

## *Reviewing as Responding*

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The trouble with writing like Barbara Chancellor's is that it raises the "r" word—rigour, calling into question, for some readers, on what grounds, within which field, using what epistemology, which methodology, does the work stand, is it situated, located? These days it often seems that writing, not unlike rigour, is an elusive notion—less Saussurean dyad, more Peircean triad, further becoming-signifying emergence. So what does it mean to write today? Is there a singular way of writing "academically" so inured that, to those bound by convention, anything otherwise is sloppy rather than slippery? Are there multiple ways of writing suggesting possibly incommensurable practices in endlessly emerging writing milieus?

In support of Barbara's approach, I make plain my own view through performing reviewing~responding<sup>1</sup> in writing as expressive practice. For example, in this instance my writing interpolates my reading with a view to modifying another('s) writing and elaborating further reading, and so on. Elsewhere, this reviewing~reponding practice (Sellers & Sellers, 2008) has attracted comment as "remarkable because of how much it differs from the typical academic disagreements journals sometimes publish..." (Greenwood, 2008, p. 336) and for encouraging others' generative ideas.

I wholeheartedly recommend *Cheonggycheon Streaming Currere* to readers because it exposes them to what was characterised to me as "an unusual paper" (Osberg, 2009 personal communication). Relevance to readership is a recognised criterion for submission selection. When I first read this submission I was engaged by the articulation

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<sup>1</sup> I use the ~ tilde symbol to link words that I treat as recursively co-implicated and find problematic if separated; learning~teaching is another such set.

of what I saw as transnational curricula matters. However, without diminishing that transnational interest, further readings which foregrounded streaming *currere* as pedagogical placings inquiry with its geophilosophical turns towards complexity in simplicity, affirmed for me that *Complicity* is the paper's appropriate place. I declare this with a view toward what Mark Bonta and John Protevi (2004) call "a geography of complex spaces" (p. 32) in their discussion on Deleuze and geophilosophy and the problem of conceptualising self-organising systems in highly structured socio-economic political realms. Then what is geophilosophy? As Deleuze and Guattari (1983, p. 196) remind us, *what* is not the question, so much as *does it work and if so how?* These are the inquiries Barbara attends to in ways that do work geophilosophically and I will attempt a brief writing here about why I think so and of my reading about how she does the work.

### Cheongycheon Stream as Geophenomenon

The opening paragraph of the paper introduces us to Cheongycheon stream as a Korean geophenomenon dating from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century continuing to the present. In other words, seeing the stream as a geophysical-temporal space experiencing continual change. This experiential phenomenon is adopted and adapted to help us appreciate how what we desire so longingly in what we term structure is other than appearances would have us believe. Articulating and appreciating such views has been my work for some time recently, and like Barbara I have found it lonely and frustrating. Lonely because one needs to initially walk these paths mostly unaccompanied to experience them, and frustrating because then there is a paucity of language to enable discussions of the complexity of experiences with others. To ease these burdens, I look to gatherings of prose, poetry and picturing (songs even), which Barbara characterises as generative experiences she found in reading my work (Sellers, W., 2008). In turn I too encounter generative experiences in her confident assemblages of text and picturing in prose, poetics paintings and photographs.

Reading this paper invites very different ways of approach, and, I hasten to add, there is for me no one or correct way! Rather than setting out to read, I prefer to scan the whole text and pictures for haps<sup>2</sup> (words-phrases-images that loosely interconnect and enactively suggest different ideas about engaging spaces) and to jot or doodle my responses as they emerge. This suggests to me a topography for the writing and gives me a sense of the undulations, shapes and forms that I am reading in~over~across. With a sense of topography I am able to seek out constitutive, comparative and contrasting features and characteristics to understand sense states, and their similarities and differences, states near equilibrium or approaching tipping point for example, and there are just such examples within this paper: "No wonder I've had to struggle to make meaning! Each of the clusters of memory I have drawn upon...connect and entangle in may ways, so attempting to understand pedagogy of place in a linear deductive way has

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<sup>2</sup> See Brent Davis (1996) for an elaboration on haps and enactivism (p. 257), and Deleuze and Guattari (1987) on haptic space (p. 492-3).

