

# *Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community*

enter



Here am I.  
Standing before you  
Singular and solitary.

But don't let appearances fool you.

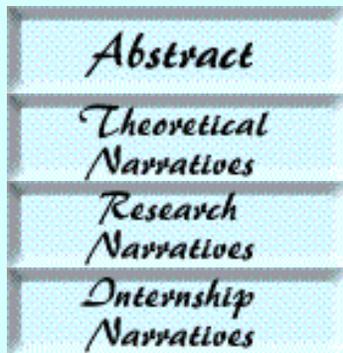
Each word from my mouth  
Each gesture  
is borne of others.

You see singularity  
But reality is in multiples.  
As we talk  
You enter this world.  
And I into another

Image & text source: Gergen, 1998 (<http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/kgergen1/part1.html>)



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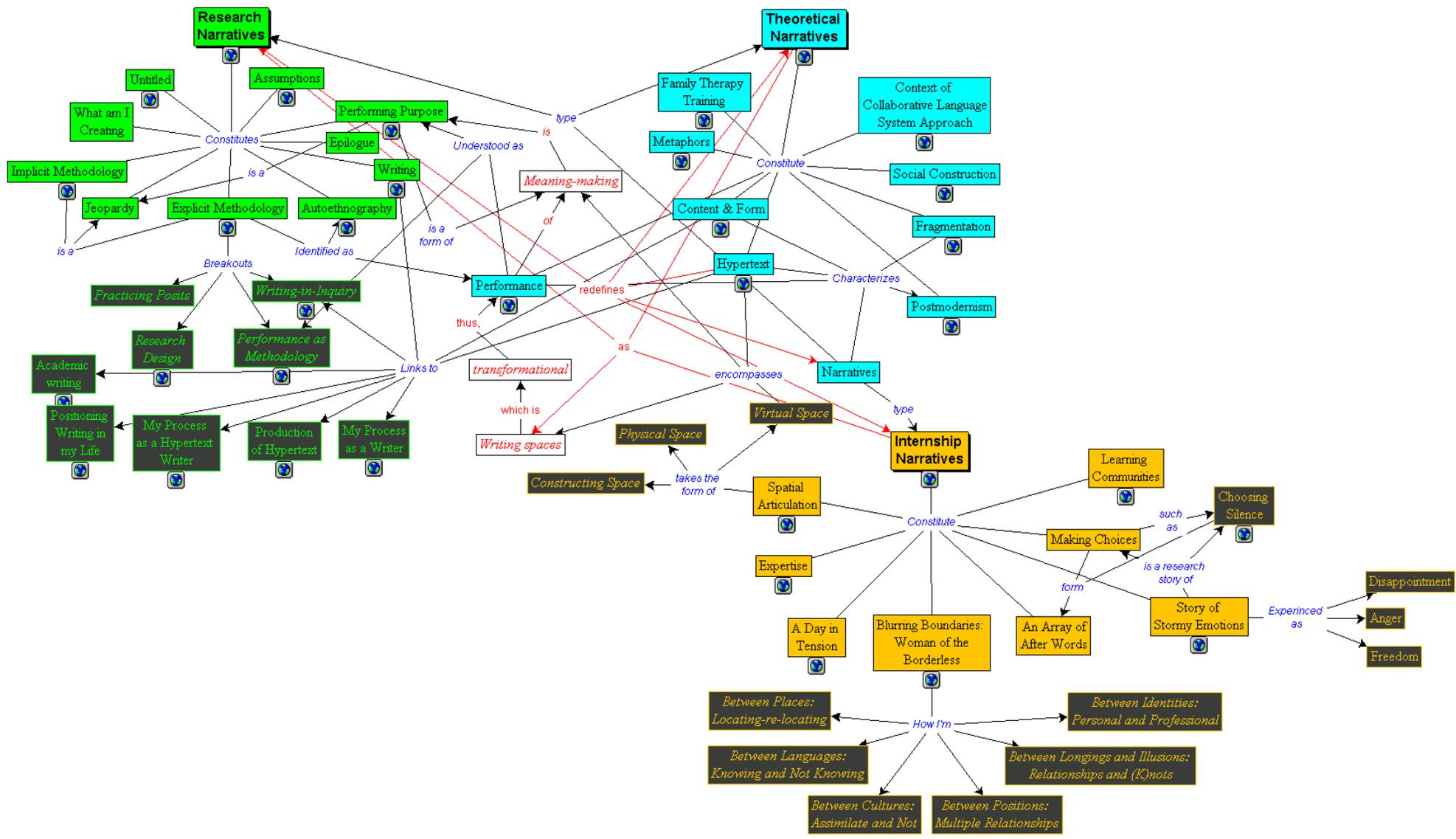


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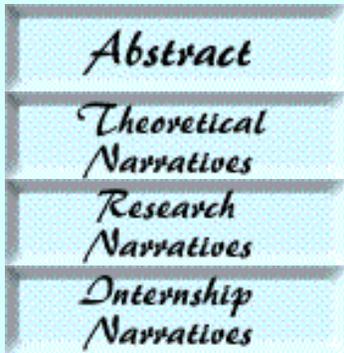
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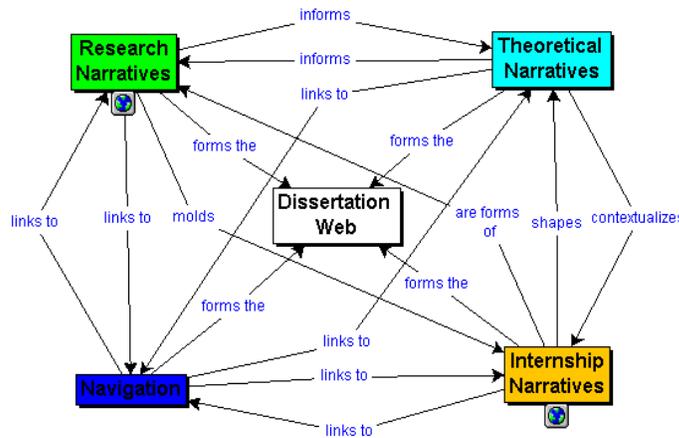


# GRAPHIC MAP INDEX

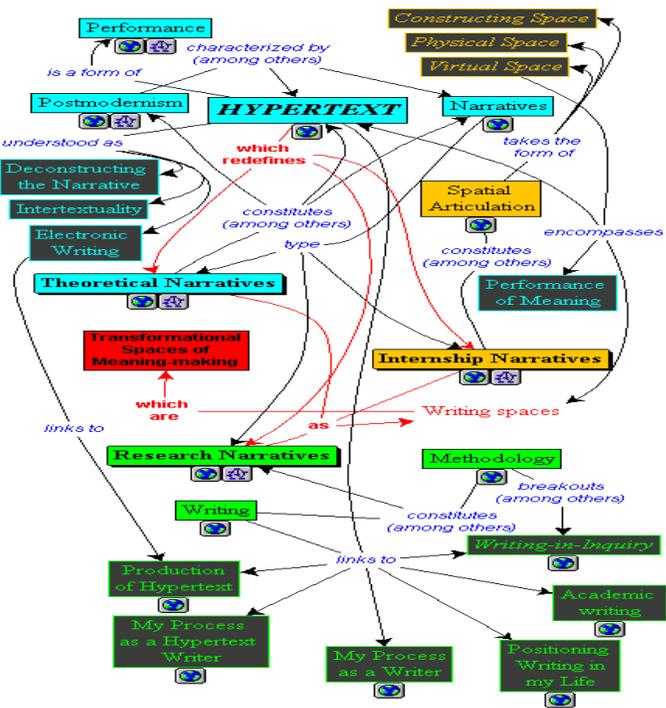
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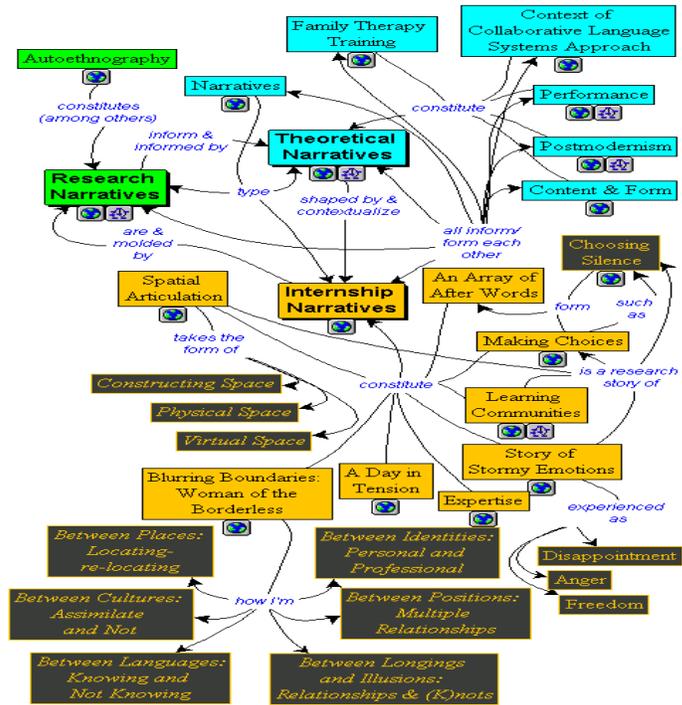
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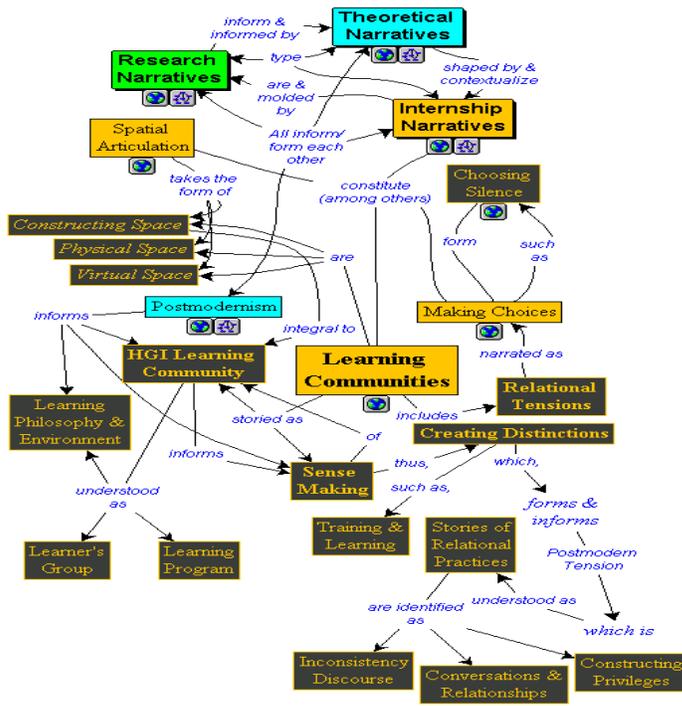
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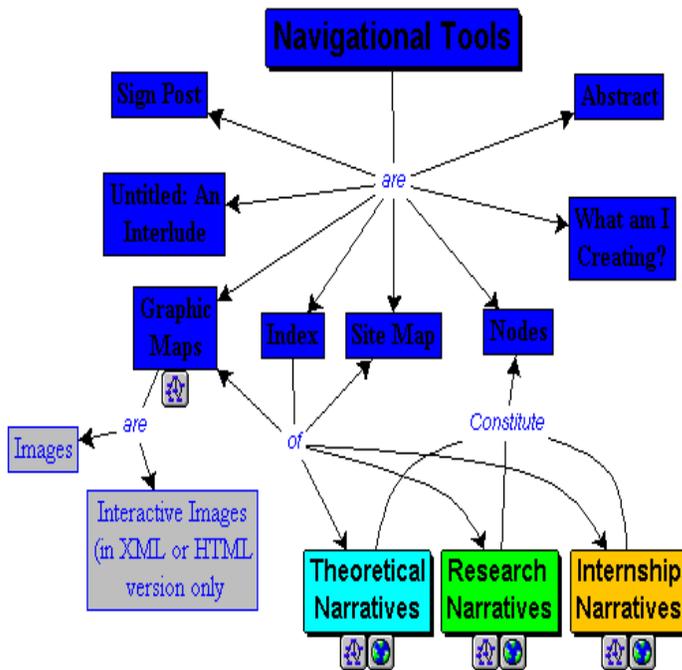
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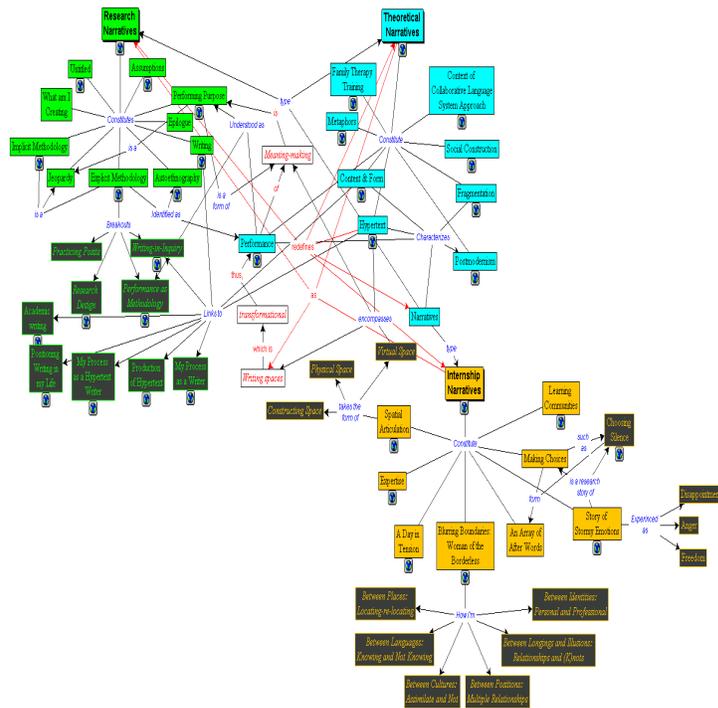
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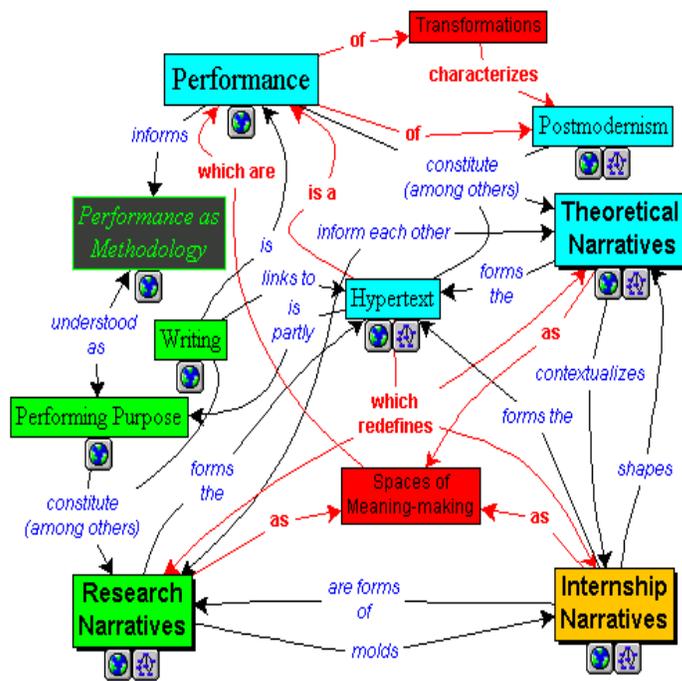
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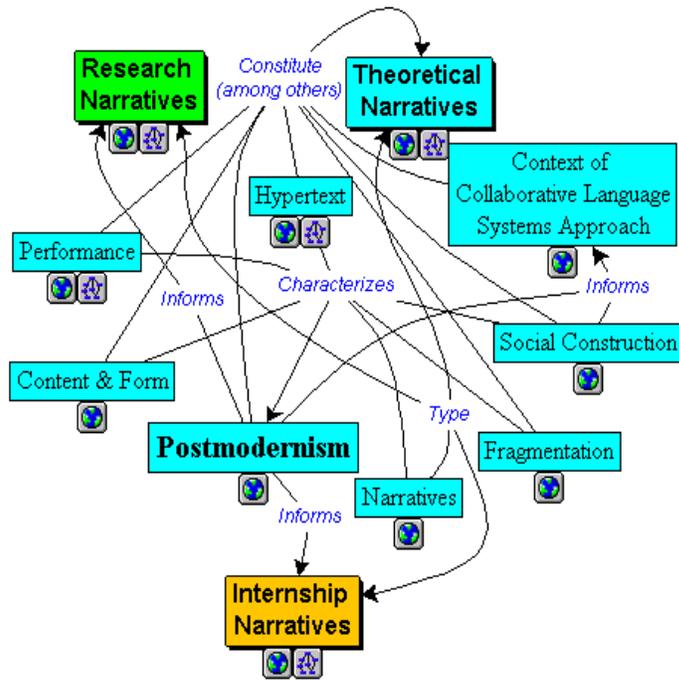
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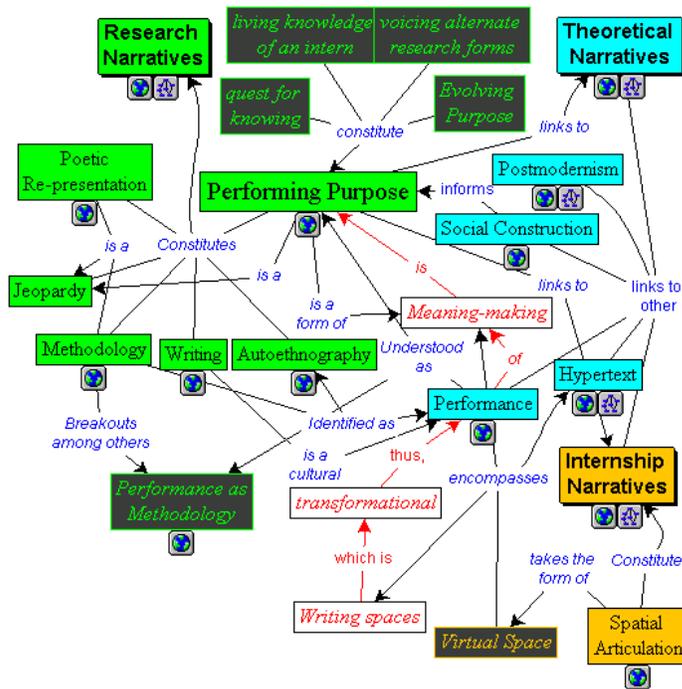
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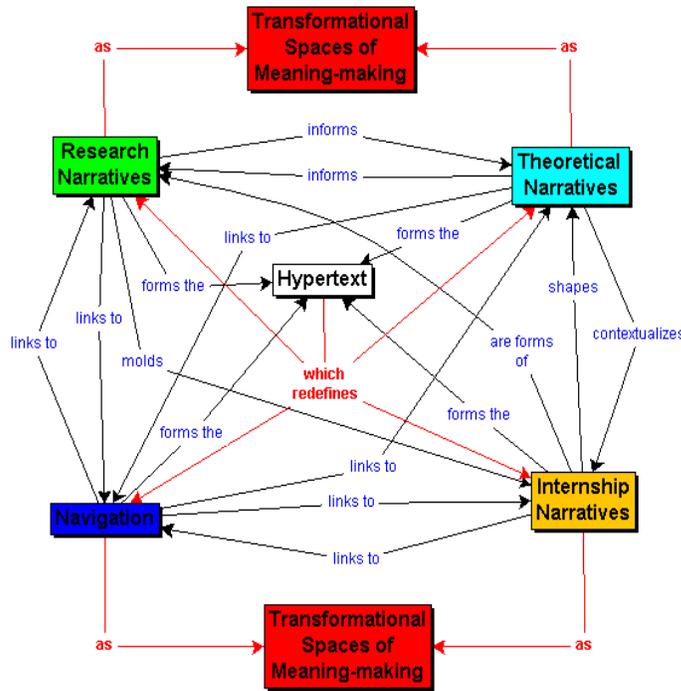
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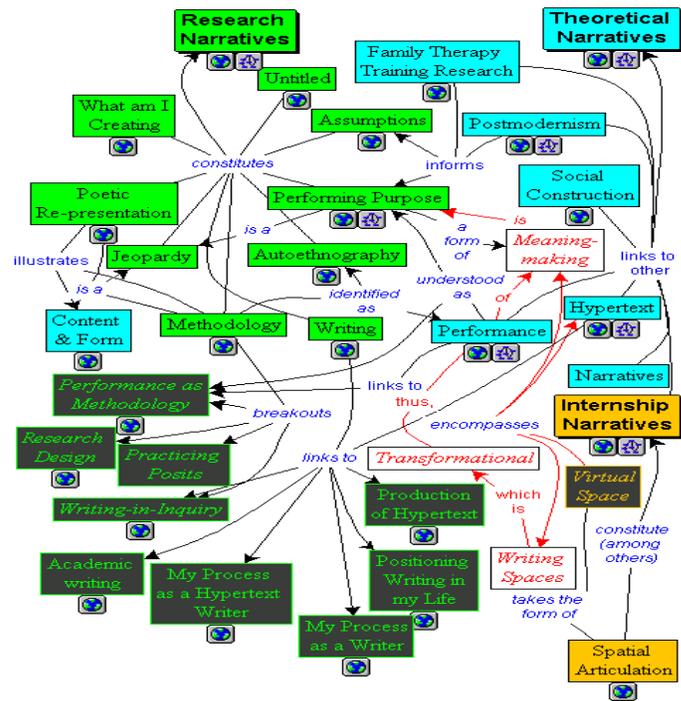
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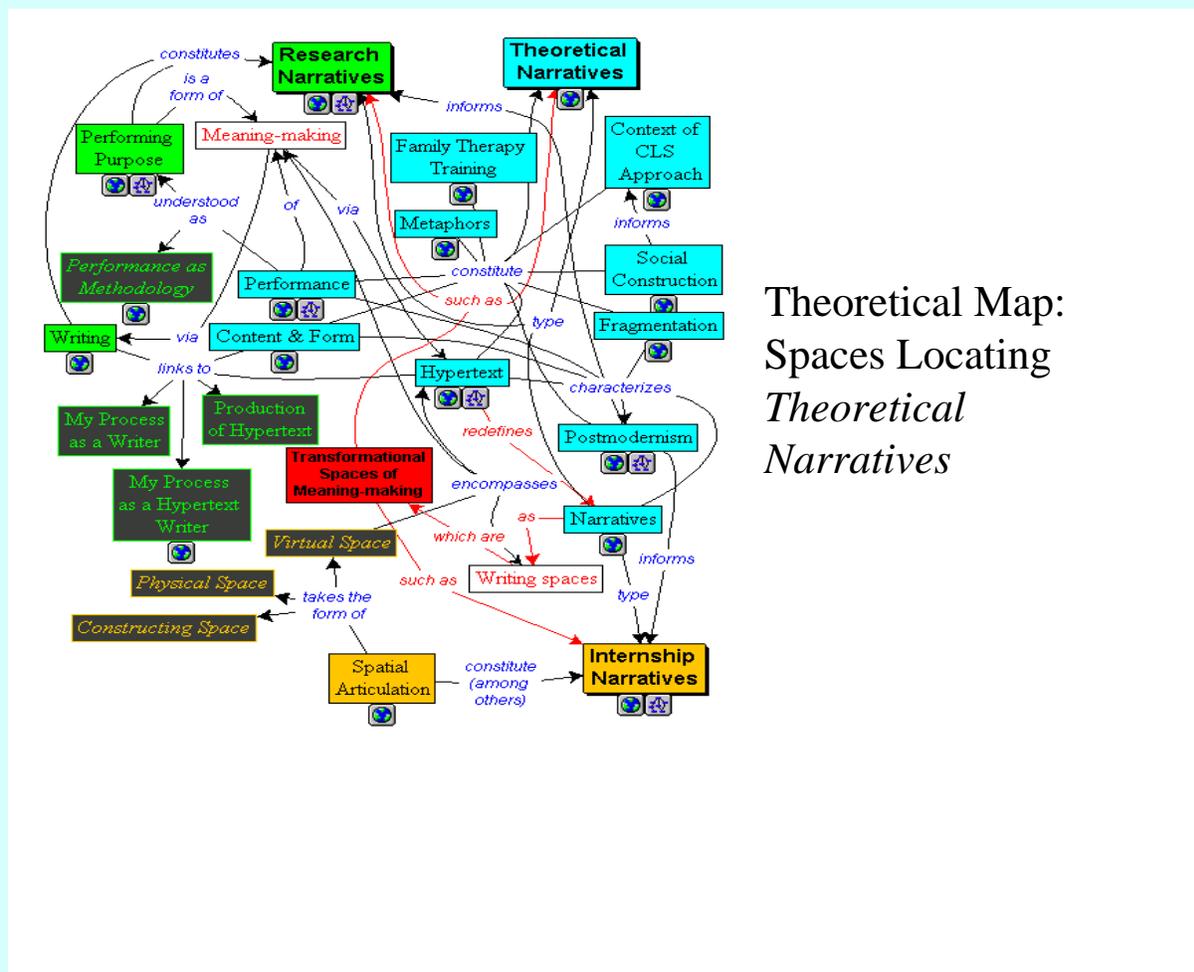
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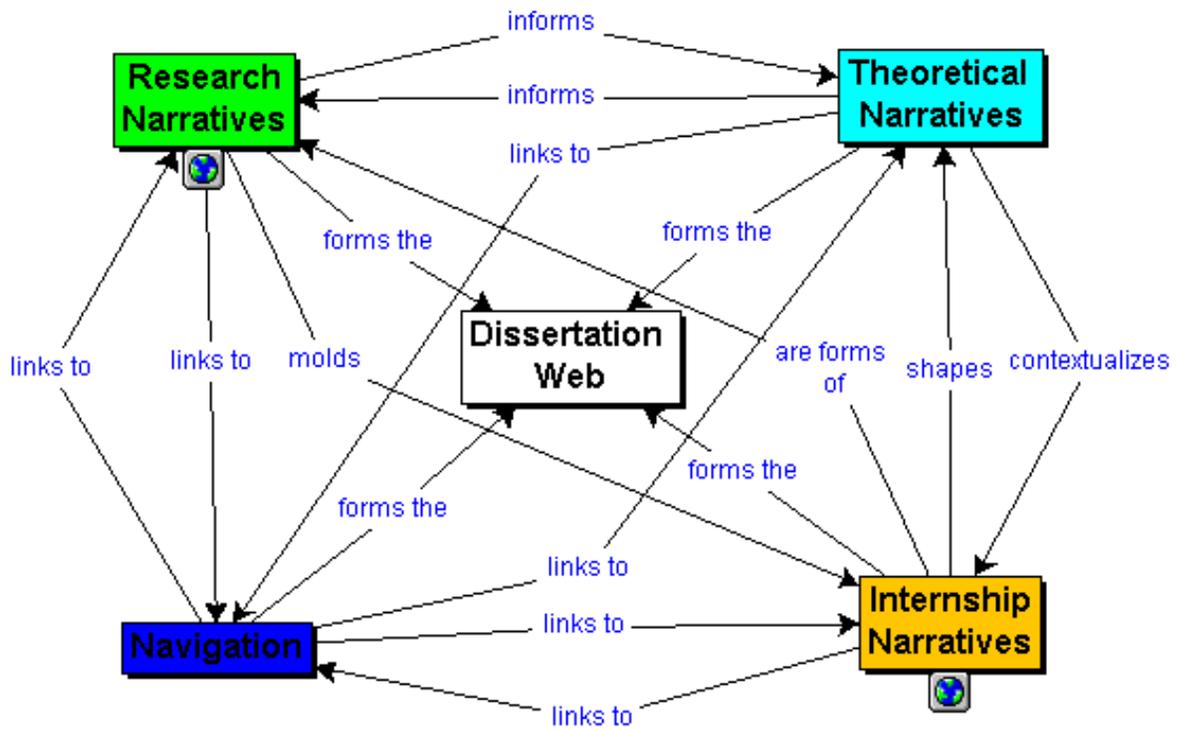
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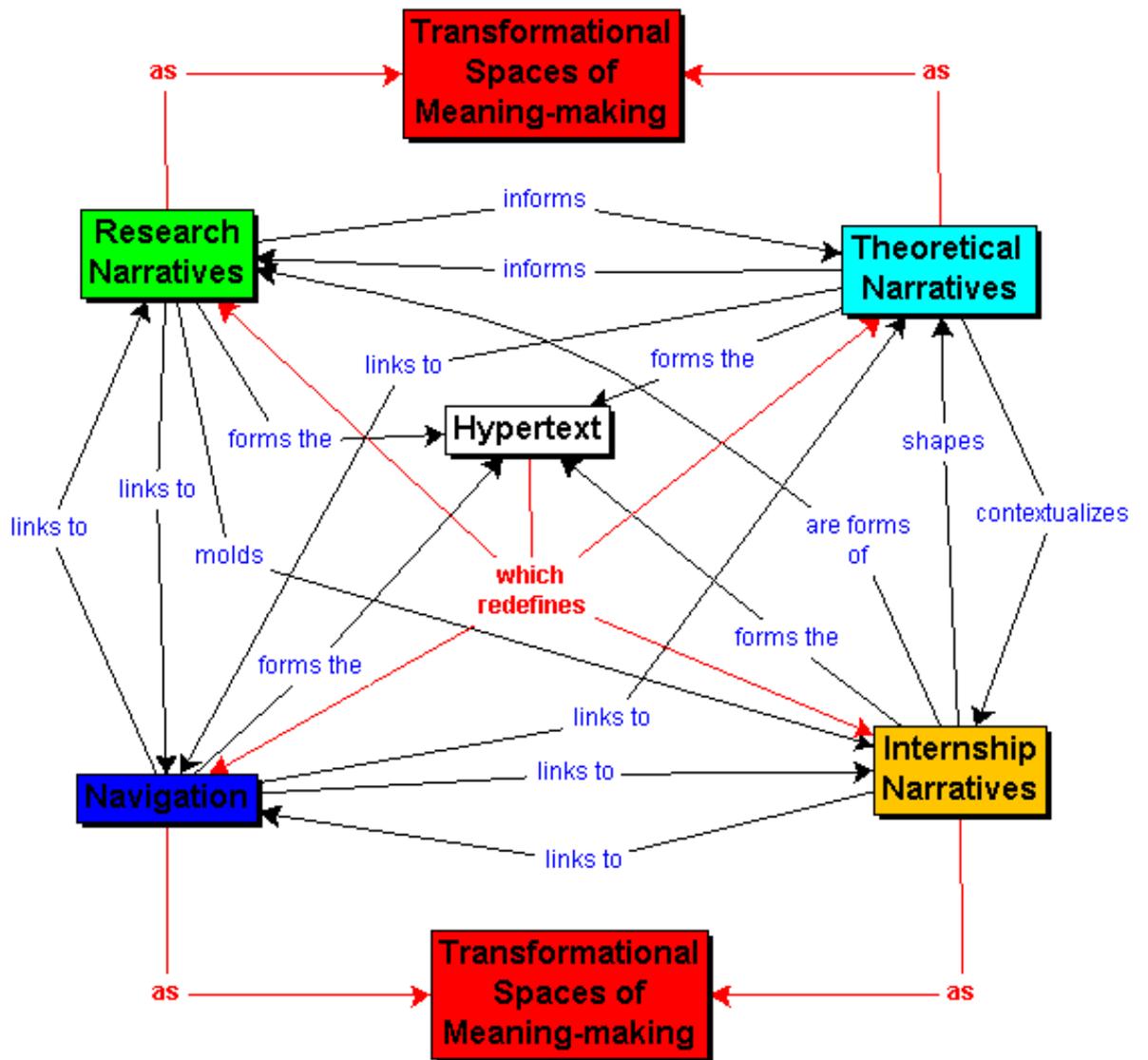
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...dissertation web  
as it transformed in the process of  
dialogue and construction...



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the 1st image for an  
overview of  
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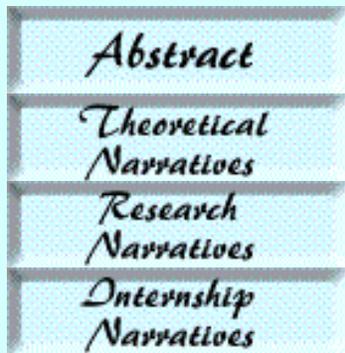
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## ABSTRACT

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I present the [dissertation web](#) as a montage of a postmodern inquiry of my doctoral internship and research experiences—concerns and jubilation—positioned within the discourses of [postmodern](#), dissertation, academia, experimentalism and cyberspace innovations among others. I create a [social constructionistic](#) interactive interplay, using [hypertext](#), among my various voices of an intern, a researcher and a [person](#).

In the dissertation web—my inquiry—I practice the characterization of postmodernism on numerous fronts—subject of study, context of study, methodology and re-presentation of the inquiry. Implicitly and explicitly, I articulate the various characterizations of postmodernism in my inquiry by challenging the traditional research practices ([metanarratives](#)). I challenge the traditional praxis by alternate [performances](#) of research practices such as studying myself in a cultural context of an internship using the methodology of [autoethnography](#) and performance.

The [hypertext](#) docuverse is a further characterization of postmodernism in the styles and structures that are used for re-presentation of the narratives. The styles of narration I use—such as words and graphics, prose and poetry, first person conversational texts, narratives and collages—blur the boundary of "academic" [writing](#), [literature](#), and [art](#).

The hypertext is intended as a [metaphorical](#) experiential,

intertextual journey of an [intern](#) and a [researcher](#). Rather than a fixed structure, I create numerous structures of possible structures to privilege the readers' [navigational](#) choices. I anticipate that the reader's choices in the virtual space might create a sense of meaning-transformation as one journeys through the dissertation web, thus, valuing [fragmentation](#) and connection as aspects of sense-making, which are contextualized (among others) by the reader's meaning frames and my hypertextual [performances](#).

The dissertation is submitted in three formats—exclusive dissertation web.pdf, intertextual dissertation web.pdf, and xml version. The *exclusive dissertation web.pdf* is a web capture in pdf format of all the "files" that compose the dissertation web created in html. The *intertextual dissertation web.pdf* is a web capture of my dissertation along with capture of the external web resources that contextualize my dissertation web, thus illustrating the intertextuality of hypertexts by making the dissertation part of the larger textual web.

Due to the web capture, the "docuverse" is nonlinear and the pages do not follow any particular or author predefined sequences. So, *please use the internal links or the bookmarks to read or browse the dissertation web* rather than scrolling from the first "page" to the last "page" of the pdf formatted docuverse. The third version in xml will be made available at a later date. An html version of the dissertation is available directly from the researcher-author.

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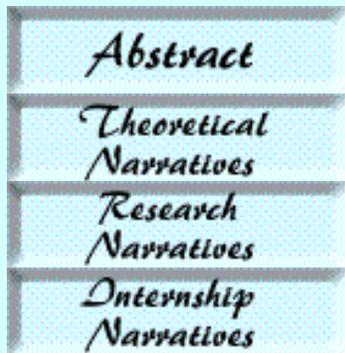
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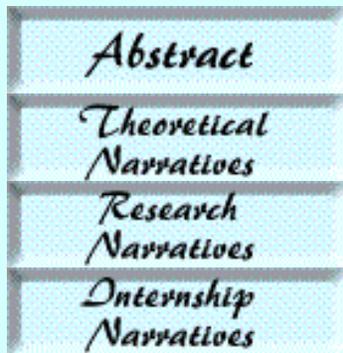
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*Abstract*

*Theoretical Narratives*

*Research Narratives*

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## CHOOSING SILENCE

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Often in the dissertation web I refer to *the conflict*, *the conflictual relationships*, or to *the relational tensions* but no where do I explain the nature of the conflict or the players involved for three reasons. First, in the "truest" sense of multiverse, I think the story of conflict and conflict management can have as many versions as there are story tellers, with no one story being more true than the others but each individual's story being most resonant for him or her. Second, I think it is unfair to all the players involved, to present only my version. Since in an ideal (non-conflictual) situation, I would have preferred to collect the other voices of the experience as multiple realities (or in traditional research language—"member check"). However, for my own emotional health, which I put ahead of the research, I choose not to contact other key players of the conflictual relationship. Thus, as a researcher I consider it unethical for the other players not to have a choice in their voice being included, if I was going to include my version of the story. Third, due to the uncertainty of the relational consequences that may arise from narrating only my version in the text. And rather than choosing in the interest of research I have chosen to focus politically, on the future relationships since I continue to work at the Institute.

However, with the above said I will attempt to give the following background with the focus on the process rather than on the content, as one (my) version, to help understand the context of my narratives.

## **A PROCESS NARRATIVE OF THE CONFLICT**

I entered my internship in the Fall of 1998 with expectations for clinical, supervisory, research and administrative experiences in a challenging, stimulating and supportive environment with no expectation of conflict. I did not anticipate any conflict because until that point in my life I took differences in a stride and had been able to "resolve" any strong interpersonal issues via conversation.

Seven weeks into my internship I found myself experiencing some "interpersonal stylistic differences." As time passed I redefined the "stylistic differences" as interpersonal conflicts because I found myself in knots and any efforts to have a conversation was like hitting a brick wall. I journaled about these conflicts as tension, differences, arguments, undercurrents, and showdown. The conflicts appeared to be among interns, between interns and faculty, and between interns and administration. I also experienced differences among faculty but I never labeled their differences as "tension" or "conflict." Though I later learned, that there were some strong differences among certain faculty members, especially about the Institute's administration of resolving the "conflicts." However, at the time of my internship I was unaware and unsure how it may have contributed to the "conflictual environment" that developed in the course of the 1998-1999 internship year. According to the oral tradition at the Institute, that particular internship year was an anomaly in the history of the Institute.

The various efforts to resolve the numerous conflicts were varied but till date I have no understanding of which effort lessened the tension and conflict and which effort feed the fire. The conflict resolution efforts that I was party to or aware of included encouraging the conflicting interns to resolve the issues among themselves, supervision, separation of conflicting interns in supervisions, faculty-intern meetings, availability of faculty as consultants that the interns could choose based on their comfort, discussions about bringing-in mediators, interns using the Clinical Dialogue as a "safe" space to talk (vent) about administrative

issues.

I experienced the efforts to resolve conflictual relationships as not being adequate either due to the underestimation of the extent and severity of the conflicts or/and help not coming in quick enough in addition to factors unknown to me. I also experienced a lot of blaming and finger pointing (including myself) which in retrospect is antithetical to the philosophy espoused at the Institute. At a personal level, I questioned the faculty's (except for those who were already involved in the conflict) involvement to take our initial "complaints" and "struggles" seriously. I felt hurt by some faculty members who informed me later that they had heard about the "difference" but had dismissed it as usual internship issues that challenge new members entering a community.

However, possibly due to the multi-layered nature of the conflicts, the various efforts seemed to hardly make much of an impact to change the situation though I did experience some very small differences. In fact some efforts, such as the faculty-intern meeting, seemed to drive in the wedge harder thus increasing the despair for some interns that any thing might change. However, it is hard to measure the impact the efforts made because I have no way of knowing how worse things could have been had it not been for the various efforts. **Did these and other unknown efforts help certain situations from hitting rock bottom?**

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## ABOUT SALIHA BAVA

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*About Saliha*

I am the associate director of Houston Galveston Institute and an adjunct faculty in the MS Psychology program at Our Lady of the Lake University-Houston. I received my Masters in Social work from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, India and PhD in Marriage and Family Therapy from Virginia Tech. My areas of interest include collaborative learning spaces and communities, internship experiences, performative-based practices, hypertext, autoethnography, and research methodologies.

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On 9/3/99 I came up with the following list as I reflected on my past year's internship training and assessed for myself what I would identify as my expertise as a therapist:

## EXPERTISE OF A FAMILY THERAPIST

1. Emphasis on the relationship and context
2. Strength based perspective
3. Experience with family process
4. A knowledge base or collection of ideas of multiple localized experiences
5. Developing a relational sense of Timing
6. Self-in-relations
7. Focused active listening skills
8. Genuine curiosity
9. Attempt at understanding (rather than explaining)
10. Skillfully creating dialogical space for multiple voices, including the not yet heard or spoken
11. Values and biases
12. Reflexivity
13. Public transparency
14. Degrees of uncertainty
15. Ability to see lighter side of life and to take life seriously at the same time
16. Juxtaposing paradoxes with awe, amazement, and respect
17. Respect for differences and similarities
18. Personal and professional ethical positioning

19. An ever growing understanding and passion for therapeutic, mental health, relationship, academic, research, and cultural discourses
20. Knowing when to ask for help

Not all of the above were new for me. I brought some with me before I started my internship at the Institute. Over time new areas developed and the older areas became stronger.



### ***Afterwords***

*So how did I come to be at this place of expertise at the end of a year of training at HGI? How much of this is attributable to my internship year? What did I already possess before I started out at the Institute?*

As of April 1999 I had reported lack of growth as a therapist to a number of people, supervisors and friends. The story I was living was that of lack of creativity and on the edge of depression. I had my apprehension of whether I had learnt anything new yet. One of my supervisors attempted to reframe my experience as maybe 'I had learned what not to do.' But the question I kept reiterating is 'why did my experience have to be so strained to learn what not to do.' *I believe that learning "what not to do" is defined as doing no harm, which is highly valued. My experience of learning what not to do however, appeared as a non-lesson since my expectation as a trainee was to learn what to do.*



### **Reflections 10/1/00**

Nearly, a year and a month later as I reflect on the above list I ask myself the meaning of each of these terms. I can probably come up with stories for nearly each of the items on the list. *But is the storied meaning the same as the meaning I attributed to them nearly a year back?* I am also struck by the definitive tone in my

list. Or am I attributing the tone? The claim of the above list as my expertise has a ring of finality to it. The word "expertise" leaves no room for knowing where I am in relation to these areas in my growth.

I look, read and question/reflect "what is focused active listening skills?" "I am still learning 11, it varies with each context." How does one come to a place of expertise with "values and biases?" What did I mean by "reflexivity?" Which one of these will I still consider as an area of expertise today?

I have to admit that the list looks impressive. If nothing else, over the last two years that I have been at the Institute, I have learned some of the vocabulary of the Institute's knowledge community. In learning the language I am creating different narratives of my lived experiences as a person with multitude of [evanescent selves](#).

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Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community



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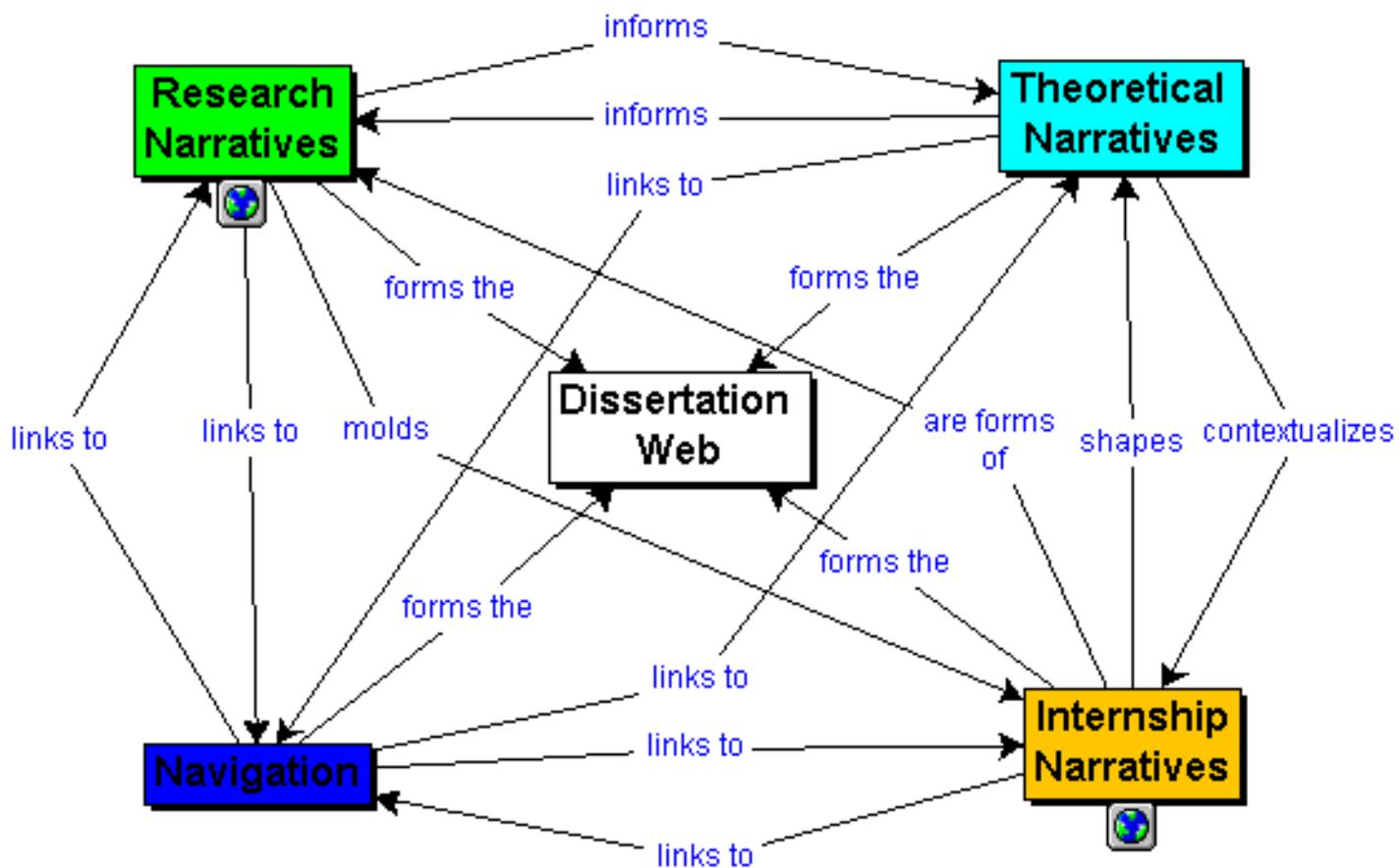
Spatial  
Articulation



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The dissertation web, a hypertext located within multiple discourses, is an intertextual script, a rendition, of my internship (1998-1999) and research experiences (1998-2001).

## SIGN POST



[FONT](#)

[FORMATS](#)

[HINTS](#)

[ICONS](#)

[TONE](#)

[WHAT DO I DO?](#)

[MAPS](#)

### FONT

I use font style and color as practice strategies to denote temporal location, decentering text, reflexivity and analysis or a combination as indicated below:

Green or Pink

Block quotes from the journal entries of my internship experiences from 1998-1999

Red & blue or Red & Black

I juxtapose two texts as a way of representing multiverse conversations to contrast dialogues in time, space, or content. (Sample 1-[Learning Communities](#), Sample 2-[Firebrand](#))

Purple

Text that "legitimize" my preferred discourses

*Italics*

A reflexive narrative or an afterwords, if its is more than a phrase or two

## Links

Are words or phrases which will take you to different lexia or text. To return back to the previous text click the "back" button of your browser

## **Bold**

Words, phrases or sentences in bold represents a practice of reflexivity and analyses which draws on Sociologist Joseph Schneider's mode of questioning textual authority

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All of the above practices also serve the function of decentering the text, by seeking the reader's attention to them away from the content they might be reading. In addition to the above described specific practices, I have also used color to re-present varying meaning which are explained in each section/textual space to which the practice is isolated.



## **ICONS**

All the following icons were produced by me to graphically and consistently orient you as described below:



Clicking on the icon will aid you to graphically locate the dissertation web



Clicking on the icon will take you to an interactive map of the image under which it is placed. Accessible only in HTML & XML formats



Clicking on the icon will take you to an information portal about the writer



Indicates a transition between content



Clicking on the icon will take you to the top of the textual frame that you are currently viewing



## MAPS

Maps provide a graphic language for locating the various textual spaces or sections within the dissertation web. They may be viewed as intertextual spaces of meaning-generation.

The links between the textual spaces re-present one of many possible conceptual links and may not be a dissertation web hyperlink. Not all conceptual links are mapped and the links between textual spaces/sections may vary from one graphic map to another (consisting of same sections) in order to uniquely locate a section in that particular intertextual space.

There are two types of maps: Graphic and interactive maps. The graphic is an image while the interactive map (functional only in XML and HTML formats) has tiny icons which will take you to another interactive map or a hypertext associated with the textual space it re-presents.

### *Maps Used As*

1. A compass to locate the section or textual space you are visiting.
2. A tool or another language to add to the sense-making of the dissertation web rather than to represent the textual space within

the dissertation web.

3. The author's reflections of the intertextual spaces and meaning-generation.

### *Map Legend*

Are virtual spaces constituted by text (or multimedia) and are colored coded (for easy identification rather than conceptually) as follows:

**Text**

	Identified as Spaces for Theoretical Narratives
	Identified as Spaces for Research Narratives
	Identified as Spaces for Internship Narratives

**Icon**

Clicking on the icon with a globe will take you to the textual spaces of the respective links

Clicking on the icon with a network will take you to an interactive map of the respective links

*Blue italicized  
fonts*

Are semi-bridges that explain the connection between the linked textual spaces

**Red font and links**

---

Are indicative of reflective and transformative positions

The maps were color coded to make it visually appealing at the risk of creating distinctions among the various narratives, which was not my intent.



## **HINTS FOR THE W(E)ARY TRAVELER**

The intent is for the reader to choose his or her path. The reader/writer can [enter](#) and [exist](#) the dissertation anywhere. Since my committee advised me to give some guide to the travelers, I added the ensuing text. Listed below are suggestions of the multiple ways by which one may choose to journey within the [dissertation web](#):

1. Let your curiosity lead you and thus, click on a [link](#) as your interest is piqued. Sometimes, the linked section may introduce an abrupt shift in content but the process of meaning-making may be closer to my experience of meaning-making of my internship and research experiences.
2. Use the site-map as a "linear" navigational tool and read the listed sections from bottom to top or vice-versa. Please note that the sections are not necessarily listed in any linear sense-making fashion.
3. Choose one of the spaces- [theoretical](#), [research](#), or [internship](#) narratives and read all the sections and then move to the next.
4. For fun: pre-select three sections you are going to read and do not allow yourself to be seduced by the links. Stick to your

selections! And then back-track to see if you did stick to your selected path.

5. You might combine the above or create your own list of possible pathways.

6. Use [navigational](#) tools.

7. Use the [Graphic maps](#) to locate yourself.

8. Use the back button on your browser to retrace your steps.



## WHAT DO I DO?

If you land in a textual space and are not sure how to move out off that space try the following:

1. Move your cursor or pointer all over the page until the pointer changes to a pointing finger and then click the left button of your mouse.

2. Click on any blue underlined text that indicates a link. (Blue is the most common default color for links unless you have changed your default browser properties. If you have gotten this far then these hints are redundant for you, skip this section!)

3. If you are on a page as illustrated below then click on any of the navigational tools.

4. Or you can always click the "Back" button of your browser to retrace your steps.

5. PDF users: Be warned! that the bookmarks do not indicate any particular linear narrative. Since pdf is structured like a book, it inherently structures the files as pages giving the dissertation web a linear look, which was not my intent.



## FORMATS

exclusive_diss_web.pdf	All of the dissertation files converted to PDF using web capture.
intertextual_diss_web.pdf	All of the dissertation files and external web links converted to PDF using web capture
html	Available from the writer only
xml	Writer was still working with the tech team when this version was uploaded for final submission to the University



**FINAL WORDS:  
HAVE FUN**

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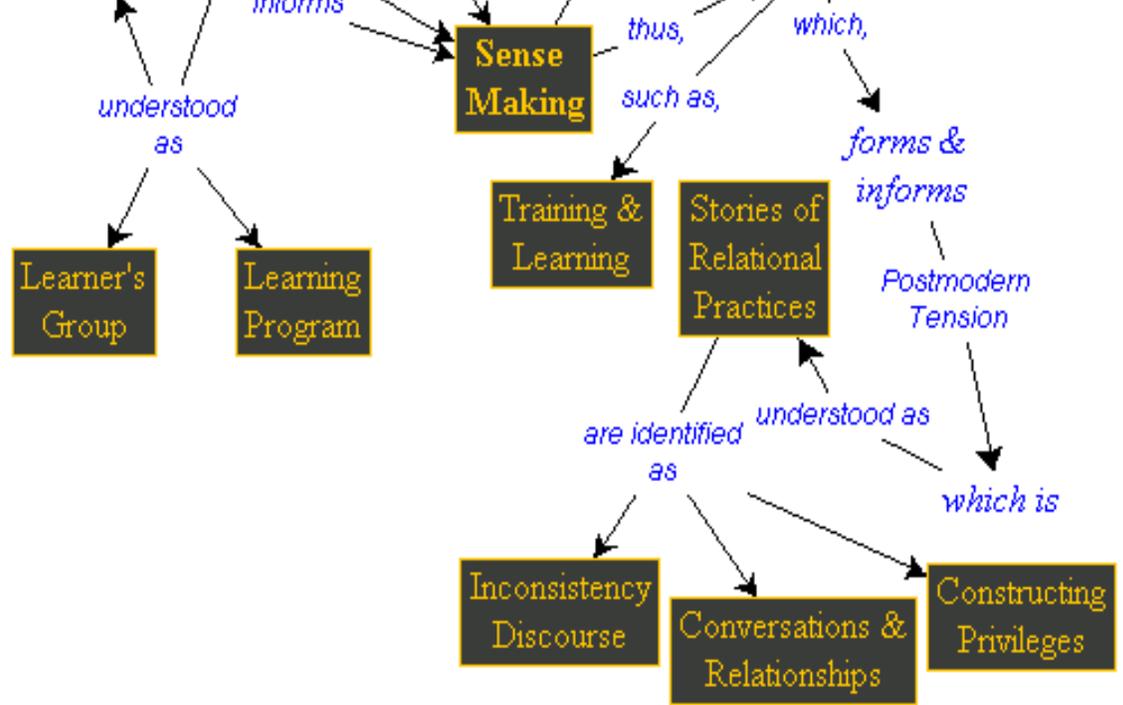
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**Map: Graphic Location of *Constructing Learning Communities* within the Dissertation Web**



Click for an interactive map



## *The Institute: A Learning Community*

### **Learners' Group**

The learners' group in 1998-1999 consisted of six women and one man. Two were master level interns (Supervised Clinical Associates) working towards the completion of their licensing requirements. Two women, in their masters program, were working towards the completion of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) internship requirement. The other three- a married couple and myself-comprised the doctoral level interns. All the three doctoral interns, younger in age than the other four learners, were legally non-resident aliens in the United States. The couple was European, and the others were American. Five of the learners were Caucasian. One of the women learner's family-of-origin was from middle-east and she was the only first generation American in her family. The age range of the learners' group was 29-50 years. I am an Asian Indian single woman in my early thirties.

The two supervised Clinical Associates had started their second year at the Institute when I started in 1998. They both had completed their master level internship the previous year. The masters' intern had started their internship in July/August 1998. I started my internship in September 1998 and the Doctoral intern couple started in November 1998. There was an expectation that as the learners joined the community the older members would welcome, guide and support them.



## **Learning Program**

The Masters level interns were required to attend the community activities three days a week and the doctoral interns attended five days a week. The supervised clinical associates had individualized learning contracts with the Institute.

The community activities for the interns consisted of a mix of structures-formal and informal. The formally structured programs consisted of four activities: Clinical Dialogue, Theoretical Seminar, Children's Protective Service team meetings, and supervision. The informally structured programs were comprised of the client contact, video watching, clinical work with faculty, consultation, report writing, projects, need based meetings, reading time, intern conversations, and assigned responsibilities for doctoral interns. In addition, the doctoral interns had the opportunity to work with MS Psychology Practicum teams from Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU), Houston Program. The Institute was the practicum site for the OLLU students and a number of Institute faculties were adjunct OLLU faculty.

*Clinical Dialogue:* This was a program designed to provide intensive clinical training in the collaborative approach to therapy. All the learners and other professionals from the community would meet on Tuesdays from 9:00 to 11:30am. My understanding was that we would see clients in a reflecting team (Andersen, 1990; Anderson,

1997). Six faculty members over the course of nine months led the clinical dialogue. The learners along with the faculty members developed the agenda for the Dialogue. As the meetings continued the faculty member would check in to the group's need and accordingly "structure" the program.

*Theoretical Seminar:* A tradition of the Institute, a select group consisting of faculty members, learners, and few invitees met alternate Thursdays for one and half hours. As compared to the Clinical Dialogue this was a closed group. Though visitors were invited to the Seminar, but it did not extend into the larger community. My understanding was that this Seminar provided for the cross-fertilization of ideas and the group members would suggest new readings that would be distributed and read in the subsequent meetings.

*CPS Team Meetings:* The Institute has a contract with Child Protective Services (CPS) for clinical services. The CPS team in 1998-1999 consisted of the interns and six associates. The team would meet after the Theoretical Seminar on every other Thursday for one hour. The meeting served staffing and administrative purposes. However, since the time was not sufficient to cover case and administrative discussion, the team leader proposed moving the meeting time to Wednesday every week.

*Supervision:* Each learner had been assigned a supervisor with the understanding that half way through our training the supervisors will be rotated to enhance our interactions with the various faculty members. The doctoral interns were assigned master-level interns for supervision. Co-supervision was encouraged for supervisors-in-training as a way of learning from each other. The supervisors-in-training also attended the Supervisors' Seminar that was offered once a month by Harlene Anderson.



The emphasis of the learning community has been on collaborative scholarship. Tarule (1996) adopts a feminist pedagogical discourse to define collaborative learning in an academic setting. She identifies the agenda of collaborative learning as "experimenting with and examining new ways to construct classrooms as discourse and interpretive communities, inviting students and teachers to engage in what educational theorist Paulo Freire (Freire & Macedo, 1995) has called dialogical meaning making." Anderson (1999) identifies collaborative learning communities by emphasizing the 3Cs-connection, collaboration, and construction. I have experienced the efforts to practice the 3cs in the OLLU program for the students but not as much among the Institute faculties. The 3cs are being implemented through the practice of pods, mentorship program and student associations in the OLLU program. However, one may find it hard to identify Institute "programs" that may be vehicles for the 3Cs. The Institute's emphasis on focusing the training programs from Tuesday through Thursday might be viewed as building a learner's community which could be interpreted as efforts to connect. However, as the OLLU program grows, its training "model" appears to crystallize but the Institute's training model appears to get nebulous. *I wonder if that is in keeping with the multiple voices? Or is it because the Institute is transitioning since Harry Goolishian's death in 1991? Or is it a transition because of leadership change that started in 1996?*

The therapist and client (therapy system) are back in the therapy room, not as master technicians or cybernetic automats, but as humans with history and beliefs, with agency and intention. The concepts of dialogue and narrative are describing a therapy that permits a collaborative

We steered away from a private practice model because we believed that the "private ownership of clients" isolated therapists into their own separate practices, placed a focus on maximizing income, minimized colleague interaction,

working 'with' each other rather than 'us' working 'on' them. " (Anderson, 1990).

[Substitute supervisor and supervisee for therapist and client respectively]

and lessened (or prevented) the open flow of information. This model has largely contributed to our ability to provide quality training and a high degree of flexibility in our clinical work. We could afford the luxury of spending several hours on a different case. We had the freedom to focus on developing methods for therapy without the concern, or the necessity, of maintaining individual clinical incomes (Anderson et al, 1986).

My experience has been different. The training model of 1999-2000 was different from the above description. I can now (after two years) assume a certain model. In 1998-1999 however, for varied reasons I had a hard time to fathom the training model. All I could figure was it was some postmodern training model that was not well articulated and lacked consensual understanding among the members of the community at the Institute. I experienced this in the way the participation of the faculty members with the intern community was limited to learner initiated or a formalized activity. In my own case I had couple of members take particular interest in me and I felt they were available to me. However, I have had fellow interns' report about their sense of a low level of faculty involvement and the dearth

of faculty interest in the learning community. I saw and experienced how inconsistently some of the faculty members attended theoretical seminars and faculty-intern meeting. Some faculty members were more apt to attend regularly than others were. This phenomenon can be explained in a number of ways. Personal and historical conditions create different contexts for learning communities which are in the business of knowledge production (Harding, 1996). The uniqueness of each faculty members' situation is important to understand each one's involvement or the lack thereof. However, for this text it will suffice to say that since each faculty has differing commitments, which vary every year and that probably the interns are unaware off this situation. I however, had the privileged position of being a doctoral intern who had more contact with faculty due to my responsibilities and the amount of time I spent at the Institute. Also my supervision was structured to rotate among faculty members as opposed to the master level interns who were supervised by me which further limited their contact with faculty. (I have been in conversations where such comments were voiced as, "Harry was the patriarch who kept peace and had the ability to maintain cohesiveness" and "now friendship" is the basis for "connection." We have "never been so diverse.")

Today, I observe that each faculty member is practicing from the private practice model. The faculty does not receive any salary but a small stipend from the Institute. The extent of faculty involvement is varied. Six faculty members were involved in the clinical training program titled "Clinical Dialogue" which met over 30 weeks for two and half hours once a week. At any given time three faculty members were involved in the supervision of the interns. For the last three months of the internship, once a month the faculty and interns met for lunch or to trouble shoot but the attendance was rather sparse both among the interns and faculty. Every other Thursday, the group-faculty, trainees and guests met for an hour and half for a theoretical discussion of selected readings. In spite of these number of meetings there was a sense of a lack of a community or coming together of learners. There was a sense of fragmentation both internal to the intern group and the faculty group. Fragmentation of groups that

fosters curiosity and growth is rather different from that which creates stress and absenteeism or dropout. Unfortunately, in 1998-1999, fragmentation within the intern group and the interpersonal tensions among the members led to the latter. However, since then my experience has been vastly different in the experience of connection. *Is the difference in my experience a function of time and crystallizing of relationships?* And I was also given to understand that my internship period was an anomaly in terms of the [interpersonal tensions](#).

