Loss, Melancholy and Reverie in Education

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Technology damages our sense of how to read and study as scholars. This loss (of knowing how to read and study) makes for melancholy. Melancholy is brought on as a result of not being able to find spaces of reverie in which to read and study. We need spaces of reverie in which to read and study. We need spaces of reverie so as to delve deeply into our studies and to produce and generate knowledge.

Introduction

Reading, writing and knowledge production are all connected activities. We cannot, however, generate knowledge without knowing how to read and study. The art of reading and studying has been lost for many scholars who are immersed in technology. While technology can be helpful and make life easier for us on some levels and while we agree with some of the ideas put for by posthuman scholars (those who argue that we are intimately connected to technology), we argue here that technology has gotten in the way of our work as scholars. Technology is supposed to make reading and studying easier but in fact it makes things more complex and more difficult. Scholars and students are supposed to benefit from learning online but many of us struggle to keep up with the always shifting and complicated online formats that make our jobs much more difficult and confusing. Students too struggle to keep abreast of the ongoing shifting nature of online learning.

In this paper we will argue that technology damages our sense of how to read and study as scholars. This loss (of knowing how to read and study) makes for melancholy. Melancholy is brought on as a result of not being able to find spaces of reverie in which to read and study. We need spaces of reverie so as to delve deeply into our studies and to produce and generate knowledge. We argue in this paper that we need to work through this loss and melancholy in order to find spaces of reverie to generate knowledge.

Loss

William Pinar (2006) suggests that currere (the Latin root of the word curriculum) "is the seeking of what is lost" (p. 21). Curriculum scholars need not "seek" for what is lost because they are always already lost. We have lost our moorings as scholars due to technology. Many scholars struggle to make sense of the shifting and changing technological arena in which we do our work. Many scholars have lost the art of reading and studying because technology interferes with intellectual activity. Peter Appelbaum (2008) states that " [s]o much of education is about experiencing loss" (p. 159). Generating knowledge means that we unpack what these losses are about. Becoming educated is a complicated process. Becoming educated means that we delve deeply into ideas, theories, narratives, data in order to understand our place in the world. In order to become good teachers we need to work hard to teach our students the art of reading and writing, of studying and of producing knowledge. But how can we do this when we waste so much time in an attempt to figure out how to maneuver an online learning platform? Face to face learning is fading on campuses all over the country. We have lost the personal and inter-relational aspects of learning. Maggie Jackson (2009) states that

> A culture of divided attention [online learning divides attention] fuels more than
> perpetual searching for lost threads and loose ends. It stokes a culture of forgetting, the
> marker of a dark age. (p. 94)

We simply cannot engage in deep reading and studying in an online setting that makes for confusion and chaos. Students cannot read in any deep way when they are trying to figure out how to post things and read lecture notes posted by their professors. But this is not the whole problem. We are daily bombarded by

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email, Facebook, blogs, tweets and so forth. We are continually disrupted and as Maggie Jackson (2009) puts it "distracted" as the title of her book suggests (*Distracted: The Erosion of Attention and the Coming Dark Age*). Alberto Manguel (2013) claims that "[i]t may be that, in our increasingly gadget-driving society, we have lost a certain sense of why we read. . ." (p. 49). Our reading as scholars is continually interrupted by our increasing lack of attention as we watch youtubes instead of reading. We are a visual culture, not a print culture. Youtubes can be educational but still watching a Youtube is not the same as deep reading. We read so that we can produce new knowledges. But again we have lost the art of reading because of disruptions, disconnections and distractions all generated by technology. Sven Birkerts (2006) asks

> What will be the fate of reading? I don't mean the left-to-right movement of the eyes as we take in information, but the age-old practice of addressing the world by way of this inward faculty of imagination. I mean reading as a filtering of the complexities of the real through artistic narrative, reflection, and orchestration of verbal imagery. . . . The electronic impulse works against the durational reverie of reading. (xv)

The notion of reverie as it applies to reading will be addressed toward the latter part of this paper. It is enough to say right now that that deep reading cannot happen without reverie. As we know the point of going online and being on the internet is about speed. We want our computers to be faster, we want to look at news items quickly, we quickly scroll down our Facebook pages to see who commented on our posts. Reading Facebook is simply not reading. It is glancing without much thought. Deep reading, as Birkerts (2006) suggests above is becoming a thing of the past. The internet, cyberspace, online learning are about speed, not slow "durational" reading. But in order to do deep reading, we need time and space to take things in slowly. Learning is a slow process, not a process of speed. David Ulin (2010) states that

