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Coming out to Australia: Cosmopolitan Vlogging

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Abstract

This paper is a collaborative reflection on a graduate a/r/tographic (artist/researcher/teacher research project using vlogging as its means of inquiry into potential for subjective reconstruction. The initial study focused on shifting perspectives of self in times of solitude and new surroundings. Springgay et al.'s (2005) a/r/tographic renderings were used to methodologically investigate emergent perspectives and realities of Tyson Lepage's journey in grappling with repositionings needed to open himself to shifting courses of action. The initial study took place in Sydney and the

North Coast of New South Wales, Australia from September 2017 to December 2017. This revisitation of Lepage's research results from subsequent and ongoing discussion and reflection between Lepage and his two graduate mentors, one in Australia and the other in Canada. William Pinar's scholarship on cosmopolitanism provides a theoretical lens for developing deeper understandings of a relational self and is used in both initial research and in this return to the research. The multidimensional movement of understanding self in relation to other, requires openness to the world but also to one's inner feelings and opinions. It requires individuals acting in the world with others while also cultivating solitude and independence of mind, the combined process of which, Pinar describes as worldliness, and which he claims is the pedagogical project of cosmopolitanism in curriculum theory. The authors revisit Pinar's worldliness and Lepage's renderings/findings from the initial research, to now extend their collective thinking regarding the research journey of making visual expressions of living a passionate and contemplative public life.

The first time I was called a faggot, I was in Grade 6. I remember walking down the school hallway in my hometown of 400 people, wearing my extra baggy jeans and brand name T-shirt I begged my mom to buy me and hearing those words whispered by older boys as they walked by. I went home from school that day and asked my sister, "What does faggot mean?" She asked with concern: "Who called you that?" saying she would get mad at whoever it was. She explained it means "when a boy likes a boy". For me, I understood that this was me—and this was bad. This was when I learned about sexual diversity. Diversity, however, involved labels for people, automatically deeming some less than others. Because of my sister's reaction, I didn't question the matter further. In school the characters we read about were straight; acting roles were assigned based on sexuality and gender, and Religious Studies taught us marriage was between men and women. For years, even after graduating high school, I questioned what life might have been had the school curriculum offered opportunity for creative and artful spaces in more complex interplays of education and community. How might I have felt about myself had I sensed an opportunity to express, learn and imagine more about myself?

Tyson Lepage, 2019, p. 1 (paraphrased)

Introduction

In this article Tyson Lepage and his master's thesis supervisors, one in Canada (Valerie Triggs) and the other in Australia (John Buchanan), describe and review aspects of Tyson Lepage's (2019) a/r/tographic research in which he sought to make sense of being an educator interested in the world and in the creation of artful spaces of reimagining how one might live with oneself and others. Awarded the Queen Elizabeth II scholarship, Tyson completed his research in Sydney, Australia, a city, country, and continent entirely new to him. Before

leaving Canada and after arriving in Sydney, he collected written and video data during four months of walking, studying, and working, which he transposed into weekly vlogs and posted on social media. Vlogs are blogs that use video as the main medium and, in this case, are supported by oral reflections shared in-situ in each video. Tyson also wrote accompanying reflective journal entries. Over time, Tyson's online vlog site attracted thousands of hits revealing interest in this form of research communication.

Tyson drew on Pinar's (2009) curriculum scholarship of cosmopolitanism in which one's sense of self exists in association with the choices one has made in their life and their given circumstances. Cosmopolitanism, in this perspective, not only assumes narrative modes are important, but being engaged in the world for others also complicates narratives and our notion of self, challenging and perhaps changing both world and self. Pinar (2009) cites Appiah (2005, p. 222) who further emphasizes that one would not be a cosmopolitan in only wanting to change the world but not understand it. Pinar (2009) claims that cosmopolitanism involves both changing and understanding.

In this paper, we, three authors, continue what was originally graduate/co-mentoring work, working and studying collaboratively to generate further possibilities for learning with, and from one another in flexible, imaginative, and interpretive ways. While the research is solely Tyson's, we revisit Tyson's project in order to extend our combined understanding of the experience for ourselves. The time between Tyson's thesis and the writing of this paper has generated additional insights and awareness for both Tyson and the other authors. Together we revisit Tyson's work through the theoretical lenses of Pinar's cosmopolitanism and *A/r/tography's* renderings, advocate for vlogging and journal writing as *a/r/tographic* research methods and offer some cosmopolitan thinking for a renewed sense of self-in-relation to self, others, and world.

