

GESTURE OF THE BOOK

by

Beth Louise Easton

**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
For the degree of Master of Arts
Graduate Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto**

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Gesture of the Book

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Curriculum, Teaching and Learning**

Master of Arts, 1999

This thesis–book is an existential phenomenological inquiry undertaking to speak the gesture of the book. The inquirer endeavors to utter and make articulate for herself and the reader through reflective discourse, the gesture of the book as experienced within the biography of the inquiry. With an emphasis on finding a way of speaking the existential responsibility for our own voices in inquiry, the inquiry is a theoretical commitment to a communicative relationship with the world as encountered through interpretive inquiry (Darroch and Silvers, 1982).

Engaged with the sensible of the book, as maker, author, inquirer, and reader, the inquirer endeavors to communicatively transcend silences reached at the limits of theoretical understandings (Silvers, 1983) through a phenomenologically speaking of the gesture of the book.

**To my parents Carmen and Paul Easton
whose unfaltering love above all else, sees me through.**

Acknowledgements

While I claim that this thesis-book is the story of my endeavor to speak the gesture of the book, the other story, and in many respects a more important one, is the story of the people who supported and loved me through its making. It is because of the support, example, and friendship of the following people that I was able to do this work I loved.

Ron Silvers, my supervisor and teacher whose gracious generosity of spirit helped me understand how I could do what I desired. His regard for knowledge and learning taught me how to express care in my work. I am grateful to have worked with this wonderful teacher.

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lets me live joy with him through spontaneous tent-pitching, midnight burials, wooden sledding, and other stubborn matters of heart. John, my brother, who still calls me Sis, like it's my name. JD, another wordy, who in his own squid-ink-inspired, spirit-wrestling-induced mayhem lets it be known that all is possible in word and deed. Karyn, for her absolute commitment to wonder and boxing in all its furious and fantastic forms. Loree, for sharing my preference for the passions of antics over the passions of rage. Maki, whose love of toast and Messiah helped me through one very cold winter. Martha, who has shared with me her heart of movement and helped me better live my own. Nick, a wordy who, when I didn't know what I was getting into making books, made it seem possible, and whose own writings suggest infinite, surprising worlds to me. Paul, my brother, who continues to claim he raised me. Rick and Terry, who in a strange way helped me find my way here. Reg, my fellow booky, teacher, and technical advisor whose love of books nourished my own, and whose daily check-ins kept me laughing. Regina, beyond providing sanctuary and feline inspiration, her thoughtful insights help me find my way. Renga, whose many, many packages and letters, and his life of words, thankfully never stopped calling to me. Sharon, the other wordy, sets a grammar example to which I aspire, and whose sharp turns of phrase inspire me to more. Queen Theresa, who rescues me almost daily with her unwavering commitment to love and madness and our friendship. And to Weibke, who will likely shout at me for being last, which is why I love her.

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Vision

Here

I am holding a book in my hands. I am standing and holding it in front of me, at my belly. I don't see the place where I stand, nor do I know where I stand. I only see my bare forearms and the book in my hands. There is no fore or back ground from which the book can be distinguished. I see it only in relation to my hands and forearms, in relation to my holding.

Holding the book I do not read what is printed on its covers or pages. I do not read the symbols or images contained within, I only notice the spare, white expanse of page, and the bare skin of my forearms. I hold, touch, and move the book in my hands. Bringing it closer to my face I smell it, bringing it closer to my chest and throat, I breathe.

I notice the paper, the cover, the binding, its size and weight, how the book feels in my hands, how my hands feel the book. I watch my hands touching the book and feel it against my bones and the skin covering them.

I run an index finger firmly up and down the length of the spine. I force the rounded tip of my finger over the edge onto the cover. I feel the board of the covers, their firm turn and cut. I extend my hand wide, palm and fingers passing gently, flat over the books front and back surfaces. I pass my hand gently above the book, allowing only the smallest of space between its surface and the surface of my hand.

Slowly, I raise the book balancing it in one hand. I let the covers and pages drop open. Under its own weight it parts and widens from

the bound center buoyantly splaying open. Gently, I lift and lower lift and lower my hands and forearms feeling the book balanced across my palm.

Inching my fingers deep into the crease of the spine. I look inside to see where page meets binding gently pressing further inward to its center, its root. There I discover the string that binds the pages together. There I discover the cradle of the spine in which the pages are enfolded and held.

First I hold one page then a few more between my thumb and index finger. I wave the pages forward and back to feel their strength and give, their motion from center, from spine. I turn my hand over stroking the page with the top of my hand touching less with flesh, more with bone. Turning my hand palm down I bring the flesh of my hand to the skin of the page. Then closing my hand, I close the book. Gripping the front and back cover with my fingertips I squeeze the book and pull its spine into the arc of my palm.

Animations

Here

There are only thirty minutes until curfew. Around me people duck into lanes and courtyards, abruptly vanishing into their homes. I hurry past strangers and acquaintances without exchanging glances. The eyes of others, even those familiar and dear, have become a risk to be avoided. While the desire to look into faces, to recognize and be recognized, is an act of resistance few can afford.

I find my way without aid of street signs or building numbers. Clandestinely we removed these postings in the first days of the occupation aiming to hinder the Occupier's navigation through the streets of our town. Enraged they publicly punished people caught removing and concealing signs, While an attempt to curtail further act of sedition, crimes punished provided us with evidence of realized defiance and sowed additional rejoin among us.

People continued to remove street signs, numbers, and names hiding them in holes sunk deep in gardens or empty lots. All hints of freshly turned soil were concealed to prevent Occupiers from locating these, and other, earth caches of valuables. Soon no public sign marking direction or location remained. We learned to find our way through memory of past movement, or the revelations of new wanderings.

During the first days of the occupation libraries, schools, museums, galleries, and bookstores were closed and all unauthorized gatherings of people banned. Although private book collections remain marginally tolerated, it is illegal to produce, sell, trade, transport, or consume books and other forms of printed words. The only exception is the weekly broadsheet produced by the Occupiers. It contains propaganda about appropriate thought and conduct, poorly disguised as news. People carry and read it as an act of self-protection, purposely exposing it by tucking the folded paper under an arm, or letting it stick out from the top of a grocery bag.

After we first removed the signs I made a small book from rationed paper. I folded sheets into four quarters, then with a knife, slit along the creases to make pages that I sewed together with a simple needle and thread. I finished the book by covering the outer leaves with cloth to strengthen and protect it. Inside I wrote lists of street names, house and building numbers, the names of shops and businesses. I made marks beside the homes of family and friends, beside the names of parks, libraries, cafes and other private and public places where I remember moments of joy, rage, and wonder.

From memory I recorded the presence of these sites, incising their absence with hand and ink. Then I sewed the book to the underside of my pocket, inside my coat lining. Here it rests close to my body. When I walk outside in the streets I slip my hand inside my pocket, and pressing my fingers to the cloth I feel my talisman, a touchstone of paper and ink conjuring my absent, longed for world. Feeling it there, I imagine holding the hand of a longed-for lover, or placing my hand to the cheek of an old friend whom long ago I fell out with, but now touching my hand to their cheek, I can't remember, nor care, why.

I began meeting regularly with the others a month after the prohibitions were introduced. Upon an old friend's recommendation I was admitted into the group. We are six, four more than is legally permitted to gather at one time unless of the same family. None of us knew one another before, and we have only books and the need to bear our secret meetings in common.

Our meeting locations change regularly, and to avoid suspicion we arrive and depart separately. Twice a month we each rehearse excuses about sick relatives and friends and then gather to trade, read, and speak about books. We never discuss the occupation, and it seems that more than anything this interdiction vivifies our inquiries.

Before leaving home I meticulously packed my bag with groceries to conceal the false bottom and the books I hide underneath. Today beneath bread, apples, and cheese I carry a volume of poetry to read from, and two novels to trade. The others may read from books on such subjects as history or art, and will also bring novels to trade. Lately too, we have been daring to speak about philosophy and religion, but discussion remains scant, if not terse, nearly always left for last when time is short and our staggered exists have begun. It is as if the beliefs these books speak of have become possibilities too uncertain to bear.