*Surveying Faculty:* With growing demands of managed care, financial subsistence becomes a crucial issue for each faculty along with affiliation to the Institute. For some, the affiliation is a way "to hang out with like-minded thinkers", "it's belonging to a community", "a place to share common ideas" and "to hear and develop new ideas." I wonder what about the prestige one may feel as a result of the association. In a confidential survey conducted in 1999 by the Institute, the faculty responded to the question "What opportunities have come to you from being on the faculty?" The varied responses were "invitation to co-write with Harlene & publish, invitation to teach at OLLU", "working with great, bright people. Intellectual stimulation. Connection with OLLU, exposure to (unclear). Awareness to international conferences. Meeting 'big names' in our field", "presenting at TAMFT and encouragement to write" "attending seminars, enjoy the company", "relationships, writing, OLLU."

In numerous conversations with other interns, there is a sense that the Institute faculty is focusing more of their energies on OLLU. As a supervisor and fellow intern, I have heard from my intern-colleagues that they barely experienced much interaction with the Institute faculty other than the formal structured experiences and the individual efforts initiated by them towards the faculty. *So is OLLU a subversive effort of HGI to stay alive? Is the experience of the interns indicative of a shift of the model of HGI in response to managed care and the need for one's own financial and familial responsibility? Or is it an issue of appreciation measured in terms of*

*economics? Or is this a lesson in learner's expectation of training?*



## ***Sense Making: Creating Distinctions***

### **Training and Learning**

Keeney describing patterns of distinction in his book *Aesthetics of Change* asserts that "language is an epistemological knife. It slices the world into bits and pieces, provides names, names of names, and names of names of names" (1983, p.110). Similarly, one can create certain patterns of distinction at the Institute. But as Keeney emphasizes, that the meaning of terms, that is, the descriptors are not separate from the describer. In this textual zone I draw attention to the distinction of training and learning. In a research audit I wrote:

I call it training, but I come from the positioning of learning. The way the Institute is currently set up, it models itself on the training model. So it is set up to impart knowledge. However, the philosophy is that of learning communities as espoused by Anderson. But is this the position adopted by other faculty members? As part of the social construction belief one could assume the co-construction of knowledge. But as Bruffee points out, it is very risky coming to a group of learners and saying 'so we are going to learn together.' It's a different way of "teaching" but it is teaching no less.

So it becomes important to have a training philosophy which makes public the learning assumptions. There is much of an oral discourse where the trainees/learners are encouraged to take the initiative to approach the faculty. From reported accounts [by fellow interns] I presume that this is tough for most new learners whom I have encountered in my two years at the Institute. Most learners coming from a collaborative stance are expecting

it to be a two-way street where the learners sit together and co-plan the learning. But what if the learners want to explore outside the parameters of the faculty/Institute's agenda? How are such collaborations managed? It becomes essential to talk about the different needs and expectations of the learners. For instance, I think there were different expectations of the doctoral and master level interns. The only explicit practice that reflected this was the number of hours each level intern puts in and that the doctoral intern supervises master level interns if she wants to make it part of her learning. However, there was not much other articulation of this in the process of talking about expectations. However, there were a number of other practices which implicitly denoted a difference in the expectations. Even though I asked, almost all my supervisors when we had our discussions about expectations "what are your expectations of me?" Almost never was there a mention that we would like you to practice only "our ideas." But the master level students come in for training and the practice of master level internship is set within the larger discourse of academic training for marriage and family therapy and psychology training. Such a discourse requires that students do an internship after they have had a certain level of course work which includes practicum, after may be one year of classroom interaction. So such students are probably coming with a mind set that 'I will be taught about social construction or the practice of social construction.' The students have been primed about the various orientations and expectation of the internship site. So walking in the students realize that "I will have to do what "they" expect of me." But what happens when you walk in and the expectations are:

Trainer: What do you want to learn? We don't teach but we learn together but we do so from a particular framework?

Trainee: (talking to self) How am I to learn this framework if you don't teach?

Trainer: Well you will learn it in practice.

What happens when the practice philosophy is in transition?

Trainee1: (reflecting with self and other) Well some say that there are "skill sets" and some say there are no "skill sets" and they say they don't teach but they are teaching me this. Or am I learning?

Trainee2: Does it make a difference whether I'm learning or they are teaching me? All that matters is that I know what to do to help the client.

Trainee3: I know with their experience they have a lot to impart and I want to learn all that they know. So how can I "soak" up their learnings? I want to be a sponge.

Self: (a reflective trainee, training to be a trainer, talking to self) So how do I create a learning environment where the student wants to be a sponge as her learning agenda and collaborate with the student's expectation and honor my practice of not being positioned as the expert? Maybe I can share this with her!

Center stage:

Self: (as a trainer) Hum I'm wondering ... I want to respect what you were hoping to get from being at HGI. And also how to create a way of meeting your agenda within the parameters of the Institute's philosophy (no that is a totalizing discourse). No, rather let me say within the parameters of my ideas of teaching and learning.

After a pause...

Self: So, if I may offer (realizing that by the very nature of institutional positioning of myself as a supervisor I'm not "just offering" but would probably be received as an influential suggestion) (waits to check for cues and proceeds) lets talk about how we can create this environment.

*The dialogues continue as contextualized by the various conversational partners' ("trainers" and "trainees") expectations and definitions of training and learning.*

I want to invite and encourage participants to take responsibility for and to be the architects of their own learning. To these ends, I want to ensure that each participant has a voice, contributes, questions, explores, is uncertain, and experiments.  
(Anderson, 1999)

One observes the use of the metaphor from architecture; the learner is directly referred to as an "architect" of one's own learning. However, even though the learner has the freedom/"space" to *construct* one's own learning, but there are certain parameters within which this might happen, as defined by "voice, contributes, questions, explores, is uncertain and experiments." What happens when a learner's model differs from the parameters of the Anderson's collaborative learning community model?

On November 4, 1998 I had noted "(t)here are times when you

[sic]want the Institute to reach out to you rather than you reaching out to them all the time." I had journaled this in reference to a supervision session of master level supervisees. After supervision we had shifted our conversation and were talking as fellow interns. One of the interns felt that the "key" faculty members had not checked in with her after a critical incident from the evening before. We discussed about "shared responsibility." The question raised was "what about the Institute's responsibility towards the intern?" Even though I was their supervisor, the interns felt the need for more interactions from the faculty. In the conversation I felt I was defending the Institute, however, I was able to say "I didn't want to be the Institute's voice, though I feel I may be sounding so." I was practicing being *public* (Anderson, 1997) as a supervisor and fellow intern. I left the conversation wondering "how do you balance that (Institute meeting the learner's expectations) with promoting (interns') self agency?" By the beginning of the third month of my internship I was discussing with my supervisor "the lack of congruency between what I experienced as the philosophy and my experience as an intern." There was one faculty member who I had found I was connecting with but the other interns did not have a similar experience and they had been there a month longer. By then numerous of our intern conversations had hinted at or focused on how the "human element (was) missing outside the therapy room." A week later I journaled "I need a holding environment, somewhere where I can be this confused self & know that I am not being judged & where I can go anywhere I choose to go." And I knew with whom that could be so because I had journaled "I think I have a pretty good sense of who to seek out to make what I need to happen."

**So what kind of a learning environment are we constructing when we language distinctions such as learners and trainers, interns and faculty? How do we get out of the language trap? Or would the practice of reflexivity entrap (or un-trap) the reality-in-language?**

In my experiences, approach from a postmodern stance at the Institute did not mean that all practices were acceptable. Certain

practices were common and privileged than others. However, the tension of postmodernism is that there is no way of knowing if my experienced practices are **the** "Institute's" practice? Another tension is the label "Institute's practice." Such a label is a construct which carries the potential of a metanarrative that takes away from the momentary interaction between individuals-in-relationship. I thus, approach my tensions as stories of [relational practices](#).



## *Stories of Relational Practices*

### **Inconsistency Discourse**

For two years I have heard phrases like "inconsistency," "lack of structure," "paradoxical" ... "hypocritical" (last being more of a whisper). I have engaged in talks that centered around/on, what I have labeled as, *inconsistency*. What was this "inconsistency?" Often "inconsistency" was expressed as having or experiencing the relationship (practicing the kind of relationship) that is different from the relationship that is dialogued about in written and spoken texts. From the very beginning of my experience I was confused by the phrase of "inconsistency" that I heard and observed, which became more of a felt sense occurring within a context.

Paradoxically, within this context I was also experiencing the consistency between the discourse of collaborative learning as languaged by some faculty members and my own experience of my budding [relationship](#) with these faculty members. The discrepancy between my own experience and that of my fellow interns drew my attention to the "inconsistency" of experiences. However, my emerging sense of "inconsistency" was enhanced by (1) the discrepancy between my experience and some of the reports of the fellow interns; and (2) the practices of lack of appreciation expressed by the HGI community members towards each other at the Institute. The inconsistency discourse increased as other community members identified a lack of "cohesiveness" or "togetherness", at the Institute, which echoed my felt sense of a lack of a community.

I attempted to understand the inconsistency "sense" (now viewed as a discourse) as a way of being and practicing the philosophy. That is, learning to hold my felt sense and experiential self and the oral narratives as multiple realities and not positioning myself to find **an** answer or **the** answer. At times this worked for me and at times it did not. As time goes by it gets easier, but initially it was much more difficult. So is it a struggle of "inconsistency" or birthing pains of learning to find my comfort zone with distinct multiple ways of being or a combination of both? And/or was it a con (contrary to) within my experiences of **consistency**?

I have struggled with the idea of practicing a collaborative learning approach. Often I found myself having a sense of dissonance in practice. Frequently, I have heard the claims at the Institute that the "learning" is learner driven and "we are life long learners." However, the category of faculty and learners seeks to maintain the divide between the faculty as trainers and the learners as trainee.

If the goal was to construct knowledge together then how come there was privileging of certain member's voices over others? If the goal was a practice located within [social constructionism](#), then how was it a practice of transmission rather than sharing? Perhaps a rhetorical question, since I did not *not always* experience collaboration as knowledge co-construction. Rather, in my encounters I viewed our exchanges as preferred ways of being among the involved participants who adapted to the contextual cues and thus, *at times* experienced the process as a "transmission." At such moments I felt knowledge was being imparted rather than co-constructed. However, such processes consisted of other relational practices as detailed below.



## **Conversations and Relationships**

The kinds of relationships in/formed the kinds of conversations and

the conversations in/formed the kinds of relationships (Boyd, 1996). I experienced two distinctive types of relationships-in-conversations-*transmission* and *partnership*.

In my status as a learner, at times, I had positioned the trainer as a transmitter and sought out answers as solutions to my problems. In such conversations I experienced the other (trainer) in an experientially tangible position above me. At other times, I experienced that the hierarchy was "existent" before I made sense of the process as "transmission at work." In the course of such conversations I would encounter the other as informing me of "what is." For instance, in one encounter, I presented my dilemma of wearing multiple hats to a supervision group. When the supervisor responded, from the reflecting team position (Andersen, 1990; Anderson, 1997), I was disappointed since I encountered her responses as filling me in on the history of the Institute rather than speaking to my dilemma. However, since the conversation context was that of group supervision of supervision, there were other supervisees present who were not part of the Institute. And the conversational structure was a reflecting process; that is, I was given space and uninterrupted time to present my dilemma while the others took a listening position. After I had finished what I wanted to say, I paused and listened while the others proceed to reflect on my dilemma. My supervisor was also one of the reflecting team members, but I gave her words more weight since she was the leader of the group as well. Thus, *which came first-the hierarchy or the sense of the process?* I do not have an answer to that question.

However, in other circumstances I would go in to my supervision sessions or conversational encounters expecting to discuss my "problem." My desire for these conversations would be to make sense of my ongoing experience at the Institute. Depending on context and people I spoke to some would give me "answers" while at other times I found myself making sense along with an interlocutor. Yet, the sense was more of a partnership. I felt free to express how I experienced, how I thought and how I struggled. I found myself not being very selective about the words I chose to

express what I wanted to express. At times I shared my frustration in not having the language to express how I felt. Thus, I believe my experience was relational, wherein in certain situations I found myself engaged in the process of sharing and not experiencing the taboo of certain phrases.



## **Constructing Privileges**

In Theoretical Seminar, which met every other Thursday mornings, I found myself tracking certain practices that appeared to privilege certain voices over others. With time the voices that were privileged or were louder changed. My initial experience was that of Harlene occupying a special "[space](#)." Later in my experience I found the voices of some interns, who were unhappy at the Institute, louder and occupying more space. I will describe each experience and how I made sense of both of these situations.

Different members of the community privileged Harlene's voice over other voices. Among the practices that drew me to this observation was how members responded to her voice, and/or invited her voice in the absence of it. I also found myself jotting the words she spoke over other member's words. At other instances, if two speakers happened to speak up at the same time and one of the speakers happened to be Harlene, she most often got the space not because she did not give space, she did, but because the other speaker would pull back. The image I had was that of a "queen bee" and the worker bees (Personal communication, 2000). Though I did not observe her hoarding "talking space," but how she was sought (sort)-out in conversation gave me the impression of her being the queen bee. Though, ironically, she was much more of a worker bee than I had imagined about a person of her stature. Another practice was whose ideas got more "air time". Certain ideas generated a more passionate discussion than other ideas. There was an appearance that certain ideas carried more energy or weight than other ideas. *Was it the ideas that were valued or the speaker of the ideas?*

Later on in the Theoretical seminar a series of sessions stand out in my experience. These experiences are centered around couple of interns who appeared to dominate the conversations. As I sat through/participated in these conversations I was struck by my own **preconceptions** of what was driving the conversations. Often I would leave these sessions with a sense that the talk was not what appeared to be the talk, rather it was a metaphorical conversation for the interns' experiences. I also found myself practicing from these preconceptions and pursued, what in my mind was, the metaphorical conversations. For instance, though the content was about world politics or larger systems, but I would draw parallels to our organizational politics of everyday internship experiences and would thus conceive the content as metaphorical.



### ***A Reflective Aside***

*As I reflect on what I have written above, I recall what Bruffee (1999) refers to as speaking the same language that constitutes the community. So as I have chosen to become more and more a member of the community of knowledgeable peers of social constructionism I am in conversations with members with whom I share my beliefs. Thus, the language and the practices I chose to focus on are ones which bring me into the folds of the community such that I renegotiate my values, knowledge and language in languaged relationships (Bruffee, 1999).*



*So have I started practicing the theory? Or is it just becoming comfortable with the situation? Or is it because the situations are changing? Or is it because there are structural shifts in the organization?*



The discourse of training at the Institute is shifting and becoming increasingly a public discourse of diversity rather than solely social constructionist. However, the shifting sands continue to be within the domain of postmodernism.

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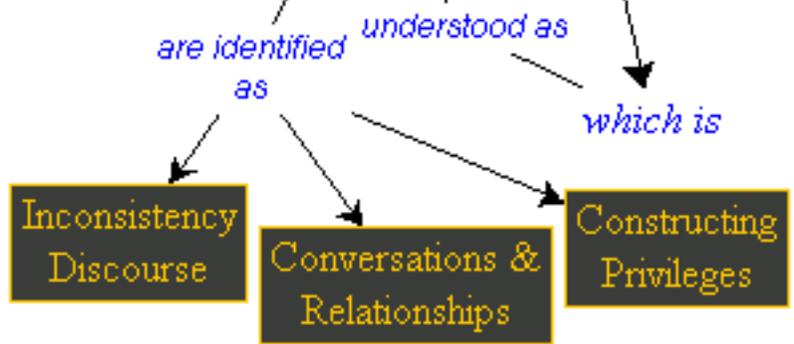
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## What does "social construction" mean (to me)?

I view social construction as a discourse of how we know what we know, i.e. epistemology. The discourse of social construction is a confluence of shared assumptions, though not all individuals who embrace social constructionism would share in all of these assumptions (Gergen, 1999). However, the constructionist discourse focuses on how the self and the world are constructed realities (Gergen, 1999). I will discuss the four assumptions of social construction dialogues as espoused by Gergen (1999) in his book *An Invitation to Social Construction*:

### 1. "The terms by which we understand our world and our self are neither required nor demanded by 'what there is'":

Language is constitutive of our understanding of the world. Neither does the world, as we understand it, exist independent of language; nor does language mirror the world.

However, the traditional view of language has held the notion that words can function as pictures. Such a view, known as *the correspondence theory of language*, elucidates that words corresponds to objects or events in the world. For instance, the color "blue" is not the word "blue" though in every day language we presume the word blue to be the same as the color blue. The color could have another name and we would have known it to be such. So how did we come to share such common (mis)understanding?

According to the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1965), "the meaning of a word is its use in the language." He introduces the notion of the "language game" which implies that we have rules that govern the usage of words and thus language. He compares the use of words to chess pieces. Just as chess pieces are meaningless outside the game of chess, similarly words are senseless outside the "language game." Thus, words are not the objects in the world but objects for/within a language game.

**2. "Our modes of description, explanation and/or representation are derived from relationship":** Relationship is privileged over all that is intelligible. It is central to our meaning making experiences. Gergen (1999, 1994) emphasizes the relational over the individual mind and as fundamental unit of social life. Thus, our efforts to make meaning-description, explanation and/or representation-are relational. Our sense making does not lie with either of the individuals in interaction but lies in between - in the inter-action or "joint action" (Shotter, 1993).

**3. "As we describe, explain or otherwise represent, so do we fashion our future":** Describing, explaining, and/or representing are actions within language games. Such actions may be viewed as cultural ritual performances (Gergen, 1999, p.36). These performances, embodying language games, function within communities. These performances are part of the "broader patterns of actions and objects, which he [Wittgenstein] called *forms of life*" (Gergen, 1999, p.35). Thus, our form of life or social life-traditions and rituals-is constituted in languaged communities and is the process of communal meaning generation. Hence, an invitation for transformation of our social life, our future, involves "the emergence of new forms of language" and alternate meaning frames as detailed below.

**4. "Reflection on our forms of understanding is vital to our future well-being":** Since understanding, a cultural ritual performance (Gergen, 1999), is a communal meaning making process within a language game, reflecting on our performance is critical to our future. Reflecting involves the action of reflexivity, that is, critical question of one's ideas, practices, and traditions; questioning in the way in which we understand and practice our understanding; suspending one's ways of understanding and inviting alternate meaning frames (Gergen, 1999). The practice of reflexivity acknowledges such an action as another performance within language game; thus, reflecting on reflexivity.



## Notions in Practice

In the ensuing section I discuss how I am informed by the embedded assumptions of social construction and how I currently understand the notion of knowledge, meaning and meaning-making, truth, reflexivity, and self(ves).

*Knowledge:* I view knowledge as a practice of consensual meaning making by members local to a community. The practice of contextual generative dialogues, of sense making, constructs, deconstructs and reconstructs the body of ideas labeled as knowledge. Thus, knowledge is a communal practice embedded in languaged activity of meaning making. The production of meaning making is knowledge construction. Thus, I approach knowledge as a languaged practice rather than as a taken-for granted "conduit" practice. In the latter practice, knowledge is viewed as being independent of the knowers or knowledge seekers. And Knowledge, viewed as truth, is transmitted rather than created. However, the notion of knowledge as a languaged practice privileges the process of meaning making that results in a body of ideas that might then be labeled as knowledge with a small 'k' since such "knowledge" is local to the members involved in the production of meaning making.

*Meaning:* My assumption of meaning is that it is a communal and a negotiable process of transformation. A "fixed" meaning may be viewed as momentary consensual sense making by a community. However, the "fixedness" transforms across history and culture as relational forms evolve and dissolve.

*Reflexivity:* The practice of critical questioning one's ideas, practices, and sense making connotes reflexivity. Such a practice involves suspending the obvious, seeking the "positive potential" of other meaning frames, questioning oneself, the taken-for-granted and the political (Hertz, 1997; Gergen, 1999).

*Self(ves):* Self as a relational being rather than a individual being.

Such a self is pluralistic rather than a core or singular self. A relational being is a self in conversation with self (practicing reflexivity) and/or others.

*Truth:* I view truth as a construction of a social life of a community. Thus, outside of the community the "truth" fails to exist since it lacks the shared language game of the community. From a social constructionist position I do not deny a community's truth rather I question how truth is understood and practiced within the community. Further, I entertain the notion of multiverse performance of truth across history and culture.



## **Implication of Social Constructionism for My Inquiry**

Navigating the following links will lead you through the implication of these notions for my research process:

**Discourse Performance:** My inquiry aimed at creating alternate meaning-making frames.

**Postmodern tension:** Sustaining research tradition on the one hand and creating new possibilities on the other hand.

**Representation Practices:** The dissertation web is a practice in representation of my internship and research experiences.

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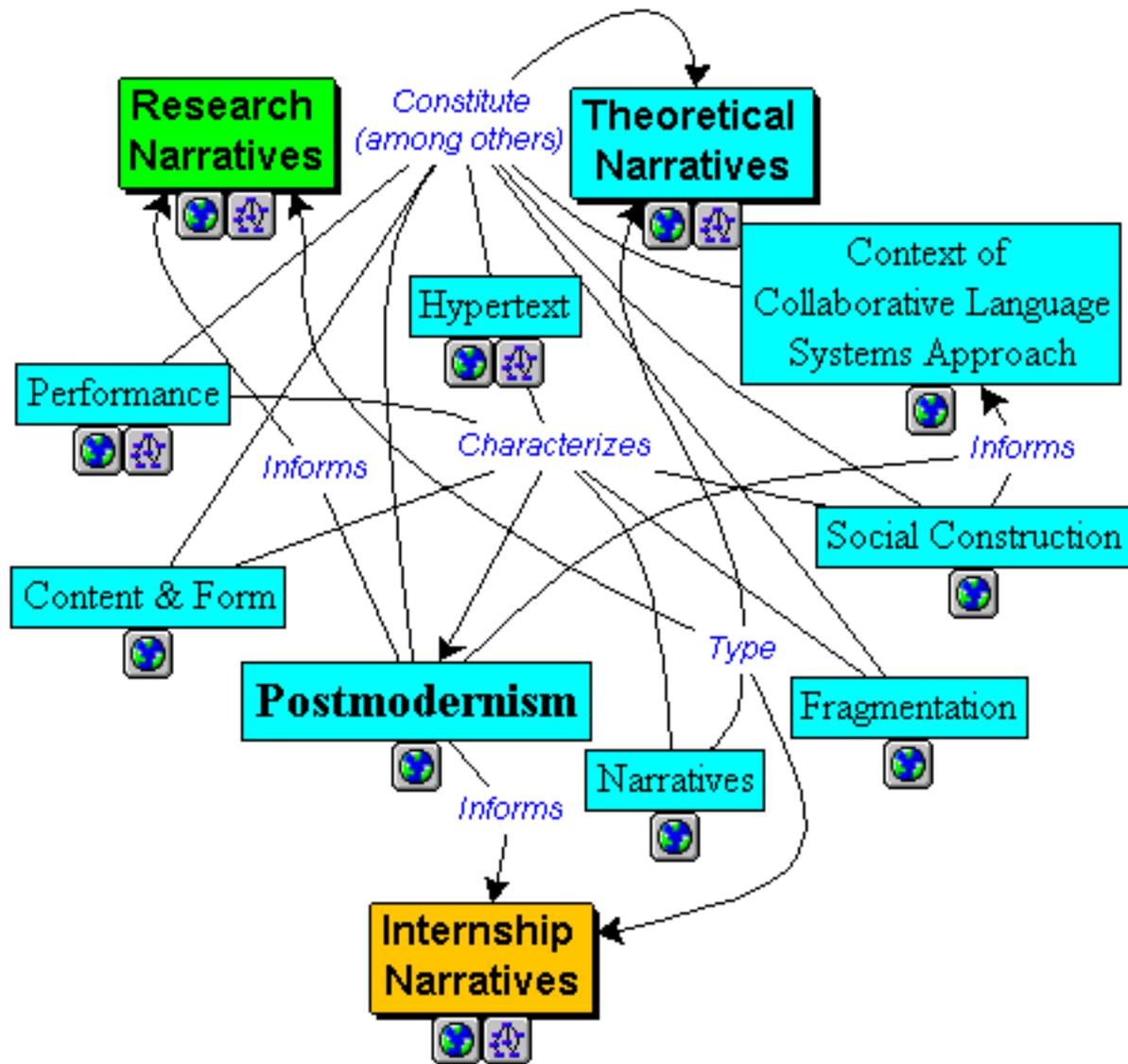
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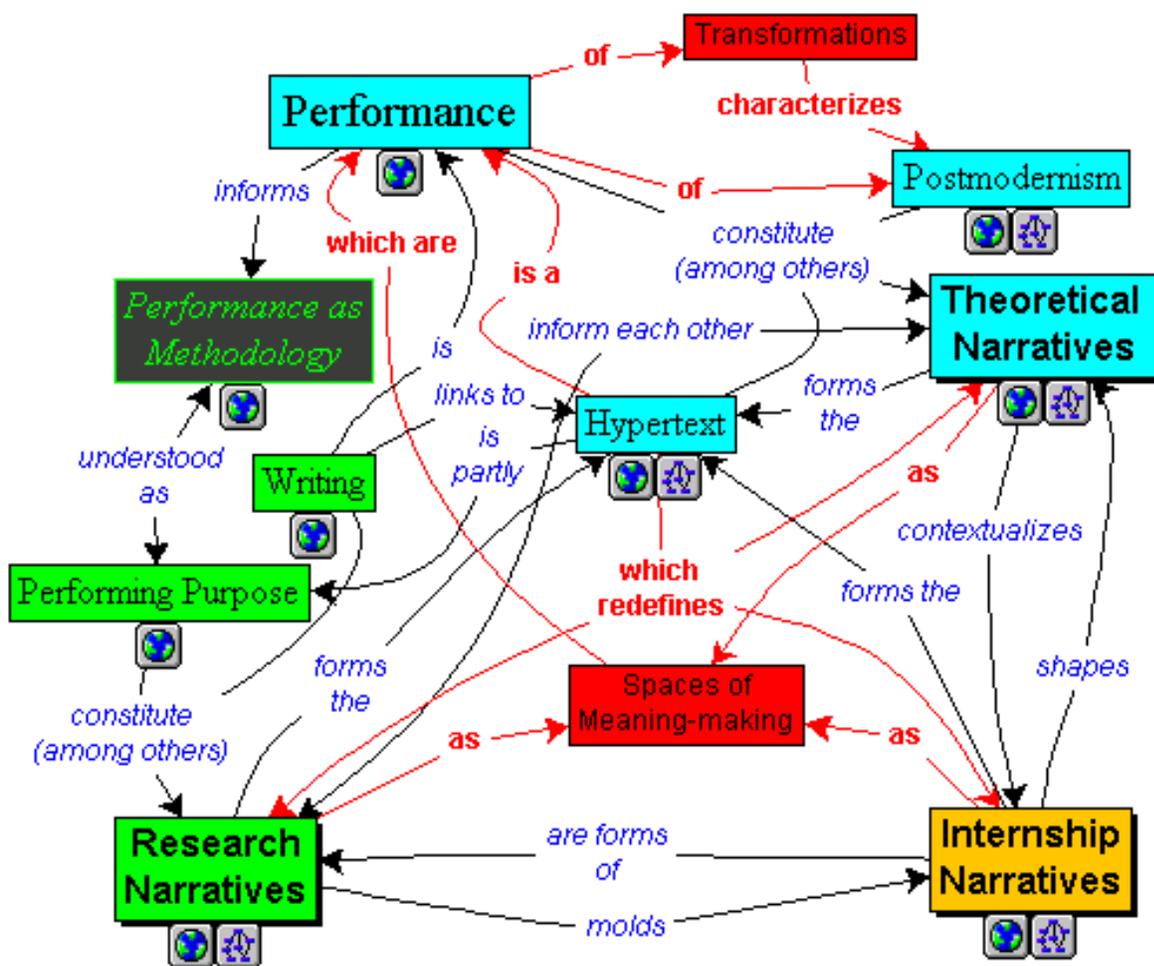


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The dissertation web, a hypertext located within multiple discourses, is an intertextual script, a rendition, of my internship (1998-1999) and research experiences (1998-2001).

# PERFORMANCE: POLYVOCAL UTTERANCES

- Abstract
- Theoretical Narratives
- Research Narratives
- Internship Narratives



Map: Graphic Location of *Performance* within the Dissertation Web



Click for an interactive map



The performance metaphor, though not new to literature, theater and arts

or family therapy, is relatively new to the field of family therapy research. The field of psychotherapy has encountered the performance metaphor in varying forms of Psychodrama, Gestalt therapy, Structural Family Therapy (enactment) and in the writings of Bradford Keeney. However, it has not been a dominant metaphor in the research literature of family therapy or in the language of research methodology.

Performance is a word that takes varying "street meaning(s)" based on the particular cultural moments ([States](#), 1996). It is a word that continues to exist in the metaphorical state along with the many established definitions as delineated in the dictionary. Etymologically traced to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Merriam-Webster dictionary currently defines *performance* as "1 a: the execution of an action b: something accomplished 2: the fulfillment of a claim, promise, or request : IMPLEMENTATION 3 a: the action of representing a character in a play b: a public presentation or exhibition...4 a: the ability to perform : EFFICIENCY b: the manner in which a mechanism performs...5: the manner of reacting to stimuli : BEHAVIOR 6 : the linguistic behavior of an individual : PAROLE; also : the ability to speak a certain language."

Though the word "performance" brings to mind theatrical notions, it did not appear in significant usage in the theatrical language until seventeenth century. "Performance ...simply meant carrying something out, a 'working out of anything ordered or undertaken'" ([States](#), 1996). One has run in with *performance* in the social science literature as it gains wider usage within varying knowledge construction communities and as its "meaning grows out of use" (Bruner, 1990, p. 118).

The annual research theme of the Institute of Collaborative Research and Public Humanities, Ohio State University for 2000-2001 was *Cultures of Performance, Performance of Cultures*. In a [web posting](#), they state that

over the last few decades, concepts drawn from the arena of performance have become widespread in the humanities and human sciences: ideas of act, practice, play, performativity, theatricality, game theory, masquerade and the carnivalesque can now be found in fields from linguistics and

anthropology to art history, gender studies and political theory. ICRPH, 2000

At times used perfunctorily or theoretically to emphasize a theoretical notion, performance also takes on specialized meanings within the specific cultural usage communities (Holzman, 2001). According to the Department of Performance Studies at the University of Surrey

performance can also be understood as a broad spectrum of human events from rituals to 'performances' in everyday life to formalised aesthetic events such as dance, theatre, [sic] or live art. We see performance as one mode of cultural practice or praxis through which experience, knowledges, discourses, identities, and meanings have been and are constantly (re)negotiated and (re)positioned.

Lois Holzman, a developmental psychologist, adopts a Marxist Social therapy approach to performance wherein the power of performance is viewed as a "revolutionary activity." Revolutionary activity refers to a continuous transformative practice of self-reflexive and dialectical "methodology for a new kind of political-psychological practice" (2001, p. 81). She defines performance as, "the revolutionary activity by which human beings create their lives (develop)-qualitatively transforming and continuously reshaping the unity that is *us-and-our environment*" (Holzman, 2001, p. 82-83). Sociologist Erving Goffman (1959) utilizes the notion of performance as a metaphor to address the question "what are the ways in which we repeat ourselves" in his classic *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*.

Psychologist Jerome Bruner (1990) in his book "Acts of Meaning" addresses the notion of cultural psychology and the meaning of self in terms of narrative language which may be subsumed under the performance metaphor. Even the title of his book *Acts of Meaning* conveys a subtext of performance. "Acts" a common term in theater refers to parts in a play or dramatic performance. Explaining how one enters the "human culture" Bruner draws on Judy Dunn's book *The Beginnings of Social Understanding*. Dunn uses the metaphor of *drama*

to account how a child, a *protagonist*, "learns to play part in everyday family 'drama' before there is ever any telling or justifying or excusing required" (Bruner, 1990, p.85). Thus, emphasizing again the subtext of performance as a dominant metaphor in the construction of understanding the human culture. Further, he draws on the notion of "play" (1990, p.115) to comment on the construction of self in the social sciences. He draws on Polkinghorne, who draws heavily on the narrative metaphor to discuss the notions of our personal identities and self-concept. Polkinghorne views our existence as a plot "of a single unfolding and developing story" (1988, p.150).

To perform carries an embedded connotation of form. **Performance** gives form to the cultural content or discourses that one enacts as members of cultural communities. For instance, writing styles and research methodologies are common cultural praxis of academic discourse communities. Writing styles are forms that are defined within and define the academic discourse. Formats are published in books such as, William Strunk, Jr.'s *The Elements of Style* or APA's *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Such publications spell out the rules of composition within academia thus defining the academic language game. Another cultural praxis of academic discourse are research methodologies, which delineate our ways of knowing thus, defining and recursively defined by the discourse community. Both, writing styles and research methodologies **form and give form** to discourses.

**To understand my notion of performance as used in the dissertation web go to:**

**[Performance](#)**

**[Performing Purpose: Performing Research](#)**

**[Performance as Methodology](#)**

**[Writing](#)**

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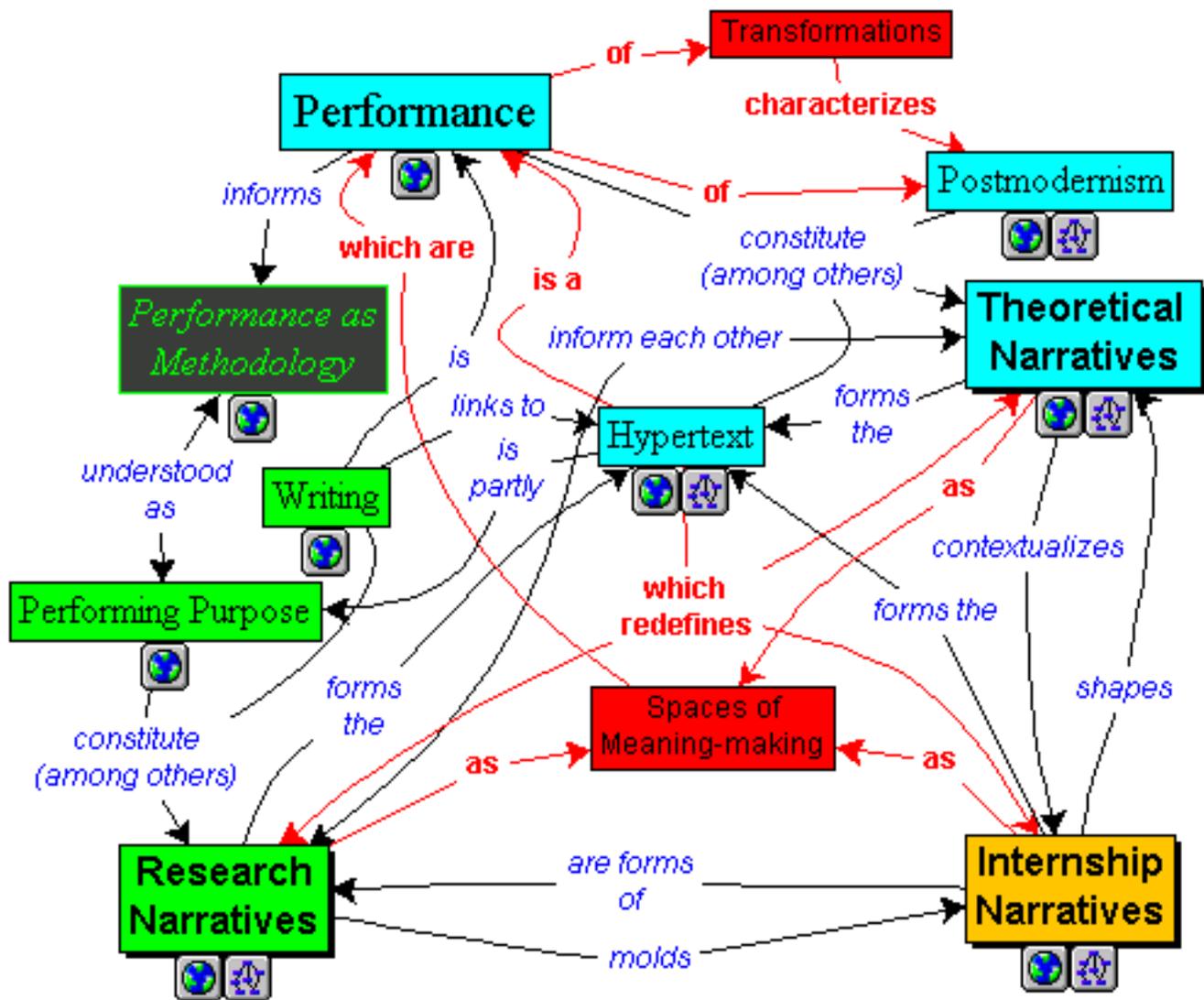
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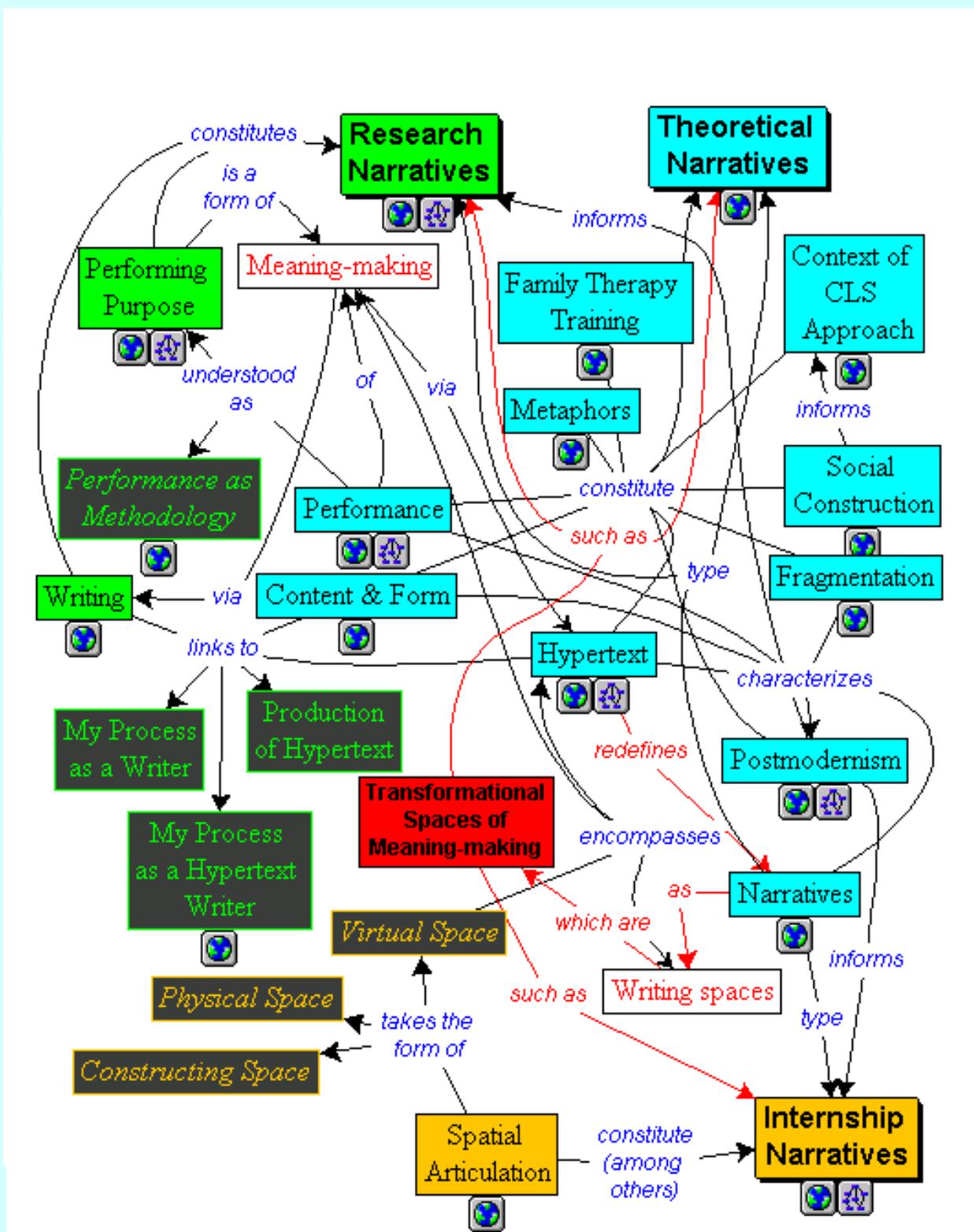
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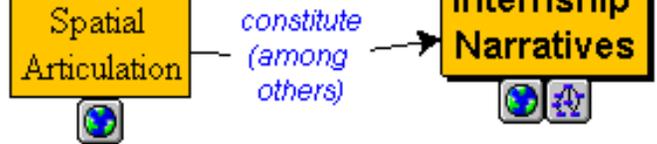


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# CONTENT AND FORM

- Abstract
- Theoretical Narratives
- Research Narratives
- Internship Narratives





### Map: Graphic Location of *Content and Form* within the Dissertation Web



There are basically two aspects of art: Content and Form.

Content suggests the subject matter, the story, or information that the artwork seeks to communicate to the viewer. Form is the visual qualities of the work; the manipulation of the various elements and principles of design. Content communicates, form visually demonstrates.

[Electronic design](#), 2001

All content are forms of art and all forms contain content. Content and form are aspects of the social meaning making process. Historian Hayden White (1987) in his famous book "The content of the form: Narrative discourse and historical representation" illustrates the interlink between content and form by explaining how historical accounts are characterized as real rather than imaginary based on the form of narrativity. He states that the form of narrativity which historical events take, in order to be considered real, is more than a chronological sequencing of the events. It adopts a narration in third person that should also possess a structure, "an order of meaning." Such an order of meaning is not derived from mere sequencing (White, 1987).

[Linda Goin](#) (2001), a graphic designer, explains the relationship between content and form as:

When an artist or designer tackles the problems presented within art, they are planning a way to resolve how to say what they mean through form and content. The content may be addressed in subject matter or words. The form is the visual aspect - the "format" and the utilization of the elements and principles of design.

According to Goin (2001) physical limitation, stylistic limitation, and time could restrict one's possibilities with form. I experienced a similar process in my design possibilities. Though I continued to think of the hyperlinks between various textual contents, I found myself limited by the advancement of markup language of electronic dissertations and archiving capabilities of the University. A consistent internal dialogue was "don't waste time focusing on the form if the University cannot support your format/design." The "stylistic limitation" (Goin, 2001) can be identified as the process of the physical limitation of one's format that directs the evolution of one's idea. The stylistic limitation in my process of idea development was the extent of technological advancement and my understanding of design. Not being a formal student of technology or design, I coached myself via conversations in the field, books and curiosity.

One of the elements of design that informed my design was space. I understood the concept of space in design from graphic designer Andrew Mundi's website <http://www.mundidesign.com/presentation/index2.html>. Space, one of the elements of design, is defined as "distance or area between or around things." Space in graphic design can be illustrated in three ways: distinguishing figure and ground, embedded figures and figure/ground reversal. Emphasis, balance, rhythm and unity are four aspects of Composition and layout principle (Mundi, 2000). Emphasis refers to "what elements get noticed or read first." Balance is the equal distribution of weight." "Rhythm are patterns created by repeated elements that are varied." Rhythmic patterns can be of two kinds: calming or lively. Calming rhythms are produced by placing elements are regular elements. Lively patterns are abrupt changes in the size, shape and position of elements. Unity is like elements that look like they belong together. Unity is created "by grouping, repetition or placing elements on a grid unity" (Mundi, 2001).

Design is a process that starts from "general information to specific details." For instance in my creation of written and graphic texts I would start from the general information of my journal, textual narratives of various authors and numerous conversation (discourses) to create specifics such as textual chunks that were titled to form the various lexias or elements of the dissertation web.

Design is the process of composition of either written material or graphic material. The element of design is present in both realms, since design is a purposeful, informational, visual language that has a process. The purpose of a written or graphic material is to communicate information. In my dissertation I was attempting to communicate my research and internship experiences via the written and graphic texts. To use musician and composer [Peter Huebner](#)'s words "every word [and image] has two aspects: an inner and an outer one, a substantial and a formal one - namely, content and form, substance and outer appearance" (2001).

Drawing on graphic designers, musicians, artists, and designers' understanding of content and form I present the following distinctions:

<b>Content</b>	<b>Form</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words and Images</li> <li>• Explicit</li> <li>• Structure</li> <li>• Form is integrated in content</li> <li>• Chunks of text</li> <li>• Use words/symbols</li> <li>• Product oriented</li> <li>• Meaning oriented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure</li> <li>• Implicit</li> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Content is integral to form</li> <li>• Patterns of text &amp; links</li> <li>• Use design/visual metaphor for content</li> <li>• Process oriented</li> <li>• Meaning oriented</li> </ul>

I identify content and form as one of the characterizations of postmodernism. Rather than choose one or the other, both aspects are important in my dissertation web and have informed my performance as a [hypertext writer](#).

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## PRODUCING A HYPERTEXT-WRITER

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Creating a story of a hypertext writer involves the [process](#) and the [production](#) of hypertext. I viewed myself positioned as a hypertext writer as I created a newer genre of electronic dissertation. Production of an electronic dissertation, that follows more than a book metaphor in an electronic medium, is a challenge. The challenge is faced at many fronts, such as, technology and technological support is at its infancy, thinking is rooted in the print-hypertext binary (Mason, 2001) due to our primary experiences stemming from print medium and one is creating at more than the levels of writing.

### PROCESS AS A HYPERTEXT-WRITER

My process as hypertext writer can be understood as person composing on the following three levels:

[Substantive](#)

[Method](#)

[Graphic](#)

#### Substantive

The substantive content decisions were influenced by the research purpose and framed within the theoretical parameters that were informing my assumptions. Else where I describe the [process of the writing](#) and [research process](#).

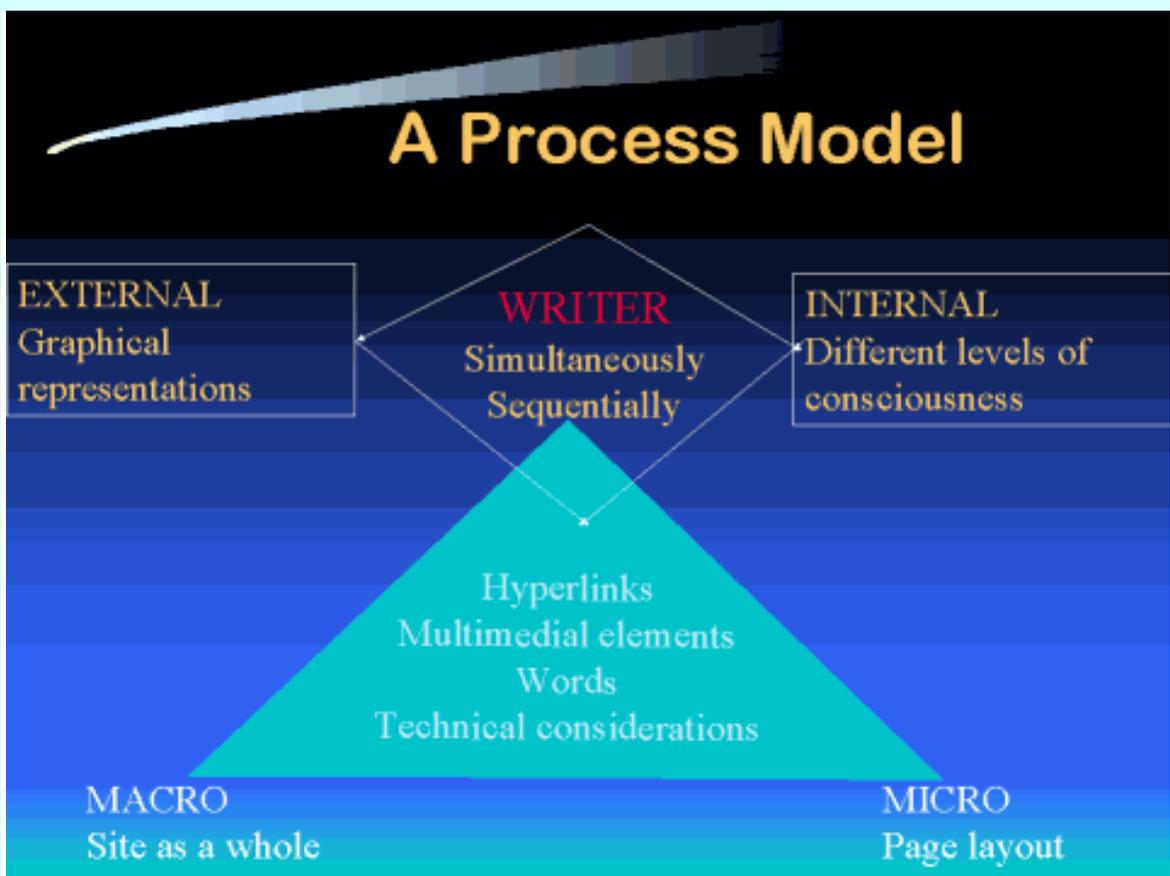
I was constantly struggling to find words that might come close to

describing the process for me and words that were not so value loaded that it might hinder the reader from stepping beyond its everyday usage. For instance, attempting to move away from the use of the word "chapter", I used terms such as "textual chunks," "parts," "these pages," "not sure what to call this thing," and I finally settled on "sections." I decided to use the term sections, not for any particular linguist reason but more due to the necessity of time to wrap up the dissertation process. At another instance I created the phrase *textual frame* to refer to the screen space that encapsulates a chunk of text or lexia that is typically referred to as the webpage to break away from the linear metaphor of the print media; since, to continue using the term "webpage" is to perpetuate the linearity of print media. It brings to my mind the indexical notions of books, chapters, and pages rather than the displayed space on the screen (Pockley, 1997).



## **Method**

I draw on [Jean Mason's](#) (2000) process model to narrate my experience as a hypertext writer (refer to figure).



Source: <http://www.masondissertation.elephanthost.com/>

As a writer, I worked on two levels simultaneously—"internal" and "external." Internal refers to the various levels of conceptualization of the relationships and interrelations among the numerous texts that form the dissertation web. The various conceptualizations includes content (similar to print media), the multimedia, the hyperlinks and the technical considerations. The external level refers to the graphic re-presentations (that is the final version as you view it) of the internal conceptualizations.

[Mason \(2000\)](#) describes the relationship between the internal and external as follows:

although I usually first give some consideration to my target audience, and mull over my purpose, or conduct some preliminary research, when I actually put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard it is to create some kind of visual schematization of the

docuverse I envision. Unlike other writing tasks where I may begin in any number of ways be it by brainstorming, outlining, or even getting right down to writing an entire section of a document, when it comes to hypertext I need to visualize the bigger picture. I storyboard before I can move on to any of the particulars of content. Mary put it this way: I have to grasp the interface before I push the material. Lee brought up the point that I think we all have different styles, and some people may still write first; but, in fact, neither she nor any of my other principal respondents seemed to work that way.

The concept of storyboard introduces the visual aspects of "outlining" the site. Similar to writing a book, one outlines the various chapters, however, in creating hypertext the writer pays a lot more attention to the visual layouts or to the format as well as to the content. As [Mason \(2000\)](#) asserts, based on her interviewing other hypertext writers that

writers working in a traditional printed medium normally give far less thought to how their writing "looks" on the page. We have been trained to expect words to carry the whole message. Even though this may not be entirely the case in reality, writers seem much more aware of the non-word elements when composing in hypertext.

I visualized each chunk of text (lexias) in relation to other chunks of text within the web. This lead me to consistently be in search of ways to visually re-present what I had envisioned the layout of the various lexias. I would do paper and pencil layouts, paper and post-it layouts, words and pictures, power point presentations and finally I took to a concept mapping software called CMap Tools to

graphically structure the layout of the title of the lexias and the links among them. The overall web transformed as new material/chunks of text were constructed.

Constructing a dissertation web is a job of at least three people--conceptual writer or researcher, graphic artist and webmaster--being done by one person ([Mason, 2000](#)). Most students choose at least one of their committee members as a consultant on their methodology but as such dissertation genres develop either the student will be forced to seek experts outside the committee and/or have members who have working knowledge of the various aspects of the electronic dissertation. I asked two people with graphic design and website development (hypertext) skills to review my dissertation web simultaneously as I had submitted my dissertation to my committee.



## Graphic

[Mason \(2000\)](#), in her study of hypertext writers, found that all her informants had the "need to visualize all components of a docuverse in spatial terms during the hyper-writing process." I experienced a similar process of doing numerous visual layouts of how the different elements are linked. I started with a number of drafts and finally I settled with the four nodes—[Theoretical](#), [Research](#), [Internship](#) and [Navigation](#).

The above process along with the following questions informed my hypertext production, which is detailed in [Production of Hypertext](#).

How to present the content?

How to structure the site such that I meet the normative criteria of dissertation while introducing the conventions of the new digital genre?

How do I balance functionality and aesthetics?

How do I balance reader control and author navigational tips?



## **PRODUCTION OF HYPERTEXT**

Production of hypertext was focused on the following three aspects:

[Structure of Possible Structures](#)

[Reader Control](#)

[Conventions](#)

### **A Structure of Possible Structures**

All through out my work I thought about my dissertation web as being non-linear. One of my focus, thus, was on how could I create a similar experience for my reader. Another of my focus was to move away from the hierarchical structuring of most websites, especially away from the traditional manner of organizing the dissertation chapters. I further attempted to move away from the concept of a home page. Though, I knew that unless I found an alternative structure, I may inevitably have to create an equivalent of a home page, if for no other reason but due to the university requirements of an electronic dissertation.

Of the possible [hypertextual patterns](#) or structures—axial, tree, cyclic, counterpoint, mirror world, tangle, sieve, montage, neighborhood, and missing links—I choose the web structure or a combination of the "cyclic" and "tangle" ([Bernstein, 1999](#)) for my dissertation web. Readers may find themselves coming back to the same links after moving through certain lexias and may move out of one cycle into another depending on the link chosen. I created four nodes—[Theoretical](#), [Research](#), [Internship](#), and [Navigational](#) indices—of equal importance. All four nodes have inter- and intra-links with some overlapping lexias.

The indices serve as an organizational and presentational space rather than as a hierarchical space. However, in the process of

working there were certain lexias that I initially structured hierarchically to ensure for linear print-out, if required, and for the fear of not being too different from the norm. I view this anxiety as a vestige of the traditional research process and training.

Another key factor to consider in creating the structure of possible structure is the technology of *archiving* and the final format of the dissertation web. Currently the University is using PDF format as it is the most accessible format across platforms. The University is in the process of developing XML dissertation standards and I worked with a team to present my final version in xml. But the progress of standards caps my creative spirit since it is a new language that I am learning along with the community of developers of the XML standard.

Further, I was advised by the technical committee to keep the utilization of interactive elements which require proprietarial software to a minimum. For instance, I wished to create more interactive elements using Flash but I was discouraged. Further, I found that in the PDF version I had to link to the movie file of the interactive elements as PDF would not convert flash files. Thus, the medium of re-presentation introduces additional parameters on the structure of possible structures.



## **Reader Control**

Hyper-writers must also decide how much relative freedom to "allow" a reader in moving among those links. (Mason, 2000)

I had anticipated giving more freedom rather than less when I envisioned my work. However, as I interacted with sampled readers, committee members, and re-read my work as a reader I gave more navigation, thus relatively lowering the freedom than I had envisioned.

In my dissertation I have aimed towards a less restrictive style, allowing for more reader control in the selection of the segments he/she may choose to read. This may be done by selecting the links from the navigational bar or the site map. Since, I have chosen to pay less attention to archival purposes, I have chosen a non-linear structure (currently unsupported by Virginia Tech Library archives) such that the form matches the content of the meaning-making process of my research and internship experience, which were non-linear processes. The process may be better described as a dance of fragmentation and connection over time and space.



## **Conventions**

Mason (2000) details the conventions that are important when creating a website. She states that such conventions are in a state of flux as the world of web designing continues to evolve and transform with technological advancements. Using her dissertation as a guide I have used the following conventions as identified below:

**Navigation:** The dissertation web logo on the upper left-hand corner is a hotlink to the graphic map of the overview of the lexias. A navigational bar consisting of ways to navigate the dissertation web is provided on the right hand corner of each frame. Another navigational bar consisting of the links to the abstract and the three narrative indices—theoretical, research, and internship—is provided on the left-hand side. I also provide a similar option of navigational link at the bottom of the page, so that a reader has the option to choose their direction without having to scroll back to the top of the page.

**Textual Frame Title:** The subject or focus for each lexia is the title for each textual frame.

**Search Engine:** A search engine on the top right-hand corner,

below the navigation tools, is provided for the reader to search the dissertation website. Though non-functional in the PDF version, it is presented as an idea tool for future.

**Top:** is a hyperlink to the top of the page. It is used for all hypertexts to provide the reader with navigational consistency.

**E-mail:** A hyperlink to my email is placed at the bottom left-hand corner.

**About me:** is as hyperlink to my resume and a brief narrative about myself.

**Dissertation Title:** appears at the bottom of each screen, which contextualizes the hypertext and facilitates easy citation for the reader.

**Name of the university and program:** appear at the bottom of each screen and are hotlinks to the respective websites for interested readers.

**Site Last Updated:** provides the date I submitted the dissertation to the University and it was uploaded.

©: The copyright sign is provided but its meaning may change as the field of Internet copyright transforms.



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Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community



[About Saliha Bava](#)

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The dissertation web, a hypertext located within multiple discourses, is an intertextual script, a rendition, of my internship (1998-1999) and research experiences (1998-2001).



## PRODUCTION OF ELECTRONIC TEXTUAL FRAMES

---

The production of the electronic text involves working with content and form at the same time. Since the "text shows what it is telling, does what it says, [and] displays its own making" (Pockley, 2000), thus, the content and form are intertwined. The electronic text is a form of a narrative structuring which constitutes the event it purports to re-present. Thus, the showing and telling of the text are the constitutive elements of the text along with what the reader brings to the text in the course of his/her understanding of the text.

Further, I assume the showing and telling of the text as the production of a textual performance. In my production I had created the following series of steps:

1. Conceptualization and creation: Putting on paper or on the computer what I want to say and how I want the text to look. For instance, I wanted to tell the story of stormy anger and I wanted the red and black colors to be vividly present in the final performance.
2. Create a MS Word File
3. Save the file as an HTML file
4. Use the Netscape composer as Text Editor; later I moved to Dreamweaver4
5. Edit HTML Tags
6. Create a template for layout and consistency
7. Creating graphic maps using CMap Tools
8. Size maps to fit the parameters of the delineated insert space
9. Create an index of maps

10. Create interactive maps and flash files
11. Create \*.gif and \*.mov versions of graphics and interactive elements using Fireworks and Flash software
12. Verify links using the Dreamweaver's features
13. To create a PDF: Use web capture of Adobe Acrobat to convert html files to PDF
14. Link \*.mov files where flash images were embedded
15. Upload file to Web Server or university server or copy to CD-R
16. Verify Links
17. Make corrections and reload

As my textual frames increased, I started mapping the links on paper. I also looked for various Concept Mapping softwares such as Cmap and Inspiration and some Hypertext writing tools, which were primarily proprietary softwares such as StorySpace. I decided not to use any proprietary software due to archival and accessibility reasons. I decided to use CMap tool to create graphic images of the interlinks, since it converted the images to gif and HTML options that I was able to import into my dissertation web. I subsequently moved away from using the Netscape composer to the HTML editor *Dreamweaver4*, which has the capabilities to manage a website and tools to maintain and update the links. Thus, I found it to be an effective tool to use as I created the various interlinked textual frames. At the later stages of my dissertation to ensure a coherence among the text and to ensure consistency in the process of editing the various textual frames I developed a [checklist](#).

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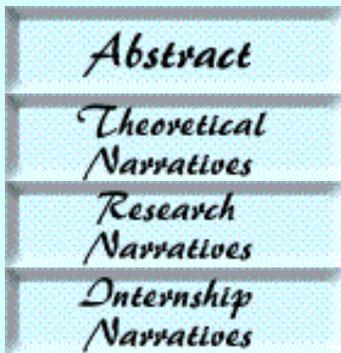
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## PRODUCTION OF MULTIMEDIA FRAMES

---

### PRODUCTION OF A *DAY IN TENSION*

8/10/00: As I was reading my internship journal I had a epiphany to compose a poem. Thus, I wrote [poetry](#) instead of prose.

*Creating a Collage:* Since February of 1999 when I would read my internship collages I would have an urge to create a collage. Thus, I consider my writing to be a kind of collage. However, I wanted to create something with my hand that was not written. When I read the poem I sensed its "completeness." So as I dialogued with the various ideas, I started collecting magazines. But I still had no idea what was to evolve.

10/14/00: I wrote a note to myself:

1. play with the font
2. create a collage
  - start with the poem
  - middle: use pictures for a collage, take a digital photograph and then import it as a graphic file into the multimedia piece
  - end: a picture of exhaustion

10/16/00: I had been reading the poem and was contemplating changing the position of certain words. For instance, I changed "drive in" to driving. Thus I created some content changes. Simultaneously I was contemplating the form. I did not like the way the words were originally spread across the page, so I

realigned the words to appear closer by manipulating the column width for each cell. As I re-read the poem I realized that it lacked some of the emotional emphasis it had for me. Consequently, I added **bold** formatting to certain words.

