

*The Song of the Soul: Transforming Disabling Illness Through Art*

by

Zulis Yalte

BScN, University of British Columbia, 1972

A Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF NURSING

In the

School of Nursing  
Department of Human and Social Development

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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**Co-Supervisor**

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Dr. Peter Cole, University of British Columbia, Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy

**Outside Member**

## Abstract

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The focus of this qualitative, arts-based inquiry was to understand how disabling illness might be transformed through art. *A/r/tography* -- art/research/teaching and writing, was the method used to explore and understand the meaning(s) held within the art: *Border Crossings* -- a conceptual, figurative, sculptural installation. The installation embodied the experience of disabling illness, symbolically depicting power relationships, identities, subjectivities and the multi-dimensional nature of being, of one *coming up against* the institution, the illness and the self. Guided by the work of Heidegger (Hermeneutic Circle), Deleuze and Guatarri (Rhizome and The body without Organs) and Foucault (Power Relationships), the A/r/tographer examined the installation through the lens of the poststructural feminist writers Grosz, Davis, Gatens, Weedon, Moss and Dyck with a focus on the *body/subjective* to explore notions central to understanding being in a body. A further analysis through art theorists Eisner, Allen and A/r/tographers Irwin and Springgay's aesthetic perspectives, explicated the nuance of how art transformed the ill researcher and larger community.

The results of the inquiry revealed a multi-dimensional, generative process of opening multiple thresholds of complexity, understanding and transformation of the experience of disabling illness for inquirer, and the art participant/observers/larger community. The research illuminates the value of A/r/tography as a potent means of inquiry into *lived experience* and how art enhances the understandings and possibilities for the transformation of the experience of disabling illness/*lived experience*.

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You all hold me up with your love.

## Dedication

To

Dr. Margaret Rose Francis  
1936 - 1987

Professor of Nursing  
PhD - Human Development and Nursing Education (U of Maryland)

When I first met Margaret Rose (of Kerala, India), she was teaching undergraduates in nursing at the University of British Columbia. I was one of her students during a summer session. She taught the philosophy of nursing through example, acknowledging the spiritual as the essential aspect of being human. During our after patient-care talks, she illustrated her points by reading from Eric Fromm's *The Art of Loving* and quoting from the Bhagavad-Gita or poetry of her homeland, India. I resonated with her. She was a genuine, caring, present and dynamic individual who relentlessly championed the human spirit, treated every person with respect, and worked toward developing nursing curricula that reflected the aesthetic of love and the human spiritual essence.

I was fortunate in time, to count Dr. Francis as a dear friend. Her commitment to her intention of nursing that embraced the whole person - body/mind/spirit, was at the time visionary and met with opposition. In my own way I have carried on with a parallel aesthetic -- that of greeting the soul of each person I meet, within a nursing/healing situation or in any aspect of my life. Maggie-gi as I called her, inspired the whole person aesthetic in me and I continue... my gratefulness to you Margaret Rose for your love of humanity.

Also **Dedicated** to

All of the Aboriginal and Inuit peoples with whom I have lived, worked and played throughout the more than 30 years of my career. Thank you for honouring me with your stories, your beauty, your trust, your kindness and reminding me through your example, that my heart beats in synch with mother earth and the pulse of all life. Our relationship played a large part in inspiring me to understand the illness I experience. May this work benefit your lives and communities and may you receive the support you need to thrive on every level.





**Figure 1 Conceptual, figurative sculptural installation: *Border Crossings***

This journey is about transforming through art. “I am not an artist”, you may say, or “I do not understand or resonate with art”, or “How can illness be researched through art?” Eric Neumann (1959) details how art infuses our being, life and world unconsciously/consciously, individually/collectively and has done so since primordial times. Each individual is *interconnected* consciously/unconsciously to the collective whole through symbol and metaphor, through dreams, ritual and the representations of multiple art forms/expressions. Graeme Sullivan (2010) who has practiced and researched art as inquiry extensively explains: “The meanings that artists make from their imaginative investigations are not only *collected* from their encounters with things around them but they are also *created* in response to their experiences. This is what is unique about the inquiring mind of artists, for they create new understandings from what we don’t know, which profoundly changes what we do know” (p. xii). The post-modern world is seeing the provocation and disruption of the boundaries of *who is an artist* and *what is art*. The development of *process* versus product oriented art; that opens the

depths of the soul through art process, revealing individual/collective meaning, has contributed to the possibilities of art as inquiry. Pat Allen (1995) art therapist, and Michele Cassou (2001) art process practitioner and educator, are two creative women who have pursued their own decades-long process-art practice and research. They share their insights and methods in their books that describe art practice being taken up in multiple forms by non-art experienced people -- dance, music, collage, photography and others. We all have the experience of some aspects of our creative imagery in our dreams and daily imaginings.

On this journey I invite you to suspend expectation of the conventional and allow yourself to listen with your heart as well as your mind, and to allow your being to go where it will go as you read and imagine. The creative in each of us is a magical realm, as Neumann writes: “Artistic creation has magic power; it is experience and perception, insight and differentiation in one” (p.86).

The journey will begin with some personal information that aims to provide an understanding of how I communicate with and experience the world in the way that I do. Some information on the disabling illness and how I am limited is pertinent. A few words about *art as knowing and inquiry* will orient the reader to a context for understanding my transformative healing journey through art (a conceptual, figurative, sculptural installation called *Border Crossings*) that I detail, and the value and importance of art to human experience and knowing. How I came to choose an arts-based research focus will follow along with a discussion of the chosen method - *A/r/tography*. The philosophical influences and theoretical lenses of viewing will be detailed. Consideration of *Border Crossings*, the sculptural installation that is the focus of the art of this inquiry -- its origin/construction, the figures from an overview perspective and then individually will be identified. The relationship of the art/figures (including related notes, images and writing) to the experience of the transformation of disabling illness will be discussed, within an analysis of the installation/figures through a poststructural feminist lens. A chapter will follow with a further analysis from an art aesthetic/a/r/tography perspective to provide a detailed understanding of how art transforms disabling illness. The thesis will conclude with the implications of *a/r/tography* in exploring and transforming disabling illness and for nursing.

To the sounds that emanate from my childhood... the journey begins





As a youngster, I was sensitive to the pain, distress and sadness of others, including plants, birds, animals and other creatures. I tended their wounds, gave them love through my hands and conducted ceremonies for their healing or passage after death.

Simultaneously I funnelled my expression through art- drawing/painting, building structures, singing to myself and in choirs, acting in school plays and physical activity- school/community sports teams, biking, swimming and dancing. Through all of these activities I experienced a transformation of difficult feeling to greater ease. Constructing, different forms of artmaking, ceremony and singing held the most impact.

Since a child, I have had dreams/intuitions of occurrences before they happened or would receive information on an interior level to clarify events as they happened. For example, when I was 12, my best friend had to move away from the town we lived in because her dad died. She promised to write. I wrote and wrote to her with no response. I was anguished by this loss. One day while in the garden and feeling so much grief, a kind, deep, voice spoke inside my head and said: "We are stepping stones for each other - she was for you, you were for her and there will be others who will be your stepping stones and you theirs, all of your life." That was the first time I heard a spiritual presence as a spoken voice, not a singing one. It was only in later years while studying subtle energy theory and practice, I came to understand that I had an innate ability to heal and ease suffering. I learned how my various forms of art activity interfaced with that ability.

So, since earliest memory I have had *sensitivities* of/to the subtle energy aspects of being which I only came to understand as an adult. Through my life these sensitivities and understandings of being a human in the material world have influenced what I have read and studied i.e. as a young pre-pubertal girl, going to the school library before class and after, hungering to read of different religions including Hinduism and Buddhism. At fifteen I studied informally with an older woman, a nurse, who taught me about electromagnetism and herbalism. As a late teen I discovered Carl Jung and the ability to work with my dreams. Discovering Jung, symbolism and his work with dreams assisted me in taking a step back from my life to look at the patterns and metaphors in it/myself.



children's laughter on the beach, where in the ordinary world there was simply forest and low vegetation. I had a spirit guide come to me in meditation and painted his image. As I developed, I discovered that my art expressed my intuitive knowing and would offer a spiritual teaching, introduce me to people before I met them or make some aspect of my life more clear. These experiences both excited and frightened me and prompted a 'push-pull' relationship between my deep self/*non-ordinary world*<sup>2</sup> and the material/*ordinary* reality. Through the *push* I could more easily turn to the 'acceptable' cognitive, psychological perspective and focused my attention to the concrete, material aspects of myself/life. The *pull* caused me to delve further into the study of esoteric knowledge and subtle energy. I had read Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*. My intuitive and self-awareness grew. By the time I was 26 and traveling in Tasmania, I came to understand that when I had a sore throat (which would develop into a cough), it was when I was doing/not doing something that went against my inner knowing. I would develop symptoms, for example: if I did not speak up with the truth of what I wanted or thought in a situation -- I would develop a sore throat. All I had to do was bring the situation to consciousness so that I was in a place of choice and then make a choice and the symptom would disappear. It was then that I began to identify my body as a barometer of the state of my deep self, my spirit.

This revelation called me deeper into the study of different philosophies, religions, healing practices and modalities with a yearning for understanding and meaning. I had discovered the work of the existentialists Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus and Franz Kafka while in undergraduate studies and deepened my interest. I was stimulated by the work of the feminists: Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, Judy Chicago, Starhawk and Susan Brownmiller in the 70's, and became involved in consciousness raising groups and a free women's clinic. All of these writers influenced my direction along with Eastern spiritual teachings and philosophy. I began to read Friedrich Nietzsche, Emanuel Kant, Martin Buber and other philosophers. Jungian psychology led to the study of transpersonal psychology, with an ongoing thread of subtle energy study in its different forms (Bioenergetics, reiki, bio-kinesiology, acupressure/shiatsu, aura and chakra work, color

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<sup>2</sup> The non-ordinary world is similar to the dream world or state, also referred to as the transpersonal by Walsh & Vaughan (1993) and Vaughan (1995). It is entered into from the waking state and is fully engaged in by the enteree.



*The hum is muted*

In 1997 after working with children, youth and families in psychiatry for 10 years, a work that embraced my skills with art, intuition, subtle energy as well as insight - oriented thinking and knowledge/skill in psychotherapy, I received the *call* from my guidance that it was time for me to move to an island property. I recognized the *call* through dreams, journaling, my body knowing and an inaudible voice beckoning me. I was to go there for learning that I could not obtain within the institution. When I arrived on the island, I was told I would learn of the *mystery*. For two years I responded to what was presented to me, delving deep into the spiritual realm through dreams, drum, singing, artmaking, writing, energy healing and my relationship with nature. My art, more deeply intuitive and revealing, brought new information that became interwoven with my healing practice, and introduced me to people I would meet in my new community.

In 1999 when I had been living my life true to my calling as an artist and energy healer/therapist on my home island and a nearby city, I was filled with feelings of love, joy and gratefulness. I consulted with my guidance as to what was next. Within weeks the query resulted in an introduction to what would become possibly, the most profound period of my life.

A job advertisement in the spring of 1999 for a Mould Nurse in an Aboriginal community came into my hands. I laughed and asked my guidance: *Really?* I was puzzled as to what *Mould Nurse* meant but was happy at the prospect of working within an Aboriginal community again. I did not know anything about mould, in time I learned.

I learned the title meant I was to go into the mouldy homes of community members to assess their health, identify health problems and become a liaison between their doctors and them. I was also to assess the amount of mould and health risk and set a process into motion of moving the mould home inhabitants to a healthier indoor air quality rental location. I began to be affected by the mould over the months as I went into community member's homes, until I became so ill that I could no longer work.

I tried to understand what was happening to me from a *spiritual/transpersonal* perspective. I looked at what the metaphors of congested sinus and fatigue/exhaustion might suggest to me of the underlying 'cause' of the problem. Inflamed airways, relentless cough; profound exhaustion, mental cloudiness and feelings that I was dying as my life

energy seemed to be ebbing away, overwhelmed me. The doctors could find nothing wrong. I saw in myself a reflection of the people with their illness, of what I had been immersed in for the 11 months of my work with those falling ill while living in mouldy homes. I had wondered at the meaning for them, why they were so sick when the authorities were saying that only immune compromised people, the aged or very young would be susceptible to illness from mouldy buildings. I quickly saw the authorities were very mistaken. As I grew more ill, I was forced to stop working. I knew intuitively and intellectually that the 'authorities' were wrong. I had been a strong - intellectually agile, physically active- hiking, biking, swimming, dancing and a socially involved person who was passionate about life and my work. My immune system was strong. I fell ill too. Why?

Eventually over the next year with alternative and allopathic treatment I began to feel strengthened, enough to work as a nurse practitioner between December 2000 and November 2002, on two to six week contracts in outpost nursing stations. I did well for the first year and a half, growing stronger with extended periods at home between contracts. Midway through the second year I began to have symptoms again while in a station and residence where I could smell mould. I did not return to work there but went instead to a 3-month contract in another community with a near new station where I thought I would be safe. The first residence I was placed in was old, water stained, with mould in the bathroom and ceilings and was rodent ridden. I refused to remain there. After 4 days, a near new modular residence became my home. I grew ill despite being in a near new residence and nursing station but improved when sent for 48 hours to a hotel in larger town on station business. I came to understand there was no safe place for me in the employer station and residences. There had been a flood the previous spring in the new station and water was swept into the crawl space. It was full of mould and the spore/toxins were circulated through the ventilation/heating system. I discovered the nursing station and residence(s), though near new, were mould-contaminated buildings, verified by a health inspector. Other staff, also ill, did not believe it was due to mould/toxins. For them, their illness was a perpetual 'flu'. By the time I was able to break my contract with the help of the union, I was gravely ill.

Once home, for many weeks I was only able to lie and sleep with short periods of wakefulness. Weakness made it difficult to lift my head from the pillow. My mind was so

cloudy I could remember little, not even family members names and had no capacity to use my mind to visualize or meditate. I surrendered to this state and gave thanks moment by moment for: “Showing me the way” and “Making me a channel of your Love”.<sup>4</sup> This prayer, along with a request for practitioners who could help me, synchronistically produced others with a similar illness, naturopaths, physicians/specialists, and forms of assessment and treatment in Ottawa and the US. In my own community/province this illness was contested and denied through the various levels of multiple institutions.

This is the illness that followed me into graduate school and fuelled the drive to engage with my art/self and the academy in pursuit of the unknown.

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<sup>4</sup> This prayer is derived from St. Francis of Assisi and I have consciously prayed my version for more than 25 years.

I did not understand at that point what or why this was happening. I was insistent that my doctor order fungal cultures and do immune studies and requested referrals to various specialists. The fungal reports came back showing *Aspergillus niger*, *Aspergillus fumigatus* and *Penicillium* in my sputum and sinuses. Other fragments of unidentified fungi, various non-*Candida* yeast and bacteria showed up as well. These results were repeated over a year through 8 cultures. All were consistent with the fungal air quality reports from the nursing station and residences in 2 communities where I had worked. From the research I had done while working with people in mouldy homes and subsequent to that, I understood a big part of the problem was the toxins. I worked with natural medicine physicians, juice fasting and using various natural remedies to try to detoxify my body. Eventually I had to travel to a doctor in Ottawa for acknowledgement of mould inhalation illness and treatment and then to two doctors in the US. One a chemical brain injury specialist who had worked with chemically injured people for 40 years, (mould toxin injured for 10), helped me to understand the profound cognitive difficulty I was having.

## Chapter 2

### Finding the harmonious key: the methodology

“ ... *in your dark night of sickness you have to find ways to go deep.*”  
 Thomas Moore (2004, p.280)

*A sound emerges, art the theme*

As I engaged in academic studies the way that my body/mind was changed by illness, also changed the way that I learned and engaged with academic work. I did not understand this at the outset and only came to understand as I met difficulty and found ways through, as I progressed with studies. Previous to the toxic injury I had enjoyed the ability to multi-task; to abstract, think/understand deeply and discuss complex ideas; to remember acutely/vividly passages from specific books or papers – often seeing them with my minds eye on the page with the page number; to sustain prolonged engagement in reading, writing and physical activity with an ensuing sense of energy and excitement and much more. Post injury I had difficulty grasping ideas from reading or hearing discussions. My attention span was/is short and I could/can only focus on one idea or activity at one time. I was then and am now, easily exhausted by the act of concentrating/thinking/writing for 45 minutes and had to lie down frequently to rest/sleep for long periods (2-3 hours). My thought processes were/are drastically slowed making progress with reading and writing slow. My memory and word finding was/is significantly impaired making communication cumbersome and humiliating. Essentially my brain/functioning had been assaulted by the toxins and my being sought/seeks a way to express that circumvented the toxic injuries. My intuitive processes however were/are intact and became/are predominant as I grapple/d with finding a way to engage with my academic studies. It was while taking a class in *Community, Politics and Social Change*; when asked to do a mapping of what community meant to me, that I drew an actual map (approximately 30” by 96”) with drawings and writings (including images, poems, personal writings of thoughts about influences to identity, power relationships, all nature of relationships that made up community; social theory, aboriginal theorists and elder wisdom, biomedical/allopathic and alternative holistic writings) and the constellated group connections that comprised my

community. During this project I was struck by the fact that the various organizations that formed 'the institution' (the medical community, the employer, the employer insurance company, the governmental ministries) that I was forced to interact with, had in fact become part of my community. During this mapping process I experienced the internal image of a three dimensional shamanic body/figure with openings into/out-of the body and with writings all over the body. I felt myself come alive, *transform*, as I worked bringing my whole self to the work of forming the map. I felt the creative energies working through/with me. Out of this experience and the generous latitude of my professors Drs. Pamela Moss and Michael Prince, I was able to proceed with constructing the sculpture of the shaman that I had envisioned as part of my engagement with the course work. During the construction of the shamanic sculpture, the spontaneous evolution and conception of a community of figures emerged as the conceptual, figurative installation, *Border Crossings*. Still, my bodily complexities required long extended rest periods making the progress in creating the assemblage slow. My professor further accommodated this by requiring a maquette (a miniature 2' x 2' model of the figures/community) of the full installation, the Shamanic figure to as far as I had constructed it, and a paper on power relationships to fulfill the final course requirement. Compelled to keep working, the installation was completed 7 weeks after the course and term ended, outside of any course engagement or requirement.

During the art-making process of constructing the installation, I recognized that this installation exploring disabling illness, and my felt sense of transforming through insights and bodily changes as I worked, was in essence, a form of research. I realized it could not only inform my academic work but might also be at the core. My task was to explore this art process as a method of inquiry that would afford me the openness to work with the art and the information imbedded within it. The method required openness because the installation was complex and multi-dimensional, in many ways synonymous with Talbot's (1992) holographic notion of life/the universe and the way I experience life. The process of constructing the installation, working with it in different ways and coming to how I wanted to focus my attention, was one of an undulating seven years. The undulations encompassed my bodily demands for rest and treatment, medical leaves and the multiple avenues of theory and inquiry possibilities that I explored.

*Art in Nursing*

I have practiced in the discipline of Nursing (39 years), and in graduate school have explored my experience of disabling illness in a creative expressive form. Historically, creative expressive/art inquiry in nursing is uncommon. In 2004 there was no one at the University of Victoria School of Nursing who could advise me on arts-based research. Unable to find direction within nursing, I turned to other disciplines and found resonance with my own work, in the work of Dr. Rita Irwin and the A/r/tographers. I made data based searches and found that most of the arts-based research came out of Britain where it had begun in the late 70's, and the eastern US in the Education and Human Services fields. In Australia and Canada this was a new form of methodology, primarily in Education that emerged in the late 90's. In Toronto an Arts-Informed inquiry group had formed. As I write this thesis, in nursing in Canada I am aware of two nurse researchers who are involved in arts-informed research, one is: Dr. Kimberly Fraser at the University of Alberta, who uses arts approaches to disseminate knowledge about home care and the other: Dr. Gail Mitchell, a Human Becoming theory proponent at York University School of Nursing, has a focus on integrating the arts in research dissemination.<sup>5</sup> At a multi-disciplinary *Arts-Based Methods in Health Research*<sup>6</sup> workshop at the University of British Columbia in 2009, exploring the uniqueness, legitimacy, efficacy, artist competencies and the priorities for research using arts-based methods, the Executive Summary author notes: "Health researchers have adapted arts-based approaches (such as drama, poetry, visual arts, dance and song) to knowledge translation." There is growing interest and use of arts-based approaches in the health sciences including medicine. From the Dublin City University School of Nursing, Dr. Briege Casey (2009) uses arts-based inquiry in undergraduate nursing student education in Mental Health. *A Canadian Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research* (2008) carries a nursing research chapter

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<sup>5</sup> Kontos, P., **Mitchell, G**, Mitry, B., Ballon, B., Using drama to improve person-centred dementia in care, *International Journal of Older People Nursing*, Vol.5, Issue 2, pp. 159-168, June 2010 Nurse researcher bolded. A creative presentation of findings of four research studies on dementia.

<sup>6</sup> Art-Based Methods in Health Research, November 20-22, 2009, Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies, University of British Columbia, Schedule and Executive Summary. February 20, 2011, Retrieved from: <http://www.arts-basedmethods.pwlas.ubc.ca/report.php>

entitled: Nursing Research and the Transformative Value of Art. The nurse-authors review the role of art in research and identify five areas where art is related to nursing research. They are: *art as inspiration* references a nurse who had a profound aesthetic experience while being in the presence of Rodin's sculpture and used her photographs of the art to enter into an exploration of aspects of 'sacrifice', the prominent theme of the sculpture; *art as method* describes studies where nurse researchers have used existing art to evoke a response in the subjects on specific topics related to ethics and then explored these responses; *art as data* offers an account of some studies that involved the research participants being asked to create an art image related to their perception or experience and then to explain the meaning of their image; *art as intervention* describes studies in which various art forms- photographs, tai-chi, theatre are employed to engage participants in relation to specific issues such as grief, educational/awareness needs and lowering stress; and *art as dissemination tool* lists numerous ways that art is employed by nurses to disseminate research findings – they are personal stories (narrative poetry), images (photographs, art), and drama (pp. 604-610).

Education faculties throughout North America (University of BC, University of Toronto, Yale University, Columbia University) have become the way show-ers in utilizing arts-based/informed approaches to inquiry. Cross-disciplinary interest and collaboration in employing arts-based methods is growing as evidenced by the number of qualitative research conferences that include arts-based/informed methods and studies. In nursing, arts-based/informed inquiry is still in its infancy being utilized primarily to disseminate knowledge and research findings. My approach of employing my practice of artmaking to create the sculptural installation -- Border Crossings as a means of exploring/understanding illness, disability and transformation, or as a form of arts-based inquiry into a *lived experience* through my artmaking practice, is it seems, unique to qualitative methods in nursing research. To provide a context for understanding this mode of inquiry I will provide a brief overview of what knowledge-forms *art as knowing* and *art as inquiry* offer humanity and academic inquiry.

*Art as a way of knowing, the essence of my song*

Art as knowing is a way to know the deep multi-levelled/conscious/unconscious self. In reading the arts-based inquiry literature, many referenced Elliot Eisner, a scholar in Art and Education at Stanford University. I turned directly to his work to inform me. Elliot Eisner (2002) contributed to my understanding of art as knowing that I experienced/lived, but had not articulated. He describes artistic form as being congruent with our sensuous, mental and emotional life, as projections of those aspects of self. That form may take the shape of a poem, play, dance, film, painting, sculpture or an interweaving/interplay of several creative mediums. Emotion is a catalyst for the emergence of the form and the image/poem/music/dance, the form, will evoke a feeling response in the viewer/witness. He writes that: “Through the arts we learn to see what we had not noticed, to feel what we had not felt, and to employ forms of thinking that are indigenous to the arts.” (p. 12). *Art as knowing*, is *knowing* through our body, through our emotions, through a felt sense of what is beyond articulating, that can only be expressed in form. The deepest voice of our soul says Pat Allen (1995), is our imagination (p.3). Through imagination and some technical skill with a material, an internal experience is translated into form. Eisner explains: “Representation stabilizes the idea or image in a material and makes it possible to dialogue with it”. The form created is inscribed and edited so that the representation carries the quality/value/potency the artist intends and then communicates something to the viewer/listener, whether artist or not. This communication, a “transformation of consciousness into a public form” is a communication with the larger community and Eisner says, “a contribution to the development and growth of culture” (p.6). He further explains that the process of representation is not linear, but is “more a conversation” with the ideas and images that serve as embarkation points versus blueprints. The process is intuitive, “the maker is guided and ... surrenders to the demands of the emerging forms” and the process “generates surprise” (p.7).

This offers a small window into some of the thought and literature on art as knowing and serves to introduce art as inquiry.

*Art as inquiry, a sound unknown*

Before considering the modern literature and concepts that offer validity to art as inquiry as a qualitative research method, I would like to acknowledge Indigenous /Aboriginal ways of knowing as providing some of the foundational roots to art as knowing and inquiry. I have not read in any of the arts-based, arts-informed literature, of the historical *art as inquiry* practices that originate with indigenous peoples throughout the world but trans-discipline literature such as Eric Neumann (1959, 1991), Joseph Campbell (1974), Richard Atleo (2004), John Neihardt (1959), Peter Cole (2006) and other aboriginal, anthropological and art historical literature, provide details of such roots. Indigenous/Aboriginal knowledge since pre-history, though not named *art as inquiry*, have been and continue to be, practices interwoven with the arts: sound/music, movement/dance, ceremony, symbolic painting, carving, clothing design and implements of living. These indigenous knowledge, arts-based practices served many purposes: to communicate on multiple levels (including with the invisible world), share information, heal illness, seek knowledge, educate and live in the world in a harmonious way with all species. It seems the post-modern era is re-awakening to and embracing forms of knowledge and practices that encompass the body/subjective/aesthetic as critical to understanding human experience.

Eisner (2008 in Knowles) again contributes to my understanding of art as inquiry. He writes: “Art is present in research when its presence enables one to participate vicariously in a situation... the arts in research promote a form of understanding that is derived or evoked through empathic experience”. He further posits that: “the deep strength of using the arts in research may be closer to the act of problematizing traditional conclusions than it is to providing answers in containers that are water tight” (p.7). Whether viewing images, dance, theatre or hearing a story, the viewer/participant has the opportunity to form a feeling response to the art form.

Eisner (2008 in Knowles) identifies four primary contributions of the arts to knowledge and its value in inquiry: “the arts address the qualitative nuances of situations... what is subtle but significant... and may not have been noticed; ... images rendered in artistically expressive form often generate a kind of empathy that makes action possible... and in some ways, is the first avenue to compassion; the arts provide a fresh

perspective so that our old habits of mind do not dominate our reactions with stock responses and the arts tell us something about our own capacity to experience affective responses to life that the arts evokes". He concludes:

If the arts are about anything, then they are about emotion, and emotion has to do with the ways in which we feel. Becoming aware of our capacity to feel is a way of discovering our humanity. Art helps us to connect with personal, subjective emotions and through such process; it enables us to discover our own interior landscape. Not an unimportant achievement. All of the processes that I have described contribute to the enlargement of human understanding (pp. 10-11).

The arts in inquiry then, carries the body with emotion/intuition and subjective experience into the picture of being human, to balance and extend knowing through the objective/rational positivist perspective that has prevailed in academic knowledge forms to date.

There are multiple ways of approaching Art as Inquiry in the health care field. Community participatory theatre based projects are popular to communicate concepts and stories of health/illness experience. Visual images offer opportunities to enter into empathic experience in divergent ways from creating the image, to viewing and responding to an image, or using an image to illustrate a concept or outcome. Another approach to arts inquiry is *to be engaged in the practice of art and make the inquiry through that practice*. This is the approach I engaged in that developed as a natural evolution of how I relate to and function in the world, and is the focus of my work with the sculptural installation.

### *Exploring the tones*

Early in my search for an arts based method of inquiry, I had read of various approaches and came to realize because of an Interpretive Inquiry class, why I had lacked clarity in determining a methodological approach. I *impeded* the openness and unfolding of information the sculpture had to impart by having several defined pre-set goals. Initially I wanted to:

- Delineate the mould and mould toxin toxicity to human beings of any age, in an enclosed space however immune strong or compromised they are.

- Impart that the past history of multilevel abuse such as I experienced, or the indigenous peoples of Canada have experienced, may be a factor in vulnerability to a serious immune compromised condition that results in autoimmune illness.
- Expose the pervasive and embedded racism, misogyny and lateral abuse within the standard, policy setting and practices of the *institution*.
- Illustrate how we are all interconnected and that there is a spiritual purpose to all experience and all relations.

I was trying to determine a question and method through which all of the above might be demonstrated, rather than discovering through research, what new knowledge the installation had to impart. Through the Interpretive Inquiry class and individual study, I came to understand how research needs a framework and how working within and through that framework, new knowledge can be re-generated. In determining the method of inquiry that I have chosen (in fact it chose me), I will provide an overview of some of the major influences that have informed my thought, the question that guides my research (chapter 3) and a description of the chosen form of inquiry, *a/r/tography* (chapter 3).

An important concern for me was how this arts-based work I was engaged in, would interface with nursing theory.

#### *At-tuning to nursing and the Watson Model*

It is through a lens of seeing all beings as a creative, dynamic, inter-relational, interdependent, ever changing mystery, that I approached graduate studies in nursing. In the nursing world, the conceptualization of Jean Watson of human-to-human caring as having the potential of being transpersonal, a relationship that “ moves beyond ego self and radiates to spiritual, even cosmic, concerns and connections that tap into healing possibilities and potentials” (Watson 2001 in Parker, p. 347) is meaningful to me. Her reminder that: “... persons using the theory... allow for existential-phenomenological-spiritual forces in their relationships with clients” (Neil 2001 in Parker, p.356) creates a loose and open structure as a nursing theory within which to explore and research the human condition/experience and the impact of nursing caring relationships.

In the mid 90s while working in Child, Youth and Family Psychiatry, another spiritually oriented nurse and myself worked to have our administration/staff consider and

accept the Watson model as a conceptual model to focus care. I had already received authorization, with the assistance/support of a spiritually sensitive psychiatrist, and was incorporating hands on subtle-energy healing, ritual, ceremony, art therapeutic techniques and visualization in my therapeutic individual work with clients. At the time the Watson Model seemed the perfect ‘marriage’. The institution however was not in favour of implementing this model. I continued my course of practicing my intuitive/body knowing in working with my colleagues to provide therapeutic care for children and families, and as a mentor for junior staff and preceptor for university students. I did not think about the Watson Model again until entering graduate studies.

Having developed a philosophy of life coming out of: early experiences as a spiritual being interconnected with all of life – visible/invisible/heard/unheard and undertaken explorations in history, cultural mythology, philosophy, metaphysics, esoteric-spiritual teachings and practice(s) etc., I am most aligned with Jean Watson’s philosophy. Her emphasis on the nurses development through personal/professional /spiritual growth promoting activities/practices that: “ assist the nurse in entering into this deeper level of professional healing practice, allowing the nurse to awaken to the transpersonal condition of the world and to actualize more fully “ontological competencies” necessary for this level of advanced practice of nursing” (p.348), resonate with the way that I live my life, with my philosophical beliefs and with some of my own imaginings for nurses/nursing (to be discussed during the Implications chapter). There are areas of Watson’s model that need clarification for me. I have some discomfort with Watson’s naming feelings in dualist terms- positive/negative in Caritas #5<sup>7</sup>. I would prefer simply the word *feeling* instead, as any discomfort that arises with feelings whether in feeling love or anger, joy or disgust, the nurse’s role is in being an accepting presence that fosters the flow of feeling... whatever the feeling is. I do not think what I have said is different from Watson’s meaning intention, but I view the use of dualist wording as incongruous with her work. Also, Watson seems directive in terms of how a person/nurse might achieve a state of ‘being present’. I realize that many people want concrete ‘how to-s’ but such direction/example as meditation, could conceivably obstruct a nurse’s growth/development. Rather, my research intent has

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<sup>7</sup> Clinical Caritas Processes # 5: “... being present to, and supportive of, the expression of positive and negative feelings as a connection with deeper spirit of self and the one-being-cared-for” (p.346).

been to foster the individual to follow their own knowing as to what might have provided them with the growth and answers they sought, however difficult a process for that person. It is my view the nursing role is to support the person through their process, through a witnessing and validation of the person's feeling/experience/knowing.

In my renewed interest in Watson's theory development, I note her vision of a "model of caring that includes a call for both art and science: it offers a framework that embraces and intersects with art, science, humanities, spirituality, and new dimensions of mind-body-spirit medicine and nursing evolving openly as central to human phenomena of nursing practice" (p. 349). As this writing is focused on defining a method to research the information imbedded in my art about transforming disabling illness, Watson's broad perspective Caring Theory is not only congruent with my practice and current/ongoing research, but is also a compatible worldview within which to pursue my inquiry.

*The sounds of multiple realms: philosophical Influences*

Although the reading I have pursued in relation to defining the epistemological underpinnings of my research is wide, I have focused on: Michel Foucault with his notions of *Power and Discipline*, Martin Heidegger on the phenomenological aspects of *Being and the Hermeneutic Circle*, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri with their concepts of a *Body without Organs* and the *Rhizome*.