> . . . to read, we need a certain kind of silence, an ability to filter out the noise. That seems increasingly elusive in our overnet worked society, where every buzz and rumor is instantly blogged and tweeted, and is not contemplation we desire but an odd sort of distraction, distraction masquerading as being in the know. (p. 34)

Where do we find the "silence" we need in order to be scholars? It seems that we are caught in the web of the internet. This is a place of noise, speed, and information. But scholarship is not about "information" but about knowledge and about advancing fields of knowledge. How do Ipads and Ipods, blogs, myspace, Facebook and tweeting help us to advance knowledge? How do we advance fields when we are bombarded by meaningless information on Wikipedia for example. This is not knowledge. It is not even vetted. Anybody can post anything they like on Wikipedia. Students flock to Wikipedia for fast answers and explanations. But again fast answers and explanations are not knowledge.

There is also a loss of intimacy and inter-relation—because of technology-- that we experience as teachers in classroom settings. Students often text during class, look at Facebook while the professor teaches or answers phone calls on their cell phones during lectures. Teachers attempt to build community in classrooms but are continually interrupted by these ongoing activities. And in online instruction the sense of community collapses. Disembodied text is what we deal with when teaching online. Online instruction does not make for good communication or relationship. Glen Mazis (2008) states that

> Wolfgang Giegerich, for example, would say that the technology that surrounds us. . . the Web providing endless information about and connections with others, television bringing us visions of events around the globe and entries into cultures or natural landscapes that we would never have the opportunity to witness, are *not* ways of encountering the world and its sense, let alone sounding its depths of soul, but are ways of becoming more and more *cocooned*. (p. 9)

Technology actually isolates us. It isolates our students who take online courses. It isolates professors from students while teaching online and posting lecture notes seemingly in a disembodied way. Professors rarely see their students face to face and when they do the time is so short that we cannot build community or build educational relations with the students. There is something about this that is so troubling. Ottavio Mariani (2008) suggests that technology is "intrusive" (p.55) and in fact is a threat to our very personhood. Mariani claims that we have a "misplaced focus on technology and the diversions it offers" (p. 55) These diversions are indeed dangerous because they keep us from thinking deeply about life and learning. Indeed we are in a constant state of "diversion." One minute we are looking at Youtube, the next the news on CNN, the next we look to Facebook and after that we write blogs or tweets or look at AOL's latest news scandal. In the meanwhile, we should really be reading and writing and teaching—in a deep sense. The more we text, blog and tweet the more anti-intellectual we become. Moreover, while we think we are connected to

the world and to current events we are actually becoming less connected to our own selves. Alberto Manguel (2013) states that being constantly online creates a

> . . . mindless interconnectedness, the feeling that by means of the World Wide Web we are never alone, never required to account for ourselves, never obliged to reveal our true identity. We travel in herds, we chat in groups, we acquire friends on Facebook, we dread an empty room. . . . we feel uncomfortable reading alone. . . .(p. 46)

But because we "travel in herds" does not mean that we are really making any meaningful connections on the internet. Everything is superficial. Texting is not relating to another. It short circuits our relations by its superficiality. If we do, in fact, "feel uncomfortable reading alone" we are in trouble—especially if we are scholars. The scholarly life requires much alone time, much quiet time. We must sit still, focus, read, study, write. This kind of a life is interrupted by technology. We are not focused but mostly scattered, distracted—as Maggie Jackson (2009) puts it.

Reading and Loss

Terry Eagleton (2013) states that

> Like clog dancing, the art of analyzing works of literature [or works of education] is almost dead on its feet. A whole tradition of what Nietzsche called 'slow reading' is in danger of sinking without a trace. (ix)

