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Inception of Emergence¹

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Abstract

How do we notice what is arriving? As authors, we collaboratively play with the continuation and momentum of emergence presented as a polyvocal text. As part of our research, we video-taped a collaborative mark-making activity led by two graduate students in a PhD cohort. What emerges from our interaction of situated dialogic inquiry is a heteroglossic performative text on emergence. The first 40 seconds of the video is woven into a paper that in itself becomes an ontological practice in emergence. The paper, in message and mode, delves into a series of moments and becomes a series of moments that ask the question: What is the play of interrelatedness in a collective inquiry of emergence?

PART ONE

Performative Inquiry: Mark Making

It is January 20, 2020.

Slash of late afternoon light invades the classroom. Marlies is in a flurry of preparation. She fixes long white pieces of paper stretched across the length of two tables. With military precision, she positions pencils, pastels, paint, brushes, water in cans to rinse. Video cameras await us, perched on tripods; expressions, like all lenses, inscrutable. "Come on in," welcomes Ming-Yu. "Not quite ready," counters Marlies. We enter, shrugging free from our burdens of

backpacks, winter coats, and the day's journey.

Ming-Yu sits at the piano bench. Marlies calls us to attention, efficient, focused, gesturing, "pens, papers, paint, choose whatever you like, first work here on the left side, on this piece of paper, leave the other sheet for now." We look at the blank canvas that is to become the action site of our performative inquiry, and then we move individually, collectively—our faces expressing a variety of emotions: trepidation, curiosity, fear, disinterest, reluctance, eagerness—into art making.

Here and now, this liminal space of meaning-making requires your presence.

Dear reader, we offer you three entry pathways into this inquiry, choose one threshold of entry or read all three and/or read the endnote², to orientate yourself to this article.

² In the paper, we explore our collective inquiry through artmaking, dialogue, and meaning making. Our research inquiry is as follows: 1. We participate in a collective artmaking activity. 2. The artmaking activity is videotaped. 3. As a self-described focus group, we watch the video to identify moments of emergence. 4. We videotape ourselves watching the video of our artmaking activity while identifying emergent moments, a "coding" exercise. 5. This video of us watching ourselves watching the artmaking video and "coding" is transcribed. Individual transcriptions are done by pairs, compared, and confirmed. Ellipses in these transcriptions are indicators that words, phrases, sentences have been omitted. 6. Postcards, a pedagogical means of reflection, and two individual essays on emergence are written. 8. Finally, this paper—a narrative collage of images, writings, details, extracts, encounters, and reflections, is collaboratively written. The paper 'starts' in medias res with the artmaking activity discussed in Part 1. Part 2 introduces what happens when the artmaking video is brought to the cohort with the intention to identify stop moments (Appelbaum, 1995; Fels, 2012) in the first 10 minutes of the video. Part 3, a curated narration of transcript excerpts describes the crisis point or pivotal turn in our inquiry. Part 4 reminds us that conclusions are not easily achieved in complex collaborative encounters. Asterisks throughout the text and ellipses outside transcript extracts are markers that move us back and forth through different moments and time, inviting the reader to pause and reflect or continue to read on. These asterisks are portals, gaps, temporal moments subject to the reader's presence. Interwoven throughout are postcards and images. Our collaborative fragmented performative mode of writing invites the reader to engage in the phenomenon, emergence, a lived experience, a process of emergence while reading our collage.

<p>Every moment threatens infinity when considered on the plane of its significance.³</p> <p>How do we attend to the moments precipitated before, during, and after our ‘data’? I wonder what is the <i>best</i> way to study a moment? I wonder how might we study the relationship of the moment to the infinity?</p> <p>Do moments persist even when we pay no attention to them?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What emerges?</i></p>	<p>How do we “stay in the movement of communicating, learning and organizing” (Shaw, 2002, p. 20) within an inquiry? Especially within an inquiry about playing with emergence?</p> <p>We invite you to actively engage with the question, "What is the play of interrelatedness in a collective inquiry of emergence?" As prompted by Shaw, how might we <i>engage from within, engage as participants, engage in process terms, above all, engage the paradoxes?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Who arrives?</i></p>	<p>Forgive this intrusion. Forewarning is required. Until further notice, all data encountered is interruptive, suspect, and non-compliant.</p> <p>Engaged in rhizomatic play (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) we perform meaning-making, an inter-textual mashup, recognizing <i>here and now</i> that moments of what we seek to name as emergence are elusive.</p> <p>Data mutinies.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A liminal space of play</i></p>
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Our authorial intentions are refracted and polyvocal. A performance of literary critic and philosopher Bakhtin’s (1981) heteroglossia—“another’s speech in another’s language” (Kindle Locations 4539-4540) playing up our multiple voices, meanings, and expressions. All text exists within a community of other texts, especially those texts that the "community considers relevant to the interpretation of any given text" (Lemke, 1995, p. 23). This situated dialogic inquiry (Shotter, 2010) is the situated nature of any mark making—art, writing or utterances. Bakhtin (1986) reminds us “No utterance in general can be attributed to the speaker exclusively; it is the product of the interaction of the interlocutors, and broadly speaking, the product [*sic*] of the whole complex social situation in which it has occurred” (p. 30). We speak a multiplicity of languages derived from a nexus of lived experiences and complexities.

³ Susan Stewart (1993) states “Once a book is considered on the plane of its significance, it threatens infinity” (p. 38). While she speaks to the concept of the book as object, the ‘moment’ reads similarly, as a presumed miniature that explodes into infinity as it is approached.

Our Collaboration in Making

Our research collaboration was born of a chance encounter between Saliha and Lynn at a conference in New York City. “Come to Vancouver,” Lynn said, “and we’ll play. We can explore emergence together.” Saliha flies to Vancouver, January 2020. Thus, we come together to inquire into the relational performative (play) processes of presence, emergence, and improvisation. We invite Lynn’s doctoral students to join us in our research to create inclusivity through living conversations within a pedagogical space, an inquiry we continue together through the writing of this paper, interweaving voices.

As researchers, we attend to singular moments of emergence within the swelling emergence of every-day life and, so, what arrives mid-way through our research but an exploding pandemic that feels like a tidal wave: unavoidable and overwhelming. Emergence sans attention sweeps us tumbling, head over heels, to an unknown and beyond. In our noticing of a particular moment of emergence identified by one of us and reflected upon by all, something new inevitably arrives that startles us to renewed attention. Thus, in the midst of a pandemic, ever emergent, we are called to notice and reflect upon particular moments—an action, an encounter, or collaborative offering in the presence of each other—portals to new beginnings (infinities?); new possibilities (Anderson, 1997).

