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## Academic Joyrides: Uncreative Reading and Writing

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## Academic Joyrides Uncreative Reading and Writing

Susan O. Cannon & Teri Holbrook

### Abstract

With this article, we invite you into our experiment with uncreative reading and writing drawing on the work of Kenneth Goldsmith (2011) and the Situationist International. In particular, we take up two situationist concepts, *dérive* (drift) and *détournement* (rerouting or hijacking). We experimented with these concepts through a series of invitations to see how they might work on our writing and thinking. The concepts are meant to take participants out of their predisposed and unnoticed practices to encourage new ways of thinking and being that work against restrictive forces. In this case, we desired to push back against the pervasive notions of efficiency and productivity in academic reading and writing to attend to other things of value.

*Keywords:* academic writing, invitations, uncreative writing, citational practices, academic reading

### The Story of the Interactions That Began This Piece

Teri doesn't know why, now, she decided to show a documentary about environmental artist Andy Goldsworthy (Mediopolis Film- and Fernsheproduktion, 2001) in a doctoral level poststructural inquiry class housed in a college of education. It may have been because Goldsworthy uses bare fingertips to melt together

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broken icicles—cold, water, heat, flesh, time, air, lungs and so on in relations that upend not only notions of icicles but also boundaries, binaries, and other calcifications. It might have been the way icicles are stubborn, how they keep falling apart, refusing the joint, and prompting soft grunts as Goldsworthy tries to coax them together. Or it may have been that she just wanted to show it, impulsively, like sometimes she just wants to eat an orange.

A couple of days later, Susan, a student at the time, came to Teri's office. If you like Andy Goldsworthy, she said, you might like Robert Smithson. She extended a book she had dug from a box in her attic. On its cover was a photo of Smithson walking along his massive land art structure, Spiral Jetty—another environmental work humming with relations and refusals.

(A side jaunt here: Spiral Jetty is 6650 tons of black basalt and earth coiling like a dead centipede from the banks of the Great Salt Lake in Utah. When Smithson built it in 1970, the area was undergoing a drought. The levels of the lake were low and the jetty walkable. But within a few years, water levels rose, and now the jetty is visible only some of the time. Smithson, who died in a plane accident in 1973, knew this would happen. Choosing a location that was only accessible by 15 miles of dirt road, he wanted the sculpture to be “both difficult to reach and difficult to see” (Julavits, 2017). The result is a massive piece of earthwork art in a constant state of living and dying; it emerges and retreats with the water levels like a rocky Loch Ness Monster (for that simile, see Sanford, 2004).)

Some stories have a definite beginning. *In the beginning there was....This story opens with....*The story of academic writing we draft here has no definite start. It started at multiple sites in multiple times with multiple gestures. It started with detours.

*Detour:* amazon.com thinking

In addition to the book on Smithson, Susan brings Teri a copy of *No. 111 2.7.93-10.20.96*, an experimental print text by poet and writing scholar Kenneth Goldsmith, published in 1997. If you like this, she says to Teri, you might like Goldsmith's (2011) *Uncreative Writing*. Teri muses: If Susan likes Goldsmith, she might like David Shields' (2011) *Reality Hunger*. Both books push at how readers are allowed to read and how writers are allowed to write.

*Detour:* Guilting in academia

Teri remembers as a child hiding under the covers at night to write what she worried were forbidden stories because they took away time that could be spent pulling up her puttering grades. She worries on the regular now, swallowing the twinges that accompany cross-field drives into poetry, fiction, art, hypermedia. Are they scholarly enough? Empirical enough? Theoretical enough? Susan diverts time from assigned class readings to read the short story *Time and Again* by Breece D'J Pancake (2002). It's about a snowplow driver who packs down snow on a familiar route. It prompts her thinking about research, but does it “count” as

academic reading? Is it productive? Does it increase her authority as a developing scholar? Can she cite it?

*Detour: Poem-stuck.*

A faculty/doc student reading group in a college of education takes up Barad's (2007) *Meeting the Universe Halfway*. Except Susan and Teri get stuck on Barad's excerpt of Alice Fulton's *Shy One*, so Susan turns to the complete poem and as the rest of the reading group shifts to discuss the chapter, they stay sticking, line by line, because "Nothing will unfold for us unless we move toward what/looks to us like nothing..." (Fulton, 2004, p. 59). The sticking for both of them feels joyful. Like an escape.

