

READING AS ASSEMBLAGE: INTENSIVE READING PRACTICES OF
ACADEMICS

by

SHARON MURPHY AUGUSTINE

(Under the Direction of Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre)

ABSTRACT

This interview study investigated academic readers' reading practices using Deleuze and Guattari's concept *assemblage* to produce language and images of reading that recognized the complex relations among texts, people, places, ideas, and memories. The following two questions propelled inquiry and analysis: 1) How do reading practices function as a force that assembles complex relations of texts, people, places, ideas, and memories in surprising and productive ways? 2) What alternative reading practices are possible by theorizing reading through these relationships? This inquiry specifically chronicled how the participants in this study *used* books to do things. Reading was not, therefore, a solitary, passive endeavor, but an active, social engagement in creating their worlds. The production of a list of prescriptive reading practices that others could duplicate was not the goal. Rather, Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) assemblage aligned within larger conversations among new criticism, reader response, and socio-cultural theories of reading. Specifically, Sumara's (1996) theory of reading worked with the theories of Deleuze and Guattari to describe a wider variety of reading practices than are commonly found in school settings. Participants provided language to describe

intensive reading, reading practices that altered subjectivity, and descriptions of surprising reading experiences. Deleuze and Guattari's concepts and participants' experiences produced descriptions of reading as an active, surprising, and productive practice.

INDEX WORDS: Education, Reading, Deleuze, Guattari, Sumara, assemblage, order-words, incorporeal transformation, commonplace location, flow experience, adult literacy, lifelong literacy, school, qualitative interview research, Writing as a method of inquiry, data analysis, coding, reading practices, poststructural theory.

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2010

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December 2010

For

Glenda May Rogers

For teaching me how to live, love, and persevere.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Deleuze (1990) said, “We need both creativity and people” (p. 176). Here’s to my people:

- To Bettie St. Pierre for helping me to imagine possibilities—her words of encouragement early in my graduate career began assembling this PhD.
- To Mark Faust for his book club class and passion for discussing reading in all its complexities.
- To Peter Smagorinsky for his generosity, mentorship, and careful scholarship.
- To Ron Bogue whose teaching and scholarship shepherded me across many plateaus of thought.
- To my participants for sharing their time, ideas, and stories and providing many variations on how to create an academic life.
- To Belita Gordon whose support and belief in me never wavered.
- To Peg Graham, Sally Hudson-Ross, and Steve Bickmore (my teaching soul mate) for helping me love college teaching as much as high school teaching.
- To my writing group—the best colleagues and friends ever—Tara Star Johnson, Amy Kay, Melanie Hundley, and Christine Malozzi.
- To Sterg Botzakis who knows that this all started after Bogue’s class over fried chicken (and Lobster) at the Georgia Center.
- To Amy Davis—my writing partner—I could not have finished without our conversations and your support—this is the only sentence that she has not read.
- To Nancy, Martha Ann, Rachel, Sarah—my sisters—and Hailey, Janie, Shyla, and Lawson—my nieces and nephew—I wish for each of you the courage to follow whatever dreams you cannot even now imagine.
- To Mike Augustine—my best friend, love of my life, and my rock—thanks for always believing in me.
- To Kathleen May Augustine—the joy of my life—the inspiration that kept me going. My years in Athens changed my life, but you altered my life so sweetly and completely. I cherish my Mommy title above all others.

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CHAPTER 1

READING UNDER A NEW DESCRIPTION

The only presents I give my niece Hailey are books—birthdays, Christmas, and any just-because occasion. When she started first grade, she excitedly told me about a new "game" that she had learned. A two sentence story followed about Jack going to the grocery store. Then, Hailey's speech became very deliberate, "Okay, now, Aunt Sharon, you have to answer: 'Did Jack A) go to the store for food or B) go to the store for a hammer or C) not go to the store.'" I was stunned and quite sick that Hailey, who has read so many stories, delighted in creating different accents for characters, and enjoyed inspecting the illustrations in her books so carefully had been indoctrinated into the multiple choice "game" so early—a game that would soon lose its novelty. Her streams of reading experiences were forever altered by school and I was devastated.

Reading as a source of insight had always been an important trope in my life as a reader. What at first might have seemed a grail-like search for tidy, universal truths, and “comprehension” when I was a young reader reading simple texts became a much more opened-ended and complex practice as I read more difficult texts, especially texts that enacted their theory. Reading was no longer a passive activity but one in which I underlined, circled, and highlighted passages that caught immense complexity in a simple phrase and stopped me in my tracks. I began to scatter exclamation marks, names, numbers, comments, abbreviations (e.g., def., society, Keatsian), and symbols (e.g.,

☺☹♀*?∞) in the margins of different genres—fiction, academic journal articles, and philosophical texts—I might read all in a single day, connecting them, using one to read another, plugging one text into the next. Former poet laureate of the United States, Billy Collins commemorated this reading practice in his poem, “Marginalia”:

We have all seized the white perimeter as our own
 and reached for a pen if only to show
 we did not just laze in an armchair turning pages;
 we pressed a thought into the wayside,
 planted an impression along the verge. (ll. 34-38)

Writing marginalia in texts produced hyperlinked connections to other texts, people, and places; they showed reading was, indeed, not a passive act. Some of these hieroglyphic impressions I planted “along the verge” led to thematic papers, class discussions, conversations, emails, lesson plans, and journal entries—all new forms for those distilled, haphazard, and fragmented pieces. Some fragments hung in the air sprouting later connections and annotations—but always part of the stream of ideas that simmered beneath the surface of my thoughts. Reading slipped away from facile descriptions as a transcendent act of escapism or a search for insightful aphorisms about life. Reading became more about generating connections among ideas, people, memories, and places than annotating existing monuments of experience. The marginalia peppering my books provided a jumping off point for reading as a practice embedded in life, not a practice that accesses something outside or above life.

Marginalia was proof of an active, productive reading. When I was a high school student and undergraduate, I highlighted passages and scribbled in the margins of books.

Sometimes I highlighted passages that resonated with my current circumstances, but mostly, I recorded my teachers' explications of texts handed down to them from their teachers. In graduate school, my marginalia changed because reading had changed. It was now about connections and a-ha moments—as a second text spun out from the margins of my books. Instead of reading to figure out meaning, I took Deleuze's (1990/1995) advice and used marginalia to activate "all the larvae you can find in a book" (p. 14). My own reading as a concept-generating process provoked me to wonder how others might explain their reading practices.

Background of the Problem

In my fifth year of teaching ninth and eleventh grade language arts, I realized that I had been hiding a dirty little secret from my students and myself—I was no longer a reader. Well, that's not entirely true. I had become a strange type of reader—the kind many teachers become—a reader who reads only what she is teaching and figures out ways to dissect, test, and comment on pieces of literature she has read multiple times. As Romano (1995) would say, I was the least "authentic reader" in my class, and I did not like the reader I had become.

I decided to model a different type of reader for my students. I proposed that I would read two books per month that I had never read and post the titles on a wall in our classroom. During the time we periodically devoted to Silent Sustained Reading, a twenty minute block of time requiring everyone in the school to put aside other work and read a novel of their choice, students saw me reading those books on a regular basis. These reading practices began to change my view of school reading. As time passed, I shared with my students snippets from books that I liked, which ranged from *Moby Dick* to *The*

Divine Secrets of the Ya Ya Sisterhood, and they began to share with me books they thought I needed to read like *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, *Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes*, and *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Of course, all my students didn't bring me books, but an on-going conversation began with many of my students and my colleagues about why we liked to read in the first place and what school reading practices had done to our lives as readers.

My personal reading experiences that had ushered me into the teaching profession—a love of reading and the deep connections between literature and my life—were the very things that were not represented in the tests, quizzes, and activities that I felt compelled to create for my students. Many of my colleagues admitted the same disconnect. Ironically and sadly, the experiences that had made me want to read and talk about books were not being recognized, reproduced, or even encouraged in my classroom. I had neglected to focus on how reading produces, expands, and connects past, present, and future experiences, memories, and relationships in life. Like my niece, Hailey, I had become part of the school reading assemblage that produces “more students who *can* read than students who *do* read” (Allington, 2006, p. 10). Exploring how school reading experiences could have the potential to create meaningful moments of intensity among people, ideas, places, and memories became an important part of my research interests. If school reading practices block these powerful reading experiences, what reading practices could activate them?

Early in my graduate career, I read Appleyard's (1991) compelling description of the five developmental stages of readers that span childhood, adolescence, and adulthood: the reader as player, as hero/heroine, as thinker, as interpreter, and as pragmatist. I found

Appleyard's categories provocative because they reminded me of my own reading life. I fell easily into those descriptions—a montage of evolutionary stages that I “chanced to latch onto” (Rorty, 1986, p. 48). Even though I should have been suspicious of the linear, chronological narratives that his developmental stages implied, I was quite interested in his idea that people adopt different reading purposes in different contexts or time periods of their lives. But instead of creating stages and categorizing readers into types, my interest became theorizing reading practices that produce connections, proliferations, and ways of altering and shifting worlds. Rather than creating stages and categorizing readers, I began thinking about experimenting with reading practices that produce connections to worlds that “have nothing to do with books” (Deleuze, 1990/1995, p. 9).

My preoccupation with how certain reading practices create reading experiences is not new to English education. Over forty years ago, Friedenberg (1966) framed school in terms of the *experiences* students have rather than in terms of the content knowledge they study. He stated, “What is learned in high school, or for that matter anywhere at all, depends far less on what is taught than on what one actually experiences in the place” (p. 89). The practices in place in many language arts classrooms encourage “covering” a specific literary canon in order to reinforce a specific body of cultural knowledge. School reading becomes less about creating lifelong readers and more about training students to read canonical, anthologized texts. Dewey (1916) warned this practice of “formal teaching and training” may create “an undesirable split between the experience gained in more direct associations and what is acquired in school” (pp. 9-10). As a teacher, I felt the prickliness of this “undesirable split” was further isolating school from the “subject matter of life-experience” (p. 8). I agreed with Dewey that experiences in school

shouldn't merely be framed as "preparation for life, but must be understood as life itself" (Sumara, 1996, p. 168). However, setting up a real world versus school world binary was not my intention, anymore than it was to set up an authentic reading versus inauthentic reading binary. But this was the only language I had at the time, and I needed more explanatory power in my theoretical and linguistic arsenals. All I knew was that the varied experiences that are possible while reading both in and out of school settings deserved as much attention as, if not more than, book lists of recommended texts (Finders, 1997; Heath, 1983; Hirsh, 1988; Hull & Schultz, 2002; Sumara, 1996, 2002). What my students and I *do* with a book is far more interesting to me than *what* books we are reading. The focus of my dissertation is not on the content of particular reading experiences (fiction, non-fiction, canonical versus non-canonical works, and the various sub-genres contained within each of these), but on how readers describe their own reading experiences in ways that promote life-long relationships to reading.

Statement of the Problem

In this interview study with ten academics from Australia, Canada, and the United States, I used Deleuze and Guattari's concept *assemblage* to study how reading, for them, has been a force that enables complex relations of texts, people, places, ideas, and memories. I investigated the reading practices that participants used across a variety of reading experiences. I was not interested in creating a monolithic reading subject, a prescriptive list of reading practices, or a developmental model of reading practices. Reproducing realistic, chronological portraits of my participants' reading lives was not my goal. To disrupt such descriptions, I offer their reading practices in fragments to show how the readers interviewed in this study lived lives that include reading (Sumara, 1996).

The participants are all academics with terminal degrees—the top of the reading food chain, so to speak—and I chose this group because they are accomplished readers. Using Deleuze and Guattari's concepts, such as assemblage, allowed me to describe their reading practices that are much more varied than those encouraged in most middle and high school classrooms. Because preparing students to become lifelong readers has always been important to me, I studied the reading practices of accomplished, lifelong readers to identify and explore descriptions of reading one seldom finds in schools.

Research Questions

My interviews and data analysis were driven by the following two research questions: How do reading practices function as a force that assembles complex relations of texts, people, places, ideas, and memories in surprising and productive ways? What alternative reading practices are possible by theorizing reading through these relationships? To address these questions, I had to situate Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) assemblage within the larger conversation of reading theory.

Plugging into Reading Theory

Because reading has been described as a cognitive, mental activity (e.g., Adams, 1994; Van den Broek, Young, Tzeng & Linderholm, 1999; Gough, 1985; Just & Carpenter, 1980; Rumelhart, 1994; Sadoski & Palvio, 2004; Samuels, 1994), cognitive psychologists and reading theorists have explained reading in terms of information processing systems. In that approach, the book is read by the reader who decodes and comprehends the message embedded in the text. Over time, reader response theories (e.g., Fish, 1980; Holland, 1980; Iser, 1978; Tompkins, 1980) developed a different approach that addressed the context of the reading and the subjective stance of the reader.

However, both approaches reified the subject/object dichotomy of the reader and the text as separate entities with the main activity taking place within the mind of the reader.

Rosenblatt (1978), arguably the first and most influential reader response theorist, identified two reading stances: efferent and aesthetic reading. She claimed that efferent reading focuses on the study of a “text that takes the form of isolating certain kinds of textual details” (p. 163) and that aesthetic reading focuses more on the affective experience of a work of art by paying attention to both the private and public linkages experienced through transacting with a text. Even though Rosenblatt introduced aesthetic and efferent concepts as a “continuum” between “the most extreme terms” (p. 173), their binary status unintentionally simplified the reading process. However, as Rosenblatt (1995) made clear later, she intended a more nuanced understanding of aesthetic and efferent reading than defining reading as a moment of either gratification or information. Her concept of literary reading as an “aesthetic stance” recognized how “human concerns are embodied in” (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 42) the private “associations, feelings, and ideas” (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 292) associated with some reading experiences.

In a previous study, my co-researcher and I (Augustine & Zoss, 2006) interviewed pre-service English teachers about their experiences with reading from Rosenblatt’s “aesthetic stance” (p. 42). They related that many of their complex and rewarding reading experiences occurred outside language arts classrooms because many reading practices in schools were largely aligned with efferent readings of aesthetic texts. To enlarge on Rosenblatt’s description, we coined the term *aesthetic flow experience*—an experience with a work of art that has the “qualities of flow, pause, emotional intensity, and meaningful relationships” (Augustine & Zoss, 2006, p. 77). We suggested that many

pre-service teachers' reading experiences enacted both of Rosenblatt's stances, aesthetic and efferent, suggesting that reading experiences have the potential to be complex practices.

Adding to the lineage of reader response and socio-cultural theorists who have proposed multifaceted reading theories, Sumara (1996, 2002) offered language that broke free of this continuum while still addressing the complexity that Rosenblatt (1978) described. Though he did not cite Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concepts in either of his books about literary reading, Sumara's (1996, 2002) research described how subjectivity is an enacted concept that depends on the linguistic and extra-textual forces from past, present, and future experiences—the creation of a *commonplace location*. Sumara's (1996, 2002) concept of *commonplace location* focused on contexts, social bodies, and relationships that make reading a productive practice that alters past and present relationships, contexts, and experiences even within the hierarchical relationships in the classroom. Through reading, Sumara found that the way students experienced school changed unexpectedly when they were given the time to reread and discuss books together. Sumara (1996) detailed how the students in his study used reading as a practice that created new relationships and ways of relating to one another that transgressed the gridded and hierarchical landscape of school relationships and expectations. For example, Sumara read aloud to his class a section of Paterson's novel, *A Bridge to Terabithia*, and he cried. Simply making room in his class “for life that is infused with the kind of passion that goes along with having a body that expresses emotion” (p. 4) changed the relationships he had with his students and opened his classroom to more meaningful connections than traditional teacher and student subject positions offered. In many

schools, finding student engagement in “life in the classroom” (p. 4) is highly unusual. However, in working with teachers to explore what teaching literary fiction did to their reading practices, Sumara found embracing non-hierarchical and unpredictable ways of reading and relating to students was not comfortable or popular. Early in his study, one teacher left because reading literary fictions was not resulting in practical teaching strategies to apply to her lesson plans. Several other teachers in the group also felt “anxious about the time it took to overcome their feeling of strangeness” (p. 149) in reading Ondaatje’s *The English Patient*. For participants, being English teachers meant that they were excellent readers who understood texts, so to shift from being an authority on texts to being bewildered by a text was disconcerting to participants. This bewilderment and difficulty was exactly what Sumara posited needs to be in the classroom because it destabilizes the hierarchical grid of school; many students already feel disconnected, if not bewildered by texts, so forefronting difficulties with texts would address student discomfort by having teachers model what they do with ambiguous or difficult reading. In his research, reading wasn’t an activity designed to teach students something about life; reading was a practice that created and recreated life by shifting subjectivity and providing more meaningful experiences.

Deleuze & Guattari in Education: Jumping off Points

The work of French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980/1987) has only recently been used to think differently about educational practices and issues. Alvermann (2000), St. Pierre (1997a, 1997b, 2001), Pillow (2003), Semetsky (2003, 2006), and Leach and Boler (1998) are a just a few scholars in education who have taken up Deleuzian concepts and used them to create new ways to theorize lived worlds.

Deleuze and Guattari's collaboration was "a new approach to knowledge as shared and situated, and [brought] philosophy into closer contact with sociocultural issues" (Semetsky, 2003, p. 211). Deleuze and Guattari offer concepts that enable one to disrupt binaries and think differently about what seems normal.

My difficulty in using Deleuze and Guattari as a jumping off point for theorizing reading rested in their command of a wide variety of subjects, particularly a history of philosophy, with which I was not familiar. Part of their agenda was to create, invent, form, and fabricate concepts that do not reify the world in dualistic terms. Lecercle (2002) identified the following key concepts as important in understanding the work of Deleuze and Guattari: affirmations of "immanence, not transcendence"; "becoming, not structure"; "speed, not stasis"; and "assemblages, not subjects nor system" (p. 255). Lecercle described these main concepts as "affirmation[s] of the creativity of language" (p. 254) that offer a way out of a subject/object dualism. *Assemblage* is the main concept that I used to analyze data and to theorize reading as an act of immanence, an act of creation that generates possibilities. Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) assemblage enables alternatives to the structuralist tendency to use overarching formations or evolutionary designs to explain the world. Instead Deleuze and Guattari proposed that the world exists as the constant circulation of forces through discursive and non-discursive entities and that these forces are not represented in objects in the world but *are* the world.

Grappling with Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) language was an invitation to new modes of living—how to live in/with the world differently—that provoked productive thinking about the practice of reading. By acknowledging that language is "in a state of constant imbalance" (Lecercle, 2002, p. 196), Deleuze and Guattari offered a

way of thinking about reading that radically changed my view of the world. They challenged me to leave behind the idea of transcendence to embrace immanence and to change my conceptions of subjectivity. Reading, writing, teaching a class at Mercer University as a new instructor, playing with my two-year old daughter, talking on the telephone to my mother, watching bad television, listening to NPR on the radio, or walking downtown to have dinner were everyday practices that channeled forces, places, and relationships that assembled in various configurations to create the many shifting assemblages that create my life. Deleuze (1988) noted, "We continue to produce ourselves as a subject on the basis of old modes which do not correspond to our problems" (p. 107). Because reading is at the center of many of my life's activities, I was particularly interested in how this practice might be reconceived as an immanent practice. Readers (or anyone for that matter) do not survey the text or the world; readers use texts, put ideas to work, and constantly form and re-form with the world. Reading is a practice that is part of "the formative activity of all living beings" that creates "a most complicated and indirect cognitive tool—adult human consciousness" (Bogue, pp. 92-93, 1999). For Deleuze (1990/1995), reading was a series of on-going experiments that create consciousness. Reading from this perspective poses different questions:

‘Does it work, and how does it work?’ How does it work for you? If it doesn't work, if nothing comes through, you try another book. This second way of reading's intensive: something comes through or it doesn't. There's nothing to explain, nothing to understand, nothing to interpret. It's like plugging in to an electric circuit. (Deleuze, 1990/1995, p. 8)

Reading plugs the reader into assemblages already in progress.

Assemblages are at once both *a collection* of discursive and non-discursive entities and *the action* among these various discursive and non-discursive entities. Semetsky (2003) defined non-discursive as "the visible" and discursive as the "articulable" (p. 215). The movement of discursive and non-discursive forces link not necessarily because theirs was the most enlightened fit, but because the connection was possible and worked. These connections are haphazard but controlled through various social forces and contexts that work together in a variety of situations and through a variety of reading practices. By avoiding theorizing reality as negation and lack, Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) emphasized life as on-going creation and production. In other words, they believed metamorphosis and productivity do not occur in order to fill emptiness but continue simply because life proliferates, links, and creates possibilities. Illustrating how reading practices are part of that proliferation, linking, and creation became my project.

A Map

In the next chapter, I map out Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concept of assemblage to see how it might work side-by-side with Sumara's (1996) commonplace location. In chapter three, I provide a description of my study and how Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concepts influenced data analysis and the writing of the study. In chapter four, I weave the reading practices of my ten participants into Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) assemblage and Sumara's (1996) commonplace location. In chapter five, I discuss how my research could have implications for teachers and researchers.

CHAPTER 2

READING AS ASSEMBLAGE

Riding my bike through the saltwater marsh in South Carolina, I notice a snowy egret moving gracefully through a thin layer of water that covers the pluff mud. Elegant and beautiful, the egret and its gait are part of the magnificence of the salt marsh's machinery—a beauty connected to many purposes. The egret's smooth, deliberate movements enable it to catch its prey. Its poised movement is a trait that makes it an integral force in the assemblage of the salt marsh. I stop my bike perhaps altering the course of a small fish or fiddler crab's life as the egret flies away. I have dropped into the salt marsh's assemblage and it into mine.

In part one of the chapter that follows, I first explain in general terms how Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) created a philosophy of immanence, not transcendence, that is important in theorizing reading. Here immanence is a philosophical concept that explains “the order and creativity of the world as the result of the self-ordering capacities of complex systems rather than crediting such order and creativity to an extra-worldly source” (Bonta & Proveti, 2004, p. 98). I provide a discussion of the terminology they used to create a philosophy of immanence (e.g., Deleuze, 1990/1995; 1993/1997; Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983; 1980/1987; 1991/1994; Guattari, 1986/1998). In part two of this chapter, I show how Sumara's (1996) call to theorize reading using language and concepts in “new and imaginative ways” (p. 88) maps onto many of Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concepts.

In post-war France, philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) and radical psychoanalyst Félix Guattari (1930-1992) created works that challenged the orthodoxies of Marxism, capitalism, and psychoanalysis. In their years of co-authoring books, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972/1983) and *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980/1987) were their most notorious collaborations because they used these texts to create concepts for a world defined by immanence not transcendence. Their collaboration and involvement in the events of May 1968 in France situated them as political activists whose philosophical concepts were concerned with finding ways to think about how one might live life differently.

Part I: Why Deleuze and Guattari?

Probably one of the most helpful questions that I've been asked about my project is "Why are you using Deleuze and Guattari to theorize reading?" My first answer is always that their philosophy of immanence seems more useful to me than a philosophy of transcendence. The work of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) offers an ontological way out of transcendent dualisms through a positive ontology of immanence that underscores the creative and productive nature of the world. In this conception of the world, school is not a place to prepare for life, but a place where life occurs and proliferates; similarly, reading practices are not as an access points to deeper knowledge, but are ways of connecting and creating knowledge. Bonta and Proveti (2004) described Deleuze's ontology or metaphysics as different from the "metaphysics of presence" that situates "the structure of Being" as "grounded in, or exemplified by, a transcendent or 'highest' being or entity" (p. 13). Deleuze's ontology, on the other hand, is a "process ontology" (Bonta & Proveti, 2004, p. 119). The word *process* here does not imply a progression to a more

enlightened state but emphasizes the constant movement and interrelationships among all material things. This emphasis on connections is not an attempt to create a whole or a unity but rather illustrates the on-going change, movement, and creation that is always becoming in the world.

Because Deleuze and Guattari's work was a radical response to the metaphysics of presence or the negative ontology of Western thought, their concepts, especially *assemblage* and *becoming*, offered new ways to think about reality. Deleuze and Guattari did not build a vocabulary that could be easily defined concept by concept; one concept cannot be thought without using other concepts. They do not offer a neat, discrete hierarchy of terms that build on one another but, rather, provide an irruption of concepts that connect, disconnect, attach, and move rhizomatically. Lorraine (2005) explained that Deleuze and Guattari's work is not written in "a style that moves the reader from one argument to the next, until all the arguments can be gathered together into the culminating argument of the book as a whole" (p. 207). They instead "instigate productive connections with a world they refuse to represent" (Lorraine, 2005, p. 207). Their concepts inevitably led to other concepts important to their project, such as: *line of flight*, *machine*, *desiring machine*, *deterritorialization*, *striated space*, *smooth space*, *machinic assemblage*, and *collective assemblages of enunciation*. Part of their project was to destroy the concept of the humanist subject in order to think about other possibilities for living differently.

My intention is to provide an explanation of how using some of Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concepts to destroy the humanist subject might encourage thinking differently about reading practices. Hardt (1993) identified Spinoza's influence

on Deleuze in establishing a "practical perspective" that influenced Deleuze's "radically new vision of ontology" (p. 99). Deleuze's practical perspective emphasizes the possibility immanent within each moment. This means that the future is not predetermined but always in the process of forming and changing through a myriad of possible everyday relations in the world. Hardt (1993) described how an emphasis on relations over being works in Deleuze's ontology: "Being can no longer be considered a given arrangement or order; here being is the assemblage of composable relationships" (Hardt, 1993, p. 99). My point here is that what has differentiated Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) work from other theorists for me is their focus not on representing an ideal world or emphasizing how to access a more idealized version of the world but how to live differently within the world through new relationships within that world. The world as it exists is not removed from a more ideal state. In other words, the world does not lack this other realm and the world does not proliferate to fill a void.

Immanence and transcendence.

Colebrook (2002) explained Deleuze's philosophy of immanence as central to understanding his work because she, and others, believed that transcendence was an important error in Western thought. She explained that the concept of transcendence enables other concepts such as God and a person's subjectivity (already formed and static) as "outside life" (p. xxiv). However, to think with immanence rather than transcendence means that there is no outside or higher plane to which one can appeal for meaning. Rather, meaning is constantly produced in various connections and contexts. For Colebrook (2002), ontology as immanence leads to a creative, productive world:

The power of creation does not lie outside of the world like some separate and judging God; life itself is a process of creative power. Thought is not set over against the world such that it represents the world; thought is a part of the flux of the world. To think is not to represent life but to transform and act upon life. (p. xxiv)

Reading is one practice among many that is not about trying to unearth a creative power inside a text that is separate or outside of everyday life. Everyday practices are this creative power—the world and thought are simultaneously creative. They are not separate with one representing the other. This explanation of immanence does away with the idea of levels of experience that follow a Platonic ideal of forms where ideal forms exist on a higher, transcendent plane, and always inadequate representations of those ideals exist in the world. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) conceived of the world as a "multilinear system" of immanence where "everything happens at once: the line breaks free of the point as origin; the diagonal breaks free of the vertical and the horizontal as coordinates" (p. 297). Hurley (1992), translator of Deleuze's essay "Ethology: Spinoza and Us," identified an ontology of immanence not as a representation of a higher plane; instead, the world is a continuous plane or map of how things stick or assemble together. Hence, Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concept *plateau* rejects the hierarchy and dualism of transcendence and embraces the simultaneity and creativity of immanence as the on-going flux circulating in the world. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) cited Bateson's use of plateau as not having any "orientation toward a culmination point or external end" (p. 22). A plateau has multiple connections through "superficial underground stems in such a way as to form or extend a rhizome" (p. 22). Deleuze (1990/1995) later added to this

description that a plateau is a sort of lace pattern that has intricately connected "zones of continuous variation" (p. 142). These zones do not have "a plan of organization or development" but are a "plan of composition" (Deleuze, 1985/1992, p. 630) always in-the-making.

Describing ontology as in-the-making, Colebrook (2002) noted that working from ontology as immanence uses the creative force of life differently than, for example, an Oedipal ontology. Deleuze (1990/1995) described the damage of psychoanalysis and its Oedipal project as "a project directed against life, a song of death, law, and castration, a thirsting after transcendence" (p. 144). For Deleuze and Guattari, desire was no longer about "the overcoming of loss or separation" but was about "connection" and "expansion" (Colebrook, 2002, p. xxii). Desire as a force of action that creates and regenerates the many connections that we have in our lives is different from a view of desire as a force of action that drives our lives to fill empty spaces or deep-seated feelings of abandonment or neglect as described in some theories of psychoanalysis.

