self-caused, but caused from beyond, by absolute being, by a transcendent intelligible will. Each entity is founded in subsistence, a perduring selfsameness, which is identity, and which is lent from its cause.	☾ The world is without foundation because/yet the basis of the world is difference. Life exists in a material world, which is composed of myriad of singularities, each constituted/assembled by forces, or affects.
unity	☾ Perduring selfsameness comprises the identity of each and all. ☾ Identity allows for generic categories, abstractions, ideations—thought itself. ☾ Also lent from its cause is intelligible will, which confers agency to persons.	☾ Difference is said of each and all. ☾ Through the univocity of difference, everything is unified into a singular multiplicity. ☾ There are no genera, only multiplicities; no abstractions, just particulars. ☾ A thing is an assemblage, an ephemeral, transitional coalescence. Ditto for self.

	☾ The goal of life is to ascend to (reunite with) the full intelligibility of being from which being was created.	☾ Stability of meaning is an oppressive regimentation of thought. ☾ Concepts are inventions of thought. ☾ Agency is not choice or will, but the differential application/effect/intensity of forces, as much an attribute of things as of persons. ☾ The goal of life is the affirmation of life (being alive), the point of life is becoming.

Essential Features of Eisernian and Irwinian Metaphysics

Element of (↓) with respect to metaphysics of (→)	Eisnerian arts based research	Irwinian a/r/tography
primacy	☾ The world is real, but our perceptions of it are subjective and multiple. Therefore, for individuals, the foundation is the mind; which is an autonomous, enduring selfsameness.	☾ The world is a complexity of material and cultural forces and relations. From this, individuals are constituted as singular, emotive, embodied and ever-changing.
unity	☾ The mind's constitution and workings, its autonomous, yet subjective nature, is said of all minds. ☾ The mind is a monad with an admittedly limited perspective; however, from these limited perspectives knowledges are	☾ Because the world is not a whole but an array of fragments, generalizations are not possible (except for the generalization that the world is not a whole, but an array of fragments, so generalizations are not possible ((except for…))).

	transactively constructed and may merge into commonalities. ☪ The goal of life is self-fulfillment, which comes from mind, from cognition, which includes the creative and the non-symbolic and which allows the human agent the successfully coherent and satisfying transaction of experiences.	☪ There is no transcendence; recourse to an absolute is a deception. ☪ Unity is in the living of life, a continually and contiguously rhizomatic unfolding of becoming. ☪ Individuals, however, are selfsame, not fragmented but connected through the flow of relational events. ☪ The goal of life is its very unfolding; the goal of the individual is becoming, a flowing process of connections and differentiations.

—*You would think that these tables would dish it out, but I find this as clear as blood pudding. Have you thought about adding some pictures?*
—I thought about interpreting them as poems.
—*Yes, as poems! You've always been good at that.*
—Okay, discussion first, then the non-discursive excursive.

The tabling of the essentials of the belief systems of these contrasting metaphysics and methodologies puts each into relief, and at the same time, it lays out tensions between them. As such, I think it serves to prompt critique, a cross critique, going both ways. I will note some problems and contradictions that have been presented in the literature, and I will also present my own appraisal.

Problems and Contradictions in the Metaphysics of Presence and Difference

What is a problem? A "problem" in philosophy is sometimes defined as a contentious issue about which arise differing perspectives, or stances which prompt objections and arguments from those holding contrary positions (American Heritage Dictionary, 2016).

However, I note that often it is the notions or perspectives about which one objects that are referred to as the problem (ibid). Thus, I note that, with respect to metaphysics, a problem may be found so objectionable as to pose a hindrance or obstacle to accepting a proposed belief, or even to elicit condemnations of it.

The problems commonly noted in the metaphysics of presence are what prompted the metaphysics of difference in the first place. As already mentioned, one oft-stated problem is that noted by Heidegger and Derrida, that Western thought is inherently oppressive due to the intrinsic favouritism of its binary structure. Furthermore, Derrida has described Western metaphysics as a device that regulates thought by insisting on the stability/fixity of these binary derived identities, and thus repressing difference (e.g., Derrida, 1967/1976, pp. 26-44; 1967/1978, pp. 279-280; Grondin, 2012, p. 240). Another problem seen with traditional Western metaphysics, as discussed by Jardine (2012), is that it is based on a construct of identity as non-contradictory, which Jardine feels has led to a presumption of certainty, and which he feels has permitted Western society's oppressive domination of the other, in acts such as educational standardization and colonization. Yet another problem found in the metaphysics of presence is that it requires recourse to the transcendent; that it ought to limit itself to what is empirically knowable (Moore, 2012, passim).

The most commonly stated problem in the metaphysics of difference, especially via its enactments in post-structuralist, postmodernist, Derridian and Deleuzean theory is that of obscurantism, a style of deliberate obfuscation resulting in incoherence (Critchley, 2001; Duggan, 1998; Friedrich, 2003; Sokal & Bricmont, 1998). For example, Sweetman (1997) notes, "Derrida expresses [his] thesis . . . beneath layers of rapidly changing, and often barely

penetrable, metaphors, double and triple meanings, multiple references, puns, imaginative and often shocking imagery, etc." (p. 237). I admit that I have found the same problem, not only with Derrida, but also in trying to read Deleuze, and also in trying to read post-structuralist methodologies such as a/r/tography. Another problem noted is that Derrida, by excuse of being anti-foundational, provides no arguments or reasons in support of his thesis (Sweetman, 1997). Lack of grounding, or evidence, is a problem for Sokal and Bricmont (1998) who complain that Deleuze inaccurately, and thus unjustifiably, appropriates concepts from scientific domains.

What's a contradiction? In philosophy, a contradiction is the occurrence of conflicting notions within the same theory. Ever since Aristotle's proposal of a principle of non-contradiction as a warrant of truth, the noting of contradictions has been the gas that gets the machine of argument going. (Indeed, "contradiction is the motor force of change", says Moore, 2013, p. 185). Contradictions may pose an obstacle to the acceptance of a theory. This was certainly the case for Derrida, who not only claimed contradictions to be an ineliminable aspect of Western philosophy and literature, but wanted, Hume-like, to sentence the whole canon of thought to the flames of iniquity. Perhaps Derrida is right that contradictions are inevitable, but are all contradictions of equal import?

An example of a fundamental contradiction in a philosophy is the proposition in Hume's empiricism, and in logical empiricism, that every proposition should be backed by empirical evidence, as this proposition is itself not empirical but an idea of mind. This contradiction little affected the reception of Hume's theory, but was the downfall of logical empiricism (Stumpf, 2003, pp. 432-433; also Moore, 2013, p. 297-301; Phillips, 1983). Contradictions have also been noted in idealism. Stumpf (2003) finds what he feels is a fundamental contradiction in Kant

stating, on one hand, that things in themselves are unknowable, and, on the other hand, claiming that these supposedly unknowable things are the source of sense perceptions (p. 307). Moore (2013) also finds a fundamental contradiction in Kant, in his presentation of the noumenal realm as that which is beyond the limit of our knowing. Moore insists that if we know what is beyond a limit, the limit cannot be (p. 135). All of these examples are instances of the contradiction *of knowing what we cannot know* (according to our epistemological premises). And these examples correspond to the contradictions that have been noted in the metaphysics of difference and presence, respectively.

> —*My father used to say that a devil's choice is a devil's sport.*
> —Damned if you do and damned if you don't?
> —*The reason for gymnastics in the Olympics?*
> —The reason why departments of philosophy stay open?

A contradiction in the metaphysics of presence occurs in its interpretation of time as both punctilinear and achronological, an incongruity which has troubled philosophers since antiquity, but which was brought acutely to critique by Derrida (Cisney, n.d.; Söderbäck, 2013). Söderbäck (2013) explicates Derrida's critique of the incongruous premise of selfsameness, that the identity of a thing, in the metaphysics of presence, rests on a belief in the eternalization of the present moment, of exempting being from the succession of time, all the while other aspects of sensible existence, such as motion and change, are seen in the linear movement of time. Cisney (n.d.; 2014, pp. 123-139; 2018, pp. 134-142) adds to this critical exegesis that for Derrida (as for Husserl and Heidegger), this "presenting" is a perceptual act, and is never pure, but always contaminated by non-presence, or absence. All of this leads to the main criticism applied to the metaphysics of presence: that this doctrine claims to know that which is beyond its ken.

One contradiction in the metaphysics of difference is noted by Grondin (2012), who points out that the thinking of Derrida, as one that is posited within a Western structure, ought to suffer from the same instability as that which he claims is an inevitable aspect of this structure. Grondin is amused, but not convinced, by the notion that a critique, by its very critical nature, rests outside of the system it is critiquing (p. 242).[33] Another equally fundamental contradiction, this time in the metaphysics proposed by Deleuze, and one that seems strikingly obvious to me, is that in this system everything is said to arise from a principle of difference—except for the principle of difference itself. As Deleuze (1969/1990) says,

> The univocity of being does not mean that there is one and the same being; on the contrary, beings are multiple and different, they are always produced by a disjunctive synthesis, and they themselves are disjointed and divergent, *membra disjuncta.* The univocity of being signifies that being is voice that . . . is said on one and the same "sense" of everything about which it is said. That of which it is said is not at all the same, but being is the same for everything about which it is said. (p. 179).

Rae (2014) finds this a fundamental contradiction in an otherwise laudatory system, and expects that it could be corrected.[34] However, I find that this contradiction occurs not just once, but repeatedly, as Deleuze expresses features of his differential ontology, which, once acquiesced by others, become sedimented constructs, or what Rae (2014) rues as "moments of identity" (p. 12). This is something that seems to have bothered Deleuze himself, as a feature of

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[33] *—Hmm. If you lie about lying, are you telling the truth?*

[34] Alain Badiou (1999) is another who accuses Deleuze of being contradictorily transcendentally Platonic in his metaphysics of immanence. Badiou (1999) offers his own metaphysics in lieu, which he summarizes as "The One is not, there are only multiplicities, and the ground is void" (p. 53). Badiou's metaphysics has been criticized as logic without ontology, as "having no relationship to the world or reality" (A. Robinson, 2014).] I am not familiar enough with Badiou to attempt adjudication.

Deleuze' theorization is his neologization of terms of reference, and his re-neologization of these terms of reference, over the course of his works, in an attempt to emphasize the principle of difference. For example, an entity is sequentially termed an *assemblage*, a *desiring machine*, a *body without organs*, a *conceptual personae*, terms I'm sure Deleuze would not call synonyms, but conceptual creations or differentiations.[35]

These contradictions in each metaphysics, would, by corollary, apply to any research methodology that aligns with these metaphysics. However, these are generally not the contradictions that are noted in critiques of arts based research or a/r/tography.

Contradictions have been noted in Eisnerian arts based research, from those holding contrasting points of view. Jagodzinski (1983) notes a contradiction in Eisner's presentation of arts based research as universally applicable; he judges the epistemology of arts based research as only usable by the elite "connoisseur". Jagodzinski and Wallin (2013) put forth a contradiction of unwitting humanism in "arts-based research", but I don't think this is a contradiction for Eisner, as his theorization of arts based research never states a resistance to humanism, just to rationalism as traditionally stated. Pariser (2009) believes there is a contradiction between the definition of research by science and by arts based research; however, this is an external, not an internal contradiction, and one that is used to contest arts as a valid academic epistemology. I notice that Eisner's thinking presents a similar contradiction to that of Kant. Eisner's arts based research asserts that the world is not knowable in itself, only perspectively: "All we can ever know, is an active mind in commerce with a world" (Eisner,

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[35] Aside: Yes, Derrida's work uses the same strategy of neologism as a means to avoid fixity of meaning, but in this case it is not a contradiction, but a problem.

1991, p. 51). You might ask, how can Eisner know from the limited perspective of one mind,

what all minds are like?

The methodology of a/r/tography seems to mostly circulate among its users and has not

much been subject to dissenting critique. One strong critic is jagodzinski (2017) who notes that

a/r/tography states an alignment with post-structuralism, and a differential metaphysics, yet

enacts a humanist self-present sense of self. Jagodzinski and Wallin (2013) note a related

contradiction, that in spite of a professed alignment with Deleuzean thought, a/r/tography

enacts the "presence" of representation of thought and idea. I agree with both of these

contradictions, but I point out this contradiction seems to ensnare much post-structuralist

writing, which employs the very devices it rails against, such as binaries and abstractions.

Furthermore, I see the same contradiction in jagodzinski and Wallin (2013), a book which only

makes sense in as much as its ideas may be established, identified, fixed into constructs.

