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**DANI KARAVAN'S *PASSAGES* AND THE POETICS OF DELEUZE|GUATTARI
FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN ART EDUCATION**

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Art Education

by

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ABSTRACT

Dani Karavan's Passages and the Poetics of Deleuze|Guattari for Research and Practice in Art Education is an arts based dissertation that theorizes Dani Karavan's environmental installation *Passages*, an homage to Walter Benjamin in Port Bou, Spain, in relation with research and practice in art education. Exploring the rhizomatic assemblage of Deleuze|Guattari, this dissertation uses rhizomatic cartography as poetic arts based method. Based on the botanical concept of a networking system, and diverging from an aborescent model, Deleuze|Guattari refer to the rhizome as an image of thought that apprehends ideational multiplicities: the rhizome gives form to the ensemble of associations that converge/diverge in creative thought. The multiplicities that emerge from this networking process map and create the nodes, or main ideas, of this dissertation: an assemblage of borderlands, a revision of the Icarus myth, shelters of exposure, and the vicissitudes of motherhood.

In this dissertation, I refer to the role of poetics in contemporary culture as one that involves a poetic language that resists being easily absorbed into the conventions of our culture through a close attention to dynamic form. The rhizome creates a form that is always in the middle; the dissertation becomes an assemblage of disparate elements that resist closure, or, in other words, I argue that this form of research creates a poem. The intensive formulations of such poetry embodies, through writing, the Deleuze|Guattari concept of sensation.

Deleuze conceptualizes sensation as an aesthetic dimension that is coextensive but distinguishable from perception: "Sensation is not a faculty of the subject but, rather, the mutual limit of the subject and the object, a place in which these two aspects become

indistinguishable, such that one can say that in sensation the subject is altered by aspects of worldly forces that are occluded by the perception of constituted objects. Perception, the discernment of an object that stands over against a subject, is a faculty of “figuration” insofar as it is the isolation, within a manifold of sensory information, of a distinct thing. Each art takes as its aim the reversal of this occlusion of sensation by perception” (Ford, 2005, p. 392).

Central to the theoretical discussion of the logic of sensation is the idea of the figure. A Figure is a singular instance of sensation. “Sensation disorganizes the body of perception and in so doing it disorganizes perception. The figurative painting ‘tells you the story in a long diatribe through the brain’. Perception overwrites sensation and in so doing suppresses the forces that constitute sensation” (Ford, 2005, p.392). Finding ways to teach others to respond to works in the arts, to experience and understand the figures of sensation, is a significant project of art education. This dissertation offers one mapping of such a terrain.

Keywords: Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, Walter Benjamin, Dani Karavan, Paulo Freire, Antonio Machado, Miles Horton, Poetics, Poetry, Art, Arcades Project, Passages, Icarus, Art Education, Rhizome, Rhizomatic Cartography, Sensation, Art Education, Arts Based Research

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PREFACE



Figure1. Dubin, E. *Self Portrait: Naucrete and Icarus*

I followed him into becoming for nine months, or perhaps I've followed him for all of my life. My body understood how to follow his sounds, which were expressed genetically, and as I am my body, I was becoming-child. He grew and I grew. I was no longer a definite being, but part of the becomings running through me (E. Dubin writing as Naucrete).

During pregnancy, cells sneak across the placenta in both directions. The fetus's cells enter his mother, and the mother's cells enter the fetus. A baby's cells are detectable in his mother's bloodstream as early as four weeks after conception, and a mother's cells are detectable in her fetus by week 13. In the first trimester, one out of every fifty thousand cells in her body are from her baby-to-be (this is how some noninvasive prenatal tests check for genetic disorders). In the second and third trimesters, the count is up to one out of every thousand maternal cells. At the end of the pregnancy, up to 6 percent of the DNA in a pregnant woman's blood plasma comes from the fetus. After birth, the mother's fetal cell count plummets, but some stick around for the long haul. Those lingerers create their own lineages. Imagine colonies in the motherland. (Pincott, 2011, p. 263).

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We take words and images into our bodies and they become part of our internal life, and these words and images change because they are within us, and they can change how we see and how we experience the world and ourselves.

My teachers are the uncited sources within my work. Their words and images are ideas that change how I see, and how I think. I am deeply grateful for these teachers' inspiration, encouragement, patience, and guidance. My life has been blessed by the brilliance, generosity of time, and care of my teachers:

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Steven Melnick

Jamie Mullen

John Taggart

Barbara VanWicklin

Dedicated to my sons Avery Alexander Dubin and Benjamin Louis Dubin.
We make this road by walking together.

Chapter 1: APPROACHING PASSAGES

“ I wanted to write a poem
that you would understand.
For what good is it to me
if you can’t understand it?
but you got to try hard—“
(Williams, 1917)

Passages is an arts-based research dissertation that performs Deleuze|Guattari’s poetics of rhizomatic cartography. Rhizomatic cartography, as used in this dissertation, is the art-making process I use to explore and theorize artist Dani Karavan’s work *Passages* for research and practice in art education.

Rhizomatic cartography is a form of mapmaking. I chose the rhizome for this dissertation as the rhizome, a generative subterranean stem theorized by Deleuze|Guattari as a multiplicity, embodies my experience of the creative process. The space that surrounds us is rich with potential experiences, and many possibilities exist for constructing these experiences.

The process, the making of experience and knowledge, can follow different pedagogical paths. Among them, we have choices of following roads that have been created for us, or making new roads by walking. To follow existing roads is what Deleuze|Guattari refer to as “tracing”. This is akin to putting your finger on a map and tracing the route you plan to take to get from point A to point B. This is a closed route. The destination is fixed. Another possibility, to make the road by walking, is not to have a map to trace; rather, by moving through space, by following the path of the nomad, you make the map. Deleuze|Guattari consider the nomad as a way of being in the middle. The nomad is always between points not aligned with systems of organization. The nomad is characterized by movement within the inbetween. The path of the nomad is a path of

opening. An open route. The destination is in the making. This nomadic dissertation considers what it means for art education to move towards openings rather than closure.

This is an experimental pedagogy that desires to inspire the reader to think differently. To lead you toward questions that test the limits of assumptions, and provide tools to engage in your own limit acts to make your own maps.

What is an art education in the making? Deleuze & Guattari (2004) write, “What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious” (p. 12). Constructing the unconscious is the act of creating a form, an assemblage, within the chaotic space of potential experience. This is not a fantasy, “an unconscious closed in upon itself”, but a limit act – an experimentation borne from the imagination, that engages the real. This process begins by constructing the unconscious through sensation.

Wandering, as used in this dissertation, proceeds by means of sensation. The idea of sensation expressed in this essay emerges from Gilles Deleuze’s (2005) work *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. *The Logic of Sensation* maps Deleuze’s thinking following his collaboration with Felix Guattari on *1,000 Plateaus* that the poetics of this dissertation is based upon. *The Logic of Sensation* is an important text to connect with the project of this dissertation because the work makes clear Deleuze’s contribution, and the centrality of his thought, to the field of aesthetics. Deleuze conceptualizes sensation as an aesthetic dimension that is coextensive but distinguishable from perception: “Sensation is not a faculty of the subject but, rather, the mutual limit of the subject and the object, a place in which these two aspects become indistinguishable, such that one can say that in

sensation the subject is altered by aspects of worldly forces that are occluded by the perception of constituted objects. Perception, the discernment of an object that stands over against a subject, is a faculty of “figuration” insofar as it is the isolation, within a manifold of sensory information, of a distinct thing. Each art takes as its aim the reversal of this occlusion of sensation by perception” (Ford, 2005, p. 392).

Central to the theoretical discussion of the logic of sensation is the idea of the figure. A Figure is a singular instance of sensation. “Sensation disorganizes the body of perception and in so doing it disorganizes perception. The figurative painting ‘tells you the story in a long diatribe through the brain’. Perception overwrites sensation and in so doing suppresses the forces that constitute sensation” (Ford, 2005, p.392). Finding ways to teach others to respond to works in the arts, to experience and understand the figures of sensation, is a significant project of art education.

My own form of knowing in the world is often through sensation. Sensation is not a form of knowledge typically privileged or understood in schooling, and as a result, I struggled with institutionalized learning. I dropped out of college as an undergraduate and transferred three times because my form of learning didn’t fit into the system. By “accident” (I will explain in a moment that I do not think this is good fortune or accidental, but rather an attunement to the everyday), I aligned with a professor who taught me, through independent study, how to use sensation effectively in academia.

I learned how to use a question, rather than a statement or fixed idea, as the catalyst for new work. The work then came to document my process of coming to terms with the question. The thinking is embedded within the work – not something that happens separately and then is applied. Because I had a question to focus my attention,

daily life became a kind of laboratory to experiment with the question. This is the process through which the experimental poem/artwork emerges. This is part of the poetics of Deleuze|Guattari. (I do not draw a distinction between experimental poetry and experimental visual art. They belong to the same field.) For example, in this dissertation, all the nodes of daily life have the potential to become part of the rhizome of the dissertation: books I am reading, contemporary politics, overheard conversations, E-mails, personal experiences, images, sounds...all of this becomes part of the field of research from which the question is considered. The richer and more engaged the life, the greater the laboratory. The living is essential to the making. Here, the experience of motherhood, of becoming mother to two boys, is woven into the materials of the book.

Deleuze|Guattari (2004) write “the book is not an image of the world. It forms a rhizome with the world, there is an aparallel evolution of the book and the world” (11). Unlike the Freirean idea of word = world, Deleuze|Guattari suggest word || world. The word and the world run side-by-side. Like lovers that never were, the word and the world are an attraction that will not merge. They are a separate longing mirroring the needs of the other. Their rhizomatic systems produce lines of flight: territorializing and deterritorializing each other.

As a book, this dissertation is not separate from the life that is part of its making. The words of the dissertation form a rhizome with both the world where the making of the book emerges and the theoretical world where the making of the question / the making of research and practice in art education emerges. The book emerges as an open form, a road made by walking, a rhizomatic mapping of this unknown territory. As such, I may contradict myself and repeat myself as ideas are built “at different times and

speeds” as Deleuze|Guattari write. Paragraphs tangle across various years and experiences. The paragraph I wrote today may have emerged from a paragraph I wrote two years ago. There are days when the words are lucid, fast and hard, and years when the words are painfully incoherent, slow and spare. These are the different speeds and times through which the book emerges. A rhizome is always in the middle and therefore there will not be a conclusion, an ending of closure, but I suspect when the dissertation proves the words can communicate to another, then I will know it has reached a point of becoming that can be shared.

The aesthetics of the rhizome are not the modernist ideal of “making it new” but, rather, reinterpreted in the postmodern rhizome as “making it multiply”. The multiplicity can embrace making it new, but as poet Octavio Paz writes, “temporal succession no longer rules our imagination, which has retreated from the future to the present. We live instead in that conjunction of times and spaces, of synchronicity and confluence, which converge in the ‘pure time’ of the instant” (Mishra, 2014, ¶7). Invention is not as much looking to the past to make an old idea new, but a mapping of this instant that is always already changing. The contemporary poem is not reinventing the past, but mapping this particular moment. A mapping of the middle space. This contemporary poetry is rhizomatic cartography. It is this aesthetics we might apply to the method as arts based research.

The experiences of dailyness, both the everyday and the art/theory, that are drawn into the rhizome are selected through sensation. For this reason, the process often appears serendipitous, or like a string of happy accidents. I argue, however, that this is not actually the case. These are not “accidents” as we traditionally understand the word. My

experience of sensation is that it is a sensitivity, an attunement to the life of the objects, ideas, people, forces that confront us in our everyday wandering. This is not a forced attuning. Instead, sensation is a sensitivity to the figures in the everyday. The investment is not emotional, as we understand feelings, in fact, there is a detached quality to sensation. The detachment is an openness to the experiment: the experiment can go whichever way it goes. We are not loading the deck. We are not emotionally concerned with a particular outcome.

Instead, we enter a curriculum of the question and wander into what is now unknown to us and follow the figures of sensation as a form of learning in the making which constructs the unconscious through which we may create a map of the territory of the question. Here, we can begin to see the figures of the territory and begin to share our map with another. Sensation constructs the unconscious figure that the later faculty of imagination relates preconceptually as image. This presents itself when we are deeply engaged and attuned to a question / a question understood as something beyond our current comprehension. Sensation constructs the unconscious. Sensation, through the figure, informs the unconscious image of our next step which we then recognize in the territory of the road we are making by walking in the world: sensation gives us the rhythm of an image (not the thing itself / a kind of metonymy) and we recognize this in the mirror of the world (word || world) and unconsciously select this because we recognize / find familiarity and comfort here. This is neither accidental, nor conceptual.

The experience is of a physical resonance, literally, we are struck like a tuning fork and vibrate, sending/receiving waveforms, between the thing in the world and the

unconscious image. This is the || of the word and the world, or the figure and sensation. A different sort of semiotics.

In this dissertation, I would like to redefine the accident for art education. In contemporary culture and education, the idea of the “accident” is defined as an event that happens by chance and is without apparent or deliberate cause. Accidents cause damage or injury. There is another kind of accident, one we often call the “happy accident” in art making that I would like to suggest is often not accidental, but actually a knowing through sensation.

The events that create this rhizomatic map of artist Dani Karavan’s installation *Passages* appear as happy accidents: An accident I arrived in Port Bou, Spain. An accident I found Karavan’s installation *Passages*. An accident that I was studying the philosopher Walter Benjamin at the time (*Passages* was created in honor of Walter Benjamin and the other exiles who had passed through this borderland.) An accident that the physical location and circumstances of *Passages* paralleled those of poet Antonio Machado’s work (whose poem *We Make the Road by Walking* was the title of the Miles Horton and Paulo Freire’s book I was reading). An accident that *Passages* related to the Icarus myth – the story of Icarus that I found stunning as a new mother. An accident that Charles Garoian and Kimberly Powell introduced me to Deleuze|Guattari. And so on. But these accidents are not the result of blindly stumbling around and happily bumping into things.

The kind of accident I am describing is achieved through sensation. These happy accidents are immanent in the question. Immanence, for Deleuze|Guattari, is that which exists or remains within, is an infinite or smooth plane: “[t]here are only relations of

movement and rest, speed and slowness between unformed elements, or at least between elements that are relatively unformed, molecules, and particles of all kinds. There are only haecceities, affects, subjectless individuations that constitute collective assemblages." (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 266) This is the formless inbetween space of emergence.

We experience immanence through sensation within the unconscious. We then have the opportunity to experience the figures, the sensation of what is immanent, reflected in the rhizome of the world as a kind of knowing. These are the kinds of accidents we want to foster in art education: the experimental work. To know through sensation in the world we must open the middle space, the inbetween, to allow for the experiment. This is the poetics of the experiment. This is the poetics of Deleuze|Guattari's rhizomatic cartography.

In this dissertation, I use rhizomatic cartography to perform and theorize Dani Karavan's artwork *Passages* for research and practice in art education. This dissertation performs rhizomatic cartography as a form of arts-based research. A few terms are used interchangeably throughout the dissertation. The term "arts-based research" is exchanged with the words "experimental art-making". I argue that experimental art-making, defined through rhizomatic cartography, is already arts-based research. Situating the arts and research within the context of translation theory, I consider whether the arts need to argue their forms of knowing within the language of research. While this kind of translation may bridge understanding between the arts and sciences, demonstrating how arts processes correlate with research practice, do the arts need to adopt research-based language? Could the arts keep their native arts-based tongue and simply argue art-making

is a form of knowledge that can perform as a research method? In a similar way, does art education need to adopt the language of the behavioral sciences, the study of schooling and pedagogy, or can we use our native studio language to discuss our process?

Translation theorist Lawrence Venuti argues that when performing translation, we have two main choices. We can take the work that is foreign to us and domesticate the foreign by translating the words so they are seamlessly familiar to the reader. Or we may translate the work in a way that allows what is foreign to us to remain. This is called a foreignizing translation. The reader of a foreignizing text is aware of difference, and may encounter passages that are not easily assimilated.