Desire is a process of increasing expansion, connection and creation. Desire is "machinic" precisely because it does not originate from closed organisms or selves; it is the productive process of life that produces organisms and selves.

(Colebrook, 2002, p. xxii.)

An ontology of immanence implies desire not based on lack or closed, predetermined entities or practices but implies that physical, spiritual, social, and political bodies and everyday practices from reading to painting to gardening are productive processes of life. This openness is helpful in thinking of the practice of reading not as an over-coded practice that is predetermined but as a creative force itself.

Deleuze and Guattari do not define reality as a search for the essence of the world. For them the world is always in process, changing, and becoming something different in each successive moment. Boundas (2005) described this creative force as a replacement for "substance and things" (p. 191). What drives life is this creative force immanent with the world, not separate from it. Meaning is not found in a search for origins or the essential substance of things but shifts from moment to moment. Boundas (2005) further noted that Deleuze's ontology is "a rigorous attempt to think of process and metamorphosis—becoming—not as a transition or transformation from one substance to another or a movement from one point to another, but rather as an attempt to think of the real as a process" (p. 191). To think in terms of process, movement, and forces creates a different ontology than one of transcendence that thinks in terms of arrival, points, metamorphosis, and endings. Deleuze (1990/1995) stated that "there are only processes, sometimes unifying, subjectifying, rationalizing, but just processes all the same" (p. 145). Boundas (2005) underscored that Deleuze "presupposes, therefore, an initial substitution of forces for substances and things, and of (transversal) lines for points" (Boundas, 2005, p. 191-192). Thinking in this way makes irrelevant the mind/body dualism because "substances and things" are replaced by forces that circulate. Arriving at a particular point is also eschewed since movement and metamorphosis are at work in every moment and in every relationship.

Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) focused on an ontology of immanence that emphasized trajectories of movement over essences of things. May (2005) linked their project with continental philosophy's disillusionment with analytic philosophy's interest in "the beings of which the universe is constituted" (p. 14). For example, May (2005)

noted that Foucault sought to show how taken-for-granted constraints on our everyday lives are historically and sometimes randomly "contingent" (p. 13) and that Derrida was interested in deconstructing categories that "appear to be strict categories of experience [but] are in fact fluid and interwoven" (p. 13). However, Deleuze's project was not concerned with an ontology that was "an attempt to *discover* the nature of the universe's fundamental entities" (May 2005, p. 17). Instead, Deleuze was interested in a conception of ontology as creation. For example, Deleuze (1990/1995) described *Anti-Oedipus* as a break with old conceptions of the unconscious that is not as a "theater" replaying the events of a person's life but a "factory" that is "a productive machine" (p. 144) continually creating and discovering life. May (2005) posited that Deleuze wanted to rework the concept of ontology to focus on making "the distinction between creation and discovery no longer relevant" (p. 17).

Suppose that ontology were not a project of seeking to grasp what there is in the most accurate way. Suppose instead ontology were to construct frameworks that, while not simply matters of fiction, were not simply matters of explanation either....In other words, could one not create an ontology whose purpose is to open the question of how one might live to new vistas? Nietzsche, Sartre, Foucault, and Derrida have shown the constrictions that arise when the question of how one might live must answer to ontology. Deleuze suggests that it is possible to move in the opposite direction, to create an ontology that answers the question of how one might live rather than dictating its limits. (May, 2005, p. 17)

May's understanding underscored my belief in Deleuze's work as a project that offered more possibilities of living despite perceived limits. For example, a college campus that

reclaims a street to create more green space limits sidewalks during construction over a fourth-of-a-mile stretch of land frequently traversed by pedestrians. Barriers obstruct walkways, and signs point to sanctioned detour pathways. How to live, or in this case, walk, is constricted and regimented, but in practice, the sanctioned paths are not followed, and pedestrians create their own, more convenient walkways. The prescribed is thus subverted and new pathways crop up. A fence that seems to limit movement has a slight opening, and gradually people make their way through it and cut across the construction zone. This image of pedestrians creating new pathways for their particular situations links to the rhizomatic movement of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987). Foucault (1970/1998) predicted that our current century might be thought of as Deleuzian because living becomes more about connections and creation than limits and endings. Deleuze saw that thinking of ontology as discovery leads to finding the essence and nature of what is, which gives identity "conceptual stability" (May, 2005, p. 18) over time. Ontology as discovery was not Deleuze's project. Deleuze did not seek to "offer a coherent framework from within which we can see ourselves and our world whole" (May, 2005, p. 19). Deleuze's work is not intended to be an extension of analytic philosophy but a positive philosophy that disturbs the impulse to freeze identities into points that hide difference, possibility, heterogeneity, and movement.

Deleuze and Guattari's experiment with assemblage.

Re-thinking the concept *structure* became important in the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987). To do this work, they used the concepts *machine*, *desiring machine*, and *assemblage*, to replace the idea of an overarching, or foundational, fixed source or structure in the world. They experimented with the terminology of the machine

in order to create a vocabulary that would encourage thinking and living differently. Lecercle (2002) noted that Deleuze first wrote about machines in the preface to Guattari's (1969) collection of essays, *Psychanalyse et Transversalité*, which was published just as his collaboration with Deleuze on *Anti-Oedipus* began. The purpose of Deleuze's preface was to use the concept of the machine to re-think the concept of structure. Where structure is fixed and stationary,

a machine, on the other hand, is dynamic and diachronic. It is a temporal characterized not by its elements, or parts, but by the events (called “breaks”) of which it is a site; it is a site, therefore, for the emergence of events, not a piece embedded in a larger organism; and it does not produce subjects—in a machine, “the subject is always elsewhere.” (Lecercle, 2002, p. 181)

Machine is a concept that does not imply the overarching trope or meta-narrative that Lyotard (1984) critiqued nor does it encompass the full explanatory mission of Althusser's (1970/1971) state and ideological apparatuses. Machine for Deleuze provided a more mobile, relational way of thinking of phenomena that had the capacity to change over time.

In their collaboration *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1983) used the concept *desiring-machines*, not simply machine, as a way to discuss desire in terms of productive connections, rather than in terms of Freudian "lack" (Colebrook, 2002, p. xxii.). Deleuze and Parnet (1977/1987) attributed the concept desiring machine to Guattari. Desiring machine is not an originating structure, closed system, or tightly bound organism but a continually open process of the productive energy of life. However, the concept desiring machine from Deleuze and Guattari's

(1972/1983) *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* was replaced by the concept *agencement* (and later translated into *assemblage*) in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* because desire was too easily conflated with sexuality (Deleuze and Parnet, 1977/1987). Because of this potential misconception, Guattari's "phrase 'desiring machines'" (Deleuze & Parnet, 1977/1987, p. 101) was replaced by *agencement* because interpreting desire as sexuality was a limiting, not an expanding notion. Sexuality is "one flux among others," and a desiring machine is more complex than this "one flux exclusively" (Deleuze & Parnet, 1977/1987, p. 101). Adopting the term *agencement* removed this potential reduction.

Assemblage is the English translation of the term *agencement* that Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) used frequently in their later work. Adopting the concept assemblage is important because they were trying to reframe desire as "a process of increasing expansion, connection and creation" (Colebrook, 2002, p. xxii). In his translation notes to Deleuze's *Negotiations*, Joughin (1995) further noted that replacing desiring machines with *agencement* eliminated its conflation with sexuality and implied a "more impersonal term" (p. 185-186). However, Joughin (1995) noted a further complication when *agencement* became *assemblage* in Massumi's (1980/1987a) translation of Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Joughin (1995) viewed assemblage as a problematic translation because it does not communicate "the sense of preparation or orientation toward action" or "reconfiguration" (p. 197) that the French *agencement* carries. In English, *assemblage* can be both the act of assembling and a collection (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 1994). The term is frequently reduced to its noun form in English, a

collection. Instead of using assemblage as a noun, Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concept assemblage implies the verb, to assemble. Bogue (2003) underscored this translation problem by explaining how "complex networks are comprised of 'assemblages' (*agencements*)" that are "collections" not just of discursive and non-discursive "entities" but of "heterogeneous actions" that all "somehow function together" (p. 98). Moreover, the active tense of the term *agencement* is sometimes lost in translation. Bogue (2006) identified the verbal nature of *agencement* by calling it "machining" or the action of putting various entities into relation.

Machinic assemblages and collective assemblage of enunciation.

Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) described the discursive and non-discursive aspects of their two broad categories of assemblages: *machinic assemblages* and the *collective assemblage of enunciation*. Bogue (2003) explained the functioning of these two interrelated assemblages in the following way:

These complex networks are comprised of "assemblages" (*agencements*), collections of heterogeneous actions and entities that somehow function together. Two broad categories of assemblages may be distinguished, the first consisting of nondiscursive *machinic assemblages* . . . the second of discursive *collective assemblages of enunciation*. Machinic assemblages are the various patterns of practices and elements through which a world's entities are formed, and collective assemblages of enunciation are the patterns of actions, institutions and conventions that make possible linguistic statements. (p. 98)

This description of machinic and collective assemblages underscores the relation of the physical with more abstract, linguistic concepts. Assemblages are not just complex ideas

or abstract notions that order the world; they are the conjoining of both the abstract and the physical. The machinic assemblage is an assemblage “of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 88). Bogue (2003) described these machinic assemblages as the non-discursive practices and bodies in the world. These assemblages involve the “socially sanctioned networks of practices, institutions and material entities” (Bogue, 2003, p. 98) that interact to codify language. The important thing to remember is not that there are two kinds of assemblages but that every assemblage involves both the discursive and non-discursive. This is not an attempt to reinscribe dualisms but to emphasize the both/and impulse of assemblages. Lecerle (2002) characterized the assemblage as

A process before it is a result or an entity...the assemblage has two sides, one which involves bodies and states of affairs, and the events that occur in them, the other which involves utterances, and the sense they ascribe to the event. An assemblage is an unholy mixture of events and territory...So an assemblage is always dual, the combination of two aspects, or two sub-assemblages: a *machinic assemblage of desire*, and a *collective assemblage of enunciation*. (p. 186)

The utterances of collective assemblage are difficult to separate from the bodies and states of affairs present in the machinic assemblage. Probably most helpful in understanding assemblages is Lecerle's (2002) description of the assemblage as combining both "what one does and what one says, the objects of the world and their groupings, the utterances in the world and their enunciation" (p. 186). This description emphasizes the abstractness, materiality, and action of the process of assemblage.

A Rube Goldberg machine.

Additionally, an assemblage is a hodge-podge not just of things or materials but of connections or forces. A Rube Goldberg machine (2003) is an example of assemblage that was helpful when I began to use Deleuze and Guattari's (1908/1987) assemblage. Each attendant part of the Rube Goldberg machine may have a history, a context, and purposes that exist independently of the particular moment of the desiring machine or assemblage, but it is only in being juxtaposed and interspersed that the machining or assembling happens in a particular way, though there are many possibilities if any one flow or part is changed. Where a Rube Goldberg machine may have a particular purpose, sharpening a pencil in this case, an assemblage may not have a specific goal or purpose but is an experimenting with what is possible. An assemblage is a machining or putting various forces into relation to one another in unexpected and open ways.

An assemblage, as I am using the concept, is not necessarily voluntarily or intentionally activated but is a coalescing of different forces at work in life. These forces converge and mingle through a variety of forms that I recognize as present relationships to memories, places, smells, colors, sounds, expectations, institutions, and possibilities. A person is not in control of exactly how an assemblage is set in motion and collides with another. The Rube Goldberg machine does not work as well here because assemblages are things, actions, and relationships at work in life, not static machines. They are possibilities or forces moving to become a hodge-podge of associations that connect in ways much as the synapses in my brain connect—quickly and without warning, collecting information and making associations in surprising, involuntary ways. Just as

Deleuze (1990/1995) described the brain as "organized like a rhizome, more like a grass than a tree" (p. 149), assemblages chart new connections and movement that create "new pathways, new synapses" (p. 149). This movement, machining, and assemblaging happens all the time, but I want to focus on how it happens when I read.

Assemblages and reading.

Deleuze (1990/1995) said that when he and Guattari read books, they were looking for "all the larvae you can find in a book" (p. 14). I picture those larvae not as points but as hyperlinks that trigger assemblaging and assemblages that trigger becoming. Their entire project is a juxtapositioning of various entities in ways that create new concepts or ways of living in the world. I used assemblage to rethink ways that reading practices have been described and prescribed in and out of school settings. If one thinks of reading as an assemblaging or machining, then the subject/object dualism of the reader and the text is no longer possible, and one focuses instead on flows that assemble and are put into relation with one another. I theorize reading not as an act that reveals depths of meaning buried in a text but an act that splays life experiences across connections. I do not read with a downward movement determined to unearth "wisdom" that is "exalted and outside" (Appleyard, 1991, p. 174) of life. Deleuze (1990/1995) would call this impulse "depraved" because it treats reading as "a box with something inside" (p. 7). Deleuzian reading, then, becomes not about depth but about horizontal movements and connections of assemblages, both discursive and non-discursive. This connective reading is "intensive" because "the only question is 'Does it work, and how does it work?' How does it work for you" (Deleuze, 1990/1995, p. 8)? Deleuze's advice works; reading transports concepts that startle my senses and assemble my life differently. Not just a

dialectical relationship between the writer, the reader, and the text in isolation, reading circulates through the variables of memory, place, relationships, and time. This connectivity that folds across these variables resists linear conceptions of time and place: “people do not experience time as a succession of instants, a linear linking of points in space, but as extended awareness of the past and the future within the present” (Richardson, 1990, p. 22). Reading is a gathering that can surprise and link seemingly disparate parts of life—the past, the present, the future—not to make everything the same but to add more complex connections. This does not mean that reading is a magic carpet ride to a better life or even better concepts. Reading is a productive, unpredictable practice. In the same way that Foucault (1975/1995) theorized power as productive, I view reading as productive. Power relations can be productive as well as oppressive. Likewise, reading practices are productive and have the potential for different effects.

Reading novels, theoretical texts, paintings, buildings, landscapes, or poetry activates connective nodes of intensity that implode “time and geography the way maps compress the world onto a two-dimensional sheet of paper” (Ondaatje, 1992, p. 161). Reading becomes a cartographical act that compresses time, space, and relationships into a chain of events that are not ordered but are haphazardly connected in ways that are not always comfortable. These implosions, folds, or connections do not occur only in the moment that a book is read or in the moment the writer produces a text. Other activities such as playing tennis, walking on the beach, visiting historical sites and museums, and going to the doctor are shot through with connections to texts. Here is one example of a collective and machinic assemblage that involved my physical body, particular places, several books, and relationships:

Mammograms only hurt on my second visit when the eye of the mammogram machine seeks the “hidden architecture” of my body by “directing [its gaze] towards a buried depth” (Foucault, 1966/1994, p. 249) that will reveal what until now for me has been “a secret text, a muffled word, or a resemblance too precious to be revealed” (p. 249). This eye teaches me that I am going to die.

The poster on the wall says, “Compression. Compression. Compression.” My entire life is compressed into this moment. I stare and reread the poster as I wait. With the actual compression completed, I wait for my Mom and the radiologist to come into the room where the large mechanical eye that reveals the inner contours of my body sits in a corner. I picture this moment as it happened years earlier for my Aunt and will happen over and over again for others. My “I” has dropped into this moment.

The radiologist enters and the room swims around him. I’m off balance; his voice is in the room and I’m trying to hear it but it’s far away. My life, my heart, my memories, my future are all compressed into this moment—this plateau full of connections and relationships that are not depths but associations. I sift through his words and latch onto “micro-calcifications of the breast.”

A Foucault class, fear of a mammogram, the death of an Aunt from breast cancer, an institutional poster, my mother's hand squeezing mine, and the doctor's detached voice attached to one another in this moment. They are the connections that formed in "a life that includes reading" (Sumara, 1996, p. 9) and continue to spread. These connections do not arrange themselves vertically to become knowledge that stacks into a deep understanding with meaning at the bottom; they arrange themselves horizontally as relations that spread, fold, and move across events.

Earlier, I opened the door to my Mom's house and she was there looking nervous about my mammogram. A wall of oregano, Italian sausage, and basil immediately surrounded me. I know these smells. I stop at the door overwhelmed with new ways to read these smells. They produce more than hunger and comfort in me now. They are the reality of uncertainty and change. I round the corner into the kitchen and see that she has made chicken and dumplings, spaghetti sauce, and chili. I think of Willa Cather's short story "Neighbor Rosicky" for the first time in over fifteen years and a line from it about a daughter reading her father's hand invades the moment. She thought that his hand "communicated some direct and untranslatable message" (Cather, 1985, p. 1038). "To freeze," Mom says. I freeze this moment and remember this new way to read smells. Smells are read across several heterogeneous impulses simultaneously—panic, comfort, uneasiness, closeness, separation, support, and anxiety.

This is an example from my own life of how associations, meanings, and connections gather in surprising ways. I enjoy saying assemblaging instead of assemblages because as soon as I describe one, it loses its action and continualness. I connect this experience to Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) description of Virginia Woolf's walk through a crowd: "never again will Mrs. Dalloway say to herself, 'I am this, I am that, he is this, he is that.' And 'She felt very young; at the same time unspeakably aged. She sliced like a knife through everything; at the same time was outside, looking on" (p. 263). This assemblaging does not have a "beginning or end, origin nor destination; it is always in the middle. It is not made of points, only of lines. It is a rhizome" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 263). Assemblages act rhizomatically to connect and fold across sensations that are always possible.

I am home and know that I am okay. I begin reading Lather's (1997) book Troubling the Angels: Women Living with HIV/ AIDS, and connections assemble not to add another layer to my life experiences but to produce more connections. I read comfortably on my sofa and flip haphazardly through the book. Its arrangement invites disjointed reading because its split pages make the reader choose which text to follow. This particular reader realizes that she is never getting the complete story because "lives are so complicated" (Lather 1997, p. 220) just as the text is complicated. Lather's book is not an easy read either in content or in form, and I approach it with a detached air of frustration. Distracted and overwhelmed, I think about other readings I need to do. I am stymied about what to write in my reading journal. And then in a rush, the assemblage moves and connections happen. As I read, these connections multiply and hang there as I read the words of Sandy, one of Lather's participants:

I for some reason did not realize that I was going to die before I got my mammogram, and now I think about it- I was going to die before...I mean, you know, for some reason it reassures me, knowing you're gonna die, and you're gonna die. Sometimes you feel like you are the only one and that everyone else goes on and is gonna have this wonderful life forever. But life isn't really so wonderful, even if you're not positive, you know what I mean. I don't remember my life being wonderful before, you know. But when you first find out that you're HIV positive, it seems like everything was wonderful before that. It did to me, anyway. (Lather, 1997, p. 152)

In this moment, Sandy's words collided with mine and were present on the couch with me. Our voices intertwined and an "insight [that] does not spring directly from a

particular episode in her life [or mine] ...emerges ambiguously from the strange crevices that collect [and connect] memory, current perception, and fantasy” (Sumara, 2002, p. 3). Lather's book began functioning instead of meaning.

The reading assemblage described above and others like it move with smells, relationships, and readings recent and from years past. This assemblaging does not happen in a moment but is on-going. It gathers together and functions in surprising ways. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) were not so interested in what a book means but in “what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed” (p. 4). Reading as connecting occurred as I had my mammogram, smelled food cooking, thought of Cather's short story, and read Lather's book. Events in my life were assembling. I do not read these connections as intellectual or emotional; instead, they attached all at once, unable to be parsed apart. These connections become modes and intensities that circulate; they are not static, predictable characteristics that are similar or are easy to identify. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) stated, "But we are not interested in characteristics; what interests us are modes of expansion, propagation, occupation, contagion, peopling" (p. 239). Reading as assemblage is a mode of expansion and connection across experiences, memories, and relationships.

Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) used Virginia Woolf's novel *Orlando* as an example of the simultaneity of event in an assemblage. The main character of Woolf's novel experiences blocks or intensities of childhood which are not the same as a childhood memory. Orlando lived through several lifetimes as both men and women, so those experiences were multiple across centuries. Those memories, then, became less

about specific memories and more about a "thisness" or force associated with childhood generally. Deleuze and Guattari explained that "memories always have a reterritorialization function" (p. 294), an explanatory urge, or a rush to make experiences identify with one another. Orlando's character emphasized not the personal and individuating capacity of memory but the blocs of sensation associated with childhood. Assemblage is not about explaining one experience in light of a memory, nor does it imply arriving at a deeper understanding. Assemblages provide opportunities for what Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) call *becoming*:

Becoming is opposed to the point-system of memory. Becoming is the movement by which the line frees itself from the point, and renders points indiscernible: the rhizome, the opposite of arborescence; break away from arborescence. *Becoming is an antimemory*....Wherever we used the word "memories" in the preceding pages, we were wrong to do so; we meant to say "becoming," we were saying becoming. (p. 294)

Memories, then, assemble with other aspects of the assemblage or, as Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) explained, moments of becoming when "everything happens at once" (p. 297) or everything assembles at once.

Thinking reading as a connection, a gathering, an assemblage provides a useful description of what happens as I read. Reading is slipping in and entering in the middle. Reading a book activates an assemblage that is "populated only by intensities... [that] pass and circulate" but "is not a scene, a place, or even a support upon which something comes to pass" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 153). Reading is a productive practice, not a grounding that holds meaning, and I am not a clean slate to be written on.

The practice of reading reorders the world by enabling the juxtaposition of continual experiences and perceptions, emphasizing becoming over being.

Becoming complicates being and subjectivity.

Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) use Nietzsche's concept of *becoming* as an alternative to *being*. Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concept of becoming is not about starting at one point in one state and arriving at another point in a different state.

Nietzsche (1882/2001) wrote

A different distinction may appear more advisable—it's far more noticeable—namely, the question of whether the creation was caused by a desire for fixing, for immortalizing, for *being*, or rather by a desire for destruction, for change, for novelty, for future, for *becoming*... The desire for *destruction*, for change and for becoming can be the expression of an overflowing energy pregnant with the future. (p. 235)

Becoming, then, fits with the ontology of immanence that Deleuze and Guattari posited because becoming institutes an orientation that does not fix a world and its identities as pre-given and out there to be discovered. Being also presents a view of desire in terms of what is found or missing; whereas, becoming takes desire as an on-going force that creates possibilities. Their philosophy of immanence is "pregnant with the future" Nietzsche (1882/2001, p. 235) proposed. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) posited becoming as an alternative to *being* in their concepts *becoming minor*, *becoming woman*, and *becoming animal*.

Becoming minor/woman/animal are continual processes of undergoing change. Becoming minor is not a quantitative measure but instead works between the minority

and majority. Becoming majority stands for the predominant and powerful standard in the world that the subject is a unitary “adult-white-heterosexual” even though this is an “abstract standard, [and] is never anybody . . . whereas the minority is the becoming of everybody, one’s potential becoming to the extent that one deviates from the model” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 105). Likewise, becoming woman over man and animal over human are the sides of binaries that deviate from the model that is held up as the standard. Lecercle (2002) described becoming minor (or any less valued side of a binary) as "a combination of active forces, of forces of change, whereas majority is a nexus of static, reactive forces. There is also a certain creativity in minority, due to its capacity to struggle for change" (p. 194). Becoming minor/woman/animal are the side of the binary that has the possibility of becoming a line of flight or what Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) called "leaks" (p. 204) in the system:

Lines of flight, for their part, never consist in running away from the world but rather in causing runoffs, as when you drill a hole in a pipe; there is no social system that does not leak from all directions, even if it makes its segments increasingly rigid in order to seal the lines of flight. (p. 204)

A line of flight or a leak in any machine or system involves movement through two types of space: smooth and striated space. For Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987), smooth space is "nomad space" and striated space is "sedentary space" (p. 474). However, the conceptual schema of these two spaces is not "simple opposition," but "two spaces [that] in fact exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space"

(p. 474). A constant movement, a becoming and an assembling, is on-going and presents a different way to think about living than the static, Humanist state of being.

The striated and smooth spaces of becoming.

To understand becoming, the concepts *striated* and *smooth space* and *detrterritorialization* are important. In his study of Cajun dance, Stivale (2003) explained becoming as a process or movement that requires both striated and smooth space. He found that each was productive of the other in generating dances that were likely to be sustained. His observations of Cajun dance styles support Deleuze and Guattari's claim that both striated and smooth spaces are constantly changing and acting in concert with one another. For Stivale (2003), striated space was space "strictly hierarchized by customs and rules set in place" and smooth space was "unfettered openness to free flows of movement or total improvisation" (p. 474). He found that neither striated nor smooth space was evident in its pure form in the dancing that he observed "rather, only passages and combinations of movement and rest between smooth and striated spaces emerge[d] to animate the initially empty dance site" (Stivale, 2003, p. 33). And so it goes with imagining any reading event. Reading a book is neither a complete improvisation of the reader into the smooth space of the book nor the stringent schooling of the reader into the striated pages of the book. Smooth and striated spaces exist simultaneously and inform one another—sometimes one overtaking the other but not for long. Becoming rests in this constant flux in the middle of these two—just as the "becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 10) act to detrterritorialize one and reterritorialize the other.

Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) description of becoming does not focus on a specific state or point of arrival, e.g., one has become someone, but on a mobile view of what some call subjectivity. Colebrook (2002) characterized deterritorialization in the following way: "Everything, from bodies to societies, is a form of territorialization, or the connection of forces to produce distinct wholes. But alongside every territorialization, there is also the power of deterritorialization" (p. xxii). Colebrook (2002) used the example of photosynthesis to describe how the connective forces of the plant and the sun have the potential to territorialize and produce greenness and allow it to grow. However, the connection of the sunlight and plant can deterritorialize the greenness of the plant and make it something other than green. For example, the plant becomes brown with too much sunlight. This example shows how the "connective forces that allow any form of life to become what it is (territorialise) can also allow it to become what it is not (deterritorialise)" (Colebrook, 2002, p. xxii). In other words, connective forces have the power to produce and to destroy. An important aspect of deterritorialization is that the result is not something that combines aspects of each force (plant or sun) but a process that creates something that is neither plant nor sun. Becoming is not about becoming like something else in the metaphorical sense but has more to do with movement and metamorphosis (Bogue, 2003). Becoming is entering the process of deterritorialization whereby the striated grid or graph of experience populated with dichotomous categories is undone and other possibilities or lines of flight are created.

Conceptualizing becoming requires letting go of subjectivity and the idea of identity as an objective, stationary state of *being* that implies a core self that transcends all other relationships and contexts. Instead, the forces that create what is often called the

"I" of a particular person are always in flux and are never finite. However, the notion of an "I" in Western culture presupposes a definitive representation that stabilizes identity through time and space and emphasizes a unique individualism and a destiny born of hard work and good intentions. The normative American "I" is thought of as having the entitlement of a white, Christian, male heterosexual. Colebrook (2002) added that for Deleuze and Guattari,

Life is a flow of complex differences, but we have imposed the category of "man" or "humanity" onto a widely divergent field. We have taken all the flows of human becoming—lines of memory, habit, conceptuality, sociality and fantasy—and produced the extended object of "man." (p. 84)

This commonsense way of viewing the world with man at its core is a problem for Deleuze and Guattari. However, American culture values the unique, coherent, unitary, stable man as I illustrate below.

The Reagan assemblage.

The national week of mourning for President Ronald Reagan in 2004 underscored the constructed nature, not just of the office of the President, but of Reagan himself as a static being. The discursive (eulogies, articles) and non-discursive (lowering the flag, lying in state in the Capitol rotunda, the setting sun on the West coast at his funeral) practices associated with the assemblages surrounding his death enunciated President Reagan. The posthumous creation or gathering of selves into a person called President Reagan shows the mechanisms of power that produce the complexity of subject positions possible in a life. What is important is not only the way Ronald Reagan was produced

from various positions as a steadfast subjectivity after his death but also how specific relationships created different but equally static descriptions of him.

