

An Intimate Distance: Youth Interrogations of Intercorporeal Cartography as Visual Narrative Text

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I love the idea of maps. As a nomad of sorts, a dreamer, traveler, and mover (I have lived in a dozen cities in four continents with a considerable amount of time spent dwelling in/between) I find maps an important means of orienting myself to new spaces. Maps facilitate new knowledge of the world. They enable discovery, exploration, and un/ending possibilities.¹

However, the maps I find most compelling are narratives, sometimes found in guidebooks, others posted on websites, and then there are those that are novels, short stories of places and travel adventure. I love to read these narrative cartographies, imag(e)ining places and encounters, searching, disclosing, and inventing the world in which I live. These types of maps are experienced and offer possibilities of what is yet to come, rather than simply reproducing what is known. These maps are less about orienting myself on the grid, and more to do with losing myself in discovery and the un/known.

Contemporary mapping theories argue that mapping is a creative activity that focuses on the *process of mapping* rather than on the object of maps (Cosgrove, 1999). As opposed to traditional views of maps as stable and complete, contemporary cartographies recognize mapping's partial and provisional nature. Thus, mapping is not just an archive of projected points and lines onto a surface, often referred to as a trace; it is a dynamic and complex actualization of un/foldings. While traditional maps chart and

graph the lay of the land, codifying, naturalizing, and institutionalizing conventions, contemporary mapping that finds its place in visual art and culture, views maps for *what they can do*, the potential and possibilities of the un/named. This mode of thinking finds the agency of mapping in its ability to uncover or to un/fold (Corner, 1999). The mappings that I find so compelling are ones that inaugurate new worlds, opening bodies to other bodies and encounters. Furthermore, mapping as process argues that the “experience of space cannot be separated from the events that happen within it; space is situated, contingent, and differentiated. It is remade continuously every time it is encountered by different people, every time it is represented through another medium, every time its surroundings change, every time new affiliations are forged” (Corner, 1999, p. 227). Rather than a view of space as an empty vessel that objects are placed within, feminist reconceptualizations link space with corporeality and subjectivity. Therefore, what we need to examine is how spaces and bodies are simultaneously created in the process of mapping.

Instead of mapping as iconographic deductions or representations I want to think of mapping as engagements that are material intercorporeal becomings. By challenging the idea of a map as an orientation that relies on points, I explore the possibilities of narrative cartographies as textual interconnections between body and space. In doing so I question: *How do students understand and construct body knowledge as intercorporeal cartographies that materialize space as visual textual narratives?*

In this paper I examine short segments of student created videos investigating how these works of art question subjectivity, representation, and meaning making in relation to bodied space. In doing so I draw on contemporary mapping theories that conceptualize the process of mapping as disruptive and differential, and which enable alternative ways of inhabiting space. Subsequently theories of the fold will also shape an understanding of intercorporeal cartographic meaning making with, in, and through touch. In doing so I argue that what we know is intersected with experience and our corporeal subjectivity. This I contend is paramount in thinking of curriculum inquiry as a process of bodied encounters constructed with, in, and through space.

intercorporeal encounters through touch

Visual perception has dominated theories of knowledge for centuries demanding an understanding of reason as objective, distant, and separate from the body (Foti, 2003; Vasseleu, 1998). Vision associated with light and the mind, became the powerful sense through which the individual autonomous subject gained mastery and control. The other senses, and in particu-

lar touch, often associated with the domestic, female body were relegated to subordinate roles, further entrenching hegemonic power relations and dualistic thought (Classen, 1993, 1998). However, when perception is reconstructed from the perspective of touch, the mechanisms of visual perception are disrupted, and ways of knowing become intimate, sensuous, and relational. Therefore, feminist re-conceptualizations of touch pose a different way of making sense of the world, bringing the body inside the visible such that the boundaries between interior and exterior become porous and folded (Irigaray, 1993; Springgay, 2003; 2004).

