

Navigating Crisis and Desire: Pedagogies of Presence in Absence

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criˈsɪs *noun* \ˈkrɪ-səs\:

1: an emotionally significant event or radical change of status in a person's life.

2: a psychological or social condition characterized by unusual instability caused by excessive stress and either endangering or felt to endanger the continuity of an individual or group; *especially*: such a social condition requiring the transformation of cultural patterns and values.

Synonyms: boiling point, crossroad(s), exigency, extremity, tinderbox

Related Words: contingency, possibility; climax, turning point; happening, predicament¹

Amy Kilgard likens performance studies to collage, naming them both as physical and interpretive arts of layering. Specifically, Kilgard teases out four key connective tissues between these two “layered” arts: 1) performance and collage are both embodied/sensual practices; 2) performance studies and collage are both attentive to juxtaposition and relations of time and space; 3) through a shared commitment to examining the (at least) doubled life of its constitutive components, performance studies and collage reveal presence in assumed absence; 4) performance and collage are both necessarily unsettled and unsettling (11). Strine, Long, and HopKins argue that performance is an “*essentially contested concept*,” meaning that performance studies’ existence is constituted through difference, and that those differences and “disagreement[s] over its essence [are themselves] part of that essence” (183). In light of Strine, Long, and HopKins’s contention, Kilgard offers collage as a pedagogical metaphor and an artistic practice for revealing such generative spaces of difference (3).

With its attention to undermining master narratives (Corey) and essentialized performances (Cooks and Warren 212), Kilgard frames the insights generated by performance studies as producing a form of intertextual “crisis” on the part of the viewer/practitioner. Forsaking modernist notions of stable identities (3), Kilgard presents collage as a means to illuminate the layered realities of our being. On the collaged nature of identity, Kilgard explains:

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¹ “Crisis.” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*

it is not the original stories themselves that are most important . . . It is their collision—or more appropriately their constant acts of colliding but never quite crushing each other or subsuming each other or erasing each other or perhaps even meeting each other—that is at issue. These moments of almost violent colliding make up the “crisis” that collage highlights. (1)

Rather than turning away from the unsettling crossroads that collage reveals, Kilgard urges her readership to embrace crisis as a form of pedagogic intervention that functions through startling juxtapositions (15). Collage pedagogy—in its appreciation of difference, its amalgamation of presence and absence, and its disquieting collisions of time and space—produces a crisis that forces its audience to consider what layers and connections we might be shrouding in our maintenance of lines.

As a final project for a course on feminist pedagogy, I had originally conceived of this essay as a literature review on desire or *Eros* in the classroom (see hooks; Pensoneau-Conway). Facilely, I had constructed desire as crisis’s binary pair—one as good, one as bad; one would stop me in my tracks and one would move me forward toward my intended goals. But desire does not always move us forward. Sometimes it moves us backwards and sideways in a jagged navigation. Sometimes desire moves us to some thing or some one that frightens us, holding us petrified, in place or in crisis. In the immediate days and weeks following Dr. John T. Warren’s unexpected passing, I found myself in crisis—paradoxically unsettled, yet stuck. Entrenched deeply in a mourning community made up of John’s students, colleagues, family, and friends, the end-of-the-semester papers that loomed overhead seemed meaningless on the canvas of such loss.

Hoping for motivation and gasping for movement, I turned to Kilgard’s constructive treatment of crisis and collage as an act of self-care and as a way to avoid drowning.² Touched by Kilgard’s submission to the pedagogical power of juxtaposition offered through collage (15), in this essay I look at the forces of crisis and desire and investigate their collision.³ This is a gesture to begin the work of ambling past their assumed differences in hopes of revealing their connections; it is a move to make poetry of a loss that I cannot comprehend; and it is my way to honor John by attempting what he taught me: illuminating (his) presence in seeming absence, and finding motivation for movement toward the next inevitable beyond.