For example, in his eulogy to President Reagan, President George W. Bush, in office at the time of Reagan's death, created an unflappable, unchanging essentialist Reagan who did not change as he lived his life. Being *oneself* and staying true to oneself over a lifespan is an important component of the cult of individualism pervasive in American culture. Bush (2004) said as follows:

Along the way, certain convictions were formed and fixed in the man . . . Ronald Reagan spent decades in the film industry and in politics, fields known, on occasion, to change a man. But not this man. From Dixon to Des Moines, to Hollywood to Sacramento, to Washington, D.C., all who met him remembered the same sincere, honest, upright fellow. (¶ 7)

These "convictions" are supposedly fixed inside the man; they are so strong that the world and places could not change them. In this scenario, Reagan is the quintessential Marlboro man who replaced cigarettes with jelly beans and survived an assassination unscathed. However, Libyan leader, Moammar Gadhafi, in remarks reported by Libya's official JAN new agency, produced a different Reagan: "I express my deep regret because Reagan died before facing justice for his ugly crime that he committed in 1986 against the Libyan children" (Spencer, 2004, ¶ 7). These remarks activate a different assemblage and fix the former President in an unflattering light by referring to the "1986 air strikes [Reagan] ordered that killed Gadhafi's adopted daughter and 36 other people" (Spencer, 2004, ¶ 5). Bush's and Gadhafi's comments on Reagan's death assemble different enunciations of Reagan. Their statements carry different weights and authorize

static but different versions of Reagan within particular cultural contexts; thus creating Reagan as a heroic leader in one context and a murderer in another. The emphasis in both is on being and staying in a certain state of being that is recognizable across time, space, and contexts. I submit that all of these perspectives are part of the Reagan assemblages.

Becoming through an assemblage of forces.

In contrast to this stationary view of the subject and the impulse to put man at the center of or as the grounding force behind the world, Deleuze and Guattari offer a way to leave the concept of subjectivity behind through their concept of becoming. Their intention was to think how the process of life constantly invents and creates within all aspects of the human and non-human world. Stagoll (2005) recognized viewing subjectivity and the world through becoming as important because "it undercuts any Platonic theory that privileges being, originality, and essence" (p. 22). Furthermore, he noted that

For Deleuze, there is no world "behind appearances," as it were. Instead of being about transitions that something initiates or goes through, Deleuze's theory holds that things and states are *products* of becoming. The human subject, for example, ought not to be conceived as a stable, rational individual, experiencing changes but remaining, principally, the same person. Rather, for Deleuze, one's self must be conceived as a constantly changing assemblage of forces, an epiphenomenon arising from chance confluences of languages, organisms, societies, expectations, laws, and so on. (Stagoll, 2005, p. 22)

We are not essentially stable people moving through life and changing a bit through experiences; rather, we continue to become through an assemblaging of forces,

relationships, and places that are constantly juxtaposed in new and productive ways. Our lives are not identities, though we are often marked in this way—I am a mother, wife, daughter, sister, aunt, instructor, teacher, and/or coach in various contexts—instead, our lives are the many becomings made possible by "constantly changing assemblages of forces" (Stagoll, 2005, p. 22).

These assemblages of forces work through various connections. For example, a work of art—a book, a painting—are ways of connecting these forces. Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994) note that works of art are not ways of representing or “commemorating a past” event but are “a bloc of present sensations that owe their preservation only to themselves” (pp. 167). These sensations are not made or found but are immanent to life, and they invite new ways of thinking, seeing, and feeling. Deleuze (1990/1995) called these sensations “concepts, or new ways of thinking; percepts, or new ways of seeing and construing; and affects, or new ways of feeling” (p. 165). He noted that “you need all three to *get things moving*” (Deleuze, 1990/1995, p. 165). Novels, poems, paintings, and music provide opportunities to connect with these sensations and “*get things moving*” (Deleuze, 1990/1995, p. 165). These sensations exist independent of our relationships with various works of art, and I would add various relationships with people, places, memories, and ideas. This is not to say that they exist on a transcendental or ideal plane but instead that they are immanently possible in life.

Modes, forces, and bodies.

Sensations and forces work through assemblages and constantly affect bodies. To identify *the body* as a stationary thing is not desirable, for *the body's* articulable enunciation changes across assemblages. For Deleuze, one experiences the world not

through a stationary identity or body but through a variety of modes that are "a constantly changing assemblage of forces... arising from chance confluences of languages, organisms, societies, expectations, laws, and so on" (Stagoll, 2005, p.22). The unpredictable confluence among these connections creates bodies whose multiple visible (non-discursive) and articulable (discursive) assemblages intermingle in a state of a constant movement. Semetsky (2003) noted that "The body, for Deleuze (borrowing from Spinoza), is both physical and mental; the affect is not just a feeling or emotion but a force influencing the body's mode of existence or its power" (p. 213).

As complicated and abstract as modes sound, Deleuze (1985/1992) used them as a way to think about "bodies and thoughts as capacities for affecting and being affected" (p. 626) not as states of being in which a person is trapped. Semetsky (2003) defined mode of existence as "a capacity to multiply and intensify connections so as producing a complicated rhizome and not planting a single root" (p. 213). Arborescent modes of existence would inscribe the transcendental split of the body as the container for the soul. In contrast, bodies are not defined "by their genus or species, by their organs and functions, but by what they can do, by the affects of which they are capable" (Deleuze & Parnet, 1977/1987, p. 60). There are many possible bodies in the world that do many different things—social bodies, spiritual bodies, cultural bodies. Colebrook (2002) described the body as an assemblage in this way:

All life is a process of connection and interaction. Any body or thing is the outcome of a process of connections. A human body is an assemblage of genetic material, ideas, powers of acting and a relation to other bodies. (p. xx)

Therefore, "bodies and minds are not substances or subjects, but modes" (Deleuze, 1985/1992, p. 626) or arrangements of forces immanent in the world. These modes are always in the process of becoming. Deleuze (1993/1997) described the process of becoming as

Always incomplete, always in the midst of being formed, and going beyond the matter of any livable or lived experience. . . a process, that is, a passage of Life that tranverses both the livable and the lived. . . .To become is not to attain a form (identification, imitation, Mimesis) but to find a zone of proximity, indiscernibility. (p. 1)

These zones of indiscernibility are modes or "complex relation[s] of speed and slowness, in the body but also in thought" (Deleuze, 1985/1992, p. 626). An experience is a becoming not so much where a form is realized but where a "zone of proximity and indiscernibility" (Deleuze, 1993/1997, p. 1) is created. This zone, mode, or becoming is a line of flight or a continual experimentation with the possible sensations at work in the world.

Bergson's body pivot as becoming.

I am using *modes* and *forces* to describe bodies. The body is "an assemblage of genetic material, ideas, powers of acting and a relation to other bodies" (Colebrook, 2002, p. xx). Bergson (1896/1988) discussed just such a body and put this particular bodily assemblage at the center of action in the world. His description of the body works with Deleuze's concepts of assemblage and becoming because the body is not a static entity but a force itself that "directly" feels the flux of itself and the world; "the body is a center of action" (p. 138-139). Bergson's (1896/1988) concept of the body hinges on movement,

not stasis, and he described the present as the immediate experience of the bodily assemblages' sensations and movements. This awareness of the present is not absolutely determined because the body “*as an ever advancing boundary between the future and the past*” (p. 78) is always driven forward to meet the future and create a present. This means that creating the future is always at work in the present. Bergson (1896/1988) described this constant movement as a becoming:

My body is a center of action . . . it, indeed, represents the actual state of my becoming, that part of my duration which is in process of growth. More generally, in that continuity of becoming which is reality itself Our body occupies [the material world's] center; it is, in this material world, that part of which we directly feel the flux; in its actual state the actuality of the present lies...which is always beginning again...our present is the very materiality of our existence...a system of sensations and movements and nothing else. (p.138-139)

Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) work connects with Bergson's work almost a century earlier—assemblages travelling through time. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) emphasized the body as an assemblage of forces and modes that were in a constant state of movement, metamorphosis, and change. Experiencing the world through this bodily pivot does not mean that we are imprisoned by our bodies but instead underscores the variety of contexts and forces immanent within the world that change and influence our experiences.

Csikszentmihalyi's flow experience as becoming.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990), a professor and former chair of the psychology department at the University of Chicago, has written extensively about *flow experiences*

that work with Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concept of becoming. For the past three decades, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has studied and defined flow experiences as focused modes of concentration that absorb all aspects of affection, perception, and the senses. The first description of flow experience appeared in Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) book *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety*. The following year, results from his doctoral dissertation about how young artists created their paintings were published in the book *The Creative Vision* (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976). Since then, Csikszentmihalyi has published many scholarly articles and books. However, I focus here on Csikszentmihalyi and Larson's (1984) book *Being Adolescent: Conflict and Growth in the Teenage Years* and Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* because much of his work focuses on ideas from his earlier study with Larson. Csikszentmihalyi and Larson's (1984) study involved seventy-five adolescents who were given beepers and then randomly contacted to write immediate descriptions of their activities to explain what they thought and felt during activities as various as creating a work of art, rock climbing, playing music, or participating in athletic events. The study found that across a variety of activities, participants described similar experiences of intense involvement with an activity.

Though Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (1984) never mentioned Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) work, a flow experience works in much the same way as a becoming is a "zone of indiscernability" (Deleuze, 1993/1997, p. 1). Adolescents from Csikszentmihalyi and Larson's study were avid "rock climbers, chess players, dancers, artists, and others" (p. 23) who described moments that stood out as moments of intensity

and indiscernability when they no longer felt conscious of themselves. Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (1984) found that:

Regardless of the specific activities, people mentioned a set of consistent elements . . . They described profound involvement with their activity, which combined a loss of self-consciousness with deep concentration. The experience was subjectively pleasing—compelling enough to inspire rock climbers to risk their lives—and at the same time required highly complex use of mental or physical skills. Many respondents used the word “flow” to describe the effortless buoyancy of the experience. This state of consciousness . . . is a condition in which one feels whole and acts with clarity, commitment, and enthusiasm. (p. 23)

Their wholeness was not a long-lasting state but was typified by its brevity and constant physical movement. Participants' descriptions of feeling whole meant that they could not separate mental and physical forces. Their flow experiences were an assembling of these forces. They also did not set out to have a flow experience, but in the process of a particular activity experienced their actions, thoughts, and bodies as forces that worked together. Csikszentmihalyi and Larson's (1984) participants' activities all have experiences that were activated by what Bogue (2003) called "complex networks" that are "comprised of 'assemblages' (*agencements*), collections of heterogeneous actions and entities that somehow function together" (p. 98). These experiences compress time, space, and memory to create elastic, sensory experiences. An experience involving a book, a painting, a building, a landscape, or a poem could enable relationships that become moments of intensity. These relationships exist not as transcendental,

disembodied experiences outside memory, time, and space but as connective relationships *through* memory, time, and space.

Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994) used becoming to show how forces work together to make a variety of experiences possible. The flow experience is a becoming, a “state of consciousness” that has four dimensions: “positive feelings toward self and others”; “psychological activation” of “energy”; “intrinsic motivation” toward the goal of an activity; and lastly, “absorption in the goal of the activity” (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984, p. 24-25). It is inaccurate to think of this “flow” state as static or whole; rather, “a new order among conflicting goals [or forces] is created” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1984, p. 24-25). For example, flow experiences are often associated with athletes who talk about playing a sport *in the zone* so that everything seems to work as one. A flow experience is an assemblaging and a becoming that transmits sensations and intensities, suspends time, and absorbs one in a pre-personal block of experience through an activity.

Order-words and incorporeal transformations.

Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concepts of *incorporeal transformations* and *order-words*¹ show how words and material entities do not operate the same way in every

¹In the chapter “November 20, 1923: Postulates of Linguistics,” Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) introduced the concept order-words in an exclusively negative sense that underscores the disciplinary power of language: “Language is not life; it gives life orders. Life does not speak; it listens and waits. Every order-word, even a father’s to his son, carries a little death sentence” (p. 76). While I retain this negative sense, I use order-words in a more general sense as hinge-words or pivot-words that produce both negative and positive possibilities. Deleuze and Guattari note: “In the order-word, life must answer the answer of death, not by fleeing, but by making flight act and create. There are pass-words beneath order-words. Words that pass, words that are components of passage, whereas order-words mark stoppages or organized, stratified compositions. A single thing or word undoubtedly has this twofold nature: it is necessary to extract one from the other—to transform the compositions of order into components of passage” (p. 110). For my purposes, I order-words created the possibility of stoppage and with the pass-words

context. Order-words and incorporeal transformations show the material effects of assemblages. Order-words are not simply discursive entities but carry with them material social, cultural, and personal connections that are productive and sometimes prescriptive. Order-words "do not concern commands only, but every act that is linked...to a 'social obligation'" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 79). Order-words have histories and connections to social, political, and cultural networks in language. They are "assemblages of enunciation in a given society" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 81). Order-words or the collective assemblage of enunciation includes the "acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 88). Patton (1996) linked order-words to organizing or effecting action rather than representing the world. *Terrorists* and *jhadists* are examples of order-words because they can be used to describe the same person enacting various relationships, restrictions, and feelings toward another in a particular context. Terrorist is an order-word because the collective assemblage of enunciation that utters the word attaches it to different visible or machinic assemblages. The American government often describes terrorists in Iraq, but the same people are considered jihadists on websites and some Arab television stations. Language changes the way places, people, and actions are perceived and felt. Order-words transform relationships and atmospheres.

Incorporeal transformations are linked to order-words in that they are the material manifestations of language attributed to bodies in the world. The movement and immanent possibility of change through assemblage and becoming operate in the striated spaces of the order-word and incorporeal transformations. However, striated and smooth

beneath them, a passage to more variation. Therefore, I use order-words in a differently nuanced way from Deleuze and Guattari's original intent.

spaces exist simultaneously. The machinic and the collective assemblage of enunciation are always co-implicated. Patton (1996) described Deleuze and Guattari's use of "the concept of the order-word...to redescribe the relationship between language and the world in terms of effectivity rather than representation" (p. 325). The effects of using the order-words jihadist or terrorist to describe a person changes how a network of relationships and contexts build up around them. This means that language does not represent the real world but has effects that manifest themselves in material, bodily ways. For example, in a court room "the transformation of the accused into a convict is a pure instantaneous act or incorporeal attribute that is expressed in the judge's sentence" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, pp. 80-81). This courtroom act is an event in which machinic and collective assemblages co-mingle to attribute a change to the body of the accused that affects all material and abstract relationships to that particular body. These events happen in conjunction with institutions. These transformations alter physical bodies because the order-words ascribe certain attributes to a particular body that also collides with the practices and institutions of the machinic assemblage—the effect is at once linguistic and material. Bonta and Proveti (2004) described an incorporeal transformation in the following way:

An incorporeal transformation assigns a body to a different assemblage...Using their terminology of content (assemblages of bodies) and expression (assemblages of institutions supporting the world of order-words), DG note that this active element of incorporeal transformations means they do not represent bodies, but "intervene" in them. (p. 99).

This action underscores the close alignment of the machinic and the collective assemblage of enunciation to produce incorporeal transformations that change relationships across bodies, space, and contexts.

Summary

Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concepts of assemblage and becoming enable new ways of thinking about relationships with the world. Within their ontology of immanence the discursive and non-discursive are equally important in examining how practices and statements influence relationships with the world. Their concepts of assemblage, becoming, incorporeal transformations, and order-words work to provide new entry points to the work of other theorists such as Bergson and Csikszentmihalyi. One practice that benefits from their new concept of immanence is reading.

Part II: How Does Sumara Plug into Deleuze and Guattari?

Although Sumara (1996), a Canadian professor of secondary education, did not mention Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) texts in his own work, he described reading as horizontal connections across past and present experiences. Sumara's research provides interesting links to Deleuze and Guattari's concept assemblage. His work also extends the ongoing conversations among new critical, reader response, and socio-cultural theories of reading that have taken place since the early twentieth century. Situating Sumara's project on the fringes of reader response and socio-cultural theories of reading connects his work to Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) assemblage and provides new ways to theorize reading.

Situating Sumara.

Both new criticism and reader response theories have been influenced by the Cartesian dualism of the text and the reader. New criticism traces its beginning to Vanderbilt University in the 1930s when John Crowe Ransom, a Vanderbilt professor and influential Agrarian author, delineated new criticism's project as defining "what the critic's responsibilities were" so that the study of literature was "precise and systematic" (Young, 1989, p. 857). Ransom's students, Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, jointly published *Understanding Poetry* (1938) and *Understanding Fiction* (1943), books that presented a new approach to the study and teaching of literature that became known as new critical theory or new criticism. Instead of focusing on the cultural, historical, or personal contexts of the reader, the author, and the text, new criticism developed a method of close textual analysis that did not view the work of literature as connected to external influences—the historical period of the author, the psychology of the reader, or the historical period of the text. These variables were to be bracketed by the reader in order to treat the text as its own autotelic unity.

In the same year that Brooks and Warren's first book was published, Louise Rosenblatt (1938/1995) published *Literature as Exploration*, a book that recognized the external influences on reading that new criticism disregarded. Her book is often credited as the first explanation of a school of thought known as reader response criticism. Largely ignored until the 1950s, Rosenblatt's book did not have the "number of periodicals" that worked as "organs for disseminating" (Young, 1989, p. 858) her theory as did the new critics—*Sewanee Review*, *Southern Review*, and *Kenyon Review*. Though adopted more slowly, Rosenblatt's ideas unhinged an adherence to the unity of the text as

the authority by elevating the role of the reader and the reader's cultural context in creating meaning. In a socio-cultural move, Rosenblatt described reading as a transactional relationship between the reader, the text, and the context of the reading experience. Later reader response theorists (e.g., Fish, 1980; Holland, 1980; Iser, 1978; Tompkins, 1980) investigated how the cultural, social, cognitive, and psychological aspects of experience are implicated in the act of reading. These theorists continued to dislodge the text as the most significant source of meaning and considered the text in tandem with the author's and the reader's experiences and contexts.

Sumara's study.

Though closely aligned with reader response and socio-cultural theories of reading, Sumara positioned reading as less about the author and the text and more about the reading practices and contexts of readers within which reading events occur. For example, Sumara's (1996, 2002) study, reported in his books *Private Readings in Public: Schooling the Literary Imagination* and *Why Reading Literature in School Still Matters: Imagination, Interpretation, Insight* focused on how the context of school and the experiences of English language arts teachers influenced the reading experiences of students and teachers. These insights emanated from his work with four inner-city high school teachers in their thirties and forties who met bi-weekly to discuss poetry, short stories, and novels. Their book club meetings that discussed *The English Patient* (Ondaatje, 1992) were the focus of Sumara's study. In addition to participating with the teachers in their book club, Sumara observed, tape-recorded, and conducted interviews with students in the classes of two of the teachers who had their students read two of the books that the teacher book club read: Bell's (1996) novel *Forbidden City* and Wyndam's

(1955) *The Chrysalids*. Sumara focused on how teaching literature in the context of school had influenced the reading practices and experiences of teachers and how those experiences might, in turn, influence the reading practices of their students. In particular, many teachers found themselves in the predictable question, response, and evaluation routine that Marshall, Smagorinsky, and Smith (1995) identified as pervasive in many classroom discussions of literature. To address those striated exchanges in classrooms, teachers in his study realized that replicating the reading experiences from their teacher book club in their classrooms could produce shared readings that have the possibility of falling outside expected curricular codes and providing rich, engaging reading experiences for both students and teachers.

Sumara's contribution to reading theory.

Sumara's (1996) theory of reading developed from his study is consistent with Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) assemblage. To address the complexity that he experienced in reading with the teachers in his research project, Sumara used concepts from Chilean biologists Maturana and Varela (1987) and Varela, Thompson, and Rosch (1993) to theorize reading beyond dualistic and causal relationships between the reader and the text. Sumara applied Maturana and Varela's (1987) concept, *embodied action*, to reading, which enabled him to think differently about the traditional triumvirate of the reader, the text, and the context. Embodied action argues that the division of the environment (context) from its inhabitants (the reader and the text) is simplistic and instead suggests that each co-specifies the other. Living organisms, activities, and environments are not separate; instead, they co-evolve simultaneously and are systems in which everything is immanent, co-creating, or co-emerging with everything else. The

ecosystem of the rainforest is an illustration of co-emergence where every plant, animal, weather system, and land feature serves a particular purpose within the ecosystem and cannot exist independently of the others. One animal's extinction can disrupt the entire ecosystem.

Commonplace location as assemblage.

Using that idea, Sumara's interest was the ecosystem of the reading experience, and he applied the idea of simultaneous co-emergence to reading. For example, he noted how the location or context of reading matters:

If I am reading a new novel at home and I receive an unexpected call from an old friend, that telephone conversation exists with my reading of the book. It becomes part of the act of reading. Reading the same novel in another context (such as the school classroom), means that the text exists within a different organizational structure...and therefore must have an altered identity as a literary fiction. Of course, this contradicts commonsense beliefs about reading since even if we believe that the meaning is always the product of interaction between author and text, we often forget that the actual identity of the text and the reader depends upon situational location. (Sumara, 1996, p. 112)

To address the complexity of the act of reading, he created the concept *commonplace location* as the nexus of relationships that produce surprising, ongoing altering of relationships that occur when reading practices are not viewed as "merely a vertical reading of one text" (p. 107) but a "horizontal" process of connections across "multiple texts of already lived and current experience" (p. 107). Sumara's horizontal description of reading resonates with Deleuze and Guatarri's concept assemblage. Connections occur as

horizontal relations constantly spread, fold, proliferate, and randomly link various aspects of one's past and present lived experiences. Moreover, Sumara (1996) explained that "the commonplace location is the space opened up by the *relations* among readers, texts, and the contexts of reading" (p. 132). For Sumara this ecosystem is interrelated, and reading provokes synaptic associations in which present and past relations to people, places, and other texts continuously stick and assemble together in a vast horizontal map or plane of connections. These connections for Sumara, Deleuze, and Guattari do not change one's relationships with the world; they *are* one's world.

Just as Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage can be translated into English as a stable noun or a static heterogeneous collection, there is the danger of interpreting Sumara's commonplace location in the same limited way. Instead, both concepts function more as verbs than nouns. Assemblage is a constant machining or movement of various entities that function together, and commonplace location implies ongoing changes to one's relationships with, in, and through people, places, texts, and memories. A commonplace location is not a stationary, fixed *place*; it "is not in the book, nor is it in the reader" (Sumara, 1996, p. 132). These locations are "not something that can be finally pinned down to or located *in* something" (p. 132). Reading, then, is a chain of associations that are enacted in "contingent, often serendipitous" (Sumara, 1996, p. 86) ways. Deleuze (1990/1995) positioned reading a book as "a series of experiments for each reader in the midst of events that have nothing to do with books" (p. 9). Reading practices can do more than produce "monuments...commemorating a past" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1991/1994, pp. 167-168) because reading has the potential to shift relationships

among people, memories, and contexts. Sumara labeled changing boundaries and relationships—movement—as the opening of a commonplace location.

A classroom example of commonplace location.

Sumara (1996) recounted how such relations functioned as a commonplace location by using his own public school classroom as an example. When he read a particular passage in Paterson's (1977) *A Bridge to Teribithia* that he had read many times before with past classes

I realized I was suddenly there with Mrs. Myers and Jesse [characters in *A Bridge to Teribithia*]. I was with them in their grief. It had become a part of the life I was sharing with those students during that moment. And, in the middle of this life, I cried with Jesse and Mrs. Myers—a private, intimate moment made public. At that instant I realized that I was no longer simply “the teacher” acting in a location called “the classroom” but, instead, was involved in a situation in which the “fictional” and “real” texts of my lives were united.... Was I reminded that it had been almost exactly one year since our much-loved school principal had died suddenly from a brain aneurysm? Or perhaps I was reminded that other people I loved would also die without warning? Or perhaps I was reminded that someday I would die too. (p. 3-4)

For Sumara (1996) his experience of reading *that* book with *those* students at *that* particular time became a commonplace location that "moved classroom relations...to another place" (p. 4). Reading with his students shifted relationships and made different relationships possible. Even though Sumara (1996) noted that school reading experiences do not often leave “room in the school classroom for life that is infused with the kind of

passion that goes along with having a body that expresses emotions” (p. 4), this experience elicited passion and engagement from his students. He noted how fictional texts, life experiences, and his identify as teacher became more complex and less differentiated.

The physical classroom might seem to be “increasingly rigid” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 204) or binding , creating hierarchical relationships among students and teachers. However, Sumara's reading experiences with his students showed how even the most hierarchical of situations “leaked” and assembled (non-discursive) physical spaces differently. Such complexity reassured rather than overwhelmed Sumara because he believed spontaneity in reading with others in a classroom was possible and could not be completely striated by tests, quizzes, and study guide questions.

Commonplace book as reading practice.

Because Sumara believed that each engagement with a text was different, he became an avid rereader of texts and began to write about reading practices that enable creating the *commonplace book*. Imagined as a way to materially manifest the myriad of connections that go unrecognized in the literary experiences of students and teachers in schools, Sumara’s idea of the commonplace book involved practices such as writing in the margins of novels that he reread. He noted that inspiration for that particular practice came from the novel, *The English Patient* (Ondaatje, 1992). In that book, an injured soldier, known only as the English patient, is cared for by a nurse in an abandoned Italian villa. The nurse reads a copy of her patient’s book by Herodutus, *Histories*, and soon realizes he has drawn, written, copied, and generally chronicled his own personal history alongside that of Herodutus’. The comments the English patient writes are not a linear

listing of events but connections to the written text he read that might not make sense to anyone but himself. Sumara (1996) and the English patient both annotated their books to note connections to relationships, impressions, and other “largely invisible features of humanity—the desires and relations that bind human subjects” (p. 47) that might otherwise have gone unrecorded. By writing in the margins of books that he reread multiple times, Sumara (1996) traced his “perceptions of, and relations with, others in the world” (p. 56). For Sumara, readers packed up their lived experiences and took them along as they read making haphazard, possible associations. His commonplace book is one way of making that rhizomatic movement and those connections more concrete.

For Sumara (1996), the past, the present, and possible physical, linguistic, and remembered worlds of readers coalesce with the linguistic words of texts to generate "emotion" and events that "can never be predicted" (p. 2). Socially sanctioned systems are neither closed nor open. Rather, Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) noted "there is no social system that does not leak from all directions, even if it makes its segments increasingly rigid in order to seal the lines of flight" (p. 204). With the practice of the commonplace book, Sumara documented those lines of flight.

Summary

Many of Sumara's ideas are enriched by plugging them into Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concepts that reflect an ontology of immanence. Sumara's use of commonplace location proposes reading as a practice not based on transcendence or ideals but on actions that take place within the realm of everyday relationships. Reading is a process of recognizing books as part of circuits of relationships that generate, create, and produce. Sumara suggested that reading fiction both with others and alone is a

process of assembling that activates circuits of relationships or commonplace locations. Colebrook (2002) supported this view of reading as assemblage in her comment, "We shouldn't be producing *books*—unified totalities that reflect a well-ordered world, we should be producing texts that are *assemblages*—unexpected, disparate and productive connections that create new ways of thinking and living" (p. 76). Reading, then, becomes more about practices that create these "new ways of thinking and living" (Colebrook, 2002, p. 76). In the coming chapters, I investigate how the reading practices of academics might create some of these new ways of thinking and living "a life that includes reading" (Sumara, 1996, p. 9).

CHAPTER 3

ASSEMBLAGES ALL THE WAY ACROSS

January 31, 2008—driving home from work, listening to NPR’s “All Things Considered.” I listen intently to the voice of Professor Andres Lozano from the Toronto Western Research Institute when he says: “Well, it was a Eureka moment for us. We knew it was something extraordinary, something totally unanticipated. My personal philosophy in science is that the best discoveries are always serendipitous. And I think this is an example of when we were looking for something and didn’t find it, but instead we found something that was interesting. And we pursued it” (Norris, 2008). Professor Lozano’s words haunt me as I struggle to describe data analysis. The concept of serendipity provokes, startles, and encourages me to describe methodology, not as an arborescent, preconceived diagram, but as rhizomatic, shifting assemblages.

The anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s (1973) famous turtle anecdote explains description, not as a transparent rendering of cultures, but as layers of interpretations.

There is an Indian story—at least I heard it as an Indian story—about an Englishman who, having been told that the world rested on a platform which rested on the back of an elephant which rested in turn on the back of a turtle, asked (perhaps he was an ethnographer; it is the way they behave), what did the turtle rest one? Another turtle. And that turtle? “Ah, Sahib, after that it is turtles all the way down.” (Geertz, 1973, p. 28-29).

Geertz launched anthropologists (and by extension qualitative researchers in the social sciences) into the land of description as implicated interpretations. Using Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987), I propose an ancillary mantra to set alongside Geertz's (1973) famous interpretation of interpretation being "turtles all the way down" (p. 29). My Deleuzian-inspired mantra is "it is assemblages all the way across."