Making my way, I stay close to shop and building walls where fading daylight offers a dim recess of safety. Incidents are fewer now, for after nearly a year occupied we, and they too, have settled into the daily machinations of a capitulated reprieve. Random shootings occur less often as we both have reached the understanding that we share an interest in enduring without provocation and incident. Wits and nerves remain wrung taut, and from time to time, without reason or warning, street crossings, even the shadows or walls become perilous as tension is released.

I step into the street at the last moment before I must cross and turn the corner, forcing myself beyond fear, to feel something less certain, less tangible. In the middle of the silent, empty street I am aware of the wide breadth of bone of my exposed back. There I feel this unprotected extremity come alive with sensation. There during the brief minutes it takes to cross the intersection, I feel the relief danger can allow.

I am preoccupied with the book hidden in my coat. Agitated, I press my fingers to the cloth to feel the hidden book. I slide my fingers inside between the covers and along the pages, imagining the lettering, the words, the names contained there. I prod to feel the thread, the stitches, the firm double knot securing the simple binding. I imagine myself carrying the book in my hands, holding it before me, referring to it as I journey, stopping at intersections, in front of buildings, homes, and shops that bear no signs. There without concern for the prohibitions or the possible consequences of my actions, I hold the book in front of me, touching the cover, turn the pages, and begin to search.

Methodically I feel each page with my hand then run my fingers along the list until I locate the name of the place where I stand. When I find it, pressing my finger to the page, I say the name out loud, recalling an experience associated with the place, or the people of it.

Prompted by the names and numbers inscribed on the pages, I proceed from place to place with the book in my hands, guided by it in my search for each site listed and my desire to have this book enliven my world, for it to somehow hurt or heal me. Startled, just ahead I hear a gate slam shut and glimpse one of the others entering the house. Already I have arrived. Taking my hand from my pocket to push the gate open, I discover I have been ripping at the stitches concealing the book in my coat lining. Shreds of torn thread are pushed up under my nails and wrapped around my fingers. Placing my hand back inside my pocket I feel the revealed book. Reaching the house, I hold the book in my hand, and knock on the door.

Here

I enter the house and walk from the front door down the hallway to her bedroom. Unsure if she is awake I wait for her to greet me as I take off my coat and arrange her chair. From beneath the pillow she grunts a hoarse dry, "Good-morning." "Good-morning" I whisper taking the pillow from her head and pulling back the covers, releasing the musky scent of her skin from the bedding. I feel awkward smelling the aroma of her ill body, I am unprepared to face what she can not conceal from me.

She lies on her side, unmoving, legs and arms curled upwards. Each night she is placed in this position and each morning lifted from it. From out between her knees I gently slip the pillow that prevents her anchored bones from carving sores in her fine, thin flesh. She begins to move her gnarled fingers, releasing her clenched fists and unfolding her wrists. I put my arms around her small, frail body and taking a deep breath lift her from the bed and place her in the wheelchair. Afraid I may drop her she asks if I am alright, and directs me in an even tone "Be careful. Watch the carpet."

With both of my hands I adjust her torso in the chair, waiting to feel her narrow hips slip into the round of the seat, ensuring she is far enough back, balanced, arms on armrests, right hand on the motor's control. I have learned to recognize by the tilt of her head, the lean of shoulders and torso, when she is settled.

She confirms with a simple “all right” and I step back as she wheels out the door and down the hall to the bathroom. With failing eyesight, she travels guided by the shadows of memory and the occasional bump of the chair to the wall.

As I make the bed, I hear the chair motor humming in the hallway. When she calls “Ok” I go to her at the bathroom door where she waits. I ease her forward out of the chair so I can get my arms around her, then straining, boost her full weight into my arms, pulling her firmly, secure to my body. I feel her hold her breath, become rigid against me as I move her, and wonder if pressed to my chest she feels my heart beating and the dampness of my sweat. She doesn't say if these clumsy lifts hurt her, her thin bones folded tightly to my torso. I think they must.

I carry her to the toilet, then bathe and dress her. Then finally after breakfast, after following the same meticulous routine that is followed each day by the others who care for her, we do something different; this one day a week we spend together we read.

Slowly we circle the study a number of times as she surveys the bookshelves lining the four walls. While not blind, her vision is poor and she can only read some of the oversize print on covers and spines. Out loud she says the names of authors and books she can see. Others she recalls from memories evoked by this moving incantation through her book collection. I follow behind her retrieving the titles she requests.

The library is vast, and all but a few of the books are fiction, including classic and contemporary novels, short stories, myths, fairy, and folk tales. She has not told me about the history or meaning of her library and I have not asked.

I pile three dozen or more books on the low table in front of the couch. I have given up trying to identify some pattern or method informing her choices, and stopped expecting to read excerpts from even half of her weekly selections. It has become clear that she doesn't intend for us to read from all of them, but wants books down off the shelves, piled into tall, solid stacks close to her. These stacks, lined up on the table are like fortress towers delineating and securing the parameters of this time and place where she reads stories from books.

I lower her onto the couch, then prop her securely upright with pillows. After pulling the book table closer, I position myself sideways at one end of the couch and pull her toward me. Leaning my back against a side armrest, I brace her between my out-stretched bent legs, and ease the weight of her torso against me, resting her back and shoulders against my chest.

Initially we read in a more formal position, in chairs facing each other with the table of books between us. She would choose a title saying "Now I am going to read..." The first time she uttered this impossible phrase I waited a few moments for her to do as she declared before I realized this was her way of asking me to read to her.

I read and she listens, watching me. I notice how intently she fixes her gaze on my hands as I turn pages or reach for a book, her eyes following the movements of my hands and arms. I try to meet her eyes, wanting to acknowledge some detail of the story, but she focuses without distraction on my mouth, watching me form words, sound stories to her with lips, tongue and breath.

A few weeks pass and she asks if I could place my chair alongside hers. At first I think this might be because she can't hear me well, or because she becomes distracted seeing me read when trying to hear the story. But after I move closer, she asks me to move closer still, until I am right beside her.

Then, depending on the varying strength of forearms and the flexibility of her fingers, she reaches over and touches the books as I read to her. She doesn't read over my shoulder, follow along with her eyes, making out whatever words she is able. Often her eyes are closed or she looks ahead, listening while she rests her hand upon a page, touching her fingertips softly to the book's fore edge, feeling the book as she listens to the story.

Sometimes instead of placing her fingers on the book, she touches them to my forearm. I feel the expressive pressure of her fingers on my skin as I read and become more aware of the book I hold in my hand, its size and weight, the texture of the page, paper, the sound my voice makes as I read the story aloud to her.

Then after a few weeks of reading this way she timidly asks if we can read together on the couch and if I might help her hold the book in her hands.

I feel the back of her ribs gently rising and falling against my chest as she breathes. I cradle her, her hands and arms resting in mine as she holds the book in her hands. She needs the book to be close, preferring it squarely in front of her face, six or eight inches away, filling her immediate field of vision.

I read aloud to her, my head over her right shoulder, my mouth beside her ear. This close to her I am aware of the long, deep inhalations she takes while she listens to the story. She seems to smell the books. The ink, leather covers, cloth bindings, paper. even dust gathered from shelves, are all elements for her to savour.

“Now I am going to read...” I stretch my left arm across the width of her chest, and holding her right shoulder, lean forward to retrieve the book she requests from a pile on the table. I open it and place it in her hands which now rest limp in her lap. I scoop my arms underneath hers and help her raise her arms and the book into place. I wrap my fingers gently around hers, and with her lift and turn the pages as she hold the book, touching it, touching it to her.

Here

I pause, resting against the baluster at the top of the staircase. Sunlight seeps from the walls and the temple's dome infusing the room with an aqueous haze of light. Catching my breath, I continue across the floor of the circular chamber and locate the incised outline of a hand on a stone on the far wall. Placing mine upon it, I press firmly until the surface gently gives way and the door opens.

Here between the summit's internal chamber and the temple's external wall lies a narrow circular passageway lined with towering shelves. Entering the ginzot I find the cadre of others systematically working. Until a few days ago, the shelves were brimming with books, but along with the others I have sorted and removed the volumes from the depository and carried them downstairs to the temple entranceway.