St.Pierre and Pillows (2000) complain of the constraint of their mother tongue—the structure of

humanist language and thought. They complain that one is stuck within a dominant structure,

even as one tries to work contrary to the dominant beliefs. Is this an excuse or a truism?

Apart from coming up with the principle of non-contradiction, Aristotle came up with the

term *aporia*, to describe a kind of contradiction. An aporia is a puzzle, unsolved and perplexing.

The word is Greek, and Aristotle describes aporia with the image of a knot, as a knotty problem.

For Aristotle, a knot can be untied; so an aporia, for Aristotle, is a prompt for disambiguation

and elucidation, for straightening out one's thoughts (Aristotle, 350 BCE/n.d.; *Metaphysics,*

Book Beta, Section 1)

Using Aristotle's example, I now look at the problems and contradictions levelled against the metaphysics of the Western tradition, and I use them as prompts to tease out my own beliefs.

>—*I could tell you what to believe.*
>—Shsh! No shortcuts!

Problems and Contradictions as Prompts for Discernment of Belief

The perceived problems and contradictions in the metaphysics of presence served historically as the prompt for the movement into post-structuralism and the metaphysics of difference, and so have already been well discussed, and by thinkers with greater depth and training than me. However, the point of this exercise is discernment of belief, which is never served as well by the appropriation of dogma as by a dialectic engagement with other horizons, moving from them toward an interpretation of one's own. "Confrontation—that is, not merely quarrelling and feuding but the strife of the striving—sets the essential and the unessential, the high and the low, into their limits and makes them manifest," says Heidegger (1953/2000, p. 120). I will consider the following:

- the problem of binaries;
- the problem of transcendence;
- the problem of time; and
- the problem of subsistence, of selfsameness and perdurance of identity.

Binaries are derided as an essentializing and regimenting device of Western thought, a complaint initiated by Heidegger, and dealt lengthily by Derrida. I find it accurate to say that classical logic of the Western tradition is based on oppositional binaries, on parsing contradictories and contraries in propositions, on noting the *if this, then not possibly that*

(Joseph, 1937/2002, pp. 114-118), though I also note that classic logic is not the sum of

Western thought. I also find it true that oppositions are a generally used cognitive device to

gain clarity of a construct by delineating and distinguishing attributes of an entity (Elbow,

1993). This is how Aristotle arrives at definitions of the essence of genera (in his *Metaphysics,*

Book Zeta, Chapter 4). The use of oppositional logic to derive essence is still the basis for the

generation of definitions in dictionaries (see R. Robinson, 1996; also, OED, 1989b, its definition

of "definition"). I see that binaries may be used reductively and may reduce complexity so

much that depth and breadth of meaning is lost (Haggarty, 2019). It is also true enough that

binaries may be used to demonstrate marking and privileging, but is the problem the thought

device, the language structure, or the act of privileging itself?

I find it an irony that while the admonition that one must "move beyond binaries" is

commonplace in academia (e.g., Midgely et al., 2013), binaries are engaged throughout the

very academic literature that derides them. Here are a couple of examples. The first is that the

dichotomous terms, modernism/postmodernism, structuralism/post-structuralism, and

metaphysics of presence/metaphysics of difference are coinages, not from the supposedly

binary-bound Western tradition, but from the reactive alternatives to it. St.Pierre (2014)

suggests that this usage is lamentably unavoidable because of the regimenting effect of the

dominant Western thought.[36] But the use of binaries is not only unavoidable, it's deliberate.

This can be seen in the discussion by Irwin (2004) on the methodological practice called

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[36] For example, describing her sit-and-think-big approach to research she states, "I believe it is very difficult for those of us well-trained in the empiricism that grounds conventional humanist qualitative inquiry not to think that material/textual binary, not to privilege language collected "in the field" and "face-to-face" over already written language—in other words, it's difficult not to privilege presence" (St.Pierre, 2014, p. 12).

métissage, a discussion carried out through a reflection on many binaries such as difference/similarities, colonizer/colonized, meaning/certainty, presence/absence, light/darkness, sadness/joy, complex/simple, knowing/ignorance. While in some cases, the binaries are marked by a privilege that reverses a traditional one (e.g., meaning over certainty), many of the binaries in this work are engaged "in-tensionally" to intensify ambiguous relationships between entities. This point is stressed in Springgay et al. (2005):

> Duality is understood to mean duality/nonduality (Pryer, 2002). Vibrating amid dualities is
> a space for uncertainty and ambiguity. Dualisms become clear before blurring,
> interconnecting, blending one into/through the other, only to return to clarity and then
> ambiguity/complexity again, in an endless hermeneutic circle. (p. 901)

The reduction of Western thought to one of binaries is not only simplistic but dismissive. An unqualified reaction against binaries has always irked me. It seems not only a zeitgeist, but also a fad, like velvet suits. I find that the use of binary in a/r/tography works to demonstrate my point that, contrary to how they are often viewed, binaries are ubiquitously and purposefully engaged. With good reason, they are described as innate (Jakobson, 1972; Lévi-Strauss, 1955). Binaries are useful in distinguishing between features of things and, further, may be useful in allowing for the tension between things (Elbow, 1993), particularly the paradox of the tension between self and other, or mind and world (DePoe, n.d.).

Binaries are also something I found I used to delineate features of the metaphysics of presence and difference. The table in Exhibit 5[+], contrasting features of the metaphysics of presence and difference, is a listing of binaries. It is impossible to carry out a comparison without engaging binaries. A contradiction is a binary.

Something I appreciate in a/r/tography's attempt to move beyond binaries is their exploration of alternative devices of thought. As such, a/r/tography explores, metaphorically, the notions of *margins, without, absence, liminality* and *in-between*. It is that last concept that I find (and I think a/r/tography, too, finds) most productive. The notion of the in-between is used by a/r/tography to describe the liminal state. Liminality was originally used in anthropological studies to describe an intermediary state in a process of growth (Ortiz, 2001). A/r/tographers, as with other post-structuralist thinkers, take liminality to be the cultural state of being cast out of the centre of privilege (Irwin, 2004). I think the term "margins" offers a better descriptor for that construct. The notion of the in-between is still a useful cognitive or semantic construct, but I point out that this term only gains meaning in a binary context. It is only by defining the bounds, that something can be understood as in-between. For example, the poignancy of the liminal state that is life comes from the awareness that it exists between the bounds of birth and death. Sameshima, White and Sinner (2019) explore the notion of the in-between as *ma*, as the productive (conceptual) space, often a negative/backgrounded space, between two markers. I think that if we consider the in-between as pointing to ambiguities, ambivalences or enigmas between the markers of a concept, we may allow for a productive nonduality.

I move to the problem of transcendence. To start, I note that the issue of transcendence is sometimes considered one of belief in God. Hume's empiricism led him to atheism (Stumpf, p. 269); perhaps this is whence arises the general assumption that the two must concur. But, not so. The event of a metaphysics drawing on a transcendent absolute is not theological in

itself, for one may be atheist and still believe in a transcendent absolute.[37] In my reading of

Deleuze, I find him exceedingly interested in various theologically oriented metaphysical

constructs , which he, in a reactive exegesis, develops into his metaphysics of difference. For

example, from medieval theologian Duns Scotus, Deleuze draws the notion of the "univocity of

being" (Deleuze, 1968/1994, pp. 39, 66, 303-304; see Moore, 2013, p. 548; Cisney, 2018,

pp. 178-179)—that existence is a mode rather than a state of being—a notion which Deleuze

then relates to Spinoza's idea of the absolute immanence of being (Deleuze, 1968/1994,

pp. 40-41; see Cisney, 2018, pp. 179-180; Moore 2013, pp. 548-549). Conversely, notions from

Greek philosophy regarding a transcendent absolute were instrumental in the establishment of

Christian metaphysics and creed (Augustine, 400/2008; Grondin, 2012, pp. 72-79, 95-101; New

Catholic Encyclopedia, n.d., "Theology, Influence of Greek Philosophy on"; Wilhelm, 2011).

To transcend is to go beyond, and transcendence is that notion, that conceptual place of

beyond. Beyond might refer to a spiritual beyond, yes, but it also may refer to that which is

beyond the empirical or the immanent. Thus, transcendence is also opposed by strict

empiricists, such as Hume, or the logical empiricists, who try to limit all propositions to those

that may be evidenced by sense data, and who stand sceptically against any non-empirical

proposition. For Deleuze, a self-declared "radical empiricist" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 47),

the problem with transcendence is that, in trying to move away from the bona fide plane of

immanence, where everything is in flux, a flux of power differentials in a state of "eternal

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[37] This is what the scientists Fritz Haber and Steven Hawkings are described as coming to, in, respectively, the 2003 play *Einstein's Gift* (written by Vern Thiessesn), and the 2014 film *The Theory of Everything* (directed by James Marsh).

return" (Deleuze, 1968/1994, pp. 41-42, 54-55, 67-67), one posits only illusions—of another realm, of the eternal, of universals, of propositional thought (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/994, pp. 35-60; see Rae, 2014, p. 164). Similarly, for Derrida, the problem is that transcending results in a "presenting", in an attempt to fix as eternally present that which is inherently unstable— meaning.

Right to the end, Deleuze kept to his radical empiricism, "eyes open all the way" says Moore (2013, p. 542). Hume, however, realized that "to whatever length any one may push his speculative principles of skepticism, he must act and live and converse like other men. . . . It is impossible for him to persevere in total skepticism" (as cited by Stumpf, 203, p. 273). Kant suggested that to think transcendently is part of the given human condition (Kant, 1781/1998; Grondin, 2012, p. 137; Wood, 1990, p. 245). I note that the notion of transcendence is not a problem for me.

I note that transcendence, like binaries, is quite unavoidable: whenever we have an abstraction, or a representation (mental, aesthetic or symbolic), we transcend the empirical. This stumped Hume, and I feel that it puts Deleuze in a bind. Abstractions are omnipresent in all ideation (and this, I think, is the take-away from Plato), and ideating is what we humans do. Writer Marilynne Robinson (2010) notes that the ideas of mind have never been successfully explicated as empirical; that the replication of thinking as a chemical synaptic transference is not possible, neither extra-corporeally nor corporeally. Ideation is intrinsic to the synaesthesia of art (Hawkins, 1991). I classify Eisner's qualitative thinking as transcendentally representational, albeit non-discursive, and albeit arising from a somatically engaged mind.

The notion of mind, rather than brain, as the source and place of ideas underlines a connection between transcendence and idealism. As a philosophy, idealism is the belief that knowledge arises from ideas of mind, thus Berkeley's absolute idealism states that everything is a product of mind (D. S. Robinson, n.d.). But this is not to say that the split between the metaphysics of presence and difference is a split of idealism and empiricism. The metaphysics of presence is more so one of idealism *and* realism (i.e., it tries to reconcile a view of reality as comprised of entities independent of the mind, with an awareness that awareness is a construct of mind). I note that the metaphysics of presence has encompassed both so-called idealist philosophers, such as Plato, Plotinus, Kant and Hegel, as well as so-called realist philosophers, such as Aristotle, Aquinas, Comte and Hume. The metaphysics of difference, on the other hand, is more distinctly empiricist, with its idealism denied, hidden, or excused as an unavoidable inheritance. I note that the metaphysics of difference is empiricist without ascribing to many notions ascribed to empiricism's cousin, realism, to notions such as veridicality, certainty, rationality and foundation, to the belief that truth consists of an accurate correspondence of internal idea to external world. I find Eisner's arts based research an idealism, in as much as it is neo-Kantian, and realist, in as much as it is Deweyan. I find the a/r/tography of Irwin et al. an empiricism, in as much as it is Deleuzean, but like Deleuze and Derrida, it harbours an idealism of self-sustaining, mutually encompassing, abstracted notions of reality.

In reading philosophy, I have always been fascinated by the elaborate systems that some philosophers have drawn together from their metaphysical notions. "Magnificent thought-castles", Kierkegaard called them (according to Wood, 1990, p. 11). I see this in Plato, Aristotle,

Aquinas, Comte, Spinoza, Hegel, Marx and Deleuze. A cosmology according to Aristotle, a cosmology according to Deleuze, and so on. I judge this fascinating move toward systematization an idealism. I see this idealist synthesis in the collection of works by Eisner. A/r/tography, on the other hand, begins, like Heidegger and Derrida, very critically and "de-constructionally", yet a/r/tography, too, seeks a metaphysical basis for comprehending reality, something which Irwin puts together quite synthetically in her 2013 article, "Becoming A/r/tography". Idealism, as a creative synthesis, is more interesting to me than analytic, critical or empirical thinking. I think that it is the creative synthesis of Deleuze which satisfies his followers.