To investigate how Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concept assemblage provides an alternative figuration for conventional qualitative research methods is the methodological issue for this chapter: How was *the doing* of the study—the interviewing, the writing/data analysis—theorized through the concept of assemblage? Kvale (1996) labeled a researcher operating from a vertical perspective as a miner who seeks quantifiable, "objective facts" or "nuggets of essential meaning" (p. 3). In this conception, the world becomes a place where knowledge is an entity "waiting in the subjects' interior to be uncovered, uncontaminated by the miner" (Kvale, 1996, p. 3). This approach might also be described according to the parable of Plato's (380 BC/1990) Cave, in which the world contains shadows of forms or appearances that can only reflect their Ideal form or essence (Kvale's nuggets). Using Deleuze to think about research involves using theories that are not vertical shafts that help mine transcendental qualities or knowledge from participants or books, but are immanent constructions *with* the worlds of participants and books. Interviewing, reading, writing, and data analysis are all research practices that were transformed in my study when viewed through Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) positive ontology of immanence. Research is not about "turtles all the way down" then but assemblages all the way across.

I used Deleuze and Guattari's concept of assemblage to rethink conventional

qualitative research methodology in general and, in particular, its standard description of data analysis. In my study, assemblage highlighted the constant juxtaposition of things, people, places, ideas, the human and the non-human (discursive and non-discursive relations) during the research process. My purpose was not to access a transcendental or interior commodity from my participants; instead, their conversations and scholarship, our relationships, my reading, and my writing machined together to create glimpses into reading as a practice of connections.

In the first part of this chapter, I provide a chronological description of the study by describing a timeline of events, the interview process, and my participant interviews. The second part of the chapter provides further description of how the face-to-face and telephone interviews worked to assemble important connections that were not contingent on physical proximity. The third part of the chapter focuses on how Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) assemblage informed my analysis as I worked across interviews, transcriptions, readings, and writing. This methodology chapter describes how data analysis through writing and reading is accomplished without the explicit "coding" of data using qualitative research software. Even though I had been trained to use qualitative research software (e.g., Atlas ti), I decided instead to focus on accomplishing and describing data analysis without using explicit coding. My questions, then, became: What credibility does my study have if I do not code my interviews in ways familiar to qualitative researchers? What might I learn if I use writing as a method of inquiry *and* analysis without using the validity-making machine of qualitative research software like Atlas ti?

Part I: A Chronological Description of the Study

In this interview study with ten academics from Australia, Canada, and the United States, I used Deleuze and Guattari's concept, *assemblage* to study how reading became a force that enables complex relations of texts, people, places, ideas, and memories. The process of interviewing and the analysis of those interviews were driven by the following questions: How do reading practices function as a force that assembles complex relations of texts, people, places, ideas, and memories together in surprising and productive ways? What alternative reading practices are possible by theorizing reading through these relationships?

To recruit participants for my study, my committee members helped me identify scholars who use theories in their work that resist or challenge the Cartesian reduction of the world into binaries. I received Institutional Review Board approval at the beginning of June 2005 (See Table 1, Timeline for Study). I emailed twenty-one scholars and invited them to participate in my study. By the end of June, ten participants had agreed. From 2005 July through October, I interviewed ten professors from the United States, Canada, and Australia: five professors in English education, one professor of English, one professor of sociology, one professor of comparative literature, one professor of philosophy, and one professor of social and cultural foundations of education. Six of these participants were women and four were men (See Table 2 for the chronology of the interviews), and all ten had published in their respective fields for fifteen years or more. I had met all of the participants in various scholarly settings at least once and had read their work.

The Interview Assemblage Begins.

In July 2005, I conducted an interview with Jakob (all names are pseudonyms), a professor of English education at a large southeastern university, in my home. Jakob also gave me feedback on the wording of interview questions and confirmed the importance of particular questions (See Appendix A, Interview Guide). Our discussion lasted over two hours as we recounted and theorized many of our own reading experiences. I had thought initially that I might interview each participant more than once in order to compile an entire reading history of each. However, after this interview with Jakob, I changed my mind and decided that a single interview with each participant would suffice. I decided that my goal instead was to understand how the reading practices of these academics were invested in complex relationships to texts, people, and places. The original interview guide consisted of the following six questions:

Can you describe your life as a reader?

What are some really memorable reading experiences you've had?

What are some of the contexts in which you read?

What are some of the physical locations in which you read?

What do you expect from reading?

How does reading surprise you?

During the interviews, however, I changed the questions to suit the scholarship of my participants and to address issues and questions that had emerged from prior interviews with other participants. In an effort to avoid Weiss' (1994) pitfalls of following an interview guide too closely, I explained, at the beginning of each interview, the connection the participant's work had to my project and let them know that I was

familiar with their work. I quickly realized that each interview developed its own rhythm—part improvisation and part scripted questions. Glesne (1999) noted that “questions may emerge in the course of interviewing and may be added to or replace the pre-established ones” (p. 68). The changing interview guide was a tangible marker of movement through the striated space of my interview questions to smooth spaces and back. During this process, I reminded myself that “the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 474). The interview questions provided striated space from which we could access smooth spaces. Questions became important as our words, voices, ideas, and gestures across interviews were juxtaposed to connect and alter how I thought about interview questions.

Assembling Participants.

I interviewed nine of the ten participants within a four-month period with each interview lasting over an hour. I conducted three interviews by telephone; four others in person at coffee shops; two in person in participants' campus offices; and one in person in my home. I audiotaped and transcribed all interviews. For the first three interviews, all professors at the same southeastern American research university chose to meet me at local coffee shops. My first interview was with Leighton, a professor of English and women's studies at a southeastern American university, and I followed my interview questions closely (See Appendix B, Leighton's Interview Guide). I had not met Leighton before the interview but had heard about her work in the Women's Studies Institute through other graduate students. Leighton commented that she used coffee shops for

different purposes and that this particular one was where she "read things for classes, certain kinds of research, and ambitious student work." The interview lasted an hour and fifteen minutes. Because this was my first interview, I realized, when I transcribed the tape, that I talked more than I had remembered. After saying, "It feels funny to be doing all the talking," Leighton encouraged me to share my own experiences. As Oakley (1981) noted, there is "no intimacy without reciprocity" (p. 49). I attribute my talk not only to nervousness but also to a desire to build rapport with someone I had just met. All my interviews had this conversational quality and were not highly structured.

Next, I interviewed Davidson (See Appendix C, Davidson's Interview Guide), a professor of English education at a southeastern American university, whom I had known for several years. We met at a neighborhood coffee shop in a suburban area removed from the university's downtown area. The coffee shop was frequented by professors and students alike and functioned as a library of sorts with people reading, writing, or searching their Internet library stacks on wireless computers as they sipped various caffeinated beverages. When I arrived, Davidson was reading galley proofs for a book. Having spent two years working closely with Davidson on several research projects, I was not nervous about the interview. Still, I was surprised by the intimate and pivotal moments he shared that changed his reading practices.

I met Beaufort the next day at the same coffee shop (See Appendix D, Beaufort's Interview Guide). He was an English and English education professor who had just relocated to a southeastern American research university from a midwestern American research university. Beaufort commented on needing to find coffee shops and book stores to network with other readers and sustain his reading habit. The tape recorder

malfunctioned, and Beaufort and I rescheduled the interview for the following day. Beaufort remarked that my research topic was "at the center of [his] own research projects." Laughing, he warned that he might provide more detail than I wanted. He often made inclusive statements such as, "I don't know how this maps onto your experiences" and "people like us." He talked with a persuasive eloquence, ease, and charisma that could convince me to follow him off a cliff.

I interviewed the next four participants in September. The first was Scott (See Appendix E, Scott's Interview Guide in), a professor of comparative literature who works at the same southeastern American research university as my first three participants. Our interview was our first meeting. She had written extensively on holism in literary study and supported interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching at the university. We met in her office on campus but moved to a conference room nearby with a boardroom table and comfortable chairs. Our interview was awkward at the beginning because she thought my study was about "pleasure reading," a type of reading that she did not do. However, once I mentioned how her work related to my project, we established a better rapport. She even gave me several of her interdisciplinary syllabi that use texts from across the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. At the end of the interview, she gave me a signed copy of one of her books that was out of print. This interview continues to surprise me because it illustrates how quickly connections between two people can form.

The awkwardness at the beginning of Scott's interview reminded me that establishing rapport with a participant does not happen automatically. I was particularly worried that the telephone interviews I had planned with participants in other countries might make connecting with them difficult. My first telephone interview was with Kerrey

(See Appendix F, Kerrey's Interview Guide), a professor of education and assistant dean at a large northeastern Australian research university. I had met Kerrey at a conference where I attended two of her sessions. Her presentations proved her to be a quick-thinking, deliberate speaker who challenged her audience to think about their taken-for-granted assumptions about the world. Her anecdotes were deceptively simple and well theorized. I was familiar with her work and, frankly, was a little intimidated about talking with her. The time difference helped because I simply could not be nervous at five in the morning, which was seven at night her time. From the moment her voice came over the receiver, she was gracious, friendly, and approachable—telling me, "No worries, Sharon!" Any apprehension I might have had about telephone interviews being strange or disconnected evaporated.

My next interview was face-to-face with Lancashire (See Appendix G, Lancashire's Interview Guide), a philosophy and women's studies professor at a large southeastern American research university. Lancashire and I had emailed several times. Because her schedule was very tight, we had waited until the end of September to meet. We met in her campus office and sat side-by-side on a couch. Because I had met her on several occasions, we fell easily into conversation. As did many other participants, she began drawing linkages among her early reading experiences and those later in her academic life that she had not considered before the interview. She traced her interest in anthropology back to her voracious reading of *National Geographic* and noted that she had brought her interest in anthropology into her scholarly work as a philosopher.

After interviewing Lancashire in person that afternoon, I went home for a telephone interview that evening with Marsh (See Appendix H, Marsh's Interview

Guide), a professor of social and cultural foundations of education, women studies, and comparative studies at a midwestern American research university. Having read many of her publications in qualitative research, I was probably more nervous about this interview than any other because I had met Marsh on several occasions and attended many of her presentations at research conferences. We had had to reschedule previous interviews because of the illness of a close family member. I remembered her as having a commanding presence in a room full of scholars; she was someone who spoke with authority and conviction that others recognized. This interview surprised me because I felt comfortable talking with her and found her extremely open and approachable in this setting. At one point she reported that she was reclined in her reading chair. Throughout the interview, her voice sounded relaxed, and I envisioned her unwinding in her living room at the end of a long day.

My last two interviews were also telephone interviews that I conducted at the beginning of October. Lawrence (See Appendix I, Lawrence's Interview Guide) was a Professor Emeritus of sociology at a large midwestern American university. This interview had been rescheduled twice because of her busy travel schedule. Much of Lawrence's work had struck a personal chord with me, and I felt I knew her before talking with her. Though I later met her at a conference and found her to be a tall woman, her voice was diminutive and whisper-like. When I told her this, she laughed and said that no one would ever characterize her as diminutive. There was a palpable connection as we talked, and her excitement about her scholarship animated her voice. She was excited about a new reading practice called book altering, which I will describe in more

detail later. She had even converted a guest room in her house for this practice. At the end of the interview, we both commented on how much we had enjoyed our discussion.

My last interview was a telephone with Larkin (See Appendix J, Larkin's Interview Guide), a professor of secondary education at a western Canadian university. I had met Larkin only once but had read two of his books and several of his articles. He remembered meeting me at a research conference several years earlier. Though I had not intended his interview to be my last, it was fitting because his work had been a constant influence throughout graduate school. He had the reassuring habit when he talked of making statements and then rhetorically asking, "Right?" He also talked extensively about what having a career in the academy did to his sense of self and to his ability to maintain relationships. When the interview ended, he said I could contact him by telephone or email anytime. His parting words were comforting and collegial because he said he looked forward to meeting again at conferences since we would both be in our field for a while.

The previous descriptions situate each participant in their fields of study and provide a sense of the rapport established during the interview. After each interview, I wrote a memo, fieldnotes to capture my initial impressions and connections (See Appendix K, Example Memo from Lawrence). By November, I had emailed all participants their interview transcripts and asked them to return the transcripts with corrections, additions, and clarifications if they wished. They did so in various ways. However, Leighton was the only person who made no corrections or additional comments to her transcript. Davidson emailed me before I sent his transcripts to share an emotional childhood reading memory where he remembered being "deeply saddened" in

junior high school after reading Marjorie Rawlings' *The Yearling*, but, he did not have any corrections to the interview transcript itself. Beaufort emailed me a corrected copy and noted that he just did a little "wordsmithing" of his comments. Kerrey wrote her corrections and comments using the track changes option in Microsoft Word. One of her corrections was to my transcription of *bow-bird* for *bower-bird*. Without her explanation that a bower-bird was native to Australia, I would not have made the connection of the bower-bird in nature to the concept of assemblage. Lawrence printed her transcript and wrote grammatical corrections in red ink. I received her corrected transcript in the U.S. mail with a typed letter and appreciated the intimacy of this correspondence. On the back of the envelope, she even wrote that she was leaving for Australia and would take the books that I had sent with her to read—Sumara's (1996) *Private Readings in Public: Schooling the Literary Imagination* and Ondaatje's (1992) *The English Patient*. Larkin whose comments were typical of participants' responses to receiving their interview transcripts, responded that he appreciated having the interview transcribed because it was so closely aligned with his own research agenda.

During that time, surprising connections provided intimacies not contingent on physical presence or time. Even though I interviewed scholars who had more power and experience in the academy than I, power relations did not feel like a hierarchical student-teacher relationship within the context of the interviews. Relations were made easier by our mutual associations with my committee members and my familiarity with their research agendas. Being in relation to these participants was not "considered a given arrangement or order; here being is the assemblage of composable relationships" (Hardt, 1993, p. 99). The relationships began before the interview occurred and continued

composing themselves during the interview and response process, and long after the interviews were over. As I returned to the interview transcripts and audio recordings during analysis, the assemblage continued.

Part II: The Interview Assemblage Continues

Fontana and Frey (2000) described interpretive research as an approach that assumes "true and accurate pictures of respondents' selves and lives" (p. 646) are possible and that accurate representation of participants is the aim of research. However, they noted that such pictures often hide the complexity that includes "an increasing mountain of field notes, transcripts, newspaper clippings, and audiotapes" that the researcher must simplify and reduce to present readers with an interpretation of the data that has been "cleaned and streamlined and collapsed into rational, non-contradictory accounts" (p. 661). To avoid hiding the complexity of lived experiences, many qualitative researchers during the last two decades explored representing ethnographic data in aesthetic and performance genres: poetry (Richardson, 1993), performance ethnography (Denzin, 2003), and novels (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990; Saks, 1996). Conventional interpretive research positions interviews as unmediated access to the real world and foundational stories about that world. In postmodern interviewing, Denzin (2001) noted that

The interview is not an interpretation of the world per se. Rather it stands in an interpretive relationship to the world that it creates. This created world stands alongside the so-called bigger and larger world of human affairs of which this creation is but one tiny part. The lifelike materials of the interview absorb us and seduce us. They entice us into believing that we are seeing the real world being staged. This is not so. But then there is no real world. There are no originals.

There is no original reality which casts its shadows across the reproduction. There are only interpretations and their performances. (p. 30)

Interviews with my participants did “absorb and seduce” me; the language they used to describe their reading practices provided jumping off points that provoked me to read and write more. However, the interview assemblage does not rely unproblematically on producing Geertz’s (1973) rich, thick description to narrate what really happened during interviews. Interviewing as assembling circulated and moved many linguistic and material entities together through surprising linkages. A fixed picture or representation of how these entities link together is not the goal of this research report, which aligns more with Denzin’s (2001) view of representation—not as a way of accessing a transcendental truth but a way of thinking differently about the worlds we inhabit:

But then, at this point, we do not ask if the representation is true. We ask instead, is it probable, workable, fruitful, does it allow us to see things differently, and to think differently? (p. 31)

The interview assemblage does not produce a complete picture but provides more possibilities and is constantly working. The interview does not end when the telephone receiver is placed in its charging station; rather, the machining continues—the assemblage continues.

The rhythms of the face-to-face interviews.

At the beginning of interviews, I assured each participant that we could deviate from the interview questions I had prepared but had not given to participants in advance. For example, I began the interview with Leighton by saying, “I have questions here but I don’t feel like we have to be sequential.” Nevertheless, during the first three interviews, I

did try to control the interviews, especially at the beginning, and this rigidity distracted me. The participants, though, were not distracted and launched into elaborate descriptions of their reading memories. The question-answer structure of typical interviews fell away as they spoke, and I asked questions out of sequence, following the natural associations of our conversations. As I listened more without worrying about my next question, I became swept up in the conversation, posing new questions and rephrasing those I had prepared. Participants were “making words fly” (Glesne, 1999, p. 67) in the interviews. For example, after Leighton mentioned teaching a women’s studies capstone class, I asked her an impromptu question: “What has feminist theory done to your reading practices?” After I asked this question, our conversation became rhythmic; her half-page responses were interspersed with half-page exchanges between the two of us that clarified or moved into a new area provoked by her memories. Leighton commented on this rhythm to our conversation, by noting, “It’s much easier to get at things in conversation.”

My interview with Beaufort had its own rhythms as well. His interview in particular had a mesmerizing rhythm as he reminisced about his reading experiences. Some of his answers took the form of a compelling lecture as he spoke about a reading class he was teaching for the first time. We then moved into talking about his reading history, which produced vivid images as if I were watching a montage sequence from a movie. Denzin (2001) noted that this collapsing of time and space often occurs during interviews:

In the postmodern interview, storied sequences do not follow a necessary progression. Narrative collage fractures time, speakers leap forward and backward in time. Time is not linear, it is not attached to causal sequences, to “fixed

landmarks in orderly progression” (Dillard, 1982: 21). Time, space and character are flattened out. The intervals between temporal moments can be collapsed in an instant. (p. 29)

The comforting rhetorical quality of his descriptions transported us from our neighborhood coffee shop back in time to the late 1960s. Because he talked for long, interesting stretches at a time (at one point for almost two pages with minimal interruption from me), I found myself drawn into the rhetorical, discursive world that assembled around us. Indeed, “time, space and character flattened out,” and Beaufort’s descriptions became more tangible than the vanilla soda water and *café au lait* on the table between us.

Every interview was not immediately gripping and easy to fall into, and I learned that not all assemblages easily coalesce. My face-to-face interview with Scott showed how assemblages sometimes rupture or move in erratic ways. On the sweltering day that Scott and I met in her office, establishing rapport was quite difficult because she was one of two participants whom I had not known in advance of the interview. Seated next to one another at a large conference table, we talked briefly about my project and why I was interviewing her. As the interview began, the open-ended nature of my first question about her reading history was too broad, and she said curtly, “It would help me if you asked specific questions.” From this first comment, I felt awkward and clumsy, but I immediately asked her more concrete questions. For instance, I began by asking about her first reading memory. For two pages, we had short exchanges, and then something changed. She sat back a little in her chair, put one hand in her lap, rested the other on the table, and said, “I can tell you a little bit about my reading habits and how they impacted

my writing.” Her comment was the oil that got the machinery of this interview moving. Her demeanor became more calm and comfortable. As her voice quickened, our shorter exchanges fell away as she took us back thirty-two years to her early days reading about the Heisenberg principle. I share these examples to show how rhythms of interviews vary, not from a good rhythm to a bad one, but in fits and starts that sometimes lead to surprise. Next, I turn to the rhythms of the telephone interviews.

"Being there": The rhythms of the telephone interviews.

After five engaging and productive face-to-face interviews, I worried that it would be more difficult to establish rapport in the telephone interviews with participants whom I had met only briefly at academic conferences. I feared telephone interviewing would make it harder to connect to participants without the physical gestures that can help establish rapport—a nod of the head, a raised eyebrow, a smile, or eye contact. My apprehension about the telephone interviews was unfounded and their intimacy surprised me. Interestingly, Fontana (2002) and Kendall (2002) found online conversations sometimes more immediately intimate than face-to-face meetings. My telephone conversations were similar to online conversations in that way and challenged me to think about what it means to occupy a space together. I began to understand that "being there"—the mantra of anthropologists, is not necessarily about physical presence—usually “being there” refers to Geertz’s (1973) rich, thick description that makes the reader feel present at the site of the research. As I sat at my kitchen table during the interviews, I imagined the spaces my participants occupied—Marsh relaxing in her recliner watching what she called bad television; Larkin standing in front of his refrigerator looking at the note to remind him of my phone call; Lawrence standing

breathless in her book-altering room; and Kerrey shutting a kitchen window to keep out street noise. The intimacy of these telephone interviews brought into focus how assemblage worked not as a noun but as a verb—a machining or a putting into relation that was not limited to physical proximity.

As participants spoke in telephone interviews, I wrote notes even though I was recording the interviews. I wrote fragments of sentences spoken by participants or my thoughts that circulated as participants talked. A tangible practice during the interview, writing focused my attention on our words and ideas and was a way of connecting and "plugging into the electric circuit" (Deleuze, 1990/1995, p. 8) of our assemblage. Interestingly, I did not take notes during face-to-face interviews because I focused more on my body language and the body language of my participants as these insights were important non-discursive parts of the assemblage. Denzin (2001) noted that an important aspect of interviews is that

They transform information into shared experience. This reflexive project presumes that words and language have a material presence in the world; that words have effects on people. Words matter. (p. 24)

Interview conversations had material effects, and as I listened to the audiotapes later, I was reminded of data not found in a transcript—the look in someone's eye or the regret in someone's voice. However, even telephone interviews had these material effects, and I constructed images of participants that were as visceral as those in face-to-face meetings. I accumulated these associations with participants and their environments as they talked to me on the telephone and in person, as I transcribed their interviews, and as I thought about them later.

One such telephone interview was with Kerrey, and even though I could not see her, I have strong visual memories of our conversation. At one point, she mentioned that she needed to close her kitchen window, and I imagined her standing there, telephone on her shoulder with car horns honking in the distance. I also have strong memories of her Australian voice, of the cadence of her quick sentences that seemed more interrogative than declaratory, of a certain confidence as she talked about her reading practices and her scholarship in general. Those unexpected sensory experiences made me feel strangely present with her.

Lawrence's telephone interview proved equally as tangible because she rushed into an animated explanation of her book altering practice as soon as the interview began. As she described ripping pages out of books and writing in her altered books, we both laughed. Our laughter seemed to relax our bodies in a way that worked through our voices. Almost breathless, she attributed her excitement to not having yet had a chance to talk, write, or theorize about this gratifying, new reading practice. After thanking her for the interview and her scholarship that I had read over the years, she said, "I just got shivers up and down my legs." Afterwards, she emailed some writing about reading through the eyes of her mother and as I read, I cried. We emailed later, and she noted that she had cried while writing the piece. Words do have material effects—laughter, shivers up one's leg, and a surprising intimacy assembled across physical distance. "Being there" in those interviews was not contingent on time spent together in the same physical space, but on the connections our interactions enabled. The point here is that telephone interviews were as useful and as productive as face-to-face interviews; sometimes telephone interviews felt even more intimate.

Perhaps the intimacy of my telephone interviews that was not dependent on physical space is best described by St. Pierre (1997b) as “transgressive data” (p.179). In her study of older white women from a small Southern town, she argued that data are more than the fieldnotes, letters, and interview transcripts in the researcher’s file cabinet. After her experiences in the field, she identified “emotional data, dream data, sensual data, and response data” (p. 180) as “transgressive data” because they were “uncodable, excessive, out-of-control, out-of-category” (p. 179). Data became an unpredictable massing of forces that aren’t necessarily understandable or codable but lead the researcher into new territory. In both St. Pierre’s and my study, interviews with participants provided transgressive data that were not codable but initiated analysis and connections across interviews.

Part III: Writing and Reading as Data Analysis

After recently speaking to a qualitative research master’s class at my university, I demonstrated how I had used *Atlas ti*, a popular qualitative data analysis software package, to code and analyze data. I explained how every piece of the interview transcripts was sorted into different overarching codes related to the sociocultural theory we used to analyze the data. These overarching codes were then broken down into sub-codes to further establish themes emerging from the data. The use of a software program for coding and data analysis quickly established the validity of my study with the students, who hung on my every word and marveled at tables of codes and numbers that were embedded in my final manuscript. At the end of the class, my colleague who had invited me to speak to her students noted that she would be glad when I was able to teach the qualitative research class. As can be imagined, I felt oddly blasphemous and cautious

when I explained to her that I had not coded data in my dissertation study. Bewildered, she asked, “Well, what on earth did you do if you didn’t code?” Because I had not followed the conventional data analysis process of labeling transcripts with major codes and then developing sub-codes from those categories to identify emerging themes, my colleague began to doubt the validity of my study. I had initially felt confident about *not* coding data, but my colleague’s disciplinary comments positioned me outside the qualitative research norm. Believing that writing and reading were methods of both inquiry and analysis, I needed to describe what counted as data analysis in my study. What follows describes that process.

Analysis flies off in all directions.

A veteran qualitative researcher gave me the following advice about data analysis: Read all the theory you can, and the concepts will be there when you begin your analysis. In this study, writing and reading have been the two chief methods of data analysis that provided surprising, haphazard connections that weren’t immediately understandable. I learned to accept that predetermined theories failed to connect to participants’ experiences while other theories unexpectedly assembled. That is to say, the feminist, ecological, and reading theorists that I thought would be central to my analysis of participants’ reading practices were disconnected from the experiences participants shared. Instead, the concepts of Deleuze and Guattari emerged to provide ways to theorize how academics used books to do things.

I began writing my dissertation in what I *thought* (and hoped) would be a fairly chronological process. I created separate documents for each of the dissertation’s five chapters and another for the references. Having completed a two-year research internship,

I had followed a similar process in constructing journal articles. Creating the bones or outline of a writing project gave me momentum and a sense of accomplishment even at the beginning of a long, complex process. With this overall shell completed, I began writing chapter one to provide both personal and theoretical contexts for the study.

Though I did not realize it at the time, the following problem statement that I used in this chapter was, at the same time, too specific and too broad:

This interview study with teacher educators who teach across humanities disciplines in universities throughout the southeastern United States uses post-Cartesian theorists to develop embodied images of reading experiences that blur the boundaries of the binary concepts of aesthetic and efferent reading.

It was too specific because it concluded beforehand that participants' reading experiences were embodied, and it was too broad because post-Cartesian encompassed a large swath of socio-cultural, feminist, and poststructural theorists. Suddenly, these theories felt less like a neighborhood of interconnected concepts and more like the vast expanse of interstellar space.

Undaunted, I wrote chapter two to situate and explain these varied post-Cartesian theories that were important to my analysis. To this end, I divided chapter two into three parts: (1) reading theorists (e.g., Brooks & Warren, 1938, 1943; Faust, 2000; Fish, 1980; Holland, 1980; Iser, 1978; Keenan, 1997; Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995; Rosenblatt, 1978, 1995; Scribner, 1988, 2001; Smagorinsky, 2001; Smagorinsky & O'Donnel-Allen, 1998; Sumara, 1996, 2002), (2) poststructural feminist theorists (e.g., Bordo, 2003; Grosz 1994, 1997; Haraway, 1991; Hayles, 1999), and (3) Deleuze and Guattari (e.g., 1980/1987; 1991/1994). Part one addressed how reading theories

addressed the mind/body split. Part two traced how poststructural feminists addressed dualisms through *embodiment*. In part three, I connected Deleuze and Guattari to concepts by other theorists: aesthetics (Baumgarten as cited in Siegesmund, 1999), an aesthetic flow experience (Dewey, 1938/1980; Csikszentmihalyi, 1984; Murphy & Zoss, 2006), memory (Bergson, 1896/1988), autopoiesis (Capra, 1996), and place attachment (Massey, 1999; LeFebvre, 1991). Describing this version of chapter two in detail illustrates a trail of theories that led me to think about the complexity of describing reading practices in non-dualistic terms. At this point, it was not apparent to me what particular theories would be the most useful in the interpretation of data. The first draft of chapter two began with the following statement: “I am tangled up in tracking the concept of *embodiment*.” The bulk of the first version of chapter two addressed how each theorist troubled the term embodiment.

Next, I began writing the methodology chapter and almost immediately trying to write using the structure of sequential dissertation chapters became an albatross. After writing descriptions of participants’ interviews and connecting my interview experiences to various insights about qualitative research methodology, I abandoned writing about data analysis because it was something I simply had not completed. Peräkylä’s (2005) chapter in the *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* noted: many qualitative researchers “do not try to follow any predetermined protocol in executing their analysis” (p. 870). Peräkylä’s argument is that coding data is the “predetermined protocol” (p. 870) that used in data analysis in qualitative research. I had been trained to code, so I longed for codes that could fill tables, charts, and graphs, efficiently categorizing and organizing data, and counting standing in for my analysis. Charmaz (2005) stated that “coding is the

first step in taking an analytic stance toward the data” (p. 517). I had conflated data analysis with conventional coding. In any case, to avoid *describing* my analysis, I *continued* my analysis and began writing chapter four.

