

Inter-text: 'the impossibility of living outside the infinite text – whether this be Proust or the daily newspaper or the television screen...' (Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, 1973/1990, p. 36).

means even though I am not a trained artist, publisher, or expert in such media.

Similarly, the prose texts will reflect a *have-a-go* attitude and be inspired by the random bits and pieces of text that I find and create through the meaning-making process. I do not intend to read everything. My accounts (like all accounts) will be fractured, incomplete, tentative, partial, and situated – and not definitive claims at truth. In fact, on a different day, in a different mood, under different circumstances, a different text would result. It is by illusion and trickery that texts appear internally coherent: authors create narrative logic by establishing seemingly unchanging or definitive selves, positions, or realities. But like Ice-T suggests: "Shit ain't like that" (*Body Count*, 1992). I don't have a definitive self or a definitive reality. My mind is seldom made up and seldom certain of anything. My texts will reflect this (poststructural) uncertainty.

This philosophy should free me from the burden of claiming absolute authority or masquerading as an expert. It should also free me from narrative certainty, narrative coherence, and narrative logic. My mind does not reflect these attributes – nor will my texts. Therefore, I want to establish the freedom to explore without predetermined borders or fixed outcomes. I want to follow my intuitions and impulses wherever they take me. I want to 'collapse discipline into invention' (Ulmer, 1985) and *rage against the neo-liberal and modernist machine* (hell yeah).

Research Methods

All three texts – the *EiseJesus*, *Madman*, and *Manifesto* – are pedagogically-driven, meaning-making, ludic exercises: *meditations*, of a sort. They are all text-based in-



"The greatest crimes against humanity (and by humanity) have been perpetrated in the name of the rule of reason, of better order and greater happiness" (Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*, 1993/1995, p. 238).

Endnotes

¹ In 1990 I left art school after a dispute over my 'prose paintings' and turned my attention to writing prose. I literally left 'art' behind, threw away my pads and brushes, and took a new direction. However, beginning with my Honours thesis in 2006 (titled: *Mystory – Raging Against the Mass Schooling Machine*), and now, I am once again adopting the guise of my former art-self, and merging my love of writing with my love of art, image-making, and hybrid textualities. In fact, I now approach my writing from the perspective of the artist-researcher and artist-pedagogue: *the heuristic hermeneutic*. That's what this *artefact* (art + fact) is all about: *art* (image, and aestheticism) and *faction* (blurring fact and fiction): messy, hybrid, oxymoronic texts: part art, part writing, part anything (goes). *Art(e)facts*.

Photograph

Photograph: 'You can look the author in the eye, but he can't return your gaze,' taken by Andrew Miller, late 2006, in the bathroom, in a rental house, in Happy Valley (where we suburbanites are all very happy), in Adelaide, South Australia. Reproduced with permission of the narcissist / camera-gazer.

His father loved secrets and codes. He remembers his father telling him about the Rosetta Stone that Napoleon's soldiers had found in the mud of the Nile. The stone was dated from around 200 BC and was clearly a burial marker, and so its three inscriptions were deduced to be identical: one in hieroglyphs, one in demotic Egyptian, and one in Greek. Since two of the inscriptions could be read, here at last was the magic key in the mysteries of the Pharaohs and the secret lore of the Cities of the Dead. Even so, his father told him, it took Champollion, brilliant French linguist and code-breaker, fourteen years to decipher the message of the stones.

(Turner Hospital, *Due Preparations for the Plague*, 2001)

'... I define *postmodern* as incredulity toward metanarratives' (p. xxiv). "The answer is: Let us wage a war on totality..." (p. 82). (Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 1979/1984)

If you look into the Abyss ...

'...grammatology is a boundary science and a science of boundaries...'
(Ulmer, 1985, p. 130).

"Chance and chance alone has a message for us. Everything that occurs out of necessity, everything expected, repeated day in and day out, is mute. Only chance can speak to us. We read its messages much as gypsies read the images made by coffee grounds at the bottom of a cup" (Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, 1984 / 1999, p. 48).

quiries that use multiple bands and multiple media to generate leaning and meaning. The text production process and the text products that result are equally important elements of this pedagogical (para-eclectic-al) research method. They all partake in learning CHAOS, where one minor decision here, one aesthetic alteration there, can have generative and cumulative effects on all learning and textual events to follow.