*10/17/00:* I worked on creating a draft of the web-page for the textual element of *A day in Tension*. I wrote out an introduction to the production. In the process I decided to fragment the production into five frames: epilogue and four other frames. The epilogue was to be an introduction to the production. The four frames--*morning, midday, evening and night*. I then proceeded to create the frames and the respective links.

As I was working on the last frame the sounds of thunder compelled me to shut down my computer for safety. It was about 7:00pm, I opened the door to the refreshing smell of the rain, the visual enticement of lightening and crackling sounds of thunder. I stood at my balcony enjoying the light and sound show, breathing in the freshness, and mindful of the intensity of thoughts rushing around in my head. I continued to feel, smell, listen, see and make sense of my thoughts. As I could no longer hold my sense making in the container of my head, I stepped back inside to my "dissertation desk." And I started to write and sensed the rush of the words from the container through my arms and fingers onto the paper via the pen. And produced what you have just read--a production of a production of a performance (in turn another performance)!

And I then stepped out to enjoy the pitter-patter. But the story of the production does not end there, though it was the beginning of telling another story.

*12/17/00:* I got up on Sunday morning with images of "Knots" floating in my head and an image of a collage. I wrote out the word "knot" and made couple of lay outs of what I may do. Fill in pictures within the knot. Or color pictures in the background and black and white to spell knot. Or a collage of knots. Or a collage

with the word "knot" painted diagonally across. Then I was prompted to take my sketching pad and made pictures of knots. I left these various images floating in my head as I went on with my Sunday activities.

*12/25/00:* Christmas Day! I typed out the written words onto my computer to create a virtual text. I then moved to a corner of my efficiency apartment to create space for my "collage corner". I moved all the stuff away from the front of my bookshelf and had a rug that was to serve as my "collage corner."

*10/1/01:* In the mean while I had worked on developing the night scene using Flash. I had decided to drop the "evening." I took a digital picture of the collage after its completion, which was to represent mid-day and evening.

*12/15/01:* I dropped the mid-day as it was not what I wanted it to be like.



***After words:***

*Putting together all the multimedia pieces brought a sense of freedom and enjoyment that was contrary to the feelings and thoughts the "product" was intended to convey. The process was a moment of postmodern tension--experiencing two diametrically opposing feelings at the same time.*

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# *Morning*

Planning for the day

Weary  
Unenthusiastic  
**What** a drag!

Driving in

Mounting tension  
Bracing self

Check messages  
Move to the attic

"Relax" self-talk

Empty room

Sigh  
Exhale tension

Chest starting to  
tighten

What the **fuck!!!**

"Give yourself a  
break"

Check my voice mail,

Look at my calendar

I know the scheduled  
meetings

But I re-study

"I **hate** this"

A day in tension!

[night](#)

**NOTE**

To run movie: Click on the movie space

Movie not visible: Please download 25night2.mov.

To view outside pdf: Use Quick Time player or plug in.

GO

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[Abstract](#)[Theoretical Narratives](#)[Research Narratives](#)[Internship Narratives](#)

## STORY OF STORMY EMOTIONS

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In [feminist-postmodernist] practice one's relationship to one's work is displayed. There is a sense of immediacy, of an author's presence and pleasure in doing the work. Lived experience is not "talked about," it is demonstrated; science is created as a lived experience....The researcher is embodied, reflexive, self-consciously partial.

Richardson, 1997, p. 168

In the ensuing section I re-create a self-consciously partial reflexive narrative of my emotional experience of internship. I have utilized text, space, color, and font style to create experiential moments as I demonstrate my story. I move through the narrated emotions of [disappointment](#), [anger](#) and [freedom](#). I position myself as an intern in my demonstration of disappointment and anger. In narrating my freedom I have positioned myself as an intern, doctoral fellow, academician, and woman. I use asterisk to transition between emotions and between text and *analysis-in-reflexivity*, displayed in *italics*. The words I use to **legitimize** the **text** and give it **authority** are in **purple**. I bold certain words as a practice of **reflexivity** and **analyses**, that I have borrowed as an analytical tool from Sociologist Joseph Schneider (1991), who questions textual authority in Sociology. I end my demonstrated telling with an [afterwords](#).



The stormy anger arises;  
violent attacks occur. We  
punctuate our words and  
motions with them. Scenes  
of pain and frustration are  
repeated, as are enactments  
of releasing powers. These  
rituals enable the person to  
become stronger, to face fear  
with courage, to live through  
whatever is troubling, live it  
again and again, go through  
the suffering. In the process,  
the person regains control of  
life and discovers genuine  
ways of relating to others.  
Moustakas, 1995

An evening in May of 2000 I was having dinner with **CC** and was telling her about how I feel a sense of change flowing through me. I was not sure what or how to tell her what I meant. I was feeling this growing sense of something that one may call restlessness. A sense of impatience with myself; a feeling of not connecting emotionally with some clients and feeling disquieted, which earlier I may have labeled as being bad. However, on that day I felt it was calling my attention to something that was very much part of who I was becoming. And I was intrigued *and* concerned about this emerging growing attention to the restless sense of myself.

Later that night, I spoke to a childhood friend of mine, **KG**, and she was wondering about how my dissertation was going. She said, that in the past she has known me to "become stressed" and shut out other things and "to focus on the work in hand." I told her about the sense I had been having for the last few days. As I spoke to her I was also wondering in my mind if it was due to me shutting something emotionally out of my life or was this a preparation for "my dissertation focus" or a combination of the two. A kind of impatience to get finished! I had shared similar sentiments with **CC** earlier in the evening.

As I was sharing this sense with CC I said "I still have such a deep sense of anger in me regarding my internship year." I said that 'I felt some how the anger was disproportionate to what I think of as my "bad" experience. I think a certain amount of anger is justifiable but the intensity and the longitivity of it is unfamiliar to me.'

With KG I wondered if I was becoming too "American?" What is it to be "American?" I said that 'I felt in the US, anger was a common discourse and such a discourse included certain acceptable ways of expression. However, in India I believe that we have different discourses regarding anger. I can imagine my dad saying to me "move on" as way of coaching me on how to manage my anger.'



*An after thought: "The American discourse of anger" is a construct I have created from being part of the clinical community. I have spent more time within this community in my stay in America than with out this community. So what is "American?" What is "the American discourse of anger?" How ironically unitary I seem to become in relationships from my cultural-historical past.*



But I catch myself harboring an intensity of anger  
that intrigues me and at times gave me an  
excuse to not revisit my journals!

As I continued talking to CC I told her how I had spoken about my sense in supervision but apparently my anger lives on. I said how one of my supervisors had helped me to see 'what are the things I could learn or may be what I may be able to avoid in the future based on my experience.' But I did not want that kind of learning for that long a period of my internship!

Yes, expectations of internship are important and learning to be in conflictual relationships is a great learning experience.

But

what if you feel 'that's all your learning is about'?

And

you are not able to concentrate on anything else and a year later you feel "what a waste of a year!"

I take solace in Moustaskas (1995) words "these rituals enable the person to become stronger."



And how I wish I could have vocalized what a big **DISAPPOINTMENT** my internship year was!

I was disappointed to have seen an absence of the philosophy that **dissolves** problems in therapy not at work in supervision or at the Institute.

I am disappointed to hear from a faculty that the agenda was to squash what was termed as "rebellion" rather than to seek understanding.

I am disappointed!

I am disappointed that this might be more a **philosophy of** therapy than of **life**.

I am disappointed that I saw faculty as more than humans!

I am disappointed that postmodernism does not bring solace.

I celebrate postmodernism when it raises questions,  
but where do I go when **postmodern tension** creates depression and  
disappointment?

Where and how does one then create relational responsibility?

In keeping with postmodern approach I have questions and no answers yet!

I think seeing faculty as humans has been the greatest learning for me.

Disappointment/Ironic Learning

Anger

Disappointment

Silence

Appeasing?

Or

Sadness

Professionalism

Silent gratitude

## Ironic learning?

Can it  
be all?



Reflection Entry: May 2000

*Henri Matisse said "with color one obtains an energy which stems from witchcraft." As I reflect on my past year's internship training I see vivid shades of **red** and **black**. I am drawn to expressing my self in these colors. In this writing I seem to perform more with colors than usual. Is it the synergy of colors or the energy of the emotions?*

*Over the next few weeks I wrote about parts of my internship experience using red and black colored fonts.*



Journal Entry: May 18, 1999

I'm very restless today. Actually kind of irritated with all the undercurrents or the way I make sense of things! But how do I avoid the comments that are made and I am easily seduced into stuff that is disconcerting or something I'm in the process of making sense.

Part of what I described as "Man! I'm pissed" was stemming from what I then described as "not sure where to take it!" I found myself all consumed by the happenings of interpersonal conflict that had become the focus of my experience and dissertation. In May 1999 I was still grappling with the uncertainty of where and how to deal with my frustration resulting from the broken communication lines, to put it in politically correct and simplistic language. My journal from May 1999 clearly indicates a relational and an individualistic focus. I was cognizant of how I was contributing to my tension at the Institute and I also wanted the faculty to be more actively involved. To make matters worse I was struggling, *unspoken*, in my relationship with one my supervisors. I was struggling "with how to talk to her about how I [felt] pushed aside." In my journal I was referring to the times my supervision had been interrupted or there was a difference of understanding about whether this was my clinical supervision or both clinical and supervision of supervision. And

though this by itself was small but such details or lack of such details were frustrating at the time when the process of being an intern was living in "misery." I was craving for a bit more proactive behavior from faculty who were not directly involved in the conflictual relationships. But the atmosphere felt more like a forest fire that was spreading and everyone was looking out for himself or herself and leaving it to someone else to handle the fire while he or she sought safety and shelter. What I felt were raw emotions during that time. My emotions were like the dried up shrub that needed just the smallest of sparks to become a blaze.

I seriously doubt that none of the faculty except for the ones who were directly caught up in the fire understood the living inferno that the internship had become. "You were never too prepared." You never knew when the fire would engulf you and how many times in the week you may get burnt with no time for healing. And the doctors and firefighters seemed totally inept or oblivious to the inferno until some of them got hurt!



As I re-read the words above, they seem to lack the dramatic feelings I experienced. But I hear the criticism and bitterness I had experienced and it brings alive the anger. In my body I feel the restlessness and the stirring from the by gone days. My ear rings with the insulting words like "do you have dictionaries in your country?" that were thrown at me during one of the intern-conflict dramas. Some journaled entries from January through April, 1999 are blank pages of pain.

Journal Entry February 1999

I am so emotional right now. I feel like crying. I feel so lost and hope someone would just hold me and I know it is hard but I'm so tired and at times shut down and feel the pressure of work all the time. Pressure - pressure. That's all I feel overwhelmed with. I'm tired and want to feel light and not bogged down.

At another time I wrote,

I feel I have reached a point where I'm not experiencing growth. I don't see any change....I feel so sad and lost.

I had journaled that

I'm not as creative, I'm shutting down. Am I reaching burn out? I

don't feel happy all the time or most of the time. I don't know if something is missing or am I just being too demanding? Is this being unprofessional? What should I be doing differently?

Journal Entry End of February, 1999

I hate it! Its so frustrating! I feel so left out....But there is just so much undercurrent and it is driving me crazy. I want to be able to focus and keep on at my work! I need something different.

\*\*\*\*\*

*The vivid colors of **red** and **black** seem to be taking on the meaning of raging fire and blowing black clouds of smoke. As I write this story I realize that this was a part of the story I could not tell because I experienced it as being **politically incorrect**. And even though some of the characters in the narrative might tell me its "ok", I seriously doubt that this will not change my relationship at the Institute. Or may be not in the way I feared it might. I think this has been a long over due story. I wanted to tell this story but it has taken me the safety of more than a year and forming relationships after the inferno to know that I will be safe. I can now share the story of how I want to be heard and not feel compelled to tell it such that I have to protect myself. Though, I do experience certain degree of concern, nervousness and cautiousness.*

*Since I believe that **we live the stories we tell**, (White & Epston, 1990) I struggled to not tell a **dramatic** sounding narrative. However, I now realize that most of the internship year was **dramatic** in my experience, a **construction**, some of it was even nightmarish. So to tell a story that contains dramatic language brings **to voice** what I had denied to pen down in my journal for the fear of offending others (colleagues) and the current narration gives me the chance for healing or "**moving on**."*

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□



Research Audit 9/15/99

"sorting through and arranging all the paper. The room looks a mess as the green binder, containing all these bits of information. My experiences of last year- my data for the dissertation- sits very neatly within a 3-ring (green) binder"

For months the green folder sat on my desk. The *green binder* is a three-ring binder that contains all my journal entries arranged chronologically and all my field notes categorized by the various Institute activities. I found myself unmotivated to read the various entries and notes. The green binder came to represent the past and the future; the done and what had to be done. In an e-mail on 9/15/99 I wrote to my friend:

man! hell I don't know what's with me today!!

I got up at 9:30 did a tiny winnie bit of stuff and my eyes felt heavy!! Couldn't keep them open so slept from 11:30 to 1pm (in fact got up in between & tried to read & my mind didn't seem to grasp so I laid down!!

I got so much to do other than dissertation....prep for class, institute stuff, clean-up, reading...on & on. All I'm feeling is the need to curl-up!! I had been out of the apartment yesterday, so its not cabin fever! Help! I'm feeling the pressure of time and no drive!! I can't even seem to make sense of your mail below!! I'm brain dead!

I sent the mail out around 1pm. Later on in the evening, at 7:50 p.m., I sent another mail:

I know what it was!! I have to read all the junk that I had written in the past and its amazing the things your body does!! I was having similar reactions to reading it as I was to going through the experience...wanting to curl-up and sleep!!

At other times, I stared at the green binder and felt drawn to read it. And read, I did. I called it *smart reading*; I skipped the parts which drew me to re-experience the anger I describe.

I read parts that I was proud of as a researcher; parts that described the research process. Parts that I wrote about my changing relationship with my friends from Virginia. For some reason, unknown to me then I skipped a lot of parts. My story then was I don't want to feel the emotions of the internship year. It sucked and I don't care to relive right now. What I had not noted was the anger that rose within me. I had not yet acknowledged the **other**-the anger. The anger would be **professionally incorrect** to acknowledge since "had not I been

privileged to have been given an internship at THE Institute." How can I be so petty in not being able to put aside my anger and move on? And of course I cannot disappoint the person I admire. Rather I have to impress her. And to impress her would be to not mention how much I felt disappointed by her supervision. How can I be so insensitive to hurt a person who was already hurting from the fiasco of year's drama. More over, how can I be so professionally stupid to say to the person something like, "I wanted so much more from you as a supervisor"? If I say these words to her, there may be no future with her. She may NEVER mentor me! And I could not take that big a risk. I am sure I can "move on!" I have moved on. But my research has suffered. My writing feels a chore.

I told Harlene when I gave her a skeletal first draft of an emotive text "I changed things because I know you will be reading it." And she looked surprised. I explained how I felt that I have to be selective and careful of how I say things so people can read it and not think the worst. It is not an attempt to make something look good or bad rather it is an attempt to "see and sense it [my experience] more fully" (Tillmann-Healy, 1996).



## FREEDOM

Fearless voicing

Tearless telling

Passionate flowing

Rejuvenating vigor

Carefree reconstructing

Freedom!

I tell as an intern, from the position of a fellow, who has the recent certainty of an academic career at the Institute. I tell as a fellow who, though does not have the luxury of geographical distance from the internship site, but has the temporal distance from the internship experience and the security of

relationships. I tell as a scholar who fears other academics' responses but has the support for experimentation from within the community of relationships about which I speak. I tell as a woman who is seeking and making her dreams come alive.



"A picture held us captive.  
And we could not get  
outside it, for it lay in our  
language and language  
seemed to repeat it to us  
inexorably." (Wittgenstein,  
1965)



## **AFTERWORDS: CHOICES WE MAKE**

• [SITEMAP](#) • [THEORETICAL NARRATIVES](#) • [RESEARCH NARRATIVES](#) • [INTERNSHIP NARRATIVES](#) •

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# STORY OF STORMY EMOTIONS

## AFTERWORDS: CHOICES WE MAKE

[Abstract](#)

[Theoretical Narratives](#)

[Research Narratives](#)

[Internship Narratives](#)

I reflect on the production of the [Story of Stormy Emotions](#) in the ensuing text. I bold certain words as a practice of **reflexivity** and **analyses**, that I have borrowed as an analytical tool from Sociologist Joseph Schneider (1991), who questions textual authority in sociology.

The [Story of Stormy Emotions](#) is an **emotive narrative** of my dashed internship **expectations**. I re-created the narrative from my journal and the **embodied** experiences of revisiting the internship journal entries. My intention was to **give voice** to the emotional aspects of internships and **speak the unspeakable**—disappointment and anger and the sense of freedom one experiences from having spoken aloud. To not speak-out was to deny a large and crucial aspect of my experience. Writing about the feelings was a **transformative** moment since it made public my "negative" feelings that I had been harboring for the fear of not being viewed as appreciative enough of the other internship opportunities. The transformative value lay in the **public acknowledgement** and display of the feelings.

As the native (intern) of the experiential moments of my internship I have chosen to share and make public the notion of anger and my sense of disappointment of my internship expectations rather than the descriptive content of the [conflict ridden](#) story. Due to the

*sensitive nature of the interpersonal conflict that took root and spread for close to six months of my internship, I have [chosen silence](#) as an **ethical** alternative and do not intend to detail the nature of conflict.*

*The choice of silence is **political** which has further **political** consequences. Since, I proceeded to be part of community at the Institute, I had chosen not to tell my version of the story in the interest of **creating a life** that I can enjoy rather than just endure. When I started writing the [Story of Stormy Emotions](#) I had titled it Story of Stormy Anger because that was one of the primary emotions that stood out in my experience and probably colored my reading of the journal entries. However, over time and as I wrote out my anger I was able to read disappointment into my journal entries and as I came to pause and reflect on my writing, I experienced a sense of freedom from having narrated my strong emotions. The sense of freedom also came from having been hired as a staff of the Institute, which gave me a sense of security.*

*Further, **time** and **geographical** distance have ways of creating distance from the lived experience. Since I have chosen to be at the same place geographically, I only had the advantage of time. Ironically, staying at the Institute has proved advantageous. Time has helped me get a perspective that comes from moving away from an experience, though, I have had to re-encounter my internship experience more than usual because of my research and the resultant re-readings of the journals. So, if it were not for the research I think time would have been more advantageous for me. However, in spite of continued encounters with narratives of my internship experiences as artifacts of my lived experience, I think time "re-forms" the lived experience.*

*Geographically though, I did not leave, but some of the other players from that year's internship drama had relocated or left after the completion of their internship. Thus creating a geographical distance between the Institute players (including me) and them, thereby introducing an **inevitable** context change at the*

internship site. And as new players entered the Institute for their internship, the context most definitively changed. Thus, the changing context due to the **transient membership** of the interns keeps an internship alive with **uncertainty** of future dramas. The transient nature of its membership also introduces a pitfall of an **emotional climate** that might not feel conducive for learning. Due to the annual cycle of "newer" members leaving and/or choosing to change their associations with the Institute, the pitfall is also transient and unless the individual-in-communities practice **reflexivity** there may be lingering after effects of not-so-conducive emotional climate.

I draw attention to my **meaning making** process as a **language performance** within a temporal, spatial, socio-cultural and historical context. From a temporal context, as I look behind, I am glad to have continued into my third year at the Institute and to have experienced **other** facets and relationships. These otherness have taken on the potentiality of becoming more central and creating an otherness of my initial internship experience. It is easier for me to make sense of my first year at the Institute as a socio-cultural anomaly among the kinds of relationships people may encounter at the Institute based on my subsequent experiences and historical narratives. However, I am mindful not to marginalize the emotional experience.

I wanted to draw focus towards the emotional experience of internships. The marriage and family therapy (MFT) [training literature](#) is sparsely documented with doctoral intern's internship experiences (Gawinski, Edwards & Speice, 1999). But none of the three documented MFT articles report the emotional aspect of internships. Gawinski et al. (1999) are one of the first marriage and family therapy researchers to implicitly address the emotional content of an internship experience under the themes of "immersion in a multidisciplinary healthcare setting," "diversity of patient populations," "sharing care" and "exploration of the self of the therapist." Though none of their themes directly speak to the emotional experience of internships, their research draws attention

*to the intensity of learning experiences at internship sites.*

*In my performance I draw attention to interns' emotional experience of internships. One's most desired experiences can at times be one of the most disappointing moments in the midst of the experience. Though, I am not denying the potential of conflictual and emotionally charged internships occurring at other sites, I have chosen to not re-narrate the content, since parts of me still experience anger or disgust with that particular time in my experience. As a process I think internship can be rigorous and when one adopts a position of intense reflexivity (especially due to the nature of my dissertation), the emotional intensity can be enhanced.*

*The [Story of Stormy Emotions](#) is a re-presentation of alternative writing forms that symbolically challenges the traditional discourse of writing-up a dissertation. An illustration of blurring boundaries between "academic writing" and literary forms—poems constructed from my journal entries. It is a production of contextualizing the emotional journey within academic discourses of socio-cultural practices of anger and its expression and research discourses of analytical writing. So, even though I acknowledge the tension of writing about this particular piece and the differences that might emerge, I have also chosen to voice my tension by leaving some things unspoken and thus remaining partially **self-conscious** and **reflexive** (Richardson, 1997, Hertz, 1997, Gergen, 1999).*

*As I narrate my emotional experience, I understand and perform the notion of languaged realities. In the [Story of Stormy Emotions](#) I locate my internship experiences within experiences of unspeakable emotions and academic discourses, thus writing cultural and political discourses of being an intern and a researcher.*

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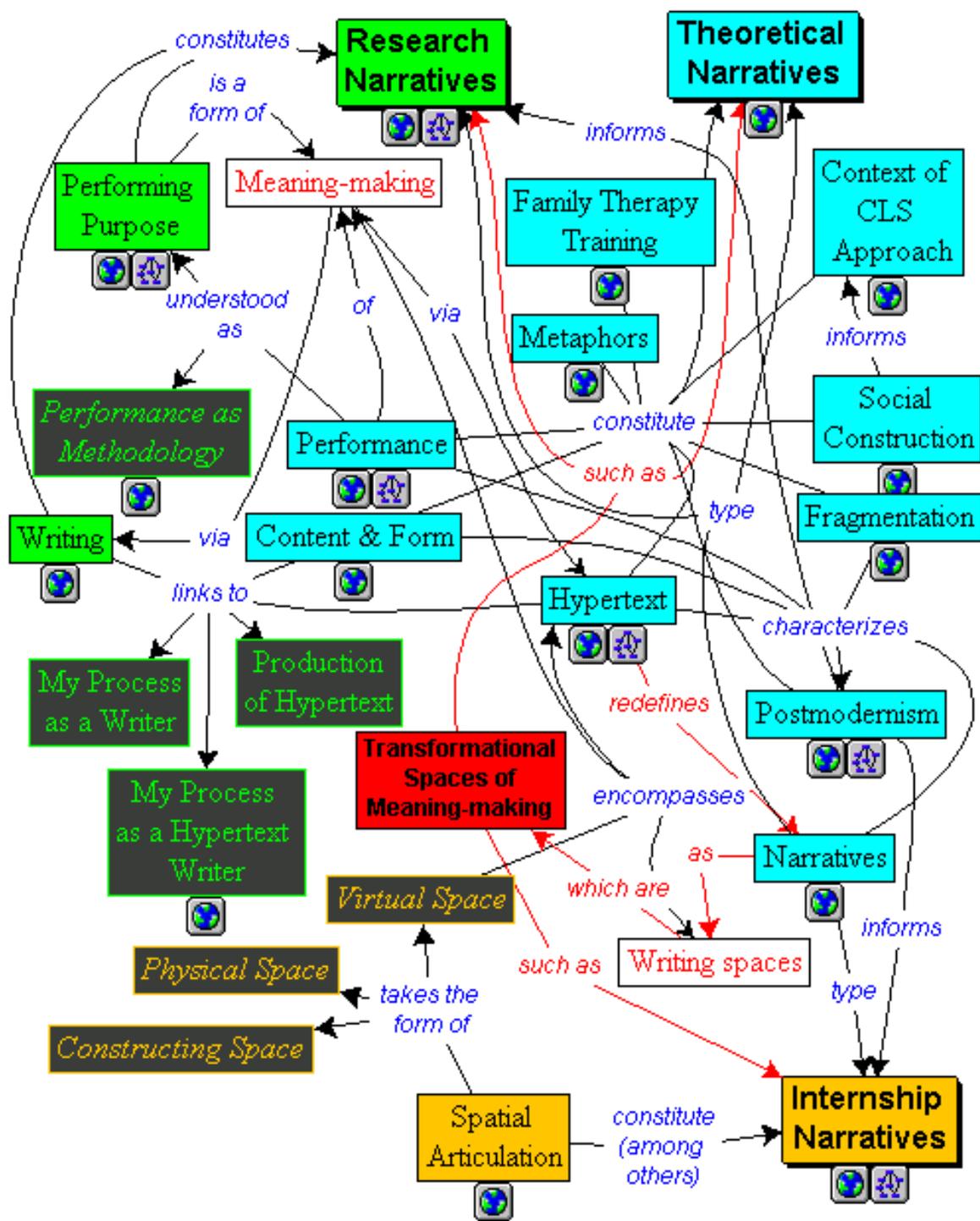
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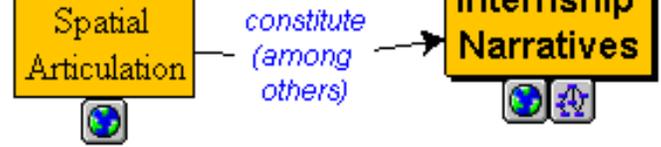


The dissertation web, a hypertext located within multiple discourses, is an intertextual script, a rendition, of my internship (1998-1999) and research experiences (1998-2001).

# RESEARCH IN FAMILY THERAPY TRAINING

- Abstract
- Theoretical Narratives
- Research Narratives
- Internship Narratives





**Map: Graphic Location of *Family Therapy Training* within the Dissertation Web**



Literature in this area is highly personal and impressionistic, often emotionally oriented, and not resting on a clear theoretical or conceptual base.

Liddle, 1991, p. 685

Liddle (1991) is referring to studies of trainee perceptions of training and supervision. He acknowledges that in a descriptive sense these studies can be helpful but questions the "personal" and "emotional" nature of these studies. I wonder how can any study that is focusing on the person's perception and experience of a phenomenon not be personal? His words indicate that the emotional orientation is not valued as much as the theoretical or conceptual orientation. I believe such positioning furthers Descartes' error (Damasio, 1994) and sets up dichotomies. Ellis (1991a, 1991b) states that Sociology has often neglected the emotional sociological discourses and thus introduces the introspective methodology. She emphasizes that an approach to study the emotional experience of lived experience includes reflecting inward as well as observing outward, filtering in, rather than out, the emotional experience along with the conceptual apparatus, emotional involvement and active participation that focus on subjective narratives and examine how social forms are imposed (Ellis, 1991). Thinkers, researchers, therapists, in the Marriage and Family therapy field, who are in the business of meaning making of reasons, beliefs and emotions in social relationships, should attend to our biases and reflect on how we create privileged "knowledge." Thus, how can we create a context for both the emotionally oriented and conceptually oriented inquiries? Rather, how can we blur the distinctions between "emotional" and "conceptual?" How can emotionally oriented inquiries be conceptualized theoretically? Further, how can the researcher bring one's emotions into a conceptually crystallized inquiry? I have endeavored to answer these questions via the dissertation web which serves the purpose of offering an alternative

research format.

Green and Kirby-Trunes (1990) studied five neophyte trainees in a supervised family therapy clinic over one year. Their goal was to track the changes that took place within the group and with the individual trainees. Some trainees changed by a tentative step-by-step process, whereas, others made a major shift in their theoretical orientation. The findings imply that there are multiple paths of learning and that the field can benefit from individualistic studies (Street, 1997, p. 105).

However, I do agree with Liddle (1991) about the lack of a conceptual framework. Packwood and Sikes (1996) state that the lack of contextualizing highly personal and individualistic researches could potentially result in approaches "that solely reflect personal experiences and emotions lead(ing) to self-indulgence and narcissism rather than to enhanced understanding and useful ways of viewing the world" (p. 335). I agree with Packwood, Sikes and Liddle regarding the importance of a conceptual framework and situating one's research, however, I question their tone when they refer to "personal" and "emotional" studies or their emphasis on contextualizing "personal" and "emotional" studies, since I think all research needs to be contextualized irrespective of the kind of research. Authors of both the studies implicitly present their respective values or biases regarding the purpose of research. Liddle's statement indicates his research orientation; namely "residing within the logico-scientific approach" (Street, 1997). Packwood and Sikes's statement could be interpreted to mean that there are some more useful ways of viewing the world than others; and though they situate themselves in the postmodern approach, they may be potentially privileging one particular research discourse—logico-scientific—over other discourses. I think of contextualizing and conceptual frameworks as explicating one's biases. Thus, irrespective of the kind of research, the researchers' practice of making their bias public introduces the reader to the researcher's chosen embodied discourse(s).

According to Liddle (1991), research of trainee's perception of training and supervision has a history of consistent contribution compared to other aspects of training and supervision research. However, the research is still sparse, and consistent research is not exhaustive or comprehensive research. "Trainees have been surveyed about their impressions of a

training program (Dowling, Cade, Breunlin, Frude, & Seligman, 1979), or specifically about live supervision (Liddle & Breunlin, 1988; Lowenstein, Reder, & Clark, 1982), and trainers and trainees have offered their views on the process of training (Dell, Sheely, Pulliam, & Goolishan, 1977; Henry, Sprenkle, & Sheehan, 1986; Wendorf, Wendorf, & Bond, 1985), and becoming a therapist from a variety of perspectives (Flores, 1979)" (Liddle, 1991). Most of these researches describe experiences at university training programs rather than internship experiences. Further, except for Flores (1979) none of the others focus on the lived experience. Most of the research was post hoc, rather than a concurrent, study of the training experience.

According to Street (1997), research in family therapy training has been program-centered rather than trainee-centered. He suggests that the training establishments must aim at the role of trainer/researcher in a way that encourages more qualitative research. In his analysis of the family therapy training research, he states, "the field has not yet embraced the move towards the growth of qualitative methods given the increased interest in social construction and narrative approach" (p. 96). He suggests that by using qualitative methodology the following issues can be addressed:

1. The relevance and effects of pre-course experience.
2. The nature of the trainee/trainer experience.
3. As training progresses, undertaking the process of changing trainee self-perceptions.
4. Nodal points in training, for example, the discovery of the 'therapeutic' process as opposed to the discovery of the workability of a particular theoretical model.
5. How trainees learn from clients.
6. Dealing with the period following a course, i.e. an individual outcome of a course.
7. Relating personal issues, for example, life events, to the process of training.
8. The trainers' expectations of trainees, and the trainees' expectation of trainers. (p. 108-109)

As I developed my inquiry, I drew on the above critique of research in family therapy training. I situated my "highly personal and individualistic" inquiry in the postmodern/social construction conceptual

framework. One of my research intentions was to be congruent among the various aspects of my inquiry: conceptual framework, research questions, methodology, analysis, and the context within which my training would occur, since Collaborative Language Systems (CLS) is identified as a postmodern approach to therapy. In the section titled [CLS Context](#), I locate my inquiry within the context of the CLS approach to therapy, training, and research. With the aim of being consistent I used a qualitative methodology to study the social meaning making of my experience of internship and research as I immersed myself in the training of a CLS therapist.

Originally, when I had proposed the study to my dissertation committee I had planned to narrate a story of my experience of the nature of trainee/trainer relationship; how I learn from clients, supervisees, and supervisors as my training progressed; and to relate these above issues to personal issues and discourses in the field (Street, 1997). However, as I immersed myself in the field I encountered my inquiry changing. Though I continued to narrate my experience of trainee/trainer relationships and related it to my personal life and discourses, however, I did not detail any stories of learning from clients. In the course of my research planning, I had acknowledged the relationship between the stories I would tell and the discourses; however, I had not anticipated some of the discourses that emerged as I progressed within my inquiry. One of the discourses that I have privileged in my narratives is the emotional discourse. Further, the [hypertext](#) and [research](#) discourse has tempered how I have chosen to narrate my experiences. Thus, I have adopted a nonlinear, reflexive, mixed narrative genre and a hypermedia format; that is, I am in a continuous critical and reflective dialogue about the stories I am telling as an embodiment of the social constructionist, emotional inquiry, hypertext, and research discourses. I have detailed other changes in a methodology section titled [Time and Shifts in Positions](#).

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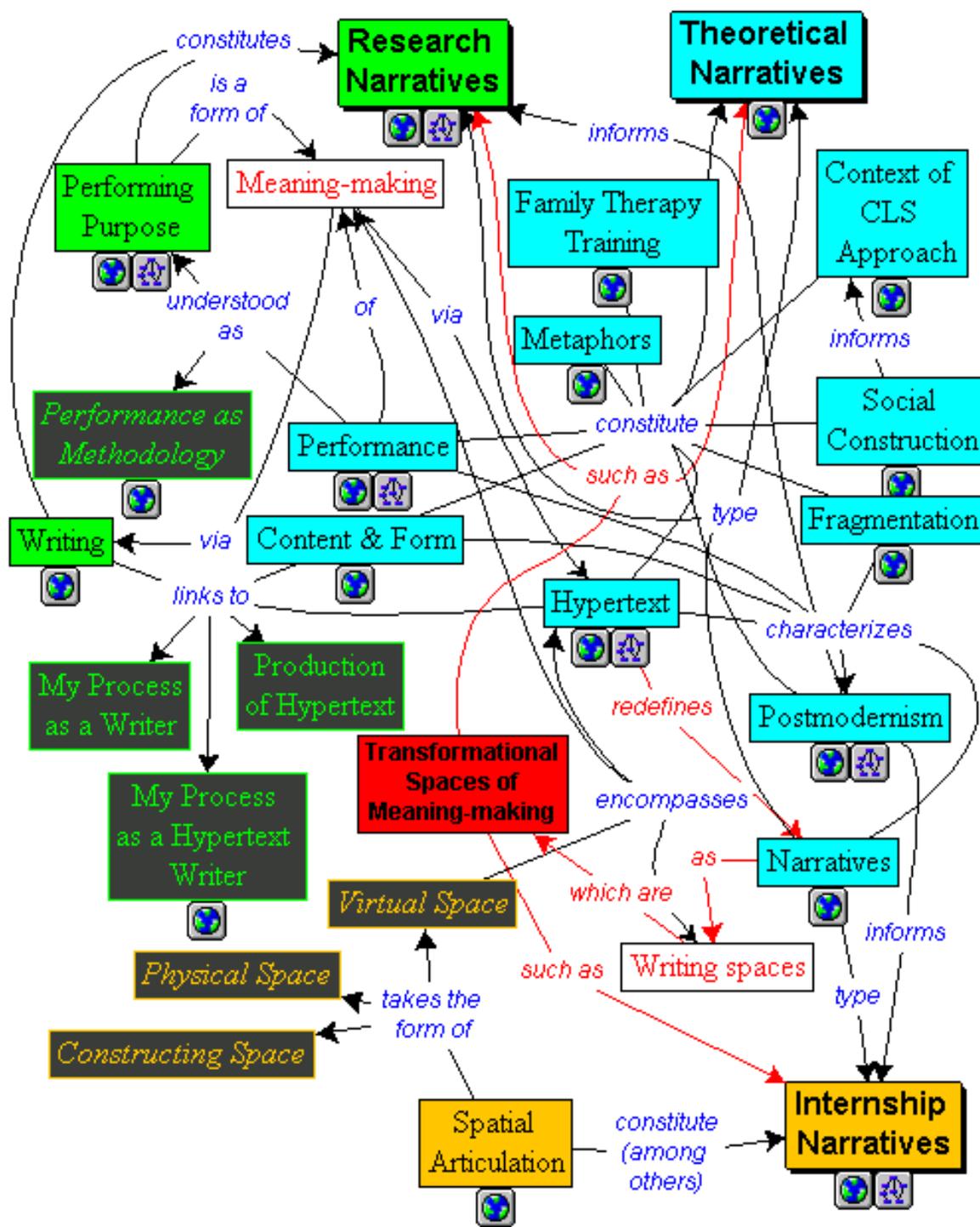
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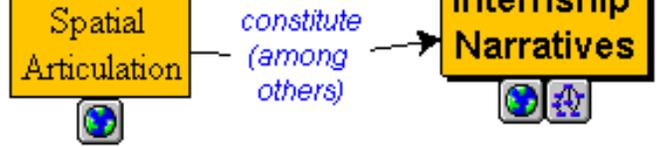


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# CONTEXT OF COLLABORATIVE LANGUAGE SYSTEMS APPROACH

- Abstract
- Theoretical Narratives
- Research Narratives
- Internship Narratives





**Map: Graphic Location of *Context of Collaborative Language Systems Approach* within the Dissertation Web**



Click for an interactive map.



Conversation—whether in therapy, in learning contexts, or in business consultations—is about helping people to access the courage and ability to "move about around things," to "have a clear view," to achieve self-agency.

Anderson, 1997, xviii

The primary tool of the therapist is one's own becoming (H. O. Protinsky, personal communication, 1996-1998) in a relationship through conversation. To presume that the client is the only person experiencing change in a therapeutic relationship implies an external, observer position being adopted by the therapist. Such a statement also indicates that the therapist is intervening within the client system and is himself or herself unaffected. The image I get is the cook (therapist) stirring the pot (client system). However, I believe that therapy is a conversational relationship (Anderson, 1997). In such a relationship both conversationalists cannot not be affected by the flow of conversation. Thus, as therapy is the process of becoming for the client, so is therapy, a process of becoming for the therapist. Teaching and learning therapy in part is about teaching and learning different forms of conversations. Learning to become a therapist includes focusing not only on the pragmatics of becoming a therapist but also focuses on the artistic nature of the therapist. Biographical sketches (Efron, 1986) and autobiographical narratives (Flores, 1979) of becoming a therapist substantiate that there is more to becoming a therapist than training. Research about family therapist training has focused on the relationship between the trainer and trainee, styles of supervision (Long, Lawless, & Dotson, 1996); trainee's perception of supervision (Brock & Sibbald, 1988; Berger & Buchholz, 1993; Gurman, 1983; Loewenstein & Reder, 1982; Wetchler, 1989; Wetchler, Piercy, & Sprenkle, 1989); and self of

the therapist (Shadley, 1987). However, there is hardly any research on the gestalt experience of becoming a therapist.

The field of marriage and family therapy has been at the cutting edge of psychotherapy. The field has responded to the current issues by adopting various stances regarding cybernetics, feminism, postmodernism and narrative influences. However, research and research methodology have not kept pace with the changes in the field (Street, 1997). The practice of therapy from a postmodern approach is gaining momentum in the field, but a review of the research literature does not reflect this change. There is a steady growth in the substantive or theoretical papers (see *Journal of Systemic Therapies*) that are published as compared to research papers in the area of postmodern approaches to therapy. Narrative therapy and Collaborative Language Systems are both postmodern approaches to therapy. For the purpose of this study I will be referring to the Collaborative Language Systems (CLS) approach only.

Collaborative Language Systems is a philosophical stance, and it emerges from the works of Harlene Anderson and Harry Goolishian. This stance emerged over the last 40 years as the Galveston Family Institute evolved into the Houston Galveston Institute. The "Institute took a rigorous theoretical position that can best be described as a cybernetic, systems-oriented, strategic, brief psychotherapy. By brief we mean the total amount of time a therapy takes, by strategic we mean planned, and by systemic we mean cybernetic" (Anderson, Goolishian, Pulliam & Winderman, 1986, p.111). They acknowledge the influence of many theoreticians and therapists, such as, Laing, Weakland, Watzlawick, Hoffman, Patton, Keeney, Boscolo, Cecchin, Maturana, and Von Foerster on the evolution of their theoretical position. In their earlier works (Anderson et al, 1986), they acknowledge the great influence of the constructivist position and identify their work so. In their later works, Anderson (1997) adopts a social constructionist position in therapy. She distinguishes between constructivism and social constructionism. Constructivism emphasizes that "knowing is an adaptive activity" (Von Glasersfeld, 1984). Reality, and therefore, knowledge are thought to be personally constructed, which according to Gergen (1994) "is logged within the tradition of western individualism." Social constructionism emphasizes the communal meaning-making process- "the mind is relational and the development of meaning is discursive" (Anderson,

1997, p. 44). In her current theoretical position, Anderson identifies with the latter epistemological stance. The shift in the epistemological stances over the last forty years from systems/cybernetics to constructivism to social constructionism illustrates how she and the Institute are always learning and that their work seems to be always transforming.



### **Key Characteristics**

As explicated by Anderson (1997), some key characteristics of this philosophical stance that informs my performance are as follows:

*Not-knowing:* This position refers to a therapist's position- an attitude and belief-that a therapist does not have access to privileged information, can never fully understand the other person, always needs to be in a state of being informed by the other, and always needs to learn more about what has been said or may not have been said. Not-knowing is a position similar to Bruner's (1990) "narrative posture" (Anderson, 1997). Such a position focuses on the process of therapy, which is the the therapist's expertise, rather than focusing on the content or aiming to change a structure that has been identified as pathological (Anderson, 1997).

*Conversational Partners:* The client and the therapist are in a relational system in the process of becoming conversational partners. According to Anderson (1997), the process of "telling, inquiring, interpreting, and shaping of the narratives" (p. 95) makes them conversational partners.

*Therapist as the Creator and Facilitator of Dialogue Space and Process:* The therapist brings his or her expertise in the area of process. This involves the process of "keeping all voices in motion and contributing" to the emerging narratives of the clients. The position of multipartiality is assumed by the therapist. Multipartiality refers to attending to each person's narrative of an experience without privileging one story over the other. Multipartiality is not being neutral, rather, it is the process of inviting everyone's story.

*A "Way of Being" versus a "System for Doing":* There is nothing recipe-like in this approach to therapy. Each therapist brings one's own uniqueness to therapy, to each relationship with each client, and to each

session with a client. "It entails the ability, flexibility, and willingness to allow shifts in thinking and behavior to flow with what the situation demands" (Anderson, 1997, p. 98).

*Therapist Risks Changing:* Since it is a relational system, not only the client but also the therapist is likely to change. The therapist's thoughts, actions, belief systems, and values are challenged in the course of therapy.

*Being Public:* This refers to the therapist's readiness to share one's own inner dialogues, thoughts, musings, questions, etc. In Anderson's (1997) words "in doing so, opening myself to feedback, evaluation, and critique. Consequently, I expose myself more as a person to all those with whom I work" (p. 103).

*Shared Responsibility and Accountability:* "When a therapist takes this reflective stance, the dualism and hierarchy between a client and a therapist collapse and responsibility and accountability are shared" (Anderson, 1997, p. 105).

*Research and Learning as Part of Everyday Practice:* According to Anderson (1997), awareness, openness, and reflection combine to become research-and-learning, which are everyday processes of transformation as a professional and a private person in her life. The process of research-and-learning as everyday practice is Anderson's local knowledge based on her experience with clients, colleagues, students, and others.

A review of the research literature about the CLS approach to therapy reveals only three "empirical" research study (Gehart-Brooks, 1997; Roberts, 1990; Swint, 1994). All three studies used qualitative methodology to focus on the clients' experience of change in therapy (Gehart-Brooks, 1997; Swint, 1994) and clients' experience of being involuntarily involved in family therapy. Thus, one can conclude that there is a dearth of research in this area.

However, a review of CLS literature reveals consistent contribution, which may be identified as substantive or theoretical. Based on Anderson's local knowledge of research-and-learning as everyday

practices, one may conclude that research is inherent in the CLS approach to therapy, as is exemplified in the CLS literature. However, the prevailing dominant discourse of "What is research?" as guided by the positivist, logico-scientific paradigm limits which aspects of the CLS literature can be labeled as "research" literature. From the position of research and learning as integrated processes, when I reviewed the CLS literature I found inquiry that related the therapist and client's voices (Anderson, 1996, 1997); therapist's experiences and growth (Anderson, 1990; Goolishian, 1990); experience of the trainer and trainee (Anderson & Rambo, 1988; Anderson & Swim, 1993, 1995). As stated earlier, none of them are inquiries into the experience of a yearlong internship at the Institute, as one immerses oneself in the CLS approach to therapy on the path to evolve as a CLS therapist.

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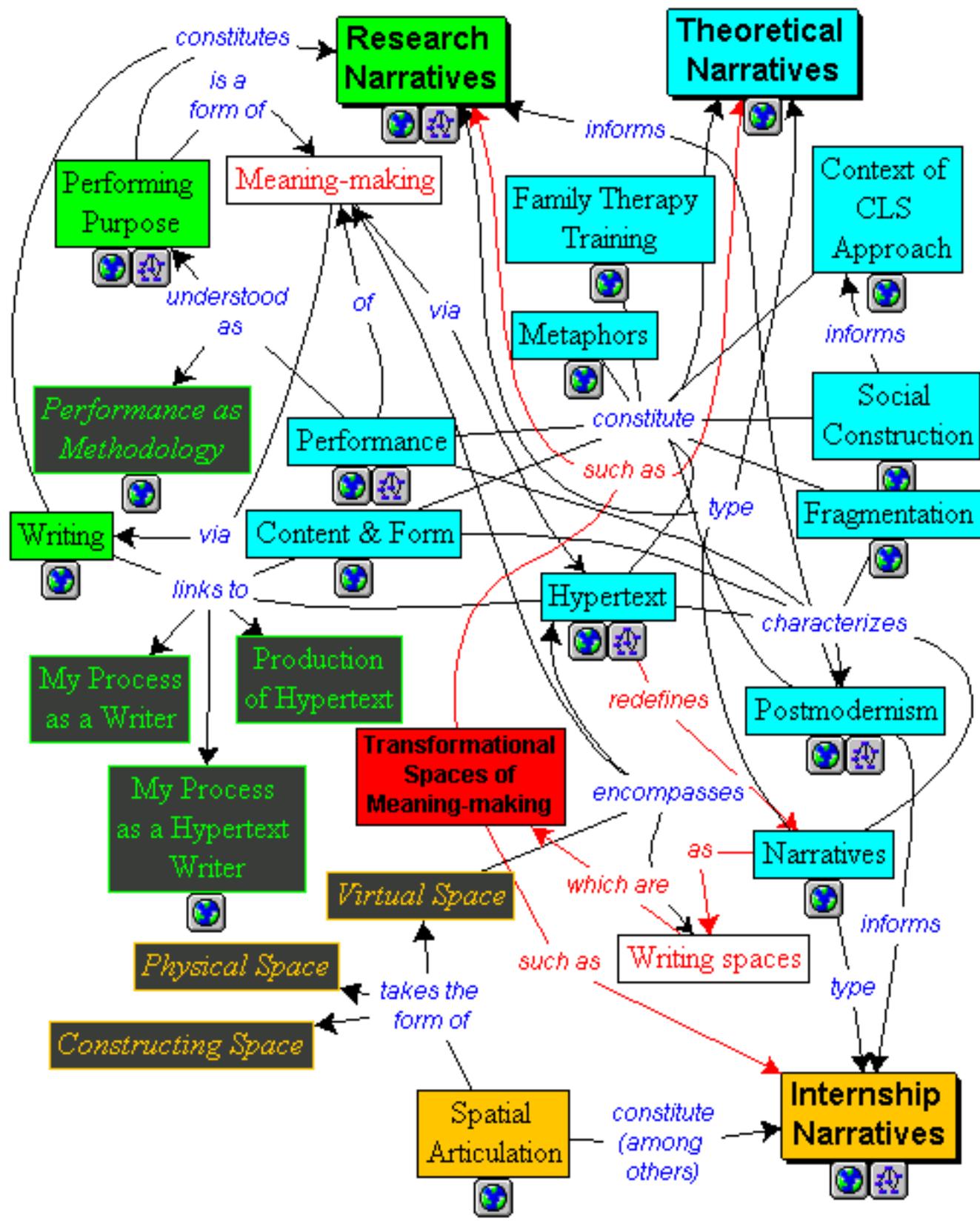
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# HYPertext

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The following are the interlinks to understanding *hypertext*:

**NOTE**

To run movie: Click on the movie space

Movie not visible: Please download 24hypertext.mov.

To view outside pdf: Use Quick Time player or plug in.

*Abstract*

*Theoretical Narratives*

*Research Narratives*

*Internship Narratives*

[Introduction](#)

[Deconstructing the Narrative](#)

[Intertextuality](#)

[Electronic Writing](#)

[My Process as a Hypertext-Writer](#)

[Production of Hypertext](#)

Performance

Constructing Space





Map: Locating *Hypertext* within the Dissertation Web



Click for an Interactive Map

## Introduction

In the 1960s, [Theodor H. Nelson](#) coined the term *Hypertext* to mean "non-sequential writing-text that branches and allows choices to the reader, best read at an interactive screen. As popularly conceived, this is a series of text chunks connected by links which offer the reader different pathways" (Literary Machines, 0/2). [Project Xanadu](#) was the hypertext prototype that was envisioned, by Nelson, as a way of going "beyond paper" and to eliminate it. To go beyond paper meant going beyond the connections that are possible on paper. Thus introducing the praxis of interface.

Nelson, who continues to battle for a different hypertextual world, contends that "hypertext is not technology but Literature." He states that "the Web is the minimal concession to hypertext that a sequence-and-hierarchy chauvinist could possibly make" (1998). Nelson draws on parallelism in his vision of hypertext. He defines parallelism as "considering how things are alike and different, which requires...comparing them in parallel" (1998). Hypertext was initially intended to function as the parallel (re-) arrangement of similar materials with unbroken connectivity. Though intended to develop parallel structure, that would have had the capacity for two-way connectivity, the web, as it has evolved today, is structurally captured by designers who are trapped in the linearity of western thought. Not only does the web continue to be a misnomer for its structure and function but also the conceptualization of "mark-up languages" that are being developed, for the purposes of creating a web, (ironically) are structured linearly and hierarchically. (Mark-up language is meta-language that makes the text and images look the

way they do on the web screen). Thus, hypertext as conceptualized by its originator lives on to take different meanings as its structure and function is socially constructed.

In contrast to Nelson, George Landow, popular hypertext theorist, identifies hypertext as technology. Landow and Delany (1991) define hypertext as "the use of the computer to transcend the linear, bounded and fixed qualities of the traditional written text" (1991). According to Landow (1997) "*hypertext* ...denotes text composed of blocks of text-what Barthes terms a *lexia*-and the electronic links that join them....hypertext blurs the boundaries between reader and writer and therefore instantiates another quality of Barthes's ideal text." Consequently, hypertext creates multilinear and multisequential experience for the reader/writer. [Amaral](#) (2000) states that

hypertext is simply a non-linear way of presenting information. Rather than reading or learning about things in the order that an author, or editor, or publisher sets out for us, readers of hypertext may follow their own path, create their own order-- their own meaning out [sic] the material.

In my initial dissertation efforts, I defined *hypertext as a network of chunks of text linked to each other electronically* even though, I believe that hypertext is not limited to the electronic medium. As I progressed through the intertextual process of creating the dissertation web, I came closer to explaining hypertext as a multifaceted notion: *Hypertext is a mental, visual, social and technical process of intertextuality and plurality of thoughts/ideas in reading, listening, and writing inter- and intra-linked lexias that are embedded in curiosity, fragmentation, connectivity, community discourses and search for social meaning-making.*

The [Project Xanadu](#) team (2000) views the world wide web (WWW) as trivializing the original notion of hypertext, protesting the "diabolic dumbdown" of hypertext by WWW (2000). Though they

view the current usage of hypertext softwares as simulating the print medium, other hypertext users introduce an important perspective that has evolved as a result of the growing popularity of the WWW. The increased accessibility of WWW and relative ease in learning HTML with which to compose websites has led to the notion of electronic composition or writing. [Mindy McAdams](#), a hypertext writer, states that "hypertext does not re-create a print environment on a screen; rather, it offers a wholly different way of moving through and among texts. Because of this, hypertext can vastly improve the usability of texts within a screen (or frame) structure. But because the screen is so different from print, it must be understood that hypertext requires a different handling of text." Such is the recreation of the hypertext writers who are prolific users of the electronic medium, probably more than the print medium ([Mason, 2000](#)).

Just as postmodernist and post-structural philosophies blur disciplinary boundaries, hypertext theories are not limited by disciplinary boundaries. The hypertext premises such as the notions of non-linearity ([Barthes](#)), decentering the text and author ([Derrida](#)), open text and the impossibility of closure along with polyvocality ([Bakhtin](#)) and the complex network of texts or [intertextuality](#) (Derrida & [Lemke](#)) are key postmodern and poststructural notions that are central to my research process. Johnson-Eilola (1997) cautions us to go beyond postmodern theories towards cultural studies theories to realize the complexity of hypertext. Since, cultural studies theories are beyond the scope of my dissertation web, I will limit myself to the postmodern notions. I weave the various notions through out my dissertation web as they inform my performance as a hypertext writer. Selecting the notion will take you to spaces within my dissertation web where I delineate the notion in words or in practice—the experience of hypertext writing and reading. Selecting the theorist will take you outside my dissertation web for a more comprehensive understanding of the respective theorists.



## Deconstructing the Narrative

We must abandon conceptual systems founded upon ideas of center, margin, hierarchy, and linearity, and replace them with ones of multilinearity, nodes, links, and networks. Almost all parties to this paradigm shift, which marks a revolution in human thought, see electronic writing as a direct response to the strengths and weaknesses of the printed book. This response has profound implications for literature, education, and politics.

Landow, 1997

Hypertext challenges the western notion of [narrative](#). It calls into question (1) fixed sequences, (2) definite beginnings and endings, (3) a story's 'certain definite magnitude,' and (4) the conception of unity or wholeness associated with all these other concepts" (Landow, 1997, p. 181). Rather than produce a linear text, the hypertext facilitates a montage of lexias linked electronically. The notion of plot is "central" to narrative. However in hypertext the center is fluid and evanescent. Since the center is not a centered "text" rather it's an ephemerally "centered" lexia, that is actively chosen by the reader from a complex composition of lexias, which is marginalized by a subsequently chosen lexia. Such movement between various lexias challenges fixed textual sequences and rather than singular "beginnings" and "endings" there are multiple entries and pauses.

Thus, the "text shows what it is telling, does what it says, displays its own making, reflects its own action" ([Pockley, 1995](#)). As you will experience in my work the genres produced change with the plot and the setting of the stories (Landow, 1997). Thus, form and content compliment one another and convey their own unique meaning within one's intertextual context.



## Intertextuality

Intertextuality, introduced by French semiotician Julia Kristeva in the late sixties, is derived from the Latin *intertexto*, meaning to intermingle while weaving (2001). Jay Lemke, an educationalist at the City University of New York, states in his book *Textual Politics* (1995) that

textual meaning is not separable in principle from the rhetorical contexts of production and use of a text. If the meaning of any fragment of a text...is defined to be the *contribution* of that fragment to the meaning of some larger unit, then we can see the pointlessness of trying to circumscribe 'the meaning' of such fragments in isolation....The probabilities of co-occurrence of wordings and their larger textual, situational, and intertextual contexts is itself an essential resource for meaning-making. (p. 56-57)

Thus, "all meaning is intertextual. No text is complete or autonomous in itself; it needs to be read, and it is read, in relation to other texts" (Lemke, 1995, p.41). Consequently, each textual frame in hyper-space is in a relationship to other textual frames depending on the reader's path and other factors-cultural/community discourses and life experiences. The writer's intended meaning varies from each reading as each reader negotiates his/her path to the dissertation web. Thus, the author ceases to exist. The larger context, determined by the reader's path and his/her discourses with in which the web-viewing is occurring provide the reading of the dissertation web with varied meaning frames. For instance, a reader interested in the issues of hypertext would forge a different path of navigating the dissertation web than a reader interested in the substantive issues of internship, research or methodological issues of autoethnography.

Hypertextuality embodies the concept of intertextuality (Landow, 1997). Hypertext brings to life the concept of intertextuality in a physical and experiential sense that is intangible when using the linear text. Linearity of the print text maintains the abstractness of

the construct, intertextuality. Intertextuality, however, in the hypertextual realm, needs no explanation rather an experiential moment in (hyper)space is performed.



## **Electronic Writing**

Writing for the web is different than writing a linear text or a text-based dissertation (Amaral, 2000). [Amaral](#) points out that there are numerous articles that cover the technical aspects of [hypertext](#) but not the application or the process of writing (link). She stresses four elements of web writing: content, organization, style, and audience. Though these four elements are similar to writing a printed text, the process is different because of the interactiveness of the web. The electronic context of web writing introduces a layer not present in paper-based texts. The electronic writing contextualizes the content differently than paper-based text, such that to strip the context can make the textual content seemingly meaningless ([Pockley, 1997](#)). For instance, if you read a paper-based printout of this text you are confined by the linear progression of this text, unless you go back and forth. In the hypertext version however, you will be able to access the websites of Amaral and Pockley as you are reading this document as well as go back and forth and jump to other parts of the dissertation web. You may have noticed that I shifted my perspective from the writer to the reader. The writer and the reader are integral parts of electronic writing since such a writer is a composer at many levels rather than content only. Such a writer is often a reader of other electronic texts ([Mason, 2000](#)) in search of inspiration, criteria, and ideas which provide form, function and fecundity. Often as a [hypertext writer](#) one composes the content and structure but the navigation and the integrated modes of expression are viewed as a reader.

The content for electronic writing is very similar to writing for a paper-based text. However with the entry of the electronic context the [production of hypertext](#) changes.



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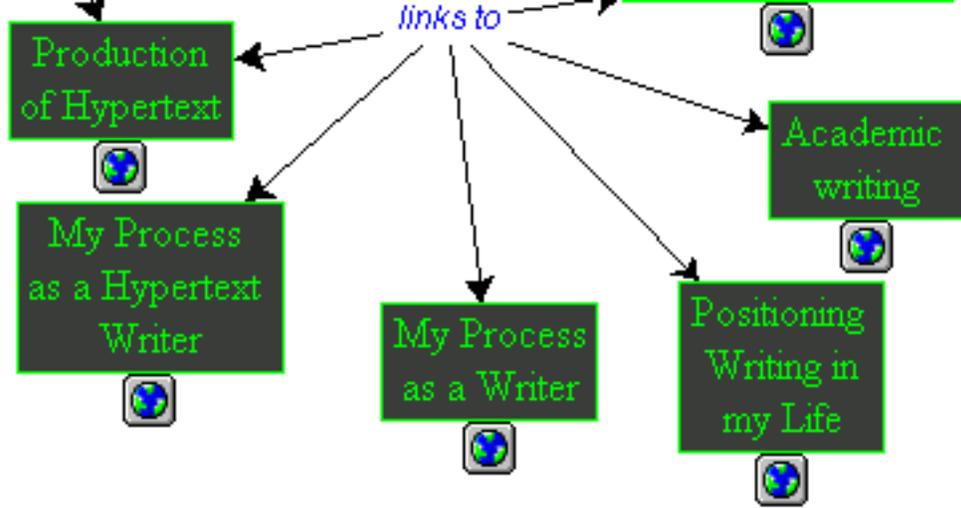
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The dissertation web, a hypertext located within multiple discourses, is an intertextual script, a rendition, of my internship (1998-1999) and research experiences (1998-2001).

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# METHODOLOGY

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# METHODOLOGY

## AN INTRODUCTION

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### STORIES ABOUT STORIES

After having completed three research projects and written three reports I found myself at an unusual place. I was struggling with how to write this "chapter." I had a clear idea that I wanted this "chapter" to be available in two formats: [implicit](#) and [explicit](#). You are perhaps here because of your interest in how *explicitly* I did my research, because you are a committee member evaluating my work, or because you have to make sure that I follow the academic discourse regarding methodology chapters.

*How is one expected to write this linear narrative with arbitrary categories that have been determined by a tradition of what a scientific report should constitute? How should someone who has chosen to situate oneself within the framework of "constructing difference" and is caught up in the idea of "challenging the traditional research practices in praxis" write an explicit research methodology chapter?*

I spent hours pouring through the various online dissertations, reading for the methods sections. Sometimes I found myself re-orienting myself to the three research reports I had written earlier. At other times, I was exhausted and found myself very fragile. I often had the urge to scream. Or, I would find myself sitting bent-over clutching my midrib, rocking back and forth. Or I would sit with my knees pulled under my chin and my arms tightly wrapped

around my legs. I had chosen to not teach the introductory course in research methodology at the Our Lady of the Lake University, Houston Program, in the Fall of 2000 as I was writing this text because I found the foundational approaches limiting my creativity. I am still attempting to find myself at a creative juncture where I can position myself within and without modernist and postmodernist discourses. Its tougher to do so as I am constantly in dialogue with one particular way of being-postmodern than another-modern.

So, I have chosen to take shelter in what Marcus defines as "messy text," since such a text enhances my creativity and performance (Marcus, 1994). I would like to tell the story of my research process during the pre-and post "analysis" phase as a "messy text" since such a re-presentation comes closest to my experiential moments as a researcher. Marcus identifies authors of messy texts as being engaged in experimental work to produce more than a "special pleading, self-indulgence, avant-gradism or a genius act" text, rather struggling to provide new cognitive mappings from conventional form (1994). Though my work is experimental, my struggle also lies in not knowing how much further I can move from conventional forms to create a different "text."

I am struck by what I am creating just as I write this "chapter." I am practicing what I tell my students and what I have been told about writing: "Just start writing what is on your mind and the rest will follow." "Don't worry about writing well" (Goldberg, 1986, p 110).

