

SEEMING THROUGH TIME AND SPACE:

*a body's voice amidst an ethos of online
calculability and standardization.*

**Presented by
BARBARA DORAN
Sydney College of the Arts
(SCA).**

“Different aspects of the world come into
being through interaction of our brains
with whatever it is that exists apart from
ourselves and precisely which aspects
come into being depends on the nature of
our attention”.

(MacGilchrist 2010 p38).



FETAL- BARBARA DORAN 2009

KEY CONCERNS

An **artist's voice** – autoethnographic observations.

- what happens to us when we participate in being **creative?**
- Looking for a connecting framework – transcending stereotypes around creativity and sensory specialization.
- **Educator considerations** – learning, creativity, sociological imaginations and the world's we foster in a **digital age.**
- Polarised experience as a litmus for identifying potential blind spots in grounding innovation and creativity in education and cultural organisation.
- Broadening 'value' and space for creative practice in education and beyond.

OVERVIEW

- What is an **EEEM**? Creativity, art & phenomenological intention.
- **Online teaching** experience with **no face-to-face contact**. Imbalance - **intensely cerebral** & leaning towards **digital accounting**.
- Reflecting upon cultural infatuations with **measurement** as form of **surveillance & conditioning (educating) body/mind**.
- Iain MacGilchrist - cultural malaise & **left hemisphere hijacking**.
- Ian Hacking - bio-politics & attachment to **categorization, calculability and standardization**.

MY ARTISITIC PROCESS - I CALL AN EEEM

AN an Embodied Ethnographic Exploration of Matter.

Seeks awareness of **multivalent, embodied** responses emerging through **daily activities** that shape, retain and change cultural patterns.

Body holds primacy as the medium of experience.

My photographic artworks are **situated narrative responses to lived narratives** that are simultaneously personally, socially, ecologically and materially embedded.



AN UDDER DELIGHT - BARBARA DORAN 2006



PUBLIC PRESENCE BARBARA DORAN 2006



BRING HOME THE BACON
BARBARA DORAN 2006



MAJOR MINOR BARBARA DORAN 2007



HAND MAIDE BARBARA DORAN 2007



CINDY SHERMAN



MATTHEW BARNEY



SHERIN NESHAT

Location of an
exploration (*in a particular
time and space*) brings
forward narrative
habitats
or
combinations of mediums,
materials, people, ideas &
environments and
emergent states of being.

**I'M LOOKING TO
LOCATE MYSELF/
OURSELVES IN
CONTEXT.**



EXTERNAL ENTITIES - BARBARA DORAN 2012



ENGAGING IN AN EEEM SEEKS.....

- the **FEELINGS** inside **MEANINGS** contained within the membranes and materials of :-
- Costume/dress - Food - Architecture
- Organization of our bodies in space through rites and rituals of the sacred & profane (everyday).



- **QUALITIES and SENSATIONS** or **SOMA** of experience and context = as important as ‘naming’ the ‘distinctions’.
- E.g. smell, taste, tactility, visuo - spatial orientation, temperature, muscular, organ activity, gesture, intonation.....



- founded in **'being in'** experience
- attuning consciousness to **synthesis of bodily responses** (including cognition) as it responds to context and nuances of shared space
- a constantly shifting search for **DYNAMIC HOMEOSTASIS.**
- **reflection** upon **experiences** of the **quality of awareness** distinguishes from the **object of attention &** helps **overcome** predilections of heritage and improvisation as a shape shifter.



An EEEM = transdisciplinary approach which seeks to:-

“To seek to understand the whole through grasping its essence or core”
(Brown p 73).

- Includes the voice of the researched
- Emphasizes social interaction as a collective process of building knowledge
- Retains conscious exploration of the vital effects of interrelationships.