But idealism poses a problem of time, for some. The Western tradition of thought has been criticized, by Bergson, Derrida, Deleuze and Heidegger, among others, as holding a punctilinear version of time, all the while, contradictorily, also holding an understanding of ideas as eternal, and the self as an always-already. Related to this, is the criticism by Henri Bergson[38] that while the analytic tradition of the West understands time, and knowledge itself, as space, as extension, human intuition experiences time as duration (see Moore, 2013, pp. 409-415). To me, Bergson's comments suggest that the contradiction is more of a paradox than a flaw. In fact, in the Western tradition, the paradox of time has long been a puzzle, and not an esoteric one, but a puzzle that cleaves to conceptions of being.

The poem of Parmenides might be considered to be the origin of the sense of "presenting" of time, in that Parmenides held that only the eternal and timeless way of the

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[38] Henri Bergson: French philosopher, 1859-1941.

goddess was one of truth. Parmenides was a "to be or not to be" philosopher, and he had no place for change or becoming in his metaphysical scheme, yet change and becoming were of great importance to Aristotle, who sought an understanding of motion. Aristotle famously called time a measure of change, a measure of motion (in his *Physics,* Book IV, Chapter 12)—a description clearly punctilinear. Aristotle also reflected on becoming, the developmental change of an entity, which he linked to teleology, purpose, final cause (in his *Physics,* Book II, Chapter 3; *Metaphysics*, Book Delta, Chapter 2). These two features of time, its "presenting" and its linear unfolding, are continuing features of Western thought, of the metaphysics of presence, and are features opposed to by the metaphysics of difference.

Derrida, drawing on Heidegger's complaint of presenting, criticizes the fixation of time that allows the illusory concept of selfsameness. And Deleuze feels that Western metaphysics has been so focused on sameness that it has forgotten change. Deleuze abandons both a punctilinear sense of time and a teleologic sense of change as development. There is no development, no evolutionary ideal for Deleuze. Deleuze reworks an understanding of change, using notions from Bergson, as one of differentiation, as one that abandons the conception of change as a movement from potential (possible) to actual, wherein only one state is considered "real", to a conception of change as a movement from virtual to actual, wherein there is no negation, but rather the emergence of one state from multiple options, an emergence which only increases the options yet again (Deleuze, 1968/1994, pp. 207-214; Moore, 2013, p. 415; Rae, 2014, Chapter 6).

While Deleuze offers fascinating concepts, I think there is an irony in that the criticism that Western thought fixes time, also fixes Western thought on time. For the Western notion of

time has always presented a paradox. This is seen in the musings of many philosophers. Ancient

Greek had two notions of time, that referring to sequential duration, *chronos,* and that

referring to moments or events of significance, *kairos*. In Saint Augustine's Confessions, he

puzzles aphoristically over the mystery of time and being, wondering why, if "in order to be

time at all, the present is so made that it passes into the past, how can we say that this present

also 'is'? The cause of its being is that it will cease to be" (Augustine, 400/2008, Book XI, Section

xiv). Husserl, likewise, puzzles over the nature of time as it relates to being, suggesting that the

phenomenological reduction, this contemplative process of dwelling on essences, allows time

to be perceptually reduced to a "living present" (M. R. Kelly, n.d.). Time as perceptual is also

conjectured by post-structuralist philosophers, by Roland Barthes,[39] for example, who describes

his coinage of the *punctum* as an achronological and ephemeral moment of time, produced by

a piercingly meaningful recollection (Bird, 2012, "Ephemerality"; Strawberry, 2013). Time as

memory is significant in narrative theory, for whom life is a story plot elaborated over

chronologically experienced time (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), and yet, as with Barthes'

punctum, perhaps made meaningful in an achronological narrative moment or montage

(Dillard, 1982, pp. 20-25). Story may also suggest time as eternal, eternally present or eternally

cyclical, as in cosmologies or myths (Eliade, 1959; King, 2008).

Rather than seeing conflicting Western notions of time as a contradiction, or a problem,

I see them as a resonating enigma or mystery.

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[39] Roland Barthes: literary critic, semiotician, post/structuralist thinker, 1915-1980.

I come to the last problem in my list, that of subsistence, of selfsameness and perdurance of identity. This is the problem that jagodzinski (2017) sees in a/r/tography, and he admonishes a/r/tographers for holding on to the "self-constituting subject" (p. 268), to a humanist self-centred identity, in spite of their professed allegiance to a metaphysics of difference. (As discussed already, the reason for the opposition to selfsameness, from the perspective of the metaphysics of difference, is that it is established erroneously, by recourse to a transcendent absolute; to what Heidegger calls the ontotheological, rather than a more authentic grounding, which Heidegger and Derrida allude to metaphorically and mystically, and which Deleuze locates within immanence as difference.)

A/r/tographers have my sympathies. I think that subsistence with respect to concept is hard to let go of. I think subsistence with respect to person is *very* hard, if not impossible, to let go of. One place that this "problem" is poignantly seen is Prendergast's (2020) homage to the late poet Carl Leggo,[40] in a work of poetic inquiry that cannot let go of the always-already person, all the while espousing an ontology of new materialism (an enunciation of a metaphysics of difference; see Barad, 2003, 2007; Snaza et al., 2016).

Why is it hard to drop the principle of subsistence, of selfsameness and perdurance? I think it's because selfsameness is the fundamental aspect of identity as commonly humanly conceived. Selfsameness permits the expectation of thought as stable enough to be commonly and widely shared. Selfsameness describes the notion, feeling and experience of the perduring

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[40] Carl Leggo: poet and beloved benefactor of arts-integrating research, 1953-2019.

self. Selfsameness allows me to talk about myself in first person, as an *I*, and to use the reflexive pronoun, myself. Likewise, selfsameness allows you to be thou and thyself (Buber, 1937/1970).

Here's an irony: positivist research tries to efface the (too subjective) self, but presents truth as knowledge that is certain, fixed, perduring. The turn to qualitative research brings forth an (always-already) self, while presenting knowledge as perspectival, limited and fragmented.

Are you wondering: is it possible to think of subsistence without recourse to an absolute being? Of course—it is the feature of transcendence itself that allows the always-already. Isn't this what occurs in the fallout of Cartesianism, in existentialism, wherein the ego, the mind itself becomes transcendental? Isn't this what science does, posits absolute subsistence as a principle, while assiduously avoiding any explication of the principle itself? Or, if a theoretic/cosmological physicist, perhaps positing self-cause as cause (Q. Smith, 2008). Conversely, it is possible to believe in a principle of absence with respect to a transcendent absolute, as in Buddhism, wherein the point of life is to allow the self to become nothing to oneself, and everything to all, to be absorbed into a transcendent absolute beyond, wherein emptiness becomes fullness (Nárada Maháthera, 2012).

I do not see myself as a construction of impersonal, material forces. (Do you?) I do not see myself as posthuman assemblages, as differentiating nodes of differential relations. I do not see myself as becomings of re/active intensities. (What about you?) I do not see knowledge as fragments or pastiches. (You? Do?) I do appreciate and expect an eventual coherence to an interpretation. Selfsameness and perdurance of idea seem unavoidable—I notice that Deleuze, Derrida and their derivatives are only comprehensible in as much as they allow for a

consistency of thought. With respect to identity, selfsameness of person, thing and thought seem to me not just immanently unavoidable, but eminently desired.

I see selfsameness as an *always-already*.

The point of the above discussion is to contemplate knots in thoughts. Let me summarize what I find. Firstly, I find binaries, transcendence and selfsameness are unavoidable, but I think that unavoidability, while possibly a prompt for resignation, is not reason for acceptance of a philosophy. But, secondly, the criticisms of the metaphysics of presence for its use of binaries, paradoxical notions of time, belief in transcendence, and in selfsameness of concept and person are not obstacles for me; so not a reason to reject the metaphysics of presence. Thirdly, the contradiction in the metaphysics of difference, in offering/denying principles, and the problem of allowing, even avowing, obscurantism, are definitely obstacles for me. Ultimately, the reason why I do not accept the metaphysics of difference is that I find these theories do not offer me an adequate and satisfying ground for meaning, particularly meaning of the self.

> —*So, 1-2-3. You untangle the knot. Full apology. Presence over difference?*
> —No. Aporia will always remain.
> —*What's aporia, again?*
> —The tease of knotty naughts.

I see that my consideration of prior critique has put me into a classic square of logical opposition (Joseph, 1937/2002, pp. 114-118): I can say what I do not accept; I can say what I do not reject; I can say what I do reject, but is this enough for me to say what I do accept? No, not yet, although that's where I am going.

> —*Where we all want to go? To find that perfect ism!*
> — Yeah, though we see that all the *isms*, straight up, have their problems. Absolute idealism ignores the material. Absolute realism ignores the immaterial. Absolute empiricism leads to determinism. And absolute—
> —*Vodka never solved a thing.*

>—Ha ha. But you were never a hard drinker, were you?
>—*Hardly, and I get my fill of spirits now. All right, on to your logical square one. Go ahead, lay it out on the table.*
>—Okay, Amiga.

Every philosophy poses problems and contradictions. The idea of the incompleteness of theory has even been put forth *as* a theory—Godel's theorem/proof (Elsevier's Dictionary of Psychological Theories, 2006). Philosophies are beliefs and beliefs are ever in tension with others. In that case, what to do about problems or contradictions in philosophical theories?

Are contradictions only an issue for detractors?

I recall the quote from logician E. H. Bradley (engaged in the discussion of terms of reference[41]) that metaphysics is an excuse for what one was going to believe anyway. And I note that Guba and Lincoln (1994) define paradigms as beliefs that one must accept on faith, no matter how they fare with argument (p. 107).

What beliefs do I have on faith, that I accept and live with, despite contradiction? I have received, lived and find I still fall in with an understanding of being human as not just an idealism of mind and thought, but also an embodied, emotional, subjective, perspectival, socially interactive, symbolically expressive being. And I have received, lived and still feel akin with an understanding of the human as born of a transcendent Oneness, the divine. But—

>—*Geez, I was expecting the kitchen table, but you've laid out the altar.*
>—You didn't see it coming to this?
>—*I don't mind, but are you allowed to talk about religion in an academic dissertation?*
>—Things have changed. There was a time when we couldn't have dialogue in a dissertation.
>—*You're recording this dialogue?!?!*
>—Uh, are you ok with that?

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[41] See Exhibit 5, "Terms of Reference—Provenances and Preferences", third paragraph.

—*I guess so, but you know, that* (ethics review board).

—Don't worry; we'll just call it a product of imagination. Speaking of which, this might be a good segue to

—*the Confessional?*

—mmm, poetry.

Exhibit 7⁺

Poetic Excursus[42]

Absolutely

Simple and sure as a nursery rhyme:
a key, a gate, a tree to climb;
we clamber up and down we fall;
meantime—

Around that tree winds a garden wall
of stone, with vine-entangled scrawl,
while up above the winged doves fly
enthralled—

Born from the heft of heavenly sighs;
born to the tree's green lullabies;
to be in the garden we were begotten,
so why—

Do we fall, fall away, from
that tree, that green, that gate, that sun?
Our propensity? Our legacy?
Our origin?

Open the gate with the mortal key;
circle around the knowing tree,
where all thought melds to a single chime,
absolutely.

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[42] The poems in this section interpret, respectively: the metaphysics of presence; the metaphysics of difference; metaphysics in Eisnerian arts based research; metaphysics in Irwinian a/r/tography.

Whats the Diff?

CardGame said
metaphysics was roots of the tree
HighDigger fully disagreed
said fuck! the soil!
And where once were apples
we smell decay

He buried the body
(OK, *we* buried the body)
No malice mind you. she was dead
Ergo. dont bother
with exHuming
looking for markers
Dug the grave good—Kant

That a phallusy
fat pussy that one

Just cause you cant read the signs you think
theyre hieroglyphics
like the Rosetta Stone herself
knock, knead, know
(not need no)
See Rosy go swashing her fur gainst the gray slate
and the chalkings are dust

Suns up again
but even if we agree there was yesterday
you are just cotton candy. soufflé.
a fig-mint of imagination
break burn blow

You protest? Wethinks too much
This poem for example? for exhibit?
for exhibition? or tom-foolery?
We allow for thoughts
after all we invented you
So scat!

Substance

What stands under
is mind:
your mind is the substance
glinting red in the ripe sun,
the apple, juicy, hefty, plump,
the point of the tree;
yes, there are other apples, too,
and maybe they taste good—
you sure do.

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admit one

to the event
we assemble
one singular plural
un/officially
un/sanctioned
by invitation only
by force of   the city
celebrity ~~celebrity~~   like tinder
~~celebrity~~   like cloud fire
                                     hot and hotter
I ^{up}un$_{re}$ do   the border

                                     f $^e/_a$int   skin feels
                                                                       coital / unpeeled / red
                                                                       as apple
                                                                       splits-spits-pits-its-is
                                                                       rupture it/s rapture

                                     be <-> come
                                     the moment
                                     coalesce, dehisce
                                     we were here
                                     were we?
                                     are we?