Applying these central ideas of contemporary translation theory, I wonder if we need to domesticate the arts as qualitative research, and the teaching of studio practice as schooling, or whether we can foreignize the process by allowing the arts to keep their own indigenous research and pedagogical language.

Another term I have adopted is referring to this dissertation as a collection of “essays”. Originally, essay meant “to wander” and could be translated literally as “attempts”. Michel de Montaigne, a 15th century philosopher, popularized the form of the essay. This collection of essays performs a wandering through passages that has multiple associations. Passages can be defined as sections of written text. This wandering attempts to offer the reader an experience similar to the experience I had wandering through artist Dani Karavan’s installation *Passages* in Port Bou, Spain. The wandering is also expressed in Walter Benjamin’s original meaning of passages / pagenwerk of the glass arcades connecting shops in Paris, and allowing people to wander the streets in new ways.

One of the rhizomatic nodes that tangles the passages in these essays is the myth of Icarus. Icarus is the Greek story of the boy who took flight across the sea with his father Daedalus. Leaving the labyrinth in which they were imprisoned, Daedalus made wings of feathers and wax and attached them to his son's shoulders. Icarus, exploring flight, disregarded his father's warning not fly too close to the sun. The heat of the sun melted the wax on his feathers, and Icarus fell into the sea.

The Icarus myth serves multiple purposes throughout these passages. As a new mother myself, I wondered where the mother of Icarus was in this myth. Why didn't her lover, Daedalus, make wings for her as well? How did she learn of her son's flight into the ocean? Carrying a child for over nine months, giving birth to the child, loving the dependent child through the sleepless nights and the paradigm shift of raising an infant. How did Daedalus come to take Icarus from Naucrete? I wanted to give Naucrete a voice in this myth by giving her some of my own voices as a new mother of boys.

Also, I have been struck by how the experience of motherhood has been equated academically by women as children = the book. Women's children are the books they publish. Forming and birthing new ideas = making and delivering a human child. If the word || world, then the child || book, but the child does not = the book. A mother is not a fixed form, but always in the making. Mothering is part of the territory of this dissertation, as the book is not separate from the life. Motherhood informs the process of this particular practice of rhizomatic cartography and is expressed through the myth of Icarus.

Motherhood a process of delay. Children are interruption machines. The silence and time available before motherhood is now a stuttering across time. These interruptions

are not separate from the writing. The rhizome allows the complexity of the now to entangle within the book. Because the rhizome is not hierarchical, motherhood and the theory of Deleuze|Guattari can participate equally in the process of writing.

The practice of experimental art is a curriculum of leaping. My past experience has been entering this leaping space alone. Now, in this moment, I must leap with my boys. And I do not know how to do this well. I knew the other thing: the solitary experience of mapping ideas through sensation. I now find myself as mother and children, a multiplicity, with unfamiliar sensations. This dissertation is a document of my struggle and multiple failures to learn to write differently. This kind of writing is stammering. Stuttering. The three procedures of stuttering are part of the method of motherhood: decomposition, deterritorialization, pushing something to its limit.

According to Deleuze|Guattari, stuttering creates a minor literature that breaks with the major literature. Stuttering stops making sense. I find little comfort here, but remain hopeful. I'd prefer singing to stammering, but this is not my choice to make. Learning to write differently, motherhood, becomes a personal labyrinth.

One of the curiosities about Icarus is the nature of the labyrinth. Daedalus is imprisoned in a labyrinth of his own making. His son, by extension, is imprisoned there with him. This is an important distinction: Daedalus and Icarus are not placed in prison. Daedalus imagines and creates the prison that holds them. The labyrinth is borne of his own imagination. The prison is passed down from father to son. The prison is stasis: a reality devoid of sensation. The walls are fixed. When Daedalus places wings on his son's shoulders, when Icarus and Daedalus leap out over the sea together...they are leaving one labyrinth, but as poet William Carlos Williams writes, the man carries the

city within himself. We are the labyrinth. We can change our location, but we remain. In their leaping, Icarus and Daedalus carried the labyrinth with them.

Second, the Icarus myth serves this dissertation as the myth parallels the labyrinth of public schooling and academic research, and asks how we might learn to create education and meaning within these walls. This is not a dissertation of escape. Not a consciousness closed to itself. Not fantasy. I am not offering a new world; I do not believe in utopias. Rather, the poetics of Deleuze|Guattari offer a way to conceptualize the space of the inbetween, the space, for example, that lies beneath the lines on the grid, and to expand the possibility within the labyrinth rhizomatically.

Throughout this dissertation, I conceptualize Dani Karavan's work *Passages*, an homage to Walter Benjamin and the other exiles who passed through this borderland, as both a labyrinth and the rhizomatic space of the in-between. Using the artwork itself as a leaping point, as a rhizomatic node, is both a way towards the in-between and a method of applying art to education and research. I mean, the art itself; the undigested materials – not someone else's theory of the art, but one's own looking and thinking and applying. A foreignizing strategy embracing the figures of sensation.

For me, the experience I had at *Passages* – the “accidental” encounter that led me to the installation, resonates with the story of Icarus. The work asked me to stand above the sea and take risks with the water. I wanted to know my limits. Educator Paulo Freire writes of the limit act: Persons of imagination perceive the untested feasibility in limit situations, and engage in testing actions to see if they can transcend these boundaries. I am suggesting, in this dissertation, that both the creation of art, and the viewing of art, can function as a form that teaches individuals how to respond to limit situations through

the use of testing actions that perceive the untested feasibility beyond arbitrary boundaries.

I want to know where limits break down into Julia Kristeva's notion of the abject and where limits open into Maxine Greene's notions of awakening. Deleuze|Guattari inform this conversation by remembering that the labyrinth and the abject and the awakening exist together as a pack. One does not escape the other. It seems to me that what we are really saying is something like where are the limits of "art-making". This embodies the process with a language that is more complicated than a language of risk and failure.

We make the road by walking. But the the risk is real. An accident can turn into trauma. My experience of real failure is more like: we make the road by walking, and it is winter, and we do not have shoes, and we are losing our feet to frostbite as we walk. There are many reasonable reasons to stop. I am trying to communicate the virtual real. You need to know the line that marks the space between Maxine Greene's "awakening" and Julia Kristeva's "abjection". I'm not sure where to draw this line. In this dissertation, I am trying to understand how the teacher might recognize the difference between too far (abjection) and not far enough (not yet awakening).

In addition, I am arguing, somewhat selfishly, but also for the others who are like me, that this form of knowing, knowing through sensation, has a place in public school and academia. Both curriculum and research benefit from the inclusion of a myriad of perspectives, from embracing intellectual difference, in allowing different research methodologies to tangle and form nodes we would have not otherwise have been able to imagine or encounter. They benefit because this allows us to see from multiple

viewpoints, and therefore, see further beyond ourselves and what is currently known. As poet Rainer Maria Rilke writes, “love consists in this: that two solitudes protect, and touch, and greet each other”. In other words, difference can protect and touch and greet difference. This is one way to peace. We do not need to merge, or become one. We can remain our own together. We can be each other’s separately. This entanglement protects, rather than erodes, the form of the Other. The love story of research methodologies.

Writing about *Passages* using the method of rhizomatic cartography, I am performing arts-based research. I am performing art-making as a way to explore. I am not trying to create binaries; I am not creating a passage of escape. There is no escaping from the labyrinth. To escape would mean leaving one labyrinth for the next. Standards, objectives, recipes for creating curriculum and research will continue to exist and change with the spirit and fears of the culture. Rather, I am trying to find the space inbetween. Within these limits, there is a place that can expand and allow for difference.

This is the space of the wanderer, the nomad, the exile. Deleuze|Guattari give me a way to think about this in *A Thousand Plateaus*: My inclusion of Walter Benjamin is to include the physical reality of the exile – that wandering can lead to the abject. It would be wonderful if we all could have “a room of one’s own” as Virginia Woolf writes; however, those of who do not / who cannot -- can still find a space to create in the inbetween. We take notes in the bathroom, we sketch ideas at 4AM when everyone else is sleeping, we are always looking for openings no matter how brief -- and we constantly give up only to return again stuttering. Each return is a new beginning that places us back in the middle.

Reader, if these passages succeed, they will offer an experience of knowing through sensation. A passage into one way of conceptualizing art in the making, or arts based research. My hope is these passages could inspire educators to not create binaries within the curriculum, but rather to look for the middle space, to believe the space exists, to not get worn out expecting global change, but instead to expand the inbetween with an autobiographical vision of a curriculum that is the complicated conversation of art in the making.

GLOSS OF CHAPTER 2

In *Chapter 2*, I introduce artist Dani Karavan's environmental installation, *Passages*. This artwork was made to commemorate philosopher Walter Benjamin and the many exiles who inhabited this borderland during both the Spanish revolution and the Nazi Occupation in the small coastal village of Port Bou, Spain.

I introduce that I found myself in Port Bou on accident. I discovered the installation *Passages* on accident while wandering the trails by the ocean. Later, in future chapters, I will consider how these accidents may actually be the making of the unconscious through the figures of sensation. Chapter 2 seeks to offer the reader an experience of the actual installation of *Passages* through using thick description of the materials and experience. In addition, I theorize Karavan's work for art education using Elizabeth Ellsworth's concept of a "shelter of exposure". To introduce the experiment, educators must first create a shelter through which our students can begin to be exposed to new ideas.

There is also a secret in this passage. You may not know, and I regret to tell you, that this *Passage* speaks in silence of Deleuze. I do not tell the story that runs through me as I write this passage, but I will tell you here: Saturday November 4, 1995: On Niel Avenue in the 17th arrondissement of Paris, Gilles Deleuze leapt from the window of his apartment to his death onto the sidewalk below. I do not speculate why. In fact, Deleuze (2004) himself suggests: "...we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed, and with what bodies without organs it makes its own converge" (6).

Rather, hidden in this first passage, is the body of Deleuze standing at the glass window of *Passages* in the moments before leaping. Deleuze, in this way, functions with Karavan's *Passages*, with the flight of Icarus (discussed in Chapter 3), and with the inbetween space of the leap: the moments in the air when the body is neither here nor there. The moments in the air that open the question of what we witness in the inbetween: a moment of awakening or a moment of abjection. How does the teacher read the falling body? How does the artist know the limits of her/his own body? In this passage we bear silent witness to Deleuze's defenestration.

Chapter 2: DANI KARAVAN'S *PASSAGES* AS SHELTER OF EXPOSURE

“What shall I do, singer and first-born, in a
world where the deepest black is grey,
and inspiration is kept in a thermos?
with all this immensity
in a measured world?” (Tsvetaeva, 1924)

What with the chorus, and the spinning water, and the just perceptible murmur of
the breeze we are slipping away. Little bits of ourselves are crumbling. There!
Something very important fell then. I cannot keep myself together. I shall sleep.
But we must go; must catch our train; must walk back to the station—must, must
must. We are *only bodies jogging side by side. I exist only in the soles of my feet
and in the tired muscles of my thighs. We have been walking for hours it seems.*

But where? I cannot remember. (Woolf, p. 135)¹

I was wandering in Port Bou, Spain after the train to Barcelona broke down. The train
station sits on a mountain overlooking a town nestled among rocks bordering the
Pyrenees and the murmur of the Mediterranean. Visiting this borderland on the edge of
France and Spain was not part of my plan: I was looking forward to seeing Antoni
Gaudi's architecture in person in Barcelona. I had little sketches of parts of Temple
Expiatori de la Sagrada Família in my yellow bag. I now find myself walking the steep
path from the station towards the beach; I am looking for a hotel to spend the night. After
being stuck on a hot train for the better part of the day, and then transferred to an old

¹ *The Waves* is considered Virginia Woolf's most experimental novel. Woolf called it a
“playpoem” and the work is difficult to assign a genre as the form blurs distinctions
between prose and poetry.

wooden train that rocked us into Port Bou, I am tired. The others passengers and I *are only bodies jogging side by side. I exist only in the soles of my feet and in the tired muscles of my thighs. We have been walking for hours it seems.*

Port Bou is a borderland where two European cultures meet: Spain and France – a local tourist town with rocky coasts and terracotta roofs. Port Bou marks an important passage over the Pyrenean border for many exiles. A passage hiding brutal secrets within beautiful borders. During the twentieth century, Port Bou was a main line of retreat for civilian refugees seeking exile in France during the Spanish Civil War, and during World War II, Port Bou was a passage for those fleeing the Nazis.

In 1940, the last battle of the Spanish Civil War took place near Port Bou scarring the surface of this small town. That same year Walter Benjamin, a 48-year old the Jewish-German philosopher, attempted to cross this border fleeing the Nazi Occupation. Benjamin obtained a United States visa authorizing his entry into the United States. He hoped to join his friends Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno and resume the work of the Frankfurt School in America. He had only one option: to get into Spain over a pass in the Pyrenees, cross the whole country to reach Portugal, and from there sail for America. This was the route taken by many refugees.

At the train station in Port Bou, however, Benjamin was refused entry into Spain. He was told he would be handed over to French authorities the following day, which meant his surrender to the Nazi Gestapo. Under police surveillance, Benjamin spent that night at the Hotel de Francia making what Marshall Berman called a "pre-emptive strike on himself." Artist Dani Karavan remarks of this location, "[f]rom very far away I heard

the noise of the station, the border, the railways, the voices of the locomotives and the rattling of the carriages of the trains that lead to the death camps” (Masanes, N.D., ¶10).

That night on September 27, 1940 in room #4 on the second floor of the Hotel de Francia, a cheap *pensión*, most believe Benjamin took a strong dose of morphine. Like many exiles, he carried vials of morphine in the event of arriving at such a moment. The medical certificate gave the cause of death as cerebral hemorrhage. After seven years in exile, and 28 changes of address, the borderland of Port Bou became his final home. He was not given further passage.

A judge documented the “German Gentleman’s” possessions:

- a leather suitcase
- a gold watch
- a pipe
- a passport issued in Marseilles by the American Foreign Service
- six passport photos
- an x-ray
- a pair of spectacles
- various magazines
- a number of letters
- a few papers
- some money

Benjamin’s guide across the mountains, Lisa Fittko, referred on many occasions to the suitcase with a manuscript that Benjamin “jealously guarded as a valuable treasure” the suitcase, which many believe held his *Das Passagen-Werk*, translated into English as *The Arcades Project*. This suitcase, and final manuscript, were never found.

The Arcades Project was conceived in Paris in 1927 and carefully constructed over the course of thirteen years— “the theater,” as Benjamin called it, “of all my struggles and all my ideas.” A rhizomatic theater, reconstructed from manuscripts, the

English version, published by Harvard University Press in 1999, and running over 925 pages is a collection of fragments:

Focusing on the arcades of nineteenth-century Paris—glass-roofed rows of shops that were early centers of consumerism—Benjamin presents a montage of quotations from, and reflections on, hundreds of published sources.... His central preoccupation is what he calls the commodification of things—a process in which he locates the decisive shift to the modern age. (Benjamin, 2002, p. 2)

Arcades (English), passages (French), passagen (German) are pedestrian passages open at both ends and roofed in glass and iron. These arcades connect two parallel streets often consisting of two facing rows of shops. Benjamin (2002) writes of these passages in *The Arcades Project*:

These arcades, a recent invention of industrial luxury, are glass-roofed, marble-paneled corridors extending through whole blocks of buildings, whose owners have joined together for such enterprises. Lining both sides of the corridors, which get their light from above, are the most elegant shops, so that the arcade is a city, a world in miniature, in which customers will find everything they need (p. 19).

After settling into a hotel, I walked the dirt trails that followed the bends of the sea up a steep hill decorated with sharp boulders and soft rounded rocks. The sun was setting and the shoreline sparkled with phosphorescent shrimp. Kneeling on a rock to get a closer look at the shrimp, I found a small silver ring lost among weeds. Two thin silver bodies embraced stretching arms and legs to circle each other. I slipped the ring on my finger and continued up the cliff. Looking down, I could see people dining outside small family

restaurants. Above me, some kind of structure, perhaps a shelter or a lookout, stood at the top of the cliff.