Lydenberg discusses another layer of meaning of juxtaposition in surrealist collage: “juxtapositions are experienced as part of an aesthetic of adventure, risk, and desire,

² See “Save the Crisis for the Holidays” (Fassett and Warren *Critical* 137-40) for further intersections of crises and self-care in educational contexts.

³ In this essay I use Kilgard’s presentation of collage and its attentiveness to contradictions as a metaphoric means to understand my experience of loss. Myers and Alexander argue that the cultivation of metaphors can offer openings of hope, modes of sense-making, as well as a way of “critically reflecting on the nature of experience and theorizing experience into possibilities of knowing the world anew” (164).

qualities often overlooked in critical analyses of collage [. . .]” (274). This additional component of risk is something I often find in performative juxtapositions, in, for example, a leap across the stage edge.

—Kilgard 15

The experience of choking on my own guts goes something like this: jaw clenched tightly to keep down my beating heart, muscles tensed to hold in my sinking stomach. In such moments I am literally awestruck—overwhelmed with dread, while simultaneously roused and inspired. As a physiological response, choking on my own guts is my body’s recognition of crisis and desire colliding.

My first bodily memory of this inside-out collision is my eight year-old self learning about infinity. What I had always held as a persistent but ineffable suspicion of my own perceptual limitations suddenly came into sharp relief. In mild epistemic shock, I even checked with my mother to make sure that infinity was indeed a real thing. Like me, my fellow third-graders seemed confused but intrigued by the concept, with playground taunts of “I dare you times infinity” rapidly on the rise.

I soon learned to cultivate the limit-experience of infinity, upping the boost and lowering the fright, by spending my recesses spinning in circles. All I remember wanting is to go further, faster. But either throwing up or falling down, my body’s movement would always stop me—a paradox that still doesn’t make any logical sense. As I grew older, I took to roller coasters and once even skydiving, all to inhabit that connective tissue between fight or flight, ground and the abyss, time and space, crisis and desire. It was only in these moments where I could be certain that I existed in at least two worlds at once, with my moments of otherwise normal existence feeling like a dull glaze.

Sometimes unexpectedly, the ground has fallen too far and too fast, leaving me locked in infinity’s fold, terrified that I might drown. I’ve lost my grounding this way when I’ve learned of losing loved ones, when I learned of losing John. But even as I’ve sat there in crisis, choking on my own guts, I still feel desire pulling me towards the infinity of the distant horizon.

And it’s my sense of wonder in the face crisis that shames me, that repels me, that makes me wonder if anyone else feels *this way*, too?



de-sire **noun** | də'zī(ə)r |

a strong feeling of wanting to have something or wishing for something to happen

verb [trans.]

1: strongly wish for or want (something)

2: express a wish to (someone); request, entreat, or invite

3: archaic to feel the loss of⁴

⁴ “Desire.” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*

And it all converges there. This vibration, violation, screaming, desire, burning, power, tension, muscles so tense you couldn't make them clench that hard, falling, falling away, falling behind, simultaneously seduced and repelled, and slicing, and searching, and bleeding, and sobbing, and *what am I describing?*

—Kilgard 16 (emphasis added)

Megan Boler criticizes what she finds to be a simultaneous overusage and nonspecificity of the term “desire” within critical educational theory. With educational theory's relatively recent attempts to articulate emotion as a credible site of knowledge production (“Disciplined Emotions” 204), Boler argues that in such literature, the concept of desire is deployed by authors as an unproductive umbrella term, with its usage eliding the layered canvass of individual, cultural, and historical forces of emotions (226). Highlighting critical educational theory's largely Marxist roots as well as Marxism's historical focus on altering the material conditions of our world, Boler contends that critical educational theory is underprepared for teasing out the serpentine relationship between power and desire. On this tortuous relationship, Boler explains, “Nationalism and capitalism reveal their dependence on emotional equilibrium . . . [balancing between] desires produced within capitalism, on the one hand, and the “reality” of unfulfilled [desires] that cause ‘frustration,’ maladjustment, and conflict” (212).

