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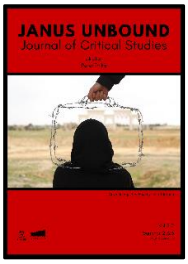

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The Anti-Essay: Creativity, Knowledge, and Multimodal Academic Form

Brent F. Saccucci

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The Anti-Essay

The ~~Politics of epistemology~~ AND queering colonial academic form

★ All of my edits + revisions are found in RED - to celebrate the role of unreading/in-process MESS, or as Jack Halberstam calls it "the queer art of failure"... Halberstam reminds us that even as academics - "FAILING IS SOMETHING QUEERS do + have done exceptionally well... FAILURE is a style" (3).

What citation style should rebellious art be in?

How has capitalism, logic, and Western thought contributed to how we know the academic form today?

- Further to this aim, how are academics staying complicit in colonial education practices by teaching / assessing knowledge in the same way it's always been done?
- What are the implications for doing knowledge differently? and (de) representing academic form?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

F

Of course, it is at once "inappropriate" and "unprofessional" [AS MUCH AS IT IS necessary and disruptive] to hand in a paper proposal out of traditional academic form.

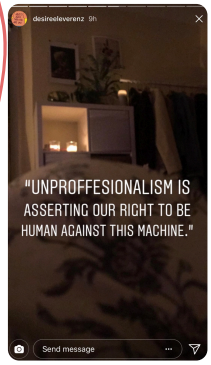
~ I am not trying to villianize academia or research, but rather, trying to bring about an

EPISTEMIC EQUITY

across underrepresented knowledges

to open up space in research + pedagogy

for diverse, new, and decolonial literacies ~



HOWEVER,

In thinking creating through research differently I open doorways into the theory in new ways

Reading Corner / Story Time

I think of this movie (I forget) where this student handed in a paper (10 pages, double spaced was required)
To his philosophy professor in response to the question "What is reality"
To which he responded in one sentence:

"Whatever you make of it"

And he got an F for not writing the paper.

He thought he would get an A for being ballsy.

I am not trying to be ballsy. The discomfort I am getting now, in attempting
to hold every ounce of imposterism I have down in order to do this without writing a formal paper at the risk of ruining my academic career, is almost discomforting as you are in reading this piece of — what is this? Poetry, comics-creation, digital and mixed media art? As of recent, I've been calling it

"Notebooking" a process I am inheriting by way of other theorist-Writers, two of whom I am particularly drawn to, Marion Milner (in Particular her work *A Life of One's Own* in which she draws on Her notebook as a research site to get curious around happiness, and Anne Carson's *Short Talks* where she uses the short non-fiction creative Narrative discuss ramblings and musings.
These ramblings, musing, doodles, lines, are gravitational orbits that Are surrounding by other synapses, memories, and stories.
Taking Michael Taussig's idea that "a line drawn is more than a line (records - but what it reads to) seriously, I hope that this paper showcases the way that Notebooking can act as a generative, multi-media tool in Research-creation. (+ epistemic disruption in academic paper form!).
A hybrid genre in many forms but true to one pursuit: a pursuit

(p.22) line drawn is important not for what it

½ AS

Jackson & Mazzei (2017) state:

"We explained that in a threshold, things enter and meet, flow (or pass) into one another, and break open (or exit) into something else." (721).

So dramatic

It's here, in this THRESHOLD of ~uncomfortable feeling~ BETWEEN THE ACADEMIC COLONIAL FORMAL ...

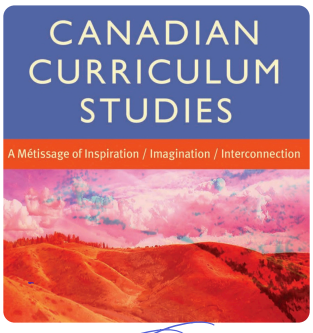
... AND THE CREATIVE MADNESS of the ARTFUL

THAT A BRAIDING...