To give a clean cut story of a messy research process seems to go against my grain and research experience. But I have been psyching myself with different tricks to get to the position of telling you the story. Before I share the tricks let me tell you something more about myself.

I seem to work best when I imagine my mind as a percolator after having read something. The different readings seem to form an

interesting blend and flow with a life of their own, which is a fascinating creative process for producing texts. During this process I have to be immersed in the ideas that are percolating or in dialogue with each other. Then I have to trust the way in which the newness emerges from the internal dialogues. I imagine the percolation process as an inner dialogue about and among the various texts. The inner conversation distills its way through my fingers via the keyboard on to the computer screen. As I type, I can find myself silently citing some of the ideas, which furthers the notion of an internal dialogue. So, in practice I read familiar texts or texts with similar or challenging ideas and then I may move on to another activity, such as a physical task and/or write my reflections of the readings. During this process my internal dialogue continues and at a later time I return to my computer with my new distilled thoughts.

As I read other dissertations, I asked myself to imagine how I would write this chapter if I approached it from a conventional perspective. I asked myself to write as a student writing for a school project and as a teacher writing a sample paper for my students in a research methodology class. Some other self-talk included, "Imagine writing for a person who has no idea about the various subjective methodologies. What will be an important story to tell? What will I tell an audience who come to a conference to listen to my methodology?"

Reading other researchers' methodologies revealed the number of different ways of proceeding to produce a text titled, "Methodology." Some common elements were research design, sample, data collection, data analysis, research process, and perhaps a personal narrative about the researcher. But what is one expected to write when the sample is oneself? The data collection was very simply a journal and a collection of artifacts and the research process was messy. Though the process seems to have made me a bigger skeptic about the academic and research discourses, I think the skepticism fits in with my postmodern positioning as a person who is incredulous of meta-narratives

(Lyotard, 1984). So in keeping with the purpose of being explicit, I see the above narrative as part of the process of reflexive writing of the current methodological text, especially since, report-writing is an integral part of the research.

In the methodology sections I re-present a narrative of my [research design](#), [autoethnography](#), performance as methodology, and writing-in-inquiry. I introduce my [practicing posits](#) as a guide to reading of the subsequent text. The practicing posits are detailed elsewhere in the dissertation web and may be accessed by selecting the links. I then juxtapose my [original research position](#) with the constructed research process titled as the *Time and Shifts in Position* in the [Research Design: Changing Forms](#) section.

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## POETIC RE-PRESENTATION OF METHODOLOGY

'Observing' does not produce what is observed. (That is a conceptual statement.)  
Wittgenstein, 1958, p. 187e

Welcome! You are beginning a journey of experimental re-presentation in the era of "Crises of Re-presentation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Each section is representative of a stylistic variation within the experimental re-presentation genre. I have aimed at a nontraditional dissertation style that nurtures various ways of re-presenting my inquiry and theoretical focus. The dissertation journey is a walk on the cutting edges of postmodern research trail located within discourses and navigationally aided by the state of art technology. What is re-presented is not the represented.



### FIREBRAND

What follows are 3 stories told in tandem: a personal narrative from my life before and after internship, internship experience, and method narratives. All three are juxtaposed with texts quoted from Moustakas' (1995) book *Being-in, Being-for, Being-with* which serve as theoretical narratives from contemporary scholarship that experientially aims to invite you to intertextuality (Lemke, 1995). My intention is to invite you to contemplate on your experiences of re-presentation as you walk along my experiences.

*Abstract*

*Theoretical Narratives*

*Research Narratives*

*Internship Narratives*

The firebrand is the person who recognizes what is natural, what is organic, what is alive and vital in life, the person who dares to live, to be, and to create, often in the face of interference, rejection, deceit, and betrayal.  
Moustakas, 1995

The firebrand is  
a burning  
ember, life that  
is in each of us  
and that  
provides the  
spark and  
energy to speak  
against what  
distorts, hides,  
and denies our  
being and truth.  
It is that which  
awakens within  
in us,

when we must  
declare our  
independence or  
when we  
discover a new  
formula for  
living.

I am in my school  
auditorium. My  
classmates are  
planning a school  
production. We are  
planning a group  
song. I am eager to  
participate. The group  
leader is attempting to  
organize us for our  
rehearsal schedule. As  
we are discussing  
possibilities, it dawns  
on me that I will not

be able to participate since the rehearsals will be after school. My family doesn't own a car. I know mom will not allow me. I try to suggest within school times. I also know that I don't have a singing voice. So will they even care? I feel they really don't give a damn. All of a sudden I feel the Kali rising in me! I feel possessed. I have control and yet I have no control.

I scream.

I am in the middle of the auditorium. I'm on stage. I'm in my body and outside my body. I'm talking to the group and I can see myself talking to the group. I'm calm inside and shaking with rage on the outside. I say my piece and exit with the door banging behind me!

My first public performance of rage at

social injustice.

I am 16 years of age.

I make a vow.

It is the path that enables us to participate in the mystery of creation, uniquely and individually.

The firebrand expresses her-or himself in two basic ways: as the torch that lights up the darkness, and as the carrier of the torch, throwing light into the darkness, and often disturbing complacency and brewing trouble.

Being a firebrand is a way of raising temperatures and creating conflict, turbulence, and dissension.

I vowed to speak my truth.

## My Truth

My truth is to speak  
my mind

My truth is to feel my  
experience

My truth is being  
My truth is doing

My truth is to be in  
communities

My truth is to be in  
relationships

My truth is relational  
My truth is unique

My truth is to give  
respect

My truth is to receive  
respect

My truth is experience  
My truth is language

My truth is in re-  
presentation

My truth is in  
immersion and re-  
experience

My truth is subjective  
My truth is  
intersubjective

My truth is in  
construction

My truth is in de-  
construction

My truth is isness  
My truth is was and  
will change

The motive of the firebrand is not to attack or destroy others but to bring to light a basic truth, to take a stand, and to declare and own who one is, especially in the face of perceived violations of one's values and rights and interference with one's goals, purposes, and meanings.

*My first supervision of supervision session with my co-supervisors:*

After introductions and agenda development, I move onto the topic of co-supervision. I address one of my co-supervisors and state my confusion of what happened when we were co-supervising. I state how I felt-"that she cut me off." I'm curious to know her thoughts. My intention is "lets be open and share our

In relation to one's self, the firebrand engages in reflection and self dialogue that evokes awareness of ideas, projects, and goals, insights into one's deviance from others, and particularly from mainstream people.

experiences."

I am acting on my truth but did not explicate my truth!

I often regret my lack of mindfulness in that supervision of supervision session. I had been with our supervisors of supervision for two months, unlike my co-supervisors, who were new! My invitation for openness was probably misconstrued!

Maybe I came across as issuing a challenge since I was choosing to deviate from the "main stream." I wish I could have been a more "public" (Anderson, 1997) firebrand!

The firebrand chooses to be different when being different represents a truth, when being different guides the fulfillment of basic human values and actualization of one's potentials.

I chose to be different when I performed public "rage" at 16-years of age.

I was speaking my truth.

My truth of being unheard!

I chose to be different when I came to America for higher education as a single woman.

I was speaking my truth.

My truth of equality for women!

I chose to be different when I chose to deconstruct my questions for my preliminary examination; exams which determined my doctoral candidacy.

I was speaking my truth.

My truth of theoretical consistency!

In relation to others, the firebrand seeks to maintain what is unique and distinctive, what will enrich a relationship and keep it alive in fundamental ways.

My inquiry is my other and part of myself. What you are experiencing is my effort to invite you into uniqueness in relation to re-presentation and me.

So I wonder, what are you experiencing?

I struggled with "how to re-present my internship experience?" "How not to re-create the canonical ways of representation?" Since I believe the traditional re-presentation assumes that theory and method are separate; that representation of data will provide you with an insight of my internship experience; that you- the reader will have an accurate picture of my experience or may be even know my experience. I believe that these are discourses. I believe in the discourse of theory/methodology (Ellis & Bochner, 1996). The two are intertwined. I don't think the map is the territory (Bateson, 1978). Often methodology is implicit in our presentational and re-presentational efforts. The research experience is rarely linear. So why do we choose to "write up" the process so simplistically and linearly? *The very process of inquiry re-presentation is an inquiry construction*

*process.*

How is your experience currently different from when you read traditionally represented research texts?



## LANGUAGE AS CONSTITUTIVE

Somehow I too must find a way of making things; not plastic, written things, but realities that arise from the craft itself.

Somehow I too must discover the smallest constituent element, the cell of my art, the tangible immaterial means of expressing everything...

Letters on Cezanne by Rainer Maria Rilke

I believe language is constitutive (Anderson, 1997) and representative at the same time. We construct as we language. And we attempt to make sense of our experience via languaging, which introduces a re-presentational quality of language. The written text is a craft of language. However, I often experience language an unfulfilling tool to construct the ineffable. As Rilke states above, art provides me with another "tangible immaterial" tool of expressing myself, though not everything. Art expands the meaning of language. Paint, crayons, color pens and paper provide me with mediums to create and construct different experiences.

My body is stretched out  
I feel the carpeted floor against  
my curved left side  
my folded knee  
the tip of my toe

Feel of the crayon  
intensity  
shade  
flow and form  
take on a meaning of its own.

I return charged and stimulated to my computer to type away the thoughts that seem to synthesize and create various dialogues-internal and external. I sense a rhythm. And I continue.



## TIME

Here is a place as I sit listening and stop writing. Just listening. Kind of paralyzed. Kind of wanting that level of immersion but holding myself back. Caught between "a job to be done" and a story. But an important story- meaningful and yet self-doubting. Cynically questioning its value. Why not wrap up and move on? Get on with life. Time! There "time" again-another story of my life.

Time  
Running Time, Slow time  
Quick time, real time  
Linear time, circular time  
Time!  
Yet another story.

Which stories do I tell and with what purpose? Should I make a statement or complete a task? Either way time is running out and its "just" a dissertation. Got to get my degree! And yet I'm "just" beginning!





## WRITING

I chose the method of journaling not only because it was tool of data collection for my inquiry but also because it was a challenge for me. I grew up within the academic discourse that writing is important.

Not writing is an academic suicide. But for me "just" writing is a doing and not a process of being. I have deep faith that I'm evolving as a writer and the pieces are coming together as I find a way of expressing ideas. I choose to not stand behind ideas that are fluid, so as not to get stuck but stand in front, in curiosity, wonderment and doubt.

My growth with writing has been a struggle, a journey, and a life event that is a process; a process that is relationally connected to events in time and space. It is a process of growth, a path of exploration, a construction and invention and intervention of self.

My earliest thought about writing was when I was in school and did well in grammar. I used to score good grades in all my grammar tests. I was proud of my grammar. I used to help my sister, who is six years older than me, in identifying participle, past participle, present participle and infinitive etc. But the actual process of writing was [another whole story](#).



## SENSEMAKING

We of the here and now are not for a moment hedged in the time-world, nor confined with it, we are incessantly flowing over and over to those who preceded us, to our origins and

to those who seemingly come after us.  
Selected Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke

I struggled with how to "analyze" my journal. How do I write the story I want to tell? It makes sense to me, but what do I tell my reader-you. And then it all came together on the beaches of the sunny state- Florida when I was on my dissertation retreat. The days in Florida were actually a treat. A treat to be in conversation with like minded people. A community. A group of people who spoke from their own experience. A place and way of knowing that was not meant to be defended but shared. In that moment, I experienced freeing myself from the shackles of "how to" and slipping into the freedom of experience and creativity. The experience of the activity held the moment of knowing.

Poems are not . . . simply emotions . . . they are experiences. For the sake of a single poem, you must see many cities, many people and things . . . and know the gestures which small flowers make when they open in the morning. You must be able to think back to streets in unknown neighborhoods, to unexpected encounters, and to partings you have long seen coming; to days of childhood whose mystery is still unexplained . . .to childhood illnesses . . . to mornings by the sea, to the sea itself, to seas, to nights of travel . . . and it is still not enough.

Rainer Maria Rilke, 1992

I found myself moving in and out of stories that I had never written, never told but had lived. Lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990) that were to later define and construct my course of inquiry. Stories that would be re-constructed to re-present the construction of my internship experience as a [performance](#). Storying a performance and performing multiple stories.

I felt good.

I felt a sense of peace.

I felt pride.

Such is the experience, according to Moustakas (1995), when "one discovers what one has been searching to know." Moustakas asserts from a phenomenological perspective, which builds on the implication that each individual has an essential core of being. I however, believe my experiences are constructions; a communal experience of meaning making. An experience that flows out of generative conversations that fosters one's lived experience over impersonal identity-less metanarratives.

Ellis and Bochner (1996) dialogue in their book *Composing Ethnography* that the world of social science and literature are merging. However, they caution that the blurring boundaries do not lessen one's responsibility to be allegiant to one's field experiences. And accountability of the inquiry process furthers the researcher to produce a "selective, partial and contestable" (Ellis, 1996) work which retains the distinction as the boundaries blur.

I maintained accountability by maintaining a public research trail. I qualify my research trail as public for two fold reasons. Firstly, due to time, situational, or human constraints I filtered what I choose to track. So I cannot claim to be "fully" able to reconstruct my research process because of the complexities of multiple positionings. Secondly, every retelling is a construction. The research trail or audit consisted of journaling, notes taking, tabs of paper detailing thought in action, jottings and mental notes to be transcribed later. "Later" often ranged from the same day to that weekend depending on prioritizing tasks, time, and my emotional health.

Blurring the boundaries of social science genres and literary genres, I used narratives, collages, poems, scripts, graphic images and varying literary forms in my dissertation web.

I echo Vaughn Miller's (personal communication, 2000) thought "to me my world feels pretty ordinary." So do I write up my life to make it glamorous or tragic as the case might be? Or may be the question to ask is how do I invite the readers to my story?



## **RESEARCH PROCESS: A PARTIAL PERFORMANCE**

Research Audit 9/19/99

I started reading my notes. As Harlene suggested I am just reading and seeing what will emerge. This process feels like a journey. I'm reconstructing my experience as I read my notes and journal. I started my journey with the beginnings of the research process rather than the beginnings of my internship experience. This arbitrary starting point seemed a more logical place to start, since it seemed to be the beginnings of my research while the internship, the process I was studying is part of the larger picture; the picture of my research.

On the other hand I wonder why am I still avoiding making contact with the internship experiences? Here on my last day of my break I am finally reading my entries but still far from hitting the meat.

As I write, I am struck by how I always seem to write to an audience. The audience changes from my committee to some group I am presenting, to students I am teaching, to Harlene, to friends, or to myself for a later date. The audience keeps shifting, but I do sense a reserve since I know that in some ways this is an open document. So I'm filtering what I choose to journal and what I'm willing to let people see.

...there is one personal theme that I know I definitely don't write about here. And still it is an integral part of my feelings of isolation, relocation, and how things could have been different. This is one theme that gets consciously filtered in my process. So how do I write and talk about it? Will it be important for the final analysis?

Research Audit 10/13/99

I have to yet get back to reading my own "data" (journals). I'm very comfortable reading texts written by other authors and reflecting. But I need to have an understanding of the other texts since this is part of methodology. Rather than analyzing why I do so, I need to think of it as an intuitive way of proceeding. Maybe it's a way of suspending the data. Going back to reading other texts, and then returning to my data with these explicit ideas to see what new ideas do I formulate as I read my data. This is a clear methodology in my view of how I may be proceeding. Since I deeply believe in intertextuality.

Research Audit 11/25/99

I was struck by a couple of processes that I am involved in as I live through the "analysis phase". First is the process of reading my journal and writing an emerging narrative from my journal by contextualizing it in my current textual readings and conversations, contrasting it to current experiences and/or relating it to other events of my internship year. The second process is reading of various texts; it gives me an idea of how to make sense of my internship experiences and the journal of my internship experiences. The first process has a flavor of induction while the second process has the flavor of deduction.

Both processes result from my intentionality to make sense of my journal and to present my ideas as a dissertation. In addition, there is a steady and studied focus on immersing and attempts to stay immersed in the process of "analyzing my data."

Using animated graphic images, I re-present how I contextualized the research process. (You will need the free Flash Player plug-in to view the animation. By clicking on [FLASH](#) you will be taken to the website to download the plug-in which takes an estimated one minute @ 56K modem). The various contextualizing factors are presented graphically as circular or oval objects floating in space, interacting, bouncing off each other and moving back and forth in significance to each other and in the context of space and time of the research process. These factors occur in the space of my sense-making against a [backdrop](#) of discourses. Or another way of viewing the discourses is as [threads](#) weaving through the factors.

## [Contextualizing Meaning Making with Discourses as Backdrop](#)

## [Contextualizing Meaning Making with Discourses as Threads](#)



### **AFTERWORDS**

*I started writing the above text as a draft right after I arrived back from the "dissertation retreat" in Florida in January 2000. I was not attempting to name it as any particular chapter. But even as I finished a section, I labeled it as Firebrand. I intuitively knew that the text belonged to a chapter that is traditionally titled as Methodology. The draft of the above text was one of my first pieces of writing I circulated as an example of what I wanted to do in my dissertation from a [content and form](#) perspective.*

*I was still grappling with the idea of an explicit or implicit textual*

*narratives for methodology. An explicit methodology is foundational in dissertations and at the same time I was also attempting to reach my goal in presenting alternate (experimental) forms of reporting inquiries, so implicit was more in keeping with my [research purpose](#). Part of my aim was to dissolve the standard frames of theory, methodology and data presentation. However, with time the form of this imagined text shifted. Consequently, I settled on two texts—implicit-embedded poetic methodology and an [explicit methodology](#).*

The firebrand avoids roles, categories, classifications, hierarchies, fixed routines, and practices but rather seeks to create rituals, searches for new rhythms and connections with others, keeps secrets and confidences, and engages in conflicts and intimacies when these are true to experience, when these are ways of enhancing life. The firebrand is concerned with being open honest, adventurous, and creative. If none of these processes are viable, the firebrand terminates the activity or relationship and moves on. (Moustakas, 1995)

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Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community



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The dissertation web, a hypertext located within multiple discourses, is an intertextual script, a rendition, of my internship (1998-1999) and research experiences (1998-2001).

## PERFORMANCE

---

A [day in tension](#) is a [performance](#)...

**a way of giving shape to haunting spirits, putting into form what disturbs, what fascinates, what demands attention; that is, performance is a way of formulating the unforgettable so that it might be forgotten.**

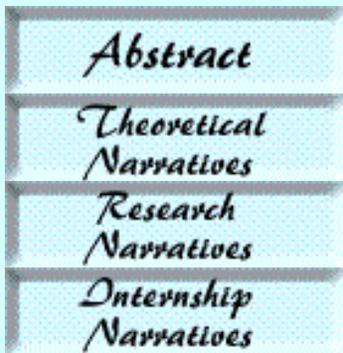
Pelias, 1999

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# A DAY IN TENSION

## INTRODUCTION

---

*Abstract*

*Theoretical Narratives*

*Research Narratives*

*Internship Narratives*

I produced a multimedia art [form](#) to perform a day at my internship site—Houston Galveston Institute. The production does not "capture" all days. Further, the performance does not speak for the subsequent year or my current experience. However, the production is close to the dominant experience I privileged during my internship. To experience the production you will need flash plug-in which can be downloaded free from [Macromedia-Flash](#).

The words, collage and pictures are textual productions based on the reading of my journals and my embodied experience when I read and/or retell a story. The production initially consist of three parts: morning, mid-day, and night. I open the [day](#) with a poem written in tandem: action and feelings; *mid-day*, a graphic of a collage; and *night*, a blank darkness which loops back to *Morning*. But I deleted the mid-day as it did not meet up expectations of representation and due to time constraints I could not work on it further. You may find yourself in the metaphoric cyclic repetition of the experience. To exit the loop select one of the other links provided in the [Morning...](#)

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[Performance as Methodology](#)

[Theoretical Narratives](#)

[Research Narratives](#)

[Internship Narratives](#)

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[Go To Graphic Map Index](#)

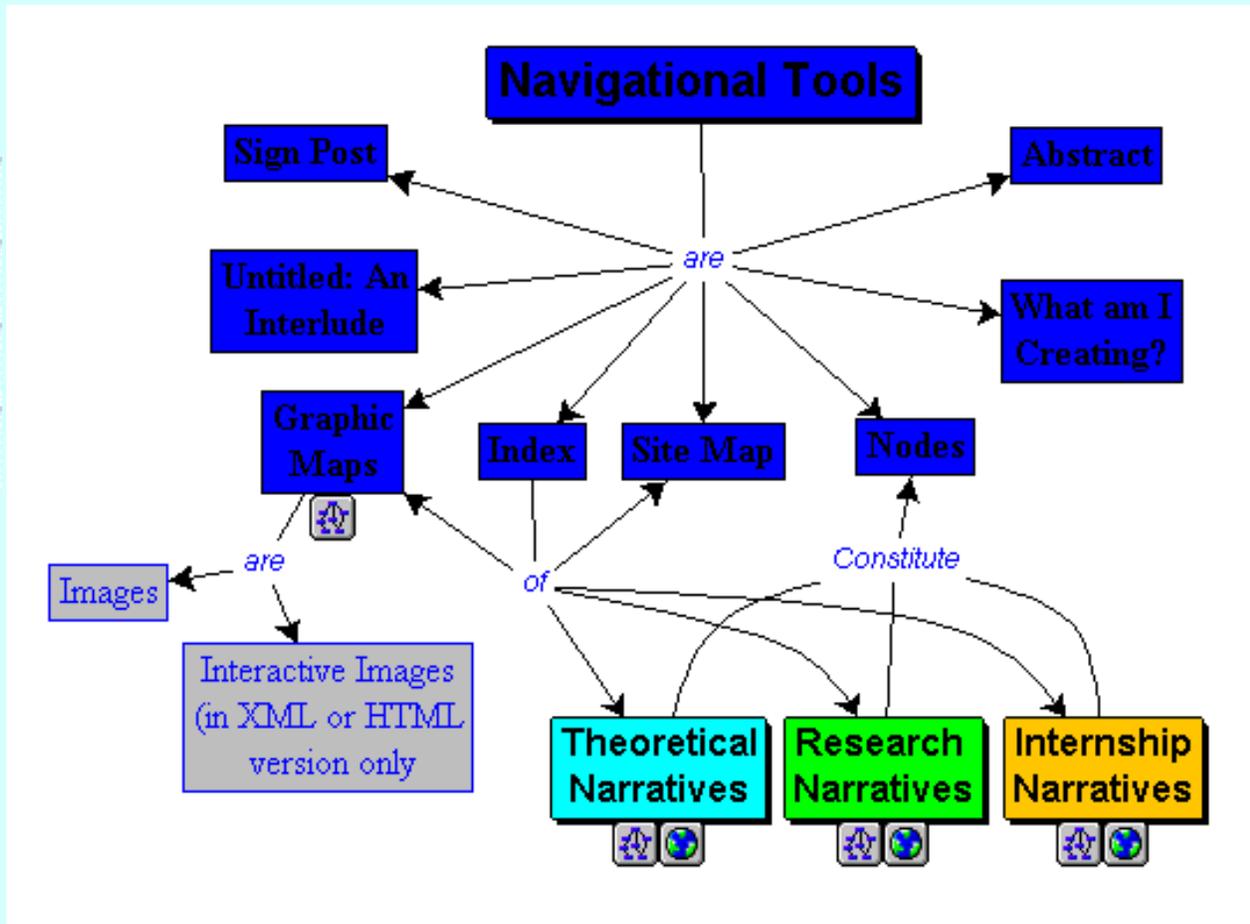
[Go To Graphic Map Legend](#)



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# UNTITLED: AN INTERLUDE

Abstract
Theoretical Narratives
Research Narratives
Internship Narratives



Map: Graphic Location of *Untitled* within the Dissertation Web



The **preface**, by daring to repeat the book and reconstitute it in another register, merely enacts what is already the case: the book's repetitions are always other than the 'book'. There is, in fact, no 'book' other than these ever-different repetitions: the 'book' in other words, is always already a 'text', constituted by the play of repetition and difference.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in Stephen Pfohl, 1992

So what then is a preface, if not a strangely reflexive display of roots that were "once upon a time" covered-over but now laughingly reinscribed? What plagiarism! Rada Rada in Stephen Pfohl, 1992, p.3

I present my dissertation web as a collage of voices of a postmodern inquiry of my doctoral internship experience--concerns and jubilation--positioned within the discourses of dissertation, academia, experimentalism and cyberspace innovations among others. I create a [social constructionistic](#) interactive interplay (using [hypertext](#)) among the various voices--modernist, post-modernist, intern, therapist, person, writer, reader, imagined audience, specific colleagues, committee members to name a few. The list is endless, evolving and often a mirage.

As a mirage, the elusive nature of these ideas seems to be within one's reach only to disappear and re-form another "[reality](#)". A reality, who is to say is more real than the mirage? According to the Hindu philosophy we, humans, live a life of *maya* or illusion. So I welcome you, the reader, to suspend your values as you interact with these ideas and/or to bring them along. The choice is yours, however, my assumption is that the different choices will produce varied reading since, the context influences the reading. So, to sort out what created the difference would be another socially constructed experience (Anderson, 1997).

Gergen (1997) cautions us that

highly innovative writing runs the risk of unintelligibility. If a reader cannot identify what the writing is intended to do, and how he/she is to participate as a reader, then it may be eschewed as nonsense. It is imperative, then, for the fictional-scientist to presume a readership immersed in the intellectual context giving rise to such [experimentation](#)."

I will thus attempt to provide initial [navigation](#). The dissertation web was

created with two intentions in mind. First, to fulfill the requirements of a dissertation. Second, related to the first, is to inquire into performing meaning via the experimental forms of research and writing. I approach writing, utilizing hypertext, to create an online art. I will elaborate on the [latter](#) intent (performing meaning) and then move to the [former](#) intent (performing research) in the linear text. However, if you are reading online the choice is yours. If you are intrigued by the purpose of my inquiry you might link to [Performing Research](#) or you might continue to read if you are curious about the intertextual re-presentations of meaning performances.

## [Performing Meaning](#)

### [Textual Presentations: Hypertext](#)

### [Textual Presentations: Writing Forms](#)

## PERFORMING MEANING

only if we institute a third, dialogical revolution of a kind that calls all our previous methods into question, and suggests wholly new intellectual practices and institutions to us, can we begin to fashion forms of inquiry that will do justice to the uniqueness of the being of Others.

Shotter, 2000

A primary purpose of this current inquiry is to "perform meaning" (Shotter, 2000). He draws on Brunner's notion of people's folk psychology that forms from dialogical activities which make it possible for people to co-create unique meaning. Such unique meaning making is made possible by the "creation of indeterminacy and uncertainty by the devices people use in their narrative forms of thought and talk" (Shotter, 2000). Brunner (1990) refers to this as "*subjunctivity*." Brunner speculates on three hypothesis that may be at work to keep a story in achieving the degree of uncertainty or subjunctivity such that a reader can create his/her own virtual story. His first hypothesis is that "subjunctive" stories are easier for the reader to identify with. His second hypothesis is that such stories have the quality of being able to distinguish the narrator from the

narration, which opens up the possibility for social negotiation of meaning. His third hypothesis is that the reader is more at ease with alternative versions of a story than with alternative versions of "scientific" accounts (1990, p. 53-54). In addition to drawing on Brunner's hypotheses in my attempt to subjunctivize my narrative, I use hypertext and varying writing forms (as well as font color and size) as intertextual practices to draw the reader to create their own unique meaning of my experience of internship and research re-presentations.

### *INTERTEXTUAL RE-PRESENTATION: HYPERTEXT*

I think meaning performance can be enhanced and extracted from the solely linear narrative discourse by the introduction of hyperlinks. The introduction of electronics in education has revolutionized the way of learning and meaning construction. The notion of "virtual story" in the electronic world now adds to the "devices" available to people to perform meaning as stated by Shotter. In the cyberspace the virtual story is created by the medium of narrativity as well as active reader participation. The reader, who is not a passive audience, is furthered into a visibly active position. Thus, the electronic medium adds to the props (by adding another layer) to facilitate the performance (creation) of an interactive virtual story. In my inquiry I will employ this device-electronic medium-to co-create a virtual story with you-the reader.

In my attempt to create this document, I initially used a linear form-a fixed beginning and an unanticipated arbitrary end to the presentation. However, since I wanted to create an experiential moment of circularity-no defined [beginning](#), [middle](#) or [end](#), I moved towards creating an on-line text or a [hypertext](#). The electronic version furthers the possibility of interplay between my voice and the readers' choice as the reader decides the arbitrary "print" or navigational points which will bring into construction multiple beginning and end points.

quality which constitutes the wonder of the **polyphonic** art: horizontally thought-out melodic lines are layered one on the other in such a way that vertically they form a perfect coherent totality - as in a drawing where every line leads its own life, but at the same time fits into the whole network of

other lines; or as every word of a text bears its own meaning, but in concert with all the other words forms a new field of meaning, full of unsuspected connections and cross-relations.

Bossuyt, 1997

In the similar vein the various narratives in the dissertation web, each with its own meaning, come together, along with the reader's local expectation, to form a unique multi-layered experience, a new field of meaning with each new reading. Like the polyphonic (add [link](#) to audio) music the multivocality of hypertext will provide the reader with authorship. Instead of the various texts being physically isolated (as in print medium via books) the interactive nature of hypertext will provide the reader with multiple voices with which to create their own multi-layered experience, some of which might lead them outside of my dissertation web. Thus, lending itself to vicariously experiencing my internship as a process (rather than a product). As the reader chooses the links, creating a multi-layered experience, he/she is also decentering each experiential moment. With each mouse click the marginal text (link) is centered to get marginalized again or centered as chosen by the reader's hyper linking pattern rather than the author. However, I (the author) perform to create links, thus co-creating with you (the reader) your experiential journey of meaning making.

Hypertext is a [metaphor](#) for [fragmentation](#). Fragmentation is a life. Ordering life is a process of meaning making. Living in the moment is fragmentation. The uncertainty of the future leaves us clueless to a definitive meaning of the occurring moment. However, in selecting the links and the interconnected nodes of the hypertext provides the reader with a socially constructed sense of meaning of the text. Similarly, my efforts to defragment my life are the practices of linking to construct meaning.

### *TEXTUAL RE-PRESENTATION: WRITING FORMS*

In addition, I purposefully tell my story using multiple forms-[stories](#), [poems](#), [juxtaposition various texts](#), [font size and color](#), etc. The forms bring forth the multilayered, complex zest of my experience while hiding other multi-layers. The purpose is to engage the reader and myself in the

complex and multi-layered nature of a lived experience stemming from the "multiple interpretive positions" (Tillmann-Healy, 1996). Multiple interpretive positions emphasizes the first person narrative of the author told from the multi-positioning of the person of the author, such as, [intern](#), researcher, [writer](#), academician, [woman](#), immigrant-in-transition, etc. Such writing practices intends to invite the reader to come close and experience the writer's world (Tillmann-Healy, 1996)."And so literary texts initiate 'performances' of meaning rather than actually formulating meanings themselves" (Bruner, 1986, p.25).

**PERFORMING PURPOSE: PERFORMING RESEARCH** will expand on the purpose of my dissertation inquiry.

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Here am I.  
Standing before you  
Singular and solitary.

But don't let appearances  
fool you.

Each word from my mouth  
Each gesture  
is borne of others.

You see singularity  
But reality is in multiples.  
As we talk  
You enter this world.  
And I into another

Image & text source: <http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/kgergen1/part1.html>

EXIT

ENTER



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## RELATIONAL ART

---

Ken Gergen describes the relational art as a space of relatedness of his words and the graphics provided by Zurich artist, Regine Walter. He states that, the "text and graphics both concerned with relatedness, ...work together to create a relationship." He provides various [exemplars](#) from the series he has produced with Walter.

I chose this particular art since it spoke to the process of relational connectedness in space and time. The words describe my [process as a writer](#), myself as an [intern](#) and myself as a [researcher](#), who was me and the other as I produced the dissertation web. The picture captures me as an apparently singular entity who is not singular when looked at closely and against the backdrop of other's gestures.

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# METHODOLOGY

## RESEARCH DESIGN: CHANGING FORMS

### PRACTICING POSITS

I had picked up the following posits in my journey through various texts. Since I have been immersed in these diverse ideas longer than my research process, I have arbitrarily cited the most recent and fresh citations for the ideas. As I make explicit my research process, I am conscious of the following posits/ideas as recurring themes that I valued as a researcher and a writer:

- A [postmodern](#) conformity to nonconformity in the way research is conceived (Marcus, 1994).
- Commitment to interdisciplinary work by working in and out of bounds of tradition.
- Experimentalism (Marcus, 1994) as a guiding principle
- [Fragmentation](#) as design format
- Commitment to [form and content](#) as inseparable (Richardson, 1994)
- Exploring and [delineating](#) my own processes and preferences against established and evolving paradigms (Crotty, 1998, Richardson, 1994)
- Emphasis on [intertextuality](#) (Lemke, 1995) and contextualness.
- Seeking "coherence, verisimilitude, and interest" (Richardson, 1994).

You may have observed that I adopted an anti-foundational

approach in my inquiry process by being postmodern. But the very practice of the above posits led to an adherence of postmodern foundationalism (if one could say so). However, I did not find myself following the above because I wanted to be postmodern (maybe partly so) but because they fit for my practice. Thus, in the process of narrating the research process I find myself constructing a coherence that was imperceptible in the midst of the process. The [Research Design](#) is one such coherent story of creating this messy text (Marcus, 1994).



## **RESEARCH DESIGN: CHANGING FORMS**

Since interacting with the elements in the field, my original design has changed. I will start with a summarized version of the original design and then provide you with an overview of what actually transpired in course of the research.

## **ORIGINAL POSITION**

I entered the field acknowledging the influence of various methodologies: [phenomenology](#), [heuristics](#) and [ethnography](#). I also entered the field with the understanding that the methodology would be fine-tuned once I start my internship since I agreed with Weick (1995) "how can I know what I think until I see what I say." This statement would be a defining idea in the field more than I had imagined it to be when I was planning my inquiry. However, I had a proposal as I headed out of Blacksburg to New Delhi on my way to Houston. I had planned to take two and half months of sojourn before I started my internship and visited my family in India, who I had not seen in three years. I did plan to keep reading the literature on autobiography, methodology, meaning making and self. This was the beginning of the unplanned events taking my research space and methodology in unintended directions.

I had planned to structure my research project into four stages, with

each stage associated with a research question, data collection and an analysis plan.

Before I proceed to what transpired in the field I invite you to preview my ideas of phenomenology, ethnography, and heuristics that were guiding my methodology at the proposal stage.

## **Phenomenology**

I see a large part of my study resembling phenomenological methodology. Phenomenology is the process of finding what is the structure and the essence of an experience of a phenomenon experienced by the person (Patton, 1990). Phenomenology is often confused as a paradigm, philosophy, or at times as a qualitative methodology. As a philosophical tradition, phenomenology was developed by the German philosopher Edmund H. Husserl (1859-1938). Husserl's use of phenomenology as a rigorous science focused on the study of how people experience and describe things through their senses (Patton, 1990). The focus is on attending to the experience, and experience comes through our senses. But, the only way to understand one's experience is through interpretation. According to Patton (1990), there are two implications of this perspective. First, how people experience and how they interpret the world is important. Second, a methodological implication is that the only way to know what another person experiences is to experience it yourself (Patton, 1990). The second implication, a presupposition is one of a bottom line. I disagree that one can grasp "the essential meaning of something" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 77), which is the purpose of phenomenology.

I believe that a description and interpretation of an experience is only an experience, a *narrative*

*experience*. It is not "the" *experience-lived experience* (Van Manen, 1990). Further, a person attempting to understand the experience of another person, by experiencing it herself, assumes that the two experiences are the same. The two experiences are approximations, but they are not the same. Instead, I would qualify phenomenology and use it as hermeneutic phenomenology, which serves to remind us that all phenomenological inquiries are inherently meaning-making. Since all lived experience "facts" are captured in language, the inquiry is inevitably an interpretive process (Van Manen, 1990).

Thus, I am using a phenomenological focus in my study to describe the experience of an evolving Collaborative Language Systems therapist but not a phenomenological philosophy; that is, I am not capturing an essence. The aim of this focus is not to get to the essence of the experience (since it is not consistent with a social construction paradigm). Rather, the aim is to describe how I experience the experience. Period.

## **Heuristics**

Heuristics is a form of phenomenological inquiry (Patton, 1990). Clark Moustakas developed heuristics as a research methodology (1990) to draw distinction from phenomenology. The question asked by a heuristic researcher is, "What is my experience of this phenomenon and the essential experience of others who also experience this phenomenon intensely?" (Patton, 1990). Heuristic research has two focal points. First, the researcher must have direct, intensive, and personal experience with the phenomenon. Second, others (co-researchers), who share the intensity of the experience, must be part of the study.

I draw on the first part of heuristic research focus, "what is my experience?" as the focus of my study. However, my co-researchers are not necessarily others who are training at the Institute. Rather, my co-researchers are other therapists practicing from the Collaborative Language Systems approach, my supervisors, and members of the supervision team. However, it may be that once I am in the field my co-researchers may also include other interns. This is a good example of how my research methodology might become more of a heuristic research.

I draw on heuristics because it emphasizes the connection and the relationship of the researcher to the experience; while phenomenology is a more detached analysis of the experience. I identify with the heuristic approach since the focus on the self-of-the-researcher remains throughout the study. The researcher is expected to have actual "autobiographical connections" (Moustakas, 1990) with the phenomenon. Second, in heuristics, which is a creative synthesis, the research participant is visible in the analysis; while in phenomenology, which concludes with a general structural description, the research participants disappear in the structural analysis (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 1990).

### **Ethnography**

Ethnographic methodology may stem from a phenomenological philosophy. Ethnography studies the question, "What is the culture of this group of people?" (Patton, 1990). Thus, the emphasis is on culture.

In my study I identify only some traces of ethnography. Thus, for the three following reasons, I would rather not call my inquiry an ethnography. First, my research

question is to study my experience as an intern, rather than the culture of the people at the Institute. Second, to ask the question, "What is the culture of this group?" is to assume an observer-subject split. My counter question is, "Can I study the culture of this group of people as separate from my experience of this culture?" So, in one way I am studying the culture but through my experience of the culture, rather than separate from me. Third, culture will be interpreted in my study as discourses in my final analysis. Thus, I draw on aspects of ethnographic methodology since my inquiry involves intensive field-work, note taking, and journaling.

## **TIME AND SHIFTS IN POSITIONS**

A distinct feature of qualitatively oriented research approaches is that problem setting itself is in a transactional process. A general idea may be enough at first, with problem and fieldwork alike maturing as field work continues. The realities of the setting exert their influence; researcher proclivities and ideologies exert theirs (Wolcott, 1994, p. 401-402). As I entered my internship, I also started a textual journey into the realm of autoethnography and Carolyn Ellis's emotional sociology. The confluence of my textual and internship journeys created methodological shifts (as anticipated by Wolcott) as detailed below. I first introduce [autoethnography](#) and then a narrative of how the initial encounters in the field (enactment of my internship) interacted with my research intentions and conclude with the emergence of [performance as methodology](#).



[Autoethnography](#) (Click on the link to read further)

**Interplay of Intent and Enactment**

Prior to starting my internship, on September 1, 1998, I had been in New Delhi visiting my family for summer. I had done some personal journaling at home, which I will leave out of this inquiry. The personal journaling provided me with practice for the intended data collection methodology. I used Marlene Schiwy's, *A Voice of Her Own* as a guide for my personal journals.

*Journal Entry August 18, 1998*

I left home for Houston.

*Journal Entry August 19, 1998*

I arrived at the Houston Hobby airport where a family friend met me and took me to her home for the night. As we drove she pointed to the glimmering Houston sky line and I experienced a sense of "having arrived!"

*Journal Entry August 20, 1998:*

We met the realtor and checked out the efficiency, which was to be my new home for the next year. It looked clean and nice. The complex was well kept and I liked it. I went to the manager, gave him a check and then moved my luggage into the apartment. I set up my phone connection. My friend drove me to the Institute after I had taken care of the few basics. She was going to drop me off at Houston Galveston Institute! This was to be my first introduction to the Institute. I was excited and a bit nervous.

I arrived at 3316 Mt. Vernon to encounter a quiet looking house sitting at the end of a row of houses. My friend decided to wait while I went in to make sure I was at the right place, though the street address was distinctly visible there was no outward sign

to indicate that this gray colored house was the Institute. I walked past the wrought iron gates, up the four steps through another porch gate to the front door and rang the bell. An African-American woman opened the door, who I later got to know was the Office Manager. After I introduced myself and confirmed that I was at the Institute, I returned to reassure my friend that I was at the right place. I turned and went back in, unsure of what to expect next and a little uncertain of how I was going to get back to my apartment, even though I knew that I would be taking the bus. The feelings of nervousness and excitement continued to linger.

I had arrived after lunch, for which I had received an invitation. While in India I had been invited to join "them" (faculty at the Institute) for lunch, and I had replied that I would try but did not promise. I remember thinking that the invitation for lunch was very thoughtful of them. "Thoughtful or mindful of them" goes on to become a major bone of contention between the interns and the faculty in the months to come. Something I would not have predicted at that time! Today I re-define it as "not so much a contention as much as tension."

On my way to Houston from India, I wrote some thoughts regarding my research. I was focused on Heuristics and how my research could develop into shades of such a research if I were to talk to my fellow interns about their experiences. In the beginning months of my internship, I would talk to my intern-cohort about their internship experience informally and they would also comment that our experience was good material for our research. But as time went by, I stopped talking about this topic since most of our experience talks had negative undertones. The "negative talk" seemed to foster further negativity. And for my own

existence, I needed to have other talks rather than "negative experience talks." In addition, initially I had planned to explore the use of my cohort's lived experiences as co-research participant voices. However, interpersonal relationships at the Institute deteriorated so fast (within three months) that I abandoned that idea of talking to my fellow interns to record the "internship talk." Pretty soon the air thickened with accusation and mistrust and uncertainty of verbal attack/ viciousness or coldness. As I sit recalling those months I see a thick fog! So, the research took on a different turn methodologically, there were no "structured" conversations of intern experiences that I recorded in the interest of maintaining (and hoping) a sense of working relationship. Thus, my immediate needs as an intern took precedence over my needs as a researcher.

However, things appeared to take on a [worse turn](#) with each passing week. I experienced myself entertaining ideas of changing my internship site by the fifth month I was at the Institute. In January 1999, I spoke to my University's internship coordinator to explore what I should do and how to proceed. Through all this process, I acknowledged to myself via journaling that all of these experiences were also part of my research process, but research was the last thing on my mind, other than the frequent thought that all this is "messing" my research up. At one level I knew that all the interactions were relevant to my research but at another level the everyday experience was so bitter, like throwing up bile, that I found myself withdrawing from journaling some of the emotionally gut-wrenching experiences. At other times I was so exhausted by the end of the day that I would just come home and "crash" (fall asleep). I found myself lacking in appetite and sleeping through the weekend. I would sleep till noon on weekends, get up and have a shower and get something to eat only to fall asleep again. I had also lost weight (partly because I was observing the month of Ramzan-the Muslim holy month of fasting-in January). At times all I felt was hollowness in the pit of my stomach. I was very lonely and sad. I just wanted to be held and comforted. I was so tired of the everyday dramas that I was ready to call it quits.

It is said that time heals all. Time has given me a distance, and now the picture is very foggy. It took me over ten months after I completed my year long internship before I could sit with my journal and not put it down in disgust or anger. Or maybe it was the pressure of time running out on my dissertation that motivated me to read through my writing-at times lengthy and descriptive and at other [times](#) sketchy and incomplete journal entries. However, even as I write this text the [anger](#) is fresh.

The confluence of my internship experience with my research experience led to methodological changes. I continued to keep a journal of my experience but often devoid of descriptive daily activities at the Institute rather detailing my emotional thoughts of various interactions. At the research level I was further exploring [autoethnography](#) and Carolyn Ellis's texts (1991, 1992, 1994, 1996). In course, I encountered the metaphor of [performance](#). I proceeded to adapt the evolving performance metaphor for my methodological narrative as detailed in [Performance as Methodology](#). Thus, the texts I was creating was being contextualized by the texts I was reading.

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"The seeds of postmodernist skepticism have always been present within Western philosophy, ever since Cratylus, who refused to speak because he considered the meanings of his words to be unstable" (Robinson & Groves, 1999). Cratylus (c. 400B.C.), student of Heraclitus, said "you cannot step into the same river even once" (Robinson & Groves, 1999). Before him, Heraclitus (c. 500B.C.) said, "you cannot step into the same river twice," meaning that everything in the world is constantly changing.

Steven Best and Douglas Kellner (1991) view postmodern discourses as responses to the Western socioeconomic developments of capitalism in the 1980s. Drawing on their interpretation of postmodern theory, one can delineate two trajectories of the discourse - "the positive culturalist wing" and the "pessimistic wing." The members of the former trajectory complement and celebrate the liberating features of the postmodern sensibility. The later groups of "cultural conservatives" decry the "new developments of mass society and culture" (Best & Kellner, 1991). However, the French scene was critical to the emergence of what was to be known as the postmodern era. In 1917, Rudolf Pannwitz used the term 'postmodern' "to describe the nihilism and collapse of values in contemporary European culture" (Best & Kellner, 1991, p. 6). According to education researcher Michael Crotty (1998) though postmodernism is commonly assumed to have emerged since the 1960s, it is less about the chronological succession and has more to do with the logical succession of ways of knowing.

Crotty (1998) distinguishes between postmodernity and postmodernism. He identifies postmodernity as a

distinctive historical stage in the societal development Postmodernism, like modernism, is a response to a qualitatively new society, 'a profound mutation in recent thought and practice' (Sarup 1993, p. xi)...postmodernism 'implies the exhaustion

of the dynamic principles of modern art, music and literature and heralds major transformations in the very idea of "art" and in its relation to other social practices' (Crook 1991, p.4). (p.190)

Loyal Rue (1994) describes postmodernism as, "a philosophical orientation that rejects the dominant foundational program of the Western tradition" (p. 272). However, modernism has also been described as a response to the *then* Western tradition of bourgeois realism (Crotty, 1998). So the question is, 'what distinguishes postmodernism from modernism?' According to Crotty (1998), "it is the 'progressive deconstruction and dissolution of distinctions' lying as the very heart of postmodernism (Milner 1991, p.106)" (p.192). The dissolution of distinction has been defined by various writers to include the blurring of boundaries between high and low culture, elite and popular culture, social science and literature, academia and mass culture, theory and practice, reason and emotion etc. thus resulting in the mixing of codes (Crotty, 1998; Milner, 1991; Richardson, 1997; Sarup, 1993). Postmodern, a highly un-definable notion is distinguished as a philosophy, epoch or a way of being depending on the context and the users way of categorizing. Postmodernism, inherently un-definable, is ironically identified as socio-cultural practices via the distinction characterized in the unmaking of the taken-for-granted "distinct" categories.

Lyotard, a French philosopher, questions the notion of "grand narratives" in his book "The Postmodern Condition" (1984). Parry (1993) identifies "God, Death and the marginalized" as the three great Others in the grand narratives of the Western tradition. Postmodernism might be considered a phase in the development of epistemology or might be considered as a way of thinking about questions such as: What is the nature of reality? How can reality be understood separately from the language used to describe it? Is there space for knowing reality outside of the language? Postmodernism is rooted (a paradox) in skepticism and reflexive

critical questioning of one's knowledge constructs. Thus, introducing doubt about our current assumptions of reality, truth, and self. Postmodern thought promotes uncertainty and an incredulousness of metanarratives (Lyotard, 1984).

Ludwig Wittgenstein, an Austrian philosopher, introduced the notion of "language-games" which changes with time (1969, p.34e). In his book "Philosophical Investigations" via the seventh aphorism, Wittgenstein (1965) introduces the process of how one may learn the cultural language games:

7. In the practice of the use of language (2) one party calls out the words, the other acts on them. In instruction in the language the following process will occur: the learner names the objects; that is, he utters the word when the teacher points to the stone.—And there will be this still simpler exercise: the pupil repeats the words after the teacher-- both of these being processes resembling language.

In his book "On Certainty" (1969) Wittgenstein states, "every language-game is based on words 'and objects' being recognized again" (p. 59e). And the way the words connect up to the interlocutors' context, influences the meaningfulness or meaninglessness of the words and objects experienced by them. [Lois Shawver](#), a clinical psychologist and teacher of an online seminar on Wittgenstein since 1996 on a postmodern listserve explained that

Wittgenstein uses the word 'game' because of its connection with 'board games' or, particularly, chess. There are implicit and explicit rules as to how to 'play the game' but within those rules there is a lot of freedom. 'Games' does not imply playfulness, and the

connotation of playfulness is very confusing for many people.

Nietzsche, a more recent philosopher, insisted that language can only be [metaphorical](#). "Postmodernism is a quest for paralogy, a special kind of conversation in which new ideas, ideas that inspire other ideas, is continuously introduced" ([Shawver](#), 2001).



## Characterizing Postmodernism

I adopt a [social constructionist](#) approach to reality from within the realm of postmodern thought. How we understand *language and reality* is one of the defining characteristics of postmodernism. Language becomes a defining parameter in how we know what we know. What we know is not separate from the knower. One's (knower's) languaged communities provides one with the discourses for meaning making of one's experience, thus, creating the realities that we identify as our lived experience.

Language cannot meaningfully refer to the world outside of itself (Anderson, 1997). Which implies that language does not mirror or represent reality. Rather than follow a correspondence theory of truth or the picture theory of language, one of the postmodern thoughts is that of the language-game (Wittgenstein, 1965, 1969). Language-game carries numerous meanings. [Shawver](#) (2001) summarizes in one of her interpretations of "language-game" in the online publication titled *Postmodern Therapy News*. She states that

Wittgenstein uses the notion of language-game in two related ways. One is to help explore how language works. And the other is to learn use of language by doing things with language. He states 'when language-game change, then there is a change in concepts, and with the concepts the

meanings of words change' (1969, p. 10e).

The changing form of language game introduces us to another characteristic of postmodernism: *meaning-making is transitional and fluid*. Social meaning-making is often contextualized by the socio-cultural and historical factors. Thus, the changing context—social, cultural, political, and historical—introduces varying conditions for meaning-making.

I believe that the notions attributed by languaged communities characterize postmodernism. In my dissertation I draw on the following characterization of postmodernism:

[Narrative](#)

[Fragmentation](#)

[Hypertext](#)

[Performance](#)

[Content and Form](#)



In the dissertation web—my inquiry, I practice the characterization of postmodernism on numerous fronts—subject of study, context of study, methodology and re-presentation of the inquiry. Implicitly and explicitly, I articulate the various characterizations of postmodernism in my inquiry by challenging the traditional research practices (meta[narratives](#)). I challenge the traditional praxis by alternate [performances](#) of research practices such as studying myself in a cultural context of an internship using the methodology of [autoethnography](#) and performance.

I continue to improvise my research performance by adopting the notions of hypertext to present the "research report." The [hypertext](#) docuverse is a further characterization of postmodernism in the styles and structures that are used for re-presentation of the narratives. The styles of narration I use—such as words and

graphics, prose and poetry, first person conversational texts, narratives and collages—blur the boundary of "academic" [writing](#), literature and art.

The hypertext docuverse allows for the focus of the dissertation's structure to be non-linear with emphasis on multiple exit and entries to my lived experience. Rather than a fixed structure, I attempt to create numerous structures of possible structures to privilege the readers' navigational choices. Thus, I value fragmentation and connection as aspects of sense making that is contextualized by the reader's meaning frames and my textual [performances](#).

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Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community



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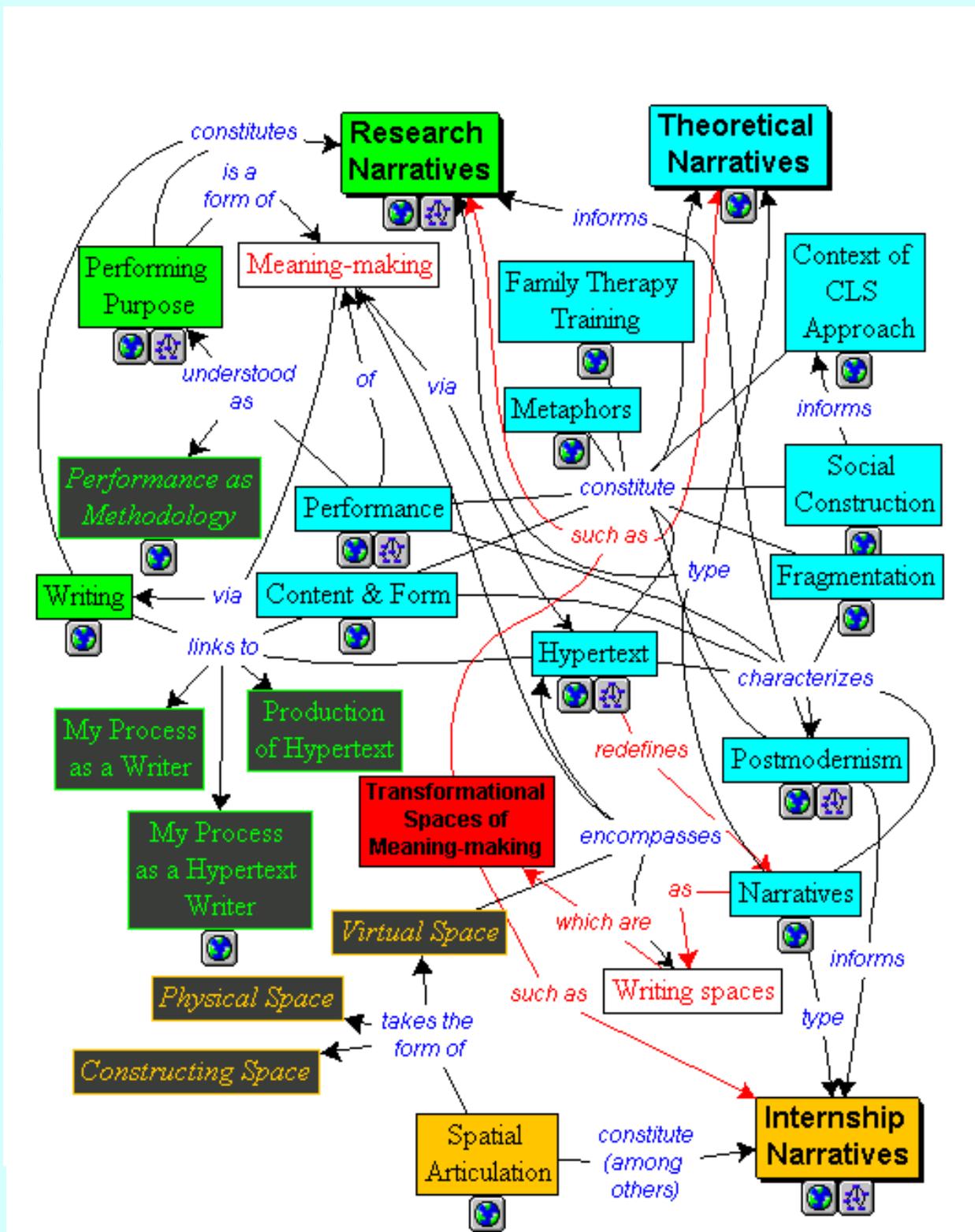
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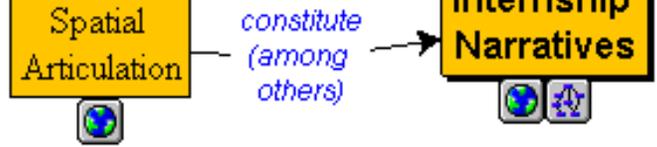


The dissertation web, a hypertext located within multiple discourses, is an intertextual script, a rendition, of my internship (1998-1999) and research experiences (1998-2001).

# FRAGMENTATION

- Abstract
- Theoretical Narratives
- Research Narratives
- Internship Narratives





**Map: Graphic Location of *Fragmentation* within the Dissertation Web**



Fragmentation is a life form. When the cells produce gametes (sperms and eggs) during the meiosis process they do so by fragmentation only to later come together with another life forming fragmented cell to form life-meaning-a human being. Such is nature's way of performing meaning through fragmentation and connection. However the masculine way of being, according to feminist researcher and educator Leslie Bloom has furthered the notion of weakness or instability or lack of a unified self when we choose to privilege fragmentation. Fragmentation is symbolic of ambiguity, uncertainty, and messiness (Bloom, 1998). "But the sign is not the signified." So how is it that we come to attribute the notions of ambiguity, uncertainty, and messiness to fragmentation? What is fragmentation?

The Oxford dictionary defines fragmentation as (i) "A part broken off or otherwise detached from a whole; a broken piece; a (comparatively) small detached portion of anything." (ii) "(*transf.* and *fig.*) a detached, isolated, or incomplete part; a (comparatively) small portion of anything; a part remaining or still preserved when the whole is lost or destroyed." (iii) "An extant portion of a writing or composition which as a whole is lost; also, a portion of a work left uncompleted by its author; hence, a part of any unfinished whole or uncompleted design."

We know that the lexicon meaning is not the same as linguistic meaning. My definition of fragmentation is the seeming disjointedness between processes. I qualify disjointedness with *seeming* since I believe we create meaning in language. Thus, a particular behavior that may be identified as stubborn may be identified as persistent depending on historical, sociocultural context and community norms. Similarly, in my experience at the Institute I found myself often attending to [statements](#) such as "lack of communication", "lack of structure". I found myself engaged in conversations to understand other's experience of these ideas. How do I listen to other's idea and not minimize it and also hold the notion of

creating meaning in language? In my own experience I went on to identify the notion of "contradictions" as a fragment of my life story-at that time.

Bloom (1998) invites feminist researchers to embrace "fragmentation" as a significant category of analysis. She views it as a resource that "encourages women to understand how we can be open to new ways to understand the world, to think about experiences, or to reflect on one's self." Her emphasis on fragmentation fits with notion of messy texts (Denzin, 1994). Both researchers/writers are echoing what Laurel Richardson identifies in her book *Fields of Play*, as "disjunction" (1997, p. 5).

I construct a link between what I refer to as fragmentation and what Richardson narrates as the "condition of temporal experience" (1997, p. 29). She draws on Ricoeur's notion of narrating a story as a "transcultural form of necessity". She views the experience of time as "a concordant whole, such as when reading a familiar poem, where the whole piece is experienced despite the fact that some of it has already been read and more is yet to come. Other times, time is experienced as discordant, such as when we regret about the past or fear of the future impinges upon the present" (p.29). Similarly, life experiences ("texts") are encountered as de-fragmented when there is familiarity or certainty in our present expectations. However, we experience fragmentation, when faced with ambiguity and uncertainty in our present, as we attempt to make sense of the past and future.

Thus, fragmentation can never be totally done away with since it's a way of making sense of our lived experience, though highly under-privileged. Fragmentation includes the knowledge that human knowledge is currently fragmented. And the efforts of a meta-theory are efforts to piece together fragments to form a unified whole. Thus, the quest for a unified knowledge base consists of fragmented constructs that is constituted in language within communities of knowledgeable peers (Bruffee, 1999).

We fragment our experience to form "manageable" (w)holes which we subsequently de-fragment to experience a put together (w)hole. However, as Richardson poetically assembled that "the story of life is

less than the actual life...the story of *a* life is more than *the* life" (italics added, p.6). Thus, I hope that as I write and narrate *a* fragmented text, it will be more than *the* "fragmented text." I hope for the "texts" to be "the contours and meanings allegorically extending to others, others seeing themselves, knowing themselves through another's (my) life story, re-visioning their own, arriving where they started and knowing "the place for the first time" (Richardson, 1997, p. 6).

Thus, in other words fragmented [texts](#) (lexias), comprising the dissertation web, are intertextually connected to form a whole. Each reader's experience will be as unique as the other's life experience due to the various fragmented notions and [discourses](#) one brings to their experience of the dissertation web.

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<a href="#">Abstract</a>
<a href="#">Theoretical Narratives</a>
<a href="#">Research Narratives</a>
<a href="#">Internship Narratives</a>

## METHODOLOGY

### PERFORMANCE AS METHODOLOGY

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Performance, unlike academic papers, invokes experience along with an invitation of involvement, emotions, and imagination (Paget, 1990). Often the technical and analytical writings in third person, stripped of expressiveness while maintaining academic hegemony and restrains, are considered the "real text" (Paget, 1990). However "real" a text may be, it is still interpretive and biased (and/or based) in the researcher's communal language. Academics are coming out of the reading closet to talk about their experience of reading and hearing "exemplary texts" (Paget, 1990, Richardson, 1994, 1997); thus, attesting to the culture of *performance* in academia. However, from a social constructionist perspective the "exemplary texts" are consensual practices of a languaged community that is being questioned and critiqued by inter- and intra-community members in the spirit of poststructuralism and postmodernism. A feminist view to "give voice is raising the issues of authorship, ownership and textual *reproduction*" (Richardson, 1997, p.57). Consequently, as science and literary borders blur, newer writing genres that transgress disciplinary boundaries are emerging. In a similar vein Becker, McCall, Morris and Meshejian (1989) introduced the metaphor of *performance science* as an experimental form of result reporting. They studied the theater community in Chicago, San Francisco, and Minneapolis/St. Paul and re-presented their research finding as a script for a play.