Likewise, intercorporeality is an approach that attends to the forms and folds of living bodies. It is a thinking that reflects on inter-embodiment, on being(s)-in-relation, where one touches and is touched by others. It poses the question of how knowledge is experienced through encounters and as being(s)-in-the world. Knowledge becomes open and embodiment becomes a process of exchange. Intercorporeality engenders a way of thinking that is not separated from the body but emerges through an intertwining of mind and body, inside and outside, self and other and through our interactions with the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1968).

This intertwining can be understood through the act of un/folding where perception is doubled, embodied, and tangled. A fold is both exterior and interior. In a fold inside and outside remain distinct, but not separate, rather they are doubled. Un/folding is not the reverse of a fold, but may result in additional folds. Thus, the fold appears interconnected, embracing touch and intercorporeality. The condition of the fold is the premise that it is not a void or an absence in the sense of nothing. Rather the fold is being as turned back on itself—touching.

Deleuze (1993) translates the fold as sensuous vibrations, a world made up of divergent series, an infinity of pleats and creases. Un/folding divides endlessly, folds within folds touching one another. “Matter thus offers an infinitely porous, spongy, or cavernous texture without emptiness, caverns endlessly contained in other caverns” (p. 5). Challenging Descartes, Deleuze is mindful of the fold as matter that cannot be divided into separable parts. A fold is not divisible into independent points, but rather any un/folding results in additional folds, it is the movement or operation of one fold to another. “The division of the continuous must not be taken as sand dividing into grains, but as that of a sheet of paper or of a tunic in fold, in such a way that an infinite number of folds can be produced...without the body ever dissolving into point or minima. A fold is always folded within a fold” (p. 6). Perception is not a question then of part to whole but a singular totality “where the totality can be as imperceptible as the parts” (p. 87). Perception is not embodied in perceiving the sum of all parts rather it is distinguished by and within the fold.

Un/folding is the body between subject and object, a doubleness that “teaches us that each calls for the other” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 138). This between is a between that includes both terms, but also points to the uniqueness of each, and the limitless possibilities of their beyond. Between is the body in the threshold of the world, awake, enactive, and sensuous. Un/folding enables bodies to come together, to touch in a proximal relation, to form knowledge as intercorporeality.

Similarly, contemporary feminist scholarship that draws on post-structuralist theories of subjectivity, identity, and meaning, exposes earlier discourses of space as normative, continuous, and objective. Following the work of Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987), feminist theorists argue that space is fragmented, rhizomatic, fluid, ambiguous, vulnerable and open to constant change. Space is linked with how one encounters, constructs, and performs identity, thereby mapping the relationship of space to subjectivity, corporeality, and ways of knowing (Ahmed & Stacey, 2001). In other words the body is not simply in space (an object placed in a particular location), but rather the body is spatial itself. Thus, scholarship that investigates “the body” needs also explore the interconnected relationships between experience, space, and subjectivity. Feminist scholar Elizabeth Grosz (1994, 1995) contends that an understanding of the ways in which subjects occupy, materialize, and disrupt space is predicated on an exploration of how bodies and spaces define and shape one another. Space becomes both the production of culture, and the making and circulation of intersubjective experiences. This is further addressed in the work of Luce Irigaray (1993) who argues that space and time must be conceptualized differently, posing that space be understood from the perspective of touch; a more fluid, viscous, and proximal understanding.² *The question becomes: How do secondary school students construct and negotiate the body with, in and through space as visual narrative text?*

This paper draws on an a/r/tographical³ study into how secondary school students understand, explore, and negotiate the lived meanings of their bodies through touch. The study took place in an alternative secondary school in a large urban city in Canada. As a visiting artist, researcher, and teacher, I developed and implemented a six-month curriculum project investigating student understandings of body knowledge through the curricular themes *body surfaces*, *body encounters*, and *body sites*. Students created performance, installation, and new media art as a means of aesthetically inquiring into the lived experiences of their bodies, while also exploring the relationship of the body to visual art and culture. In this paper I un/cover student understandings of intercorporeal cartography as a means of disrupting, challenging, and re-constructing the body in and as space. The videos can be accessed through [hotlinks](#) imbedded within the paper.