A "METISSAGE" (Lee Ann Lugo, 2018) of Knowledge forms comes together to create openings / fractures / entries / exits

More of me is felt through

of both
Resistance to academic and epistemic assimilation,
and a revolutionary
Artifact to re-define the academic genre as we know it.



is taking Research-Creation approaches in so many ways. Especially poetic inquiry, because Leggo was such an influence. But not all of these poems are good. Some are grad students trying art for the first time. Is that okay? If I am to call upon a new research model and new way of knowing, how are we going to assess it? In imagining new knowledges might we also have to imagine different aesthetic values? Is this axiology?

my writing

Than through my typing.

How might ART act as a curricular & pedagogical disruption in CAPITALISM's ONTOLOGY???

"Sounds spooky but we must ask SCARY QUESTIONS if we are to break this haunting cycle of curriculums' ghosts"

DO I MEAN
(A) DECOLONIZING or
(B) DECAPITALIZING? or
(C) DEMOCRATIZING?
what do you think? n.

Snarfa

Understanding "queer" as anti-normative and disruptive, and "literacy" as meaning-making, I argue a queer literacy is research-creation; and, this contributes to decolonizing academic form through, in the case of RC, by moving from analysis → creativity, technical → playful, productive → generative.

PROVOCATION

Space for inappropriate understanding

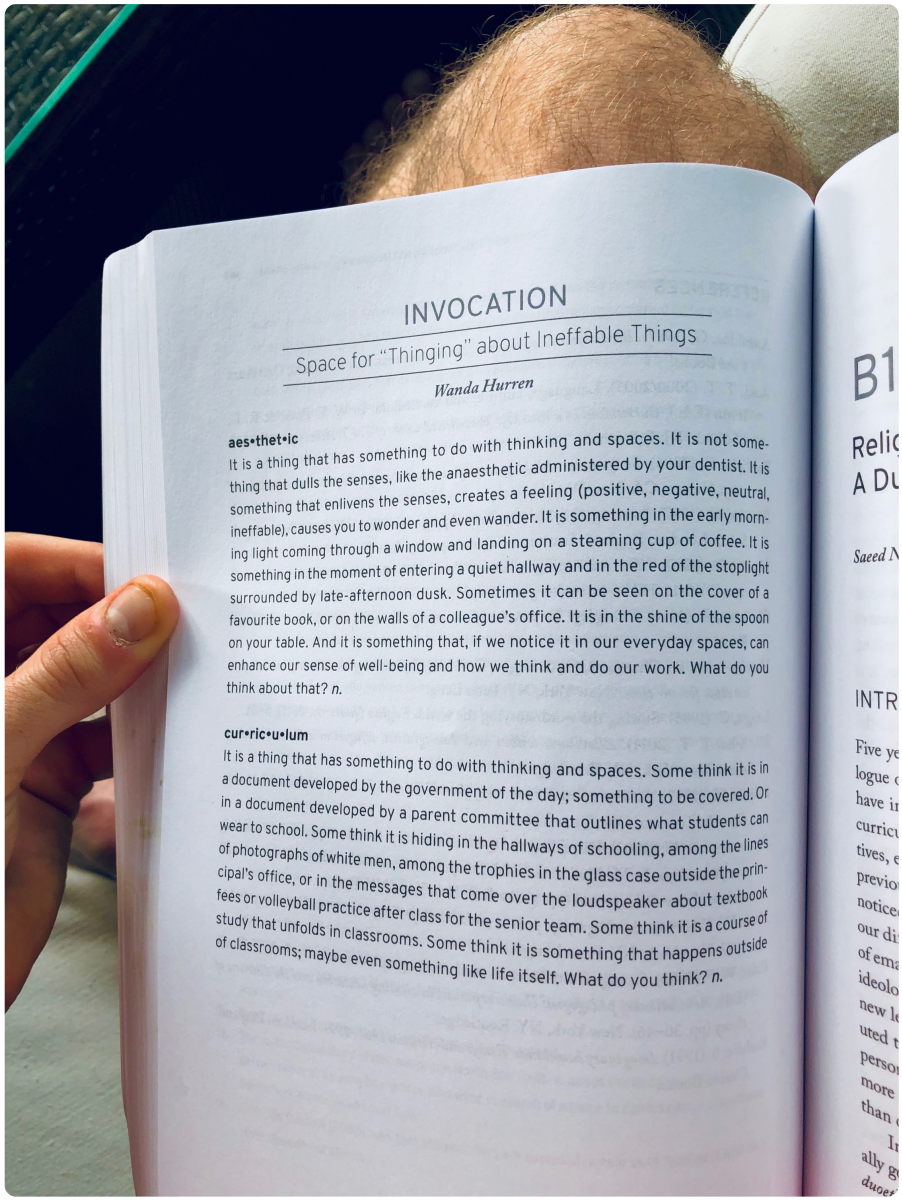
Brent Saccucci

qu→eer

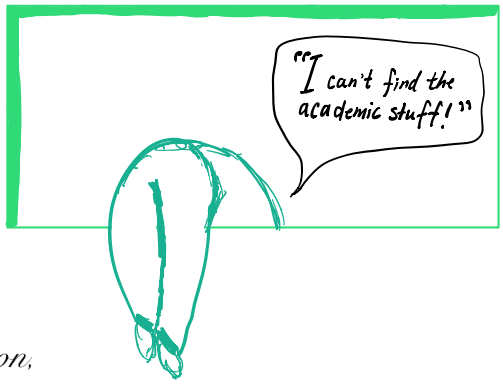
Against the norm. Against the gradient.
Revolution sparking. Out of bounds.
Deviant.
What do you feel? *n., v.*

lit eracy, n.

Making meaning, meaning making.
(Re)mixing signs and symbols to create understanding. Knowledge of something.
A reading. Reading the world. Creating the world. Lens. Quilting experiences, texts, and images into a blanket sewn by your grandma when you were a kid.
What do you know?



Bookend



Since intellectual periods such as *The Enlightenment* and *The Scientific Revolution*,
Academic knowledge has, on a global scale, been concerned with the colonial characteristics
Of intellectualism that were found in these periods, namely the scientific method and it's subsequent pillars of logic and reason, while academic literacy as a whole became a practice of technical and analytical reading and writing. With colonialism came a specific schooling and knowledge practice that reinforced these characteristics, and, practiced diligently,
Diligently,