- Education can be viewed as an inherent dynamic of cultural patterning.
- confirms and conserves those distinctions we draw out in assembling a sense of order and meaning to our existences.
- *(ideas influenced by anthropology, sociology, social and cognitive psychology -theory of the mind. key theorists - Geertz, Douglas, Moscovici, Brown and Turner, Varela and Thompson).*



THIS WORK EXPLORES THE:

- embodied dimensions of a culture that has been organized around standardization & calculability
- AND
- traits intrinsic to the producer : consumer cycle of capitalism while toying with the language & gloss of “VM” visual merchandising.



THE EXPERIENCE

- Lectures via podcast - main assessment = multiple choice exam, scanned & tabulated via digital processing.

Teaching with absence of:-

- bodies and related cultural and personal context
- feedback –no space for interpersonal connections especially non verbal communication cues e.g. facial responses, tone of voice.
- providing person ‘situated’ feedback.

OUTCOMES

- Students accounted for and valued as a number.
- Feedback asked for contact.

LOSS OF

- The person and personal
- Education as a mentoring and grounding process of knowledge creation over information accumulation.
- Collective, interactive visceral space - for learning & reflecting.
- Diminished Right brain's role?



CAPACITOR DEVELOPMENT - BARBARA DORAN 2012



AURAL TRAUMA - - BARBARA DORAN 2012



OLAFACTORY HEMORRHAGE

ACTUALITY OF:-

- sitting for long hours with single focus- talking to a white wall
- Reach of digitization - down to the sound waves of my voice.
- Feeling of cerebral heat and disconnection with my body - especially olfactory - smell and taste.
- Confined tactile and sensory experience.
- Longing to move in open natural light, air and sound.



REFLECTIONS.....

Intense sense of my role in:-

- Distilling information & converting it to audio digital sequences (pod casts).
- Developing systems of classification to survey performance.
- Instilling skills that would reproduce information distillation & acceptance of depersonalization.
- Perpetuating a culture of administration and managerial - not only in my role but in the roles my students would practice professionally

DESPITE the content of the course teaching for CONSIDERATION of the PERSON & RECOGNISING DIVERSITY.

RESPONSE.....

To **re-embodied** the materials

- With students in later courses folded all the exams into origami arrows.
- Made them into various costumes and head-dresses
- Created, performed and photographed a archetypal narrative of this cultural pattern.
- Ponder this cultural pattern as one many possibilities.





“Tradition is not only a way to see and act, but also a way to conceal. Tradition consists of all those behaviours that in history of a social system have become obvious, regular and acceptable. Since they do not require reflection to be generated, they are invisible unless they fail.