Michel Foucault's (1972, 1995) thought and writing on the nature/aspects of *power* and his notion of *disciplining* within and without the *institution* have informed my work and thinking from the perspective of influences within the bio-medical system, including nursing and the broader governmental/professional institutions that have contested the illness I experience. The art process of creating the installation of inquiring into my experience of chronic and disabling illness, enabled me to explore the multiplicity of power relations (conscious and unconscious) within my body, community, my relationship(s) with the institution(s), and the internalized aspects of the *disciplining* that I have experienced through my life education, and through the *disciplining* effected upon me by the various levels of the institution as I contested the contested illness, or pressured those engaged with my care to look and think further beyond the ways they had been disciplined to behave. Foucault's work on power relations has assisted me in putting into

words my own experience, relationship with and conception of power, and has offered a context through which to identify and understand the power relationships at play in my own situation. Foucault's notions are referenced as I consider the sculptural figures in the description/analysis of the installation that follows.

Martin Heidegger [Caputo (1987), Bullock & Trombley (2000), Macey (2000)] with his notions on Being, that we are in a perpetual state of becoming, and with an emphasis on authenticity, informed my work as I delved through the layers of the sculpture and my own being, un-layering, exposing, discovering new inroads, directions and possibility. The concept of working in a circular way with the detail being important to understanding the whole, and the whole being important to understanding the detail; the Hermeneutic Circle, offers further resonance as I recognize my way of circling, spiraling, working-constructing, uncovering, moving back and forth between the conscious/unconscious, past/present/the space between, constructing/writing, the constructed/unmanifest potential, the detail and the whole to understand the meaning of the sculpture.

Deleuze and Guatarri (1987) and their concept of a *body without organs* captured my attention at about the time I was beginning to construct the shamanic sculpture. As I constructed the figure I was aware of its visceral *presence* despite being without viscera. I extrapolated their thinking to take the body to a *being without body* as I grappled with ideas of conveying the numinous and the sense of energetic presence that a being embodies and that is my experience. Later, through discussion in a research class, the *rhizome* concept came into focus and piqued my interest as I wrote about the sculptural figures and began to make the rhizomatic connections with different aspects of my life/experience/ being, past/present/future and understood what a profound metaphor the rhizome is for being/understanding self/other in the non-linear/logical aspects of being/world.

The feminist post-structural literature of theorists Grosz (1994, 1995), Davis (1995,1997), Gatens (1996), Weedon (1987) and Moss and Dyck (2002) with their perspectives on different aspects of understanding being embodied, helped me to write about and understand the installation, both the individual figures and the whole, and from a viewpoint of varying subjective positions. In the following consideration of

A/r/tography, I will clarify the relationship of the poststructuralist feminist approach to the body, with my chosen method of inquiry. A subsequent description/analysis of the figures and the installation, will detail the ways in which each of these writers assisted me to frame, understand and delve deeper into understanding what I saw/experienced in the installation.

## Chapter 3

**Tuning, on determining a method**

*The waterfall sings, "I find my song, when I find my freedom."*  
 Rabindranath Tagore<sup>8</sup>

*Testing the sounds*

The process of determining a method for working with the installation was circuitous and instructive. Initially I read arts-based researchers work such as that of Prosser (1998) and Pink (2005). Their writing focused on working with visual images from an anthropologic and ethnographic aspect with a narrative potential to take the inquiry to subjective realms. Their focus did not answer my question of how I would work with the complexity of the information that took into account the data related to my multiple roles as creator of the art, of my subject/object positions represented in the sculpture, embedded under/within the surface and my role as an experiencer of the community the sculpture comprised. Similarly other arts based methods, such as those employed by arts-informed researchers that used drama/theatre, writing/poetry to disseminate research information, fell short of the openness and scope I sought to access what lay hidden beneath the surface of the installation and its figures. I struggled with whether the process of creating the installation was my method or my data. I felt confused. It was when I went to speak to Dr. Antoinette Oberg in the University of Victoria's Curriculum Studies that I had a revelation. I had presented my portfolio of *Border Crossings* images and writings to familiarize her with my work and the conundrum of how to work with its complexity. I expressed concern as well about criticisms I had received that my art/work and writing was not scholarly. I was striving to bring the work into an acceptable academic context, yet wanted it to also be accessible to the lay public. She first reflected that my work, writing and language, was scholarly. Dr. Oberg advised that I had my own language and my task was to discover the method that would offer me the context to use my own language to write about the installation. She suggested I seek information

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<sup>8</sup> Tagore, Rabindranath. (2002) *Stray birds*, New Delhi: Rupa Co. [original 1916], p. 9

on arts-based research from the literature of the Vancouver arts-based and Toronto arts-informed researchers. I reviewed that literature and others originating in the US, UK, Australia and other parts of Canada. In 2005 arts based research in the UK was well established but just becoming known in Canada. In the work of the A/r/tographers at the University of British Columbia, whose practices of artmaking, research and teaching interface with each other, I recognized myself. Teaching is contiguous with the other practices of artmaking and writing and integral to a/r/tography. I wondered if a/r/tography really was a ‘fit’, as I did not hold a *formal* teaching position. Although I did not formally teach at a university, teaching had become integral to my life through art/nursing/healing practices both on an individual and group level. Though I can no longer work in my former capacities, I teach often in my contact with people and frequently receive calls or emails asking for consultation.<sup>9</sup> I sensed I had found the method that would offer me access to the information/data I knew lay embedded within the recesses of the sculptural installation.

Aahhh-eehhh-yyyyyyaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhh

Sound voice breath

HHHHHHaaaaaaaa-eeehhhaaaaa.

*Alert to the liminal voices*

The sculpture called to me to listen. I began to hear the inaudible, loud stories the sculptural recesses had to tell. I developed insights and new understandings as I spent time with the installation or in the space of not being with or the space between. I had not intentionally asked the sculpture what it wished to convey, what it had to say and *I determined this was the l-i-m-i-n-a-l space relation that the sculpture and I needed to*

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<sup>9</sup> Throughout my career I had developed curriculum for nurse/staff education, pre/post natal group series, parenting group series, adolescent awareness in school group series, art workshops, dream workshops that employed creative expression to explore the dreams, a modular alcohol and drug educational program geared to adolescents/adults that focused on family and individual patterns of denial and change, and the *In Balance* - Integrative Biofield Therapy (an integrative subtle energy/shamanic/counseling practice healing approach I developed to work with people sustaining all forms of trauma) curriculum and training intensives for a community First Nation crisis counselors (at their request).

*enter into*. Herman (2005) traces the origins of the word Liminal to the Latin ‘limin’ meaning threshold and describes its use by French anthropologist, van Gennep, who divided the transition rites he studied into rituals of: separation (preliminal), margin (liminal) and aggression (post liminal). The liminal middle space came to be adopted to mean a place of “in between the margins” (p. 470). Herman says “We enter liminal space when what we have known is left behind and we do not yet know what lies ahead.” She further cites Turner who “spoke of *liminoid states*, referring to the *inner experience* of the initiate in liminal space”. Herman goes on to explain: “In this interior liminal space, consciousness is altered... we access images that were previously outside our capacities to know them, and we are able to see new patterns in the chaos” (p. 471). Aoki (2003 in Hasebe-Ludt) refers to this *space* and suggests: “... the site between representational and non-representational discourses is the site of living pedagogy” (p. 5). He refers to other names for this space: Third Space, a hybrid space, a site of ambiguity or difficulty/possibility, metonymy or metaphoric writing, and “For Bill Doll, it is a site of chaos in which dwell transformative possibilities” (p. 6).

This liminal space is the space I enter when engaged in artmaking and the practice of healing work for myself or with others. It is the space from which the creation of the sculptural installation emerged. It is this space I prepared to enter with the sculpture, the difficult, ambiguous, liminal space of possibilities and potential transformation.

As I determined that the liminal space of difficulty/possibility was where I needed to enter into with the sculpture, and as I paid attention to the multidimensional/many layered/subtle/gross aspects represented by the sculpture, I initially thought that bricolage<sup>10</sup> as a research method, would offer both the latitude that I needed, and the comfort of a ‘fit’. Within that bricolage, an approach to writing described by Trueit (2002): *écriture feminine* or *poetic narrative*, “not bound by the constraints of literary writing in fact, resists all of the organizing structures of form, ideas and expression

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<sup>10</sup> The bricoleur has been termed a jack-of-all-trades with a diverse theoretical/philosophical background knowledge, skill and experience. Although I am a novice in academic studies of philosophy, theory and research, my preceding informal life education offered strong support to my academic excursions. Kincheloe (2001) sees bricolage as concerned with the dialectal relationship between knowledge and reality (p.682). He develops his conceptualization further in 2005. He emphasizes “...bricoleurs seek multiple perspectives not to provide *truth* about reality but to avoid the monological knowledge that emerges from unquestioned frames of references and the dismissal of the numerous relationships and connections that link various forms of knowledge together” (P.326).

considered necessary for *good* writing” (p. 275) would weave well for my purposes. This approach to writing comes from body knowing, from the intuitive. Trueit says: *écriture feminine* assumes that the writer is always “being born” in the process of writing, which is reminiscent of the hermeneutic circular writing that I was already immersed in. This open style of writing allowed me to express, unhampered by rules of form, and to engage with the recesses of my sculptural work in a flowing way. As well it allowed expression of experience difficult to translate into words. Hawkins (2005) writes: “There is a concept, which I call “epiphanic thinking,” that belongs in the same epistemological category as intuition and tacit knowledge. All three terms refer to a kind of knowing that is not arrived at by analytic reasoning, and that is often difficult to articulate or even understand” (p. 41). Living in the liminal space is living in the space given to epiphanic experience and intuitive knowing. As mentioned, Aoki refers to this liminal space as metonymic, the space for him of metamorphic/metonymic writing. I recognized the metamorphic space of transformation in both my writing and art-making process.

During the course of my studies and writing I became conscious of how circular my approach to anything I undertook, was/is. I found similarity to Oberg’s (2004) “reflective research process”. She explains: “I have come to describe my teaching and the researching of my teaching as a practice of opening, paying attention and not knowing” (p. 241). My process is centering, noticing and following what unfolds. This circular process applies to my writing, art-making and nursing/healing practices. I have described my entering into and practicing of - as a feeling/sense of ‘coming to the altar’, a form of prayer. Different words are used for a similar process that transports the researcher to the liminal space. Being self-reflective, Oberg moves back and forth between her teaching practice and herself. I move between my multi practices - healing/nursing/teaching /artmaking practice/writing and self. I also move easily between the conscious /unconscious and the Shamanic ordinary/non-ordinary worlds. *Reflective writing* became integral to my chosen method of inquiry.

Mason (2002) writes about reflexivity explaining: “Reflexivity ... means thinking critically about what you are doing and why, confronting and challenging your own assumptions and recognizing the extent to which your thoughts, actions and decisions shape how you research and what you see. This of course can be a very difficult process,

not least if it involves recognizing and dealing with elements in your own assumptions which you would rather not face, but is also a highly creative and sometimes exhilarating one” (p. 5). Responding critically to self/experience is one perspective on reflexivity. Another is offered by nursing scholar Gweneth Doane (2003), who describes a possibility for reflexivity as: “one that involves an attentive indwelling, a deep relational presencing through which it is possible to access another mode of consciousness and thus realm of knowledge” (p. 94). She relates knowing that her experience is embodied and explains: “Whether I am consciously remaining open or consciously closing off, I experience the text as *continuing to live in me*, having material effects on my body, on my self, and on my experience” (p. 95). This description of reflexivity as *deep relational presencing* and the *knowing* that *the text* ‘continues to live in me’ resonated deeply. Doane’s writing of her experience and knowing assisted me in recognizing that what I call ‘attending’, a focusing process whereby I draw my attentions and energies into my body, to quiet and be, as my own form of relational presencing. I *attend* as I move into relation with my art/writing/research, my nursing/healing and myself. I understand in her description that through her reflexive process she enters the liminal/borderlands space, as do I through an *attending* process and that in the text she described as *continuing-to-live-in-her*, was in part, the text living in me that appeared in my art, on/in the sculptural bodies/figures. I am guided by Doane’s *complete attention* focus and intent of reflexivity versus interpretation. Reflexivity for me embodies both perspectives of the critical self-dialogue in the cognitive realm and the deep relational presencing that is the liminal realm. Again it seems the circular/spiral process of self/awareness/unawareness moving back, forth, up, down, around and through opens a fluidity of confluences and backeddies of new sounds, hums and notes and new configurations of all of these. Each approach calls forward to consciousness different aspects of self to consider and know.

Mason’s words are reminiscent of A/r/tographer, Rita Irwin’s message to me in a phone conversation in 2007. I had called Professor Irwin to speak with her about a/r/tography and my sense of resonance with it. I recognized in her book *A/r/tography* (Irwin and de Cosson, 2004), that again my circular process was similar in not only writing but also in art making. We spoke of my process with my art and the a/r/tography process, a circular one, being the same. Rita told me I am already practicing a/r/tography. Irwin

(2004 in Irwin and de Cosson) writes: “To live the life of an artist who is a researcher and teacher is to live a life of awareness, a life that permits openness to the complexity around us, a life that intentionally sets out to perceive things differently” (p.33). This spoke to the determination of a method that would facilitate research in the liminal space(s); the space(s) Irwin calls the borderlands. As she explained:

Those living in the borderlands of a/r/t recognize the vitality of living in an in-between space. They recognize that art; research and teaching are not done, but lived. The lived experiences and practices are inherent in the production of works of a/r/t and writing (graphy) made by individuals creating and recreating their lives. Thought and action are inextricably linked, and through a hermeneutic circle of interpretation and understanding, new knowledge affects existing knowledge that in turn affects the freshly conceived existing knowledge (see Grumet and Pinar 1976). In this way, the circle is unbroken: action-reflection-action-reflection and so on (pp. 33-34).

During this conversation I knew I had found my method of inquiry and in fact I realized that the sculpture had come into being through an A/r/tographic process that I already practised. I *lived* my practices – art, healing/nursing, writing, teaching and research. The more I learned about a/r/tography, the more I recognized myself in the: rhizomatic unfolding, hermeneutic circular process, practice focus (for me artmaking/researching/ nursing/healing/teaching), interpretive writing, interest in the body/subjective as site of disruption, and in the community/relationship intention. I recognized that this research methodology would become the *score* for my journey to the sounds of the liminal realm.

*The tone of my natural voice, A/r/tography*

Rita told me (my words), that a/r/tography comes from action research with the self, moving in a spiral way cycling again and again to discern new perspectives, thoughts, insights and knowledge. She cautioned me that the rigor comes from a careful, cognizant attention to what lies under my assumptions that I would rather *not* see. I heeded her caution whole-heartedly. I knew that my reflexive familiarity has its roots in the depth Jungian psychological therapy/work/world view I had lived in the past and continue as a template of my current/ongoing embrace of life. In Irwin’s (2004 in Irwin and de Cosson) writing she quotes Carson and Sumara (1997, xvii-xviii) to further explain that

a/r/tography borrows from action research as being: “deeply hermeneutic and postmodern practices, for not only do they acknowledge the importance of self and collective interpretation, but they deeply understand that these interpretations are always in a state of becoming and can never be fixed into predetermined and static categories”. Irwin goes on to say that: “*Theory as a/r/tography* creates an imaginative turn by theorizing or explaining phenomena through aesthetic experiences that integrate knowing, doing, and making: experiences that value complexity and difference within a third space” (p. 34).

In her book Irwin discusses the dichotomous thinking that separates and the dialectical perspective that “views categories of thought as being in equal relationship with each to one another, thereby allowing the inherent concepts to vibrate constantly with active energy”. She goes on to reason that:

Although a dialectical stance assists many educational endeavours, it still favours two categories, ... theory over practice. If we resist this favouritism and move to embracing *theoria*, *praxis*, and *poesis* or, put another way, research, teaching, and art-making, we are moving to a more complex intertextuality and intratextuality of categories. A dialectical stance no longer works unless we push the very nature of the intention embodied within a dialectical stance to a multilectical view that encourages thirdness, an in-between space that exists between and among categories (p. 28).

This reasoning excited me because this multilectical third space was where I sensed I needed to go, to push the boundaries of what seemed apparent in what laid waiting within my sculptural installation. I wanted to get to the places of nuance within the nuance, the palpable within the impalpable and the silence within the sound/sound within the silence. I wanted to understand the illness I experience beyond the common terms of the health/illness continuum, beyond the spiritual/psychological that I perceive/know and beyond the dichotomy of health/illness. The sculptural installation held untold information recesses for exploration. The beauty of a/r/tography for me was/is, that it embodied the interface of my way of being that is circular and rhizomatic<sup>11</sup>, with the multilectical third or liminal space.

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<sup>11</sup> Rhizomatic – pertaining to the rhizome: "a horizontal underground plant stem bearing both roots and shoots", from: The Oxford English Dictionary (2002, p.716).

*Intermezzo, the rhizome*

In the process of coming into being, the installation took twists and turns, called for spontaneous additions/deletions while I responded to the intuitive call to read this or write that. The development of the concept of and the actual installation construction was, a rhizomatic process, a process I would discover that was an a/r/tographic way of working.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe the rhizome: “The rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers”... and “ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself...” (p.7). I recognized the subterranean rhizome-like connections between/among the figures of the sculptural installation, *Border Crossings*, the connections within the figures connecting connections, connections to community and to multiple aspects of my life/being. Deleuze and Guattari identify six principles of the rhizome: Principles 1 & 2 - *connection and heterogeneity*: “any point of the rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be.” An example of connection is the foregoing *semiotic chains*. Principle 3 – *multiplicity*: “A multiplicity has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing in nature.” They explain: “There are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. There are only lines.” In the rhizome concept a number is no longer a universal concept but becomes a multiplicity and “Multiplicities are defined by the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight or deterritorialization according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities” (pp. 6 -7). Principle 4 - *asignifying rupture*: “A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines... there is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome”... and ... “These lines always tie back to one another”. Deleuze and Guattari go onto to speak of music as a rhizome that sends out ‘lines’ of flight like so many “transforming multiplicities” (p. 9). I recognize similar ‘lines of flight’ in the

artmaking process. Principle 5 & 6 - *cartography and decalcomania*: “a rhizome is not amenable to any structural or generative model” ... but “altogether different, a *map and not a tracing*... a map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification” (p.12)... and a map “has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight.” They explain the rhizome has no beginning or end, but is in the middle, a plateau that is also a multiplicity with dimension(s), a rhizome root assemblage. “A rhizome is made of plateaus... that communicate with one another across microfissures, as in the brain.” The communication plateau to plateau: “can be read anywhere and can be related to any other plateau”, so may not be a linear communication (pp. 21-22). The rhizome Deleuze and Guattari reiterate: “is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*” (p. 25).

The extraordinary experience of rhizomatic connections/*lines* for me was that despite not having read Deleuze and Guattari on the rhizome until at a late stage of the thesis (I had read other authors who wrote about their rhizome theory), so much of my rhizomatic, a/r/tographic process -- from the map beginnings in a graduate class, to understanding the sculptural parts/whole as a map of embodiment and subjectivity, and to the multiplicity and multi-dimensional aspects of the sculpture, was interwoven into my lived experience of creating/being with the art. I understood early in the art process, that the fungus/toxins that had overwhelmed me were rhizomes in their nature<sup>12</sup> -- off-shooting to different aspects of my being on a figurative and metaphoric level. All became part of the a/r/tographic process.

In 2004, while reading O’Riley (2001) and in an Aboriginalizing Research class, I recognized my approach to thinking/being/art-making/researching as rhizomatic. When I read of the progression of thought and development of A/r/tography, that described it as rhizomatic, I felt reaffirmation with the method I had decided upon. Irwin & Springgay (2008 in Springgay, Irwin, Leggo and Gouzouasis) explain the rhizome in relation to A/r/tography:

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<sup>12</sup> Fungus – formed of septate/non-septate hyphae – segmented, joined filamentous chains, that disseminate not only through sporulation from the hyphae bloom, but also can regenerate from a hyphael segment. The hyphael segments as well as spores, are capable of issuing toxic vapours, even microscopic fragments may. In this way -- hyphae, spore dissemination creating new colonies -- might the fungus/mould be thought of as rhizomatic in their activity? June 14, 2007, Retrieved from: <http://www.doctorfungus.org/thefungi/index.php> and <http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/fungi/fungi.html>

A/r/tography is a research methodology that entangles and performs what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) refer to as a rhizome. A rhizome is an assemblage that moves and flows in dynamic momentum. The rhizome operates by variation, perverse mutation, and flows of intensities that penetrate meaning opening it to what Jacques Derrida (1978) calls the “as yet unnamable which begins to proclaim itself” (p.293). It is an interstitial space, open and vulnerable where meanings and understandings are interrogated and ruptured (p. xx).

Riding the rhizome would take me into the folds of the figures, into the *third space* of the bodies and into the subjectivities they represented. Again with the A/r/tographers I found resonance with my direction and perspective. Irwin and Springgay draw upon the feminist body theorist Grosz, whom I had read and embraced in my Policy and Practice Directed Readings class. The work of Grosz and that of other feminist body theorists (to be discussed in the next chapter) have informed my work significantly. Irwin and Springgay (2008 in Springgay et al) consider theories of touch and intercorporeality, that: “...becomes a mode of knowing that through proximity and relationality poses different ways of making sense of the world, challenging the mechanisms of visual perception”. They write:

A/r/tography resides in this intercorporeal space, and attends to the forms and folds of living bodies. It is a thinking that reflects on inter-embodiment, on being(s)-in-relation, and communities in practice. Research becomes a process that is not separated from the body but emerges through an intertwining of mind and body, self and other, and through our interactions with our world (p. xxi-xxii).

Springgay (2004 in Irwin and de Cosson) in her writing on *Body as Fragment* clarifies the relationship of the artist, art and the body. “Artwork itself becomes an artifact, an archive of body memories, a container of processes and actions unfolded in the making of the work. Traces of the artists’ body remain as part of the final product: a residue of bodily knowledge, artistic knowing, and understanding. The artworks exist as souvenirs of knowing and as objects that serve as traces of authentic experiences” (p. 62).

This was my experience as I constructed the figures of the installation - that I was constructing myself in some way. I incorporated images of previous pieces of art and “art-

i-facts” of my earlier life into the figures of the installation. My beingness /life/experience and others were embedded in all of the folds and recesses of the art.

This embodied, subjective nature of what an arts-based form of inquiry brings to knowledge production is poetically described by Neilsen (2004 in Cole): “Our fully – present, sense-making selves embody and in / form the art: we are the poem, the painting...”. She writes that: “The usual split between ontology and epistemology, or between body and mind may not apply” (p.46). This statement helped me to understand why the feminist poststructural theorists I chose to ground the first analysis of the sculptural data through, resonated for me. Because their writing encourages a rupturing of the binary to understand human experience from a body/subjective/emotion position, I could begin to think about/see/hear the installation/embodiment in a new way. I had created the sculpture from my body/emotion/subjective position but trying to understand it intellectually was difficult. I could not ‘see’ it because I was too close to it. The poststructural feminist writings offered an intellectual structure to my viewing /experiencing/understanding.

I knew whatever method I chose, it would be an intricate dance for me because as artist I am placed in not only subject and object positions but also in the imagined subject/object positions as the constructor/experiencer/viewer of the installation. It is through embodiment as Grosz and Springgay state that the lived experience can be known. I understood that through a/r/tography (that amplifies the art subjective voice through an artmaking/writing/research practice), and the access to lived experience inherent in a/r/tography, I could enter into the installation to understand embodiment, illness, subjectivities, transformation, my self and relations to other(s) and more. *A/r/tography* as a method was central to my engagement with the installation, and contemplation of the question that guides this thesis: *How is the experience of disabling illness understood and transformed through art?*

Researching the sculptural installation was a continuation of my process as an artist/nurse/healer (one who is healing)/teacher. A/r/tography provided a practice/body centered framework from which I could call upon my intuitive processes through interpretive writing to make my inquiry, much as I did in creating the figures of the installation when having a variety of materials to choose from, I spontaneously chose from

the liminal space, entering into the unknown. The borderlands space, the liminal, middle space is also a space of shamanic knowing/practice.

The act of artmaking that takes me to the borderland space is a process with parallels to the *shamanic journey*. The shaman journeys from the *ordinary*<sup>13</sup>/material world/time, to the *non-ordinary* world outside of time/no-time, a liminal space, and is changed/transformed in that journey process. The shaman then returns to the outer ordinary world with new knowledge/information to share with the community (Halifax [1982]<sup>14</sup>, Heaven, Ingerman, Tedlock). Whether artist or shaman, the borderlands/liminal space is entered into and information is retrieved and brought to consciousness, to the ordinary, material world reality.

While researching the foregoing methods/techniques of bricolage, interpretive writing and the rhizome, it was clear that each over lap or intertwine with each other in some way. Each method is *open* in itself and each was not only compatible with a/r/tography but wove through and interpenetrated. By that I mean that the method fosters a relationship with the unknown with unexpected outcomes unfolding in the way the outcome or knowledge wants to unfold. I have come to understand how my art and healing/nursing/teaching practice is also research practice, one unfolding through the other as knowledge is generated, reflected upon with new knowledge generating new practice, new reflections, new possibilities and on and on. The a/r/tographic rhizome interpenetrating /unfolding to all aspects and practices of my life continues through the writing process that, rhizome-like is not linear. The writing moves back and forth in terms of time/experience/perception so that writing about creating the sculpture transports me to *being in* the creating. There is no time, but *kairos*<sup>15</sup>, *the space between*. In writing I am in the liminal and there is no time/no space so that in the writing I may move back and forth

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendix C, Glossary of Terms

<sup>14</sup> "The steps of the journey of shamanic initiation seem to have a patterned course. The call to power separates from the mundane world: the neophyte turns away from the secular life, whether voluntarily, ritually, or spontaneously through sickness, and turns inward towards the unknown, the *mysterium*. This change of direction can be accomplished only through what Carl Jung has referred to as 'an obedience to awareness'. Only through the development of discipline will the shaman's habitual ways of seeing and behaving dissolve, and the visionary realms open. Thus, the initial call to power takes the shaman to the realm of chaos, the limen, where power exists in a free and untransformed state" (p. 6).

<sup>15</sup> Kairos (καῖρός) is an ancient Greek word meaning the right or opportune moment (the supreme moment). The ancient Greeks had two words for time, chronos and kairos. While the former refers to chronological or sequential time, the latter signifies a time in between, a moment of indeterminate time in which something special happens. What the special something is depends on who is using the word. While chronos is quantitative, kairos has a qualitative nature. Retrieved: October 12, 2006. <http://www.encyclo.co.uk/define/Kairos>

between past/present/future from one sentence to the next. Although I have edited the writing there are places when the non-rational/non-linear use of time/tense is right for the writing.

A further consideration of a/r/tography as a method of inquiry will provide a context for understanding the discussion analysis in Chapter 4. In a/r/tography the artmaking process, the writing about the process and the art is the evidence, the data. As a novice researcher I felt confused as to what my art -- the sculptural installation was. Was it a framework, was it my method of inquiry or was it the data? In coming to understand a/r/tography, the confusion lifted as I saw that a/r/tography -- the contiguous practices of nurse/healer/artist /researcher /teacher/writer generating the art and the writing, was both method and a framework for inquiry and the data. I also came to understand that a/r/tography is fundamentally different from other research methods and I was trying to understand a/r/tography from my elementary understanding of qualitative research. Springgay (2008 in Springgay et al) explains: "A/r/tography is a mode of thinking about or theorizing multiplicities. It is not about framing rules or understanding principles, but about the possibilities of intertextual relations. Instead of requiring logical certainty and the guarantee of universal validity, a/r/tography is embedded in imagination, experimentation, uniqueness and conjecture. It seeks to provoke, to generate, and to un/do meaning" (p.161). Irwin & Springgay (2008 in Springgay et al) provide a clear description of the nature and rigour of a/r/tography:

A/r/tography is a living practice, a life creating experience examining our personal, political and/or professional lives. It uses a fluid orientation within the contiguous relationships described earlier. Its rigour comes from its continuous reflective and reflexive engagement, analysis and learning. This can include any qualitative form of data collection such as interviews, journal writing, field diaries, artifact collections, and photo documentation, yet it can also include any form of artistic inquiry such as painting, composing music, and writing poetry, and educational inquiry such as student journal writing, teacher diaries, narratives, and parent surveys. The reflexive and reflective stance to analysis will be ongoing and may include aspects from traditional ethnographic forms of inquiry such as constantly comparing themes that emerge from the data. What is important is the attention given to ongoing inquiry through an evolution of research questions and understandings. (p. xxix)

Through a/r/tography I have lived and continue to live through time, a multiple practice process (artmaking/researching/healing/nursing/teaching/writing) that has

engaged my body mind and spirit. In the following chapter, describing and analyzing the sculptural installation (the art), I will reveal how the art -- the artmaking/writing /research process that is a/r/tography, transformed the disabling illness I experience. It is a journey I have undertaken which led me to understand differently, the illness I experience. The inquiry has implications beyond personal meaning; it carries value for nurses experiencing, or caring for those with disabling illness and for others experiencing disabling illness. I conduct the inquiry through what Eisner<sup>16</sup> identifies as a dialogue with the art through interpretive writing. That dialogue served to reveal a plethora of projection (discussed in the Chapter 2) – largely unconscious, in metaphor and symbolism - that I, as artist placed upon, and embedded within, the installation figures. The analysis through the poststructural feminist lens, serves to uncover some of these projections and the meaning within the whole/parts of the installation, in terms of understanding the disabling illness I experience. It is in seeking understanding of the illness through art, that I became conscious of the illness I experience as changing, and being transformed/*trance-formed*<sup>17</sup>. Throughout this analysis /description some of the explicit ways that art transforms/*trance-forms* disabling illness is described. A further analysis in chapter 5 from an art aesthetic perspective, further reveals the transforming effects of art with disabling illness. My first conversation will be with the installation as a whole or from a wider view and then with the individual figures.

Before entering into the interpretive, a/r/tographic writing or data on/of the installation, I locate myself within the tones of the feminist poststructuralist theoretical literature. I ask the reader to suspend any need for logical, sequential order and invite you to step into the rhizomatic undulations that characterize my own and the a/r/tographic process. I further ask the reader to keep in mind that my a/r/tographic process in constructing the sculpture and writing with/about it, spans 7 years from beginning construction until this point in this thesis construction. During these years, a proliferation

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<sup>16</sup> Eisner – see Chapter 2, Art as Knowing, Art as Inquiry.

<sup>17</sup> Trance-formed – living in the liminal/in-between spaces of the artmaker/researcher/healer /nurse/writer I recognized the similarities to the liminal space I go to in shamanic practice, in trance while journeying with my power animal. A shamanic practitioner may make use of the trance inducing implements of sound- drum, rattle, song or movement – trance dance. The trance inducing implements assist the practitioner in entering liminal space – where the shaman engages in activities/quests on an invisible plane to return with new awareness or *trance-formed/transformed* with the new knowledge.

of information emerged from the a/r/tographic process. It took the form of the sculptural installation itself, notes, dreams, shamanic journeys, conversations and sketches from journals, interpretive writing, as well as still images and video. In the following writing on the installation, I draw largely upon my writings from 2007 and on notes from 2004 to present time. The images span several years of documentation. The overarching thesis question of: *How is the experience of disabling illness understood and transformed through art?* is suspended over the work as I write.

For the remainder of this chapter in writing on the theoretical and the description/analysis of the installation, I will indicate the moments and places of *transformation/insight/change* by using *calligraphic font* and the letters (MOT) for the passages that have transformed me/my experience of illness through the practice/process of my art.

*The theoretical chords for understanding the voices of the installation/body*

TA-AT TATTTTTTTTTAT-TAT-TAT TTTAAT

*a rough crack ing machine gunfire*

*of questions*

*Where are the headaches? When do they come on? How long?*

*Ghhhhblhhhhhhha*

*gunmetal cold voice a blur*

*my mind stalled first question*

*my body shocked*

*assaulted*

*no introduction, a gesture- sit there*

*rapid fire questions.*

*You proceed to tell me brain lesions are normal for 50 year olds,  
commonplace.*

*It's the diabetes (I don't have) the high blood pressure (rare and situational) that causes  
the lesions. No toxins do not.*

*I attempt to respond*

*you fire me down with your bullets of dismissal and denigration*

*callous cold crude*

I stand, put on my coat to leave, saying there is no point in continuing then...

*You stand looking aghast? “But we haven’t conducted the interview or examination.”  
Tears punctuate my response: “ For years I have been treated by specialists in this  
dismissive, denigrating way. I will not tolerate more.”*

*You ask me to remain saying I will not be dismissed. I am aware this means money for you  
and the possibility of a complaint. I mention that a neuropsychologist colleague had  
suggested I see you...*

*Chameleon-like you become sweet  
gentle, respectful.*

*I stay.*

A week later I read your report. You refer to what you see as *emotional lability* three times. You are definite the brain lesions are not environmental toxin related. You list complaints that I did not have or mention and exclude the ones I did. You refer to diagnostic maneuver outcomes that were not conducted. You create a fit for your diagnosis. This is not me you describe.