Stated differently, the complex emotion of desire is both produced and distorted by capitalism. Marxism, against its rationalistic backdrop, has historically privileged the “real work” of revolution, while devaluing the discussion of emotions as true political action (Boler “Feminist Politics” 128). Due to Marxism's binary privileging of materiality over emotionality, Boler contends that critical educational theory is left ill-equipped for systematic analyses of emotions generally, and desire specifically, in relationship to ideology. Boler ends her essay with a call for more layered approaches to the study of emotions and power in the context of educational theory and practice (“Disciplined Emotions” 227), specifically calling for approaches that do not replicate Marxist binaries between emotion and politics, knowing and feeling (“Disciplined Emotions” 220).



When we consider live people as constitutive elements of performances, we must acknowledge the complexity of the resonances evoked (including interpersonal relationships, identity categories, and life experiences).

—Kilgard 8

Collectively, John T. Warren's mentorship, scholarship, and pedagogy functioned as nuanced lessons on motivated movement. As a performance practitioner, John Warren offered me motivated movement in terms of the potential of a performer's body to express the layered and complex interplay of his or her experiences, intentions, and feelings in relationship to macro social forces. John's lessons on the power of

motivated movement are crystallized in his performance review of Brian Lobel's *Ball* ("Performing Trauma"). There, Warren highlights Lobel's motivated movement as a contouring tool that reveals to his audience a sense of depth—not only a depth of Lobel's stage persona, but moreover, a dimensional account that Lobel offers against a backdrop of social and personal forces. "Brian on his back being examined, Brian spinning that hula hoop, Brian popping the cork from a bottle of champagne" (186)—Warren makes clear how Lobel's crafted movement of his body on stage tells not simply a story about cancer, but work to reveal "a layered accounting of survival, of pleasure, of grief, and of persistence in the face of cancer and the ways cancer constructs and limits one's social and bodily choices" (183). The directorial, interpersonal, and pedagogical potential of such "layered accounting" of emotions—made visible by the physical movements of bodies, in and against affective, social, and political constructs—is for me, John's resounding lesson.

As a critical pedagogue, John Warren taught me again, about the power of motivated movement. More specifically and in the context of the classroom, John helped me to sharpen my focus for discerning the slippage between my students' movement motivations—that is, their individual experiences, intentions, and feelings—and the socio-institutional structures and biases that frequently inhibit their mobility and repress their aspirations. While the talented stage performer must *overtly* convey to her audience the complexities and contradictions of the character she is playing—for example, her character's cultural and economic values juxtaposed to her character's physical ability and self-image—John modeled how the committed teacher continuously strives to recognize and make present the often *covert* complexities and contradictions that play out every day on his student's bodies.

John demonstrated how critical performative pedagogy (see Alexander and Warren; Warren *Performing Purity*) as well as critical communication pedagogy (see Fassett and Warren "Strategic Rhetoric"; Fassett and Warren "You Get Pushed Back") insist on holding individual student motivations in constant tension with institutional and ideological norms that determine educational "successes" and "failures." His pedagogies insist that even so-called aberrant students "have legitimate reasons for feeling and behaving as they do; moreover . . . [the students'] resistance might be (dis)organized against an authority that objectifies them for the purposes of order" (Fassett and Warren *Critical* 42). As metonyms of larger social formations, movement motivations—on both the stage (Warren and Kilgard 268) and in the classroom (Alexander 329)—demand reflexive and layered interpretations of the always-present relationship between emotions and power. Herein lies the consciousness-raising power of John Warren's pedagogy: its ability to create spaces of resistance by revealing the deep layers, and to make present what was taken-for-granted.



Collage is a demonstration of this process of the many becoming the one, with the one never fully resolved because of the many that continue to impinge upon it. [. . .]
Concrescence is, in effect, never finished, however much there may be the illusion

of completeness. This is the poetry of becoming—the poetry of relativity— and it is what collage is about: the tentativeness of every unity of being because of the persistence of becoming, even when absolute entity-ness seems achieved.