In this article, we describe one story of how we took up our questions around reading and writing in the academy. Intrigued by Goldsmith's (2011) uncreative writing, we drew from the practices and thinking of Situationist International, a group of 20<sup>th</sup> century artists, to craft a call-and-response-game that explored notions of text, materiality, and what counts as academic writing. We ventured on what we called academic joyrides, experiments in reading, writing, relations, and refusals. Through these academic joyrides, we attended to the value of following reading and writing spurs and lingering in moments of joy, beauty, and disturbance. In the process, we redrew the lines of what we conceptualize as value in academic reading and writing. Given the increasing demands on academic writers to be productive and efficient, we think this type of reterritorialization (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) is important. What we present below is just one of many playful forms of resistance that we imagine possible in reworking the academic writing and reading landscape.

### Uncreative Writing and the Academy

Both of us have folders in our computers that hold collections of other writers' words—scholarly quotes that we can put to use in journal manuscripts, lit reviews, coursework, and conference proposals. We select these words carefully, for how they confirm or pivot our thinking, how they demonstrate other scholars' ideas. We conscientiously attach citational information so we can make responsible attribution. Through these quotes and citations we show that we have done our work; they, in turn, give that work legitimacy. This borrowed language carries with it the residue of the authors' collected writings, their presence in the field, and the ways other scholars have taken up and contextualized/extended their words. In the academy, who we cite and how we cite matters.

But there are additional words in those folders that are collected for other reasons. They thrill, they resonate, they take our breath away: Yoko Ono's (2000) four-line poem "Time Painting" that tersely commands us to paint light, Carolyn Forché's (1981) "The moon swung bare on its black cord over the house," Naomi

Shihab Nye's (2001) "...wistful for something I have never tasted or seen." These words, too, carry residue, and they seep into our thinking.

As a doctoral student, Susan asked Teri about the rules of academic writing: When I cite an author and pull a quote, how do I know I am using that quote in a way that aligns with the author's intent? Can I cite songs or poems in my academic writing? How do I show—and count—fiction's and architecture's effect on my scholarship when I am not getting a degree in literature or architecture? Can I cite Wislawa Szymborska, Flann O'Brien, or Rem Koolhaas in an article on educational research? Will the journal editors and reviewers think my work doesn't belong in the field if they don't recognize the names?

Underlying all those questions was a threaded concern that both of us shared: Given that all writing involves the effacing of trails of thought—of names and sounds and images and so on that for disciplinary reasons don't make the cut—what happens if we refuse to submerge what we suspect we *should* submerge? Do we have to erase the raggedy trails of our thinking in order to write and publish in our academic fields? And what are the repercussions of those erasures? What's the impact of pretending they are not there?

Goldsmith's (2011) notions of uncreative writing provided space for us to consider these questions. Goldsmith describes uncreative writing as writing in which "new meaning is created by repurposing preexisting texts" (p. 35). He posits that in the computer-driven creative landscape of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, humans are experiencing "textual abundance," a "glut of language" coming at them from multiple media sources (pp. 23-25). In this environment, writers are not tasked with producing something original "but rather the technically skilled handling and systematic manipulation of the almost infinite texture that is already out there (on the internet)" (Haensler, 2019, p. 174). Texts, then, are conceptualized as material in their own right instead of as merely conduits of thought, and writers are positioned as textual appropriators who order (and disorder) already made language for effect.

Goldsmith is a poet, and his arguments owe much to concrete poets and visual artists who work with both the semiotics and materiality of words. But he also draws from the work of Marcel Duchamp, Walter Benjamin, Francis Picabia, and other 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers who challenged understandings of originality and replication. To bolster his arguments, he uses a variety of contemporary examples: Sara Charlesworth's conceptual art that removes all the print text from the front pages of newspapers, leaving just the images; Simon Morris's experiment in re-typing on a blog the original 1951 edition of Kerouac's *On the Road*, which took the form of a 120-foot roll of paper; Matt Siber's removal of the environmental print in his photographs and displacing it *in situ* onto an accompanying sheet of blank paper, thereby demonstrating "how language in the city is ruled as much by the grid of architecture as the streets are" (Goldsmith, 2011, p. 42).