I dip a paint brush into the colour red, and gingerly risk my first stroke. Ajay traces in black charcoal a self-portrait to the left of me. Daniella gives a startled cry; she has placed her mark where she isn’t supposed to. I’m dancing in and out, waltzing unaware, in time with Ming-Yu’s music—a cascade of falling and rising notes—moving in to make a spiraling stroke, standing back to see what I have created. Maggie commands her paintbrush like a musician, swift strokes of blues and greens and reds, composing a symphony amongst us. We are intent, seemingly without conversation other than the odd comment, “excuse me,” and “are you done with that colour?”



How do we attend to emergence and to what arrives among the participants from within their participation? In the philosophical spirit of practice-based inquiry as informed by Appelbaum’s

(1995) stop moments, Bakhtin's (1981) heteroglossia and dialogism, and Shotter's (1996, 2011) spontaneously expressive responsiveness, we initiate our exploration of emergence by noticing moments of "ahas," "disquiets," "stops," "telling moments," "what's not being said" (Shotter, 2014) and/or tensional moments that catch our breath. Each of these "stop moments" or "tugs on the sleeve" are what Lynn (2010) identifies as "action-sites of possible learning that inform our pedagogical practices and ways of being in the world" (p. 3). These spontaneous call and response moments are how we simply 'go on' with each other through the activity of relating and responsiveness within each moment (Shotter, 2011). How to 'go on' is central to Wittgenstein's (1953) philosophical investigation of forms of life which draw "our attention to how our talk is in fact interwoven, moment by moment, in with other of our activities" (Shotter, 1996, p. 390).

How else might we embody, engage relationally, and recognize *this* moment, *here and now*, created by our coming together?

Making a mark in collective artmaking where relationship is embodied in the interactions with each other and on paper is an ontological exercise in and of itself: an activity of making that simultaneously performs and authenticates its own emergence, a literal coming togetherness that defines our interrelated being-ness. Set within the contingency and the complexity of a plurality of individual annunciations (gestures), relational exchanges and situational conditions (including an improvised musical score, video recording device and ethics agreement), each with its own sets of proscriptions, permissions and prohibitions, this simple invitation, is anything but. What ensues, within the event and its subsequent reiteration within analysis over a two-month span, is a playful implosion and productive confusion of the concept of emergence that folds in upon itself, revealing and subverting frames of reference and enabling new conceptions and questions to emerge.

"Make your mark" or "Make a mark"? Which was heard, I wonder? Our invitation evolves into various interpretations, unclear and yet unquestioned, somehow informing the artistic process. Embracing unforeseen turns, pitfalls, inner and outer criticism, praise and protectiveness.

"Now add your mark into the marks of others." Hesitantly, I add green to someone's drawing, careful not to disturb their design. I watch as Maggie makes my painting disappear into her own. She turns then to Ajay's self-portrait, and shades swiftly. His drawing comes to life under her deft strokes. I am awed by her deft confidence, her artist hand in rapid motion.

“And now, with scissors, cut out the parts of the painting, anyone’s drawing or painting that you like, that you think most beautiful, and glue the pieces onto the length of paper on the right, where Daniella and others have been working.”

The scissors feel powerful. I approach, I choose, I cut deliberately. The accompanying music is discordant, loud, rash in its descent, fingers pounding on the keys. Is that Ming-Yu playing? A crisis of conscience, then abandonment.

It is June 1st, 2020.

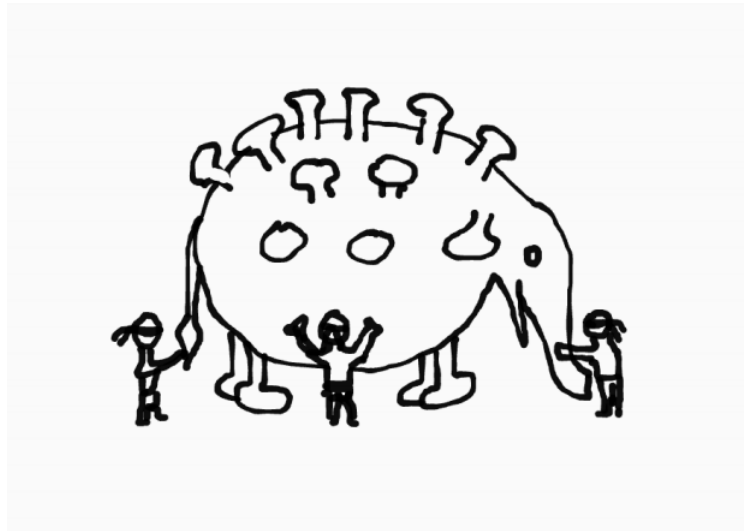
Just over six months, and counting, since the Coronavirus showed up in the human population, each of the authors sheltering in place as the virus spreads across the globe. Wherever we turn people, organizations, institutions, communities, governments are stepping into the uncertainty and at times, the unprecedented. Individually, and collectively, we are improvising with how to respond and create the next steps to go on in the face of unknowns.

One word sums it all—emergence.

We are suspended in emergence.

To study emergence while things are emerging is a Catch-22. Or is it?

Ajay, Image from Postcard⁴



Graduate students, visiting professor, instructor—we are all on a shared venture: to investigate emergence through improvisational activities of art, conversations, relating, and reflecting. How do we improvise or play within emergent moments? What constitutes an emergent moment? Is it possible to recognize a moment of emergence when one happens? The concept of emergence is not novel. It has always been here, but the current crisis calls our attention to emergence with a sense of urgency. *How do we find clarity when COVID feels larger than life?*

Our focus on emergence is a relational activity—an improvisational process, a negotiated space. Not a particular knowing or a manifestation, rather a crafting of “something” to which we are called to respond. Or at least that is what I arrive with—an anticipation to co-create such a responsiveness. What pleasantly surprises me is that I couldn’t imagine what would come next and next and next as we respond and negotiate and navigate and coordinate our experiences with each other.

⁴ A reviewer’s comment: “The image of the Coronavirus elephant is poignant and the allusion to the blind men so clear. What are we dealing with in pedagogy and pandemic? No one knows, but it matters.”

Cut up someone's painting? How should I cut into these beautiful pieces of art? Who had made what? My eyes quickly scan the room to see what others are doing, hoping to catch the eye of the artist who had worked where I stood. I'm standing over what looks like a volcano. In a rather quiet voice, I wonder aloud who had painted it, but my murmur is drowned out by the sounds of cutting paper, by the busy hands all around us. Not wanting to cut through it, I carefully cut one of the smoke swirls while trying not to disrupt the overall feel of the drawing. I carefully walk over to the other table and look around to see where I can place "the Volcano." Care for it being a driving force. Inspired by Amy's swirls she was cutting out, I decided to prop the volcano, creating a three-dimensional set-up. Floppy, but preserving it as best as I could and giving it a new life. Relief.