Although three years have not passed since the last burial, for over a year the ginzot shelves have been overflowing. The town's swelling population, its fame as a centre of learning, and the increased availability of books, all contribute to an unprecedented number of books being read, becoming worn and requiring storage and burial. Also it is hoped an earlier burial may bring rains to end the two-year drought.

Reaching for the final stack of books to carry downstairs, fine cracks in the skin of my hands again rupture and bleed. After days of handling the books my skin has come to emulate the brittle, worn surfaces of the deteriorating volumes. The surfaces of the books, parched from storage and disuse, absorb the moisture of my skin and cause it to dry, split, and bleed.

As I disturb the books from their provisional resting-place, the air grows heavy with dust from the filings of the crumbling pages and the feasts of worms and lice. With each breath I inhale the decaying matter of the books; musty, fecund remnants of skin, bone, plant and stone. No longer do I consume the book's abstractions, instead I ingest the books themselves, whole, with each breath. I taste the chalky bits that settle in the back of my mouth and must swallow frequently to clear them from my throat.

From the shelves I remove books gathered from temples, schools, and private libraries. They are of every imaginable size and description. Some are cumbersome, dense volumes requiring the full strength of both of my hands and arms to lift and hold them. Others are small enough to fold into the palm of my hand. Others are slim and elegant, able to be discretely slipped into a coat pocket. I imagine placing the smallest one under my tongue where it would induce moisture like a pebble.

Running my fingers over the covers I feel the textures of the materials encasing the books. I touch the skins of animals: lizard, snake, calf, pig, goat, and other creatures unrecognizable. If I look closely at the skins I can see pores, openings through which air and moisture passed between animal and atmosphere; patterns of hair follicles; and scars from wounds.

As I attend to the books for burial, no longer preoccupied with reading them, with what knowledge or questions they contain, I am struck by their corporeal elements, reminded of their living roots. No longer tools of study, these old, discarded and disapproved books I am to bury offer more than knowledge. I am enticed to regard their matter with all of my senses.

Sturdy blocks of hardwood and ivory once polished to gleam like glass, luxuriant velvet, fine silk, brass pounded down to the weight of paper, encase the volumes I remove from the shelves. There are books elaborately inscribed with images of fantasy or heroic fury, others bearing golden stamps of their creators or patrons; books embossed with images of both heaven and earth, adorned with horns, gems, tapestry, fur, and feathers; books inscribed with inks from plants and metals, others coloured with pigments of powdered stones, minerals, and nuts. The finest are illuminated with radiant gold.

I open wooden boxes and discover books with silver cases secured with ornate alloy hinges; books enfolded in brocade slipcovers; books bound tightly in stout shrouds of woven linen. Curious to see and feel all – I finger parchment, cotton, and vellum leaves and search between the pages for the sinewy knots that reinforce the stitched bindings.

Slowly, with my final armload of books, I make my way down the dimly lit, twisting staircase. Nearing the ground floor of the temple I hear the din of the crowd that is beginning to gather out front in the street. Carefully, I stack this last load of books along with the rest to be placed in the burial receptacles.

Rules governing the storage and burial of books are strict. No books may be thrown away, left to decay, destroyed, or re-used. The proper burial of each book is an act of respect undertaken with reverence for the words and teachings contained within. To bury a book improperly is a grave act of impropriety, a defilement of idea, no matter how mundane its object or origin. Particular consideration is granted volumes addressing the Divine. These books must be buried together in vessels made expressly for this purpose by artisans.

Ever increasingly there are disputes over categorization of the books as definitions about what constitutes the Divine, as well as related words and teachings, are rigorously debated. Also disagreements continue to stem from our differing ideas as readers and students, but now new knowledge, new questions and methods of inquiry, as well as new book forms, new materials, technologies and methods of production, challenge our previous understandings about all knowledge, not just about the Divine. As questions about the designation of books for burial have become more complex, the resolutions reached feel less definite and meaningful.

In large open baskets I lay books and manuscripts including the classics; literature; philosophy; art; history; works of biology, medicine and healing; jurisprudence; government; military strategy; the natural sciences and agriculture. I carefully place scrolls and manuscripts about matters of the Divine deep inside earthen pots, sealing each with a tight-fitting lid.

I hear laughter and shouts outside as horns and drums sound calls to mark the celebration's beginning. I make my way to the temple's front door and wait for the other scholars and temple officials to gather. With them, I will carry a clay jar to the cemetery. These jars are reserved for those considered learned, while baskets of secular books and teachings are carried by lay-people. Despite the privilege of being entrusted with Divine scrolls, I'll miss carrying a basket, smelling the sweet effusion of straw sweating in the sun's heat, and seeing, for the last time, the books I am to bury.

Outside the sun is hot. As I walk I cradle the clay vessel in my arms, holding it low, anchored to my torso and pelvis, its lid resting just below my chin. Held there the clay cools my body. I become caught-up in the people moving, unified as a procession. I easily forget my feet, guided by the musicians playing among us, as I travel from the center of town to the outskirts where the cemetery is located.

I do not speak to the others around me, fixing my attention instead on the movement and expressions of people. I watch people stroll and swing their baskets like surprise gifts as they turn to call to friends. I see others, mostly women, walk with baskets half-resting on their hips, as if carrying a harvest of vegetables or a heap of wet laundry. Their postures speak of everyday tasks, of unplanned strength. I watch young women and men teasing and flirting with each other, the books becoming props to aid their folly.

I delight most in the children. For many it may be their first ginza burial. Most are too young to read, but carry one or two books from their parent's baskets. Some seem timid and the formal, awkward postures of their hands and wrists suggest little acquaintance with their bounty. Other children, less shy, beam and appear to be on the verge of exploding, about to run, shout, jump, or dance. I catch some singing, who then forgetting themselves, stop mid-song, mouths open, to stare at some new passing spectacle: the costumed horse and ride; the inflated bouquet of the balloon-seller; the unleashed dog dodging the moving forest of legs. Seeing their excitement, I wonder about the renewal of life and idea the ceremony is to inspire.

Entering the cemetery I smell the dank piles of freshly turned soil and feel the moisture released into the air from the opened earth. After walking deeper into the cemetery grounds, I stop beside a grave and place the clay jar there beside me. Released, my arms are tender the muscles strained. Four other students with clay jars join me and we arrange ourselves around the grave as the musicians continue to play and the remainder of the procession enters. Slowly small groups gather beside each grave and place their baskets or jars on the ground. When everyone is in place an official tells the story of the burial celebration. As I listen to the history of the tradition I remember moments of discovering, reading, and sharing books.

The story finishes and the musicians begin to play. People start to sing quietly. For a few moments I watch the clusters of people place their books into graves. I crouch down and lean forward over the open grave and lower the vessel into the ground. I feel an odd mix of elation and regret. Taking handfuls of loose soil from the pile beside the grave, I slowly begin to cover the books.

An Elucidation

The vision and the animations were created for another book. Presented here they are traces of those found in the other book. Although the words are the same, differences abound. In the other book the words are not printed, they are transcribed, written out by hand by the author. There they are placed on the lines in a way that corresponds to the movement of hand. In the other book the pages on which the words are written are slightly narrower, heavier, the surface fine, the edges unfinished, ragged. In the other book the texts are encased in two covers. The outer one is a portfolio made from pigskin and has ties of cotton. The inner one is covered in handmade paper containing shards of mica. It is sewn to the sections of the book with hemp thread stitched along the spine. There calfskin vellum slips reinforce the stitches. All materials and forms are exposed for touch.