Diligently, led to strict forms of what was deemed "intellectual" and "academic" by colonial standards and the educational institutions that upheld these standards. Therefore, as it currently stands, education values the "essay" or "article" as the gold standard for intellectual argument, leaving to the margins certain ways of knowing, in particularly queer, Indigenous, and arts-based.
This paper will take flight from the starting point that colonialism has a particular

Particular

Particular academic practice, and a "queering" of that
Practice is necessary for what I name "epistemic equity". Through a research-creation framework, this paper will bring into conversation
Not only research-creation scholars (Loveless, 2018) but educational researchers in higher education anarchism (Spinosa, 2018) and curriculum theory (Hasebe-Ludt & Leggo, 2018) to showcase how epistemic equity, and the "metissage" (mixing) of multiple forms of knowledges, can be argued as a "queer literacy" — and in our colonial times, such a re*orienting* may offer up more accessible and creative openings

Openings

Openings in research, writing, reading, and pedagogy.

Keywords: research-creation, queer epistemology, curriculum, colonialism
Keyimages: Braids (particularly "friendship"), knots, salmon swimming upstream

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THE ANTI-ESSAY

UNDOIMPERIALISM

The Coloniality of Knowledge

"The production of "legitimate" knowledge has been closely related to the context, class affiliation, and the social identity of the producers... European colonizer have defined legitimate knowledge as Western knowledge, essentially European colonizers' ways of knowing, often taken as objective and universal knowledge."

-Francis Adyanga Akena, ~~Critical Analysis of the Production of Western Knowledge and Its Implications for Indigenous Knowledge and Decolonization~~ (2012) *Critical Analysis of the Production of Western Knowledge and Its Implications for Indigenous Knowledge and Decolonization.*

Knowledge is relational, and therefore social, and therefore cultural, and like any culture, is tempted by the predatory forces of dominating "the other".

Knowledge-for-emancipation should include the ways of knowing, language, and mediums of understanding that the community of the subjugated can understand so that they can use that knowledge in ways that are agentful. Academic literacy and access to academic language, including the essay, is deeply influenced by ability, race, status, and class. Academicese is... inaccessible. It's time to do something about it for those of us that call ourselves critical educators.