None of the texts will shy away from this Chaos or establish a learning trajectory to negate the anarchy and uncertainty at the centre of life or at the centre of learning (the figurative band [→] is testimony to this *pragmosophy*). Each text will fly full-faced at Chaos, not to excuse sloppiness or laziness, but to seek alternative knowledges and alternative textualities. *To look elsewhere for meaning while acknowledging that all meaning is provisional.*

An ideology of tourism and vagabondage will drive each text. *The Postmodern Pedagog(age)* travels unashamedly towards uncertainty rather than away from it. As a semi-guided form of constructivism, *pedagondage* seeks possibilities not certainties, and is as much about *de-socialising, un-doing, and un-becoming as re-socialising, re-making, and transforming.*

The post-pedagogy seeks new ways of building meaning, building texts, and building selves. Texts become the enactment and media of a new pedagogy, an arts-based pedagogy, where learning occurs through text (and art) production and self-directed, semi-guided, constructivism. Such a pedagogy is chance-driven—*not question-contained*. It seeks questions—*not answers*. It moves away from order and dredges the depths of disorder. There are no predetermined destinations here—no ques-

S O A H C

'Modern practice stands out from other practices for its obsessive preoccupation with ordering, and all ordering is about neat divisions and clear-cut categories, casting all ambivalence, automatically, as the prime and the most awesome of weeds' (Bauman, *Life in Fragments*, 1995, p. 219).

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"There is always the hope that 'research' will lead you to some obscure place that is an undiscovered gem. The researcher as tourist"
(Schlunke, *Bluff Rock: Autobiography of a Massacre*, 2005, p. 209).

the Abyss will look into you. (Nietzsche)

tion-led, thesis-contained, rationalist-trajectories to follow (fuck no). This is messy research that produces messy texts and messy learning pathways (Marcus, 1998). The vagabond-tourist is more interested in what *might* turn up and what *might* happen than settling for neat packages, neat structures, and convenient lies.

At the heart of this research method is a fascination with the spiritual, metaphysical, ontological, pedagogical, epistemological, axiological, ethical, radical, and textual. I am interested in creating texts that are evocative and meaningful—pragmatic and radical—in a neo-liberal age, an age otherwise addicted to money, economics, and consumer goods at the expense of deeper and messier conundrums at the heart of human existence. I WANT MORE THAN MONEY. I want love, stability, and cohesion.

Finally, this research can be described as discontinuous research, ludic research, and episodic research, since it 'delights' in the transitory and chance-driven encounter.

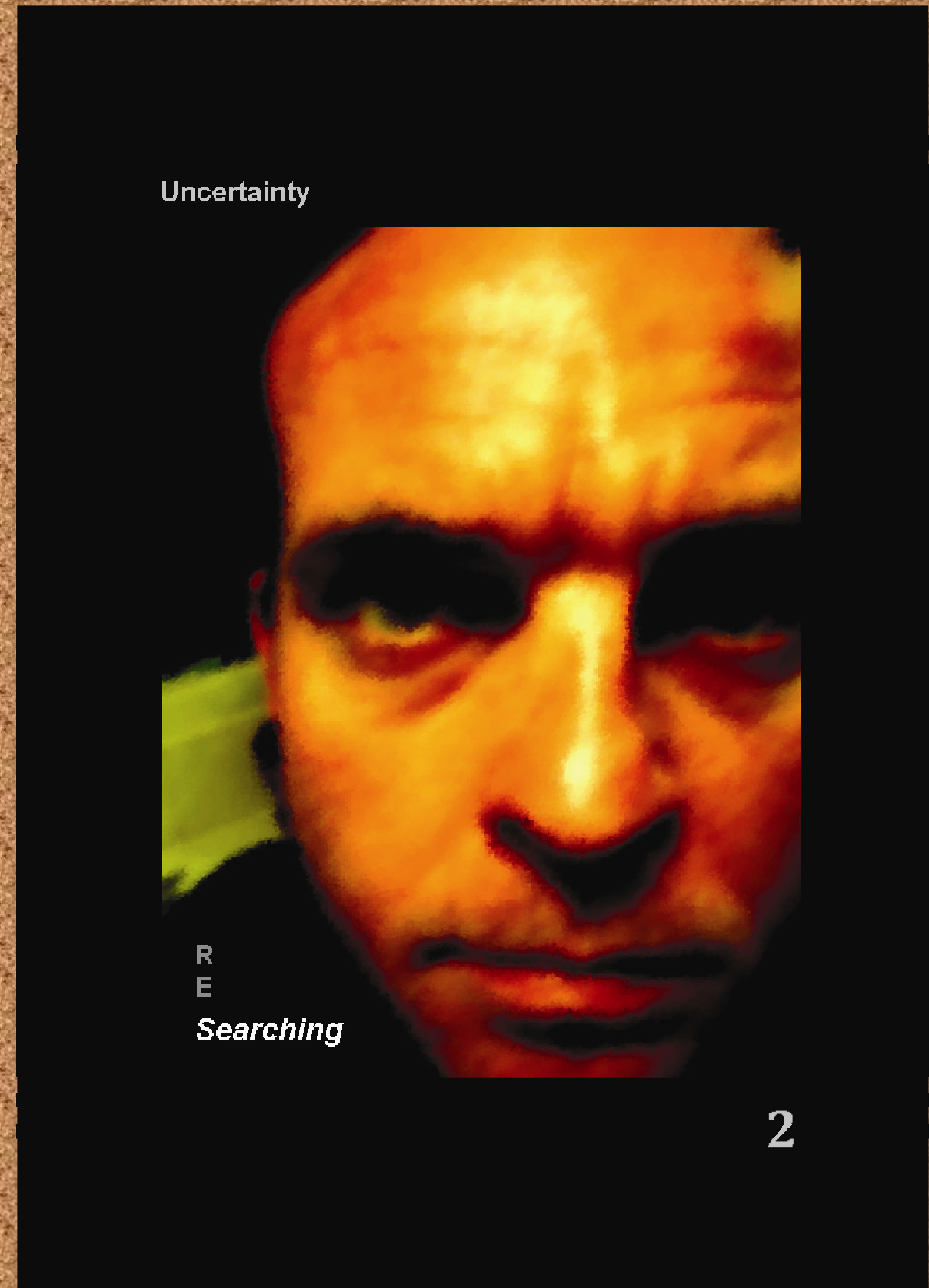
Research is arranged around the rubric of bricolage (or constructivistic bricolage), eclecticism, and dilettantism, a *stream of consciousness-like* research that values the hybrid, the polyvocal, and the multi-sited. This is a holistic research strategy involving the body and mind, the cognitive and affective, the spiritual and material, and art and language. It hopes to produce innovative and evocative textual artefacts that blur the boundaries between art and prose, creative writing and academic writing, image and idiom, books and blogs, and genres, discourses, and practices (refer "Personalising Ethnography" [up next] for more on this).