*I am characterized as an emotionally labile menopausal woman seeking compensation.  
Your word is authority.*

This dramatic entry expresses some of the potency of my *lived experience* and introduces this writing grounded in the feminist poststructural literature on the body. It arises out of my ongoing occupational, multi-system *Environmental Illness*, and the resulting relations with the multiple levels of the *institution* explored through the construction and presentation of a figurative sculptural installation called: Border Crossings (Figure 2).

The sculptural installation depicted the relational nature of being/knowing (human to human, human to nature, human to invisible world), and the power relationships experienced in disabling illness. As I constructed the sculptural figures, they very quickly took me into the layers of the illness experience, embedded within the sculptural bodily tissue and the figure’s relational stance. It is the meaning, the knowledge/understanding that the sculptural installation embodies about the body/illness that I explore.

As I approach the writing with a toxic exposure induced brain injury, multi-system complex illness and multiple new starts at writing, the following thoughts have occurred since my first attempt several years earlier: “is this my resistance (psychological)? What am I afraid of in analyzing the sculpture?” Still, I am not certain but trust that these

questions surfaced at the inception of this writing on the installation for a reason. They are questions within the larger question that overarches this thesis: *How is the experience of disabling illness understood and transformed through art?*



**Figure 2** *Border Crossings* Sculptural Installation, Adult Education and Research Conference, University of Victoria, May 2004.

As my comfort lies in working intuitively, I suspend these questions over this writing as a gentle disrupting breeze, to be answered, as they will, as the writing progresses. Now, to the feminist poststructural theory on the body...

*The female voice permeates the body: the feminist poststructural lens*

The Directed Readings class on the body (by telephone conferencing) gave me a view into literature I previously had little awareness of. Over the course of the passing three years as I relearned to read and improve concentration, the *body* literature illustrated

for me how graphically the sculptural installation depicts the body as Moss and Dyck (2002) describes in their conception: “a site of both oppression and resistance *at the same time* “ (p.126). While the sculpture is a site of resistance, a site of contesting illness through the act of creating the sculpture, it is also a site of oppression in that *multiple institutions* contested the disabling illness I experience/d. Contestation is depicted in the sculpture through the writing on the bodies detailing medical and other forms of the *institution* denial of the illness, and (MOT) *my resistance of contesting a contested illness through writings on the body of actions to counter medical and other contestation. The sculpture is a three dimensional story and being so, resistance.* Arthur Frank (1995) explains: “Telling stories is a form of resistance. In the story, the flow of experience is reflected upon and redirected; resistance through the self-story becomes the remaking of the body-self” (p. 170).

Moving with/through my *resistance* with an eye to understanding the (MOT) *sculptural installation/remaking my body-self*, beyond my own intuitive knowing, I have explored some of the poststructuralist feminist literature on the body. The sculptural installation is complex and multileveled with many potential directions to pursue. This coupled with the plethora of literature on the body from diverse disciplines and theoretical perspectives has resulted in (MOT) *considerable discomfort and agonizing* in my attempt to hone my focus of exploration. (MOT) *The discomfort* also rises for me with the social science literature because of the historical privileging of mind over body/intuitive /feeling concerns. In the feminist literature as Grosz (1994) writes: “Feminists... view... the human subject as a being made up of two dichotomously opposed characteristics: mind and body, thought and extension, reason and passion, psychology and biology... Dichotomous thinking necessarily hierarchizes and ranks the two polarized terms so that one becomes the privileged term and the other its suppressed, subordinated, negative counterpart” (P.3).

I prefer to think in terms of *perceiving the binary in a different* way so that the view is not of dichotomy but of (MOT) *an interface or fluid communication of opposites* that embraces the *tension of the opposites*<sup>18</sup>. By this I do not mean a unity but *a flow or communication between the two*. I intend to demonstrate this difference of

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<sup>18</sup> Kathy Davis and Pamela Moss will refer to *the tension of the opposites* further in this writing.

conceptualization throughout this writing. I do not wish to neglect the aspects of being embodied that are central to me, (MOT) *the numinous aspects that interface the material with the ethereal/non-material, which I experience as absent from feminist and other body (non-spiritual) literature I have read.* Although my view of the sculpture is through a poststructural feminist lens, it is important to how I am embodied in the world<sup>19</sup>, to allow my intuitive self to guide the writing and to interject as need be in the analysis. I will make room for this and an interweaving of my body in the moment, as I live in/through the writing process. I propose then a description/analysis of the sculptural installation from a poststructuralist feminist perspective drawing upon the work of Kathy Davis, Elizabeth Grosz, Moira Gatens, Chris Weedon, Pamela Moss and Isabel Dyck. As previously mentioned the philosophical work of Foucault and Deleuze and Guatarri will also contribute to the analyses, along with the hermeneutic approach and influence of Heidegger through the Hermeneutic circle. This will be evident in the circular/spiral process of reflection and reflecting upon the reflections, throughout the inquiry.

My orientation to poststructural feminism is guided by the discussions of Weedon (1987) who says: “for a theoretical perspective to be politically useful to feminists, it should be able to recognize the importance of the *subjective* in constituting the meaning of women’s lived reality” (p.8)... and ... “ a theory is useful if it is able to address the questions of how social power is exercised and how social relations of gender, class and race might be transformed” (p.20). She further describes: “Post structuralism theorizes subjectivity as a site of disunity and conflict, central to the process of political change and to preserving the status quo” (p.21). (MOT) *The destabilizing challenge is as well, the catalyst of transformation that I am mindful of as I proceed.*

To bring this disunity into the read text, the rhizomatic connections, as well as recognizing the representation of disunity in the sculpture, I will indicate the multiple voices in different colours, different fonts (all 12 point but some appear larger or smaller) and with identifying capital letters preceding the voice, indicating which voice is interjecting into the conversation. The *lived body* voice (LBW) as I *write*, will appear in *purple* ink. The *lived body* voice while *constructing* (LBC) the sculpture (taken from

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<sup>19</sup> Feeling, intuitive, introvert based on Character and Temperament Types (Keirsye & Bates, 1984) and as described in Chapter 2

journals written and film shot during the construction process) will appear in orange ink. I consider as well the *voice* of the *participant viewer* (PV) who experienced the sculpture while installed at various academic and public venues as a lived body voice (taken from ledgers participant viewers voluntarily wrote in during the presentations or from emails written to me during/following a presentation) and express that voice in blue. The *voice of the metaphysical other* (MO), that I perceive as denied by post structuralism<sup>20</sup>, will provide an interface/communication to it in this nonbinary-binary and will appear in green ink. The *moments/places of transformation* (MOT) that I experience/d as the artist creator/experiencer/writer throughout the a/r/tographic inquiry will be indicated with the letters (MOT) and in *calligraphic font* to note moments of transformation or *the notes of the song that is revealing itself*. This layering through the writing of script, colour and image will offer the reader a sense of the multi-dimensionality that the sculpture depicts, lived experience it embodies, and a tacit sense of how viewer/participants experienced the installation while walking among the figures. Less tangible experiences/notions such as multi-dimensionality are difficult to describe, so reading the Glossary of Terms (Appendix C) before proceeding will provide the reader with a context and meaning for some of the words/language that I use.

Moss and Dyck (2002) write: "...the body is the 'logical' place to investigate subjectivity and identity for this is the site through which people experience life... body has become the site through which to sort through society" (p.20). Grosz (1994) declares her intention in writing *Volatile Bodies* is: "a refiguring of the body so that it moves from the periphery to the center of analysis, so it can now be understood as the very 'stuff' of subjectivity" (p. ix). Both Moss and Dyck and Grosz echo Davis' (1997, p.4) concern that the subjective experience is the space for feminist inquiry.

The sculpture is as mentioned, multileveled. It is an exploration of notions of identity, community, power relationships, disabling illness and social change as translated through the sculptural body(ies). The sculptural bodies are physically inscribed as well as metaphorically (see Figure 3). Throughout the *body* literature, power

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<sup>20</sup> "Poststructuralist (e.g. it is resolutely anti-metaphysical and anti-humanist..." p.203). Schwandt, T (2001). *Dictionary of qualitative research*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, Ca.

relationships/resistance, inscription, subjectivity and the material/discursive aspects of being a body are taken up as notions central to understanding being a body.

Inherent in my description/analysis of the installation will be considerations of: *power relations* with a focus on *resistance*; *inscription*- surface and internalized; *subjectivity*- as the creator of the sculpture, subject positions and subjective experience; and the *material* (sensuality, biology, psychological processes) and *discursive* (ideas, notions, thoughts, images and texts)<sup>21</sup> aspects of the ill body represented in the sculpture. A further discussion of each of these notions will give the background necessary for understanding my orientation to theory and entering into the sculptural space.

LBW: ... so much swirling, thoughts tangled, muscles paining, feel like I am burning inside, my viscera, tendons... exhausted, have to lay down... feel like I can't do this, write, want to give up... 2 hours later after sleep... I feel excited again about writing....

### *Power Relations*

Liberal and Marxist theories of power conceive of power as something to be possessed as Gatens explains: "... power is held by one group which uses this power in order to dominate and exploit another group which lacks power" (p. 63). Philosopher Michel Foucault influenced a change in the conceptualization of power as Davis (1997) writes: "Emphasis shifted from power as exploitation, coercion or manipulation to the subtle, pervasive and ambiguous processes of discipline and normalization through cultural representations" (p.11). Davis further (p. 3) acknowledges philosopher Michel Foucault as having significant influence of modern day interest in the body and developing a theory of power or force relations that lends itself to the study of sexual difference in particular. Foucault (1972) in his discourse describes power as: "the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere within which they operate and which constitute their own organization" (p.92). He further posits: "where there is resistance there is power" (p.95).

LBW: ... I recognize my resisting/powering in my body responses to writing/thinking...

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<sup>21</sup> Moss (2002), p. 62

*MO: My understanding of his theory is that power is finite, that is, there is a fluctuant undulation of the web of power as the transforming and shifting force relations happen but no 'real' change occurs. This view infers power relations cannot take us anywhere but along the same worn tracks. I feel more optimistic. I think of power relations similarly to Foucault in that there is always the paradox in everything, the power and the resistance. As well I think the interactive, relational aspect is pivotal but for a different reason. More than thirty years in learning of and working with energy modalities, eastern philosophy, western psychology and the insights coming out of quantum physics has brought me to a place of understanding power as being the result of what is generated by the relational interaction rather than the interaction itself. I think it is the tension of the dynamic that is the power/resistance. For example: from an energy perspective in the body, the Ida and Pingala are two channels of subtle Creative Energy running in opposite directions up, down spiraling around the chakras, connected by the third and central Sushumna channel of the spine. The dynamic created by the interacting opposing, spiraling flows, powers the spinning of the Chakras, vortices of energy (Judith, 1988, p. 36 and 118). The more open the flow of Creative Energies through humans, the greater our experience of our state of being power, whether the power of Love, Nature, Beauty, Creativity etc. My concept is not limited but conceives unending possibility of transformation and change in the myriad relations at all dimensions of creation interacting simultaneously, with the sense of power enlivening, throbbing through and cocooning, spiraling without limits. This sense of power in nature we describe as sacred, majestic or awe inspiring. The power is the result of our interaction, our openness to the Creative Energies flowing through and interconnecting all of creation.*

### *Inscription*

Grosz (1995) summarizes the literature:

Two broad kinds of approach to theorizing the body can be discerned in twentieth-century radical thought. One is derived from Nietzsche, Kafka, Foucault and Deleuze, which I will call "inscriptive"; the other is more prevalent in psychology, especially psychoanalysis and phenomenology. I will prefer to refer this second approach as the "lived body". The first conceives the body as a surface on which social law, morality, and values are inscribed; the second refers largely to the lived experience of the body, the body's internal psychic inscription. Where the first

analyzes a social, public body, the second takes the body-schema or imaginary anatomy as its object(s). It is not clear to me that these two approaches are compatible or capable of synthesis. Nevertheless, each may provide some of the theoretical terms necessary to problematize the major binary categories defining the body – inside/outside, subject/object, active/passive, fantasy/reality, and surface/depth (p.33).

One perspective conceives the body as a ‘tabula rasa’, the other as an experiencing being-with an interior. Gatens (1996) argument that: “If we conceive the body to be neutral and passive and consciousness to be socially determined, then we are at least halfway to a behavioural conception of subjectivity”, counters the concept of the body being a passive surface of socio-cultural inscription. She further says: “The stimulus-response model of conditioned behaviour assumes a passive non-signifying subject who can be trained appropriately...” (p.8). Acknowledging this drawback, Foucault’s socio-cultural inscription conception may still be helpful in coming to an understanding of all that is imbued in the sculptural bodies.

Moss and Dyck (2002) refer to the *surface inscriptions* of the chronically ill body that “are linked to shifts in ability and image... augmented by... visible markers of “crippling” illness ... “mark” the body as somewhat deviant, abnormal or disabled...” (p.8). She describes the *internalized inscriptions* as: “...internal mappings of what it is like to be ill” (p.95). Each of these perspectives of conceptualizing inscription will be employed to undertake the excavation of the meaning of the inscriptions on and in the figures in the installation.

### *Subjectivity*

Mansfield (2004) writes: “... for Foucault the subject is the primary workroom of power, making us turn in on ourselves, trapping us in the illusion that we have a fixed and stable selfhood that science can know, institutions can organize and experts can correct” (p.11). Foucault conceives a de-centered subject.

Conversely, my earlier discussion of subjectivity indicates Gatens, Davis, Grosz and Moss calling for the body to take the center in the study of embodiment, through inclusion of the interface of the symbolic/psychic/interior with the material/surface /exterior with a particular interest in the ‘lived’ experience. Grosz (1994) who writes with

the intent of displacing the centrality of the mind says: “If subjectivity is no longer conceived in binarized or dualist terms... then perhaps other ways of understanding corporeality, sexuality and differences between the sexes may be developed... Which enable us to conceive a subjectivity in different terms than those provided by traditional philosophical or feminist understandings” (p. vii).

Weedon (1987) explains that: “The political significance of decentring the subject and abandoning the belief in essential subjectivity is that it opens up subjectivity to change” and that “feminist poststructuralist goes further... to insist that the individual is always the site of conflicting forms of subjectivity” (p.33). Weedon describes subjectivity as: “...the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world” (p.32).

Gatens posits an ‘imaginary body(ies)’ concept based on Deleuze/Spinoza’s work, that brings an intersection of interiority/exteriority to forms of subjectivity through analyzing the symbolic images of gender and sex. Gatens’ notion of imaginary bodies, Weedon of subjectivity, Davis, Groz and Moss of the body centered subject will be helpful in understanding the intersection of the symbolic and material aspects of embodiment.

### *Material and Discursive*

Throughout the writing on the installation, as various aspects of the sculptural figures, their inscriptions, symbolism and subjectivity is analyzed, they will be considered in the light of the various feminist poststructural theories discussed. The material (sensuality, biology and psychology of the subject) will interweave with the discursive (ideas, notions, thoughts, images and texts)<sup>22</sup> as they are presented in the sculpture.

Kathy Davis (1997) says of theories of the body: “Embodied theory requires interaction between theories about the body and analyses of the particularities of embodied experiences and practices. It needs to explicitly tackle the relationship between the symbolic and the material, between representations of the body and embodiment as experience or social practice in concrete social, cultural and historical contexts”. Davis further exhorts: “... feminist theory needs to be less concerned with achieving theoretical

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<sup>22</sup> Moss, 2002

closure and more interested in exploring the tensions which the body evokes... In the process of becoming more self-conscious and reflexive, feminist theory on the body will also become more embodied” (p.15). Moss and Dyck (2002) also dedicate to the *tensions* “within and between both sides of binary constructions”. Davis identifies that feminist theory on the body has neglected the subjective, lived experience and a reflexive approach to inquiry. A reflexive approach to inquiry that focuses on the *tensions* of opposing

LBW: ...Swirling, difficult to pull thoughts out of tangle - anxiety in gut, brain/body hurting, need to lie down.... I try to push myself past the first indication of fatigue, to work longer than the 45 or 60 minutes my body allows. I am so uncomfortable- it takes longer to recover. I must pace myself differently, take a walk outside after 40 minutes of writing, then lay down... then try to work again.

ideas/theories/feelings/experience calls to mind the work of scholars in the discipline of Curriculum Studies. Irwin (2004 in Irwin and de Cosson), and Aoki in Hasebe-Ludt (2003) describe the necessity of entering into *the borderlands/the third space/liminal space*, or *the space between* during the research process. The discomfort, unsettling of the known and/or chaos Doll (2002) is the space of new knowledge production and transformation.

The liminal space, the *threshold* and the subjective/lived experience is a stepping into the unknown as Herman writes: “We enter liminal space when what we have known is left behind and we do not yet know what lies ahead She cites Turner who “spoke of *liminoid states*, referring to the *inner experience* of the initiate in liminal space” (p.471). Herman explains: “In this interior liminal space, consciousness is altered... we access images that were previously outside our capacities to know them, and we are able to see new patterns in the chaos” (p. 471).

In this way, the intellectual feminist poststructural framework for understanding the installation interfaces with the a/r/tographic inquiry process. The liminal space is the space I enter into when engaged in the practices of art making, subtle energy healing work, writing and shamanic journeying. It is the space from which the creation of the sculptural installation emerged. It is this space I prepare to enter with the sculpture - the difficult, ambiguous, liminal space of disruption, possibility and potential transformation. In

consciously entering the liminal space through my writing practice, I take up Davis' challenge and hold the intention- to be with the *tensions* of the body and to consider the relationship of the *symbolic/material* and *body representation/embodiment as experience* as integral to the analysis of the sculpture. Before I enter into the sculptural space, a closer consideration of its origins is requisite to the description/analyses.

## Chapter 4

**The Song Embedded: the sculptural installation, a description analysis**

*“The soul narrates your deepest truth through image and metaphor”*

Pat B Allen (p. 82)

*Giving voice to the hum, origins of the sculptural concept*

Through my studies during the 2003-4 period, I came to ‘myself’ in an unavoidable way... examining my beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and knowings through multiple perspectives; different from the psychologically oriented examination I had engaged in during previous years. I was locating myself in community in terms of various social constructs such as scale, community, identity, difference, gender, power and political values. I engaged deeply and every aspect of my being was challenged.

LBC: ...while I tried to study, apply for CIHR grant- another revealing power relations exercise in itself- childhood stuff coming up re: trying to do things inside a box- forms and rules ...

LBW: ...the forms of CIHR that were so difficult for me with my changed neurology causing pain and exhaustion in my whole body, a tangle in my brain, and the boundaries I was pushing in class in diving deeper with self-examination and revelation, the coming up against the *institution* trying to advocate for myself - all culminating in a 3 day vomiting /diarrhea catharsis that laid me weak and flat --- feeling as if again\_I was dying for several days... as I lay in the mental haze - feeling listless I tried to summon my spiritual companions - but could not feel them -- I was too weak.

LBC: A steadfast friend ... called and talked and kept in touch... assisting my return to my life. Part of the force relation ---- from my own view/experience ---

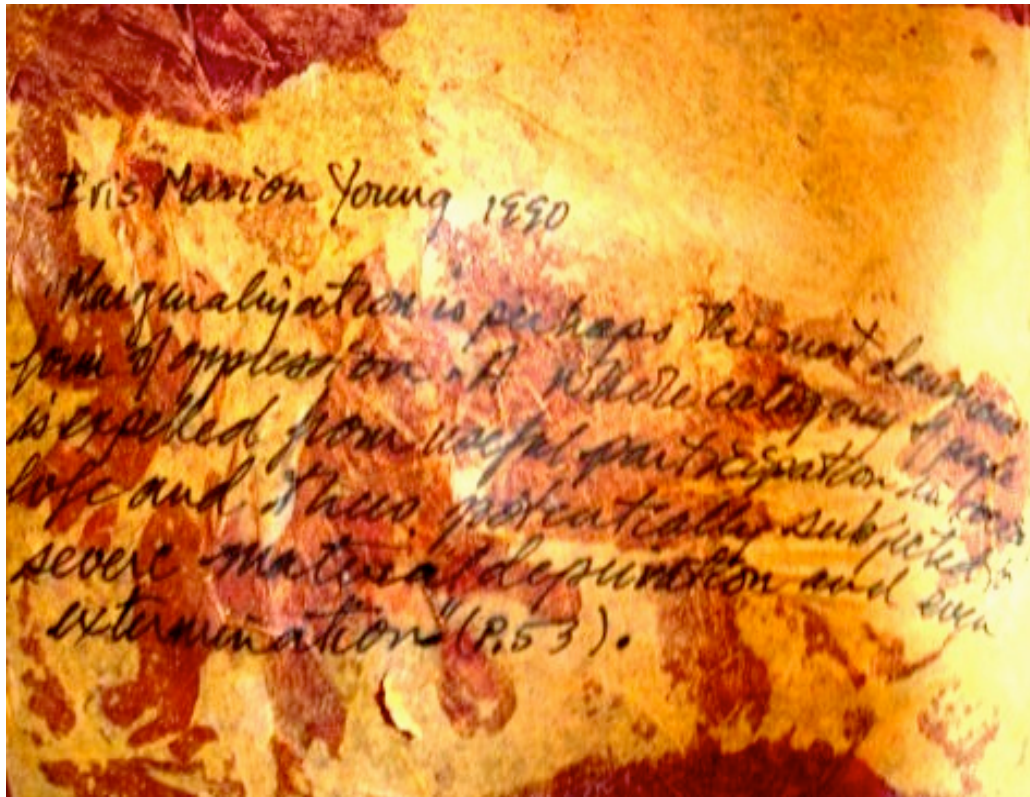
(MOT) *the resistance is to taking my power/being who I am...* LBC: ...whatever I am unfolding to be... a whole self-sabotage scenario plays out --- rising from the

remnants of unworthiness in part – (MOT) ...but more from the place I have learned I am afraid of --- being the powerful --- meaning in my own full power – self ...

MO: multi-dimensionally have had several memory scenarios – of being a leader/healer – person of knowledge and those I care for - my family members, villagers – killed and tortured to induce me to give my knowledge or not killing me – while killing all others to keep me for my knowledge. So to be who I am has meant pain and suffering for others ...

LBW: ...this knowledge of multi-dimensional experiences allows me to/fosters the strength in me, to have courage to feel the feelings and move through to change my experience to one of safety and ease and pleasure in being whom I am.

The sculpture quickly moved to representing the layers of experience of disabling illness and my coming up against the multiple levels of the *institution* as I sought



**Figure 3 Marginalized figure, left side pregnant abdomen**<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> “Marginalization is perhaps the most dangerous form of oppression. A whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in ---- life and thus potentially subjected to severe material deprivation and even extermination.” Iris Marion Young (1990), p.53.

physician after physician, multiple alternative practitioners, compensation and employer representatives to assist me. Simultaneously it symbolized any person who has experienced disabling illness due to environmental and mould toxins and their contested illness experience. The sculptural figure was not pre-conceived, it emerged and I followed its lead. I did see in my mind's eye writing over all the body and as I worked, took writing from personal history, social and aboriginal theory and empirical science research. The writing came forward to embed inside the body through openings to the interior, beneath the surface of or on top of the *skin* (Figure 3). It emerged through a spontaneous intuitive



**Figure 4 Sculpture in construction, University of Victoria.**

process in choosing from social/feminist and aboriginal theorists, elders, medicine people, news reports, journal entries/dreams, medical reports, empirical fungal research and stream

of consciousness writing. The placement of the writings was a combination of spontaneous and deliberate.

I was building the shamanic figure when imaginings for a community of figures emerged (Figure 4). The *oppressor* and *marginalized* were conceived simultaneously and the *heron, tree, water, earth* shortly after as (MOT) *I recognized my deep<sup>24</sup> self that embraced all beings as my community*. The oppressor/oppressed terminology was derived from my readings of Iris Marion Young (1990). It also has Marxist origins and likely *unconsciously came from*



**Figure 5** Constructing the Oppressor figure, University of Victoria Art Education studio  
*my early university days when I was ardent about sociology and found Marxism provided a framework to understand one perspective of power relations and one that described my childhood social*

<sup>24</sup> Deep – the self that has no body, that flies free as energy, a part of everything and everything a part of me.

experience. The terms came spontaneously as I worked and seemed to ‘embody’ the *energy*, the intensity and duality/oneness of what I was trying to express.

Due to the multi-system illness I experienced, I could only work for short periods on the sculpture. I would work one half to one hour and then have to lie down for two or three hours. In the first days I could only work for an hour every 3 or so days. In the last 8 weeks (3 months later), I worked in a studio at the university (Figure 5) where I had a thermarest and pillow on a table. I would work for an hour and lay down for as long and could achieve 2 or 3 or hours of work. I found my energy/ability better after 7 pm so I would rest in the day and go to the studio in the evening and work as much as my body allowed.

Some days I just went home and could not do much at all. I was compelled to work whenever I could on the sculpture. When I wasn't with the sculpture, I thought about it. I paid attention to dreams, thoughts, hunches, articles and information that serendipitously came to my attention. In five and a half months *Border Crossings* was ready to present *LBC: ...Time is pressing yet I am absorbed and there is only the non-time... the piece taking the time it takes. I have such a sense of working on my own body as I construct this piece – bizarre and sacred in some way all at the same time. Somehow it is an honouring of myself... as no other honouring of self has been – I have to get entirely honest with myself in a new way... the figures and the dialogue with them that began from the time of the map beginnings, when I perceived them but did not see them until they took form, began to bring to light aspects of myself that I had never noticed or recognized...* at a first conference.

MOT: *Art/creative expression, the translating of feeling, ideas or the unformed – the unnameable, that I do not know is waiting, into tangible form is a primary way for me to think and come to insight/understanding about my Self/self, others and the world.* I find resonance with Pat Allen (1995), an art therapist who had made images over two decades and writes that her art making: “... is my way of bringing soul back into my life. Soul is the place where the messiness of life is tolerated, where feelings animate and the narration of life, where story exists. Soul is the place where I am replenished and can experience both gardens and graveyards. Art is my way of knowing who I am” (p. ix).

Art serves a similar function for me. During the sculptural construction process, through various academic and public presentations and through being with my body/self over the last several years of constructing the art, being with the installation/my art through all of it's processes, through writing and working with the images of the sculpture, new understanding and knowledge has surfaced. This knowledge impacted me in its breadth as it intersected so many levels of experience from the psycho-socio-cultural, bio-medical and economic understandings, to levels of consciousness and awareness, to the spiritual meaning of illness and to the *institutional* political interplay. MOT: *Most impactful as I rode with the artmaking/writing research process were the shifts in my consciousness/awareness accompanied by simultaneous transformative bodily changes.* The revelations from my perspective of the multiple subject positions will be detailed in a closer consideration of the individual figures. MOT: *in the installation the figures serve as both historian/geographers that chronicle/map inner/outer experience, and as vessels of a wellspring of mystery/knowledge that is not only contained within the body but also moves through and beyond in rhizomatic interconnections and interweavings.* (The meaning of this statement will become clear as this thesis progresses.) My orientation to understanding life/experience through my body is a highly intuitive process of paying attention to my emotion/feeling, sensitivities or perceptions on a subtle energetic, invisible level, thoughts moving through my mind and to my bodily sensation of vitality/fatigue, ease/pain, fluidity/limitation and so on.

MOT: *It is through reading and being with the selected social science and poststructuralist feminist literature on the body, and considering the sculpture in relation to those writings, that I have come to understand a new importance of the body in understanding self/other and society.*

The sculptural installation is a depiction of the ill body in community, of my subjectivities and a framework through which to understand the ill body as well as my body and society. It is my intention in this writing, that my reflexivity as I view the *LBW: I realize as I write that my subjectivity is the site of unsettling, disunity and conflict through my resistance to writing about a theoretical perspective (feminist poststructuralist) that I experience as not resonating for me because I perceive it as not open enough to embrace my spiritual perspective. As I write and read I am beginning to have glimpses into the possibilities of artmaking/writing /teaching/research process... as enhancing and deepening my spiritual life.*

sculpture through a poststructural feminist lens, with the tensions in *spaces between/liminal space*, will raise new questions or perspectives that might contribute to the understanding of the body in disabling illness and its transformation through art.

*MO: A dream snippet during the time of making repeated starts on this document-*

*I am in my studio and an old man, who had earlier lit a veil on fire that covered one of my large monumental sculptures, has created a small sculpture – a human abstracted figure, with odd parts. I ask why he has done this. He said he is pushing the idea of the figure--- pushing how it can be different. I felt puzzled because it was such a different way of working than the way I work by sensing what is in the material and coaxing it out. In the dream I realize the old man by lighting the veil on fire, was trying to remove the veil, to make the invisible visible, to open between the worlds—the creator/created/creation. It was a metaphor for ‘seeing’ the sculpture/Border Crossings, in a new/different way. I have the knowing that ‘pushing structure’ is what I do around illness and ways of seeing illness, not what bio- medicine does. I also knew the dream was about the structure of this paper - that I had been working in a recognizable though contrary way for me and now it was time to push the structure...*

**LBW:** As I write, I open a book and come to a sentence... “Images that are necessary to us come in all sorts of ways, for the soul never tires of trying to make itself known” Allen (p.33).

*MO and MOT: The synchronicity of this process astounds me at times... not only images but words and books come, or conversations with people precisely when they are needed... that ‘hand on the back’ sense of being accompanied on this journey.*

*The Harmony -- the many voices of the song, an installation overview*

I intentionally make voice sound<sup>25</sup>, different from the spontaneous sound that issues when I am relaxed and feeling happy. The sound is a spiral, a circle too,

vibrational wave

after wave

centering

entering

opening my heart’s path

<sup>25</sup> Dewhurst-Maddock (1993) “on the cosmic scale, sound is a universal, unseen power, able to bring about profound changes on many levels” (p. 8). Andrews (1995), “Every cell in our body is a sound resonator” (p. 9).

connecting mind  
to my core  
to the earth  
to my alignment with the Creative Energies flowing through all that is  
unending, ever penetrating.

*Lined up* as I name this place in myself, I can choose from an inner place of intuition, clarity and a *feeling* of ‘rightness’ in my being. I bring focus to the liminal, the art making space through this *lining up* process.

The title of the sculptural installation, *Border Crossings*, emerged from my awareness as I constructed the sculpture, of the multiple levels of interface or as I conceive of the interface(s): thresholds of states of being, intersections of culture, society, relationships (human, nature, plant, animal, invisible world presences), feelings and intuitions etc. I defined *Border Crossings* as: *The threshold of opportunity at the interface of our multidimensionality /humanity to become conscious, free flowing, flexible beings who can make conscious, inclusive choices that enhance our individual and collective humanity.*

This definition relates not only to the material world but also the unseen world of levels of consciousness and non-ordinary<sup>26</sup> reality. In my *reality/work*<sup>27</sup> with people experiencing emotional/physical trauma; and from my own experience with subtle energy therapy, meditation and shamanic journeying, there are perceptible levels of consciousness that I conceive as thresholds to different levels of interiority or dimensional space, all intersecting in multiple ways, inner with outer. This definition was written before reading the poststructuralist feminist literature so coming upon the analogy of border crossing or threshold in the literature (Davis, Grosz, Moss and Dyck) to describe the intersection of differences or binary oppositions, (MOT) *gave me a sense of intuitive understanding of what I read about embodied experience and theory.* As an example Grosz (1995) writes: “The body can

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<sup>26</sup> See Glossary

<sup>27</sup> *In Balance* - Integrative Biofield Therapy, an integration of subtle energy work, shamanic practices and counselling focusing specifically on facilitating the healing of physical and emotional trauma. This work emerged through the integration of my own sensitivities, years of study, self-healing and practice of diverse approaches to subtle energy/complementary healing, western medicine and psychology (primarily Jungian) and spiritual practice (Chi-gong, Vipassana (Goenka) meditation, shamanic practices/ceremony).

be regarded as a kind of *hinge* or threshold: it is placed between a psychic or lived interiority and a more sociopolitical exteriority that produces interiority through inscription of the body's outer surface" (p. 33).

With the concept of crossing thresholds of intersecting difference(s) fresh in mind, then engaging with the sculptural installation, the viewer/participant (viewer walks through and among the figures reading the inscriptions on and in the bodies) may be struck by what seems to be a number of binary oppositions.

From the view in Figure 6, difference is noted in the largeness and dominance of the white figure (oppressor) in opposition to the disabled, smaller burgundy figure (oppressed or marginalized). All the figures are naked and seem equally exposed.

LBW: Initially I was uncomfortable with naked bodies at nineteen, as a new nursing student but over the years with deep work on myself, I have learned comfort and ease in being with people in their nakedness, interior and exterior. It seemed natural to express these figures without the encumbrances of the façade of clothes or anything to hide behind. The shocked, gasp responses from participant viewers – both lay and academic, revealed how little comfort there is with a naked body in our society. Two enthusiastic women were scholars from India. For them the installation was magnificent. They walked among and explored the figures, fully engaged with the voices of the bodies and installation as a whole, proclaiming the inscriptions 'poetic'. (MOT) *Through this experience, I was awakened anew to the many layers of inscription that 'clothe' us burying attitudes, beliefs and secrets. I 'live' in an interior world much of the time so when a friend said to me that the sculpture was hard for people- 'you are in their face Zulis, people don't want to think or feel...*

MOT *she assisted me to remember, and simply notice the viewer's response without expectation. Another particle of self-judgment simultaneously slipped away.*

The white figure's penis is visible. The hegemonic power relationship is at once evident between these two figures. The purple shamanic figure stands apart from the other two human figures, closer to nature and relational yet not part of the hegemonic

PV: ... Why is the oppressor a white male? (asked by a 19-year-old male with a swarthy Mediterranean complexion who identified as white.)...