In my research, why would I use academic language to describe the experience of madness to a mentally-ill person? How do practices of reading and writing, however meditative they may be, reinforce neurotypicality? Those ~~who~~ deeply affected by mental illness, namely queer and Indigenous people, have impacted effects of literacy. Types of neurodiversity fully inhibit academic research from being remotely digestible by certain types of people. We rarely see people ~~living~~ thriving with neurodiversity in the academy. We rarely see poor people in the academy. We even get scared to say "poor people". So, how might decolonizing academic form also contribute to intersectional work in *how we know* ability, sexuality, and class? Knowing colonialism is BFF with ableism, homo/transphobia, and capitalism, how might decolonizing academic form also contribute to destabilizing ~~x~~ a sociology of knowledge we've come to privilege so much?

This anti-essay is less a project of content ("we should know more about queer history or residential schools") and more of a project of critiquing, jamming, and queering academic *form*. As a provocation to curriculum studies' central question "What knowledge is of most worth?" I may add that since knowledge is shaped by it's form, we may also ask "What ways of knowing such knowledge are of most worth?"'

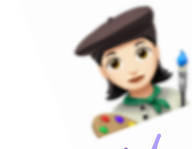
What are these types of knowledges? Well, *I don't know* because I only know what I know, but I can know differently if authorities (like teachers and instructors) allow me to know differently. Of course, like Adyanga Akena reminds us, knowledge is informed by it's producers. So then, let us bring more artists, women, QTIBPOC, and mad people to the role of the teacher and see how that influences our classrooms and marginalized learners! Excuse my informal and inappropriate use of an exclamation mark ;)

⇒ INSERT ARTS-BASED RESEARCH here

here

here

here









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The Arts are one way I know how to know differently.
Curriculum theorist

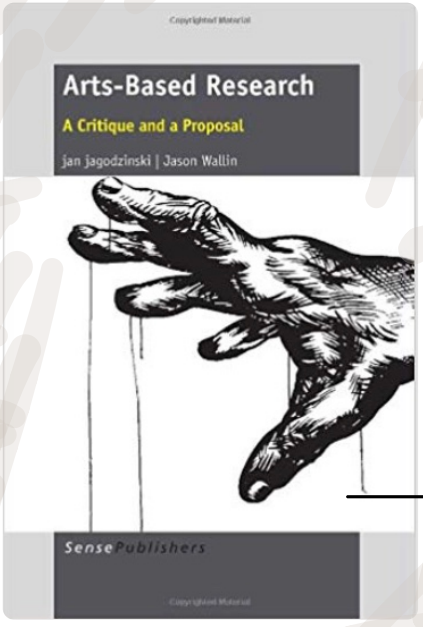
MAXINE GREENE was one proponent (copr) of creativity in educational research. Then, in the early 2000's, **RITA IRWIN** introduced us to A/R/T/OGRAPHY



artist researcher teacher

YAY! Finally! A methodology for artist-scholars!

BUT EVEN THAT WASN'T SEEN AS RIGOROUS ENOUGH BY SOME SCHOLARS IN THE FIELD, specifically POSTHUMANISTS (Wallin & Jagodzinski, 2013).





~~CRIMINAL TEXT~~

A/R/TOGRAPHY ALSO "LACKED A CRITICALITY and REFLEXIVITY" (Springgay, 2007).

Stage Direction: Enter Research-Creation stage left.

A paradigm, an approach, a methodology — foregrounding the art-making process as the research. Not as an appendix, not as something that needs an explanation.

Just ART. Shitty Art. Good Art. ✓ Literary Art ≠ Gay Art. Sad Art Fat Art. Happy ART.

~~Total.~~ Academic, Anarchy?

(Doesn't your lil internal Marxist just love it?) (Upon reflection years 18r this is a BIT dramatic, but it's a solid pic).



Figure 6.9. Sarah-Tonin' delivers an academic talk on a new phenomenon researchers are calling "wet dreams"

All of academic knowledge and culture was just a performance of colonial and capitalist logics anyways, so why can't we perform research in new ways that disrupt?