I identify story telling as a kind of discourse performance. Gergen

in his article "Who Speaks and Who Replies in Human Science Scholarship?" identifies four major forms of discourse that are accorded privilege in Human Science writing (1997). He identifies the forms--"the mystical, the prophetic, the mythic, and the civil"--as "ways of listening" to critically evaluate our rhetorical legacies of scholarship. He introduces two alternatives--autobiographical and the fictional--to the traditional voices. The emerging alternatives are new genres of voice and repositioning of the reader resulting from interest in "the literary and rhetorical means by which texts achieve their authority" (1997).

According to Gergen (1997) in the traditional and newer genres, the author and reader perform a relational dance of voice, authority, and distance from each other. In the mystical, the prophetic, and the mythic genres the author is presented as an independent knower who informs the reader. The civil voice draws the reader closer to the author, who is positioned as an intentioned and "rational truth seeker." The autobiographer draws the reader even closer to the author, whose experience "is rendered transparent and accessible." The fictional genre "invites a high degree of author/reader intimacy" but ironically, there is greater distance due to the entertainment context (1997).

Based on Gergen's organization of textual traditions in Human Science writing, I perform like an autobiographer. He describes the autobiographer as one who:

typically strives to present the fullness of life as experienced. Similar to the mystical and the prophetic, autobiographical writing is replete with expressions of value. However, such expressions are not typically in the service of chastising the reader for his/her deficiencies, but for justifying actions taken. The reader is left, then, to draw object lessons from these accounts. The autobiography does share much with the

myth, in terms of the commands of narrative coherence. However, these demands are often sacrificed for purposes of sharing the "lived experience" with the reader.

Autobiography, while sometimes used for purposes of sustaining civil society, is more frequently employed by those who are in some way unusual - either non- or anti-normative. The autobiographer will often "reveal the dirt" that the civil reporter would wish to suppress. Perhaps the most significant characteristic of the genre is born of its attempt to share subjectivity, to enable the reader to stand in for the writer. This often means a high reliance on affectively charged language (for example, of the passions or the spirit, heavy usage of quotidian discourse (the reality shared by all), and a substantial reliance on metaphor (enabling the reader to sense the qualities of a unique experience). Gergen, 1997

Thus, my reflexive understanding of my preferred position as a writer who is performing intertextually is located within Gergen's scholarship (discourse) which provides me with a language game (Wittgenstein, 1965) that I participate in as I create the dissertation web. I co-create the rules of the game along with members from the languaged community of performative scholarships, social constructionist writing practices academic and other discourses. As I co-create the rule I am scripting a performance discourse. I am defining how to be as an autoethnographer, an autobiographer--a researcher and an intern. And recursively the various discourses mold my performance as a researcher and an intern. The "rules" of the emerging language game, that inform my performance as methodology, are delineated further in:

### [Performing Discourse](#)

## Performing Meaning

### Performing Writing

In this current performance I make explicit the above ideas as I re-create my research experience. However, I fall short in performing the ineffable because of its intangibility. Outside (and/or is it inside) of our languaged constructions are the silences and the not yet spoken, which comprises the ineffable and/or probably because of the ineffable.



### **Performing Discourse**

"The motivating spirit of experimentation is thus anti genre, to avoid the reinstatement of a restricted canon like that of the recent past" (Marcus & Fisher, 1999, p.42).

The dissertation-web is located within multiple discourses-- postmodernism, performance, hypertext, academic writing, crises of representation, textual practices, internships, training, and the Institute's cultural and historical discourses to name a few. I chose and locate myself among the various discourses depending on the context and the relationships. Anderson (personal communication, 1998-2001) states that the relationships form, inform and disform our conversations and our conversations form, inform and disform our relationships. Thus, at any given moment I am performing a number of discourses depending on my relationships and conversation.



### **Performing Meaning**

In my dissertation I perform meaning primarily via intertextual presentations. Intertextual presentations take two primary forms:

[narratives](#) and [hypertexts](#). Narratives are chunks of texts that tell a story of my internship or research process experience. I identify the narratives as [Swirling-fragmented narratives](#). Each story is part of the whole-the dissertation web of my experience. At any given moment each [Swirling-fragmented narrative](#) is detached and incomplete, simultaneously, it is also a whole-a story in itself. However, depending on the context of meaning construction the reader may experience the text as fragmented or a whole; a structured metaphor of my experience or a structuring of my experience.

[Hypertexts](#) are chunks of text connected to each other electronically. According to Kolb, hypertext is more of a technological utilization than a literary form even though the hypertext writing style varies from print-text. For some hypertext writers (Bernstein, 1999; Landow, 1997), hypertext is more about the patterns of link rather than the electronic linking of the text. The pattern of linking adds another level of complexity to the narratives; thus, introducing the notion of polyvocality of social semiotics as a performance of the consensual community members co-constructing knowledge.

Another way of understanding performing meaning is to view my research writing as a tri-fold performance-a) as an academic discourse acted out, b) as a creation of the writer in dialogue-with self and other/reader, and c) as an art of re-presenting and re-(new)-creating of the research process.



## **Performing Writing**

"In short, the poetic essay offers a more nuanced account in keeping with the spirit of the performative event itself. The performance scholar, then, might wish to articulate what he/she knows not through the mirroring positivistic logic but through a reliance on the

poetic." (Pelias, 1999, p. xi)

I want to tell the story of my struggle with "how I should perform the text." In my effort to draw you, the reader, as far as possible into my world-unfamiliar and non-duplicable-to vicariously experience my story, I utilized three performative writing practices. One was to create an experience of circularity- no fixed beginning or end. Second, to (re)create fragmentation as experienced in my internship and the research process as an integral part of the backdrop of the text for the reader. Third, to practice multiple interpretive positioning (Tillmann-Healy, 1996).

Writing, like an art, is a dynamic process (Richardson, 1997) and a construction among people-the writer, intended reader, editor, committee chair and members, friends and family, etc. However, most students are not told about how the writing gets done. Becker (1986) states that "the separation of scholarly work from teaching in almost all schools hides the process from students." The process of writing, editing, and rewriting is the process of knowledge construction for a consensual community. In this instant the academic community constitutes the consensual knowledge community as deemed by my research committee. However, before I even gave people a draft of my writing, I was engaged in numerous conversations about my writing. I wrote a couple of beginning drafts before I "settled" for a particular format. One of my beginning drafts was a description of the year as a play. On reviewing it, I thought it lacked the "oomph" I wanted and did not convey the story I wanted to share within a particular context. Even though it seemed to have an innovativeness, it lacked the development of scholarly work via my lenses. So, I dropped the story line of a script for a play. However, the incomplete play provided me with a condensed version of my experience. I could see how the plot was built around the conflictual interpersonal relationship. Though that was part of the internship story I wanted to tell, I did not want it to be the only story. I also wanted to narrate the stories of how I grew as a therapist, the researcher studying herself, and how I struggled within the challenges of what is doable

as research. However, I will never know for sure, if it was a path towards the journey of what was to be this particular story I write here. I believe that the initial drafts were ways I processed my intense internship feelings. This was a period of four to five months. During this period [writing-in-inquiry](#) became my performative focus.

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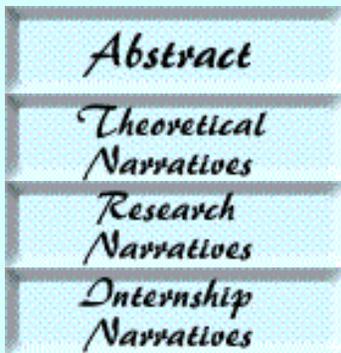
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## METHODOLOGY

### WRITING-IN-INQUIRY

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"The play with writing techniques brings to consciousness and the sense that continued innovation in the nature of ethnography can be a tool in the development of theory" (Marcus and Fisher, 1999, p. 42). Though the authors are talking about innovation in ethnography, it captures for me the process of writing as a performance of and performing theory. The ensuing text is a re-account of the process of writing as performing inquiry.

Writing-in-inquiry is the process of theory development (co-creating knowledge), innovation and transformation via writing. It is a reflexive practice that generates creativity and innovation and is not limited by disciplinary boundaries or discourses. Traditional writing practices (third person, authoritative genres which distance the reader) are limiting for a number of writers and readers (Richardson, 1997). Thus, writing-in-inquiry are practices that include the traditional and new literary forms, which blur disciplinary boundaries.

Over the past 15 years, writing genres utilizing the new literary forms have been a growing trend in the fields of sociology, anthropology, Woman studies, and Critical Cultural schools thus closing the gap between scientific and literary discourses that has been existing since the seventeenth century (Richardson, 1997). Plurality, polyphony, dialogue, reflexivity and deconstruction as a critique and response to positivism, objectivism, and crises of representation have evolved. Also the new writing genres in social

sciences such as, performance scripts (McCall, Becker & Meshejian, 1990), second voice device, decentering original texts (Schneider, 1991), poetry (Richardson, 1993, 1997), drama (Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Richardson, 1993, 1997; Richardson & Lockridge, 1991), polyvocal texts (Schneider, 1991), webtext ([Pockley](#), 1999, 2000) are forms of postmodern praxis. However, such genres are relatively new to the disciplines of psychology and marriage and family therapy (MFT). MFT and Psychology could gain from the writing in inquiries of these disciplines. Feminist critique and postmodern approaches have added a critical edge to MFT. Such critique has introduced innovative therapeutic practice strategies; however, these ideas are not very prevalent in our writing practices of research. There has been a proliferation of qualitative studies but the push for quantitative studies as scientific practice continues. Thus, the increasing chasm between qualitative and quantitative methodologies is not illustrative of practices of postmodern critique.

Writing-in-inquiry utilizing alternative writing practices is not a visible idea in our field even though qualitative research has increased. The writing has moved to be more inclusive of the research participants' voices, however, the authorial authoritative presence continues. And as long as we continue moving in the direction of diagnosticians of mental health, we continue to risk privileging the researcher's final word over the participant's word, since both are embedded epistemological practices of modernism. However, to move in the direction of therapist as conversational partners with shared expertise with individuals, couples and families, in meaning-making is to move along the continuum of shared inquiry from "problem conceptualization" to writing as being-in-inquiry rather than as a way of presenting the results of a research.

I describe how I bring to life the practice of writing-in-inquiry with respect to [data collection](#), [re-presentation](#), [analyses and interpretation](#).



## Writing To Collect Data

[Journal](#)

[Autobiography](#)

[Research Audits](#)

[Reviews](#)

### *Journal:*

"The journal is a journey. . . Its purpose, in part, is to give voice to the heart and sound of one's domestic and far-flung thoughts." (E. M. Broner as quoted by Schiwy, 1996)

I believe the current inquiry as a process of journaling my experiences at the Institute, though private, but "if deeply examined, is universal, and so, if expressed, has a human value beyond the private" (Sarton as quoted by Schiwy, 1996). Journaling has been widely used in women's studies and by writers to make sense of one's own experience, to find one's own voice, for self healing (Baldwin, 1977), and as a powerful tool of creative expression (Bell-Scott, 1994; Baldwin, 1977; Hogan, 1991; Simons, 1978; and Schiwy, 1996).

Journaling from the feminist perspective was often viewed as giving voice to the subjugated, to the other, giving voice to what a woman has denied to herself (Bell-Scott, 1994). The emphasis was on finding one's inner self or owning what was rightfully hers. Though all this seemed to make sense to me, it did not fit for me or the purpose for which I wanted to use journaling in my research. The feminist readings do refer to the self in relation to others, but this was very different from the "relational self" (Gergen, 1991; 1994). Relational self refers to the self as constituted by language and dialogue (Gergen, 1991; 1994). According to the narrative metaphor, the self is storied and is ever changing (Polkinghorne,

1988).

As I reflected and discussed, I realized that I had assumed that some feminist and postmodern literatures were referring to the same "stuff" when they referred to "giving voice to the subjugated" or "self". However, a major distinction stands out for me between the social construction thinkers and some feminists (though both can be "categorized" as postmodern thinkers) when they refer to "self". The literature I have read for classes was influenced by feminist thought (Goldner, 1991; Luepnitz, 1988). However, I have not had a formal introduction to feminist theory. So I read *Feminist Theory*, a chapter in Aggar's (1998) book *Critical Social Theory*.

Reading about feminist theory made me realize that according to Aggar (1997) "radical/cultural feminists" tend to believe that there is an inner core self that is untouched by the patriarchal positions. Further, they dichotomize gender and are explicit or closet essentialist (Agger, 1997, p. 110). This is radically different from a social constructionist position which emphasize the historicity and fluidity of gendering (Aggar, 1998, p. 116). However, postmodern feminists, especially French feminists, "view women and men as 'narrating' the world differently, reflecting their different nature, relationships to their unconscious, and subject positions" ( Agger, 1998, p. 115). This view is akin to radical feminists who argue for separate spheres for men and women; for women to find themselves; and, thus, to find liberation. French Feminists stress feminist narrativity as a means of liberation, identity, and cultural creation, because of the postmodern stress on language and how discourses position people (Agger, 1997). I see the varied usage of self and narrativity by radical and postmodern feminists and social constructionists as the root of my confusion. From a social constructionist perspective, the boundaries of the self and the boundaries of the world are necessary cultural symbolism and may be constituted upon differing assumptions (Lock, 1981). A narrative about any aspect of self is a social construction of the relational self, since the boundaries are co-creations of a culture.

Given this contextualized distinction, I used journaling as one of the most dominant methods of data collection since:

any change in ourselves, any move toward greater self-awareness, authenticity, and openness, will affect those around us. Each step we take toward genuine creative expression sends ripples out into the world, and often, they may spread much further than we might imagine. The personal is universal. Schiwy, 1996, p.300

Self means the relational self, self-awareness is a socio-cultural product, and culture defines and constitutes the boundaries of the self, just as the self constitutes culture (Lock, 1981). Thus, constituting myself as an intern in my journals was constructing the socio-cultural practices of the Institute in that moment of journaling.

The journals I kept of my internship experience over the period of ten months were intended to be daily entries. In the initial months of the internship, I kept daily entries of the activities I attended and reflections of my experience. However, as the daily conflictual interchanges increased, the entries were very sketchy. There were days when I did not make entries because I found myself exhausted from the interaction, and I did not want to write about the exchange since I did not want relive the moment. When I had proposed the journal as the primary source of data collection I had not anticipated the potential of emotional impact of writing about "negative experiences." Even though I had expected that there might be certain surprises that I may not like, I had not expected the experience to be so overwhelmingly depressing. In the initial months of my internship I taped some conversational clusters that I was part of but discontinued the process as the [internship climate changed.](#)



## ***Autobiography:***

Autobiography adheres more closely to the true potential of the genre the more its real subject matter is character, personality, self-conception—all those difficult-to-define matters which ultimately determine the inner coherence and the meaning of a life. (Karl J. Weintraub, 1975, p. 824 as quoted by Broughton & Anderson, 1997).

Another form of data collection method of personal experience is autobiography (Clandinin, & Connelly, 1994). Autobiography is closely linked to journal writing. Rather, a journal is a kind of autobiographical writing. Autobiographical writing attempts to capture the whole context of life, while journals are the small fragments of experience which lack the whole (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 421).

In the book, *Names we call Home*, Thompson & Tyagi (1996) illustrate the power of autobiography via contributors' stories of how they "became raced" by recounting their childhood amid contradictions about race. They used autobiography to illustrate "why racial identity formation occurs at the intersection of a person's subjective memory of trauma and collective remembrance of histories of domination" (p. xii). Autobiography became one of the appropriate methods of data collection for my inquiry.

First, contributors to the book found that autobiography enabled them to explore their individual life history as they tapped into the communal memory and experience (Thompson & Tyagi, 1996). In the process of telling my story, I tapped into my memory and experience of how I became aware of the larger social process of discourse and emerging discourse formations. Second, "personal narratives bring forth the politics of self-definition" (Thompson & Tyagi, 1996). I believe that self-definition is a process of social meaning making (Lemke, 1995) via conversations (Anderson,

1997) in the context of ever present discourses and emerging discourses. One's own self-definition reflects one's values and belief system which is recursively defined by one's culture (Lock, 1981). My story is a "politics of self-definition." Third, my experience of the research training I had in the ethnography class (at Virginia Tech) and my current research experience is captured in the words of Thompson and Tyagi (1996), "many of the contributors' most complex and startling insights were ones they didn't actually 'know' until they wrote them" (p. xiii). The above quote succinctly describes the power of writing and journaling, which is used in therapy as homework and used by therapists as letters to their clients (White & Epston, 1990). Lastly, "the contributors offer multilayered accounts of the emotional and political work involved in developing racial consciousness" (Thompson et al., 1996). Though, my story does not focus on race (though it may be one of the intersections in my story), I strive to describe the process of developing mindfulness as an intern and the intersections of a meaning making being, relocator, researcher, therapist, and supervisor in the context of this internship via the reflexive narratives.

(Re)telling methodology is performing an autobiographical story telling. Or, one may also view (re)telling methodology as performing a story. The former is a creation of a script and the latter being an acting of a script. However, both are performances; one is scripting a performance and the other is performing a script. A story of methodology is both scripting a performance (discourse) and performing a script (discourses).

(For an implicit [performance of methodology](#) click here. Be warned that to navigate back to the explicit may not be so clear since you may have to find your way through the implicitness. However, you can always use the 'Back' button on your browser to get back here.)

**Research Audit:** As part of the research process I kept a research audit from the time of writing the research proposal until the final

submission of the dissertation to the Graduate school. The audit included my comments on the process, my feelings, and notes on how or what I was changing in the research. The audit also included my thoughts on different sections and plans for future writing.

**Reviews:** Viewing various texts as "data," I maintained an e-folder with notes from my readings of various texts. Flemons (1998) in his book "Writing Between The Lines", describes a method to manage one's data from literature review. Adopting his method I had an e-file for each reading-book, article, dissertations, and websites. I maintained quotes and my reflections for each reading. Subsequently, I created a theme e-file where I would collate the notes from various authors by themes such as narrative, hypertext, content and form, collaborative learning communities etc.



## **Writing To Re-present**

"We write in the moment and reflect our minds, emotions, environment in that moment. This does not mean that one is truer than the other-they are all true" (Goldberg, 1986, p. 115).

Goldberg's word captures my experience with writing. I found myself writing and re-writing a number of times. And I knew they were all true. The questions I kept asking myself were "Which of my experiences do I choose to include/exclude?" "What goes in/out?" "How do I decide what goes in/out?"

Writing to (re) present involved mixed genre. The intention was to convey the complexity of the research and internship experiences and to provide the reader with a window into my multiple self. I combined a number of new literary forms along with narrative prose in my textual production. I use layered account, swirling-fragmented narratives, scripts, and poetry as forms of writing to re-

present my lived experience as an intern and a researcher.

***Layered Accounts:*** Ronai (1992) defines the layered account as "shifting forward, backward, and sideways through time, space, and various attitudes in a narrative format" (p. 103). For instance, I use layered accounts to narrate "The story of stormy emotions," and "Implicit methodology."

***Swirling-Fragmented Narratives:*** I combine the notion of [fragmentation](#) with [narrative](#) to introduce the notion of fragmented narrative. Each story (a lexia) is part of the whole-the dissertation web of my experience. Each lexia is detached and incomplete and simultaneously, a whole-a story in itself. However, depending on the context of meaning construction the reader may experience the text as fragmented or a whole; a structured metaphor of my experience or a structuring of my experience. My intention is an invitation to the reader to jointly construct the context with me in virtual space and time and thus together we will perform each "reading"-fragmented or de-fragmented.

***Scripts:*** I use dialogues to perform the multiple voices I bring to life in my experience as a researcher and as an intern. Utilizing scripts also introduced polyvocality of interns' experiences without the presence of any particular intern but by tapping into my various intern conversations. Thus, by blurring the boundary between "fact" and "fiction" I have created an interpreted description of interns' commentary on the Institute as their internship site.

***Poetry:*** I have interspersed prose with poetry. Poetry emerged as a form of presentation to "capture" my sense of the recreated experience. Poetry has the power for creating subjunctive texts that is fluid and inviting while conveying a fluid "description" of the experience. ([sample](#))



**Writing To Analyze and Interpret**

"Meanings are made within communities and...the analysis of meaning should not be separated from the social, historical, cultural and political dimensions of these communities" (Lemke, 1995, p.9).

Analysis and interpretations are cultural practices of the communities we belong to and are a matter of opinion (Wolcott, 1994). I have adopted Coffey and Atkinson's (1996) positioning that analysis is a reflexive activity that informed my " data collection, writing, [and] further data collection." I view analysis and interpretation as a dialogical conversation within a consensual community interwoven with "data collection" rather than a post-data collection activity. The reflexive process of writing to represent is inclusive of my interpretation, since while writing I feel the presence of my colleagues over my shoulders (Wolcott, 1994). According to Wolcott, "our interpretations are our claims to the independent creation of new knowledge" that we do to be profound but, it is always a matter of consensus within the [traditions](#) we locate ourselves (Bruffee, 1999; Lemke, 1995; Wolcott, 1994).

Approaching analysis and interpretation as social practices of the academic community and language as social semiotics or communal meaning making (Lemke, 1995), I have utilized the following practices in the performances of the various stories of my internship and research.

***Stories as Interpretation:*** Stories about my internship experience and research are interpretations about my experience. The stories are not *the* experience. The practice of making sense of my experience and presenting them as narratives, poetry, script or multimedia are all interpretive constructions of the experience that I have written about.

***Stories about Stories:*** Related to the former, the practice of constructing texts, interpretive texts, are stories about stories. Every story telling is an interpretive effort. Thus, the whole dissertation -web is an illustration of stories about stories. The

stories of textual production are another layer of interpretation of my efforts at meaning making.

***An Afterwords:*** Words that I have written from a reflective position after I have completed a thematic lexia. "An afterwords" may be a story about the story, a process reflection of my writing experience (in turn my research experience) and/or an epilogue.

***Interwoven Reflexive Narratives:*** Narratives are interspersed, within the stories of my internship and research, as reflections of what I am doing textually. According to Woolgar (1988) there are two forms of reflexivity: *constitutive reflexivity* and *benign introspection* and that social sciences "fall awkwardly between constitutive reflexivity and benign introspection in virtue of their admission of some similarity relations and their pretensions to ideals of Scientific method" (p. 22). Reflexive narratives fall between "benign introspection" and "constitutive reflexivity." Drawing on the notion of reflexivity I have created narratives that question the built in interpretations in the texts. Thus, I am suggesting to the reader to read the text on a number of different levels and to continuously stay in a critically questioning dialogue with whichever interpretation s/he takes away from the text.

***Decentering Text:*** Drawing on sociologist Joseph Schneider (1991) who critiques textual authority, I bold certain words as a practice of **reflexivity** and **analyses**. In doing so the focus of the reader may shift from the content of the lexia to the phrases and words in bold fonts. The hypertext links may serve the same purpose though not always intended. The intent is to draw attention to the writer's reflexivity, which is a further commentary on the textual production. See text [\*Afterwords: Choices We Make.\*](#)

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Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community



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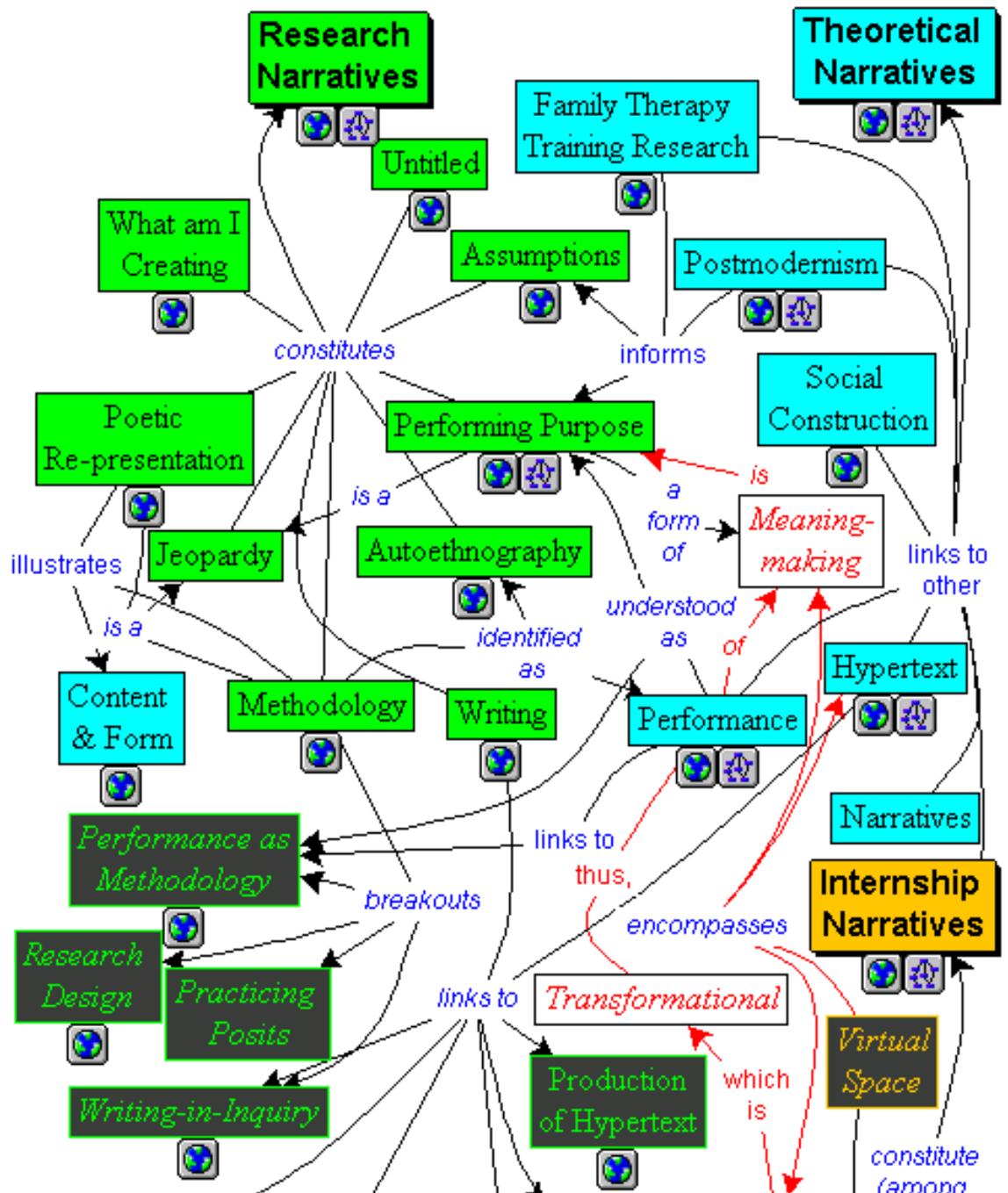


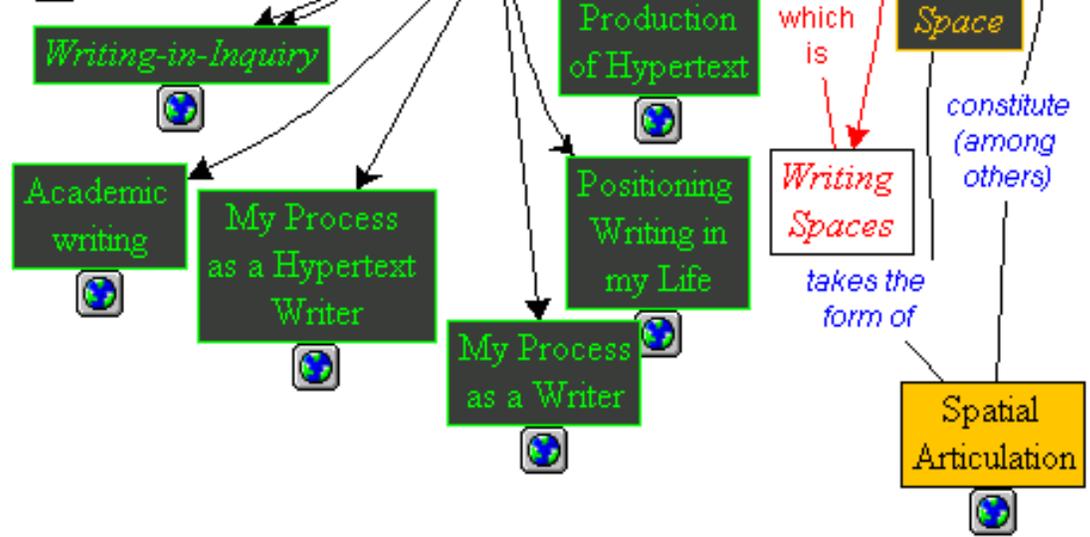
The dissertation web, a hypertext located within multiple discourses, is an intertextual script, a rendition, of my internship (1998-1999) and research experiences (1998-2001).

# METHODOLOGY

## AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

- Abstract*
- Theoretical Narratives*
- Research Narratives*
- Internship Narratives*





**Map: Graphic Location of *Autoethnography* within the Dissertation Web**



Autoethnography takes multiple forms based on authors' definitions. It has been featured as a methodology (Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Fiske, 1990), form of writing (Van Maanen, 1995), reviving a literary genre (Richardson, 1994, 1997), text (Denzin, 1989; Reed-Danahay, 1997), term of textual analysis (Neumann, 1996) and concept (Hayano, 1979). Autoethnography is not new to anthropologists (Reed-Danahay, 1997), literary critics (Deck, 1990), post-colonial thinkers, and sociologists (Ellis & Bochner, 1997) who have been using it for a little over two decades, while unheard of among marriage and family therapists.

Several authors (Dorst, 1989; Hayano, 1979; Pratt, 1994; Strathern, 1987; and Van Maanen, 1995) relate autoethnography to "native ethnography" which is the study of one's own group (Reed-Danahay, 1997). Dorst (1989), who critiques traditional ethnography, identifies autoethnography as a composition of social and cultural artifacts in the form of self-inscription and self-referentiality to the people of that particular region. Anthropologist Deborah Reed-Danahay (1997) states that it is increasingly difficult to distinguish "ethnography and an autobiographic perspective. Increasingly, ethnography is autobiographical and autobiography reflects the cultural and social frames of reference." She further delineates it as a "self narrative that places the self within a social context." She also identifies it as a term to categorize "counter-narratives, politicized texts that resist ethnographic representations by outsiders" (p. 139). However, literary

critic Alice Deck (1990) identifies autoethnographers as "indigenous anthropologist... [who are] concerned with examining themselves as 'natives' as they are with interpreting their cultures for a non-native audience" (p. 246-247).

Practices of an autoethnographer are as varied as the understanding of autoethnography. Autoethnography, according to Reed-Danahay (1997) requires one to transcend selfhood and social life, which is a postmodern condition. An autoethnographer is a "figure not completely 'at home'" since s/he is a border-crosser with "multiple, shifting identities" (1997). She views autoethnography as rewriting the self and the social, thus creating a political discourse. If traditional ethnography is defined as writing and interpreting the culture (Dorst, 1989); then, autoethnography may be viewed as its critique, since autoethnography questions the ethnographic practices of representation of others and self-documentations. Deck (1990) describes the autoethnographer as a native expert who has first hand knowledge of the culture which is sufficient to lend authority to the text. This parallels the postmodern condition of local knowledge. Drawing on the above features of autoethnography, I had chosen to position myself as an autoethnographer among my [multiple identities](#) for the following reasons.

First, I positioned myself as a [border-crosser](#) with "multiple, shifting identities." Thus, I was a native and an other at Houston Galveston Institute, the [internship setting](#) which was the context of my inquiry. I positioned myself as a native among the members of the intern community at the Institute. However, I was also a new comer (other) to the Institute's community, which practices from a postmodern approach. I did not view myself as a neophyte (neither a native nor an other) to postmodernism. Over time as I became part of the community--immersed myself in the everyday activities of the Institute--I became more of an insider than an other or outsider. However, in reference to the faculty and long term community members, I continued to be an other as a learner/intern and a new arrival into the community. I also continued to be an other-Asian in a community of predominantly Caucasian members. Since I was positioned as a supervisor to the Master-level interns who were also my peers, I became a border-

crosser. I had crossed the border from being an intern-cohort member to a supervisor-in-training. As a supervisor I had access to administrative and financial information, attended faculty meetings, supervisor's seminar, and Institute retreats that were not readily accessible to Master-level interns that particular year.

Second, I viewed my inquiry as a critique of traditional representational practices of self and other in praxis. I chose to use experimental literary forms (Woolgar, 1988) to re-present and *formalize* "data" frames. Rather than create a distinction between describing the experience (data) and then analyzing and interpreting the "data", I constructed story spaces, which were interpretations of my internship experiences. Since, every re-telling is a new telling that is interpretive of the experience it talks about, all descriptions are interpretations (Wolcott, 1994).

Third, the inquiry is a self-narrative within the social-cultural context, that is, the internship culture at the Institute. In narrating my internship experience and narrating the *how* of the narration of my internship experience I re-created a socio-cultural interpretive description of the Institute. Thus, as a native (intern) and other (new community member, learner, intern) my experience is a commentary (interpretation) of the Institute's internship culture in the year 1998-1999. And as I write the commentary, I question my experience (illustrated as reflexivity) and make public my writing practices (illustrated as production of texts).

Fourth, the inquiry, a contextualized self-narrative is a political text (Neumann, 1996). The text is political for three reasons. First, I position my experiences in relation to "other" in my context. Second, I question my experiences and thus, the context is also questioned. Lastly, I have created research narratives that are non-traditional, in tension with the dominant expressions of inquiry. I have blurred the boundaries of fact and fiction in my writing style, and I am using the [hypertext](#) technology (Kolb, 2000) and genre.

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Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a  
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The dissertation web, a hypertext located within multiple discourses, is an intertextual script, a rendition, of my internship (1998-1999) and research experiences (1998-2001).

## STORY OF BLURRING BOUNDARIES: WOMAN OF THE BORDER(LESS)

I am here because I am a woman of the border: between places, between identities, between languages, between cultures, between longings and illusions, one foot in the academy and one foot out.

Behar, 1996, p. 162

Research Audit 9/19/99

Ruth Behar's, anthropologist and MacArthur Fellow, words in her book *Vulnerable Observer* resonate with my lived experience. That one sentence held my undivided attention since it spoke volumes to my own experience of living in the United States of America. So how does it relate to my research? I don't know. But it relates to me, Saliha the person, and research is one of the activities of my experience in America. So how does living on the *border* impact my research experiences, my internship experiences, and my training experiences?

The following links will guide you to the various ways I see myself as living on the border and how I found the boundaries blurring in the course of my internship and research experience. I punctuate each blurring boundary experience with **questions** (in **bold**) as food for thought for readers-interns, international students, intern supervisors and coordinators, policymakers at academic and professional organizations.

[Abstract](#)

[Theoretical Narratives](#)

[Research Narratives](#)

[Internship Narratives](#)

## NOTE

To run movie: Click on the movie space

Movie not visible: Please download 22blur\_bound.mov.

To view outside pdf: Use Quick Time player or plug in.

**Between Identities: Personal and Professional**

**Between Places: Locating-re-locating**

**Between Longings and Illusions: Relationships and (K)nots**

**Between Languages: Knowing and Not Knowing**

**Between Cultures: Assimilate and Not**

**Between Positions: Multiple Relationships**

**Between Identities: Personal and Professional**

Early in my experience at the Institute, in one of the supervisors' group meetings when I was introducing myself, Harlene mentioned that I was from India. And I took that as a cue to add more about

that part of me. Later that day she commented that I did not include the Indian part of myself in my introductions. That was a beginning of a new story that I started to tell about myself living in the US. I realized that as a result of having no formalized marriage and family therapy training in India and since I could not count any of my clinical-client contact—hours from India I had just dropped that part of my clinical identity. My self-introduction, a measure of one's professional identity, was an embodiment of the discourses I was immersed (within) without the reflective practice, until Harlene directed my attention to my *Indianness*. I thought I was arbitrarily introducing myself as a doctoral student, with no reference to my life-personal/professional self before my doctoral status. But it was not as arbitrary as I thought it to be. For me, the arbitrariness was embedded in the discourses of professionalism, belonging, and professional identity. **Who decides which of our past training and practice experiences as a therapist counts towards one's professional identity? How is this decision made? How does the discourse of professional identity impact on boundary crossers, like me, who move from one country to another in the quest of training? How do interns and international students define themselves to belong within a new learning community?**

So what happened to the person of the therapist in this whole process of internship? The whole story elucidated above is the story of the person of the therapist and there is more to her. Since she is more than the self of the therapist. Peter Rober (1999) ponders on the place of the person of the therapist in the therapeutic conversation in his article *The Therapist's Inner Conversation in Family Therapy Practice: Some Ideas about The Self of The Therapist, Therapeutic Impasse and The Process of Reflection*. However, I wonder about the process of the therapist's becoming within the life of the person. How does my being and becoming a therapist influence my personhood? What is my story of my personal life as I grow and train as a therapist?

So how does an intern build a personal life for herself? Fortunately,

I believe that the personal and professional are integrated which resonates with what the Institute views. Both Harlene and Sue spent time in meeting me outside of "professional" confines. For instance, before I arrived I had a "crisis" of where I was going to live since the apartment contract, that had been arranged, had fallen through. At that point Harlene offered that I could spend the night at her place on arriving in Houston and then search for a new apartment. In another instance, Sue picked me up from my apartment one day when I missed my bus to the Institute. At other times, we had opportunities to ride together to places (since I did not have a car), go out for lunch or coffee or have a chance to assist in organizing a social for students of Our Lady of the Lake University. Consequently, I felt very welcomed and wanted by Harlene and Sue's gestures. I had a notion, that such requests and gestures were not expected or commonplace of people in their position. However, via their gestures, I experienced their practice of the personal and professional as intertwined. These experiences furthered in training me to be "more human" as a professional rather than creating an aura of a distanced or superior professional based on my status. The personal gestures provided an informal context for professional training. And the professional context—internship—which brought us all together, in turn, defined me as a person who continues to strive to become a humble and caring professional mindful of one's status and authority as a therapist and supervisor/trainer.

**How are the notions of "personal" and "professional" defined in various training communities? How do these distinctions inform the training context and vis-a-vis? How do the relationships within a training context define one's professional identities?**



### **Between Places: Locating-re-locating**

In a conversation I had with my sister on December 26, 1999, I

said, "I opened myself emotionally to what I was reading in an effort to build stronger relationships with my clients. But opening yourself emotionally in one part of your life also makes you vulnerable in other relationships. Since I don't see myself as an on and off key that can switch back and forth between various contexts, I find it harder to maintain an even keel or even turn off emotionally to [the fact of] being by myself in Houston." I had prided myself as a person who could take on the challenges of coming to the United States for my education with my family's support and seeing my dreams come to fruition. One of my stories that helped me through the process of relocating to America from India was that I could turn off emotionally and just focus on the task at hand to its completion and move on. This ability, defined as "turning off emotionally," stood me in good stead. However, it was this very same process that I was inadvertently changing in my growth process as a therapist. The change process started long before I embarked on my journey at the Institute. However, it was at the Institute that I realized how much the person of the therapist had changed in the last three years, since her arrival in America. To tell you the new story of "who is this person?" is to tell you a selected portion of my personal struggles. It is my narrative of a person relocating emotionally to Houston to start her internship.

Journal Entry 9/4/98

As I sit at home, with all papers on laptop research spread around me, I experience a sense of just finishing my internship and packing my bags and going home and completing my writing. Even as the idea struck me I thought how limiting it would be in Delhi since I'll not have a good enough library and a platform to have dialogues (other than via e-mails) which may not be important. I think part of this feeling is from missing [friends from Virginia] to talk with. The [other part is] fear of what will happen after 12 months here. And the feeling of just floating and not knowing. Ironically that is how my research feels as well: floating and not-

knowing. This reflects the process of mirroring as stated by Marshall and Reason (1993).

The above was one of my earliest acknowledgements of missing my friends from Virginia Tech and the loss of closeness I shared with them, that in the months to come became even more apparent to me. I had counted on friends to walk along the dissertation path with me but had not realized how being geographically apart from them would affect how I would cope with the other relational tensions in the days to come.

Since I had moved to America, my cohorts and peers at Tech had assumed the task of providing the immediate "familial" support that I thrived on and cherished. As Morie in *Tuesdays with Morie* states about familial foundation and love, "if you don't have the support and love and caring and concern that you get from a family, you don't have much at all" (Albom, 1997, p. 91, ). My close friends and the long distance familial support from India were the source of nourishment for my growth. But the relocation to Houston brought home the reality that friends are friends and we all will move on someday. Separation of friends is different from separation from family. Unlike family, friends will leave. This was the beginning of acknowledgement of the missing "spiritual security"-somebody watching out for you (Albom, 1997, p.20) or as I had journaled "*someone who I know I can rely or count on being here for me. Oh! I guess I want my family here.*" It was also the inevitable passage into adulthood of coming to terms with the choices one has made- you come alone and go alone. But also learning that separation *of* friends is different from separation *from* friends. The former is a geographical distance while the latter is an emotional distance. In my relocation with the former came a certain degree of the latter thus, creating a need for emotional connection.

As time progressed I continued to experience a concern of not feeling "*quickly* settled" into my new life! On September 20, 1998 as I was journaling with a light pink pen which would not write

smoothly I commented

My mood is like this pen- writes and doesn't. God alone knows if it is PMS or what! I have hardly anything in the fridge but I don't feel like going to the store. So I'm pulling on the stuff from the freezer (my storage)...I don't feel like doing anything!

"I don't feel like doing anything" had become a mantra of Houston. 16 months after I had moved to Houston, I often continued to experience the mantra. I used to reason that it was my dissertation. In contrast to Virginia, the experience of 'not wanting to do anything at home' was alien to me. "I'm just spread out on the 'bed'....who can I call and speak" and I would go down a list of friends- some of whom I have already spoken to and still reported feeling "negative." As I continued to struggle with being by myself in Houston, I once wrote "it is time to move on. Focus my life here, if anymore is meant to happen- God will show the way. FAITH."

I had relocated to Houston, for my internship, not intending to stay for long. Even though I saw the move as transitory, I was also longing for geographical continuity that would provide me with a base to dream and launch into my dreams. However, I had not anticipated Houston being such a platform. At an emotional level I longed for the missing connections but I had chosen not to form deep connections in Houston, since I was on the "move." Thus, the loss resulting from the geographical relocation, enhanced with the idea of not wanting to grow close to anyone in Houston, brought forth the sense of void of the emotional connection in my life. Ironically, I was forming the emotional ties in my first year at Houston. But due to my sense of loss and the interpersonal tension (resulting in the need to further shield myself emotionally) I did not experience the emerging "professional" relationships as emotional bonds. However, with the temporal distance—three years later—as I re-create the current narrative, I see the irony.

**How does an intern choose to form emotional ties, when one**

**transitorily relocates? How does the training context impact on the emotional ties that are formed on relocation?**



### **Between Longings and Illusions: Relationships and (K)nots**

"Build new relationships here -in Houston," that is what I told myself. "Find someone here with whom I could share something that is very important to me. Find enjoyment and happiness in that." And relationships were forming and things were happening but I continued to lack the sense of meaningfulness. Each relationship I formed was very warm and fun in its own ways yet the sense of satisfaction of having a peer was missing. What led to the experience of lack of meaningfulness? My personal and professional expectations were intertwined and contrasting expectations co-existed at the same time. On the one hand, though personally I did not want to form emotional ties because of my anticipated "inevitable" relocation, professionally I wanted to have a fun and supportive learning experience with my peers. On the other hand, though personally I wanted to fill the emotional void resulting from the relocation, professionally, I wanted to shield myself as the tempo of the interpersonal tension arose at the Institute. The obvious answer lay in looking outside the internship context to meet my "personal" needs. However, I restricted myself from much activity outside the Institute due to time commitments and the lack of a car, which limited my mobility in the city of Houston. My personal longing and my professional illusions were intertwined. Personal longings were informing professional expectations and a professional disillusionment was a personal loss.

**How does the training site learn about the "personal" longings and illusions of its new members? How does the training site prepare for the new dynamics that emerges from the new relationships? How are the "personal" and "professional" disillusionment managed in a "professional" context?**



## Between Languages: Knowing and Not Knowing

Reflections 5/27/00

Social Construction knows no borders.

I have this sense of going back and forth among various boundaries-therapy, training, anthropology, literature, hermeneutics, feminist, methodology, theory, philosophy, cultural anthropology, and linguistics.

All of these areas touch on my interest. Ideally I would have loved to have an interdisciplinary curriculum. I enjoy the freedom to pick and choose as I learn and to go with the flow of what fits for me. But I did not have that luxury during my graduate course work. I was limited by time, which was determined by cultural transition and financial resources. However, growing up I got the message of "interdisciplinary" approach from my mother who was a professor of Political Science in the University of Delhi. I remember the longing within me to do what she did. She had history, economics and politics as her foundational courses. Growing up I knew I wanted to study psychology but I was also very fascinated with geography and my growing interest in philosophy. As I learned about research I became more convinced that a theoretical foundation in philosophy is crucial for a researcher.

Research is not about methodology rather it is about the political reconstruction of knowledge and understanding about the process of knowledge construction. Knowledge construction is a process situated within [intertextuality](#). So no knowledge is created in isolation but is relationally situated within the existing texts and conversations. The above construction of research is a language I have learned over the years.

I have this preconception that at the end of a dissertation one is an

expert on the topic researched and well versed with the theoretical guidelines of their study and the idea of "defense" is to hold one's position. However, I am of the opinion that I am always open to the changing and co-evolving ideas of a conversation and my ideas are not fixed. I feel I have just begun my long journey among the various disciplines that fascinate me.

As I bring to pause my dissertation journey I find myself drawn to theories of Cultural Studies and I curb my desires to immerse in these theories myself until I "complete" my dissertation. I understand Cultural studies as an interdisciplinary approach that "draws from the fields of anthropology, sociology, gender studies, feminism, literary criticism, history and psychoanalysis in order to discuss contemporary texts and cultural practices" (Sauer, 2000). I wish to enter the languaged community of cultural studies as I continue to immerse myself in the languaged community of social construction. I surf cultural studies websites, read introductory essays and I am drawn to writer such as, Roland Barthes, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Edward Said. Even as I romance with cultural studies, I am seduced by the growing notion of performance studies as well.

**How do interns and researchers re-locate themselves as their theoretical orientation expands with experience? How does one's changing theoretical orientation position oneself within a languaged community?**



### **Between Cultures: Assimilate and Not**

I found myself living on the edge since coming to America. In Virginia I would often not feel part of the conversations which were loaded with "cultural jokes." But I also found myself resisting "the culture" for the fear of assimilation and the imagined difficulties I would have when I returned to India. Assisted by my financial constraints I was able to maintain my preferred way of being. I heard the local news but because Blacksburg was a small

town national or international news was not well represented. In conversations, I would feel I was dumb though I had my own reasons for not knowing. However, at times I would feel very awkward not knowing the politics and major political critiques so I would "sneak" on myself and read international newspapers.

When I moved to Houston, after a brief visit to India, I had tested my notions of assimilation and my imagined difficulties in returning to India. After living in America for three years, I experienced myself as being able to *get back to* my own culture given time. I also experienced myself as not fitting-in within the short time I was in India. The mixed experience of belonging and not belonging brought home to me the sense of borderless woman living between cultures. I found a stronger thrust to "assimilate" the United States into my sense of being and sense of "home" rather than fear myself being assimilated by the dominant culture. My first three years in America were full of examples of mindful and purposeful living. I thus planned that I could continue my mindful living while simultaneously, embrace certain "American cultural practices" and not get swallowed by assimilation. However, the key was in mindful living. Thus, I chose certain practices with intent rather than adopting practices for the sake of an American experience. For instance, I chose to read the New York Times on a regular basis and made it my homepage of my web-browser. So I found myself catching up with national and international news, which for me was a measure of allowing the American culture to impact my senses in the way that I had not allowed for in Blacksburg. The practice also gave me a sense of being more culturally in-sync while still being selective. Another practice that I had cultivated in Blacksburg but continued on a greater frequency in my second year in Houston was going to the movies.

Thus, I find myself assimilating the two cultures rather being assimilated by any one dominant culture. I continue to focus on my dream as living in both cultures. For instance, I cook to combine recipes and spices. I design and dress to combine cultural lines and material. I work with ideas to combine and juxtaposition the

"cultural" biases. However, I do not deny that in my every day living there are subtle ways by which I am assimilating into the culture as I pick up cultural nuances to ease my daily living. But I think the awareness brings forth the practice of reflexivity and mindfulness of what and how to honor and embrace change and the unknown.

**How do learning sites address the international students' process of assimilation? How do the international students' long term goals influence the process of assimilation? How does the process of being assimilated *by* a culture differ from the process of assimilating *into* a culture?**



### **Between Positions: Multiple Relationships**

Journal Entry 3/30/99

In my interaction with her [fellow intern] I approached her as her friend, we then talked as fellow interns and at some point [in the conversation] I found myself taking up for the Institute (*which I realize I have done a number of times esp. with her and I know she may often see me as being in a position of authority since I'm her supervisor as well*). But I definitely, more often than not, remained in a position of a fellow intern and friend in this talk with her.

Journal Entry: Dateless

...When we left Sue said [to me] "so do you think we shocked them as much as we feel disoriented at times when we leave?" It is this part of Sue I enjoy and yet I'm uncomfortable with it when I see her in a hierarchical position with respect to me and my notion about "position" kicks in! But I enjoy it [the bantering].

It is the bantering kind of humor with no mean intentionality that I enjoy and her eyes seem to light up!!

#### Journal Entry 4/3/99

So it is finding that delicate balance of paying your intern dues and at the same time getting what you want as a learner!

#### Journal Entry 5/31/00

I received a message from Harlene today wondering if the visitors could sit in with me during my clinical supervision. She said that [X, Y & Z] had sat in once and [had reported] that had been good. I felt a little unsure because I was not sure how I was planning to use the time. And I was contemplating using the time to talk about one client and my overall feeling of "shutting down" or slowing down or not feeling in-sync with things for myself. I am feeling I'm doing too many things but if I was organized, I think, I would be doing better. But is that an excuse? Or should I be saying 'no' to things? I feel that is a part of something I want to discuss and not sure if I want to discuss it with the visitors present (may be I could discuss about this part of me next week).

But [on reflection] some things that struck me were:

1 This is a way of making private thoughts public.

2 This is also a way of practicing what Harlene addresses as "protecting your time"

3 I had this sudden insight or coming together moment of how much more I was going with the flow of blurring boundaries of who was talking to whom about what,

when, where, and how. I was practicing this idea in a number of ways. I had invited my supervisees to sit in on my supervision and had them reflect on my clinical dilemmas. I had invited my co-therapist to my supervision and we went back and forth with such conversations and none of this was set in stone as to how things should be conducted. These varying patterns of interactions enhanced the practice of constructing a collaborative learning environment and getting involved with learning situations as they arise and drew my attention to how much more flexibility and movement there is in such a learning environment.

All of the above entries illustrate the multiple ways in which I had found myself in the blurred zones of relational position resulting from the different hats I wore over the course of my internship. Often in any one conversation I would find myself being mindful of the multiple positions that I occupied with my conversational partner. In the course of my experience, I found that the Institute was promoting the idea of multiple relationships. Rather than forcing or limiting the learner by the taboos or notion of "dual relationships" the learner was encouraged to learn the practices of reflection and mindfulness of the multiple relationships and then to act—depending on the situation—relationally, therapeutically, ethically, and legally.

**How does the notion of "dual relationship" limit the intern from preparing for the "real world" of multiple relationships? How can learners and learning sites create a context for reflective positioning within multiple relationships?**



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Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a  
Postmodern Community



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The dissertation web, a hypertext located within multiple discourses, is an intertextual script, a rendition, of my internship (1998-1999) and research experiences (1998-2001).

## PERFORMANCE

---

### Performance is

a personal expression, a pressing for voice, a pressing against silence until one pushes onstage to assert "I am, I am" as the lights fade: Expression leads to oppression, oppression to expression.

Pelias, 1999



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## PERFORMANCE

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### Performance is

a method of understanding, bodily, located in the experience of doing-as the carpenter knows the weight of the hammer, as the sculptor feels the smoothness of the stone, as the child learns the tricks of the tree.

Pelias, 1999

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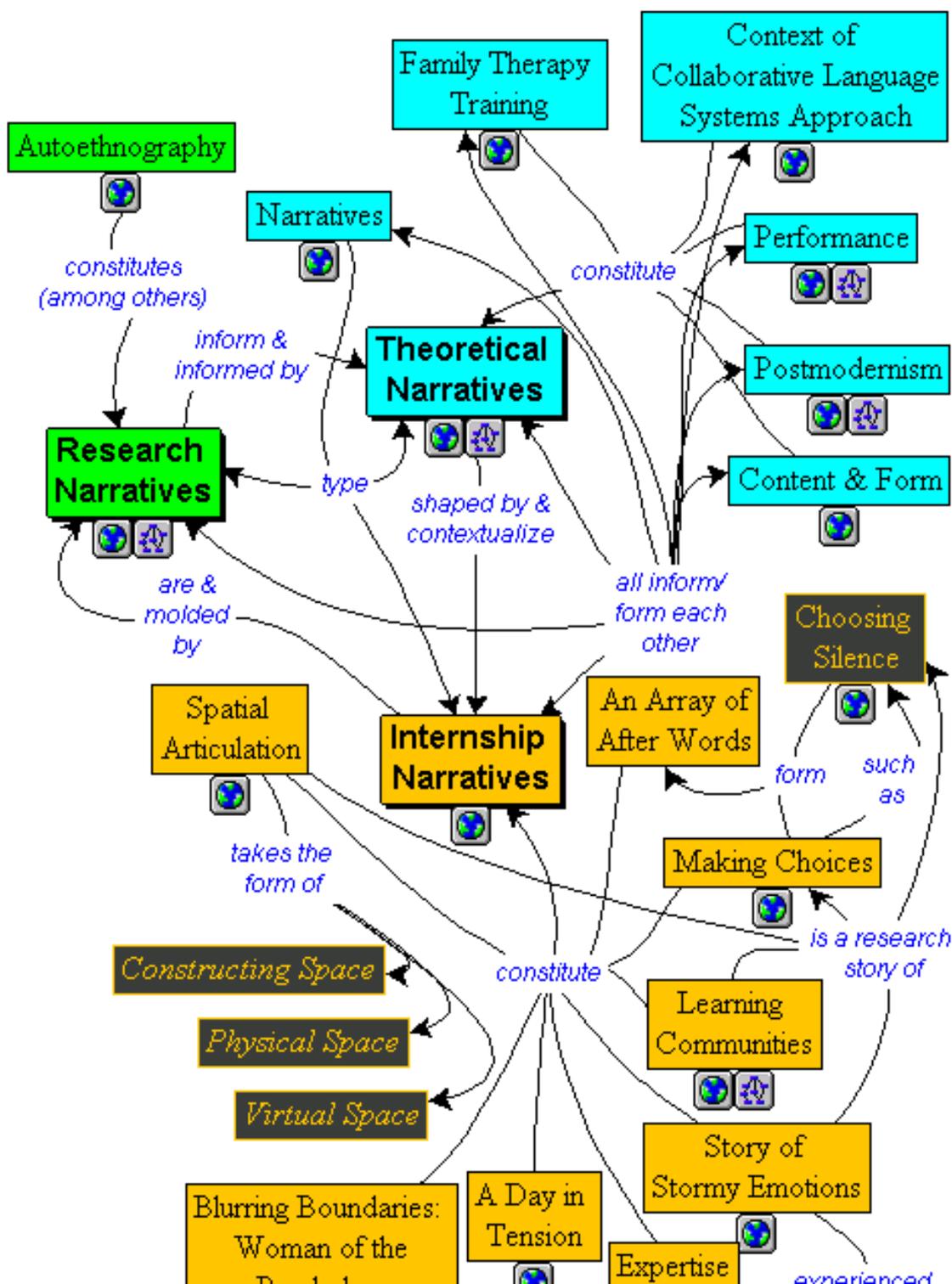


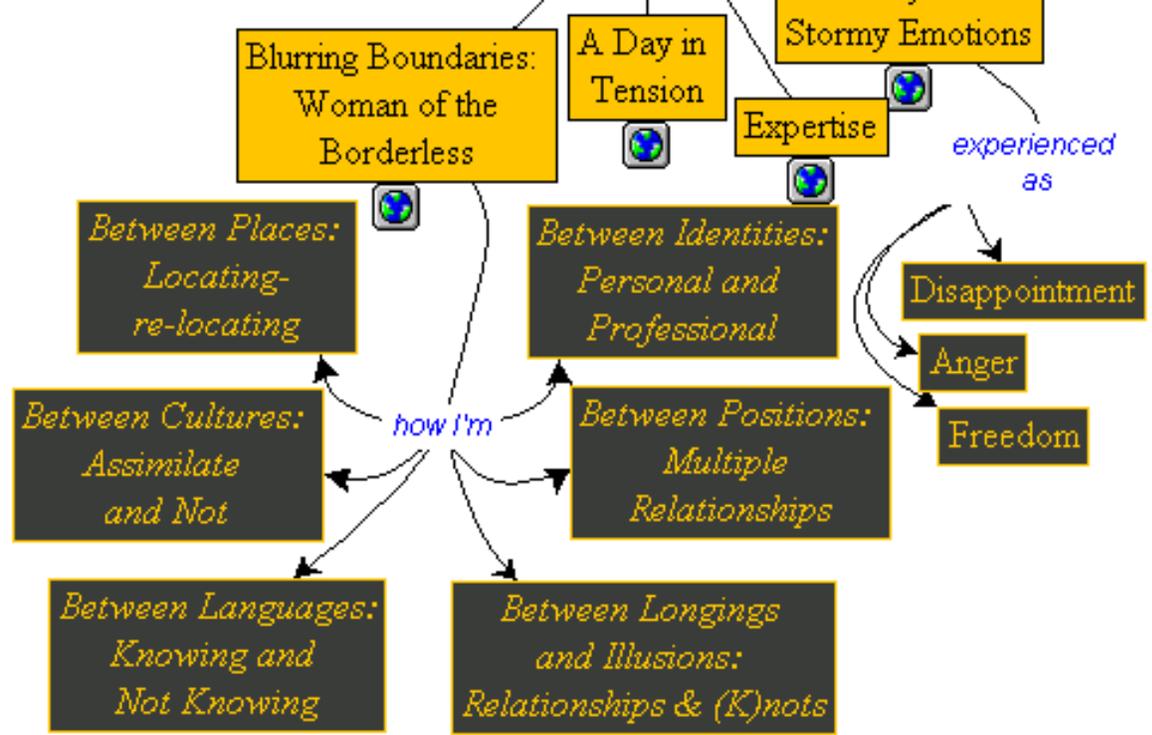
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# SPATIAL ARTICULATION

- Abstract*
- Theoretical Narratives*
- Research Narratives*
- Internship Narratives*





Map: Graphic Location of *Spatial Articulation* within the Dissertation Web



Click for an interactive map



Space, as a [metaphor](#), provides a frame for drawing parallels between the multiple notions of postmodernism and factors that influenced my sense making of the internship and research processes. The abstractness of space allows for the complexity of [postmodernism](#) to come alive in a (inter-) subjectively unique fashion, allowing for the co-creation of local knowledge communities irrespective of the defined conversational context as clinical, training, or research. Not only does postmodernism possess an abstractness but also the varied critical thoughts and praxis of postmodernism lends itself to degrees of uncertainty. Such perplexities of postmodernism are probably encountered in the newness of an internship experience, the uncertainty of the positions occupied by various members at an internship site, the hierarchical locations of the members within a new community that an intern enters and/or the (geographical) place.

Spatial articulation can take three metaphorical forms--the [constructing space](#), the [physical space](#), and the [virtual space](#). Each may be a variant of the others depending on the object of inquiry and analysis. For the purpose of this dissertation however, I tease them out from each other

to highlight the critical space occupied by the notion of space in my meaning-making experience of the internship and research processes.



## CONSTRUCTING SPACE

*Construction* refers to the social meaning making of the notion of space as experienced by me at the Institute. The metaphorical notion of space appears in the form of the internship experience, clinical theory and practice, and may be seen as the implicit and explicit "political deconstruction and reconstruction of subject positions" (Johnson-Eilola, 1997).

Instead we developed theoretical bias toward thinking in terms of human systems as meaning-generating systems; therefore the business (the expertise and responsibility) of the therapist is to create a *space* and to facilitate a process that offers the optimal opportunity for the generation of new meaning and for possibility of change as the client defines it" (Anderson, 1990, emphasis added).

Intellectually, Galveston is an island as well. Its isolation has encouraged two contradictory tendencies bearing on the development of family therapy in our community: the first a tendency to withdraw and interact exclusively with an intimate group of colleagues, the second to reach out to gain the interactive stimulation necessary for intellectual growth (Anderson et al., 1986).

Space, as a [metaphor](#), is a recurring theme historically and presently at the Institute. As illustrated in sample texts above, space was a notion that held theoretical and [explanatory value](#). Theoretically, spatial notions are used in languaging the process of therapy. Notions such as

"creating *space* for generative relationships and conversations" (Anderson, 1998-2000, personal communications) often inform therapy and supervision conversations. What space did the Institute hold in the theory development of family therapy? The Institute is home ground for the postmodern approach to therapy identified as [\*Collaborative Language Systems\*](#). One of its greatest contributions is the idea of the problem system being organized in language rather than by the patterns, individuals, or systems. The problem system is a meaning making system that is socially organized in language. One of the purposes for therapy is to create dialogical space for the unspoken. Dialogical space is "a metaphorical space between and within the conversational participants" (Anderson, 1997). It is a virtual space, thus the meaning is co-created by the conversational partners. The notion of dialogical space or conversational space is one of the central constructs of collaborative practice that I had experienced. Creating dialogical space holds a definite sway in the theoretical bias of the new language of therapy at the, now not so isolated, land-locked, Institute. In the ensuing section I discuss the various (re)constructions of space in practice.



