

The Star Process:
A Narrative Study of the Educational Potential of Autobiography

by

William Kurt McBurney
B.Ed., University of Victoria (at Malaspina University-College), 1997

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

This inquiry explored the Star Process, a process for the practice of autobiography and living consciously; this process was created and developed by the author. This inquiry was an autobiographical exploration of the Star Process and autobiographical inquiry for the purposes of providing a solid foundation and framework for further study and development of the Star Process as a mode of autobiographical inquiry. The Star Process focuses on the identification of a Personal Philosophical Frame of Reference and the five key elements of Desire, Effort, Confidence, Knowledge, and Application and Responsibility for Knowledge Acquired (ARKA). This study was also an autobiographical exploration of the field of contemporary autobiographical inquiry with the goal of situating the author and the Star Process within the field of Curriculum studies and autobiographical inquiry.

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Dedication:

I dedicate this work to all those who search, working consciously everyday to be better people and make this world a better place.

I dedicate this work to all those who inspire me—you know who you are.

And finally I dedicate this to my family. I love you all. You inspire me most; my world is a better place simply because I share it with you.

Chapter 1

Introduction:

One thing that can't be doubted, the "possibility of a quality" is within us. It is called prajna. We can deny everything, except that we have the possibility of being better. Simply reflect on that.

Dalai Lama (1998, p. 184)

How The Process Started:

I entered the fourth year of my education program in the fall of 1994. I was one year from being a certified teacher, living in Nanaimo with some wonderful friends who were also in the education program. I had a good part-time job, a good life. Not certain I wanted to be a teacher I entered fourth year with apprehension. This apprehension and uncertainty about my career choice manifested itself in many negative ways. By November I was denied the opportunity to participate in my practicum experience, but as such, was provided the opportunity to learn something very valuable. During the six weeks I was to be out in the schools, I went into my life, beginning a deliberate conscious deconstruction of all my experiences.

For twenty-five years I lived an unconscious life. With no intention or attention I had stumbled into success or fallen to failure; I could neither celebrate nor commiserate—I was barely involved in my own life. It was as though my life and all my passively observed experiences decided to gather once and for all to give me a chance to engage with my life or let it slip away—if I were to ignore them this time, my ignorance would have to be conscious. What began in the fall of 1994 has emerged into a model for

living I call the Star Process. This is a narrative inquiry into the formulation of the Star Process and how it continues to inform my life personally and professionally.

What is the Star Process?

The Star Process is a way of viewing, perceiving, feeling, and living life. My philosophical perspective finds its home in existentialist philosophy. This is my orientation to the world and the perspective I have used to follow my inquiry. Many of my struggles in this inquiry have been rooted in my situatedness as an existentialist. Studying at the University of Victoria, whose Curriculum and Instruction environment is dominated by post-modern, poststructural, and critical theory perspectives, I felt out of place and philosophically opposed. I spent a good deal of time and effort in this process looking for ways to defend not only my existential perspective, but existentialism. Then one day I realized it was not necessary to do so, all I needed to do was state that I inquire from the existential perspective.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), a researcher needs to define one's interpretive paradigm. Denzin and Lincoln define an interpretive paradigm as: "this net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises...or interpretive framework, a 'basic set of beliefs that guides action' (Guba, 1990, p. 17)" (p. 33). That net for me is the existential net as described by Reid (1981):

For them [existentialists], the reality of life consists not of classes, capitalism or hegemony, on the one hand, nor in the administrative processes and established structures, on the other, but in the relationship of the individual consciousness to the external world...The subject matter of the perspective is, therefore, the individual consciousness as revealed to the actor and to others. The method is the

ordering of experience through frames provided by biography, psychoanalysis, existential philosophy and mysticism. The ordering is undertaken in a tentative exploratory way. The truth is never to be demonstrated, always discovered. Paths of discovery lead in unknown directions. (p. 166)

The Star Process has developed under this interpretive paradigm. It began as a way to bring meaning to my personal and professional life and eventually developed into an academic inquiry. Bringing meaning in this context was to bring consciousness to events in my personal and professional life that originally happened without consciousness; bringing meaning was to understand the influence of consciousness—or lack thereof—on these events.

The essence of the Star Process assists one in living consciously. I define living consciously as: understanding what you believe about life and making those beliefs part of how you physically live your life. In education, this is connecting one's theory of education with one's practice of education. Paulo Freire (1970) defines this as praxis, a cycle of action and reflection. My understanding of Living Consciously aligns well with Freire's praxis and conscientization. Connections between the Star Process, Living Consciously, autobiography, conscientization, and praxis will be developed throughout this thesis.

The Star Process is a process that assists me in living consciously. As I explored my life in the fall of 1994 I discovered there were several elements that were pervasive in my successes and failures. These elements were: *Desire, Effort, Confidence, Knowledge, and Application and Responsibility for Knowledge Acquired (ARKA)*. These elements, when present, led to successful realization of my goals; when lacking, I found success

was often elusive. With respect to post-secondary academics, I realized I was successful when I had genuine desire to be in school, made a concerted effort, was confident that I could succeed, was knowledgeable of myself, my context, and engaged in the process of acquiring new knowledge while applying what I knew about myself in process and accepted personal responsibility for my education (ARKA).

The deconstruction of my life also identified a spiritual aspect of my self that was always part of my experiences; an aspect that subconsciously or consciously influenced, inspired, and judged my every choice, my every action. Regardless of my consciousness of it, this spiritual aspect of my self had very real influences in my life. I have called this my *Personal Philosophical Frame of Reference* (PPFOR).

Autobiography About Autobiography:

This inquiry began by exploring how autobiographical processes contributed to an understanding of life and the transformational process of living consciously. This journey was not a simple precise linear journey from point A to point B, it has been circular and at times chaotic; however, amidst the circular chaos I found themes of cohesion with Pinar (1975/1992), who writes:

I can look at my life in a linear way, acknowledging its multidimensional character, but limiting my view to a linear one to make it more manageable, and I see that this has led to that; in that circumstance I chose that, I rejected this alternative; I affiliated with those people, then left them for these, that this field intrigued me intellectually, then that one; I worked on this problem, then that one...I see there is a certain coherence. Not necessarily a logical one, but a lived one, a felt one. (p. 20-21)

On the linear surface, things often seemed illogical, random, and disconnected—as my inquiry often has—but as Pinar writes, a lived felt coherence existed. A lived felt coherence I discovered in the process of my inquiry and the processes of my life. When I limited my view to a linear one, it made the process more manageable, allowing me the opportunity to see a lived felt coherence that formed the backbone of this inquiry.

As I stood on my path, looking at my life in a simple linear way, I turned my gaze backward—ignoring for the moment the complicated multiplicity of future—and saw themes and topics that continued to surface in the course of my inquiry; themes, topics, and “enduring interests” (Oberg, Wilson & Berg, 2002) persistent in their pursuit of me—spiritual echoes reverberating in my mind. It was not until I paused on my path, looking at the whole of my inquiry that I began to see that all things led to the Star Process, autobiography, and living consciously. Thus I knew I had found the thread that was my lived felt coherence.

In this inquiry I used autobiography as a method of inquiry, most specifically Pinar’s (1975/1992) *currere*. Pinar (1995) writes: “...stated simply, *currere* seeks to understand the contribution academic studies makes to one’s understanding of his or her life” (p. 520). Simply stated, I believe the Star Process seeks to understand the contribution that understanding one’s life can make to one’s academic studies. This inquiry explores the idea of the Star Process as it emerged in the context of my life and thus this autobiographical inquiry is about the ideas and interactions of the Star Process and living consciously *in* my life. My life is the context of these ideas. I approached this autobiographical inquiry in the spirit of Ayn Rand (1958) who in foreword of her novel *We The Living* writes:

We The Living is as near an autobiography as I will ever write. It is not an autobiography in the literal, but only in the intellectual, sense...My view of what a good autobiography should be is contained in the title that Louis H. Sullivan gave to the story of his life: *The Autobiography of an Idea*. (p. xvii).

It is with Rand's view of autobiography—contained in Sullivan's title—that I approached this thesis, writing the autobiography of an idea, the Star Process, telling its story and sharing its ideas in the context of my life. Rand's passage reminded me that the point was not to enlighten the reader about my life, but to demonstrate the affects of the Star Process and living consciously. This is an autobiographical inquiry about the autobiographical Star Process; an autobiography about autobiography.

This inquiry utilized Pinar's four moments of currere: Regressive, Progressive, Analytical, and Synthetical. This exploration was done by means of substantial writing: journal writing, papers, stream of consciousness free writing, thesis writing that became not-thesis, reflections, rememberings, ideas, sketches, stories, songs, and musings. Perhaps that part of myself that encouraged me to write and journal all those years ago had looked to a future—now my present—realizing that I would need these windows to the past in order to create this inquiry.

With the focus of my inquiry in mind—autobiography, living consciously, and the Star Process—I autobiographically explored moments when I discovered the Star Process and subsequently living consciously. A detailed description of currere and its four moments will follow.

In the regressive moment of currere I returned to the fall of 1994 to re-visit the time in which I discovered the Star Process. I went back to “capture it as it was” (Pinar

1975/1992, p. 21). Regressing in this inquiry was complicated because I was going back to a time in which I utilized a regressive type of moment. As mentioned above, I wrote a significant amount about that time and examined old journals.

Of the progressive moment of currere Pinar (1995) writes: "...one looks forward to that which is not yet the case, the future—like the past—inhabits the present. Meditatively the student of currere imagines possible futures" (p. 520). In this inquiry, I looked forward from two different places in linear time. In the next chapter about the Star Process I looked forward from 1994 examining how the Star Process and living consciously influenced my professional and personal life. In later chapters, the progressive moment looked forward from the present, imagining possible futures yet to unfold.

In the analytical moment of currere, one explores the present, exclusive of the past and future, then one analyzes the: "temporal complexity that presents itself to me as my present" (Pinar, 1995, p. 521). Once again the analytical moment is two-fold. In the Star Process chapter I attempted to re-capture the analytical moments of 1994 and in later chapters the analytical moment was the time of this inquiry.

The synthetical moment is a moment of synthesis. In the Star Process chapter, the Star Process itself was the synthesis that resulted from the exploration of my academic and life processes previous to 1994. In this inquiry the synthetical moment is represented by this document. Engaging in this process helped me to synthesize connections between autobiographical inquiry, the Star Process, living consciously, my life, and my professional practice as an educator.

Orienting the Reader:

Using Pinar's (1975/1992) *curre* and his four moments—regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetical—created a temporal complexity, and thus the tenses of the writing often reflect the moments explored. Writing in the past, it seemed natural to write in the past tense; when exploring the present the present tense pervaded, and looking ahead future tenses flowed. I was, I am, and I will are products of the temporal complexity of this inquiry.

This process is also complicated by the many voices in this on-going conversation. There are voices of my infinite temporal selves: 1994 Kurt, today Kurt, tomorrow Kurt. There are also those voices I perceive, the voices of those whom have shared this graduate journey with me: Dr. William Pinar, Dr. Bill Doll, Dr. Honore France, Dr. Antoinette Oberg, Dr. Laurie Baxter, and Dr. Lara Lauzon; I would often hear their voices asking questions I as I progressed through my writing. Other voices are those perceived voices that have influenced and inspired me with their writing and inquiry: Ayn Rand, Maxine Green, and Wayne Dyer. The virtual conversations I have had with them have been part of this inquiry as well.