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XOXO Sarah Jorin



Drag became a particularly important tool in my arsenal of academic anarchist weapons to disrupt what arts-based researcher Gail Crimmins names as "the masculinization of thought and research" (Research in Action Podcast, Ep. 141) which is a process whereby "masculine" traits (often schooled to boys) such as logic, neutrality, reason, and the pillars of positivism become the gold standard in research.

Feminization of knowledge (and what I name earlier as "queer literacy") is what many critical scholar's of emotion would argue is the place that affect theory holds. Emotion, often seen as a feminine quality, is not represented or trained as a value in research. Topics such as "vulnerability in the interview" sometimes come out in an interpretivist article, but all through the lens of academic talk (academese) which saturates feeling, colour, temporality, emotion —into one font, one size, for ~13 pages. How are we to have honest, awkward, and upsetting conversations around knowledge (and what counts) if we are only doing it in one tone? On one plane? In one way? Artistic knowledges help approach the issues from new vantage points in the room. A shifting perspective. A queer orientation to the knowledge that enters in small cracks only it could see from it's orbital track.

~~Ahhh~~, I am such a Posthumanist and am in full denial about it.

And my research-creation is a hybrid. It's at once creative nonfiction, and also fictitious. It's man and woman. It's dark and sad and about madness, and also hilarious.

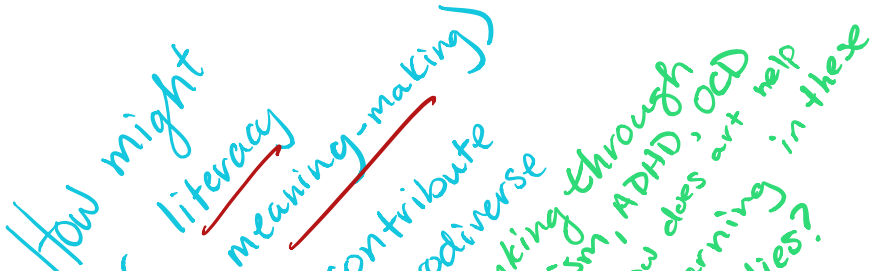
Stop taking yourself so seriously, embrace scholartistry, and see the application of artistry to bring imaginative powers to scientific inquiry.

-Nielsen, L., 2002. Learning from the Liminal: Fiction as Knowledge, *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *(48)*3, p. 206-14.

Imagination, playing with risk, unknown experimentation — it has always been, and will always be what has ever gotten us anywhere.

OMG I'm so stupid forgetful amazing disorganized overcompensating I just have 1 MORE THOUGHT!!

The Anti-Essay: A queer literacy for the neurodiverse



the queer (anti-normative) of research-creation to understandings in learners??!!

do not read as manic episode.

I can't write this essay!! I keep thinking about everything, my mind won't shut off and I can't focus. I am so dumb. I'll never get into university.

thought.

thought...

thought!!