### ***Deconstructing Dialogical Space***

Harlene Anderson in her book, *Conversation, Language, and Possibilities*, five times indexes "dialogical space" in conjunction with other sub-indexed terms. However, it is not until we have been using the phrase as a languaged reality are we introduced to its definition as: "a metaphorical space between the conversational participants" (1997, p 112). The first three indexed entries are references to dialogical space with regard to the therapist's role in facilitation and creation of dialogical space. In her first entry she identifies "a therapist as an expert in creating *dialogical space* and facilitating a dialogical process" (p 4, italics added). In the latter entries she describes how a therapist facilitates and creates such dialogical spaces and what a collaborative therapist is not. She further states how a therapist maintains this metaphorical space by not entering a conversation with formed ideas and plans but rather by "making room" for the other's

thoughts and multiple views and values (1997).

In my own growth as a postmodern therapist I have come to privilege "dialogical space" in my role as a therapist and supervisor. The question is 'how did I learn the art of creating such spaces?' Especially, if there is no technique to teach and learn "dialogical space," how does one learn the art of (metaphorical) creation?

Madelon Vriesendorp, an artist and wife of Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, provides an answer via her comments on her husband's work. She said, "the experiences are laid out. You go up and you have to look where you're meant to look. He sees a space and he sees what could happen—a scene in a space" (Lubow, 2000). A similar process occurs in the training and clinical processes. The intern (client) has the experience (context) laid out when they come in for training (therapy). In the process of a dialogical conversation, the intern (client) and "trainer" (therapist) co-create (see) *spaces*. The intern (client) then moves into these spaces where the experience is reenacted contemplatively. Further meaning is reconstructed in the ongoing dialogical spaces.

In spite of its metaphorical notion, dialogical space has become institutionalized in the local language community at the Institute such that it assumes a [virtual reality](#). Due to the Institute's training status and practice of reflexivity, dialogical space continues to get deconstructed and reconstructed. Dialogical space is one of the most explicit spatial constructs that I encountered theoretically and practically in the course of my internship.

### ***Political Reconstruction***

The above construction of space is spoken from the theoretical positions of constructing space for dialogue. There were times when I experienced "dialogical space." However, in the course of the internship I was not always experiencing dialogical space. As the journal entries below indicate that there were times when I experienced "no space."

January 1999: I don't feel safe to take this to supervision.

January 1999: Quoted from a speaker at the theoretical Seminar: "My frustration comes with words in trying to get across an idea. Like choose the right words and certain words are taboo like manipulative and I don't have any other words to use...I resent not being able to use certain words."

February 1999: I hate it! Its so frustrating!...I'm behaving like a child! But there is so much undercurrent and it is driving me crazy.

*How does a practice in creating dialogical space create the sense that there are no spaces for certain kinds of conversations?*

Spatial construct provides me with a frame to (re)construct political positions of my experience. The political positions I (re)construct corresponds to the notions of postmodernism. I seek solace for my experience of "no conversational space" in the postmodern notions of *context- performing culture and elimination of critical distance*.

### **Context: Performing Culture**

Space **(be)comes** where culture is performed. The co-construction of meaning is performance of culture. We are constantly performing multiple discourses (Johnson-Eilola, 1997). In the dissertation web one of the major discourses I am performing is postmodernism along with the academic discourses of dissertation writing and hypertext.

The internship space within which I performed as a doctoral intern with clinical, administrative, and supervisory roles was highly contextualized within a relational field that was rift with conflict and tension. Until that point in my internship, professionally and personally I had not been exposed, to [relational tensions](#) (an anomaly in the Institute's internship history) that stretched over six months. Professionally, this was my first experience of being caught up in a

highly emotional performance such that I came close to considering my options of changing internship sites. Personally, this was my first experience of being in a long-drawn out, highly charged "negative" emotional field. Thus, my internship, my learning space, got redefined as a space of [conflict and tension](#). I also lost sight of my original goal--to learn how to be a collaborative therapist. Rather, the focus was how to avoid the landmines of conflict and to keep the tension to a minimum such that I could refocus on my original goals and expectations of the internship. In the [Process Narrative of the Conflict](#) I detail **my ideas** about the relational tensions.

*On reflection the six months of tension was a cultural performance of increasing monologues rather than dialogues.*

### **Elimination of Critical Distance**

Often I tried to gain perspective in the midst of the relational tensions I experienced by attempting to create space for emotional distance. However, in retrospect I did not have an experience of "distance" even though I journaled about the transformations in my emotional state. As my journal entries about my supervision sessions indicate:

December 12, 1998      I left the meeting feeling like I didn't accomplish what I needed to. I wanted to talk about the process level and relate it to theory but it started to get depersonalized, so I brought in content... Well what I really want to do is have an intellectual conversation about theory and sensing and how all that fits in.

I attempted to create space that would not feel emotionally charged by gaining distance as illustrated in the following entry:

December 12, 1998      This seems so futile. May be move on & forget focusing on this & just do the work.

The journal entries three months later reveal the process of still attempting to create the distance from the ongoing experience and they further indicate a definite shift in perspective:

March 4, 1999    There was not much of tension. I felt I was very matter of fact. I again felt [the draw into the relational tension]... I just don't trust her & feel constantly drawn into another space that only we are in...[sic]

March 7, 1999    I think I have been feeling differently since before.... But I'm cautious in letting my guard down. I know I cannot let it down tomorrow & be my chirpy self...I think keeping my distance & staying focused on what I need to do will be the best plan for some time. I think seeing the emotional shit that's flying around helps me distance myself. Putting it in perspective & not feeling like my support has to come from the interns helps me. It hurts me but I feel it is a professional step I'm taking. A step to growing up. A step to being my own person with my own beliefs who can take a stand & don't have to feel like I cannot have a voice.

March 10,  
1999                Focusing on the issues of transition [referring to clinical work] and working with people from other culture I seem to enjoy it and I'm energized in a different way.

March 17,  
1999

I think today is a very good example of how I'm different, how things continue that I'm uncomfortable with...& how I let things...[go] which I decide is not too "harmful"...I feel bad 'coz this is an example of shutting [myself] up to preserve a relationship...

This is the frustration I experience. I don't feel so angry now. I guess 'coz it is so pointless.

March 18,  
1999

I am struggling with my own decision to get out of here [HGI] & the logic of staying!! Do I want to stay? Well where else will I go? Why am I making such a big deal? Why can't I just live & not care or give a damn!!

Though, such attempts to create space for emotional distance were *not futile*, the relational tensions continued along with the emotional seesaw.

There are times when one is researching their own emotionality or a highly emotional process and it is hard to journal then and there what one is experiencing as it is very painful (Ellis, 1991). Attempting to keep a critical distance is often a suggestion encountered in the research literature. However, to keep a critical distance from an experience or a text that one is critiquing or writing about, is virtually impossible since to talk about an experience or a text is to enter the talked about experience or text (Johnson-Eilola, 1994). And such is one of the defining characteristics of postmodernism. Thus, to write about the Institute's culture (that I have been and continue to be part of), from a critical distance, is to re-enter that particular cultural text. Consequently, the critical distance is eliminated. Thus, what I have re-created above is an instance of the internship experience; a highly subjective re-creation.

Similar processes of sense making in the midst of the internship occur with various other aspects of one's experience. One attempts to create pockets of space to define and re-define one's experience like I did- intellectual space, emotional space etc. However, the intricate interweaving of our experience and the sense making of an experience are inexplicably linked since we cannot get out of the experience to explain the experience. The process of sense making becomes inclusive in the process of experience thus, eliminating the notion of "critical distance." However, the very process of sense making also creates a different experience, at times different enough, to change the meaning of the experience and thus, creating a context for transformation.



## **PHYSICAL SPACE**

*Physical space* refers to the geographical notion of space at the Institute. Paul Dourish (1999) distinguishes space and place from an architectural framework. He states that "space is the opportunity; place is the understood reality." According to him space is "organization in three dimensions" while place is "a frame within which action unfolds." Though, he describes space as the physical structure I have chosen to describe *place* as physical structure where "social actions" are enacted. The physical space referred to as place from here on is the geographical location of the Institute, the office structures or office work spaces at the Institute and the symbolic meaning the physical structure had for me as an intern.

### ***Creating Work Space***

The Institute is housed in a [Victorian two-story house](#) that is often admired by visitors (clients and learners). It has a very welcoming and homely feel to it. Once it was described as having "many spirit" by one of my imaginative, charming teenage client who loved to tell stories and walk around the house to pick flowers and bring them back to finish our sessions in the "beautiful house."

Within the first week of my arrival at the Institute I was informed that the first floor space was the Institute's space for the interns and Institute activities. The second floor space was rented out as private office space to the Institute's associates, which I understood helped with the up-keep of the house. The first floor space had a more communal feel while the second floor space had a more personal touch of the therapist which made the room more warm and eye catching. Consequently, while the first floor space was a mantle to the Institute's history the second floor space was a personalized signature with artistic tones of the associates. And then there was the attic!

When I arrived in August of 1998, the attic was being used as office space by the interns and as a play therapy room by the Child Protective Service (CPS) team therapists (Institute associates and interns). As one enters the attic via the stairs, one is flanked by old video-recording equipment and historical artifacts from the days the Institute was located in Galveston and couple of other locations in Houston. On entering the attic one is greeted by a ray of sunshine that comes through a square foot wide skylight, the only source of natural light. Below the skylight are three tables for the interns use which was designated as their "office space." Beyond the skylight, to the back of the attic is a recessed-in alcove with sharply angled low ceiling requiring anyone taller than five feet to watch one's head. The outer end of the alcove has two supporting pillars that give the boundary-less niche a sense of private enclosed space. When the toys were neatly shelved and displayed within the alcove, it had a warm and very inviting feel for the children. But if the room was being used for therapy, then the interns could not access their personal stuff stored at the "office" end of the attic.

By the end of the first month (two months for the other interns) we had proposed to the administration to move the play therapy room to the first floor and to fully convert the attic to office space for the interns. The ease with which the proposal was accepted and the speed with which we moved the rooms around lead me to believe in the process of dialogue for creating workspaces.



## *Sparring Space*

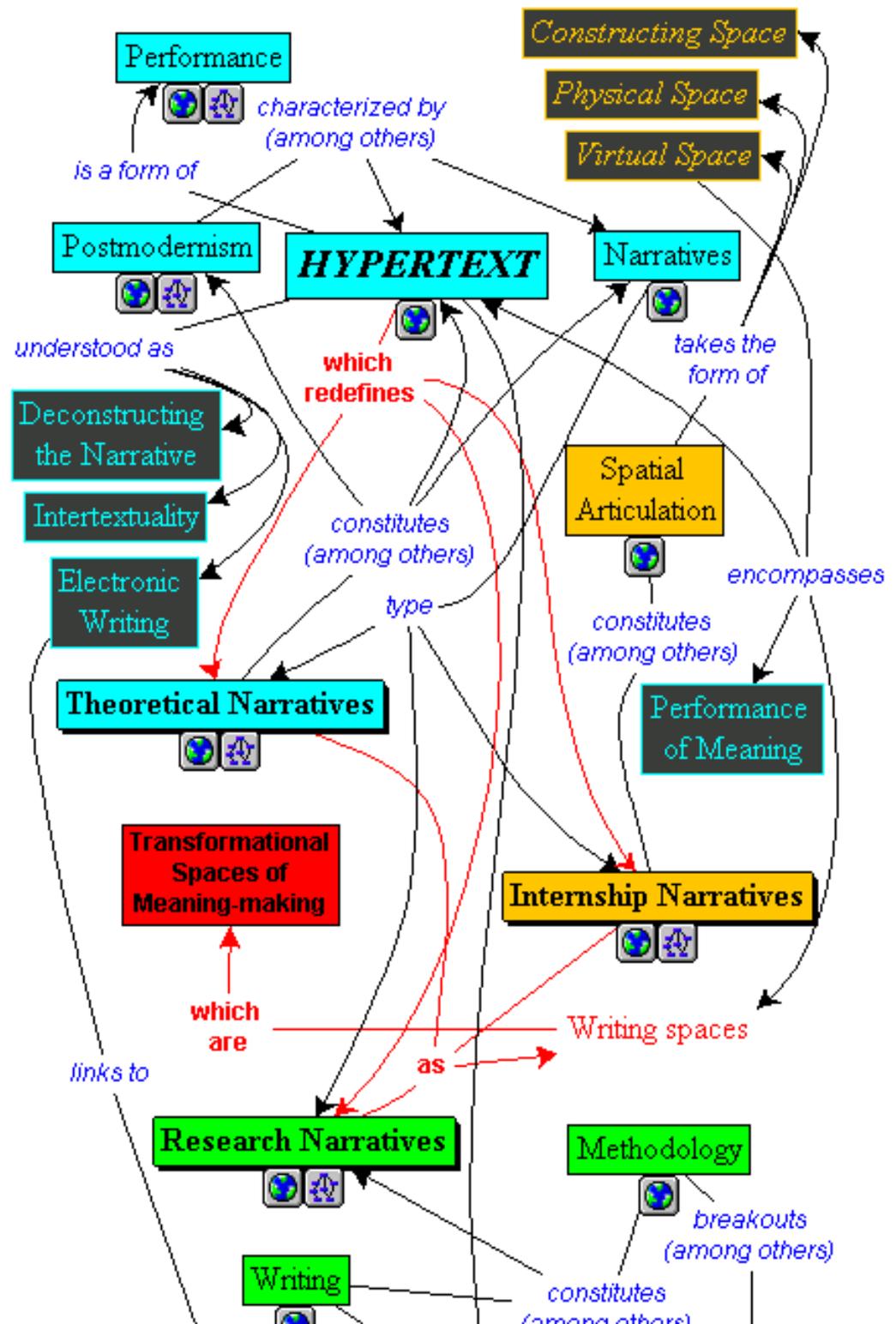
Metaphorically, "*space*" materialized as an issue of contention. However, this space was the availability of meeting rooms for therapy. In the context of [conflictual](#) relationships at the Institute the **perceived** and the **experienced** lack of physical space served to foster the tension and bring out the hierarchy. Thus, in the staff meetings the learner group members often engaged in discussions of meeting room space, which after a few months took on a monological conversational tone. It no longer was just a space issue but emerged as a metaphor to address the issues of hierarchy and power as perceived by my fellow interns. I viewed the issue of sparring spaces as creating dialogical space for addressing and airing the issues that were not being explicitly addressed. Thus, space, a metaphor became a literal notion with respect to availability of therapy room space. Subsequently, therapy room space recursively became a metaphor for relational space and virtual space to have implicit dialogues and monologues about relational power.

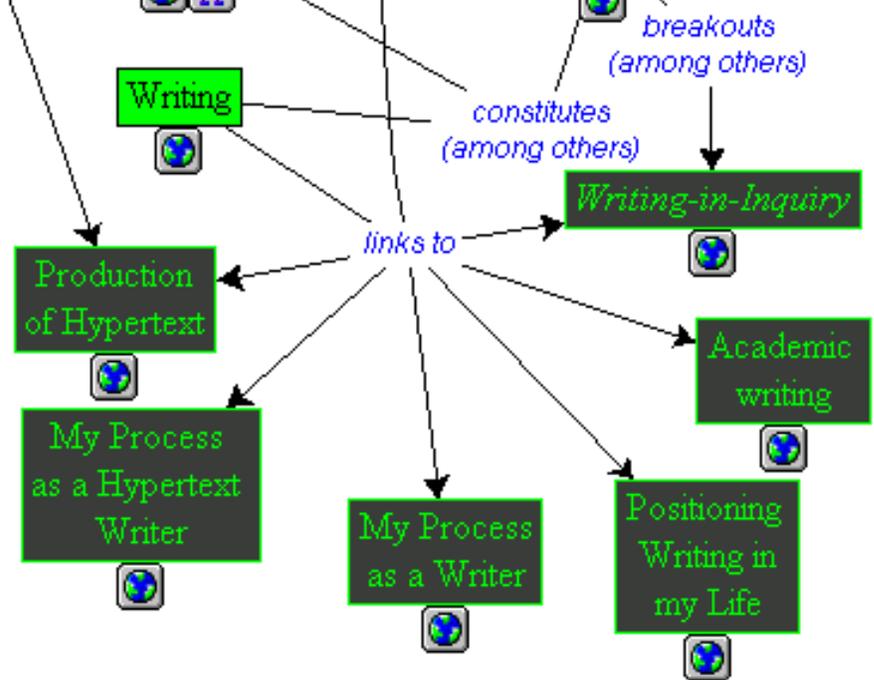


## **VIRTUAL SPACE**

*Virtual space* refers to the hypertextual space where textual frames are created to construct meaning of the internship and the research processes. Virtual space also includes, what is classically known in social construction as the space between individuals where meaning is constructed (Anderson, 1997). The virtual spaces of postmodern hypertextual spaces refute "interpretation as a way to articulate mastery" (Johnson-Eilola, 1997, p.168). Rather it privileges "fragmentation and dispersal of authority" as every textual chunk or node exists in a level playing field within which the reader/writer can construct his or her own textual journey as determined by his or her exists and entries, conceptual and meaning frames, and intentions for visiting and following the hyperlinks. Thus, the initial subject of my dissertation—experience as an evolving therapist—dissolves. It collapses and the subject of hypertext and the virtual space of meaning

construction as an intern and researcher emerges (Johnson-Eilola, 1997). The shifts are also observed in the [graphic maps](#) (indicated in red) where the narratives are redefined as spaces for meaning-making and transformation (see figure below). Paradoxically, and characteristic of postmodernism, hypertext becomes the "physical embodiment of postmodern theory" in virtual space (Johnson-Eilola, 1997), consequently, [blurring the boundaries](#) of "real" and "virtual," another characteristic of postmodernism.





In the dissertation web the virtual space encompasses the [writing space](#), the [performance of meaning](#), and the [hypertext](#) (i.e. the whole dissertation web).



### *Writing Spaces*

We realize a phenomenological interpretation, such as those occurring within architecture and other disciplines, is difficult because cyberspace is essentially without form. When architecture, seen as the art of building which is an inherently physical practice, is compared to cyberspace, seen as imaginary space due to its non-physicality, they become opposite and rival entities.

Miller, 1999

Creating a text such as a hypertext, like this dissertation, may be viewed as writing in the cyberspace or constructing a cyber-domain via the writing process. Such a text, part of the network of the dissertation is the virtual reification of the notion of intertextuality and social construction. Traditional writing (print) typically produces artifacts such as books, papers and dissertation that are physical objects occupying physical space. However, electronic writings are cultural

activities (Johnson-Eilola, 1997) that is popularly termed as constructing "information highway" that is borderless and boundless in terms of the network thus occupying cyberspace or virtual space. As Miller (1999) points out that such cyberspace "constructions" are essentially formless since they lack the physicality of printed texts. However, in the process of writing, the writer gives the text form as he/she strings the words and chunks of texts and creates links in the virtual space. Further, the reader introduces his/her own form by entering and exiting the text in innumerable ways (at times unanticipated by the writer). Consequently, the writing, the texts and the narratives are redefined as transformational [spaces](#) of meaning-making (Johnson-Eilola, 1997).

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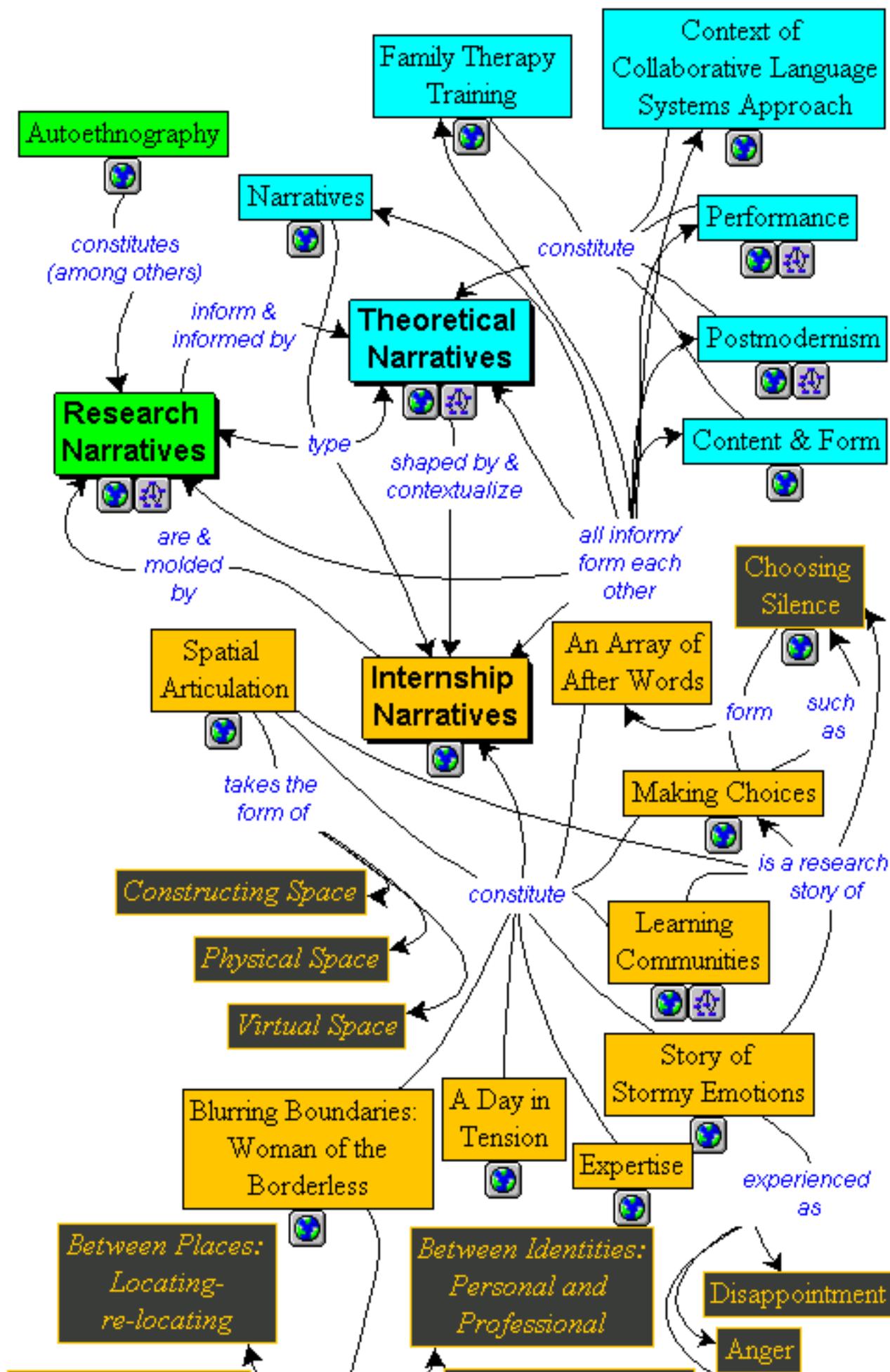
Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community

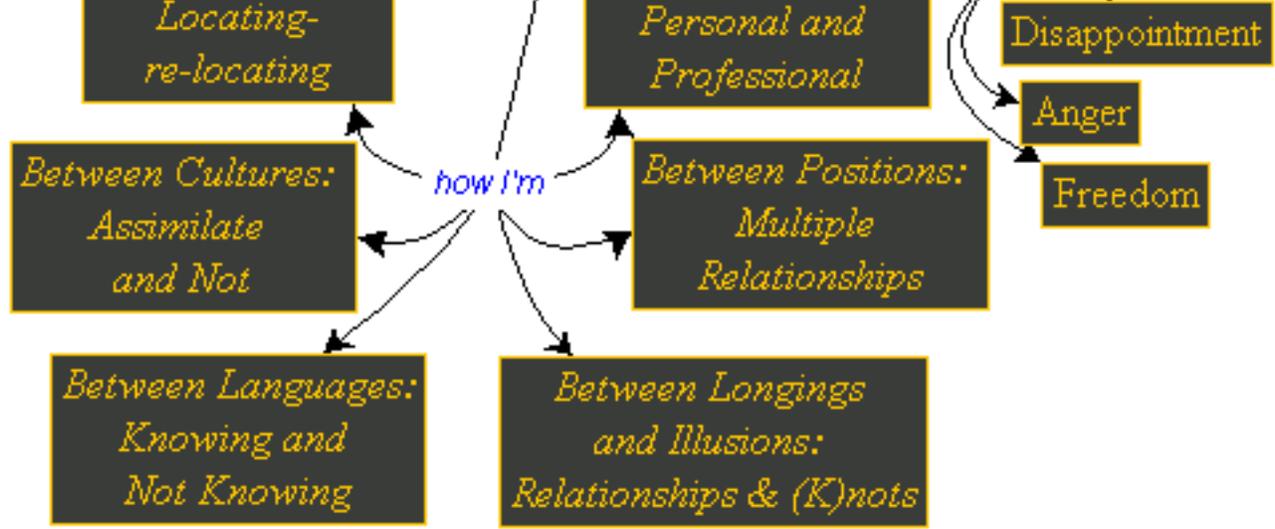


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## HOUSTON-GALVESTON

---



Intellectually, Galveston is an island as well. Its isolation has encouraged two contradictory tendencies bearing on the development of family therapy in our community: the first a tendency to withdraw and interact exclusively with an intimate group of colleagues, the second to reach out to gain the interactive stimulation necessary for intellectual growth (Anderson et al., 1986).

Since 1993 the Institute is located in a beautiful Victorian house in Houston and has satellite offices only in Houston. The central location is located near the cultural center of Houston-Museum District and not far from the Theater District.



[www.houstongalvestoninstitute.org](http://www.houstongalvestoninstitute.org)

is its virtual location.

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Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community



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**Lived Experience of an Evolving  
Collaborative Language Systems Therapist:  
A Sense, not an Essence**



Here am I.  
Standing before you  
Singular and solitary.

But don't let appearances fool you.

Each word from my mouth  
Each gesture  
is borne of others.

You see singularity  
But reality is in multiples.  
As we talk  
You enter this world.  
And I into another

Image & text source: <http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/kgergen1/part1.html>



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# CONTEXTUALIZING RESEARCH PROCESS: DISCOURSES AS BACKDROP

## NOTE

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# CONTEXTUALIZING RESEARCH PROCESS: DISCOURSES AS THREADS

## NOTE

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*Abstract*

*Theoretical  
Narratives*

*Research  
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## READERS' RESPONSES

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Readers' responses are listed chronologically with the latest one listed last. The reader responses were invited in writing and are posted here with permission. I introduce each reader by name and how I view my relationship with him or her followed by their official designation. I have not changed the content except for correcting typos. I add my *comments in italics* to some of the responses as an illustration of an ongoing dialogue.



Fred Piercy, PhD  
Dissertation Committee Member &  
Professor and Head  
Department of Human Development  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, VA  
10/23/01

Hi, Saliha. I've spent the last 45 minutes clicking around your dissertation. I am not finished. In fact, I really have a hard time knowing how much I've read. I do know, however, that you want some reader reflections to include in your dissertation, so I'll include a few now. Here they are:

Saliha has done a lot of work! I'm convinced that the dissertation is situated in theoretically sound literature, and that she's learned a lot in the process. Her technical expertise is light years ahead of mine.

The organization, as I click around, is not immediately apparent (although it certainly is from looking at the contents page). I wonder if this is a problem, and for whom?

The "conflict" she refers to is not described in a way that I can understand it. I keep wanting to know more about who said what, what the issues were, etc. Perhaps she is just showing good manners (protecting her colleagues), but I wish I could understand it better. Maybe as I click around more I will. This makes me wonder what the standard for such research should be around description. How much should the reader know or understand? Are there writing guidelines or standards for her methodology? If it was an essay, I could provide suggestions for how to engage the reader, how to describe the issue more directly, how to use dialogue, etc. But I guess that fragments are what this dissertation is all about.

How much self reflection is healthy and how much is unhealthy?

Is there "take away" for others in her personal account? Should there be? Should she make an effort to suggest "take away" learnings. Maybe she will as I read more. I wish I could go to a "summary of results" section.

I keep reading a lot of the same entries over a second time. I'm not good at clicking on only new material. I guess that I am a reader in need of remedial help!

Saliha certainly is more computer literate than I am. I like her floating bubbles to describe all that has gone on with her. I like her poems.

My personality wants a summary section. Again, is this realistic for "messy text?"

I don't want to be negative. I like her effort, and a lot of the product. It's scholarly, yet personal. I don't want to discourage her with some of my difficulty in seeking organization. Maybe my need for closure is my problem. Life is seldom like that.

My back hurts. My neck hurts. I wish I had some of these pages in my hands.

Where is that summary section, anyway?!

Hope these reflections are helpful. Hang in there with me, Saliha. I'm not through the dissertation. Perhaps reading it is sort of like your experience with internship. Closure, connections, and learnings happen in the process of reading. I'll let you know if this is true at the defense.

See you next week, Saliha. And thanks for all the work that you have put into your dissertation.

My best -- Fred

*SB: Thank you! After such a long haul at this dream project, I enjoy hearing your comments and your tone appears to parallel mine. I think one of your comments that "perhaps reading it is sort of like your experience with internship" is a central piece of my experience. As a reader/writer if you resonate that aspect of my experience then, I feel I have accomplished what I set-out to do in this dissertation.*



Tom Strong, PhD  
PMTH Friend  
University of Calgary  
Canada  
10/29/01

Hi Saliha

I've been going through your dissertation in chunks, and quite enjoying it. You have spoken from the kind of ramblind, diverse literatures that fit the creative endeavour you are accomplishing here. The whole notion of

deconstructing  
coherence has been a pet theme of mine for some time and my  
interviews are  
usually an example of something that doesn't flow in usual linear,  
narrative  
fashion, but come together at the end for clients and I in ways that  
feel  
hypertexty - now that I have this metaphor to work from. In any  
event, I wanted  
to share that Lois and Fred have some writing on this theme:

Newman, F. (2000) Does a story need a theory: Understanding the  
methodology of narrative therapy. in D. Fee (Ed.) Pathology and  
the postmodern: Mental illness as discourse and experience. (pp.  
248-261) Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE

F. Newman & L. Holzman. (1999) Beyond narrative performed  
conversation. I L.Holzman (Ed.) Performing psychology: A  
postmodern culture of the mind. (pp.  
87-110) New York: Routledge

I hope these might be helpful, particularly in adding to the  
performative thrust  
that is already there in your dissertation.

Tom

*SB: Thank you!*



Robert Teitze  
Friend  
Temple University  
Philadelphia, PA  
10/29/01

Hi,  
I've decided to stop working for the day and take a few minutes to

send you some of the things I have reflected on after experiencing your dissertation. I'll send you some more later.

My first response...it's a poem. A poem containing other smaller poems. And when I find my eyes and ears intrigued by a certain sound or color or word that you've linked in, like an unforgettable line in a poem, the one remembered for years because that single line or image unlocks the universe of the entire poem and opens the door or window that lets us experience the poem as a co-creator, not a passive observer, I tap on the link and see where it will take me...

...In his book *The Triggering Town*, Richard Hugo gives (at least I think), one of the best descriptions of the process of creating a poem...particularly the point where the poem seems to take on its own life and begins to take the poet (and the poem) into new emotions, images and meanings. The point where the poem is really interacting with the poet -changing the initial intentions or meaning and forcing the poet to, as Robert Frost once said, "surprise himself." And what really hit me about this was the implications - that the evolution of a poem is dictated by all the many choices that the poet makes...choices of rhythm, of meter, of metaphors, of colors, smells - and at the same time the idea that that these choices aren't driven solely by the poet, but driven by the poem itself. In

other words a relationship is forged between the poet and the poem...an interactive one...and suddenly we realize we need to let go of absolute control. That we need to listen too...to react, to accept, to be frustrated, to be excited, be angry...to make choices and as we do we're creating...

...So, when we were talking about this a couple of weeks ago I kept repeating "Can't you just format it for me so I can read it on paper...??" Then it hit me. Experiencing this forces me to make the choices. It now makes me accountable for my own experience. And in the process to trust where those choices would take me and, like the poet, allow the experience to unfold and echo with the sounds

and images of my own reality.

Oh yeah. The word poem actually comes from the root "to build or to make." Thought you might like that. Thanks for being patient with my need for "linearity."

As ever,  
Robert

*SB: Thank you! I appreciate the literary-poetic angle.*



Sue Levin, PhD  
Mentor & Friend  
Director, Houston Galveston Institute  
Houston, TX  
10/31/01

Hi S- If you happen to get this message before your meeting (or after, anyway, of course) I am just now reading your Internship Narratives, so very much in tune with you on this day of your defense! I am immensely impressed and appreciative of your thoughtful questions and reflections about the many inherent dilemmas you faces as a learner, and an international student, and all the other multiple "others" that you were positioned as. I am only maybe 1/2 way throug hthe Internship Narratives, but I want you know I am proud of you. I am touched by your thoughtfulness. I am inspired by your ideas. I am happy to be your colleague.

All the best on your special day--  
Love, Sue

*SB: Thank you for your support through out the process.*



Sheila McNamee  
An Inspiration

Professor, Communication Studies  
University of New Hampshire  
11/1/01

Dear Saliha,

I am SO impressed with your website/dissertation! I'm so caught up in going in various directions with it that I haven't "read" much of the text. What an ENORMOUS effort it must have been to put this together.....it is way beyond me to imagine the amount of time and work it must have taken. I would love to show it to my students..... I think much of what you have there (I have read a good deal) is extremely useful to others. You integrate both the abstract theory and your own understandings of terms, concepts, etc.... as well as connect to practice. It is so impressive. Did you also do the traditional format/hard copy? Did you play with the form there as well?

Thanks so much for sharing this with me.....I'm done with it yet! I look forward to more time with it. And I will send along any suggestions, reflections I have once I have spent more time with it. For now I just want to tell you how impressed I am.

Sheila

*SB: Thank you! No I did not do a traditional hard copy.*



Noorjahan Bava, Ph.D.  
Mother & Academician  
Retired Professor of Political Science  
University of Delhi  
Delhi, India  
11/12/01

**Part I: Emotional, Familial & Introspective Report**

Dad and Mum's Heartiest Congratulations once again, Saliha on your Grand Performance at your Doctoral Dissertation front. Your

achievement has made it possible to have Three Ph.Ds. in our family! It's a very very rare phenomenon for a middle class Muslim family like ours to have mother and two daughters to attain this feat. All of us are, indeed, very happy and proud of your achievement!

I would attribute your success in this great endeavour to four factors, viz, **Family, Heredity, Personality and Environment**. As far as our **family** is concerned the existence of an **educational environment** with mum teaching/researching at the prestigious University of Delhi with your elder sister following mum's foot steps and second sister being a professional manager; and the **relentless backup support** to you - moral, material, financial, physical, spiritual from every member of the family and above all the **readiness, willingness and far-sightedness and whole hearted support of Daddy** for your studies at the U.S. - all these have motivated and inspired you to realize your dream!

To the extent **heredity** plays a role in the development of a person's intelligence (IQ) cognitive skills etc., I think, you, Salma and Safia must have inherited the (above) genes from Dad and Mum. In my perception your interest in interdisciplinary approach towards your research problem, the propensity to do hard work and concern for excellence - these attributes you might have inherited from me. There is no doubt that your courage, honesty, punctuality, wonderful computing / mathematical and financial management skills, avoidance of waste and faith and belief in hard work being the stepping stone to success are some of the characteristics inherited from Dad.

To a great extent your success is the direct outcome of your **personality**. There is no doubt that your adolescent urge to do something very different from your B.A.(Hons) days till your Ph.D., this quality- I call it - as **originality, creativity and inventiveness** coupled with your achievement - orientation, industry, and excellent academic track record have been responsible for your great achievement.

In my view, the external environment factors contributing to your great performance include the conducive atmosphere for research at TISS, VT and HGI, great teachers like Hebsur, Bud, Harlene and others, excellent infrastructure facility for use of IT for your work, your wonderful colleagues like Sue, clients, and supervisees and workshops.

## **Part II: Response of a Social Scientist to the Thesis**

The lived Internship experience of Saliha Bava, a budding therapist and her Research experience viewed in the **post-modern** perspective constitute the content of her Ph.D. thesis. As far as its subject matter/content is concerned it is thoroughly heuristic in that it is a genuine narrative of her Self and her true experience at HGI as an intern and a researcher during 1998-1999 and 1999-2001 respectively. It eminently fulfils the criterion of **heuristics** as given by its founding father Clark Moustakas, (1990) that "the researcher is expected to have autobiographical connections with the phenomenon". Secondly, unlike a **phenomenological** study which is a more detached, descriptive and general structural analysis of experience, in this heuristic study the "research participant is visible throughout" (Moustakas, 1994). In social science parlance, the thesis can be regarded as a "**case study**" of a therapist cum researcher. As such it (the text) is subjective, embodying "local knowledge" born out of the researcher's personal, direct, intensive experience with the phenomenon of training in Marriage and Family Therapy and research at the prestigious HGI (the context). One can also interpret that this heuristic study is also based on aspects of **Participant Observation** and **Action Research methods** of modern social science methodology.

The researcher has consciously and copiously made use of the latest rage and fashion in contemporary social sciences and humanities methodology namely Post-Modernism (PM) which is an **abstract, value-loaded and interdisciplinary** paradigm, the adoption of which involves "denying the existence of foundational knowledge on the ground that no knowable social reality exists

beyond the signs of language, image and discourses" (Hargreaves, 1994, p 39). It (PM) thus stands opposed to the **modern** research methodology of seeking " objective " knowledge through truly scientific method (accurate observation, experimentation, quantification, measurement, hypothesis testing, inferences, theory-building and scientific law-making). Not only does PM privilege **qualitative** research, but also it emphasizes a **social construction** discourse, the emerging discourse in social sciences and humanities. According to this perspective " knowledge is a production of consensual and intersubjective agreements between individuals belonging to a particular community " (Gergen, 1991). In other words "truth is not to be found in the head of an individual person, but it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogical interaction " (Shotter, 1997). The researcher weaves this meaning/connotation of epistemology into her text when she observes " Dialogical space is one of the most explicit spatial constructs that I encountered theoretically and practically in the course of my internship " .

It is creditable that the researcher has taken lot of pains to self study various academic disciplines including linguistics, philosophy, communication, cybernetics, design etc. and made use of the interdisciplinary method by deploying relevant concepts, ideas, tools and techniques to create the thesis in the **Hypertext mode and its electronic submission**. Her technical expertise is outstanding to say the least.

*SB: I think PM does not necessarily privilege qualitative research. Rather the researcher from a PM stance may adopt such a position. I think PM allows for multiple discourses to coexist and thus, a researcher has the space for both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches to creating knowledge communities. Though I do agree that any particular researcher may privilege a particular form of research methodology and contextualize it as an informed philosophical or paradigmatic position.*

*Directed to the reader: I think my mother does a neat job of creating a reader's abstract of the dissertation web, which gave me the idea to create a space titled as "Reader's Abstract." Though, I enjoyed reading part II, I was a little hesitant and embarrassed to share part I since I was concerned that it may constitute bragging but I decided to share it nevertheless, as it is my mother's response to my invitation to share her 'thoughts in writing so I could include it in this space.' And I value her thoughts, not only because she is my mother but also because she is a scholar who is open to learning and may be one of the few people who reads the dissertation in full, since she proofed it as well.*



Salma Bava, PhD  
Sister and Academician  
University of Delhi  
Delhi, India  
12/11/01

Just been going through the "Theoretical narratives". I like the graphic layout map you have created. Boy all that work must have taken some time.

I think this will greatly help the reader to comprehend at first glance the layout and the linkages and clearly brings out the non-linearity of your work. Moreover, it also brings out the richness of the use of hypertext in the way each section can link into and out to another section. I think the map captures the essence of your diss web both in context and form. It fuses the elements of the ideas( concepts) and the medium of expression -hypertext.

Dad was here when I was viewing the map, and he is also very impressed. He said it is good to have that in each section of the theoretical narratives, as you can quickly locate it in the map and see the linkages.

I also liked the use of different colors to identify the theoretical, research and internship narratives. So while one can identify each

of them separately, one also sees the web of connections between them. I think, that in some way explains to the reader that for you all these three streams were being woven together. So I like the use of the word Dissertation Web, as it reminds me of a spider weaving its web. Its intricate, connected, and there is a core- you who create it for others to experience.

It just struck me, as to whether you have a map legend. The legend tells about the features. So you could explain between the red and black connecting lines.

The -----> black lines links the three narratives. However, the ---->red lines identifies how you processed and integrated the three narratives and the transformational and meaning making process of yourself.

That's how I understood it. Correct me if it signifies something else.

*SB: That is pretty good!*



Kenneth Gergen, PhD  
Inspirational Thinker  
Mustin Professor of Psychology  
Swarthmore College &  
Founder, Taos Institute  
12/16/01

I want to congratulate you, Saliha, for nurturing the future into being. What you have done is to break the mold, unsettle the traditions, and go where virtually no one else has dared (or been allowed). In this thesis you have begun not only to demonstrate the problematic assumptions underlying the traditional written work, but to show us how traditional writing practices in the social sciences suppress so much of the creative potential of the student/scholar. Moreover, what you do here is to explore the possibilities inherent in an alternative form of representation, one that wonderfully embodies multiple voices, multi-media, and a

collage of inter-related insights, arguments, enticements, and personal experiences in the domains of theory, research, and practice. Most impressively, the form of representation functions as an instantiation of the very ideas you are developing in the work. The work doesn't merely talk about narrative, performance, hypertext, language as constitutive, and the like; it acts the concepts out. And, recognizing the problematic place of the monologic knower in the body of ideas you develop, you invite your "reader" to create his or her own experience of the work. An outstanding effort, Saliha...I hope you don't mind if I share it with many others...Ken Gergen

*SB: Thank you!*



Salma Bava, PhD  
Sister and Academician  
University of Delhi  
Delhi, India  
1/1/02

hi,

I was just about to turn in for the night and looked at your dizz [dissertation].

I liked the title you have chosen :Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community

Reflecting on the title, I think that- Transforming Performances- captures the spirit and essence of the work. I felt that doing a Ph.d was also a performance. And a textual, linear format is part of that traditional performance, which you have challenged through a hypertext, non-linear format. Thus, you have "transformed" the 'traditional performance'.

In challenging the traditional norm, you have been very bold. For

all its claims that research is supposed to explore the facets of knowledge, it is bound heavily by the tradition of academia and so challengers to the old order are not welcomed.

As I browsed through your Dizz, the opening line from the serial "Star Trek" kept running through my head in the background. "The mission of the space ship Enterprise is to go where no man has been before".

In your dizz, you have done what a researcher is expected to do: challenged, explored and contributed to the body of ideas. Your work synthesizes the old and new, the traditional and modern and humanities and sciences. That is what your work has done: gone where no man has been before!

Well let me not go over board at this hour (2.15am) and also say that the map in the section on Performances is a visual delight like the other maps. And thanks for privileging my opinions in your reader feedback.

All the best sis. You have and are going to make a big impact.

*SB: I thank you for being a conversational partner in this process and for sharing your thoughts since they provoke me to reflect on my process. And as an artist, writer or a person feedback is an important element of keeping the work alive.*



Harlene Anderson, PhD  
Committee Member & Mentor  
Founder, Houston Galveston Institute  
Houston, TX  
1/9/02

Dear Saliha,

Your dissertation is an outstanding piece of scholarly work, quite an innovative intellectual and technological accomplishment. You have done an excellent job of describing your dissertation in

relation to notion of hypertext and how it fits with postmodern/social construction premises. The dissertation is in many ways a boundary-crosser-going outside the marriage and family therapy and mental health disciplines in general.

One of the things that fascinates me is how the dissertation process itself was a postmodern inquiry and the shifts that take place: How the methodology shifts throughout the research process when one begins to approach research from postmodern/social construction premises; how the researcher's notion and performance of "self" and the meanings they attribute to their experiences simultaneously shifts along the way; how the focus of a dissertation shifts-with yours how your intern experience faded into the background and an interest in new learning (ie.research methodology, hypertext and writing) began to take center stage; and how a dialogical process can lead to newness in direction, meaning and outcome or product. These parallels to postmodern/social construction premises are all apparent in your dissertation.

I am most curious about your reflections or afterwords upon completing your dissertation and how those also may shift over time: Where does all of this lead to for you? What do you want others to know about the process, creating alternatives, and becoming a therapist? What has contributed to your professional and personal growth or what is the transferrability of learning to each arena? What new knowledge do you think you created?

I appreciate your initiative, determinism, and creativity. And, I appreciate having been of part of your dissertation journey. You have a great career ahead of you.

Sincerely,

Harlene Anderson

*SB: Thank you. I often hear your words as mentorship and to hear and read your words are important for me to keep the dialogue of "living on the edge" alive. I like living on the edge but it can also*

*be a lonely endeavor, like the dissertation, but with conversational partners like you and others, listed above, have helped me construct my community in thought, language and action.*



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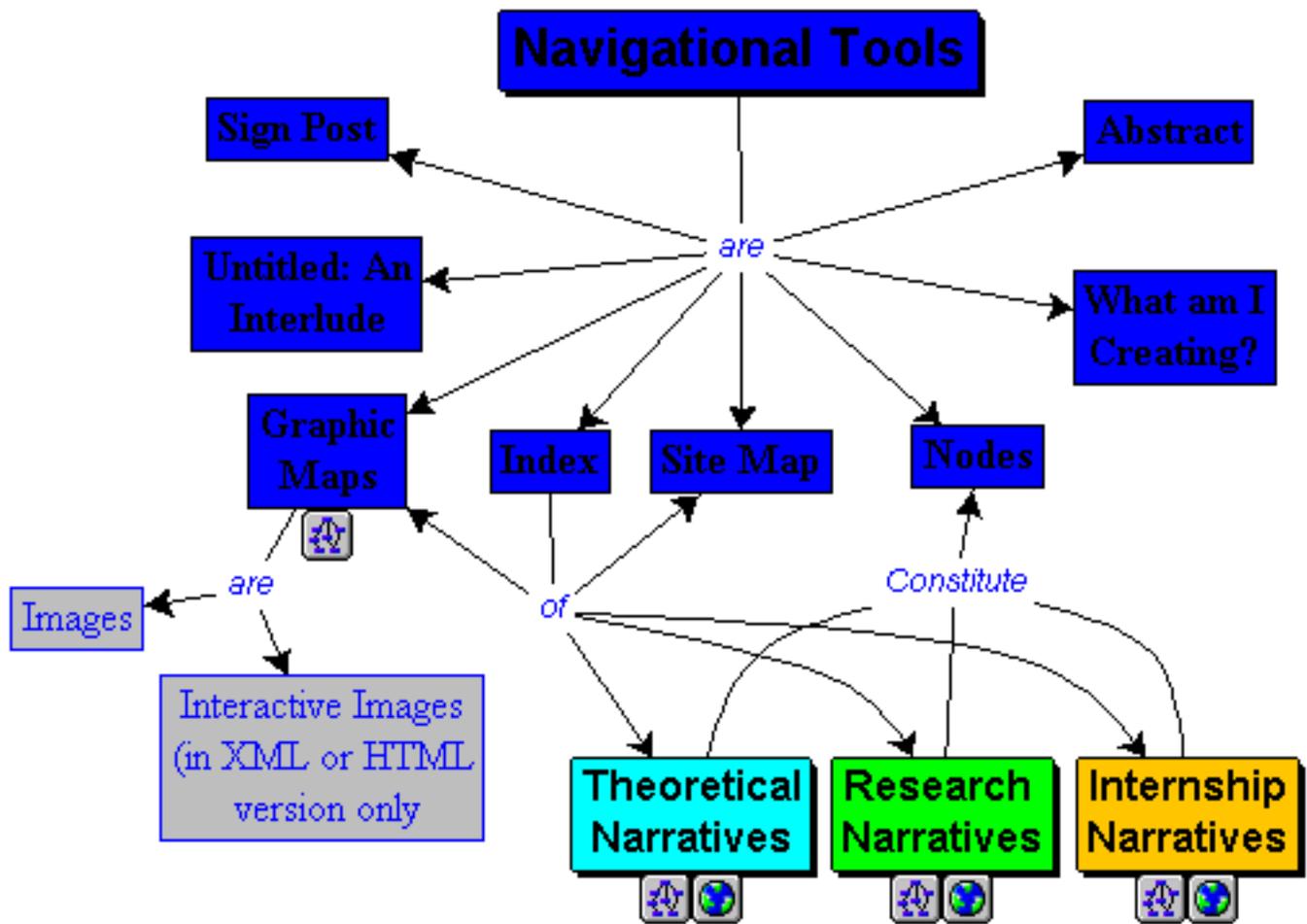
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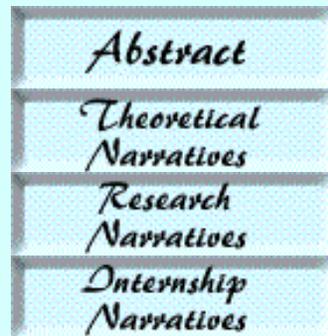
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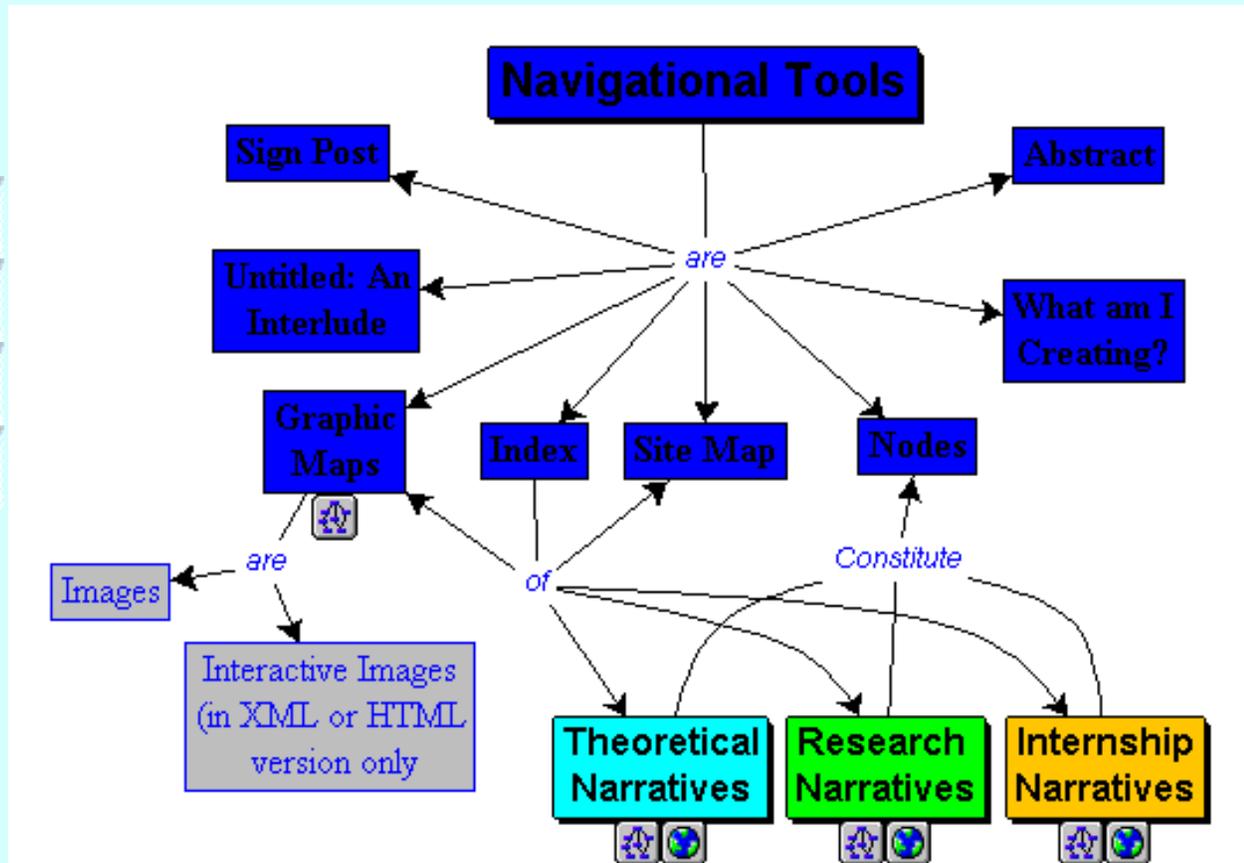




The dissertation web, a hypertext located within multiple discourses, is an intertextual script, a rendition, of my internship (1998-1999) and research experiences (1998-2001).



# WHAT AM I CREATING?



Map: Graphic Location of *What Am I Creating?* within the Dissertation Web



As I developed my dissertation web, I was asked the question "so what are you doing?" "What is your thesis?" Each of these questions is embedded with certain epistemological assumptions. But, rather than deconstruct them I have chosen to create a story of what I think I am doing. I view my dissertation as a "cultural ritual performance" (Gergen, 1999) within the doctoral research "language game" (Wittgenstein, 1978) located within the academic community of Virginia Tech and postmodernism.

In my effort, to honor the tradition of the language game and to further the *generative discourses* (Gergen, 1999) of doctoral dissertation, I write and talk in ways "that simultaneously challenge existing traditions of understanding, and offer new possibilities for action" (Gergen, 1999, p. 49). I do so by using [hypertext](#), that is, chunks of text which are linked to each other in a narrative structuring that is at times circular and at other times linear. I assume that you, the reader, bring to this text your context and meaning frames as you participate in the performance. Since I view dissertation as a production of a performance, I invite you to the interactive unfolding stories of my internship experience and the research process. Further, I interweave certain narrative threads as explained below.

## **Stories**

I am performing a montage of the stories of my internship experience and narratives of the production of these stories. As my performance evolves, I invite you to seven stories of my internship—[Choosing Silence](#), [Expertise](#), [Spatial Articulation](#), [Constructing Learning Communities](#), [Story of Stormy Emotions](#), [Story of Blurring Boundaries](#), and a multimedia interactive text titled [A Day in Tension](#). These stories are linked to the stories of "[research](#)" [process](#) and to the stories of their [production](#). In my count of the production narratives I include the seven internship stories, since I view each internship story as a production as well. All these stories are further intertextualized within theoretical narratives and are embodied performances of the various academic discourses that inform me.

## **Threads**

In addition, through out the production I have infused [threads](#) such as implicit/explicit, content/form and performance. My intention, of the threads, is a way of drawing attention to the languaged production. As I scripted the production I worked with multi levels—performance as metaphor, constructing space as content/form and creating contextually implicit/explicit readings. Thus, I would write/read into my text metaphoric language of performance. (Even as you read this frame please note what performance metaphors am I using?) At another level, I would

construct *form* props to introduce alternate forms of writing as I created an improvised narrative (content). And, lastly, implicit/explicit, is a co-construction, since each member of the audience will read some thing implicit or explicit in my text, depending on the communal language we share.

Another performance of content/form is the utilization of markup language. Producing Hypertext requires markup language such as HTML, XML etc. Utilization of the markup language produces two texts—the one you are reading and the other the "source." So the mark-up language is used to create a particular form which presents itself as a performance—a production performance and/or a narrative performance. Further the markup language performances the implicit/explicit of textual performance, which is contextualized by your subscription to the varying knowledge communities. Thus, if you identify yourself with the community of webpage readers as opposed to webpage designers then your experience of what is implicit/explicit varies depending on what you bring to the reading. For instance, the frames composing *A day in tension* could be read as an explicit expression of my internship experience by a member of the internship/training community. Another member of internship/training community may read it as metaphor for an internship day and thus assume the multimedia performance as an implicit narrative. However, a member of Webpage Designer's community may read it as an explicit performance of hypertext or as an implicit performance ([figure 1](#)) of markup language and may thus seek out the source page ([figure 2](#)) for the explicitness of the form or design. Thus, a person could read multiple meanings into one frame if he/she is positioned within overlapping knowledge communities. Thus, each reader reads into each frame other texts depending on the (con)text within which he/she is positioned.

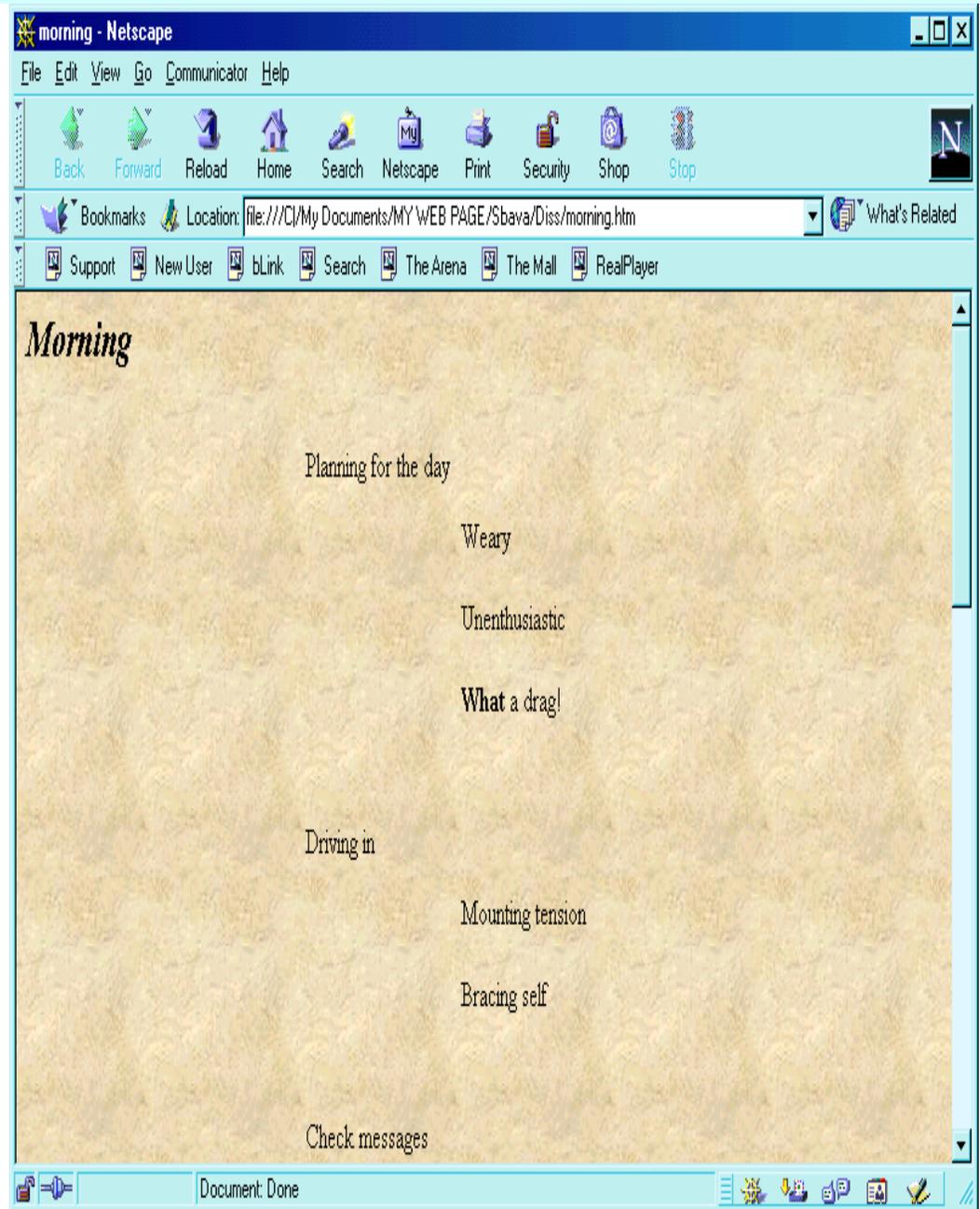


Figure 1: Web page of the *A day in tension*

```
Source of: file:///C:/My Documents/MY WEB PAGE/Sbava/Diss/morning.htm - Netscape
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<META HTTP-EQUIV="Content-Type" CONTENT="text/html; charset=windows-1252">
<META NAME="Generator" CONTENT="Microsoft Word 97">
<TITLE>morning</TITLE>
<META NAME="Template" CONTENT="C:\PROGRAM FILES\MICROSOFT OFFICE\OFFICE\html.dot">
</HEAD>
<BODY LINK="#0000ff" VLINK="#800080" BACKGROUND="Image3.jpg">

<B><I><FONT SIZE=5><P>Morning</P></B></I></FONT>
<P ALIGN="CENTER"><CENTER><TABLE CELLSPACING=0 BORDER=0 CELLPADDING=7 WIDTH=307>
<TR><TD WIDTH="72%" VALIGN="TOP" COLSPAN=3>
<P>Planning for the day</TD>
<TD WIDTH="28%" VALIGN="TOP">
<P>&nbsp;</TD>
</TR>
<TR><TD WIDTH="26%" VALIGN="TOP">
<P>&nbsp;</TD>
<TD WIDTH="74%" VALIGN="TOP" COLSPAN=3>
<P>Wearry</P>
<P>Unenthusiastic</P>
<B><P>What</B> a drag!</TD>
</TR>
<TR><TD WIDTH="72%" VALIGN="TOP" COLSPAN=3>
<P>&nbsp;</TD>
<TD WIDTH="28%" VALIGN="TOP">
<P>&nbsp;</TD>
</TR>
<TR><TD WIDTH="72%" VALIGN="TOP" COLSPAN=3>
<P>Driving in</TD>
<TD WIDTH="28%" VALIGN="TOP">
<P>&nbsp;</TD>
```

Figure 2: Source Page for the Web page *A day in tension*

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T transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community



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The dissertation web, a hypertext located within multiple discourses, is an intertextual script, a rendition, of my internship (1998-1999) and research experiences (1998-2001).