—Kuspit, quoted in Kilgard 4

When I desire to know you—your body, your insights, your experiences—I listen closely and pay extra attention. I lean in—an unconscious display that indicates my absolute certainty that we have something in common, something we are sharing. There is some-thing between us, and I am leaning toward that some-thing. I cannot be wrong, this feeling is too telling. It's simply a matter of making sense of your fragments—that is, the bits and pieces that I have gathered about you from our interactions, in relation to the sense that I have made of myself. Sometimes, when my desire is strong enough, when I wish so desperately for our fragments to cohere, I will *re-write* what I know about myself so that we may fit together better. This re-writing doesn't make it untrue or disingenuous—please don't cheapen what has unfolded between us—it means that I have learned something from you and that you have touched me. So much so that I took on the difficult labor of refiguring myself.

What happens to my former configurations? Do they disappear? Do they explode? Or do I exist like a palimpsest, my many previous forms effaced, but never fully erased? The traces are still there. Crowding me. Overflowing me. At times overwhelming me. Afraid of drowning in meaning, we live out our day-to-day convincing ourselves that those traces are gone and that we have arrived, until we encounter the person or the object that we desire so badly to know and to connect with, that we will draw upon those traces. We will *re-draw* those traces, and re-draw our selves.

This re-drawing is an education. A pedagogy of becoming. These moments, these affects, these unexpected events, people, and objects are intimate, provocative, and worthy of our isolation and attention; yet, they shall not produce a finished or enduring identity. They simply produce each of us until we inevitably encounter that next moment, affect, or object, and its attendant *crisis* of identity.



Difference is the object of affirmation or affirmation itself. In its essence, affirmation is itself difference.

—Deleuze, quoted in Warren “Performing Difference” 295

According to basic chemical theory, collision is a good thing. Enhanced by changes in temperature, velocity, concentration, catalyzing agents, and the rogue influence of spontaneity, collision ideally causes two molecular substances to react, creating the possibility for released molecule to restructure and compose an alternative substance. Heat in particular increases the kinetic energy necessary for collision. Heat: body heat, the heat of indignation or protest, of great anger, of sensuous contact and attraction.

—Pollock “Performance Is a Collision Course” 203

Diverging from Freud's Oedipal construction of desire, one that negatively frames desire as an unfulfilled lack in its subjects, Deleuze and Guattari view desire as a productive force that flows through our bodies and our minds, as well as flowing between our interactions with other's bodies and minds (*Anti-Oedipus*). Because desire is a freeing and productive force within us, it threatens the control of the capitalist state, in turn becoming subject to the state's repression. For example, linear constructions of time and space are one of many ideological structures of repression that function to interrupt the free-flow of desire. With each stoppage or crisis produced by the break of its free-flow, desire is re-routed. From this re-routing brought on by stoppages or collision, desire produces new channels of travel or paths of difference.

In his reading of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Bell describes Deleuze and Guattari's concept of a "desiring-machine" as a kind of folded assemblage. One side of its fold is made up of easily identifiable elements that account for the construction and markers of our identities. On the other side of the fold, desiring-machines are made up of non-identifiable elements that work constantly to undermine and dismantle any stable sense of identity (11). Through Deleuze and Guattari's framework of a desiring-machine, our identities are produced by intersecting paths of difference that oscillate between the two worlds of order and disorder, perception and imperception.



This displaced object has entered a universe for which it was not made and where it retains, in a measure, its strangeness. And this strangeness was what we wanted to make people think about because we were quite aware that our world was becoming very strange and not exactly reassuring.

—Picasso on the function of collage, quoted in Kilgard 2

Like running toward to horizon, or chasing after the moon, desire is not something we can close in on, but a continuous distance that we must continue to travel. Crisis is not the inability to cross that distance, but a sense of sublime overwhelm at the grandeur of the vista that lies before us. Both are forces of production, both are motivations for movement—each with subtle and vast differences in direction, pace, vibration, and style.