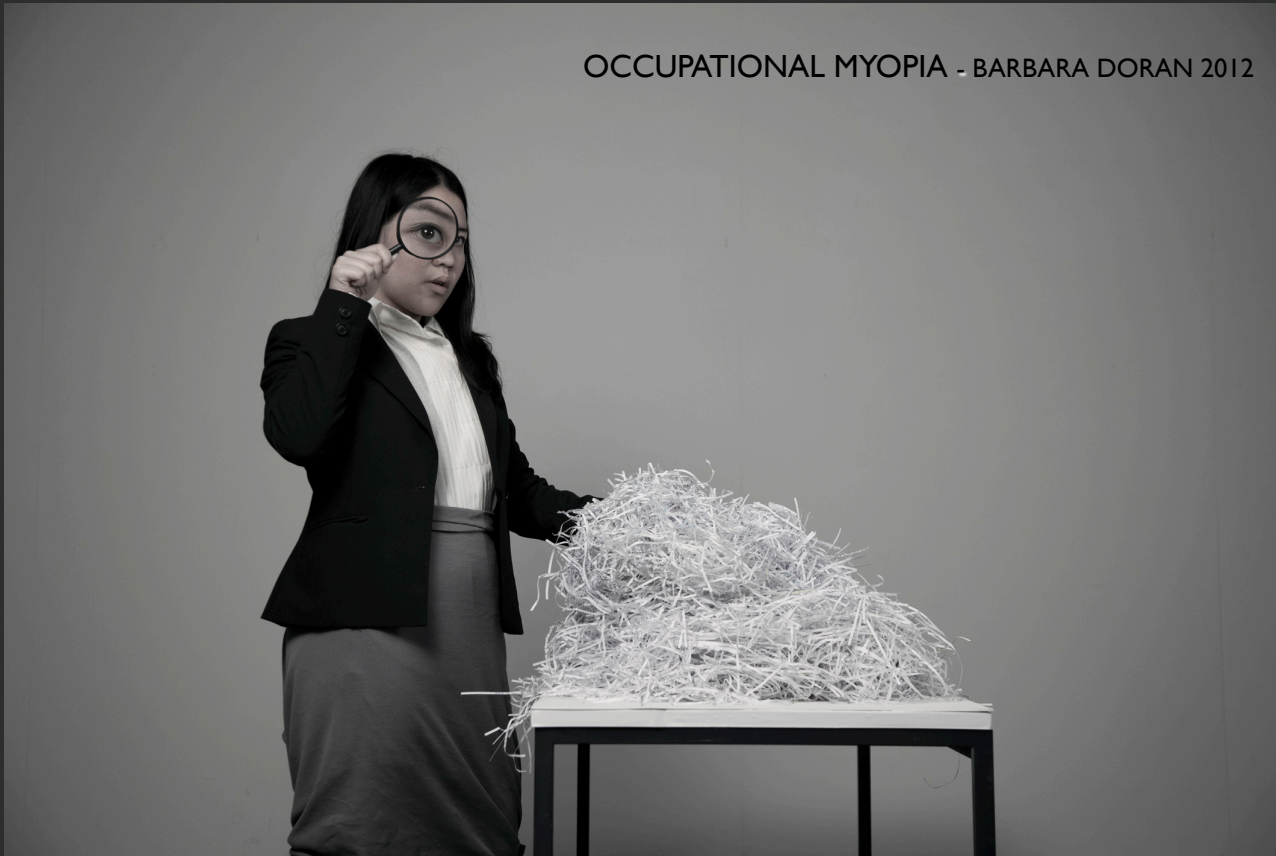
Human cognition as effective action pertains to the biological domain. But it is always lived in a cultural tradition. Cognition does not concern objects, for cognition is effective action; and as we know how we know, we bring forth ourselves” .

Varela & Thompson p244

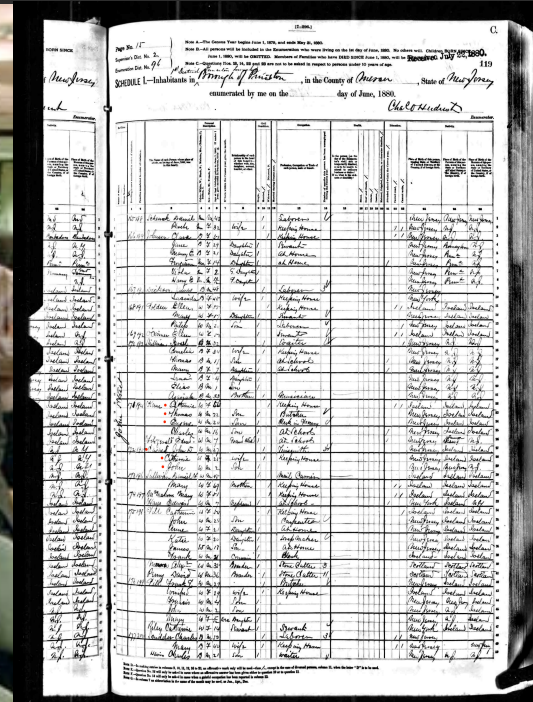
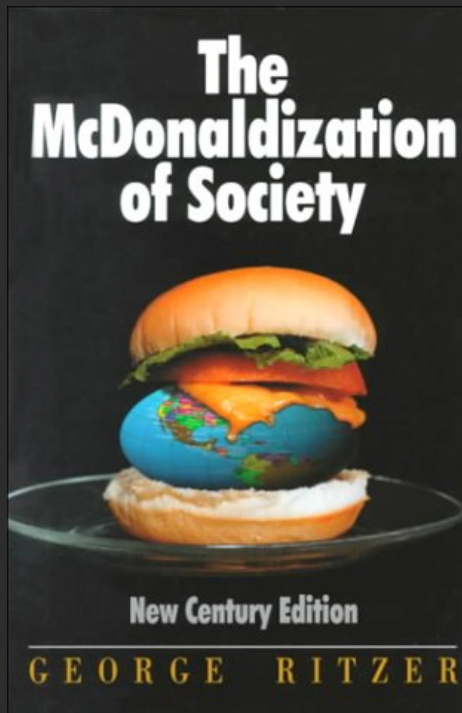