proved impossible” (Chancellor, p. 24). I often indicate my ways of seeing using doodles; in this case I found some of the words in the opening paragraph resonating with the second page of the paper in the following way (Figure 1):

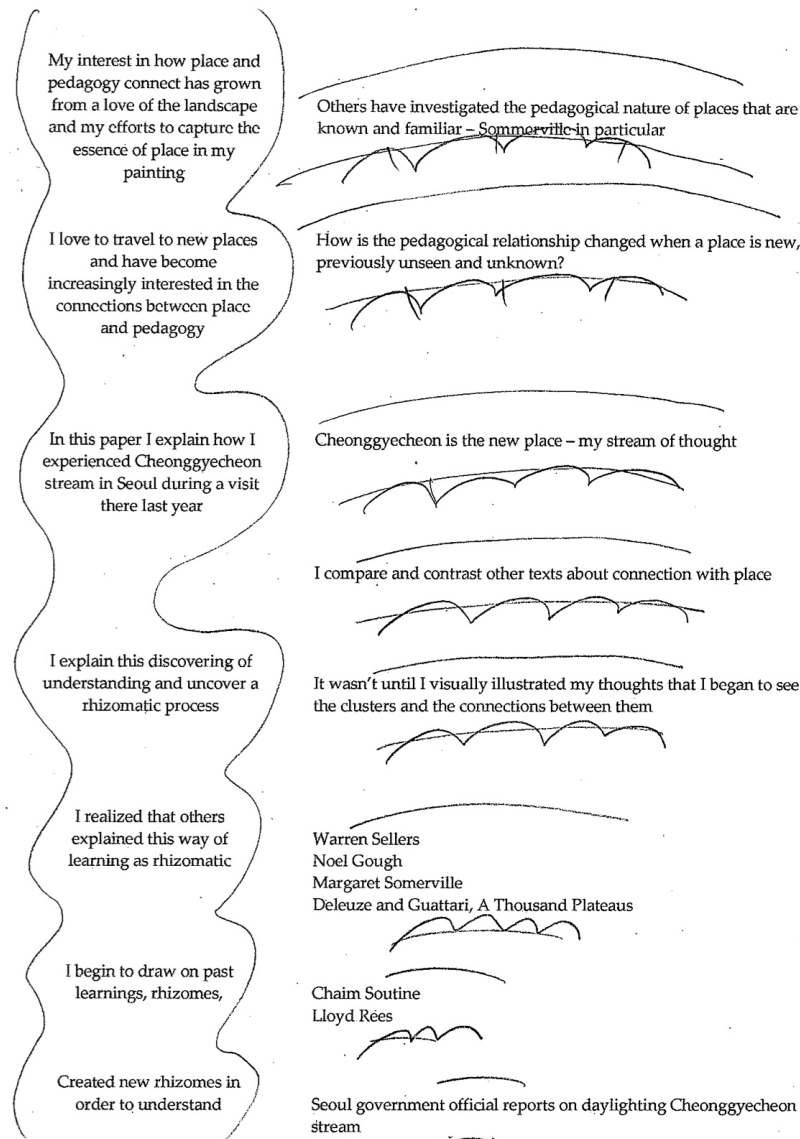


Figure 1. Streaming and bridging over Barbara's text (Chancellor, p. 17).

Spanning the... stream...are twenty-two bridges, each one unique and symbolic in cultural and historical ways. For me they are metaphors for the learning, the connections, as I bounced from rhizome to rhizome on the sidelines, along the banks of the stream...places to stop, rest, watch the stream and reflect on my learning, places, plateaus. (Chancellor, p. 17)

Streaming is an elusive notion because it is always already in motion—*striated* becoming *smooth*, whereas artificially made *still*, streaming becomes a different affect—*smooth* becoming *striated*<sup>3</sup>. However, a sense of the resonances I perceive from Barbara’s “streaming” (Figure 1) writing should be apparent in my doodling on the text and its “bridging” (Figure 1) affecting thinking in my photo-text (Figure 2). I find this way of responding helpful in dislocating the text with other scenes for thought, not to interfere but to invite different perceptions..



Figure 2. ...only moments of eddies (Sellers, 2008, p. 72).