Tyson began his study of self, vlogging, travel, and cosmopolitanism in the spring 2017 term before he left Canada to complete his research in Sydney in September. During the fall term of 2017 in a university graduate directed reading course, he read and wrote about the need for individuals to know themselves and to understand who they are in relation to the broader world. He began to consider how the vulnerability of exposing his inner thoughts might be difficult but perhaps rewarding in terms of learning more about himself and others. Tyson's coursework required him to notice something each week, no matter how trivial or small, that he had not noticed before, to take a photograph of it, and then to write about his new awareness. Tyson began to consider how sensitizing himself to his surroundings might allow the questioning of both internal and external conditions.

In addition, Tyson became more convinced of the necessity of taking a break from the intense

structure of his everyday busy life, filled with teaching preparation, coaching, friends and family, to experience life in alternative ways and perhaps make shifts within his already richly connected life. Despite his connection to family and close friends, he was aware that he had to undertake a journey of reconstructing himself in relation to a broader world. In so doing, he had to retreat from relationships he valued most, in order to grapple with issues of sexuality, religion, and self and other. This shift to solitude, or quietude, as Pinar (2019) describes, interrupts living but still happens in its midst. Pinar (2019) claims questions of justice, ethics, and religion, invite “not only activism but also quietude—solitary, social, and spiritual attunement to what and where these questions point” (p. 223). A certain period in Tyson’s life had run its course. He knew that he needed solitude to reposition, in order to move forward.

Having secured the opportunity to travel for his research in another Commonwealth country, Tyson quit his teaching job, thereby untangling him from some of his current life. As he neared the end of a four-year teaching position at a local Catholic high school, he wrote of the combination of sorrow and excitement he felt when he looked at his name on the classroom door for what he imagined might be the last time. Early video documentation of preparing to move to Australia revealed the start of what Williams (2007, as cited in Pinar, 2009) describes as a “self-reflexive discipline of self-overcoming; [that] may even involve working against oneself” (p. iiiiv). Here subjectivity involved personal feelings, preferences, and opinions inseparable from the social, the interplay of continual relational response and receptivity. The self-reflexive practice Tyson began in Canada developed further after arriving in Sydney in September.

Theoretical Framework: Worldliness as Cosmopolitanism

The study discussed in this article centers on the use of vlogs and journal writing as *a/r/tographic* methods for investigating one’s subjectivity, in terms of Pinar’s (2009) cosmopolitanism. In *a/r/tography*, generative interrelations among the roles of artist, teacher, and researcher open one’s “imagination toward the unimagined and the uncertain” (Springgay, et al., 2005, p. 897). *A/r/tography* involves understanding interdisciplinary research as a “loss, a shift, or a rupture where in absence, new courses of action unfold” (p. 898), conditions that Tyson was willing to confront and grapple with in becoming a cosmopolitan traveler and self.

Cosmopolitanism is a perspective that celebrates a shared humanity thriving in difference. Tyson sought a performance-based, materially embodied cosmopolitanism. He desired to be situated amidst a global community where difference thrived and where he might responsively reposition and re-identify himself. Instead of being its object, Tyson wanted to perform worldliness.

In studying his own capacity to differ in a world of difference, Tyson drew on Pinar’s

scholarship on cosmopolitanism in curriculum studies. Pinar (2009) argues that a cosmopolitan curriculum in education focuses less on institutional allocations of coursework and more on self-knowledge. Referencing Nussbaum (1997, p. 85), Pinar (2004) claims that such a curriculum cultivates “comprehension of alterity, including that self-knowledge that enables understanding of others” (p. vii). Curriculum is “the interdisciplinary study of educational experience” (Pinar, 2004, p. 2), involving a pedagogical task that is both “autobiographical and political” (p. 4). Rather than remaking educational practice in one’s likeness, one must engage instead, in a project of *both* social and subjective reconstruction.