Finding ourselves in our bodies? Vectors to transcending:-

- body as a machine - politics of anatomy & the human body / appropriate bodies
- social injustice and preferred bodies (feminism, racism, queer theory and health).
- limitations of mechanistic science - land use / city planning, agriculture/environmental management, population health



- we (particularly in Westernized cultures) are descendants of a world that has been shaped by values giving precedence to the realm of the mind.
- perhaps it is not DUALISM itself (assigning difference) but “how” we play this out – the kind of mind we give life to?



- sociological critique identifies the influence of standardization and calculability towards widespread “Mcdonalidisation” and the dispersal of power through cultures of managerialism.
- BUT the roots of this can be linked to earlier patterns cultivating a culture of categorising & categorized public bodies.

IAN HACKING'S 'footnote' to Foucault's biopower examines the surveillance of biopolitics of the population.

- sharp changes 1820 – 1840 era of enthusiasm for counting and easily categorising people = avalanche of printed numbers.
- accounting and categorizing bodies unable to work.
- Collecting & interpreting data (statistics the moral science) put in place bureaucracies which could go on functioning on their own.
- *A dynamic that helped shape preferences for the left hemisphere??*

MICRO ACCOUNTS -BARBARA DORAN 2012



THE LITTLE PEOPLE - BARBARA DORAN 2012



- Changed the feeling about the sort of world we lived in .
- New ways of conceiving a person & classes of people (e.g. links between education and crime).
- Birth of mechanical manipulation of data e..g Computing Tabulating Recording Company → IBM.
- Established theoretical and practical reasoning for professionals when confronted with an individual body.
- Ken Robinson (The Element, 2007) echoes this is his critique of the education system and orientation towards “industrialized” hierarchy of skills.

IAIN MACGILCHRIST

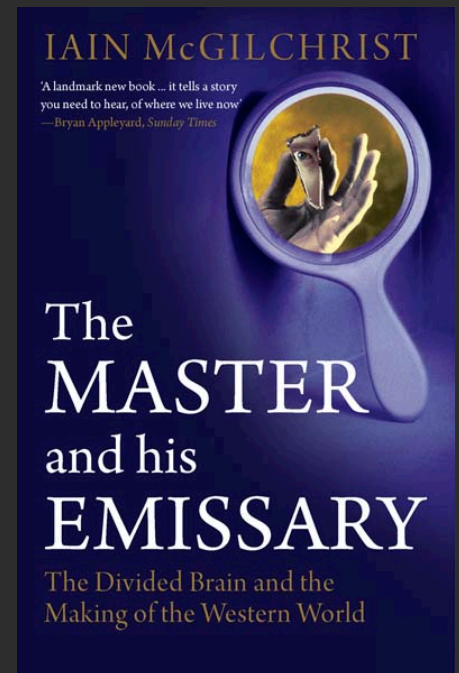
Hemispherical differences in how we attend to the world

- Proposes that we have progressively shifted towards left hemisphere dominance where the right hemisphere has been deliberately handicapped.
- The right hemisphere has been portrayed as providing a '*bit of colour to life*'