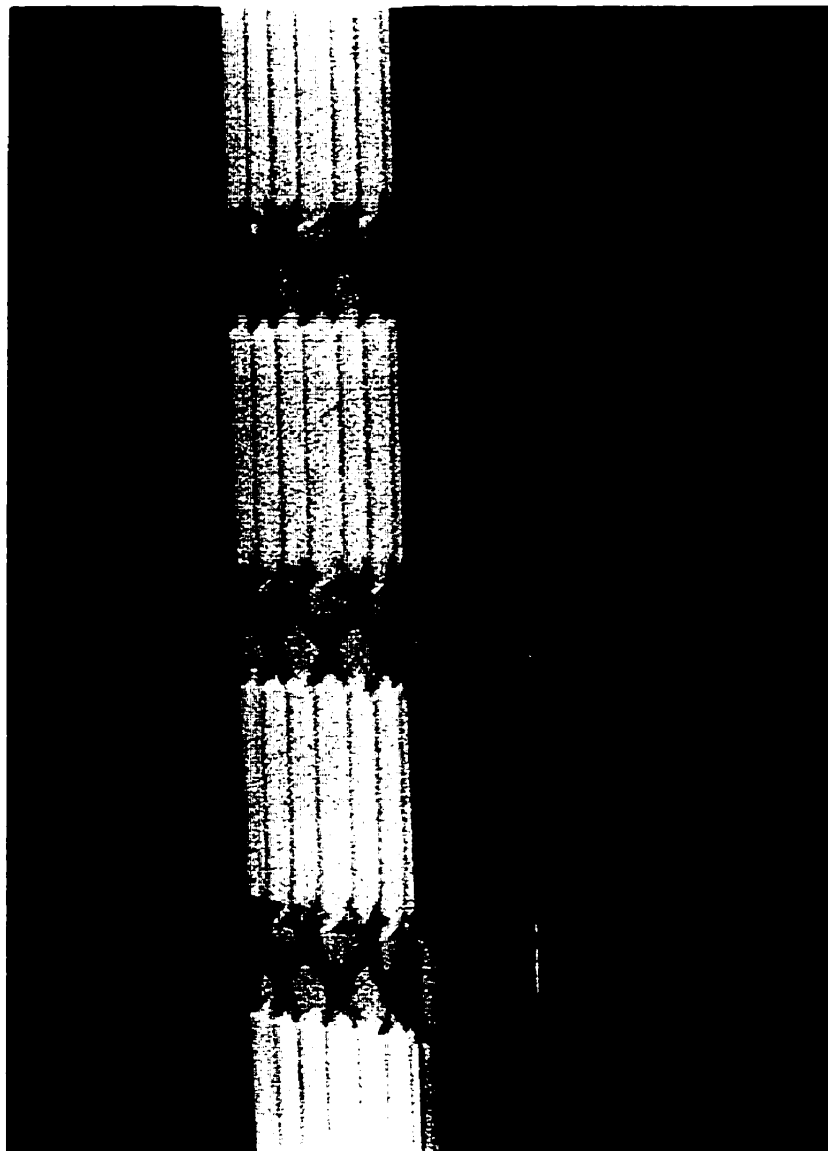
The author bound the other book by hand. This book was bound by hand, but not the author's. There the reader will find mistakes made by the author. These mistakes aren't troubling to her for medieval monks believed only God could make the perfect book so purposely included one mistake in each book they transcribed. Her mistakes tell of her body, her making. Here they have been corrected, erasing the evidence of her hands.

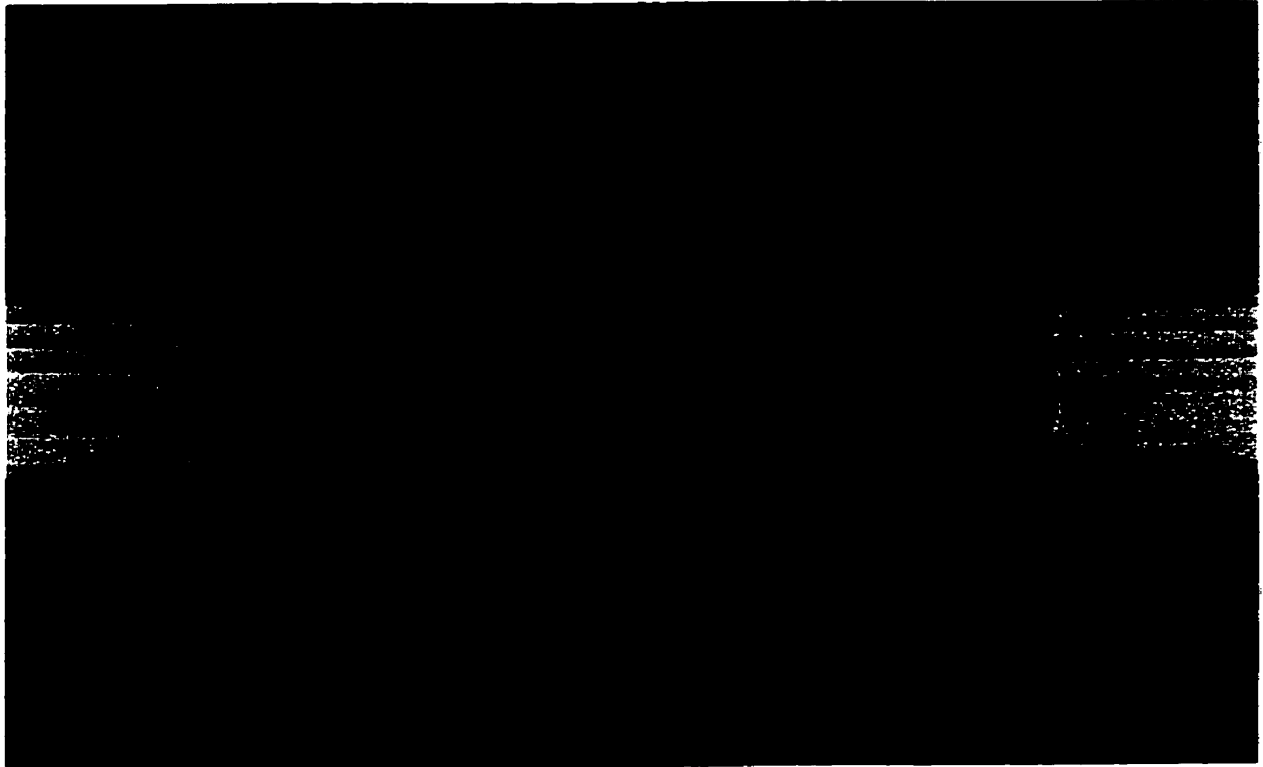
The other book was conceived, written, and made, as a unified whole. Choices for its design, material, and construction were made in tandem with writing the text, and the movements of the author, the maker. Most choices in making this thesis-book were made by the author, the inquirer, but some elements were regulated by the

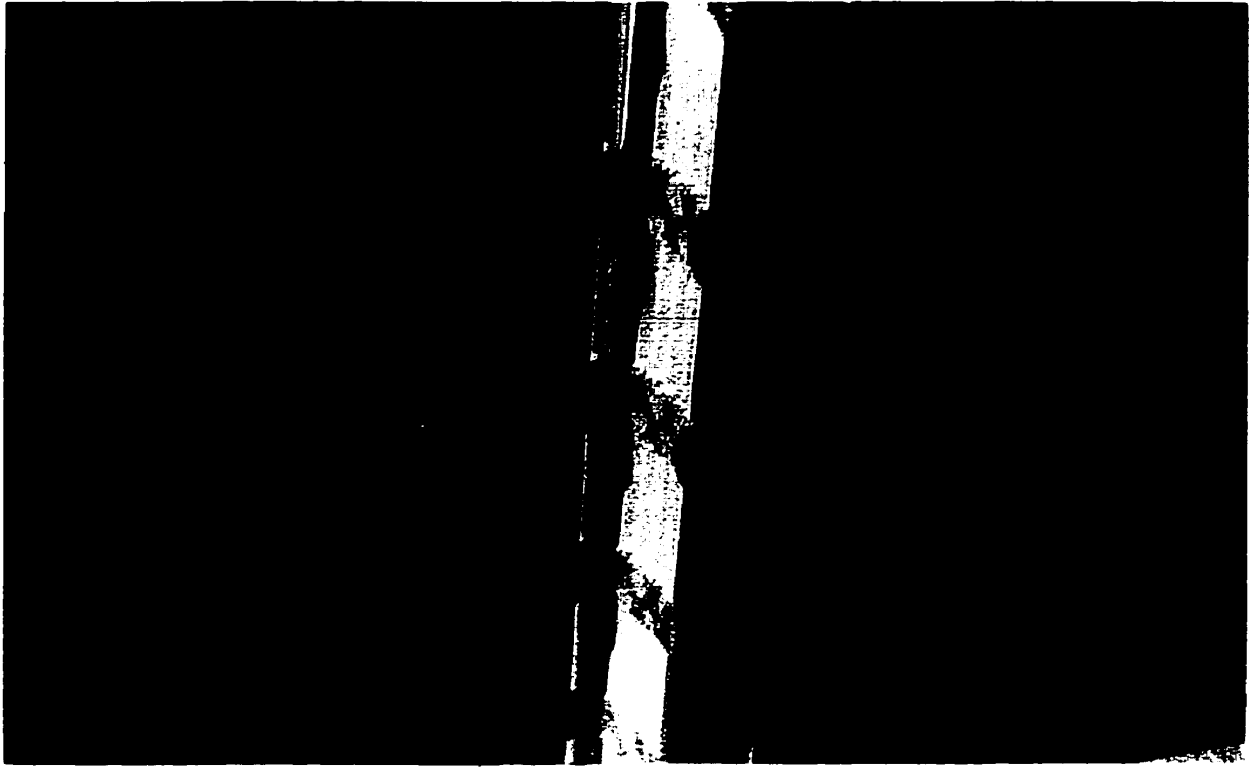
movements of the institution to which it will be presented. The other book was the choice of desire.