In the spirit of Dyer (2006), who writes:

There's a voice in the Universe entreating us to remember our purpose, our reason for being here now in this world of impermanence. The voice whispers, shouts, and sings to us that this experience—of being in form and space—has meaning.

That voice belongs to inspiration, which is within each and every one of us. (p. 3)

With that in mind, I attempted to pay attention to all the voices in my on-going conversation.

A significant realization about autobiography in this process was the value of the indirect autobiography with respect to representation and autobiographical writing. The indirect autobiography will be discussed later in this document, but a brief discussion of it here will help orient the reader to the way this document is written. The indirect autobiography is writing in such a way as to limit excessive inclusion of the purely personal. When writing an autobiography, the indirect autobiography invites the author to step away from overt personal story and cloak it between the lines of references to literature or contemporary curricular discourse. Thus, every line of this thesis serves two purposes. First of all, the chosen literature and references have been chosen because they support and articulate the Star Process and autobiographical inquiry, but these choices are also intended to consciously represent aspects of my story, my journey. My personal story is infused in the choices I have made with respect to the writing. There are times when I write more personally, but that too was choice that best honoured the moment.

Notes on Foolish Consistency:

In the process of my inquiry I often found myself frustrated and frozen in process because I did not know if I was “getting it right”. I was so fearful that I was leaving out something important that it became difficult to add anything in. I also found the voices in this atemporal conversation often contradicted one another; with a lack of consistency I became fearful that my inquiry was becoming inconsistent and therefore, a poor inquiry. To get past this fear, I turned to Emerson (1841/1996):

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He [sic] may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what

you think now in hard words, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it may contradict every thing you said to-day. —‘Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.’—Is it so bad to be misunderstood? (p. 265)

Emerson inspired me to move on, without worrying about whether or not I was getting it right or obsessing about consistency.

The Research Questions:

The research questions in this inquiry were:

- 1) What is Autobiographical Inquiry?
- 2) What is the Star Process?
- 3) How do the Star Process and autobiography inform living consciously, learning consciously, and teaching consciously?

The first question explores autobiography as a mode of educational inquiry.

Autobiographical inquiry is a potential context for the Star Process, which utilizes the essence of autobiographical inquiry; investigating one’s life as it intersects with one’s professional and personal world.

The main focus of this inquiry, question two, was to understand and articulate the Star Process, to locate the Star Process within my personal and professional lives. The third question explored how engagement in autobiographical processes resulted in the Star Process. There are multiple layers of interaction between autobiographical research and my “real” life. The Star Process itself is an autobiographical process born out of an interaction between autobiographical inquiry and my life. The third question explores the nexus of autobiography and the Star Process.

The final question explored how the autobiography and the Star Process inform my practice of education. Once locating my understanding of autobiography and the Star Process, I began to situate this understanding in the curricular community, exploring how these processes influence my interactions with education.

Plan of the Thesis:

Following the introduction, this thesis is organized in the following manner:

- Chapter Two: The Star Process
- Chapter Three: The Star Process and My Undergraduate Education
- Chapter Four: The Star Process, My Graduate Education, and My Teaching
- Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

In Chapter Two: *The Star Process*, I explore the key elements and processes of the Star Process, identifying a framework of interaction between the Star Process and living consciously.

Chapter Three: *The Star Process and My Undergraduate Education* explores the shift in the context from my life to the more specific context of my undergraduate education. This chapter also investigates the challenges encountered in my attempts to learn consciously.

Chapter Four: *The Star Process, My Graduate Education, and My Teaching* investigates the Star Process and living consciously in my graduate processes. It also contains a review of autobiography literature and a detailed explanation of the method of this inquiry. Chapter Four also illustrates how the Star Process helped me to navigate these challenges of the graduate school context. This chapter concludes with the

examination of the Star Process in my life as an educator and my attempts to teach consciously.

Chapter Five: *Conclusion and Recommendations* reflects on the influence of autobiography, the Star Process and living consciously upon my personal and professional life. This chapter also explores the potential and the challenges of autobiography and the Star Process. This chapter also explores the strengths and weaknesses of the Star Process.

Chapter Two

The Star Process:

The Star Process Context:

The superficial context of the Star Process was my life and the consciousness I brought to my lived experiences; the real context was my struggle to live consciously. In the fall of 1994 I entered the fourth year of my education program knowing that I did not want to be a teacher. Instead of consciously dealing with that inner truth, I returned to school that fall frustrated, confused, angry and full of resentment. What I would come to realize later was that I was really frustrated, confused, angry, and resentful of myself, but in the fall of 1994 this manifested in my life as frustration, confusion, anger, and resentment for the education program, teaching, teachers, and the education system. I had a horrible attitude.

My work reflected my attitude. By the time our first six week practicum was scheduled November I was denied the opportunity to participate in my practicum. In being denied this opportunity I was provided with an opportunity to learn about something I really needed to understand: myself.

While I was to be out on practicum, a friend lent me a copy of Ayn Rand's (1952) *Atlas Shrugged* and for the next six weeks I lived in her world of well-defined characters who knew who they were and how to live a life that reflected their beliefs. I was inspired and determined to understand and live my life with the same confidence and knowing as her heroes. For those six weeks, and the months that followed, I began a deliberative investigation of my life and how I participated in creating success and failure. Even

before I knew of autobiographical inquiry, I practiced it; that is why to this day I value autobiographical inquiry. What I discovered in that initial inquiry has over time developed into the Star Process.

The “Real” Context of the Star Process:

For a long time I believed the context of the Star Process was my life, but through this autobiographical process I have discovered that though the events happened in my life, the real context of the Star Process was the struggle to shift my life from ego to spirit, to develop an informed awareness of the dynamic interplay between the physical and the spiritual—to live consciously. The struggle was in the arena of my life, my context, but the struggle transcends my life, spiralling outwards (Oberg, Wilson & Oberg, 2002); the Star Process was born in, and provided the answer to this struggle.

Mind – Spirit – Body:

In the introduction, Living Consciously was defined as: understanding what one believes about life and making those beliefs part of how you actually live your life. In education this is praxis (Freire, 1970), which means making a conscious connection and finding a balance between theory and practice.

The following figure provides a simple illustration of my understanding of living consciously:

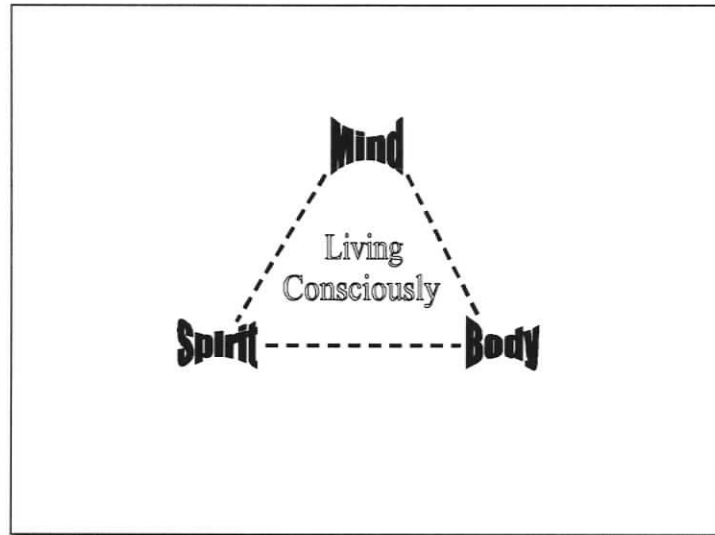


Figure 1: Mind, Spirit, Body (McBurney, 2006).

In my life my spirit leads me, yet to be led by spirit I must choose to follow, and in following I must choose physical actions that resonate with the guidance provided by spirit. Even prior to that, I must choose to look to my spirit for guidance. This, for me, is the “dynamic dance” where I find space for spirit (Doll, 2005). All three aspects are dynamically related to one another; however, I explore each element independently.

There are infinite ways to define the mind. The mind has philosophical, psychological, and scientific/neurological definitions. Is the mind our brain? Is the mind our self? Is the mind that which thinks, perceives, and feels? Is the mind the soul? There are different schools of thought; each school has a different answer to this question. Morton (1995) writes: “Even if there were a core concept of mind, it could be wrong...there is a lot of work to do before we can see where the answer lies” (p. 570).

The Oxford Dictionary defines the mind as: “1. the faculty of consciousness and thought. 2. a person’s intellect or memory. 3. a person’s attention or will.” (p. 572).

For the purposes of this process I define mind as the faculty of consciousness and thought. The mind perceives self, others, the world, spirit, and most importantly the mind is the locus of choice. The mind perceives, interprets, and makes choices. The mind is the consciousness piece of living consciously; the mind contributes to the living aspect of living consciously through the choices it makes, finding a balance between body and spirit. From my experiences, the mind provides a strong attraction, as well as many hazards; I often stay only in my mind—to be too much in my head. Like Pirsig (1974), who in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* was drawn so far into the mind that he almost went insane. The Star Process helps my mind and consciousness to be in concert with spirit and body, finding a balance between. In *The Journeys of Socrates* (Millman, 2005), the monk Serafim reminds his young student Sergei (Socrates) of the benefits and limitations of the mind:

Your training has taught you the limits of the mind. The intellect is a great ladder into the sky, but it stops short of the heavens. Only the heart’s wisdom can light the way. Your ancient namesake, Socrates, reminded the youth of Athens that ‘wisdom begins in wonder...’ (p. 225)

The heart, so often associated with spirit, and its wisdom of spirit combined with mind and body, can take us places the mind alone cannot.

In my perception of living consciously, body and physical include not only one’s physical body, but one’s actions and all things one does in one’s context. Everything in the outside world pertains to the physical: my physical body, my actions, my knowledge,

my job, my bank account, my residence, my degree, my accomplishments, my failures—these, I believe, are part of the physical world. These are on a superficial level, physical; there is an intention that I and others bring to these things which I believe to be spiritual, but all things, as they physically exist in the world, I perceive as physical. To explore the context of body/physical I used Dyer's (1995) definition of ego, the extreme edges of physicality.

Of ego, Dyer (1995) writes: "The little three-letter word *ego* has had various meanings applied to it. In Freud's system, the ego is the conscious aspect of the psyche that chooses between the base instincts of the id and the morality of the superego" [emphasis in original] (p. 176). My use of mind compares to Freud's ego, spirit with superego, and body/physical with the id. Dyer continues:

There are many other interpretations of the word ego. Some view it as the unconscious part of ourselves, primarily involved with hate malice and destruction. Ego has been described as something that is always with us, controlling our daily lives, but which we can do little to change. Others define ego as the exclusive physical reality as opposed to the spiritual or higher part we define as soul...none of these is what I mean by ego. I look upon the ego as nothing more than an idea that each of us has about ourselves. That is the ego is only an illusion, but a very influential one. (p. 176-177)

Once again, my perception is a dynamic interplay between mind, spirit, and body, not exclusively opposed.