Consequently my arguments are linked to curriculum studies that are located in explorations of identity and subjectivity (e.g. Pinar, 2004). Rather than posing curricular questions “about” the body, or how “the body” should be taught in education, my analyses disclose the very ways that students negotiate and mediate the contested terrains of body knowledge and subsequently interrogate what it means to know, inhabit, experience, and encounter embodied space. I argue how such thinking might be productive for curriculum and pedagogical practices, recognizing that questions of knowing and being are crucial to curriculum studies.

un/folding boxes: the agency of mapping as un/folding

It’s a clear blue crisp day. Inside the classroom I move between students, helping one thread a sewing machine, another add a music soundtrack to an i-movie, and stop to talk to two others as they search the web as part of their artistic inquiry. Sounds of laughter add to the already noisy room, and I glance up and out the window. Cameron has boxes on his feet and is comically attempting to walk up the sidewalk toward the front doors of the school. In front of him, Tyler and Andrew direct his movements, a video camera cradled in their hands. I smile as I watch Cameron stumble, the enormous boxes disrupting his movements as he propels his now over large “feet” up the stairs.

Later, Bronwyn the art teacher beckons me into the hallway. There, the students have arranged the boxes and are filming different students getting into and out of the boxes. Weeks later in a class discussion Bronwyn suggests that schools put people in boxes, a comment that embodies the pedagogical directive “to think outside the box”. But the students disagree with this statement, not objecting to the notion that education occasionally encloses students, surrounding them with stable objectives and fixed results. Their disagreement has more to do with what they imagine the re-configurations and assemblages of the boxes *can do*. Thus, instead of reading the meaning of the boxes as static, empty identifiable markers, the students were interested in the activity and process of the box as embodied space.

Andrew responds to the class discussion: “But these boxes are too small, the students bodies—much larger. The boxes are also open. The boxes are about mobility and change. We can get in and out whenever we want, wear more than one at once, discard them at random.” Over the coming year as I returned to view the video [Monkey Puzzle](#) I paid close attention to the activity of the boxes and their transition throughout the school. These boxes did not contain bodies, they were not vessels into which information was placed, but rather the boxes moved in/between, in the threshold of bodies and space.

More recently I discovered an artist who un/folds boxes virtually. [John](#)

[F. Simon Jr.'s](#) virtual art installation is a computer designed artwork that un/folds a cube (box) at the “click of the mouse”.⁴ When you enter the site you find a blank cube. The viewers activated response from their mouse causes the cube to un/fold in infinite patterns. Each folding produces lines or traces of past un/foldings that previous participants created. On the Guggenheim website the unauthored curatorial statement reads: “For example each leaf of this “book” that has been turned four times in the past is marked with four vertical lines; a horizontal line, meanwhile, stands for ten such unfoldings; and left and right diagonals denote hundreds or thousands of previous clicks. The pattern of lines thus changes over the course of the project”.⁵

In contrast to presenting a single image, *un/folding object* presents every possible permutation including those that are “other than”, ones that are yet to be conceived and articulated—infinite possibilities and materializations of space. Any change to the pattern of folding results in an entirely different set of possible images. *What does it mean to encounter images, bodies, and/or spaces that continually change towards infinity?*

Simon (February, 2004) describes his work as “an endless book that rewrites itself and whose use dictates its content”. Similarly, Simon’s work is performative; its mutations allow for the latency of the body to un/fold and map in space and time. The infinite creation maps the something else, moving beyond representation towards the infinite possibilities of experience. Rather than simply mathematical, *un/folding object* is tactile, participants touching and connecting within a cyberfold.