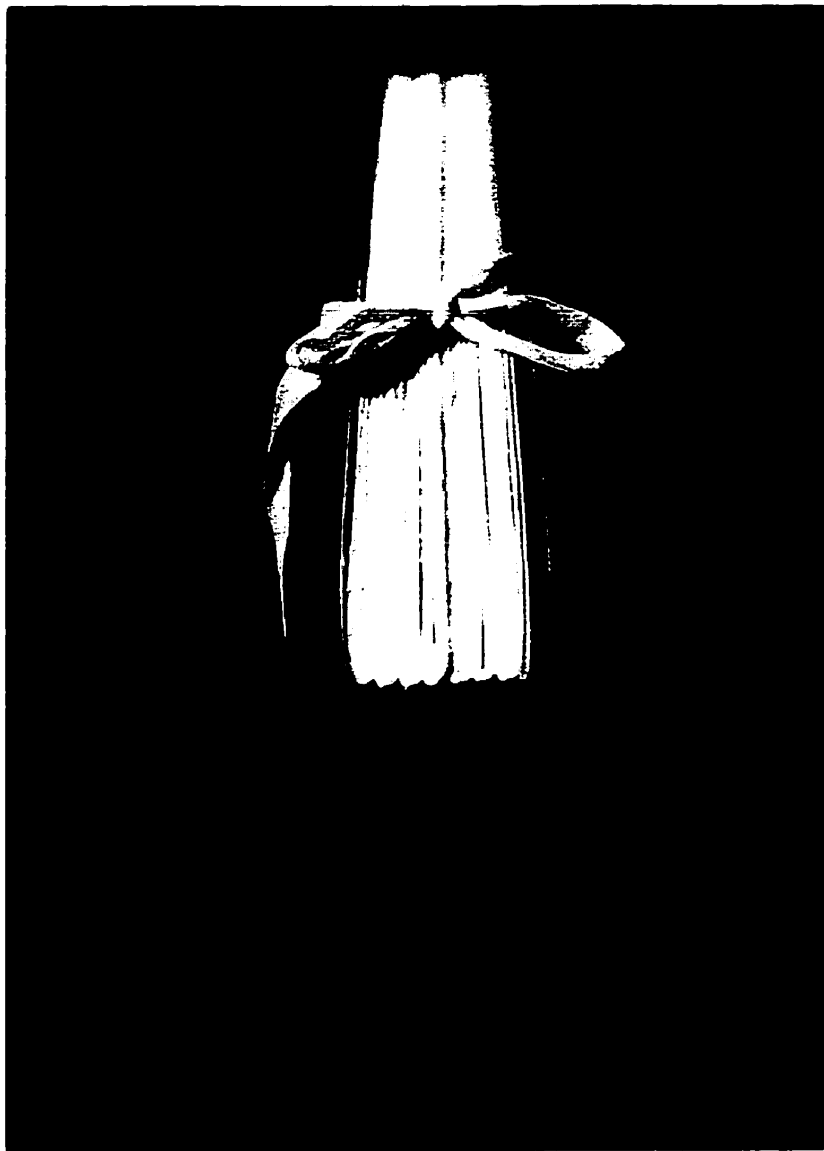
This thesis-book provides interpretive fragments of the other book. Here too desire animates. The author hopes the fragments will show the reader what was at play in the making of the other book. The vision, the animations, along with images of the other book, pieces of its materials, and interpretive reflections aim to show the biography of the inquiry that was the making of the other book. The other book is the essence of the inquiry. This rest, this thesis-book of resonate fragments, it its reflective interpretation.











Promptings

Incipit ~

To speak the gesture of the book. Opening words. An incipit. Intended to perform less like a title and more like a chord of music, it is to be a sounding resonance throughout this intertext. In the tradition of medieval manuscripts, which generally lacked titles, named instead after their opening words, incipits evoked the tradition in which the author hoped to place her work and suggested the purpose that prompted her to write (Illich, 1993: 8). In the context of this work, the incipit suggests the method through which the author undertakes and understands her work, and offers impressions about what aroused her to write.

To speak the gesture of the book. The incipit echoes the work of Roland Barthes who, writing phenomenologically, undertook to find a way to speak the pleasure of the text:

Barthes has found...a way to *speak pleasure*, a way which leads him to abandon the systematic of earlier studies...his way is to give himself away – literally, to confess, to speak with all the entranced conviction of a man in the dock: to give himself up to an evidently random succession of fragments: facets, aphorisms, touches and shoves, nudges, elbowings, bubbles, trial balloons, 'phylacteries,' he calls them, an invisible design – the design is the simple staging of the question 'What do we enjoy in the text?' (1975:vii)

To speak the gesture of the book. This inquirer has been encouraged by the writings of Barthes, drawing upon them as she undertakes to compose: What is the gesture of the book? How might the gesture of the book be spoken? This thesis-book is an attempt to speak the gesture of the book where the inquirer endeavors to utter and make articulate, for herself and the reader, the gesture of the book. The inquiry is intended to be a phenomenological doing, an interpretive inquiry of the gestures in the biography of the inquiry.

Origins ~

An inquiry with origins in a question and silence. A question first posed some time ago in a different place and context. Carried with the inquirer, or perhaps it carried her, here. From time to time along the way it was remembered and said aloud, on occasion as a part of a story about a journey – a journey of difficult work, of learning and love, a journey that came to be understood as a turning, in which she turned, in a new direction. Sometimes the story was told just so the teller could trace the experiences and emotions that preceded the asking of the question. The story and its telling were a part of an evolving explanation about how she came to ask, what traces of body, experience, desire, memory, idea and dream, ally her to ask, the question.

A friend accompanied her the first time she asked the question. The friend listened as she spoke and was silent when she finished. Sitting with him, unmoving, unspeaking, she sensed she didn't expect an answer, from him or herself, so was not surprised by the silence. Her asking seemed important as an utterance met with silence. For her to hear her voice and to remain in the silence that followed, and to later remember hearing the sound of the question and the silence that followed, seemed necessary. That her friend and colleague, a companion to her heart, was there was not insignificant.

Later she wondered, if asking the question was possible because she was willing to accept there may be no answer. She has wondered if her ability to ask the question, to express the need and

willingness for understanding and to be met with silence, her own and that of an other, was a greater revelation to her than an answer might have been. She sensed the question was of proportions too dear for resolution, as it was imbued with irreconcilable surrender.

The asking of the question has come to feel more like a pledge to belief and hope than a call for an answer, a compulsion for resolution. To utter it, even to herself, as she did over and over like a mesmerizing reflective incantation to self, prompted her to fill with doubt and wonder.

When the inquiry began she recalled her question, hearing the sonic memory of voice in mind, the beckoning in heart. The question was a tidemark on the landscape of a life, a notation of change, of continuity and movement, a testimony to past and present, an allusion to future. When the question was recalled, so too was the understanding – albeit somewhat reluctantly for what might a question be or become if not a search for an answer - that it may not need to be answered. For the question seemed other wise, less of reason, more of wonder.