Play is “*the relationally creative process of trial and error by which we co-create*” (Bava, 2020, p. 516). The back and forth of relating to co-create that which comes next is one of the oldest forms of improvising—play, simultaneously an activity and a way of being (present) (Bava, 2020). Play is everywhere, in every activity but we don't call it play because of the language games (Wittgenstein, 1953) which we play. By language games, Wittgenstein draws our attention to the rules within everyday language by which we all interact such that we become intelligible to each other. Our actions and language go hand-in-hand, creating social conventions that become a particular *form of life* (Gergen, 2009; Wittgenstein, 1953). Our social practices guide how we come to use language and vice versa, thus limiting or expanding our performatives. So, what if we expand the meaning of play? When we speak of play, we are referring to spontaneous responsiveness (Shotter, 2011) that is experimental, improvisational, and performative.

I snip snip snip into abstract swirls, preserve the representational, how could one mutilate a forest scene? We bend to our work...a collage emerges—as we move between each other, cutting, pasting without consultation. “I never said you couldn't talk,” comments Marlies during our discussion following our inquiry. “We never thought to consult,” someone says. (Later, listening to the tape, we are surprised to discover that conversations ebbed and flowed throughout the artmaking. At one point, into a momentary silence, several of us broke into song).

A co-created artwork emerges, one that continues to accompany us on our journey as does the self-portrait of Ajay, fluttering like a triumphant victor's flag around the classroom and disappearing down the hall into a future gathering we have not yet imagined.

Like participatory action research, performative inquiry recognizes and invites collective inquiry, action, and reflection. Performative Inquiry invites researchers and participants to notice stop moments that “tug on their sleeve” (Fels, 2010, 2012), moments that call for further inquiry and reflection. A stop (Appelbaum, 1995) is not a literal stop, but an interruption in motion, a noticing of an encounter, event, or unexpected engagement that, through reflection, may awaken us to recognizing other possible choices of action. Identifying such moments and then reflecting individually and communally illuminate resistance or compliance, complicity or agency. Participants recognize their choices of language, action, and relationship matter through the action sites of art/playmaking within which performative inquiry is being conducted.

Doubling pedagogy with research, inquiry as pedagogy, we pursue our questions: *How does emergence happen? How do we notice and engage emergence? How is emergence constituted?* In pursuit of emergent moments, our initial thoughts were that we would “mark” moments of emergence that stood out for us when collectively viewing each video with our co-researchers/participants—“Ah, there’s an emergent moment!”—and that we would collectively play in the noticing of the spontaneous, responsive interactions within these moments, which we did. Unbeknownst to us, the unanticipated was emerging alongside.

What emerges from this activity is experienced differently by the various participants in the room. We leave the activity with different reflections and feelings. Some participants leave with jubilation, like Ajay with his portrait. Others leave with disquiet. And some dance the data in the parking lot (Bagley & Cancienne, 2002). Some feel that it is wrong to draw over or cut up someone else's mark. Others don't feel this tension initially and follow the instructions with ease. No one speaks to this tension in the moment until after the activity is over. When the activity of meaning making through collective reflection (conversation) catches up with activity of making our mark, there is a revelation that without words, some people felt strain and loss, either on behalf of others or for the loss of their own mark. Others speak to the joy of play, or the unknowing of what will happen, or of only choosing abstract drawings to cut, while representational drawings remain intact. They retain their mark. Why? How do we mark, retain,

stain our social marks (conventions)?

Collective reflections are dialogic polyvocal activities of making meaning which unfold in-person or with the imagined other. The co-created artwork is born out of unspoken tensions, some of these tensions are grounded in simple things – some individuals start colouring extra parts of the collage to add balance to the final image. The search for balance comes from tension. Coming to grips with what each participant is taking away from this activity lives in tension. There is tension between the sounds of the piano and the strokes of paint, charcoal, pencils, and crayons on the sheets. There is a felt tension between the instructions, in the enactment of the instructions, and the understanding of the instructions. How does relationality emerge through experiences taut with tensions? How might we receive tension as generative? Enlivening? Pedagogical? Opening to new possibilities?

I ponder for weeks what it is that I am supposed to learn from this encounter. I feel the intention of the activity has given way to something different—something individual and something collective.

Our reflective postcards (Fels, 2015) speak to a variety of tugs on sleeves and a few of the postcards seem to show that other life events have tugged harder 2015) speak to a variety of tugs on the sleeves and a few of the postcards seem to show that other life events have tugged harder, as not everyone writes about the activity itself. One of us questions “What happens when your idea of creating isn’t the same as the next person’s idea of creating?” Another writes that “what followed [the instruction] was multifaceted and true of lived experience: individually felt.” Someone sits with “the sick feeling of regret.” While yet another asks a question that envelops and stretches beyond our performative inquiry: “What are the ethics of how we function as an art collective?”

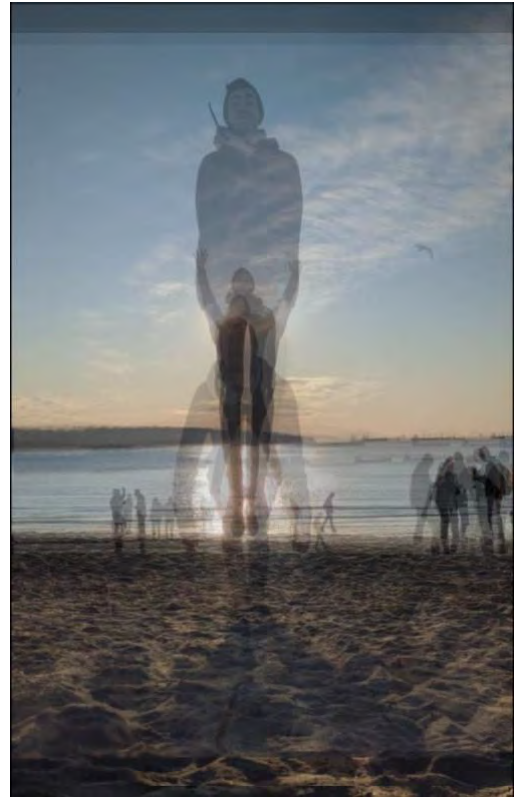
I write about the activity; actually, I write around the activity. I don’t want to write directly that the experience of this activity has caused me a great deal of anxiety. I had no problem cutting up anyone else’s work, and I leave without the conviction that I should feel guilty. I leave feeling the “expectation of guilt” and this phantom expectation makes me angry. While another student is sick with regret, my brain is racing through the shoulds and should-nots and without knowing it, I join in questioning ethics.

For a whole week, the phantom that I create while walking away from the activity will sit on my

shoulders. It will rip at my sleeves, and I will contemplate not only ethics but also truth. In the angry arms of my constructed thoughts, I will come to work through some misguided conclusions as others dance in the parking lot. Only later, when I am reading the postcards for the purpose of this paper, will I realize that I was fighting with only myself.