Arriving at the structure, I am alone. I notice triangles of corten steel forming an enclosed passageway of rust colored walls. Inside the structure some 100 stairs descend steeply over the edge of the cliff, dropping off into the sea. *[T]he road became a clamber of rocks up the shady side of the mountain. Benjamin calculated that, given his state of health, he would have to stop every ten minutes and rest for one, a resolution he strictly adhered to, concentrating on his watch and his rests. On the last stretch his companions had to help him* (walterbenjaminportbou.cat/en/content). The steel extends from the opening of the passage, extends underfoot like a carpet, across the top of the cliff and into a wall made of local stone:

It's fascinating to see how quickly nature covers over traces of the interventions to which it has been subjected. [...] The deep incision where the corridor, the main *Passage* in Dani Karavan's artistic homage to Walter Benjamin was established can now only be surmised by those who were involved in the construction process. The real wound inflicted on the rock has grown over, giving way to artistically embodied memory of profound traumas within our history.

(Scheurmann, 1995, p. 110)

I'm feeling much inner disturbance. I had not anticipated anything like this structure on my wandering around the sea, and now, I am forced to stop and confront this place.

Passages is a kind of trap. A steel trap baiting me with the question – what is this passage? Luring me to the entrance, to the experience, as the steel forms a rectangular

viewfinder focused, from this direction, on the ocean: a dark and hollow passage to the sea.

I decide to walk down the steps. It is evening in a strange place, and no one knows I am here. Although I've walked many staircases in my lifetime, this feels different. My footsteps echo in the steel arcade, and I feel trapped, not safe, in this enclosure. What is left of daylight fades into a small rectangle behind me. My senses are heightened as my body stands fully engaged and on alert. At the center of this structure, there is no easy escape. Below me crashes the sea, and above me, darkness punctuated by the small glowing entryway. Around me – rust colored steel. Each step I take feels like a deliberate separation from the world outside the structure.

People who are afraid of heights, I've been told, are not afraid they are going to accidentally fall – they are afraid they are going to jump. The structure gave me that sensation: I am not afraid I am going to slip and fall into the water; I am afraid the closer I get to the sea the more interesting it might be to jump off the cliff. Not a jumping in desperation, but, if you can understand, more of a seduction – the structure lured me to the sea, and the steps over the edge of the cliff were asking me to take risks with the water. Much like Icarus, who, once given wings, was seduced by flight.

I wasn't performing criticism by asking questions such as what is the purpose of this structure, or who made this, or why is this here. Instead, I was responding in awe. I was immediately curious what it would feel like to stand inside the structure and walk down the steps. I wanted to know what happened when I stood inside the structure. I wanted to know if it was dangerous: could I fall into the sea.

I am descending into Karavan's *Passages*. I am unaware of the artist. I do not realize the purpose of this artwork, or the fact this is an environmental installation. I did not know that Walter Benjamin, a philosopher I am studying at the time, died here. I did not know this was a memorial to him. I am reaching out to the steel wall for support as I descend the steps. There is no railing. I am not thinking about Art. I was walking in my daily life and came upon something outside the borders of what I comprehend or categorize. My impulse is not to intellectualize the staircase; rather, I want to experience the staircase.

In the self-portrait (Figure 2), what is left of the evening light glows in the small rectangle behind me. I am leaving the evening light behind, and crossing a border. I am leaving Port Bou and journeying over the edge of the mountain into the sea. I am afraid. I am Icarus above the sea. The evening is quiet, and I hear the water and the sounds of my own footsteps on the stairs. I am trapped by the structure like Icarus was trapped by his desire for flight. Like Icarus, I recognize the wilderness before me.



Figure 2. Self Portrait at Passages. Photo by the author.

This arcade functions as a shelter of exposure by exposing the bodies of its audience to moments in which “the human” and “the environment” change one another in intense and critical ways (Kruse & Ellsworth, 2009, p. 66). “A shelter provides us with the means to pause and sustain focus. A shelter of exposure allows us, paradoxically, to pause and sustain focus on the precarious edge of critical change” (Kruse & Ellsworth, 2009, p. 69).

As art educators, we can bring these ideas embedded in *Passages* into our classrooms – into formal and informal learning environments such as public schools, museums and community gatherings. Humans hold immense capacity to envision and create sustainable new realities in the world. Traditional systems of measurement and

assessment, marked by avoidance of accidents and error, limit our ability to see and respond to the assemblage of our experience. A shelter of exposure inspires us to experiment beyond “[t]ight disciplinary borders, habitual understandings of the already known, and compliant ways of learning shield us from sensing and responding to critical events unfolding outside our familiar categories” (Kruse & Ellsworth, 2009, p.71). To learn is to be exposed to new forms of languages and images that we have not lived with before: to bring these forms into our bodies and explore the changes these visions are capable of making.

Learning is always in the making. The shelters of exposure we create might be measured in light of the creative responses they generate, but cannot guarantee: “a teacher’s most necessary and creative act is to invite students to enter a sheltered place that also exposes them to critical forces of change—and then sets them free to respond with the wildest acts of imagination possible” (Kruse & Ellsworth, 2009, p.71).

A shelter of exposure is a passage that allows sensation as the texture of thought, sensation of preconception, to begin to construct the unconscious figure through which the student then responds by unconsciously selecting and documenting a parallel image in the physical world. These are creative responses. This process repeats itself indefinitely as the student moves along the inbetween, following sensation, within the shelter of the experimental question selected.

Experimental poet Charles Bernstein writes that “sense-making is the oscillation between sense and nonsense”. A shelter of exposure is a machine of sense-making that houses the tensions of the opened and the closed, movement and stasis, big and small,

shelter and exposure. In education, we want the oscillation – the tension – the place for the experiment to open the possibilities of our human capacities.

There are real risks as evidenced in Benjamin who found no shelter in Port Bou – only exposure, an overexposure to forces of excess. There is also much beauty: as Dani Karavan’s very sensitive etching into the earth reveals.

A year after Benjamin’s death, Hannah Arendt visited Port Bou. Hoping to remember her dear friend Walter Benjamin, she searched for a gravestone in the cemetery with his name, but found nothing. No one there could tell her anything about Benjamin. In a letter to Gershom Scholem, Arendt wrote: *I have found nothing, his name was nowhere*” (Masanes, (N.D.)

The foundation stone for *Passages* was laid in 1990, on the fiftieth anniversary of Benjamin’s death. Financed by the Government of the Generalitat de Catalunya and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, it was inaugurated on 15 May 1994. Karavan selected the title *Passages* to refer not only to Benjamin’s fateful passage from France to Portbou, but also to his unfinished last work, the *Passagen-Werk* or *Arcades Project*. Karavan offers: “The first time I came to Portbou; it immediately became clear to me that that place up there where Walter Benjamin is buried would be the site for my project. All of the other possibilities were crossed out. From a distance, from the west, came the sound of trains arriving and departing from the border station, and these were mixed with the sounds coming from the east, from the sea. In the north I saw the old border” (Masanes, N.D., ¶4).

Dani Karavan’s environmental work *Passages* is a rhizomatic assemblage, a poem, combining whirlpools, rocks, corten steel, glass, cypress tree, stones, fence, text,

weather, human and animal bodies, arcades, interiors and exteriors into a work memorializing exiles of this borderland and Walter Benjamin in particular. Karavan, using an approach much like Benjamin's, connects "the traces of past pain, memory and exile with the possibility of a new and better future.... [*Passages*] incorporates a number of [Benjamin's] concepts: the philosophy of history, the necessity of experience, the idea of limit, the landscape as aura and the necessity of memory" (Masanes, N.D.¶5).



Figure 3. Front view of Dani Karavan's installation in Port Bou, Spain: the corten steel structure, cypress tree on the right, and the Mediterranean Sea are parts of this assemblage.

In Figure 3, we begin to see parts of the assemblage that Karavan has made, along with the small window framing the sea (appearing deceptively close) within the theater of the corten steel structure. Combining created and natural environments, in this image the metal staircase and the cypress tree² form an unlikely pack with the memory of Walter Benjamin.

Jeffrey A. Bell (2005), considering Deleuzian perspectives of assemblage and architecture writes:

As a dynamic and consistent multiplicity of elements, an architectural assemblage ‘swing[s] between’, to recall Deleuze and Guattari’s formulation cited above, ‘territorial closure’ on the one hand and a deterritorializing movement on the other. An autonomous architecture thus swings in the direction of territorial closure for it excludes and disenfranchises elements that are not part of the architectural territory; and a heteronomous architecture swings towards a deterritorializing movement in that it includes non-architectural elements (e.g. swans, dolphins, etc.). As an assemblage, however, the point precisely is the swing between these two tendencies, the dynamic tension that neither resolves the tension dialectically, nor becomes actualised as one tendency in opposition to the other. From this perspective, architecture is an assemblage that involves both territorial and architectural elements and deterritorializing non-architectural elements. (p. 19)

² The cypress tree is one of the oldest classical mourning symbols and can represent death, life and the afterlife.

Passages swings between deterritorialization as Karavan includes nonarchitectural human and natural elements in the work such as memories, cypress trees, whirlpools, humans, animals and insects who inhabit the space, as well as territorialization as the corten steel staircase excludes elements that are not part of the architectural territory. The tension develops between the closed territory of the stairs and the deterritorialization of the both the senses and the process of memory that occurs within the viewer/participant.



Figure 4. View as one is descending the stairs inside Dani Karavan's installation *Passages*. The Mediterranean Sea can be seen at the bottom of the metal staircase.

In Figure 4, we can see the territorializing affect of the corten steel staircase leading the viewer/participant down this passage. Our understanding of how to navigate a

staircase by walking up or down, and the metal walls forming a barrier on either side are territorializing architectural elements asking us to walk in an austere line towards or away from the sea.

However, simultaneously, Karavan's *Passages*, creates an alliance with the border, deterritorializes by introducing nonarchitectural elements, so that we might cross over into this becoming – a becoming-Benjamin testing the limits of environmental space: whirlpools, rocks, corten steel, glass, cypress trees, stones, fence, text, memory, body become an assemblage, a pack, a vector taking my body over the edge of a cliff, a cliff jutting out over the Mediterranean Sea.

Here, in the enclosed metal staircase, the weathered triangles, the descending environmental boundaries I find my body is mutable. The enclosure swallows me in rusting metal; acts as a theater focusing my vision on the glowing rectangular space at the end of the staircase: the movement of the Mediterranean is the feature alongside the turbulent whirlpools. Looking back, I notice the rectangle of sunlight, my point of entry, growing smaller as I step over the edge of the cliff.

Thinking about Benjamin in this arcade, while acting as the figure of motion in his memorial I am alone on a journey that moves past the physical limits of where I have been before: *Passages* acts as an experiment in Plato's cave as what is projected onto the walls depends on what I carry in my mind. The things we carry. Center, here, is the individual him/herself. The limit of the experience exists within my body.

Am I to refuse the dazzle of the sea, refuse to hear the eerie echo of my steps and walk back up the stairs to the sun and the constant revolving around the oil and the milk and the blood of the everyday? What if the limits of my physical routines are challenged?

Can I hear an echo of Benjamin's footsteps at the bottom of the stairs? Karavan's staircase continues past a glass wall that cannot open. A glass panel preventing physical passage as passage here could mean falling into the sea.

I have reached another limit and can only imagine the descent down this final set of stairs. The panel is transparent and the following words are sandblasted into the glass in Catalanian, English, German, and Spanish:

It is more arduous to honor the memory
of the nameless than that of the
renowned. Historical construction is
devoted to the memory of the nameless.

These words are taken from a preparatory note for *Über den Begriff der Geschichte* (Gesammelte Schriften I, S. 1241) where Benjamin points out how historicism depends on recounting the antics of glorious heroes of history in monumental and epic form, and is in no position to say anything about the 'nameless'. Benjamin believed that a linear history oppresses the masses. I am among the nameless visitors participating in *Passages* as I wander through this arcade. I am looking through the glass, looking through the transparent text etched into the glass at whirlpools: "From above, on the rocks, I look at the sea. The churned-up water swirls noisily, it suddenly foams white, rushes down, then everything is calm. The sea does not move. Then again: swirl, foam, roar, calm. Here nature tells the tragedy of this man. Nobody could present it better. All that remains to be done is to bring the pilgrim to see what nature says" (Masanes, N.D., ¶5).

Ascending the stairs, I walk in darkness toward a rectangle of light. Once out of the passage a wall made of local stones obstructs my path. The path up to the back of

Benjamin's gravesite is rough. Behind the cemetery is a steel cube on a steel platform where I can sit and watch the sea through the cemetery's fence: "On the steep hill, above the boulders that have to be clambered over to walk around the cemetery, a wall, a fence, a barrier, the graves behind. A long way away, below the horizon, framed by the high dark and mountains of the Pyrenees, the blue sea, the clear sky, freedom. I decided to construct a platform with a seat from where, through the fence, beyond the cemetery, freedom could be seen" (Masanes, N.D., ¶8-9). The blue sky, the clear sky, freedom – this is the path of Icarus.

I could repeat my experience at *Passages* many times and each time would be different. The assemblage would change because I would change. Graham Livesey (2005) writes that "[a]ssemblages, as conceived of by Deleuze and Guattari, are complex constellations of objects, bodies, expressions, qualities, and territories that come together for varying periods of time to ideally create new ways of functioning (p. 18)." My body was asked to create a new way of functioning within this space: the oscillation between the territorializing staircase, and deterritorializing memories and whirlpools forced me to exist differently than I had before walking up this dirt hill by the sea.

Walking up the steps of *Passages*, now carrying the historical knowledge of Karavan's work, I think of Benjamin's (1940) discussion of Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus*:

A Klee painting, *Angelus Novus* shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history.

His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing in from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress (257-8).

Karavan's *Passages* reopens possibilities of human experience through making a pact with the border. Karavan allows us to experience an assemblage of exile, and in so doing, opens what Benjamin perceived to be one of the most lacerating effects of pain of the twentieth century: the impossibility of experience.

What shall I do, singer and first-born, in a
world where the deepest black is grey,
and inspiration is kept in a thermos?
with all this immensity
in a measured world?
(Tsvetaeva, 1924)

What shall I do? Karavan responds, with great sensitivity to the qualities of things: create the assemblage of experience; carve out a space for our human response.

Chapter 3: THE BIRTH OF ICARUS

Naucrate, the Mother of Icarus

Icarus's mother is mentioned only once in Greek literature. Someone must have given birth to Icarus; someone must have cared for the infant well into childhood before he was able to go off alone with this father Daedalus.

Icarus's mother, Naucrate, is a female slave of King Minos in Knossos, Crete, the most powerful kingdom of Greece. The Athenian inventor-architect-sculptor Daedalus fell in love with Naucrate when he was at the court of King Minos commissioned to perform many projects in Crete. Naucrate bore Daedalus a son, Icarus. Nothing else is known about her.

The Greek scholar Apollodorus (1921) is the first to mention Icarus's mother in his compendium of myth, *The Library*: "On being apprized of the flight of Theseus and his company, Minos shut up the guilty Daedalus in the labyrinth, along with his son Icarus, who had been borne to Daedalus by Naucrate, a female slave of Minos" (p. 139). And a note in the same volume later states that "[t]he only writer besides Apollodorus who mentions the name of Icarus's mother is Tzetzes; he agrees with Apollodorus, whom he may have copied, in describing her as a slave woman named Naucrate" (p. 141).

The book shouldn't be a mystery. It shouldn't be this business of separating books from life instead of having them reflect life. Why don't we know more about Naucrate? Why didn't Daedalus build Naucrate wings to join them on their flight? How did Icarus come to leave his mother's side? How did Naucrate learn of her son's flight into the sea? What becomes of Naucrate? Her story is silent, but as the mother of Icarus, his DNA continues to exist within her body. Motherhood made Naucrate a multiplicity that

includes Icarus, and despite their physical separation, they remain rhizomatically entangled.

Song of Naucrete: The Child is Named Becoming

Part of becoming
 is the desire of not becoming,
 but remaining
 remaining in the known light.

Becoming is the paradox of stars
 that no longer exist
 chronologically –
 the distance is too great.
 I see the light and do not realize
 the star has died without my knowing,
 and I remain
 in a past light that is also the present.