EXHIBIT 8

"Holy—why don't you just say what's real is real and leave it at that!?"

Confession, Creed—What I Believe

Plato, Aquinas, Spinoza, Hegel, Comte, Deleuze—they all created magnificent thought-castles, complete schemas of belief in which to house all of their metaphysical gleanings. Not every philosopher has created as complete a system as these philosophers, yet every philosopher who I have read has aimed for coherence of theory, a theory based on a first principle, which may be generalized—a theory with primacy and unity. We would-be knowers, we scholars, we researchers, can at least aim for that: discerning for ourselves a coherent synthesis of belief. In this exhibit, I explore my ontic beliefs. This is a culminating aim of my project, to study metaphysics in arts-integrating research, not just as a finding, as something out there, to leave out there, but as a prompt for discernment; as for others, so for me. I do so (am doing so/have done so) hermeneutically, considering my received tradition, participating in

ongoing discourse, aware that I might yet change, but affirming the importance of coming to

creed.

Throughout this study, I wondered about the ontic notions in the metaphysics of

presence and difference. My consideration of contradictions and problems in the issues of

binaries, transcendence, time and selfsameness might seem like I espouse a metaphysics of

presence. And I do, as I described in the last section, appreciate its notions of identity. Yet, I was

intrigued to find, in a more recent version of their chapter on paradigms in research, Lincoln

and Guba (2000) enter an additional ideological framework, which they call *participatory/co-*

operative (pp. 164, 168). Prior paradigms (e.g., Guba & Lincoln, 1994) were based on a

dichotomy between the belief that the world is materially given and ordered and can be known

with certainty (the paradigm they call positivism) and the belief that "world" is a human

construction, knowledge of which depends on point of view (the paradigm they call

constructivism). The participatory framework, however, believes that the world is both given

and constructed. Lincoln and Guba's commentary does not explain how the world might be

understood as given. One of the sources to which Guba and Lincoln attribute their framework,

Heron and Reason (1997), describe the participatory framework as based on a "subjective-

objective ontology":

> There is a given cosmos, a primordial reality, in which the mind actively participates. Mind
> and the given cosmos are engaged in a cocreative dance, so that what emerges as reality
> is the fruit of an interaction. . . . Mind actively participates in the cosmos, and it is through
> this active participation that we meet what is Other. (p. 279)

Heron and Reason draw from the phenomenological insight of co-constituting

intentionality to substantiate their paradigmatic and metaphysical model. However, I note that

many spiritual cosmologies also hold a participatory framework comprised of a belief that the

world is created by a transcendent absolute and inhabited by creatures who act of their own

agency, yet are charged with taking part in the ongoing creation of the world (e.g., Hrynkow,

2018; V. Kelly, 2021; Puglisi, 2020). For example, I see that the participatory framework aligns

with the belief system of my own spiritual heritage, Roman Catholicism. Further, I have

discovered that I am not alone in recognizing this alignment. It has also been of great

fascination for me to discover that this tradition has already been interpreted as a metaphysics

of participation (Fortuin, 2019; Hagan, 2015; Kerr, 2012; Koterski, 2004; McInery, 1990; and T. J.

White, 2017). I can describe this metaphysics with respect to the elements I have already

described, those of primacy and unity, but which I re-label, as more resonant to me, *substance*

and *communion*. Also, I note that since what is participated with is creation, it might also be

called a metaphysics of creation (Kerr, 2012). Here is my enunciation of this metaphysical

understanding, tabled according to these principles.

Essential Features of a Metaphysics of Participation (Creation)

Element of (↓) with respect to metaphysics of (→)	participation
substance (primacy)	☾ The foundation is the Creator, a being who is transcendent, beyond this embodied, material world, and yet immanent, within this embodied, spiritual world. ☾ The world is created by the desire of the creator to create and give goodness. The world is given as a gift to its creatures. It is made of stuff. Good stuff.

communion (unity)	☾ All creatures are created in the image of the Creator, God, and so are given, and participate in, attributes of the creator.
	☾ The world is knowable, and yet a mystery. Creation and Creator are knowable, and yet a mystery. Creatures are knowable, and yet mysteries.
	☾ The goal of all creatures is communion with God and participation in God's vision of creation.

—*Very nice. I think that could work in plain song.*

—Yeah, me and Athanasius.

Just as the addition of the framework of participation offers an alternative to Guba and Lincoln from their prior dichotomy of positivism/foundationalism versus constructivism/interpretivism, the addition of a metaphysics of participation offers (me) an alternative from the dichotomy of presence (being is fixed selfsameness) and difference (being is flux). I note that while a metaphysics of participation aligns with a Catholic spiritual tradition, it is not church doctrine, and its tenets readily extend beyond religious boundaries. Also, I note that the metaphysics of participation was not elaborated in opposition to the metaphysics of presence or difference, nor is it a reactionary correction thereof. The metaphysics of participation is a complex belief set about which much has been written, especially more recently with the increased interest in metaphysics prompted by post-structuralism. I offer here a brief review of the metaphysics of participation as understood in my tradition, but I begin by noting that this metaphysics of participation, like the metaphysics of presence and difference, was never asserted, per se, by the philosophers from whom it has been drawn. Like the metaphysics of presence and difference, it is a metaphysical orientation gathered and interpreted thereof (just as I, once again, do here—review, reconsider, reflect).

—*True Confession! So interesting! Do you mind if I call some others over? Hilda! Tom!*

—Tom?!

—*No, not that one, Doctor Tom. Don't worry. I get it. Table talk, sacramental seal.
Though mightn't you have a big Tom among your peepers?*

—I hadn't thought of that. Apart from you it's been quiet. The magistrates are biding
their time…

—*Just keep going like you're telling your story to your mother. It is a love story, after all?*

Metaphysics of Participation

In the Catholic tradition, I have discovered, a metaphysical doctrine of participation is first

located in the systematic theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas, which he developed from

antecedents in Abrahamic and Hellenist thought. Hagan (2015) asserts that the notion of

ontological participation is first enunciated in Plato's doctrine of Ideas/Forms, is "sidestepped"

by Aristotle's "doctrine of immanence" (p. 21), and then synthesized into Aquinas' metaphysical

theory. *Participation* in these contexts means "taking a part, having a limited share of

something else which is wholly that" (Koterski, 2004, p. 193). In this context, Hagan (2015)

notes, the Latin term for participation derives from both the Greek words *metechein*, connoting

"a relationship of mutual having" and *koinonein*, connoting a relationality of commonality and

dependence (p. 15). I consider these two terms as steps toward the elucidation of a

metaphysics of participation.

With Plato, the notion of participation is discussed in his theory of Ideas/Forms (e.g.,

Phaedo, Sections 74-75, 93, 100-101; *Republic,* Book VI, Sections 596a-b). Plato's doctrine of

participation begins as an exercise in logic, in thinking about the one and the many, the

particular and the universal, and how one characteristic or quality or property may be found in

many things. Plato (ca. 380-360 BCE/1997b) says to his interlocutors,

> As you know, we customarily hypothesize a single form [or idea] in connection with each
> of the many things to which we apply the same name. . . . Then let's now take any of the

manys you like. For example, there are many beds and tables. . . . But there are only two

forms [or ideas] of such furniture, one of the bed and one of the table. (*Republic,* Book VI,

Sections 596a-b)

With the notion of participation, Plato shows how a unity may emanate into many without any

loss of the unity itself. This notion fits into Plato's theory of Ideas/Forms, where he proposes

that there exists a single (perfect) Idea/Form and its many (imperfect) instantiations (*Phaedo*,

Sections 73-74). Plato posits a participation of a thing with its Form, a participatory relationship

that is not just logical but ontological (*Republic,* Book VI, Sections 596a-b; see Hagan, 2015;

Koterski, 2004; Wood, 1990, p. 137). This is because Plato posits two realms, the intelligible and

changeless realm of Ideas/Forms and the less intelligible, changing realm of sensible, material

things, the *form*er in*form*ing the latter:

> Reason itself grasps by the power of dialectic. It does not consider these hypotheses as
>
> first principles but truly as hypotheses—but as stepping stones to take off from, enabling
>
> it to reach the unhypothetical first principle of everything. Having grasped this principle, it
>
> reverses itself and, keeping hold of what follows from it, comes down to a conclusion
>
> without making use of anything visible at all, but only of forms themselves, moving on
>
> from forms to forms, and ending in forms. (Plato, ca. 380-360 BCE/1997b, *Republic,* Book
>
> VI, Section 511b)

Although Plato suggests Ideas/Forms as causal, this is not what Aristotle would call efficient

cause, or what the modern world would refer to as that which effects (Koterski, 2004). Hagan

(2015) asserts that Plato's theory of Ideas/Forms, and sense of participation, has a problem of

lack of ground due to the unreduced and unconnected multiplicity of Ideas/Forms in the realm

of intelligibility (pp. 19-20). Hagan (2015) feels that while Plato does present the notion of the

One and the *Good*, he does not clearly connect this notion as a source or grounding for intelligibility.

Aristotle refutes Plato's theory of Ideas/Forms (in his *Metaphysics*, Book Alpha, Chapter 9; Book Zeta, Chapter 13-15), finding its presentation of universals problematic. Aristotle notes that for Plato, a Form/Idea is a cause and a principle (*Metaphysics,* Book Zeta, Chapter 13, para. 1), and thus ontologically prior to and more ultimate than sensed material things. Aristotle, the empiricist, disagrees. Aristotle looks fundamentally to the "thisness" of things and suggests that a thing is hylomorphic, a compound of a material form and a definitional essence (*Metaphysics,* Book Zeta, Chapter 3, para. 1). However, Aristotle does acknowledge participation as logical predication, as a means of explicating how accidents (properties) show commonality and how the units of a genus participate in the defining characteristics of the genus (*Metaphysics,* Book Alpha, Chapter 4, para 1). But by refuting the theory of Ideas/Forms, Aristotle refutes the notion of participation as causal (Koterski, 2004, pp. 193-194). Aristotle believes that all things must come from things: "something must be produced out of something" (Aristotle, ca. 350 BCE/n.d., *Metaphysics*, Book Zeta, Chapter 8, para. 1).

Aristotle is committed to a construct of metaphysics as a science of first principles, a science that can expound primacy and universality (*Metaphysics,* Book Alpha, Chapter 1; Grondin, 2012, p. 56). Aristotle's metaphysical thinking dwells on the immanence of being (its thisness, its quiddity), and as such he is most interested, I find, in two contrary features of being: the definitional essence of things, which can be fixed, and the incessant motion of things. Taking motion as a principle of being, Aristotle develops his notion of material change, of potency and act, of efficient cause, and all of this leads to his notion of an unmoved Mover, that

the motion of every material thing is put into motion by another material thing, but that

eventually the series ends with an unmoved mover as the ultimate source of movement, "that

which as first of all things moves all things" (Aristotle, ca. 350 BCE/n.d., *Metaphysics*, Book

Lambda, Chapter 4, para 1). Hagan (2015) notes that Aristotle's extrapolation from motion and

efficient cause to an unmoved Mover continues a problem of lack of ground, because, in spite

of this positing of an ultimate cause, "potency remains an aspect of the never-ending circular

change of the cosmos [celestial sphere]" (p. 24). Hagan points out that Aristotle's *regressio*

actually demonstrates an even more radical separation of material and immaterial realms than

Plato's *eidos*. Hagan (2015) points out that the beliefs of Aristotle, like those of Plato, are based

in a Hellenistic belief in an imperfect flux that is the material world, beyond which exists a

causative, changeless realm (pp. 10, 82). Grondin (2012) notes the limitation of Aristotle's

transcendent One, as a changeless being, completely separated in a realm of thought, only able

to think itself (p. 66), unable to participate with the immanent world.

While both Plato and Aristotle conceived of an immaterial and intelligible realm of

thought, two thinkers radically transformed notions of this realm and of human participation

with it. In both cases, this awareness came about through mystical experiences, experiences

that only poetic prayer could explicate. Plotinus (ca. 250/n.d.) identifies the intelligible realm as

a unity of Goodness, as a Oneness from which we emanate and to which our lives are a longing

to return. Augustine (ca. 400/2008) identifies this One as the personalized God of Christianity,

and likewise envisions a teleological goal of reunification with this goodness. This unity, while

teleological, may also be experienced through mystical vision or revelation.