In fact, one of the unspoken names of this process is *Gripping Idiocy*. Gripping idiocy is simultaneously about



Love, stability, and cohesion. A good place to begin deconstructing this text would be with this line, since it contradicts the thrust and rationale of the project itself. Such contradictions are not uncommon, in all research and writings. Here, the artist-author yearns for the very stability he suggests is beyond him – the very order he suggests is beyond the world. So he dreams of a world outside and beyond the very Chaos he openly welcomes. Can he have it both ways? Can he have his cake and eat it too? Can he dream of oblivion and beyond while awakening from false consciousness?

"The truth in question is that the 'messiness' will stay whatever we do or know, that the little orders and 'systems' we carve out in the world are brittle, until-further-notice, and as arbitrary and in the end contingent as their alternatives" (Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*, 1993/1995, p. 33).



Uncertainty

R
E
Searching

2

'[Derrida] proposes a writing oriented toward stimulation or provocation rather than information, a pedagogical writing to raise questions rather than a scientific discourse giving answers' (Ulmer, 1985, p. 134).

'clutching' and 'discovering' the *Self* (the idiosyncratic), and gripping, clutching, and making sense of the *senseless* (idiocy). It is also about creating 'gripping' and 'compelling' *idiolects* (personal texts) while 'un-doing' and 'disturbing' *sociolects* (social texts). Both terms—gripping and idiocy—signify in multiple directions – just like, alas, *The Postmodern Pedagogndage*, which drifts and tours simultaneously. It's a kind of 'gonzo' ethnography.

Positionality

Teaching is a political activity (Apple, 2004; Freire, 1996; hooks, 1994): so too is studying. The research strategies and learning theories students adopt while undertaking doctoral studies position them in various ways. Most students, through fear of failure and/or deeply ingrained educational habit, follow orders: they are un-critical of the institutions that seal their credentials. This 'student' means to do his fair share of talking and telling. This reverses (and equalises) the usual teacher-student dichotomy which typically positions students as incapable and ignorant rather than capable and knowing (i.e. as passive recipients of expertly-mandated curricula). The Master speaks and the disciple listens (*tabula rasa*). The Master acts and the disciple mimics. The Master transmits and the disciple receives. Students, too, need to work against the grain of habit, their own and the system's, to find their own voices (Boomer, 1988; Freire, 1996). As Derrida (1967/2005, p. 37) suggests: "The disciple must break the glass, or better the mirror, the reflection, his [or her] infinite speculation on the master. And start to speak."

Garth Boomer (1988, p. 116) writes: "The schools of the Western world are generally predicated on the inability of students. The confidently able student presents a threat.