Tensions created from within the relational, one might say. Stewart and Zediker (2000) state that “the fundamental tension, in our experience, is between letting the other happen to me and holding my ground” (p. 240). They emphasize the value of such dialogic tension (both within self and with the other) as the quality of contact which enhances the teaching/learning space.

Seeing as if for the first time, shifting viewpoints and changing attitudes as we reflect together. In dialogue, we are seeing anew. New images appear. Fine hologram of oneness and withinness that is the group. “Performative inquiry lends itself to the uncovering of layers of insights. The very reality that there is room for ambiguities allows the space for a continual unfolding of images and thoughts to solidify into bodily wisdom. Images stay with us and continue to work on the soul” (Richmond & Snowber 2009, p. 110). The embodiment of the conversations and relationships that go hand-in-hand (Anderson, 1997) are sourced in dialogic tension, which is an inevitable part of emergence. It is within such “relational play” that we create and re-create images of ourselves, others, and the world around us (Bava, 2017, 2020)



Communal, cultural, ethnic, social, institutional, practices, expectations, biases, and/or conventions impact our choices of action in relationship with others, a critical place of contextual investigation in performative inquiry: *Whose script are you performing, and why? How do you perform your environment: your relationships with others within the contexts, communities, environments in which you live and interact? How are they performing you? What do your stop moments reveal about your assumptions, your biases, who you are, who you might become? What gaps exist in play? Do you dare say no?*

“What we do,” Varela (1987) says, “is what we know, and ours is but one of many possible worlds. It is not a mirroring of the world, but the laying down of a world...” (p. 62). A tug on the sleeve invites illumination of possible worlds beyond the immediate, the expected, imagined by others, performed by each one of us anew. What possible world does this writing-with-you create?

Daniella, Postcard



Patchwork quilt made with the notes I wrote in class about the emergence

According to the dictionary, emerge is to bring out something that was there, to **appear**, to emerge, to be born. I like the idea of thinking about the revelation of something that existed previously but had not yet been seen. Besides bringing the connection of the present moment with the past after all what already existed, this concept also reminds us that nothing emerges without references, spontaneously.

However, I believe that what emerges is also the result of a series of factors, and did not fully exist until the moment it emerges. From these moments, what emerges is not only something that was hidden, but is something **woven by interrelations**. What emerges is the result of a unique series of events and is the result of interactions with the context and its relationships between the people involved.

What emerges is fresh, new, **intense** and, perhaps, for this reason, concentrates in itself a **higher power of transformation**. The vitality of discovery is present in the thinking/action that emerges.

If we compare a routine and predictable situation with an emerging moment, it seems to me that there is more energy concentrated in the second situation. The surprise of the new connections created, the surprise of having understood something differently produces a greater dense force for what emerges, generating a **driving force**. It is like passion and love. Love is time, construction, routine, coziness, it is food for a whole day. Passion takes us out of focus, changes our breathing, sharpens our senses. Love is routine, and passion is emerging.

There is also a force in an emergent situation that is created by the tension of having **challenged** something predicted and predetermined. The adventure of confrontation, the courage of the unexpected, the emotion of the unpredictable.

What are those conditions for emergence, and are we able to create or facilitate them? Most contemporary uses of the word *emerge* include a physical appearance from out of a place, often a dark place (C.U.P., 2020; Lexico, 2020; Merriam-Webster, 2020; Rundel, 2020). In the literal use, emerging happens when something or someone comes into view, sometimes from hiding, such as emerging from the shadows or emerging from a hallway. All of the consulted dictionary definitions of emerging include the idea that something has become known or manifest (C.U.P., 2020; Lexico, 2020; Merriam-Webster, 2020; Rundel, 2020). In fact, Cambridge University Press (2020) adds “to become known, especially as a result of examining something or asking questions about it.”

PART TWO

Focus Group: Watching Video of Artmaking to Identify Stop Moments (The First 40 Seconds)

It is January 27, 2020.

Not only can emergence happen by coming out from something, such as the shadows, but emergence can come into something, such as emerging into the light (Lexico, 2020). *Emergence is what we give meaning to*, as in these moments brought forward within this writing.

Saliha and Lynn watch the recording of our collective artmaking the evening prior, and decide to review the opening ten minutes of the video with everyone the next day. Again, we set up the video camera to record our process of sensemaking of our artmaking. This activity is also meant to provide a space to practice “coding.”

“Just call out stop, if you see an emergent moment—a moment where something happens, or changes, or catches your attention, or that you remember as significant. We’ll stop the video, and you can put down the time signature, and what you notice.”

“Is everyone ready to go?” asks Saliha. She pushes the button on the computer to start the video. We turn our attention to the screen in front of us, where we see ourselves engaging in Marlies’ and Ming-Yu’s performative inquiry of mark making.

“Stop!” Without comment, each emergent moment is annotated by the one who calls out stop. Stops arrive like ping-pong balls, fast and furious.

To what extent does this instruction to call out a stop create emergent moments? Nuance, perspective, seeking moments that speak individually, collectively, calls us to notice. A relational interplay between observer and what is observed. How we punctuate in action creates the meaning of experience lived.

I wonder if any moment could be a stop moment if we just take the time to notice it—if we are given instruction to notice it? Are there any moments in our lives that do not have the capacity to speak to us? Each moment arrives whether or not we ask for it to arrive. So, what happens if we think of each moment as an unexpected guest?

The sheer size of a moment makes it impossible for us to attend to every moment equally, but I think it is important to pay attention to some of the moments that don't tug quite as hard either, to see the moments that stillness brings us, and to equally take time to notice moments in the busy times in our lives. There are moments whose tug I didn't feel at all, moments that did not make me stop that I wish I had paid more attention to. To have spent extra moments reveling in the loveliness of being held in an embrace, or to have spent time reflecting on the privilege of washing dishes next to a loved one.

Noticing brings emergence to light. Every moment holds the potential for emergence. Noticing, is an invitation to reflection and sense-making, awareness of positionality, awareness of gaps as yet to be named.

It is curious how the experience of watching a video of a lived event indelibly alters one's memory of it. I remember participating in the initial performative inquiry, feeling irritated by the contrivance of the task and the presence of the recording device, no doubt exacerbating feelings of vulnerability and exposure even as I performed my compliance. In the moment and its recollection, my experience is largely sensory, and emotionally intense; the presence of others drowned out by the loudness of my embodied self-consciousness.