Our lives in cyberspace speeds everything up. We are losing the ability to read slowly partly because of our engagement in cyberspace. Everything must be fast. There are of course other reasons why reading slowly has become problematic. For scholars, the tenure clock is ticking and there is not time to do anything slowly. One must hurry up always. Everything is rushed in the academy, even though nothing seems to change much with the exception of the constantly changing landscape of technology. And this constantly changing technological landscape is affecting us in ways we cannot be sure of. What does the changing landscape of technology, speed and engaging in cyberspace culture do to us psychically? We are always already out of breath. When we read texts quickly we miss the spark, the depth, the insight, the wonder. But there is no time to slow down. Sven Birkerts (2006) states that "[l]iterature and old-style contemplative reading seem enfeebled—almost as if they need to be argued for. . ." (xii). Education as a discipline too suffers from the lack of "old-style contemplative reading." More specifically, educationists—who draw heavily on the humanities—have little time to dwell on texts. Dwelling takes contemplation and time, silence and the gift of solitude. But our solitude is constantly interrupted by technology. It seems that every hour we check our email, surf the web, catch up on the news online, watch Youtube, check our Facebook page and so forth. One could of course choose not to do these things, but it seems that this is our culture now. And we cannot escape it. Posthuman scholars argue that we should embrace technology and think of it as an attachment to our very being. But this stance is highly problematic. We are not computers. But in order to keep up with our younger generation of students we have to be in touch with their culture which now is mostly in cyberspace. This is important but it does interfere with our ability to focus on our own work and ways of working. In recent times it seems that many undergraduate students have an aversion for reading. How can one train to be a teacher and not like to read? Reading for many undergraduates consists of texting, blogging, Facebooking. Sitting down and reading a book takes time and concentration. But reading seems to boring and slow for cyber spacing students. David Ulin (2010) claims that ". . . we are a culture that seems unable to concentrate. . ." (p. 67). Surfing the web has damaged our ability to concentrate. Cyberspace encourages quick responses, unthinking, non-reflective practices and jumping from topic to topic. When we ask our students, then, to read a book many of them complain. Even graduate students complain about how many books they have to read in order to get a Ph.D. The classroom turns into a battlefield. Students demonstrate much resistance to reading at all levels. We have to push them to read. This becomes even more difficult when teaching online courses. We have little sense of what is going on in these courses, if students are actually reading the books and the postings. Alan Jacobs (2011) claims that these problems are not new. In fact he states that " [s]erious "deep attention" reading has always been and will always be a minority pursuit. . ." (p. 106). Anti-intellectual culture is not a new thing—especially in the United States. But it seems that things have only gotten worse with our engaging in cyberspace. There is little about cyberspace that is "deep." Cyberspace is built on the idea that everything is surface. There is little depth in surfing the web. Of course there are exceptions. There are educational Youtubes. Scholarly papers can be read online. But for the most part cyberspace is a disaster for not only the humanities but also for education

generally. Of course the death of the humanities is another problem that has been talked about for decades (see for example Pinar, 2006).   What is to become of educational studies? This is a worry and a fear. Many of us are interested in studying literature, literary criticism, philosophy, psychoanalysis and so forth. These are considered soft disciplines. The soft disciplines are not in sync with the larger neo-liberal culture of universities or strategic plans of universities which are tied directly to business. Our scholarship is not valued across campus especially in schools of business and technology. This becomes especially problematic when scholars are going up for tenure or promotion. At any rate, the root problem here is technology and the ways in which it has damaged our sense of the literary, our sense of depth, our sense of reading and studying in any deep way. Maggie Jackson (2009) claims that

> . . . the way we live is eroding our capacity for deep, sustained, perceptive attention—the building block of intimacy, wisdom, and cultural progress. Moreover, this disintegration may come at a great cost to ourselves and to society. (p. 13)

The problem of not knowing how to read a text in a deep way is a larger problem than reading in and of itself. As Jackson puts it, it is a cultural problem that will lead to our eventual demise. Technology will be our downfall, she claims. We are headed in the wrong direction. What will become of the university when students become scholars and still hate to read or do not know how to unpack a text in any deep way? Will books disappear? These questions might seem irrelevant but they are not. How can we study if we cannot read a text in an intelligent way? Alberto Manguel (2013) states that

> Electronic reading of various kinds does not seem to encourage prolonged sessions with a single text but rather to encourage a pecking process of short fragments. Communications historian Nicholas Carr, in *The Shallows*, speaks of certain digital-media scholars who suggest that "we shouldn't waste our time mourning the death of deep reading—it was overrated all along" . . . . (pp. 87-88)

This is a shocking admission. There are good reasons to "mourn" the loss of "deep reading." In fact, there are good reasons to be melancholic about this historical moment. What is the future of scholarship if nobody wants to read deeply? What is the future of the academy? These are serious problems we must consider. We might be the last generation of scholars who actually enjoy reading books, and reading deeply. Reading for hours on end seems to be a thing of the past. Except for a very few.