Pinar (1978) claims that part of curriculum studies is a voyage out, one embarked upon between the knower and the known in which the theorist turns attention from what exists towards what does not. Pinar (2009) described this voyage as engagement in the world focused on what one has yet to offer. Subjectivity is a critical resource demanding a “self-reflexive discipline of self-overcoming”; even involving “working against oneself” (Pinar, p. viii). This multidirectional movement involves “openness to the world but also openness to the world of one’s interiority” (Pinar, 2009, p. 63) and is defined as worldliness. Essentially, worldliness involves openness to the world, and to one’s feelings and opinions. Its practice requires acting in the world with others while cultivating solitude and independence of mind.

Solitude and independence of mind do not necessarily require social isolation, yet being away from narrowly defined duties to family, students, and community afforded Tyson new pathways of movement. Tyson found that temporarily suspending existing relationships allowed him to study the trajectory of his desires. Uprooting has no predetermined course and offers no guaranteed outcomes, but it will, hopefully, involve a calling-into-action of excitations and passion about oneself in the world. The contiguities inherent in uprooting and inserting oneself elsewhere create dissonant elements of difference that offer opportunity for one to breathe (Pinar, 2009, p. 52). Pinar describes this movement as the worlding of subjectivity and claims worldliness is the pedagogical project of cosmopolitanism in curriculum theory.

Worldliness, for Pinar (2009), allows one “to envisage working from within as simultaneously subjective and social” (p. 151). The reconstruction of private desire into public service is the very calling of a cosmopolitan education (Pinar, 2009, p. 180). This reconstruction is not something transcendent but rather begins with worldliness, which Pinar (2019) describes as “passion for reality” (p. 184). Here spirituality, sexuality, and sustainability are the ways in which the world flourishes in its difference.

Methodology: A/r/tography

Tyson chose a/r/tography because it can be directed both inward and outward through

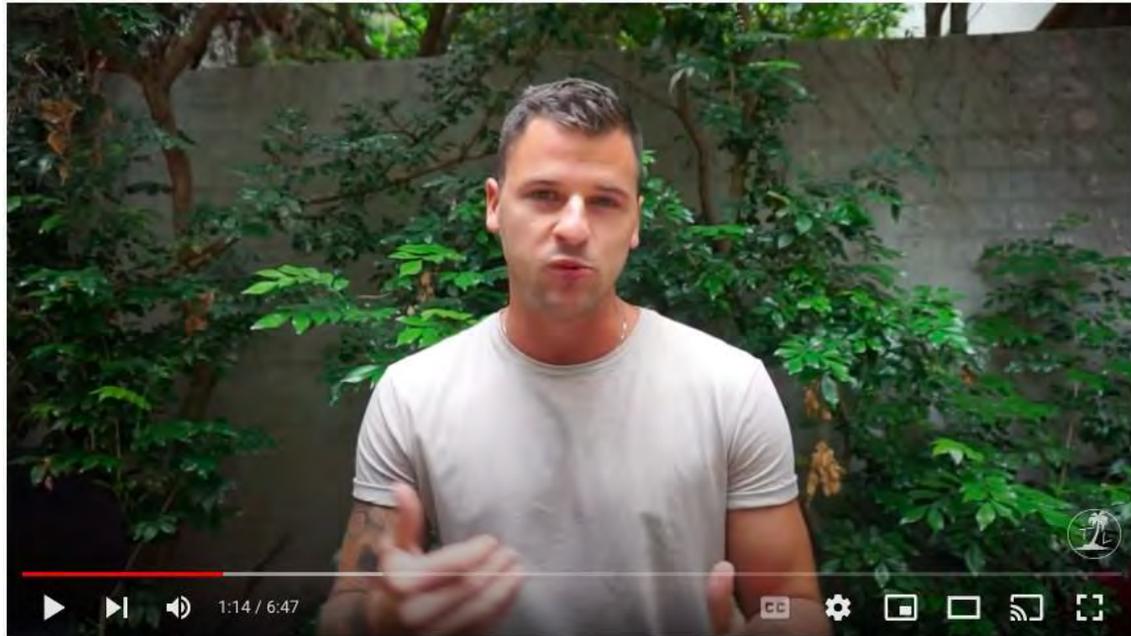
reflexive writing and artmaking. In a/r/tography, roles of artist, researcher, and teacher are emphasized through living, inquiring, and being, in ways that purposely influence and implicate one another. Inquiring into one's life is "not done, but lived" (Irwin, 2004, p. 33). Attending to where the various roles in his life augmented or shifted generated helpful contradictions, making new possibilities more apparent. Tyson wrote: "This methodology allows...flow between intellect, feeling and practice, which aligns with my research as a teacher, a gay man, and a global citizen. It afforded...opportunities to be vulnerable and create meaningful data" (Lepage, 2019, p. 20). It also provided flexible and creative interpretive possibilities through which to render the data.