BUT

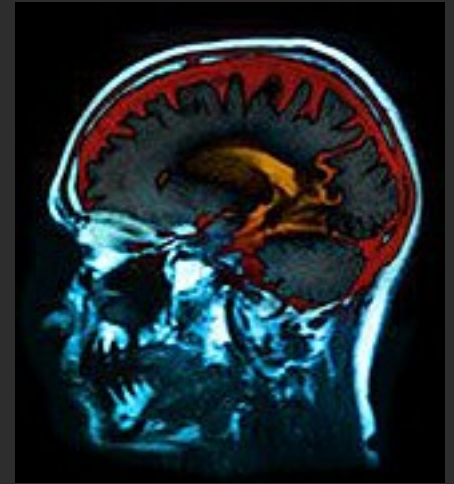
its role is far more extensive.

- Argues - processing should be **R→L→R**
- **Master & his Emissary**
- **NOW the Emissary as Master.**



• **VERY BRIEF SUMMARY - LEFT**

- Literal, explicit
- Believes itself
- Prefers to focus on it has makes & what it knows
- Use focus —main concern is getting & making
- Localised attention - preferential/ predictable
- Serialises events, short term view.
- Deals with what is known and familiar
- Drawn by expectations & is self referencing - can only re-represent
- Has great inhibitory power over RT in corpus callosum
- Categorises through abstraction - abstract classes of things
- Concerns itself with both left and right of perceptual field
- Less interconnected to the sympathetic nervous system, less emotive.



VERY BRIEF SUMMARY- RIGHT



- Brings something other than what we know
- Alertness, vigilance, sustained attention
- On the look out – open to possibility
- Relates to what it would be like in other modalities – what it feels like i.e empathetic
- Relaxation permits expansion of attention
- Creativity – looks for union of things
- Grounding and integrating concerned with relations of things
- Concerns itself with both left and right of perceptual field
- Longer working memory – space /time
- Verbal and visual
- Specialises in non literal aspects of language – underpins humour & metaphor
- Can only give what it presences, deals preferentially with actually existing things –as they are encountered

REVEALS.....

- links between left hemisphere patterns of attention and **biopolitics of the population.**
- links to **pervasive culture of managerialism** and **educational affections for digitization** in cultural organization.
- Dilemmas about **space for embodied learning** in higher education.
- Considerations for **blended learning and** facilitating new kinds of **cognition** and **social order?**

*Is **art** key to generating **complex knowledge** of and from the **body and integrated learning?***



“The great shock of twentieth century science has been that systems cannot be understood by analysis. The properties of the parts are not intrinsic properties but can be understood only within the context of the larger whole.

Systems thinking is contextual, which is the opposite of analytical thinking.

Analysis means taking something apart in order to understand it; systems thinking means putting it into the context of the larger whole”.

(Capra 1997, p30).

Art and creativity:

- Founded in a **phenomenological** relationship with the our bodies e.g. music, dance, performance and in visual art, material intersections.
- Encounters **cognition** as **distributed** throughout our **nervous system** .
- Forms an **integrative** role within and without – e.g. **interpersonal** neurobiology – mirror neurons, mimetic role of observing, doing and connecting to others.
- Release of oxytocin in ritualised, art making activities – counter balances stress produced by cortisol and **enhances bonds of attachment** important in **stabilising social relations**.
- **Relaxation** linked to greater **creative activity** and production of **alpha waves**.
- Accommodates **pre frontal cortex** to **limbic system** connections.

See Thompson 2005, Hass-cohen & Carr, 2008, Seigal 2010, Sternberg, 2010 & Dissanayake 2012.



- **HOW** we 'digest' is vital.....

Challenge for learning in a digital age involves:-

- using technologies to open up space for embodied learning that is distributed throughout our nervous system.
- fostering interpersonal and empathetic connections grounded in a material and virtual sense of being.
- Evoking understandings of living systems and complexity.



The challenge is two fold:-

- To expand understanding of and value in, how the creative process works

AND

- To foster situations where creativity can be engaged in with aspirations that extend beyond the language and being of calculable outcomes.

THANKS

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