Likewise the students’ boxes continue to map space as intercorporeality. Boxes appear again in a subsequent film entitled [Monkey Puzzle II](#), and are taken up in a number of classroom narratives throughout the school year. Instead of transforming the boxes through a “click” of a mouse, the boxes are moved, worn, cut into, disassembled and circulated suggesting the potential for new possibilities and fresh discoveries. In fact in one video episode “the box” dies, a memorial service is performed, and a number of students and teachers are interviewed in the school asking them to say a few words about “the box”.

Opening either bodies or boxes, we rupture the links that we assume automatically exist between things, words, spaces and bodies. Tyler informs me on a recent visit that the boxes are entangled, they are threads between all of the various videos, but they are not boxes that contain or hold things in the ways that we traditionally think of boxes. Boxes are more than empty space that needs to be filled. Rather, the box embraces intercorporeality mapping narrative text as process and transformation.

Pedagogically in place of “thinking outside the box” a more apt metaphor might be to un/fold boxes and spaces, to materialize knowledge, to

touch it in such a way that endless, infinite, and un/fathomed processes can be explored. "Outside the box" imposes order and containment to the inside, separating it from what lies external to it. In contrast un/folding does not separate inside and outside, rather it opens each onto the other, rendering the "map" as a fluid, anamorphous space. Un/folding invites the corporeal body into the threshold, a dehiscence of difference that is inside the outside, rupturing the visible, the map, and discovering new sensory becomings.

Shifting our focus to another segment in the *Monkey Puzzle* film, we spend time analyzing a section where Tyler is writing in his journal. The students have discovered the possibilities of the reverse function in i-movie so that the act of writing moves backwards. They find this exciting and as we sit and explore this section together they begin to ask questions and think through this gesture. Andrew tells me they are "un/writing". Initially their responses position this act of un/writing as a move backwards. Andrew states: "Clearly", he says, "it's like the un/writing takes away the writing and leaves just this pristine page", and Tyler interjects "it's cleansing". However, as we move through our discussion I ask them if they see this movement as a negative affect. Andrew is quick to respond: "It's not an act of destruction like if you took a part a Leggo® house. It is not being deconstructed, it is more like different knowledge". He continues, "It's not really positive or negative—it's in-between". At this point in our conversation Tyler interrupts "It's not just about our bodies, but how things affect our bodies and how our bodies affect things".

Following Tyler's statement Andrew continues with the idea of un/writing, relating it to the concept of "un/doing":

Another thing I like about this un/writing is that when you reverse it, and you are witnessing this action take place at some point along that point in reverse you realize that it is something that has been reversed then by the time the un/writing is finished you've figured out its in reverse so in fact he is actually about to start writing so it is almost that what you just saw didn't actually happen. Because you are actually at the start now. At the end you realize it's the beginning and what you have witnessed has never actually occurred.

As they continue to discuss the un/writing, Tyler says: "there was one other thing that I noticed here. I'm going to play part of this clip. At one point I erase something and that's putting something back in". Andrew responds: "Now that would be a different angle". I'm not so quick and I have to ask: "What do you mean putting something back in". Tyler explains: "Because when you are using an eraser [remember they are using the reverse tool] it's doing the exact opposite the tools are reversed. Its like a double reverse

of writing”.

The idea of peeling away successive layers of meaning, of looking beyond or beneath the surface takes the notion of *trace* as a starting point. The palimpsest is a perfect metaphor for this process of layering. A palimpsest, according to one source, is a medieval manuscript where text is erased in order to make room for subsequent writings (Gerber, 2003). Viewed in this way, the act of erasure is a “making room” for new information. In this act of erasure removal is never complete.

Traces are left, in some cases literally, but also metaphorically, embodying the memory and history of the trace. Other configurations of contemporary palimpsests include torn posters on billboards, signs with missing letters, stamps and envelopes with traces of travel and even a chalkboard. These suggest yet another, but similar meaning to the word palimpsest, where the object becomes a vessel or container recording the history and memory of its experiences. A number of artists have explored the idea of the palimpsest, where in the instant of erasure something else is created. In this sense the erased becomes more than just a negative or a non-attribute. In *Monkey Puzzle* the un/writing scene and the doubling of erasure did not simply remove text and return the piece of paper to its previous stage, in the process of erasure the remnants of pencil becomes a deliberate making of new possibilities.