## ACCOMPANYING ASSUMPTIONS: EMBEDDED PRACTICES

Adopting a postmodern theoretical position involves denying the existence of foundational knowledge on the grounds that no knowable social reality exists beyond the signs of language, image and discourse.  
Hargreaves, 1994, p. 39

According to Hargreaves, practice from this position implies that existing versions of social reality are to be deconstructed and one gives voice to other neglected or suppressed narrative. Thus, a postmodern practice involves an inter-flow of deconstruction and re-construction of narratives. However, a narrative or a reconstituted narrative are new narratives and are not presenting or mirroring the narrated event.

Postmodernism implies reminding myself that my thoughts ([personal and professional](#)) are just perspectives about my interactions. I may be influenced by certain theories more so than others, but there is no singular explanation for the complexities of social life. Narratives are contextual varying across voices, classes, colors, and genders (Aggar, 1998).

[Narratives](#) are conditions of culture which endorse and constraint some individual's experiences more than others. The conditions of culture determine what is said, who says what with what authority, which is defined as a discourse (Madison, personal communication, September 1997), which in turn further generates the conditions of

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Narratives*

*Research  
Narratives*

*Internship  
Narratives*

culture. Thus, discourses are discursive in nature and have an inherent power since they are co-created in communal interactions. Discourse formations are social semiotic formations (Lemke, 1995). According to Lemke (1995), semiotics refers "to the general study of meaning making (semiosis), including not just meanings we make with language, but meanings we make with every sort of object, event or action in so far as it is endowed with a significance, a symbolic value, in our community" (p. 9). Thus, discourses are communicated via various sign systems: verbal and non-verbal, written or spoken, silence or speech, action or inaction, presence or absence, and so on.

One of the emerging discourses in social sciences and humanities (Shotter, 1997) is the "[social construction](#)" (Gergen, 1985, 1991, 1994a, 1994b; Harre, 1983, 1986; Shotter, 1997) discourse which flows from the postmodern paradigm. From this perspective, knowledge is the production of consensual and intersubjective agreements between individuals belonging to a particular community. Knowledge does not exist in an individual's mind nor "out in some extralinguistic reality" (Gergen & Gergen, 1991). Or as Bakhtin (1984) states, "Truth is not to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction" (as quoted by Shotter, 1997). According to this perspective our "inner" lives live in the temporal inter-relational spaces "occurring between ourselves and an other or otherness in our surroundings" (Shotter, 1997).

In this view, language is seen as constituting social reality rather than representing or reflecting reality. Language is not seen as the syntax and/or the grammatical structure of written and spoken texts. However, language refers to the various sign systems one may use to communicate and interpret ideas. Our sense of self and social world are constructed, maintained, and transformed by language (Pinkus, 1996).

Adopting a postmodern and social constructionist stance as one's

belief system has implications for research since ideology and research are connected (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). I view social science research as a narrative (Packwood & Sikes, 1996) inquiry. The purpose of an inquiry, which is a social activity, is political action. "Social science research is an ideological undertaking" (Packwood & Sikes, 1996, p. 336). [Narrative](#) is a root metaphor of social construction (Sarbin, 1986), and all research are forms of narratives. According to Catherine Bateson (personal communication, March, 1998), "life is the ultimate research."

I expand on my ideas of [postmodernism](#), [social construction](#) and [narratives](#) as discourses within which my dissertation web is located.

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## JEOPARDY

Dissertations must not violate stylistic norms because that might jeopardize our young scholar's future. "Let them be radical in what they say but not in how they say it." - Such is the pragmatic, and characteristically self-fulfilling, argument that is made. The point here, as in most initiation rites, is to be hazed into submission, to break the spirit, and to justify the past practice of the initiators. Professionalization is the criteria of professional standing but not necessary professional values; nor are our professional writing standards at or near the limits of coherence, perception, edification, scholarship, communication, or meaning. Underneath the mask of career-minded concessions to normalcy is an often repressed epistemological positivism about the representation of ideas. While the philosophical and linguistic justifications for such ideational mimesis - for example the idea that a writing style can be transparent or neutral - have been largely undermined, the practice of ideational mimesis is largely unacknowledged and, as a result, persists unabated.

Charles Bernstein

<http://wings.buffalo.edu/epc/authors/bernstein/frame.lock.html>

In my effort to *legitimize* (Lyotard, 1984) my dissertation as an acceptable academic form I provide the following links:

[http://www.masondissertation.elephanthost.com/site\\_map.htm](http://www.masondissertation.elephanthost.com/site_map.htm)

Jean Mason who researched hypertext writers.

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<http://www.cinemedia.net/FOD/>

The Flight of Ducks, an online documentary about Australian cultural memory, by Simon Pockley.

<http://www.duke.edu/~mshumate/fiction/htt/mals.html>

Project Entrance for Michael Shumate's thesis titled Writing Lives: Technology, Creativity, and Hypertext Fiction.

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/ETD/directory/browse.html>

This site provides a compilation of electronic dissertations across disciplines in various universities world wide. The website, like a number of Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) University websites provides the dissertation writers with a transient and "transitional community" (Bruffee, 1999). Members like me enter the community to "translate" ideas into practice as we garner practice strategies. The transitional community provides the members to play with new ideas as they loosen their ties with other communities (Bruffee, 1999). Thus the transitional community becomes a community of members performing rites of passage. The dissertation is a rite of passage of earning the Doctoral degree. The virtual community of ETDs provides me with space to shift my praxis from a modernistic to postmodernistic professional norms. I encounter jeopardy and alternate forms of professional writing, norms, and values. I become [boundary-less](#) as I traverse across disciplines.

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[Untitled: An Interlude](#)

[What Am I Creating](#)

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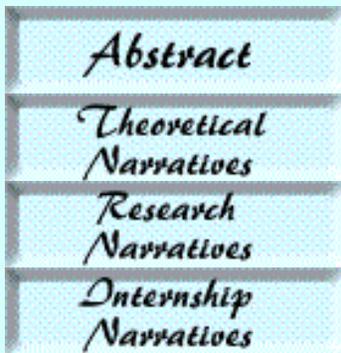
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Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community

[About Saliha Bava](#)

[Email](#)

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Marriage & Family Therapy Program at [Virginia Tech](#)  
Blacksburg, VA  
Site Uploaded On: January 09, 2002

## Appendix A

### VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

#### Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects

Title of Project: Lived Experience of an Evolving Collaborative Language Systems  
Therapist: A Sense, not an Essence  
Investigator: Saliha Bava

#### I. Purpose of this Research/Project

The purpose of the proposed study is to explore my doctoral internship experience at the Houston Galveston Institute, as I evolve as a Collaborative Language Systems therapist. I am currently a doctoral student in the Marriage and Family Therapy program at Virginia Tech, and this study is in partial fulfillment of the doctoral program requirements.

#### II. Procedures

This project will involve me analyzing my journal entries of my internship experience. I will report about my experience as stories from my internship contextualized within my life and the interactions I had with you and other staff members at the Institute. Thus, the final report might have references to our interactions or conversations. No reference will be made to client conversations.

#### III. Risks

I anticipate minimal risks to you in participating in this research project. You have a choice of what information to share with me during our conversations, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. I will also request you to read the final report of my inquiry in order to add or delete any information you think is important. At this point, or at any point during the research process, you are free to refuse the use or references to any part of our interactions or conversations in the final analysis.

#### IV. Benefits of this Project

The researcher expects this research to be beneficial to you, other therapists and the field of marriage and family therapy training. Although the researcher cannot guarantee that you will receive any specific benefits from participating in this study, she hopes that you will find the interactions and conversations itself to be useful to you personally and professionally. The Institute may benefit from the feedback of training doctoral interns, which might assist in their future training processes.

#### V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

All information will be held as confidential, but anonymity cannot be assured. No names (pseudonyms will be used) if requested, will be attached to the information from the interactions and conversations in the final analysis. However, before agreeing to participate in this study, you must be aware that anonymity within the Institute's community cannot be assured because of the nature of this project and the limited number of people that constitute the Institute.



*Lived Experience of an Intern and a researcher  
in a Postmodern Community*

# RESEARCH PRESENTATION

10/31/2001

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**Author:** SALIHA BAVA

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READER RESPONSE REQUESTED

I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT...

PPT Slide

PPT Slide

PPT Slide

SPEAKING FROM MY EXPERIENCE TO  
YOURS

PPT Slide

PERFORMANCE

AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

*Lived Experience of an Intern and a researcher  
in a Postmodern Community*



Source: Geertz & Walter, 1993

Here am I.  
Standing before you  
Singular and solitary.

But don't let appearances fool you.

Each word from my mouth  
Each gesture  
is borne of others.

You see singularity  
But reality is in multiples.  
As we talk  
You enter this world.  
And I into another

*Saliha Baya*  
*October 31, 2001*



# RESEARCH PURPOSE

- ◆ **Living Knowledge of an Intern**
- ◆ **Voicing Alternate Research Forms**
- ◆ **Quest for knowing**
- ◆ **Understanding the Institute's Training Community**
- ◆ **Performing as a Writer**



# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ◆ **How to locate the local experience of an intern in a postmodern community?**
- ◆ **How to co-construct alternative styles of inquiry?**
- ◆ **What is the researcher's experience of a highly subjective inquiry and messy text?**



# ASSUMPTIONS

- ◆ **Language is generative and constitutive (Anderson, 1997; Gergen, 1999)**
- ◆ **Meaning making is a social activity & intertextual (Lemke, 1995)**
- ◆ **Meaning is transitory**
- ◆ **All inquiry is an interpretive process (Van Manen, 1990)**
- ◆ **All descriptions are an interpretation of the described event**
- ◆ **Reflexivity & critical questioning of self & other**

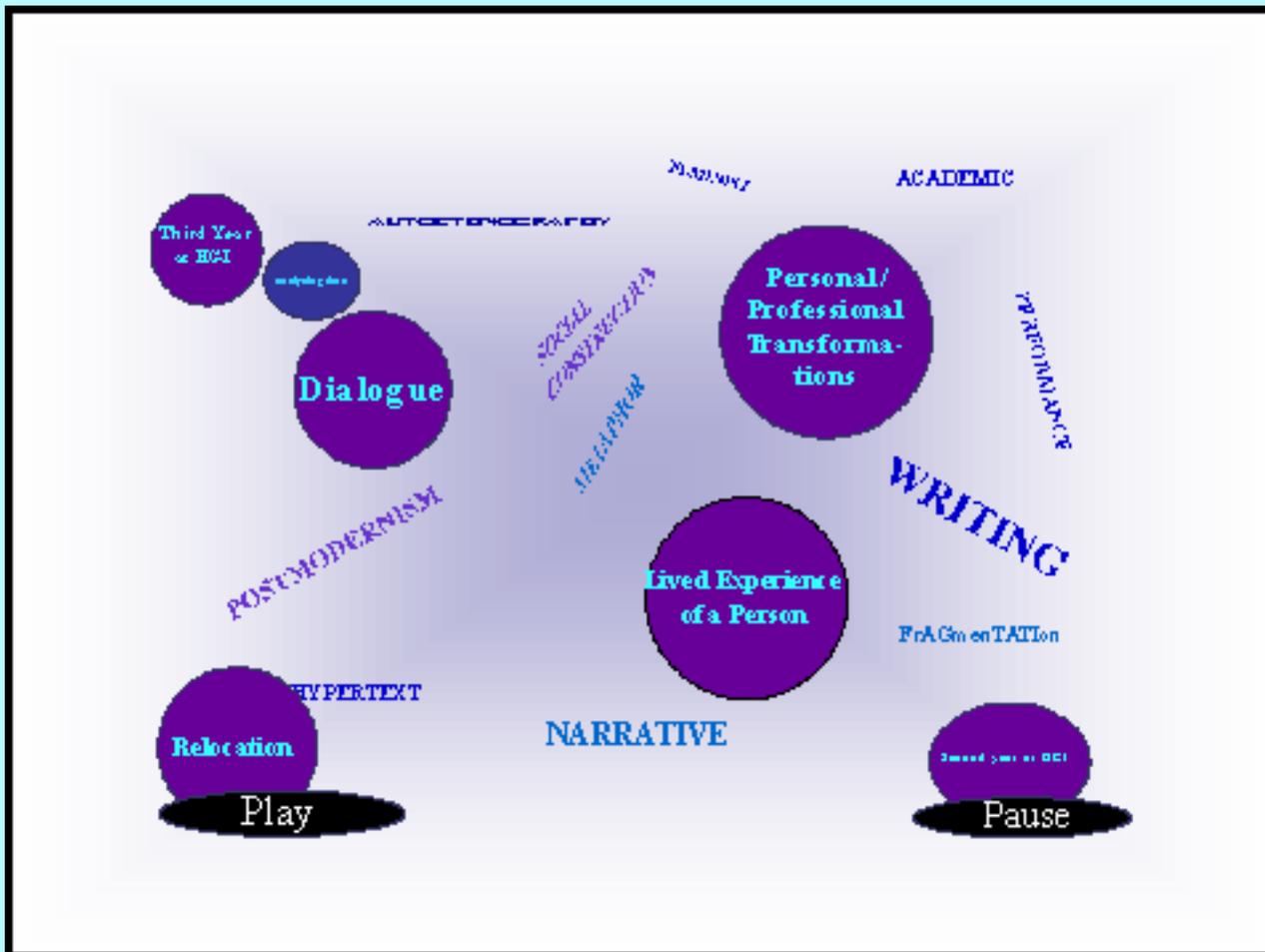


# LOCATING AN INTERN'S EXPERIENCE





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# METHODOLOGY

- ◆ Autoethnography
- ◆ Performance as Methodology
- ◆ **Writing-in-Inquiry**



# AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

## MULTIPLE MEANINGS

- **“Native ethnography”**: Study of one’s own group
- **An ethnographical autobiography** that “reflects the cultural and social frames of reference”
- **“Self narrative that places the self within a social context”** (Reed-Danahay, 1997)
- **Autoethnographers** are “indigenous anthropologist... as concerned with examining themselves as ‘natives’ as they are with interpreting their cultures for a non-native audience” (Deck, 1990)
- **“A category of counter-narratives, politicized texts that resist ethnographic representations by outsiders”** (Reed-Danahay, 1997)

## MY POSITIONING

- **Border-crosser**
- **Critique in Praxis** of usual re-presentational practices of self & other
- **A self-narrative within the social-cultural context at the Institute**
- **An inquiry that is a production of a political text**



# PERFORMANCE

*Performance is*

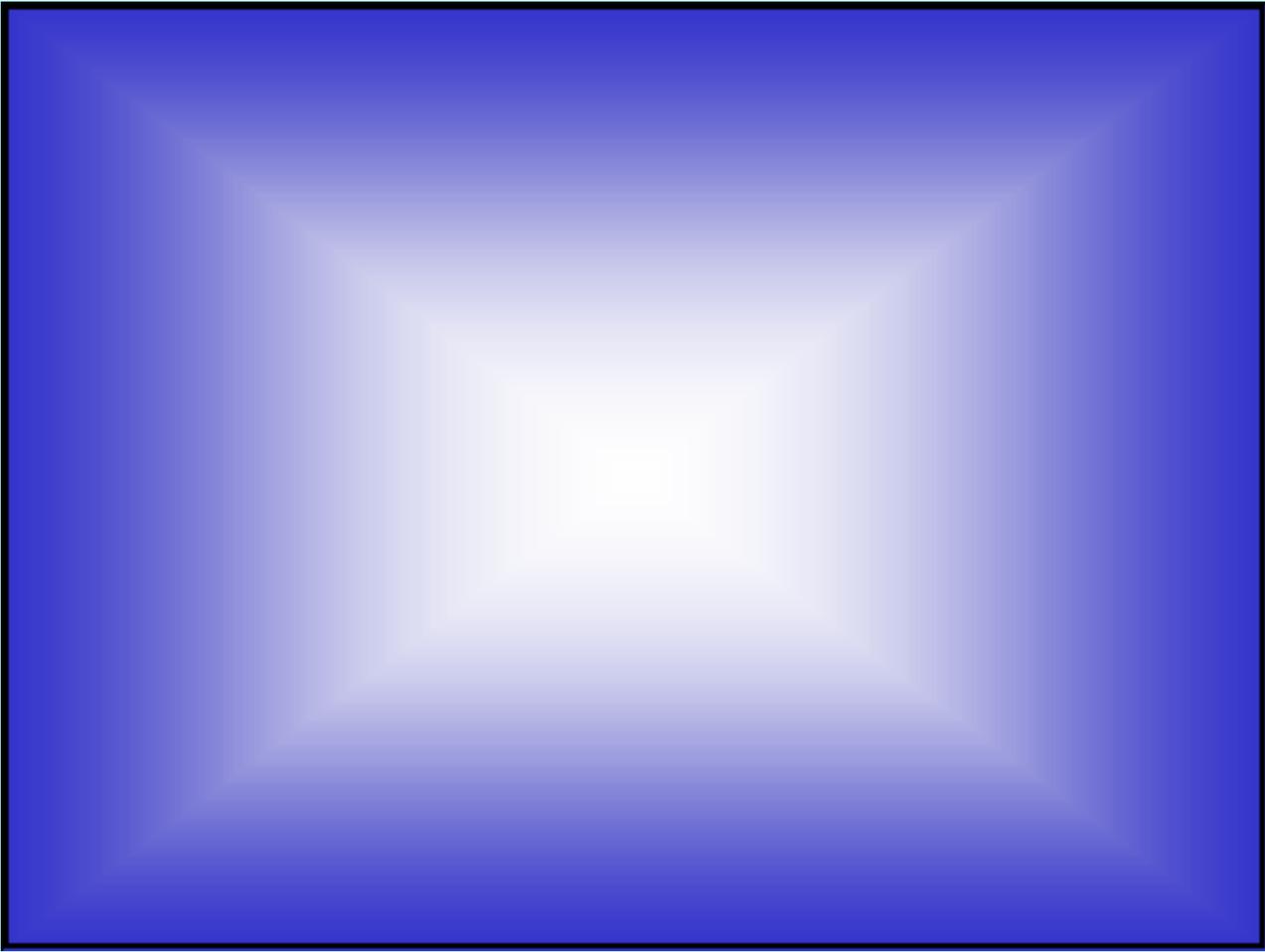
*an act of becoming, a strategy for discovering oneself by trying on scripts to test their fit, a mean of clothing oneself in various languages until one believes what one says.*

*Pelias, 1999*

## **METAPHOR FOR METHODOLOGY:**

- **Creating Scripts**
- **Acting Out Scripts**
- **Performing Discourse**
- **Performing Meaning**
- **Performing Writing**





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# **SPEAKING FROM MY EXPERIENCE TO YOURS**

- ◆ **Interns & Internship Coordinators**
- ◆ **International Students as Therapist-in-Training**
- ◆ **Researchers**
- ◆ **Writers**
- ◆ **Hypertext writers**
- ◆ **Boundary Crossers**



## **BEING & BECOMING**

- ◆ **Hypertext producer**
- ◆ **Want to be a conceptual writer**
- ◆ **Co-create collaborative learning communities**

## **SELF-IN-RELATIONSHIPS**

- ◆ **I trust myself in the process but in the midst, I am uncertain of the “final product”**



## **CREATING ALTERNATIVES...**

**...is to create evocative narratives of my internship and research experiences that are not separated from my personal historical narratives**

**...is to learn multiple languages**

**...is to honor history and be critical of history**

**...is to be reflexive**

## **ABOUT BECOMING A THERAPIST...**

**...training in postmodern ideas is an experiential and didactic training**

**...learning occurs at many different fronts**

**...over time as one makes sense of one's experience**

**...learning is transferable**



## **LANGUAGED COMMUNITIES**

- ◆ **Broaden my languaged communities**
- ◆ **Different languages give meaning to my experience.**
- ◆ **How much more I need to learn about the various discourses**
- ◆ **Membership is meaning-making of forming and re-forming notions**



# I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT...

- ◆ **LANGUAGED COMMUNITIES**
- ◆ **CREATING ALTERNATIVES**
- ◆ **BECOMING A THERAPIST**
- ◆ **BEING & BECOMING**
- ◆ **SELF-IN-RELATIONSHIPS**



# READER RESPONSE REQUESTED

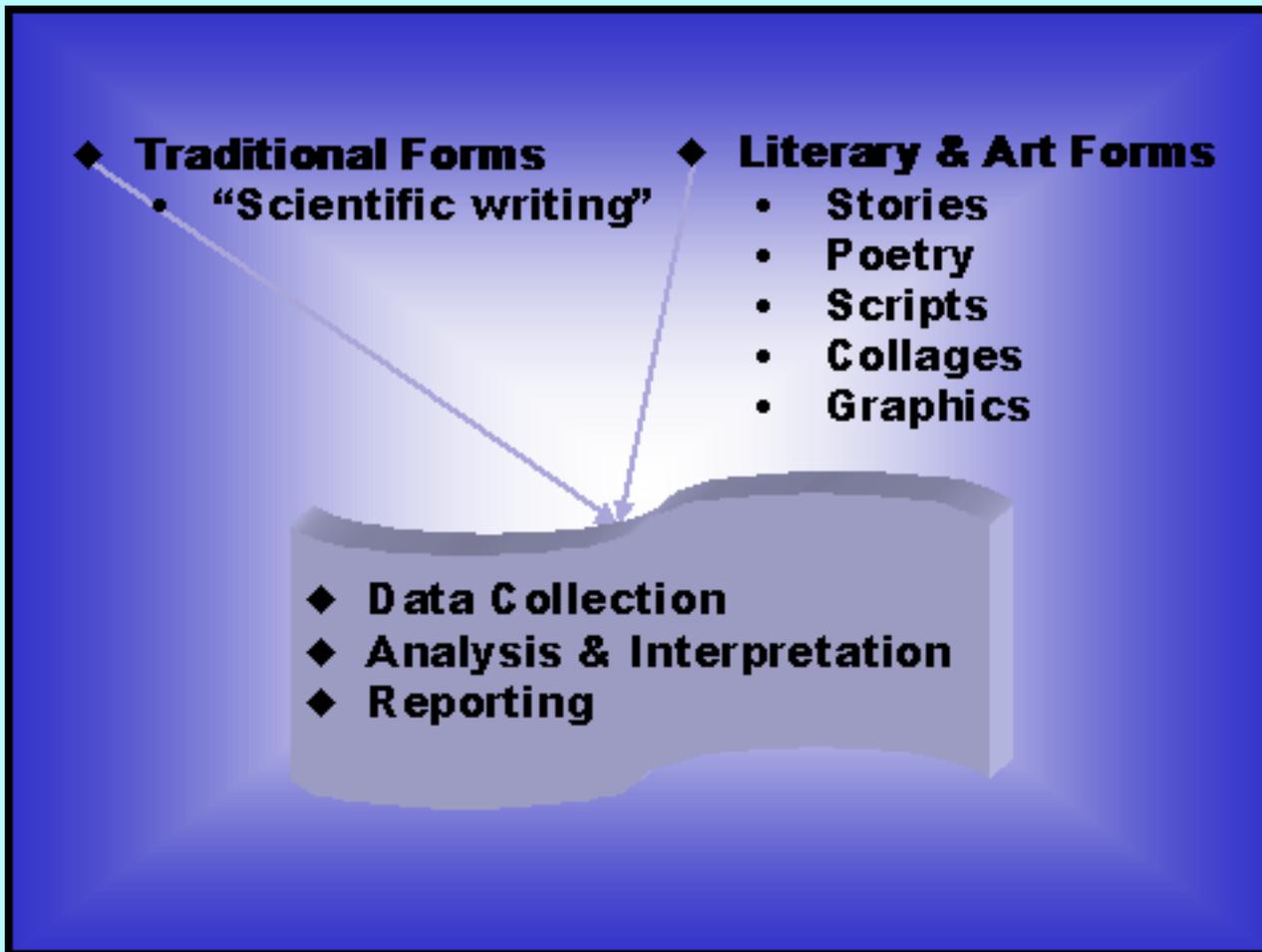
- ◆ **Committee Members**
- ◆ **Sue Levin (Institute's angle)**
- ◆ **Ken Gergen (Social Construction in Praxis)**
- ◆ **Sheila McNamee (Research angle)**
- ◆ **Tom Strong (MFT, POMO angle)**
- ◆ **Alan Parry (POMO angle)**
- ◆ **Dilek Tinaz, others (Intern angle)**
- ◆ **Jean Mason (Hypertext angle)**
- ◆ **Rob Tietze (Literary angle)**
- ◆ **Technical Support Committee  
(Technological angle)**



## Stories of My Internship Experience

- **Choosing Silence**
- **Expertise**
- **Story Of Blurring Boundaries**
- **Spatial Articulation**
- **A Day in Tension**
- **Learning Communities**
- **Story Of Stormy Emotions**





# WRITING-IN-INQUIRY

**Writing-in-inquiry are creative and innovative processes comprising of reflexive practices that are generative and transformational acts.**

**FORMS...**



# PPT Slide

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# PPT Slide

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# PPT Slide

POSTMODERNISM

PERFORMANCE

HYPertext

WRITING

LOCATING AN INTERN'S

EXPERIENCE

METAPHOR

FRAGMENTATION

NARRATIVE

TRAINING

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# ASSUMPTIONS

- Language is generative and constitutive (Anderson, 1997; Gergen, 1999)
- Meaning making is a social activity & intertextual (Lemke, 1995)
- Meaning is transitory
- All inquiry is an interpretive process (Van Manen, 1990)
- All descriptions are an interpretation of the described event
- Reflexivity & critical questioning of self & other

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# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How to locate the local experience of an intern in a postmodern community?
- 
- How to co-construct alternative styles of inquiry?
- 
- What is the researcher's experience of a highly subjective inquiry and messy text?

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# RESEARCH PURPOSE

- Living Knowledge of an Intern
- Voicing Alternate Research Forms
- Quest for knowing
- Understanding the Institute's Training Community
- Performing as a Writer

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# PPT Slide

**Saliha Bava**

**October 31, 2001**

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# METHODOLOGY

- [Autoethnography](#)
- 
- [Performance as Methodology](#)
- 
- Writing-in-Inquiry

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# AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

## MULTIPLE MEANINGS

- “Native ethnography”: Study of one’s own group
- An ethnographical autobiography that “reflects the cultural and social frames of reference”
- “Self narrative that places the self within a social context” (Reed-Danahay, 1997)
- Autoethnographers are “indigenous anthropologist... as concerned with examining themselves as ‘natives’ as they are with interpreting their cultures for a non-native audience” (Deck, 1990)
- “A category of counter-narratives, politicized texts that resist ethnographic representations by outsiders” (Reed-Danahay, 1997)

## MY POSITIONING

- Border-crosser
- Critique in Praxis of usual re-presentational practices of self & other
- A self-narrative within the social-cultural context at the Institute
- An inquiry that is a production of a political text

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# PERFORMANCE

## METAPHOR FOR METHODOLOGY:

- Creating Scripts
- Acting Out Scripts
- Performing Discourse
- Performing Meaning
- Performing Writing

Performance is

an act of becoming, a strategy for discovering oneself by trying on scripts to test their fit, a mean of clothing oneself in various languages until one believes what one says.

Pelias, 1999

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# SPEAKING FROM MY EXPERIENCE TO YOURS

- Interns & Internship Coordinators
- International Students as Therapist-in-Training
- Researchers
- Writers
- Hypertext writers
- Boundary Crossers

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## BEING & BECOMING

- Hypertext producer
- Want to be a conceptual writer
- Co-create collaborative learning communities

## SELF-IN-RELATIONSHIPS

- I trust myself in the process but in the midst, I am uncertain of the “final product”

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## CREATING ALTERNATIVES...

...is to create evocative narratives of my internship and research experiences that are not separated from my personal historical narratives

...is to learn multiple languages

...is to honor history and be critical of history

...is to be reflexive

## ABOUT BECOMING A THERAPIST...

...training in postmodern ideas is an experiential and didactic training

...learning occurs at many different fronts

...over time as one makes sense of one's experience

...learning is transferable

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# PPT Slide

## LANGUAGED COMMUNITIES

- Broaden my languaged communities
- 
- Different languages give meaning to my experience.
- 
- How much more I need to learn about the various discourses
- 
- Membership is meaning-making of forming and re-forming notions

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# I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT...

- LANGUAGED COMMUNITIES
- CREATING ALTERNATIVES
- BECOMING A THERAPIST
- BEING & BECOMING
- SELF-IN-RELATIONSHIPS

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# READER RESPONSE REQUESTED

- Committee Members
- Sue Levin (Institute's angle)
- Ken Gergen (Social Construction in Praxis)
- Sheila McNamee (Research angle)
- Tom Strong (MFT, POMO angle)
- Alan Parry (POMO angle)
- Dilek Tinaz, others (Intern angle)
- Jean Mason (Hypertext angle)
- Rob Tietze (Literary angle)
- Technical Support Committee (Technological angle)

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# PPT Slide

Stories of

My

Internship

Experience

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# PPT Slide

- Traditional Forms
  - “Scientific writing”
- Literary & Art Forms
  - Stories
  - Poetry
  - Scripts
  - Collages
  - Graphics
- Data Collection
- Analysis & Interpretation
- Reporting

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# WRITING-IN-INQUIRY

Writing-in-inquiry are creative and innovative processes comprising of reflexive practices that are generative and transformational acts.

FORMS...

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*Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's  
Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community*

*Salha Bava*

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
in  
*Human Development*

APPROVED

*Howard Protinsky, PhD, Committee Chair*  
*Harlene Anderson, PhD, Committee Member*  
*Dan Nesor, PhD, Committee Member*  
*Fred Piercy, PhD, Committee Member*  
*Anne Prouty, PhD, Committee Member*

October 31, 2001  
Blacksburg, Virginia

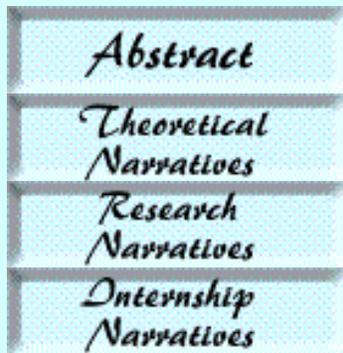
Key Words: art, autobiographical, autoethnography, blurring boundaries, content and form, discourses, electronic referencing, feminist, hypertext, interdisciplinary, internship experiences, intertextual, journal, methodology, multimedia, narrative, performance, postmodern, qualitative, representation, research methodology, social construction, space, and writing

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Non-functional in PDF

The dissertation web, a hypertext located within multiple discourses, is an intertextual script, a rendition, of my internship (1998-1999) and research experiences (1998-2001).



## WEB CAPTURE: CONVENTIONS FOR E-DATA MANAGEMENT, E-REFERENCING/BIBLIOGRAPHY, AND ARCHIVING

Technology and software advancement informs our writing and representation options, conventions and forms. We are introduced to new possibilities of researching, data definition, data collection, data storage, analyzing, interpretation, reporting, and representations that challenge and add to traditional conventions. According to the Library of Congress (2002) "no definitive guidelines exist for citing electronic sources." Electronic technological advancement creates new possibilities and guidelines. One such possibility is ways manage secondary sources and how to cite and link-to online resources in electronic thesis and dissertations.

In my dissertation, I offer one such possibility with the use of Adobe Acrobat's feature *Web Capture*. Web capture as it's name suggests is like a photographic feature, which captures any electronic file while retaining the interactive quality of the document. The web capture is an exceptionally useful tool for referencing websites since the web captured product functions like an archived product which the researcher can use when he/she needs access to the website. Thus, even if the website changes or the server of the website is moved, the researcher has a "photographic" capture of his/her "original" citation or web resource. Additionally, constructing the convention of archiving of e-references as a method of citing electronic resources (e-resource/s) is similar to giving a visual credit to the website while increasing the chances of readers visiting the archived websites due

to the visual effect which is similar to web surfing. Further, archiving e-resources provide the readers with access to inaccessible e-resources (which could raise other issues, if the e-resource is not a website). Thus, web capture is an especially useful research, teaching, and learning tool and provides an additional possibility of conventions for electronic thesis and dissertation, which are submitted in pdf format, by furthering e-referencing and archiving.

I had intended a xml format for my dissertation, but due to the xml conventions being in their embryonic phase, I chose and was given permission to use the pdf web capture format to meet the Graduate School's dissertation requirements. [Tony Atkins](#), Technical Director of Virginia Tech's Digital Library and Archives suggested the pdf web capture, which assisted me in coming closer to my original intent of making dissertation web part of the larger textual web (the internet). It also added to the possibilities for conventions of electronic referencing of online and electronic resources, which I introduced in my pdf web capture format of the dissertation (file labeled as [intertextual\\_diss\\_web.pdf](#)). I distinguish between my dissertation web and external web resources as a practice of fair use of the e-resources.

• [SITEMAP](#) • [THEORETICAL NARRATIVES](#) • [RESEARCH NARRATIVES](#) •  
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Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community



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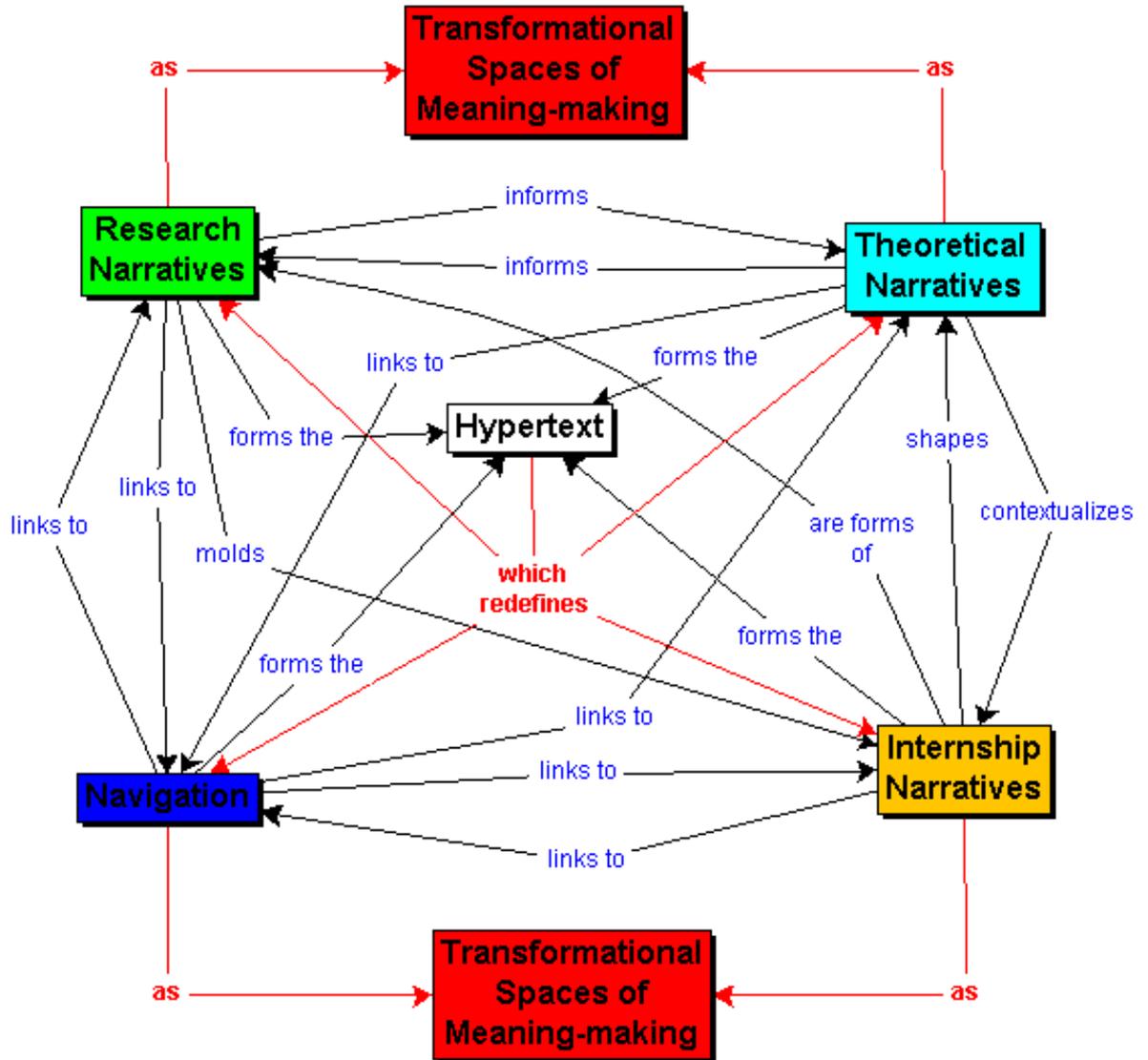
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- [Abstract](#)
- [Theoretical Narratives](#)
- [Research Narratives](#)
- [Internship Narratives](#)

## TRANSFORMATIONS: AS SPACES OF MEANING-MAKING



Writing, a cultural performance, is a transformational process. In the process of narrating, linking experiences, de-fragmenting one's experience via [writing](#) and constructing [hypertexts](#), one is in a constant flux of creating newer experiences of meaning-making which are transformational moments. The processes of my inquiry ([dissertation web](#)) are tales of transformation from the title of the study to

the "final" versions of (hyper)texts.

## **SHIFTING SANDS**

### ***Title***

I had proposed the title of *Lived Experience of an Evolving Collaborative Language Systems Therapist: A Sense, not an Essence*. The title was intended to guide readers who were interested in stories of an evolving therapist during the internship period. However, as I immersed myself in the internship allowing for the research field to inform my process of inquiry, the context and my intent changed. I was being transformed as a person but the focus of my transformation was not at the level of the therapist. I experienced substantive re-formations at the level of what I had labeled as the intern or researcher. Thus as the focus shifted, so evolved a new title: *Lived Experience of an Intern and a Researcher in a Postmodern Community*. As I got closer to punctuating my dissertation as "finished", I continued to reword the title since I found the latter title missing the importance of hypertext, performance, and the notion of transformation. So I selected the title of *Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community*.

### ***Focus of the Inquiry***

Due to the dearth of literature on therapist development during internships, I decided to focus my inquiry on the internship process rather than narrow it to supervision, or any one particular aspect of my training. I entered the field with the understanding that at some point in my inquiry I would have to narrow my focus but I wanted to be immersed and informed in and by the field before I narrowed my focus. The process of delineating the focus was a fascinating experience in itself. It had a life of its own. I proceeded with my intuitive knowing along with support from my committee who would be my reminders for focus and definition. The definition of *field* itself expanded from the internship field to the intertextual field of discourses of postmodernism, feminist thought, research, writing, representation, electronic medium, hypertext, electronic thesis and dissertation initiatives, softwares, performance, space, academic requirements, personal and professional expectations, relationships among others. I found my focus to expand and narrow based on my ongoing lived experiences. My plumb line was "finishing" my doctoral program.

### ***Research Questions***

As the focus of my dissertation transformed, I re-formed my research questions. Though, one is suppose to inform their research process by being focused on the research question, I chose to inform the process by one of the characteristics of

postmodernism-shifting centers. Shifting centers is like shifting sand dunes that form and re-form as (contextual) natural elements change course overnight. Similarly, various contextual factors informed my process and the focus transformed from the therapist development to evolution to intern's experiences to my process as a researcher to an intern and a researcher's experiences.

I entered my internship experience with the following broad questions:

1. What is my experience of training, supervision, and interpersonal interactions at HGI?
2. What experiences shape my development as a CLS therapist as I progress through a year of training at the HGI?
3. What are the parallel processes occurring in supervision, therapy, and research as I position myself as the trainee, therapist, and researcher?
4. How does my awareness of my social location affect training and research?

Over time as I narrowed my focus and attempted to stay within the defined parameters of my proposal, I focused on the purpose of the inquiry and my interest along with the engagement with the field to narrow my research questions as:

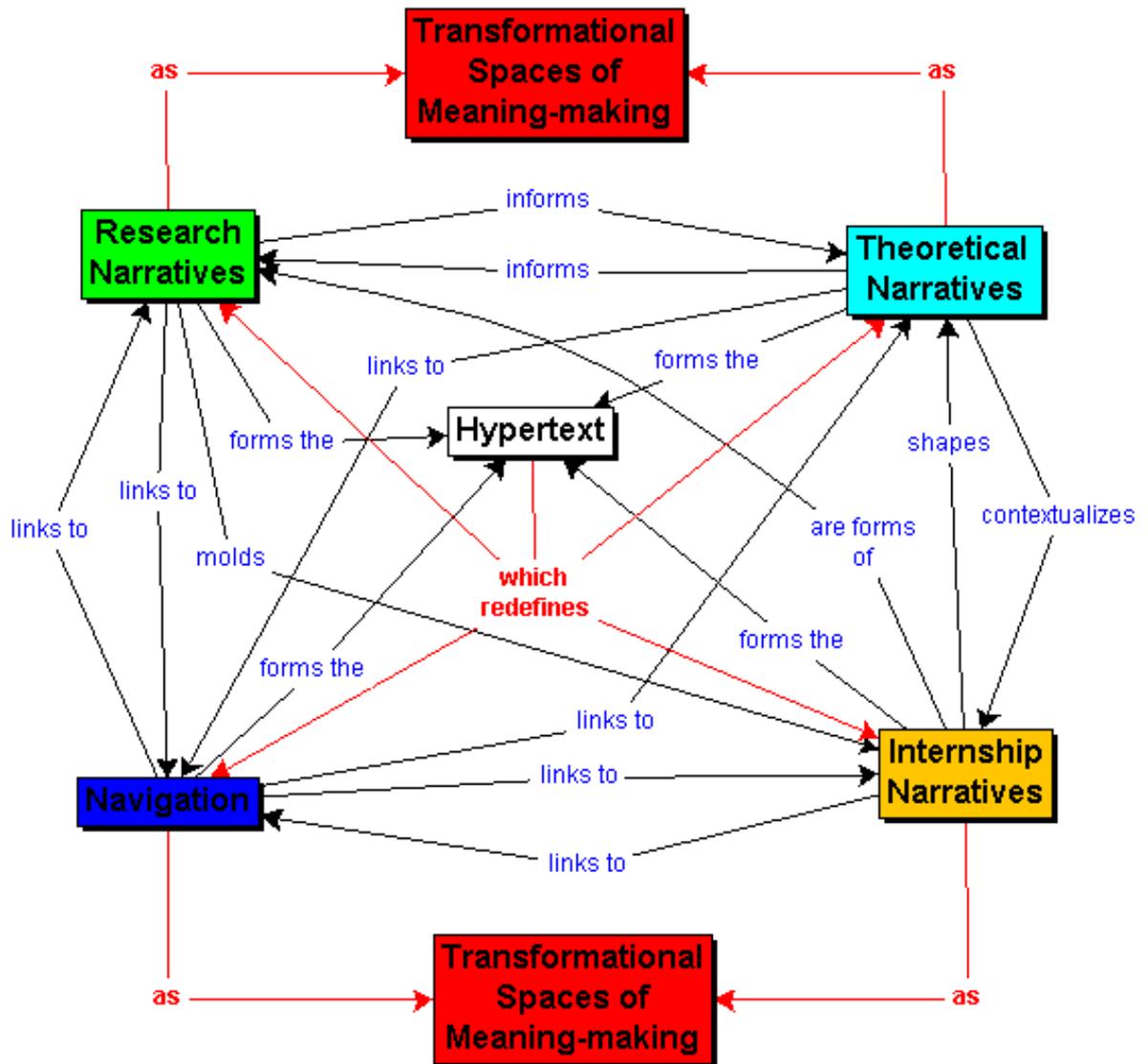
1. How to locate the local experience of an intern in a postmodern community?
2. How to co-construct alternative styles of inquiry?
3. What is the researcher's experience of a highly subjective inquiry?

### ***Research Process***

As is characteristic of postmodernism, the center de-centers, that is the foreground becomes background and the background becomes foreground. Similarly in my research process the intended final product—my internship and research process—became background by the time I came to the punctuate the dissertation web with a pause. Instead, the production process took foreground. Though both the product and the process are aspects of the research experience however, I had not anticipated that my focus of the ground would change to the production process, thus, the "product" was the process.

The process of creating narratives of one's experience is a process of de-fragmenting one's life to make sense of disjointed events, parallel events, interacting events, conjoint events etc. In the process of writing, the writer strings words and chunks of text to create links among the various narrated events. In the dissertation web all this is occurring in the virtual space or cyberspace. Thus, the focus might shift, back and forth, from the narrated texts to the patterns of links in cyberspace. Consequently, the texts and narratives are redefined as transformational spaces of meaning making. In my dissertation web the hypertext transforms the research, theoretical and internship narratives to virtual spaces of

meaning making (as illustrated below). Consequently, experientially and contextually, the focus shifts from the narratives to hypertext, from internship experiences to research process experiences, from the "what" of my experiences to the "how" of my experiences, from fixed linear personal narratives and descriptions to fluid formless transformational communal sense-making processes. Thus, blurring the boundaries of narratives and hypertext, internship and research experiences, fixed and fluid, personal and communal, and form and formless.



As one reads the dissertation web, one is immersed in the experiential social sensing-making of postmodern characterization that informed had me as an intern and researcher. I pause (close the dissertation process) my current synthesis of transformations-a form of sense-making of the inquiry- with what *I have learned* and with a collection of questions titled *Speaking From My Experience To Yours*.

## **I HAVE LEARNED...**

### ***In the process of dissertation...***

The transformation of "a record of one's own experience into a record of (an)other's" (Landow, 2001) is the process of autoethnography for me. The telling of a cultural story from one's own experiential perspective has the transformative potential of shifting a personalized narrative to communal narrative. Whether I have been able to achieve this will be measured over time by reader's responses across various languaged communities.

### ***About Languaged Communities...***

...I have broaden my languaged communities.

...Different languages give meaning to my experiences.

...How much more I need to learn about the various discourses.

...Membership in languaged communities is the process of meaning-making of forming and re-forming notions.

### ***Creating Alternatives...***

...is to create evocative narratives of my internship and research experiences that are not separated from my personal historical narratives

...is to learn multiple languages

...is to honor history and be critical of history

...is to be reflexive

...is to be and become

### ***Becoming a Therapist is...***

...learning that "training" in postmodern ideas is an experiential and didactic learning

...learning that learning occurs at many different fronts—with clients, in supervisions, among intern conversations, with peers, with friends and family, and over time as one makes sense of one's past and present experiences

...learning that learning is transferable

### ***Writing is...***

...transformational

... autobiographical irrespective of the content

... interpretational

... intertextual

## **SPEAKING FROM MY EXPERIENCE TO YOURS**

### ***Interns and Internship Coordinators***

- Who decides which of our past training and practice experiences as a therapist counts towards one's professional identity? How is this decision made?
- How are the notions of "personal" and "professional" defined in various training communities? How do these distinctions inform the training context and vis-a-vis?
- How do the relationships within a training context define one's professional identities?
- How does an intern choose to form emotional ties, when one transitorily relocates? How does the training context impact on the emotional ties that are formed on relocation?
- How does the training site learn about the "personal" longings and illusions of its new members? How does the training site prepare for the new dynamics that emerges from the new relationships? How are the "personal" and "professional" disillusionment managed in a "professional" context?
- How do interns and researchers re-locate themselves as their theoretical orientation expands with experience? How does one's changing theoretical orientation position oneself within a languaged community?
- How does the notion of "dual relationship" limit the intern from preparing for the "real world" of multiple relationships? How can learners and learning sites create a context for reflective positioning within multiple relationships?
- How do interns co-create metaphors to perform the organizational and personal discourses of training and learning?
- How are spatial metaphors created as discourses of relational politics?
- How are local expectations and emotions privileged in the course of the training?
- What kind of a learning environment are we constructing when we language distinctions such as learners and trainers, interns and faculty? How do we get out of the language trap? Or would the practice of reflexivity entrap (or un-trap) the reality-in-language?
- How is the learner's experience influenced when the practice philosophy of an internship site is in transition?
- How does an internship site address learning, from a collaborative perspective, when the learner's model differs from the site's training parameters?
- What if the learners want to explore outside the parameters of the faculty/Institute's agenda? How are such collaborations managed?

## ***International Students as Therapist-in-Training***

- How do learning sites address the international students' process of assimilation?
- How do the international students' long term goals influence the process of assimilation?
- How does the process of being assimilated *by* a culture differ from the process of assimilating *into* a culture?
- How does the discourse of professional identity impact on boundary crossers, like me, who move from one country to another in the quest of training?
- How do interns and international students define themselves to belong within a new learning community?

## ***Researchers***

- How to use hypertext as an alternate way of re-presenting and authoring our text (Denzin, 1994)?
- How to approach interpretation as an art (Denzin, 1994) that is local and personal?
- How to use writing, intertextuality and conversations to make sense of one's own experience and thus expanding it outward to the reader who reads the text as an "other" to make sense of "another's life?"
- How is hypertext a methodology?
- How are personal narratives political, historical and cultural narratives?
- How do our self-definitions of our fluid selves inform (the) self?
- Can Adobe Acrobat's [\*web capture\*](#) feature become a convention for data-management, e-referencing, and archiving and appending secondary electronic sources?

## ***Writers***

- How do the discourses that one is located within inform, form, and disform one's writing?
- How does writing inform the cultural discourses that I enter into as a chosen languaged community?

- [SITEMAP](#) • [THEORETICAL NARRATIVES](#) • [RESEARCH NARRATIVES](#) • [INTERNSHIP NARRATIVES](#) •



Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community

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## SITE MAP

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- [What Am I Creating?](#)

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- ◉ Academic Writing: An Understanding & Challenges
- ◉ Positioning Writing in My Life
- ◉ My Process as a Research Writer: A Collage
- ◉ My Process as a Hypertext Writer
- ◉ Production of Electronic Textual Frames
- ◉ Production of Multimedia Frames

## Internship Narratives

- ☉ Choosing Silence
  - ◉ A Process Narrative of the Conflict
- ☉ Expertise
- ☉ Story of Blurring Boundaries: Woman of the Border(less)
  - ◉ Between Identities: Personal and Professional
  - ◉ Between Places: Locating-re-locating
  - ◉ Between Longings and Illusions: Relationships and (K)nots
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  - ◉ Between Cultures: Assimilate and Not
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  - [Learning Philosophy & Environment](#)
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  - [Shifting Sands](#)
  - [I have Learned](#)
  - [Speaking From My Experience to Yours](#)
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- ☉ [Appendix](#)
  - [Checklist \(PDF\)](#)
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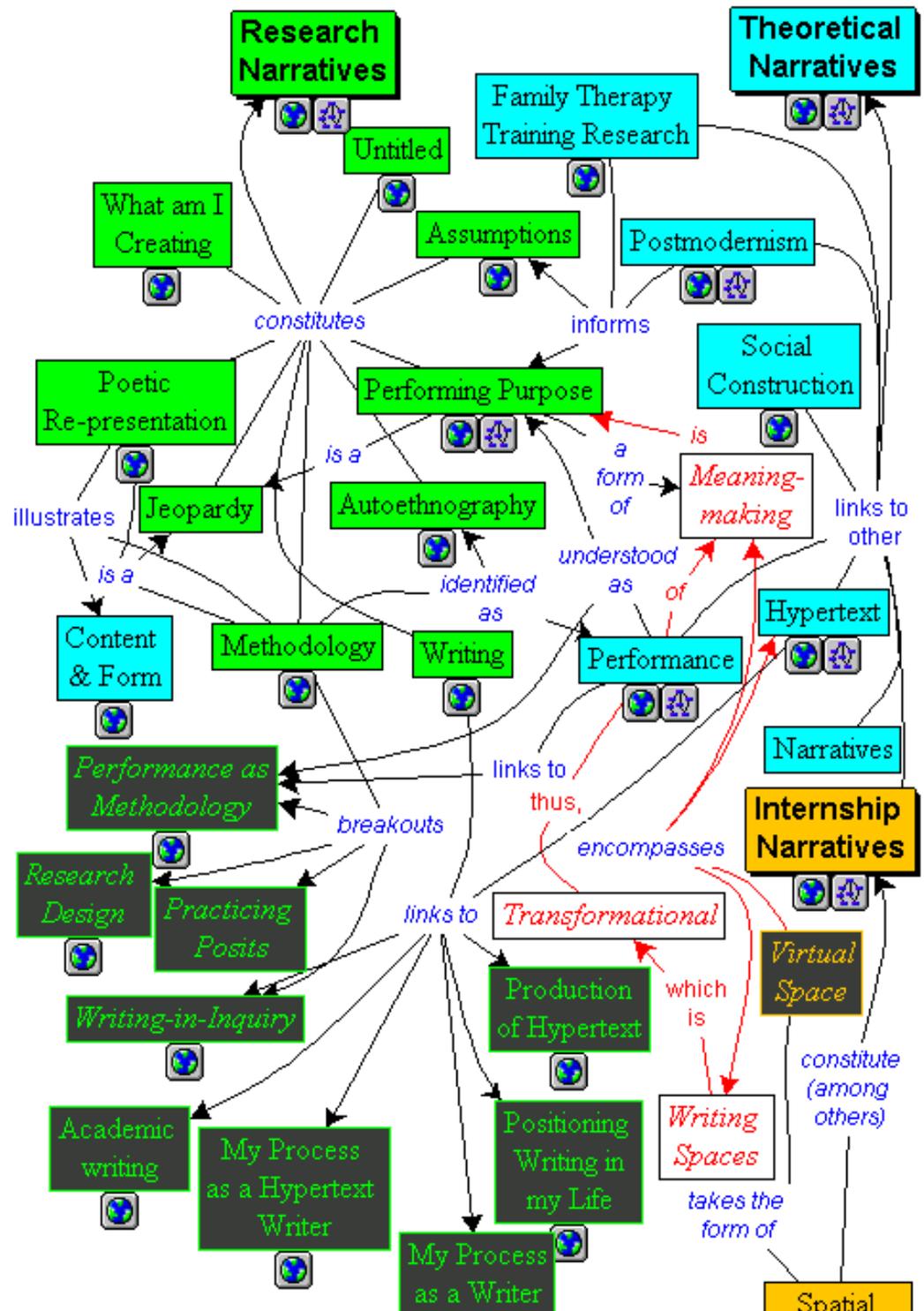
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# WRITING

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- [Theoretical Narratives](#)
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- [Internship Narratives](#)





**Map: Graphic Location of *Writing* within the Dissertation Web**



Click for an interactive map.



**I write to know others and myself.**

Research Audit 9/6/01

Writing was one of the key tools of my dissertation process. Writing, etymologically, denotes "to scratch, draw, inscribe" from old English; it is akin to Old High German *rIzan* which means, "to tear" (Merriam-Webster, 2001). All of the meanings connote a creation or reformatting to produce something new. Similarly, I view the dissertation web as *drawing* or *inscribing* newness into my sense-making of the internship and research experiences. The sense-making of the experiences is contextualized in writing and its process as delineated in the following links:

[Academic Writing: An Understanding & Challenges](#)

[Positioning Writing in My Life](#)

[My Process as a Writer: A collage](#)

[My Process as a Hypertext-writer](#)

[Production of Electronic Textual Frames](#)

[Production of Multimedia](#)

[Writing-in-Inquiry](#)

[Writing Spaces](#)



**ACADEMIC WRITING: AN UNDERSTANDING AND CHALLENGES**

Peter Elbow (2000), professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, eloquently makes a case for training students in discourses other than only academic discourse. He categorically states that he is not against academic discourse rather he wishes to add nonacademic discourses to a student's experience for three reasons. First, very few students will write academic discourses after college. Second, nonacademic writing renders experience, such

as autobiographical stories or sketches. And third, use of nonacademic discourses helps students produce good academic discourse as the former enhances their understanding of their discipline when a jargon is explained in nonacademic language. So how is academic discourse defined?

Elbow (2000) states that academic discourse is *not any "one thing."*

I can't tell my students whether academic discourse in English means using lots of structural signposts or leaving them out, bringing in their feelings and personal reactions or leaving them out, giving evidence from the poet's life for interpretations or leaving them out, referring to the class, gender and school of other interpreters or leaving them out—not finally even what kind of footnotes to use. (p.240)

He identifies some generic intellectual practices among academic discourses, such as, reason and evidence, separation of the ones' social-cultural position from the assertions one seeks to make and perhaps the convention of an objective stance that ironically is inherently (inter)subjective depending on the discourse communities one belongs. Sociologist and writer of "effective and affective sociological discourse," Laurel Richardson (1992) states that in academic discourse:

we are expected to write papers in prose, reference others, place our work in a lineage, objectify the topic, and focus on the expressed topic rather than on the self-as-producer....Like other cultural groups, academics fail to recognize their practices as cultural/political choices, much less see how they are personally affected by those practices (see hooks 1990; Levine 1985; Richardson 1991a; Smith 1990; Van Maanen 1988).

In my dissertation web, I privilege a nonacademic writing style that is conversational and in first person. Though, first person and expressive writings are not uncommon in literature, it is gaining momentum in various social science disciplines. Such writing is acquiring the status as a form of academic writing that is pressed onward by various discourses such as critical ethnography, feminist, literary, critical theory and cultural studies. Thus, by using nonacademic writing styles in the course of an academic rite of passage I am adding to the creation of an alternate version of academic reality. In using a discourse we are also constructing a version of reality (Elbow, 2000).

Even though I privilege the nonacademic writing in my dissertation, I find myself drawn to academic discourses due to my anxiety about challenging the norms. Since the dissertation process is often spoken as an exercise in conducting research, I am seeking to gain a certain degree of acknowledgment, from my peers and senior academics, such that I have an understanding of the academic language game of research and thus know how to perform *the* academic discourse. So the display of the academic conventions is a performance of earning my rite of passage as an academic. However, with the performance comes the risk of authority and monotone voice using technical or formal language (Elbow, 2000, Richardson, 1997) and the risk of being seduced by the idea of a *singular* academic discourse (Elbow, 2000). Further, we often ignore or marginalize, in traditional academic discourses, the trials and tribulations of the researcher. Such "author-evacuated" (Geertz, 1988) narratives carries the potential to undermine one's challenges as a researcher since, other researchers' challenges are unspoken and the reports are bland representations of the discovered objective truth rather than an evocative creation of a version of reality.

I adopt a reflexive position in my writing to correct for the vestigial academic discourses that I use in the dissertation web, as I become part of the alternate academic discourse voices. I attempt to reflect on my practices as cultural/political choices in the creation of the textual narratives in the sections titled *After Words* or *Epilogues*. I also practice the "improper" social science research of not only not textually marginalizing my lived experience (like Laurel Richardson) but also making the "self-as-producer" the focus of my dissertation (Richardson, 1997).

Based on your interest in form, structure, person and/or process of writing you can link to any one of the following and navigate back to this screen by using the browser's back button:

[Positioning Writing in My Life](#)

[My process as a Writer and as a Hypertext-writer](#)



## **POSITIONING WRITING IN MY LIFE [or My relationship to Writing]?**

Research Audit 1/26/00

How not writing is an academic suicide. But for ME "just" writing is a doing and not a process of being. I have deep faith that I'm evolving as a writer and the pieces are coming together as I find a way of

expressing ideas. Ideas that are fluid and things that I choose to not stand behind, so as not to get stuck but ideas, in front of which I can stand in curiosity and wonderment and doubt.

My growth with writing has been a struggle, a journey—a life process. Writing has been a process that is relationally connected to events in time and space. It is a process of growth, a path of exploration, a construction and invention and intervention of self.

My earliest thought about writing was when I was in school and did well in Grammar. I used to score good grades in all my grammar tests. I was good at and proud of my grammar. In fact, I used to help my sister, who is six years older than me, in identifying participle, past participle, present participle and infinitive etc. But the process of essay and creative writing was not my forte. I recognized the importance of writing when I started college. I remember being proud of some of the term papers I had written. Academic writing is not taught in India the way it is taught in the American educational system. I learnt this lesson the hard way. When I arrived in America for my Doctoral program I realized that most American students came with some "superior" training in writing that I did. Was it training or confidence? The fear that my writing was not good enough and not at par sent my confidence in writing plummeting. But in spite of my sliding confidence I came with certain academic privileges.

I identify myself as privileged with a propensity towards academic discourses (Heath, 1983) due to my middle class family's training in academia. My parents were first generation college graduates in their respective family-of-origin. Education, especially as defined in academia, was highly valued in my family. My father is a graduate of the Indian Military Academy. My mother, after teaching for 39 years, retired as a Political Science professor from the University of Delhi. My oldest sister followed my mother's footsteps, entered academia after the completion of her Masters, acquired her Ph.D. and continues to pursue research fellowship and post-doctorate training. My next oldest sister received a MBA degree.

I grew up in an environment surrounded by books and academic conversations to which family friends brought their children for "vocational" counseling and academic advice. The emphasis of the educational environment in India was on family and learner initiated even though most students did not have access to formalized writing programs such as structured university programs or writing centers that taught about planning, organizing, researching and writing term papers. I had good coaching from my sisters. They taught me how to perform well in academia. For instance, one of my sisters taught me how to use

electronic databases for literature search when I was an undergraduate. Thus, due to my family background I was more comfortable asking the librarian and professors for assistance compared to some of my peers. I grew up surrounded by academic politics and the happenings in my mother's department and university. Seeing her struggle to start a new department, watching her agonize for not being recognized for her efforts, being discriminated because she was a minority who had chosen not to play dirty politics taught me early lessons in the politics of academia.

I first encountered research when I was a nine years old and accompanied my mother for her data collection for her dissertation in remote rural India where she interviewed farmers as her research subjects. I have memories of her working on drafts of her dissertation, making decisions about the type of paper to use, talking to the cartographer, the printer and then our whole family helping her to proof-read and collate her material. Later my mother talked about statistics and she would spend hours writing papers for journals. Today, she has to her credit published nine books and several articles. To date one of the most connecting moments with my mother is when we talk about research, ways of knowing, teaching, writing and academic politics.