Politics & Teaching...

Michael Apple (2007, July 9) notes that teaching is a political activity whether we like it or not. It can both affirm and empower or demean and disempower. The sorting and ordering of students, for instance, can either empower or demean depending on its use.

Finley (2005, p. 692) writes: "As an educator, I want to encourage children to learn early to become lifelong activists who are equipped for guerrilla warfare against oppression by virtue of their ability to name their oppressors, dispute oppressive practices that are stereotyped or systematized into seeming normality, imagine a life lived otherwise, and then construct and enact a script that shifts them into an alternative space. Art, in any of its various forms, provides media for self-reflection, self-expression, and communication between and among creators and audiences. Performing social change begins with artful ways of seeing and knowing ourselves and the world in which we live."

Against the grain...

"It is difficult to swim against the tide. But this is our most difficult task if our position in history is not to preserve the past, but to change the present to create the future" (Freire, as cited in McInemey, 2004, p. 12).

'In the postmodern times of ours the ordering obsession is still very much the mark of thinking and action. What are now absent are models of global order...' (Bauman, *Life in Fragments*, 1995, p. 220).

12

Genevieve: This is the way it happens: a certain name, a certain phrase, a face in the crowd—minute, unpredictable things—and she can feel grief in her finger joints, armpits, groin. It breaks out like a fever. It swells and throbs, a contagion of loss. So she tries not to miss anyone. She tries not to get close to anyone she might come to miss. She works long hours, she stays on the road, she keeps moving, and moving on, she keeps changing one unlisted phone number for another, she does her best to be unreachable and to gather no moss (p. 140).

Genevieve (to Tristan): "Travel writing reveals more about the observer than the place observed. In that sense, it's autobiography, don't you think?" (p. 157).

(Turner Hospital, *Due Preparations for the Plague*, 2004)

Art(e)fact = part *art-science-fact-fiction-interface*-paper = (im)material

In requiring our students to be incompetent so that we can teach them, do we spread barbarity?" The same, I suggest, can be said of universities, which herd and direct students in various ways. The classical dissertation—with its formulaic structure: *introduction – literature review – methodology – findings – discussion – conclusion* (Kamler & Thomson, 2006, p. 91)—is one such way. Faculties, schools, subjects, majors, minors, grades, GPAs, transcripts, lectures, tutorials, essays, exams, fees, and other ordering and sorting techniques are other such ways. Certain knowledges and certain educational experiences are thereby excluded from university curricula (such as BAs from some modern-day universities).¹

I therefore mean to reposition myself as a confidently able ~~student~~ *artist-researcher* (and artist-pedagogue) rather than a lowly, inept, and passive student. I intend to enact my teaching theories and practices through the kinds of learning activities I adopt as a learner and the types of texts and curricula I invent for myself as a 'postmodern pedagogue.' This does not preclude the necessity for dialogue with more experienced learners, where "learning is *talking* and teaching is *listening*" (Darling-Hammond, 2007, July 10). As a teacher, I believe wholeheartedly in

¹ Livio Dobrez (2007, July 10) reminds us that contemporary universities have themselves been 'done in' by the 'profit motive' of 'consumer capitalism' (i.e. neo-liberalism). Global consumerism, in this sense, has led to 'postmodernity' not away from it. Postmodernity is not a fad but a product of historical processes, despite the rhetorics of neo-liberalists and neo-conservatives to suggest otherwise. Universities, Dobrez reminds us, are rapidly changing: market forces, user-pays principles, non-elected deans, managerial chancellors, competitive funding arrangements, and publication quotas are redefining university principles and practices. The 'commercial turn' (e.g. accountability, vocationalism, topic relevance, core subjects, semesterisation, etc) has turned universities into 'Educational Supermarkets' that compete for customers (i.e. students). The terms 'choice' and 'excellence' now mean the opposite of what they once did. In short, Dobrez suggests, we went from 'Empire-nationalism' to 'Simpsons-consumerism' overnight.

"The question ... now asked by the professional student, the State, or institutions of higher education is no longer 'Is it true?' but 'What use is it?' In the context of the mercantilization of knowledge, more often than not this question is equivalent to: 'Is it saleable?' And in the context of power-growth: 'Is it efficient?'" (Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 1979/1984, p. 51).

Against the grain...

"Having taught against the grain, and having discovered the source of some oppression, pragmatics and survival may require us to return to the oppressive regime. But at least now, it will be a witting compromise containing a time bomb" (Boomer, 1988, p. 191).