I remember this sense of overwhelmingness, experiencing my first snow while living in Carbondale. Only the second week of spring semester, I was still trying out new pathways toward the unfamiliar building clear across campus that I had been assigned to teach in at Southern Illinois University. With the snowfall quickening and no umbrella, I took shelter where I could from the canopies of nearby buildings. Halfway there, I emerged from a tunneled awning, deposited in a small clearing free of buildings on the southeast side of our sprawling campus. Started, looking out from underneath my hood, I was overcome with awe at the beauty of the blanket of snow that lay before me. But my splendor in the visual grandeur of its whiteout effect was cut short; with my California body unaccustomed to the disorienting camou-

flage of snow, I realized quickly that I had no idea where I was, and no visible path to which I could orient myself.

I stood there stuck for at least ten seconds, instructing myself to keep walking on, through the thickening layer of snow. But I couldn't hear myself over the ticking of my watch, reminding me that I was almost late to my only third day of class. Feeling cowardly, I finally turned around and doubled back the way that I had come, eventually finding the familiar path that I had already traveled days before.



So I'm teaching this class, reveling in this moment to fuck with these students minds, to fuck up their notions of gender, sex and sexuality, to fuck them—not literally, but, but rather playfully—to mess them up, to encounter the realm of these personal, yet political, issues with a sense of wonder and excitement.

—Gust and Warren 118

The movements that support straight lines are movements toward what they elevate; it is a movement and an ability to follow the straight and narrow. But not all bodies can, nor want to follow this straight path; not all bodies see that path (Fassett and Warren “Strategic Rhetoric”; Fassett and Warren *Critical* 135-9). Collage practice functions through blurring the spatial boundaries that obscure power and discipline bodies (Kilgard 8). Collage pedagogy, and the “crises” that it reveals, asks us to move away from the obvious and easy to read layouts of straight lines, and encourages us to allow curiosity and desire to move us—even when we are not sure where or what we might be moving toward.

In moments of crisis the first thing we may feel is lost, stopped, or caught. We may be overwhelmed by millions of possible crooked paths that we could take, with no lines, no advisors, or guides to lead us. But eventually we forge a path, even if it's not the original or traditional one we had thought we would take. Sara Ahmed illuminates these connections between crisis and desire in her discussion of a queer phenomenology. Drawing on landscape architecture, Ahmed reminds me that in spaces like parks or hiking trails there is a term for those places on the terrain where unofficial paths form—where we can make out erosions, footprints, and pathways from travelers who deviate from the straight and predetermined path. Such erosions are aptly titled *desire lines* (570).

Desire lines illustrate what Mady Schutzman names an ambulant pedagogy. With its etymological root *ambi* meaning ‘to wander,’ an ambulant pedagogy is averse to logocentric pedagogies that ignore discursive movement in favor of the linear. Schutzman's ambulant pedagogy functions critically as a means to reveal the unrecognized movements and overlaps hidden in seemingly static representations of aesthetics and reality (279). Desire lines function in both visible and invisible ways: as evidentiary divergence from one historic path; as well as hidden and covered over by obstacles and brush, requiring more movement or foot traffic before revealing themselves as advice to travelers.

An ambulant pedagogy sharpens our perceptions to eschew the illusion of stand-stills and given lines, instead seeking out the possibilities existing just below the threshold of actualization, just below the path. Schutzman explains such a pedagogy as, “without clear horizons; perhaps it is ambulatory because it merges the notion of solvency—stability and balance—with the prediction of moving again, being back on one’s feet, recovering enough balance only to risk losing it once again” (292). This notion of ambling, in both its precarious uncertainty and sense of exploration, becomes a useful intersection for thinking through crisis and desire—what one may offer the other, and how they will continue to tumble on and over each other.



What is a [collage] work? A work is an object overflowing its frame converging into a series of other objects each overflowing their frames, not becoming one another, but becoming events, each moving in the direction of their own infinite singularity and difference.