PV: ... Why is the shaman's penis so big? Why is the shaman's penis bigger than the oppressors? These questions asked by men...



**Figure 6** *Border Crossings*, Gender, Sexuality and Health Conference, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC.

power dynamic. She seems to energetically ‘hold’ the space for the oppressor and marginalized to have their interaction. The shaman’s head is splayed open. Light glows within the figures, with the heron and water intended to symbolize the interconnection of all beings through *vital/life force energy* or Light (Heaven, Bruyere, Judith). Some areas are luminous or light-filled while others are opaque or dark. This interconnection could be

interpreted in the context of Foucault's power relation's concept, as the force relations with the powering and resisting at the same time. The illumined aspects could represent power and the opaque areas resistance each changing as the person interacts within the disciplining, normalizing societal influences.<sup>28</sup> Thus there are two dominant discourses of power relations represented in the sculpture, the Marxist perspective of power being possessed and Foucault's of power being exercised. Another view, as I conceive power, is that of power as relational and experienced as we relate in/from our multidimensional self/selves (See footnote #18).

The sculpture expresses multiple subject positions of myself as shaman/other, myself as marginalized/other and myself as oppressor/other and as heron, earth/soil, water and tree. Each of the figures is a symbolic representation, as well as a societal one. When I constructed the sculpture I thought of my own experience in each of the subject positions and also of the experience of clients, co-workers, friends and family members

*LBC: ... I thought of the representatives of the institution - individuals involved with my case, and the various physicians I attended and realized they were part of my community too. I wondered what they must think and feel considering some of their responses and directives to me. I thought of the micro-organisms in my body all competing for food and 'territory'... (MOT) of the aspergillus niger, aspergillus fumigatus and penicillium colonizing my sinus', bronchus and probably my esophagus and stomach because I had so much gastrointestinal pain and unusual functioning. They were part of my community. I wondered if when I felt a rising wave of fatigue and muscle pain, it was the fungi putting out toxins to disable the host so that it could colonize a little further and 'branch' out. Or were they like fish in the ocean, excreting and creating a cloudy toxic environment that I felt as pain and fatigue while they just went about their daily necessities?*

*PV: ... a security person approached at one conference and spoke about the intersex aspects of herself she saw reflected in the shamanic figure that s/he was interested in and had heard on the radio would be presented on at the conference... s/he asked to come to explore the sculpture more closely and did...*

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<sup>28</sup> Page 10 in the writing of the metaphysical *other*, my understanding of power, different to Foucault's, is described.

LBC: ... I thought of a story I heard of the anguish of a middle-aged woman who had disclosed having been 21 when she discovered that she was born with the genitalia of two sexes. She psychologically denied this, as had her parents (her mother had hidden the truth of the medical opinion from her all of her life) until her recent involvement with an intersex support group. Her disclosure made me aware of the large numbers of people with physically 'different' sexing characteristics who are made totally invisible by the heterosexism in our society. I thought more deeply and differently about my own sexuality as a result of this disclosure and the construction of the sculpture. I wanted in part to make this possible sexual reality visible, in addition to the symbolic representations that gave meaning to me as a being embracing the feminine/masculine in myself.

who had a variety of hegemonically located experience. *The feminist poststructural writing assisted me in understanding the impact of the use of imagination in understanding subject positions of the other and how I had utilized this strategy in my sculptural inquiry.* Bordo (1996) writes:

“Without imaginations (or embodiments) of alterity, from what vantage point can we seek transformation of culture? And how can we construct these imaginations and embodiments, if not through alliance with that which has been silenced, repressed, disdained?” (p.41). Gatens (1995) is helpful in her definition and use of the term imaginary as: “those images, symbols, metaphors and representations which help construct various forms of subjectivity” (p. viii). Certainly all of the figures are imaginary representations of subjectivities in that each of the figures emerged through my imagination and were imbued with postures or characteristics out of that source. Closer examination will reveal multiple subjectivities within one figure for example the Shamanic figure is a man-woman, woman-man, a human being that is neither man nor woman, a human being that is both man and woman, an ill and disabled person etc. As well, there are the imaginary subjectivities of those energy beings without form in their imagined, imaginary subjectivity, those of the spirit world -- guides, teachers and beloved ones who have left their bodies, to name a few.

There is writing (socio-cultural inscription) on each of the bodies and openings into their interior. The footwear of each figure may be noticed and reveal the businessman's

brogues (wealth) on the oppressor figure, while the marginalized figure wears worn sneakers (poverty). As mentioned this binary could be viewed in terms of Marxist ideology of power as something to be possessed. The shamanic figure features further difference with not just boots but green (color of growth and regeneration), soft, animal-hide boots, which may not fit into a wealth or poverty dichotomy. These binary oppositions reveal not only the intersecting power relations of oppressor/oppressed, wealthy/poor, abled/disabled, male/female, racial difference, cultural difference, but also the socio-cultural *inscriptions* embodied on/in the figures.

This side view (Figure 7) reveals the marginalized figure as pregnant and a woman. The oppressor figure has his hand on his hip (Figure 8), a document/dictum in his hand that he seems to be handing her and towers over her emphasizing his dominance. She is in interaction with the oppressor figure. That she is female introduces the element of gender difference along with the power differential imbued in that difference- socio-economic and political roles, valuing/privileging as a human or worker (wage disparity) etc. Being pregnant she embodies the (pro) creative power of women. The shamanic figure is represented with breasts and a penis, and furthers this gender difference beyond or outside of the binary, a difference of difference.

LBW: ... so much pain, have to stop, swirling, can't think, my brain hurts. My body felt like I had put my finger in a socket last night, my mind scrambled and zapping, I tried to calm myself for sleep. A melatonin helped. I feel the lack of sleep today..... (MOT) *Is this body pain resistance to going into the sculpture? I notice my body changing- eliminating a lot – like- I am letting go of something... metaphor?*

The hegemonic power-relations depiction in the sculpture was intentional to symbolize the domination-control model of the 'institution'. The oppressor figure is exaggerated to embody the dominant aspect, while the marginalized and shamanic figures are physically smaller (my own height) and emphasize relational vulnerability. The marginalized figure is also exaggerated– pregnant, disabled, a woman and a person of color, all marginalized in our society. The exaggeration has her figure 'speak'



**Figure 7 The Gender, Sexuality and Health Conference, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC, June 2004. The figures illuminated – representing energy flowing through and the interconnection of all beings.**

PV: A woman congratulated me on the installation. I asked her to tell me what it meant to her. She said she was afraid of it, she did not read anything about the installation or on the bodies. She did not know what the installation was about but she just wanted to get out of there. Another woman advised me to destroy it as soon as possible saying that mould is evil and I should not have created the figures depicting it.

vulnerability all the louder, creating the hegemonic tension between the two figures. The installation represents political relations, and is a political statement in and of itself. This

blatant power relation either draws the viewer/participant in to engage or repels and the viewer walks away.

The potency of the viewer's reaction to the installation or their force relation with it, could be revealing of the power of the actual presence of the art representation of power relationships, and of the PV's own internal force relations/power/resistance, that was touched by the constellation of images/power relations and thereby provoked revulsion.

From the perspective of discourse, my reading of Foucault (1972) informs me about the sculpture in a similar way that the poststructuralist feminist scholars informed me to see the sculpture from the their perspective. Foucault says about force relations: "Every relation of force implies at each moment a relation of power (which is in a sense its momentary expression) and every power relation makes a reference, as its effect but also as its condition of possibility, to a political field of which it forms a part" (p. 189). The politic/power relation, depicted in the conflicted stance of the marginalized, 'coming up against' the oppressor is from a superficial view, a power-over model of power. However by looking into the marginalized figure's face and to her stance – there is strength and fragility at the same time. Looking into the stance and face of the oppressor one might see that similar duality of strength and fragility at the same time and more of a power/resistance concept of power. The superficial view of the conflicted figures is political - the marginalized/powerless vs the oppressor/powerless and it is political as well to look at the reflection of duality in each of us that the power/resistance model may also represent. Whatever the PVs saw in the sculpture engaged them, even though they ran away from it. They engaged in the force relation and their engagement could be seen as responding to the political force relations, though possibly unconsciously.

In this brief overview, observations and concrete statements are made about power relationships, socio-cultural inscription and gender differences all intersecting with each other. Now this inquiry will move closer to the individual figures.

*LBC: The oppressor/oppressed dyad symbolizes the external/internal dynamic in all of us- (MOT) the conflict, the parts of us that come up against each other in seeming: weaker/stronger, smarter/dumber, wanting to continue/wanting to give up and healthier/sicker. It is the dualistic thinking that splits us as individuals and as a society. We learn about ourselves by*

what we act out with others. In this way everyone/thing is a mirror of the other with areas of opacity and density, changing all of the time. The mirrors on the foreheads of each human representation, symbolizes these qualities. This is changing all of the time because we are kaleidoscopic multi-dimensional beings, existing at once on many different levels. There is always movement with the potential of removing blocks/obstructions so that we can become clearer - more translucent as energy/light/consciousness flows more freely through us.

*The Adagio (Oppressor) and the Allegro (Oppressed)*

Towering at six feet three inches, the oppressor figure is starkly contrasted to the marginalized at five feet two. The oppressor figure is back and white, a metaphor for rigid, inflexible thinking and attitudes commonly met in those within institutions. The writing on the body is for the most part, horizontally and vertically placed or linear, and written in a systematic way in black ink on white paper (Figure 8). This is in contrast with the writing on the marginalized figure in black or brown ink, on coloured paper (Figures 8 & 9) and spontaneously, seemingly randomly placed, as if collaged. Foucault's (1979) concept of the disciplining and normalizing aspects of power relations depicts authority as functioning within the rules/regulations both spoken/written and subtle within the institution. The black and white synonymous with predictable and inflexible placement/writing symbolizes this normalization, as does the corporate leader brogue shoes and the hand-on-hip imperious stance. The oppressor figure is both disciplined by his institution in the Foucauldian concept of power while at the same time illustrating power as something to be possessed and used to dominate others.

PV: June 04, Gender, Sexuality and Health Conference: "The oppressor is easier to read but that is how it is, isn't it -- easier to hear -- or more heard than the marginalized."

PV: May 04 Adult Education and Research Conference: 'provocative and disturbing but in a good way'

PV: Oct 06 Artists of Conscience, Art Symposium: 'informative, I'm looking for answers for my own illness, saw a lot of similarities'



**Figure 8 Oppressor: white, Oppressed: burgundy/yellow**

PV: "Recognition of the oppressors assists us all. May 'the heron' find within us and all the strength to overcome the oppression in our lives... the CEO's, the "Bush" league, the developers who need only more... stay strong!"

PV: “your exhibit resonates that affirmation of the connected of all life- our thoughts/bodies/journey/ies and our need to be in balance with ourselves and one another.”

PV: Jan 07-May 07 Engaging Disability, Pages Marina and Resort: “ Like walking into science fiction”: “... transition is what goes on here, and process. Yet it’s very still...”; “The idea of ‘Border Crossings’ opens up limitless possibilities -- here we see so many of them explored and inviting us to participate rather than remember a fixed experience.”

The marginalized figure also is unconsciously disciplined by her socio-cultural norms, race, gender and position in society while at the same time presenting with many of the variations of marginalization as subject to domination (woman, aboriginal/person of colour, disabled, poor). There is in her stance and steady gaze at the oppressor, a sense of strength and determination. She does not bow her head in subjugation but has her head up and eyes wide open. The oppressor’s eyes are hollow revealing blank whiteness so that it is not clear if he is seeing or is present.

PV: His smile is similarly hollow, as some participants defined: “as the Joker in Batman”.

The light glowing from within the figures symbolizes the life-force/Light or Creative Energies that flow through all beings in an interconnected web.<sup>29</sup> The oppressor figure has some open, illuminated areas where the viewer can see the underlying sculptural structure or symbolically the interior of the oppressor’s being, indicating an open energy flow. Other areas are opaque indicating increased density and constricted energy flow. The open flows are symbolic of open attitudes and behaviours while constricted flows symbolize rigid and controlling attitudes and behaviours (See Figures 7 & 8). The oppressor has few open areas: in front is some transparent light on his chest in the heart area, and through his legs and at his left ear; viewing his back his head is illuminated (active rational/mind) and his legs, while the rest of his body is opaque. This is in contrast to the marginalized figure whose body is luminous throughout with small areas of opacity indicating a vibrating, open and dynamic system. Her open attitudes and behaviours are symbolized with her luminosity and free flow of energy. She is contrasted as well in being so luminous, she seems fragile yet paradoxically this is a strength. Based on my knowledge and experience in working with subtle energies, the more free-flowing our energy system, the healthier, more stable and dynamic we are.

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<sup>29</sup> This ancient concept described in modern texts such as: Bruyere, Judith, Capra,

*LBC: (MOT) The oppressor embodies the (mine or anyone's) inner saboteur that negates, criticizes, diminishes or dismisses. LBC: In the external reality it is that element- the doctor, the authority, corporate person, supervisor/employer, organization etc. that negates or dismisses. In society, this 'element', the oppressor carries a large shadow (Carl Jung), is not conscious on individual or organizational level which is why /how it can operate and harm... put human safety last- after money, position, influence, maintenance of the status quo. So in the figure, large areas of dark/shadow and small areas of illumination with all of the potential of total illumination because the Light/energy is there and the emotional/physical 'issues' create the blocks so that the Light cannot flow. (MOT) I was acutely conscious as I stood back and looked at and mulled upon the different figures in the sculpture and the installation as a whole that each part of every figure represented an aspect of me and aspects I came up against in myself, (as I would try to understand a dream)... that represented my own internal "institution" and my grappling with trying to understand the underlying causes of the illness in my being.*

The opacities/luminosities may be considered inscriptions given that the body reveals the socio-cultural inscriptions and marks that indicate an emotional/psychological /spiritual interior. From this perspective the opacities carry with them experiences that constrict, so we might imagine from a multidimensional perspective, the oppressor's body carries a great deal of pain/fear and constriction producing experience or that he has responded to experience with constriction and/or both. Conversely the marginalized figure's luminosity inscribes her with openness and a free flow of energy. This does not mean she has not had painful experience, but that she has responded in such a way as to have fostered or allowed the free flow of energy.

*LBW: one view is that the oppressor is actually fragile because his system is so closed; making him less open to the interconnected energy of the Creative energies and all beings, and as a result he is less vital. I saw how I projected the identified oppressor in my health/illness scenario with the construction of*



**Figure 9** The marginalized and oppressor figures - with writing on the bodies at *The Artists of Conscience*, Victoria International Art Symposium, Victoria, BC, 2006.

the oppressor/marginalized dyad and that as I spent time with the installation constructing, thinking about it, being with it I saw also that the individuals of the institutions were with strength and fragility at the same time and navigating their own realities – this resulted in a sense of peace in my being and a letting go of anger and resentment...

*LBC and (MOT) I had to wonder then how my depleted vitality intersected with my internalized oppressor? How was my internalized oppressor limiting my sense of interconnection, trust and an open flow of love and how was that affecting my body/illness/health?*

*The Adagio, the Oppressor Figure*

The oppressor figure (Figure 9) is constituted as possessing power that is wielded over others evidenced by the socio-cultural inscriptions already identified in his gender, department, relational stance, economic status as revealed through shoes, work (a bureaucrat or corporate representative) and to some extent his values and morals within the context of his societal positioning. Grosz (1995) contributes to the understanding of the surfaces inscribed. She explains: “The body becomes a text, a system of signs to be deciphered, read, and read into. While social law is incarnate, “corporealized,” correlatively, bodies are textualized, “read” by others as expressive of the subject’s interior” (p. 35). The body from a Foucault view is: “a social object, ... a text to be marked... written upon by various regimes of institutional (discursive and non-discursive) power, as a series of linkages (or possibly activities) which form superficial or provisional connections with other objects and processes.” Although conceived as superficial surface linkages, Grosz posits: “They are not merely superficial, for they generate, they produce, all the effects of a psychical interior, an underlying depth, individuality, or consciousness, much as a mobius strip creates an inside and an outside” (p. 116), with the outer becoming inner.

*LBW: As I write I have experienced a mounting fear. In my exterior world, after returning home from a day away, I had a sense that someone had been in my home. My papers had been re-arranged and I discovered items missing. Last year due to the low income of the disability pension, I rented a separate entrance room in my home. The renter had no access to my home, yet when I returned from a few weeks absence, I discovered my home and studio had been broken into and many items gone. It turned out the person; a charming male, was an addict and was stealing from many others as well as me. I went to police, which resulted in an investigation without charges. I was told, unless he*

was caught in the act, nothing could be done. No one else had put it together that this man was who was stealing from them. I had 'outed' him. I began to doubt myself the three times this happened over the autumn because the locks and windows were all secure. There was no way for him to get in. I had a roofer touch up areas that needed attention when he lifted off the skylight. I was in disbelief. The roofer said it was standard practice not to fasten down the skylights, I realized this was the thief's route of access. All of the skylights were then secured. Still last week the thief got in and I realized he must have a key. Yesterday I had the locks changed again. Twenty minutes after the locksmith had left, a stranger, a man appeared at my door. He wanted to wash my windows and skylights. After inquiring into who he was and where he lived I discovered he lived with a 'friend' who was the friend to the former renter and had been complicit in the thefts from my home. When I told the fellow I could not have him on my property because of his involvement with people who stole from me he became verbally aggressive with a tirade of: "You are nothing but a bra-burning feminist and a baby killer". A lesbian friend who had also set a boundary with the same people, and I, have been targeted with violent anti-lesbian/feminist words on signposts, directly to our person and covertly in the local paper. I was shaken with the realization all at once that: my home was being watched, he arrived immediately after the locksmith left, he was an accomplice to the other two thieves, and he was aware of my feminist oriented work/writing/books on my dining room table. Alarmed I went to the police who this time listened because they had many other similar and worse complaints about all three men. Following I went into an anxiety state, worked with it to discharge and regain balance. This is an explicit example of the material and discursive intersection between my researching/writing life and my personal/community life as I live in the moment... thinking about power/resistance theories, inscription, agency and

multidimensionality. This example demonstrates the linkages that Foucault writes of and the inner turning to outer to inner of the mobius that Grosz identifies. It is an example as well of ruptures and excess in a material sense in the rhizomatic, a/r/tographic process that is a lived experience – not only in the art/writing/teaching research, but also in all of the interconnected living.

(MOT) *My resistance is not being 'taken in' by this person purporting to look for work; my resisting is paying attention to my intuition, to noticing and being present with myself in my environment, going to the police, discharging my anxious feeling to 'clear' my energy field so that I can regain clarity, soliciting the comfort of the friends of my community human, animal and nature and turning to art to assist me in transforming the fear place in me to a place of possibility and optimism.*

MO and (MOT) *At the same time as all of this is happening I am aware of another level of myself understanding that the focus I have in the outer world/thoughts on understanding and examining the power relations ongoing undulations of the art installation/illness exploration has perhaps drawn an outer experience to illuminate the interface of not only inner/outer but of the multidimensionality of being. I remember clearly the teaching of my guides when I was 25 showing me that all is illusion. They did this by showing me images of their changing of familiar forms – such as a 30'ish male and female and moved dramatically with humour and fun, through ghoulish contortions and an aging process before my eyes, and then back to the representations they normally appeared to me as. The memory of this teaching returns to me at times when I feel threatened or deeply concerned about the events in the world, to remind me so that I might regain my perspective that all is illusion.<sup>30</sup>*

Moving closer to the inscriptions on the body, what is revealed about who the oppressor is, what is his interior and what does he represent? What do the inscriptions say about embodiment? Different to the socio-cultural inscriptions from a distant view of stance, gesture and relational positioning, are inscriptions on the oppressor's body that are self-inscriptions. These inscriptions are both and at one time a self/other subject/object positioning that this artist/writer has inscribed on an imaginary body and imaginary subjectivity.

On his chest is inscribed:

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<sup>30</sup> This relational experience with my guidance in part explains my meaning of the multi-dimensional.

R upper:

*Iris Marion Young reminds that when we feel 'othered' – we are 'othering'. When is the oppressor myself? How do I oppress myself with limiting thoughts, beliefs or attitudes? How can I be in my 'strength' in oppressive circumstance?*

*LBC and (MOT): I realized once the installation was completed that in addition to attempting to represent the possessive form of power, I had also exteriorized my own inner conflict (oppressor/oppressed) of aspects of myself that demeaned, denigrated or gave myself a hard time for becoming ill, for not being 'able' in ways I was familiar with, for somehow having caused/created the illness by in some way not being 'good' enough -- spiritually, emotionally, physically. I understood from years of depth psychological and body therapy that the internal 'oppressor' voice was the internalized perpetrator from early abuse experiences- a voice would rise louder when I felt threatened, stressed or in the midst of transformational change as I was with the illness and in the ongoing resistances in my interaction with the external oppressor - multiple representatives of the institution. Even some friends took the role of oppressor by judging me with criticism that I was ill because I had in some way not done things 'right' spiritually. Their attitude was > all I had to do was change my thoughts and I would get better. How I learned from this. I oppressed myself with these thoughts/words too. Ironically this is such a black and white way of thinking by we 'healers' who purport to locate ourselves outside of the rigid hegemony of black and white thinking. This illustrates the hegemony internalized in all of us, unconscious and difficult for the self to acknowledge. I felt my own self-judgment drop away as I came to this realization and felt my heart soften toward myself a little more.*

*LBW: Illness is a major transformational change not only in the outer world, but inner as well. I say inner with a concept in mind of limitless possibility, not a 'trapped soul' as Foucault conceived. Through the years as healer/heelee, I had come to know my body as a resonator/communicator in symbolic ways of what was happening with me at the level of my essence as an energetic/spiritual being. That is, I have interpreted physical symptoms as a communication of blocked energy flows related to the area of the body, where the symptom is and according to the metaphorical meaning of that area. For example: my experience of difficulty breathing -- the lungs = difficulty taking in life (the breath of life). This is also the heart emotion centre so a difficulty*

receiving /giving love could be an interpretation. (MOT) *The illness itself has transformed me - feeling weak, vulnerable, hopeless and overwhelmed at times with markedly limited capacity in my physical and intellectual functioning that causes me to rely more heavily upon my intuitive capacities. Exploring the illness/body through this art installation has transformed me further in positive ways. I can stand outside of my being/experience and view it from a different perspective through my art.* LBW: How do I read my body now where every system is activated and shouting- asthma, sinusitis, irritable bowel, CNS multiple symptoms, endocrine symptoms, articular symptoms, liver distress and such sensitivity to scents and fumes that I cannot go out and about without pain, fatigue and difficulty focusing? *It is through my artmaking/writing/research process that I am able to see/know/understand that 'every system is activated and shouting'...*

Upper:

*I am the oppressor and I am also connected to the All by the energy/light that connects us all, I am not separate- I am affected by all of the actions by all beings of the visible and invisible world- I am living the powering and resisting (Foucault) as is all else.*

*MO: This was countered with those parts of myself whose prayer has been/is for many years "make me a channel of your love" and trusts the unfolding, whatever it is- to be a response to that prayer, and that knows there is meaning in everything.*

LBW: So- I surrender to trust and pay attention as I ride.

(MOT) *As I keep writing, thinking and being with the writing, with the figures, I experience less pain and can think for longer periods, about an hour. Of course, I have kept my environment controlled- air filter, scent/allergen free as possible and have avoided going out as much as possible. (MOT) Still, I am working longer and not feeling so exhausted. My body is changing, the puffiness is reducing and my face is more familiar as it was before I got ill. I look older in my eyes and in the facial lines, but the bloated allergic puffiness is reduced. I am doing colonics every week, a year and a half now. I am taking hemp hearts for omega 3's and phytoplankton drops as well. All combined are helping. Maybe it is all kicking in at once? (MOT) I am relieving my self in a figurative sense as well by writing*

*feelings, thoughts about this traumatic, deep rent in my body/life. The sculpture is definitely a huge inscription in and of itself -- on my life/my physical/professional/personal/emotional/spiritual life.*

Solar plexus (stomach area):

under the flap in the interior of the oppressor's body (Figure10).

Written in the interior is: *Anger, anxiety, fear*



**Figure 10 Oppressor interior – Anger, anxiety, fear.**

LBC: The solar plexus is also called the 'power' centre. This is the energy centre, vortex or chakra where humans feel anger, anxiety and fear when this centre is active or out of balance and excitement about our lives when in balance.<sup>31</sup> Not expressing the feelings can result in energetic constriction and stomach symptoms, gastritis, ulcers and indigestion. A constricted solar plexus emotion

<sup>31</sup> SHEN (system of human energy nexus) Theory by Richard Pavek, Sausalito, California.

centre also blocks the heart energy flows. The heart/solar plexus interface is the interface between sky and earth energies so the person cannot experience the open free flow of sky/earth energy that allows a person to feel grounded, in their body, in their life. When we are not grounded, we are fearful and want to control and dominate. Dominating and controlling gives a false sense of power and safety. I placed an image of soldiers shooting guns to reflect what is happening in our outer world right now as well as a metaphor for inner conflict and externalized feeling projected onto others. An institution/world controlled by fear and efforts of various nations to dominate resources and people. Fear, anger and anxiety are feelings we all experience and all of us at some time or another feel out of control. The oppressor is out there and within, out there in a possessive way and in the disciplining/normalizing of socio-cultural norms. Violence historically has been accepted as a way to resolve problems in our society... not necessarily cultivated but accepted. Is it fear that drives one to treat others in denigrating, dishonouring ways? Is it fear that calls people to positions where they have the possibility of control over others? (MOT) *My fear, anger and anxiety has certainly been activated by this - not only illness experience, but also by the humiliation by the Nursing representatives of the institution, who commanded that I do not speak of mould, that I mind my own business and be quiet... etc. etc. In some ways, this art and writing is my own form of violence to 'shoot' back at all those who have hurt me. I am no less an oppressor, I know that. My way is just a little more convoluted and I think I am taking more responsibility than those of 'the institution'. Does that make me better... no? Just coming up to this way of thinking binarizes. It is so easy to get defensive and try to defend or justify. A form of thinking that again comes from fear versus the heart.*

PV: Comments of participants, Adult Education and Research Conference, 2004 from my journal:

“I don't have to read, the postures are evocative of feeling and relationships.”

“The marginalized is vulnerable yet strong, the oppressor is controlling and dominating.”

“... this reconfirms for me that hiding is not easier...”

*LBW and (MOT): This solar plexus energy inflamed also symbolizes my anger/rage/resistance at the dismissal and denigration I experience/d with the multiple representatives of the institution in relation*

to my ill body and to me as an aging woman with a disabling health condition. Most of the time I am peaceful. The anger comes in waves and I know the level of rage at times has a direct connection to the humiliation and degradation I experienced in ongoing multi-level abuse as a child. I have a sense that in the 13 years as an adult when I worked in the various forms of therapy on the childhood trauma, I was not 'ready' to feel the level of anger I do now. Has the illness experience been a necessary catalyst, a symbolic 'perpetrator', to activate the submerged anger in a healing catharsis? In the first eight months of illness, I experienced post-traumatic stress triggered by not being able to breath (feeling suffocated) in the early weeks before my breathing stabilized, and then as I 'detoxed', there was an un-layering of early trauma memory. Or was I rendered susceptible to the mould illness because of the increased levels of intra-psychic stress caused by the multi-level trauma that causes deep injury to trust and self-love and the immune system? Or both? Energetically an energy field is considered to shatter or fragment as a result of trauma. A child's energy field is not fully formed so the intrusion is the greater. The immune system is stressed to the degree of compromise possibly rendering the subject vulnerable to illness of many forms, particularly autoimmune illness. How large a part has early trauma played in my unfolding health difficulties? And for others?

*MO and (MOT) Trust... that's it; this illness is a complete and utter transformation, a sloughing of the past/old to renew and reconfigure this body/being. The dream of the transforming structure (p. 54) and remember- all is illusion. What purpose then this illness if I take the viewpoint that all is illusion? I have already, early on, asked my guides to help me understand the reasons for this illness. I thought it was to heal other dimensional (some might say past life) wounds, particularly around self love- the heart/lungs and speaking out, breaking the silence in a monumental way, a deeper way. That is the logical /linear aspect according to my psychological understandings of illness/body/experience relationship. My inner teachings have been an encouragement to be more transparent, honest with others and myself - reveal the hidden, as this gives others permission to reveal themselves and unburden their being. Really, that is what the installation did for the participant/viewers. When we relate honestly and transparently hiding nothing, we open our energy fields /flows, so that our guidance has a clear channel to assist us further in our development. As well, the person we relate with, and self, have the opportunity to take the knowing/relating to new and unknown directions. Transformation unfolding is possible in unknown ways.*

This concept (green writing) differs from Foucault's limiting way of conceiving the 'force relations', as his concept does not allow for transformation. The inscriptions on/in the oppressor's body relate to ways in which s/he has dominated others and contributed to

the pain, illness and suffering in the world whether an *institution* representative or anyone with oppressive behaviours. They relate to the symbolic oppressor's possible thoughts: about how s/he has a conflicted inner oppressor/oppressed dynamic internally, social change that could shift policy in positive ways to uplift others, about the high rates of poverty, inadequate housing and illness in marginal communities due to governmental neo-liberal policy, the higher incidence of occupational respiratory illness for women compared to men and the inequality of the treatment and compensation of women in the workplace compared to men.<sup>32</sup>

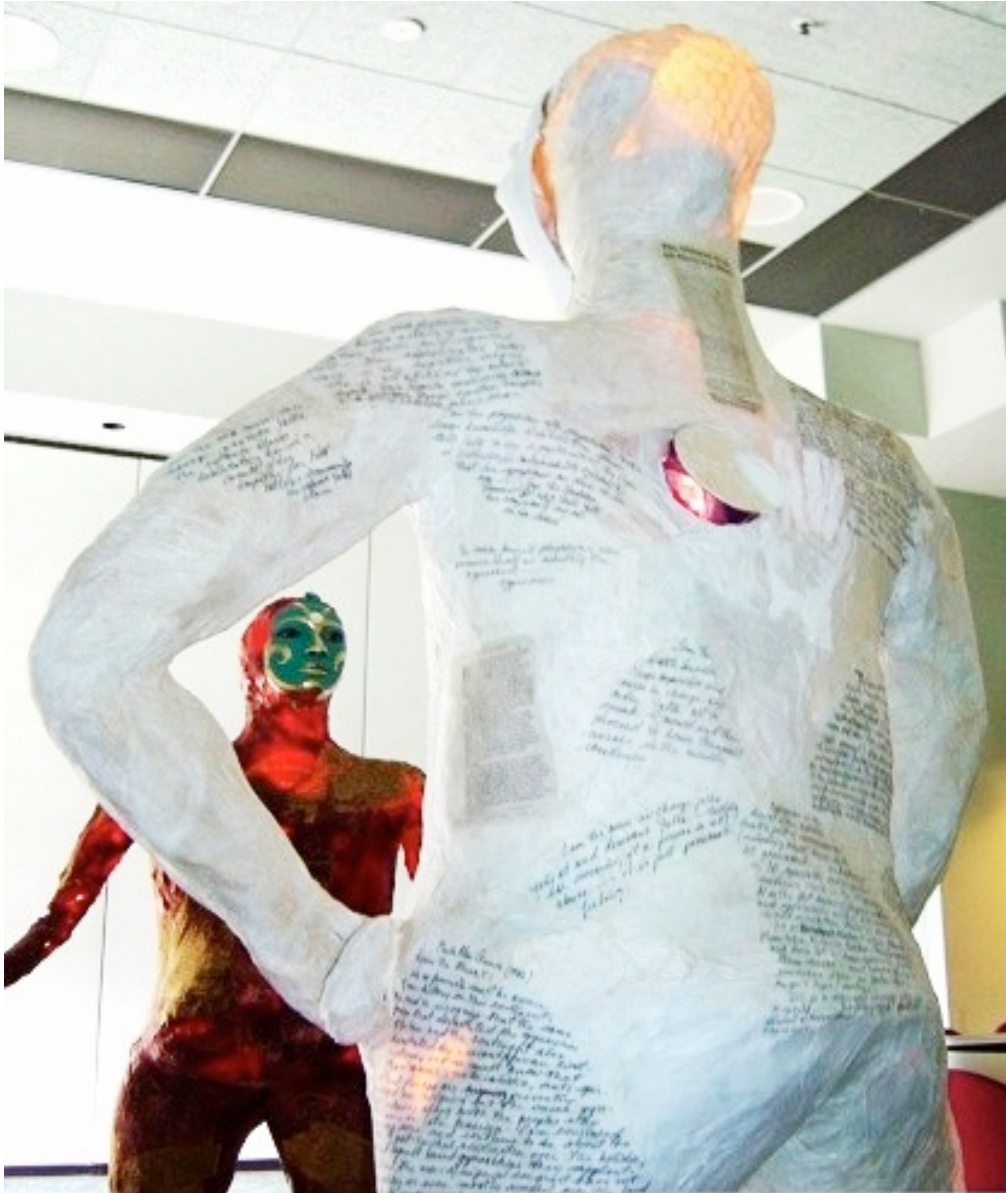
This view into the emotional interior of the oppressor changes the exterior impression of him from his stance of an imposing and dominating presence who is seemingly in a conflicted relation with the marginalized figure, to that of a person with conflicted moral values, inner feelings or a conscience and in contemplation of ways to achieve personal and social transformation. This self/other consciousness links him to others.