Vlogging

One of the main reasons for choosing a/r/tography was to engage the act of creating. Being a passionate traveler and avid follower of travel vlogs, Tyson was interested in learning how to create vlogs for others who might be on a similar journey. Creating vlogs involved artistically challenging skills. Having never previously considered himself an artist, Tyson claimed this practice shifted his self-perception to find that both recording and editing were creative acts. Making something shareable between the social and the subjective ignited a creativity that Tyson had forgotten he had. Pinar (2004) argues that "as long as human beings are capable of creativity, human conduct (except in trivial matters) cannot be predicted" (p. 107, brackets in original), rendering it essentially creative.

Tyson filmed himself weekly, in various places, sharing particularities of locations, experiences of the moment or of that day or week, and/or things that he had been recently contemplating. Figure 1 (below) is a still of Tyson talking on his vlog. In his weekly journal, Tyson explained that creating a vlog involves a well thought out plan, attention to detail, creative footage that tells a story, and meticulous editing skills, all which test patience and challenge perfectionist tendencies. "Framing" what he wanted to capture each week was important to avoid random footage unrelated to a story—and he wanted to be interesting to his viewers. He wrote:

Each week, I brainstormed what it was that I wanted to present to the world that week. Some weeks, big ideas like 'coming out' or 'spirituality' came to the forefront, and other weeks my vlogs told smaller stories about life in Sydney and the beauty that this city holds. No matter what the story was, however, I needed to be sure I was gathering enough content that includes pieces where I am talking to the camera and B-roll, which involve the close up, smaller shots usually used for overlay or paired with music.



Vlog #11 Going to CHURCH in SYDNEY & My Conflicting Thoughts on CATHOLICISM

Figure 1. Still image from vlog, Sydney, December 2017.

Editing was also a learning process, involving blending clips into next clip, adding captions, and pairing video with music. After editing and posting each vlog, Tyson reflected on the process, ideas, and experiences in writing.

In educational research, vlogs have been studied to understand audience engagement, content, or vlogger identities, but vlogging has not been used as a method of inquiry. Boler, et al., (2014, as cited in Leavy, 2017) identify vlogging's "malleability and proliferating potential" as a democratizing research tool (p. 441). This malleability and potential provided Tyson with opportunity to think and deliberate aloud with unknown others while finding his way in new terrain. Rose (2001) discusses how street photography does not want viewers to feel pity or dismay at certain life experiences. Instead, "its way of seeing invites a response that is more like, oh, how extraordinary, isn't life richly marvelous" (p. 20). The authors in this paper agree that this is the response that Tyson's vlogs evoked for himself and others.

A/r/tography's Renderings to Understand and (Re)access Vlogging Research

A/r/tography offers six methodological concepts to consider in an inquiry approach. These conceptual practices are known as renderings that may help in making meaning of research: contiguity, living inquiry, metaphor/metonymy, openings, reverberations, and excess. Renderings are flexible, imaginative, and interpretive. Moving between theory, practice, and creativity, each rendering impacts the other and encourages the creation of emergent renderings in future research. By overlapping and interconnecting, they proliferate further possibilities for engagement between artist, researcher, and teacher selves. Essentially, these renderings open avenues to new insights and ideas about the relationship between phenomena and self. Explaining self-growth, being honest, and opening up about opinions and views can be difficult for researchers to share and for readers to accept. Renderings are concepts that help with this understanding by portraying "the conditions of their work [researching] for others" (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxviii)

Tyson's collected data comprised twelve vlogs and associated written reflections. Using the renderings for analyzing his data added further insight into studying self as cosmopolitan traveler and citizen, and living, in relation to the incommensurabilities of normative societal and educational expectation. Each rendering (contiguity, living inquiry, metaphor and metonymy, openings, reverberations, excess) will be discussed briefly in relation to Tyson's initial analysis of his research. Italicized sections comprise original vlog reflection journal writing, and block quotes are recent reflective returns to the original written journal responses.