While Goldsmith (2011) does not focus heavily on academic writing per se, we nonetheless found his work provocative in light of our own restlessness

around the creative erasure and sidelining we were doing in our writing as academics. To explore our thinking, we borrowed tools from his text to push what we understood as taken-for-granted aspects of academic reading and writing. We posit that academic writing can be conceptualized as something akin to uncreative writing—if not uncreative writing outright, then enough of a relative to warrant attention. As Goldsmith sees it, in the digital age, writers become “hoarders of data” (p. 28), collecting bits of text in the hopes of putting them to use at some point in different configurations. Similarly, as social science academics, we hoard scraps of data/text in the form of interview transcripts, field notes, student work, survey responses. Like uncreative writers, we take that data and reorient and reassemble it—along with the theories, ideas, quotes, findings, implications, etc. of others—into a composed text. In doing so, we engage in 21<sup>st</sup> century writing practices, made more visible and expeditious by the computer, in which “what becomes important is what you—the author— decides [sic] to choose. Success lies in knowing what to include and —more important—what to leave out” (p. 10). As academic writers, we cite particular experts and draw on particular works in our fields to situate and validate our thinking. And, equally important, we leave some sources out, concerned that if we cite them, we risk our authority diminished and our work dismissible.

### Mapping Drifts and Detours

Given this broad recognition of a kinship between our work in the academy and uncreative writing, we sought to develop an intentional experiment in academic uncreative writing to, quite simply, see what it would get us. We followed Goldsmith’s lead and looked to the work of the 20<sup>th</sup> century artists and philosophers of the Situationist International to put form to our thinking. Goldsmith (2011) described the situationists as seeking “not to reinvent life but to reframe it, reclaiming dead zones as alive” in pursuit of new perspectives (p. 36). These artist-philosophers took up invented “situations” as tools of liberation from everyday life and in the process sought to enact social change. Like them, we too were seeking freedom from the taken for granted. We recognized the ghostliness of much of our academic thinking/writing. Particular words or phrases mattered in our writing and thinking but lurked on the edges of the finished text, vibrating there for a while before fading into dark corners through publishing’s polishing/erasing process. We were drawn to two concepts that the Situationist International used “to infuse magic and excitement into the dull routine of everyday life” (p. 36): *dérive* and *détournement*.

Debord (2006) described a *dérive* or drift as a “playful, constructive behavior” in which participants “drop their relations, their work and leisure activities... and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there” (p. 62). It was the hope that traveling through spaces differently

or traveling through different spaces would push participants to notice what had become routinized. In academic writing and reading, scholars have habituated the following of citational trails, going further into a field's literature base by traveling from one piece to another—*if you like this, then you might like this*—or relying on must-read lists curated by members of a given field. The increase in the digitization of academic texts and the tracking of citations have accelerated this academic trail following; Google Scholar, ResearchGate and Academia.edu feature algorithms that use citations and user downloads to suggest further readings. In our emails we often receive invitations to read articles that relate to the manuscripts we have published but predictably did not make visible the erased sources that made any of the work possible. The effacement hardens through our academic social media sites and our own citational practices.

Seeking something like Debord's (2006) "playful, constructive behavior," we looked for ways to go off track. Susan was particularly interested in Goldsmith's (2011) invitation to think with Vito Acconci's 1969 *Following Piece* exhibit, "whereby [Acconci] simply followed the first person he saw, walking a few paces behind him, until he disappeared into a private space" (p. 37). Once that person disappeared, Acconci would then follow the next person he saw, repeating the process but not the experience.

Such a *dérive* is "meant to renew the urban experience by intentionally moving through our urban spaces *without* intention, opening ourselves up to the spectacle and theater that is the city" (Goldsmith, 2011, p. 36). We wondered how this might be transferred to the textual spaces we traveled in the academy. How might we read a little less intentionally or read and write differently? How could we work to purposefully move off well-worn citational trails, to be pulled, as Debord's work challenged, "by intuition and desire, not by obligation and necessity" (p. 37). What would an intentional experiment in *dérive* get us as academic writers?