Listening to participants’ interviews while rereading their transcripts, I settled into my data to write about participants’ reading practices. I highlighted particular passages and wrote in the margins of the transcripts as I listened to the interviews. I pasted participants’ accounts of their reading experiences into chapter four. As I wrote with my participants’ words and experiences, the language of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) seeped into my writing. Deleuze’s (1990/1995) description of his collaboration with Guattari helped me think about that experience: “Writing flies off in all directions and at the same time closes right up on itself like an egg” (p. 14). In these early stages of my analysis, the concept of embodiment closed “up on itself” (p. 14) while I was writing about participants. The more I intentionally thought about the concept embodiment, the less it connected to participants’ reading experiences, and the more my writing went “off in all directions” (p. 14). Deleuzian concepts that I only marginally understood percolated into my writing and connected to participants’ experiences, making “it possible for me to ‘see’ in the data” and through the writing “something other than what I went looking for in the first place” (Alvermann, 2000, p. 126). For example, Larkin's dismissal of the term embodiment in the final interview pushed me to question whether the concept worked with the data. As I wrote about participants’ reading experiences, the theories of Deleuze and Guattari machined together with Larkin's doubt about embodiment. These connections assembled in ways that changed the direction of my analysis. Lawrence's concept of reading as latching helped that movement, and I began writing across the

linguistic and material, not in search of a transcendent level that would explain everything, but across a plateau of immanence that made possible surprising connections among the experiences of my participants.

I wrote with impressions and traces of what made participants' voices crack and their eyes sparkle. I attended to those comments that seemed spoken in confidence. I referred often to the memos I had written immediately after the interviews because they contained first impressions and connections. I also considered notes I added to these memos while transcribing the interviews when theoretical concepts began emerging. When I read the memos, I realized that even though I had used the term embodiment in many of my questions, my participants and I circled around something I didn't yet have language to describe. I had used the term embodiment to describe their reading practices, but the term carried too much mind/body split baggage and felt forced. Even though my interview questions did not stay the same from one interview to the next, I naïvely expected my first initial explanatory concept—embodiment—to stay in place. Writing, though, became an assemblage that moved Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) theories and the words of my participants together in new and exciting ways.

I was forced to squeeze concepts into language, and new connections among ideas occurred—thoughts I didn't know I had come to life on the page. At other times, I struggled to write a sentence or make sense of a transcript. Then, suddenly, I'd have an insight, a flash, such as the following note I made to myself: "Order-words and poetry—two participants mentioned poetry as being intense and colonizing, so I need to write around those instances they described and work in order-words." In this way, writing did not simply repeat ideas already formed, but writing was a method of analyzing and

working through new associations. Wolcott (1990) advised qualitative researchers to begin writing even when they think they don't know what to write. Similarly, Elbow (1998) said that "writing is a way to end up thinking something you couldn't have started out thinking" (p. 15). Writing is analysis or a way to think what I did not know was possible. Deleuze and Parnet (1977/1987) noted, "The writer invents assemblages starting from assemblages which have invented him" (pp. 51-52). Writing is the work of assemblages. I thought my analysis had fallen apart—I wish I had known then that assemblages were moving and working through my writing. The gaps and disconnects in my theories were my way of writing to the limits of my thought—assemblages were moving and producing a different way of thinking my data.

Assemblages are the active enlistment of external objects into the human cognitive system. Although we can still exercise conscious agency, it works in conjunction with preprogrammed routines within and without that also control the outcome, sometimes, decisively. (Hayles as cited in Marcus & Saka, 2006, p. 105)

I was being pushed into different theories, not because I desired it or because I was entirely in control of the way theories permeated my life, but because "the active enlistment of external objects" worked to change my analysis. The theories and participants' experiences were "external objects" sculpting the linguistic terrain of chapter four. As I wrote about participants' reading experiences, I used language from Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) to talk about their reading experiences. Data analysis, then, was writing, and writing was a leaking system—a place where concepts seeped into my analysis in surprising, sometimes inaccurate, and ultimately productive ways.

Writing ignites some theories and extinguishes others.

After writing through all four dissertation chapters, a meeting with my dissertation committee added more data to the assemblage. Although I thought my analysis had fallen apart, it was actually continuing to form. That meeting focused the theory I would use in data analysis on the concept assemblage. My committee's feedback helped me understand that the theories I had used in chapter four to analyze data worked, but that the literature review in chapter two, much of which focused on embodiment, did not. A question that now preoccupies me is how people write a literature review describing the theories they intend to use to analyze data before they have either collected data or begun analysis. Using writing as a method of inquiry and analysis, I could not describe exactly what had been done before anything was done, but in the genre of the dissertation, chapters one through three are many times written and approved before data collection ever begins.

I left that committee meeting with my professors feeling renewed and focused. I began to clarify the theory that was working its way into my writing—*assemblage*, *becoming*, *order-words*, *incorporeal transformation*. I read about these concepts and tracked the history of the concept *assemblage* to construct a theoretical chapter that explained the lineage of this concept and situated it within the reading theories I wanted to use. To understand that one concept, *assemblage*, meant trying to understand many overlapping concepts including *order-words*, *incorporeal transformation*, *desiring machines*, and *immanence*. I continued to use writing as a method of inquiry, but I now added more focused reading as a tool of inquiry and data analysis (e.g., Richardson,

2000; Wolcott, 1990). What follows is a description of how I read and wrote my way into understanding assemblage.

When writing is not enough.

Analysis had been on-going for years, and it seemed to me that I had used Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concepts to theorize participants' reading practices as early as the first memos I had written after each interview: body-without-organs, assemblage, line of flight, becoming, deterritorialization, striated and smooth space. Initially, I didn't use the concepts deliberately; they just appeared as I wrote, without explanations or definitions. However, as analysis continued, I realized I needed to better understand the concepts so that I could, indeed, write about and use them confidently. In that way, writing with them led to reading about them—grasping and snatching phrases, and highlighting passages, and whole pages of the books I read by Deleuze and Guattari as well as secondary texts about their work. The act of writing was not enough. How could it be? I checked out books from the university library and printed online journal articles that explained Deleuze and Guattari's (1987/1980) assemblage. I carefully read the translator's footnotes and appendixes of Deleuze and Guattari's books to trace what was lost in the English translations.

As I read and took notes, I built webs of connections around Deleuze and Guattari's concept assemblage. I created documents for each source that I read, but by the time I had read forty sources, my many documents became unwieldy and hard to search. For example, in one document I had Deleuze and Parnet (1987) and in another Holland (1999). In an effort to organize and connect explanations of concepts across readings, I created a glossary of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts by collapsing all the primary and

secondary source documents together into one document. I, then, began sorting quotes within this one document according to various concepts; my first entry was “and” and my last was “truth.” Was I coding my theory? I continued building this glossary until I had seventy-nine pages addressing Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts. This glossary provided structure for the many concepts that I was immersed in and organized language that folded back on itself. I, then, began to write chapter two by tracking the concept assemblage in Deleuze and Guattari’s work. Their concepts were related; for example, one has to understand *order-words* in order to understand *incorporeal transformations*. Many passages I copied from Deleuze and Guattari’s work were lengthy, and I did not yet know how to use them to interpret participants’ reading experiences.

As I wrote the final version of chapter two, I wanted to begin data analysis before I finished writing about the theories—I wanted to create connections among the data with reading experiences. During this period of writing, I posted the following quote from Virginia Woolf’s (1982) diary beside my writing desk:

It is worth mentioning, for future reference, that the creative power which bubbles so pleasantly in beginning a new book quiets down after a time, and one goes on more steadily. Doubts creep in. Then one becomes resigned. Determination not to give in, and the sense of an impending shape keep one at it more than anything.

I’m a little anxious. How am I to bring off this conception?...Yet writing is always difficult. (p. 25)

I had “a sense of an impending shape,” but I still felt anxious. To begin to use assemblage to think about reading, I decided to write about my own reading experiences. I assembled Foucault (1966/1994) and Lather (1997) to think about the material fact of my annual

mammogram. I also used some previous writing about the death of President Ronald Reagan to discuss assemblage and subjectivity. Writing those two sections of chapter two made me eager to return to chapter four and use Deleuze and Guattari's concepts with data. Just as my earlier writing about my participants brought forth theories that I had not anticipated, situating one of my own reading experiences within the theoretical chapter activated insights by making complex, abstract concepts more tangible. I continued writing, connecting theory to lived experiences by illustrating how theory has material effects in the world.

The theory writing pivot.

The final version of chapter two provided a pivot with which I could theorize participants' reading practices. In addition to writing about my participants, I had several other documents open at the same time on my computer: my Deleuzian glossary, chapter two, my interview transcripts with memos, and a document that was a "parking lot" of ideas, to which I moved stretches of text from the dissertation in order to move my analysis forward. I moved back and forth between writing about the experiences of participants to the Deleuzian terminology to generate linkages between data and theory. Through this writing, the concept assemblage focused how I theorized participants' reading experiences. Writing and reading worked in tandem as methods of analysis.

When I read, I lost track of time and connected ideas in surprising ways. Sometimes I actively took notes, at other times I read passages aloud; but mostly I read silently, poised with a pen to underline and write in the margins. I underlined passages in Deleuze and Guattari's work that related to my data and sometimes wrote participants' names in the margins. Data was no longer just the interview transcripts. Theory was data

that I was reading, collecting, and analyzing simultaneously. When I turned to transcripts, Deleuzian concepts peppered the margins of my interview transcripts, creating another assemblage that I could return to and write through. My desk sometimes looked like a nest of papers because I had the notebook of transcripts opened (I eventually abandoned paper copies of the transcripts and instead used their electronic counterparts), several books opened with different colored Post-it notes in a chair beside me, and scraps of paper from the bottom of my purse that were taped to my computer to remind me of a connection made at dinner the night before. The italicized beginning of chapter two was written hastily on the back of a napkin after a bike ride on vacation—analysis was constantly occurring and seeped into all aspects of my life. Data analysis as assemblaging was putting different and unrelated data into relation in unplanned and unexpected ways. Analysis could not be described as simply coding data but the intermingling of data and theory—this interview with that one, this idea with that one.

Writing was not something I did after analysis was complete; writing was analysis. Writing produced an assemblage, a collection, of participants reading experiences. Additionally, writing was the practice of assemblage, a machining or putting together of their reading experiences with theoretical concepts. For example, I wanted to write about Beaufort's insightful and humbling experience at graduation, so I wrote a description of that reading event. With Leighton, I began writing about how her reading experiences illustrated active, social reading practices that were not passive, solitary experiences. For Davidson, I knew I had to write about how his reading practices changed after his wife's death. Next, I connected his not-reading with Lawrence's cerebral hygiene and Scott's focused reading. Lawrence's book altering practice

mesmerized me. Kerrey's use of bower-birding and self-described transgressive reading practices provoked connections to assemblage. Larkin's intentional rereading and cataloguing of his reading experiences as a way to document his subjectivity captivated my interest—how would I describe this practice without discussing subjectivity? Marsh's description of being haunted by texts, writing, and interviewing was something I knew I wanted to address. Jakob's interest in memory pushed me to read Bergson and led me to passages in Deleuze and Guattari that replaced memory with becoming. Scott's lifelong relationship to writing, reading, and teaching that produced her concept of holism suggested ecological models of reading that I briefly entertained as a title for my entire project: *An Ecology of Reading: A Machine that Works*. Lancashire's research in material culture and the practices of everyday life seemed to connect to reading, but I didn't yet know how to include her insights; I just knew I had to begin writing around her experiences.

The practices participants described assembled different aspects of their worlds, some in the past, present, and future. Linearity was not important in the stories they told; in fact, they often talked of events that happened over thirty years ago as though they were present—and they were. My writing about their lives brought the assemblage into focus. I wrote and kept writing because ideas, people, words, images, places, and feelings latched together to tell one story and not another. Writing was an assemblage; their stories were not pieces of a larger whole but working, living, breathing aspects of life that were constantly juxtaposed and changing one another.

My writing or assemblaging had a "butterfly effect" (Capra, 1996, p. 134) such that when starting from "the same point, two trajectories would develop in completely

different ways" (p. 134). Writing and reading through all the interviews put them into relation in ways that changed each interview. As Capra (1996) noted, "minute changes" (p. 134) have the capacity to lead to larger shifts. Assemblages work and combine in much the same way. Following a chain of events is almost impossible, but I have attempted here to describe how fragments of one interview shot my analysis into different directions. Data analysis was "a kind of great connecting machine" and "a great art of connection and experimentation" (Rajchman, 2000, p. 13). Data analysis became writing, and latching, and assembling, and machining not with an intentional plan but by experimenting with connections that fueled more movement and thought.

Analogies for my analysis.

Analysis resembled a Rube Goldberg machine where everything connects in haphazard ways. The Rube Goldberg image shows how data from various sources can come together to produce results. This machine is an unlikely assortment of entities that have their own histories and purposes and come together to work differently. My data analysis machine included discursive and non-discursive flows and entities—stories, words, gestures, and images that stay with me even now—Beaufort's eyes misting over, Davidson's pain over the loss of his wife, Marsh's work with the terminally ill, Lawrence's book altering room, and Lancashire's obsession with National Geographic. Those events and impressions created entry points in the data where I began writing. These entry points were not stationary points but lines of flight that generated analysis. Instead of generating codes and themes, I was experimenting with connections and intersections. Analysis was these connections.

Crotty (1998) defined researchers as *bricoleurs*, much like those who build a Rube-Goldberg machine, because they “employ a large range of tools and methods, even unconventional ones, and therefore rely on his or her inventiveness, resourcefulness and imaginativeness” (p. 49). For my purposes, writing and reading were the methods I used to connect theory with what participants told me. The bricoleur does this different work to “re-vision these bits and pieces, casting aside the purposes which they once bore and for which they were once designed and divining very different purposes that they may now serve in new settings” (Crotty, 1998, p. 51). I used interviews as assemblages, reordering and re-visioning the world beyond the everyday use of things, theories, and actions. Deleuze (1990/1995) portrayed the reader and researcher as experimenters rather than creators or excavators (Kvale, 1996) who engineer or author their own actions. That is to say, research does not always have to follow a predetermined plan or “research design.”

Lévi-Strauss' (1966) bricoleur works much as Deleuze's reader; neither is an engineer controlling combinations of entities, but an experimenter. Colebrook (2002) described an assemblage as the "unexpected, disparate and productive connections that create new ways of thinking and living" (p. 76). Research assembled disparate objects, places, experiences, conversations, and people that created a productive, haphazard web of relationships and possibilities.

Summary or Making Order Out of Chaos

Even though I have described how messy the research process is, I do not mean to imply that it cannot be organized. In fact, looking back over the many drafts of this research report, I recognized order in my tracking of concepts through the texts I both

read and wrote. Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994) could have been referring to researchers when they noted: “We require just a little order to protect us from chaos” (p. 201). Their quote helps me understand what Britzman (1995) called the push “to position experience as seamless even while it was lived as disorderly, discontinuous, and chaotic” (p. 233). Rarely do research projects occur in a linear manner, and sometimes the most interesting aspects of research are obscured or eliminated entirely to create an orderly progression. In this chapter, I have not obscured the “disorderly, discontinuous, and chaotic” (Britzman, 1995, p. 233) but have shown how productive practices of using writing and reading as methods of analysis.

Using assemblage to think about methodology has been a productive process because it underscores “emergence and heterogeneity amid the data of inquiry, in relation to other concepts and constructs without rigidifying into the thingness of final or stable states that besets the working terms of classic social theory” (Marcus & Saka, p. 106). In short, the concept assemblage is supple enough to encompass both organization and complex possibilities within a research project. A research study is comprised of any number of events, and the romance of assembling them together into a satisfying story has a strong pull because it implies that there can be a definitive “end to the analysis of events” (Caputo, 1993, p. 94).

In the next chapter, I look at fragments of the “irreducible” and show how I “inhabited, settled into” and “coped with” (Caputo, 1993, p. 94) theories about data and data about theories. Bonta and Proveti (2004) described this symbiotic relationship or how data and theory contaminate one another in productive ways:

Indeed, it is a truism of contemporary life that there is a relay between theory and practice: not that one first gets one's theory straight and then applies it, but that conceptual clarification must be linked with practical feedback just as practice is informed by ongoing conceptual work. (p. 12)

In my study, data analysis became an exercise in Bonta and Proveti's (2004) "conceptual clarification" that linked the words and experiences of participants with the concepts and theories of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987). I inhabited data analysis as I interviewed, read, wrote, researched, transcribed, always returning to my transcriptions, glossary of concepts, and the shifting drafts of my dissertation chapters. Next, chapter four drops the reader into the assemblages that my participants and I have "inhabited, settled into, and coped with" (Caputo, 1993, p. 94).

CHAPTER 4

INTENSIVE READING: USING BOOKS TO DO THINGS

Students sit criss-cross applesauce around the teacher on the patchwork rug as they read The Pumpkin Runner together. Children's hastily printed comments litter the wall in columns called Noticings, Wonderings, and Burning Questions. Third graders squirm up on their knees to share connections that include anything from watching a cartoon version of The Legend of Sleepy Hollow to losing a longtime pet to attending a NASCAR race to toughening one's bare feet at the beginning of the summer. Reading is not a predetermined way of thinking for these students; instead, reading produces unexpected associations that do not always have a great deal to do with the actual events of a story. Sitting on the periphery of the discussion, my thoughts fold across the academic food chain back to my participants. Like many of the academics in my study, these children have reading experiences that drop them into an ongoing assemblage of questions, ideas, and images.

In chapter two I aligned Sumara's (1996) theory of reading with Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) assemblage because both understood reading as an on-going process that described reading practices as socially and relationally embedded acts that resist the image of the lone, hermit-like scholar (Hood, 1985). This chapter focuses on how assemblage provided an opening that discouraged discussing reading as a "tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and

a field of subjectivity (the author)” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/1980), p. 23). Instead of creating an exemplary *way* of reading, participants’ reading experiences merged with theoretical concepts assemblage, order-words, incorporeal transformations to generate rich, complex views of reading as a productive, multi-dimensional, social, subjectivity-building practice. This chapter is arranged in three parts that correspond to three main themes that resulted from data analysis: creating a language of assemblage, reading as forces and associations of assemblages, and inhabiting assemblages. I use data from each participant but not in all three sections. In Part I below, three participants’ descriptions of reading created a language of assemblage with terms such as *latching*, *book altering*, and *bower-birding*. In Part II, I explain how six participants’ reading practices assembled forces that altered participants’ lives and subjectivity in both purposeful and unintended ways. Finally, in Part III, I discuss how reading experiences of six participants produced unintended consequences. Deleuze and Guattari’s (1980/1987) concept assemblage, the reading theory of Sumara (1996), and the reading practices of participants produced “new and imaginative ways” (p. 88) to describe intensive reading, theorize subjectivity, and inhabit reading contexts and relationships.

Part I: Creating a Language of Assemblage

This section describes reading as assemblage or a process that latches various parts of a life together in complex and interesting ways. First, I discuss Lawrence’s reading practices of latching and book altering. Then, I illustrate Kerrey’s transgressive reading practice of “bower-birding” (M. Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005). I end by characterizing Leighton’s and Kerrey’s practice of reading poetry as order-words intervening in their reading assemblages. All of these participants introduced

language that illustrated aspects of reading as an assemblaging of insights and intensities that is productive.

Reading as latching and book altering.

Lawrence, a Professor Emeritus of sociology at a large mid-western research university, described her critical reading practice as "latching" (R. Lawrence, personal interview, October 6, 2005). As a member of a "post-postmodern syndrome (PPMS)" (R. Lawrence, personal interview, October 6, 2005) reading group and an avid reviewer of refereed journal articles, Lawrence explained that both reading contexts challenged her to read more critically. Her reading certainly was not what Deleuze called a "depraved" (p. 7) way of reading that considered the meaning of a book but an "intensive" (p. 8) way of reading that focused how a text works with other aspects of life: "Does it work, and how does it work?' How does it work for you?" (p. 8). For Lawrence, critical reading functioned as a way of asking questions and evaluating the author's claims within a larger body of work. Additionally, reading critically was a process of "latching."

I read with a critical eye, with a very critical eye, because that reading [in my reading group] tends to be chosen because it's difficult and can create or can latch into projects in different ways. So I read that quite critically. And I also read it indeed for latching. What does it latch into in my life? And how does it latch into work or my life or other sorts of things? (R. Lawrence, personal interview, October 6, 2005)

One definition of latch is "to associate oneself intimately and often artfully" (*Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*, 1994). Lawrence's latching was similar to Deleuze's charge that reading is "like plugging in to an electric circuit" (p. 8) because her latching

focused on circulating and linking ideas productively within the contexts of her book club and the work of reviewing journal articles. In addition to reading critically, latching was also reading carefully and slowly “for beauty for the sound of words on the pages—the rhythms, the breaths, that kind of stuff. It takes me a long time to read” (Lawrence, personal interview, October 6, 2005). In short, latching was a productive way of using and working ideas and concepts into her thinking.

One practice that illustrated Lawrence’s latching technique was her newfound reading practice of *book altering*. Altering books made reading a practice that outwardly manifested her on-going creation of ideas and concepts as she read. On the official website of the International Society of Altered Book Artists (ISABA), an altered book is defined as “any book, old or new that has been recycled by creative means into a work of art. They can be... rebound, painted, cut, burned, folded, added to, collaged in, gold-leafed, rubber stamped, drilled or otherwise adorned” (Geiger, 2005-2006, ¶ 2). The ISABA website includes a gallery where artists post their book altering projects and receive feedback from other members (<http://www.alteredbookartists.com/>).

Lawrence's interest in book altering began after taking paper-making and book-binding classes where she met people involved in an altered book group in her town. For Lawrence, book altering is an intimate, artful practice that capitalizes on the connectivity alive in her reading. While some book artists suggest that book altering is recycling by making the old into something new, Lawrence described book altering as a different type of reading that does not have to start with an interesting book. Book altering is about reading through her “lens” to “reimagine” or ignore the book entirely (R. Lawrence, personal interview, October 6, 2005) as she alters it.

Differentiating book altering from scrapbooking was important to Lawrence: "It's interesting because I'm not positioning myself as against anything [scrapbooking], but for something [book altering]. I'm not against" (R. Lawrence, personal interview, October 6, 2005). For her, scrapbooking creates a "monument to the actual experience that happened," (R. Lawrence, personal interview, October 6, 2005) but book altering *is* the experience. During this experience, she asks herself, "What does the book itself look like? What are the possibilities of a book? How do you tell a story in a different way? What can you express?" (R. Lawrence, personal interview, October 6, 2005) These questions reminded me of what Colebrook (2002) called Deleuze's challenge to readers: "Ask, he insisted, not what a text means but how it works...Art, Deleuze argued, is not just a set of representations, it is through art that we can see the force and creation of representations, how they work to produce connections" (p. xxxii). Lawrence's book altering is just such a practice. She laughed as she described this process of altering books and making them work:

So you take some book that you either like or hate or whatever or just think about and just interact with it, so it's a very different reading practice where you're changing the text. It's actually art interacting with the dead author as if the author is alive. I'm changing that text, modifying it, changing the pictures or doing whatever. I'm finding that whole process fascinating because it is the next extension...An actual book and tearing pages out it. Goodbye pages! Writing in it [the book], underlining under things, maybe painting in it, maybe adding my own pages, altering it. (R. Lawrence, personal interview, October 6, 2005)

In a visceral and overt way, she cut up and repurposed books. What many readers do in their minds and in marginalia, Lawrence did materially. Discussing book altering provoked an excitement and a joy in her voice that reached its height when she described her home studio that accommodates this reading practice. She explained that she has a warm, green and brown study where she reads and writes, but then she has a more contemporary, blue and steel studio where she alters books.

Book altering is a radically different notion of reading—certainly a more physical one. Lawrence lamented that she would be unable to publish her altered books, but noted book altering was an "artful practice with emotional impact and expressivity" that "tells a story, not one that necessarily matches" the words, pictures, and stories found in the book before altering it (R. Lawrence, personal interview, October 6, 2005).

You look at it, and it's say a children's book, an ABC book, or whatever. And that's what's being altered. So you might take the zebra and decide: "Why does that zebra need stripes? That zebra needs a tutu instead." You know, so it's a fascinating process. So you're both giving someone a gift and altering something and returning it to them. It's a one of a kind. It's back to the Benjamin that there are originals now because they are not just printed because you've taken something that's printed and now you can make an original. I mean, all of it is just fascinating to me. (R. Lawrence, personal interview, October 6, 2005)

Lawrence's practice of book altering latches different ideas together through an artistic process of exploration and experimentation similar to Deleuze's (1990/1995) description of reading as "a series of experiments for each reader in the midst of events that have nothing to do with books, as tearing the book into pieces, getting it to interact with other

things, absolutely anything” (p. 9). In other words, Lawrence's book altering process followed Deleuze's description of reading as an experiment that plugs into events and ideas not necessarily having anything to do with the book at hand.

Book altering became an unexpected scholarly joy for Lawrence because it physically manifested her scholarship in an artistic medium. Book altering was a radical reading experience that made scholarly notions of reading more artistic, visceral, and physical. For example, Lawrence altered an early feminist book called *Bold Women* by pasting over the women in the book and adding women she thought should be there, including Guatemalan worry dolls to represent Guatemalan babies who survive despite terrible odds. For her next project, she planned to interact with herself as a young scholar by altering one of her own books. Her engagement with this reading practice surprised her:

It's a whole different process of reading. And the writing and reading, painting and drawing and ripping paper and what everyone does. There's been a merge here that's quite unexpected. I didn't expect to be doing this in my life. But here I am. (R. Lawrence, personal interview, October 6, 2005)

She said she is doing this partly "so the book becomes a much more alive thing in my hands" (R. Lawrence, personal interview, October 6, 2005). For Lawrence, book altering is a "radically different notion about reading" that forefronts "the viscosity" of her reading experience "because you are so physically involved" in a different way than if "you're writing on a computer or holding a book" (R. Lawrence, personal interview, October 6, 2005). Lawrence's reading practices of book altering and latching create linkages that are not hierarchically organized but are rhizomatically splayed across a

variety of possible discursive and non-discursive connections. Her reading emphasizes Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) assemblage in its most active, unexpected and dynamic state of putting experiences, words, landscapes, memories, physical modalities, and forces in relation to function together through the artistic medium of book altering.

Reading as bower-birding.

Kerrey, a professor of education and assistant dean at a large northeastern Australian research university, lamented that her new administrative title had changed her pattern of reading because she now has to read "policy documents," "strategic plans," "mission statements," and "budgets" (M. Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005). Or as she collectively described it: "I have to read a whole lot of shit, really—managerial shit for my work" (M. Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005). This managerial reading encroached on her academic reading. The bureaucracy of the university did not encourage or enable her to read more but to read differently. To get relief from the administrative morass, she said:

A release from [administrative reading] really is to go way away from it. So I read something about eroticism in the 12th century because it's got nothing to do with any of that. So it makes me transgressive in my reading, I think. I just, I'm not a good girl in my reading. (M. Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005)

Another reason for reading outside her discipline is that Kerrey found much educational research "pretty boring" because "it's like transferring bones from one graveyard to another" (M. Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005). Kerrey's transgressive reading linked disparate fields of study to create new insights. She was not interested in reading as a mastery project that builds a hierarchical body of impenetrable knowledge.

That is to say, Kerrey's transgressive reading produced new ways of imagining issues in the field of education.

Kerrey used the image of the *bower-bird* to describe her transgressive reading. Native to Australia and New Guinea, the male bower-bird's mating ritual uses an assemblage of "colored stones, shells, feathers, flowers, and other bright objects" (Columbia Encyclopedia, 2001-05) to lure the female to his nest to mate. Just as the male bird adorns his nest with various eye-catching objects, Kerrey works the "shiny bits and pieces" (M. Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005) from her transgressive reading into her research agenda to create new understandings:

What I do is I bower-bird my way, if I can put it that way. I find bright and shiny bits outside my discipline and I pull them into the discipline. That's what I love doing. I love pulling in the totally unfamiliar idea and bringing it into education and to my theoretical stance and making it do some work and letting it make some trouble. And so that's why I tend to read outside the discipline. (M. Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005)

Kerrey's reading outside her discipline functions to disturb or as she put it, "make some trouble" (M. Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005) within the field of education. Her image of reading is, then, similar to Deleuze's (1990/1995) description of reading while writing *Anti-Oedipus*:

And we read a lot, not whole books, but bits and pieces. Sometimes we found quite ridiculous things that confirmed the damage wrought by Oedipus and the awful misery of psychoanalysis. Sometimes we found things we thought were

wonderful, that we wanted to use. And then we wrote a lot. Felix sees writing as a schizoid flow drawing on all sorts of things. (p. 14)

Deleuze's description of reading and Kerrey's bower-birding practice are what Massumi (1980/1987b) called a "kind of philosophy 'pragmatics' because its goal is the invention of concepts that do not add up to a system of belief or an architecture of propositions that you either enter or you don't, but instead pack a potential in the way a crowbar in a willing hand envelops an energy of prying" (p. xv). Reading outside her discipline functions as a crowbar that opens other possibilities.