Melancholia

We must take a serious look at where we are today in university culture. Colleges of education are plagued by anti-intellectualism. Curriculum studies scholars and philosophers of education have been fighting this culture for at least thirty years. These are hard times to be an intellectual in colleges of education. Many of our courses have gone online. Online learning is terribly problematic for both students and professors. Technology has made us melancholic. And there is a good reason to explore this emotional state. If we are to be true to our callings as intellectuals we must become knowledgeable about how we feel in such an environment. We suggest that we must work through melancholia in order to retain our positions as intellectuals in the university. This means we must face the problems of technology head on. We cannot go on pretending that everything is alright. Georges Bataille (1988) says that "[a]ll profound life is heavy with the *impossible*" (p. 58) Technology has put scholars in an impossible situation. University life should be profound but it has become a business of cyberspace learning—which is hardly profound.

Donald Capps (1997) tells us that Freud "notes that melancholia is more complicated than mourning because the lost object evokes such highly ambivalent feelings" (p. 14). The lost object in this case is the loss of deep, reflective reading. Technology mitigates against anything deep or reflective. But what are we to do? Posthuman scholars argue that technology is here to stay—of course—and we should embrace it as a part of who we are. We are intimately connected to computers as we do all of our writing on computers. We are intimately connected to online learning because most of our courses are now online. But how to embrace something that is causing us so much grief? We will admit that writing papers on computers is a lot easier than writing on old-fashioned typewriters and using white out. That we can agree upon. Computers allow us to think in ways that we might not have been able to think before simply because of the ease of writing. Writing on computers has changed the way we think. But is that to our detriment or to our good? Here we are indeed ambivalent. Still there is something about the typewriter that is missed. The clicking of the keys, the ringing of the bell and the slowness of it somehow bring back times when we felt like writers. Pounding away at the keys on a typewriter is very different from the light touch we need to key in our words on a

computer. One could argue too that typewriters are a form of technology that when first introduced created a lot of ambivalent feelings for the simple times of writing with a pen. But then too a pen is a form of technology and the argument goes on and on. Perhaps we should simply mourn our nostalgia and move on. Mourning as Freud teaches is the ability to give up the lost object –in this case deep reading—and move on. Melancholia is being stuck in our grief and being paralyzed by our ambivalence.

Melancholia, though, has historically been associated with the professoriate. Clark Lawlor (2012) points out that Rufus of Ephesus (p. 36), Robert Burton (p. 18) and William Stuckeley (p. 88) all believed that study, research and reading was bad for the soul; that the scholarly life caused melancholia. Lawlor (2012) points out that, for example,

> One had to be careful, though, as with the great melancholic scholar of the Renaissance, Burton, too much study and reading could have serious consequences: 'Study requires solitude, and solitude is a state dangerous to those who are too much accustomed to sink into themselves.' (p. 18)

Perhaps, then, scholars are always already prone to melancholy. Or perhaps this view is a romanticization of the scholarly profession. We should never romanticize melancholia however. It is a terrible state to be in. Looking inward might cause melancholia but it might also help to find solutions to problems, to better understand the self. Exploring one's subjectivity is what scholarship is partly about and it might help to find ways out of difficult situations. However, interestingly enough we find that William James (2000) too found that "an over-studious career" (p. 224) could lead to "the edge of the slope" and even cause suicidal thoughts (p. 224). We recall from Plato, however, that the unexamined life is not worth living. So when we examine our lives through deep study and reading why should this affect us negatively? What can we do with the *via negativa* to make it work for us in different ways? Archetypal psychologist James Hillman (1991) claims that we can make use of our melancholy and make meaning from it. Hillman (1991) tells us that melancholy "brings refuge, limitation, focus, gravity, weight, and humble powerlessness. It reminds of death. *The true revolution begins in the individual who can be true to his or her depression*" (p. 153). Thought can emerge from depression –or melancholy—only if we go into our pain and explore it, take it on and not repress it. So when we think of these things against the backdrop of our current situation as scholars who struggle with technology we can begin to move the discussion only if we admit our frustrations and resistances to what is on the horizon. Technology is not going away. We are being led further and further away from face to face contact with our students and somehow we must grapple with this. The question becomes how to be scholars in this highly technological age? What does it mean to teach when we cannot see our students? What does technology do to student learning when everything is done in cyberspace? These are important and troubling questions. How do we find spaces where we can work and be good teachers and good scholars? What must we do to make the best of a bad job i.e. this technological nightmare?