Another situationist example that Goldsmith (2011) gives is *détournement*, "a way of taking existing objects, words, ideas, artworks, media, etc., and using them differently so that they become entirely new experiences" (p. 38). The power of *détournement* circulates through the "double meaning" that is activated "by the coexistence within [its elements] of their old and new senses" (Internationale Situationniste, 2006, p. 67.) In other words, remixing elements does not remove what clings to them; they carry their excess with them into their new contexts even as they are remade into something different. As an example, the situationists would overlay a map of one city onto the geography of another to see how it might lead them through unintended and previously unexplored spaces. Such a move did not erase either the text of the map and all its semiotic and cultural connotations or the geography of the city and its complexities but created conditions for new constructions. In our academic writing, we committed to use a variant of textual *détournement* to pull us out of our polished reading and writing habits. What might be the effects of employing lyrics of a song to think about a poststructural

concept or citing an author for the evocative/visual effect of the words rather than the knowledge it conveyed? We sought ways to explore language for its semiotic, aesthetic, and material effects, recognizing that to do so would not expunge the intent of the original authors but might cause tensions and reverberations with the making of something different. (See Holbrook & Cannon, 2018 for a resulting experiment in the materiality of academic texts.)

### Invitations to Drift and Detour

To try and reclaim that feeling of escape that we felt when we pulled aside from Barad and reveled in Alice Fulton's poetry—the reckless abandonment of productivity driven reading—we engaged in a series of intentional call-and-response invitations designed to take us out of familiar patterns and to push us down intellectual and collegial spurs. We decided together to say yes to the tugs of curiosity and mischief and to *create* situations—similar to *dérives* and *détournements*—that would inspire unexpected thoughts. The rules of the game were as follows:

1. Send each other invitations in uncreative writing (Goldsmith, 2011).
2. Do not require or expect an answer.
3. Keep it joyful.
4. Collect the fragments in a virtual “green box.”
5. Open it when we decide it's time to do so.
6. See what we can make.

The “green box” refers to Duchamp's (1934) collection of documents and text fragments associated with the making of one of his art pieces, all of which could be countlessly remixed for different effects. We likewise constructed a “green box” electronic folder to stash the documents and fragments we collected/created during the game.

Over the course of approximately 18 months, we exchanged books, poems, song lyrics, hyperlinks, articles, abstracts, and quotes. We constructed our exchange as joyrides, surreptitious diversions from the academic compound. We took off-ramps into architecture and poetry and Talking Heads, unsure of how these tours might further a research agenda but certain that they did. Didn't William Gibson always shout out directions during Teri's thinking with Deleuze? Didn't Rem Koolhaas and Gertrude Stein travel along with Susan as she first read Foucault? We engaged in these joyrides to explore what, in an era of pastiche, mash-ups, heterotopias, and literary collage, we could recognize and reclaim as academic reading and writing

What follows is a reconstruction of our game as we applied situationist thinking to our academic writing. For this article, we have culled the invitations to four and included the original invitation as well as our reflective notes. In playing the game, we worked with Goldsmith's notions of textual abundance and the semiotic and material facets of words. Agreeing with Goldsmith that we live amidst a glut



of language, we grew attuned to the way we selected, assembled, portrayed, and used words. While deploying them to make meaning, we also, at turns, aimed to release them from both the page and the pixel. We stitched, glued, and ripped them. We recontextualized them onto cloth and canvas, employed skeuomorphic features to mimic “realness.” We photographed them, digitized them, sent them to each other as jpgs or in the body of emails. Through these various moves, we strived to challenge ourselves as academic writers to look past the expected and to “be drawn to the attractions of the terrain” (Debord, 2006, p. 62).