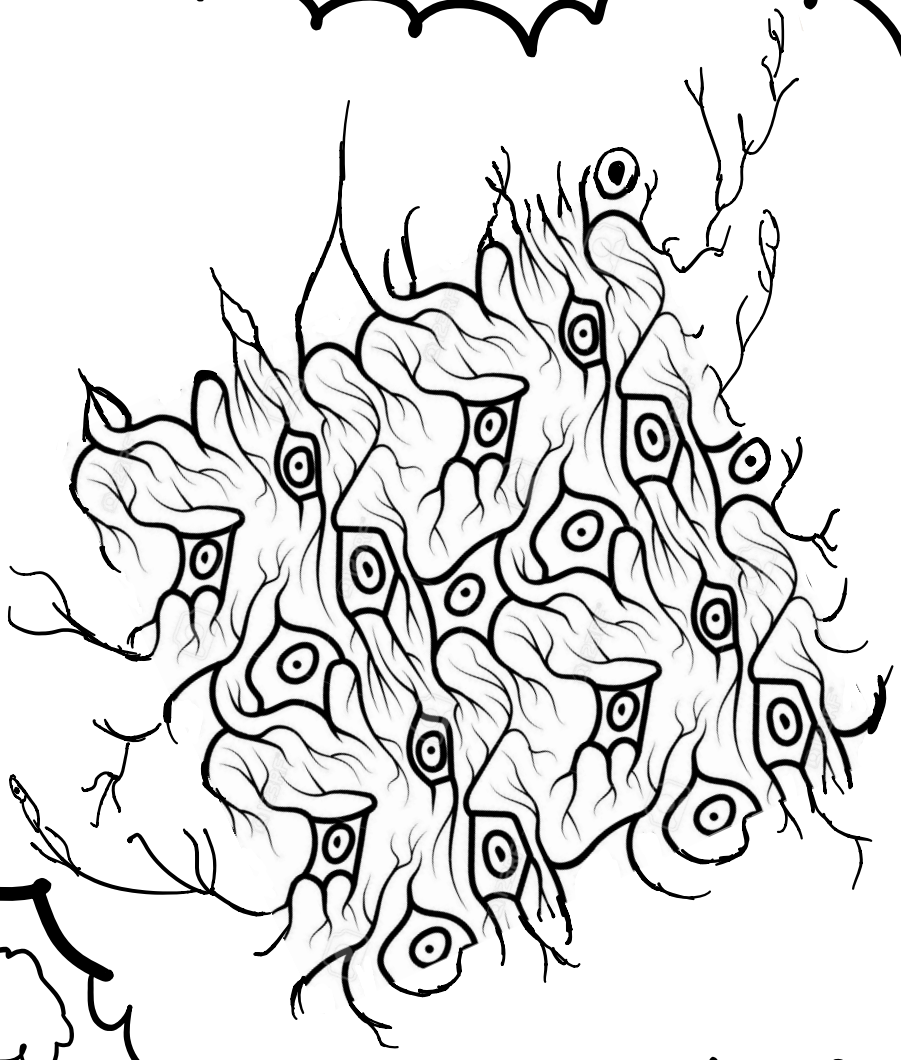
thought.





I can't

Understand



This reality

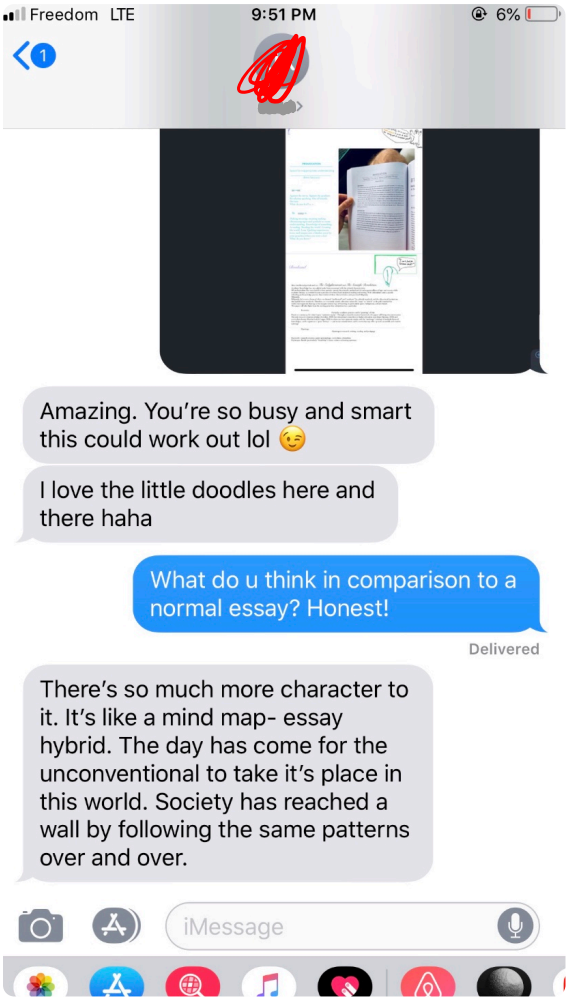
Through logic

> Science is much closer to myth than a scientific philosophy is prepared to admit. It is one of the many forms of thought that have been developed by man, and not necessarily the best. It is conspicuous, noisy, and impudent, but it is inherently superior only for those who have already decided in favour of a certain ideology, or who have accepted it without every having examined its advantages and its limits.