Aquinas is a great synthesizer of prior philosophical notions, as are many of the Western

philosophers of great impact. In his metaphysical systematization, as found in his great works,

Summa Theologiae and *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas merges Plato's notions of participation

with those from Aristotle, which he garners via their interpretations through Neoplatonism

(namely, Plotinus and Augustine) and Islamic scholarship (e.g., Avicenna). From Plato, Aquinas

takes on the notion of the participation of things in ideas, that ideas pervade in things, and

things mirror ideas (see Aquinas 1265/1961, *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics, Book 10;*

Aquinas, 1267/1947, *Summa Theologiae,* Part I, Question 44, Article 3; also see Wood, 1990,

p. 137). From Aristotle, who offers little on participation, especially ontological participation,

Aquinas draws many notions describing the immanent world, notions such as essence, efficient

causality, potency and act (see Aquinas, 1265/1961, *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*).

From the Islamic scholar, Avicenna, Aquinas appropriates the important notion of the

distinction between essence and existence (see Aquinas, 1254/1968, *On Being and Essence*;

also see Grondin, 2012, p. 92; Wood, 1990, p. 181). To these notions, Aquinas adds this

significant postulate: that an effect participates in its cause and that an effect resembles the

cause (Fortuin, 2019; Hagan, 2015; Koterski, 2004). Aquinas rejects the formal causality of

Plato, and moves to the efficient causality of Aristotle, but in doing so, Aquinas also expounds

his notion of ultimate cause as from a first principle, from a transcendent absolute which he

identifies as God (see Aquinas, 1254/1968, *On Being and Essence*, Chapter 4, Section 7).

Furthermore, Aquinas affirms Christian doctrine (as in the *Book of Genesis*) that this ultimate

cause is a *creatio ex nihilo* (a creation from nothing; see Aquinas, 1267/1947, *Summa*

Theologiae, Part I, Question 45, Article 1). Aquinas radically changes the Hellenist belief in

things as ever the cause of things to the idea that ultimately things are caused by an act of

divine creation. Aquinas' notion of ultimate causality as creation involves significant reversals of

Hellenist belief: for Aquinas, God is not changeless but eternal, not finite but infinite (Hagan,

2015, pp. 10, 82; Wood, 1990, p. 137), not an "infinity of imperfection" but a "infinity of

determination" and a "perfection of being" (Hagan, 2015, p. 23, footnote 69).

Aquinas' metaphysics is designated by post-structuralist thinkers as a metaphysics of

presence, but it is perhaps more aptly (though non-exclusively) described as a metaphysics of

creation (Kerr, 2012) that is comprehended through a metaphysics of participation (Fortuin,

2019; Hagan, 2015; Koterski, 2004). Here are some key aspects of Aquinas' metaphysics of

participation/creation. Firstly, recall, dear Interlocutor, that distinction between existence and

essence, between the "that is" and the "what is" (Aquinas, 1254/1967, *On Being and Essence*,

Chapter 1, para. 4; see Exhibit 6). Aquinas postulates that, while for creatures, their existence is

limited by their essence, for God, there is no such limitation; God's existence is unlimited by

God's essence (Aquinas, 1254/1967, *On Being and Essence*, Chapter 4, Sections 6-7) and thus,

God is "universal perfection" (Hagan, 2015, pp. 37, 39). Relatedly, as Aquinas considers cause,

he posits God as self-subsisting, that God is *sui generis*, self-caused, while human existence he

posits as caused from a source beyond humanity (Aquinas, 1267/1947, *Summa Theologiae,* Part

I, Question 45, Article 5, Response 1). For Aquinas (as per Christian theology), created beings

receive existence from God; their being is dependent on God's act of creation (op. cit.).

Furthermore, created beings participate in the attributes of their cause, their creator, God—

they "receive partially what belongs to another in a universal way . . . receive only part of what

belongs to another fully" (Koterski, p. 189). A refrain of participation repeats throughout

Aquinas' works. For example, here, in his *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas (ca. 1267/1947) states that

> univocal predication is impossible between God and creatures. The reason of this is that every effect which is not an adequate result of the power of the efficient cause, receives the similitude of the agent not in its full degree, but in a measure that falls short, so that what is divided and multiplied in the effects resides in the agent simply, and in the same manner; as for example the sun by exercise of its one power produces manifold and various forms in all inferior things. In the same way, as said in the preceding article, all perfections existing in creatures divided and multiplied, pre-exist in God unitedly. (Part I, Question 13, Article 5, Response 3)

How does human existence participate with that of the divine? How does human being participate with that of the absolute? Aquinas elaborates *analogy* to explain participation in the attributes of the divine. Aquinas states that

> the likeness of creatures to God is not affirmed on account of agreement in form according to the formality of the same genus or species, but solely according to analogy, inasmuch as God is essential being, whereas other things are beings by participation. (Aquinas, 1267/1947, *Summa Theologiae,* Part I, Question 4, Article 3, Response 3)

And Aquinas further explicates:

> In one sense truth, whereby all things are true, is one, and in another sense it is not. In proof of which we must consider that when anything is predicated of many things univocally, it is found in each of them according to its proper nature; as animal is found in each species of animal. But when anything is predicated of many things analogically, it is found in only one of them according to its proper nature, and from this one the rest are denominated. (Aquinas, 1267/1947, *Summa Theologiae,* Part I, Question 16, Article 6; for further explication on analogy in Aquinas, see T. J. White, 2017; Wood, 1990, pp. 191-201)

The metaphysics of presence presents participation as a partaking of the intelligibility of the absolute, an intelligibility that, being whole endows selfsameness, being eternal endows perdurance, and being true endows reasoning. But the metaphysics of participation also considers other aspects of the divine, and other attributes that are participated with. One guide to this is Aquinas' notion of the transcendentals, characteristics that occur perfectly in God, and which are participated with imperfectly, analogically, by creation. The transcendentals most commonly discussed are *thinghood, unity, otherness, truth, goodness* and *beauty.* For example, T. J. White (2017) discusses the transcendental of beauty as that which may be sensibly seen as an integrity of proportion, as in a beautiful tree, or spiritually seen as an integrity of coherence, as in a beautiful idea (cf., Aquinas, 1267/1947, *Summa Theologiae,* Part I, Question 39, Article 8). Koterski (2004) presents other significant attributes of the divine that humanity participates in, such as personhood, creativity, autonomy and love, attributes which expand upon the notion of participation as relational and communitarian.

> Renewed attention to Thomas's doctrine of participation may . . . show the attractiveness of Thomas's way of thinking when we start to consider grace as the participation of our nature in the divine life, faith as the participation in God's knowledge, and charity as participation in divine love. (Koterski, 2004, p. 188)

There are other significant aspects to the metaphysics of participation which relate to metaphysical knowledge in itself, aspects such as the notion of analogical knowing, the notion of the absolute as both transcendent and immanent, and the notion of revelatory insight. Let's consider each of these.

Firstly, analogical knowing, something that extends from engaging analogy to understand participatory being. Aquinas puts forth the idea that while we cannot know of the transcendent

absolute directly, we can know it by analogy, that we can extrapolate proportionally from the attributes of created beings to the attributes of God. Aquinas points out that

> proportion is twofold. In one sense it means a certain relation of one quantity to another, according as double, treble and equal are species of proportion. In another sense every relation of one thing to another is called proportion. And in this sense there can be a proportion of the creature to God, inasmuch as it is related to Him as the effect of its cause, and as potentiality to its act; and in this way the created intellect can be proportioned to know God. (Aquinas, 1267/1947, *Summa Theologiae,* Part I, Question 12, Article 1, Response 4; see Fortuin, 2019, para. 5; Wood, 1990, p. 193)

Secondly, the absolute as both transcendent and immanent. The doctrine of participation believes creation is not just a making of a something out of something, and nor is it fixed, but a sharing from a wholeness that remains dynamic and undiminished by the sharing (Aquinas, 1267/1947, *Summa Theologiae,* Part I, Question 45, Article 2; Question 46, Article 2; Koterski, 2004, p. 189; T. J. White, n.d.). This inexhaustibility of the absolute is a concept which might be understood analogically, as in the example of how the attribute of whiteness is undiminished by its occurrence in a winter of snow. Because God is undiminished by creation, created beings are not pieces of God; the metaphysics of participation is not a pantheism—to which Spinoza's reasoning is thought to bring an entirely immanent God (Stumpf, 2003, p. 236). On the other hand, in the conception of the metaphysics of participation, God does not rest separately transcendent, but ongoingly shares with creation:

> Because no creature is identical with its act, each creature requires the constant *influxus* of being from the divine being in a maximally intimate fashion—no part or aspect of any creature exists ever at any time without the constant in-pouring of being from God. . . . The good pours itself out, and the greatest good manifests the greatest self outpouring. (Hagan, 2015, pp. 84-85)

Thirdly, revelatory insight. Hagan's metaphor of "pouring" highlights an essential feature of the doctrine of participation. God's outpouring is a tenet of belief, knowledge of which comes not from rational certainty, but from revelatory insight. Saint Thomas is both philosopher and theologian, as Angelic Doctor of the church, he is both teacher and traveller (Chesterton, 1933/1974).

As I explore the Thomistic metaphysics of participation many insights come (heuristically) to me. For example,

- I note that Aquinas engages with prior thought hermeneutically, reinterpreting prior thought and engaging with its dialectics;
- I note that the metaphysical doctrine of participation adds depth to the hermeneutic notion of whole and part epistemology;
- I note that Aquinas' thrust is phenomenological, to explicate the phenomenon of existence;
- I note that Aquinas is not bound by logic or reason; he uses reason to explicate belief, developing a complex metaphysical schema that encompasses both realism and idealism;
- I note that Aquinas' notion of participation, affirming the ongoing dynamic of creator and creation, upsets the notion of identity as fixity.

Reading about Aquinas' metaphysics of participation, reminds me that metaphysics always comes down to tenets of belief. Aquinas' metaphysics of participation, all the while examining the same philosophical forebears as those examined by post-structuralist thinkers Heidegger and Derrida, takes a distinctly different perspective and, by focusing on participation (with a continually present and loving creator, along with the goodness of creation) instead of identity (as an intelligibility shared of the absolute), opens to an expansive alternative to a metaphysics of presence qua (fixed) identity.

As I wind up this description of the metaphysics of participation, two quotes give me pause for thought. Firstly, says one theologian,

> When we turn to the transcendental plane and consider the coming forth which Thomas calls creation (or using that Neoplatonic term emanation so strange to Aristotelian ears), the process is not to be conceived of as a mutation or a motion from potency to act, but as another kind of causality, an influx of being from the first principle. (Koterski, 2004, pp. 193-194)

Secondly, says another,

> Being is both mysterious and intelligible. . . . Although the mind grasps the univocity of being [as existence], it does not grasp it in its fullness, for being always overflows the mind's grasp of it, overflows the categories of the intellect. (Sweetman, p. 234)

In the first quote, I see the feature that is so strongly resisted in post-structuralism: the belief in being as derived from a first principle found in a transcendent realm, that belief which is described as ontotheological, and as an oppressive fixation. But the second quote describes being as anything but fixed. I feel that post-structuralism threw out the baby with the bath water and continues ever since in search for that loved one. Having discovered that being cannot be found in rational certainty, where or how else might one search?

Presence, Reconsidered

I want to reconsider presence.

I want to reconsider, from the gleanings I've gathered from the metaphysics of participation, the notion of the fixity of presence.

In a post-structuralist critique of the metaphysics of presence, presence is critiqued as "presenting", as the fixation of ideas and of being outside of time. But those connected to spiritual aspects of the metaphysics of presence see presence not as fixity, the fixity of identity,

but as boundlessness—as boundless, procreative, magnanimity. This notion of presence is

frequently referred to in Christian scriptures.

> —*You will reveal the path of life to me, give me unbounded joy in your presence, and at your right hand everlasting pleasures. (Psalm 16: 11)*
> —*We ourselves have known and put our faith in God's love toward ourselves. God is love and anyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in him. (1 John 4: 16)*

When I first heard the term, metaphysics of presence, what came to mind was this sense of

presence as an experience of divine munificence. I also thought of the very Catholic sense of

the presence of God as experienced in the sacrament of Eucharist, wherein earthly bread

transubstantiates into the body of Christ.