The metaphor of the palimpsest lends to Derrida’s (1997) concept of “*sous rature*” or writing under erasure, where in meaning there is an always already absent present. Gyatri Spivak in the preface to Derrida’s *On Grammatology* translates Derrida’s text: “This is to write a word, cross it out, and then print both word and deletion. (Since the word is inaccurate, it is crossed out, since it is necessary, it remains legible” (in Derrida, 1997, p. xiv). In other words, the trace of the word remains present. It is the idea of “trace” that Derrida puts under erasure, a word, writes Spivak “that cannot be a master-word, that presents itself as the mark of an anterior presence” (in Derrida, 1997, p. xv). Accordingly one could transcribe the word “difference” here as well. The trace of a word is its absent “something else”. Extending this reading we might consider the active form of Derrida’s term. Derrida’s use of the French phrase ‘*sous rature*’ implies that his focus could be turned away from settling on fixed meanings of terms, towards the *activity of crossing* something out that thereby leaves a trace. This trace is no longer a static point of meaning but instead has been transformed in the process of erasure. So while in *On Grammatology*, trace is translated as track, a meaning more inclined with traditional maps, and points of origin, I’d like to consider the *trace as a process*.⁶ Thus, I’d be disposed to re-think the metaphor of the palimpsest from vessel or archive of past meaning, which would imply a container of closed boundaries, to a more rhizomatic con-

figuration, where the *act of crossing out* turns from a remainder or an absence, towards a re-configuration of mark making as not only new knowledge, but knowledge that points to possibilities that are yet to come, further tracings.

In the student's video the act of erasure is not a making room for something else, but alternatively a process of foraging new connections and understandings. Erasure shifts from the removal of something to the act of creation, a being in the midst of—space as intercorporeality.

cartographical “other thans”

A shopping cart takes a trip to the beach. The scene is dusk, blue light casting moonscape-like shadows along the shore. The tide is out making the sand soft and rippled. A young man steers the cart, pushing it awkwardly in the sand. It gets wedged in the sand, inciting the title of Louie's film: *Stuck*. The pushing movements appear directionless, the young man is neither going towards the sea nor further in land, he is simply struggling with the wheels of the cart that sink further and further into the soft darkness. The struggle un/folds in split time as shots move between the cart at the beach and an underground parking lot, where a young woman, face solemn, pushes the cart between rows of parked cars. Again spliced camera angles create a sense of movement that is adrift, wandering.

While there is a direct confrontation with urban space and outward surroundings the film creates an inward awareness and almost a detached sense from the urban scene. We see the characters but imagine and feel their invisibility, as if the people are part of the backdrop of beach and garage and we are watching a solitary shopping cart on a voyage. Voices and sounds have been removed, replaced with a soundtrack of a popular song. Only the opening segment where the cart speeds away from the camera and the final segments in the parking garage do the sounds of the outside world, the urban core, filter in, creating a sense of tension between the physical space of the city, and the materialized corporeal space of the film. Although “the city” is limited to scenes of a beach, with sprawling urban growth visible in the distance, and a parking garage, the shopping cart is an emblem of urban life, consumerism, and a marker of habitual time—shopping. Yet, the cart is empty, accentuating the coldness of its metal structure, allowing it to become a cage or border between the viewer and the person attempting to move the cart. In her journal notes she's written: “It's staining us this excess of stainless steel”.

Unlike the *Monkey Puzzle* films where actors and cameramen change places, *Stuck* is filmed and directed by Louie, bringing the surface of the film even closer to the viewer, as if we are inside interfacing with the ‘skin

of the film' (Marks, 1999). The differentiated and shifting perspectives between beach and garage becomes a means of moving between stories and exploring multiple selves that haunt space. Questions about representation are applicable as the film shifts between spaces and locations. There is an awareness of interconnected views that explore the relationship between bodies and spaces, the expansiveness of the beach and the concrete mass of a parking garage. The shopping cart as it moves between experiences precludes any simple linear narrative as memories jostle amid a shifting present. It opens up a prospect of a passage through which we discover spaces that exist within space, and the body's relationship and weaving with, in, and through space.