Contiguity

Irwin & Springgay (2008) explain contiguity as "a rendering that helps us understand those ideas within a/r/tography that lie adjacent to one another, touch one another, or exist in presence of one another" (p. xxviii). Its aim is not to categorize or create boundaries between roles, but rather, lends attention to transitory shifts made visible between roles. Considering contiguity in analyzing vlog creations, Tyson noted comparisons between creating vlogs and accepting himself as gay. Not all vlogs are made easily and not all questions are answered immediately. Tyson realized acceptance was going to be a long process and simultaneously sensed that it would be resolved. Tyson struggled to accommodate competing, contiguous sexual identities across time:

It is difficult to think about my prior self as someone who resisted homosexuality. I can remember thinking, "Yes, I am gay, but it does not define me". This idea, however, has shifted over the years as I truly believe being gay is absolutely what defines me. It is every fiber of my being. It fuels every interest and every passion that I have.

Contiguity is found in lived experience and the interrelatedness of one's various roles. The interrelatedness makes visible the spaces and activities inherent in the living of roles that overlap and affect each other. By inquiring into the contiguity of himself in relation to his role as a creator and educator, Tyson experienced the passionate encounter of Pinar's (2009) worldliness in which "passion is an expression of interiority through intense engagement in the public world and is also the state or capacity of being acted on by external agents or forces" (p. 153).

Living Inquiry

Living inquiry attends to memory, identity, autobiography, reflection, and meditation. It considers knowledge a state of being and becoming with one's self and one's surroundings (Irwin, 2004). Tyson's first vlog, posted the week before departure to Australia, shared details of the house he grew up in, moments with his parents, and feelings about moving abroad. Tyson noted the reflection was difficult to write as it highlighted complex conversations and relationship dynamics with his parents. For the first time, he opened up about his strained bond with his father who had instilled Catholic values in Tyson. Writing about difficult moments felt therapeutic and provided a sense of his father's care. In analyzing his data, Tyson found simple vlog and reflection conversations generated discussions about more serious subjects like shame, control, and release from inhibitions.

While Taylor (2016) claimed that vlogs can be useful in community-building, they also presented a risk for Tyson who was previously quite shy about talking about his "closeted" sexuality. Conversely, the distance from family and new sense of isolation in Sydney prompted more openness and honesty in Tyson's vlogs and reflective writing. Tyson noted that this isolation provided a safe space to attend to memories around his but he was unsure of his audience's reaction. Elsrud (2001) argues that "risk-taking is a particularly strong story about the self" and "when taking risks, life is carved out rather than merely lived in the imprints of others" (p. 603). Tyson knew that posting about his sexuality on a public platform would be a risk but would also bring relief and freedom. Each week, as he tended to past experiences, Tyson was able to critically analyze himself and realize long suppressed traits. Tyson mentioned that he had never previously focused on self-improvement or living inquiry because his heteronormative surroundings seemed prescribed. Being away from the pressure of everyday expectations, however, presented opportunity for thinking about relationships with self and others. There was extended time for interrupting the self-loathing and sexual suppression that Tyson had experienced since grade six. New sources of vitality emerging in the streets and meeting places of Sydney allowed him to finally replace this thinking with new (cosmopolitan) ideas. It took the repetitions of walking, vlogging, and writing for Tyson to allow the inquiry of the body into the classroom of his own learning, or as Pinar (2009) might

describe, the worlding of subjectivity. hooks (1994) emphasized understanding passion as motivating students to think differently about themselves and their ways of being with others, to really engage in a living inquiry.