"With all our post-modern capacities to see infinite complexities and intertextualities, in the end we need to pre-empt and to act. We need to strive towards at least an interim or temporary Utopia, if we are not to become self-indulgent spectators on the one hand or despairing nihilists on the other" (Boomer, 1989, p. 12, my italics).

Entries

Textaments

Nodes

Networks

Textographies

Art(e)facts



Entries:

multiple inserts & openings

Text fragments, Nodes, & Networks:
discrete textualities & *textaments*.

This *EiseJesus* doesn't so much 'explain' the intentions and ideologies of my creative products as create the intentions and ideologies of my creative products. This text is a meaning making endeavour, an arts-based (Finley, 2005), narrative inquiry (Chase, 2005) which seeks to generate texts and meanings through art, writing, and hybrid blends of each. As such, this text is a series of texts: a personal dictionary of sorts; an information retrieval system; a collection of fragments; a textbook; a scrapbook; an encyclo-

paedia; a bricolage—a *textament* that brings a host of theories and practices to the text-production process. It is through making these entries (these deposits and openings—these nodes) that I am making myself and making my texts. I am writing and imagining myself *into* being. I am writing an *ing* into me: I am *meing*. I am *me(an)ing* making. I am *me(diat)ing* between texts, selves, theories, and practices.

This assemblage process and structure is inspired, in part, by the textual 'fragments' of Roland Barthes' (1973/1990) *The Pleasure of the Text*; the textual 'bands' of Jacques Derrida's (1974/1986) *Glas*; the 'multidirectional' and 'nonlinear' formats of dictionaries and textbooks; and by

“The immediate application of this new speculation is to overcome the desire of the professor to conclude, to render a question inert through resolution, to reduce the tension of a problem or an interpretation to the nirvana state of zero pressure by designing a decided meaning” (Ulmer, 1985, p. 145).

“In the beginning is hermeneutics. But the shared necessity of exegesis, the interpretive imperative, is interpreted differently by the rabbi and the poet” (Derrida, *Writing & Difference*, 1967/2005, p. 81).

Choice 1: interpretation and literality (exegesis and hermeneutics);
Choice 2: invention and allegory (eisegesis and heuristics).

the benefits of arts-based inquiry and *pedagondage*—as a learner, I mean to try them on for size. As Marilyn Cochran-Smith (1991, p. 280) points out, “teaching is fundamentally a political activity in which every teacher plays a part by design or by default.” The same, of course, can be said of students; although in the case of students it is much harder to act in potentially radical and liberating ways given that the system is designed to negate such attempts (Boomer, 1988). Try writing a dissertation in any other way than the formula outlined above and see what happens!

Hermeneutics is about interpreting the texts of yesteryear; heuristics is about inventing the texts of tomorrow. *The Postmodern Pedagondage* does not downplay the importance of interpretation and critique, but it does ‘play-up’ the importance and value of transformative and inventive educational activities and encounters. Reproduction makes way for invention and mimicry makes way for thinking and feeling. Most importantly, *pedagondage* is about learning to *think, feel, act, and be* in personally relevant and meaningful ways (Delors, 1996) in a number-centric, consumer-oriented, morally-bankrupt, neo-liberal age. Boomer (1988, p. 3) writes:

In London, Nancy Martin and Harold Rosen were my chief supervisors, teachers and critics. I owe them much for introducing me to a plethora of mind-blowing, habit-shattering texts and for their superb teaching, but it is for one simple but profound attitude that I am most in their debt. *They, and their colleagues, treated me as if I had a mind and they encouraged me to use it* [my italics]. Whether or not other teachers in my past had done this, it was my perception and experience that this was happening for the first time. *I was being allowed to think my thoughts* [my italics]. The challenge was to get my ideas straight. I was not being tested on the ideas of my teachers and the texts they presented, but on what I made of what they said in relation to my own experience and ideas.

Hermeneutics: *noun* 1. the science of interpretation, especially of the Scriptures. 2. the branch of theology that deals with the principles of biblical exegesis. 3. *Philosophy* a. the study and interpretation of human behaviour within the structures of society. b. the study of the meaning and purpose of life; existentialism. (*Macquarie Dictionary*, 2005, p. 669)

Heuristics: *adjective* 1. serving to find out; furthering investigation. 2. (of a teaching method) encouraging students to discover for themselves. (*Macquarie Dictionary*, 2005, p. 671)

Heurism *noun* the heuristic method or principle in teaching. —**heuristic**, *noun* (*Macquarie Dictionary*, 2005, p. 671)

“**Heuristics refers to creative processes of discovery and invention such as those that have been enjoyed by arts-based researchers who have consciously brought the methodologies of the arts to define new practices of human social inquiry**” (Ulmer, as cited in Finley, 2005, p. 684).