It is with trepidation then, through filtered protection of a finger shield, that I watch the video recording, lest these feelings be evident. They are not. Presented with the "evidential" view of a fixed, dispassionate and disembodied camera eye, my own subjective and embodied recollections are indiscernible. The internal impulses of the corporeal self are dethroned from their prominence in consciousness, relinquished for a more democratic remembrance, one that is

owned by no-one, totally other, re-presenting events as they might have appeared, externally. We transcend our bodies' containment to become mobile specters of ourselves.

Curiously, this displacement of the self within memory, now exposed as fragmentary, incomplete, makes space for the presence and experience of others. On the screen, and in memory, I am reborn in re-presentation as an integrated part of a collective whole, held together within the video's frame as we set about our mark making.... Hypnotically, hands move in and out of one another across the table, effortlessly, gracefully, like the warp and weft of a tapestry. The dynamic choreography of action and response on the screen, mirroring the conversation that unfolds back and forth dialogically between us outside the screen looking on, as we identify and consider 'stop' moments from the video replay.

Each identified stop quickly follows in the footprints of the first. Saliha and Lynn glance across the room at each other in surprise. The evening before, we had identified *our* first emergent moment at the two-minute mark, and yet, *here and now*, a cascade of stops arrives within the first 40 seconds of the video! Lynn calls a halt to the calling of stops.

Saliha: “Okay, which stop moments did you notice? And why?”

Ajay notes a stop at 0.48 second—less than one second into the video!

Ajay: “It’s not a breathtaking moment, it’s a remarkable moment, ‘remark-able’ moment. Another remarkable moment. And it has something to do with the focus of the camera.”

Marlies: “What I thought was interesting was first of all how poised everyone was at the beginning.”

Moments spill forth, moments that speak of movement and music, moments that speak of the fear of being in the wrong place, and moments that speak of dancing the dance between being participant and facilitator, mark maker and maker of marks.

According to the timer on the video camera, the group spends 22 minutes and 50 seconds talking about less than 1 minute of video.

As the class calls out their stop moments, I begin to wonder about the data that we are gathering. How do we even know that this is data? These moments seem insignificant overall. Some of the

moments are internally experienced, like Daniella's experience of being in the wrong place, while others are connected with the swaying or singing to the tempo of the music. I become a bit wary, so I comment, "I'm sitting here wondering about the fact that we are watching ourselves? How can we all come to the same conclusion..."? Really, I'm asking, how is this data? How are we agreeing on these points as researchers?

Saliha tells me, "We are not trying to."

Every moment can't possibly be a point of research!

Can it?

Creative emergence is an act of unfolding, revelation of what lies within, a surprising coincidence of events. To observe and reimagine—what transpires? Like endless frames of beauty that fill a photographer's lens, a myriad of different viewpoints is possible in each moment, angle, glance— exquisite windowpanes of possibility. The magic of sensory awareness forges novelty out of incomplete parts, inviting connections, the invisible made visible.

A living emergence.

Our creative process comes to mind when I consider emergence-in-action:

messy, unpredictable, which calls for an open mindset, allowing for incubation and serendipity.

No prescription, no certainty of outcomes.

Give over to the not-knowingness, of letting go of outcomes, freedom from prior expectation. No attachment.

*Until play and playfulness clears the confusing thicket to reveal a pathway,
obvious in its presence, or not, and artistry arrives, in 3-D, bold moves,
connecting strokes giving flight to the artefact.*

Emergence reveals itself as a living relational activity, in this moment, *here and now*, in each emergent moment. As Jana Milloy (2007) notes, each moment unfolds into another: "The temporal process of unfolding generates emergence, a turn without a return, a rhythm that moves forward, in a circular motion, perhaps, in a kind of pulse, a swelling" (p. 22). Noticing, and

attending to moments of emergence, requires then attendance to a relational presence in constant arrival; uninterrupted, the gap between past and future arrives unabated, with consequence.

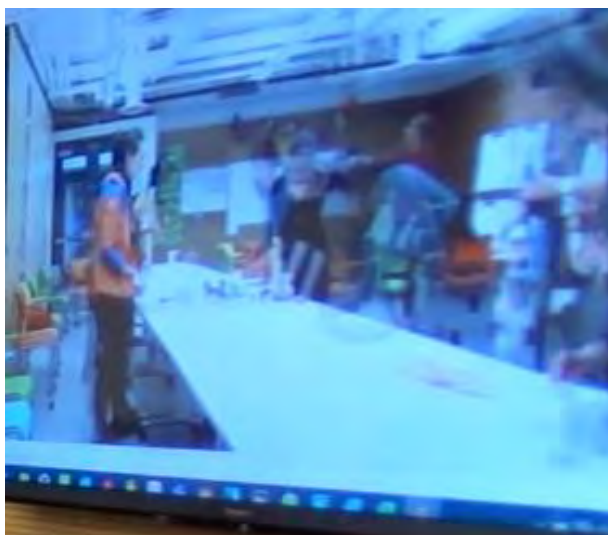
What we are living *here and now* is one of many possible worlds. Thus, navigating plurality is a matter of relational tension, always. To reimagine is to navigate between the normative as perceived from one's particularity and situatedness (that which is) and the creative (that which is yet to arrive) (Bava, 2020; Shotter, 1993). This is the play of imagination and dialectics (Bava, 2020), creating space for what is yet to be co-created. To be in emergence is to be in the in-betweenness or what Turner (1974) refers to as the liminal. As Bava and McNamee (2019) state "the focus of analysis, therefore, is not the individual but is what people do together and what their 'doing' makes" (p. 295). Emergence is playing between and playing with between.

Ming-Yu: "I saw myself not in the group but actually *in* the group."

Marlies: "And, the playfulness that came between – and I think it's also maybe in our role as being inside out ... that... I didn't pick that up as much because my role was more serious about (chuckling) being the facilitator and so I was going in and out – and in and out – but it's almost *inside (out? our?)* perspective where as you were fully engaged in activities together and the interactions together were so beautiful."

PART THREE

Data Mutinies



Where is the end of seeing?

At what point does one know everything there is to know in a moment?

"Mutiny" whispers Data.

Someone calls out.

"Stop!"

Saliha presses the pause key on her computer

keyboard. But rather than one clear image, the image on the screen is distorted, a technical glitch. We appear pixelated, stuck-in between stillness and action. “I’ll try it again,” mutters Saliha. She presses the play button, and our images leap into fluidity. Again, she touches the pause key.

The screen freezes, our images pixelated into a new ghostly overlay of multiple moments, a profusion of selves, conversing with and interrupting one another across space and time, making visible the dialogic nature of every moment between a remembered past and possible future.

Saliha: “And somehow, I’m not able to...I mean, I am moving it [*moving the clip back and forth on her computer*] hoping it’ll resolve [*hand movement indicating the video*], and it’s not resolved. It’s a...time of the emergent (tongue in cheek)....” [*hand making rounded movements*]

Marlies: “Ya, we’re all within one another [reference in the background to the hologram].”