#### *The Allegro, the Marginalized figure*

As much as the oppressor figure is expressed in a dominating relational stance, the marginalized figure, small, and seemingly fragile gives a sense of confidence and strength at the same time. Resistance can be seen in her willingness to look directly at the oppressor (Figures 7, 11) and in her confident stance. She embodies the intersection of multidimensionality, in the degree of marginalization she symbolizes: a woman, pregnant, person of color, poor and disabled and the multi-dimensions of the material -- socio-cultural, ethnic, spiritual, physical, emotional and attitudinal aspects of being. Her (pro) creative power offers an element of multi-dimensionality and interconnectedness in that she gestates a baby but also alludes to her ability to create, to be in alignment with the Creative Energies to live in a creative way.

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<sup>32</sup> Messing (1998)



**Figure 11 The Marginalized figure (burgundy) seen in oppositional stance with the Oppressor (white)**

Her luminosity – the degree to which she is illumed by the light running through her (literally there are ‘rope’ lights running through each figure interconnecting them and nature –the heron, water to symbolize the interconnectedness of all beings), as well suggests this flow and interconnection, in contrast to the oppressor’s opacity. As mentioned earlier, she is inscribed with a capacity to keep her life force energy flow relatively open (Figure 12).

What do the other inscriptions reveal about her? The forms of marginalization speak to how she has been 'marked', visibly and invisibly. Her aboriginality or non-white color has marked her deeply with racism, exclusion, derision, invisibility and



**Figure 12 The Marginalized figure illustrating transparent light and writings on the body.**

forms of violence. These marks are repeated again with gender/femaleness and being disabled in the sense of Foucauldian inscriptions that are forms of socio-cultural discipline and normalization.

Davis (1997) refers to the concept of the body as a text: “Drawing upon Foucauldian notions of power, the female body became a text which could be read as a cultural statement about gender/power relations... Emphasis shifted from power as exploitation, coercion or manipulation to the subtle, pervasive and ambiguous processes of discipline and normalization through cultural representations” (p.11). The text/body of the marginalized figure tells of numerous social and cultural circumstances that have inscribed her body (Figure 12).

### L ribs:

*First Nations and Inuit peoples may be more susceptible to mould toxins because of the historical massive multi-level abuse<sup>33</sup> they have endured through colonization and residential abuse. The racism continues in various forms in every level of our society including the higher and lower echelons of the multiple institutions.*

*Auto-immune illness is linked to mycotoxin exposure (Johanning, Amman, Campbell, Kilburn) such as: arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome, diabetes, thyroid disease, various cancers, multiple sclerosis and other central nervous system problems. When a person has experienced multi-level trauma as the Inuit and First Nations peoples have, the immune system is stressed and weakened.*

LBW: Illness due to mycotoxin exposure is not acknowledged but contested by the Medical *institution*. British Columbia follows suit. The standard explanation is that moulds and mycotoxins are normal in the environment and only immune compromised people may become ill. There is a large body of international physicians and researchers who daily are producing peer reviewed articles demonstrating the number and seriousness of mycotoxic illnesses endangering human health (one is Fungal Research Group, New York)<sup>34</sup>. Is this the ‘disciplining and normalizing’ that the Medical *institution* and affiliate

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<sup>33</sup> Scaer, R. (2007). Prolonged, inordinate stress and/or trauma alter the immune system with – an increased vulnerability to infection and low lymphocyte count (bacterial, viral, fungal), chronic pain disorders, chronic fatigue/fibromyalgia, autonomic dysregulation (hypertension, atherosclerotic heart disease), endocrinological abnormalities (altered thyroid and cortisol function which may lead to immune disorders) pp. 107-127.

<sup>34</sup> Campbell, A., Thrasher, J., Gray, M., & Vojdani, A. Mold and mycotoxins: Effects on the neurological and immune systems in humans, *Advanced Applied Microbiology*, 2004; 55:375-406.

association physicians are subject to or is there something more? Is there a continued silent genocide of aboriginal peoples as the ruling *institution* puts native bands through years long Kafkaesque processes to have institution funded housing to bands remediated, so that there are healthy homes? Is there a relationship to the perpetuation of mould/toxin-induced illnesses listed above, and the creation of an ever-expanding array of drugs and profits of the pharmacy industry? (Moynihan and Cassels, 2005)

Messing (1998) says women are 2–4 times more affected by respiratory illness than men. This is likely so in mould homes, and perhaps higher if the women are at home more. The endocrine system is affected by mould-toxins, so perhaps this is why women have a higher incidence of illness?

#### Back of neck:

*When is the oppressor myself? How do I oppress myself with limiting thoughts, beliefs and attitudes? How can I be 'in my power' in oppressive circumstance? – break the silence/secrecy, speak up, take action, make art, write, sing the truth and persist with persisting?*

*LBW and (MOT) This inscription on the imaginary marginalized is my subjectivity expressed and at the same time 'other', my own inscription and some of my process as I have navigated my way through difficulty. It is an example of the interior turning inside out to the exterior as in Grosz's mobius, as is the lived body experience while building the sculpture.*

*LBC and (MOT) The secret about the secret, was revealed, when I asked myself **why** after the car accident. I had been building the sculpture for about four weeks when the MVA happened demolishing my truck. A few months later it suddenly struck me what had happened. Earlier in my life whenever I had an art show I would feel very sad and had fear I was going to die. The last show I had, I feared I would be killed. I knew it was irrational, not an - 'in present time problem', that it had something to do with a past experience. Then I 'got' it. As a child the perpetrators who abused me threatened to kill my family and I, if I told. I lived in fear through all my school years. In terms of the sculpture, I realized I was telling many secrets about the hegemonic and harassing behaviours of the institution, about the lack of honesty in the multiple aspects of the institution in relation to the stance on mould and mould toxins as a human health threat and about my life. I revealed some detail about the childhood abuse*

*because it is possibly linked to the stressed immune system rendering me vulnerable to the mould toxins. All- secrets that could possibly result in the death of my family or myself... just doing my art and revealing inner feeling, in my body/mind is equated with revealing secrets. As well I have noticed over the years since I came to understand the secrets part of myself, that when my parents were seriously ill, when my dad died- produced feelings of incredible responsibility in me. I understand the death threats to work in reverse in my psyche... any threat to the health of my family member, was related to the secrets and my responsibility to keep them safe and related to the multi-dimensional knowings that I have of other times (some may refer to this as past life memories).*

*MO: There is another level to the MVA that has nothing to do with my childhood experience. Soon after as I sought counsel with my guidance I came to understand the MVA brought attention to the places in my body affected by the mould/toxins and required more therapeutic attention. This would also assist me in identifying what could be helpful to others in healing from similar mould/toxin induced illness.*

*LBW: (MOT) I recognize that the sculptural art process has been/is a trance – forming /transforming healing process for me in a multi-levelled way. It has helped me to separate out, identify and understand the aspects of my life that have come together to contribute to the illness that I experience. It has assisted me in perceiving and understanding social and feminist theory with a view to activating positive social change. It has helped me to integrate the social theory knowledge and understand it through my body. I have come to understand why my prof. guided me to explore the sculpture through the lens/framework of poststructural feminism. This framework has allowed me to write in a reflective way about my subjective experience and the tensions between the various dualisms... my own body/mind. I have just begun but see the potential for developing my ideas about power further and developing through the sculpture, a possible framework for understanding the body.*

### R scapula:

Speaks to the luminosity of the marginalized figure --

*A person is not a thing or a process but an opening through which the absolute can manifest.*  
Heidegger.

This multidimensionality in the form of a connection to the invisible world is demonstrated through an inscription of an imaginary palm print on her

Back, behind her heart:

Social scientists may refer to this inscription as *agency* (See Figure 13).

It reads: *Our guidance is always with us, our choice to see or hear*

**LBW: Connection with her guidance is both a form of agency and resistance in that she is strengthened to make choices and act and those actions may be in/of resistance.**

The oppressor figure as well has access to this form of agency, as do all figures in the installation. The palm print on each back is a tangible reminder of the interconnectedness of all life and the Creative Energies linking us (Figures 11 & 13). Foucault posits force relations as surface relations without interconnection with an interior. Some poststructuralist feminists (Grosz, 1994) subscribe to ways of understanding the body from a psychoanalytic (Freud, Lacan) tradition and the concept of the ‘lived body’. Grosz sees the interior turning in on itself as a mobius strip to exterior and exterior to interior. In the interweaving of the various theorists ideas and the *lived body* voices of the participant/viewers, the voice of the self while constructing the sculptures/the sculptures constructed me and the voice of the self now in process of a writing inquiry has bridged a connection of the interior and exterior and exterior to interior. These voices have bridged not only interior/exterior lived experience or personal/public, but also have given meaning to the multi-dimensional interface of the invisible world of guidance, with the interior/exterior voices of embodied materiality.

Atleo, an Aboriginal scholar seeks to elucidate this bridging through developing a research method as written in the inscription on the marginalized body:

R Shoulder:

*Richard Atleo (2005) proposes a Nuu-chah-nulth worldview... Heshookoh Tsawalk “Everything is One” – a research method that may allow research of the spiritual experience – with promise for balance in a world predominated by logical linear thought.*

And

R Chest/shoulder: Richard Atleo. *Tsawalk, A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview.*

*“All life forms have intrinsic value. Humans of every race have equal value as do the deer, the wolf, the whale, the eagle, the cedar tree. Holding life forms in equal*

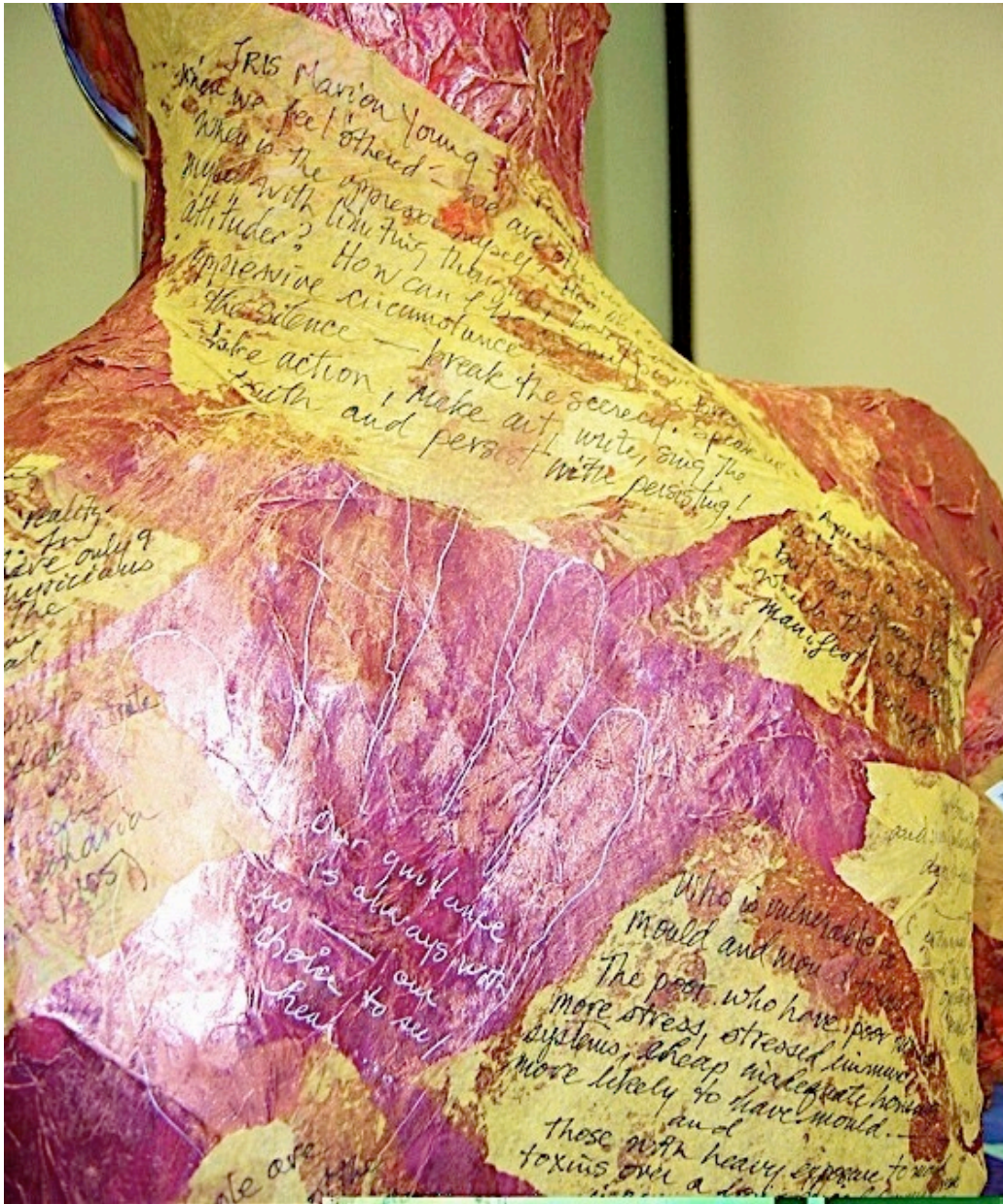


Figure 13 The handprint, symbolic of the invisible, agency/guidance supporting the figure's back.

esteem demands that balance and harmony be maintained among them by the development of protocols. Research methods can be developed to test the proposition that respectful protocols between life forms tend to promote balance and harmony" (p.130).

*LBC and (MOT) ... During the construction of the sculpture I went to speak with Dr. Atleo, traditional name Umeek, about his worldview because of the resonance I saw/felt with my own life and values. He invited me to speak in his class. I spoke from the perspective of being aware of my multi-*

*dimensionality (my awareness of the invisible world of teachers/guides, of memories of other times – dimensions/lifetimes) and shared stories through some earlier paintings of the multi-dimensional aspects (painting of a woman in a flying canoe that came to me several years earlier. Umeeek related the painting to Nuu-chah-nulth legends of a flying canoe that interface with me/my life, making them selves known through my art. The experience of Umeeek's honouring and valuing of who and how I am, strengthened me and deepened my courage to 'allow' and trust ever more fully, the unfolding and transparency of my art - Border Crossings, to be who I am in the world.*

**LBW and (MOT)** *The transparency of the interface of the interior/exterior bridging referred to by Groz and Gatens in their writing is evident in the preceding description. I sensed that Umeeek at this particular time saw me from his multi-dimensional self. I knew this because he honoured me by singing a song about me singing to my guidance as I walked along a beach. That is a part of me, a practice that no one, other than the shore creatures knew. I was accepted, valued and respected. At another time, I was viewed from a perceiver's material self of the rational mind and judging comments were made. I have noticed this about myself as well. If I experience, view from my 'spirit' I am accepting and valuing. If I experience primarily from my rational mind, I can be judgmental. I notice I experience from my rational mind when I am afraid, even if not conscious of fear. The fear awakens me to consciousness as I seek the underlying cause of the feeling. The oppressor, dualistic aspects of materiality rise from that fear and rationality. If I am relaxed and in connection with my spirit, there is an open flow of the polarity of body/mind. I may see aspects of a person from the rational mind view and accept them as part of the wholeness rather than focusing on that aspect as problematic as when I am in my rational mind.*

*MO: I can bring myself in alignment with my spirit, or access my multi-dimensional self in a multitude of ways. My body is the primary instrument for making my connection with my spirit/the Creative Energies. Voice, singing, or simply consciously breathing into all parts of my body helps me to return to my body. Drumming also assists. Both voice and drumming assist in opening the heart and as previously mentioned, the heart is the interface between the earth and sky energies. This allows the Creative Energies to flow freely and so that there is balance between the mind/body and a sense of interconnection with all beings. Intention utilizing the mind, praying can accomplish this as can walking, being in nature or anything that fosters a persons sense of 'connection'. I experience being 'lined up' when I am living my art, energy healing practice or*

*writing. Singing and creating ceremony or conducting a ritual also assists me in making a 'connection' very quickly.*

LBW and (MOT) *It is again through this art that I am able to stand back and see myself more clearly, to identify how I function and what influences there are... I become more conscious through my art.*

Centre Chest (thymus):

*I am the poor, aged, First Nations/Inuit, person of colour, poor unemployed, single mother, disabled, lesbian/gay/transgendered.  
I am the marginalized and oppressed in this society.*

LBW: I was not going to include this one because it is redundant and then had some realizations about myself related to this inscription and illness. I placed this over the thymus gland, the 'immune' gland. I have already written about the stress of abuse, poverty, bureaucratic struggles for pensions/allowances and poor housing /nutrition and how these stresses weaken the immune system. Yet, thoughts of my life and childhood tumble with the writing I am doing. Recently I had to go to my mother who has been ill after a fall. In my visit with her I realized her 84 year-old body had thinned, she was very frail. Simultaneously I had the knowing this may be the beginning of her transition to divest herself of her body. She has struggled most of her life as a young girl growing up in wartime England, in poverty and in marrying my dad who became an alcoholic after the war. I was highly tuned to and protective of my parents. When I became ill from the mould/toxins in *institution* facilities in November 2002, I had in February of 2002 gone to my mom who was critically ill with what seemed to be a heart attack. She was in Intensive Care and just seemed to be hanging on. Mom rallied and grew stronger eventually recovering enough stamina to resume her life in a modified way.

(MOT) *Returning to this writing following this last visit with her, the thought stopped me, that I fell ill not long after mom. I was close to death and I did not die. Did I become ill out of an internalized*

*inscription of protection? Did I universalize this inscription of protection to include the First Nations/Inuit peoples I have worked with? Did I seek to work in First Nation and Inuit communities out of an inscription of marginalization and pain? Was my inscription so deep that I would become ill and almost die, as my mom, so that I could understand her and support her through her process? Did I become ill similarly to support and advocate for the First Nations and Inuit peoples?*

*MO and (MOT) My guidance came early in my illness in the form of a gentle voice in liminal space, to tell me that I was experiencing illness to remember how frail this level of disability felt so that I could "be a voice for others".*

Another inscription questions this possibility.

L Bicep: Patricia O'Riley (2002) *Technology, Culture and Socio economics*

*"Can anyone see from another's point of view? Having a 'choice' to cross borders and to be in the margins is a privileged and arrogant position. Our seeing can only be partial. If we are not of that land/culture, we do not know the language of the people and of that land" (p. 115).*

**LBW**: This is something I have questioned for a good part of my life, yet my life is to a large degree about advocating for others. Within nursing as well, I advocated for patients with doctors, social services and their families. This is what my spiritual self confirms is part of me, my purpose here this time around. How does a person carry out the advocacy? ... that is what is at the root of the matter. Is advocacy made in respectful ways asking the person if, what/how they might want change for themselves, adequate?

An inscription referencing Peter Cole (2002), *Aboriginalizing methodology: considering the canoe* contributes to an answer to this question.

R Lateral Thigh:

*as first peoples of this land our responsibilities include  
to take into accountability not just measurability  
our relationships with the rest of creation  
we follow our instructions as orally passed on  
as well as continually relearned in our ceremonies rituals daily protocols  
we work to regenerate mutual relationships interpenetrating considerations*

*ethics for us in an add-on or a form to fill in  
it is ultimate integration within the deep structure of our understanding  
of creation including its ongoingness its pre-co- and post-emptiveness  
our way is not to bioassay and produce mapped grids gradients  
of western research paradigms  
accountability and respect is not just about seeking re-zoning approval  
it is more than following approved bureaucratic codes (p.457)*

LBW: As I understand what Peter is saying, it is the honouring and respecting given in any action I might contemplate taking, through my intention, communicating with ceremony and ritual. A ceremony may be as simple as pausing for a moment and giving thanks for the ability to speak with kindness, wisdom and insight. In the society of the dominant mind some of us have forgotten to bring our bodies, our ceremony and ritual to every aspect of our lives, not just in advocacy for another.

LBW and (MOT) *I took a class in Aboriginalizing Research with Peter during the time of the conception and construction of the sculptural installation. I experienced a lot of internal conflict as I struggled with notions of balance in advocacy and respect as I reviewed my past years of working in Aboriginal communities and the future of wanting to contribute to Aboriginal communities in a way that would be desired and not perceived as imposition. I had wanted to research around the high incidence of suicide, the efficacy of subtle energy healing approaches in aboriginal communities, and to do my masters thesis around social justice issues and aboriginal communities. While taking Peter's course I decided the best way I could assist Aboriginal communities was to heal myself... to research on myself. Unconsciously this had a large part to play in the emergence of the sculptural installation and the focus on mould illness in another class. Peter was so honouring, valuing and respectful in all of our relations in class. His valuing of my writing from my heart and intuition, in relation to class readings, encouraged me to reveal myself further and get more honest with revealing who I am. It was a scary process and I went through a lot of fear and powering/resisting --- coming forward/holding back and at times almost ran, but I stayed. He made a huge contribution to my growth and with his acceptance and valuing fostered in me a trust in myself to put myself 'out there' in whatever way. It was through this trust of self that I developed within the cocoon of his class, that the emergence of strength, courage and confidence came to support me to conceive of and construct, the archetypal sculptural installation. I opened to myself and to the invisible world in untold ways, without the restraint and fear of the past, and my guidance began to speak with me/others through my sculpture.*

Honouring and respect is the foundation of the inscriptions on the marginalized figure, whatever the status, wealth, health, color, age, creed or sexuality. Multiple inscriptions written on her body give details as to the progression of her susceptibility to mould/toxic and other immune system illness and how they manifest. Other inscriptions relate to seeing each person/being as valuable, worthy of honouring and respect and as a way to prevent and remedy the disparity in our society.

LBW: Respect and valuing is what I wanted in my navigation through the multiple levels of the *institution*- from the employer representatives, colleagues, insurance representatives and physicians, in striving to obtain relief from my symptoms and to stem the tide of further erosion of my strength and ability. I experienced the denigration, derision and dismissiveness from the various levels and representatives of the institution, as I had witnessed others- Aboriginal community members, clients, friends and family with disabling illness experiences... being similarly treated. (MOT) *I developed a new and deep level<sup>35</sup> of awareness, compassion for and empathy with, those who suffered with the disabling effects of any illness and with the sense of helplessness and despondency resulting from their abhorrent treatment by the representatives through the strata of the institution. And through constructing the installation, making art, I nurtured myself in a profound way, at my core, at my spiritual essence.* (MOT) *Creating this art is the most difficult and also the most loving, honouring act I have ever made to myself. It is of profound meaning for me that this act of self love, of doing what I love most, is actually what has given so much with others... not only in the art piece itself- with its symbolism and opportunities for entrances into their own being/emotion/life, but also because of how I am changed as a result of the sculptural process, those who love me are relieved and happy to have me find meaning, satisfaction, happiness and excitement in my life despite the perpetual symptoms and disabling illness effects.*

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<sup>35</sup> Deep: refers to my bodily/mind/spirit experiential understanding gained through the illness experience on a physical, emotional, neurological/immune, bio-multisystem level and societal/institutional level.

*The Fortissimo and the Vibrato: the Shamanic Figure*

*All medicine persons are hollow bones that Wanka Tanka, Funkashila, and the helpers work through... In and through. The power comes to us first to make us what we should be, and then flows through us and out to others” (p.21). Fools Crow in Mails 1991.*

The shamanic figure holds the greatest energy for me, yet it is the figure that is most difficult for me to ‘enter into’ through the lens of the poststructural feminist writing. I think this is because I identify most closely with it (as a subtle energy healer with intuitive sensitivities), the shaman metaphor. The subtle energy healing work I practiced, opened the door to my learning about shamanism, though I had been exposed to the work of shamans when I worked as a nurse practitioner with the Inuit in the arctic, and when travelling in Nepal. There while staying overnight in a local home during a several day trek, I witnessed a shaman healing a small child. Years later as I allowed my interest in the shamanic to take me to studying with a shaman, I learned that my sensitivities to the invisible world that began in childhood and other experiences I had, were all in the realm of the shamanic.

*LBW and (MOT) It is the ‘difference’ aspect that I am afraid to expose ... for fear of what else might be lurking that I am not aware of, and I don’t want to find that in viewing the shamanic figure through a feminist poststructural lens that the ‘mystery’ diminishes for me...*

*LBC and (MOT) The sculpture guides me as I go – and I see how past art pieces called intuitively (the masks that had been in a box in storage and forgotten, the image of a sculptural installation from 1985 that centered around the healing of sexual abuse) to be included and perhaps came into being waiting to be a part of this installation.... So the sculpture of my life is transparent through this form- from conception to now with so many relationships of experience/perception/thought – making them selves understood now. Yes, I am taking the time to be present for me/my self – not the distraction of caring for others... and ironically the depth that I care for myself in this way is a contribution to the whole.*

*LBW and (MOT) It is the shamanic figure that emerged first with all of its multi-dimensional intersections, complexity and sense of potency and it is the last, because I was not ‘ready’ to look into the shamanic, that I turn my attention to. In many ways I am working a circle or spiral in coming to*

*consider the shamanic after having an understanding of the oppressor and oppressed figures.*

*Understanding those figures gives me a practice run in some way at delving into the recesses of the shamanic, but more, considering the oppressor/oppressed figures and the metaphoric language they hold has given me a deepened understanding of myself... what I embrace/reject of/in myself and can be seen as a societal reflection... the personal metaphor taken to the larger community metaphor*

The shamanic sculptural figure (Figure 14), naked as are the other figures, most noticeably reveals the sexual characteristics of two genders, female and male. This figure is inscribed externally by difference with both female and male sexual attributes in one body. Encompassed in this duality of male/female is an internal inscription of the *non-binary* of the fluidity between the binary of male/female. I recognize this is my subjective experience as an identified 'twin-spirit' *lesbian* of viewing/interpreting, and a heterosexual may not make that internal fluid non-binary interpretation. At the same time, I binarize myself by standing under the label of lesbian, different, yet I am not wholly either lesbian or not-lesbian. I do not find a fit with the known descriptors. The less obvious and internal symbolic inscription that the shamanic figure represents is that of one who has balance while traversing in the ordinary/non-ordinary, visible/invisible or material/non-material worlds. The non-ordinary/ordinary encompasses the rich symbolism of the dream world. Traditionally one way a shaman becomes a shaman is by going through the metamorphosis of a death-rebirth experience, then returning with new knowledge (Neihardt, Halifax, Tedlock, Harner). A facility to traverse the ordinary/non-ordinary with relative ease and balance is developed through repeated experience.

The shamanic figure holds a rattle (an inscription of communication with/honouring-of the invisible world and vibrational tool used in energy healing) in the right hand, with this arm up-stretched, and an abalone shell filled with the plant medicines (symbolizing the honouring of life, all beings, ordinary/non-ordinary world, cleansing personal energy/space) of cedar and sage in the left extended arm/hand. The figure is in a position of supplication/communication with the *Creative Energies/ Divine*. This figure stands apart from the other figures in the installation yet in relation to them, conveying a sense while walking among the figures, that the shamanic figure energetically



**Figure 14 The Shamanic figure**

'holds the space' for the oppressor/oppressed figures who are in positions of conflicted interaction. (MOT) *The figure thus is in a supportive stance, with a sense of contained, being-with power that is neither the Marxist possessed dominator/submissive binary power, nor the Foucauldian*

*disciplined power/resistance. The Shaman opens to the flow of energy flowing through her. S/he has a disciplined practice to be in a state of openness, different from the state disciplining internalized that Foucault's notions describe, and stands in balance between the dichotomy/duality as described earlier (Thesis pp. 90-91).*

The body of the shamanic figure is externally inscribed/marked with writings in different type and colour on different sizes, shapes and kinds of paper. Some of the 'writings' on the body are images. These writings, on, under the surface and *in* this shamanic body are different from the writings/markings on the bodies of the other figures, and metaphorically refer to the multiple aspects of *difference* of the shamanic figure. Their placement refers to the level of penetration of the socio-cultural and spiritual markings of the body. The difference in the kinds of body markings, some rigid black and white of the bio-medical world and research, of the pink triangle<sup>36</sup> symbol marking 'gay' by society and now by gays themselves (as homosexuals were marked by Nazis in WWII), the markings that are intrusions into the body (for example: the rear L back flap opening of a tunnel into the genital area that reveals early childhood abuse and the resulting chronic intra-psychic stress that depletes the immune system), are intended to inform the participant observer of some of the internal influences upon this body that have significance in the experience of disabling mould illness and the wounded healer metaphor that the Shaman archetype embodies.

*LBC: When what is hidden or in darkness is brought to the light, then it can be experienced in a new way, takes a new form- can be trance-formed/transformed. An Aboriginal professor wrote to me that after my visit to his class, his class achieved a level of openness and unity that he believes would not have occurred had I not visited. My presentation to his class was about The Multi-dimensional<sup>37</sup> Aspects of Being, wherein numinous experience was in part illustrated through my past art and intuitive, clairsentient and clairaudient experience shared.*

*MO: Again- the confluence of all the forces – not me but the power generated by the conscious/unconscious relationships on all levels – (MOT) of all involved brought about individual*

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<sup>36</sup> The Pink Triangle I intentionally placed point down above the pubis to represent the Yoni, the symbol of the Goddess

<sup>37</sup> See Glossary, Appendix C

*and social transformation ... through art... not power possessed, nor power/resistance but power relational and experienced through the open flow of interaction.*

The difference in the kinds and types of markings serve to illustrate other levels of difference of the shamanic figure from the rest of the group. The Shaman is marked with difference as a *shape-shifter*<sup>38</sup>, with the ability to change form to enter into the non-ordinary world to shift form to animal or bird or whatever is needed to complete the tasks s/he intends. This ability sets the Shaman apart by the very nature of her work/calling and though her purpose is to serve the larger community, she is peripheral to it but relational. The shamanic figure wears soft, green leather (nature/animal/instinctual/heart) boots symbolizing her/his intentional inter-relation with the natural world different from the cultural markings of the brogue (bureaucrat/logical/linear) shoes of the oppressor figure, and sneakers (poor/unemployed/heart) of the oppressed figure.

The colour of the figure, purple with a purple mask, holds significance also. (MOT) *Although I made spontaneous, intuitive choices of colors, in being with the installation I see the personal and deeper meaning the colors have for me. Purple represents a person of color. When I practice my healing work, a shaman in the non-ordinary world who has dark skin and is Inuit, is one of the guides of the healing interchange. As well, purple symbolizes the colour of the crown chakra and the energetic connection with the Divine or Creative Energies (Hunt, p.19, Anodea, p. 46-47, Hover-Kramer, p. 62). Purple is used in colour therapy for healing the central nervous system and problems with the brain.*

The illumination from within the shamanic figure alters the colour to magenta (Figure 15). A fiery luminosity glows in more transparent areas and the colour changes to a deeper purple in the opaque regions of the shaman. This figure has greater translucency (magenta), illumination shining through the tissue paper skin than the other figures, a metaphor for the unobstructed flow of energy through the body with opaque, deep purple areas representing obstructed or slower energy flow.

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<sup>38</sup> See Appendix C – A Glossary of Terms



**Figure 15 The Shamanic figure illustrating: illumination in areas of greater transparency or open energy flow, and opaque areas of greater density or slow, blocked energy flows.**

My relationship to the shamanic in my life will be better understood through the following description of a dream. A prominent dream I had before becoming ill was that I was swimming in the cold, dark waters of a river with the numinous experience of feeling the native made sweater I wore, enfold me with warmth. An inner voice with the clear, guided direction of how to swim to preserve my life, and *feeling* a Buddha appear in my heart, assisted my safely making it to shore, where numerous robed beings had lit the shore with torches as a beacon to guide me, and led me along a torch-lit path up an embankment.

I had a knowing I had reached safety and that these beings were allies to assist me. This dream story/imagery is characteristic of a Shamanic initiation dream. This was revealed when I ‘worked’ with this dream with a New Mexico Jungian analyst, Barry Williams, not long after dreaming it in 1996. I learned that this dream is characteristic of the shamanic transformation dream that involves a symbolic death, numinous intervention and a rebirth whereby the learning of the deep inward journey of the near-death experience is brought forward to the outer world to share. The shamanic symbol holds multiple meanings in one figure.