For Dyer, the illusion of the ego is that we exist exclusively in the physicality of life—believing that our physical self *is* the self.

For Dyer, living only in the physical world of ego creates an illusion that we are only our physical self—our actions, our possessions, our accomplishments. The goal is to live a life guided by spirit or intention. Dyer (2004) offered the following six primary ingredients of ego:

1. *I am what I have.* My possessions define me.
2. *I am what I do.* My achievements define me.
3. *I am what others think of me.* My reputation defines me.
4. *I am separate from everyone.* My body defines me as alone.
5. *I am separate from all that is missing in my life.* My life space is disconnected from my desires.
6. *I am separate from God.* My life depends on God's assessment of my worthiness. [emphasis in original] (p. 10)

Dyer's characteristics of ego define my perception of ego as an example of exalted exclusive existence in the physical realm. Our physical lives, inclusive of mind, spirit, and body, define and illustrate our spiritual beliefs about life—a choice.

Rand (1938) holds a very different sense of ego. Rand ends her novel *Anthem* with:

And here, over the portals of my fort, I shall cut into the stone the word which is to be my beacon and my banner. The word which will not die, should we all perish in battle. The word which can never die on this earth, for it is the heart of it and the meaning and the glory.

That sacred word:

EGO. (p. 105)

For Rand, one's physical life is the manifestation of one's reason and virtue—spirit. She does not separate mind, spirit, and body, for her they are synonymous. She writes of mind, but as the faculty of reason that infuses one's conscious sense of values and ethics into the physical life—what I perceive as spiritual intentions of life. For Rand, everything is demonstrated in the physical realm.

Dyer (2004, 1995) and Rand (1956, 1958, 1952) could not be more diametrically opposed; for Dyer it is all spirit and for Rand it is all physical. The context of Dyer's physical life is the overarching spiritual; for Rand, the context of her ideas is the physical. In the pages that follow many other thinkers and theorists will be explored: Pinar, Greene, Doll, Freire, McGraw, Plato, Kierkegaard, and Emerson. Though all these thinkers and theorists approach life from very different perspectives, I found—when I applied the frame of living consciously—that all were connected in a very significant way: the invitation for one to live in accordance with one's accepted beliefs. They differed in their beliefs and values about life and education, but I found there was a consistent theme of one needing to live in accordance with one's beliefs and values, regardless of the beliefs and values themselves. Living consciously, as I interpret it, is not about living consciously in a manner congruent with my beliefs, but in a way that resonates with one's own beliefs.

Dyer (2004, 1995) reminds me that I am not exclusively my ego; Rand reminds me that my physical life—in her definition of ego—represents my life. My life, when lived consciously, is Doll's (2005) "dynamic dance", simultaneously I am mind, spirit, and body. What keeps me mindful and helps me navigate this particular temporal

complexity is the Star Process. The authentic context of the Star Process is the struggle to live consciously in mind, spirit, and body.

Freire – Praxis and Conscientization:

Freire (1970) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* explores how the relationship between oppressor and oppressed creates oppression, a condition which oppresses both. Praxis, a conscious balance between theory and practice helps create freedom. Of Praxis, Freire writes:

It is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in the organized struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves.

This discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection: only then will it be a praxis. (p. 24)

Freire also uses the banking metaphor for education. In this metaphor students are empty accounts to be filled by teachers, a process he believes leads to our dehumanization because it ignores what the student brings to the school as a person in the world. His approach invites us to be more aware of our incomplete humanness and work towards completing ourselves through consciousness. He calls this process conscientization. Freire (1985, p. 68) writes:

The basic condition for conscientization is that its agent must be a subject (i.e., a conscious being), conscientization...is specifically and exclusively a human process. It is as conscious beings that men [sic] are not only *in* the world but *with* the world, together with other men...Only beings who can reflect upon the fact that they are determined are capable of freeing themselves. Their reflectiveness

results not just in a vague and uncommitted awareness but in the exercise of a profoundly transforming action upon the determining reality. (as cited in Fenández-Balboa, no date)

Glass (2001) writes:

Conscientization is the term Freire used to capture the complex ontological, epistemological, and ethical-political features of education as a practice of freedom...liberation entails a people's struggle to be, to feel, to know, and to speak for themselves. "The more the people become themselves, the better the democracy" (Horton & Freire, 1990, p.145). (p. 19)

Conscientization is a process that helps one understand one's location and consequently choose action that helps to one's situation and move to improve it through praxis.

Conscientization and praxis help individuals choose action for themselves and not mimic the actions of the oppressors.

The following figure illustrates my understanding of the relationship between praxis and conscientization:

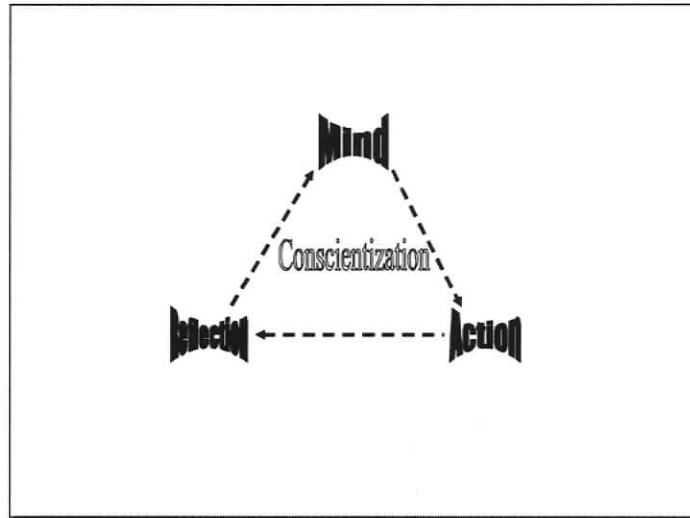


Figure 2: Relationship of Conscientization and Praxis (McBurney, 2006)

This figure uses the same format as the Figure 1, which illustrated my understanding of living consciously. In this figure conscientization occupies the space where living consciously was previously and the dotted arrows represent the reflective process of praxis: choosing action (mind), taking action, reflection, and choosing new action.

Autobiographical processes and the Star Process invite one to investigate one's role in one's life context with the intention of conscious action found in conscientization and praxis. With regards to Freire (1970), one must look at one's self in context in order to understand one's oppression and one's role as either oppressor or oppressed, or both; the oppressor is as much tangled in the web of oppression as the oppressed (Freire, 1970). Praxis, conscientization, autobiographical inquiry, and the Star Process can assist one in understanding the situation, locate one in one's self, and move to change the situation.

In the following section I will explore spirit and living consciously through the initial stage of the Star Process—the definition of a Personal Philosophical Frame of Reference (PPFOR).

Personal Philosophical Frame of Reference (PPFOR):

The first key component of the Star Process that became apparent was the awareness and consciousness of what I have defined as a *Personal Philosophical Frame of Reference* (PPFOR). The first step in the Star Process is exploration and definition of a PPFOR. In the regressive deconstruction of my past experiences in 1994 I discovered there was a part of me present in my every experience, regardless of whether or not I was conscious of it. It is hard to distinguish retrospectively whether or not the elements of the Star Process illuminated the PPFOR or whether my PPFOR made the elements more apparent.

A key point about my PPFOR is that I realized that throughout my whole life I had a PPFOR, but rarely was I conscious of it, and regardless of my consciousness of it, my PPFOR had real affects in and on my life. I found that when my life experiences and choices resonated with my PPFOR I experienced happiness and a sense of positive self-esteem; at times when I made choices and acted in ways incongruous with my PPFOR I experienced moments of sadness, anger, and depression. Looking back from 1994 I realized I had no consciousness of my PPFOR and therefore resonance or dissonance were simply matters of chance, mere reactions to life. Now that I am conscious of my PPFOR I can choose actions and make choices I predict will align with my spirit, thus increasing possibility for happiness and realization of goals I have set for myself. Even in

moments of sadness or falling short of my goals I have at least a consciousness of why I feel the way I do.

What is a PPFOR?

There are many ways to describe and understand a PPFOR. Through this autobiographical research I gather support to illustrate my understanding of a PPFOR. A PPFOR is the spiritual component of living consciously, what one believes about life or education.

Plato's Idealism and a PPFOR:

Much of Plato's idealism is about finding the ideal world—utopia, as created and illustrated in *The Republic*, which demonstrates Plato's vision of the ideal citizen or self. Though I do not agree with all he envisioned in *The Republic*, I do agree with engaging in the process of *creating* a utopian vision. A PPFOR is not unlike Plato's vision of the ideal citizen, it only differs that one must do for one's self what Plato has done for us.

I discovered my "ideal self" as I engaged in the initial autobiographical process. By way of the process of induction I was able to discover this ideal vision of my self by visiting moments I was able to physically manifest my highest vision; as well as those moments which I demonstrated far less than the greatest idea of myself. Though idealistic perfection can be problematic in one's everyday life, it can shed some light on those shadows once perceived as self.

Plato also informs understanding of a PPFOR through his concepts of *akrasia* and *arête*. Stevenson (2002) writes: "Akrasia is weakness of will that causes people to do what they know is not right. It is the opposite of *arête*, which is the highest personal

excellence, the integrity to know what must be done” (p. 56). I always equate my PPFOR as my conscience or my “little voice”. My little voice is my PPFOR speaking to me; akrasia is what happens when I neglect to listen, whereas arête is achieved when I listen. Retrospectively in the process of discovering the Star Process I visited times I both listened to and ignored my little voice, in order to understand and illuminate my PPFOR.

A PPFOR – Existentially Speaking:

For me, from my existential perspective, my PPFOR is rooted in Heidegger’s concept of authenticity. Baldwin (1995) writes:

Heidegger held that each of us acquires an identity from our situation—our family, our culture, etc. Usually we just absorb this identity uncritically, but to let one’s values and goals remained fixed without critical reflection on them is ‘inauthentic’. The ‘authentic’ individual, who has been aroused from everyday concerns by *Angst*, takes responsibility for their life and thereby chooses their own identity. (p. 68) [emphasis in original]

One’s PPFOR in this context is the identity one chooses, or would choose in a perfect world. To achieve this authenticity we must travel through a conscious process in order to separate our “identity” from that perceived identity rooted in the context of friends, family, and culture. Authenticity asserts we cannot remain fixed when we engage in critical reflection. This implies several things.

First, it implies that our chosen identity—or PPFOR—once discovered is not set forever; an identity or PPFOR in its specifics will change over time. Authenticity on the other hand, is an atemporal quality we bring to the enlightenment and discovery of our identity. Ideally, authenticity is a constant whereas our specific identity or PPFOR may

change and evolve over time. That is not to imply that either must change, but for one to remain conscious of one's identity or PPFOR, one must periodically engage in critical reflection. Stevenson (2002) writes: "Authenticity, for Heidegger, is refusing to take things for granted, refusing to act as if things are already figured out and understood...authenticity means leading your life on your own terms by refusing to accept the assumptions others make" (p. 240). This does not mean that we may never share assumptions or conclusions with others; it means we need to engage in the process ourselves in order to form a conclusion or assumption. In an existential sense a PPFOR is a chosen authentic identity.