Orienting ~

I have come to interpret my asking of the question and my silence in the face of this asking, as a signal that I had reached a limit of my understanding. The question I asked was a part of another inquiry, and in the silence I realized the approaches and understandings I had relied upon could no longer serve me. Reaching this limit induced a crisis in my ability to be with and express my experiences of my self and the world. This crisis of being and expression was, and continues to be, not an impasse but a (re)turning, a turning anew, toward and within inquiry. I understand my efforts within this inquiry are in part an attempt to inspire the crisis, to express and engage the silence, and in so doing vivify my understandings and expressions of self and the world.

Ron Silvers' notions of questioning, silence, and reaching a limit of understanding, in his reflections upon his research with children (Silvers, 1983) offer conceptual understandings which resonate with, and help to clarify, my own. He asks a question of a child and is met with silence which he describes as "a rupture of understanding ...present as my experience of failing to be a part of another's world of meaning" (Silvers, 1983:93). He contends we experience "silence as a struggle with our histories and our occasion...In daily life, as an unexpected intrusion into what we are engaged in, or in our academic work, as a contingency, it becomes manifest as a rupture" (Silvers, 1983:93). Silence is not a deficit but a contingency, an opening, an expanse that can better enable us to be with the world as it presents itself to us and as we encounter it. Silvers explains "contingencies

present themselves to reveal not a methodological incompleteness in design, but the taken-for-granted sources of my (the inquirer's) life-world in the face of another life-world" (1983:93). The silences of the other, the life-world, of his inquiry, the children, and their presence as children not only provide openings, but make demands upon the inquirer:

...their presence...demands that I transform my attention, suspend my interest and 'see' what is present. Such a task requires that I understand silence as an avenue beyond the limits of an adult horizon (Silvers, 1983:93-94).

In this way inquiry becomes concerned with a search to communicatively transcend the silences reached at the limit of horizon, the limit of one's understanding.

Venturing to identify and speak my understandings of, and the elements that constitute, the turning anew which typifies the 'doing' of my inquiry, I draw on the forms of description and theorizing that are interpretive inquiry as expressed by Darroch and Silvers (1982). Theirs is an existential, phenomenological form of inquiry in which the:

...researcher's biography must be analytically incorporated in her or his understandings of others...in communicating these understandings the researcher's biography must be available to others in a visible commitment to discourse" (Darroch and Silvers 1982:3).

Therein this form of phenomenological inquiry is distinct from other forms of phenomenology which undertake to find others' place of speaking. Whereas here the emphasis is on "finding our way of speaking and our existential responsibility for our own voice in inquiry" (Darroch and Silvers, 1982:6). Inquiry becomes a theoretical commitment to a "communicative relationship with what we encounter, [but]...not as form of inquiry separate from ourselves" (Darroch and Silvers, 1982:16). Interpretive inquiry stresses:

what is at issue...is the reconciliation between worlds present in research (that is, the world of the researcher and the world of the other who is studied) and the world of the receiver (reader) of that research" (Darroch and Silvers, 1983:3).

It is these practices and commitments: the analytical inclusion of my biography; the attempt to find a way of speaking by attending to my voice and its location; the expression of my experiences of the other – the book - as experienced; the attempt to reconcile the world of the inquiry with the world of the receiver; these elements of reflective discourse, constitute the movements of my (re)turning, my approach to inquiry, my 'doing' to speak the gesture of the book.

Stirring flesh ~

**Gesture, a meaningful movement,
prompting, an action of the body.
Performed with intention, a move to evoke, seeking
response and to disturb. An expression
of feeling, it can cause commotion and convey sentiments
and desires. The ability to cause ruptures and raptures,
breaks, openings,
they lead to change. (Oxford English, 1989)**

**Gestures, embodied motions of meaning, the moving presence
of flesh in language. They typify the bodily act of language, are
stresses and tensions of the body at the intersection of language and
the world (Vernon, 1979). While speech intends, carrying the burden of
meaning, gestures play, affect with desire around the edge of meaning.
There, where the limits of language can be felt, movements of the
body, of hands and arms, gestures incite. Flesh stirs, and it beckons
meaning, accompanies and describes, prods at the inner contours of
spoken words opening them up to more. The body introduces
language into the world in the form of speech and the body introduces
the world into language in the form of matter, weight, flesh, thrust up
inside of speech, as gesture (Vernon, 1979:21). To speak the gesture
is to undertake to speak the body and its endeavors, experiential and
responsive, with the world.**

**I endeavor to speak the gesture of the book by undertaking to
speak this thesis-book, to speak its bodily language expressed in the**

stresses and tensions of its making and reading, in it as medium, and as object of inquiry. To speak the gesture I consider the book at the intersection, a movement in flesh between book and the embodied world of maker, reader, author, inquirer.

Desire ~

Asking a question is an act of desire. From the Latin verb *quodere*, to question is to seek, to seek to learn. When I question I seek to reach beyond myself, I extend myself, beyond the limits of my understanding, to encounter more than there is, more than I am. I recall and raise a question and it in turn recalls and raises me; recalls me to my life to my body, experiences, desires, memories, ideas, dreams, the other, the stimulus of possibility and the unknown and its promise.

To ask a question is an act of destruction, it ruptures the sense that the other, the world is known, named, spoken. When I posit a question I release the world from a state of determinability, and with wonder and doubt, return it to the unknown, to the dynamic state of its' possible unknowable-ness. When I question I express the desire to be with, and of, the world from which my doubt and wonder so hopefully estranges me. I undertake to reconstruct the limits of my understanding, limits that have been severed, broken open to the more of the world.

To question is to court meaning, to attend in inquiry to that which eludes or resists being known or spoken. When I question I act to invoke. To realize what I seek through invocation, I require a location, a disposition of reception that will host what I desire. When I undertake a question I become a mendicant, wandering, untethered to fixed sites of meaning, bereft of certainty, emptied. It is this state of

emptiness, forged through release and estrangement, that can permit and seduce the movement, the desire, that is inquiry.

The concept gift, as it pertains to the mendicant, can help to explain how emptiness can permit and induce inquiry's movement. A mendicant wanders living from the offerings, the gifts, given to her begging bowl. The begging bowl is understood to be an empty place, toward which the gift, abundance, is drawn (Hyde, 1983). The inquirer also wanders, exploring, engaging through the emptiness she brings to inquiry, created through doubt and wonder. To which promptings from her body, experiences, desires, memories, ideas, dreams, the other, the world, are drawn. Emptiness pulls gently at the whole until the thing in motion, the gift, abundance, returns to replenish us (Hyde, 1983). As inquirer-mendicant, I wander, inquire, forsake in doubt and wonder, the material, the knowable-ness of the world, allowing for movement, abundance, which is receptive to my seeking.

Sentiments

as foreseeing, experiencing, knowing
(Darroch and Silvers, 1982)

Accord ~

I dream I am a teacher in an old school in a rural, impoverished community. Nothing about the school feels human. All of its' surfaces are slick, cold, and impenetrable; plastic, concrete, and metal. The hallways are empty and too wide; the walls unadorned except with clinical tones of yellow and green paint. Classrooms are large, doorways too high and broad. Floors are covered in waxed linoleum and polished tiles, even the wood of the desks has been sealed with shiny veneer, no longer reminiscent of the living.

In the dream I sit at a desk at the front of a classroom. Before me are neat, straight, rows of desks. There are no books, no images, no objects of any kind in the room. It is after school and I am working late. No one is in the class or the adjacent hallways. I am aware that other colleagues are nearby, but I can't hear them. Everything is quiet and meant to be so.

