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# In Appreciation of Modern Hunting Traditions and a Grouse's Life Unwasted

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*David W Jardine*

What am I, in the terrible and fragile?  
Our prey is watching over us.  
—Jodi Latremouille

The general patterns and shapes of the social world are part of our labour to understand and interpret, for ourselves and for and with our students. Such is a great part of social studies. Research into such grand patterns and shapes is a vital part of coming to know ourselves, and how our lives have turned out thus and so. But there is another labour that is often occluded by such research, and this other labour is sometimes misunderstood.

The social life for which social studies is meant to provide an articulation is actually lived out in locales of great intimacy, particularity and grace. Families, practices, languages, roles both inherited and resisted, times, places, heartbreaks and joys, geographies known through the body and breath and the labour of hands, and, too, great arcs of reminiscence, ancestry, old ways barely recollected or inscribed in practices learned hand over hand, face to face, full of forgotten-ness. To be properly understood and articulated, these locales of intimacy don't lend themselves to forms of research that demand generalities or methodological anonymity as is proper to various social sciences. They demand a form of research that

is proper to the object of its concern—an old Aristotelian idea, that knowledge must “remain something adapted to the object, a *mensuratio ad rem*” (Gadamer 1989, 261).

This wonderful piece of writing by Jodi Latremouille, “A Modern Hunting Tradition,” is a strong and elegant example of remaining true to such measures. It is an example of how writing itself is a powerful, difficult and rigorous form of research (Richardson 1994; Richardson and St Pierre 2005). It shows how a careful and poetic reflection on one's life can reveal truths about our living, and how such “life writing” (Chambers et al 2012) stands firmly in the phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions of inquiry.

I mention all this because Jodi shared with me an e-mail she received from her father after she sent him an early version of this piece, and it points to something vital to the power of this writing. Included in parentheses are Jodi's comments on how her writing was edited in response:

Enjoyed your writing, not sure if you need accuracy but if you do:

I never skid anything in the cheesecloth game bags, they are only when we put them on the packboard. (*I had originally written that my husband skids a piece of moose down the hill in the game bag. Edited as per this e-mail.*)

Small moose in five pieces, big one in six with the head attached to the neck making it a pretty good load as J will attest. Ha Ha.

*(I had originally written 3 pieces, 5 if very large. Edited as per this e-mail.)*

Vital to the power of this writing is, again, that it must find its proper measure in the things that are its subject. I have found, myself, in pursuing such writing, that it is not flimsy or subjective or random, but needs a terrible accuracy. Otherwise the whole thing deflates and becomes nothing but a self-referential, overly personal reminiscence. Here, in this writing, we have profoundly personal reminiscence, but it is cast out into the world and its ways. This is why it is so effective for me as a reader. It is careful in its heeding of the life-world in all its meticulous detail. Part of its power to address us is in this accuracy. Without it, it betrays its object and betrays its own weakness. *This* is why, in heeding the demands of accuracy, such writing is legitimately deemed research and why and how such work should form part of the work of social studies in our schools.

So, in appreciation, I want to betray my age; what struck me most in Jodi's writing is that the lives of these Great Beings should not be wasted and that, in understanding this, we understand something of ourselves and our own frail passings. Our lives, too, should not be wasted.

I end, therefore, with a wee bit more of that e-mail, which betrays, as does Jodi's work, a great and trembling intimacy in the hunt:

So far nothing to pack or skid yet this fall. Been close to two three-point bull moose and got within 50 feet of a bedded bull and cow. [The] bull ... was up and gone before we could shoot, a big guy. The cow walked to within 30 feet of us. Mixed feelings on chasing a big productive guy like that this late in the season, could be tough. Probably leave him for another year and try for him early. He's probably getting old like me anyway and past his prime so will give him this last hurrah before we meet.

## References

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