McGraw's (2001) Authentic Self:

Autobiographical inquiry has also become part of popular psychology. Dr. Phil is a pop culture psychologist whose books and programs have influenced many people. McGraw's book *Self Matters: Creating Your Life From the Inside Out*, utilizes autobiographical processes to understand and align individuals with their authentic self; his definition of the authentic self has much in common with a PPFOR. McGraw (2001) explains the Authentic Self as follows:

The authentic self is the you that can be found at your absolute core...It is the you that flourished, unself-consciously, in those times in your life when you felt happiest and most fulfilled. It is the you that existed before and remains when life's pain, experiences, and expectancies are stripped away. (p. 30)

In *Self Matters: Creating Your Life From the Inside Out* McGraw (2001) provides strategies and guided experiences—autobiographical processes—to help one re-discover one's authentic self while simultaneously identifying one's fictional self and how it was

developed. It is the incongruity between the authentic and fictional selves that complicates one's life.

In guided autobiographical processes McGraw has one explore ten defining moments, seven critical choices, and five pivotal people. These twenty-two components are designed to make one aware of one's authentic and fictional self, and the gap—where many of us live—that exists between these two selves. In essence, it is this gap that the Star Process addresses and living consciously closes. Living in accordance with a consciously understood PPFOR is what I refer to as living consciously—identification and understanding of one's Authentic Self /PPFOR makes living consciously possible.

For McGraw, the illumination of the Authentic Self—via autobiographical deconstruction of the False Self—raises one's consciousness and understanding of how one's perception of self has developed and continues to influence one's life. This work is often enough to break one's bonds to the False Self. I agree that consciousness alone can help improve one's life, but I think the PPFOR and the Star Process go further by helping to identify specific elements and contexts for our authentic selves. McGraw's process of defining ten defining moments, seven critical choices, and five pivotal people does assist one in defining the False Self.

The False Self of McGraw is equates well with Dyer's (2004) definition of the ego. Understanding Dyer's ego and its grips on one's life illuminates McGraw's (2001) definition of the False Self and may assist one in traversing his autobiographical processes. This work can also help one to define a PPFOR.

Ayn Rand and A Sense of Life.

In my own life and life processes, Ayn Rand has had significant influence. As has been mentioned earlier, her (1952) *Atlas Shrugged* changed the way I perceive and interact with life; in many ways she was the catalyst for the Star Process. Another definition and perspective that can help define a PPFOR is Rand's (1966) sense of life.

Rand writes:

Long before he [sic] is old enough to grasp such a concept as metaphysics, a man makes choices, forms value-judgments, experiences emotions and acquires a certain *implicit* view of life. Every choice and value-judgment implies some estimate of himself and of the world around him—most particularly, of his capacity to deal with the world. He may draw conscious conclusions, which may be true or false; or he may remain mentally passive and merely react to events (i.e., merely feel). Whatever the case may be, his subconscious mechanism sums up his psychological activities, integrating his conclusions, reactions or evasions into an emotional sum that establishes a habitual pattern and becomes his automatic response to the world around him. What began as a series of single, discreet conclusions (or evasions) about his own particular problems, becomes a generalized feeling about existence, an implicit *metaphysics* with the compelling motivational power of a constant, basic emotion—an emotion which is part of all his other emotions and underlies all his experiences. *This* is a sense of life.

[emphases in original] (p. 25-26)

A sense of life not only implies a need for awareness, consciousness, and choice, but also implies that every choice or non-choice becomes a significant part of one's

perspective, interaction, reaction and being in the world. For Rand (1966) the degree in which we consciously interact with the world defines not only our perception and definition of the world but the perception and definition of ourselves as well.

Long before I was conscious of my PPFOR it was part of my life and who I was in the world. It not only informed my choices—or evasions—it made judgments about myself in the process of living; judgments that affected subsequent decisions. Becoming conscious of my PPFOR I looked recursively again at the events of my life and each time I found it was there influencing my choices and judging my actions, just like Rand's sense of life. When my choices and actions resonated with my PPFOR, life was fulfilling—these were successful moments. Times I neglected to listen to my PPFOR, were times of sadness, anger, resentment, and guilt. The more I neglected or evaded, the further from my PPFOR/Sense of Life I traveled, making it not only more difficult to see choices that could resonate with my PPFOR, but difficult to see a world where my PPFOR may exist. The more I lived a life that resonated with my PPFOR, the “easier” life seemed, choices were apparent, and the world appeared a better place. My little voice is my PPFOR's consciousness of me, communicating choices and actions, voicing the basic emotion underlying all my emotions and experiences.

The following section, titled: *My Location: A Plane of Consciousness of Highest Tension* illustrates my understanding of a PPFOR and how it relates to my perception of living consciously; it also represents my present unfolding PPFOR. Living consciously is an integral aspect of my PPFOR. A PPFOR is the critical first stage in the Star Process and living consciously. This section illustrates what I believe about life and education while demonstrating the process of conscientization, struggling to locate myself

philosophically and situate myself in the specific context of curriculum studies and life in general. The next stage, utilizing the elements of the Star Process, travels through creating action and reflection cycles of praxis.

My Location: A Plane of Consciousness of Highest Tension

When I speak of location I am referring to my philosophical location, where I locate myself within my own knowledge and understanding; my location is also where I situate or align myself with contemporary perspectives and schools of thought. Upon entering graduate school I was quite comfortable in my philosophical location, knowing who I was and what I believed—graduate school knocked me off balance, forcing me to question once again who I was and what I believed. It is not that graduate school has necessarily changed who I am, or even my philosophical location for that matter, but forced me to articulate who I am and what I believe in new contexts, in the realms of curriculum inquiry. Pinar (1995) in *Understanding Curriculum* explores curriculum from different philosophical perspectives or contexts, and thus each chapter understands curriculum as various types of text. I found I needed to rearticulate my location with regard to the texts of curriculum—understanding myself as phenomenological text for example—not always an easy task.

I have titled this section: *My Location: A Plane of Consciousness of Highest Tension*, not only because it captures the essence of my location, but also because it honours the work of Maxine Greene, who has influenced my inquiry in many significant ways. Greene has an elegant writing style that is a pleasure to read. One of the aspects of her writing that I admire the most is how she philosophically explores issues, sharing her perspectives and proposals, while leaving a space for others to enter and explore the

issues from their own perspectives and philosophical locations. A personal goal of this thesis was to emulate her autobiographical style, to philosophically explore autobiography from my perspective, while leaving a space for others to enter, explore autobiography, their own perspectives, and philosophical locations.

The title of this section finds itself rooted in Greene's (1978) *Landscapes of Learning*. *Landscapes of Learning* has had significant influence upon my academic becoming. I first read it as an undergraduate student—at first only six pages included in Ozmon and Craver's (1995) *Philosophical Foundations of Education*—though I appreciated it then, I never quite captured its depth, or the depth of her writing until graduate school, when I was exposed to more of her work. *Landscapes of Learning* is at the epicentre of my inquiry, it was within *Landscapes of Learning* that my exploration of living consciously began. The following passage is where this section finds its inspiration:

The situated person, conscious of his or her freedom, can move outwards to empirical study, analytic study, or quantitative study of all kinds. Being grounded, he or she will be far less likely to confuse abstraction with concreteness, formalized and schematized reality with what is “real”. Made aware of the multiplicity of possible perspectives, made aware of incompleteness and a human reality to be pursued, the individual may reach “a plane of consciousness of highest tension” (p. 166).

I have always been attracted to this passage. I suppose intuitively I realized it captured the very essence of my inquiry, but it was not until I decided to use this passage as the inspiration for titling a section on location and my PPFOR that I realized the depth of

these few lines, not only for myself, but perhaps for Greene as well. In *The Dialectic of Freedom*, Greene (1988) dedicates an entire book to exploring freedom; what began as a few lines in 1978 became an entire book by 1988. In her own words *The Dialectic of Freedom* “arises out of a lifetime’s preoccupation with quest, with pursuit” (Greene, 1988, p. xi). In the following paragraphs I will explore the meaning of this passage with regards to: autobiography, freedom, and the theme of location.

First of all, ignoring freedom for the moment, she writes: “The situated person...can move outwards to empirical study, analytic study, or quantitative study of all kinds. Being grounded, he or she will be far less likely to confuse abstraction with concreteness, formalized and schematized reality with what is “real”...” (Greene, 1978, p. 278). From where is the situated person moving outwards? Towards what? Where are we grounded? The situated person is grounded in one’s self, in knowledge and understanding of oneself and one’s philosophical location, what one believes of the world. It is from here one can move outwards—away from one’s self—situated in the world’s collective knowledge and understanding, or what is sometimes referred to as: Reality or objective reality. This is the first source of tension, the interaction of my subjective reality with my perception of objective Reality.

There is an implication here that autobiographical work is not only important, but necessary as well. We need to do the work necessary to understand what we believe—our subjective “abstract, formalized and schematized reality”—before we interact this knowledge with that of the world—or the “objective” “concrete” or “real”. Greene herself emphasizes “real” to illustrate that our perception of what it is “real” needs questioning and investigation, not only in *Landscapes of Learning*, but in most of her

other articles as well (Greene, 1988, 1994). She has not claimed there is no reality, but that one single version of reality does not, and cannot, capture the whole of reality, be that the “grand narrative” version or that of the individual.

Greene makes no value judgments; no reality is identified as the *Real* reality, all are important and valued. What is most important is that each individual and their respective reality, is of value and is valued; she is setting up the next part of the passage: “...made aware of the multiplicity of possible perspectives, made aware of incompleteness and a human reality to be pursued...” (p. 278). This is made more dynamic when the concept of freedom is brought into play, as it will be momentarily, but even before freedom is in play, “the multiplicity of possible perspectives” values every perspective. She invites us to question the “grand narrative” and explore with humble confidence the value of our own narratives; humble because simultaneously we must accept everyone has, and is creating, their own particular narrative.

In *Postmodernism and the Crisis of Representation* Greene (1994) writes:

In a moment of decentering, then, of eroding authorities, of disappearing absolutes, we have to discover new ways of going on, as members of communities, as persons in process, always on the way. More and more people become restive with the kind of ‘grand narrative’ Lyotard describes... (p. 217)

The central cannon has been decentered in the postmodern era, possibly even dismantled, now like conditioned addicts we find ourselves craving the external validation of modernist grand narratives and the security of the cannon, coping with the frustrating confusion of withdrawal, fumbling not only to decide for ourselves what is *good* or *bad*—with respect to: research, teaching, education, living—but how to create

what we perceive as *good*—good qualitative research, good teaching, a good life. Now is a time to be very careful not to shift mindless worship to another symbol: the absence of the canon or those who claim they have released us from it. Opportunity for change exists, if only we can consciously change our habits, as well as our contexts.