As I work I hear a sound from outside beyond the school's front doors. A deep rumbling grows louder and nearer. Listening I realize it is the sound of many, many footsteps, a mass of people marching. I begin to feel the rumbling under my feet and the ground begins to shake with the advance of the crowd toward the school. A colleague rushes into my room and tells me that I am in danger and I must hide. I know then that it is students who are marching. Although the sound is frightening, I don't feel threatened by the students. Unsure about what is going to happen, I flee to the basement. Within minutes the

students arrive at the school's front doors. Shouting that the school belongs to them, they bang on the locked doors demanding to be let inside. Listening to the pounding, to the sounds of their dissent, I feel an affinity to them and their protests, feel they are right to demand the school be returned to them. As they continue to pound on the walls that fortify the school structure, the foundations of the walls begin to shake. The ceiling cracks and pieces of earth become exposed and water begins to seep from the ground around me. I hold onto a column that supports the ceiling and floor above me sensing it might give way. I am unsure whether to flee the school or wait and hope the protests end and that the structure will remain standing.

I become two young children, one wanting to stay, unsure about what will happen if I leave, the other wanting to go, confident a departure will offer more. The one child keeps urging the other, joyfully whispering "Come on, don't you want to just slip into the book?" Encouraging a departure the child whispers, "Just slip into the book...."

Feeling the ground shaking and hearing the pounding and shouts, and imaging what it might be to move beyond the institution, away and into the book, I let go of the column and slip into the river that moves under the foundations of the institution and am carried away by the moving water. After a short while of travelling downstream I am spat up onto the shore by the motion of the river. Standing up I discover I have brought a bag of books with me. Calmly, I pick up the bag and commence to climb to the top of the hill adjacent to the river, toward the streets of the town.

At the top I step into the street and begin walking in a known direction, I realize I know I am heading back toward a place from which I have original come.

Envision ~

I am holding a book in my hands. I am standing and holding it in front of me, at my belly. I don't see the place where I stand, nor do I know where I stand. I only see my bare forearms and the book in my hands. There is no fore or back ground from which the book can be distinguished. I see it only in relation to my hands and forearms, in relation to my holding.

These words are part of a vision I have about a book. I envision this vision. Seeing it like an image of a memory, like a picture I might see in my mind as I remember an event, a memory of meeting and embracing a lover: I see the side of his mouth, the fine line of his jaw, the soft dark recess of skin where neck meets ear as I place my cheek to his. I conceive of the vision as I might conceive of an image of a desired event, imagining a future meeting when I embrace a lover; head pressed to his shoulder, I look down and see my fingertips extended upward, spread firmly and wide across his back.

I don't understand this vision of the book to be a memory, for it did not occur. Nor is it an event I necessarily wish to realize in the future. Rather I sense it as a metaphor that inhabits and stimulates me; it intends and motions me, but obliquely.

Holding the book I do not read what is printed on its covers or pages. I do not read the symbols or images contained within. I only notice the spare, white expanse of page, and the bare skin of my forearms.

I don't know when I began to sense the vision, but it feels long familiar. I sense it when I see and hold a book, when with my hands I turn pages, especially of those books carefully crafted by hand; new, previously unopened books; books made from fine materials; old, archaic, rare books. I sense it when I work with paper, cutting and folding it to make a book, or when by hand I sew together the pages of a book with a long, thin needle. The vision returns to me when I hold, discover and make books with my hands. It is as if such books, and the making of books, possess an aura, some charged presence to which I respond with the vision (Drucker, 1995:93-94).

I hold, touch, and move the book in my hands. Bringing it closer to my face I smell it, bringing it closer to my chest and throat, I breathe. I notice the paper, the cover, the binding, its size and weight, how the book feels in my hands, how my hands feel the book. I watch my hands touching the book and feel it against my bones and the skin covering them.

The vision was written in response to "What is the question of the book for me?" When I asked myself this question an account of the vision, a telling of my sensing about the book became possible. The telling of the vision allows expression of insights, of bias and sway, of the taken-for-granted (Darroch and Silvers, 1983) notions that I hold tacitly that give shape to my inquiry.

The vision makes explicit my affinity for the sensible of the book, to that which is perceived with my senses, rather than what is made

intelligible, conceived with my mind. I refer to a seeing, a holding that is relational. I see and hold the book in relation to my hands and forearms, to my body. I suggest a knowing of book in relation to my body, through my body, my body is the means by which I come to sensible of the book. This knowing is a knowing with, and between, the two bodies.

I run an index finger firmly up and down the length of the spine. I force the rounded tip of my finger over the edge onto the cover. I feel the board of the covers, their firm turn and cut. I extend my hand wide, palm and fingers passing gently, flat over the books front and back surfaces. I pass my hand gently above the book, allowing only the smallest of space between its surface and the surface of my hand.

This vision, this encounter of a book did not occur. I understand it to be a pulse between experience and imagination, reverberating within body and mind, bearing knowledge of my life. Vivian Darroch's conception of vision and narrative biography, the telling of our lives (1982) helps me to animate my understandings of the vision and its process within my inquiry. She explains that through the telling of a vision of her life:

I came to understand that the power of such telling is in the immediacy by which, through the response of speech to a vision, our 'usual' introspection is made particular-to-life. A vision allows a truth of life to recur amplified, rather than diminished, by historical facticity. (1982:106)

In the telling I bring forward what is already of me, emanating. How it intends and motions becomes more visible to me in the telling. For the telling animates the vision, it becomes less oblique, enlivened. Darroch contends the telling is "...an elucidation which would allow the vision to leave the house of my body and achieve the status of a reality-creating force" (1982:105). The telling can express a truth of life to be lived.

Slowly, I raise the book balancing it in one hand. I let the covers and pages drop open. Under its' own weight it parts and widens from the bound center buoyantly splaying open. Gently, I lift and lower lift and lower my hands and forearms feeling the book balanced across my palm. Inching my fingers deep into the crease of the spine. I look inside to see where page meets binding gently pressing further inward to its center, its root. There I discover the string that binds the pages together. There I discover the cradle of the spine in which the pages are enfolded and held.

The telling of the vision also allows my self to assume a presence in my work, to live within my work, as it becomes a part of my biographical narrative. Darroch explains that this is one task of narrative "...to save one's self. Narrative allows a reception of life, informs how life is being used, is to be used" (1982:110). As the telling enlivens the vision, the vision becomes a "reality-creating" force in my life, capable of informing how my life is being expressed, and how it might be expressed, where inclinations and desires can become truth.

First I hold one page then a few more between my thumb and index finger. I wave the pages forward and back to feel their strength and give, their motion from center, from spine. I turn my hand over stroking the page with the top of my hand touching less with flesh, more with bone. Turning my hand palm down I bring the flesh of my hand to the skin of the page. Then closing my hand, I close the book. Gripping the front and back cover with my fingertips I squeeze the book and pull its spine into the arc of my palm.

Sensible ~

A notion of the sensible attends my work. I use the concept as it is defined by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception*. The sensible is that which is apprehended by the senses (1994a:10). Comparing it to the visible he asserts “The visible is what is seized *with* the eyes, the sensible is what is seized *on by* the senses” (1994a:10). He refutes traditional notions of the sensible (psychological and physiological based notions) to claim the sensible is seized *on by*, rather than *with*, the senses. In this the sensible is not the immediate effect of external stimulus, is not instrumental, in service to consciousness, nor is it objective. Rather, the sensible is perceptual experience comprised of meaningful, ambiguous, shifting patterns of pre-objective, non-intending, experience.

He contends sensation is an element of consciousness, not an objective of it, a vital process similar to procreation, growth, and breathing. Conceiving of the sensible in this way requires a return to the phenomena itself, a move away from the sensible as an instrumental object of consciousness, to the pre-objective experience of the phenomena, to the world as given (1994a:3-12) to the book as it gestures.

Inscribing the gesture ~

Inquiry can impede the inquirer's efforts. Desire wants insatiably. I can become incapacitated by the possibilities its seeking arouses. To court meaning is to court a profusion of possibilities as the unknown, the unspoken, is infinite, and its resistance to being known allures, further activating desire. I notice, I conjure, I turn, I wander, I follow, I pursue, I attend, discovering, inviting, receiving. To discern what is most befitting my effort, and to address its yield in a way that serves my desire, is an endeavor.