### Daylighting and Restorativity

Daylighting is also a tricky expression, mainly used in civil engineering to refer to the opening up of an underground feature—a tunnel or culvert—to the daylight. Where water is involved, daylighting works to restore the riparian environment that enclosure and darkness has diminished. Again there is much in Barbara’s writing that, for me, resonates with daylighting here in rhizomes, challenging change, restorativity and generativity. Allusions to flux and flow also remind how interrelationships and interconnections perturb conventions of logical linearity and rational hierarchy in molecular and rhizomatic ways that Barbara’s mapping diagram informs (Figure 3.). And again, my response looks to encourage different approaches to seeing~reading~thinking~writing.

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<sup>3</sup> These are Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) terms referring to coexisting co-implicated, differently similar spaces –sometimes someplaces, other times otherplaces—there, not there, yet there...

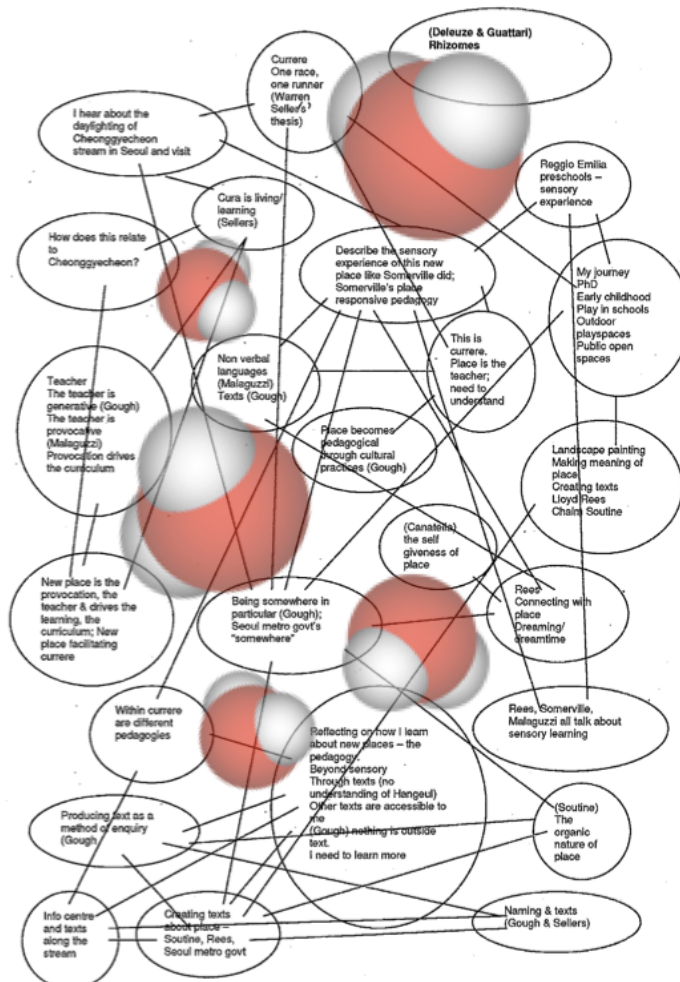


Figure 3. Barbara's rhizomapping (Chancellor, p. 30) and 3-D water molecules.

### Affirming Rigour in Writing Differently

This paper both challenges and affirms several important scholarly matters. It challenges a conventional notion of rigour by performing writing differently and in ways that expose obscured undercurrents to other ways of seeing. In doing so it both affirms and is affirmed by my own work that has, in turn, been affirmed by the scholarly and generative examination of peers. As importantly, Barbara's paper also affirms pedagogical place as both imaginary and practice for ways towards thinking differently about seeing, being, thinking and knowing about learning~teaching. Through such learning performances and teaching practices "texts [are] created to inform...and reconnect...in new ways" (Chancellor, p. 27).

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## About the Author

Warren Sellers devoted the late 20<sup>th</sup> century to working as a designer, director and producer in what is now called the Creative Industries sector. At the turn of the century, a long-standing critical interest in education returned him to study for and earn a Masters degree and Doctor of Philosophy in Education. His research interests and subsequent distinctive publications, interweaving text and imagery, work to unpack densities in complexities. He has filled several educational research roles involving eLearning and the scholarship of teaching and learning in Aotearoa-New Zealand. Warren is now Project Manager for the *Design for Learning* project in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at La Trobe University, Victoria, Australia. Email [w.sellers@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:w.sellers@latrobe.edu.au)

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