*LBC: As I built the shamanic figure I intuitively wanted to place a Buddha in her/his heart. (MOT) I placed a Buddha that I had carved during a 3 week contract while working as a nurse practitioner in one of the residences that later proved to have mould in it, inside the shaman’s heart. As I began writing on the sculpture, the dream of the Buddha in my heart, while I swam the dark, cold waters, came to my mind.*

*MO and (MOT): Simultaneously as I constructed the Shaman, I realized this journey with the mould/illness/sculpture had been symbolized in the dream several years earlier as a premonition of what was to be experienced. I wrote the dream in silver around the outside of the opening flap to the heart (Figure 17).*

*The rich resonant voice:*

*The Shaman: The Wounded Healer, The Twin Spirited and The Psychopomp*

The role of the shamanic figure in the installation serves many purposes. S/he, the shaman inscription is the archetype of the ‘wounded healer’<sup>39</sup> who has experienced a death(s), rebirth and has returned transformed by the experience with new knowledge brought back to be shared with the larger world. Such an experience that takes one to the brink of death, to survive and return to the ordinary world is known as a shamanic initiation. The mould/toxic illness I experience, that took me to the brink of death, can be

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<sup>39</sup> Frances Vaughan (1995) takes the term archetype beyond Jung’s – the collective (unconscious) psychic structures of human experience such as The Great Mother etc., to align with Wilber’s concept taken from the great mystics (Plato, Augustine) to designate the first subtle forms that appear as the world manifests out of unmanifest spirit. The *Healer* is one of four archetypes in discovering identity as soul. The Healer attempts to transform fear. Wounded healer, a term used by Joan Halifax, (1982) to describe the deep wounding of an individual, the journey to healing and the knowledge acquisition during this journey that allows the ‘wounded healer’ to bring forward knowledge and skills to assist others.

viewed from this perspective, making the shamanic figure personally symbolic. That is, I experienced a life threatening illness and in the course of surrendering to that experience, then moving through it in multiple ways, including art, I have arrived trance-formed at a place of increased strength and awareness. I have gained knowledge that can be valuable to others [through the story telling - visual art and in writing Frank (2002), Eisner (2002)] who have not only experienced mould/environmental or disabling illness, but also those who treat/care for people with the systemic symptoms that are a sequelae (following on) of mould/toxin exposure and chronic debilitating illness. There are numerous other such 'initiatory' life threatening experiences from my early life such as the childhood sexual violence and near drowning, that reinforces the shamanic and the wounded healer metaphor in my life. In the sculpture, the mould illness is the vehicle that served as an entry point for me to enter into understanding the installation and specifically, the shamanic figure.

The shamanic figure depicted with the genitals of two genders carries significant personal and universal symbolism. Twin spirited is a term used in some cultures to refer to the relatively common occurrence of the shaman being a person who has a fluid, gender identification. Tedlock (2006) makes the following explanation of this phenomenon:

Separating gender and sexual characteristics and associating it with occupations and social roles creates the possibility of having more than two genders. As a result, in a number of societies there are four genders: man, woman, woman-man, and man-woman. Some researchers have suggested that a shaman is neither masculine nor feminine but rather a mediator between the sexes, a third gender that is either woman-man or man-woman. While this idea is intriguing, at least at first, it's far too static a description for what is, in fact, an extremely changeable situation. It is not membership within any one of these gender categories per se that is directly linked to shamanic practice but rather the transformation of gender or the frequent gender switching, bending, blending, or reversing that is important and that enables shamans to manipulate potent cosmic powers during rituals... (Pp. 249-250).

The notion of dual sexual energies held in one person has historical roots not only in world Aboriginal cultures and other societies, but also in Greek and Roman mythology. Hermes, who the Greeks called the Psychopomp, Conductor of Souls, was identified with Thoth in Egypt and Mercury in Rome. Walker (1983) reveals Hermes origins:

He was really older than Greece, one of the Aegean Great Mother's primal serpent-consorts, partaking of her wisdom because he was once a part of her. Like India's

Ardhanarisvara---Kali and Shiva united in one body---Hermes was the original “hermaphrodite” united in one body with Aphrodite. (p. 395)

Joseph Campbell (1974) makes a relationship between Hermes caduceus, an axial rod with two snakes entwined, to: “the Indian diagram of seven spinal centers touched and wakened to consciousness in Kundalini yoga by the rising of Serpent Power” (p.283). This Kundalini and chakra symbolism and relationship to Hermes intersects with the `roots of the ‘energy’ metaphor aspects of the Border Crossings installation.

Walker goes onto detail the worlds that Hermes has comfort in and association with as a Greek god of magic, letters, medicine, and occult wisdom. He is not only proficient at crossing boundaries and traversing worlds, this fluid activity and way of being *is* his nature. One representation of Hermes was as a *herm*, a phallic stone to mark boundaries. Walker writes: “Hermes phallic spirit protected crossroads throughout the Greco-Roman world” (p. 396). The symbolism of Hermes as psychopomp and marker of boundaries is another level of interface with the inscription of the sculptural installation: *Border Crossings*.

In the Oxford English Dictionary, a psychopomp<sup>40</sup> is the mythical conductor or guide of souls, especially as a title applied to Hermes. In Jungian psychology<sup>41</sup> a psychopomp is a mediator (human or symbolic animal) between the conscious/unconscious.

*LBW and (MOT): I understand as I work with the shamanic figure how this figure is a psychopomp of my unconscious... showing me the multiplicity of my being, showing me how past experience intersects with the present, the rhizomatic, and that the mould, is part of the community of my body. Similarly as an artist I am a psychopomp transporting images from the unmanifest world to the manifest and in artist representation/form. The shamanic figure is a psychopomp to/for me delivering from the liminal realm, the trance state, the notes of release and my trance-formation*

Psychopomp is a name attributed to the shaman as a conductor of souls from one world to another (Ingerman, 2000, p. 2; Walker, p. 395), from the ordinary reality to the non-ordinary and back to the ordinary again. Ingerman (1991) also describes the shaman

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<sup>40</sup> See Appendix C, Glossary

<sup>41</sup> Coombs and Holland (1996), pp. 82-90.

as acting as a psychopomp: “ a person who helps souls cross over to the other world” (p.1). In this instance, Ingerman is referring to the souls of the dead crossing over from one -- material world, to another -- non-material world, versus a metaphorical one as occurs during a shamanic journey from the ordinary to the non-ordinary.

I have known since a young child that I was ‘different’ in terms of gender identification. As a teen I came to understand that my attractions were not primarily with the opposite sex. I saw others, including animals, birds and plants as spirits or simply other beings like me, I seemed to live outside of a socially constructed gender influences to a large degree. My pain came from not fitting in anywhere... not knowing how to dress or behave within the accepted girl/boy roles.

As an adult the dichotomization of male/female has been even less meaningful as I have had material body experiences that have transcended accepted material body knowing.

*MO: For example one spring I sat out on my sunny pathway on a log stump while I carved a small (4" x 1.5") shard of soapstone resting on another log stump. As I carved I could feel the muscles of my arms and my body become immensely strong and muscles hard, as I had never experienced strength in my current material life. My arms were dark and hairy and I could feel a dark beard. I was a strong stalky sculptor with a swarthy complexion and smoked a pipe with my dominant left hand. In this materiality I am right hand dominant. I just sat with the experience noticing the differences from the body I know. It lasted several minutes.*

The carving that came through offered teachings that had to do with the subtle energy learning I was immersed in. This, along with the transmogrification experience of my body from female to male and back to female, allowed me to understand my gender fluidity a little more, and to become more comfortable with my ability to be in two worlds at once. In fact I came to understand that living with/in gender fluidity was a dynamic balance for me. (MOT) *The shaman as Twin Spirit and the gender fluidity that Tedlock explained, along with the notion of Hermes as a hermaphroditic figure with a capacity for fluidity in*



**Figure 16** The Shamanic figure ‘holding’ the mould illness in the chest.

*many worlds, and the psychopomp metaphor of movement between the metaphoric worlds, has provided me with a framework for understanding my own nature. The power relations with this experience cannot find explanation through the Marx or Foucauldian perspectives but is explained for me through my own concept of power as a relational open flow of the Creative energies.*

The shamanic figure embodies the symbolism of the shaman as psychopomp, the transporter of information from one world to the other- the conscious from unconscious, ordinary from the non-ordinary or one world or state to another. (MOT) *The shamanic figure as psychopomp, also serves as a vehicle for me, the artist, to explore and think about how the*

*world/living has impacted me and how the illness from mould inhalation is woven into that impact along with other historical events.* In the installation the shamanic figure serves as a 'sacred witness' to the apparent conflict (indicated in their oppositional stance) of the oppressor/oppressed. As a sacred witness s/he is detached from judgment or an emotional attachment of an outcome or alliance with one or the other figure. S/he has the compassionate heart, symbolized by the Buddha (Figure 17) to see beyond exterior posturing and masks, into the heart of the other figures as to what prompts their behaviours and ways of being.

LBW: This helps me to remember to bring my compassionate heart to my dealings with not only the institution, but with all life and myself.

In the installation, the shamanic figure carries this symbolism of a sacred witness holding the energy of the space as well for the participant observer who navigates the sculptural community space and readings on the bodies. The participant observer is engaged in a transformational process in such exploration and the shamanic figure is indeed a psychopomp, even in this figurative representation as I the artist, and the participant, come to consciousness in relation to different areas of my/their lives.

PV: With reading and exploring the figures, participant observers revealed (through verbally relating and writing) transformative experiences such as: weeping provoked by a man's memory being triggered of his own oppressive circumstance and his grief about it and the weeping of a young woman in identifying with the disability aspects represented in the sculpture in relation to growing up with a younger sister, stigmatized due to Down's syndrome. Another person gave a lengthy self-revelation about being gendered hermaphroditic and the social implications for her/him. Further participant /viewer insight and change was revealed in the expressions of excitement at the potential for poetic poignant revelation by a cleaning staff person in relation to her own personal 'coming up against' the medical system in relation to her disability. The stark and quiet revelation by a Native elder as he spoke before the Transformation and Healing Ceremony (during the expression in sculptural form contributed by two South Indian scholars and a Border Crossings installation at the *Artists of Conscience* Symposium in Victoria, B.C. in 2006), of his brother who died from mould inhalation illness, touched many during that ceremony including me.



An analysis through the lens of art aesthetics follows and will delve into the subterranean recesses and folds of the installation. There understandings as to how the a/r/tographic process of creating the sculptural installation, writing about it and living the research through art has contributed to the transformation of my experience of disabling illness, awaits retrieval.

## Chapter 5

**Between the notes, inside the song: an art aesthetic analysis**

*“What we need is an eye for the invisible factors that are implicated in disease. We need a soul microscope and a stethoscope that captures the pulse of meaning as well as the beating of the heart.”*  
*Thomas Moore*<sup>42</sup>

*The Song audible*

Chapter 4 and the poststructural feminist writers (Grosz, Gatens, Davis, Weedon, Moss and Dyck) offered an analysis through the perspective of being *in* the ‘tensions’ of the subjectivity, inscriptions and power relationships represented in the *bodies* of the sculptural installation *Border Crossings*. Their body/subjective focus offers a similar opportunity to scholars inquiring into bodily phenomenon such as disabling illness. The poststructural feminist perspectives provided me with a ‘frame of reference’ that facilitated my writing analysis from a body-centered position about body-centered representations/subjectivities and the multiplicity of being. A/r/tography deepened my embodied inquiry through the multiple body-centered practices as a multi-media artist, healer, nurse, writer, researcher and teacher. Irwin and Springgay (2008 in Springgay et al), in discussing the practice aspects of a/r/tography offer that: “Touch expresses active involvement with the subject matter. Touch becomes a mode of knowing through proximity and relationality and poses different ways of making sense of the world, challenging the mechanisms of visual perception. Similarly it draws attention to sensory experiences and knowledge and that is interconnected with our bodies and with others” (p. xxi). The artmaking practices that I engaged in, of creating representational three-dimensional human forms, coupled with writing/*graphy* were potent conduits of sensory, multidimensional awareness/knowledge and relationships that I possibly would not have become aware of, had I not pursued the unformed through sculptural imagery creation. That is, I do not know if two-dimensional drawings would have held the same content and impact for me, or the participant viewers. Creating and being with/among the figures of the sculpture offered an extraordinary visceral, dimensional, and transporting experience

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<sup>42</sup> Moore, Thomas. (2004). *Dark nights of the soul*, New York: Gotham Books. (P. 268).

of being a body and of being a body experiencing a disabling illness. The plethora of intersecting words, ideas, memories, people, experiences, sensations expressed in the sculpture and written about, are only a few of the awareness' I sensed 'waiting in the wings'. The feminist poststructural focus of centering on the body, one that a/r/tography embraces, has offered a 'way in' to some understanding of the subjectivities of the sculptural representations of a person experiencing disabling illness.

In this chapter I delve beyond the subterranean layers of understanding the art - *Border Crossings* and the a/r/tographic process I lived, further into less known realms through an analysis from the perspective of art aesthetic theory and a/r/tography. I anticipate the reader will gain a fuller understanding of not only how the art transformed disabling illness, but also of the value of *art as inquiry*. As with the analysis in Chapter 4, I rely upon evidence produced during the a/r/tographic process – the artmaking, the art itself, the writings through the years about the art/process, the documentation of the interactions of the art with the larger community during public/academic presentations and through the dissolution process.

During my research I have discovered that the art/ists theorists offer another perspective to understanding the ways that the body/mind/being in disabling illness can be transformed through art. I will now analyze the art and the transformation of disabling illness through key concepts from art aesthetics and a/r/tography. The key notions identified by art theorist/practitioners Elliot Eisner, Pat Allen and a/r/tographers, primarily Rita Irwin and Stephanie Springgay are: *transforming consciousness*, the eruption of *surprises*, *integrating aspects of self* and creating *disruptions and unsettlingings*.

Each of these four concepts, are integral to the a/r/tographic process. Irwin & Springgay (2008 in Springgay et al) state that the rigor of a/r/tography: "...comes from its continuous reflective and reflexive stance to engagement, analysis and learning" (p. xxix). To explicitly demonstrate how this art inquiry meets the rigor of a/r/tography, in addition the preceding four concepts as a lens for analysis, I will consider the findings to the a/r/tographic inquiry into disabling illness through the a/r/tographic concept of *renderings*. Irwin and Springgay (2008) describe renderings as "... embedded within the processes of artful inquiry" and as "... concepts that help a/r/tographers portray the conditions of their work for others". The four identified art aesthetic concepts of art as inquiry may overlap,

interface with or be contained within the a/r/tographic renderings concepts, and visa versa. Irwin and Springgay identify six renderings. The first, *contiguity* is described as “found with the artist, researcher and teacher identities existing simultaneously and alongside one another” (p. xxviii) while a second rendering: *living inquiry* is explained as “an embodied encounter constituted through visual and textual understandings” (p. xxix). A third rendering, *metaphor/metonymy* - refers to the a/r/tographers use of this rendering to make sense of the world while a fourth rendering, *openings* refers to: “cuts, tears, ruptures or cracks that resist predictability, comfort or safety.” The fifth rendering: *reverberations*: “... refers to the dynamic movement, dramatic or subtle, that... often take us to deeper meanings” and the sixth rendering, *excess*, is “that which is created when control and regulations disappear and we grapple with what lies outside of the acceptable” (p. xxx). These descriptions are scaled down from more lengthy explanations the authors provide but will serve as a compass to the rhizomatic *map* that the a/r/tographic process revealed in and through *Border Crossings* and the research process. I will say more about each rendering as examples of each open within the following analysis/discussion. Because this thesis is developed within the nursing profession by this inquirer who practices nursing, among other practices, I am identifying the transformative aspects of living the art process from a perspective of not only a/r/tography, but also art aesthetics. My attempt is to provide the reader (specifically nursing or other disciplines where art aesthetics has not been central) with a fuller understanding of the inquirer experience, and the possibilities for an artmaking-process-practice combined with nursing, writing, research, teaching and possibly other practices. The areas emerging for further inquiry will be identified and considered within the following analysis discussion.

### *The Song of songs: art transforms*

Eisner (2002 and 2008 in Knowles) identifies that artmaking can be transformational for the artist and the art viewer. Art allows a communication with the form/image that is created and the artist develops new awareness(es) and insight(s). The art allows a seeing/experiencing of nuance and what has not been previously noticed, so there is a fresh view/understanding that can disrupt and unsettle. The art and the

artmaking/writing can be laden with surprise. The *private becomes public with a resultant transformation of consciousness* as described by Eisner (Thesis p. 14-16). In multiple ways throughout the description/analysis of Border Crossings, the results of moving into the liminal space with the sculpture through creating the sculpture, dreams, filming and photographing, being with and writing, revealed *continuous, multilayered insights, perceptions and new understandings* (indicated with calligraphic font in Chapter 4). *The inquiry has transformed my experience of myself in my body and in the world/community*, and will be expanded upon in the following paragraphs. Likewise, it is through these personal experiences and insights of how living the a/r/tographic process transformed my consciousness/body/mind experience of disabling illness, that others with disabling illness might recognize the potential for themselves to transform their experience through an art/writing/research practice. The reader/viewer may also ‘project’ her/his own meaning onto the image/writing and what is personal meaning for me may or may not have the same/similar meaning for the viewer. If the viewer finds similar meaning as I the creator, then my personal art/meaning takes on a community/cultural meaning as well. The art form/writing may also become meaningful to the viewer for the meaning projected by her/him onto the art form that I created. Either way, when I produce an art form that is the result of my own projected emotion, symbolism and meaning, then my private internal world is made public and is a contribution to the culture (Eisner 2002).

*Sounds enlivening: Art Transforming consciousness*

In considering the first art aesthetic key concept of *transforming consciousness*, I look one again to the rich information the sculptural information held and revealed for examples to illustrate this concept. The following discussion will explicitly show how the sculptural installation transformed consciousness and in doing so transformed my experience of the chronic disabling illness I live with.

In the description/analysis (Chapter 4) of the installation, there are multiple ways that shifts in consciousness are noted in *calligraphic font* (that indicate insight and transformation of consciousness/body) through the sections of writing. Examples of some of the artist’s awakening consciousness are: (Thesis p. 52) *I have such a sense of working on my own body as I construct this piece – bizarre and sacred in some way all at the same time. Somehow it is*

*an honouring of myself... as no other honouring of self has been – I have to get entirely honest with myself in a new way... (Thesis p. 81) All- secrets that could possibly result in the death of my family or myself... just doing my art and revealing inner feeling, in my body/mind is equated with revealing secrets...* (Thesis p. 72) *It is through my artmaking/writing/research process that I am able to see/know/understand that ‘every system is activated and shouting’... (p. 88) I developed a new and deep level of awareness, compassion for and empathy with, those who suffered with the disabling effects of any illness and with the sense of helplessness and dependency resulting from their and my abhorrent treatment by the representatives/levels of the institution, and (Thesis p.94) Simultaneously as I constructed the shaman, I realized this journey with the mould/illness/sculpture had been symbolized in the dream several years earlier as a premonition of what was to be experienced. I wrote the dream in silver around the outside of the opening flap to the heart (dream of swimming in a dark river and robed beings with light guiding my safe landing).*

This is a small sampling of the layered and multiple insights embedded within the individual and collective installation imagery, in symbolism and metaphor. It also is descriptive of Eisner’s comment about art: “Through the arts we learn to see what we had not noticed, to feel what we had not felt, and to employ forms of thinking that are indigenous to the arts”. The multiple, rich insights that continue to emerge as I live my life, and that a/r/tographers Irwin and Springgay (2008 in Springgay et al, p. xxvii) describe as inherent in any inquiry through art, demonstrates the rhizomatic, multidimensional (including numinous, non-ordinary dimensions of experience), and transformative processes that are possible. The foregoing examples of writings from the artmaking/a/r/tographic process, extended through time since 2004, illustrates several renderings at once, all interwoven. The rendering of *living inquiry* – is evidenced in the examples “*I have such a sense of working with my own body*” and throughout the art/artist/subjectivities/other dialogue of chapter 4. *Reverberations*, a rendering that is well evidenced in the example: “*just doing my art and revealing inner feeling, in my body/mind is equated with revealing secrets*”. A further rendering, *openings*, reverberates in the insights from the preceding examples in reference to the embodied construction of a body/being -- of the different sense/experience of the artist’s own body and the self-honouring act the art construction symbolized as well as the *secrets*.

Another example of the profound effect the creative process of a/r/tography can have on human experience, and in transforming the experience of disabling illness (on an emotional/interior and physical/exterior level), from my living the inquiry I offer:

I became aware of multiple past/present interconnections that held *emotional charge* that spontaneously dissolved during the creation of the sculptural piece or writing about it - such as becoming aware of the metaphor, potency and breadth of effect held in the *secrets* (Thesis p. 81). With this/these release(s) came a felt sense of increased ease and 'spaciousness', of relaxation in my body while I simultaneously experienced an increased sense of assurance. Physically, I noticed I had a sense of increased strength and could hold my back up without the strain I had previously efforted before the artmaking/writing process. I noticed a diminishing of bodily swelling, an increased digestive ease, an increased sense of satisfaction with my life and who I am in my life/the world, despite the continued disabling bodily experience/symptoms. This bodily sensation/awareness /physiological functioning transformation experience, is similar to what I have experienced as a recipient of subtle energy work, and to what I have heard from recipients when I practiced subtle energy healing on them. I came to understand that the practice of the artmaking/a/r/tographic process seems to be a potent form of subtle energy work in and of itself.

Although for some years I have come to know my body as a resonance of spirit and my symptoms or ailments as communications of how balanced or not I was/am with the spiritual aspects of being, my experience/knowing of my body as a barometer of spiritual balance has gained in clarity and certainty that I trust. When I sculpted the areas of my body affected by the mould/mould toxins on the shamanic figure and drew those areas on a chakra 'map' (example of dialoguing with image/form), my understanding of what was happening for me spiritually, became clear. I could see the overall and specific effects in a tangible cohesive way.

This example offers further illustration of the a/r/tographical renderings of *reverberations*, *openings* and *living inquiry* as well as *excess*. The rhizomatic interconnections and *reverberations* that erupted in physical material transformation of my body, explicates the concept of *excess*, *excess* that *reverberates* on multiple levels -- physical/emotional/ spiritual/social, while *living the inquiry*. Another rendering, *contiguity*

is evidenced in the contiguous relationships of writer/artist/nurse/healer/teacher/researcher who is living/describing the experiences of the artmaking process. The *reverberations* resulting from understanding the meanings of what the *metaphor/metonym* of ‘secrets’ referred to were multiple and had transformative effects upon the researcher on an emotional/spiritual and physical level. In one small sampling of the sculptural installation, the possibilities of a/r/tography are revealed, a/r/tography transforming disabling illness.

As described in Chapter 2, Eisner says that art (making) offers the artist the opportunity to project aspects of self onto the art form and then dialogue with it. The viewer will also project their experience onto another’s art form. The artist/creator dialogue is clearly illustrated throughout Chapter 4. Artist/researcher aspects that were projected onto the art and dialogued with included identity perspectives, power relationships, underground psychological processes, gender issues, social justice inequities, ethical and human health safety issues to name a few. How are identity issues, power relationships, deep psychological process and gender concerns central to or related to the experience of disabling illness? In light of the ‘hidden in the folds’ psychological processes that transpired throughout the inquiry -- some related to past trauma, some related to complex/entangled family relationships, is there then a relationship between past trauma and a vulnerability to toxic illness or any illness? The question arises: can past trauma/stress affect immune function? Can a relationship be made with the vulnerabilities identified and the revealing/surprising psychological insights that emerged? Again, the rendering: *openings* and *excess* are illustrated as ruptures, in what is known, resulting in multiple possible meanings and questions. These questions that arise through the a/r/tographic process can be *embarkation points* as Eisner terms. Irwin & Springgay identify this phenomenon in their writing: “Meaning and understanding are no longer revealed or thought to emanate from a point of origin, rather they are *complicated* as relational, rhizomatic, and singular” (p. xxi). The insights and questions can be far reaching in terms of personal meaning as I have attempted to convey, illustrating the impact an a/r/tographic practice could have for any practitioner in her/his life/experience. Such practice opens possibilities for new questions and approaches in caring for those experiencing disabling illness. The multiple meanings span a breadth of personal/self concerns with openings and questions that are in the realm of the social and bio-medical.

For example: Is the rise in illnesses like alzheimers, childhood leukemia, various organ system cancers, asthma, renal disease, MS, Parkinsons and many other toxin related illness, due to the increasing use of toxic chemicals in all aspects of living in our modern world? Or -- How much of a relationship is there with the increasing biological toxins such as moulds resulting from - decreased building maintenance/funding/deteriorated buildings, unethical building practices that cut corners? or the non-action of representatives of the various levels of the *institution*, despite full awareness of the untoward human health effects of organic/non-organic toxic exposures maintain workers in toxic workspaces, or tenants in toxic buildings, and the increase in respiratory illness, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue and neurological or other toxin related illnesses? How at risk are women in toxin related, gender weighted, health issues (Messing notes more women have occupational respiratory illness than men) and occupational health safety air quality concerns (aging hospitals, universities, and office buildings pose air quality problems and a human health threat to occupants) that affect the community of nurses in a workplace and the larger community of any worker in a toxic building? Again Irwin (2004 in Irwin and de Cosson) reflects this anticipated outcome of meanings affecting self and community, as inherent to a/r/tography. She explains that a/r/tography comes out of action research and that “the importance of self and collective interpretation” are “always in a state of becoming” (p. 33). The understanding I take from Irwin’s writing is that - just as a person might view my art image(s)/figures and project themselves onto/into the art to dialogue with, so too may that person read of my response and dialogues with my art, and then make further projections or take further meanings for her/his self from my writings. In this way, whether literal image/word/sound/movement or metaphor, the viewer will experience an emotional response to the art and interact in some way with the art/writing/image/sound /movement/form. This was clear in the some of the public responses to *Border Crossings*, even if the response was rejection/dismissal.

I made the rhizomatic connection with my dream of the ‘dissolving of structure’ (Thesis p. 54) and saw clearly that the *metaphor* of the *interconnection of all beings* had a wide meaning on multiple levels, including my own inner/outer thought/experience, and manifestation. The sculpture took on a universal metaphorical meaning in this way- of interconnection of all beings and through other metaphors that are universal (my

understanding from a Jungian perspective). Some of those universal metaphors/symbols are the: oppressor, oppressed, mother, disabled, shaman, masculine, feminine, hermaphrodite, multiplicity, difference, otherness, water, tree, heron, water, stone, shell, inscription on and in the bodies and more. Each symbol is pregnant with meaning for the viewer/experiencer of the art installation, as well as the artist, whether or not conscious of the symbolism at the moment of viewing. The renderings - *metaphor*, *openings*, *reverberations*, *living inquiry* and *excess* are all explicated here through the process of the *contiguity* of artist/writer/researcher /nurse /healer/teacher. An illustration of the volume of *excess*, *reverberation* and *openings* follows, with some of the thought that unfolded in relation to the impact that *metaphor* has in making sense and meaning of experience.

Understanding the role of the intuitive in the art creation and viewing process, the aesthetic presence of the art, and the energy field of the art form, will assist in understanding the meaning of the preceding statement. Pat Allen (1995) explains the appearance of metaphor through an intuitive process: “The soul narrates your deepest truth through image and metaphor”. Artistic form, as Eisner identifies, emerges out of the artist’s feeling expression through the image/form and evokes feeling for the viewer. Art has an aesthetic impact for the viewer and for the artist as the artist modifies and hones the image/art form to her/his satisfaction. Eisner (2002) explains:

What is aesthetic heightens feeling. What is aesthetic is pervaded by an emotional tone made possible by the process of being engaged in a work of art. The phrase “work of art” can have two meanings. It can refer to the work of *art*, or it can refer to the *work* of art. The former refers to the product created, the later to the process of creating it. Aesthetic experience can be secured at each location (p.81).

The artistic form creates an energy field (Hover-Kramer, Shames, 1997, pp. 27-47) in and of itself. Eisner explains: “According to Gestalt theory, the forms that artists create generate fields of energy that are picked up by our nervous system, which in turn creates a resonance in the perceiver” (p. 17). The viewer is impacted by the artist’s reality/feeling. As Hover/Kramer and Shames explain: “The field can be considered a protective envelope of electromagnetic energy. We do not so much *have* a field; more correctly, we *are* a vibrant field” (p. 39). When in proximity to each other, force fields interact with each other. Is this part of the relational interchange that happens between an art form and the viewer? Does the art form imbue the artist’s *energy vibrational configuration*? or is the art

form a force field in and of itself? This is a question I can pursue but perhaps examples of the force field, that were demonstrated in the comments of viewer participants (VPs) shared during the various venues of academic/public presentations/installations of the sculpture *Border Crossings*, will offer some insight. Some of the PV comments were:

*Man (late 60s)*, tearful, “this is so powerful, the beauty of the figures and what is written on the bodies, I am so moved by it all... ”.

*Woman, (early 40s)* tearful, “My husband was injured and had a lot of problems trying to get compensation, this reminds me of how hard it was for him, for us. It is good you tell the story like this, so people can see...”

*Woman (40s, four years after viewing the installation)* tearful, “I still think of your sculpture. It was so powerful, I can’t tell you how moved I was by it and the healing and transformation ceremony”.

*Woman (30s)* Tearful... “As I was with the figures I thought of my younger sister who has a genetic illness and how hard it was for her and for me when we were growing up, all of the prejudice” ...

*Man (30s)* Moving close to me and speaking quietly “Thanks for doing this art, for showing the inter-sexed person, I am inter-sexed. It is good to see the sculpture, it is so hidden in our society. I was hoping to be able to meet people here to talk with”.

*Woman* comment in book: “Transforming your suffering into power and understanding. Lovely experience and one that encompasses more than mould”. This woman approached me 3 years later to relate she had sustained a disabling injury that would not allow her to pursue her stone sculpture practice. She remembered my sculpture/story, was inspired to find new ways to create and did. She made a point of telling me how my work/story had helped her to carry on more meaningfully with hers.

*Woman (50s)* “Your work leaves me feeling empowered to read the runes in my own body too”.

*Man* comment in book: “Informative, I am looking for answers to my own illness, saw a lot of similarities... would have felt more hope reading it all... but today is a “sic” day so couldn’t take too much”.

The preceding examples illustrate how art as research can have a potent impact upon the viewer/perceiver, as well as the artist. The way the participant/viewer engages with the art is another contribution of art to the community and culture. Art for the viewer can be: evocative of a feeling response and projection (of the viewer’s own story); healing (release of grief of the past with tears), provocative of new thought/direction (reflecting on what writings on own body might say) and an instrument for learning/receiving information (recognized some of own illness symptoms, inspired new way to make art despite disabling condition). Each perceiver of the art experienced a change in feeling and

some, in insight and awareness. With the awareness/insight of the experience of viewing the art, the viewer then, had a transformational outcome. So, it is possible that viewing art may be transformational for the viewer as well as the artist/creator.

Researching through artmaking is not linear, as Irwin and Eisner have written. In my experience it is as if ideas or inklings, hints and suggestions of ideas, are suspended in liminal and temporal space in flux and chaos, changing, re-arranging and re-ordering themselves to new and different configurations through some creative process that has nothing to do with me as an artist. Rather I am gifted with visits, senses and whisperings and awoken to the *nuance* of experience, the art leads me.

Another example of transformation for this inquirer is that my concept of the health/illness continuum has changed. This shift serves to explicate what Eisner (2002) names as *problematizing conclusions* or what Irwin and Springgay (2008 in Springgay et al) name as *openings* and *reverberations*. The illness I experience, Environmental (multi-system) Illness is contested by bio-medicine, so that the dominant (those whose views and opinions dominate practice and policy) practitioners of bio-medicine have one conclusion for me that offers no definitive diagnosis but refers to a middle aged woman, hormonal involvement and depression or other psychiatric etiology. The non-dominant bio-medical practitioners (Environmental Medicine, Occupational Medicine, Neuro-toxicologists and Mycotoxicologists) research outside of corporate incentives, and look for links and connections for physical manifestation. They diagnose: Mycotoxicosis, Mould Toxic Encephalopathy, Polysystem Symptom Complex and Environmental Illness with multiple systemic effects. I have an orientation of regarding physical problems as manifestations of my spiritual self, being out of balance. As I work with my art installation and write from, as the a/r/tographers say (Irwin and Springgay 2008, in Springgay et al, p. xxi-xxii) *the intercorporeal spaces*, rhizomatic interconnections are made from ‘an archive of body memories’ that the art piece has become. I gain surprising and penetrating insights into aspects of my being that are part of the *structure* of who I am/have become. In this way the sculpture constructed me as I constructed it. In this dynamic relationship with the art, and revealed insights, I experienced transformation of the illness. With the illumination of bringing these pieces of self from the deep folds of the sculpture, understanding ensued and my material/body/structure began to change. I could not know that would occur.

Traditional conclusions of  $x$  causes  $y$  of biomedicine have no place in this journey. The complexity is great. There are no simple answers from a mind/Newtonian science *or* a body/heart/intuitive perspective.

As a result, a further transformation of my experience of what disabling illness is, has changed and continues to change along a path of *being in* the unknown that opens to new information/directions. I now see *illness* as experience/opportunity to know self from a fresh, and deep (in the sense of moving into the unknown-unknown) perspective, always changing. Illness is neither good/nor bad, none of the dualistic attributes being ill is historically given, but it is an *experience of meaning*.