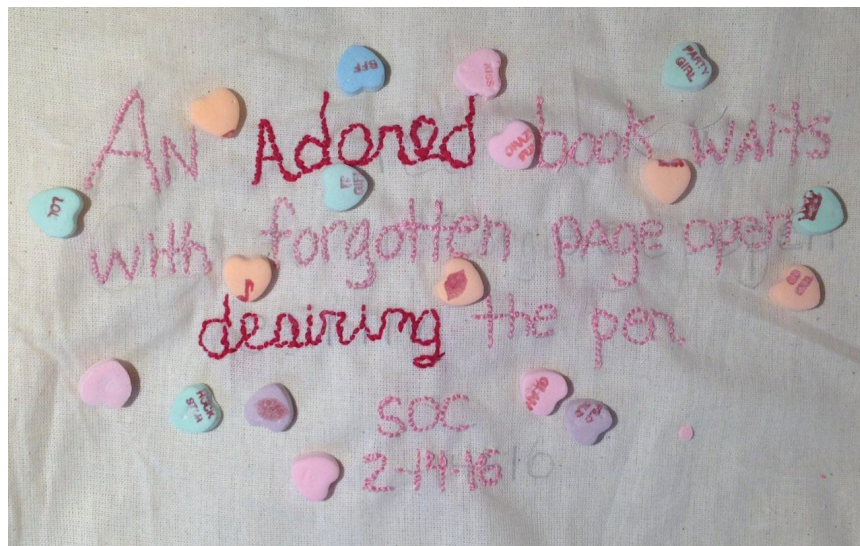
### The First Invitation

Susan made the first offering (See Figure 1). Her books are full of marginalia and underlined phrases, and she began to think about the parts of books that are unmarked—the phrases that don’t get underlined, at least not by her. She wondered what unseen or unremembered passages lurk in her books, or Teri’s books that might matter, if only they were attended to. She sent Teri an invitation designed to get at the unmarked.

*Susan: When I made the (first) piece, I felt like I was back in architecture school. There was something about the making, the stitching, the slowness of the task that made it feel important. I was trying to capture an idea, to play with the trope of Valentine’s Day and poetry, the way we use words to convince others to love us, or to understand us better, or to play with us.*

**Figure 1**

**An adored book waits/with forgotten page open/desiring the pen.**



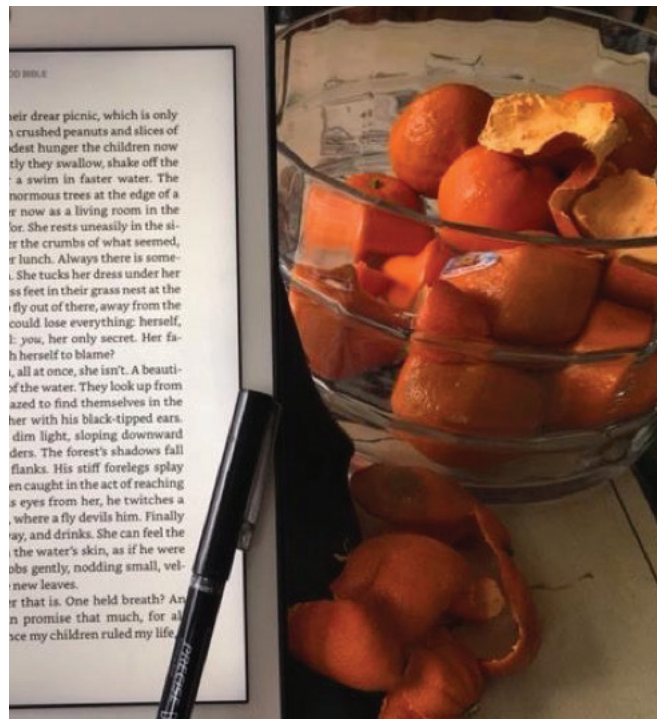
*Even the poem had rules. I counted the syllables on my fingers, playing around with variations on the theme. When I was stitching, I lost the carefully considered words. I lost the word in the work of the letters, and I lost the letters in the work of the stitches.*

*When I was doing the embroidery, there were moments where I wasn't thinking. I was just doing, following the instructions I was given for how to make the stitch and then align it with the rest. Part of the time, I was talking with my friend, I kept messing up, getting the thread knotted and jumbled. The front ended up looking ok, but the back of the piece shows all the marks of my distraction.*

*Teri: When I got the invitation, I was amazed. I couldn't believe Susan had made it. At first, I thought it was digital, but then I saw the penciled words behind the stitching. Then I convinced myself that she did it with some sort of sewing program, that she was a superseamstress who typed the words into her sewing machine, which whipped out the stitches. I looked at it up close, stretching towards the screen as if I were holding the fabric up to my face. I could see the weft of the cloth, the strands of the thread. Tactile even though I was only using my eyes. And memories. I could smell, taste, feel the sugar dust of the candies.*

To answer the invitation, Teri sent Susan the image in Figure 2, along with the

**Figure 2**  
**The page**  
**desiring**  
**the pen.**



following text: *This is a book I adore but cannot bear to pick up again. Holding the physical book is too visceral—memories of reading the saddest part at night in a deserted parking lot, pages lit by the marquee of a worn down movie theatre I shouldn't have given my daughter permission to go to, waiting for her to come out to the safety of my car; crying because I couldn't bear the book and the helplessness of motherhood. So here is the Kindle version. Safe in my kitchen with oranges and perspective. Still desiring the pen, but can't have it.*