Metaphor and Metonymy

Metaphor and metonymy “exist[s] as intertwined relationships in which meaning un/creates itself” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxx). Using a metaphor from one practice (vlogging, reading, reflecting) could potentially change something in the other. In searching for music to accompany his vlogs, Tyson latched onto the lyrics of Madonna’s (Ciccone, 1984), “Like a Virgin” which resonated across his art, research, and teaching. Throughout his research, there were many metonymic “firsts” that impacted learning about the self: first hours in Australia, first time driving on the left side of road, first time seeing a kangaroo (see Figure 2 below), first time experiencing solitude in this country, first gay housemate, first sexual experience with another man, first time saying *I am gay* out loud, first time questioning being Catholic, first time posting a vlog on a social platform etc. These “firsts” are metonymic for new awareness of the relational reconstruction taking place between the subjective and the social in Tyson’s identity.



Figure 2. Still image from vlog, Australian Reptile Park, Somersby NSW, October 2017.

Another first involved being in Sydney for the marriage equality vote announcement in November 2017, quite possibly the biggest movement in Australian LGBTQ+ rights history. Tyson wrote about being in a bar as the marriage equality vote was ratified:

I walked in...and stood in the corner waiting for the announcement. I could feel the tension in the room and my palms grew sweaty as I tried to steady my camera. I wasn't watching what I was filming; I was watching the couple beside me. Two handsome men, embraced with their arms around one another, stood watching the TV. When the 61.6% announcement boomed across the room, it shot in a sea of emotions with it. This couple hugged so tightly it looked as though they were gripping one another for support not to fall almost as though the two shall become one. They sobbed uncontrollably, tears streaming down their faces—it was impossible for me not to stare...That day altered my perspectives of being gay and fighting for equality—it is human rights, not gay rights (Lepage, 2019, p. 79).



Figure 3. Still image from vlog. Sydney, November 2017.

Tyson writes now:

I still remember this moment as clearly as it was back then. Reading this reflection makes me realize how often I observed and watched others through the lens of my camera as a means for learning about myself (See Figure 3 above). Through this

celebration, I learned about fighting for gay rights and the joy that can come with victories of equality. What I didn't envision at this moment is how much of an impact it would have on my future self. Currently an educator in a Catholic school system again, I have fought many battles for queer staff and students and have come up victorious. Although there is a long way to go yet, I refuse to leave until further change has been made. We are all equal and we deserve to be treated as such.

The metonymic thinking of "firsts" for Tyson seems to offer reparation to the identity that he carried with him in his high school years. The slippages involved in the jarring realizations of being open to the world through openness to himself call Tyson into passionate new pathways of movement of public service to and with others.

Openings

Openings allow one to look for encounters involving surprise, conflict, unsettlement, or movement. They "open up possibilities for a/r/tographers as they give their attention to what is seen and known and what is not seen and not known" (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxx). Openings reveal tears or cracks, allowing researchers to stray from predictability and comfort, realizing more difficult, ambiguous, and unknown aspects of their research. Perhaps the most important aspect of Tyson's research involved the opening in which he "came out" publicly on social media and experienced a reciprocally open and positive social response, even from strangers. He wrote:

It brought up feelings of shame and guilt which I am all too familiar with...Also going through my head were...the anticipated reactions that people would experience as they watched my vlog. Some people, I assumed, wouldn't care, some would be surprised, and some would have been waiting for it for years. What waited for me 24 hours later, however, surpassed what I could have ever predicted (Lepage, 2019, p.77).

Tyson did not at all anticipate the overwhelming support he would receive: "*Family, old friends, former colleagues, and people I have almost forgotten about since going different paths in life, reached out to congratulate, applaud my message or say, 'proud of you' "* (p. 78). While deeply appreciative, Tyson was saddened by the realization that being gay necessitates this process of coming out. See Figure 4 below for snapshots of responses from friends, family, and acquaintances.



Figure 4. Screen grab from social media, November 2017.