The final part of this passage: “the individual may reach “a plane of consciousness of highest tension” (p. 278) is set up by Greene earlier, in reference to the following passage from Alfred Shultz about being in the world:

By the term “wide-awakeness” we want to denote a plane of consciousness of highest tension originating in an attitude of full attention to life and its requirements. Only the performing and especially the working self is fully interested in life and, hence wide-awake. It lives within its acts and its attention is exclusively directed to carrying its project into effect, to executing its plan. This attention is an active, not a passive one. Passive attention is the opposite to full awareness. (p. 276)

This “plane of consciousness of highest tension” exists when one pays “full attention to life and its requirements.” Autobiographical inquiry is a method of paying full attention to life and its requirements. Understanding and exploring life in the private/personal sense moves outwards towards the public Other when one explores life’s requirements, the way life ought to be lived. In this process I locate myself in my subjective *abstract formalized and schematized reality* in particular, moving outwards from there I attempt to situate myself in an *objective concrete reality*. This is a source tension because the individual is left to decide for one’s self the nature of reality, consciously locating and situating oneself somewhere on a continuum. On one end of the

continuum is one's intuition, the *subjective abstract formalized and schematized reality* and on the other is the perceived public position, the "*objective concrete reality*".

Shultz writes: "Only the performing and especially the working self is fully interested in life and, hence wide-awake" (as quoted in Greene, 1978, p. 178). The performing and working self is conscious of one's self and thereby is located and situated, resulting in the wide-awake state. The performing aspect of this passage insinuates that the self is out in the public realm, interacting and being, a contextualization of self in and of society. The working self could imply autobiographically working on one's self; not necessarily working on one's self exclusively, but at least enough to be wide-awake. This state, or space, of "wide-awakeness" is where the tension exists.

Another layer of tension from the Shultz passage is: "...[the self] lives within its acts and its attention is exclusively directed to carrying its project into effect, to executing its plan" (p. 276). This is living what you believe, living consciously, taking from discoveries made in your *subjective abstract formalized and schematized reality*—perhaps via autobiographical inquiry—and *moving them outwards* into interaction with "*objective concrete reality*". In education this tension is for teachers—whom are aware of their philosophical location and situatedness—to make their practices reflect their theoretical spiritual beliefs about education. This is a difficult task when the seemingly traditional *objective concrete reality* holds all the power and one's *subjective abstract formalized and schematized reality* seems to rub against, or be situated across the table from the status quo; it is an impossible task when one is not "wide-awake" or only gives one's "passive attention" to one's particular situation. Autobiographical inquiry awakens

us to the private/personal particulars of our being in the world and our situatedness within the public, providing the opportunity to transform ourselves through the tension of attention.

In my own particular awakenings, autobiographical inquiry—the Star Process—made me aware of my private/personal subjective abstract formalized schematized reality. Situated there, within my own reality, I moved outwards into the public, locating my subjective reality within my perception of the concrete objective reality; this is, and has been, a source of constant conscious tension.

This tension exists in all arenas of my life; the only things that change are context and focus. The tension in my personal life is my constant attempt to understand myself and my beliefs, not only situate those beliefs in the public, but to as Shultz, writes, “to carry [my] project into effect, to execute [my] plan” (as quoted in Greene, 1978, p. 276). This requires constant attention: what is it I wish to create in the public? How do I create the world in which I wish to live? Where I situate myself on the continuum requires constant attention, an awareness of the distance between my intuition—my PPFOR—and imposed societal values—the chorus that tells me what I am supposed to do, think, and feel.

This is the same tension I feel in my graduate work, all that has shifted is the context. In my graduate work I seek to understand and locate myself within my own beliefs, then situate myself in the perceived public forum of curriculum inquiry. The tension is the same tension, but my attention is more focused. There is also tension as I attempt to understand the gap between contemporary curriculum and my own visions for curriculum, which needs to change, my visions or the field of curriculum study? The

tension also arises as I attempt to move from my location to my situatedness —how do the discoveries I make in the public forum relate to my private/personal beliefs? As Pinar (1995) writes: “...currere seeks to understand the contribution academic studies makes to one’s understanding of his or her life” (p. 520).

On another level, my personal angst and tension seems to mirror that of the worlds of qualitative and curriculum inquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) state there have been seven moments of qualitative research, with our present moment being one that places us somewhere in transition from the fifth moment towards the sixth and seventh moments; each of these moments provide a more specific temporally contextualized definition of qualitative research. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) describe the fifth moment of qualitative research as moment that is shaped and defined by a “triple crisis”: one of representation, one of legitimation, and the final crisis as a dynamic composite of the first two. Of representation and legitimization they write: “Clearly these two crises blur together, for any representation must now legitimate itself in terms of some set of criteria that allows the author (and the reader) to make connections between the text and the world written about” (p.22).

The crisis of representation and legitimation exists in the postmodern environment where the writer recreates experience via writing lived experiences—the researcher writes research and thus creates research. There are no external points of reference to legitimize conclusions; as life is an end in itself, writing too is an end in itself, or perhaps as Deluze writes: “writing is life” (Deluze & Parnet, 1987, as cited in Wilson & Oberg, 2002). This is another source of tension. Is what I am writing the truth? What is the truthfulness of my research? If my writing is the research, then how do I know, how does

the reader know, I have not made the whole thing up? Does my research represent anything, or anyone, other than the defence of my ego and experiences?

Intuitively I know there is truthfulness to my writing and my inquiry, and deep down I know there will be places where my path will intersect with the reader. I have faith that at these intersections my story will be representative the Other—otherwise our paths would never have crossed—at the moment of intersection may both our paths be legitimized. However, tension exists because I have no way to prove this until it happens, and it cannot happen until I have completed my journey and share it with the Other.

The third of the crises, the dynamic composite of the crises of representation and legitimation, is this uncertainty in the postmodern world of text—yet another source of tension. The third crisis asks: “Is it possible to effect change in the world if society is only and always a text?” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 28). Of poststructuralism, Noel Gough (1999a) states: “...the poststructuralist position is that there are no ‘solid’ foundations—it is language all the way down. The ‘ground’ on which we stand is language—ground sketched under our feet which provides us with the illusion of a place to speak (and helps us to avoid a kind of ‘conceptual vertigo’)” (p. 53). I must admit that I have been unable to avoid conceptual vertigo in the course of my inquiry. The postmodern and poststructural are pervasive in qualitative research; I have found that much of my tension is resistance to positions such as the poststructural described above by Gough.

The question of the third crisis, posed by Denzin and Lincoln (2003), is a source of tension for me personally; not because I am uncertain it is possible to effect change in the world—I believe it is possible—but the sense that society “is only and always a text”

does give me cause to think. What if there is a solid foundation existing beyond and through the language we use to represent it? What if the lived experiences themselves and the meaning I attach to these events provide the foundation from which I exist and speak? It is when I attempt to articulate this foundation that I begin to dizzy with conceptual vertigo—it is the attempt to articulate the foundation that causes vertigo, not the foundation itself.

The fifth moment of qualitative research, as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2003), is not a source of tension for me personally. If it is indeed a crisis as described, then it is the acceptance of it as a crisis that causes me tension. Once again I turn to Greene to understand my tension. In *Postmodernism and the Crisis of Representation* Greene (1994) writes:

The point is to live our lives because they are ours. Or to shape our narratives in ways that do not duplicate other narratives. At least we can work to render them the kinds of stories that open out to possibility. This does not depend on representation; it depends on creation and invention, preferably among others who are also in quest, who recognize us for what we are striving to be and who win our recognition for what they are not yet. Risks, yes, and relativism, and an ongoing conversation. (p. 218)

We must honour our personal narratives and the lives they represent; telling these stories, these personal stories will open us to possibilities we may never have considered. We recognize the potential of the Other when we read their stories of becoming; recognition awakens an awareness of our own potential, potential we may realize with effort and courage. The sharing of the personal narratives in a public forum makes each pervasive in

the other. The ongoing conversation is not only a conversation between individuals, or an individual and society; it is also the ongoing conversation one has with one's self as one continues to be conscious of the created narrative; conscious of one's location and situatedness—conscious of one's tension. Doll (1993) relates location and situatedness to Cheney's "contextualist", he writes: "...bound always by the localness of ourselves, our histories, our language, our place, but also expanding into an ever-broadening global and ecological network" (p. 180).

Autobiography grounds us in our private/personal narrative, making us aware of who we are and where we locate ourselves within our knowledge and experience—our history, our language, our place. Reading the autobiographical inquiries of others, listening to their narratives in some form or another, situates our narratives, and our selves, within the public. Situated and located does not necessarily mean we never leave a location, or deny that we are in a constant motion of becoming, autobiography makes us aware of our present situatedness, ever mindful of past and future. Once situated, we can as Greene writes, "...move outwards to empirical study, analytic study, or quantitative study of all kinds" (p. 178).

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) in *Strategies of Qualitative Design* define five phases of the research process: 1) The Researcher as Multicultural Subject, 2) Theoretical Paradigms and Perspectives, 3) Research Strategies, 4) Methods of Collection and Analysis, and 5) The Art of Interpretation and Presentation. Denzin and Lincoln state: "Behind all but one of these phases stands the biographically situated researcher. The five levels of activity, or practice, work their way through the biography of the researcher" (p. 25). We all bring a perspective to our research that is situated in who we are; and who we

are, to some degree or another, is constructed by our place in history, our experiences. Janesick (1998) writes: "...qualitative researchers accept the fact that research is ideologically driven. There is no value-free or bias-free design. The qualitative researcher early on identifies his or her biases and articulates the ideology for conceptual frame for the study" (p. 41). This is also reflected by Creswell's (1998) definition of reflexivity, of reflexivity he writes: "This [reflexivity] means that the writer is conscious of his or her biases, values, and experiences that are brought to a qualitative research study. Typically, the writer makes this explicit in the text" (p. 24). Researchers who know their location are aware of what they bring to their studies, understanding and accepting that what they bring affects the design and interpretation of their studies. We need to know what we bring to our research; autobiographical inquiry is a method of doing so. It by no means is, or should be, the only method of inquiry, but a process that every researcher at some point, preferably early on and occasionally, should engage in.

Thus far we have discussed the "situated" and "grounded" individual, identifying the following sources of tension: the interaction of my subjective reality with my perception of *objective Reality*, "the multiplicity of possible perspectives" (Greene, 1978, p. 278), and Denzin and Lincoln's (2003) fifth moment of qualitative research characterized by an uncertainty in the postmodern world of text. However, thus far freedom has been omitted from Greene's (1978) passage; she writes: "The situated person, *conscious of his or her freedom*, can move outwards..." (p. 278), conscious of his or her freedom, what does this mean? What is the role of freedom and the consciousness thereof? What is the significance? Freedom as a concept discussed by Greene, makes the tension more dynamic. In some ways freedom contextualizes the struggle, thus

simplifying and easing the tension, yet in others it complicates the struggle, increasing tension.

In the simplest sense, freedom means that each individual accepts that they have the freedom to have an *abstract formalized and schematized reality* wrought with opinions, beliefs, and understandings independent of, though contained within, society and the Other, or from some perspectives *concrete reality*; grounded in one's self, one moves outwards from there—conscious of one's freedom.