Ajay: “That’s a beautiful one, now I’m looking through you.” [laughter]

Maggie: “Amy is in two places, looking....”

We become the data. The movement of disruption, interruption, invites us to play, to see the multiplicity and complicity of time, our interactions, *all the light we did not see*...so focused we were on the task we had assigned ourselves. Multiple images of time overlaid reflect our own situated time, *here and now*, in the classroom, where we are watching ourselves, recognizing that we are in another time, *here and now*, watching ourselves, watching ourselves in action, enlivening the liminal space between. We learn that “...we co-belong in the openings we co-create” (Women Collective Women Writing, 2008, p. 133); relational beings (Gergen, 2009).

We play with exuberance and enthusiasm, delighting in the haptic, incongruent, and transgressive nature of these bodily bifurcations that have interrupted the seriousness of our exposition. There is laughter, and a subversive delight in the preposterous as well as an eruption of divergent ideas connected with this visual disruption—about remembrance, simultaneous presence, embedded experience, and the space between—

“The temporal process of unfolding generates emergence, a turn without a return, a rhythm that moves forward, in a circular motion, perhaps, in a kind of pulse, a swelling” (Milloy, 2007, p.

22). A moment is ephemeral, temporal, fluid, appears, disappears; a moment gives way to a moment, when a moment slips away, and yet, as Milloy reminds us, *each moment, a child of a duration* (p. 157). What is born within the arrival of each moment, the inception of emergence, calls us to attention. There is yet something new to arrive. Noticing and attending to moments of emergence requires then attendance to a presence in constant arrival.

A human problem is that we attempt to say something about a “thing” without seeing our relationship to that thing or our relationship among the players who are attempting to make sense of it (Bateson, 1972). Nothing emerges in the absence of relationship, human to human and non-human. Emergence is a phenomenon of noticing and sensemaking from within our relationality.



...to *emerge* can also be to garner prominence, as is the case when a leader emerges, and this influence must be recognized and apparent (C.U.P., 2020; Fierro, et al., 2020; Rundel, 2020). This is an acknowledgement by others that the emergence has significance. The question is commonly posed, “What emerged for you?” holds a space for a subjective and bespoke insight to be honoured, respected, and prized for its attachment to the person experiencing the emergence.

Maggie: “... *this* is a current stop moment. [*laughter*] We are absolutely enraptured by it. This pixelated doubling of the images is the way in which that is actually capturing the complexity of the situation, because you have sort of the moments collide upon each other and you are participants with your past self and then your future self in the moments. It calls attention to what’s not visible, what’s in between the spaces and also the way in which there are so many things that are not visualized within the screen because we all remember this as internal felt experience and now we are watching that from a different place... there is a disjointedness and the back and forth that even though we’re capturing a linear, singular, monocular eye, of an event, that is...bringing every aspect of themselves in, into [*hand movement gesticulating*] ‘the parallel space between’ space.”

Saliha: “Where is the in-between space? Is it the in-between space of that moment [in the video hand gesture], or is this in-between space between that moment and this moment [between the video moment and being in the room right now moment] [*hand gestures*], and what’s happening?”

Marlies: “It’s all about the embedded process.”

Amy: “We can call this experience, right now, inception of emergence.”

Saliha: Did you get that? [*gesticulating to Marlies, to write it down*] Yes, “The inception of emergence”, we are going to say, “Amy, Date, 2020... Say more, we are all joking and enjoying it, but what is it?”

Amy: “What’s happening right now? We are going in [*spirals*], like one going in further and then further, but it’s re-examining the same from different perspectives on these same people. Like the movie *Inception*, you go into one story, then you go into the story that’s in that story.”

Maggie: “So, emergence is dialogic, right? [Yes.] ...So, you were looking at me...what did you just say? Like I am looking at myself drawing. I'm drawing but also then reflecting on myself drawing. Amy is in two totally different spaces, so there is multiplicity and dialogues involved in every single action, ya, whether it’s...”

Ajay: “Where’s the emergence?”

Saliha: “I mean, for a person like me, I’ll say it’s always happening, it’s always already here.”

Ajay: “I’m getting [a feeling that] much more is emerging ...than in our responses to this. You know, again, I’m not in the picture or the frame. I’m just getting the sense that the activity itself, you know, we are giving it multiple interpretations and that itself is turning out to be a... seduction...”

Amy, Image from Postcard

Community in-between the spaces

Although every community is unique, it is the ideology of the regularized and normative for what beholds a culture within its society. Communities exist amongst the understanding of their values within their micro and macro cultures.

How do communities perform play? How do we define these moments of interactive play? What is required to set the stage for these occasions? What kind of space and time is needed? How can we capture the synaptic energy of those in-between moments of improvisation and play?



What we do not often see are the circumstances and nuances in which lie beyond the ways of culture, the grey areas of diversity within those in-between spaces. What calls to my attention are the emergent moments or interactions between people, ways in which they are not categorized, labelled, or expected.

"If we could be in these in-between spaces more, we could be living in very different worlds, very different realities." Bava, 2020.

By Amy

Ming-Yu, Postcard

I have been sitting here for the whole afternoon, trying to squeeze something for the postcard. I was slightly upset about the unpredictable continuing change due to COVID-19. Almost all my students cancelled the lessons, libraries and gyms were closed, I have nowhere to go but stay home for the study. I tried to concentrate, but I generated nothing. Not a word.

I started to feel anxious. I have no time to waste. I need to create the postcard No. 10, watch the video, do transcriptions, better start the final paper, there is a pile of books waiting there, and today is already Wednesday. How could I be so empty at this moment?

Wait! Empty...I remember I read something about empty yesterday!

I grabbed the book, flicked through the pages, it must be somewhere here...

"I think that I am empty of content and am just spinning my wheels. But I am not empty, I am full of shit!" (Nachmanovitch, 1990, 144).