Also: McLuhan & Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage*, 1967.

‘I had a strict rule, which I think secret services follow, too: No piece of information is superior to any other. Power lies in having them all on file and then finding the connections. There are always connections; you have only to want to find them’ (Eco, *Foucault’s Pendulum*, 1988/2001, p. 225).

other media that offer information in readily retrievable and accessible ‘bites’ and ‘chunks,’ such as encyclopaedia, travelogues, filing cabinets, and hypertexts (Aarseth, 1997).

I do have practical and ideological reasons for assembling my research in this *bric-a-brac* fashion. Firstly, this method (and outlook) allows me to research, collate, and retrieve entries quickly and easily, and to (re)arrange them in any direction and through multiple media. Secondly, this method (and practice) allows me to expand entries indefinitely as a kind of ongoing scrapbook or workbook while having no (set) commitment to conclusions or answers, just questions and possibilities. Thirdly, this method (and disposition) allows me to treat new entries and new sections (new *drolleries*) as independent texts with their own formats, designs, artworks, contexts, prose styles, and agendas: their own *discrete* textualities (homo-, bi-, or *hetero-textual*) (Schlunke, 2005, p. 16).

Most importantly, however, this method (this praxis) allows me to escape the conceptual and physical barriers that surround the construction and composition of the traditional ‘chapter,’ ‘essay,’ or ‘thesis’ product, whereby particular formats and con-

ventions dictate what goes *into* the text and thus *into* the head (as knowledge). Such templates, whilst informative and instructive, whilst safe, also dictate a certain type of learning and thinking; a certain way of framing the world, of framing knowledge, of framing the text; a particular ‘rationality’ that dismisses all other types of thinking (feeling) and writing; all other ways of being (*meing*) and seeing. Interesting asides, for instance, have no ‘home’ – no ‘place’ – no ‘voice’ – and no ‘legitimacy’ – in the typical university essay or thesis. Such allusions are typically dismissed as irrelevant and indulgent or demoted and banished to footnotes and endnotes (which few people read).¹ A *dictionary-scrapbook-bricolage*, on the other hand, allows me to add new entries at will, no matter how obscure or inchoate, no matter how absurd or poignant, and to build on them without worrying about arguments, themes, and narrative logics. When confronted with an essay, for instance, the writer usually delimits content on the basis of the research topic. All else is ignored.

By contrast, an encyclopaedia or dictionary can allow for a vast array of

¹ And yet, ironically, this text also indulges in footnotes to highlight the *inter-textual* nature of all information and all knowledge, and to make links to other nodes of knowledge and learning.

‘... I want to unknit how we know something, I want to unravel how stories can both fix ideas (and so our ways of knowing) and intimately and intricately undo those certainties. My hope is that a gap, a space of improvisation, will be found, where stories emerge that speak of how they have been produced but also something more’ (Schlunke, *Bluff Rock*, 2005, p. 14).

Geoffrey Bennington: ‘Texts appeal to reading, *cry out for reading*, and not just any reading, but leave open an essential latitude or freedom which is just what constitutes reading as reading rather than passive decipherment... (Hermeneutics is the dream of closing that opening.)’ (Hahn, *On Derrida*, 2002, p. 64).

'Derrida allies himself with the avant-gardists who perform theory as a kind of visual art (Ulmer, 1985, p. 148, my italics).

After nearly thirty years in education, I began to find my own voice [my italics]. Tentatively at first, but with growing confidence, I began to break free from the kind of academic writing which tended to paste together strips of other people's words. Looking back now, if I had to boil down all I have learnt about teaching and learning into one injunction for beginning teachers, it would be this:

- Always teach in the knowledge of the pulsating, intentional minds before you. Let that knowledge permeate everything you do.

Once my intention had taken grip in London, my mediated conversations with great thinkers through texts changed in nature. I was not taking their thoughts and accumulating information; rather, I was using their thoughts to construct my own understanding of English teaching and learning.

And it is this type of *heuristic* learning that this learner-teacher means to promote: not to spite tradition, but to enrich it... ■