There is an idea of a walk or journey at work in the video. Walking suggests paths that others have walked before, a collective walking; a walking that is not solitary but joined with all of the past and future walkers and places. These multiple walkers break down the idea of an individual autonomous self, an interconnection, an invasion of sorts between bodies and spaces.

Cartographical scholar James Corner (1999) proposes three thematic ways in which new practices of mapping emerge, and each of them produce certain understandings of space as embodied, relational, and intertwined: *drift*, *layering*, and *rhizome*. I want to focus on the interconnections between these themes and the videos.

Walking as drifting creates a condition of lived experience that produces un/expected encounters between bodies. Corner (1999) contends that drifting allows for a process of "mapping alternative itineraries and subverting dominant readings and authoritarian regimes" (p. 231). More a form of embodied mapping where the body becomes part of the space and social surroundings, drifting is ephemeral, vague, and explores the un/familiar terrain of meaning making. Drifting turns knowledge from distant and objective towards an understanding of proximity; an intimate distance.

Kirsten Forkert's walking project entitled *Public Time* examines the places one moves through everyday, but where one never stops, because you have no reason to spend time there.⁷ Her project gathered a group of people together and walked through a section of an urban city in Canada, examining the spaces between destinations—the gaps and moments that one does not readily pay attention to. Her intervention also required participants to actively engage in the process of walking as opposed to being distant observers. Instead of claiming space, the movement or drifting engages questions such as what it means to define a public, a group or a collective experience as an interconnectedness between bodies and space in-the-everyday. In an urban environment that privileges efficiency and the directedness of destinations, Forkert's walking interrupts bodied encounters of walking and

space.

Walking becomes a corporeal cartography where distance is measured through un/certain means. The walk inter-connects body and space enabling a particular set of events to create meaning through alternative gestures. Traditional mapping is contingent on making something visible, tangible, and concrete. Forkert's work is temporal, relational, and sometimes invisible. Invisible in this sense does not mean, that which cannot be seen, but rather it is visible through other perceptions than sight alone. Inverting vision with touch, such that we move inside the visible understanding gives way to all of the senses and mapping becomes a process of knowing and being through the body.

The student videos map and reveal space, not as representation but as intertextual narratives that call attention to the body's relation to text. In place of narrative threads that are meant to bring points together through common connections, the obscurity of narratives is reminiscent of the rhizome and Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) multiplicities or lines of flight. As opposed to text as a discrete unit or an object with a linear traceable history, lines of flight are becomings that connect in unpredictable ways. In place of points or an iconographic representation of mapping, becomings are created through a series of conceptual rather than physical lines. One extracts concepts by mapping the lines, providing a cartography that can be pursued in any number of ways. "The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 12). Mappings are intertextual interstitial spaces that indicate "other than" and point towards different stories. Mappings complexify things instead of reducing them to universal points or markers.

The videos investigate the construction of subjectivity as narrative. They are testaments to the students urge to construct scenarios and narratives around everyday encounters that fringe on the bizarre and yet are strikingly real. Watching the films as characters move in and out of boxes, or pushing shopping carts, there is an underlying presence beneath the narrative that we are not simply watching, but participating in a world that dramatizes life, to make it real by making it filmic.

The *Monkey Puzzle* videos demonstrate a concern not only with exploring spaces that are dynamic and undetermined, but also with memory. However, it is not the excavation of memory, a palimpsest as vessel, but a narrative intertextual cartography of the body that is patterned on new assemblages and meanings.