If I call this knowledge, this knowing, this experience, of the fullness of the divine that of

knowing and experiencing *presence,* I would distinguish it from Heidegger's *presenting* (as

described in Exhibit 5 and Exhibit 7) although it may well relate to his notion of *Walten* (*phusis*,

"emerging-abiding sway", Heidegger, 2000, pp. xiii, 15-16). This sacramental notion of presence

does not equate with the fixation of identity, and it suggests to me that I might reconsider the

appellation "metaphysics of presence". Knowing divine presence is not at all like knowing the

fixity of fact, and as the just-relayed quotes suggest, is not to be known through logical

rationalization. Nor, I acknowledge, is this knowing of the divine presence the exclusive domain

of Christian or Abrahamic religions. This sense of presence is an understanding of being not as

"the lowest common denominator of all things" (Wood, 1990. p. 2); not as "that which is

outside of nothing" (ibid); not as "the last trailing cloud of evaporating reality" (Nietzsche,

1889/1968, p. 37; in discussion by Wood, 1990, p. 2), but as "plenitude" (Wood, 1990, p. 3).

Presence as plenitude, and being as presence, offers a meaning that cannot be logically

analyzed, reduced or fixed. Presence is the deep experience of the mystery of being itself.

The kind of knowing that allows one to experience the presence of the fullness of being is often described as mystical. Underhill (1911/2002) describes mystical knowing as non-conceptual knowledge of the absolute, gained by contemplation or meditation. The epithet mystical is often applied to those who claim knowledge of God, of a transcendent absolute, through revelation or spiritual insight.

I note that the trio of thinkers of difference, Heidegger, Derrida and Deleuze, have all been at times described as mystical and/or spiritual, even though all three decry the "ontotheological" and have, at least in some ways, called themselves atheist. In all three, it is their move to the negation or absence of sign/concept/thought which brings about this qualifier. One such qualification has come from the post-structuralist theologian John Caputo. Caputo (1974, 1975), in a seminal work, describes Heidegger's thought as an engagement with, and a parallel to, that of the fourteenth century Christian mystic Meister Eckhart. In doing so, he notes a movement in Heidegger from critic to mystic, from critiquing the Western fixation of being, to contemplating "an ecstatic relationship of openness to Being in which and through which Being reveals itself" (p. 61). Caputo (1997) also describes Derrida in spiritual terms. He finds Derrida's thought eminently religious, albeit a-theist, that his "religion without religion" is a movement from his deconstruction of dogmatic representation in traditional Abrahamic religions to a messianic and mystical "passion for the impossible" (Caputo, 1997; headlines, passim). Caputo sees Derrida's deconstructionist theory not just as critique, but as affirmation of hope. Likewise, Foshay (1994), correlates Derrida's différance as a negative theology, that Derrida's vacillation demonstrates the *apophaticism* associated with spiritual mysticism: of knowing the unknown by means of negation, by what it is not. Influenced not just by post-

structural theorists such as Derrida and Levinas, but also by hermeneutic scholars such as

Ricoeur, philosopher Richard Kearney discerns his own metaphysics and phenomenology as

anatheism (Kearney, 2010), theorizing a *God who may be*, a God of possibility, a faith that

depends on a hopefully iterative interpretation of being and divinity:

> The divine possible takes its leave of being having passed through it, not into the pure
>
> ether of non-being, but into the future which awaits us as the surplus of posse over
>
> esse—as that which is more than being, beyond being, desiring always to come into being
>
> again, and again, until the kingdom comes. Here at last we may come face to face with
>
> the God who may be, the deity yet to come. (Kearney, 2001, p. 4)

Not all explorations of post-structuralist mysticism endorse the philosophers or

metaphysics of difference. Davies (2001) compares the mysticism in Deleuze with that of

Neoplatonist Plotinus and medieval Dominican monk Meister Eckhart. He notes that Deleuze

resembles the two mystics in their looking to univocity (oneness) to understand being and in

their engagement of apophatic negation to understand knowing. He notes Plotinus' declining to

name the One as an effort inadequate to the task, and notes that this refusal of representation

is that which occurs as Deleuze tries to "think difference". Davies distinguishes Plotinus and

Eckhart from Deleuze, however, in that ultimately the theologians, aware that "sheer negation

does not signify" (p. 77), look to the apophatic for a *revealing* of the divine One. Davies laments

that Deleuze' attempt to conceive of being, both thought and thing, as an entirely immanent

differentiation, without representation, collapses into the unthinkable (p. 84). Davies suggests

that it is only *in* its contradictory transcendence that Deleuze' project might make sense, that

Deleuze' attempt to make difference non-representational renders it transcendental. Davies

finds Deleuze' contradiction, his hope to find meaning beyond representation, apophatic, even "ecstatically theological" (p. 85).

Davies' (2001) comments regarding Deleuze prompt a discussion of differences between the desirability of the representational versus the presentational in the metaphysics of presence and difference. I note that in both metaphysical traditions one can find a problematization of the representational. By means of explanation, I'll start with an acknowledgement that representation is always a re-presentation, a secondary expression of a prior image, event or experience (Barker, 2004b). Also, I remember that the notion of representation comes up in Plato's theory of Ideas/Forms, in his notion of a perfect, but transcendent Form, and its imperfect material realizations. For post-structuralist thinkers Derrida and Deleuze, the Western tradition's ever-Platonic representational thinking is blighted. For Derrida, the problem of representation is its delusional "re-present-ing" that tries to hold to the present and hide the inherent supplementarity of meaning. For Deleuze, the problem of representation is that it delusionally tries to maintain repetition as replication, *without* the inevitability of difference. Rather than representation, Deleuze aims for the invention of concepts via a *creatio ex nihilo*, as Davies (2001) notes. For the (critics of the) metaphysics of presence, re-presentation has always been inadequate: a Platonic means of expression wherein the created object only imperfectly participates with its perfect eidos. But if I jump to my Catholic understanding of presence, I note that even if creations of God are partial or limited, not perfect as God is perfect, they are, nonetheless, made in God's image. And, while, for these creatures, in their partiality, knowledge of God is limited by the *representational*, via means such as reason or analogy; the *presentational* extends a

hope/promise of direct revelation. As such, I am reminded of Eisner's discussion of qualitative reasoning as presentational versus representational, as thinking and communicating without use of conventional symbol or rule-bound syntax (Eisner, 1994a, 70-71; 1994b, pp. 220-226). In this, I am reminded that the presentational, non-discursive element of art may be, and has been, used mystically, as a means of prayer or contemplation, in seeking a revelation, or any experience of the presence of the divine. Such is the expectation of religious icons, where one hopes to move from a reflection on the representation aspects (iconic and symbolic) of an image, to a receptive experience of the presence of God (Kosloski, 2018).

Although I don't see mystical leanings in Eisnerian arts based research,[43] I, like Caputo and Davies, have seen a mystical/apophatic exploration of metaphysical ultimates in my readings of the metaphysics of difference. While in Deleuze this must be parsed through the contradiction of his logic of a transcendent immanence, in Derrida, it dances like an entrancing whirligig. To start, I see an apophatic presence in Derrida's différance, and in all the deferring metaphoric terms of reference he engages, trace, supplement, alterity and so on—I think that the deferring is not just to avoid fixing meaning, but an attempt to find meaning outside of linguistic sign, non-conceptually, in an *ex-stasis* "de hors-texte" (Derrida, 1976, p. 158). "The as-yet un-nameable begins to proclaim itself," says Derrida (1967/1978, p. 293), and what I see in Derrida's unnamed something, in his foundational non-foundation, is a search for transcendent ultimates and a proposal that these vacillations comprise possibility, which I think for Derrida is

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[43] Although I do now see the possibility of a metaphysic of participation. Eisner's monadic minds co-construct with each other. But where do these minds come from? Eisner does not describe them as self-created, and so, I think, assumes their givenness.

the very ground of ground. Furthermore, I see the same ironical urge in a/r/tography's

appropriation of post-structuralist terms and process, those of Derrida among others,

apophatic terms such as stutter, becoming, absence and without.

I especially see an apophasis in a/r/tography's frequently used term the *in-between.* In

the use of the term and concept of the in-between, I see a/r/tography exploring the meaning of

being, exploring metaphysics, vis-à-vis their perceived problem of the rigidity of binaries. As

mentioned previously in Exhibit 7, I don't find that a/r/tography shuts down binaries; rather,

that a/r/tography uses binaries not just unavoidably, but intentionally (in-tensionally), perhaps

to jump between markers of the known to a resonating unknown. The apophatic is similarly

engaged in Sameshima, White and Sinner's (2019) term and concept of *ma*. *Ma* is a notion

appropriated from Japanese culture and language, which refers to the space between markers,

what might appear as an absent or negative space, but which may be productively engaged.

Examples of such productivity occur in the negative space in a work of art, or in the pauses in a

performance of a play or a ceremony. In their anthology, Sameshima, White and Sinner (2019)

engage *ma* to explore a curriculum of in-between. One example herein would be my chapter

(Haggarty, 2019) in which I consider the productive space between the markers that are marks,

as a place for the *value-ation* of a lived educational experience.

I see that there are different ways to look at the in-between as the place between

binaries. It could be seen as a place that eliminates/erases the opposition between the

markers. Or, it could be seen as a place that holds the opposition between the markers.

Both are a form of nonduality, but I find only one resonant. The former I see as mere absence,

as the erasure of polarity, as an unproductive attempt to move beyond/out of (transcend)

binaries. The latter I see as presence, not as a fixed presence, but as a filling presence, such as the in-between of life between conception and death. I think that if, instead of trying to "move beyond binaries", we try to move between them, we are moving away from certainty to the unknown but not the unknowable, rather, toward a mystic presence.

And although this mystic presence of the in-between is something we see explored in theorizations of the metaphysics of difference (and in methodologies aligned with it), it is significant to note that this movement to apophasis has antecedents in Christian mysticism. It is vital to recall that almost all of the major philosophers of the metaphysics of presence, Plato, Plotinus, Augustine, Aquinas, were mystics, for whom "proof was always couched in a prayer", for whom the purpose of reason was the support of faith, for whom presence is an inexhaustible outpouring of the being they knew as God (a plentitude of beauty, goodness, truth, unity, thinghood, otherness).

Theologian Bernard McGinn, in his introduction to his 2006 anthology of the writings of Christian mystics, describes mysticism as knowledge of God gained not by rational human effort but by the soul's reception of a divine gift. However, he stresses that mysticism isn't a *having* but a process, a transformative journey to God (pp. xii-xiv). I see that McGinn's interpretation relates back to Hagan (2015), that in a metaphysics of participation, participation isn't a *metechein*, a mutual having, but a *koinonein*, a relationality of commonality and dependence (p. 15). I appreciate this highlighting of presence as neither a fixity of knowledge, nor a having, but as a filling and transformative relationship.

I wonder if it is ultimately to relationship that the apophatic reaches. Although the metaphysics of difference moves away from a transcendent Other, does it move away from

otherness? When a/r/tography speaks of rupture, does it seek rapture? When Prendergast (2020) offers homage to her late friend, does she seek the comfort of a continuing presence of relationship with him? Perhaps what Prendergast wants is what Söderbäck (2013) calls, after feminist philosopher Luce Irigiray, a *metaphysics of co-presence* based on the in-between category of *being-with* or *becoming-with*, a belief system that stresses that human beings are not "autonomous, self-same" but marked by "alterity" (p. 260). In this metaphysics, the absolute is an apophatic otherness: "Only a subject-in-becoming can approach the other reciprocally, by acknowledging his or her own incompleteness (the fact that we are not whole, not fully present on our own)" (ibid). This sounds very much like a description of the metaphysics of participation, and here again I find a convergence at the apophatic limits of metaphysics.

The opposite of certainty may be uncertainty, or it might be mystery. If identity is opposed to difference, what lies in between? Presence?!

I offer the musings here in order to reconsider the notion of presence not as fixity, but as plenitude. I think it is a significant theme arising from this study and bears further thought. What exactly would be the questions guiding that study, I do not yet know.

> —*Something I wonder about: You said that in the so-called metaphysics of presence, presence was declared to be a fixation of now and a certainty of forever. But, I wonder, is the opposite of the eternity of fixation finitude or flow? Or is it both finitude and flow? Is it a stilling of movement, or a filling of nothing?*
> —Ah, good points. And perhaps the question arising for future study could be, "What is this presence that draws together the limits of metaphysics?"
> —*Why limit, why not centre?*
> —Ah, why not? Speaking of centre reminds me of aporia, Aristotle's knotty problem. I wonder if instead of seeing aporia as a knot which must have a solution, are there other ways to consider the knot? I think about Borromean knots: they cannot be untied; they are endlessly circular. I consider the Celtic knot. The Celtic knot is also called a meander, which is the basis of

the labyrinth, the ancient and continuing tool for sacred discernment. In the knot that is a meander, the point is not to untie, but to follow the path to the centre and then return back out again, all the wiser.

—*The circle that is a spiral—Saint Brigit's cross.*

—Yes, perhaps this image of the Celtic knot may guide me. It suggests presence not as a fixation, but as an experience of plenitude, a journeying to the in-between, a journey that does not remain statically at the centre, but is aware of the markers of its existence.