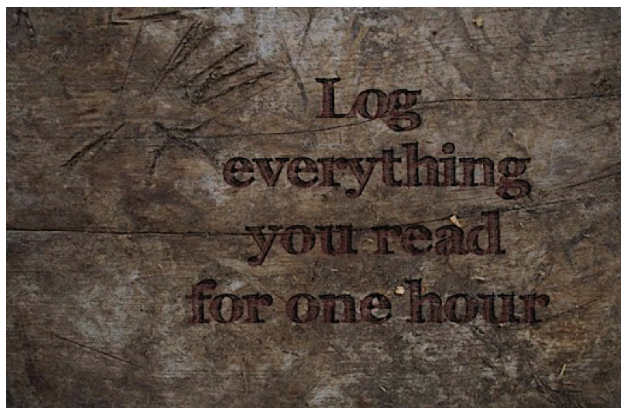
### The Second Invitation

Within the next few days, Susan received an email from Teri with the image in Figure 3 attached, “Log everything you read for one hour.”

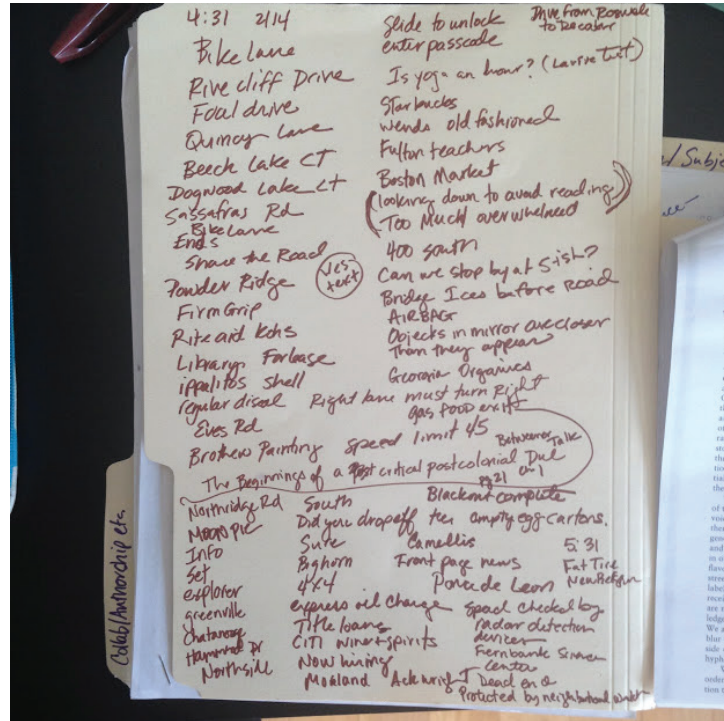
This invitation was derived from the work of Matt Siber who, by subtracting text out of images of streetscapes and laying it out on a white page, draws attention to all of the text that surrounds us. It's of note that the professor/student dynamic played a role here: Because the invitation was sent by an instructor, Susan responded to it as an assignment. As the passenger on a drive from the suburbs to town, she had planned to read a packet of articles; instead she took note of all the texts she saw around her (See Figure 4).

Susan: *Noting all the words on the car ride home from the suburbs. “Log everything you read for one hour,” she said. That was my assignment. Let all the language in. See it all. Do not discriminate. Bring it in. I only lasted five minutes before it became too much. I could not attend to all the language any longer. I looked down. The indiscriminate field (Manning & Massumi, 2014) was overwhelming for me. In pointing with each other, read this, read that, we narrow the field. We discriminate. And, we trace the lines, we acknowledge them. We directed each other's attention and allowed our attention to be drawn.*

**Figure 3**  
Log everyting  
you read  
for one hour.



**Figure 4**  
Log of  
Susan's  
reading.



### The Third Invitation

The third invitation (See Figure 5) was a collage, drawing from David Shield's (2011) *Reality Hunger*, which, by looking at contemporary writers and artists, does companionable work with Goldsmith. Teri hesitated sending the invitation. Worried that it might be too weird. Why on earth had she put her hair in there?

The text in the collage read:

Method of this project: Literary montage. I needn't say anything. Merely show. I shall purloin no valuables, appropriate no ingenuous formulations. But the rags, the refuse—these I will not inventory but allow, in the only way possible, to come into their own: by making use of them. (Shields, 2011, n.p.)