When attempting to discern and express the gesture of the book from within the yield of desire, the lure of the intelligible was imposing. For the intelligible, a concept used here according to the philosophical notion intelligible, as something able to be understood only by the intellect, not by the senses, is a favoured foundation to meaning making. The intelligible reasons. It offers a regulated way, expressive and accountable, through language and methods familiar and accessible to me as an inquirer within an academic institution, and likely perceptible to others who might be interested in this inquiry. However each attempt to instate the intelligible faltered. For my wants the intelligible was too austere, too disciplined, unable to simultaneously release and capture what was at play within my work and within me. Efforts to speak the gesture, to speak the body, were truncated, for the intelligible cripples flesh, and its language and method only stimulate gestures of surrogate flesh and body.

In an attempt to move beyond my experience of the intelligible as a limit, I inscribed a vision and three animations of the book in the form of narrative accounts. Writing storied tellings was an attempt to rupture me from intelligible boundaries and inclinations, and to allow an emergence of the sensible.

To enliven the animations, I turned to the traces, undertaking to amplify the cantos of word and image that resounded as undertones of the inquiry's motif. I sensed these traces were traces of the gesture, were my "pathfinders...[able to take me]...toward the depths where we can't see clearly what we see, to discover the most known unknown thing" (Cixous, 1993:52). Pathfinders that could allow me to break open the ground necessary to speak the gesture of the book as a truth of life. The traces intimated, were insinuating, suggestive in their surfacing and resurfacing. Dreams, memories of experiences – my own and others, historical anecdotes, analysis, speculations, and fantastic imaginings, persistently imprinted my wonder with an elusively patterned, yet inciting, regard for the sensible of the book. It is as if these traces claimed me, over and above other details, nudged and agitated.

Like Barthes punctum, these traces pricked me, breaking the "very wide field of unconcerned desire, of various interest" (Barthes, 1981:27) to wound and animate me to specific details, small stings, a little cut encountered during the biography of my inquiry. I believed these traces were keys that could open my expressions up to desires' movement, and allow for a more embodied, animated telling of the sensible.

I undertook to animate the traces as the way to speak the gesture of the book. To do this I chose to tell stories of books, to write narratively about books as a form of inquiry. The animations reflect a form of narrative telling based upon writing personal experiential narratives (Connelly and Clandinin 1990, Conle 1997, Darroch and Silvers 1982) drawn from the body of knowledge that is the writer's life. Within this narrative form events of life are recounted episodically, complete with settings, characters, and plots, and placed within the context of the teller's life, told from her vantage point, from the perspective "I". While my animations partially adhere to this notion of narrative, they differ significantly in that they do not aim to provide "truthfully-told experiential stories" (Conle, 1997:205) of my life.

The animations are not true accounts of my experiences. They did not occur as they are told. They are fusions of lived experience and imaginative possibilities. I wrote narratives that combine stories of my life and imaginings of the 'what if' of possible worlds. I drew on the responsive dexterity of the imagination, to tell more, as imagination has the capacity to bring possible worlds into existence (Frye 1963, Greene 1995, Kearney 1988, Sloan 1983). The possible world that I wanted to bring about was the one that could express, and bring forward the gesture of the book as it lived in my body, had already been realized in my body, as my desire and the traces suggested.

I believed that to speak the sensible, embodied, gesture of the book, required an imaginative telling of story. Such a telling could better resist the taken-for-granted, and the reason, of the intelligible,

helping to instead disclose the unseen, unheard, and unexpected (Greene, 1995:28). Also an imaginative telling has the capacity to speak the sensible. Merleau-Ponty contends imagination is of the body, lives within the body as an intertwining of vision – the imaginary, and movement (1994b). The imaginary lives in the body “as a diagram of life, complete with pulp and carnal obverse” and in this lives near to what already exists, to the actual, which is the sensible (Merleau-Ponty, 1994b:285). In this the imaginative telling has the capacity to draw on the teller’s “diagram of life” to release then speak the sensible as story.

Incarnating the book ~

Speak of books and you might see glimmers of awe and adoration in a listener's eyes. Tell stories of lost, rare book collections found by chance in far off train stations; of painstaking procedures to restore books ruined by flood or fire; of recipes for blood-based inks; tell of small presses; ancient libraries, hand binding; delicate paper; tell stories of books soaked in water to make elixirs to bring health to cows; of books too favored to be lent; of stolen, or long overdue books; books slung over backs and worn like clothing to bring good fortune or rain; books hidden under blankets and read furtively in the dark; tell stories of such arcane and everyday matter of books, and you might be met with aroused wonder and be told other stories of books in kind.

When speaking of books I have encountered other people's affable agitation. Unprompted, except by my telling, people have enthusiastically expressed interest and fascination with books, have shared knowledge, or told stories of their own book experiences, stories I was surprised to discover resonated with traces of body, were of the sensible in detail and emphasis. I have been told of traditions in which books are passed down through generations of families, of the emotional response had by one lucky enough to touch a sketchbook of an Italian master, of the worn physical features of a personally treasured book, of books longed for and lost.

Listening to people speak about books I sensed an ineffable presence, a reverberation resounding within a chamber of being bounded by curiosity, desire, and conspiratorial complicity. The tone of

the reverberation piqued my interest, and led me to wonder how I might account for, or express, the seemingly inexplicable, stirred responses I have experienced when engaged with books. Johanna Drucker conceptualizes a notion of such a presence, contending some books engender a charged presence, an aura, which originates, in part, within the book itself:

Books... generate a mystique... They seem to bear meaning just in their being, their appearance, and their form through their iconography and materials as though they have been imbued with a power which animates them beyond their material limits generating a metaphysically charged atmosphere which surrounds the work (1995:93-94).

The aura may also produce a response, a “fascination” in the reader “tapping into a certain level of the fantasmatic – a level of psychological engagement in which emotional energy attaches to an object for reasons which cannot be explained through reason or conscious analysis” (Drucker, 1995:94). Drucker accounts for the aura as the product of a dynamic engagement between reader and book, in which the auratically charged book taps into the reader’s emotional energy resulting in the reader feeling a sort of enchantment with the book.

While Drucker’s positions the aura within the realm of the psychological, the mind, my experiences of the book suggest the charged presence is anchored in the sensible, the body. For me, the auratic presence of the book, can better be accounted for as related to

the body, the sensible, as an element of the pre-objective experience of sensible of the book, of the phenomena - the book as given and perceived by the senses. It is its pre-objective nature that contributes to the ineffability of the aura, to how it alludes attempts to be named, to be spoken directly, for it does not so much intend, intelligibly, as moves, sensibly.

It is this understanding that I bring, deliberately take, to my making of books. It is the ineffable aura that I court, that I undertake to conjure into being, to matter, when I conceive of and make a book. Unable to directly name, to describe and say "That!," is the charged presence of the book, I instead endeavor to offer, to create, through phenomenological "doing," an expression of the book which the aura may attend. How I go about this doing is highly subjective, initiated by desire and then based in the movement between my body and the materials I use, and the responses to the sensible I experience and then undertake to express. I respond to the materials with which I work, touching, feeling, seeing, holding, and replying with my hands through folds and cuts and stitches. My making is intuitive, prompted by the sensible, by what I feel, see, smell, hear, even sometimes taste in the materials, in the books. It is grounded in an engagement with the sensible that is enacted through my body and maintains the phenomenological commitment to experience, to "doing" being the source of knowledge that the inquirer brings forward in the inquiry.

Afterword

I made the other book without knowing what form this one would take, or what it might tell. People would ask what this work was about and would seem surprised when I could not tell them. I could tell them what I hoped for, or thought I desired, or even thought I thought, but I could not tell them what it was because what is was lived in my body. It lived in the dynamic between my body and the world with which I engaged. I could only tell through the doing and now these fragments reflectively account for that doing.

I could not make this thesis-book, could not assemble these fragments until the other one was finished. The making of the book, the incarnation of the sensible as I experienced it, and then tried to animate and embody it in my doing, told me the telling of this thesis-book. Its sensible inscription and incarnation, the movements of my body that brought them into being and allowed for the reflective telling, is an account, an interpretation of its making. This thesis-book is a story of the other book. Its limitation is that it can only speak of, gesture toward, the other book, offering interpretive fragments, pieces of material through image and shred. The flesh of it and the inquirer are absent. All of this found here now is remnant, but it hopefully maintains a resonance that sounds to the body of the reader. For this flesh, this body, the one of the reader, is now the one who speaks the gesture of the book.

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