Reverie

Reading, writing and knowledge production can be hampered by melancholy (which is brought on by being burdened by technology). However, if we put our melancholy to use we can begin the process of generating new kinds of knowledges and new kinds of epistemologies.

It seems that there is a rather odd connection between melancholy and reverie. When one is in touch with one's melancholy spaces of reverie open. In this opening toward reverie scholars can generate knowledge. Somehow we must move through melancholy and the burden of technology to reach states of reverie. Knowledge production happens after a long period of rigorous study and reading. After the rigorous period of thought, spaces of reverie allow the scholar to write. Writing emerges out of spaces of reverie. It is interesting to note that Robert Romanyshyn (1999) makes the connection between melancholy (which he calls grief) and reverie. He states that reverie

> Is kin to the mood of grief. In grief you inhabit a nether world between sleep and wakefulness, a place where you are neither in a dream nor fully in the world. You dwell in a moment which is neither night nor day, a twilight world of shadows and light. . . . Reverie has a similar character. Although I do not know for certain if grief opened me to these states of reverie or if reverie helped me to stay with my grief. (pp. 31-32).

It is clear that for Romanyshyn reverie and grief are interconnected. They both allow us to experience strange states of being—as he calls them "twilight" states. It is here, we argue, that thought is produced. It is here in the "world of shadows and light" that knowledge is produced. This is not the world of the rationalist, i.e. Descartes, but the world of the dreamer, i.e. Bachelard (1961/1988) who also argues that reverie and melancholy are interconnected. Bachelard (1961/1988) says that

> The dreamer gives himself up to the melancholy of reverie, a melancholy that blends actual memories with the memories of reverie. It is this blending, again, that one becomes sensitive to the reveries of others. (p. 26)

Here again we see that there is a connection between melancholy and reverie. But here Bachelard complicates melancholy with reverie by suggesting that memories are also part of reveries and melancholy. He suggests here too that memories of reverie are different from what he calls "actual" memories. Could it be that memories of reverie—as he puts it—are part fantasy? This is what is implied in the above citation. Can one have reveries without memories? What is melancholy about primarily but memories? Whether the memories are real or made up they are generated by reveries. Knowledge production, then, is part and parcel of melancholy, reveries and memories, real or fictitious. Bachelard (1943/2002) suggests that "[o]ur lives are filled with odd experiences, experiences of which we never speak but which lead our unconscious into endless reveries" (p. 31). If reveries remain unconscious how do we tap them? We must work to make what is unconscious, conscious in order to use this material to understand better who we are and to better understand how to produce new knowledges. Knowledges do not come fully from the rational but also from the irrational. The unconscious is the irrational. We argue here that most of what we know comes from places in our psyche that are buried. Through deep reading, writing and studying we can begin to unearth that which is buried. The problem, however, as Bachelard (1943/2002) points out is that " [t]he superego of a culture represses reveries. . ." (p. 211). Is technology the "superego of culture"? Does technology work against finding states of reverie?

To dwell on reveries one must have the time to do so. We live in a fast-paced society where everything seems to be speeding up because of technology primarily. Is there room for reveries in cyberspace? Perhaps we could create cyberspace in such a way that we could actually engage in reverie. An engaged reverie is one that produces knowledge. Are most knowledges produced via the unconscious? Partly. What can help us to generate reveries?

Bachelard (1961/1988) suggests that "[t]he flame of the candle summons reveries from memory. It provides us occasions, in our distant memories, for solitary vigils" (p. 24). It is important for the scholar to "find occasions" "for solitary vigils." Engaged scholarship is a solitary pursuit. Although we work from the words of others, it is our contribution to that work that drives scholarship, that advances fields of study. We have to find places to do our work, to bring up reveries from our lives and a simple act such as watching a "flame of the candle" can allow this kind of thought to emerge. Reverie does not happen out of nowhere we have to nourish it. Michael Eigen (2005) states: "To wait on a feeling allows reverie. . ." (p. 175). We must wait for reverie to arrive. But we also have to find the right conditions for the arrival of reverie. When reverie arrives so too does knowledge. We must be able to capture these experiences in writing so that new knowledges do not disappear in our minds. We must be able to translate these experiences into words so that others can read and learn. Anthony Molino (1997) tells us that Christopher Bollas spoke of reverie as "an atmosphere of fluid, unconscious germination. . ." (p. 12). Out of this fluidity comes new knowledges, new epistemologies and advances in fields of study. Christopher Bollas (1997) remarks that "for reverie to take place, I have to be able to drift inside myself. . . in a more associative way. . ." (p. 48). New knowledges come in the form of "drift"[ing]. University life, however, does not allow for much if any room for drifting or work on the unconscious. So we must find spaces away from the university in order to do our work. At home in a relaxed state we can drift, write, think and dream. At the university we get bogged down with technology, meetings, accreditation, and trivia. Bachelard (1960) suggests that reverie "is lived out in a relaxed time. . ." (p. 5). In order to write we must dream and use our imaginations but we can only do this if we are relaxed. Working in a university does not lend itself to relaxation. There are always deadlines to meet, facing a tenure and promotion system that is highly stressful.