— Goulish, quoted in Kilgard 3

John Warren’s scholarship theorizes difference in various contexts and from various perspectives. Of these varied perspectives, Warren has drawn upon philosophical work of Gilles Deleuze (“Performing Difference”; Warren and Fassett *Communication* 189-90), putting the notion of difference in dialogue with communicative concepts of identity, culture, and power. I read these dialogues as an answer to Megan Boler’s call for more elaborate and developed approaches to the study of desire and power in the context of educational theory and practice (“Disciplined Emotions”); Boler explains: “I am not convinced that the language of the desire and the unconscious carries enough specificity to allow us a full-fledged account of specific emotions in relation to historically-contextualized power relations” (227). Rather than replicating what Boler’s criticizes as educational theorists who speak of desire as a nonspecific stand-in for the body or emotional terrain (219), I interpret Warren’s engagement with Deleuze as a means to make sense of the intersectional relationship of power and desire, through the communicative concept of difference.

In my reading, Warren articulates the movement of desire as producing varied forms of repetition. In turn, each outcome of that repetition produces political differences (“Performing Difference”). In this sense, repetition is the vehicle for the production of difference, with desire as repetition’s motivating force. Stated differently, difference is desire’s movement motivation; desire is the means of difference’s production. From this Deleuzian perspective, difference—as well as the crisis/collisions produced by difference that block and re-route desire—functions as both fuel for and product of the desiring-machine that we call culture. Warren argues that in addition to the already perceptible categories of difference like race, gender, and sexuality, the communication discipline needs more complex ways to discuss and identify difference on a conceptual level, (“Performing Difference” 303). Because culture and identity mutually inform each other (Warren and Fassett *Communication*

62), both the perceptible and imperceptible elements of differences—produced by the force of desire—work to (de)construct our always forming identities.

Warren, then, is arguing for the advancement of our discipline’s existing understandings of identity formation, through the development of communicative schemas that make present the invisible elements of difference’s production. Kilgard presents collage as a conceptual and artistic means to recognize and navigate differences that we may often gloss over: “In the construction of collage, each constitutive element belongs to at least two worlds. As audience members/viewers, we may read these elements using our understanding of their characteristics in both worlds, as well as others, depending on our own histories, backgrounds, and knowledges” (2). Warren (“Performing Difference”) on the other hand, draws on the extant theoretic concepts of citation (Butler) and simulacra (Baudrillard) to articulate a more analytical schema for or classifying difference’s modes of production.

Despite their diverging approaches, undergirding both Warren’s and Kilgard’s respective treatments of difference is their mutual contention that within culture, forces of difference—desire included—are always at play, however we often cannot recognize or articulate these paths of difference. In this sense, recognition of difference is always a matter of locating presence in assumed absence. By keeping in place this perceptual gloss that conceals difference, we miss possibilities for learning and for growth. Warren approaches this growth from ideological standpoint, explaining that when the complexities of difference are facilely polarized toward either similarity or opposition, we miss opportunities for investigating how power is functioning differently in a particular context (302). Kilgard approaches possibilities for growth from an aesthetic and embodied standpoint. Regarding the nuances of difference that collage practice can highlight, Kilgard explains, “The juxtapositions are beautiful. They say things, these meetings of jagged and smooth edges, of top of face and intricate butterfly. This chore, this obligation, this love creates complicated and heartbreaking possibilities” (13).



Each stage of the evolving image contains the history of all the other images, that remain, like ghosts, in the final composition. This final group shape would not be possible—would not exist in its present/presence form—without the ghostly imprint/absence of all the other shapes, individual and collective. . . . the final image somehow reminds me of them. It does and does not contain them, in much the same way as a collage does and does not contain its source materials.