In my desire to remain
 I am still becoming –
 this is unavoidable.

I have to move beyond my knowing,
 nothing more in the moment,
 I will never be ready
 there is no readiness
 no preparation,
 but to sustain a kind of monotony
 I think of endlessly
 Whitman's blade of grass:
 I believe a blade of grass
 is no less than the journey-work
 of the stars.

I let the smallest chaos,
 the fact that this light I see
 does not exist although it exists to me,
 I let the smallest chaos in
 into my habitat.
 I make a little home
 with the smallest chaos –

the sound of a body making a home
 with the smallest chaos.

The sound is imperceptible –
 cannot understand because
 we are making a home beyond our understanding.

Part of becoming
is the desire of not becoming
but remaining,

but there is no choosing.

Birth is unavoidable
once the child exists –
here the child is named *becoming*.

Birth may be a celebration or a funeral,
but there is no way around –
no other way
but birth
once the child is conceived.

The child is named becoming.

We must make a little home.

The Birth of Icarus

The child is named becoming. Icarus is flying through her body. The pain is startling and consuming. Her eyes are closed. “Can someone help me?” She’s calling out to anyone who can hear. The woman who had been organizing paperwork is now at her side.

Naucrete wanted to know what birth felt like; wanted to store this as a memory inside her body for future creative use:

a freight elevator cut loose.

She hears Daedalus growing anxious that the doctor cannot be found. The doctors were expecting a complicated delivery. She sometimes wondered what they planned to do in an emergency. The doctor promised he could have the baby out in three minutes, but “it won’t be pretty.”

She’s having a precipitous labor. Women in precipitous labor often deliver suddenly at home, or in the car on the way to the hospital. Labor is unpredictable. Precipitous labors even more so.

The thing about a precipitous labor is there is no way to prepare. The adjective *precipitous* means acting too quickly and without enough thought. The contractions are fast and without a break. No way to apply a birthing method – no time for an epidural or breathing technique. This kind of research has no premade methodology: precipitous, emergent.

During the birth of Icarus, Naucrete is becoming-intense. She is pure sensation. Becoming-intense is not becoming emotional. Not quite a feeling as we might consider “fear” or “joy”, but sensation, an existing in an altered vibration. A physical music of rhythm and resonance. She is aware that this could be her death or her baby’s death, but

all that exists is the warmth of a stranger's arm against her forehead, incredible pain, the melody of people's voices as specialists gather as spectators: there is no thinking. *Quickly and without enough thought.*

Sensation is the texture that gives rise to thought. Unlike accessing sensation as a form of knowing, becoming intense is an immersion in sensation. Sensation remains constructing the unconscious indefinitely. She is constructing the unconscious image of labor biologically, and she is travelling. She is present, feeling the freight elevator cut loose, but Naucrete is also elsewhere, inside the elevator falling. *I am the animal we hunt, and I go with you on the hunt.* She is following the sensation of this birth not knowing what is going to happen next, but also not aware or concerned with her not knowing.

Icarus and Naucrete are becoming animal together, constructing the unconscious figures of birth – and she sounds like a woman screaming, but this is really the sound of becoming separated from a part of herself forever, and her body knows this, like a rooster knows to crow. And the sound of a scream is just a vibration, a physical music, like an ocean wave, not a feeling. Her body resonated with the vibration of a scream, a tuning; perhaps, a calling out to the ego to return a new line of flight to the body.

She is screaming because she is becoming intense. She has crossed a border and is becoming animal. She is not a woman screaming as much as a wolf howling or a rooster crowing. There are not words that come, but rather a sharp exhaling of air through the mouth and throat. And because she's becoming intense, she has no emotions or conceptions as she knows them. Naucrete feels nothing for Icarus except sensation: the weight of his body on her chest, the sounds of his breath, and her body responds with care for him.

Chapter 4: The Flight of Icarus or A Curriculum of Leaping

“When you get there, there isn’t any there there.” Gertrude Stein

According to Brueghel
When Icarus fell
It was spring

a farmer was ploughing
his field
the whole pageantry

of the year was
awake tingling
with itself

sweating in the sun
that melted
the wings’ wax

unsignificantly
off the coast
there was

a splash quite unnoticed
this was
Icarus drowning

(Williams, 1960)

Life was tingling again in gentle beginnings as farmers plowed fields and windows pushed out as the year began to open again to the possibility of color and shape. The season was spring when Daedalus placed heavy wings of wax and feathers on his young son’s shoulders. Spring was a good time to explore other visions of the Labyrinth that imprisoned them. The days were longer and the airs warmer to navigate paths, and make a new home across the sea. How hard was it for Icarus to trust his father as they climbed to the top of the tremendous stone wall, to perch on a cliff overlooking the rocks below;

to trust his father despite his experience of gravity, feeling the weight of the wings pressing his heels further into the ground; to trust his father and leap out over the ocean?

Daedalus went first. Fanning his wings like giant billows, the lift and thrust of flight, leaping off the edge of the prison wall and soaring through blue spring air. Wings to open, to lift, is to fly. The image is beautiful: Icarus watching his father flying and brilliant. This remarkable possibility convinced young Icarus to leap out against his own known laws and reason. We now view them flying together. Two human forms soaring freely through the space that forms a clear rectangle between sea and sunlit sky.

“Remember,” Daedalus instructed, “do not fly too close to the sun, nor too close to the sea.” But what is too close, really? After all, weren’t they already defying the very rules Icarus had followed? And isn’t it true that this time Daedalus did not offer himself as example, no experience through which Icarus might better understand the consequences of melted wax or wet feathers? How else might Daedalus have instructed Icarus? How to allow for widening curiosity without flying too close to the sun? As art educators, how do we know the limits of our students’ bodies? What is our responsibility?

At the beginning of the Icarus myth, we see the image of Daedalus as teacher and Icarus as student. Daedalus has created a shelter of exposure by attaching the shelter of soft white wings to his student Icarus, while exposing Icarus, through Daedalus’ own example, to the possibility of flight. What is left for Icarus is to leap into his question toward what is currently unknown. Icarus’s question is not one of escaping the labyrinth, but of learning how view his labyrinth from new perspectives: to uncover the figures of sensation.



Figure 5. Brueghel, P. *The Fall of Icarus*

When Icarus fell it was spring. According to Brueghel, a farmer was plowing his field (see Figure 5). Icarus and Daedalus were almost home as they approached the coast. Icarus met the sky with widening curiosity observing how small known things became from this perspective. Not realizing he had flown too close to the sun, Icarus continued opening and closing his bare arms as the wax melted and feathers formed soft white clouds around his body. Did Daedalus watch? Daedalus did not swoop his own body down to catch his son; did not pull his own wings to his chest to gather speed and snatch his son from the ocean waves. Did Daedalus watch Icarus fall out of the sky, into the ocean, and drown? Or had he left Icarus alone? Where was Daedalus? What is the role of the teacher?

According to Brueghel,

unsignificantly

off the coast

there was
a splash quite unnoticed
this was
Icarus drowning (Williams, 1960).

The sun burned orange red. So close to sod green lawns it appeared the grass would soon catch fire. Was this moment imperceptible? Perhaps each farmer in his field was just keeping to himself about what he thought he saw. What would it mean to say you saw a flying boy fall from the clear blue sky? *Our measured world*. Each witness might have stood in silence knowing no one would believe him. Perhaps each could not believe his eyes and returned to working in the warming dirt, to following the same routine as every year before.

Icarus, is it easier to embrace your death as tragedy, then to question the circumstances? Why does it seem beautiful to believe that you were so wild with curiosity that the only possibility was death? Why does Draper (see Figure 6) find comfort in imagining you a gorgeous bird shot down for exploring too far, wings almost forming handcuffs, as your dead body is tended by sirens? How do we even know you drown?



Figure 6. Draper, 1898, *The Lament for Icarus*, oil on canvas

Icarus, perhaps you dove into the ocean and emerged floating and kicking your way towards shore, or towards a small fishing boat that gladly helped you aboard? How do we know Daedalus didn't forget to latch the final straps to your shoulders? What if this is an accident? What if we just don't know what happens to you, Icarus?

In astronomical terms, the “error box” refers to a quadrilateral area of the sky whose dimensions correspond to the uncertainty of a measured position inside it. Icarus and Daedalus were flying inside this “error box”. Uncertainty surrounds their measured positions. Icarus was immensity. Icarus was becoming intense. He was following sensation into the unknown, no longer conceptualizing space and time. He was becoming bird. Becoming raptor. His screeching was the sound of hawk ascending, not a boy

burning. His eyes surveyed the colored shapes far below. Everything becomes virtual: color, form, shape, heat, texture, vibration, speed. Becoming intense makes immanent Deleuze|Guattari's concept of the sensation.

The popular moral of the myth of Icarus is to take the middle ground. Do not fly too close to the sun, nor too close to the sea. Avoid extremes. Live within your limits. Listen to your teacher. But what if this reading of the myth is reimagined? Perhaps the middle ground isn't the life balance we need. Some limits are oppressive. How do we begin to live with curiosity and the unknown? How do we practice the limit act? How do we allow for sensation in art education? Inside the error box, inside this space of wandering, where do boundaries dissolve into Julia Kristeva's notion of the abject, and where do they become Maxine Greene's awakenings?

Abjection is a human reaction to a threatened breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of the distinction between self and other or self and object. The abject is associated with the eruption of the real into our lives. This eruption of the real occurs in both abjection and Maxine Greene's concept of "awakening". This eruption of the real occurs in the aesthetic dimension of sensation, which, while coexistent with perception, remains separate. The concept of abjection is similar to Deleuzian sensation as both consider the mutual limit of the subject and object, a place where these two aspects become indistinguishable. Greene's concept of awakening uses the opening of this aesthetic dimension to move people to hear, feel, see in new and often unexpected ways in order to build a more meaningful democracy. While both abjection and awakening involve a student's opening of the virtual real through the figures of sensation, the outcomes are significantly different.

Why did Icarus's curiosity lead to his decent into the sea? What does this mean for art education?

1. Did Icarus dive into Julia Kristeva's notion of the abject?
2. Did Icarus leap too soon: not creating wings for himself / using another's form?
3. Was this an issue of narcissism: impetuosity, youth, disobedience, doesn't understand death and the nature of risk?
4. Did Icarus wake in the process of flight to discover a desire for leaping towards wilderness?

Dani Karavan's artwork *Passages* offers us a form to further think about these questions. Walter Benjamin, 48 years old, older than Icarus—attempted to escape from the confines of a country controlled by Hitler's Nazis. Portbou, a French-Spanish border town in the Pyrenees, marks the moment his flight neared the sun. The details are sketchy. Did Icarus fly into the sun, or did Daedalus forget to latch his wings? Does it matter? Neither Benjamin nor Icarus could escape the labyrinth. Escape is fantasy. To escape one labyrinth is to enter another labyrinth. The possibility that was open to both Icarus and Benjamin was to reimagine the labyrinth: an opportunity for creative revision.

Israeli artist Dani Karavan's memorial *Passages* to Benjamin in Portbou, Spain takes advantage of this creative revision offering a haunting response through which to consider connections between the flight of Walter Benjamin and the myth of Icarus. Jutting out above the Mediterranean Sea, *Passages* descends over the edge of a cliff and into the sea. Standing at the top of the staircase, we are Icarus preparing to leap. We are Icarus falling as we descend the stairs. Rebecca Solnit (2001) in her work discussing the history of walking, describes walking as a process of falling and catching yourself. With

each step, the body is unbalanced, and catches itself with the next step. The decent down the passage to the sea requires the viewer to walk down the steps: to continually fall and catch her/himself over and over.

Passages is both elegant and terrifying. Swallowing the viewer in steel and acting as a theater focusing vision on the crashing waves of the Mediterranean, *Passages* is the flight of Icarus: below, the sea is a wilderness.

Within the passage of this staircase is a glass door that never opens; a glass panel preventing further passage. The panel is transparent and the following words are etched into the glass: “It is more arduous to honor the memory of the nameless than that of the renowned. Historical construction is devoted to the memory of the nameless.” These words are taken from a preparatory note for *Über den Begriff der Geschichte* where Benjamin describes how historicism depends on recounting the antics of glorious heroes of history in monumental and epic form, and is in no position to say anything about the ‘nameless’. Benjamin believed that a linear history oppressed the masses. *Passages* functions as a curriculum not only of Walter Benjamin’s life work, but of all the nameless border crossers who perished here. Not the linear syllabus with clearly defined objectives, but the rhizome tangling borderlands and cypress trees and visitors and corten steel.

Kristeva’s concept of the abject finds a variation in form through Karavan’s *Passages* (Icarus’s journey, Benjamin’s exile). The abject is often visualized as three concentric circles (see Figure 7):

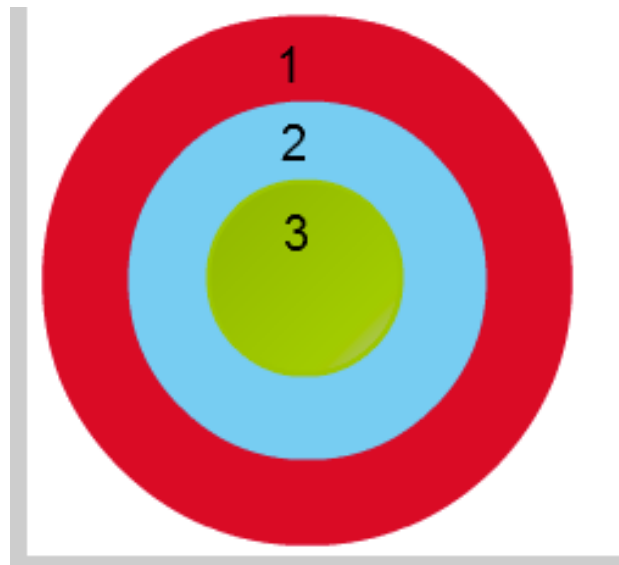


Figure 7. E. Dubin (2016). Visual Depiction of Kristeva's Concept of the *Abject*

1. The outermost circle, surrounding everything, is the “abject”/the nonexistent
2. The middle circle represents the “other”/the outside
3. The center, the inner circle, represent the “I”/the inside subject

The form of Figure 7 is that of a stone dropped in a pool of water—almost the spiraling pattern of a labyrinth, only the circles of this depiction of the abject are discrete, with no apparent point of entry between them. Concentric circles are a waveform that requires the center to be “in motion” in order to propagate the waves.

In Karavan's *Passages*, the viewer/participant represents the inside subject, the “I”. This is the figure in motion within the memorial. The structure itself, the corten steel enclosure is the middle circle representing the other/the outside. The abject/the nonexistent is the outermost circle seen through the glass beyond the walls: water, waves, whirlpools.

To consider this form in terms of the memorial *Passages*, we may wish to create

a second visual depiction of the abject. Concentric circles are waves propagating outward from a center. The sine wave offers a different perspective of the abject (see Figure 8).

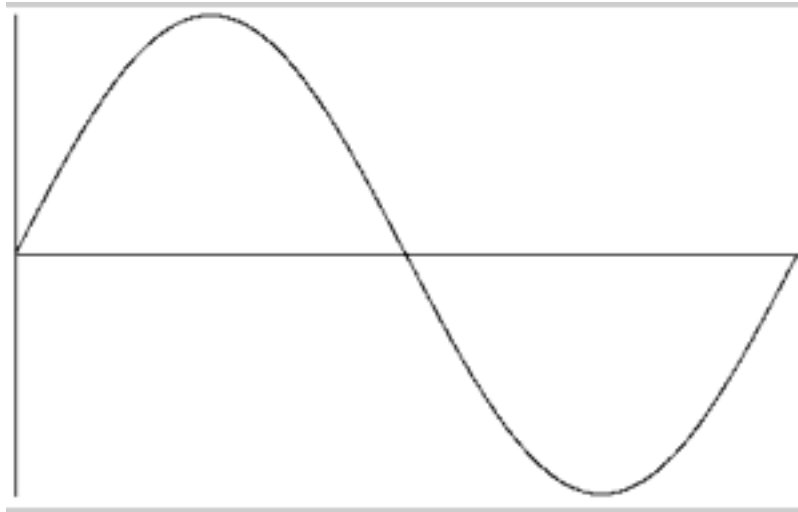


Figure 8. E. Dubin (2016). Sine Wave. Alternative Visual Depiction of Kristeva's
Concept of the Abject

Figure 8 is also a documentation of Icarus's flight. In this visualization, there are two significant implications for the inside subject in regard to the abject.