Susan received the third invitation and wondered: *What does it mean to purloin no valuables? I need to look up purloin. Can I send her back my valuable texts? Do I stitch? Do I montage—literally? "To come into their own: by making use of them" ... How do we best make use of rags and refuse? Does that imply the words left behind or those that we pull and don't use, strewn about on scraps of paper? The words that are not catalogued carefully in Evernote or elsewhere, the ones that slip our grasp?*

**Figure 5**  
*Method of this project.*



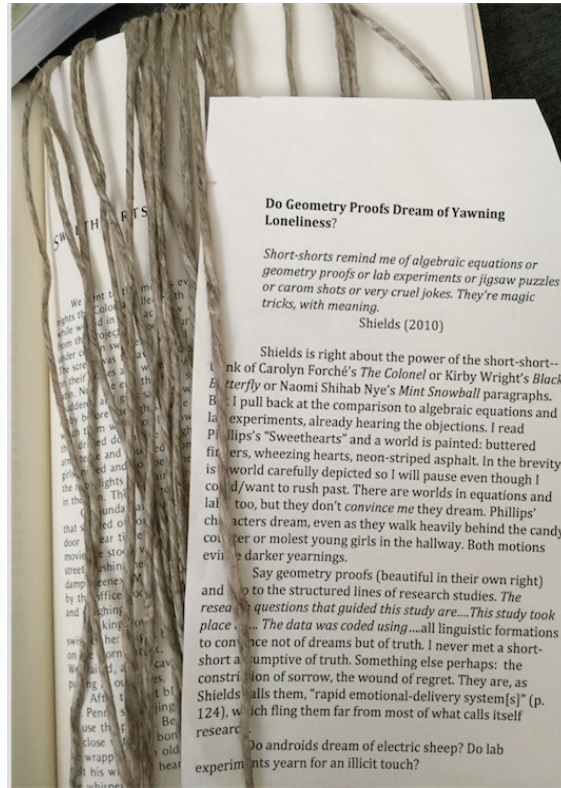
In the invitations, pressure had begun to creep in. Susan found herself asking, is what I am sending interesting enough, creative enough, going to go off the beaten path *enough*?

### The Fourth Invitation

Susan wanted to make an interesting invitation, to craft something. Yet, it had been a long time since she had received Invitation Three, and she was preparing for a conference. She continued reading *Reality Hunger* on the train. She felt that she should have been reading something more academic, yet didn't Teri's invitation give her permission to keep reading *Reality Hunger* even though it had nothing to do with her imagined research trajectory? Shields (2011) says that short-short stories (about 1-1/2 pages in length) are "magic tricks, with meaning" (p. 125). What did he mean? She sent Teri a text message with a photo of a page of *Reality Hunger* with the short-short title "Sweethearts" by Jayne Anne Phillips (1976) circled and the word "Read" written in the margin. It was an invitation and a command. Susan had no idea what the story might be about, but she wanted to see where it might take them.

Teri found a used copy of Phillips' anthology on Amazon. She responded to the invitation:

**Figure 6**  
**Do Geometry Proofs**  
**Dream of Yawning**  
**Loneliness?**



Susan, who had never read in the genre of the short-short, was off. She read Nye's (2001) *Mint Snowball*, collecting fragments of words:

Its scent clung to his fingers even after he washed his hands....She experimented. Once she came close. She wrote down what she did. Now she has lost the paper.... wistful for something I have never tasted or seen. (pp. 16-17)

And then, most memorably, Forché's (1981) *The Colonel*:

The moon swung bare on its black cord over the house....Some of the ears on the floor caught this scrap of his voice. Some of the ears on the floor were pressed to the ground. (p. 16)

Susan finally returned to *Sweethearts*, the assignment she had given Teri. She googled it and found it was out of print and expensive and felt a pang of guilt for having sent Teri on such a search. Then finding "Why She Writes" by Phillips (n.d.) on the Internet, she pulled, Goldsmith style, snippets of language:

[T]he work is never what you thought it would be, or what you hoped. Sometimes it's better; if the writing is any good, it struggles free of you, and the feeling of being inside it just as it moves away is so brief; a sensual visitation....[W]riting is a process, book to book, finished piece to abandoned fragment, dream to compulsion, every failure linked to its luminous twin star.... Words float memory, awaken desire; words do pull people in, even demanding, haunting words, because language is, finally, a matter of survival. (para 1-4)

Susan wondered as she stole (copied and pasted) pieces of Phillips' text: Do I read to feed myself? Do I read looking for words to steal or borrow, to appropriate, take up for my own use? And to what good, for what value, for whom?