Kerrey's eclectic reading was not the only way she bower-birded her way into new ideas. Because of the steady stream of new information, Kerrey highlighted the importance of surrounding herself with a social network of people who can enrich her scholarly work. Instead of feeling guilty about not maintaining interest in the many education journals in her field, Kerrey adopted the practice of French philosopher Michel Serres, who recently let her in on a secret about his eclectic knowledge: "I have interesting friends. Basically, you can't read everything" (M. Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005). To compensate for the enormous amount of information that she is unable to read, he told her she should enlist other experts to keep her up-to-date in their fields. Accessing information socially is quite possibly "the only way you can keep up" (M. Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005). Kerrey's reading assemblage, then, includes people. She reads people like traditional texts because they "can pass on to you a distillation of what [something] is about. Because there is no way you as a lone reader can inform yourself anymore" (M. Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005). Because Kerrey valued sustaining social networks, attending conferences in her

discipline kept her connected to important developments in her field. After just one good hour at a conference talking to someone she's "already got some little objects...to pull into [her bower-bird] nest" (M. Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005) in hopes of producing and attracting new connections.

Creating possibilities that might elude her if she adhered to a traditional or predictable path, Kerrey, a self-proclaimed "bad girl," described her reading practices as transgressive. Just as the bower-bird collects a combination of materials that are usually not found together, Kerrey sought information not usually found or used in the field of education to provide a different construction of old ideas. Kerrey and the bower-bird placed materials (in the bower-bird's case) and ideas (in Kerrey's case) into new relationships that forced her and others to notice different arrangements. Her reading illustrates practices that assemblage the discursive and non-discursive worlds in interesting, productive, and transgressive ways.

Reading as order-words, intensities, and a-ha moments.

The language two participants used to describe reading poetry, in particular, underscored reading's potential to surprise, perplex, provoke, and generate concepts, but not always in comfortable ways. Poetry was a source of order-words that reordered the lived experiences of both Leighton, a professor of English and women's studies at a large southeastern university, and Kerrey, described above. In Massumi's (1980/1987a) translator notes, he clarified that the French word "*Mot d'ordre*" or *order-word* has two meanings: "password" (p. 523), and also a word or phrase that commands and creates order. Poetry's order-words manifested incorporeal transformations:

An incorporeal transformation is brought about by an order-word uttered in the proper context....Another way of putting it would be to say an incorporeal transformation assigns a body to a different assemblage...DG note that this active element of incorporeal transformations means they do not represent bodies, but “intervene” in them. (Bonta & Proveti, 2004, p. 99)

Reading poetry provided “the proper context” for this “intervention” that assigned Leighton and Kerrey to “a different assemblage” (p. 99). Leighton described going to poetry for just such a transformation:

Interesting thing I've realized is that I've probably looked for about the same kind of things in poetry as in theory. That in both cases I'm looking for something really intense—something that knocks me off balance where I have to go back and read it. (Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005)

Leighton’s desire for something “really intense” underscored reading, not as an act of *understanding* and *explicating*, but reading as an act of generating assemblages. In Leighton’s case, her experiences with poetry provoked her “to read again” without expecting to “understand” because she knew she would be “treading water for quite a while” (Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005). Instead of thinking of her reading of poetry as a mastery project, she saw it as an open site of possibility where she was “treading water.” By characterizing poetry as order-words that incited intense experiences, I do not mean that her search for intensities was simply for insight. My purpose is to show how participants’ reading experiences counted on order-words in poetry to alter their understandings of concepts and lived experiences, keeping them in a state of imbalance. Leighton’s comment that she would be “treading water for quite

awhile” indicates a willingness to be in a state of flux. For her, “treading water” was a desirable state.

Kerrey also acknowledged reading poetry with “an ontological hunger” for “a-ha moments” (Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005). Reading Dylan Thomas' poem “Fern Hill” was one such “a-ha moment,” one not of understanding but of bewilderment that altered her perceptions as a seventeen-year old. Kerrey recited forcefully the lines: “Time held me green and dying though I sang in my chains like the sea” and then described how their simple profundity had stayed with her:

When “green” and “dying” come together, because what happens is that moment, [I'd] had a whole life of green and living, you know. Green and growing and when a writer puts green and dying what it does is it jams something up against something else. It puts things in juxtaposition but it also rams home something which you can't avoid, which is the fact of dying. . .you're confronted when you're seventeen with the fact of death. . .there is no safety, I suppose. (Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005)

The phrase “green and dying” elicited a startling juxtaposition and re-ordered her world. Her “a-ha moments” were the effects of order-words that transported or plugged into her life in ways she did not necessarily expect. Instead of viewing these experiences as purely pleasurable or enlightening moments, Kerrey saw other possibilities and noted that these reading experiences are “almost like colonizing. I think of wormholes, almost like *Alice through the Looking Glass*. You know it pulls you out or else it's sort of invasive in a way—in a pleasurable way but also in a disturbing way” (Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005). When reading short stories or poems, “you've got this profound,

sort of moving experience" in a succinct period of time (Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005). These shorter texts stayed with her and continued to "viscerally" engage her through startling juxtapositions (Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005). Kerrey recognized reading not as a passive practice but a productive one that had the potential to open colonizing possibilities as easily as they could provide escape or comfort.

Kerrey's "a-ha moment" with Dylan Thomas' short story "A Child's Christmas in Wales" transported her across texts, memories, and concepts to alter perceptions of her world because it evoked "a critically powerful sense of childhood with all the fears and the delights and the disappointments of childhood too" (Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005). She did not simply tell a story about a particularly personal moment or a detailed story of her experience as a child but examined a "critically powerful sense of childhood" that order-words provoked. Kerrey plugged into the intensities of childhood that reading "held together" (Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005) to produce open sites between a past and present that continually constructed the future (Bergson, 1896/1988). Memories supply intensities that are never really past in a Bergsonian sense but are part of the construction of the present and future. For Kerrey, shorter works of fiction, poetry, and even some theoretical pieces contained order-words that had the power to produce incorporeal transformations that transposed intensities across time and memory.

Summary

Each of the three participants discussed here described reading not as a passive activity but as active—bower-birding, latching, treading water, searching for a-ha

moments, knocking the reader off balance, and colonizing—and showed the power of reading to produce material effects in readers' lives. Leighton and Kerrey read theory and poetry for the intensities they provoked. Lawrence's book altering practices enlisted other agendas and experiences in her life unrelated to the book. Kerrey's ontological hunger for a-ha moments, bower-birding practices, and transgressive reading juxtaposed seemingly disparate elements to create new ways of thinking. Leighton, Lawrence, and Kerrey's reading practices produced "unexpected, disparate and productive connections that create new ways of thinking" (Colebrook, 2002, p. 76) about reading as a productive, not a neutral practice.

Part II: Reading as Forces and Associations of Assemblages.

In order to resist the familiar trope of reading as an escape from a stable identity, this section investigates how identity collapsed and Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) *becoming*, *order-word*, and *incorporeal transformation* provided ways to discuss *subjectivity* rather than foundational, essentialist selves. For my participants reading practices reassembled relationships among people, places, memories, intensities, and ideas across *striated* and *smooth* spaces that motivated participants to either read or not read. Striated space is homogenous, static, and sedentary; whereas, smooth space is heterogeneous, fluid, and migratory. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) described these two spaces not as in "simple opposition" to one another but as "exist[ing] only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space" (p. 474). Subjectivity, then, is the movement, translation, becoming, and assembling of forces and relationships

across these spaces, offering different ways to think about reading and living than the static, humanist individual.

Beaufort, Leighton, Kerrey, Davidson, Scott, and Larkin are the focus of this section because their reading practices translated striated spaces into smooth spaces. Reading was not a way to access representations *of* life; the practice of reading was life. Participants' reading practices were "intensive" (Deleuze, 1990/1995, p. 8) and emphasized the "book as an assemblage with the world rather than an image or representation of it" (Patton, 1996, p. 325). Sometimes reading experiences initiated intensive reading practices and at other times prompted them to avoid reading altogether.

Reading and the trope of escape.

Nell's (1988) study of 300 ludic readers described reading as escape in the following way: "The metaphor most often used [to describe reading for pleasure] was that of switching off one world and switching on another" (p. xiii). However, in this study, instead of describing reading in a dualistic manner, participants said that time passed quickly as they read and provided alternate experiences that were not separate from but worked alongside other experiences. Even though Beaufort, Leighton, Davidson, Scott, and Larkin used language that at first seemed dualistic, their reading practices had the power to create a different subjectivity.

Formula reading as escape.

Beaufort, Leighton, Scott, and Lancashire read formula fiction, such as mysteries, to counterbalance the mundane aspects of their lives. For example, Beaufort, an English and English education professor at a large southeastern university, and Scott, a comparative literature professor at a large southeastern university, both frequently read in

waiting rooms, offices, airplanes, and airports—all places where waiting and boredom reigned:

I had to spend two hours at the place where you get your driver's license this morning and well, I had to get a new license. Geez, what a mess! But I had that book there so it was kind of a good way to not get depressed about where I was. (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005)

With a book, the waiting room of the driver's license office lessened Beaufort's frustration about waiting in a bureaucratic limbo. Similarly, Scott used mystery novels on planes to pass the time when she was bored. She noted:

I've always been a reader of mysteries and thrillers, you know, on airplanes. And I still like reading "whodunnits" and thrillers. Yeah, when I have freetime, like on an airplane, and it's usually a thriller or a "whodunnit." Because I'm so bored in airplanes and in airports, I want something that tells a great story. (Scott, personal interview, September 12, 2005)

Reading mystery novels plugged into particular routines on airplanes and in airports to create her experiences differently. For both Beaufort and Scott, reading functioned to create smooth spaces in the striated contexts of waiting rooms and airports because they had specific uses for them and made them work.

Leighton also revealed a penchant for mystery reading because the formula was predictable and helped her escape boredom in certain contexts. However, Leighton had developed particular times of the day and contexts in which she read mysteries and other genres. A "serious" novel at breakfast each morning started her day with a challenge, and later, a mystery novel before bedtime helped her to unwind. Breakfast and bedtime

reading each had quite different uses to her: "I'd say what I'm looking for in genre reading is exactly the opposite of what I'm looking for with breakfast reading" (Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005). Breakfast reading was serious reading that should surprise and activate her thinking. Leighton wanted this morning challenge to gain a new perspective:

Because with the breakfast reading, I want something that startles me. I want my sense of rules to be shaken up a little bit. I want to be surprised. With reading in my own field, I want to be challenged, I want to be pushed. I don't want to know where somebody's going next, and if I pick up an essay and I already have a sense of what the shape is...it's not going to be anything I come back to with great pleasure. (Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005)

Mysteries, on the other hand, had enough predictability and variation to be interesting: "I like the assumption in folklore that there's nothing wrong with having a formula—that what's interesting is playing the formula" (Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005). Leighton plugs into this formula each night before going to sleep.

When I'm reading a mystery, I know what the rules are, and I don't want them to disobey the rules. I get really ticked off if they do that, right? So there are ways in which I don't want any surprises. People will say, "Well, how can you read a mystery to go to sleep?" Well, the thing is though, you know the murderer is going to be caught, right? [smiles and nods her head] (Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005)

Leighton's mystery reading had its context and purpose. When asked whether she would ever read anything else before bedtime, she looked puzzled and asked if I meant a “real” book:

I mean, a real book? God knows what could happen! I mean, if it's a serious novel, it's life. For heaven's sake, I don't want *that* when I try to go to sleep at night. That's what I'm trying to get away from, right?! (Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005)

Even if characters in the mystery died or the outcome wasn't immediately obvious, she counted on the rhythm and predictability of having loose ends tied up neatly. She knew how the order-words of a mystery would assemble into something that created a comfortable, familiar nighttime ritual.

Lancashire, a professor of philosophy at a large Southeastern university, also counted mysteries as her formula reading of choice. Because the demands of her academic life prevented her from reading unless the reading serviced her scholarship, she noted: “I got to this point in my life where I just got really busy...I would have like a year's worth of *Natural History* that I hadn't even read. I finally just stopped the magazine subscriptions because it was too depressing.” However, she noted reading mysteries fit a specific purpose in her life:

I still read mystery novels, which I think are very satisfying. You know, I heard an interview with P.D. James once. She said that the reason people read mystery novels was that they have a thirst for order in their lives, and mystery novels are very orderly because at the end the mystery is solved. I think that I still read those because often I'm so busy that my life is just kind of chaotic, and it is very

satisfying to read something that is kind of, you know, orderly. (Lancashire, personal interview, September 29, 2005)

Lancashire's reason for reading mysteries connected to Leighton's; both wanted order and predictability. For Beaufort, Scott, Leighton, and Lancashire, formula reading was not simply an escape but the activation of a particular experience. Participants were *using* books to *do* things—to activate time or create order. In short, their formula reading enacted various assemblages and altered the qualitative experience of their lives. Reading in waiting rooms, at the breakfast table, or on an airplane had the potential to simultaneously release and spread particular modes or forces, translating striated spaces into smooth spaces.

A defense against a fragmented life.

Though he did not read mystery novels, Larkin, a professor of secondary education at a western Canadian university, reread novels multiple times as a way to combat the fragmentation of life. Each time he reread a novel, he wrote comments in its margins. Writing this marginalia and revisiting it with each subsequent reading was a practice he used to cope with what he called a “poststructural theory of identity,” meaning that “people emerge from their contexts and are shaped by discourse” (Larkin, personal interview, October 5, 2005). Larkin's rereading practice was his way of acknowledging the complexity of subjectivity but also of trying to have coherence in his life. Looking back at past marginalia, he noted, “I kind of vaguely remember writing that, but I certainly wouldn't think that today. I can see why I would have thought in that way ten years ago, but I've really changed” (Larkin, personal interview, October 5, 2005). Marginalia documented his subjectivity: “We have to maintain some coherent sense of

identity and we need different kinds of practices to do it" (Larkin, personal interview, October 5, 2005). Writing marginalia in texts is a common reading practice; however, the way Larkin used his marginalia is not necessarily ordinary because he catalogued his reading, tracking the various assemblages within which he read over the years.

For Larkin, his different readings of the same text, reflected in marginalia, occurred alongside one another; they did not represent a progression to ever more insightful readings but to different assemblages. In other words, he was not fixing or inscribing the meaning of a particular text but documenting assemblages and subjectivity that might otherwise become obscured. Rereading certain novels was "being surprised by language. It's being surprised by how a different kind of memory will be elicited within a different reading context" (Larkin, personal interview, October 5, 2005). Reading was one practice among many others such as online gaming, watching television, or going to the movies that he used to gather together associations that worked for him:

When people read [novels], they are developing these relationships with people and they are making decisions about where they fit. In part, based on what's happening in the fiction or the T.V. show or the Internet game or the chat line. All these ways, I mean, I've really tried to expand my definition of literary. And it now is anything that is mostly imagined identification. It doesn't have to be a written text, obviously. There are so many of them. We live most of our lives through imagined identifications. Right? And all those are literary in the sense that we're trying to piece together what we think is true, what we believe is true. What Umberto Eco calls "what we're pretending to believe to be true." That is a great definition of fiction. What we're pretending to believe to be true. Well, if

you think about it, if you're a poststructuralist that would be most of our experiences. (Larkin, personal interview, October 5, 2005)

Instead of numerous strings of marginalia overwhelming him, Larkin felt they provided structure to his world. Even though his subjectivity was complex, he felt less fragmented by

affirming a multiplicity of innumerable differences; with legitimate disjunctive syntheses, it is never a question of being either this or that, but of constantly exploring real alternatives and of (whatever one once was or is now) always becoming-otherwise: this...or this...or this...or this (Holland, 1999, p. 44).

Rereading explored this territory of “becoming-otherwise,” (p. 44). Larkin noted, “Academic life is *very fragmented*. You have to make it up yourself—much more so than most other jobs” (Larkin, personal interview, October 5, 2005). Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) discussed how an organism needs to have some continuity to function:

You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn; and you have to keep small supplies of significance and subjectification, if only to turn them against their own systems when the circumstances demand it, when things, persons, even situations, force you to; and you have to keep small rations of subjectivity in sufficient quantity to enable you to respond to the dominant reality. (p. 160)

Larkin’s marginalia functioned as “small rations of subjectivity” (p. 160). Because his relationships as a professor were “less fixed and more mobile” (S. Larkin, personal interview, October 5, 2005), he used repeated encounters with particular literary texts in his teaching to provide coherence across the relationships with students and colleagues.

This reading practice provided “enough of the organism [himself] for it [him] to reform [center] each dawn” (p. 160). When he revisited his marginalia, he reconnected and documented “assemblages which have invented him” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1977/1987, p. 52). His reading practices were ways of plugging into the almost imperceptible movement and change of assemblages gathering. In short, Larkin’s marginalia documented assemblages that created subjectivity over time.

Larkin described re-reading fiction in particular as a “kind of parallel experience where suddenly you're completely in that world” (Larkin, personal interview, October 5, 2005). Even though his characterization of reading as a parallel experience could evoke Plato’s dualisms and the ideal world of the text, for Larkin, parallel experience also included simultaneous experiences. Larkin often read because he was looking for a parallel subjectivity. He described his search for the parallel world of the text as a juxtaposition of past readings and relationships with current readings and relationships:

Also, when there are big moments of insight, rereading is the best way to get to them. Even if you think you're reading every word out loud, and I have read entire novels out loud. I mean, you know that you've read these passages over and over again, and sometimes they strike you as completely new. (Larkin, personal interview, October 5, 2005)

Larkin used reading to stay continually open to the possibility of parallel experiences changing the present through moments of insight. He deliberately read his way into subjectivity that could enact these types of “big moments of insight” (Larkin, personal interview, October 5, 2005).

A medicinal state of mind.

Beaufort used reading as a way to access "a medicinal state of mind" (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005), and even though he believed that others throughout history had also used reading to escape their current situations, he did not believe that reading was a panacea for the world's ills. Beaufort explained that his reading produced a medicinal state of mind that helped him deal with relationships and events in his life—specifically, the death of his mother and a divorce. When events caused him to be "unsettled and distracted and unable to focus on almost anything," he reminded himself, "Go read" (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005):

[Reading] does have a physical effect on me. I can almost feel (he pauses as he places his hand over his heart)—my heart settles down and I become calmer and I enter into this, I don't want to call it an alternative world, but it's a space where the divorce isn't happening and my Mom isn't dying. Then, I have to go back to that other world and get agitated again. (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005)

Deleuze and Guattari (1989/1987) offer another way to interpret Beaufort's medicinal state of mind, not as a mental state, but as an incorporeal transformation in which the order-words of the novels and nonfiction he read assigned him to other assemblages. In other words, the practice of reading worked in a visceral way for him; his heart beat slowed, and he engaged with and felt differently about the relationships in his life. Just as a judge's sentence can transform "the accused" into "the convict" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 80) in a moment, the texts Beaufort carefully chose to read enacted incorporeal transformations that changed material and abstract relationships for him.

Beaufort used reading to lessen “the chaos of life” (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005) and noted that others had done the same throughout history. For example, he explained that Nazi officers read Goethe while living in close proximity to death camps. He thought that guards and officers probably used reading as “a way of escaping the moral chaos in which they were living” (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005). Sometimes such reading practices “served a personal purpose, a social purpose, and all of us sometimes read to escape the boredom or the difficulty of our lives” (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005). In this way, reading can function as an incorporeal transformation or a way to alter “the social status of a body within or across assemblages” (Bonta & Proveti, 2004, p. 98). However, altering the social status of a body could relieve the guards of their suffering but not change their actions. Just as assemblages, order-words, and incorporeal transformations have the potential to produce positive possibilities, Beaufort felt that reading had the potential to produce negative possibilities or none at all.

Beaufort’s noted that one of his students experienced similar benefits from reading. For over fifteen years, Beaufort required the pre-service English teachers he taught to write literacy autobiographies describing their lives as readers, and through this assignment, he identified many others reading for the medicinal state of mind he sought in reading. Many of those pre-service teachers described reading to cope with stresses in life:

[Reading] filled up the time in a warm accessible comfortable way. They always knew what was going to happen...If they picked up a romance, it was going to end happily... That's precisely what they needed because there was so much

uncertainty about: Is this baby going to be okay?...[Why is] my husband not treating me the same way as he used to? But in this world, I'm safe. (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005)

Beaufort and his students both used texts to create an experience better than their current situations. But he noted that reading has not necessarily made the world a better place:

It's not the case that the most highly educated people in the world are the most morally specious people at all. But it is the case that those people who have that kind of education are socially positioned to say that [reading makes us better people]. So they [highly educated people] say that and then congratulate themselves for being in that situation, but all of us who have spent time in those other we's [working class] understand that there's just as much moral intelligence operating there [in working class and other cultural groups] as anywhere else.

(Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005)

Though Beaufort found much personal gratification in reading, he did not think reading was a panacea but rather a practice embedded within multiple contexts that can activate a variety of possibilities. Likewise, Beaufort noted that many educators do not think of reading in this nuanced way, but instead "talk about not reading as a kind of social crime, certainly an academic crime" (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005). However other participants found deliberately *not reading* a crucial aspect of their reading lives.

Not reading as cerebral hygiene.

Lawrence, who described her practice of reading as latching and book altering, also recognized the power of reading to alter subjectivity and reassemble lived experiences. For her, not-reading was a way of controlling ideas that might latch or alter

her writing. Reading inhibited her ability to write and so became a liability. She explained as follows:

Because I knew I would get myself lost in books. And so reading is a place where I, historically, could be lost, lost in the book. I didn't want to be lost in someone else's book. I wanted to be in my own writing. I think that was starting to be the place where I separate reading and writing [knowing] that I can't be doing both.

(Lawrence, personal interview, October 6, 2005)

Lawrence found that fiction and non-fiction reading pulled her into its world and blocked her ability to generate ideas and write. Instead of reading as she wrote a particular article, book, or other project, she wanted to distance herself from anything that might trigger her ideas to move in particular directions:

Compte—the father of sociology—Compte practiced cerebral hygiene. That's what I like to do. When I'm working on some projects, I just do it where I'm coming from. I trust my own sense of knowing, and I don't need to have it triggered by someone else. I just don't need that. It's an emotional thing, and I like how I come to know things. I don't want to have that process interfered with. So it's neither fear nor independence. It's like you go to a museum, and you go by yourself because you want to stay as long as you want to stare at a picture and see what you see and skip the next two rooms. (Lawrence, personal interview,

October 6, 2005)

While Lawrence's quest for "cerebral hygiene" showed a belief in the forces and ideas that reading can activate and channel into lived and written experiences. Lawrence was

adamant that not-reading was an important strategy in writing and kept her focused on her own “triggers” without having others’ ideas interfere with her projects.

Scott, a comparative literature professor at a large Southeastern university, also practiced a form of Lawrence’s “cerebral hygiene.” Scott sought projects outside the discipline of literary studies that could enhance her field and “fit into this conceptual framework that I was developing in my books” (Scott, personal interview, September 12, 2005). Her focused reading of science and ecology books and journals created “such a powerful model that almost everything I’d read would fit somewhere and I could use it” (Scott, personal interview, September 12, 2005). She described her reading practices in this way:

I tend to be a rather focused reader when I’m writing a book. I tend to read everything that I can get my hands on that has to do with that project. In other words, I don’t spend Saturday afternoon just reading books for sheer pleasure. If I think that there’s a relevancy there, I read the book. So when I’m writing something, I read in relation to what I’m writing just about exclusively. (Scott, personal interview, September 12, 2005)

While not Lawrence’s cerebral hygiene, Scott detailed how her reading focused on the content of the book she was writing and supported creating the conceptual framework that could be of use in many disciplines:

In the afternoon, I remember, I’d go to the science library, and I was reading or looking at all the issues of *Popular Science* between 1859 when *The Origin of Species* was published and 1900. So that was *very* focused reading. I’d just sit there in the library going over it and then xeroxing the interesting articles. There

were a lot of them! You can't do that anymore because they've been archived, so that's the kind of focused reading that I was doing. (Scott, personal interview, September 12, 2005)

She used focused reading in service of her writing, which is common in academic work. However, Deleuze's (1990/1995) description of reading and writing with Guattari parallels Scott's "writing as a schizoid flow drawing on all sorts of things" (p. 14) and putting them to use. She described her reading as "egotistical" because she read only what could be *used* to further her thinking about her writing projects:

Maybe this sounds so egotistical, I'm almost embarrassed to say it, but I think a lot of my reading was done with the feeling of, "Wow! I can use this!" This helps me, this gives me an idea that I can use to write about. I've always like writing better than reading. So I don't know why that is. It's just interactive. So when I've been writing a book, I read a while and then I get real antsy and want to start putting things together myself. (Scott, personal interview, September 12, 2005)

Scott's rationale for not reading unless it served her writing underscores reading as an active, open practice that was useful until she had the impulse to begin "putting things together [her]self" (Scott, personal interview, September 12, 2005). Scott stated, "So I guess I've never been a passive reader" (Scott, personal interview, September 12, 2005). In her case, she used reading to put ideas to use and create something new. Both Scott's and Lawrence's writing was easily influenced whether deliberately (Scott) or indirectly (Lawrence) by reading, so they both adopted practices of not reading. Scott invited particular readings while Lawrence kept reading to a minimum. Both participants

recognized that reading had the potential to influence writing, other reading, and lived experiences.

Not-reading as a coping tactic.

Even though many participants described reading as a way to access forces to cope and adjust to various contexts, Davidson, a professor of English education at a large southeastern university, described not-reading fiction books as a practice that helped him survive a traumatic event in his life. He recognized that reading had the potential to activate a variety of relationships, some of which might not be constructive, desirable, or helpful. His rationale echoed the post-Darwinian concept that Sumara (1996) used to discuss reading as a productive force. Sumara used the concept "good enough" (p. 95) to critique Darwin's "optimal solution" or "best fit" (p. 95). Sumara's (1996) point was that many connections occur as people read, but those associations are not necessarily the optimal or most positive connections. In other words, reading practices can activate relationships, connections, and actions because they are *possible*, not because they are *beneficial*. Even as far back as junior high, Davidson remembered being open to reading influencing his perceptions and feelings: "Perhaps the most moving thing I read in early adolescence (junior high)—Marjorie Rawlings' *The Yearling*. I remember being deeply saddened by the ending, and telling people it was my favorite or best book for several years" (Davidson, personal interview, July 25, 2005). Even though this entanglement of books in his life made him want to read, later those same intense connections to characters encouraged him to adopt not-reading fiction as a way to keep certain painful relationships at bay. Reading has the potential to territorialize the reader, as Davidson was well aware. In fact, Davidson knew reading could be dangerous, and his refusal to

read fiction echoed Kerrey's reason for not reading: "There's a moment when you're afraid...so we pull out of the reading because you're not prepared to give more" (Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005). She remembered reading a book that "had a warning that said if you don't want to do this, don't do it" and she said, "Well, I won't then" (Kerrey, personal interview, September 22, 2005).