Consciousness of one's own freedom is only half of the story, for if one is conscious of his or her own freedom, then one must be conscious of the Others' freedom as well. If I am free to have an opinion—i.e. freedom of speech—then all others have this freedom as well. If I accept that I have a voice and perspective particular to me, then I must accept the reality of many voices and perspectives; mine is but one of a chorus, no less important, but nor is it the only voice. Thus with the consciousness of freedom I become "...aware of the multiplicity of possible perspectives, made aware of incompleteness and a human reality to be pursued..." it is then I may reach for myself "a plane of consciousness of highest tension" (Greene, 1978, p. 278). What is the role of freedom as a source of this tension?

On one hand, freedom lets me know I have a voice, that I matter, that I am more than matter, in this world. Yet on the other hand, I must take responsibility for my voice, if what I have to say matters, then what I say best matter to me. I must realize that my voice speaks in many languages, sometimes I speak with language, written or spoken; sometimes I speak with action or inaction—my every choice speaks volumes. I need to

take ownership for my life; yet before I can take ownership, I need to know, and understand what it is I want my life to be about.

Ayn Rand (1966), whom believes in absolute freedom, associates freedom and responsibility as follows:

In order to live, man [sic] must act; in order to act, he must make choices; in order to make choices, he must define a code of values; in order to define a code of values, he must know *what* he is and *where* he is—i.e., he must know his own nature (including his means of knowledge) and the nature of the universe in which he acts—i.e., he needs metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, which means: *philosophy*. He cannot escape from this need; his only alternative is whether the philosophy guiding him is to be chosen by his mind or by chance. (p. 30)

Once again these are the processes of situating one's self, or knowing one's *personal nature*, and locating one's self, or knowing the *nature of the universe* in which we act; knowledge that is accessible via autobiographical inquiry. Greene (1988) identifies the responsibility-freedom relationship as well, contextualizing freedom and responsibility in the multiplicity of perspectives, she writes:

The point is not that there are never any excuses; it is that, in classrooms as well as in the open world, accommodations come too easily. It is the case, as Sartre said, that there is "anguish" linked to action on one's freedom, an anguish due to the recognition of one's own responsibility for what is happening. The person who chooses himself/herself in his/her freedom cannot place the onus on outside forces, on the cause and effect nexus. It is his/her interpretation or reading of the situation that discloses possibility; and yet there is no guarantee that the

interpretation is correct. If there is proof to be found, it is only in the action undertaken; and the action itself closes off alternatives. There is always as in the Robert Frost poem, a “road not taken.” (p. 5)

Autobiography provides me with the opportunity to enlighten me to myself, the opportunity to choose voice and action that represents the self I have discovered—to take responsibility. Tension is created because I know I must speak, that even when I am silenced by fear—when speaking seems impossible—I am speaking. To speak your personal truth, your subjective *abstract, formalized, and schematized* reality is difficult when it seems to rub against the grain of traditional objective “concrete reality”. If I am to have a reality, I best know the nature of that reality, so that it may expand outwards, touching more of what is “real.”

In our schools, teachers may be physically free to teach in a manner that resonates with their spiritual beliefs and understanding of education and teacher; however, they may feel restricted by the perceived spiritual consciousness of their school. They may believe in co-operative learning, or whole language approaches to reading, yet may feel restricted by the traditional spiritual consciousness of the school, principal, parents, and community. Autobiographical investigation of their own beliefs and theories of education—and that of the school community—may provide them with an understanding that may assist them in implementing their chosen methods of education into practice.

Freedom is more than a right to be able to do, think, or believe whatever one wants or desires, freedom is a state of mind, and a state of state—a relationship between self and Other, the “on-going conversation (Greene, 1994). Greene (1988) writes:

I am eager to reaffirm the significance of desire along with the significance of thought and understanding; I want to break through, whenever possible, the persisting either/ors. There is, after all, a dialectical relation marking every human situation: the relation between subject and object, individual and environment, self and society, outsider and community, living consciousness and the phenomenal world. This relation exists between two different, apparently opposite poles; but presupposes a mediation between them. (p. 8)

Freedom is more than the individual's right to physically do something, it is the spiritual condition, the underlying subconscious relationship amongst people in a society that contextualizes the action, thereby illuminating a path of possibility. Freedom is both an individual and societal endeavour; the individual and society may be necessary conditions of freedom.

Freedom arises in the same manner that tension developed between one's subjective abstract formalized schematized reality and the perceived objective reality of society. Freedom exists in this relationship, yet simultaneously contains it as well. On one hand freedom eases the tension, letting us know it is okay to see things our own way. On the other hand, freedom can complicate and intensify the tension, as we realize that there is no "pure answer" to our questions, no way to know if our perspective is "right"; we are left with responsibility to choose our own road, forever leaving behind us an infinite number of roads not taken. Freedom, as well as tension, exist at the intersection of the private/personal and the public Other. Greene argues that freedom itself may be born in a tension of consciousness, when "...they [people-human beings] were able, as it were, to discover their own freedom in a resisting world; but first they had to perceive it as

resistant to desire” (p. 6). Freedom may not be an issue until you realize your private/personal desires seem to be impinged by your perception of the public desire; to recognize this relationship one needs to be aware of one’s desires, those of society, and consequently the interactive relationship itself.

Freedom becomes more complex when we realize that freedom seems to have two levels of operation, levels I like to refer to as a spiritual and physical level. On the physical level we are free, there are no restraints or laws prohibiting us from getting a job or scholarship, going to the opera, or associate with a particular group; however, on a spiritual level we know we will never get that job or scholarship, that we do not feel welcome at the opera or to attend the meetings of a group we do not formally belong. In *Reaching from Private to Public: The Work of Women* Greene (1988) explores the subconscious environment of freedom, the spiritual aspect of freedom. Greene demonstrates that from all physical descriptions women are free to work and rise up as far as their abilities will take them, yet the environment of freedom, society, restricts them in two important ways.

First of all, though there are no rules or laws restricting women from engaging in non-traditional roles such as: business, science, medicine, or aviation; however, women have been spiritually restricted by how they are perceived by society. There is no law or rule that states that a woman cannot be a corporate executive, a surgeon, or a pilot, but her freedom to become these things is restricted by the public perception of what a woman can do. A woman can succeed in these areas if she acts like a man; Dagny Taggart in *Atlas Shrugged* (Rand, 1952) succeeds in the world of business and railroads by conducting herself like a man. There is no physical measure of freedom, both men and

women are equally free; however, spiritually utilizing Jung's collective unconscious, there is less freedom for the woman. This is a source of tension as well, this duality of freedom. The freedom that physically exists on the surface becomes problematic, arguing it does not exist is difficult, yet spiritually we intuitively know it does not exist. If we choose to argue the true existence of freedom, we are forced away from ourselves into the grand narrative, debating exclusively about the physical existence of freedom

The second restriction on freedom from the collective unconscious is the affect of this attitude on one's perception of one's self. Women may not consider becoming corporate executives, scientists, surgeons, or airline pilots because they never perceive themselves in these roles; to become so a woman must overcome her perception of herself, enduring the tension and exploring freedom at the intersection of private and public. As a man, I am reflective and sensitive, working on a graduate thesis. I am no longer in the fields working as the farmer I was born to become; I am not the hunter and gatherer. I at times feel this tension, when I struggle with my role as a man. Am I wasting my time exploring Midgley's (1996) philosophic plumbing? Should I be doing some "real" plumbing like some of my hockey friends? Am I less a man than they? I am comfortable with my situation, going to school, researching and writing this thesis, yet there are times I struggle to locate myself, and this role I have chosen, in the larger self of society. Am I free to pursue this path? Of course I am. I am by no means claiming my struggles are as ominous as those faced by women, but I am not oblivious to the struggle either. The point is that a tension of consciousness indicates a gap between self and society, between my aspirations and my actualities, a space where freedom becomes an issue.

Where there is no tension, freedom is not an issue. Greene (1988) writes: “people consider themselves to be free if the road is opened up before them—to pursue success or security or status, to “get ahead.” (p. 7). If society provides an open road, then society may be perceived as one of freedom because one never experiences resistance in the pursuit of success and happiness, as Greene writes “the individual simply feels free: It is no different than breathing; the condition simply *is* [emphasis in original]” (p. 11). But is this freedom or compliance? It needn’t be either, but without conscious tension there is no space for freedom to exist, it simply isn’t an issue.

The point Greene makes is that freedom is not a static right or gift given to every citizen of society, it is a dynamic relationship between the personal and the public, a relationship that is complicated by the multiplicity factor; I am, as we all are, simultaneously both the public and the personal. My personal perspective, my subjective abstract formalized schematized reality, is what interacts with the objective concrete reality of the public Other, opening a space for freedom. Yet my personal perspective is also an aspect, one of the multitude, forming the objective concrete reality, the milieu of Other. Our conscious attention creates conscious tension that opens a space for freedom; for freedom to exist we need to be consciously invested in our lives—locating and situating our selves. Freedom is not the right or ability to do whatever we want, freedom is a dynamic relationship that exists when we interact self with society, the private/personal with the public Other.

This dynamic relationship of freedom is not unlike an autopoietic (self-making) network, as explored by Capra’s (1996) *The Web of Life*. Capra writes:

A subtle but important point in the definition of autopoiesis is the fact that an autopoietic network is not a set of relations among static *components* (like, for example, the pattern of organization of a crystal), but a set of relations among *processes of production* of components. If these processes stop, so does the entire organization. In other words, autopoietic networks must continually regenerate themselves to maintain their organization. This, of course, is a well-known characteristic of life. [emphasis in original] (p. 168)

Each of us, each individual, is a “process of production of components” as opposed to simply a component, and society is the autopoietic network. Not only are we in a constant state of becoming, each of us as individuals, but as a society we are also in a state of becoming; a societal becoming that is inseparable from and irrevocably linked to each individual becoming. Exploring the individual as “process of production of components” is reminiscent of Kierkegaard’s definition of the self as: “a relation that relates itself to itself or is the relation's relating itself to itself in the relation; the self is not the relation but is the relation's relating itself to itself” (as cited in Storm, <http://www.sorenkierkegaard.org/kw19.htm>, p. 13).

Autobiography is rooted here as well, for moving outwards, conscious of freedom, is made possible not only by the conscious awareness of one’s own freedom, but the freedom of all persons as well—a knowledge of freedom as a dynamic autopoietic relationship. To be conscious of one’s own freedom it is necessary for one to know one’s self and one’s own location—autobiography is a mode of inquiry that accomplishes this. To autobiographically inquire into one’s own experience of freedom, or the restrictions thereof, is to gain an understanding of not only one’s particular condition, but perhaps the

condition of the world as well. All autobiographical inquires may travel through a concept of freedom, for it is often here that the private/personal intersects with the public.

Autobiography is not just a story about me, it is one, that for a moment at least, focuses on my side of the story; for me to tell this story I must contextualize and juxtapose it with the Other side of the story—as best as I can perceive it. In this contextualized juxtaposition I am engaged in a dialectic of freedom, a dialectic that begins when my plane of consciousness reaches highest tension; a tension that is born in a moment when my private/personal side of the story seems to rub up against that of the public Other. An awakening moment is a moment when I realize that the tension I perceived, is tension relieved by my attention; a realization that my perception is but one of the multiplicity of possible perspectives pervasive in the private, personal, and the public.