In *Monkey Puzzle II* the students adopt different characters throughout the film. There is no feedback loop though, as say, Andrew appears in a variety of roles, and sometimes the same role surfaces with a different stu-

dent playing that role, so that it too shifts and slides. Without these points in the film to ground the narrative (he plays this character, this character does this, and assumes these characteristics) self-identifications become ever more complex. Devoid of the need or desire for identification, the subject is free to travel, to map, with the intensity of each new moment, but without building these moments into stable structures. Subjectivity becomes part of a flux of forces with no stable pattern. He can exchange himself within himself, just as he may exchange himself with others. Without points of origin in the films there is no repeating formation of the same. Similarly, memory is no longer structured on the trace as, the successive layers that link back to an original surface. Un/writing writes the body with, in, and through space, engaging its ambiguities, activating and interrogating in/betweens, and un/layering the trace as a process of erasure. Un/writing refigures the body as a site from which and for which youth can create multiple spaces of agency, subjectivity, and representation.

There are references to a past, but even these references are elliptical rather than successive. For example in the opening scene of [Monkey Puzzle II](#), Andrew as director is describes how and why Monkey Puzzle [the first film] was created. Scenes later James is the director, and his narrative references previous films/scenes, but takes on its own interpretations and mutations. It's memory within memory not as a fixed trace but as intercorporeal mapping. Traces filter into the present tense, reminders of previous steps that may not have existed, intertwining memory with the present, not through linear tellings, but as evocative new constructions and stories.

The theme of disappearance runs through [Monkey Puzzle II](#) and [Stuck](#), but not in the same way that one traditionally views the disappearance of history, memory and artifacts fading from the presence, leaving only ghostly traces. Instead, disappearance happens suddenly as scenes abruptly shift, only to perhaps appear again in another form. There is a disruption to space, like in a dream where the fixity of space and the linearity of time give way. In the gap between the scenes, as they are seen by the viewer, described by the sometimes narrator, and experienced by the actors of which you are apart, questions arise about the (in)stability of what is transformed before you.

What I'd like to consider is how these cinematic encounters are palimpsests understood as acts of erasure that forage new meanings and materialize intercorporeal textual and spatial relations. Again, Corner (1999) offers layering as a thematic development in contemporary mapping discourse. Layering he argues is a thickening process, where each layer is considered independent of the other. Layers are not "mappings of an existing site or context, but of the complexity of the intended programme for the site" (p. 235). The layering of layers produces a stratified spatial arrangement, strati-

fied being another rhizomatic-based term. The resulting structure is not simply a “track-trace” of original layers, like ghosts, but “a complex fabric, without centre, hierarchy or single organizing principle” (Corner, 1999, p. 235). This process of layering functions to establish the indeterminacy of meaning making remaining open to new and multiply configurations and inter-textualities.

Layering thus becomes un/folding where the addition and movement between layers creates further combinations and assemblages. In this way the palimpsest moves from vessel of historical topography, towards a intertwining that suggests something else altogether. Instead of the palimpsest containing traces that are absent, the palimpsest becomes a spatial surface, a threshold that in excess and the fullest of presence points towards an “other than”; meaning that is un/familiar.

intercorporeal cartographies as curriculum studies

As a counter move to current initiatives in education that are based on standardized, disembodied, and dehumanized models, an approach to curriculum studies through touch offers possibilities of knowing and understanding that are intercorporeal and relational. Identity thus becomes a space of bodied encounters, where meaning is made between subjects as a process of exchange. Similarly, space must be understood in new ways, re-positioning the body’s role in the production of knowledge in and as space. Meanings become something else altogether, bodies touch creating knowledge in their folds. *What are the implications of intercorporeal cartographies as curriculum studies?*

Curriculum inquiry through touch encourages ambiguity and tension recognizing that difficult knowing ruptures opens the bodies and lives of students and teachers. bell hooks (1994) argues that an engaged educational act seeks to transform both student and teacher. This transformation cannot happen, she writes, unless we embrace the vulnerability of inquiry. Vulnerability recognizes that knowledge is felt, that it is sentient, embodied, and deep. Rather than a view that understands interior knowledge as inferior, inquiry through touch un/folds inside and outside and disrupts patterns in an attempt to create meaning through entanglements. Implicating touch in curriculum inquiry re-configures the body in the process of knowledge production as an intercorporeal act—knowledge between beings. This between refuses to be contained within boundaries. It is a movement and a displacement of meaning—a mapping as trace and as process.