Losing his wife was an important influence on his reading practices because before her death, Davidson read fiction, and after her death, he read only non-fiction. Even though she had diabetes and was going blind, her death was a complete shock to her doctors and Davidson. He described a change in his reading practices as follows:

So, up to that point [Ann's death], literature had just had this way of taking me, of compelling my thinking in ways that I couldn't do on my own. But that whole experience [Ann's death] pretty much forced me to think about everything. And literature has always been a little flat ever since then. Because it just it hasn't really moved me because it was such an incredibly traumatic and self-questioning time for me. I've never found anything in a work of literature, *anything* that even came close to what I was thinking those two years or so. So in the last twenty some years, I've hardly read that much literature and unless it's been a historical novel. I haven't been that caught up in it. (Davidson, personal interview, July 25, 2005)

After his wife's death, reading fiction seemed unproductive and hollow. He no longer wanted to investigate life's mysteries because he was in the middle of one of the biggest mysteries, death. After his wife's death, Davidson shifted to reading only non-fiction. Not reading fiction was a coping tactic:

In fact, one thing that happened was that I was supposed to teach the sophomore curriculum, and it's all about books where people die. The whole thing—*Ordinary People*, *Catcher in the Rye*, and *A Separate Peace*. Somebody dies in every book you teach. And it really made me wonder about that whole curriculum. It's creepy, so my colleagues rearranged their schedules to let me teach all freshmen. Because I said, "I can't teach this stuff, I can't do it." (Davidson, personal interview, July 25, 2005)

Not reading the literature that overwhelmingly focused on mortality was a way to cope. Davidson's loss was not one he wanted to be reminded of, so instead of teaching the sophomore curriculum, he opted to teach another grade level. Stepping away from the possibilities that literature might have produced is an example of the power of reading in life. Sumara (1996) also recognized the possibility that "the emotions that are generated by [the] experience [of reading with others] can never be predicted" (p. 2). Even though a book or other medium does not "capture the fullness of human thought and experience," (Sumara, 1996, p. 14) the experience of being in relation to a book with others can come dangerously close. For Davidson his wife's death and his previous reading practices were assemblages that changed with different contexts of his life and when one changed, the others followed.

From then on, partly because of his entry into graduate school, but also because of his new relationship to fiction, Davidson read only non-fiction or reading that related directly to his job or to facilitate his hobbies. He explained that he reads for specific purposes but fiction lost its purpose for him:

I would say that literature posed questions to me that I wasn't posing on my own. It framed things in ways that I wasn't framing on my own. And when I came out the other end, [after his wife's death] if I ever have, of the period of grieving, I wasn't finding things in literature that were reframing for me. It all seemed kind of trite. (Davidson, personal interview, July 25, 2005)

Davidson recognized the possibility of all experiences working side-by-side in his reading practices. His refusal to read fiction emphasized the moment-to-moment, active creation and assembling of experience among many aspects of our physical, psychological, environmental, and past bodies that occurs when he read. He routinely read a variety of texts: academic papers; gardening and nature-themed magazines and newspapers on the porch of his house; daily sports articles online; list serve posts from several academic groups in his discipline; student papers and manuscripts for review in his office and at home; and travel books and websites related to his next conference trip; and intermittently websites where he searched for allusions to places, people, works of art, or ideas that emerged in the data analysis phase of writing research reports.

Reading as assemblage enacts these discursive and non-discursive contexts to make surprising and sometimes uncomfortable connections. If all reading is productive, then *not reading* becomes a coping tactic and not the social crime Beaufort described earlier. Not reading is a way to stop the reading assemblage. In this instance, required readings function as striated space that can only become smooth space by not reading (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980/1987). In Davidson's case, reading had the potential to produce material effects, an assemblage he did not desire; distancing himself from

particular types of reading was a way of escaping those reading assemblages that could reconnect him with loss.

Flow experience not as cure or comfort.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) noted that reading is the most often cited activity in which flow experiences occur. A flow experience is “a subjective state that people report when they are completely involved in something to the point of losing track of time and of being unaware of fatigue and of everything else but the activity itself” (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993, p. 14). Even though he had chosen not to read, Davidson wanted his students to have flow experiences with texts. His avoidance of the tenth grade curriculum was an example of not-reading as a way of to control the assemblage.

Davidson discussed an observation of a driver’s education class as an example of the flow and engagement he hoped students would experience in reading. He was amazed at the level of engagement students displayed as they played a computer game, operating simulated cars using pedals and steering wheels. Even though they knew the cars on the screen were not real, they screamed and physically leaned or jumped when a car surprised them on the screen. His point was that they believed so much that they were driving a car that the real and virtual were one. Davidson said that kind of engagement in reading is what he wanted his students to have—“to be so into what they're doing that they believe that it's real” (Davidson, personal interview, July 25, 2005). Ironically, this “flow experience” or heightened engagement is what disturbed Davidson about reading after his wife died, but it also became his goal for his students.

Of course, in the driver's education classroom, no one will be hurt, but in the course of reading literary fiction and asking students to think about complex life issues, difficult issues might arise. For example, reading and talking about social issues such as racism could put a minority student at risk both socially and emotionally (Augustine & Zoss, 2006). She might prefer not to read and talk about racism because it is a painful part of her life. In this way, reading can produce painful assemblages we learn to avoid.

Summary

Beaufort's, Lawrence's, Scott's, Davidson's, and Larkin's experiences underscore the use of reading as a practice that produces the reader. For Deleuze, subjectivity is an incidental by-product of the relationships that one experiences. Stagoll (2005) explained that "for Deleuze, one's self must be conceived as a constantly changing assemblage of forces, an epiphenomenon arising from chance confluences of languages, organisms, societies, expectations, laws, and so on" (p.22). My participants were epiphenomenons, byproducts, not stationary groundings, produced through many relations and events that folded present moments across past and future experiences. Whether reading or not-reading, participants showed how reading had the potential to get "beneath the stable world of identities to a world of difference that at once produces those identities and shows them to be little more than the froth of what there is" (May, 2005, p. 19). Beaufort relied on the very power that Davidson avoided—the ability of reading to transport, to plug someone into another circuit. Although commonly thought of as an escape, the participants in this study noted the immanent possibility of reading to assemble them differently, to produce "strange characteristics" that had "a kind of instantaneousness in the emission, perception, and transmission of order-words: a wide variability, and a

power of forgetting permitting one to feel absolved of the order-words one has followed and then abandoned in order to welcome others” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 84).

Participants’ descriptions captured how reading altered their being in the world.

Part III: The Unintended Consequences of Reading Assemblages

Participants’ in the previous section used reading, not simply to escape, but to alter their subjectivity. For many of them, reading produced effects in their lives that they deliberately sought to either reproduce or avoid. In this section, I discuss readers from previous sections and focus on how reading practices could produce unintended consequences. The first participant is Lancashire, whose research interest in material culture suggested that many creative practices are not completely intentional. Next, I discuss Marsh, a professor of cultural foundations, technology, and qualitative inquiry at a large midwestern research university, who described being haunted by texts. Then, I discuss Beaufort’s reading experiences that both marked a social territory and produced an on-going literary archive of relationships. Jakob, a professor of English Education at a large southeastern university, provided an image of reading as a memory-laden, sometimes pathological practice. Finally, Leighton, a professor in English and women's studies, described reading as a context-making practice that operated not simply as something that she did *in* her life, but as something that *created* her life—a constant activity embedded in relationships, places, and events. In all of these instances, participants' reading practices produced unintentional consequences that created their lives.

Accidental, marginally intentional reading practices.

Lancashire, a professor of philosophy at a large southeastern university, noted that her reading practices were influenced by her training in continental philosophy. She described her academic reading as follows:

My training was mostly in continental philosophy and that's how I tend to read: less focused on what are the arguments and more focused on what are the insights and how they are being formulated. (Lancashire, personal interview, September 29, 2005)

Although these reading practices were purposeful and focused, Lancashire's research into *material culture* suggested other ways of thinking about reading. She explained that material culture was a broad area encompassing “things that people make and use” and “the different kinds of things that get made in different cultures” (Lancashire, personal interview, September 29, 2005). Her interest in material culture and anthropology dated back to her “voracious” reading of *National Geographic* in high school and her “fascination with other ways of living” (Lancashire, personal interview, September 29, 2005). Her academic reading was “more theoretically oriented things” that were “less about specific cultures and more about certain theoretical issues in anthropology” (Lancashire, personal interview, September 29, 2005). Through these theoretical readings her interest in material culture surfaced as a way to develop a hypothesis about why certain artifacts are made in particular ways:

My hypothesis is that a lot of the form and variation in form in material culture is not intentional—that material culture comes about because people are trying to copy something and either they are not trying very hard or it suddenly occurs to

them that maybe not copying it in a certain way would look better. So a lot of material culture is accidental or only sort of marginally intentional in certain ways. (Lancashire, personal interview, September 29, 2005)

Lancashire illustrated how even in creating a physical object there is a play of ideas and an openness that form and function do not dictate—the on-going act of creation instigates changes that are sometimes accidental or “marginally intentional” (Lancashire, personal interview, September 29, 2005). Creative practices like reading or creating objects are generative but not always intentional or precise; instead, they are influenced by accidents or ideas that suddenly seem to work.

To illustrate her hypothesis, Lancashire shared her experiences interviewing musicians about playing cover songs. Lancashire found many artists who tried to play another artist’s song but created their own songs instead because they weren’t able to copy the song exactly.

I was interviewing song writers and musicians. A lot of them would tell me about what they ended up creating in their songs [that] was often [different]. So I had one guitarist tell me that he was trying to play some riff by Ray Charles, and he got it wrong and said, "Well, I get these things wrong all the time. I'm not good at this." But then it turned into a riff for his own song. So that was the sort of a creative thing because you know his fingers weren't going in the right places and his ears weren't allowing him to copy the Ray Charles riff exactly. So what he ended up with was something original. It wasn't Ray Charles. It was his own. (Lancashire, personal interview, September 29, 2005)

The musicians that Lancashire interviewed changed a song because they could not recreate the exact, optimal Ray Charles combination and instead created their own variation that was “good enough” (Sumara, 1996, p. 95). Just as combinations of cells and organisms adapt because a fit is “good enough” (Sumara, 1996, p. 95), musicians—and I would add readers—create relationships and connections because these linkages are *possible*, not because they are the best option. Lancashire’s description of material culture connects to the reading practices many participants’ who discussed recreated works of fiction or nonfiction much like the musicians playing a Ray Charles riff; they assembled their own constellation of forces that work.

Haunted by intertextuality.

Marsh, a professor of cultural foundations, technology, and qualitative inquiry at a large midwestern research university, illustrated how reading was an on-going, complex process that did not always begin or end with understanding as the goal. Instead, her scholarship thrived on critiquing assumptions that reading and writing should be instantly clear and accessible. Living an academic life for her was about “enriching” and “interweaving” many complex concepts into her life (Marsh, personal interview, September 29, 2005). She described her reading as “working on” ideas that “haunt” her:

There's also a quote from Foucault that I'm working on right now, and I don't understand what it means, but I know it's absolutely important for what I'm trying to think through. So I'll put it there as an epigraph or somewhere in the body of the text. Then I'll keep trying to come back to it to try and figure out what sense it makes. I'll read, like this quote from Foucault that's just haunting me. Finally I was reading this summer a book by this Canadian woman about the connections

between phenomenology and deconstruction, and she explained that quote to me and I just about had a fit! (Marsh, personal interview, September 29, 2005)

Reading for Marsh is an extension of her thinking across various discursive texts—an intertextuality of different reading events. Dropping passages that haunted her into her writing began generating an assemblage of ideas, less through explication, and more through entanglement. Reading the Canadian woman's book assembled more multifaceted insights:

So there's another example of that sort of intertextuality. But also working these things we don't understand and featuring them in our writing. So I like it when I find parts of the book or parts of Derrida that I don't understand. That's where I get excited. (Marsh, personal interview, September 29, 2005)

Though Marsh's reading practice illustrates a common experience among many academics who connect concepts across different texts, she thrived on indeterminacy and made not-knowing an important aspect of her reading practice. She generated ideas through reading and writing that she could not predict in advance.

Writing and reading were not the only important aspects of her reading practices. She discussed the richness of the intermingling of the discursive and non-discursive in her qualitative research projects. She explained a book she wrote about women living with a terminal illness as “five years of intertextuality” (Marsh, personal interview, September 29, 2005). In many ways, her life was a tsunami of reading, interviewing, and writing:

Yeah! That was like...what was that? Five years of intertextuality?! (Laughs.)

That was everywhere, you know! I was clipping from the newspapers. Everything

I watched on TV—the movies, the music, the...I'd go home and visit my family. I mean it was everywhere—talks with my mother, anything about health and mortality, and the day-to-day, *not* taking the day-to-day for granted. That was *quite* the five years. I don't know that you go through something like that, and I mean, you never get over that. You're never *not* touched by that. (Marsh, personal interview, September 29, 2005)

The reading for Marsh was an intensive act that was like “plugging in to an electric circuit” (Deleuze, 1990/1995, p. 8) and living “in the midst of events that have nothing to do with books” (Deleuze, 1990/1995, p. 9). The discursive and non-discursive worlds were always colliding. Her life as an intellectual had unintended consequences because her reading practices permeated her life with an “interweaving of things” and ideas that went beyond “just being intellectual” to show

how being an intellectual deepens and enriches your life...Like when I was writing the book, the Rilke points were just, “Wow!” at that particular point in time. But it was not just the Rilke; it was the data; it was what I knew about feminist ethnography; it was the many layers that give such richness to my experience in the world—this richly layered way we can understand our own experience and then the experiences of others if we're doing empirical work...That's what motivates me in my writing to try to communicate some of that richness, the excitement of that richness, and the worth of that richness instead of looking at the world through this one-layered way. (Marsh, personal interview, September 29, 2005)

Marsh's "one-layered life" reference does not necessarily mean that there are layers of meaning that hide deeper, clearer, and more objective ways of getting at reality. Instead, her reference to layers produces a picture of experiences and relations that are constantly being connected to one another. She valued the messiness and entanglement of assemblage. Reading permeated every aspect of her life and the lives of her participants permeated her readings and writing. Marsh revealed in "having these layers that don't necessarily map tidily onto one another" because she valued the "rich complications that are a bigger life" (Marsh, personal interview, September 29, 2005). These reading practices produce layers of experiences embedded in relationships, language, culture, time, place, and memory—or as Sumara (1996) called them: "the various systems to which [the] self is relationally bound" (p. 87).

Memory, pathology, and reading.

Jakob, a professor of English education at a large southeastern university, was a self-described "obsessive reader" all of his life and an avid rereader of texts (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005). Like Larkin's rereading practices discussed earlier, Jakob's rereading practices created important understandings for him over time: "I almost feel like I haven't read a book until I've read it more than once" (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005). Rereading was not simply about gaining more meaning from a book; rereading was an on-going relationship that activated different ideas each time:

When I'm reading a book and liking it, I really savor the prospect of reading it again because I know that I'm going to be able to continue to make something more and different when I go back to it. So for me rereading is very connected to

this idea of having a relationship with a book. (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005)

Rereading was a productive relationship that continued his thinking to “make something more and different.” With rereading at the center of his reading practices, Jakob was interested in how memory constructed each rereading of a book.

Jakob connected studies of memory to reading theory to highlight the unpredictability of reading. He understood memory not as a sequential recording of past events but as a malleable, on-going site of construction and reconstruction—not simply a recreation of a linguistic text, but an on-going creation of subjectivity over time. Reading was a space of intensity where reconstructions of his experiences with the book and experiences outside the book folded together:

You're in a space or in a work of memory because that's the only way you can read. You've got to remember what you've just read in order to keep reading; unless, it's just completely mindless. Memory is activated in a very direct way when you're reading. (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005)

When the present involves reading or rereading a book, memory is activated in rudimentary but also complex ways. For Jakob, reading “becomes folded into your memory just like your life experience becomes memory” (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005). In contrast to the “point-system of memory” that Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987, p. 294) also avoid, Jakob’s understanding of memory underscored the contagion of the rhizome, constantly reforming and latching onto unpredictable aspects of experience—whether present, past, or future. Jakob’s focus on memory aligns with Deleuze and Guattari’s (1980/1987) becoming: “Wherever we used the word ‘memories’

in the preceding pages, we were wrong to do so; we meant to say "becoming" (p. 294). For Jakob, memory was a becoming because he activated past, present, and future assemblages as he read.

Bergson (1896/1988) thought that the past and future are sites for constructing the present, and Jakob's reading was consciousness-making that operated at the level of rhizomatic, short term memory that Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) described as "in no way subject to the law of contiguity or immediacy to its object; it can act at a distance, come or return a long time after, but always under conditions of discontinuity, rupture, and multiplicity" (p. 16). Jakob acknowledged an openness to possibility when reading:

One of the things attractive about reading for me is that you can entertain these ideas without having to commit to them. There's a space of openness and possibility, and there's not a compelling reason why you have to definitively align yourself with any particular way. So reading is beautiful because you can be in this place where you've got this play of ideas. Because if the ideas are significant to you, even if you couldn't articulate for a paper, the reading does become folded into your memory in ways that you can work on it. (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005)

Jakob's rereading provided an immanent, "intensive" space of ideas (Deleuze, 1990/1995, p. 8). Even without the physical text, ideas circulated and were put to use at some later date. His "significant ideas" had "become folded into your memory in ways that you can work" on them (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005). Jakob continued to use his practice of rereading as a way to continue to reassemble ideas with new ideas and aspects of his life. For him, readings like memories were always immanent. Jakob's

“working on the ideas” (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005) over time is a Deleuzian view of intensive reading. Reading plugged Jakob into Deleuze’s (1990/1995) “electric circuit” (p. 8) of memory that had the potential to provide reading experiences that “disrupted where you are in order to make way for a future that you wouldn’t have been able to imagine” (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005).

Jakob studied reading groups as well as memory and rereading practices. He developed a university course that invited literature teachers to work together in a book club atmosphere to think about a deceptively simple question: what do people do when they read? Many students in the class had been trained to do close readings of texts following ne Critical Theory; however, through the book groups, they learned that reading “expands that area of incompleteness and possibility that you create yourself” (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005).

Even though rereading texts within the context of the book club was important, Jakob did not understand reading as a value-free, emancipatory activity for himself or his students. He acknowledged its often unintended consequences and its potential to be a memory-laden, pathological, consciousness-changing practice. Characterizing reading as an inherently positive, life-affirming act was not his intention. Like memory, he believed reading had a “pathological, dark side” (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005). He was interested in the generative power of reading to produce many possibilities, not all positive and not all predictable:

Memories both make possible a different future but they also become a circle.

Nabokov has this incredible passage where he talks about the spiral instead of the vicious circle...The vicious circle becomes one visual of memory where you're

locked into this thing that just keeps going around and around by itself. Versus a spiral that recursively touches on itself and moves somewhere else. (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005)

Jakob wondered about his own rereading practices and if there were times when they were a “vicious circle” and others when they were a spiral that moved him “somewhere else.” He specifically discussed one particular relationship with Thoreau’s *Walden*. He had read *Walden* “a dozen times” as both a student and teacher in high school and college settings and even once in a reading group. His relationship with *Walden* illustrated his dilemma about the book’s use as a circular, stuck memory or as a spiral, intensive memory:

I think the grand example would be with *Walden*...I went through some readings where I didn't even like it that much. I really had this rocky relationship with Thoreau, and now I just think it's an awesome book. I just love it. But, I can see that it's not immune to criticism, but it really helps me think about things that I want to think about. (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005)

If rereading allowed Jakob to “think about things that I want to think about,” then one of the ideas that haunted him was the idea that he was rereading in an “incestuous,” cyclical way that would prevent him from questioning his “most dearly held beliefs” because he was “comfortable in the little circle of ideas that work[ed] for” him (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005).

Reading, then, for Jakob can be a state of flux and becoming, and he explained the folding of ideas into memory as an example of reading as a generative act: “If you're reading for ideas, but not ideas in the sense that you can take them away and apply them

to your life, but to be in that space that is generative of ideas” (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005). Jakob’s insight challenges a common assumption about reading—namely that reading prepares the reader for life. Instead, the possibility exists that reading is the place where life is made and changed:

If all of your life experiences become resources for reading, if reading is the place where you disrupt where you are...it's the exact inverse of what we try to teach kids in school that somehow reading provides resources for life. It's the exact opposite, because reading is the only place where you can change, where your life can change, unless you read in ways that simply reinscribe yourself. (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005)

Reading practices then are self-making practices—assemblage shifting practices. Jakob asked, if reading is self-making, then what selves are made? The man who reads Thoreau does not necessarily generate a life that is better for having read Thoreau, but he has enacted his life differently. Intensive reading is not a model or exemplar but a way of thinking of reading as a concept-subjectivity-generating machine. It is not, then, simply preparation for later tasks in life; it enacts surprising discursive and non-discursive worlds that generate assemblages that are life.

Leighton's reading as connecting machine.

When Leighton discussed her reading practices, they were embedded in particular contexts of her family, her academic life, and her social and political life. "I suppose it's only a slight exaggeration to say that being a reader is my life. I mean it's very close to that" (Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005). Her statement described reading, not as a search for knowledge outside her life but a constant activity that "was her life"

(Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005). Her early reading practices produced vivid, visceral memories of intensive reading during which she and her family plugged into books and relived them together. Her early reading experiences figured prominently in her leaving graduate school at one point and later fed her research interests.

Two early reading memories solidified Leighton's love of reading and illustrate how her family created an environment that encouraged her intensive reading practices. Leighton brought the romantic adventure novel *Scaramouche*, a novel recommended by both of her parents, to dinner to slyly read under the table because the hero is about to learn he will kill his father. Upon reading this passage, she screamed loudly at the dinner table.

My parents knew that I was cheating by reading at the dinner [table]. I didn't know they knew but they did and they had been—and I didn't find any of this out until I was an adult—but they had been watching the bookmark progress in the book. They kind of guessed that I would find out during dinner. So here I am, cheating during dinner, and I suddenly go, "AAAIEEEHT!"... Yeah, I can't believe they let me get away with that! To be fair I think they probably only let me do it when I was getting close to a crisis in a book, and they knew it.

(Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005)

That her parents not only followed her reading but allowed her to bring a book to the dinner table showed the extent to which reading was a valued family ritual. Leighton was surprised at how important and engaging reading experiences created family dynamics and her perceptions of the world. Reading was not separate from her life, but a powerful rite of passage. She particularly remembered reading *Little Women*.

I don't remember this part of the first reading of *Little Women*, which I've probably read a lot of times. But my mother says she went in to my father one night and says, "Beth's going to die tomorrow." (Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005)

When Leighton described this moment between her parents, she reproduced the sense of caution and care in her mother's voice that showed how intertwined their lives were with their reading experiences. Leighton's parents recognized that Beth's death would create powerful intensities and material effects for their daughter. For Leighton, books functioned in the lives of people; reading and family relationships were entangled. For them, reading was not an isolated practice associated with school assignments but an intensive act that altered their lived worlds. Her family was its own assemblage of forces and associations that created her life as a reader.

Later, while living in Germany, Leighton became active in a women's group that ran the first feminist book store in town. Her reading practices were embedded in the texts and relationships during that time period in her life:

You could read everything feminist that came out. There was a whole group of us—a collective of twenty or thirty women. What happened was the two women who had opened the book store were fed up [and wanted to close the bookstore]. So a bunch of us got together and formed a collective and bought it. At that point you really couldn't get a lot of feminist material in standard, mainstream bookstores. It was small press, you know, they [mainstream bookstores] weren't interested. So it was self-defense in a way, forming the collective. (Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005)

She was part of a community of readers who had similar interests in using feminist theory in their lives and scholarship. For example, after finishing Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex*, the "classic text of radical feminism" that she now thinks of as "kind of wacko in retrospect and also very, very smart and daring" (Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005), she immediately took a street car to the women's center in the middle of the night "just in case anybody was there" to talk about this book. She noted that "there wasn't anybody there, so I sat on the steps, clenching my fists and looking around expectantly for people to talk to" (Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005). In her home growing up, reading connections were reinforced daily, but once out on her own, Leighton had to build reading relationships. Her trip on a street car late at night showed how reading connected to ideas and people in her life.

Her drive to connect meaningful texts to her life and relationships had unintended consequences when she began her doctoral studies in literature. Leighton completed her undergraduate and masters degrees, but during her doctoral studies, graduate school obstructed her intensive reading practices:

The reason I got out of grad school and went to DC was that I had stopped reading. I [pause] that was exactly it. I was teaching in grad school, and I was teaching...I was thoroughly frustrated. I just had pretty much stopped reading. I had pretty much lost my joy in that [reading]. When I went back to grad school, it was on the sort of personal understanding that if that happened again [not reading] I was just going to leave. I wasn't going to think about grad school as something I was doing to get a job or to please somebody else that if I wasn't doing it for the love of it [reading] then screw it. (Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005)

Earlier contexts had functioned to produce an intensive reading life, and Leighton wanted graduate school to do the same. Her realization that graduate school might not support her intensive reading life influenced the direction of her scholarship. She focused her research agenda on authors whose works had supported her earlier love of reading but were not part of the literary canon:

I've thought a lot about what gets us into reading, and it seems to me that there is this whole body of—this is the thing about the canon I've fantasized about writing for years—there's this whole body of writers that we use to hook young readers into literature and then they never get to study them again: Shirley Jackson, A.E. Housman, and Edna St. Vincent Millay. It's really interesting these authors live in this sort of weird, liminal zone between being canonical and being popular. But it's just not somehow respectable [to research them in an academic sphere]. It wouldn't be respectable to say, "What I really want to do is study Shirley Jackson, or Millay or Housman or I love "To An Athlete Dying Young," so I'm going to study Housman." (Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005)

I quote Leighton at length here to show how her entry into the assemblage of reading and scholarship in the academy was not necessarily an easy one: "Basically I was and am a kind of an omnivore when it comes to reading" (Leighton, personal interview, July 13, 2005). Leighton found that her reading practices were not always compatible with the training graduate school required. The unintended consequence of her reading practices was that she almost left her doctoral program and stopped reading non-canonical literature, which was a passion for her. Instead of yielding to those assaults on her reading life, she created a place in the academy to study non-canonical writers, Shirley

Jackson, in particular. Her intensive reading was not simply embedded in particular contexts of her family, the women's center, and school; it produced relationships and subjectivity.

Reading as marking a social territory.

Beaufort, an English and English education professor at a large southeastern university, used reading to deliberately mark a social territory. His reading practices had unintended consequences for him. Beaufort did not remember specific moments reading particular books, but he did remember how specific books fit into his life and how he used them. For him, reading was a social act of self-making that separated him from others, marking him as a reader among non-readers. For example, he explained that he and his friends, all from working class steel mill families, wrote poetry, read books together, and generally looked "for some kind of alternative to the life that we had been fated to live which was to go over to the steel mills and take the place of our dads" (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005). Beaufort, however, used books to make something different of himself:

I had to work in the steel mills through all of my time there. But I would sort of, it's kind of weird now to think about, but I sort of carved out an identity at the steel mills as "the kid who reads," you know? So I had my little black lunch box, and I'd have a copy of *Catch-22* or a copy of *Crime and Punishment*. And at breaks or lunch, I'd be sitting there with my nose between the books, and the old guys would be, "What the fuck's wrong with you?" But they were also kind of interested in why would anyone with greasy hands and a hard hat, you know, want to read. (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005)

Though “what the fuck is wrong with you” could be seen as a disciplinary comment, the remark validated his movement out of the striated space of the steel mill. Beaufort's reading practices separated him from a life he did not want to pursue. In other words, reading had a specific use to him and his friends; reading was their smooth space and a ticket out of their working class identities and neighborhoods.

This social territory that Beaufort and his friends claimed with their reading practices had material effects in the ways that he interacted with his family. Even though they had to work in the steel mills, reading was a way to avoid completely succumbing to the lives their fathers led. Beaufort noted a particular incident during one of his first Christmas vacations home from college when his mother proudly presented him with a mass-produced copy of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. As he retold this story, he reached across the table to me as if he were receiving the book from his mother. Because he already owned a copy, he “obtusely” said, “Well, this is great Mom but I already have one of these.” (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005) She looked crestfallen but quickly masked her disappointment. Beaufort, imitating his mother's voice, said, “You're so smart, I can't even buy books for you anymore.” This incident illustrates that reading strained his relationships with his family. He noted that he never thought of “the price they [he and his friends] may be paying for disassociating themselves from their own cultural backgrounds” (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005). Because of comments from his mother and the sneers of fellow steel mill workers, Beaufort felt how certain practices, like reading that is a marker of the intellectual and social class, can alienate use from others who don't use them in daily life. The linguistic journeys his books afforded him marked a different social terrain from that of his family.

Reading as a literary archive of relationships.

Beaufort's reading life had distanced him from some relationships and contexts, and his distance from his family became more apparent at his undergraduate commencement ceremony. He had a reading experience that showed the unintended consequences of "a life that includes reading" (Sumara, 1996, p. 9). When Beaufort told a story about his college graduation day, he underscored how past relationships with books can figure prominently in creating current events and relationships. As the first person in his family to graduate from college, he was on top of the world that day, brimming with pride and excitement. Waiting after the ceremony in his academic regalia for his parents, he caught a glimpse of them through the crowd. As he recounted this experience, there was a seriousness and regret in his voice, especially, when he told me, "I was, I am sad to tell you, embarrassed" (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005). His eyes were glassy as he spoke, and I imagined his dropping into the unfolding scene with his parents:

I saw my parents coming up. My Dad had his new suit from JCPenny's on. I saw him and I winced a little. And I looked down, and I winced a little more because I saw he had a big smile on his face, his new suit, and his white work socks. I don't know why I made the connection but at that moment, I said, "Ah! That's what Pip thought!" He was embarrassed of the people he loved, embarrassed of the people who took care of him. (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005)

He attributed his revelation to his "internal library" of reading experiences and life experiences (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005). He had read *Great Expectations* in high school and twice in college: "I did my English major thing on it but it didn't get to me on an emotional level" (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005).