I further offer my own experience to demonstrate the multilevel transformative, consciousness shifting effect the practice of artmaking/writing can potentially have on any art/writing/healing/nursing practitioner's experience of disabling illness. From my Jungian psychological/transpersonal perspective, illness and emotion lead the 'way in' to the core self, to the body/soul and to the potential for transformation and change. When I first fell ill, illness was 'bad'. I felt so ill/bad. I felt traumatized and frightened by the multi-level, multi-system activation of disharmony within my body/being and in my external world with the multiple levels of the *institution*. As time passed and I took various actions to ameliorate the pain and discomfort with medication and through the art forms of meditation, prayer and engaging the creative energies, I became aware of a deep and pervasive grief. I felt the loss of the abilities/ways of being as the person I had identified with, the person I knew, enjoyed and was familiar with and as the nurse practicing healing/nursing, as I had known myself. It was through the interwoven artmaking/writing process that I became conscious of different aspects of the illness and its meaning to me. I became aware of the grief while living with/writing about the installation, and experienced a gradual healing of the grief as I continued to be with the art/writing/research process. I began to realize I was accepting how and who I was/was becoming, that I had let go of the person/being I was before the illness, and accepting that I could never recapture that former self except in memory. That acceptance gave way to a state of deep gratitude for all aspects of life... the abilities I do have, the love in all realms of my life sharing my days/nights. The gratefulness has become so full that I now feel grateful for this health experience that has taught me so much on so many levels, and has brought new people and

experience into my life. The new and possibility enriches me and fills me with optimism not only for myself, but also for mankind. This is how, through art, the experience of having a disabling illness *transformed* to that of living with/through/around illness.

These examples from my own art inquiry are some of the ways that art as inquiry and that artmaking/writing can transform the experience of disabling illness. Through art a present reality/question is opened to further questions and possibility, is perceived differently and through a non-linear, intuitive, rhizomatic path/non-path, new insights emerge along with new ways of perceiving/being: transformation.

Throughout the art/writing process an element of *surprise* erupts to present a new insight or direction that contributes to the transformation experience. Again I offer examples of the *surprise* from my own art inquiry.

#### *Sounds from the unknown: Surprises*

*Surprises*, the second art aesthetic concept hidden within the installation, were as plentiful as the insights that emerged. By describing some of the surprises that the installation held for me, a sense of how researching through artmaking/writing can erupt in surprise(s) or *openings* and *excess* for any person researching disabling illness through art, follows in the examples below.

One welcome *surprise* came as I searched for a method and eventually discovered through my body-centered, multiple practices way of being in the world, that I had been practicing a/r/tography for some years. I felt a sense of resonance and affirmation in discovering a/r/tography and *recognizing myself* in the: rhizomatic and circular hermeneutic process, multiple practices orientation, interpretive writing, and community orientation.

As the reader may sense, the key art aesthetic concepts of transforming consciousness, surprise, integration and disruptions/unsettling are not linear/sequential occurrences during the artmaking/writing process but are interwoven, undulating, overlapping and rhizomatic. They weave back and forth, in and out and over each other, in time/no time and space/no space/the space between. In the preceding example of how art can foster surprise in thinking, being and the research process, the overlap of coming to consciousness about an aspect of self as researcher, further overlaps with the concept of

integration of self -- the integration of the researcher self in contiguity with the artist/teacher/writer self. What also occurred for me was an integration of the writer self with physical/emotional transformation/change. This change resulted in writing becoming an activity I felt compelled to engage in, in a way similar to how I felt compelled to create through artmaking practices. All of the concepts were interwoven simultaneously, the reordering of chaos of the liminal realm, so that the artist/researcher/writer was transformed and in contiguity with the nurse/healer/teacher practices.

Researching through artmaking/writing can take a researcher to the deep recesses of the soul as Art Therapist Pat Allen describes, and from my experience, with relative ease if I compare my experience to the various body and psychotherapies I have engaged in throughout the years. Another example of the potent depth that transforming through art can penetrate to for an a/r/tographer, is offered with the following description:

Throughout my years as an artist I was plagued with the deep blues after an art show -- where I had my art on public display. In early years the blues would be accompanied by feelings of wanting to die. As I worked with my core to try to understand this paradoxical reaction to an activity that I enjoyed, seeing/hearing what my art meant for others, I could never seem to get past this post-show blues feeling that stopped me from 'showing' my art. These 'blues' I discovered were linked with another great surprise for me during the a/r/tographic process, that of the revelation (Thesis p. 81) of the secrets, from early childhood abuse, that arose as a result of threat of death to myself and family if I revealed the secrets. The link and connection was a spontaneous understanding that, unconsciously, I had equated those threats with the revelation of any secret and of course art is about revealing the *secret* unformed/internal world, (secret even to myself until the feeling/sense takes form) and making it public. The ah-ha moment was spontaneous - I understood why I felt like dying after an art show of revealing held secrets. This threat and fear permeated multiple levels of aspects of my being and I have a sense, permeated my molecular structure, physical structure/function and to the social structure of my life.

Throughout my adult years I had grappled with the illusive conundrum of the paradox of feeling so blue after an art show of doing/revealing what I loved most -- making art. I had worked for several years through various therapies and soul searching to try to shift that experience. The foregoing example illustrates the potential profundity, depth,

surprise and spontaneity for anyone conducting inquiry through a/r/tography over an extended duration of time.

The last example of the how the surprise element of living inquiry through art can open to new ideas, aspects of self, the numinous and doorways to new directions, *openings* for/of a researcher inquiring into disabling illness is detailed here:

Another surprise element for me is the depth and pervasiveness present in the Shaman archetype. Through the writing, which has penetrated further than I have included in this thesis, there is a power and multidimensionality (in the sense of numinous and invisible world as well as the dimensions of the material) to this archetype that can be traced through experience, dream and metaphor to my early years. The depth and potency of this revelation surprised and frightened me. I did not understand it and continue to seek to. Recently, I saw how the shamanic figure is an *alchemical* figure that holds the illness/difficulty to transmute it. Previously I had seen the shamanic figure as ‘holding’ the illness and not being harmed by it, so to see the figure as alchemical adds another dimension of transformation held in *metaphor/metonymy*.

Pat Allen (1995) helps me to understand the surprising aspect of this figure. She explains:

Certain images are “yours” to be expressed in your particular way while also having more universal significance. Holding both the personal and the universal aspects of the image requires practice and support; it is a dance, an ongoing alternation between the large and the small. There are pitfalls in becoming one-sided in either direction. Traditional therapists and even some art therapists tend to focus mostly on the personal meaning of a message. Jungians and archetypal psychologists have a rich view of the cultural and universal aspects of images but sometimes lose sight of the significance of an archetypal figure for the life of the individual. It is important to keep in mind that these images have an autonomous existence, a message to convey to not only you but to others as well. (p.103)

Allen’s view that the imagination is the language of the soul takes on a fuller meaning for me as I experience the numinous aspects in my art, such as in the shamanic figure. She writes: “If you commit yourself to art as a way of knowing, a point will come when certain images appear which are “numinous” or spirit-filled.... The images are signposts to the depths of your self.” She goes on to explain that: “Archetypal images emerge that help to place your personal experience within a larger context of the

imagination of humankind ... and... “can help to instruct you in the deeper meaning to your work” (p. 87).

I recognize in my inquiry the emergence of the archetypal in the shamanic figure.

Allen’s and Eisner’s writing assists me in understanding how a subjective experience of illness, exploration/expression through art with the meaning it has, moving into the depths of the artmaking process and the emergence of archetypal and numinous images, is also a contribution to the larger community/culture. The discussion earlier on the aesthetic aspects of art for the artist/viewer, of the ‘energy field’ the art image creates and how it impacts the viewer, further identifies how art as inquiry is a contribution to the larger community.

Art then, can carry the artist/writer/researcher into: the deep recesses -- the liminal aspects of being, to *transforming* illuminations of consciousness, *surprise*, and can be *integrating* to the whole personality. Just how *integration* can manifest during this *living inquiry* will be explained.

*Songs of pure harmony: Integrating self through art*

Art can transform the body/being as well, by having an integrating effect upon the artist. Allen (1995) writes of Florence Cane, an artist/teacher who was, she explains: “... among the first visual artists to recognize the paramount role of bodily experience and the integrating effect of art on mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual totality of a human being” (p. xvii).

The third art aesthetic concept of the *integrating* effects of the art/writing process that overlap with the outcomes of *surprise* and *transformation*, will now be considered. In giving oneself to the artmaking process, the integration experienced, is an aspect of how the artist may be transformed. The transformation(s), that is/are, aspects of coming to consciousness, may also constitute a surprise and overlap with the integrating effect of artmaking. As Eisner (2002) explains: “ In the process of working with the material, the work itself secures its own voice and helps set the direction. The maker is guided and, in fact, at times surrenders to the demands of the emerging forms” (p.7). It is my sense that this *allowing* and *fluidity*, as I describe my own experience of the ‘surrender to emerging

forms', allows the inner fragments and chaos to re-order and integration to occur. I draw upon the example of my own art inquiry:

Throughout the conception, creation, and writing process with/of Border Crossings; I experienced surprising, sometimes puzzling insights, awareness and transformations. Over time I had a sense of gathering 'pieces' of myself together. In shamanism, the shamanic practices are aimed at gathering or *calling back* the split-off fragments/aspects of self, the soul, that have become separated through trauma or illness.<sup>43</sup> The rhizomatic, non-linear, a/r/tographic inquiry through an artmaking process can be likened to the shamanic process in this way... in that as I came to consciousness about different aspects of my life/experience, felt bodily changes, experienced a different feeling sense about myself - at times beyond words, I had a sense of *gathering myself, my bits and pieces, past/present together into a more cohesive whole at that moment*. I felt more rooted and stronger in my sense of self, more confident in a different way than I had experienced confidence in the past.

The Shamanic figure allowed me as an artist to externalize and pull out of my interior to represent in exterior form, a visual symbolic language. Some of the historical, social, emotional, psychological, relational, bio-medical and spiritual factors related to my sense of self, and the development of and experience of disabling illness, is interwoven in this visual language as has been identified throughout this writing. The exteriorization in art form, not only allows me to 'think' or dialogue as Eisner expresses it, but is *necessary* for me to think, for this is how I am 'put together' and how I make meaning of my environment/the world. Since early childhood the visual language of putting thought/feeling into form has been a dominant form of communication and way for me to know the world and myself. When I became ill from the chemical injury of the mould/toxins, my ability to function through rational thought, linear sequencing, language and words became difficult. My brain was impacted, particularly the left-brain functions, by the chemical injury.

With some of my interior experience externalized in sculptural form, I saw what I had done was separate out some of the strands and aspects of my life experience - aspects of self and experience that I had not noticed, stood out clearly. Eisner (2002) in his

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<sup>43</sup> Mathews, C. (1995) and Ingermans, S. (1991).

description of aspects of self, coming to consciousness through artmaking he writes: “The works we create speak back to us, and we become in their presence a part of a conversation that enables us to “see what we have said” (p.11) and “... we learn to see what we had not noticed, to feel what we had not felt, and to employ forms of thinking that are indigenous to the arts” (p.12). The oppressor/oppressed dyad was representative of not only of the early struggle in childhood, but also during the mould illness experience of contesting the contested illness in relation to the various authority bodies/institution. On a microcosmic level this dyad symbolized my aggressive relationship with the mould that I was trying to ‘get out’ of my body, trying to get ‘rid’ of. I, now the oppressor, was oppressing the mould oppressor. It held a universal representation too for the larger community of the unfolding in our patriarchally structured world, where conflict is conducted in an adversarial manner from local politics to the larger world stage of humans against nature and against each other - war. However, this was not the total of my reality. I had also been gifted with intuitive knowing since my early years, so the Shamanic figure in the sculpture symbolizes another way for self, for society, to respond in difficulty and in joy and to each other.

With living the artmaking/writing process, I felt clearer and more cohesive than I had when I began the inquiry process, even though I have more questions. I felt excitement and as compelled to write, as I have from earliest memory experienced the compulsion to make art. As previously mentioned, in coming to different insights/awareness’, I experienced a sense of interior spaciousness in my body and cells... as if my breath moved into my very cells, not just my lungs. With that sense of spaciousness, was a sense of cohesion or integration of my body’s inner functioning, while simultaneously I experienced a sense of increasing inner confidence, trust and relaxation. I experienced a felt sense that my life was ‘coming together’ in ways that I had not known before, with an increased clarity of meaning, purpose and fulfillment. I felt a deep affirmation and trust of my ways of knowing and a sense of anticipation. There was a direct link and effect of coming to consciousness about some aspect of self and a corresponding experience of physiological and emotional/psycho-spiritual change. As an example of how profound the integration that came about through the a/r/tographic process can be, I offer:

As I lived the artmaking/writing inquiry, I became aware of a shift in my energetic connection with the writing, I began to feel compelled to write to understand, to explore different aspects of the installation. I realized that my artist/nurse/healer self had embraced the writer self as equally important and necessary to the process. I had integrated the researcher self. Further, I came to realize that for years on an internal level I had been casting about for ‘that something meaningful’ that I knew was related to art, but not how. I had looked into graduate art therapy and art/healing/transpersonal psychology programs but none had the ‘resonance’ necessary for me to make a commitment to their study. I realized simultaneously, when I recognized the researcher self integrated with my other selves, that it was my researcher/intellectual self I had been seeking... with the inner yearning that there was *more*. Not only was the researcher/intellectual self embraced and contiguous with the other practice oriented selves, but my intuitive self was integrated with my intellectual self. I recognized that it was necessary to have the insights, release the fears and experience the integration as I had through the a/r/t/o-graphic process, to come to this place. Does this mean then that my premonitory dream about *swimming in the dark river* (Thesis p.94) of difficulty and emerging with kind help and light, did in fact predict the illness/dark/difficulty and the light symbolizing resolution, was the discovery my intellectual researcher self? And was the *veil over the sculpture dream* (Thesis, p. 54), and the *disintegration of structure* in that dream similar to the predictive nature of the *river/light* dream? Was the *veil/disintegration* dream predictive of the disintegration of the *structure* necessary of the self I knew before the illness? Did the disintegration of my pre-illness self make space/non-space for the new structure -- of not only of coming to a place of living *with* illness in a way as opportunity not difficulty, but for the emergence of the new self, an integrated self that embraces the researcher self? Are dreams creative images, constructed by my unconscious material or something else? Are they communications from the far reaches/near of the multi-ple---dimensions of self, the numinous dimensions? Are these premonitory dreams and awareness, a part of the legacy of *living the artmaking/writing process* that opens self to the numinous? Allen’s insight informs: “If you commit yourself to art as a way of knowing, a point will come when certain images appear which are “numinous” or spirit-filled” (p.87). From another perspective Neumann deepens my understanding in his discussion of the archetypal symbolism of art: “Thus

from the very outset man is a creator of symbols; he constructs his characteristic spiritual-psychic world from symbols in which he speaks and thinks of the world around him, but also from the forms and images which his numinous experience arouses in him” (p.85). Were the sculptural images that ‘came through’ to be constructed/construct/re-construct me, numinous symbols that aroused me? And was this numinous interweaving in the transforming perhaps characterized by the integration?

This meandering, rhizomatic example taken from my own experience of living art as inquiry, into and transforming the illness I experience, is my attempt to provide the reader with a tangible sense of how art as inquiry penetrates through the subterranean layers of self and might foster an integration of the personality. The serial transformation I experienced throughout the artmaking writing process, resulted in so profound an integration that I feel I am a different person to whom I was before entering into the a/r/tographic process. I have not only transformed, I have *transcended* (see Glossary) the illness-self (despite continuing to carry injured body parts/organs and experience many related symptoms).

Because I experienced the integration of my writer/researcher self with my other practice selves, and of my intellectual/intuitive selves, is the integrating effect then in part, in the realm of the neurological? The integration of the intuitive/intellectual is an integration of right/left brain function. Can art practice effect a positive change in neurological functioning? Many of the insights and changes unveiled from the darks folds and recesses of the installation pertained to my past emotionally full/overwhelming situations. Does this resolution through art of past traumas positively effect neurological functioning? Will this resolution of past trauma through art, also positively affect my immune function? Is this what the experience of being able to hold my back up (an outcome of the artmaking/writing process mentioned earlier in the thesis) and stand straighter was about – an increased immune function and strength? These examples and questions provide some insight into how art as inquiry might *reverberate* and *open* to new possibilities through new questions that range from integrating the spiritual self to effecting unexpected psycho-neuro-immunological change. New possibilities arise for incorporating these aspects of being into an integrated wholeness always becoming.

These considerations of *integration* may seem to tie up nicely the dives, twists, turns, meanders and disruptions of an art inquiry and what is held within. There are however, *reverberations*, *openings* and *excess* that resound throughout the *living inquiry*, the art installation and my being, of *unsettling* voices and sounds that *disrupt* and draw me into new and deeper wonderings, to be expected in art as inquiry.

*Notes discordant to the ear: Disruptions and unsettlings*

Living inquiry through art/writing is a path that seeks to unsettle meaning of what is known. Springgay (2008 in Springgay et al) write that: "... a/r/tography is embedded in imagination, experimentation, uniqueness, and conjecture. It seeks to provoke, to generate, and to un/do meaning" (p. 161).

To understand the fourth art aesthetic key concept of *disruptions and unsettlings*, a consideration my art as inquiry - the sculptural installation *Border Crossings*, will illustrate specific ways that provocation and unsettling meaning might occur. The places/spaces of provocation that called out to me were those that I avoided or was slow to consider or did not write about. The Shamanic figure came to mind first and was the last figure I gave consideration to. I was aware of fear. I did not know what I would find, if there was something I did not want to know, could not bear to know. As mentioned earlier in the writing on the shamanic figure, the writing took me to unexpected places in myself, and the world. Yet I feel the exploration of the shamanic has just begun and there will be more to take up in other writing. I am aware that the unknown the shamanic figure holds continues to provoke hesitation and yet draws me to explore further. One aspect of the shamanic that provokes is the archetypal energy that it symbolizes. There are dangers in Jungian terms, of *identifying* with the archetype, of being out of balance with reality/non-reality as the *ego* becomes *inflated* (Edinger, 1972). Allen (1995) refers to this caution in her writing (p.103) and she also says if a person is able to balance the potency of the archetype, the universal and personal aspects, then what is learned from 'carrying' the archetype can be a contribution to the community.

An aspect of the installation I have not overlooked, but have not permitted my sight/pen to move toward is that there are three human figures represented in the installation. I am aware of some levels of symbolism that the number three can represent –

the trinity of: mind-body-spirit; mother-maiden-crone; father-son-holy ghost, earth-sea-sky, two parents-child and past-present-future. Edinger (1972), a psychiatrist and Jungian analyst, has devoted a whole chapter of his book to the symbolic meanings of the Trinity Archetype. He describes some of those meanings: “Trinitarian symbols ... imply growth development and movement in time. They surround themselves with dynamic rather than static associations” and “the number three is specifically associated with the creative process... Every function in nature has, indeed, the form of a pair of opposites, united by a third factor, their product” (183-183). He cites Inge who identifies the spiritual development described by mystics as a threefold process of: the purgative life, the illuminative and the unitive or state of perfect contemplation (p.183-184). Edinger further refers to Hegel who proposed a formula for understanding historical process, that of: thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. “The synthesis can then become a new thesis through which the cycle is repeated” (p. 184). There is a wealth of meaning to explore in just these few references to the symbolism of the number three. Do any of these meanings change my understanding of the meanings that have been made, that have already come forth from the figures? What further symbolic meaning might the number three hold that is pertinent to my exploration of the installation and understanding of disabling illness, both universal and personal? The unsettling/disruption in considering three became complicated recently as I re-read Deleuze and Guattari on the rhizome and their concept of multiplicity, not numbers. They explain: “The number is no longer a universal concept measuring elements according to their emplacement in a given dimension, but has itself become a multiplicity that varies according to the dimensions considered... We do not have units of measure, only multiplicities or varieties of measurement.” They write: “... it is only when the multiple is effectively treated as substantive, ‘multiplicity’, that it ceases to have any relation to the One as subject or object, natural or spiritual reality, image and world” (p. 8). What does this mean to me in my consideration of ‘three’? I would have to step outside of the familiar paradigm I have internalized of viewing/understanding the world/self through symbolism/metaphor; which I have lived since I first discovered Jung when 18, and try to understand the sculptural installation/my life/being from the concept of multiplicities and dimensions. A frightening unsettling/undertaking that could further up-end the structure of myself/life as I have known/know it - a step I know I must take.

Another example of provocation and unsettling in the installation is in the *masks* of each figure. Each mask was created at three different times/stages in my life. One was created at age 35 while in art school, another while engaged at age 42 with an art therapist on past issues, and the third at age 48 while exploring creating mask forms in clay. The masks seem pregnant with meaning and I have been drawn to work with them through performance... though I cannot know what that could be until I follow their lead. The masks have been on the figures but what effect will they have on me while wearing them? What will they reveal if I put each one on and act out what they want to perform? What have the masks to reveal to me about disabling illness? This is a highly unsettling act to contemplate that engenders fear. Feeling this disturbance, I know I must follow it.

In summary this art inquiry into how art has transformed my experience of disabling illness has yielded a stream of insights and potential new directions that continues. As I have lived the inquiry through writing and being with my art, I have experienced transformation in numerous ways as detailed in this chapter. Most notable is the experience of integration of my writer and researcher selves, with my other contiguous practicing selves, the integration that is simultaneously of the intuitive/spiritual with the intellectual/analytical. I named this transformation, the *song of my soul*, a discovery made despite travelling in the dark/unknown while following my heart/intuitive voice through art. I came through the alchemical art process to the *gold* or the *song of my soul*. It is an integration that gifts me with a sense of self and strength in that self, as I have not known before undertaking this inquiry. Concomitant with this are the perceptible physiological differences I notice in my body/being of a sense of inner spaciousness, greater relaxation, increased strength/stamina and an increased sense of confidence or at-one-ment. I notice an easier relation with my ill body, an acceptance of: my bodily differences; co-existence with the toxins/mould; the body, emotional, social, inter-personal losses and an acceptance of a new identity. I realize I have *befriended* the mould and have a peaceful existence with it and my interior self, and with the larger external community. The journey is not over as Irwin predicts, inquiry through art evokes new questions. The questions arise and a new aspect of the journey begins.

*The pitch changes, the song discovers new breath, new air streams...*

As Irwin and Springgay have elucidated, art as living inquiry seeks to unsettle and disrupt. To illustrate this disruption further in this inquiry, I have from the outset attempted to grasp and understand the meanings that the sculptural installation held for me about disabling illness. I peered through my familiar lenses of viewing: tacit bodily/intuitive sense; Jungian and symbolic meaning; subtle energy/esoteric knowledge; some aboriginal knowledges and through a less familiar/recently learned social theory/feminist poststructural theory on the body, and through art/arts-based research/a/r/tographic theory. Through each of these multiple lenses of considering the sculptural installation, the theme and rhizomatic thread of new awareness/insights that constituted a change in consciousness, came to light. These insights were reflected in changes in: feeling/attitude to self and others, behaviours, wellbeing, comfort/discomfort and in the experience of being in a body, in the world. The insights that provoked multiple levels of change (physiological, emotional, structural etc. as described throughout Chapters 4 & 5), some simultaneous, constituted the transformation that the art installation/writing process has been the catalyst of. Many of the insights that emerged through art as inquiry, could have meaning and benefit for others with disabling illness. It is apparent throughout the detail, examples of the inquiry process, and the analysis, how potent and transformative artmaking can be to human consciousness, human physiology and experience.

The process of inquiry through a/r/tography clearly demonstrates the potential of this method of living inquiry through art/writing practice, for those in nursing and other practice based disciplines, whether academic faculty or student. The potential is rich to research not only disabling illness experience but also any *lived experience* question in the depth provoking and disruptive way that a/r/tography offers, to challenge what is known and perceived.

This method of inquiry through art has been and continues, rich and potent. The multiple levels of transformation of my experience of disabling illness through art has been my focus, and as I have been writing I notice... the questions murmur and suggestions whisper ... what if...

Throughout the conception, construction, working-with, writing with/about the installation, I have been aware of the synchronistic *eruptions* of meaning and

interconnection through dreams, meetings, books that come to me or happenstance conversations. Some of the experience has been what I can only describe as numinous or “the intervention of the divine” (Neumann, 1959, p.7). Neumann declares: “Not only *is* the creative situation numinous; it is also experienced as such, for all existence was originally shaped by experience of the transpersonal” (p. 84). He further writes: “Artistic creation has magic power; it is experience and perception, insight and differentiation in one” (p. 86). I have been aware that the installation had its own life and led me - I have followed. This Eisner says is characteristic of art as inquiry. Through the years previous to creating the installation, in earlier art, many of the creations gave me information, or introduced me to someone before I met them. Through those earlier experiences, I had come to understand my *art as the interface of the body and the numinous*. I became newly conscious of that as I worked in a compelled way with the sculptural installation. My *work* during this inquiry has been to quiet my rational mind, to be able to hear/see/understand what was wanted on an energetic as well as material world level, to hear my intuitive voice. At times I had a sense of being accompanied. At times I had a sense that the sculptural figures were not symbolic, projected aspects of me, but entities in their own right... what if ... and this is the most potent, *disruptive* question to arise: What if the figures created are embodied spiritual presences? The leap to this question, an example of the *renderings* of *reverberations* and *excess*, is instigated by the synchronous arrival of a new book: *Embodiment: Creative Imagination in Medicine, Art and Travel* by Robert Bosnak. Bosnak’s premise is that dreams and creative images of the imagination are in fact “images that are embodiments of their own intelligence”. He explains: “The independent intelligence of image-presences, not as sub-personalities of the dreamer, but as beings in their own right, slowly began to dawn on me in private conversations with Henry Corbin ... “ (p. 10). Bosnak, a Dutch Jungian analyst goes on to explain: “In the same way that dreams, phenomenally speaking, are self-contained worlds within which we dwell – not contained within an overarching space beyond the dream – when we participate fully in a substantive image, we are bodied forth by it, we become *of it*” and “An embodied image comes to life by possessing us. Upon being absorbed in its medium, we become the medium of its epiphany”. He further explains: “Such an embodiment of substantive imagination is, however, not the expression of part of *our* subjectivity” (p.21).

Bosnak's perspective on dreams and creative images of the imagination puts many aspects of the meaning I have made of my art installation into question. Deeper levels of *reverberation* and *excess* unveil new questions: *Is this a new tonal range in the song for me to explore?* Is the installation – the individual figures and collectively, an embodied image by Bosnak's definition? What meaning will Bosnak's *Embodied Images* (EI) concept have for art representation, to my understanding of illness and transformation that I accessed through art images? What meaning does the EI concept have in relation to my concept of power? Does this perspective have a relationship to my sense of feeling 'accompanied' throughout my art inquiry journey? What new understandings could this lens offer of understanding disabling illness through art? What meaning does this concept have in relation to my projected subjectivities? Is the installation still *leading* me with this *provocative eruption* of a new lens through which to view? Is what the installation figures have conveyed to me about each of them as individual entities, or about my projected subjectivities, or are they one and the same? What new understandings will emerge in relation to energies/intelligence flowing through me by viewing my art/experience through the EI lens? I have just begun to read Bosnak's book, but this provides a clear example of the possibilities for *disruption and unsettling, reverberations and excess*, that art as inquiry provokes.

*The Song of the Soul, is the song of the heart*

As Eisner, Allen and Irwin & Springgay have explained, when art is created, the community as well as the artist benefits from the created image, much as do those hearing bird song, benefit from the song. The song may be received as plaintive, sad, or joyous. The recipient hears the song with her/his heart. Arthur Frank (1995), a social scientist who writes from his ill body experience, echoes this message of community benefit beyond the benefit to the storyteller:

Ill people's storytelling is informed by a sense of responsibility to the commonsense world and represents one way of living *for* the other. People tell stories not just to work out their own changing identities, but also to guide others who will follow them. They seek not to provide a map that can guide others - each must create his own - but rather to witness the experience of reconstructing one's own map. Witnessing is one duty to the commonsensical and to others (p.17).

The sculptural installation was a story in 3 dimensional form, that told the story as a community group and through the individual figures in text, image, posture, relationship, scale, physical and energetic presence and expression. Art as inquiry has the potential to transform experience. From my own artmaking/writing inquiry experience, the song of my soul, my heart's song, is the transformation I experienced that facilitated my feeling/experience of a deep, resonant joy in the multiple practices of art, nursing/healing, researching/writing and teaching. Through this artmaking/writing inquiry I have experienced an integration of what seemed to be disparate and unknown parts of myself that are now synthesized and transformed into a communicating/relational /fluid structureless/structure. This integrated self, with the accompanying emanation of vibration - the images, sounds, movements, perceptions, thoughts, dreams and energetic field emanations, interacts continuously consciously/unconsciously with the visible /invisible environment in a more cohesive, confident, and trusting way.

Throughout the art as inquiry process the art has led the way. The images out of liminal space/no-space became the art form, first with the shamanic figure leading the way to the community of figures. The sculptural installation moved through a process of many private and public installations<sup>44</sup> in six academic conferences, one American Scientific Research Conference, an Institute that interfaced with the academy and community and an international art conference on political awareness and conscience. The art itself transformed through a public performance Healing and Transformation Ceremony; a class in an academic *Engaging Disability Institute*, titled: 'Under the surface of disabling illness' where students found places of feeling-resonance within the installation, and then removed a piece of the sculptural figure as a catalyst to create their own new art piece on what disabling illness was for them. This was the beginning of a two-year dissolution process that eventually completed, after the art-i-facts were removed, in a ceremonial burning and dissolution ceremony. Through each installation, presentation and ceremony/performance that the art was called to, I transformed as the art transformed. I was not the only person transforming, participant/viewers also transformed.

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<sup>44</sup> See Appendix B – The Life of the Sculptural Installation

As described earlier in Chapter 1, art as inquiry has meaning for the greater community. During the creating and multiple presentations of the sculptural installation *Border Crossings*, participant/viewers - lay persons and academics alike, disclosed: feeling responses, their own stories of pain around their own or a family members disabling illness, gender difference experience, struggle with the *institution* and what they might write on/in their body if they were to build such a sculpture. Some were tearful and expressed revelation, insight and a will to new action. The art installation was provocative and healing (as expressed by the viewer) for the participant/viewer.

Strikingly for me was how the *visual imagery* and *energetic presence* communicated beyond any of the literal inscriptions on the figures. The universal language of image demonstrated how vital a form three-dimensional imagery is, as an interface between the academic and larger community. The lay public and academics alike could understand, and comfortably engage in discussion about the inquiry without having to know a specialized language.

Further, there is an *opening* to potential opportunity and benefit for not only the nursing academic community/students, but also across or trans-discipline. The opportunity is opened through the a/r/tographic inquiry process, to gain a deepened understanding of self/other and to explore a potent method of researching potentially any *affective* experience. The next and last chapter I will devote to identifying ways that art as inquiry and specifically a/r/tography might offer new possibility to nurses/nursing in clinical practice, education and research.

From my experience with inquiry through the multiple practices of a/r/tography, the questions that come forward for me to pursue with further inquiry, are the areas that I have *avoided* focusing on in the sculpture- the shamanic figure, the masks, the rhizomatic theory of Deleuze and Guattari and the archetypal aspects of representation. I am interested in the numinous aspects of being that emerged through the a/r/tographic process however rather than pursue the numinous directly, I will notice further spiritual emergence spontaneously rising out of the a/r/tographic practice. The resonance in the body of physical/physiological changes that occur with new consciousness/awareness, and insight through art/writing/ multiple practices, excite me. I think about how this interaction/relation might be taught to those who would like to pursue the integration of an

art/writing/healing practice as a path of inquiry. How can this knowledge be applied to nurse/client/patient situations? I can see potential for mixed method studies that could measure for example - outcomes (physiological affects of specific art experiences) of people experiencing various health conditions such as depression, heart disease or diabetes, in relation to an engagement in art process. Because I noted physical/emotional changes in my body through the artmaking process- increased relaxation, less swelling/fluid retention etc., questions arise such as: What is the effect of the artmaking process on the insulin levels in diabetes, on the blood pressure readings of those with heart disease, and on the serotonin levels of someone with depression? This is an area I will devote more thought to and confer with other more experienced researchers as to possibilities.

The experience of presenting the art installation in various academic and public venues with the poignant response of viewers has inspired me to imagine how nursing research might interface with non-academy/public system nurses, and with the people they serve, all in contiguous relationship - as opposed to the researcher/researchee model that has dominated research practice.

I have worked as a nurse-psychotherapist, and taught art and dream workshops (in employed position/private practice) incorporating art expression. An art activity engages a person in a non-linear way, through the body/emotions and the mystery/unknown. The unexpected can appear in an art form as it did when I conducted the workshop on disabling illness employing my own art form, the sculptural installation, as a catalyst for thinking about disability and illness. Each student revealed a work of art that embodied feeling/thoughts about or related to, disabling illness. All students identified new insights and perspectives about disabling illness, many shared emotional vulnerability around their art piece, and described an emotional shift with creating... several resolved some pertinent action about some aspect of their life related to disabling illness. This experience is a catalyst for me to think of ways that might make art expressive practices meaningful to the education of nurses and other practice/non-practice oriented professions. Art brings embodied/subjective/heart perspective to a historically disembodied/objective/mind pursuit that the academy has historically thrived in. Art brings an opportunity to the

academy, not so much to dissolve the binary of heart/mind but to open the binary to a fluid communication that affords greater possibility and provocation of accepted norms.