She never sent those questions to Teri, who therefore never responded. The questions were holed up in Susan's Scrivner folder for this project until she searched them up to put them to use here.

### Relations, Detours, and Refusals

When conceptualizing Spiral Jetty, Smithson wanted water that was a certain shade of red. He learned that areas of the Great Salt Lake were "the color of tomato soup" (Smithson, 2005, p. 7), so he and his wife, artist Nancy Holt, went in search of the color.

Driving west on Highway 83 late in the afternoon, we passed through Corinne, then went on to Promontory. Just beyond the Golden Spike Monument...we went down a dirt road in a wide valley. As we traveled, the valley spread into an uncanny immensity unlike the other landscapes we had seen. The roads on the map became a net of dashes, while in the far distance the Salt Lake existed as an interrupted silver band. Hills took on the appearance of melting solids, and glowed under amber light. We followed roads that glided away into dead ends. Sandy slopes turned into viscous masses of perception. Slowly, we drew near to the lake, which resembled an impassive faint violet sheet held captive in a stony matrix.... (p. 8)

Interesting things happen when desire does the mapping. A desire for red water leads to surreal landscapes and a sculpture whose visibility and material configuration depends on precipitation. Follow those dirt roads some seasons and you'll see nothing but the violet sheet. Follow them other seasons and you'll see a coil of basalt rocks, encrusted white now from salt crystals that grow while it's underwater. Or don't follow them at all. For decades, with Spiral Jetty submerged, artists and interested others relied on the many existing texts that represented, explained, and theorized the work without having to undergo the difficulties of getting to the site: photographs, a film, Smithson's own essays, as well as the drawings and testimonies of people who had witnessed the work or known Smithson personally.

But relying on textual trails alone, in the case of Spiral Jetty, has its perils.

Because of the site's physical inaccessibility art scholar Ann Reynolds (2005) was satisfied for years with the abundance of related texts for her understandings. But the re-emergence of the Jetty in the early 2000s and new images and descriptions provided by the people who made the (now not-quite-so remote) trek convinced her to go. She describes the effects of her visit:

As I stood on the *Jetty* last September for the very first time, I was deeply aware of the fact that neither my on-site experiences nor the descriptions that I was familiar with, both old and new, were self-sufficient or even clearly distinct. All these things were hopelessly entangled, and this entanglement produced a form of vertigo that was at least dualistic: mental and physical, spatial and temporal. (p. 73)

The Jetty wasn't the Jetty. It was the basalt and the salt and the coil and the water and the photographs and the decades and the trek and the film and the artist and the sandy slopes and the drawings and the dead ends and the essays and the scholar's mind/body after years of delay standing on the build, produced by and producing an entanglement of relations that could not, in that moment, be erased.

If a *détournement* is a remixing of existing elements, and if its power comes from the double meaning ignited by the "old and new senses" at play in those elements, then Reynolds' visit to the Jetty can be taken up as a *détournement*. It could also be framed as akin to uncreative writing, one in which the textual—the photos, film, drawings, essays—coexist among other semiotic and somatic elements to create something new albeit not original.

When we started our game, we had no expectation other than it would get us somewhere different than where we were. Wrestling with questions of erasure and what counts as academic reading and writing, we devised a space of invitations and responses designed to move us out of our routines, to compel us to re-see and reframe what we had been disciplined to understand about how thought became recognizable through reading and writing in the field of education. We took up the constructs of *dérive*—a letting go of what's comfortable and everyday so that we could be "drawn by the attractions" (Debord, 2006, p. 62) of the textual terrain we moved through—and *détournement*—the remixing of existing elements to create something new although not original.

What we found was akin to Reynolds' entanglements, where our textual exchanges were hopelessly infused with the residue of our experiences, memories, desires, and intuitions. While the rules of the game called upon us to "keep it joyful," Susan nonetheless felt the pressure of performing as student in response to her professor's invitations. While Teri lamented the erasure of so much of the reading and writing she knew fed her scholarship, she nonetheless worried that the game was taking up too much time; she found its joy displaced by a persistent concern that it would not produce an article that could be counted—that all of the joy was, in the end, what Shields (2011) terms "rags" and "refuse" (n.p.).

But in playing the game—in drifting and remixing—we did go somewhere





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