Unexpectedly, on this particular day, with these particular people, years after he had read *Great Expectations*, Beaufort dropped into an assemblage of discursive and non-discursive relationships that had been co-creating him for some time. His working class background, his pride at being the first to graduate from college, his determination not to become a steelworker, his love for his family, his experiences reading *Great Expectations*, and the occasion of his graduation were all parts of the machinic and collective assemblages of the moment. This split second insight in which a book helped him make sense of his relationship to his family was years in the making.

Beaufort's graduation day became a marker for him about how reading can work in a life. Beaufort noted, "The point that I've always tried to take from that experience [on my graduation day] is that a book can be easy enough to read but not easy enough to understand" (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005). Sumara (2002) suggested that "Literary engagements can be (and usually are) sites for both aesthetic enjoyment, and creative and critical learning" (p. 93). For Beaufort, the literary engagement at his graduation was unexpected because he'd read the book years before. Beaufort's "insight does not spring directly from a particular episode in h[is] life, but emerges ambiguously from the strange crevices that collect memory, current perception, and fantasy" (Sumara, 2002, p. 3). Controlling what reading does to a life is not always possible because it can activate assemblages in unpredictable and uncomfortable ways. Beaufort's college graduation day showed how a literary archive of reading activated, intersected, and folded into a life years after a book had been read and put aside.

Beaufort's reading experiences were parallel to other experiences in life that created "a trace in [him]—a body memory of [experience] that forms part of the

collective memory of [his] lived experience” (Sumara, 1996, p. 48). In this way, the reading event is "a singular configuration of circumstances, an unrepeatable constellation of times and locations, of people, things, and relationships" (Caputo, 1993, p. 94). Sumara (1996) noted that a book works as a "prosthetic device" (p. 48) to become part of a person's relationships and experiences such that her relations in the world are not just extensions of the book, but “material extensions of the self” (p. 49). Beaufort was plugged into the reading assemblage—“complex conglomerates and constellations of other events" that collide (Caputo, 1993, p. 94). This collision of events underscored the dynamic, productive, and unpredictable nature of assemblages.

Summary

In this section, participants' reading experiences illustrate that reading can be a practice “whose complexities cannot be settled or decided by ‘theories’ or the application of more or less mechanical programs” (Keenan, 1997, p. 1) or explanations. For them, reading was messy and produced horizontal connections that had the potential to alter relationships, ideas, and experiences across time and space. Intensive reading practices provided a way to avoid "underconceptualiz[ing] what reading does to a life" (Beaufort, personal interview, July 26, 2005). Their reading practices had "many layers that give such richness to experience in the world" (Marsh, personal interview, September 29, 2005); a "richness" that resisted producing subjectivity in a "one-layered way" (Marsh, personal interview, September 29, 2005).

CHAPTER 5

READING, ASSEMBLAGE, AND METHODOLOGY

The language that Deleuze, Guattari, and my participants put to use surrounds me. I drop into assemblages that I have a hard time describing because they shift to become my own—a stream of images, feelings, words, phrases, laughter, books, emails, spaces, time periods—a shifting amalgamation of creation that continues...I ponder and, and, and, knowing assemblages continue. I continue and am obliterated. Participants have long since moved to other iterations of assemblages past, present, and future.

This interview study investigated academic readers' reading practices using Deleuze and Guattari's concept *assemblage* to produce language and images of reading that recognized the complex relations among texts, people, places, ideas, and memories. The following two questions propelled my inquiry and analysis:

How do reading practices function as a force that assembles complex relations of texts, people, places, ideas, and memories in surprising and productive ways?

What alternative reading practices are possible by theorizing reading through these relationships?

This inquiry specifically chronicled how the participants in this study *used* books to do things. Reading was not, therefore, a solitary, passive endeavor, but an active, social engagement in creating their worlds. I did not intend to produce a list of prescriptive reading practices that others could duplicate. Rather, I aligned Deleuze and Guattari's

(1980/1987) assemblage within larger conversations among new criticism, reader response, and socio-cultural theories of reading. Specifically, I showed how Sumara's (1996) theory of reading works with the theories of Deleuze and Guattari. Participants described a wider variety of reading practices than are commonly found in school settings. Even as I completed my analysis, I found that participants' reading practices worked their way into my own as I engaged in Lawrence's cerebral hygiene, collected Marsh's important but not yet understood quotes, and used Davidson's online Google reading.

A Summary of Intensive Reading

Participants' "intensive reading" practices changed the grids of their subjectivity, not by building preplanned concepts but by intentionally and unintentionally assembling concepts into their relationships, lives, and everyday practices. Participants' provided language to describe intensive reading, reading practices that altered subjectivity, and descriptions of surprising reading experiences. I was fascinated by the language that assembled around descriptions of intensive reading—*intensities, incorporeal transformations, bower-birding, assemblage, latching, smooth space, a-ha moments, order-words, subjectivity, striated space, transgressive, deterritorialization, colonizing, treading water, line of flight, wormholes, folding, ontological hunger, becoming, and, and*. Deleuze and Guattari's concepts and participants' experiences assembled to produce active, surprising, and productive descriptions of reading as an open, almost playful practice for some participants: Kerrey "bower-birded" her way around a text juxtaposing her "shiny bits and pieces"; Lawrence ripped the pages of her books only to rebuild and latch them into ideas she thought were important; and Leighton thrived on reading as

“treading water,” waiting patiently to make those concepts do some work. Participants’ language evoked the malleability and immediacy of reading as a practice that produces concepts and possibilities.

Some participants’ descriptions showed the power of reading to alter subjectivity, which changed in a flash or slowly over the course of years. Beaufort, Scott, Leighton, and Lancashire used formula fiction to alter mundane or chaotic experiences in their lives. Each sought something specific: a medicinal state of mind, a distraction, the illusion of order, or a sense of predictability. Furthermore, Larkin’s rereading practice defended him against the fragmented life of a university professor. By cataloguing marginalia in books over time, Larkin was comforted to see not fragments but “small rations of subjectivity” (p. 160) from many re-readings over the years. If participants deliberately used reading for its power to transmit intensities that altered their subjectivity, others deliberately avoided reading for these same reasons. Lawrence, Scott, and Davidson all practiced not reading at some point in their lives because they knew that reading would change them and generally interfere with emotions, concepts, and relationships at work in their lives. The deliberate practice of not-reading underscored the general belief among participants that reading might well differently assemble their lives.

If reading formula fiction, writing marginalia, and not reading seemed to imply that the reader could control her reading, other reading practices made it clear that reading is a practice “that cannot be organized in advance” (Keenan, 1997, p. 1). Marsh described reading and doing qualitative research as being haunted by texts, ideas, and people—haunted by a recursive preoccupation among the interplay of quotes, people, and images. Likewise, Beaufort’s literary archive of past readings mingled with his

commencement day ceremonies and marked his relationships in uncomfortable and unintended ways. Leighton's carnivorous reading practices almost derailed her graduate work in literature; interestingly, her reading had thrived in other contexts but not in a university department dedicated to the study of canonical literature. This uncomfortable disconnect in her intensive reading life encouraged her to center her research on non-canonical literature. For Jakob, reading could be both beautiful and pathological because it assembled concepts but not always in positive ways. From Jakob's pathological stance on reading to Beaufort's disconnects with his family, participants troubled the idea that all reading practices produced positive experiences.

This brief summary of participants' reading practices established variation and complexity among their reading practices. Guattari (1986/1998) addressed why variation or contextualization is important in the description of the science he and Deleuze hoped to create:

The question becomes that of the status of the assemblage's components, which both bridge and oscillate between radically heterogeneous fields. I have said somewhere that we wished to construct a science where dishcloths and napkins would mix with things even more disparate, where dishcloths and napkins would not be subsumed under the category of "laundry," but where we would gracefully submit to the notion that dishcloths can be differentiated in singularized becomings linked to a host of contextual references, ranging from a barman drying glasses with a dish-cloth to a soldier in a trench throwing in the towel. In a classical analytical perspective, this type of contextualization is usually not taken into account, except when it comes to significant incidents, and is never

considered a referent capable of generating pragmatic effects in specific institutional or material social fields. It is this micro-politics of meaning which, in my view, needs to be reversed. (p. 434)

I quote Guattari (1986/1998) because I think contextualizing and examining the pragmatic effects of everyday practices like reading in schools could generate more disparate but productive descriptions of reading. Like dish-cloths and towels, perhaps bower-birding and latching could enlist a “host of contextual references” that opened the concept of reading to include this “micro-politics of meaning” (p. 434). Many practices and contexts associated with *reading* have been routinely obscured in schools. In this research report, participants’ showed variation in how their reading practices produced their lives.

Outside the art of the possible

Lamenting how slowly English translations of Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts have been used in the social sciences, Bonta (2009) noted that “traditional (by which I mean pre- and anti-structuralist) approaches” dominated many fields and that:

The challenge before Deleuzians is to show that works like *A Thousand Plateaus* (1986) can also guide and inform field-based research, in which all of us – sociologists, anthropologists, geographers, psychologists, criminologists, historians, economists and political scientists – are engaged, either directly or indirectly [with] the creative, self-organising, and rhizomatic characteristics of the social world. (p. 137)

By examining the reading practices of academics, I have shown how Deleuze and Guattari's concepts add important insights to the "self-organising, and rhizomatic characteristics of the social world" (p. 137) of reading.

What could the reading practices of my participants make possible for language arts and English teachers and their students? Bogue's (2009) two senses of "the possible" inform how we might think differently about reading in schools. He noted:

The possible has two senses, the first of which is that which is practicable, feasible, predictable, a sense picked up in Bismarck's quip that politics is the art of the possible. But a second sense is that of alternatives beyond expectations, new conceptions and approaches outside conventions. (p. 132)

My participants provided reading practices that were "beyond expectations, new conceptions and approaches" (p. 132) usually found in school settings, but I am compelled to think how their reading practices could also connect to what is *practice*-able in schools.

If I had introduced the concept of Deleuze and Guattari's ontology of immanence to my colleagues at the high school where I taught for nine years, I expect I would have gotten in return strange glances, some rolling eyes, and, no doubt, would have been accused of being too theoretical. But in Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the world, school would not be a place to prepare for life, but a place where life occurs and proliferates. Reading practices would be important because they do not necessarily guarantee deeper knowledge but provide connections across linguistic and social settings to generate lives. Deleuze (1990) wanted people to take the work of their everyday practices seriously:

What we most lack is a belief in the world, we've quite lost the world, it's been taken from us. If you believe in the world you precipitate events, however inconspicuous, that elude control, you engender new space-times, however small their surface and volume. It's what you call *pietas*. Our ability to resist control, or our submission to it, has to be assessed at the level of our every move. We need both creativity and people. (Deleuze, 1990, 176)

School should not be a place where students focus on reading as a passive, practice unrelated to their lives or the various disciplines in the arts, sciences, and humanities. Instead, school should foster creative practices that engage students and teachers in generating possible lives. But does schooling encourage creative practices leading to new ways of thinking and living?

If reading has the potential to change lives, then shouldn't schools give students leeway to create the lives they want? Does honoring the work of reading mean respecting a student's right not to read a particular text? Allowing students the opportunity to *not read* or simply to have more choice in what they read might be interpreted in this age of accountability and test scores as not focusing the standards. In education we cannot imagine problems that we sometimes do not recognize. Similarly, Rajchman (2000) asserted:

Often it is a matter of making visible problems for which there exists no program, no plan, no "collective agency," problems that therefore call for new groups, not yet defined, who must invent themselves in the process. (p. 8)

Often students adopt particular reading practices because of an attitude Pope (2001) called "doing school" (p. 4). Students "realize that they are caught in a system where

achievement depends more on ‘doing’—going through the correct motions—than on learning and engaging with the curriculum” (p. 4). In many ways the participants’ practices resist a rote adherence to a system—Kerrey, in particular, used reading to work her way out of the managerial system of her administrative reading.

Where is the time in our curriculum for allowing students to explore and build on their associations? If reading is no longer viewed as an isolated act with a reader and a text or, as is often the case, a reader and a test, then how might school engagements with literary texts change? Where is the time for rereading—for linking and connecting concepts and experiences? Rereading could be an important practice for students to notice how connections and meanings are made and then change, but in a recent “analysis of the standards found in a typical K-12 school system, Robert J. Marzano found that...to cover all this content, you would have to change schooling from K-12 to K-22” (Marzano quoted in Gallagher, 2009, p. 11). Marsh, Larkin, and Jakob underscored the importance of sustained and repeated relationships to texts that were not immediately understandable. Is there room in our schools for such extended engagements?

What if language arts teachers were encouraged to teach reading as thinking? Addressing school reading practices is an especially timely issue because today’s standard-laden and assessment-heavy schools reduce reading to a skill and drill exercise removed from the intensive reading experiences that my participants described. Gallagher (2009) coined the term “readicide” to describe “the systematic killing of the love of reading, often exacerbated by the inane, mind-numbing practices found in schools” (p. 2). Unfortunately, Gallagher (2009) noted that “many of the reading practices found in today’s classrooms are actually contributing to the death of reading. In

an earnest attempt to instill reading, teachers and administrators push practices that kill many students' last chance to develop into lifelong readers" (p. 2). Reading has more relevant and valid uses than the predetermined meaning either teachers' discussion questions or publishers' tests can activate. Reading was an active, engaging, productive practice for many participants, in particular, Marsh and Lawrence. Marsh took as much joy in her a-ha moments that cracked the codes of quotes she tangentially understood, as Lawrence did in using book altering to paste, rip, and otherwise artfully generate ideas. We need more active, joyful, reading practices in schools.

If the only justifications students hear for why they should read boils down to passing a test, getting a good grade, going to college, or becoming culturally literate, then the delayed gratification reading offers isn't good enough. But reading can also provide the immediate reward of constructing a life. Fecho (2004) noted that "it is hoped that what occurs in the classroom will have some immediate relevance to student life and not just the doubtful promise of paying off at some later date" (p. 118). In this regard, Jakob explained that the value of getting students to read is "the exact inverse of what we try to teach kids in school that somehow reading provides resources for life. It's the exact opposite because reading is the only place where you can change, where your life can change" (Jakob, personal interview, May 11, 2005). Like Jakob, I believe that intensive reading practices can and do exist in some places in schools, and I hope that reading can become what Deleuze (1990/1995) called "a series of experiments for each reader in the midst of events that have nothing to do with books" (p. 9) and, I would add, everything to do with the lives of students.

Revisiting the Assemblage

Circling back to Sharon the teacher—who read books with her students and questioned what kind of readers her classroom practices created—is difficult. A reading life is an assemblage put together much as was Frankenstein—from various and disparate parts. One distinct aspect of my reading assemblage that haunts me is Virginia Woolf’s (1955) *To the Lighthouse* because it linked and exploded understandings of space and time. Even though I read this book as a senior in college, I don’t remember every plot point and character, but when I re-member it, my life assembled differently as I drop into the folds of time and space. For me, these are “lines of flight” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9) or opportunities to deterritorialize the striated space that I’ve been taught to stay within as I decode a book for meaning. Reconstructing Sharon’s assemblages occurs when intensities pulse across experiences—hurriedly and partially re-membering relationships, spaces, books, words, images, smells, feelings, and places. The landscape of the assemblage is a Swiss cheese-like machine that blurs linearity and fixedness. Through reading I’m constantly traveling through “new space-times, however small their surface and volume” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 176). Topography changes, but assemblages gather again and Sharon is somewhat recognizable. In her life, smooth spaces lurk everywhere altering striated grids, creating possible connections among all other experiences, and assembling “a life that includes the practice of reading” (Sumara, 1996, p. 1).

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APPENDIX A

ORIGINAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Can you describe your life as a reader?
2. What are some really memorable reading experiences you've had?
3. What are some of the contexts in which you read?
4. What are some of the physical locations in which you read?
5. What do you expect from reading?
6. How does reading surprise you?

APPENDIX B

LEIGHTON INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Can you describe your life as a reader?
2. What are some really memorable reading experiences you've had?
3. What are some of the contexts in which you read?
4. What are some of the physical locations in which you read?
5. What do you expect from reading?
6. How does reading surprise you?
7. You write in your book about Sir Walter Raleigh's reading list becoming the reading list for most universities. Could you talk about that?
8. What has feminist philosophy done to your reading?
9. I'm interested in your book and how you described your experience of holding the original copy of a particular work and crying. Could you talk about that experience?

APPENDIX C

DAVIDSON INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Can you describe your life as a reader?
2. What are some really memorable reading experiences you've had?
3. What are some of the contexts in which you read?
4. What are some of the physical locations in which you read?
5. What do you expect from reading?
6. How does reading surprise you?
7. How do some of your journal articles fit into your theory of reading?
8. Could you talk about how people in other fields create texts and how they might be similar or different to the ones you create when you read?
9. How have emotions played a role in your reading experiences?

APPENDIX D

BEAUFORT INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Can you describe your life as a reader?
2. What are some really memorable reading experiences you've had?

Below are the questions asked at the follow-up interview because of digital recorder problems at the initial interview.

1. What are some of the contexts in which you read?
2. What are some of the physical locations in which you read?
3. What do you expect from reading in these different contexts?
4. Can you think of reading experiences that have surprised you?
5. How has reading and teaching literature influenced your reading practices? In our last interview, what did you mean when you said that many people "underconceptualize what reading does to a life?"
6. How might Gee's (1996) identity kit be important to conceptualizing reading?

APPENDIX E

SCOTT INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Can you describe your life as a reader?
2. I've been reading your book. Could you talk about how you got into writing that particular book?
3. How did "holism" become important to your life?
4. What are some really memorable reading experiences you've had?
5. What are some of the contexts in which you read?
6. What are some of the physical locations in which you read?
7. What do you expect from reading in these different contexts?
8. Can you think of reading experiences that have surprised you?

APPENDIX F

KERREY INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What are some really memorable reading experiences you've had?
2. What are some of the physical locations and contexts in which you read?
3. What do you expect from reading in these different contexts?
4. Can you think of reading experiences that have surprised you? Have you ever had any reading experiences where you were more aware of your body?
5. What readings have you done that you felt positioned you into a different subjectivity? One of my participants uses a Virginia Woolf quote about reading against the current, can you think of a time when you read against a current or a discursive regime? Does reading ever become a current that you get swept away in?
6. You refer to Grumet's *Bitter Milk* and call for a new politics of educational knowledge that doesn't collapse personal identity into the therapeutic idiom. Reading is often positioned this way. Many times the practice of reading is seen as a quest for knowledge as cure. How would you position reading differently?
7. How could reading be a technology that "burn[s] like a cigarette into [the silken fabric...[that is] the whole order of traditional society" (Hill as cited in McWilliam, 1999, p. 11)?

8. Could you talk about how you use the term embodiment or corporeality and how you deploy these terms?

APPENDIX G

LANCASHIRE INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Can you describe your life as a reader?
2. What are some really memorable reading experiences you've had in different parts of your life?
3. How did your training as a philosopher influence your reading practices?
4. What are some of the contexts and physical locations in which you read?
5. What do you expect from reading in these different contexts?
6. Can you think of reading experiences that have surprised you or changed your perspective on the world?

APPENDIX H

MARSH INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What are some of the physical locations and contexts in which you read?
2. What do you expect from reading in these different contexts?
3. What are some really memorable reading experiences you've had?
4. Can you think of reading experiences that have surprised you?
5. What has being an academic done to your life as a reader?
6. What readings have you done that you felt positioned you into a different subjectivity? Does reading ever become a current that you get swept away in?
7. What do you think of the term embodiment?

APPENDIX I

LAWRENCE INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What are some of the physical locations and contexts in which you read?
What do you expect from reading in these different contexts?
2. What are some really memorable reading experiences you've had?
3. Can you think of reading experiences that have surprised you?
4. You talk about unavoidable human content invading your writing...how does this same thing happen with reading? How is reading not a cure?
5. What readings have you done that you felt positioned you into a different subjectivity?
6. Does reading ever become a current that you get swept away in?
7. In your book, you apply theory to your writing practices. What theories seem to be important in talking about your reading practices?
8. Could you talk about what you think of when you hear the word embodiment?

APPENDIX J

LARKIN INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What are some really memorable reading experiences you've had?
2. What are some of the physical locations and contexts in which you read?
3. What do you expect from reading in these different contexts?
4. Can you think of reading experiences that have surprised you? Have you ever had any reading experiences where you were more aware of your body?
5. Rereadings seem to be a big part of your reading practices. What is a rereading event like for you?
6. Many times the practice of reading is seen as a quest for knowledge as cure. How would you position reading differently?
7. Reading as total experience and reading across disciplines to formulate a multidisciplinary approach to reading across disciplines science/philosophy/
8. Could you talk about how Derrida's repeatable singularity applies to your own reading practices?
9. Could you talk about how you use the term embodiment or corporeality and how you deploy these terms?
10. What feminists do you think have been influential to reading theory?
11. How do you decide what to read and who to read it with?
12. How does memory influence your reading? Are memory and reading wormholes, hyperlinks, rabbit holes?

13. What aspects of your reading practices do your published writings obscure? Is there something else that's been left out?

APPENDIX K

EXAMPLE MEMO AFTER INTERVIEW WITH LAWRENCE

Setting: After teaching and feeling a little under the weather, I was flipping through channels on my TV and deciding if I should take a nap or not. I recently changed antidepressants and have struggled to keep the momentum going with my dissertation. The telephone rang and it was Lawrence. I asked if I could call her back as I needed to get the recorder set up. I did so and called her back. We ended up having the best conversation. Her voice is so diminutive on the telephone, so quiet and soft. At the end of the interview, I told her how she had brightened my day. I told her that it was rainy and I was a little down before she called but that talking to her had lifted my spirits. She seemed to really appreciate that which underscores how easy and caring she was to talk with.

Impressions/Memorable Images of Reading:

- Space and place—She created a space in her house to read this way. She now has a studio devoted to this type of reading experience—it gets Northern light, is blue and white and cooler than her study, is more contemporary with steel bins to store stuff in. Her study is warmer, greens and browns, with view of backyard. She calls these spaces collectively, Lawrence's West Wing.
- Book altering—She is doing something unexpected with books that she calls reading. She got involved through a friend and a paper-making class. She then took a book binding/making class and met some Book Arts People and has gotten

into what she called Altered book groups. (Send her magazine clipping from Newsweek) This is not scrapbooking. She says this is different because in scrapbooking you are trying to create a monument to the actual experience and this is every different to what book altering is doing. Scrapbooking is more scientific and follows women's artistic practices like quilting. Altered book groups is egalitarian and altering and gifting. Unlike Benjamin, there are originals here. It is an artful practice with emotional impact and expressivity. It tells a story, not one that necessarily matches the paper. In fact she said that her friend who is in AA did one with a book important to her recovery but that the blue book would not be the right book because it was expected. There is a magazine but she doesn't like it. It's called Altered Arts and she occasionally finds interesting tidbits in there. She said this is a different type of reading. She doesn't read about what she's interested in. She reads through her lens. She can reimagine or ignore the book. Icelandic Children's book...she changed the name and ripped pages out. She is now working on the book Bold Woman and is going to replace the women in it with the women she thinks should be in there. She is cutting up books and repurposing books, she says recycling.

Purposes for reading:

- Scans for info,
- reads slowly for beauty,
- peaceful, soothing
- Reads memoir to find out what people are doing.

- Reads for arguments and with a critical eye and things that are difficult to understand (PPMS group).
- Reads to see what she can latch into.
- Reading for how they're made--form, content/form and a broader way, to see what the possibilities are.
- Reading in an unexpected way--Altering books

Other connections:

- Talking to Lawrence made me think of an artist that I had met years before at UGA. I searched the UGA website and found the lecture: October 21, 2003: Tim Rollins Lecture: Tuesday, October 21st, 2003, 5:30 pm, Georgia Museum of Art. I copied the following information about his reading practices with his students. They also are repurposing and altering books into works, large canvas-type works of art. Rollins Information: In 1982, Tim Rollins took a teaching job in the South Bronx to create a special course in art and literature for students with educational and emotional disabilities. Since then, Rollins and his students across the country and around the world have created works of art based on literary texts, often combining the actual text pages with painted images laid down on a canvas ground. Rollins looks for a diverse group of students, often finding those who dislike school but love art. Through their intense interaction, Rollins and his collaborators create remarkable works of artistic and social significance. While working as an art teacher in a junior high school in the South Bronx in 1982, Tim Rollins founded the Art and Knowledge Workshop, an alternative after-school program for students with learning difficulties. The workshop was designed to

encourage a greater interest in literature, and for one of the first projects, Rollins had his students draw at their desks while he read aloud George Orwell's 1984. All of the students had copies of the book; one misunderstood the instructions and drew directly on the pages. The creative possibilities of placing images over text excited the class, so they applied the pages of the entire novel to a canvas and began working in concert on a large-scale composition. The process has since become the trademark of the collaboration between Rollins and the students, who call themselves Kids of SurvivalK.O.S.in recognition of the skills acquired through participation in the workshop, which have helped them to better navigate the social, cultural, and political factions that make up their world. This information is from the following website:

<http://www.art.uga.edu/html/news.php?getLinks=getNews&getContent=getArtist&contentValue=3> Accessed 10 October 2005

- We also talked about *The English Patient* and Dennis Sumara's book: Sumara, D. (1996). *Private readings in public: Schooling the literary imagination*. New York: Peter Lang. The English patient has a copy of Herodotus's (424/1958) *Histories* and he draws, writes, and pastes into this book touchstones that bring him back to his subjectivity. In Sumara's book, he takes this image of the English patient's Herodotus text and calls it a common place book or a collecting place for the many relationships in his life. The English patient really ignores the text in some places and in others weaves the stories into his own. The striking thing about picking the Herodotus text is that it's the first history that tries to use weird,

obscure stories to tell history instead of a chronological, museum-like presentation of facts. This made me think of Lawrence's altered books practice. Elizabeth Bishop's poem "In the Waiting Room" is an example of reading experience where my "I" dropped into the poem.

As an undergraduate, I had to teach a piece of poetry in a modern poetry class. We were randomly assigned the poems and my poem was "In the Waiting Room" by Elizabeth Bishop. I read this poem over and over, so I would be able to explicate the poem to the professor's standards.

The waiting room was bright
and too hot. It was sliding
beneath a big black wave,
another, and another (ll. 90-93).

TABLE 1: CHRONOLOGY OF INTERVIEWS

Academic Department & University Affiliation	Participants	Interview Date
English and Reading Education Southeastern US Research University	Jakobs	3 July 2005
English and Women's Studies Southeastern US Research University	Leighton	13 July 2005
English and Reading Education Southeastern US Research University	Davidson	25 July 2005
English and Reading Education Southeastern US Research University	Beaufort	26 July 2005
Comparative Literature Southeastern US Research University	Scott	12 September 2005
Teacher Education Northeastern Australian Research University	Kerrey	22 September 2005
Social and Cultural Foundations of Education, Women's Studies, and Comparative Studies Midwestern US Research University	Marsh	29 September 2005
Philosophy and Women's Studies Southeastern US Research University	Lancashire	29 September 2005
Sociology Midwestern US Research University	Lawrence	6 October 2005
Secondary Education Canadian Research University	Larkin	5 October 2005

TABLE 2
TIMELINE OF STUDY

Outline of Research Process	Dates
IRB Approval	9 June 2005
Recruit Participants	June 10-30, 2005
Interviews	July 3- October 5, 2005
Transcription	July-November, 2005
Data Analysis	On-going through interviews, transcription, writing, and reading
Writing Draft Chapter 1	January 2006
Writing Draft Chapter 2	January 2006
Writing Draft Chapter 3	February 2006
Writing Draft Chapter 4	February 2006
Chapters 1-4 Initial Feedback from Committee	5 March 2006
Reading Committee Feedback Meeting	10 March 2006
Revising Drafts of Chapters 1-5	On-going through September 2010
Dissertation Defense Date	November 17, 2010