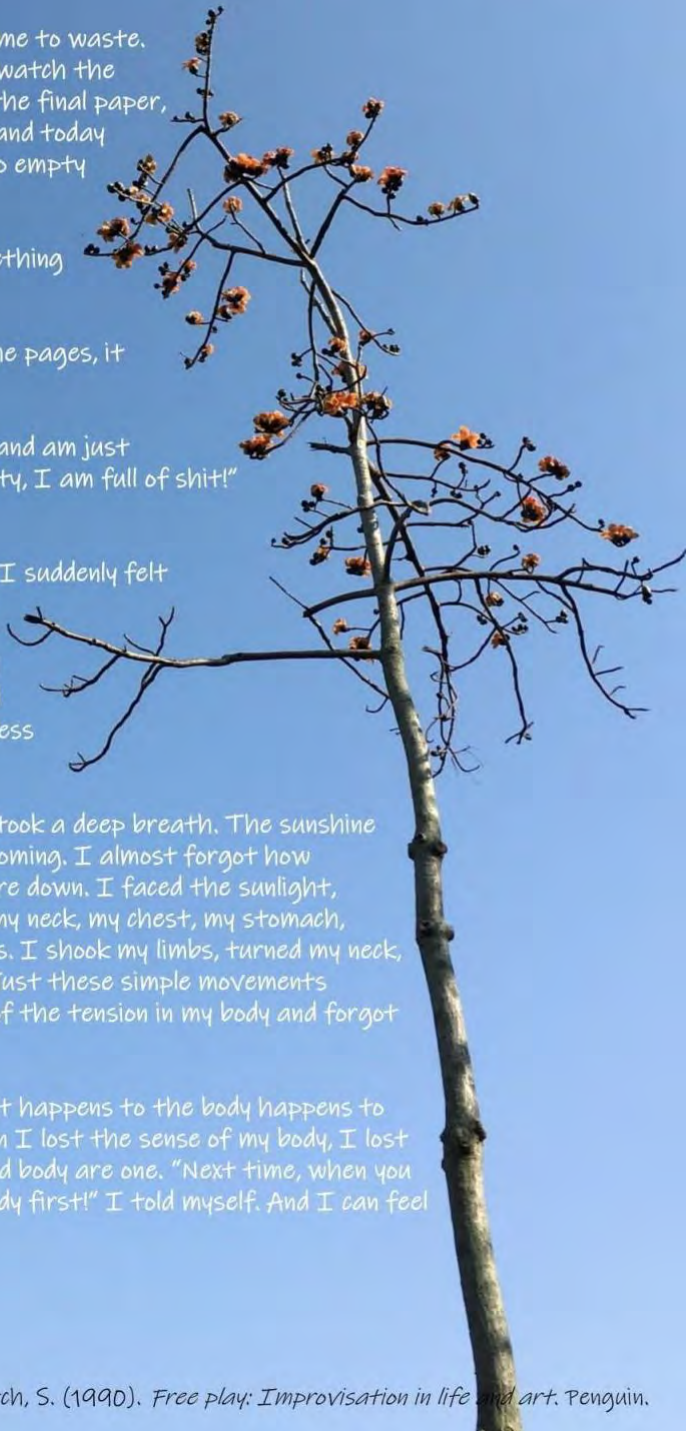
I laughed aloud, and at that moment, I suddenly felt my shoulders relaxed. I was surprised at the tightness in my body that I did not notice at all. Indeed, I was full of shit, and my body knew it. How could I hear my inner sound if I let the useless uneasiness occupy my mind?

I stood up, moved to the window, and took a deep breath. The sunshine was still bright in the dusk. Spring is coming. I almost forgot how comfortable it is when the shoulders are down. I faced the sunlight, closed my eyes, tried to sense my jaw, my neck, my chest, my stomach, my waist, my hips, my legs, and my toes. I shook my limbs, turned my neck, and welcomed fresh air into my lungs. Just these simple movements refreshed my brain. I was not aware of the tension in my body and forgot how it could affect me.

Snowber (2018) mentioned that "what happens to the body happens to the mind, and vice versa (p.249). When I lost the sense of my body, I lost myself and the energy I have. Mind and body are one. "Next time, when you need to restart the mind, move the body first!" I told myself. And I can feel I am not empty anymore.

By Ming-Yu Lin

Nachmanovitch, S. (1990). *Free play: Improvisation in life and art*. Penguin.



PART FOUR

Seduction of Completeness

What emerges as we research and write is ever unfolding, unravelling, appearing in our midst. As we experience our inquiry, emergent moments arrive in liminal spaces we co-create, generating new possible actions, collaborative (and individual) meaning-making, insights, new invitations for engaging, learning, inquiring together. Our overlapping roles of co-researcher, participant, learner, educator, artist invite us to imagine emergence anew: a relational kaleidoscope of performative play in motion. Listening, being wide-awake to the silences, tensions, in-between spaces of not knowing, undoing what is expected, anticipated—here is the action site of inquiry where we choose to dwell in play, in curiosity, in not-knowing (Anderson, 2007; Bava, 2017; Frantzich & Fels, 2013).

And yet we know in this writing that not all that has been will be revealed.

Our hope was to notice how we embody—in dialogue and play—that which we sought to mark as moments of emergence. What we learned is that emergence is everywhere, temporal, elusive, constantly in movement—moments unfolding into moments unfolding, *each moment, a child of duration* (Milloy, 2008, p.157, emphasis added). In the complexity of engagement, we unleash in inquiry, something new arrives, borne of the dialogical relationships and interplay we shared, *continue to share*. Emergence reveals itself as living relational organic, *here and now*. Emergence slips through time, between and through moments of play, unfolding into newness of presence as we watch ourselves watching ourselves watching ourselves in play to awaken play.

Our inquiry offers moments of resistance, transgressions, tensions, recognitions, awakenings that are in themselves emergent, temporal, elusive, ever-changing as we seek to name the learning that is our inquiry. The definition of emergence is that emergence defies definition. The closest we arrive is Amy's "inception of emergence," being present and wide-awake (Greene, 1978) in relational dialogic play so that we might witness *our* arrival in moments of arrival, noticing our moments of connecting and (re)marking together to make up what matters. We remain forever on the cusp of emergence.

What becomes clear is that perspectives, impressions, memories, encounters we experience during our inquiry are temporal, elusive, ever shifting in the changing tides of relational interactions. Emergence is not an answering, but a calling to what else might yet arrive. What Shotter (1996) refers to as anticipatory responsiveness. Arrivals are contextual, performative, spontaneous: how we are individually and collectively situated yet not deliberate and thus

responsive to how and why we engage, and how and why we gaze upon and make meaning. Living in a bounded world (Gergen, 2009), we may be seduced to see arrivals as separate activities. Instead, as we are offering, we may choose to *orientate towards* the where and how our current activity is located in dialogic relationship to what precedes and what follows in interplay, attending to our situatedness and lived experience (Lemke, 1995; van Manen, 1990).

The challenge and joy of co-writing this article has been to arrive in textual embodiment of our conceptual and experiential interplay and relational navigation as we seek to recreate and honour a collective recognition of the arrival of *inception of emergence* in our midst as experienced and named. As writer scholar Rishma Dunlop (2002) writes in reference to collaborative writing, “This is an imagination that explores the nature and value of our relationships to each other, of taking risks. This imagination demands courage” (p. 12). Gablik (1991) calls for “new forms emphasizing our essential interconnectedness rather than our separateness, forms evoking the feeling of belonging to a larger whole than expressing the isolated, alienated self” (p. 5). As Saliha remarks, “That’s my journey...That’s my curiosity because if we could be in these in-between spaces more, we would be living in very different worlds, very different realities.” Our offering, this article, is a rhizomatic exploration, as we engage in an impossible task—creating anew our experience of learning together through collaborative artmaking, reflection, writing and sense-making, recognizing the gaps, the tensions, to this moment *here and now*.