Freedom is not only the ability for me to physically walk my own road, but the underlying spiritual condition, the collective relationship of consciousness that makes the journey at all possible. I must accept that the Other is in a process of walking their own road, that each of us, in walking our own roads, makes choices that dynamically create the milieu of the Other. It is my acceptance of the multiplicity of possible perspectives that creates a possibility of freedom for the Other's journey; the Other's acceptance, our acceptance, of the multiplicity *opens out to possibility*, a possibility of freedom. Sanford (1997) writes: "We have, through collaboration and conversation, discovered power from within and around us, recognizing 'self' and 'other' as well as the 'other' of 'self'. Discourse enables multiple voices to exist simultaneously" (p. 11). The Simultaneous

Self is both, Self and Other; acceptance of this duality pervades every choice and perception.

Locating Myself Within the Public Other:

Situating is a personal private process, contained and contextualized by society; *Locating* is the process of thoughtfully placing the private/personal within the public Other. Each informs the other, and although one's location and situatedness are inseparable, each process is unique and particular to itself—the academic process of separating the two processes is useful, illuminating an inherent connectivity.

I believe my location is contained in every word, every choice I make in writing this thesis; it is a foundational quality that exists in everything I do. As reflected by Jung (1963, as cited in Pinar, 1976/1992): “My life is what I have done, my scientific work; the one inseparable from the other. The work is the expression of my inner development; for commitment to the contents of the unconscious forms the man [sic] and produces his transformations. My works can be regarded as stations along my life's way” (p. 52). To situate myself I must be more aware of my location. In this section I make my situatedness more explicit and offer *works that can be regarded as stations along my life's way* to illustrate my location.

The second phase of qualitative research, according to Denzin and Lincoln's (2003), is the interpretive paradigm. Denzin and Lincoln define a paradigm as: “this net that contains the researchers epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises...or interpretive framework, a ‘basic set of beliefs that guides action’ (Guba, 1990, p. 17)” (p. 33). The interpretive paradigm, as described by Denzin and Lincoln, is both location and situatedness—the “basic set of beliefs that guides action” is one's

location, one's situatedness is how their "epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises," align with contemporary schools of thought.

To find a paradigm that suited my philosophical location and methodological choice, it was necessary to travel back to Reid's (1981) description of the existential perspective:

For them [existentialists], the reality of life consists not of classes, capitalism or hegemony, on the one hand, nor in the administrative processes and established structures, on the other, but in the relationship of the individual consciousness to the external world...The subject matter of the perspective is, therefore, the individual consciousness as revealed to the actor and to others. The method is the ordering of experience through frames provided by biography, psychoanalysis, existential philosophy and mysticism. The ordering is undertaken in a tentative exploratory way. The truth is never to be demonstrated, always discovered. Paths of discovery lead in unknown directions. (p. 166)

The existentialist perspective, as described by Reid, reflects my epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises, serving as a simple definition of the "basic set of beliefs" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 26) guiding my actions. Reid identifies Huebner, Greene, Grumet, and Pinar as those doing research from this perspective; all of these individuals have had significant influence upon my inquiry. As have the existential philosophers: Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Sartre; I often find that perspectives that resonate with my own are associated with existentialism in one way or another.

I wish to one final time in this section return to Greene's (1978) *Landscapes of Learning*, for this quote captures the essence of my location, my PPFOR. Greene contextualizes her exploration of freedom and multiple perspectives in Sartre's discussion of the relationship between writer and reader, Sartre writes:

For, since the one who writes recognizes, by the very fact that he takes the trouble to write, the freedom of his readers, and since the one who reads, by the mere fact of his opening the book, recognizes the freedom of the writer, the work of art, from whichever side you approach it, is an act in confidence in the freedom of men [sic]. (as cited in Greene, 1978, p. 278)

Consciousness – PPFOR – Physical – Living Consciously:

The following discussion of living consciously outlines the real context for the Star Process. As mentioned above, it was my struggle to live consciously that inspired the discovery of the Star Process. Earlier the following figure was used to illustrate the relationship between consciousness, spirit (PPFOR), physical, and the space for living consciously.

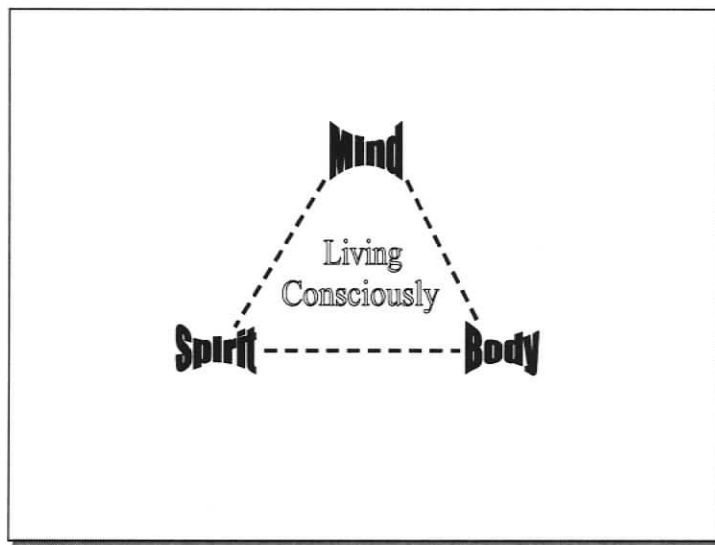


Figure 3: Mind, Spirit, Body (McBurney, 2006).

Having explored the PPFOR and its processes of locating one's self philosophically within one's own beliefs and situating one's self in the social context of education or life, it is possible to make the above figure and my understanding of living consciously more dynamic, more complex.

With a PPFOR, the Star Process begins to interact with living consciously differently, as illustrated by the following figure:

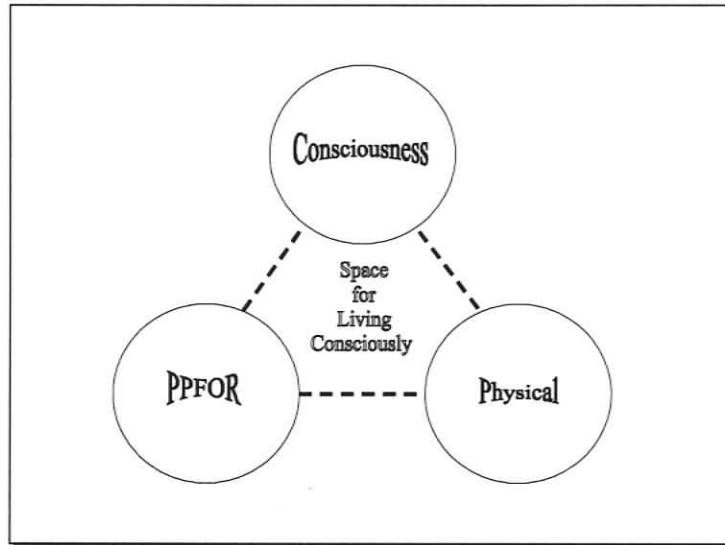


Figure 4: Consciousness, PPFOR, Physical and Living Consciously (McBurney, 2006).

Now consciousness (mind) as the purveyor of interpretation and choice exists as a circle, as does my PPFOR (spirit) and the physical. The space for living consciously now exists where living consciously did previously.

When living consciously exists in one's life, living consciously takes up this potential space. As the mind—through the tension of conscious attention—draws in one's PPFOR and one's physical existence, the circles overlap—a space shared by all—representing living consciously. As demonstrated in the following figure:

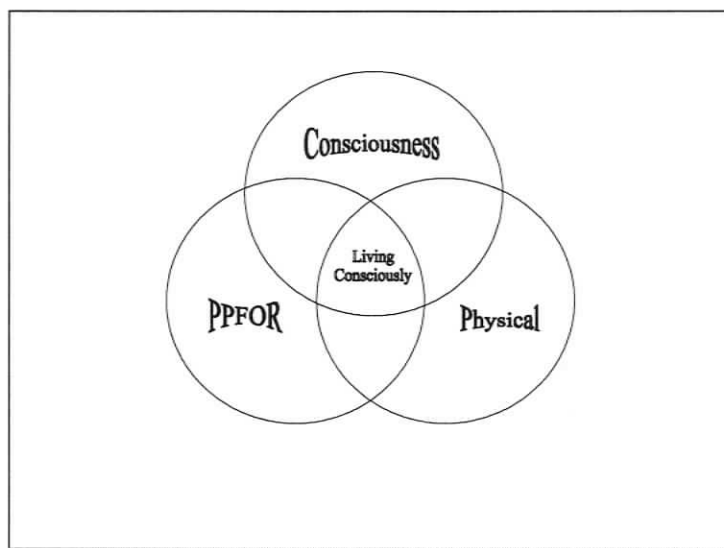


Figure 5: Living Consciously (McBurney, 2006).

This graphic represents moments in my life when I have been able to live consciously. Consciousness, my PPFOR, and my physical life interact and inform one another; at such times there is representation in my physical life of the spirit of my PPFOR. A plane of consciousness of highest tension to be sure, but living consciously existed.

The figures that follow will demonstrate various forms of living unconsciously.

The next figure demonstrates a total disconnect:

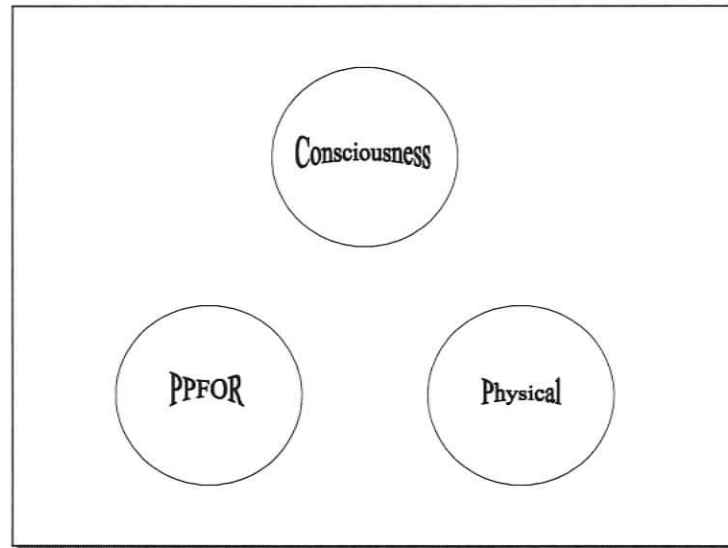


Figure 6: Total Disconnect – Living Unconsciously (McBurney, 2006).

In this case, there is only one sphere in which one can exist, in the consciousness of thought; disconnected from one's physical existence and one's spirit as well. This represents being solely in one's head, risking the insanity described by Pirsig (1974) in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*.

I have experienced this in my life as well. I have spent many hours sitting alone beneath the stars dissecting my thoughts and dissecting them again. I have had some wonderful epiphanies in these moments—that is the draw to be in my head—but to stay there too long I lost the contexts that made these thoughts real. Moving too far into thought without the context of spirit or the physical world has been dangerous for me because with the lack of context, the mind creates its own context.