—*Has this study brought you to a centre?*

—Yes, but I know I will have to go back again, and again.

—*And have to go on, and on.*

—Yes, but I'm not ready to go on, yet.

—*Still looking back?*

—I think that I need a big, strong summation to assure my interlocutors (and inquisitors) that all is well and done. I do have to submit this work to examination. Though I fear I could never give enough to satisfy—

—*Well, why not just end in silence? "Silence is precious; by keeping silence and knowing how to listen to God, the soul grows in wisdom and God teaches it what it cannot learn from men."* (Blessed Anne of Saint Bartholomew)

—"What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence"? (Ludwig Wittgenstein)

—*Hey, I have an idea; why don't you offer your finale to me? You know me as companion on your quest. And I have another question, and I think it would be a great one to end on. You say that the point of researching metaphysics is to be able to figure out what you think knowing is—and then how this understanding of knowing applies to your research practice. Well, now that you have researched your metaphysics, what do you say? Does this metaphysics of participation that you discerned align with what you had said would be your research methodology? Are you still happy with your methodology? Does it still work for you? And the same thing about how you see art as a way of knowing.*

—Oh my! You're right. That's a great idea! I'll end with a—

Methodological Review

—In this study, I discerned a metaphysics of participation, and I reconsidered presence. Now I might ask: 1) What are the epistemological entailments of this metaphysics? 2) Do they agree with or apply or alter the methodology I initially put forth as the research practice of this study?

What can be said about the metaphysics of participation? This is the belief that the world is given, yet given over; given by the intentions of a creator, yet given over to the intentions of its creatures; to be human is to be both creature and creator. And what does this imply about knowing? To me, it admits that the world is given as gift, but also as mystery, and so we engage, we decipher, we use every tool of reason, but still, we are never completely sure of ourselves, let alone the world of others. This lack of certainty prompts differing beliefs. When

reason fails, what is left? We continue to participate. We work with what we have at our disposal: relationship, discourse, emotion, perception, imagination, intuition.

Are these entailments reflected in the methodology I have put forth?

At the beginning of this study, I proposed that I would use a methodology drawing from both phenomenology *and* hermeneutics. As I re-consider my synthetic methodology of creational dialectics, I find that it does meaningfully and productively align with a metaphysics of participation, and all its intriguing dualisms and in-betweens.

> —In the dualism of phenomenology *and* hermeneutics, in the expectation of essences, along with the awareness that these essences must be interpreted, I see the polarity of world given and world given over, of creature and creator. I see the polarity of creature and creator in the existence and engagement of binary as a means of discerning, explaining and understanding one's position, as well as those opposing or contradicting. I conjoined notions from these two orientations into my own methodology, which I termed creational dialectics. The term "dialectics" came to me from its rich hermeneutic history, which connotes not just duality but dialogue. Likewise, creational dialectics emphasizes dialogue, and notes that dialogue requires not just explicating one's own point of view, but of listening well enough to another point of view to understand it as well. The qualifier "creational" shows two things: firstly, that dialectics is a creative conversation which may involve not just logical clarity, but the non-linear, non-analytic, creative arts; furthermore, that what we ultimately want to know about is what *is.*
>
> All of this comes to play, not just in my methodology, but in my understanding of art as a way of knowing: in my master's research I spoke of gleaning from epistemological notions of both arts based research and a/r/tography; through this current research, I come to a deeper level of poetics. Discerning a metaphysics of participation reminds me of the presence that is plenitude, and it offers me the apophatic, as an adjunct to the semantics of symbol in art, and to the aporetic place of in-between. The dwelling of heuristic research, for example, seems to me now to be an invitation to open to apophatic presence, to dwell within an aporetic phenomenon until insights occur, as they do with poetry and prayer.

With creational dialectics, I re-view, I re-search. My inquiry has led me from an aporia to an antinomy: from seeing knowing as dependent on belief, to seeing my belief as an invitation to further contemplate the mystery of being. This is an invitation to know, as Saint Thomas invites, through reason, of course, but also through faith, through intuition, through the

contemplation of enigma, to seek an experience of presence as plenitude, to invite revelation, to enjoy a relationship with the divine.

> —*While I'm so proud of you, I can't always understand you. I think what you're saying, after all, is that art is like prayer, a way to reach to heaven.*
> —Yes, so

Shall We Sing?

The divine is inexhaustible as sky.
(We thought we had rendered the heavens finite
with poisonous smogs and rocket blasts,
but the sky remains, impregnatable and impregnated.)
The sky is an excess, un-emptiable, ever-new,
shining beatifically, each and every day,
raining beneficence to the waters below, in ever-changing hues,
and we are invited to dive in deep.
And what are we asked for in return?
Nothing,
for the divine has no necessity of gratitude or praise,
and all our paeans, our odes, our rituals at the sacramental fount,
are how we splash our way
to immersion with that One.

> —*Yup, they love it—putting it to 8/6 time. Gus, Hilda and Tom—the other tom, Merton.*
> —Oh, Merton's a saint now?
> —*If I am saint of the potato peels, someone must be saint of the potato peeler.*
> —Speaking of which, what's it like, your potato patch? I've told you what I think about the beyond, now you tell me.
> —
> —Mom?
> —
> —Mom? MOM!?

ૐ

EXHIBIT 9

"Don't be afraid, Sir. We come from heaven; we bring tidings of great joy."

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AFTERWORD

TRIAL TRANSCRIPT OF (CROSS) EXAMINATION OF DEFENDANT

Presiding Adjudicator:

The defendant has concluded the presentation part of her defence. We continue now with an examination by the inquisitors, of which there are four, each coming from a distinct ideological perspective, and costumed emblematically. There will be three rounds of questions addressed to the defendant, who is asked to keep her responses brief. During the examination, advocates are not permitted to interrupt or intervene. After the examination, the defendant will be remanded as the inquisitors deliberate.

First Round, Questions Regarding the Overall Nature of the Work

Examiner #1 (dressed in full academic regalia):

What can I take from this work as truth? If the whole thing is art, is literary fiction, why should I bother reading? Without any notion of justified true belief, what knowledge can be gained from this exercise? How is this project not just solipsistic, relativistic, idiopathically idiosyncratic interpretation? Why do I feel that this entire thing is just a proselytization of personal beliefs, those of Eisner, Irwin, or yourself?

Mi:

I'm grateful for the directness of your questions, Esteemed Examiner. I think what you're getting at is a desire for "justified *true* belief". But I remind that, like the methodologists I describe, I'm not looking for "justified *true* belief"; I'm not looking for that promise of capital T-truth. As Eisner says, "truth implies singularity and monopoly". Instead, in this study, like Eisner, I recognize uncertainty and I look for *meaning*, meaning that comes from shared coherent belief. Because it is shared, it is not solipsistic. It expects and endorses coherence and cogency of meaning, not an anything-goes-relativism. Also, I note that justified true belief is still belief, and that belief links to justification. I think that for both Eisner's arts based research and Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography, justification comes from their enunciation of their beliefs into construals of art and of knowing, which then is mirrored in

the valued reception of them. I don't see this as proselytization any more than an article on successful outcomes of a vaccination trial exhorts trust in the vaccine. My work explicates the basis of shared, coherent metaphysical systems, which profoundly inform epistemological understandings. In as much as I would hope that the exposé of them exhorts my interlocutors to consider their own belief systems, I do the same myself, and in doing so I discern the coherent grounds for a creationist belief system.

Examiner #2 (wearing a blazer of classical cut, along with colour-co-ordinated dress shirt and pants):

You've thought big and long, and you've cut to the quick. But, I want to follow up on Examiner #1's query about proselytizing, and play the role of devil's advocate, so to speak. In your conversation with your mother, you said that your methodology aligned with your metaphysics. I wonder if this was something known all along? If so, has the intent of this work therefore been dogmatic and rhetorical, to persuade the interlocutor of a metaphysics of an unchanging reality? You say your methodology is hermeneutical, if so, shouldn't it be about changing horizons; if so, how did yours change? I wonder about the place for evolution; is all evolution teleology for you? And also, and so, what does this work say about the human condition? What does it say about you? What does it say about me? What does it say about us?

Mi:

Thank you for your most intriguing and complicated query, Doctor. Allow me to walk with this a bit. I start by reminding, again, that my methodology of creational dialectics works synthetically with the sometimes opposing methodologies of phenomenology and hermeneutics. Or I could say I work in-between these two markers, aware that this in-betweenness may present both antimonies and aporias. Therefore, this study doesn't purport a definitive package, but an exploration and an interpretation. I explored presence and difference; I interpreted them; I reconsidered their meanings. I saw Eisner's arts based research as aligning with a metaphysics of presence, though now I wonder about the mind as

given. I saw Irwin et al.'s a/r/tography as based in difference, though I also see a veering into the apophatic. You shake your head, that this is not enough. Your comment on hermeneutics as changing horizons seems to suggest that for something to count as change, the shift must be significant, a significant move towards horizons encountered, that my work would be most hermeneutical if *I* radically changed my prior understandings of world and of knowing. But mayn't change also be an opening, a deepening, a fulfilling, a completing? No, no, still, you shake your head. You also seem to be querying whether such change is really change at all, that as gorgeous as the metamorphosis of butterflies may be, that as wondrous as the development of opposable thumbs may be, if the transformation was pre-ordained, is it really change at all? You seem to be querying the existential puzzle of sameness versus change, one of the polarities I also puzzle over in my study. If essences are an always-already, am I really interpreting or just uncovering? But, really, are you asking questions of me, or are you asking yourself these metaphysical questions? *What is the meaning of existence? Do I exist uniquely or is there just existence? Are we many or are we One? Why are we born and why do we die?* I don't know. It's an aporia. My study tells me of the given giftedness of being human, as well as its limitations. It tells me that we creatures receive life, but we must find out for ourselves what life means. And that we do this by believing, because the human condition is one of believing.

Examiner #3 (wearing khakis and a t-shirt emblazoned with a fist):
What it comes down to for me is: How will this work better the world? How will this work address injustice?

Mi:
I appreciate your fervor, Professor. However, I note that the primary intention of this work is to understand, not change, the world. Yet to act on belief *is* an ethic (e.g., Spinoza, 1983/1997), all the more obvious when acting on belief means acting out of synch with those in majority or in authority (e.g., Spinoza; see Scharfestein, 1980).

Examiner #4 (a strangely disembodied voice emanating from a shimmering cloud of light): Why is this work just about the ideas of pale male Europeans? Why is it just about ideas? Considering that half of your subject of interest is necessarily the postmodern turn of Western philosophy, why have you missed its deeply worldly dimensions?

Mi:

I acknowledge your inquisitiveness, Inquisitor, but I point out that these are ideological statements. I think you are speaking from a different epistemological, not to mention metaphysical, perspective from that which guides me. My work is about the fundamental of beliefs, not about the socio-political causes of ideas, nor an exposition or discussion of the belief that the socio-political is a material cause, nor about the world as a battle of material forces. I speak about ideas and metaphysical beliefs because I find that they are the fundamental guides to all that we do and know. They are ulterior to specific ideologies, paradigms, cultures or religions. However, although this work is about the fundamental of belief, I do relate the relevance of the social and the material, of life as mysteriously, existentially given, of life as incarnate and relational. It does not require a philosophy of materialism or new materialism to recognize this. Not only is this a feature of the metaphysics of participation, as I discuss in my work, it is also an element of my methodology of creational dialectics. Life as embodied and interactive comes into play in much of my art—such as in my drama, for example, with its creation of biographical, though archetypal, characters, characters with prior situations, characters interacting in a new situation, characters who play as more than talking heads, even though they have a lot to talk about.

Second Round, Questions Regarding the Engagement of Art in This Research

Examiner #1:

I get your point, that the two methodologies you study, as any methodology, are value-laden, but how does the art prove anything? How is the artwork not just superfluous decoration, as I can just follow the prose to obtain your arguments?

Mi:

Thank you for asking. The points that I make in this work go beyond, and are substantiated beyond, the prosaic argument. Art moves from the nomothetic, the typical, to the idiographic, the particular. Art allows an intensivity of (re)experience, rather than only relying on the extensivity of generalization. Art allows ideas to go to places where rational argument can't go. Art is aesthesis; it creates an experience which may be felt with the viscerality of imagination.