My immediate intention is to pursue inquiry further into the Shamanic figure art/expression taking into consideration the mask and archetypal aspects as I proceed. I anticipate a book on the a/r/tographic inquiry into the experience of disabling illness may result from this future pursuit. This thesis is coming to a conclusion and I am just beginning my heart's call -- that of this practice-based inquiry through art/healing /writing/teaching, in a new and conscious way, with a newly integrated body-mind-spirit that has emerged out of my art inquiry through *Border Crossings*. The journey is not over, but this segment is completed, with several paths now open before me. What I am acutely conscious of is that I have been researching from/within my body, intuition and from/within my heart. The world is new for me as I research from my integrated wholeness/strength, compared with the former way of living by accommodating, translating and adjusting to the dominant positivist ways of being in the world. My experience throughout this life and particularly since becoming ill has been on of a sense of 'swimming upstream'. Now, I have a sense of *flow* with everything -- coming out of the integration that has occurred for me with the artist/writer/researcher/healer/teacher selves in contiguity with each other. The swimming upstream was not against the external social current as I had previously perceived, but against the current of the discordant and separated aspects of self. Now there is a sense of being at-one with the world/self and I am centered in my heART.

Heartmath<sup>45</sup> and *The Biology of Transcendence* (Pearce, 2006), informs us that the Heart and Brain are one. Embryonically, the Heart develops first and all other neural and other tissue out of that. The heart is *connected* to every tissue in the body. This opportunity afforded by a/r/tography, for living inquiry where we bring our research to our bodies and our bodies to our research through writing, art and nursing/healing /teaching practice, is an opportunity to research not only from our body but also from our heART. It is an opportunity to enliven and research from the heart/brain in every cell of our body. It is an opportunity to bring our heart knowing, compassion and love, which is for me the

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<sup>45</sup> Science of the heart, 01/03/10 retrieved from: <http://www.heartmath.org/templates/ihm/downloads/pdf/e-books/science-of-the-heart.pdf>

core of nursing, to those we serve, to further those we serve and to the methods and knowledge we seek, to serve others better. Researching through art, from the heART/brain is an opportunity to *disrupt and unsettle* the known nursing world and practices. It is an opportunity to break new ground, to create new *openings*.

## CHAPTER 6

**Potential new melodies... Implications for Nursing***A time for song in nursing*

As a nurse/healer and artist I have always felt *outside* of nursing, that I did not ‘fit’ in the technical, primarily logical milieu/structure that did not embrace/acknowledge the creative/intuitive/spiritual of those we were caring for or for ourselves as care-providers. I felt outside of nursing and at the same time, I practiced within the profession of nursing, never rejecting it because I believe that the relationship of the nurse with the person being cared for, is the relationship that can be pivotal to the person’s maximized health and well being. The boundaries of nursing are expanding to include the *healer* role that incorporates various touch or hands-on interventions such as Healing Touch, Reiki, Acupressure and Shamanic practices. Nursing, simultaneously, is also more actively engaged in expanding the practice role of the nurse within the Bio-medical model of technical, diagnostic and treatment skill perspective. The movement and growth in nursing is one of increased heart/intuitive and mind skills yet each seem to be separate streams of learning with little integration. The Policy and Practice aspects of nursing are yet another learning stream.

As a learner/practitioner/educator who craves an integrated body-mind approach to delivering health care, where my creative/heart centered contribution is valued rather than rebuffed, my inquiry into disabling illness through art has given me a window into the possibilities for a more integrated mind/body/spirit approach to nursing education, practice and research. As the analysis has demonstrated, inquiry through art into disabling illness has opened to multiple thresholds of new knowledge that is: personal/ physiological /emotional/psychological/transpersonal/spiritual; bio-medical/toxicological /immunological/neurological/environmental/occupational; ethical; social justice and activist explicit and aware; numinous and transformative. The inquiry process in and of itself was compelling and nurturing for the researcher and has fostered intimate, sharing community interface encounters. The art inquiry has contributed to knowledge of how art can function as a research tool for inquiry into lived experience/disabling illness. The inquiry transformed the inquirer’s experience of disabling illness and provoked questions,

feeling expression and new thinking/action for viewer/participants. As a result, because of my experience in interacting with the participant/observers of the art - in academic and public spaces, the inquiry experience has caused me to wonder – How might community understanding of disabling illness be enhanced and extended through art as inquiry? How might art as inquiry interface with and enhance an exchange between the academy and the lay public, or provoke a change and/or transformation for individuals/community? Can *art as inquiry* be as potent and integrating at multiple levels for the community and the individual researcher, as it has proven to be for this researcher? What potential does art as inquiry, specifically a/r/tography, offer to nursing?

Nursing is a practice based, body-centered profession; we work with ourselves and others from/in/through the deepest states of our being and human experience. Getting into the folds and liminal spaces is requisite to understanding ourselves/others, those we work with/for, and in defining what is needed - to know who we are, how we are to respond to others in meaningful ways to identify new means of educating, researching and providing quality, caring service. Having experienced art as inquiry, a/r/tography and through that experience, accessed the deep recesses of my own being -- the affective, liminal and soul realms, I have come to wonder how such inquiry might bring new melodies, new songs to nursing. Might inquiry through an art/research/teaching/writing practice, contiguous with our nursing/healing practice, help us move beyond our historical tendency to not acknowledge our own pain, fear, sadness and discomfort while facing the trauma and challenges of providing care to those in difficult circumstance? Might art as inquiry, specifically a/r/tography, serve as a means to support students of nursing to face the emotional impact/trauma they might experience in response to the inevitable exposure to suffering/client difficulty, by providing a tool that could assist them in processing their feelings as they live their nursing practice(s)? A/r/tography by my experience facilitated my self/other consciousness. Considering this, could nursing students/practitioners who integrate an a/r/tographic approach bring new insights and consciousness to the practice of nursing and care delivery? There has been what I view as a sense of ‘safety’ in focusing on the ‘facts’ and technology, the logical/linear, and not addressing the repressed emotional component resulting from the reality of a type of practice that evokes pain and suffering in us as human beings and nurses. Such repressed pain and suffering impacts us personally

and professionally and may manifest as stress related illness, burnout and in increased sick time or may even result in leaving the nursing profession. Could a/r/tography offer nursing in all areas of practice a new extended practice that might potentially ameliorate these difficulties all too common to our profession?

I do not call Nurse Educators/Researchers/Practitioners to become art or psychotherapists. Rather, I wonder - because the nature of the practice of nursing is a body-centered, emotion-charged practice, if a committed practice incorporating an art/research/teaching/writing inquiry might have a valuable place personally as well as professionally for every nurse, whatever her/his practice setting, whether clinical practice, education or research?

Jean Watson's Caring Model offers the openness to move into research that disrupts, and expands the boundaries and knowledge, such as art inquiry, specifically a/r/tography, does. Jean Watson's theory and foundational *Transpersonal Caring Relationship* – that “seeks to connect with and embrace the spirit or soul of the other”, most accurately reflects my concerns and values... she describes it as a framework “that embraces and intersects with art, science, humanities, spirituality, and new dimensions of mind-body-spirit medicine and nursing evolving openly, as central to human phenomena of nursing practice” (p. 349).

#### *A/r/tography, a first verse*

A/r/tography seems a perfect fit for the practicing nurse, nurse researcher or nurse educator. A/r/tography as identified earlier in this writing is practice/touch based and nursing does encompass multiple practices such as: acute care or community health nursing, forms of healing - Reiki, Healing Touch, Shamanism, Acupressure, writing, teaching and researching. For those nurses who already engage in a practice of some art form whether, music, painting, dance, quilt making etc., easing into a/r/tography as inquiry could be a smooth transition. Those nurses who are not practicing an art form need not lament for it is conceivable that any person can take up a commitment to process art and incorporate that practice commitment, along with nursing practice(s) into a/r/tographic practices of writing/teaching. An art practice-based inquiry such as a/r/tography focuses on *process* and not product. Art as process is not about becoming a great artist but is about

moving into an art practice process, extended over time, with self/other through art/writing/research/nursing and teaching, whereby each practice is in contiguous relation with the other. Learning a process approach to artmaking - whether painting, drawing, collaging, theatre, quilting, dance, poetry, photography, is comparable to learning meditation. Michele Cassou (2001) and Pat Allen (1995), who have developed a *process* approach to painting/artmaking, document the depth and profundity of this way of artmaking. Art offers a threshold to the multiplicity of knowing/being, to the wisdom and untapped knowledge that resides in each of us. Art in my experience can open the artist to a threshold into unknown realms.

What could an art practice-based inquiry such as a/r/tography offer nursing? It could offer:

- A potent option to research *lived experience* phenomena, that opens a possibility of reaching into the depths of subjective experience, with the potential for transformation through art, and a multiplicity of knowledge revelation(s). A/r/tography offers the opportunity to enter experience through the body/emotions and the subjective.
- A form of inquiry that disrupts accepted and ‘trusted’... possibly ‘static’ knowledge to bring new dimensions to multiple aspects of nursing knowledge, practice and form-researching through art opens up multiple meanings and evokes emotion and visceral response.

A/r/tography Irwin describes: “is inherently about self as artist/researcher/teacher yet it is also social when groups or communities of a/r/tographers come together to engage in shared inquiries, act as critical friends, articulate an evolution of research questions, and present their collective evocative/provocative works to others”<sup>46</sup>. By extending the practices to include nursing, nurses in acute care/community health, education and research could enjoy the benefits of sharing their inquiry with their nursing colleagues. A/r/tography could further offer nurses:

- An opportunity to be ‘in community’ with fellow nurse/artist/researcher/teachers in a different and connected way... which in turn has the potential of increased life/job,

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<sup>46</sup> September 12, 2008, retrieved from: A/r/tography website: <http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca/Artography>

satisfaction/fulfillment, excitement, joy and new knowledge production. These qualities have the potential of lower nurse burnout or loss of nurses to other professions or countries/provinces.

- Because a/r/tography is relational and community focused (Irwin and de Cosson 2004, Springgay et al 2008), there is potential for nurse researchers to collaborate on a level playing field that includes and spans the academic community, various service or governmental agencies and the recipients of service, in research projects. (The ease of academic/public interface during the presentation of my art inquiry is an example). There is potential to erase the duality that exists between academic and community, to create a collaborative open flow of inquiry where the researcher/researchee duality does not exist.
- The potential of a new form of relationship based on heart-full interaction, with those whom nurses provide service to, is possible. Relationships within nursing, and the bio-medical model are steeped in patriarchal structure and practice, where much is unconscious and internalized. The potential for the arts-based practice of a/r/tography to disrupt those traditional, static relations and forge new pathways to different modes of structure/non-structure is high since a/r/tography provokes and destabilizes the boundaries of the known.
- A/r/tography empowers the individual to know that many answers lie within... (demonstrated in examples from my art inquiry) the individual can become more present, attentive/responsive, with reflecting upon the reflections, and more conscious. Increasing consciousness affects the body and all relations. From my experience interiority is as relational as exteriority as they are not separate, but an interconnected experience of inner/outer/outer/inner as a mobius (Grosz, 1995, p.116) in an intersecting, rhizomatic, undulating dance. The individual, in working with questions through an a/r/tographic framework, can be empowered by being in a place of choice, with increased understanding of self and others.
- A/r/tography as a method of living inquiry, could open the space for research in the transpersonal, numinous and consciousness areas of study. Already the a/r/tographer inquiring through/in the liminal space, is akin to the shamanic practice of the shaman

travelling to the non-ordinary realm, so shamanic practice/experience could be introduced into the a/r/tographical realm as a *practice*. Nursing has moved toward and embraced various subtle energy practices, for example, Reiki and Healing Touch. With these and other, expanded practices of the nurse, new approaches to responding to human health issues are possible. A/r/tography offers the openness needed to research through such *non* bio-medical model associated nursing practices and could open the possibility of inquiry with those experiencing illnesses such as mental illnesses like depression or mood disorder in an entirely different way, with the possibility of new and divergent forms of knowledge being produced. The possibilities are enormous for researching health/wellness, community/structure, personal power/relational and consciousness issues in entirely new ways.

What would it be like if?

- Nurses on a unit, or group of teachers/students/researchers practicing a/r/tography, took their client conundrums/research question/teaching/learning dilemma to their easel, camera, dance or preferred art form, to try to understand the situation from a different perspective? They would return to each other to share their experience, insights and speak of possibilities for a new approach to the question at hand. The potential for a *living practice* that avoids entrenched and stale approaches, that nurtures presence, thoughtfulness and innovation is possible. This could also occur as a group experience over a set period of time - as a few hours or daylong (or longer) workshop or seminar. A mutually agreed upon question or intention could be set, with each member taking the question to their corner and art practice, returning in time to share and reflect upon the new knowledge and experience.
- What would it be like if a person being cared for in a Care Center was surrounded by nurturing, life-affirming images and the available technology offered melodic, harmonious music/imagery/stories with tech tools, and art materials, to guide the person to enter into an engagement through art with their deep self in relation to their illness? Where the nurses were coaches or mentors and teachers guiding their artful self/client care? What might the recovery outcomes be like? With such an

engaged relationship between the nurse and client, what effect would such mutuality have on each person? And on the quality and directions of care?

Arts-based research provides an opportunity for nurse researcher/educator/practitioners to enter experience through the body/emotion with the potential of multiple knowledges that could not otherwise be accessed through a rational/linear approach. It offers the researcher increased awareness and a refining of affective, intuitive, aesthetic and relational knowing (Leavy 2009). Inquiry through artmaking/writing is a generative methodology rendering multiple openings of possibility, complexity and discovery. A/r/tography being practice-based and engaging simultaneous, multiple practices contiguously in *liminal* space, as well as being a *living inquiry* through which knowing is always in a state of *becoming* (Irwin), has the potential to be the vehicle that transforms nurses/nursing and carries it to a new era of new conceptions, and possibilities. A new approach, new way of seeing and understanding is necessary to meet and adapt to the challenges of this rapidly changing world. Art may be an opportunity for nursing, a heart/body/subjective oriented practice-based profession, to meet and guide the coming challenges by researching and producing knowledge through, from and with the *heART*



Figure 18 The Buddha in the heart of the Shamanic figure

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## Appendix A

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## Appendix B

The *Life* of the Sculptural Installation -- *Border Crossings*:  
Exhibitions and Ceremonies

*Border Crossings* -- the conceptual, figurative sculptural installation that became both a framework for my exploration of disabling illness and the data, through an a/r/tographic -- art/research/teaching/writing process, guided me not only in what details to incorporate into the art itself but also seemed to lead in terms of where it would be presented and in what form (poster, spoken, visual). The venues listed are in sequential order of the 'life' of the sculptural installation along with some signposts of my growing awareness as an a/r/tographer.



Figure 19 Adult Education and Research Conference, University of Victoria, May 2004

- May 2004, *Social Justice and International Adult Education Research Conference*, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC. *Border Crossings* was installed for the duration of the conference in the concourse of the Education building. Participant viewers were invited (through signs placed on the floor) to walk in among the figures and read what was written on and in (under the flaps) the bodies (figures). The presentation of *Border Crossings* at this conference illustrated how this work and potentially other art forms, are vehicles for the dissemination of knowledge, awakening awareness' for the creator and the viewer/participant (VP) who responded to the diverse writings, power relationship representations and focus on disabling illness with an emotional response. VPs were invited to write a comment or impression in a book placed on a table near the installation or to email me.



**Figure 20** The Gender, Sexuality and Health Conference, Simon Fraser University (Harbour Campus), Vancouver, BC.

- June 2004, The Gender, Sexuality and Health Conference, Simon Fraser University Harbour campus, Vancouver, BC. The sculpture was installed in a large room that acted as a through-fare for conference attendees. This presentation revealed in addition to the insights above, the dynamic intersection of multidimensionality in the parallel degree of interest/meaning to the academic and as doe the lay/public. An emphasis of a political/personal meaning was most evident in the comments of lay and academic VPs, revealing the sculpture's potential as an instrument of social activism and change.
- November 2004, *Graduate Symposium: Research, Practice, Experience and Process*, Human and Social Development, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC. Poster Presentation: *Power relations and the experience of disabling illness*. Images/text of *Border Crossings*: a figurative, conceptual sculptural installation with an open ledger and invitation to comment. One graduate student (of approximately 30 in attendance) and 2 professors commented.
- November 10-11, 2005. *Illness and the Contours of Contestation: Diagnosis, Experience, Policy*, Studies in Policy and Practice, University of Victoria, Dunsmuir Lodge, Sidney, BC. Invited International participants from diverse areas of interest in contestation of illness met to share research, discuss and formulate new questions and directions. I learned greatly from the presentations of this diverse group, particularly in a connection with a Worker's Compensation specialist. My work was offered in the lounge where participants took their breaks. It was presented in the form of catalogues of images and writings about *Border Crossings* - the art process and related to the understandings garnered up until then. The participants engaged in conversation with me either while perusing the catalogues or approaching later with specific comments.
- April 2006, *Council Gove Conference on Consciousness: Seeding a Coherent Future*, Centre for Energy Medicine, Council Grove, Kansas. Preparing for and engaging in this gathering of international thinkers, artists, healers and scientists, moved me through doorways of my own limitations into new imaginings and possibilities of the power of the creative to transform. A 5-minute introduction to the 5-minute video on

- Border Crossings* - presented to an audience of 125. On one of the 5 days, I presented a 'break-out' session on: *The interface of art, the body and the numinous*, with a discussion and image examples of this interface. A lively exchange with 6 people ensued
- October 2006, *Victoria International Arts Symposium: Artists of Conscience*, Human Rights Pavilion, Government Street, Victoria, BC. During a month long exhibition of the installation *Border Crossings* that included a looping video of the process of creating the installation, with symbolic meaning, the sculptural community moved into a new phase through a *Transforming and Healing Ceremony for All Beings*. The art during this public presentation was highly significant to me in that an academic art inquiry was presented in a public gallery context with a meaningful interface between academic and lay public. It was important to me that my work be available to and possibly understood by the larger non-academic community, as well as the academic. The figures of the installation became transformed both metaphorically and literally. As the figures, their placement and the whole community was symbolic of individual, internalized process projected out onto the larger society in the dominator/victim model or dualistic *split* (society historically and continues to function in), the Transformation and Healing Ceremony was also symbolic. The Ceremony symbolized the healing of this *split* in human consciousness and social construction that manifests as *them/us, rich/poor, conscious/unconscious, smarter/dumber, more valuable/less valuable, separate/united, mind-intellect/body-nature* and so on. It was a Ceremony that symbolized not only another level of my own individual healing of this internalized *split* (identified as part of the illness process I experience), it was also symbolic of the healing of all beings, of that which separates us from *knowing* our Oneness with each other and with all beings, visible and invisible. The Ceremony description follows. The material changes are documented in figures 21 (before) and 22 & 23 (after). At this international conference, aware of my own healing and transformation, I was inspired by the sculpture's need to change and transform. An invitation was made to friends, wise elders and the public to join me in a Ceremony of Transformation and Healing. The Coast Salish Elders, who know of the Oneness of all

life through their living of Oneness (see Atleo), cleansed and smudged the participants, made prayers and spoke words that reflected both the visible and invisible world voice. I explained the personal healing journey significance and the symbolic universal meaning of the installation. Acknowledging the power of thought, word, intention and action to *transform and heal*, I invited the participants (about 30) to join me in holding thoughts for positive intention and healing for all beings and to write words of like intention (with markers provided in gold and pink – the colors symbolizing universal energy and heart chakra energy respectively) on any part of the sculptural body- earth, water, figures that they chose. Meanwhile I took white tissue covered with gold stars to symbolize golden white healing light, held the intention to heal and positively change, and then washed (glued the tissue into) the broken/diseased/impoverished/powerless areas inside the bodies with the transforming light. Following the Ceremony the installation community *changed their relational positions* from peripheral shaman/heron/tree locations and conflicted power struggling oppressor/marginalized figure locations *to a cooperative, collaborative circle formation within a circle of cedar boughs (symbolizing the inclusion of those of the invisible world with those of the material world)*. Through the years since this ceremony, people who were significantly impacted by this ceremony have sought me out to tell me about their experience or to have discussions about the transformational effects of such acts. One woman found herself moved to her core with the smudging ceremony and then further moved at being able to take a marker and join in writing positive healing messages for the world and all beings. She expressed strong emotion as she shared this experience and tears welled as she spoke.



**Figure 21 (above) Artist of Conscience - Transformation and Healing Ceremony *before* transformation.**



Figure 22 Artist of Conscience – *Border Crossings* figure placement *after* transformation.

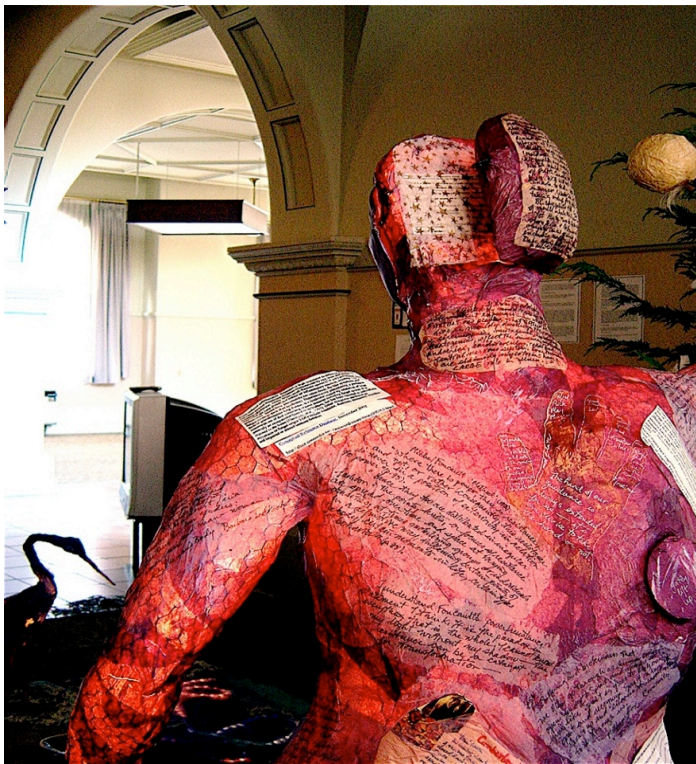


Figure 23 The Shamanic figure revealing neurotoxic brain effects ‘healed’ with gold starred tissue paper.

- January –May 2007, Engaging Disability 2007: A Disability Institute, Human and Social Development, University of Victoria in collaboration with Page’s Resort Marina, Gabriola Island, BC. *Border Crossings* was installed in the Resort’s vacant Dive Shop cum Art Gallery called the SandStone Studio. This was in my own home community so I felt vulnerability and strength at the same time in ‘putting my work out there’. There were mixed PV responses from valuing and appreciation to abhorrence and fear.



**Figure 24 Border Crossings at the Sandstone Studio, Page’s Resort And Marina**

- June 4-15, 2007, *Under the Surface of Disabling Illness*, a 3-hour experiential, creative expressive workshop during the Engaging Disability Summer Institute course on Disability at the University of Victoria, Victoria, BC. During this workshop I installed *Border Crossings* in the classroom to use as an embarkation point for the students

- (about 10 and 1 professor) to engage with their own notions, feelings and experience pertaining to disability. *Border Crossings* – the installation was set up and writings about the process with the sculpture were mounted on the wall. After an introduction to an experiential approach to having students involve their bodies through art expression in considering Disability, they were prepared by guiding them to quiet their mind and bring a focus to their bodies. They were then invited to mingle with the sculptural community and pay attention to their body/feeling response when they found a place of resonance/emotional charge with the part of the installation they were relating with. Students were instructed to hold a focus on that feeling/body sense, and were invited to cut out or tear off a piece of the sculptural figure to use as a *seed* for their own new art piece. Each student would take their feeling/seed from the sculpture to their table and choose whatever art materials called to them. Several materials were available for them to use: clay/tools, paints, paper, papier mache, glue, wire, colored tissue paper. Each student created an art piece and shared with the group in a debriefing of the experience things like: what the experience was like, what they resonated with and how this experience helped them to think/feel about disability differently. The sharing was non-directive and students seemed brimming with desire to share.
- July 2007, University of Victoria, Interpretive Inquiry Course – upon request, the 3 human figure representations of the installation *Border Crossings*, were brought into class (despite having pieces torn off from the Under the Surface of Disabling Illness workshop) for the students and professor to explore/experience. The students and professor actively engaged with the figures, asked questions and shared comments. Because so many questions pertained to the sexual explicitness of the figures and particularly the size of the shaman's penis, I again was brought to attention about – difference, as revealed in the installation and reflected in the class and in what I became aware of in myself... my own lack of discomfort around nudity and dual sexual representation in one figure. In fact – not only did I not feel discomfort, I felt relief at being able to see/be with this material form/reality.

- July 2008, Dissolution Ceremony. Over the course of two years the sculptural installation murmured of the need to transform, change, dissolve. My body/being was changing and shifting, so were the sculptural figures. This process began as the sculpture led the way with the idea of the previous described workshop... where pieces of the sculptural figures were removed as catalysts for the new art of the students. With the installation back at my home and in my studio, I slowly began to be with the installation through further documentation and dismantling – the idea of a ceremonial fire came to mind a year or more earlier... now my task was to dissect the figures and remove the environmentally hazardous pieces – the rope lighting, while leaving most of the figures intact. I did remove ‘art-i-facts’ that called to me – writings, the heart and in July 2007 *Border Crossings* was ready for its dissolution. Being July and dry, I waited for rain and a dry space in that wet period. With the approval of the Fire Chief, I began the process that was intuitive- the installation seemed to want to be enshrouded in white capes. Draped in white capes the figures were placed in a circle embracing each other, in the burning area on our property, smudged, and then anointed with melted bees wax. My partner and both of our cats were part of the ceremony. I built a small pyre around their base, including cedar and sage boughs. The fire was lit with prayers and the ancestors fed as the fire gained momentum. We all remained through the burning... I chanting and drumming and documenting intermittently. See Figure 25, 26 & 27.



**Figure 25 Robed sculptural figures prepared for burning/transformation ceremony.**



**Figure 26** The Dissolution Ceremonial Burning of the sculptural installation *Border Crossings*.



**Figure 27** *Border Crossings* trans-formed – the charred remains.

- June 4, 2011, Building Connections: Nursing's contributions to health research, School of Nursing, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC. My presentation: *The HeART of Nursing: the joys and difficulties of conducting an arts-based inquiry*. This 20-minute presentation included a 5-minute video of *Border Crossings* - in text, and spoken word, as a research process. About 10 people attended with an interested response of comments and questions.

## Appendix C

### A Glossary of Terms

The following glossary is intended to provide the reader with meanings that the following words hold for me at the time of writing, similar/beyond or different than as defined by a *standard* dictionary. The meaning of the following words is not static, but change, shift, and transform as I change, shift and transform... here are their meanings in the *now*.

*Depth or deep* – In the material or manifest reality world depth/deep may refer to the sense of layered, striated subterranean ground or levels, such as the layers of the earth that penetrate through to a molten core. Refers to degrees of dimensionality and interiority, of moving/not-moving through interior dimensions -- dimensions that are not of manifest ordinary reality, that are recognizable/non-recognizable and that are known/unknown. An experience of depth may include a sense of the known unknown, the unknown known and/or the unknown unknown.

*Dimension* – An interior, experiential state of perception/knowing/not-knowing that may or may not have multiple qualities such as sound, image, temperature, texture or shape. The experience of dimension is the experience of knowing/perceiving on one plane but not necessarily in a line. A dimension may take the form of a spiral confluence or undulating wave. (I do not know enough about Deleuze and Guattari's meaning of *dimension*, to know if my meaning is similar or the same. Determining what they mean will be a future pursuit.)

*Energy* – The experience of a formless form such as a subtle flow as a gentle breeze, an invisible push/pull, a rising/falling hot or cold sensation or an inaudible sound to name a few descriptors. Perceiving energy is the perception of an ever-moving flow and interface between, among and through all experience from barely perceptible subtle to coursing, burning, racing, pulsing, gushing hot or cold and all temperatures between. It is a perceiving of the formless form, the unrecognizable.

*Manifest reality* - The experience of forms and structures that are mutually recognizable to others - such as another person, a mountain, an animal, a concept, an organization or any experience of the known world that is shared by others. It may be synonymous with *Ordinary reality*.

*Multidimensional* – The experience of many dimensions at once, that may be intersecting, parallel, interfacing or eddying in confluences, such as the sea with the winds and the tides. I think of multidimensional as kaleidoscopic in that the intersections, interfaces and confluences of dimensional seems to also to include reflections of facets of what seems to be one thing, but may be something altogether different. The multidimensional is an

interface/intersection/confluence of known/unknown perceptions/experience and knowledge(s). When I use the term I am including not only the physical human concern/social/cultural/educational /historical material reality influences, but also include my experience of other perceptual realities that have been part of my knowing since childhood. The perceptual realities include spontaneous clairsentient and clairaudient experiences, premonitory dreams and intuitive sensing that later proves accurate.

*Multiplicity* – The condition of multiple ways of being, perceiving, knowing, experiencing and dimensional interface/intersection/confluence all at once. A person may or may not be aware of many of these aspects of self as multiple -- in fact it is unlikely that any human being can be aware of the extent of multiplicity because the numbers intersecting dimensions are so enormous, so many unknown and continuously changing – becoming something else, that fully knowing the multiplicity is not feasible.

*Non-ordinary reality* – The world or reality entered into when a person intentionally enters via a shamanic trance - by adhering to specific protocols, into an invisible realm, that is as real as the ordinary reality/realm. The non-ordinary is not confined to the ‘rules’ of perception or experience that the ordinary/material realm subscribes to. Extraordinary and magical events and meetings may occur -- such as flying on the backs of animals or birds, or flying along side creatures or persons, or meeting people known or unknown and having conversations with them. In this realm birds, plants and rocks may engage in conversation with the traveller or behave in ways that in the ordinary realm we are unfamiliar with.

*Ordinary reality* – The usual world shared by each person with others, while being in a waking state, in material reality. For example: The experience of physical structures, organizations, groups, and all forms of the manifest world.

*Psychopomp* – an agent who acts as a conveyor of souls from one state/world to another – conscious/unconscious, life/death, dreaming/waking or ordinary/non-ordinary. Hermes the Greek messenger God is one well-known symbol of the psychopomp, or Mercury in Roman mythology and the dolphin is an animal symbol.

*Rhizome* – As a gardener, I know a rhizome as a plant that multiplies by sending off lateral underground stems to form tubers or a clump of roots with each tuber or root clump producing foliage above ground. An example is couch grass or bamboo. They crop up at unexpected places, at unexpected times and cannot be controlled.

*Shaman*- A person who intentionally enters into non-ordinary reality for a specific purpose on another’s behalf, has experiences there that result in a change or transformation/trance-transformation whereby the new information is brought back to ordinary reality and contributed to the person/community.

*Shapeshifter* – In the shamanic realm, a shapeshifter is one who can transform or shift-shape from one form to another, for example -- human to animal, animal to difference animal or plant etc. As a shamanic practitioner I merge with the energy of my power animal and for a journey/that time become that animal energy and so in a sense shift my

shape from human to animal. As an artist working with ‘energy’, that perceived but not seen or formed and bringing it to form I am engaging in a form of shape---shifting. Throughout the life of the installation, the installation shape-shifted as did I, and as I shifted – shape, so did the art.

Song - The *song* is a metaphor for the shaman singing the soul fragments, separated and scattered by illness or trauma, back home. The song is a metaphor for any art form – in this inquiry, the sculptural installation: *Border Crossings*.

*Trance-formation*- living in the liminal/in-between space as art-maker/researcher/healer /nurse/writer I recognized the similarities to the liminal space I go to in shamanic practice, in trance while journeying with my power animal. A shamanic practitioner may make use of the trance inducing implements of sound- drum, rattle, song or movement – trance dance. The trance inducing implements assist the practitioner in entering liminal space – where the shaman engages in activities/quests on an invisible plane to return with new awareness or trance-formed/transformed with the new knowledge.

*Transcend* – To go beyond transforming - changing from one way of being to another, to go beyond a former state or way of being/knowing, to completely catapult the limits or boundaries of one state/way of being to another.

*Transformation* – A change from one state or way of being/experiencing, to another, following the gaining of new insight or understanding. The transformation may be in the body mind or spirit realm or woven through some or all dimensions of being. For example: from an even, balanced feeling state, to one of expressing grief or joy or anger, a perspective change from one to another – ie. fear to trust, chaos to order, or anxious to relaxed.

*Transpersonal* – A state of knowing/ being that goes beyond the personal, material to the spiritual, subtle energy or multidimensional awareness/way of being /knowing.

*Unmanifest* - that which has not emerged in form such as a thought, concept, or physical tangible experience or thing. The unmanifest is not tangible and not describable in words. It may be sensed as a nuance without form.