—Kilgard 15

In their text *Critical Communication Pedagogy*, Deanna Fassett and John Warren aim to create a context where multiple pedagogies may flourish and intersect (10). Drawing on the work feminist pedagogue Patti Lather, they mean for their pedagogy to create “generative spaces” where knowledge is created rather than transmitted (10, 22, 43). Susan Talburt similarly draws on Lather’s notion of pedagogically “generative spaces”

in her description of subjunctive pedagogies. According to Talburt, subjunctive pedagogies function to complicate given understandings of knowledge, linear temporality, and acceptable objects of desire by gesturing toward possibility and an ‘otherwise.’ (50). Unlike the grammatical indicative mode that is dedicated to definitive proclamations, statements of fact, and the maintenance of clean lines of descent, Talburt explains the subjunctive as existing in “complicated temporalities, uncertain knowledges, and disorder that underlies seeming orders” (49).

Talburt’s subjunctive pedagogies give language to the disorderly and unrecognizable face of desire’s engine. Similar to collage, in the subjunctive mood desire circulates through the dislocation of predictable categories of identity, offering no guarantee of empirical knowledges (Talburt 53; Kilgard 2). Wai Chi Dimock speaks of the subjunctive as a ‘ghostly region’ unbound from an observable and empirical reality, resting just below the threshold of actualization. Through Talburt’s and Dimock’s subjunctive lenses, crisis is not the observable petrification or stoppage of desire, but its diffusion in space, sprinkled over the kaleidoscopic possibilities of “‘could-have-beens’ and ‘could-still-bes’” (Dimock 242).

A subjunctive pedagogy becomes one of multiplicities, affects, and imagination. Its hypothetical quality suggests a *could be* that plays with straightforward notions of temporality, as well as forward movement. This subjunctive mood suggests detours, alternate routes, or different layouts from the straight lines given to us by the singularity of the indicative mood as well as prescriptive pedagogies. Dimock eloquently frames the subjunctive continuum as one,

stretching lines into longitudinal arcs: paths not carved in stone, adjustable and even reversible to some extent, with many way stations, and many plausible offshoots. These arcs lengthen the virtual durations of authors, granting them beginnings and endings beyond their biological lifespan, and feeding their words into a continuum of eventualities, distributed across different scales of time, across events both large and small. (244)

Imagining crisis and desire not as straight lines, but as sloping, folding, longitudinal arcs encourages me to seek out the moments and locations where the two connect, or mirror each other in separate hemispheres and separate worlds—exceeding their own boundaries across distances and across bodies. A subjunctive pedagogy inspires me to consider how the crisis produced by loss can move me to search inside of myself for that very lost object of desire, in turn, learning my identity differently.



Loss, like any tensive relationship, is also about gain. . . . Loss and sacrifice, if they are to matter—if they are to have meaning—should be acknowledged, should be appreciated.

—Fassett and Warren *Critical* 139

Our bodies move toward each other in different ways, depending on mood, depending on space, depending on time. Indeed, we rely on these categories so much that they seem invisible. Yet in the event of a toothache or a pulled muscle, we notice the invisible-but-always-there in times of strain and pain; in times when the mood has shifted and when we've become disoriented; and when we realize that our time on this picture plane is limited—limited to the here and now of a fleeting gesture, a slow smile, a mundane moment. In these moments of realization we become unsettled. We find ourselves in crisis.

The loss of Dr. John T. Warren made me aware of time, space, and movement that I might usually ignore. Following his passing I felt the contingency of time: his young age, his young sons, his young career reminding me that the continuum of time and its relation to physical bodies is not an even distribution. I felt, too, a change of space: the classrooms that John studied, loved, and filled with his life force seemed foreign and hollow; his office, an always welcoming, warm, and safe space, became too difficult to walk past, knowing that the person who we leaned toward—for advice, for knowledge, for guidance, and for laughter—was no longer inside of it.

Touched by Kilgard's collage pedagogy as a productive model of crisis, I am working to think through how our loss of John Warren may have also brought a presence.

A presence of time—

An appreciation for each moment; a model of what an extraordinary life can be led when time is not taken for granted.

A presence of space—

As homes, bars, churches, and conference hotels were filled with bodies from near and far.

A presence of mood—

Where any moment might evoke laughter or tears; either one bringing bodies toward each other.

Desire is not the only thing that moves us closer, crisis does, too.



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