Ancient manuscripts, Lima, Peru

disparate and seemingly contradictory entries to circulate without condemnation (such as *God* and *cunt* in the same text). Similarly, there are no overbearing narrative threads like plots, arguments, chapters, or reviews to restrain these entries from forking off in any direction. They have no loyalties and no obligations. They can stand alone, distinct and idiosyncratic, and speak for themselves (as nodes), or gather together and speak among themselves (as networks), depending on the intentions and purposes of the text, entry, user, or collector. Such a structure allows me to amass concepts, terms, texts, theories, and practices and to use them, alter them, examine them, learn from them, or discard them as I like. It allows me to personalise, (re)claim, and bastardise entries for my own purposes. To create *art(e)facts*: part art, part word, part paper, part interface, part fact, and part fiction. It allows me to research an ever expanding array of possible sources of inspiration and intrigue (*like an artist*) without committing to lengthy dissertations on each entry (*like a dilettante*) or pretending to be an 'expert' or 'authority' of any kind (*like an idiot savant*). This is not the work or mindset of the academic. This is the work and mindset of the inventor—the explorer, the *textographer*, the bricoleur,

cunt *n.* *Taboo.* 1. the female genitals. 2. *Offensive slang.* a woman considered sexually. 3. *Offensive slang.* a mean or obnoxious person. [C13: of German origin; related to Old Norse *kunta*, Middle Low German *kunte*] (*Collins*, n.d., p. 380)

God *n.* 1. *Theol.* the sole Supreme Being, eternal, spiritual, and transcendent, who is the Creator and ruler of all and is infinite in all attributes; the object of worship in monotheistic religions. ~*interj.* 2. an oath or exclamation used to indicate surprise, annoyance, etc. (and in such expressions as *My God!* or *God Almighty!*). (*Collins*, n.d., p. 651)

the hack—and the artist-researcher. It is the work and mindset of the chameleon (the shape-shifter) that washes its hands of certainty and welcomes i-r-r-a-t-i-o-n-a-l-i-t-y (format: Ulmer, 1985).

It is a new type of thinking. An applied, grammatical, experimental type of thinking (Ulmer, 1985). A type of thinking that involves invention and transformation not convention and reproduction. Where knowledge leads to, not from, the Abyss.

Clearly, what this *semi-guided, constructivistic, bite-sized, learning safari* offers by way of freedom with the one hand it snatches back with the other, by creating a new wor(l)d (word-world) order that regiments the text (itinerary) no less stringently than the thesis format, but for iconoclastic, artistic, and pragmatic reasons. Vertigo and dread (may) emerge as the artist-researcher wanders at large in an endless array of learning tunnels that never cohere into a sensible theory or argument: no final solution or destination to arrest the senselessness that ultimately erases all knowledge and all certainties; the terrifying 'fact' that we are all just slabs of meat with no more nime nor reason than the next biological entity, the next frightened creature, flailing and fighting for life against the inevitability of death;

The postmodern / Neo-liberal world:

'...be prepared for constant change; don't get too committed to anything too soon; keep your options open; hang loose; wait and see – you never know what's coming next' (Mackay, *Advance Australia Where*, 2007, p. 170).

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'Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state...' (Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 1979/1984, p. 79).

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'Print also taught us the straight-line disciplines of reading and writing which led to a tendency to admire the rational at the expense of the emotional, and to think in formal, logical, straight lines that serve us well in many contexts, but not all (which is why Edward de Bono had to reintroduce us to lateral thinking)' (Mackay, *Advance Australia Where*, 2007, p. 102).

the terrifying fact that no text will save us from the abyss or bring order to the chaos. That each new thought (entry, and self) is just another mutation struggling to overcome the disgrace of death, to prolong life, to make meaning, to negate absurdity, and to erase reality—the reality that there is no meaning, no order, no cohesion, and no rational reason for anything. Just absurdity, chaos, entropy, and the Abyss. It is a text (unlike most texts) that attempts to never end; a text open to ongoing and incessant revisions, additions, deletions, images, and formats (*to palimpsest*); a text that yields no answers—just questions, qualifications, provisions, and myths. But this needn't worry me, for my texts (my selves, my thoughts) are never finished. A text may be set aside, torn up, published, or temporarily retired (like the self, like the thought), but it always returns, one way or the other, to speak again: as little islands of 'ego' barking orders at the universe, barking instructions to God (Schucman & Theiford, 2004): *to that cunt in the sky that won't reveal when, where, how, or why...*

My persistent need to rewrite and re-format texts that date back many years is testimony to the fact that I can never leave any text alone, not for long, not when there is the irresistible possibility

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of re-approaching (or re-colonising) the text (the self, the thought) from the vantage point of the present, from the here and now, to salvage something (anything) from the wreckage of the past, to build a future (any future): with new Selves, new ideas, new contexts, new tools, and new technologies. *That putting all the words in all the right places will put Humpty Dumpty back together again; that a sensible account—a neat chapter-by-chapter solution; a coherent identity—will emerge from the turmoil. Will solve all my problems and make me happy and whole.*