First, the other does not function as a circle holding the inside subject. Instead, the other is a transparent door located at the end of the subject's vision. The door does not open, and serves to protect the subject at that point where the open space of the abject would overwhelm him/her. Second, the subject is surrounded by the abject, and the fact the staircase/waveform of this journey offers the possibility of traveling outward beyond the other. The corridor that focuses sight on the other makes it not possible for the subject to see the abject except through the shelter of exposure.

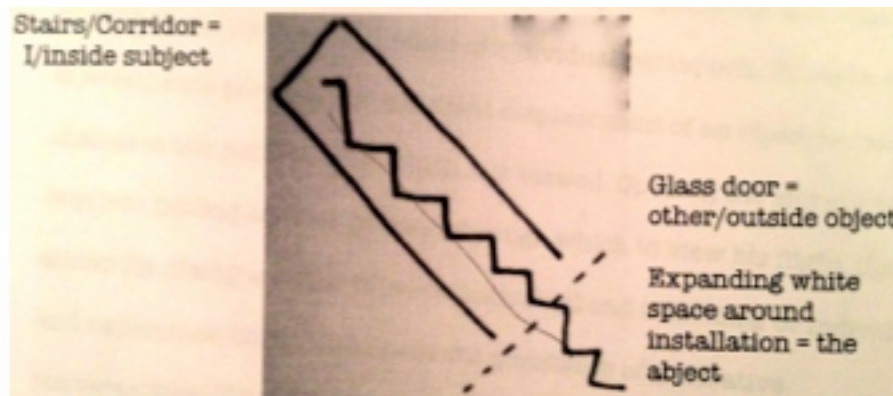


Figure 9. E. Dubin (2016). Translating Kristeva's Abject into Karavan's *Passages*

Stairs/Corridor=I/inside subject

Glass Door = Other/outside subject

Expanding white space around installation = abject

What Karavan's *Passages* teaches us about abjection, is seen when we compare figure 9 to the flight of Icarus and the passage of Benjamin. Both Icarus and Benjamin embodied the I/inside subject. They were both figures of motion. Both Icarus and Benjamin were able to perceive, in their flight, the abject/the nonexistent. However, unlike Karavan's creative revision, Benjamin's and Icarus's labyrinths lacked an other/ an outside subject that could function as a shelter. Karavan gives us a glass panel to both shelter and expose us to the abjection of exile. This shelter transforms the experience into one of awakening rather than one of abjection. The "I" can experience the sensation of the nonexistent without fixing this space. The shelter allows for reflection that provides the space necessary for sensation to turn to image and then to creative production. Without the shelter, the "I" physically falls into the abject, with no space to contain the falling body, there is no place for the unconscious to reflect in the world: perception obscures sensation. No way to access creative production. The body loses itself to this space when there is no shelter as we witness in the flight of Icarus and Benjamin.

To resist closure is to open the possible by stepping out and attempting to re-envision the labyrinth walls of individual perception. To resist closure is to embrace parallax: the apparent displacement of an object caused by a change in the position from which it is viewed. Opening the story of Icarus requires finding another position through which to view his flight. Opening allows for dialogue either between individual and individual or individual and experience/object that opens the possibility of generative conversations.

To resist closure may be to introduce the “foreign” into a homogenous system—something whose main relation to the system is its ability to enter physical space and alter the daily mechanics/motions. Daedalus resisted the closure of the labyrinth by inventing wings and using them to open the possibility of space—to move within the labyrinth instead of being imprisoned by his horizontal movement within its walls. Offering a pair of these wings to Icarus allowed his son the opportunity to also resist the closure of this space. The idea this opportunity could be transferred to another who could not invent wings, that the inspirational data produced by Daedalus could be transferred to his son Icarus, and allow them both to experience the knowledge of moving differently within the labyrinth, is important when considering education.

Daedalus functioned as a teacher. The teacher’s engagement with the subject, Daedalus’ continued learning and invention, opened inspirational data for the student. If Daedalus had not pursued wings, his student [son] could not have experienced flight. Watching his father/teacher Icarus saw that flight was possible. He experienced sensation: the aesthetic quality of wings on air shining and fresh with light and breeze, and this data led him to leap towards the unknown. Inspirational data led him to leap

beyond the limits of his beliefs towards a previously unimagined possibility. The teacher whose own form of learning resists closure can offer this experimental curriculum to the student. A teacher who understands learning through sensation has an opportunity to perform this inspirational data for the student. The process of coming to this knowledge is dialogic. The student observes, and asks often asks unconscious questions, and may then knowingly and unknowingly begin to test the limits of their own conceptions.

What does it mean to teach towards openings? Many things open and close. Practically, a window resists closure when any object that is sufficiently dense and tall is placed between the frame and the sill. A door resists closure when an object is wedged into any part of the frame. More delicate objects, like books, can resist closure when almost anything wider than the page is inserted into the text—delicate objects are often changed by this resistance in that their form will be permanently altered, will permanently remember that which caused the resistance. The forms of Benjamin and Icarus were permanently altered by their resistance to closure.

To introduce the foreign into a homogenous system can have many consequences. Some things need to close in order to survive. Flowers respond to temperature and the daily rhythm of light. The crocus and the morning glory open as temperature increases during the day and then close as the day gets cooler. The four-o'clock closes in the morning and opens again late in the afternoon. The moonflower and the night-blooming cereus stay open at dusk and close their blossoms during the day. To resist this closure, to place the foreign into this mechanism, could kill the flower. There is a need for systems to close in order to conserve energy, in order to open again to experience. We need to

look carefully at our curricula to see that they provide shelters for exposure, and moments for both opening and closing.

How we translate an experience that resists closure is important. Within the context of contemporary translation theory, we see this literally played out in texts brought from one language to another, a similar process can be applied to experiences that are foreign: we may either take the experience and translate it into a record that is transparent and easily assimilated within the dominant culture, or we may take the experience and leave its foreignness in tact so that it remains difficult to summarize within our dominant culture. To reach a more open territory and surmount the customary views of the culture, we have to allow room for unarticulated and silent spaces in our classrooms. We have to allow for unconscious questions and sensation to come to image.

Still, silent spaces are suspect. Sylvia Kind (2008) writes that “[o]ne of the greatest struggles in art programs is for teachers to take an attitude of waiting and listening...without knowing exactly what they are waiting and listening for; to not know and give attention to the not knowing and to wait for something to present itself.... All I can say to my students is trust me. It will happen” (p. 173). This waiting and listening requires accepting silence in the classroom. In American culture, silence is suspect. Hongyu Wang (2006) argues “in order to break silence, silence needs to be nurtured in the classroom for teacher and student to cultivate a sense of critical reflection and contemplation as they listen to the inner voices of the self and encounter “difficult knowledge” (Wang, 2006, p. 114).

Silence, sound of a lull-a-by
rocking the outlines of the measured

spilling out over the rim
 of every container
 like veins opened into dark earth
 un-restorable and hot
 a commitment
 to improvisation
 to the unknown what comes next.

Did Icarus wake to discover a desire for leaping towards wilderness? Towards the unknown what comes next? Perhaps, in his leaping, Icarus experienced unusual sensitivity to the qualities of things. Icarus experienced the figures of sensation. He was becoming intense. John Dewey (2005), in defining the artist suggests “[a]n artist, in comparison with his fellows, is one who is not only especially gifted in powers of execution but in unusual sensitivity to the qualities of things. This sensitivity also directs his doings and makings” (p. 51). It is not only an individual’s ability to manipulate materials, but her attunement to the “qualities of things” that makes her an artist—a kind of attention that moves one beyond habit and routine to “[break] open a dimension in which human beings, nature, and things no longer stand under the law of the established reality principle...The encounter with truth of art happens in the estranging language and images which make perceptible, visible, and audible that which is no longer, on not yet, perceived, said, and heard in everyday life (Greene quoting Marcuse, 1995, p. 31).

No longer fearing flight, Icarus met the sky with widening curiosity. He was gliding weightless, observing how small the things he had known became from this

perspective. His experience of flight was opening the sounds and images of what was not audible and visible in everyday life.

After leaping, Icarus saw the borders of the labyrinth which had confined him as small, solitary shapes among the larger puzzle of land formations: green rectangles, brown squares, dots of cottages, specks of farmers in their geographic squares. The sky was a borderland, a temporary passage, a bridge between desire and firm land.

To leave the passage of air for sea water

To strike the surface with the force of a body falling

The routine of waves quickly erases the sine of the splash

The concentric circle replaced by the horizon line

To fall into the sea, the body feels pain on immersion. The force of water hitting the skin, the question of the water becomes an interrogation: why are you here? And the shock of the cold – both physical sensations as Icarus dove down into the deep – a thousand miles down to the sea bed.

The sea is a wilderness.

What happened to Icarus after leaping may be what Maxine Greene refers to as “awakening” what John Dewey refers to as the “aesthetic”, what Paulo Freire refers to as “concientization”, what Deleuze refers to as “becoming”. Icarus, awakening, embarks on a question -- a route of experience toward the *I don't know what*. The work is a dialogue with the currently unknown; a process of attentive responding to a route that remains partially obscured. A road made by walking.

The poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1998) explores awakening in the poem *A Walk*:

Already my eyes touch the sunlit hill
far ahead of the road I have just begun.

So we are grasped by what we cannot grasp;
we see its light, even from a distance –

and it changes us, even if we do not reach it,
into something else, which, hardly sensing it,
we already are;

a gesture seems to wave us on,
answering our own wave...
but what we feel is the wind in our faces.

This process of being *grasped by what we cannot grasp* allows the artist (and later the viewer) to “enter, through imagination and the emotions they evoke, into other forms of relationship and participation than our own” (Dewey, 2005, p. 347). As the artist lives this question in her/his daily routine, images, sounds, experiences based in the everyday begin to create a route that allows for a new dimension of perception by concentrating and enlarging experience.

This process of art is an everyday experience requiring sustained attention. The inquiry is informed by this experience of the everyday as well as what is “discovered in the course of expressive action” [process] (Eisner, 2004, p. 23). This discovery can be a testimony to the emerging art making process.

Chapter 5: BABY BLUES

Colic Poem (Repeat for Three Months)

Time	Baby One (22 months old)	Baby Two (3 weeks old)
12am	asleep	asleep
1am	wakes crying	wakes / eats / change diaper
2am	asleep	asleep
3am	asleep	wakes / eats
4am	asleep	asleep
5am	asleep	wakes / eats / change diaper
6am	wakes for the day	asleep
7am	awake / change diaper	awake / eats / change diaper
8am	awake / eats	cries
9am	awake	cries
10am	awake / change diaper	awake
11am	awake / eats	awake / eats / change diaper
12pm	asleep	asleep
1pm	asleep	asleep
2pm	asleep	awake / change diaper / eats
3pm	awake / eats / change diaper asleep	
4pm	awake	cries
5pm	awake	cries
6pm	awake eats / change diaper	cries
7pm	awake	cries
8pm	awake	cries
9pm	awake / change diaper	cries
10pm	asleep	cries
11pm	cries	cries
12am	asleep	asleep

Comfort You

You are newly born, and I, your mother, cannot comfort you. You cry all night long. I try to hold you, I wrap you tight to my body and dance as I sing to you, but you cry. Nothing stops your crying. Your face is red, and your tiny hands are in fists. You've never smiled at me. You cry. The books say colic is a myth. The books say this is your fourth trimester and if whisper *shhh* loudly and prolonged in your ear, wrapping your baby blue swaddle tight, and rocking you back and forth on your side as if you are not yet born, you will be happy. Nothing works. I stand by the small window in our shared bedroom and rock you in my arms. You cry for three months, and I spend every day trying to comfort you – trying to welcome you into this world.

Baby Blues

The doctor says I have the baby blues. When he says these words to me, I think of the sky in spring. Baby blue with soft white clouds. I imagine lying down in a field and looking at the sky. I have the baby blues. I imagine how Icarus and I may lay down in a field someday, and look up at the sky. We will talk about the sky and the clouds, we will look up at the sun and feel the heat of this old star in our eyes. The blanket swaddling Icarus is baby blue. Soft. Warm. The color is a sensation of almost summer, but not yet. More the color of a forgetting. A forgetting that summer is coming. The baby blues. I go to my small shelf, and pull a book given to me by Daedalus: *On Being Blue* by William Gass (2014):

Of the colors, blue and green have the greatest emotional range. Sad reds and melancholy yellows are difficult to turn up. Among the ancient elements, blue occurs everywhere: in ice and water, in the flame as purely as in the flower, overhead and inside caves, covering fruit and oozing out of clay. Although green enlivens the earth and mixes in the ocean, and we find it, copperish, in fire; green air, green skies, are rare. Gray and brown are widely distributed, but there are no joyful swatches of either, or any of exuberant black, sullen pink, or acquiescent orange. Blue is therefore most suitable as the color of interior life. Whether slick light sharp high bright thin quick sour new and cool or low deep sweet dark soft slow smooth heavy old and warm: blue moves easily among them all, and all profoundly qualify our states of feeling. (p. 112)

I have the baby blues.

My interior life has been painted the color of an infant leaving.

My interior life has been painted the color of departure: the fragments of cocoon after the butterfly emerges.

Baby blue is the color of my forgetting.

Icarus is beautiful. Icarus fixes me in his beautiful need for almost four years. I cannot wander. I am a closed form. Words do not curl around me. *When I cannot see words curling like rings of smoke around me I am in darkness—I am nothing.* Baby blues.

Chapter 6: WE MAKE THE ROAD BY WALKING

OR THE POETICS OF THE RHIZOME

The French/Spanish Pyrenean borderlands witnessed the passage of tens of thousands of people fleeing totalitarian barbarism. Running from the same brutality, about one year before Walter Benjamin, Spanish Republican poet Antonio Machado embarked on what would be his final passage across the Pyrenees. Four days before Franco entered Barcelona, Machado took the train across this difficult path to Collioure, France, a small coastal town about 30 km north of Port Bou, Spain. Taken from Machado's poem *CLVI: Passages*, Machado (2004) writes:

Between chalk hills and grey crags

the train eats the steel trail.

The row of gleaming windows

hold a twin cameo profile

repeated through the silver glass.

Who is it that has pierced time's heart? (§5)

Had Machado been able to continue further, he could have received the medical care he needed. Instead, in a room on the first floor of the Hotel Bournol-Quintana, at sunset on Ash Wednesday, February 22, 1939, Machado died of pneumonia.

Like Walter Benjamin, Antonio Machado was also an exile. His flight was from the Spanish Civil War. His work quoted here, like both Benjamin's and Karavan's, is titled *Passages*. This section of the poem remembers the train that cut through this borderland; the same train Benjamin tried to board and was denied passage. The same train Karavan heard in the distance when he knew where he would make his installation.

The same train that accidentally took me into Port Bou when I was heading for Barcelona. Machado died in a foreign hotel room only 30 km from the foreign hotel room where Benjamin took his own life.

To witness these two exiles, Benjamin and Machado, come together by “accident” in the borderland of this passage moves me. Their lives are not the text but run parallel to the text. What begins to form a node at this point is the significant experience of the exile and the role the arts can play to move us towards openings. The significance of this for art education is embodied in the poetics of the rhizome.

Deleuze scholar, Felicity Coleman (2005), writes “[i]n a world that builds structures from economic circuits of difference and desire, Deleuze responds by reconsidering how bodies are constructed. He and Guattari argue that such structures constrain creativity and position things and people into regulatory orders.... Rhizomatic formations can serve to overcome, overturn and transform structures of rigid, fixed or binary thought and judgment” (p. 233). The rhizome offers an open system of thought through which new ideas and aggregate connections are possible through its lines of becoming: “The rhizome is any network of things brought into contact with one another, functioning as an assemblage machine for new affects, new concepts, new bodies, new thoughts; the rhizomatic network is a mapping of the forces that move and/or immobilise bodies” (Colman, 2005, p. 233).