Thus, while the prose sections of my dissertation discuss belief systems abstractly, analytically and rationally—a very important and useful thing!—the artwork offers interpretations beyond rational argument, interpretations that become experiential. For example, while the prose analyzes the essences of the belief systems of the metaphysics of presence and difference, and of Eisnerian arts based research and Irwinian a/r/tography, the poems interpret them so that these belief systems may be experienced in a non-rational, ana-logical, intuitive mode. Four metaphysical poems become four apples. Similarly, the characters in the play, though archetypes for three metaphysical belief positions, defend their beliefs in actions, sometimes just through chasing and jumping and swiping, but also in life-and-death actions, falling through open windows, setting bombs, cradling the dying, telling their stories and listening to the stories of others.

Also, the art offers themes that go beyond (or I might say, between, or more-than, or in excess of) the propositional arguments put forth by the prose. For example, the prose discusses the paradigm wars and the polemics of research ideology; the art engages the very notion of polemic as it re-enacts the story of academic inquisition. Also, while the notion of dialogue is prosaically presented as a meaning-making method, a number of the artforms

enact this understanding of dialogue. And while the prosaic argument ultimately comes to an awareness of aporias of knowing and discusses apophatic knowing, the art demonstrates and allows experiences of apophatic knowing. For example, the closing lines of both the prolegomenon and the addenda invite just that. The interpretive poems also bring an apophatic sigh to mysteries of metaphysical belief. Also, deciphering characters' motives and actions leads to the apophatic. What happens in the classroom as the characters tell their life-and-death stories? Why does the Saint offer/allow the Stranger a final moment with his mouse-friend? Why does the Stranger offer to hold the rocket? Why does the Stranger have no name? Who disrupted Mi's PowerPoint presentation? Who is calling Mi?

Examiner #2:

You have talked about why you chose art generally as a method of inquiry, but why did you choose the particular art forms that you did? How do they engage meaning?

Mi:

Thank you for your questions. Let me respond by first speaking generally. I choose to engage art in this inquiry because it allows a movement beyond (exceeding) the limitations of prose argument. Art connects to the interpretivist paradigm of my methodology. I note that many of the theorists this work engages are also artists, so engaging art allows study through like methods. Many of the scholars who theorize arts-integrating research, not only think about it, they integrate the arts into their theorizations. Furthermore, many of the philosophers I engage in my study wrote literary works to explicate their ideas.

I engaged particular artforms that seemed most fitting to me as my study unfolded, artforms that were most evocative of the findings and insights I was coming to. As I described in my section on methodology, this art-making is part of the creativity of a heuristic inquiry, of creational dialectics. As I researched, as I read, I dwelled in prior dialogue and ideas. I allowed myself not just to follow the logic of argument, but to immerse myself in the aesthetics of the conversation—into character, voice, rhythm and image. I engaged with my imagination, made associations, incubated ideas, played with them,

observed the serendipitous and insightful connections that arose, played with them some more, listened for refrain and motif and theme, queried the silences, kneaded the artform into a whole, synthesizing meaning into art. I describe this process at the end of Exhibit 2 (in the dialogue about comb-overs and tonsures and walking the dog and tuna fish sandwiches).

A key example of this movement to meaning was in my structuring of the work as an inquisition, as the action within the play, as well as the form of the dissertation itself. The idea of the play itself came from my lengthy immersion into the metaphysical notions of Western philosophers, from a hermeneutic dialogue that jumped to imagined dialogues between philosophers. From these imagined dialogues came the idea of presenting contrasting metaphysical ideas through dramatic conflict. But, I also noticed, through the course of my research and writing, how like a judicial process is an academic dissertation. Not just all the words—advisor, advocate, defence, defendant, examiner, examination—but the processes, as I myself experienced. Universities are medieval fiefdom holdovers. From these associations and experiences came the motif of inquisition, along with the theme of reigning versus partaking. I then saw that the devices of dialogue, dramatic conflict and inquisition could come together on many levels in my work. The drama could be structured as an inquisition. The entire work could be structured as an inquisition.

I was also influenced in my choice of artforms by prior works of other artist-philosophers. One philosopher who greatly informs the artwork is St. Augustine of Hippo, especially his first century autobiography, renown as *Augustine's Confessions*. My work, too, may be considered a confession. Like the term "defence", "confession" is also an equivocal term, one that connects to the two notions just discussed, that of inquisition, as well as that of dialogue. Currently, confession often means a statement of guilt—what the inquisition may presume of the defendant, and which may then be judged "heretical"—aberrant or corrupt or untruthful—by its inquisitors. But the term "confession" also refers to an unreserved statement of belief. "Confess" comes from the Latin verb *con-fessari*, to avow, to declare (OED, 1989a). As with *Augustine's Confessions*, this dissertation is also a colloquy, engaging the listener and using various rhetorical approaches to maintain attention, at times academically prosaic, at times poetic, often colloquial, at times speaking in soliloquy, at times

directly addressing the interlocutor, at times silent. The work is a conversation, always mindful of its interlocutors (betimes inquisitors).

Apart from the heartful, confessional narratives of Augustine, you may notice echoes of the works of other artist-philosophers in this work: perhaps the dramatic dialogues of Plato; the spiritual poetics of Plotinus; the logical clarity of Aquinas (yes, I think of logic as an art), the aphorisms of Nietzsche (wit, another art form); the dramatization of existential issues by Sartre (1944/1989) and Camus (1942/1946); the reflections on the semiotic in the novels of Umberto Eco (e.g., 2004); the discordant, hyperbolic imagination of Deleuze in his writing with Guattari. However, I wanted my writing to be as accessible as possible, so I avoided deliberately disjunctive tangents, non-sequiturs and other such obscurantisms (even as I indulged my penchant for puzzles of allusion).

I was also informed by those who have engaged the arts in their dissertations and in their scholarly inquiry. I make note of this in my presentation.

Here is a summary of the reasons for the inclusion of various specific elements or genres of the artwork:

- the fictive frame: to create an overall unity of theme and effect; to engage interest; to initiate suspension of disbelief; to create suspense;

- the prosaic exhibits: to engage the arts of logic and rhetoric in argument; as "exhibits", to place logical argument within, not outside of the artwork as a whole;

- the theatrical play: to give particularity of voice to the polemical issues in research epistemology and in metaphysical belief; to give voice to the two fundamental, and one alternative, metaphysical belief systems presented in the work (presence, difference and participation), as well as to enact relations between them;

- dialogues (here, for example): to enact my methodology of creational dialectics; to extend the use of dialogue, beyond the play, as a means of giving voice to differing points of view; to depict and enjoy character and orality; to demonstrate dialogue as a meaning-making endeavor that, like art, prefers musing to arguing;

- quotations and citations: to enact the discursive practice of hermeneutics; to present and to dialogue with textual voices;

- the poetry: to interpret in non-rational, ana-logical language the tacit, intuitive senses of the abstract notions involved in this work, notions such as *creation, relation, one, many, all, belief, prayer, feeling, self, other, purpose, meaning, more-than, within, between and beyond*;

- figurative language: both within the poetry and within the prose, the colloquial style of the writing is enhanced by figurative language, such as metaphor, which renders communication more holistic, sensual and accessible (and it's not just me saying this; see Lakoff & Johnson, 1990);

- the comics: to provide transitional waystations between sections; to serve as links to the judicial frame of the work; to offer thematic epigraphs; to remind the interlocutors that the prose exhibits (even here) always figure within the enveloping artwork;

- comedy: in a field in which inquisitiveness is too often dead serious, to prompt playfulness, in order to enable the release from tension and conflict through levity and pleasure; to provide wit, which is a kind of intelligence, one that illuminates as it startles or bemuses; to pique the interlocutors' senses of humour, so as to allow for visceral grounding, attending and connecting; to use absurdity to pique reflection on the fundamental of belief to the human condition.

Examiner #3:

Who is your assumed or expected or desired audience? What do you do to reach that audience? What effect do you hope to have on your audience?

Mi:

Interesting questions. You could say there are two kinds of theatre: a theatre of cruelty (Artaud, 1938/1958), which seeks to discomfit the audience, by assaulting them with violent images, in order to interrogate and shatter their erroneous beliefs; and a theatre of catharsis (Aristotle, 350 BCE/1902), which seeks to assure the audience of the essential dignity of humanity, by the arousing and releasing of emotions of empathy. I'm with the latter. I

imagine my audience to be scholars, or perhaps educators, interested in research methodology and curious about the philosophical topics of epistemology, belief and arts-integrating research. I hope to add to an ongoing conversation about paradigm in research, about the nature of reality and the pistic grounds of knowledge. I hope that my insights will be provocative. I might be campaigning, but I'm not ordaining. I hope that this work, as a literary artwork, will offer an experience that surprises and satisfies. I hope that my audience, my interlocutors, may find something new and interesting and resonating. I hope my interlocutors find themselves implicated in the dialogue of this work.

Examiner #4:

I can judge your prose by the strength of argument, but how do I know your artwork is good? What standards of rigour are applied to this work? For example, how did you get skilled at your craft? How has your art been known and received? Who are your peers? How is your art in dialogue with them, and how have they judged your art?

Mi:

Don't you think it's notable, Dear Examiner, that we ask for a demonstration of rigour of the art, but not of the prose? Do we assume some common or universal or conventional standard regarding the prose? Perhaps the idea that prose should put forth an argument, consider and discuss counter-arguments, be clear and be logical? Does that mean the prose is good enough? Should we consider rhetorical persuasiveness of prose in assessing whether it is good? Do we even think about the quality of "goodness" in relation to prose?

How do we know art is "good" enough? Are there standards we can use to measure an artwork up against? Is that standard the expert, the connoisseur, the contest judge?

I don't think it is generally a useful question to ask if art is good or good enough. As poet Carl Leggo (2004) says, "Perhaps the important question is not, Is this a good poem, but instead, What is a poem good for?" (p. 176). What Leggo articulates about poetry applies to other art forms, too. Leggo (2004) suggests that what is important in poetry (as in other art forms) is not rigour, which leads to "rigor mortis, like a starched collar that cuts the

throat", but vigour (p. 18). Eisner is another who decries the engagement of standards in education, because of their association with the quantitative and because of their predetermination of outcome, both of which he finds limiting. Instead, Eisner proffers and prefers his own notion of "expressive objectives" (Eisner, 1995, p. 34) and "expressive outcomes" (Eisner, 1994b, pp. 118-119). The value of art isn't in being good enough for judges, for awards or renown, but in being productively expressive. What is of value is having one's artistic expression resonate. The art in this dissertation is good if it helps to express meaning, and if that meaning may be productively shared. In my dissertation, I discuss the evaluation of art as *valuation*, and I maieutically provide questions for consideration of value.

For art to be productively expressive, it very much helps to have substantial practice with an artform, and to be connected with an art community that also practices that same artform. In my case, I have played as an artist my whole life, and I have worked as an artist-educator for many decades and as an artist-scholar for over a decade. I have created art as a storyteller, poet, novelist, memoirist, playwright, dramaturge, actor, puppeteer, dancer, bricoleuse and installation artist. In addition to publishing much of my creative writing, I have collaborated on dance and drama productions (Thunder Bay Fringe Festival, Chaban Ukrainian Dance Group), and exhibited visual artwork (Lakehead University Arts Integrated Research Galleries, Community Arts and Heritage Education Project). I have sat on the executive of the local writing group, the Northwestern Ontario Writers' Workshop, and offered many writing workshops for this same organization. I have worked as an artist-educator with many other organizations including the Thunder Bay Public Library, the Children's Centre Foundation of Thunder Bay, the Canadian Mental Health Agency, Saint Joseph Care Group and Learning Through the Arts. I have worked as an arts reviewer for The Chronicle Journal. I currently serve as Poetry Editor for Cloud Lake Literary and as Managing Editor for the Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, in both roles encouraging others to develop their expressive ability in art. I say this not as "proof" that my work is "good", but to demonstrate my commitment to my arts practice and my arts community.

What if this dissertation does not pass this inquisition? Would that mean that the art is not good? What if this dissertation does not pass the inquisition, but is published and gains a following? Would it then be good? What if this dissertation does not pass the inquisition yet is printed and bound and secretly placed on a library shelf, and one day a post-human finds it and reads it and thinks it tells an archetypal story of the Western world before it got wiped out in the coronaviral pandemics of the twenty-first century. Would it then be good? What if my mother reads this dissertation and cries, oh now I get you! Would it then be good? What if this dissertation has transformed my understanding of the meaning of my life? Is that good enough? It would have to be.

Third Round, Rhetorical Questions

Examiner #1:

How may your truth be measured? How may I weigh your worth?

Examiner #2:

Has this all been said before? Ought it be said again?

Examiner #3:

Do you stand for revolution or do you stick with the old guard?

Examiner #4:

How does this matter?

JUDGEMENT

Do not wait for the Last Judgment. It takes place every day.

—Albert Camus, *The Fall*

"Nozzle down, auger up. Then the anti-seismometer will become a rocket and blast us to heaven."