Ours is a performative interplay refusing consensual punctuation. Our textual improvisations have unknown parameters, invisible edges that cut, as we piece together what is remembered, what is caught on screen, what emerges in our choreography of collaborative writing, emergent learning, an experience of what might be called *radical interplay*. Failure is inevitable – and yet, openings, portals, possibilities, awakenings arrive in our midst.

It is August 21, 2021.

How do you write an ending to a paper on emergence?

A singular authorial voice is impossible.

We perform three possibilities: A postcard. A triad of exits. An offering.

Annina, Postcard

MARCH 23, 2020

'All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream' (Edgar Allan Poe)

This is the sixth layer- a writing about a conversation about a transcription about a video about a video about an activity and I wonder how many layers there can be- like generations and infinite refractions, Russian dolls unpacked and unpacked and unpacked.

At what point is an origin overwhelmed by everything that happens after, beyond, past? Can I still see my great grandmother in my reflection? I don't know what she looked like- is she still there? How many times can we remember something before the memory becomes legend. How quickly we become... how quickly we change and are changed.

I don't know how long the influence of a moment holds on, but I know that when we reflect on a moment we get to hold on to it a little longer and in holding it for an extra second we allow that moment to shape us again. These are some moments I would like to hold on for a little while longer.

- Sitting in my car with Marlies. Thank you for spending time with me and for being my friend and confidant.
- Playing piano with Ming-Yu. Thank you for letting me sit next to you and for making my noise sound like music- it fills my heart up
- Having a heart-to-heart with Ajay outside of the room during break time. Thank you for your affirmation and thank you for your unique views- you are a frustratingly wonderful human.
- Hearing Dani sing for the first time: thank you for lending your voice and music to my ears. I will always think of music as a form of revolution because of you.
- Making shadow puppets with Amy. Thank you for the calm you bring to each class and every project I've ever had the privilege to do with you. I love making stories with you- whether they be of the shadow variety or of the country-songs about sleeping bags variety.
- Seeing Maggie's face light up as people started interacting with her light installation. I will someday haul like Maggie. You turn sticks and paper into beautiful art. You have the capacity to see the potential in the seemingly mundane.
- Sharon's thoughtful replies and commiserations to my postcards. Thank you for always thinking about the rest of us, even when your own life seems unbearably full of chaos. You have a gift for compassion and love.
- Looking through art books with Salha under the table. Thank you for sitting with me and for spending some of your precious minutes in our class with just me.
- Driving home with Lynn. I have never been driven home by a professor before and I have never received such personal feedback on any of my writing as I have from you with my postcards. I want to care about my students this much. Thank you for making these moments possible.

This is my gratitude postcard but it does answer the question of what emergence is to me. Emergence is holding moments and recognizing their ability to shape us. Each of you has shaped me. Thank you for being part of me.

Annina



COVID-19, with its emergence, has brought home the message of our interconnectedness and interdependence. The global pandemic has raised our awareness of emergence and how we relate to the not knowing, the undoing of our lives. COVID-19 has illuminated the specter of our human condition by shedding light on how we awkwardly dance when we don't know how within a liminal space where uncertainty is palpable. Sharing experience, our *living data* emerges, evolves, transforms...there is no end point, only a moving into learning—relational, generative, creative, sense-making—that takes us forward into our lives.

Inception of Emergence

COVID-19 has upended the forms of life we took for granted; the rules of the games revealed. Games we didn't even realize we were playing. The world is no longer the pictures we held as dear to us. Our everyday language falls to the ground as our actions no longer function like the actions of yesterday. Something new is arriving, even as we fight to return to the past. New actions, new language, new forms of life are being made up even as we mourn the moment that has been. A new play is emerging—how we want to participate and relate to it is the call of inception.

COVID-19 is not so different from our activity. This pandemic is filled with tensions, silent and spoken. Yet, if we take time to reflect and sit in the difficulties (Salverson & Penner, 2020), something happens and we awaken to the learning that is offered. We are gifted by an infinity of moments unfolding in our presence. Our textual improvisations have parameters, invisible edges impossible to define and yet, with your willing heart, our ambition reveals emergence in its naissance of arrival.

*....a moment unfolding, unravelling,
plays into a liminal space of infinity...*



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Lynn Fels is a Professor in Arts Education at Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, Canada. She is former Academic Editor of *Educational Insights*, an open-access journal that reimagines curriculum, research and education (<https://insights.ogpr.educ.ubc.ca>). Lynn co-authored *Exploring Curriculum: Performative Inquiry, Role Drama and Learning* with George Belliveau (2008), and has authored numerous articles and chapters on performative inquiry, arts across the curriculum, and curriculum as lived experience. She is co-editor of *Arresting Hope: Women Taking Action in Prison Inside Out* (2015) and *Releasing Hope: Women's Stories of Transition from Prison to Community* (2019). Lynn was a co-investigator in a six-year SSHRC Partnership Grant, researching arts for social change in Canada (<https://artists-speak.ca>). Currently, her research focuses on performing mentorship, performative writing, and reimagining scholarship.

Daniella Gramani is a multi-artist, a music educator, and a doctoral student in Arts Education at SFU. After 20 years of professionally singing and teaching in Brazil, Daniella decided to bring her experience to academia. Her research focuses on the voice as a way of knowing and making oneself known. She is theorizing about voice while reconstructing her vocal history and rethinking the practices and principles of vocal pedagogy

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Sharon Daggett Johnsey has worked as an a/r/tographer in the area of collaborative art-making, primarily in the theatre arts. Currently a PhD student at Simon Fraser University in Arts Education, Sharon is studying the dialogic relationship between artistic content and social development. Themes central in her published and produced playwrighting are the implications of spirituality on social development and social justice.

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Ming-Yu Lin is a music educator, a pianist and a Ph.D. candidate in the Arts Education program at Simon Fraser University. She is passionate about looking for the connection between the philosophy of improvisation and classical piano training. She aims to explore a playful piano pedagogy for children.

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Amy Wiebe Lau, Doctoral Candidate, Manager in Teacher Education, Post-Secondary: Amy is a PhD candidate with a background in Educational Leadership and the Arts. Her research and current practice focus on developing a framework, Critical Comprehensive Inclusion (CCI), based on five essential criteria through which the art of storytelling is necessary for anti-racism within social, structural, and institutional colonial constructs, particularly for preservice teachers entering the teaching field. She works professionally as a manager of teacher education in higher education. Amy acknowledges that she currently lives and works on the unceded territories of the Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, and Kwikwetlem Nations.

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