Where Walter Benjamin had found one of the lacerating effects of pain of the 20th century, the impossibility of experience, Deleuze|Guattari reimagine a new system of response not built on regulatory orders and rigid systems of thought, but an open system of becoming. The rhizome maps the forces, concepts, bodies of our daily assemblage of

experience.

The phrase “the road is made by walking” is taken from Machado’s (1912) “Proverbios y cantares” in his book *Campos de Castilla*: “The road is made by walking”:

Wanderer, your footsteps are
the road, and nothing more;
wanderer, there is no road,
the road is made by walking.

By walking one makes the road,
and upon glancing behind
one sees the path that never
will be trod again.

Wanderer, there is no road—
Only wakes upon the sea.

The writer/reader of a rhizomatic text is a wanderer. There is no fixed path. We must begin and by beginning we begin to make the path. The book is made as we make the book: as both reader and writer. The work starts. And although there are issues that need clarification, and practical considerations, these do not need to be known at the beginning: *we make the road by walking*.

The word “essay” derives from the French infinitive “essayer” meaning “to try” or “to attempt”. In English, essay first meant “the action or process of trying or testing”, and this is still an alternative meaning. In the mid-16th century, Michel de Montaigne was the first author to describe his work as essays (OED, 2013, “essay”); he used the term to characterize these as attempts to put his thoughts into writing.

Horton and Freire (1990), in *We Make the Road by Walking*, the book they composed through dialogue, describe this process of coming to knowledge over time.

Freire (1990) considers:

“knowledge always is becoming. That is, if the act of knowing has historicity, then today's knowledge about something is not necessarily the same tomorrow. Knowledge is changed to the extent that reality also moves and changes. Then theory also does the same. It's not something stabilized, immobilized” (p. 101).

In this sense of knowledge as becoming, or to use Elizabeth Ellsworth's term *learning in the making*, as I return to passages in this text, my knowledge about the work may change because the experience has moved and changed with me. Learning is not a fixed entity, but a process always in the making – always becoming.

Horton (1990) suggests that a book “shouldn't be a mystery. It shouldn't be this business of separating books from life instead of having them reflect life” (p. 8). If a book, or an essay, is to reflect life, then a book has contradictions. Paulo Freire and Miles Horton (1990) discuss their experience of how to begin writing a book that reflects life:

Paulo: “I think that even though we need to have some outline, *I am sure that we make the road by walking*. It has to do with [...] this experience here. You're saying that in order to start, it should be necessary to start.

Myles: I've never figured out any other way to start.

Paulo: The question for me is how is it possible for us, in the process of making the road, to be clear and to clarify our *own* making of the road. That is, then, to clarify some theoretical issues about education in the big vision of education. It's

necessary. But I am not worried not to have now the list of these issues because I think that they will come out of the conversation. (pp. 6-8)

Wandering as dialogue allows for rhizomatic connections to expose new ideas. Freire is suggesting that the theoretical issues he hopes to confront are immanent in this dialogue. A rhizomatic path is not linear but full of roots and nodes and becoming in multiple directions at the same time. A rhizomatic text begins in the middle and has no beginning or end. *You're saying that in order to start, it should be necessary to start.* But to start does not mean to find a beginning as in a "once upon a time". There is no absolute beginning. In fact, in this essay, as I return to the writing, new beginnings keep emerging and pushing the writing that was the beginning further and further into the interior of the text. *A rhizomatic text begins in the middle.* We start where the writer finds him/herself amongst the flow of ideas. This does not mean the writer creates an under drawing of the text, and then begins in the space deemed the middle. Rather, the experimental poem, starts where it starts and then continues to grow out of itself in multiple directions. The life of the text informs the necessity of the movement. *He can go by no track other than the one the poem under hand declares, for itself.*

Deleuze| Guattari (2004) write that there "is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made" (p. 4). Deleuze|Guattari (2004) continue to discuss the formation of the book and suggest the book is unattributable because of its multiplicity:

A book has neither object nor subject; it is made of variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds. To attribute the book to a subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the exteriority of their relations... In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories: but

also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification...A book is an assemblage of this kind and as such is unattributable. It is a multiplicity –...There is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made...A book itself is a little machine...Writing has nothing to do with signifying. It has to do with surveying, mapping, even realms that are yet to come (pp. 3-5).

This kind of text is built on sensation. Sensation, a form of preconception, a texture for thought, begins to form the unconscious.

The writer-the artist³

the ones who begin without knowing the ending

the ones who do not trace stories onto paper

but who, by writing-drawing begin to map becomings

those who conceive on the paper

those whose children are not born and then photographed

but rather whose children are born in the photograph

not the children we write about

but the children whose existence is the writing

and as we write, we are becoming

the strange sounds we are following.

³ “If the writer is a sorcerer, writing is a becoming, writing is traversed by strange becomings that are not becomings-writer, but becomings-rat, becomings-insect, becomings-wolf, etc. (Deleuze, date, p. 240).

Deleuze|Guattari suggest that a book is unattributable. A book does not belong to a particular author, place, or time. Through citation, we attempt to make a book attributable. Citation makes it possible for us to believe that words belong to certain published authors: our teachers are, perhaps, among the most overlooked in this strategy. *A book shouldn't be a mystery. It shouldn't be this business of separating books from life instead of having them reflect life.* This is part of the contradiction of the book.

Traditionally, we attribute certain words and ideas to other individuals, and pretend the rest of the words unfold seamlessly from an author. Actually, the words are unfolding from multiple associations the author has taken in through his/her lifetime. The author uses these associations to map the flow of a territory. The term “author” does not correspond to a singular individual, but to all the forces at play within the flow of a book. Deleuze|Guattari do not distinguish between subject and object. An author is a multiplicity, and the process of writing through this multiplicity makes immanent a territory from the chaos under consideration.

Deleuze|Guattari (2004) suggest “[a] book itself is a little machine.” What do Deleuze|Guattari mean by machine? This is a term that occurs in many forms throughout their work: abstract machine, desiring machine, war machine, the machinic, and so on. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze|Guattari (2004) write “[a] machine may be defined as a system of interruptions or breaks” (p. 36). Through their interruptions, machines offer us an illusion that there are beginnings and endings to flows, but the interruptions simply reimagine the flow, the flow never stops. A book is therefore a machine as it gives an illusion of production and consumption: an appearance that a book begins and a book ends, but really a book is part of a flow that is already existing and continues to exist after the

publication: citation machine...grammar machine...sentence machine...bibliographic machine...title machine...paragraph machine...chapter machine...publication machine. “Writing has nothing to do with signifying. It has to do with surveying, mapping, even realms that are yet to come” (p. 5). Writing, Deleuze| Guattari are suggesting, does not have to do with representation, is not about representing an author’s ideas, but rather writing is a process of *mapping even realms yet to come*. Realms yet to come exist as sensation until one begins to map the image of the territory. This is one of the contributions of arts based research. The research itself becomes an emergent mapping, through writing, of realms yet to come.

Early on in the writing, when it became clear the text was going to follow a method of rhizomatic cartography, I realized, as Deleuze|Guattari (2004) write, “to attain the multiple, one must have a method that effectively constructs it; no typographical cleverness, no lexical agility, no blending or creation of words, no syntactical boldness, can substitute for it” (p. 22).

Like the pedagogy being articulated in this essay, *no typographical cleverness, no lexical agility, no blending or creation of words, no syntactical boldness, can substitute for it*. The multiple, the rhizomatic assemblage, the movement that opens forms to new possibilities of thought grows out of close attention to, and access to the multiplicity of daily experience: the writer opens thought to include the autobiographical, the academic, the overheard, popular and scholarly texts (books, images, cinema, music, etc.), all forms of experience from the mundane to the awakening. If these forms remain in a state of pre-conception, sensation, the writing process maps the unknown territory of these experiences as image leading the reader/writer to the possibility of creative discovery.

The poetics of the rhizome asks each person to start where they are. Freire (2000) says:

To me, it's essential that you start where people are. But if you're going to start where they are and they don't change, then there's no point in starting because you're not going anywhere. So while I insist on starting where people are, that's the only place they could start. I can start somewhere else. I can start where I am, but they've got to start where they are. But then if you don't have some vision of what ought to be or what they can become, then you have no way of contributing anything to the process. Your theory determines what you want to do in terms of helping people grow. So it's extremely important that you have a theory about it that helps you decide" (p. 99-100).

We each need to start from where we are. For some this may be quickly walking this essay as familiar ground; for others this may standing at the introduction of this essay in frustration of academic discourse and tangles of nonlinear ideas that do not represent conventional texts...taking a few steps, and walking back out. I am not sure I agree with Freire that those who will not change might as well not start. I think of how Hélène Cixous (1994) writes that a text beams at us even from a shelf. Even texts we are not engaging with in a conventional way (by picking up and reading from introduction to conclusion) are still having a conversation with us. When a text becomes part of a person's associations, how will we know where it will show up again in their life, and in what form?

Freire (2000) writes that it is not for the teacher to have the experience for the student. The poetics of the rhizome asks the writer to have the experience for her/himself

and the rest will have to meet the text where they are and have the experience that they are to have.⁴ This means that the text is a place of possibility. What becomes of the possibility is uncertain.

Poet, Robert Duncan (1968) describes “composition by field” in his book *Opening of the Field* as a process of allowing words to curl around us:

The artist, after Dante's poetics, works with all parts of the poem as *polysemous*, taking each thing of the composition as generative of meaning, a response to and a contribution to the building form . . . So the artist of abundancies delites in

⁴ I am paraphrasing both Cixous and Freire here because I am remembering this. Some parts of books become a part of us and are recalled without page numbers and citations. This makes me think about the term *plagiarism*. In the smallest sense, plagiarism is a poor work ethic and the performance of dishonesty in the hope of having someone else's words stand in for your own. But perhaps in a grander sense, plagiarism is an anecdote to loneliness. I have taken all these words and texts into myself. They become a part of my inner life so that I am not alone inside myself. When I recall Cixous or Freire from my internal conversations, it is not for the world to see their ideas as my own; rather, the words keep me company. It is for myself, and then I share them again in written composition as one might share tea with a friend. We take words and images into our bodies and they become part of internal life, and they change because they are within us, and they can change how we see and how we experience the world and ourselves. At the moment, I am citing the source the first time another's words are used. After that, I put the words in italics with no citation. The words belong to the essay at that point, and the citation makes them sound clumsy. The sound of the essay is important to the meaning.

puns, interlocking and separating figures, plays of things missing or things appearing *out of order* (p. ix).

In field composition, what constitutes the most important part of the text (thesis, supporting evidence, questions raised) is no longer clear. All elements of a text have can be equally active as events. These “events” move across disciplinary boundaries. The page becomes a field, a map, a process of cartography, and each event has the potential to serve as an opening in the field. As well, when considering the field, the spatial relationship of objects to each other becomes important. Like a map, marks are read and understood in their relation to each other.

To understand the theory behind the poetics of the rhizome, I want to consider the idea of composition by field, and the idea of a poem as a field of action, that dates to mid-20th century poetics, and to the poets who gathered around the experimental Black Mountain College in North Carolina. Charles Olson, Robert Duncan, and Denise Levertov were some of the poets working towards this new understanding of poetry. These poets were later canonized as the Black Mountain Poets.

Composition by field opposed the traditional idea of fixed poetic forms with preordained lines and meters, and instead worked towards a conceptualization of a poem as an open field where the breath was the measure of the line, and the heartbeat was the base for the rhythm – breath and rhythm become a propulsive force.

Charles Olson (1950), in his essay *Projective Verse*, an essay that became a manifesto to the avant-garde Black Mountain poets, and came to be an alternative term for the concept of composition by field, writes, “[f]rom the moment he ventures into FIELD COMPOSITION—puts himself in the open—he can go by no track other than the

one the poem under hand declares, for itself.” Without the path the text is creating – there is no poem. Inasmuch as the writer is having an experience through the making of a poem, the writer can exist only to the extent the words curl around him/her. Otherwise, there is only darkness/nothing. *Baby blues*. There is no track other than the one the poem under hand declares: *Wanderer, your footsteps are the road, and nothing more; wanderer, there is no road, the road is made by walking.*

To understand the poetics of rhizomatic cartography, it is useful to make a comparison between projective verse and the sonnet. Historically, poems began with a selected form such as a sestina, sonnet, lyric, rondel where the line/the breath and the rhythm/the heartbeat are predetermined. In closed or fixed forms, the line and meter are preordained.

The sonnet has three main forms: Italian/Petrarchan sonnet, Spenserian sonnet, English/Shakespearean sonnet. Originating in different European countries with different poets (Petrarch, Spenser, Shakespeare), each sonnet form contains 14 lines and physically resembles the shape of a small fist on the page. Each sonnet form in English also utilizes the basic meter of iambic pentameter that establishes the rhythm of the line: “pent” means five, so iambic pentameter means five iambs per meter/line (an iamb is one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed syllable such as “be-fore”). Iambic pentameter is often used in English poetry as this is the rhythm thought to best replicate the pattern of English speech. While each sonnet form shares those similarities, the forms perform different rhyme schemes. The Petrarchan sonnet, for example, is divided into two sections: the octave and the sestet. The octave is eight lines with the rhyme pattern: abbaabbba. The sestet is six lines and has either two or three rhyming sounds arranged in

a variety of ways: cdcdcd or cddcdc or cdecde or cdecde or cdeedc. A change in rhyme traditionally represents a change in subject matter. The Spenserian sonnet sets up four line groups through the rhyme pattern representing four different ideas. However, the overlapping of the rhyme separated by a final couplet pulls the lines into a single idea: ababbcbccdcdee. The Shakespearean sonnet is similar in rhyme: ababedcdefefgg. Additionally, each form differs on where the volta or “the turn” occurs. A volta is a rhetorical shift or dramatic turn in thought and/or emotion in the sonnet. Poets play with the volta often setting up the turn with suggestive language “but” or “yet”, but placing the real turn further into the body of the poem. The traditional subject matter of a sonnet is romantic or sexual love.

A poet of closed verse might choose to write a Shakespearean sonnet if they were considering an idea related to romantic love. The poet would know s/he was embarking on a 14-line poem, using iambic pentameter, with a rhyme scheme of ababedcdefefgg.

On the other hand, a poet using field composition, “[f]rom the moment he ventures into FIELD COMPOSITION—puts himself in the open—he can go by no track other than the one the poem under hand declares, for itself. (para.),” begins where he/she begins. *You’re saying that in order to start, it should be necessary to start. I’ve never figured out any other way to start.* The line, the subject, the rhythm is determined by the path the poem walks.

The idea that form and content are not binaries but rather rhizomatic entanglements growing up from and out of each other is at the heart of this poetics. Olson is suggesting that form is immanent in the process of composition. Form is not fixed, but rather is becoming as the poem is becoming.

In *Seriality and the Contemporary Long Poem*, poetics scholar Joseph Conte (1992) makes a distinction between two kinds of long poems: the modern epic, and the series. The epic must express a “complete world view...[a] breadth of mental capaciousness” (§2)” the modern epic retains a hierarchical superstructure” (§4). Quoting poet Sherman Paul, Conte offers a defining characteristic of the epic: “[epic poems] have a structure that encloses them, frames them, guides them.... An external framework of accepted ideas both encloses and closes the poem: the long poem, as I define it, is a closed poem. The epic poem always strives to be complete (Conte §4).”

For Conte, serial poems represent a “radical alternative” to the epic model. The series describes the “complicated and desultory manner in which one thing follows another. Its modular form, in which individual elements are both discontinuous and capable of recombination, distinguishes it from the thematic development or narrative progression that characterize other types of the long poem. The series resists a systematic or determinate ordering of its materials, preferring constant change and even accident, a protean shape and an aleatory method. The epic goal has always been encompassment, summation; but the series is an ongoing process of accumulation. In contrast to the epic demand for completion, the series remains essentially and deliberately incomplete.”