Curricular encounters through touch enhance moments in knowing and understanding that are un/familiar. Touch becomes a commitment to knowing that is engaged, emphasizing bodied encounters that are interrogative

and un/settling. I am reminded of David Smith's (1999) hermeneutical writings on ambiguity and uncertainty in curriculum inquiry. Western thought he argues, emphasizes structural order and universalism. Instead he contemplates a space premised on disorder: "Disorder also reveals the limits of language, that is, the resistance of things to be fully named, yet also to the pull of freedom which lies beyond names but is itself the silent generosity out of which things find their voice" (p. 127). What lies beyond is not an absence, but un/knowingness and the un/familiar. It is this space that ruptures the expected, the same, and the stable. To pose questions about "other than" is to open up possibilities, to examine the border, the limit, and to map "what we do not understand and for which we may not at present have words" (Smith, 1999, p. 128). Intercorporeal cartography endows curriculum inquiry with the lightness of becoming, enhancing, and expanding. It takes us places. It maps anew. It takes us out of ourselves, out of our customary routines and assumptions. Intercorporeal cartography as visual narrative text refuses to be grasped, to become pinned down and held. Rather these bodied encounters flicker and slip, affecting a release, and bringing us into the world itself. All at once new maps occur, a touching that glides across, colliding with other maps, pulling apart the space between.

Endnotes

1. In many configurations the use of the slash is understood to mean 'or'. For example the dualism of mind/body can be written as a slash. However, I employ the slash as a process of doubling as opposed to a dualistic meaning. For instance mind/body would mean mind and body or sometimes neither and the activity between the two terms.
2. Irigaray (1993) re-conceptualizes Merleau-Ponty's notion of *Flesh*, where the lived body is intertwined in the world through experience. In her arguments she proposes that mucous is a more apt metaphor for thinking of this intercorporeal space. Mucous, "which always marks the passage from inside to outside, which accompanies, and "lubricates" the mutual touching of the body's parts and regions", returns experience to the primacy of touch" (as cited in Grosz, 1999, p. 160). Mucous is neither subject nor object but the inter-determinancy between them, unmediated by external sensibilities (Grosz, 1999). Mucous is a more visceral, pulsating and active body knowing. The mucous can also be understood on the level of maternal-fetal bond where blood courses through and is shared by both bodies. For Irigaray, feminine morphology is never complete: "The birth that is never accomplished, the body never created one and for all, the form never definitively completed" (1985, p. 217). Thus, touch is not only the first sense but remains the primary mode of knowing. Mucous escapes control. It cannot be grasped in its fluidity, or contained. As a lubricant it slips and seeps investing touch with more of a caress than a grasp. It is precisely the fluid embodiment of touch that threatens boundaries, sustains excess, dislocating system and order.

3. A/r/tography is an interdisciplinary methodology that examines the multiple sites of visual and textual interfaces. As a methodology it proposes a complex interweaving of image and word and draws upon a diverse range of theories and practices. For theoretical and conceptual arguments regarding the field in addition to examples of a/r/tographical research see: de Cosson, 2001, 2002, 2003; de Cosson et.al in press, 2003b; Irwin, 2003; Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Springgay, in press, 2003, 2004; Springgay et. al, in press; Wilson, 2000; Wilson, et. al. 2002.
4. <http://unfoldingobject.guggenheim.org/>, retrieved February 2004.
5. As cited at <http://www.guggenheim.org/internetart/welcome.html>.
6. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) argue that a trace is a traditional type of map, where fixed points affirm objective and stable representations of visual facts. Mapping they argue is the process of creating new assemblages and opening traces.
7. <http://www.expectdelays.com/>, retrieved February 2004.

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