Today Tyson writes:

I've revisited these screenshots numerous times since making the original post and it takes me back to my small basement bedroom in Sydney, Australia. It was a moment where I was so far from home yet felt so close. The uplifting comments gave me confidence to fully embrace myself as a gay man. Many friends wished I had given them the courtesy of conversation before making the post. Ultimately, they were happy for me but alluded to the idea that it would have never made an impact on our friendship, and I should have been more forthcoming. My response remained, "It doesn't matter if you knew or suspected or had no idea, what matters is you know now and you know on my terms. I truly believe that a public coming out on social media was the best way for me to do it--not for the comments, but for the sheer simplicity of "ripping the Band-Aid off". It was almost as though I could tell everyone that mattered all at once and wouldn't have to have those dreaded personal conversations anymore.

Little did I know, I would spend the rest of my life “coming-out” and it would no longer be something I loathed, but rather something I prided myself on.

Reverberations

Reverberations refer to “dynamic movement, dramatic or subtle, that force a/r/tographers to shift their understandings of phenomena” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxx). They are the interplay between the new and the already-familiar. A familiar loneliness was the product of having grown up with private confusion about sexuality. He writes, however, how loneliness took on new meaning in Sydney:

It hit me on Wednesday. It was in one of those quiet moments where I realized how quickly I could become lonely...Perhaps it was the realization that I had yet to make any real friends outside my housemates, or maybe it was the fact that I had spent five consecutive days walking around by myself. I realized then that I do enjoy the company of others and maybe this was a sign that I was ready to put myself out there and make friends (Lepage, 2019, p .81).

Tyson’s feelings of loneliness continued throughout his time in Australia; they came and went, then surfaced again. Tyson noted that moments of loneliness opened doors to complex and counterintuitive emotions such as joy and fear. Over the course of his research, he accepted feeling sad, scared, or vulnerable, because it was in those moments that he learned to artfully transform private experiences into public expression. Vlogging revealed his willingness to be open and vulnerable to a known and unknown audience.

As a result of cultivating solitude or quietude in his research, Tyson described moments of loneliness. Long and Averill (2003) claim that while solitude and loneliness are naturally linked together, solitude is what produces the personal benefits, including feelings of freedom, creativity, intimacy, and spirituality (p. 37). This time and capacity became evident in the creative work that allowed Tyson to realize himself in more relational and cosmopolitan ways. While he initially wrote about being lonely, he now recalls the extended time as being more about attunement to self in new surroundings.

Looking back, Tyson writes:

When I look back on my time in Australia, I don’t even remember a time when I was lonely. I remember walking around the city alone, going to the beach alone, and taking the train to new places alone. I don’t think I have ever been afforded the same opportunity since then. Perhaps it was being in another country, but I think I was most comfortable with myself throughout my time in Australia. These were the moments

where I could tune into deeper feelings that bubbled to the surface and really ask myself, “Where is this coming from?”

Pinar (2019) compares time and capacity for contemplation as that which “reveals what ethical action to take in this world now” (p. 8). What initially felt like loneliness offered opportunity for Tyson to remember and to question deeper feelings that could contribute to reconstructing one’s lived experience in relation to others.

Excess

Excess operates “when control and regulation disappear and we grapple with what lies outside the acceptable” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxx). During his analysis, Tyson looked for how he re-assembled everyday practices in new ways. For Tyson, excess lends itself to data centered around sexual experiences, guilt, and growing up Catholic. In one of his later reflections, he wrote about his first sexual experience with a man. Through his research he revisited the intense guilt he felt after this experience: “That weekend, that moment together in bed, my first kiss with another man, [was] such a pivotal moment in my life that [it] haunted me for years afterward” (Lepage, 2019, p. 84). After the experience, Tyson prayed ritually every evening, asking God for forgiveness for his excess. This reflection was uncomfortable to share because he had never told anyone the story.

Because many in the Catholic Church considered it a taboo topic, Tyson wanted to study himself as a gay Catholic man who teaches in the Catholic school system. Reflecting on the experience of sexually being with another man, emphasized for Tyson, the spirituality/sexuality trade-off. The incommensurability (or excess) of Tyson’s identities (gay and Catholic) became apparent when “bargaining was taken to a new level as I was willing to do pretty much anything to wake up and be straight” (Lepage, 2019, p. 84). This struggle between religion and sexuality continued throughout Tyson’s inquiry in Australia. Figure 5 finds him in contemplation in a Sydney church.