Both projective verse and seriality embody the poetics of Deleuze|Guattari’s rhizomatic cartography: the way elements can recombine and resist a systematic ordering, always changing, an ongoing accumulation.

Chapter 7: LEAVING YOU

The Research

We do not call the police,
 we do not organize a community search,
 for the daughter lying beside us, Sunday morning,
 laughing and watching cartoons.

We do not rifle through our drawers,
 and call the restaurant where we dined late last evening,
 looking for the ring that is shining on our finger.

We cannot search for something
 unless we believe it is missing, unless it is somehow lost to us.
 Even then, it is only the things we can carry – the physical things,
 that other people are organized to help us find.

The things that we lose, perhaps,
 the things we lose that mean the most:
 Our partner's desire, our joy in living,
 the music of our mother's laughter –
 Or the things we realize we never had

When these come up missing: we begin our search.

Ghost of our future, ghost of our past:
 We haunt the life we are inventing
 anxious carpenters laying the frame of the questions we inhabit:
 some of us to search some of us to find.
 These are the chains we will rattle across the floors
 to prove our existence, to frighten all others.
 To tether ourselves to something, or else lose ourselves to the desires of others.

I hear my life across the decades I live:
 I am an echo, a valley of echoes,
 a house on a cliff with all the windows open
 and voices and wind and time passing and joining
 sound like chance orchestras
 sound like unembodied birds looking for a branch to nest
 all wingspan and flight and feathers and flocking
 calling out to the missing:
 again and again and again.

Leaving You

I am standing barefoot on a small circular rug. Standing on a picture of children designated by colored loops of wool holding hands around a circle. Stacy, another slave to King Minos, is holding you, Icarus, in her arms. "Smile, laugh, wave, tell him you'll be back," she instructs. "You're teaching him you leave and come back." I back out of the open doorway smiling and waving, "I'll be right back," I cheer, making my way over the small toys, past the sink and refrigerator and four high chairs. I push the sliding lock on the half door, and let myself out, pushing the lock closed behind me. I walk down the empty corridor and push the silver bar opening the heavy metal door to the courtyard. I can still hear you screaming.

I practiced leaving you three mornings a week all year. You learned to turn your head as I walked away. You would look up at the purple balls suspended from the ceiling and point, and Stacy would lift you up so you could push the orb with your hand watching as it spins and swings through the air.

Super in the Suburbs

Super in the Suburbs

I am scared of the middle place.
The suburban bedroom.
The jaunty nursery.
Center stage. Middle C.
Sea level. Growing family.
No line of flight: no limit acts.
Becomings are made invisible
through regulation and appropriation

take a moose, for instance
or tag a mouse, take a stance
limb of lamb, rack of spruce
all these favors
raining down like Christmas
can't tell you where the list is
but I am blissful
and busy in the kitchen
all these rodents are finger-lickin'
so much hunting
still going on at home
suburbia still slaughtering the bacon
take in the fresh mowed grass
and set the tea-cup traps

A Row of Birds

You are almost two years old and I am lifting you from the small metal seat in the front of the shopping cart. We've been collecting our food for the week. We count and name the fruits and vegetables as I open a plastic bag and you drop the fruits inside. Three red apples. Five yellow bananas. Grapes are your favorite. They come in their own bag. Checking out, the cashier admonishes me to wash the grapes first as you reach into the bag wanting to put them in your mouth. She is a grandmother of five. She points to the restroom. I can wash the grapes there. I think of all the places those grapes have traveled to arrive in your hands. Our silver cart rattles over the bumpy pavement on the way to our small white car. The afternoon sky is clear when we both look up to see gorgeous flocks of birds flying low overhead. Flocks of Canadian geese forming multiple letters in the sky. Almost like dark stars blinking. I had never seen so many birds overhead. Your chin is tipped toward the sky. Your hand is small in my hand. You say "boozy" which is your word for beautiful.

A row of birds

dark crosses against the sky

this nightmare lowers its wings

turns its body toward the crest of the wave

and the row follows

black perforation

on blue sky.

Chapter 8: SENSATION OR LIVING FORM

Icarus stood on top of the labyrinth. A passage. Knotting small filaments with feathers to his shoulders. Thin ropes imitating the hollow bones of birds to lift and thrust in flight. Icarus is on the edge of a curriculum of leaping. Is this leap awakening or abjection? Icarus is no longer only discovering solutions, solving the labyrinth; rather, Icarus now carries the labyrinth with him and together (Icarus + labyrinth + teacher +) are about to embody a new line of flight. Icarus, in his leaping, constitutes not the solution, but the problem itself. His leaping is the question that the work will explore. Leaping asks, what now? Leaping forces the student to become theory. The learning and the doing, the understanding and the exploring, happen simultaneously. The student must learn to fly in the process of flying. The student thus becomes the theory of the question s/he is asking – the theory is not separate from the action, but the action itself. This is a living form.

The arts carry this living form. The student learns to paint in the process of painting. Learns to carve in the process of carving. But when is this process “leaping” and when is this process a “recipe” and what is the difference? Why might this matter for art education?

Posing problems is a question of form. The question focuses our attention toward particular sensations that begin to build the assemblage of experience in order to map this territory within the chaos of potential. Our art education curricula offer opportunities to teach how to constitute the problems themselves; how to leap into formal invention. This is the living form we are

working towards teaching. The open form. The “recipe” is posing the problem for the student, and teaching them the steps of the answer. Where leaping is invention and the Deleuzian concept of mapping, the recipe is a solution and the Deleuzian concept of tracing. Deleuze (1990) writes about the importance of invention, which he defines as stating the problem, in *The Logic of Sense*:

We are wrong to believe that the true and the false can only be brought to bear on solutions, that they only begin with solutions. (...) This prejudice goes back to the childhood, to the classroom: It is the schoolteacher who ‘poses’ the problems; the pupil’s task is to discover the solutions. In this way we are kept in a kind of slavery. True freedom lies in the power to decide, to constitute problems themselves. (...). But stating the problem is not simply uncovering, it is inventing ... Invention, gives being to what did not exist; it might never had happened (p. 15).

Deleuze’s idea that freedom exists in the power to decide, to make the problems themselves, and that constituting the problems is a form of invention, raises questions central to art education. Deleuze’s discussion of constituting the problems themselves shares many correspondences with critical educator Paulo Freire’s ideas of problem posing education:

Problem posing education is the foundation of modern critical pedagogy. Knowledge is not deposited from one to the other (the banking model of education / a dichotomy), but emerges as a dialogue between two or more (a multiplicity that is always becoming):

Education as the practice of freedom-- as opposed to education as the practice of domination-- denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people.

Authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relations with the world.

Like Deleuze|Guattari, Freire believes the world and the people are connected, not abstracted or separate from each other. The idea of dialogue is to enter into a flow / an exchange of intensities that is always becoming.

Deleuze|Guattari take this idea further and do not differentiate between people and the world and objects: they are all part of the flow of becoming.

Freire believes that human beings are unfinished and in the process of becoming. This idea of becoming, of always being in the middle, is central to Deleuzian rhizomatic cartography. Marguerite Rivage-Seul (1987) considers Freire's concept of critical consciousness through the lens of Hinkelammert's theory of the moral or transcendental imagination. This definition begins to give us a direction in which to apply the poetics of the rhizome to art education:

Freire's discussion of the 'limit act' describes the practical recourse of persons of imagination who find themselves caught in 'limit situations' like that of world hunger or the nuclear arms race, defined as 'immutable' by cultural forces or by dominant social groups. For Freire, these persons are able to perceive the 'untested feasibility' which lies beyond arbitrary boundaries. Accordingly, the individuals

can expand the horizons of possibility by engaging in ‘testing action,’ which represents a practical attempt to transcend particular limit situations.

A limit situation is what social actors perceive as obstacles or barriers to change in their lives. Untested feasibility is the possibility a person of imagination can perceive within the limit situation. Through educating the imagination, defined here as allowing sensation to construct the unconscious and bringing the unconscious to figure through sensation, and then bringing the figure into dialogue with image through creative production, the student learns to engage in limit acts and testing actions which can lead to the experience of a fuller humanity. There is freedom in formal invention – in learning to constitute the problems.

Imagination is the faculty through which the figure of sensation constructs the unconscious to bear becoming image. Again, not an image as in a figuration, but a rhythmic or metonymic image that defracts perception. The process of sensation becoming image is real thinking, as Deleuze (1990) suggests, and he maintains with Artaud:

that real thinking is one of the most difficult challenges there is. Thinking requires a confrontation with stupidity, the state of being formlessly human without engaging any real problems. One discovers that the real path to truth is through the production of sense: the creation of a texture for thought that relates it to its object. Sense is the membrane that relates thought to its other. Accordingly, learning is not the memorization of facts but the coordination of thought with a

reality. "As a result, 'learning' always takes place in and through the unconscious, thereby establishing the bond of a profound complicity between nature and mind" (p. 165).

Difference exists not in things, but in the space between things. This is Duchamp's (1983) idea of the infra-thin, something that cannot be defined without images:

fire without smoke, the warmth of a seat which has just been left, reflection from a mirror or glass, watered silk, iridescents, the people who go through (subway gates) at the very last moment, velvet trousers their whistling sound is an infra-thin separation signaled. The possible, implying the becoming—the passage from one to the other takes place in the infra-thin (p. 45).

Imagination is a complicated term to use with Deleuze. Defining imagination, through Freire, and considering imagination as “imaging” is important. Imagination is not to be confused with fantasy or escapism. We are not fleeing the labyrinth; we are reimagining the labyrinth. Imagination is not an exercise for those detached from reality, those who live in the air (Freire, 2000). Imagination allows people to see and perform testing actions on the untested feasibility in limit situations. ‘Imagination activates people’s creative power, helps with curiosity and inventiveness...without which we cannot create’ (Freire, 2000).

The arts can function as forms that wake the viewer and lead toward questions of “what now”; lead the viewer toward experiments that might open him/her to “admitting something outside”. The arts allow us to constitute the questions themselves.

Art can open the question of “what now”? Pedagogically, the arts can present us with opportunities to encounter new forms for which we do not have preexisting frameworks. Education can teach us how to respond to these openings. Education can offer a shelter to expose us to new forms and allow us opportunities to practice responding.

How does sensation become image? How do we enter Duchamp’s infra-thin? How do we, as art educators, teach this passage? Artist Lynda Barry tells a story that offers a glimpse of how sensation as figure finds resonance with image.

“I wrote my first novel in ten days,” Barry tells us. “I told my husband, I hope I’m not in this mood too often, or our apartment is going to be littered with novels!” And then the second novel took ten years to write. Barry handwrote the first novel. After that, she needed to become (in her words) a “real” novelist, and started working on a computer and reading a lot of books on story structure. It wasn’t until Barry was recording a story for a little boy that she changed her process: “Like some poets I know,” Barry says dryly, “every word was a gift” from this little boy: “Once” (long pause) “Upon” (long pause) “A” (long pause) “Time” But writing this way, Barry had an idea: maybe the secret is to write very slowly. What’s the slowest way to write a novel? Writing *Cruddy* in 1998, Barry painted the entire novel—word by word. And in doing this, she painted the work that ten years at her computer couldn’t produce. Why? What does this have to do with art education?

Images are territories. Words can act as lines of flight from one image territory to another. I begin writing in one direction, and all these other images swarm. I continue to map this territory onto paper as these words emerge: I cannot see where I am going. I make the road by walking. Creative production is the ability to map the territory of these images.

The poem *The Panther* by Rainer Maria Rilke (1998) speaks to this importance of form and image:

The bars which pass and strike across his gaze
Have stunned his sight: the eyes have lost their hold.
To him it seems there are a thousand bars,
A thousand bars and nothing else. No world.

And pacing out that mean, constricted ground,
So quiet, supple, powerful his stride
Is like a ritual dance performed around
The center where his baffled will survives.

The silent shutter of his eye sometimes
Slides open to admit some thing outside;
An image runs through each expectant limb
And penetrates his heart, and dies.

The panther in Rilke's poem is pacing his cage in a zoo. The form of the panther's day has been determined by the qualities of the form in which he must exist: "to him it seems there are a thousand bars...and nothing else." These bars are his labyrinth and may be understood as a kind of grid. Perhaps even envisioned as the lines of a grid. A grid is a form that materially and visually organizes something through its own logic. This logic emerges as a relationality between various forces or terms that come to constitute a thing. Brian Massumi writes:

The grid of [cultural codings] was conceived as an oppositional framework of culturally constructed significations: male versus female, black versus white, gay

versus straight, and so on. A body corresponded to a “site on the grid defined by an overlapping of one term from each pair. The body came to be defined by its pinning to the grid” (as quoted by Ellsworth, 2004, p. 118).

The panther is pinned by the overlapping terms that define him: wild, beautiful, exotic, deadly. “When we codify bodies in terms of their coordinates of their start- or end-points of movement and verbalize an understanding of change only in terms of the positions that have been modified, we eliminate the possibility for grasping the realities and meanings of bodies in the making and knowledge in the making” (Ellsworth, 2004, p. 119).

The consequences of the panther’s perception of the bars are dire. The panther cannot bring an image to creative production. He cannot participate in knowledge in the making. He does not perceive the limit act. However, it is hopeful to notice that the bars have “stunned his sight”. To stun is to render senseless, to daze, as if by a blow. The panther is *not* blind; the panther is stunned. The panther has experienced the grid as a trauma that has stunned him: fixed his knowledge. Similarly, his will still exists but is *baffled*. This leaves the possibility open that the panther’s eyes could once again “gain their hold”. His could gain clarity. An outside image might find a way to live inside of the panther that would allow him to see create other possibilities between the lines of the grid. Rilke does not tell us *how*.

Deleuze|Guattari (2004) might. The panther needs art:

The more our daily life appears standardised, stereotyped, and subject to an accelerated reproduction of objects of consumption, the more art must be injected into it in order to extract from it that little difference which plays simultaneously

between other levels of repetition, and even in order to make the two extremes resonate—namely, the habitual series of consumption and the instinctual series of destruction and death. (p. 293)

How can an image reach the panther's heart and *not* die? The panther needs to begin to feel thought itself as sensation. He must be able to assume for himself another form for existing—a form that lies off or between the lines on the grid:

My mind/brain/body in the midst of learning senses the inner movement that is a 'conceptual groping of potential-to-be, along with a sense of expectancy, my mind/brain/body senses the grid coordinates of what 'I already know' shift, fringe, and draw outside of themselves as a potential learning—something as yet undetermined by the grid—addresses my learning self. In its effort to this address, my learning self is set in motion to an equally undetermined destination.

(Ellsworth, quoting Massumi, 2004, p. 119-20).

There is a *what* now that follows this possibility of seeing. So, now the panther sees the bars, sees the world. What now? So now the image penetrates his heart and does not die. What now? Isn't he still going to be in a cage in a zoo? "The problem of 'what in the world to do with it all' as Massumi suggests, is where our experimentation begins. The problem of what to do with it all spreads the potential for surprising and unexpected futures for pedagogy (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 13). We cannot answer the question *what now?* —we can only experiment and put ourselves in motion towards the un-now-known. This experiment is where art education can provide the foundation of skills necessary for creative production.

The process by which I arrive at art education describes the rhizomatic poetics I am trying to articulate. I became a teacher before I formally studied education. Having given up, teaching was not part of my plan. I was never considered good at traditional education. The fact of my silence, being the kind of student a teacher asks to stand in front of the class to read her work louder, did not make me an ideal teacher candidate. In fact, even in my artwork, my teachers warned me of my choices: “Beth, you need to follow the rules of the assignment or I can’t give you a passing grade.” But perhaps my favorite comment came from my undergraduate advisor, who, after recommending I go to graduate school, and helping me select schools and navigate applications, warned me that while I could do academic work, he did not think I was an academic: “If you do take this route, remember you will always be the kangaroo among the swans.” In other words, I would be out of place, and not in an elegant way.