-Paul Feyerabend, Science as Myth, *The Theory of Knowledge: Classical & Contemporary Readings*

As much as I am showing artistic work in this anti-essay, I'd like to take a close read of Feyerabend's arguments here. JUST A SMALL CLOSE READ, DON'T WORRY I WILL GET BACK TO MY SCIENCE-ART SOON.

The second sentence starts with "It is one of the *many forms*" and that's what initially drew me to this quote — many forms. There are real social and cultural factors ~~however~~ that have ~~lead to~~ only *some forms* of knowledge to flourish. Ableist assessment, colonial pedagogy, and Cartesian theories of mind have lead society to glorifying the scientific method and it's logics. Like I said on the first page, I don't want to villianize science or academia! I think criticality is great. **But with the average peer-reviewed academic article in the social sciences and humanities with an average of 3-8 readers, we've got to acknowledge we have a problem with form and dissemination.** There are ways to combine this academic, scientific, and scholarly rigour with creative means of knowledge production (like research-creation) that ultimately open up accessibility and contribute to a wider literacy in society of scholarly work.



GUY FROM GRINDR TRYING TO WHEEL ME BY SAYING RESEARCH-CREATION IS HOT? I'LL TAKE WHAT I CAN GET.

Later on Feyerabend goes on to argue that "The rise of modern science coincides with the suppression of non-Western tribes by Western invaders" (502). In a multicultural, diverse Canada, it is time we take uncomfortable, awkward, and risky steps toward decolonizing academic form. This essay is one such risk. When our mothers, friends, lovers, and communities we research can't even read our work, we must reevaluate form and bring about a *reorientation* to how we approach the essay and the research article.

I wrote this piece, *the scholar dances*, in relation to a piece of work Dr. Monica Prendergast, Arts Based Curriculum researcher at UVic wrote about how scholarship in the arts might seem silly, frivolous, and risky — but many great ideas did at the start. I wrote a response to that work and the inspiration it gave me about the tension of arts based researchers working in *quantitative times*.

The Scholar Dances

Laugh

It's okay! You can laugh

It might seem kind of funny, what I do

I look at the event of buying a coffee and say wait- how, what, and who?

Poststructural puzzle pieces of the planet make up my mind,

and none of them fit

Nothing ever fits.

and so I go back time and time

Time, and time,

Again and again,

Sorry before I go on – do you have any answers?

I find myself here in front of you again,

As if I'm going backwards.

My vision here is imperfectly precise

I have this dream, where I exist in a quantum slice

Perfectly precise. Sometimes I near it,

I come close

Do I have an answer?

You love the numbers, the surveys, and the digits of my body

The interviews, the diagnosis, an erasure of the holy

Here I dance – researching, rehearsing, and relearning

Here I dance

where you left off – the finites of your digitized conclusions

Is where I start — The infinity of my artistic confusions

My database is my body, and my methods are souls, my heart is still hopeful, though sinking in science's cold.

So I dance another dance,

And you know I'm just another risky chance. Some arts-based 20 something calling research a dance.

Start treading water, and you'll remember it all.

Remember the questions that brought you here,

Held deep in your body, ignited by fear.

So dance with me and let's forget to remember, and we will find answers here in the grey, unknowingly together

In this ivory tower, in a lie of safer space,

We can lay here belonging, feeling erased.

Remember me, when your numbers kill, and your data doesn't quite fulfil.

Because as you tilt your head back, and start to laugh

The scholar dances,

and never looks back.





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↳ this needs to be re-done 'cuz I've never done a chicago ref list

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(low key can we bring back a/r/tography?)

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EVER WONDERED... WHY PINK + purple hearts + flowers aren't seen as academic?

(I feel like I had to say it up here somehow b/c otherwise this is the most norm-core page in the whole article).

HUGE shoutout to Dr. Peter Trnka & Dylan Dellikta in the Philosophy Dept @ Memorial University of Newfoundland for letting me publish this queer, messy, funny, odd piece of epistemology.