Vlog #11 Going to CHURCH in SYDNEY & My Conflicting Thoughts on CATHOLICISM

Figure 5. Still image from vlog, Sydney, December 2017.

Concluding Remarks

Tyson's a/r/tographic research provided him with both a reconstruction of the public work of his subjectivity as well as with a creative and generative self-reflective practice. Learning about the self was significant for Tyson as an educator and the research gave him new-found confidence. Once openly gay, he remained unsure of how his research in Sydney translate into classrooms. Although coerced to remove his vlogs from public access in order to return to a teaching position in a Catholic school system in a different city, he felt sharing his research on a public social platform has helped him understand how his educator influence transcends classrooms.

A/r/tography provided opportunity for Tyson to create, view and experience himself as an artist, researcher, and teacher. The overlapping and interconnecting methodological concepts of renderings proliferated opportunity for engagement between Tyson's work as a teacher, researcher, and artist. These interconnections were ways of reconstructing oneself in Pinar's cosmopolitan movement between the subjective and the social. For example, through the rendering of contiguity, Tyson was able to grapple with how ideas and situations lie adjacent to one another in ways that feel how their existence depends on co-existence. Creating vlogs and considering self in relation to audience offered opportunities for reimagining oneself. Furthermore, being gay is not something that exists in isolation from others but rather in one's

relational capacity for worldliness.

In another rendering, living inquiry, attention was drawn to memory and reflection. Tyson was able to put past and present into new arrangements and ease into daily routines without knowing in advance what new relations would emerge to shift those routines. Metaphor and metonymy offered analytical procedures for extending Tyson's ways of thinking and extending the meaning of words. For example, by engaging a variety of virginal "firsts", new embodied experiences stood in for awareness of the reconstruction of his identity in relation to Pinar's worldliness of cosmopolitanism that connects the subjective and social aspects of one's life.

Openings, another rendering, compelled willingness to respond to new social situations: new jobs, new ideas, new encounters, new routines. Openings also urged a commitment to intentional opening: "coming out". This metaphoric movement of leaving a metonymic closet extended the understanding of intentionally opening the door of a place where passionate life is separated from cosmopolitan relation. The coming out was compelled by the reverberations, another rendering, that built up and persisted from reflections being absorbed into new surfaces of place and thought. Lastly using excess as an a/r/tographic methodological concept offered opportunity to grapple with what, for Tyson, had previously lay outside the realm of what was acceptable, both sexually and spiritually, and to begin to reconstruct himself amidst this excess rather than away from it.

Through continuous reflexivity of a/r/tographic renderings and the creative process of vlogging, Tyson was able to experience and analyze himself in the in-between spaces of sustainable living—prompting him to think about himself in relation to both sexuality and spirituality. By attending to these structures of Pinar's cosmopolitanism (sustainability, sexuality, and spirituality) political action was ignited for Tyson, as evidenced by the recent reflection below:

Learning to love and celebrate my differences helped me be more understanding of others. Being misunderstood for a long time helped me realize that...when I don't understand something, I ask questions and make an effort to understand alternative viewpoints. Being a cosmopolitan citizen, for me, means celebrating differences and I believe my research has enabled me to not only celebrate my own, but also those of others (Lepage, 2019, p. 90)

Tyson's a/r/tographic inquiry using vlogs offers a rendering (and now a re-rendering) of deep inquiry into living. It offers conditions of creative experimentation in creating new potential for movement and change in order to sustain passionate lives. The vlogs might be considered

a process of what Pinar (2009) describes as “public expression of private passion” (p. 13)—inquiry through which Pinar claims “teachers find their way through the labyrinth that is academic knowledge, historical moment, social structure and professional obligation” (p. 13). Passages between the subjective and the social kindle worldliness; a kind of qualitative life excess. Using “alterity as an anchor and a point of departure for a new self-understanding within which we experience ourselves as other” (Pinar, 2009, p. 34), is, for Pinar, the central theme of a cosmopolitan education. For Tyson, an immersive engagement of a/r/tographic journeying to new spaces of solitude both geographically and internally, provided opportunity for making new sense of his existence in time and space in relation to both self and others.

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