Fragments. Scraps. Chunks. Nodes (Snyder, 1998). And **entries**: entries as inscriptions; entries as openings. And **textaments**: text experiments, text tablets, text fragments. And **textographies**: incessant writings and incessant thinkings (logorrhoea; glosolalia). And **art(e)facts**: e-texts, e-facts, e-vocations, e-vents, and (pseudo) etymologies. *Texts from detritus. Texts for life.*² ■

² It is worth noting that writing in columns changes the way I write and compose text. Sentences seem to become more magazine-like, shorter, fractured, abrupt, and dense. I feel the 'narrowness' of the columns as I write, which changes how I think about the prose and how I structure my ideas. There really is a tunnel-like, claustrophobic effect at work in the text. *It means that formats do impact upon prose.*

'Far from seeking a single and complete experience, the post-modern object strives toward an encyclopedic condition, allowing a myriad of access points, and infinitude of interpretive responses' (Howard Fox, as cited by Steven Connor, as cited by Glenn Ward, *Teach Yourself Postmodernism*, 1997/ 2003, p. 48).

'Texts of pleasure. Pleasure in pieces; language in pieces; culture in pieces. Such texts are perverse in that they are outside any imaginable finality...' (Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, 1973/1990, pp. 51-52).

Hypertexts have open borders that cannot shut out other texts. They are *intratextual* and *intertextual* with no real inside or outside (Snyder, *Hypertext*, 1998, pp. 50-51).

Textaments = textual tablets / fragments / identities / experiments

I see the ~~exegesis~~ eisegesis **eiseJesus** as an opportunity to define myself as an artist, researcher, learner, teacher, and person in a neo-liberal world. I see it as an opportunity to situate myself—physically, emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually—within a set of theories and practices that allow me to generate responses to the world around me. I see it as an opportunity to set an agenda, outlook, disposition, theory, and practice *relevant* and *meaningful* to me. I see it as an opportunity to open my world to possibilities rather than limitations. I see it as an opportunity to develop a ‘pedagogy’ for living and working in an educational system still hankering back to the ideals of modernity and hostile towards the dilemmas and messes of post-modernity. I see it as an opportunity to be and become more than I already am, not by producing definitive answers to satisfy the academy, but by producing *partial* solutions and *provisional* answers to satisfy me as learner and researcher.

The products themselves *are* the solutions and *are* the responses. It isn’t just the words on the page—it is the non-verbal and art(e)*factual* too. This project *articulates* through verbal and non-verbal means: through words and images, and texts and objects. It speaks from multiple vantage points and through multiple registers. It ‘embodies’ *partial*-solutions rather than *definitive*-answers.

Homer Longchamp, a hostage dying in a bunker from exposure to sarin and mustard gas, says:

“I don’t know,” he says, puzzling at it, absorbed, “which of the three great mysteries can be considered the most impenetrable. **Life**. Or **death**. Or **randomness**. But I think randomness, the maddening neatness of randomness. Yes, I think the geography of chance is the ultimate teaser, intellectually and morally, because of the sheer enormity of divergence that results from a micro-change here and a micro-change there. It’s almost a commonplace now, with mathematicians: the Lorenz discovery—an accidental finding in itself—that minute changes in weather systems can have catastrophic results.”

(Turner Hospital, 2004, p. 377, my bold)



Salamander, the double-agent, says:

In our profession (*making the world safe for stability*, as we like to say; and sometimes, relishing our own esoteric wit, *making the world safe for moral systems*) it is a given that chaos is all; that order is not only arbitrary but evanescent, and that it is the task of a small strong circle of like-minded people to establish and guard it. Exactly which system of order we sustain—morally and politically speaking—is immaterial. We support the system most likely to stay in place.

(Turner Hospital, *Due Preparations for the Plague*, 2004, p. 258)

Zygmunt Bauman (1995) writes:

The very word ‘order’ made its way into modern thought from architecture, where it was first deployed to denote a whole in which all parts fit each other and none could be replaced without destroying the harmony, and a situation that no change could improve (p. 128).

[The ‘ordering’ of architecture was subsequently transformed into the ‘ordering’ of human beings through physical, mental, and spiritual structures and social spacings.]

Eliminate from [the] world everything accidental and unplanned – and you will cut away the roots of all waywardness and erratic conduct (p. 128).

The modern[ist] romance with universal Reason and perfection [Order] proved to be a costly affair; it also proved to be abortive, as the great factory of order went on producing more disorder while the holy war against ambivalence spawned more ambivalence (p. 190).

‘Order’ means a regular, stable environment for our action; a world in which the probabilities of events are not distributed at random, but arranged in a strict hierarchy – so that certain events are highly likely to occur, others are less probable, some others virtually impossible. Only such an environment do we understand (Bauman, 1997, p. 7).