Let her fend for herself. My hands are shaking bad. I cannot hand out the syllabi. A student sitting in the front row offers to pass them around the class. “You look like you’re 16 years old” a male student calls out from the back while everyone laughs. I’m 21. I hadn’t anticipated how uncomfortable having everyone looking at me and expecting something from me would feel. I had no background in education: no coursework, no student teaching, no observations, no mentor. I was standing at the top of the staircase in *Passages* looking down at the crashing waves.

A record of preceding events. “You know if you accept the teaching assistantship, you will have to stand in front of people and speak,” my friend’s father was concerned. I had no background in education. Using the word “quiet” to describe me was being generous. I was silent. The most silent kid in school.

A tearful tale. Briefly, as an undergraduate, I tried to study education. I wanted to teach art and poetry. The professor stood in front of the hot, un-air-conditioned, two-room building they call the “old school house” discussing classroom management and learning objectives. I was staring at my notebook sketching the boxy outline of our rows of desks trying not to cry. This was the third week of class. The things I was being taught about education made me angry, but at 18 years old, I felt powerless to combat the rhetoric. *She doesn’t know how to protest.* I couldn’t sit there and listen to this pedagogy. I walked out of the classroom in tears and stopped attending my education classes. *A discreet exit by the back door.*

I became a teacher by accident. My first professional teaching experience happened as an incoming graduate student at a university in a major American city. The assistantship allowed me to make art and to live in the city. I was given a fellowship to pay for books and housing with a small stipend for food and basic needs. But to receive this: I had to teach a class, and I had to take a class on education.

I never saw myself as a good student. My plan was to make art and accept whatever jobs came my way. Teaching was an accident. Because I did not have an academic background in education, and was not given a syllabus to use when teaching, the class became an open field. Revising poet Charles Olson’s words in *Projective Verse*: ~~he~~ *the teacher can go by no track other than the one the poem class under hand declares, for itself.* How my classroom came to be the open field demonstrates this rhizomatic poetics: how art making is immanent in curriculum and curriculum is immanent in art making.

Looking back on my younger self, a teacher of Academic Discourse, I see much humor. At age 21, I researched “academic discourse” online trying to figure out what I was supposed to be teaching these students. What was discourse? What made it academic? How could I teach this? My students were mostly black and Hispanic men from the inner city with a couple women and international students mixed into the group. I was a young white woman from one of the poorest rural areas of the country. *The life informs the necessity of the movement*. The first few months of class were so hard. The class periods were two long hours, twice a week. Most students didn’t speak what was considered standard English, and many of them didn’t know how to paragraph, or write a complete sentence. Even more so, they had no interest in writing. I stood at the front of the room and gave them small exercises while they paid little attention to the coursework. The class always got out early.

In the college-level education class I was required to take, I decided to speak to the professor at the beginning of the semester. I tried to explain my concern regarding taking a class in education because the subject matter made me cry. It was terribly embarrassing. Listening to formal discussions of education filled me with an anger and sadness that was beyond my control. These kinds of emotions do not easily fit into a classroom. For the first few weeks, I would literally have to leave class, walk to the women’s bathroom, shut the stall door and cry. I didn’t understand my response, and the emotion was overwhelming. My current self now recognizes that I experienced the form of public education traumatically. I felt helpless to do anything as a student in the public school system, and as a college student listening to education rhetoric.

Luckily, or by accident, in this education class, the professor and my classmates accepted my difference. I could exist as I was, and what happened, quickly, was that I learned this education course was theoretical: for the first time I encountered Gloria Anzaldua, bell hooks, Foucault, Edward Said. We didn't talk about syllabi or curricula or lesson plans. Instead, we discussed the voices of our students and theories of otherness. We discussed power and oppression and literacy. Reading this theory gave me a lens through which I could also begin to consider my own experience as a student; I began to see there was possibility in schooling – and I began to talk in class for the first time in my life.

Around the same time, things were changing in my own classroom. One morning, as I was preparing for critique – students' work laid out on the table, I spilled the orange juice I was drinking. Accidentally spilling my orange juice changed everything. We had two more hours of class.

The orange juice performed Deleuze|Guattari's concept of a line of flight. The French term "fuite" for which the English translation reads "flight" is the word for leakage in French. A line of flight is a line of leakage or seepage. As the orange juice leaked across the table, seeping into student work, a line of flight to another classroom to emerge in that moment.

In this unexpected moment, I began to teach for the first time. Not able to trace the map I had made of the class, I had to speak unscripted. I began to talk autobiographically. I told them about my day. I talked about being a graduate student and about my rural background. I told them this was my first time teaching; my first time living in a city. I told them things I was finding difficult. I told them about my graduate

classes. They talked back. Over the course of the next two hours, they told me how they didn't learn much in high school, how their teachers' gave them worksheets and left the room coming back at the end of the class period, that they were the first ones in their family to go to college. They told me they were not doing well in their classes. I told them I failed classes, too – but still had a full fellowship for graduate study.

This is when the moment that altered the flow of my life occurred: I told the class I wasn't sure how to teach them academic discourse, but that I thought I could teach them creativity. I began a dialogue about the course content with the students, and I offered the materials that I knew the best as a starting point. There was quite a lot of discussion and a general consensus among the students that creativity could not be taught. They also came to an agreement that they were not creative. I was surprised by how much they wanted to talk, and how many questions they had for me. I told them I wanted to try to teach writing as a form of creativity. I asked if they wanted to try this. *Yes.* I am lucky they said yes.

What happened in that moment, when I spilled the juice, I could not continue with the class as planned. The class became the open field. Revealing things about myself, bringing autobiographical material into the classroom, opened myself and the students up to a deeper understanding of each other. Because I had no premade map of how to teach, something in the autobiographical encounter connected my experience in the classroom to my experience with art making. My decision to teach the class “creativity” was really my decision to engage in teaching as an art form. To become an art educator. I did not have a sophisticated education-based vocabulary to think about this at the time. The artistic practice is what I knew. It was the only thing I knew how to teach; the only method I was able to articulate.

So, this is what happened: walking home from the University, I stopped by the large Borders bookshop in Center City. I found a book of creativity exercises. These were largely activities to teach people to think divergently / associatively. I went to the office store, and bought a large pack of computer paper. It was blank and unlined. I went back to my apartment, excited for the first time about teaching, and started planning the next class. I was excited because the course materials were beginning to fill my thinking like art making: I was quickly making connections and associations between ideas for the next class period. While this process requires focused attention, the feeling is effortless as my job is mapping the ideas as they come. I wasn't trying, I was performing. In this state, I do not question what is happening, I just stay in motion.

I thought about the idea of "commercials" and popular music and how long something can easily hold our attention. I broke the 2-hour class into 5-minute segments. 24 segments, 5 minutes each. I didn't have an education vocabulary, so I didn't think in terms of objectives, or themes, or standards, or evaluation and assessment or opening and closing activities. I had an arts vocabulary, so I thought in terms of engagement, attention, care, materials, craft, the experiment, critique, resourcefulness.

The first problem I decided to explore with the class was the blank page. The students were not engaged, and on top of that were not comfortable confronting the blank page. They had a hard time getting words on the page and organizing them in an academic manner. They needed some materials to work with. In the arts, I had been studying the work of David and Eleanor Antin. Husband and wife artists – whose work offered me an idea for teaching through their artistic forms. Eleanor Antin creates life-size puppets she uses her performances. These puppets speak using her voice as she

crouches behind their forms offering her voice to their bodies. David Antin performs “talk poems.” Antin described his talk poems:

improvised talk pieces, pieces I go to some particular place to create—in public, as improvisations. I go to a particular place with something in mind but no clear way of saying it, and in the place I come to I try to find some way to deal with what I am interested in, in a way that is meaningful to both the audience and myself. I tape record the pieces, and if I was successful I have something I can transcribe, that may be worth publishing. If it is, I publish it; if not, I forget it. So the ‘talk poems’ are more or less adapted notations of performances, done somewhere. (Antin, N.D. ¶1)

I decided to try having the students orally compose their essays. I would have them, Antin style, talk about something with a peer, like one of Eleanor Antin’s life-size puppets, and the peer would transcribe the words onto a sheet of paper. I set a timer, and when the timer stopped, their narrative stopped. This meant their work often had loose ends, and was incomplete. All the students now had words instead of a blank page in which to begin their work.

We were making “ready-mades” as defined by Marcel Duchamp. Duchamp challenged the notion of what is art. In our class, we were challenging the idea of what is academic discourse. We were manufacturing everyday language and elevating it to the level of academic discourse by placing it within a university structure.

I stressed that art making was thinking. I wanted them to learn to explore by making. Sometimes I would pose an open-ended question, and the students would think aloud in response as their partner transcribed their ideas. I tried to teach the elements and

principles of English composition each week (paragraphing, introductions, complete sentences) and we would use the written oral compositions as our practice ground. This oral process worked so well, the assignment branched into collecting oral histories from friends and family members in their neighborhoods. Instead of me asking questions to which they would respond, now the students asked questions of those in their families and became the scribe as they wrote down the responses. We didn't use voice recorders. The goal was to have words on the page that the students engaged with, and they got this through writing down what they heard, asking people to repeat sections and just filling in spaces from memory as best as they could.

To begin class, I shared a piece of visual artwork that moved me (and this later grew into us all taking turns sharing something of personal interest at the start of each class period). This activity helped focus and engage everyone on the class, and filled a few of my 5-minute time slots. I wanted to create spaces for associations and learning that could be about something bigger. Then, we would do what I called a creativity exercise, where I would put some kind of problem on board, and they would work to solve it independently or in groups. In retrospect, I was teaching them associative and open thinking – the Bauhaus model of art education. Perhaps not just teaching this kind of thinking, but suggesting that this kind of intelligence had a place in academia.

I worked out the class very carefully. I would research and rethink each 5-minute segment. What happened, however, when I was present in the classroom, is that many of these plans would change. The preparation is the research that fertilizes the rhizomatic soil in which to grow once the class period begins. The class is deeply considered even if the class period exists in the moment.

As a beginning teacher, many of my students were Brueghel's Icarus. Imprisoned with their parents in circumstances beyond their control, they fashioned wings of basketballs and footballs. The rule of academic discourse quickly melted the wax of their wings, and as they fell they made a splash quite unnoticed: this was my students drowning. As a young, inexperienced teacher, I decided to make a classroom of the sea. We had no boats, no life jackets – only water and waves and sky. The directions came from the fact of our coming together with a goal of finding land. I learned how to crash into the sea without drowning. I was terrified to descend these steps with the class, but learned to hear not just my own footsteps on the stairs, but the sound of collaboration: the sound of multiple footsteps wandering together.

My compass is my syllabus, the course materials I prepare, the readings, the films, the images and projects I hope to experience together. Once the class gets going on the first day, I start letting go of my plans and following the journey of the class. There are still days I despair; days I feel foreign; days I worry we are lost and will remain lost, but the compass brings us together and refocuses our journey. The pieces of home we make for ourselves and our students are shelters of exposure.

The process of Deleuze|Guattari's poetics, as experienced through *Passages* and discussed in this essay, might be best explained as a process for pedagogy and research in art education through Deleuze|Guattari's own words:

This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow

conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times [...] Connect, conjugate, continue: a whole “diagram,” as opposed to still signifying the subjective programs” (Deleuze|Guattari, 2004, p. 161)

Chapter 9: I WAS LOOKING OUT MY WINDOW

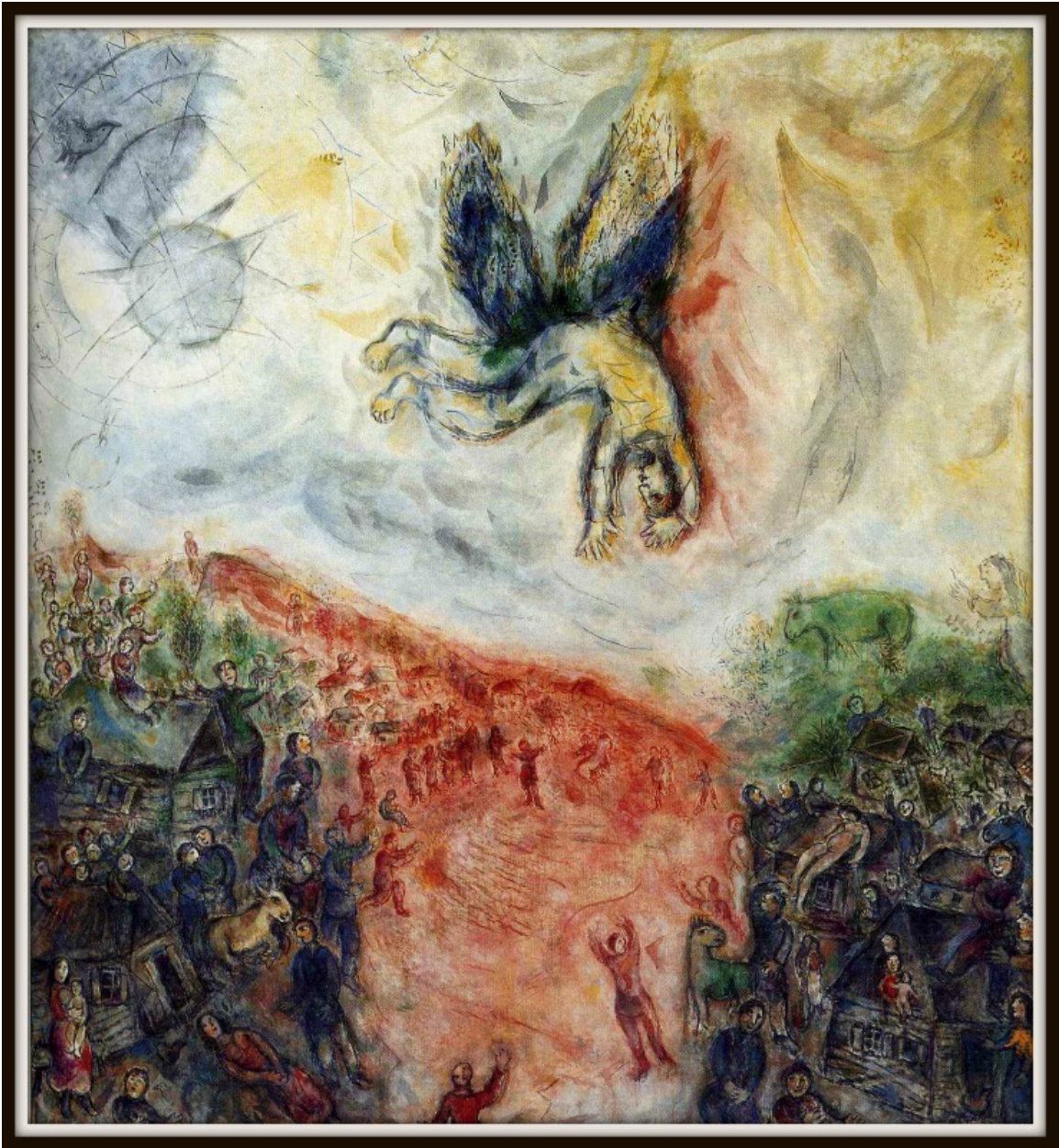


Figure 10. Chagall, M. *The Fall of Icarus*.

Chagall's Icarus is seen. The farmers plowing their fields, the mothers in their homes raise their arms to catch the boy. They clutch their naked babies closer. The land is red anticipating. The sea is the sky is the sea. Everyone can see. Everyone is wide awake for

Chagall. Everyone is reaching towards the sky. Icarus is falling into a nomadic land. He is finding his home.

I am looking out the window when I see my son.

He is just a boy.

Icarus, a boy of wandering and questions.

A boy who can fly.

I am looking at the sky and I know as soon as I see you leave Daedalus' side –

I know what will happen.

Homecoming.

It is not easy to be a mother and watch my child carry his labyrinth across the sky. I want to carry this for him. I watch him leave the walls of the island for waves of the ocean. I want to hold him in this inbetween.

Stunned, I call out his names:

Walter Benjamin, Gilles Deleuze, Antonio Machado,

Marina Tsvetaeva, Virginia Woolf.

I call for you, *Icarus!*

Your feathers drift

they are as large and soft as bodies

your feathers swarm us

a labyrinth

falling from the sky

into our open arms

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