Bachelard (1960) states that "[i]t is in reverie that we can find the fundamental elements for a philosophy of repose" (p. 20). *Educare* means the bringing forth knowledge from within. We can only bring forth knowledge from within by being in a state of "repose." Technology does not lead one to repose but rather leads one into chaos. We must therefore be careful about how long we stay online, what we do online, how we learn online and how our students learn online. We must focus more on our scholarship and spend less

time on Facebook or Tweeting. What we need of course is a room of our own and silence. Repose is found in silence not in noise. And the world of technology is noise and confusion.

Thomas Ogden (2004) writes that there are many different kinds of reverie. He states that reveries are

> Our ruminations, daydreams, fantasies, bodily sensations, fleeting perceptions, images emerging from states of half-sleep (Frayn 1987), tunes (Boyer 1992) and phrases (Flannery 1979) that run through our minds. . . .(p. 158).

New Knowledges are built on all of these things stated above. But before any of these odd states can be experienced much thought is needed. Thoughts take time. Thoughts are born of reveries of the various kinds states above. This might come as a surprise as we think that thoughts come from our rational mind. But we argue here that thoughts come from strange places other than the rational. Christopher Bollas (1987) suggests that we dwell on the word 'evoke.' He says that '[t]o evoke, from the Latin *evocare* means to call forth or to summon" (p. 239). This is much like the word *educare* meaning to pull, to draw out from within. But what should scholars be bringing forth or pulling out? For Bollas we should be bringing forth what he calls "[r]eception of news from within. . ." (p. 239). Bollas (1987) explains that

> Reception of news from within (in the form of dream, phantasy, or inspired self observation for instance) arrives through evocation, a mental action characterized by a relaxed, not a vigilant, state of mind. (p. 239)

Reveries too must be evoked, or drawn out. Reveries are also accompanied by "news from within" and all of the various states of psyche mentioned in the above citation. We want to have access to deep thought, deep contemplation, deep feeling states and so on. These deep states allow us to arrive at the "news from within" which will in turn generate new knowledges, new epistemologies, new ways of thinking our way through the world. Education should be about all of this. Often, though, it is not. We are missing the mark when we believe that assessments and objectives have much to do with being educated persons. William Pinar (2004) argues that education should be primarily about one's subjectivity and one's psychosocial situatedness in the world. Deep states of subjectivity are only gotten at through a life of quiet, solitude and reverie. Computers tell us nothing about our subjectivities. Cyberspace teaches us little about who we are and how to learn. Christopher Bollas (1987) points out that "[w]e have lost pleasure in being bewildering to ourselves. . ." (p. 238). Reveries, memories, dreams, fantasies, ruminations make us "bewildering." New knowledges emerge from these bewildering states. New knowledges are not clear, precise, indubitable and certain. New knowledges are bewildering, odd, strange, uncanny and even irrational and messy. Language cannot capture new knowledges either. There is always a remainder, or as Dwayne Huebner (1999) put it years ago a "moreness" (p. 344) to our thought. William James (1890/1950) wrote similarly about the notion of "the vague" (p. 254). James (1890/1950)claims that [i]t is, in short, the re-instatement of the vague to its proper place in our mental life which I am so anxious to press on the attention" (p. 254). Reverie is part of the vague. We cannot precisely say what it is or pin it down in any manner. Vague states of mind like reverie are where new knowledges emerge. So we must pay "attention" as James puts it, to what we usually ignore in our thought processes. James Hillman (1979) states: "Let us take vagueness as a valid phenomenon" (p. 124). Let us also take reverie as a "valid phenomenon."

In sum, we must not allow technology to damage our psyches. We must find spaces that allow for loss, melancholy and reverie in order to generate new knowledges and new epistemologies. Scholars live not only in the rational but also in the irrational. Let knowledge be irrational, vague, messy and bewildering.

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