

Responses by Stanislaw Godlewski and Judith Philippa Franke

Stanislaw Godlewski

Dear Kevin,

Thank you for your text. It was really inspiring!

When you wrote about the space between frames in comics, I immediately thought of control—is it possible to be between spaces without wanting to control something, to separate, to order? What you write about teaching seems very beautiful to me, but also difficult to implement. I envy your students for having you as a teacher. It's very difficult to learn to let go, to allow yourself to be ignorant (as Ranciere would say—an “Ignorant Schoolmaster”) and to fail—especially as the system and often the students themselves expect us to ‘know’, to give them concrete ‘knowledge’ and ‘skills’ (that’s what we get paid for eventually). Students often treat us as an authority—is it possible not to step into that role and teach at the same time? Not to mention that the ability to admit a mistake also requires awareness and responsibility, and in teaching, trust. And building trust in a group is sometimes very, very difficult.

I was thinking further about the fact that very often students (and myself too) are trained to think in a certain way. We are pushed into certain frames, but stepping outside the frame—being creative and allowing ourselves to fail—also requires training. It is a kind of practice that needs to be repeated while not falling into a routine. I wonder what ways

you have of keeping thinking outside the box fresh and surprising all the time, including for yourself.

*Looking forward to seeing you at the next PAC conference!
Stanislaw*

Judith Philippa Franke

Dear Kevin,

Already the first four lines of your paper were such a challenging joy and joyful challenge!

And more to the point: the almost sensory memory of subway stations excitement to read further about the potential of gaps of joints, to explore where there is anarchic space in-between...

...to imagine...

...what if?

I wonder if the educational system, instead of what you describe it to be dominated by, was informed by and rooted in curiosity, the willingness to fail, maybe feminism? It is exciting to imagine the practices we would apply.

You muse, “the in-between space fascinates me. It exists in our lives, hiding in plain sight, socially ignored in preference for positivist approaches to knowing”. Hiding in plain sight, the in-between spaces—almost as if they are only there if you care to see them instead of the one-directed lane of knowledge-accumulation. Again, it is almost physically there: the excitement about places between the binaries, beyond them. And furthermore: yes, what about the act of unlearning? How do we each go about that?

I am curiously asking myself when was the last time I learned from and unlearned through the students I have the pleasure working with? As Stanislaw writes: how can we thrive in not-knowing in our positions as teachers? With your referring to Bhabha’s “doorway”, I think about

the moments of hesitation. How do we dwell in them? Maybe even enjoy them? How do we together stay in the unknown?

You are so kind as to share your thoughts about your students being “torn between their reflexive desire for certainty [...] and their curiosity about rule breaking”. Again concurring with Stanislaw: Your students must be so glad to have you! What a mastery in openness—if that not in itself is an impossibility.

My mind wanders, following you to new stories shared and developed with audiences. I am filled with joy thinking about reading and trying to apply both Donna Haraway and Saidiya Hartman in wondering how new stories emerge and how to find different narratives and ways of narrating differently... Maybe apart from other things and situations just through dwelling in what you quote Norris about: “[...] creative concepts of trust, spirit of play, risk and co-ownership”.

Inspired by your writing to keep exploring in settings marked as educational and beyond, I will go into my next encounters trying out some of the scores below. I look forward to exchanging with you next time we are in the same place.

- Who inspires you to keep exploring? Spend time with them. Spend more time with them.
- Find certainty. With it, dwell in a moment of hesitation.
- Have a logbook of unlearning. Make six entries at least. Share with someone.
- Assume the system you are working in is radically based in the willingness to fail. Act accordingly.

Break a rule. Have fun with it.

Warmly,

Judith