And so began my encounters with academia, research and writing...



## **MY PROCESS AS A RESEARCH WRITER: A COLLAGE**

Writing stories about our "texts" is thus a way of making sense of and changing our lives. Richardson, 1997, p.5

They told us life was a connected narrative but it feels more life a collage. Elbow, 2000, p.307

Poetry is the most natural collage form. Poems often don't say what they are saying, and they jam unlike things together.

Why should the collage be old and natural in art, music, and poetry—but not in prose? Elbow, 2000, p.303

I present *my process as a research writer* as a collage of research audits and reflections. Though I run the risk of "points [that] don't quite follow each other coherently and the whole piece doesn't really hang together" but it is a "hodgepodge....[and] it works. It's a collage" (Elbow, 2000).



I initially started writing the section on methodology as I was reading my journal entries. Due to my strong interest in methodology and the unpleasant feelings that arose on reading my journal I chose to start with writing the methodology section. At the time I started working on it I called it "Chapter 3" since that is usually where methodology appears in most dissertations.

### Reflections on writing Chapter 3

"I'm going back and forth among the different sections of the chapter as I read and write from my journal."

"I have started 'theme sheet' where I'm jotting whatever ideas I have for a theme. Book-marking the theme by flagging it in the journal; color-coding emerging themes and adding comments in chapter drafts."

Going *back and forth* between various texts that I was writing became a large process of my writing. I found myself not working on any one piece from "beginning" to "end" before I started on another section. The attention to the back and forth process further peaked my interest in my writing process.

### Research Audit 9/12/00

I went back and forth between writing for a chapter to writing for frames. This helped me to see the link between various parts and elements in the "chapters" and to fragment my long narratives to form "frames".



The more I wrote a "chapter" the less I felt connected to it as a writer. I found my inner struggles increase. I experienced tension between the traditional research report expectations and my expectations of creating an alternate way of expression that was less linear. I was also immersed in reading about hypertext-theoretical notions and creations of electronically linked text. The notion of fragmented texts that were actually connected lexias appealed more and more to my postmodern sense. Thus, the more I thought in terms of "frames" greater was my passion as an artist—a writer.

### Research Audit 8/15/00

Writing for frames has changed my passion for writing. It is a

different form of writing.

I found a renewed sense of passion for creating narratives when I conceptualized the texts as linked frames rather than as linear narratives. [Hypertexts](#) or electronically linked textual frames gave me an alternate path to the conventional academic writing; a writing path that was laced with a sense of freedom, creativity and enthusiasm which had been missing in the traditional writing form.



Research Audit 8/21/00-8/26/00

Writing on computer changes the way you think and write. You can have multiple documents being written at the same time. I drew on the traditional idea that when writing if there is another thought knocking then just jot it down and get back to your original writing. That way you don't lose your thought and are not distracted for too long. Following the same idea I would pull on a new document or open an old file and "store" my new idea. However, as time went on I realized that I was in conversation with these different "documents" and the documents were in conversation with each other. The "distraction" was not "distraction" but another text within the context. It was an unfolding performance. And at some point in my writing the "original" writing piece stopped being "original". I was performing another act with multiple texts rather than performing a "solo" text. These ongoing performances between the texts (2-8 documents at a given time) and myself became a liberating ritual in my writing. I felt I was being creative. I also experienced the fragmentation of web-surfing and how the marginalized text took center stage only to be momentarily shadowed by another centralizing text. Among all these performing texts I would feel the emergence of a subtext, birthing as a marginalized text and then taking center stage and becoming part of the context as other subtexts emerged. For instance, *writing* was a subtext—an underlying theme. I was fascinated with the writing process in my research process. I had never conceptualized writing about the writing process. However, as I wrote (performed) other pieces- research process, fragmentation, performance etc., I was uniquely struck by an emerging subtext that I titled "writing." Thus, writing began to emerge as a theme. I would then jot a line here (research process) or there (audit, comment). I was also in the middle of another performance-conversing with Laurel Richardson's text "Fields of Play." One day when I was at my

computer constructing and performing "[Learning Communities](#)," it got marginalized. I started jotting down my ideas on writing only to find myself performing this current text you are reading which brought the notion of writing to center stage.



Research Audit 10/9/00

As I write I see a cyclic pattern that I call "writing-collating-re-organizing-writing." I find that as I create multiple pieces of *writing* I'm also creating mental links between various textual fragments. At times I write about the links or make a note to myself and at other times these links stay alive in the virtual space. Then a month or so into my writing I print out the texts. I label the printing of these textual fragments as "*collating*." The first time I did so was to give Harlene a draft of my creations. I had a visceral response. In the kinesthetic experience of paper against my fingers, the warmth of freshly printed paper and in the visual experience of black words standing distinctly on white paper, I sensed accomplishment. I felt a sense of relief. Relief that I have something substantive. As I continue to key away my thoughts and read different versions of my text on the screen I experience a continuation of my creation and a tracking of the changes in the creations. But when I print the text fragments the creation seems to come alive. My fingers come alive in a different way. I read and write to produce a different flow in my creations. Today this is a valuable part of my production of the textual fragments.

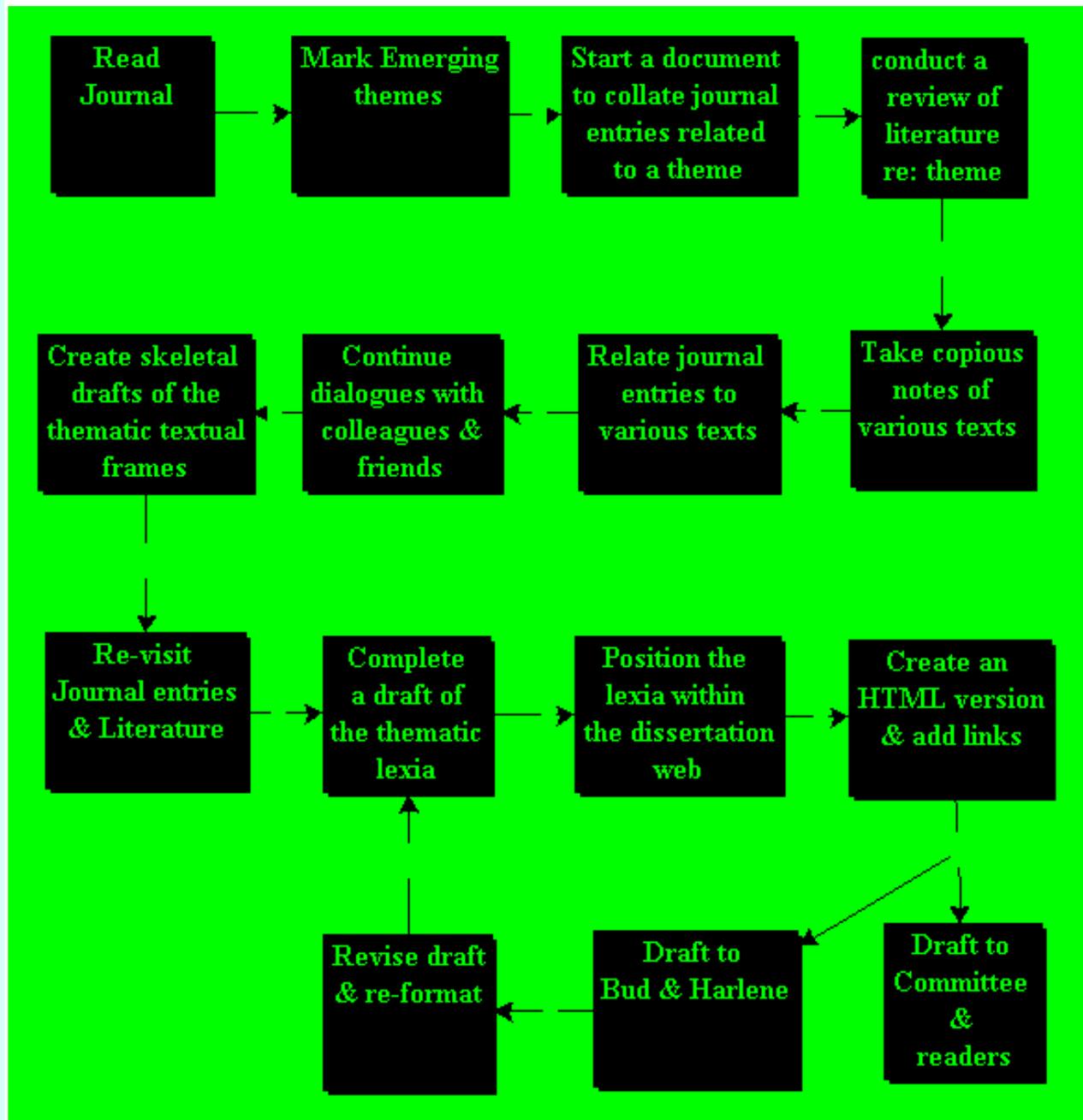
After my fingers and thoughts create their magic on paper, I find myself *reorganizing* some of the textual fragments to produce a new creation, at times experiencing the notion of being "closer to the goal." Often the reorganization may also result in reorganizing my readings which I experience as a (re)generating process. The generativeness of re-organizing lies in the way the ideas may link together to form a new intertextual fragment.

Subsequent to reorganizing, I re-turn to the computer and my fingers, coming alive differently, key my thoughts which appear on a screen. I call this the process of *virtual writing*.



Another pattern that crystallized in the course of writing was *textual productions*

as illustrated in the figure below.



I would read the journals and mark out a theme. Then I would set it aside for a few hours and work on another lexia. A few weeks later I return to the theme and collate the various textual segments and in the process added further comments and reflections. I may also start a literature search depending on the emerging theme. I then set it aside. A few weeks later I may be immersed in the literature and take copious notes and be in dialogue with the various writers. At which point the "steps" start to blur since I would not keep it clean-cut and as distinct steps rather each thematic segment introduced a different writing style and hence a different production note emerged. I would find myself going back and forth between my journal quotes as themes and the various writer's copious notes on the theme and make sense of my experience within the context of

other's writings. I would then start a new document interweaving the emergent themes along with the available literature. I would set aside a rough skeletal draft for weeks. Later, I return to polish and finish the textual segment. In the process, I once again return to my journal and some of the reading as well as ponder and talk to friends and family about the emergent theme. At which point, I position it within the context of my dissertation web and start creating the various links.

After I created the web links either virtually or in my notes, I send the lexia for review to Bud-my committee chair and to Harlene-one of my committee members. I then incorporated their suggestion into the final version of the dissertation. The final version might contain some edits based on other, similarly developing, lexias.



### **Role-playing [Selves](#)**

**Newer Selves:** Intern, supervisor, professional, HGI community member

**Pre-informed selves:** Daughter, sister, friend, professional,

**Researched selves:** Therapists, intern, professional

All of the above categories are arbitrary but I have chosen these categories to negotiate the constructed selves that I encountered in my journal and in the process of writing.

Scripted on 8/6/00

Person (P): I wanted to do something different.

Researcher 1 (R1): Sure, but it was so confusing.

Researcher 2 (R2): But we got it done. Didn't we?

R1: Yes, but it has been so frustrating.

R2: What are you complaining about?

Intern (I): Well I agree. If you were not doing the darn research may be my year would have been different! And you wanted difference!

P: Wait a minute, I thought you (I) wanted difference.

I: Sure its been different but this is not what I wanted when I said "difference."

R1: What you mean is the awfulness of the whole thing.

P: Well it would have still been different because our experience would have been independent of the research.

R2: Watch out! There is no way of telling what would have been dependent or not. And who knows what would have been different?

R1: Well at least I would not have had to feel the drag to revisit the experience

R2: You don't get it do you? The drag is the process. Autoethnography or for that matter any research is an interactive performance of the different experiences.

R1: All that is fine & dandy for you. But try telling that to your committee.

R2: I plan to.

P: Now guys we all know we are telling this to them as you challenge each other. So what do you want to tell them?

R2=It was fun. R1=What a pain! Will they care? I still have my doubts. P=I hope they get it. I=I'm glad its over (all in unison)

R2: I have enjoyed myself. Especially the process of creating something that fits for me and makes me believe in my creativity and myself.

R1: Well how come I didn't hear you when I felt like taking the gun to the project (metaphorically)?

R2: Well I was silent & listening and watching where we were going.

R1: You are one to talk now that we know its coming to an end.

R2: Silence and trust are crucial process of immersion. Too much

talk or the push to do spoils the emergence of newness and creativity.

R1: Sure! Try telling that to the academic gurus.

R2: I think we are. That is the whole point of this project.

P: Rather one of the points.

R1: What other purposes were you serving?

R2: I think to address the internship experience, since there is no MFT training literature that touches on a key area-the internship-in the making of a practitioner.

I: And when you asked me to talk I found I couldn't!

R2: Yes because R1 was very critical of what you would start out saying.

I: Plus I could not get myself to read the stuff you and I wrote. I felt it was too close. Too soon, too much. I just wanted a break.

R1: Well the stuff you wrote was pathetic anyway! It lacked scientific rigor.

P: I know you were ashamed of your performance.

R1: You bet! (To R2) And you call yourself a researcher!

R2: Sure I do and I wear that badge very proudly.

R2: My purpose was experimentalism. I was intending to expand the notion of research and was headed in an anti-foundation direction.

R1: You sure did! Wait a minute now, you did not call it "experimentalism" when you started out.

R2: Well that's the beauty of this kind of research. When you allow for interactiveness with the field and in conversation with others you construct your experience and every construction is another experience in itself.

R1: We will see how far that takes you in the field.

R2: Well I have already presented twice at AAMFT. I was encouraged to continue my efforts at SSSI by my "gurus." I have presented parts of the work at the Institute faculty meetings and have used parts of the process to be a reflexive practitioner as a trainer and can already see the difference in my practice as I participate in the creation of the learning community at the Institute.

P: I have been complimented on the work and people have reported feeling motivated when I talk about it. It has generated some wonderful conversations and made me realize my own potentials.

R1: OK goody! Tell me what is something substantive about what you did?

R2: Well for one thing I used the metaphors of performance and space (at least explicitly) to talk about the experience. And I deconstruct the metaphor of space as used at the Institute. Meaning, I analyze it as a metaphor and make it explicit in how it comes to be a taken-for-granted idea in therapy and supervision. I then explicitly and implicitly use the virtual space metaphor for my own narrative of my experiences. Further, I continue to weave the performance metaphor in how the Institute stages a collaborative learning community.

P: I am just kicked by the reflexiveness and the layers. All of which is a metaphor for the experience!

R1: OK I heard the relational "ways of knowing." What's that?

R2: You won't get it.

R1: Try me!

R2: We live in two different worlds.

R1: I know that. I live in reality and you in illusions. So tell me more about this relational mirage of yours.



I construct this dissertation web as a performer playing a role. I role-play a writer in this performance as inviting alternative forms to canonical writing. I view myself as one of the players on the interdisciplinary stage performing experimental writing (see Ellis & Bochner, 1996, 1992; Richardson, 1992;

Ronai, 1992; Patton, 1999). My writings are cultural acts of self-narrative. A narration of my internship training focused on the production of the narration, fragmentation, and the texts are non-foundational communal sense making acts of my experience.

The tension of self-narrative writing and [writing as inquiry](#) is how to assess and critique such work? To assess is a vestige of empirical approach to inquiry. The erroneous assumption is that there is a correct way to write against which to compare the alternate writing forms. However faulty that assumption may be, I found myself asking the same question as I read my work from a "reader's" eye or an editor's stance. According to DeVault (1997) criteria for evaluating personal writing are currently being developed in the field. A common voice among subjective researchers is that over time one will be able to make sounder assessments and that the reader's response to such texts will determine future standards (DeVault, 1997). Thus, I began collecting readers' responses to my text as I shared my writing, with committee members and nonmembers...



## [Readers' Responses](#)

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Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community



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What is the purpose of research? What are we trying to perform via and in our inquiries? Traditionally in psychology, the purpose of research has had three fold aim to understand, explain and predict behavior. The traditional view fosters the discourse of modernism, which presupposes that the purpose of research is to produce objective knowledge of the world, which is representational. Such research is driven by correspondence theory of truth. So, what are the alternatives for purpose of research in the postmodern world?

The last couple of decades have been identified as the crises of representation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Postmodern critiques have challenged the notion of representation and the correspondence theory of language. These challenges have given rise to uncertainty and question the notion of research and research findings as discovering "reality." Instead, the postmodern thinkers have introduced the idea of knowledge construction and language as generative and constitutive (Anderson, 1997; Gergen, 1999; McNamee, 2000). That is, in the languaged communities we construct meaning thus, constructing knowledge communities (Bruffee, 1999). Consequently, the idea of research as a tool to "discover" reality is questioned. Rather, the idea of inquiry as a process of communal construction of knowledge is being furthered (Gergen, 1999; McNamee, 2000).

I am just basically wanting to say that I do not separate my scientific inquiry from my life and that for me it is really a quest for life and to understand life and to create what I call living knowledge and it is knowledge which is valid for the people with whom I work and for my self. Marja-Liisa Swantz, 1995

Inquiry, in this era of crises of representation, has value for the process of constructing the living knowledge. The question of purpose is based on content and the end product rather than the process of the inquiry (Reason, 1996). According to Gergen (1997) the function of human sciences might be prediction nad control for some but others commit to "generating insight, emancipating the reader, moral molding, providing conversational resources, and constructing cultural futures."



## PERSONALIZING PURPOSE

***Living Knowledge of an Intern:*** Inquiry of my internship experience is an experiential activity in itself. A process. Thus, the process of creating a narrative of my internship is a story by itself. My inquiry is a narrative of the researched event and the narrative of the inquiry process researching the event. It is a personal story. Judi, one of the conference participants identified by Reason (1996), eloquently addresses my research process in her words as a:

personal process, that people bring their life energy and questions to....I have found in my own research journey that when I have a [question](#) that is really important to me, even if I don't know what that question is, then the research is alive and I am questing.

***Voicing Alternate Research Forms:*** I had proposed in 1997 that via my inquiry process I will explore alternate research forms. I approached this purpose at multiple levels-"methodology", "data collection", "analysis" and "report-writing." Thus, one of the process goals of my inquiry was to build in textual presentational structures such that the "[text subjunctivizes reality](#)" (Bruner, 1986; Shotter, 2000 ). So the challenge of writing my internship experience lay in creating possibilities for the "virtual text" that the reader will create rather than creating a "settled certainty" (Bruner, 1986). The writing or reporting stage of the inquiry process is an important part of researching the event. Inquiry of or into an event does not stop with "data collection" and "analysis", but the writing or what is traditionally known as data presentation or even thought of, as representing the event is crucial to the researched event. "...an event as we imagine it hasn't much to do with the same event as it is when it happens" (Kundera, 1993, p.139 [in Shotter, 2000]). However, the institutions of academic writing lay out norms for textual representation of the researched event. In the traditional--modernistic, rational, objective discourse--the researcher was the expert on otherness and the report, which was a reflection of the reality, was handed down to the reader who was a passive recipient of the newly discovered knowledge. Academic norms of acceptable human science scholarship are challenging the canonical norms (Bloom, 1998; Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Gergen, 1997; Richardson, 1997a, 1997b). However, there continues to be a certain prescribed mannerism of reporting which I think is a subliminal expectation

and a vestige of the traditional modernistic discourse of knowledge creation. Or could be viewed as an academic institution's norms that provides a constitutive background for research activities against which 'violations' such as the one I have pursued has significance (Shotter, 2000).

***Quest for Knowing:*** Another aspect of the personal value of inquiry as identified by Reason (1996) who quotes Judi, a research participant, is to legitimize "one's own thirst for knowledge at the edge of one's own world." My thirst to experience a highly subject research --studying oneself in a context--was one of the driving forces. The other was the discourses about representation of one's inquiry. I think the presentation of the research is part of the construction of knowledge. My effort to find unique and traditionally uncommon ways of structuring my knowledge creation is a thirst for the creation of knowledge. I experience myself as being at the edge of the world--expanding the limits of scholastic acceptance of a piece of work that may be categorized as "dissertation."

***Evolving Purpose:*** As my inquiry has progressed a *purpose* has *evolved*. It is my own understanding of the Institute's fluid culture and the Institute's vision as a postmodern training organization. This purpose has become important as I move more definitely into the role of a hired participant within this community. I am positioned to take on a role, identified as the associate director. Such a position has been constructed with the responsibility of coordination of "training" and "counseling center." Thus, the research helps me to reflect on my own experiences and to be in conversational curiosity and creative construction with the learning community members to co-create a context for learning and therapy. The research that started out as an academic requirement has consequently transformed into an action research, though not in its truest form (if there is one such form).

Peters (1997) describes that action research has a number of purposes, one of which is to learn from one's and other's experiences using a "variety of modes of systemic inquiry" (p 64). He further identifies six outcomes of action research: (i) "to improve one's practice or way of doing work"; ii) the practitioner expects "to improve one's own understanding of the practice"; iii) "an improvement in 'the rationality and justice of (the practitioner's) own social or educational practices'"; iv) "further theory development"; v) furthers "personal and professional development for the researcher"; and vi) a possible change in the system that is the context for the research (p. 65).

When viewed as an action research I find my inquiry meets five of Peters'

outcomes. First, as I pursued my inquiry I am in the position of improving my practice as the Institute's community member and I continue to position myself in an inquiring position to understand my own practice in the context of the community's practice intentions. Second, the inquiry has furthered my own personal/professional development as it furthers my understanding of learning contexts and myself. The inquiry has enhanced the reflective practitioner in me. I find myself re-storing my internship experiences as I make sense of it and become an integral community member. Third, the inquiry process has made me question the notion of narrative and coherence and construct the idea of fragmentation as an effort towards theory development. Fourth, change in a system is inevitable. As a consequence of the inquiry however, I attend to certain details, such as internship training, as influenced by my inquiry which shapes certain systemic changes. Also I have had the opportunity to share my research narratives at a faculty retreat as reflections and as a critical inquiry of the training practices by the HGI community.

***Implicit Purpose:*** An implicit purpose of this inquiry has been a performance as a writer. I have been living the narrative of "I'm not a writer." I am not sure how I came to create this narrative about myself. But I think the narrative is related to coming to America and developing a view that I [lacked](#) critical writing skills, though I used to write essays in India. Since in India I did not take classes identified as "Writing" or "Critical Thought" I came to believe that there was a right way and my writing was not as good as that of my American colleagues. Thus, the current inquiry served an implicit purpose in nurturing and creating (at times torturing) myself as a writer. The process has been arduous. The process was not just writing but coming into the being of a writer; that is performing writing, playing the writer's role. How do I write, where do I write, when do I write, what do I write? All of the above questions were part of an internal dialogue. Thus, the dissertation process is a performance journey of becoming a writer .



I conclude with my **research questions** as contextualized by the purpose of research:

1. **How to locate the local experience of an intern in a postmodern community?**
2. **How to co-construct alternative styles of inquiry?**
3. **What is the researcher's experience of a highly subjective inquiry?**

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Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern  
Community



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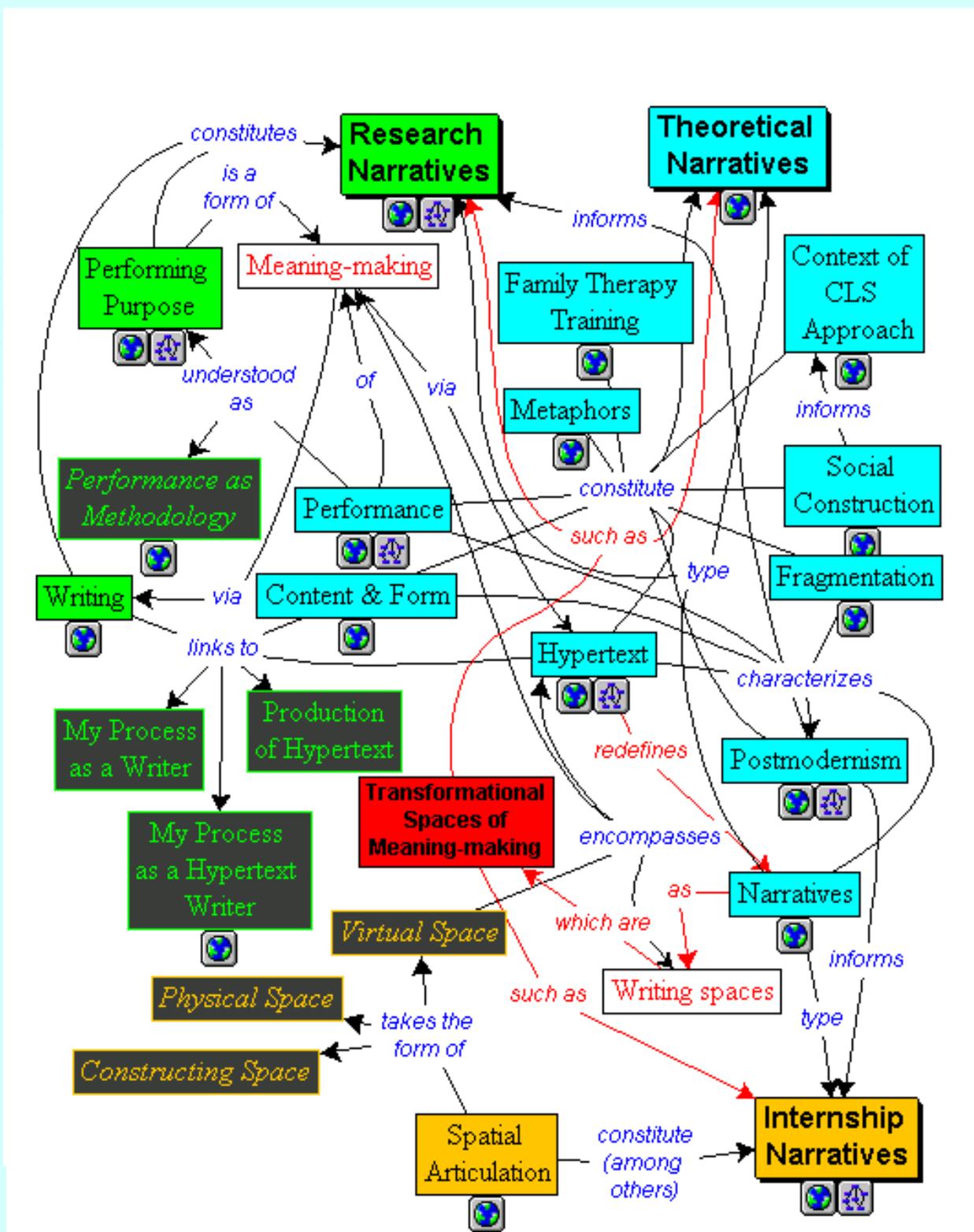
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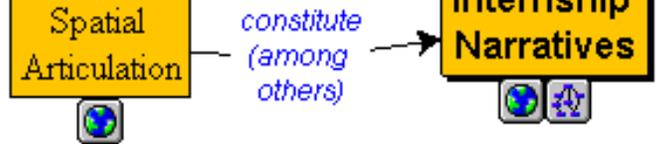


The dissertation web, a hypertext located within multiple discourses, is an intertextual script, a rendition, of my internship (1998-1999) and research experiences (1998-2001).

- Abstract
- Theoretical Narratives
- Research Narratives
- Internship Narratives

# NARRATIVES





### Map: Graphic Location of *Narratives* within the Dissertation Web



The employment of the narrative metaphor to illuminate human action is consistent with the reconfiguration of social sciences. Geertz (1980) has identified a movement in recent times in which students of human conduct are retreating from their reliance on energy, spatial, and mechanical metaphors and embracing metaphors drawn from humanities: drama, game playing, ritual, rhetoric, and text.

Sarbin, 1986, p.12

Kenneth Gergen (1999) asks the question, "what does telling a proper story mean by Western standards?" (p. 68). He identifies the following features to respond to the question 'What *are* the norms and conventions for constructing an intelligible narrative?' First, *a valued endpoint*, an intelligible story must have an intended goal. Second, *events relevant to the endpoint* must figure in the story. Thus, if there are elements that occur during the narrative but appear to be irrelevant to the endpoint then the story is not vivid or accessible. Third, *ordering of the events* requires that a certain ordered arrangement be utilized for the events. The most common ordering convention being in terms of linear time. Lastly, *causal linkages* necessitate the presence of a sense of explanation. Thus, subsequent events are causally related to the former to provide the story with a sense of reason. However, he asserts that a narrative may be intelligible without meeting the above criteria, but the story will be considered more "true to life" if these criteria are met (p.69).

Jerome Bruner (1990), adopting a constructivist position, views narrative as a form of discourse for organizing experiences. Sarbin (1986), similarly, views narrative as a root metaphor reified as an organizing principle for human experiences. Narratives are inherent with sequentiality, "real" or "imaginary", and possess the feature to link the exceptional ("fantastic creations") with the mundane (Bruner, 1990,

Sarbin, 1986). Thus, narratives are used varyingly, as discourse and/or metaphor, to structure human experiences.

Bruner (1990) asserts that, "the meaning of what happened is strictly determined by the order and [form](#) of its sequence" (p.90). Such an assertion leaves no room for local expressions such as Donald Andrew Grinde, Jr.'s, "I cannot order my early memories in any particular sequence-rather they swirl around me in an experiential place where time and space, as well as collective and individual perceptions blur into an impressionistic totality" (1996, p. 63). Bruner's usage of the term "strictly" disqualifies other accounts of narrative structuring that may fit for people like Grinde and me. On the other hand Gergen legitimizes that narratives may be intelligible without meeting the features he enumerates. Thus, the question then arises as to what other forms of narrative structuring may one encounter?

There is a distinct body of writing that reveals that other forms of narrative structuring do exist. According to Beth Brant, "memories are stories-pictures of the mind, gathered up and words put to them, making them live and breathe" (1996, p. 199). Brant obviously draws on language as mirroring memories rather than as constituting memories. Feminist researcher and educationalist Leslie Bloom (1998) draws on Teresa de Lauretis, Sidonie Smith and Rachel DuPlessis to define feminist narratology as the, "rewriting of the master script." Master script means the patriarchal models and norms of narrative form. Such rewriting assumes, "the authority of 'writing beyond the ending,' of telling personal stories that no longer misrepresent and limit women's experiences and identities, and of writing for the female gaze" (Bloom, 1998, p. 70). However, such feminist narratology assumes a unitary position of "representation." Writing for the female gaze assumes commonness among females. However, Bloom emphasizes on nonunitary subjectivity to address the "complexities of human identity" (1998, p. 6).

Could Bruner and Gergen's narratology be described as patriarchal? The answer could be yes, not because they are male theorists but because both emphasize the element of coherence and sequentiality. An approach of feminist narratives embraces "fragmentation, conflict, ambiguity, messiness, mobility, border-crossing" (Bloom, 1998, p. 6). Thus, from a

feminist perspective one could assume that Bruner and Gergen are privileging coherence and sequentiality as elements of narrative form, thus perpetuating a master script.

A normative assumption of narrative is that of causality. Causality links events to form meaning (Bruner, 1990; Gergen, 1999; Polkinghorn, 1988; Richardson, 1997). Causality as used in narrative is different from the logico-scientific utilization. While in the former mode causality is contextually embedded, in the logico-scientific mode it is "abstracted from spatial and temporal contexts" (Richardson, 1997, p. 28). However, irrespective of mode, explanation or reasoning along with sequentiality is privileged. This is primarily a gift of the western tradition of narrativity. According to postcolonist Minh-ha Trinh (1989), the western tradition of narratology privileges a beginning, a series of events, a twist and a closing. Thus, nonwestern narratives which have no plot development, "no climax that forms the story's point, or no end that leaves the mind at rest" would be framed as "bad stories" (Trinh, 1989, p.142).

As I progressed with my dissertation, I have been asked a number of times what's the point you are trying to make? My internal response has been "I don't know." But I knew. I would say "I want to tell a number of stories and leave it to the reader to take what they want." However, I would feel that the response was inadequate. My internal response stemmed from the western assumption that there had to be a focal point of my dissertation. Since, dissertation, located within multiple discourses, was also located within the western tradition of narratology, thus, the need for a focal point. Instead, when the focal point was multiple fragmented stories, I continued within the western tradition and combined it with the eastern tradition.

As I understand and reflect on the various forms of narratology, I adopt the position of self-reflexivity in my story telling. By self-reflexivity, I mean questioning my own position, taking multiple perspectives, (Gergen 1999) and recognizing various categories-patriarchal/feminist, western/eastern- as constructed frames and my chosen framing as transitory. Thus, as I critically question the normative ideas and frames of narrative, I use some constructs in the creation of my narration and narrative performance. In the subsequent section I enunciate some of these constructs.



## **Evolving Narrative Notions**

*Swirling-Fragmented Narratives:* I combine the notion of fragmentation with narratives to introduce the notion of *fragmented narratives*. Each story is part of the whole-the dissertation web of my experience. At the time that each part is detached and incomplete, simultaneously, it is also a whole-a story in itself. However, depending on the context of meaning construction, the reader may experience the text as fragmented or a whole; a structured metaphor of my experience or a structuring of my experience. My intention is an invitation to the reader to jointly construct the context with me in virtual space and time and thus together we will perform each "reading"-fragmented or de-fragmented.

*Experience Is Not The Event:* the writing/narrating the event is part of an experience of an action. Since the process of narrating the story is the process of meaning making thus the meaning persists in the way that action (narration) does not (Geertz, 1983). The process of writing is another action that does not persist, rather the communally generated meaning does persist. The act that is written about is the meaning and not the act. Each description of the act is a new act and the act of description is the interpretation of the act rather than the act itself. Thus, all we have to talk about is the meaning of the written act or narration that becomes the action and not the act as it had occurred. Thus, "its (act's) meaning can persist in a way that its actuality cannot" (Geertz, 1983, p. 31).

*Constructing Links:* The message is very simple: there is a story in each piece. And to force a link is to force a dominant narrative about narratives and that was my struggle. Forcing a link was a struggle I experienced when I assumed the position of establishing narrative causality since I was experiencing a "swirling of narratives" or textual fragmentation. However, to embrace textual fragmentation is to experience an aspect of my internship experience. And each time I attempted to make links, new meanings emerged of my internship experience very much interdependent on the current context of the meaning making. Thus, I hope that you will experience the multiplicity of my ephemeral experience in the fragmentation of the texts as you

bring your own contexts to impinge on the texts. The construction of the web is a metaphor of my experience and I hope the navigation of the web would be similar. Thus, one of the narratives of my experience lies in the contextual navigation of the web.

*Stories are Interpretations:*

The narrative structures we construct are not secondary narratives about data but primary narratives that establish what is to count as data. New narratives yield new vocabulary, syntax, and meaning in our ethnographic accounts; they define what constitute the data of those accounts.

E. Bruner, 1986, p143

Life experience is richer than discourse. Narrative structures organize and give meaning to experience, but there are always feelings and lived experience not fully encompassed by the dominant story.

E. Bruner, 1986, p143

The stories of my experience are interpretations as my context for meaning making changes. At the time of my internship, I had numerous events happen during the year and not every event made sense to me at that time or a year later. But as the context of social meaning making changes, the experiences took on different senses. The further in time I moved away from my initial sense-making attempts of my internship events, the more I came to believe that "some experiences are inchoate, in that we simply do not understand what we are experiencing, either because the experiences are not storyable, or because we lack the performative and narrative resources, or because vocabulary is lacking" (E. Bruner, 1986, p.6-7). My definition of vocabulary, within this context, is not the linguistic ability but the communal vocabulary of the knowledge group with whom I was associating. Thus, as I reacculturate myself to the chosen knowledge community I construct my experience with the new vocabulary which previously may have been outside my former knowledge communities that I belonged to (Bruffee, 1999). Structuring of human experiences is the process of social meaning-

making. The group we choose to belong to or want to [belong to](#) form and inform our sense-making and stories of our situated practices.

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Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community

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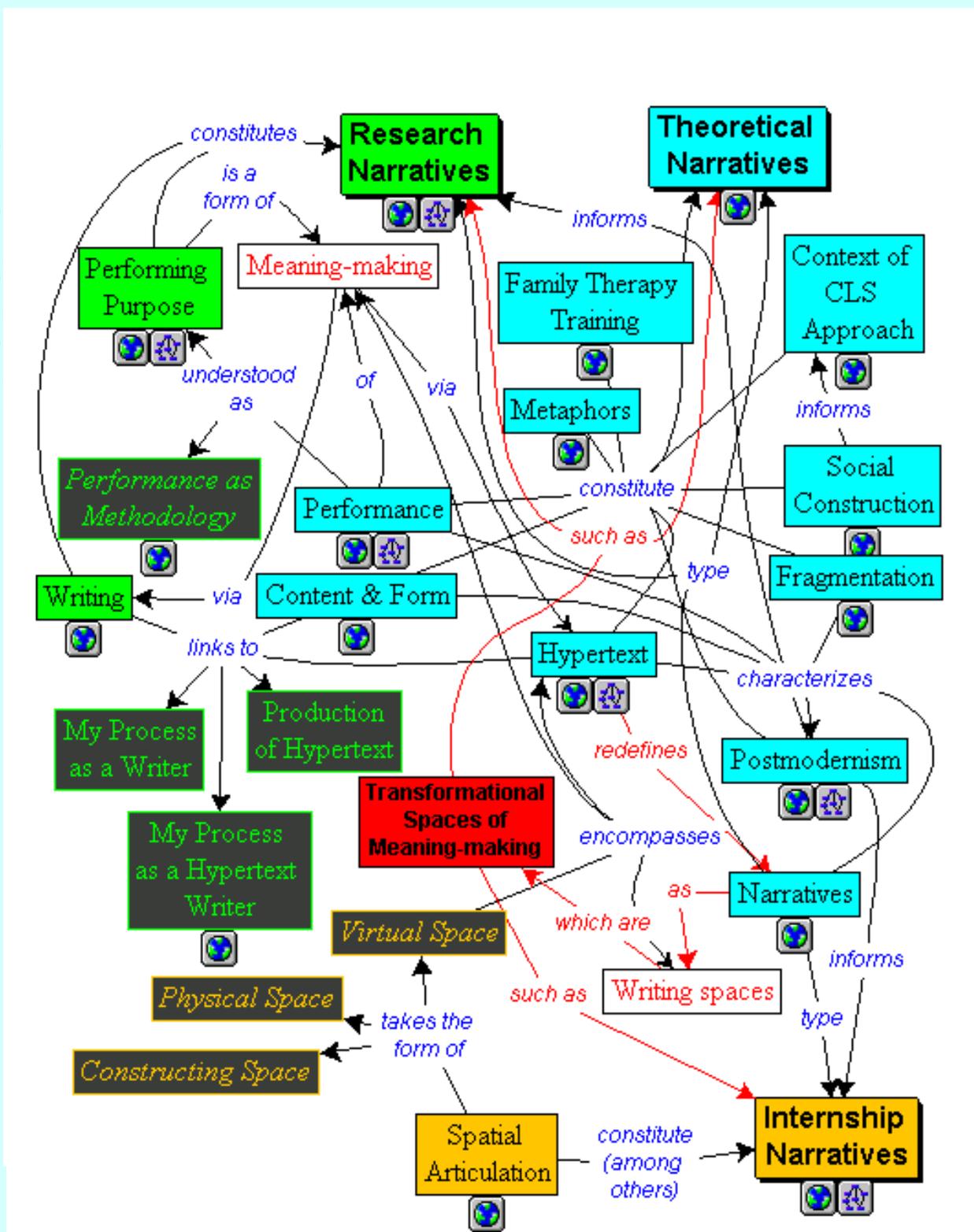
[Email](#)

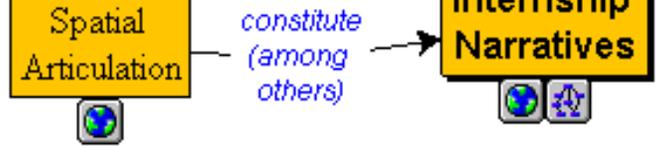


The dissertation web, a hypertext located within multiple discourses, is an intertextual script, a rendition, of my internship (1998-1999) and research experiences (1998-2001).

# METAPHORS

- Abstract
- Theoretical Narratives
- Research Narratives
- Internship Narratives





**Map: Graphic Location of *Metaphors* within the Dissertation Web**



Metaphors provide perspective (Kittay, 1987). Paul Rosenblatt, author of *Metaphors of Family Systems Theory*, defines a good metaphor as "one that recognizes that different metaphors are good for different purposes or in different situations or with people who have had different experiences" (1994, p. 215).

I view metaphors as common words appropriated from familiar contexts and situated in *novel* contexts to perform communal meaning, which are then furthered to become common words "by which we understand our worlds" (Gergen, 1999). Thus depending on the context, words are centralized (literally) or marginalized (metaphorically) to create meaning. This is so because of the myth that words are literal language that is factual or true while metaphors are "literal fluff" (Gergen, 1999, p. 65). The reification of a metaphor from its poetic tentativeness recreates it as literal. Thus, the metaphoric quality of "as if" is submerged in service of its newly formed entity (Sarbin, 1986). And the ongoing subsequent uses constructs the literal out of the fictional and guides our meaning making and action as fixed (commonsensical, taken-for-granted) entities of the everyday language of the knowledge community. And the communal meaning-making becomes the art of stringing the "factual" words (reified and legitimized metaphors) of the knowledge group.

Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species or from species to species or on the grounds of analogy.

Aristotle (n.d.)

Metaphors need not be expressed in words. A word or name could mean a sign or a collection of signs (Turbayne, 1970, as cited by Barker, 1985) such as the DSM labels. Or when a mother states about her child "he is too dependent". The word "dependent" carries a particular meaning or a

collection of signs. It is also very possible to take the word or name literally. We communicate in taken-for granted metaphorical language everyday. According to Rosenbaltt (1994), identifying metaphor takes practice-hearing and seeing them and/or learning to create one's own . Often the utilization of metaphors creates embedded structures and functions that further some notions and obscure others. Thus, in making meaning of our experiences we language our experience in signs which brings forth some notions to light and shadows others. In the learning practices for witchcraft, Starhawk (1989) draws on an exercise used by artists titled "shadow play." The exercise requires the artist to forget about objects, names, and things and observe only the play of light and shadow over various forms. Then on a blank sheet of paper the person has to block in the shadow using broad stokes. The point of the exercise is to experience another way of seeing- learning to "treat the figure and the ground with equal impartiality" (Ehrenzweig, 1967, p. 35). Which is very similar to Taoism wherein Christopher Majka states that according to Lao Tzu (father of Taoism) "to abandon knowledge was to abandon names, distinctions, tastes and desires. Thus spontaneous behavior (wu-wei) resulted."

To "abandon names, distinctions, tastes and desires" is to abandon the distinction between words and metaphors. The implication of not creating distinctions is to treat all language as metaphor. Though a desirous practice, it is easier said than done to avoid distinctions. An aspect of social meaning making is the process of consensual communal categorization based on distinctions. And one of the characteristics of postmodernism is a critique of taken-for-granted categories and distinctions. So as postmodernists though we critique distinctions, we are also seduced by it further and perpetuate other distinctions like modern/postmodern, traditional/non-traditional, linear/nonlinear etc. in the process of meaning-making. Consequently, as a **reflexive captive** user of the distinctions between words and metaphors, I locate some key metaphors in my dissertation web as navigational tools.



## **Locating Metaphors**

*Reflective Practice: The phrases below in italics are aspects of the*

*dissertation web that you will encounter during your web-surfing. I have italicized them to draw your attention to them as metaphors through which you might be able to relate to my experience as an intern and a researcher. The phrases and words in **bold** is a practice of **reflexivity** and **analyses** (Schneider, 1991).*

I view the dissertation web as a metaphorical experience of my internship and research experience. The notions of *blurring of boundary between social science writing and literature, multiple forms of writing and expression, fragmented lexias, interdisciplinary language* etc., are more than [postmodern](#) characterizations; they are metaphorical notions. The *experience of blurring of boundary* between social science writing and literature exemplifies my experience of blurring boundaries during my internship. *Learning to navigate* the dissertation is similar to navigating a new context one enters as an intern. Some *signposts* are clearly demarcated and others are co-created as one weaves back and forth through the **web of contextualized experiences**. The *multiple forms of writing and expression* ([poems](#), [graphic images](#), [collages](#), etc) are metaphors for the **multiple voices** of the **spoken, unspoken** and the **yet to be spoken** which coalesce together over time to make sense of one's experience as an intern and researcher. The experience of *disjointed or fragmented lexias* are textual and spatial metaphors for the parallel process of "senseless" experience which gains meaning **temporally, historically and intertextually** as one steps away from the immediacy of the experiences. The *interdisciplinary language* is illustrative of one's experience of entering a **langaged community** that might initially appear foreign, at times strange, but as one lingers and continues to **immerse oneself within the context**, one progressively becomes part of the langaged community via the social meaning-making process. As with metaphors that tend to clarify certain attributes and obscure others, you might have a similar experience when you immerse yourself within the dissertation web. Please e-mail me about your experience.

"All social science writing exists in the context of metaphors that shape the narrative" (Richardson, 1997, p. 34). Below I identify some key metaphors that contextualize and shape the various texts in my dissertation web. The links will lead you to a cross-selection of lexias that explicitly contextualized the respective metaphors.

**Postmodern**: Postmodern is a value loaded interdisciplinary metaphor that ranges from time period to an array of ideas to a critical position of our **ways of being**. Often defined as undeniable, postmodernism continues to be a fashionable term in academia...

**Performance**: Performance often viewed as theatrical metaphor has multiple notions...

**Hypertext**: Hypertext is gaining popularity as an electronic writing metaphor. The word originated in the 1960s when Theodor H. Nelson coined the term *Hypertext* to mean...

**Narrative**: Drawing on literature, narrative is a popular metaphor in the field of marriage and family therapy today. Narrative metaphors have existed in the academic discipline and especially influenced the academic writing discourse. In my dissertation I **draw** and **withdraw** from the narrative metaphor...

**Space**: Space is a popular interdisciplinary notion that qualifies as a "good metaphor" (Rosenblatt, 1994) as it draws on natural sciences- physics, astronomy- and architecture. And by combining it with literary and philosophical reference frames—*dialogue*, Anderson (1997) maintains the fuzziness that characterizes uncertainty. Dialogical space is virtual space for multiple interpretations depending on the interlocutors' frames of reference, thus, allowing for flexibility and multiple perspectives as the frames of reference shift (Rosenblatt, 1994)...

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## EDUCATION

- Ph.D, Human Development, Specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy, December, 2001  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA
- Post MA Certificate Program in Research Methodology, 1997  
Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, India
- MA, Social Work, May, 1992  
Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, India
- BA (Honors), Psychology, May, 1991  
University of Delhi, New Delhi, India

## CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

- Associate Director, Houston Galveston Institute, Houston, TX, June 2001 - to date  
*Coordinate Counseling Center and Training, Teaching and Supervision, Research, Clinical Work, and Fund Raising*
- Staff, Houston Galveston Institute, Houston, TX, October 2000 - May 2001  
*Coordinate Counseling Center and Training, Teaching and Supervision, Research, and Clinical work*
- Doctoral Fellow, Houston Galveston Institute, Houston, TX, September, 1999 – August, 2000  
*Intensive client contact, supervise beginning level therapist, Coordinate Training, Coordinate Clinical Externship, and develop clinical research.*
- Doctoral Intern, Houston Galveston Institute, Houston, TX, September, 1998 – August, 1999

*Intensive client contact, supervise beginning level therapist, responsible for collaboration with executive director regarding administrative activities of the Institute, Counseling Center Committee member, and develop database.*

- Marriage and Family Therapist, The Family Therapy Center of Virginia Tech. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, December 1995 – May 1998  
*Intensive client contact.*
- Career Information Hotline Counselor, Virginia VIEW. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, July, 1997-May, 1998  
*Phone counseling clients regarding career, occupation, and educational resources in the state of Virginia, poster development, and articles for the VIEW newspaper.*
- Group Facilitator, *Pre-Marital Group*. Center for Family Services, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, October - December, 1996
- Facilitator, *Relationship Building in the US*. Orientation workshop for international students, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, August 21, 1996; August 21, 1997
- Group Facilitator, *Strength-Based Adult Caregivers' Group*. Adult Day Services, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, April - May, 1996; July - August, 1997
- Group Facilitator, *Solution Focused Leadership*. Division of Continuing Education, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, April 10, 1996
- Group Facilitator, *Adult Caregivers' Support Group*. Adult Day Services, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, January, 1996 - May, 1997
- Student Social Worker
  - All India Women's Conference, Bombay, India, Fall, 1991 - Spring, 1992
  - Child Guidance Clinic, J.J. Hospital, Bombay, India, Fall, 1990 - Spring, 1991

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Coordinator, *Clinical Externship*. Houston Galveston Institute, Houston, September 1999 - August 2000; October 2000 - to date
- Instructor, *Practicum: Psychotherapy I*. Our Lady of the Lake University, Weekend Program, Houston, TX, Spring 1999 - Summer 1999; Fall 1999 - Summer 2000; Fall 2000 - Summer 2001; Fall 2001 - to date
- Instructor, *Research Methods and Procedures*. Our Lady of the Lake University, Weekend Program, Houston, TX, Fall 1999
- Teaching Assistant, *Practicum: Psychotherapy III*. Our Lady of the Lake University, Weekend Program, Houston, TX, Fall 1998
- Teaching Assistant, *Pre-practicum*. Our Lady of the Lake University, Weekend Program, Houston, TX, Fall 1998
- Graduate Teaching Assistant, *Gender Roles and Family Relationships*. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, Fall, 1997
- Graduate Teaching Assistant, Course developer and laboratory coordinator of *Adult Day Care, Special Study*, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, Spring, 1997

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- Project Director, *Families Enacting Divorce: Performing Possibilities*. Houston Galveston Institute, Houston, TX, December 2001 - to date
- Researcher, *Creating Learning Communities at Conferences*. Houston Galveston Institute, Houston, TX, Fall 2000
- Research Coordinator, *CPS Service Evaluation*. Houston Galveston Institute, Houston, TX, Fall, 1999
- Dissertation Researcher, *Transforming Performances: An Intern-Researcher's Hypertextual Journey in a Postmodern Community*. Dissertation in partial fulfillment of Ph.D. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, January, 1998 - December, 2001

- Research Assistant, *Building Your Strengths as a Caregiver*. Adult Day Center, VA Hospital, Salem, VA, Summer, 1997
- Research Assistant, *Eating Disorders Hatch Grant*. Center for Family Services, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, Summer, 1997
- Researcher, *Intergenerational Changes in Marital Expectations at the Pre-marital Stage*. Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of Post MA Certificate program. Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, India, October 1997
- Researcher, *A Study of the Effect of Information Patterns and Physical Attractiveness on Causal Attribution and Physical Attraction*. Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of BA (Honors). University of Delhi, Delhi, India, May 1990

## PUBLICATION

- Co-Author, (in press). Conversing and Constructing Spirituality in a Postmodern Training Context. *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, 13, (2 & 3)
- Co-Author, (in press). Communities and Crisis: International Learners and the Experience of One Learning Community. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*.
- Author, (in press). Connective and Generative Moments with Couples. In H. Anderson & D. Gehart (Eds.), *Expanding Conversations: Collaborative Therapy in Practice*.

## GRANT

- Grant Writer & Project Director, *Families Enacting Divorce: Performing Possibilities*. Office of the Attorney General, Texas, \$160,365.00, 2001-2002; \$158,365.00, 2002-2003
- Student Social Work Fund Raiser Committee, *First Annual Student Social Workers Conference at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences*. Foreign Embassy Funding, New Delhi, 1991-1992

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Graduate Assistant, Adult Day Services, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, August, 1995 - May, 1997
- Training Officer, SWISSAID, Bombay, India, May, 1992 - June, 1993
  - Assessed, monitored and followed-up on projects in tribal areas
  - Enabled and developed new women and youth groups
  - Documented articles on training
  - Wrote grant proposals and reports
- Volunteer, Riot Relief Camp, Bombay, India, January - February, 1993
  - Managed women's section of riot relief camp
  - Facilitated in crisis intervention
  - Rehabilitated riot victims
- Intern, Project SMITA, New Delhi, India, April - May, 1992
  - Conducted action research
  - Documented books, articles, and films

## PRESENTATION

- Workshop Co-presenter, *"Supervision": A Collaborative Language Systems Approach*. American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 58<sup>th</sup> annual conference, Denver, CO, November 4, 2000
- Roundtable Presenter, *Autoethnography: Research Tool for Postmodernists*. American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 58<sup>th</sup> annual conference, Denver, CO, November 3, 2000
- Workshop Presenter, *Creating a Learning Community: Social Constructionist Research in Action*. Social Construction and Human Transformation, International Conference, Galveston, TX, September 21-24, 2000
- Consultant, *International Curriculum, Supporting Educational Programs in India*. Houston Community College System and University of Delhi, Houston, TX, June 2000
- Guest Lecturer, *Postmodern Approach to therapy*. Social Work School, University of Houston, Houston, TX, March 2000, April 2001
- Symposium Facilitator, HGI Annual Winter Symposium, Houston, TX, January, 24, 2000

- Poster Presenter, *Managing and Organizing Qualitative Data Using Word 97*. American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 57<sup>th</sup> annual conference, Chicago, IL , October 8, 1999
- Panel Member, *Multi- and Cross-Cultural Therapists' Voices*. Houston Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, monthly program, Houston, TX, June 18, 1999
- Presenter, *Building a Community of New Transcontinental Family Therapist Professionals*. International Family Therapy Association, XI World Congress, Akron, Ohio, April 14-16, 1999
- Panel Member, *Postmodern Supervision*. Texas Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, annual conference, San Antonio, TX, January 29, 1999
- Poster Presenter, *Building Adult Caregiver Strengths: An Ethnographic Study*. American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 56<sup>th</sup> annual conference, Dallas, TX, October 16, 1998
- Coordinator and moderator for a panel discussion on *Research in the Postmodern World: My Experiences*. Quint State Symposium on Child and Family Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, March 15, 1997
- Guest lecture: 'Working with Older Adults' for undergraduate course, , Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, Spring, 1997
- Invited Presenter, *Providing Support and Strength to Caregivers*. Sponsored by Virginia Coalition for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and Virginia Tech Center for Gerontology, Blacksburg, VA, November 6, 1996
- Panel member, *Growing Up as a Woman Around the World*. Sponsored by Women's Center at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, August 15, 1996
- Workshop Presenter, *Strength - Based Adult Caregivers' Group*. Southeastern Symposium on Child and Family Studies, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC, April 18-20, 1996
- Guest lecturer, *Sexuality in India* for undergraduate course, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, Spring, 1996

- Guest lecturer, *Aging in India* for undergraduate course, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, Fall, 1995 and Fall, 1996

## CLINICAL TRAINING

- *Collaborative Family Law Training for Mental Healthcare Professionals* by Chip Rose, J.D. Sponsored by The alliance of Collaborative Family Law Attorneys & The Houston Association of Marriage and Family Therapy, Houston, TX, December 11, 2001
- *Self-Relations Supervision Group*, supervised by Stephen Gilligan, Ph.D. Houston, TX, August 5-8, 1999; Austin, TX, January 20-23, 2000
- *Constructing the Sexual Crucible: Integrating Sexual and Marital Therapy*, presented by David Schnarch, Ph.D. Houston, TX, April 30 & May 1, 1999
- *Adolescents and Violence: Challenges and Strategies*, presented by Kenneth Hardy, Ph.D. and Tracey Laszloffy, Ph.D. Houston, TX, March 12, 1999
- *International Winter Institute. Conversations, Language, & Possibilities: A Postmodern Approach to Therapy*. Houston Galveston Institute, Houston, TX, January 24-26, 1999
- *Postmodern Theory & Practice: Clinical Dialogue*, intensive, weekly clinical team practice. Houston Galveston Institute, Houston, TX, September, 1998 – May 1999; September, 1999 – May 2000
- *Monthly Series. Conversation, Language, and Possibilities: A Postmodern Approach to Therapy*, monthly theory and practice “in action” seminar series. Houston Galveston Institute, Houston, TX, September, 1998 – May 1999
- *Supervision Course. “What Every Good Supervisor Should Know,”* practical, theoretical, and ethical issues of supervision. Houston Galveston Institute, Houston, TX, September, 1998 – to date
- *Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis and Brief Solution-focused Psychotherapy*, 60-hour certification in hypnotherapy. American

Hypnosis Training Academy, Inc., Silver Spring, MD, November 13-16, 1997, December 11-14, 1997, and January 14-17, 1998

- *Frozen in Time: Possibility Therapy with Adult Survivors of Abuse*, presented by Bill O'Hanlon. Sponsored by The Family Services Institute of Roanoke Valley, Roanoke, VA, June 13, 1997
- *Systemic Gestalt Psychotherapy*. Appalachian State University, Boone, NC, May 27-31, 1997
- Certified in *PREPARE/ENRICH Program*. Training workshop for counselors, Washington, DC, May 19, 1997
- *Relationship Enhancement: Brief Couple /Family Therapy*. Workshop organized by National Institute of Relationship Enhancement, Bethesda, MD, October 25-26, 1996
- *Eriksonian Hypnotherapy Seminar* with Howard Protinsky, Ph.D., 10 weeks. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, Summer, 1996
- *Expressive Arts and Play Media in Counseling*. Appalachian State University, Boone, NC, June 14-18, 1996
- *Counseling ADHD Adults: Individual, Marital and Group Therapy*. Division of Continuing Education, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, October, 1995

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- *Performing the World: Communication, Improvisation and Societal Practice*. Sponsored by Performance of a Lifetime and the Taos Institute, Montauk, New York, October 12-14, 2001
- Society for the Study of Symbolic Interactionism Couch-Stone Symposium. St. Petersburg, FL, January 26-30, 2000
- *Family Therapy in the Mainstream*. 57<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Chicago, IL, October 8-10, 1998
- Annual conference of the Texas Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, San Antonio, TX, January 28-30, 1999

- *Preventive Family Therapy*. 56<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Dallas, TX, October 15-18, 1998
- *Creative Horizons in Family Therapy*. 55<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Atlanta, GA, September 19-21, 1997
- *Medical Family Therapy*, independent study. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, Fall, 1997
- *Come Play with Us*. First annual Virginia Association for Play Therapy Conference, Harrisonburg, VA, July 11, 1997
- *Smart Marriages Happy Families*. First national conference of The Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education, Washington, DC, May 15-19, 1997
- *Family Therapy Network Symposium*. Washington, DC, March 20-23, 1997
- *Group Psychotherapy*. Workshop sponsored by College of Human Resources and Education, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, March 10, 1997
- *Competency-Based Therapy*. Workshop sponsored by College of Human Resources and Education, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, February 28, 1997
- *Mind-Body Techniques*. Workshop sponsored by College of Human Resources and Education, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, February 15, 1997
- *The Brief Therapy Conference*. Sponsored by The Milton Erikson Foundation, Inc. San Francisco, CA, December 11-15, 1996
- *Family Mediation*. Chi Sigma Iota Fall 1996 Workshop. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, October 7, 1996
- *Families and Communities Together: A Conference for and about Children and Adults of all Abilities and their Families*. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, August 8-9, 1996

- *Psychotherapy and the Threat of Managed Care: A Caring Approach for the Nineties*. Solution Focused Therapy Workshop. Roanoke, VA, May 10, 1996
- *Connecting Communities: Building on the Promise and Potential*. Seventh National Conference of Generations United, Washington, DC, March 29-31, 1996

## **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP**

- Supervisor-in-training, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 1998 - present
- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapy Associate, Texas, 1998 - present
- Student member, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 1996 - present
- Life member, Indian Association for Family Therapy
- Member, Chi Sigma Iota: Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International, 1996 - 1997

## **HONORS**

- Awarded P.E.O. International Peace Scholarship, August, 1996-July, 1997; August, 1997-July, 1998
- Awarded Gift Scholarship, awarded by the Co-ordination Sub-Committee of the Tata Trusts, 1995
- Awarded J.N. Tata Scholarship, 1995 - 1996
- Awarded Lady Meherbai Scholarship, 1995 - 1996
- Secured second rank in College in Bachelor of Arts (Honors curriculum) in Psychology, 1991
- Secured highest marks in research project in the University of Delhi, South Campus in BA (Honors) Psychology, 1991

## COMPUTER SKILLS

- Web Designing and Consultation
- Software Experience: Adobe Acrobat 5.0, Cmap tools, EndNotes, Macromedia Flash 5.0, Macromedia Dreamweaver 4.0, Macromedia Fireworks 4.0, Microsoft Access, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Power Point, Microsoft Word, Pagemaker, Printshop, Quickbooks, and SPSS

## ACTIVITIES

- Webmaster, [www.houstongalvestoninstitute.org](http://www.houstongalvestoninstitute.org), October 2000 - to date
- Organizing Committee member, *Creating a Learning Community: Social Constructionist Research in Action*. Social Construction and Human Transformation, International Conference, Galveston, TX, September 21-24, 2000
- Committee member, Counseling Center, Houston Galveston Institute, Houston, TX, Fall 1999
- Co-Chair, College of Human Resources and Education Graduate Council, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, 1997 - 1998
- Organizing committee member, Quint State Symposium on Child and Family Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, Summer, 1996 - Spring, 1997
- Organized first Annual Student Social Worker's Seminar, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, India, 1991 - 1992
- Fund raising, Welfare Agencies Fund, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, India, 1991 - 1992
- Founded College Environment Group, New Delhi, India, 1989 - 1990