The following figure represents an overemphasis on the physical; one's consciousness is focused only on physical existence and risks living in the ego described by Dyer (2004). In the realm of ego one believes one is one's physical self.

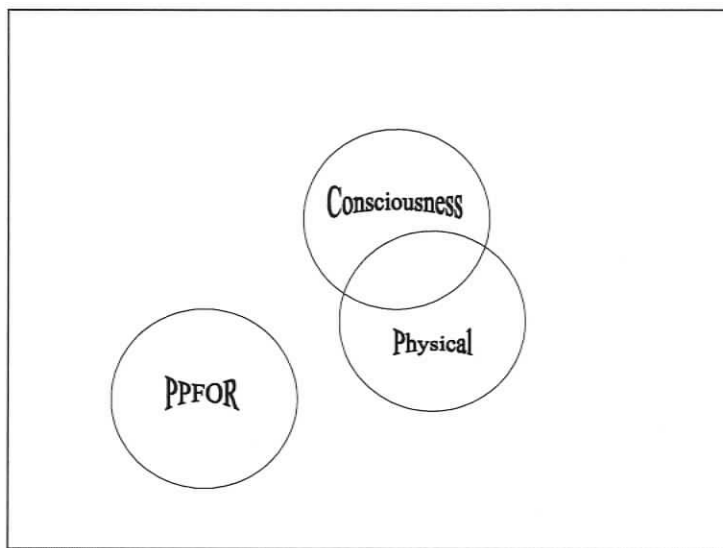


Figure 7: Existing in Ego – Living Unconsciously (McBurney, 2006).

I have also been guilty of living in Dyer's (2002) conception of ego. In 1994, when my life forced me into myself, the goal seemed to be to force me out of my ego or McGraw's (2001) False Self. The Star Process I discovered helped me to shift from ego to spirit to living consciously. Even during the process of creating this document I found myself in the physical world of ego. In my desire to be clever and produce an intelligent document I lost sight of my PPFOR. Dyer (1995), citing the thirteenth century poet Rumi, reminded me of spirit:

Your higher self becomes readily accessible when you contemplate the mystery of who you are. The stress that ego thrives on is gone, so your authentic self is available. Your ego will try to bring you back to its reality, threatening that you will become indolent and nonproductive. But you can override ego if you see the

mystery revealed as the presence of God everywhere. Then you will “sell your cleverness and buy bewilderment,” as Rumi instructed. (p. 284)

My ego has drawn me into its reality many times, even when I believed I was past being drawn into its world. I have realized I am never past such things; living consciously is practice in every moment. When “I sold my cleverness and purchased bewilderment” I got out of my own way in this autobiographical process.

In the final form of living unconsciously one exists in one’s spirit, neglecting the physical nature of life and living. The character Larry Darrel in *The Razor’s Edge* (Byrum, 1984; Maugham, 1944) returned from WWI and abandoned his physical life in search of spiritual enlightenment. His travels take him to Paris, but eventually Larry is drawn to India where he spends five years in a monastery, where discovers: “It’s easy to be a holy man on a mountain.” Thus enlightened, he returns to society in an attempt to live consciously in society. The following figure illustrates this form of living unconsciously:

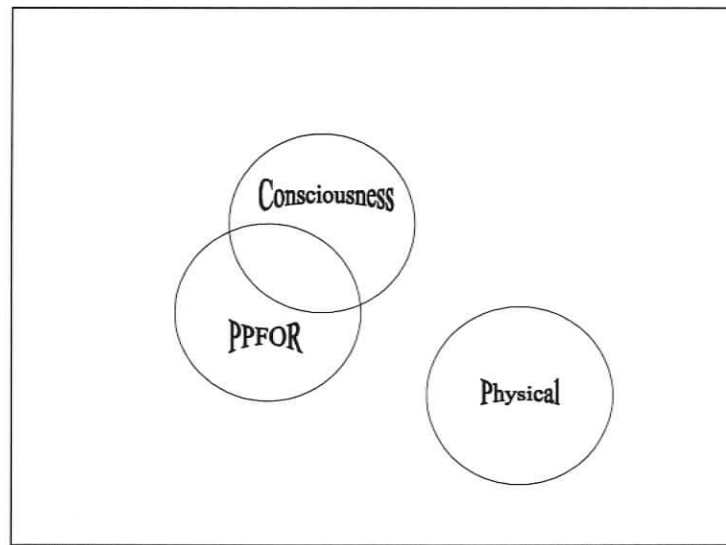


Figure 8: Living Unconsciously By Existing in Solely in Spiritual Ignoring the Physical.

I have been guilty of living unconsciously in this manner as well, spending too much time in my ideas, failing to participate fully in the physicality of life. I may not be a holy man on a mountain, but sometimes I wonder if being a solitary man in a basement suite is much different. Without interaction in the world, my PPFOR has no opportunity to know and learn of itself through me in the world.

Having explored the concepts of living consciously, one can now move on to utilizing the elements and processes of the Star Process to assist them in living consciously.

The Star Process:

The main goal of the Star Process is to assist one in living consciously— correlating and connecting one's beliefs about life, career, and education to the ways one lives one's life, practices one's career, or engages in education as either an educator or as a student. The first goal was to understand and identify a PPFOR; this is autobiographically demonstrated by: *My Location: A Plane of Consciousness of Highest Tension*. The purpose is to recapture past moments and make these critical connections between belief and action.

I accept action and motivation exist in a subjective environment, yet the Star Process asks one to somewhat remove one's self from that subjective environment in order to understand one's own processes objectively. It is necessary to contextualize experiences subjectively in order to understand action, but following subjective contextualized understanding, the Star Process asks one to separate one's self from that subjective contextualization. Once understanding the process *within* the subjective environment, one will be able to understand and take responsibility for one's actions by

removing one's self from that environment. Upon returning to the subjective physical context, one can create action that resonates with the spirit of one's PPFOR.

Some Notes on Process:

For this or any other Process to work and make a difference in life one must employ what I have termed the **BIG-H**, which stands for:

- **Belief** – It is my belief that one must believe a strategy will work and make a difference in life. If one does not believe a process will work, then it is my belief that it will be very difficult for any process work. One must surrender to the process, taking Kierkegaard's (Stevenson, 2002; Ozmon and Craver, 1995) leap of faith.
- **Implementation** – One must use it—put it into action; nothing works if not implemented. A hammer hanging on the wall in the garage does not hammer in nails—one hammers nails by swinging a hammer.
- **Growth** – The world around us is in an ever-changing state of flux and change; I believe we too need to be growing and changing, not for sake of growth or change, but in order to remain connected to the ever changing context we must grow; to stay connected we must be conscious of how our own beliefs change as well as the beliefs of our contexts; “a plane of consciousness of highest tension” (Green, 1978). The Star Process is not meant to freeze one in time, but to temporarily suspend time so one can grow and exist with time.
- **Honesty** – This is simple in theory, but perhaps the most complex and difficult in practice. Honesty invites one to be absolutely honest with one's self, to look into the darkest recesses of mind to observe one's self and one's actions as objectively

as possible. Once one learns honesty with one's self, it is much easier to be honest with others.

To illustrate the Star Process I will travel through the elements and processes as they pertain to living consciously. For the purposes of this thesis it was necessary to linearize the temporal journey of the Star Process. Initially, in 1994 and the times that followed, I engaged in an intense investigation of my life and its processes with the goal of understanding my own role in my success and failure. I have made this process more linear than it actually was for the clarity of articulation. In actuality the process resembled Satori.

Satori is a sudden awakening that occurs in the midst of your everyday life; it is not a state of mind one attains via focused meditation. Suzuki (1969/1991) writes:

Satori is the sudden flashing into consciousness of a new truth hitherto undreamed of. It is a sort of mental catastrophe taking place all at once, after much piling up of matters intellectual and demonstrative. The piling has reached a limit of stability and the whole edifice has come tumbling to the ground, when, behold, a new heaven is open to full survey. (p. 52)

After much "piling up of matters" the Star Process appeared in my life; representing a new way of living, living consciously.

In the 1994 investigation I began to understand and appreciate my PPFOR; I also began to make it part of my life. Once the Star Process arrived in my life I had a rudimentary framework for living consciously. As I traveled through my life experiences I discovered that each demonstrated a different degree of living consciously. Successes were moments I lived consciously while failures were those that I did not. I have come to

realize through this autobiographical inquiry that essentially the goal of autobiographical investigation is to bring more consciousness to our lives personally and to our teaching practices professionally.

Step 1: Identification of Central Goal or Focus.

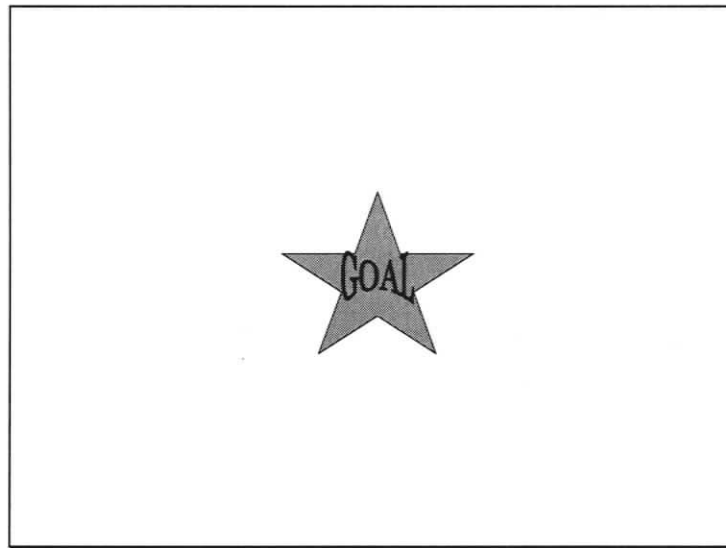


Figure 9: The central focus or goal of Star Process (McBurney, 1995).

The central goal or focus in the simplest terms defines a specific physical goal and appreciates the context of this specific goal. The wider the goal and focus, the larger the context of living consciously; the more narrow the focus, the more specific the context.

The Star Process permeates my life with the overarching goal to live consciously in every moment of my life. This is an example of a goal/focus that is very wide with a physical context that encompasses my physical existence as well as my community, society, and world. I do also use the Star Process to help me live consciously in very specific areas of my life.

In my job as the gross anatomy lab instructor/technician in the Island Medical Program at the University of Victoria, I narrow my focus to the roles and responsibilities pertaining to my job. I aspire to live consciously—work and teach consciously—infusing what I believe about myself and my job. In essence this is to create excellence in all my work processes, giving my best to every task, whether it is menial or monumental; I do my very best whether I am sweeping the lab floor, preparing a demonstration dissection of the anterior thigh, or instructing students during lab periods. Doing my best and creating excellence comes from my PPFOR, but the actual performing of the task with excellence happens in my physical context. When I understand the essence of what I hope to accomplish (spirit), the actions (physical) become apparent.

Step Two – Identification and Understanding of the Five Star Process Elements:

Once a PPFOR (spirit) and one's central goal/focus has been identified, one can start to work through the Star Process, bringing living consciously to a more specific context.

Desire – The First Element:

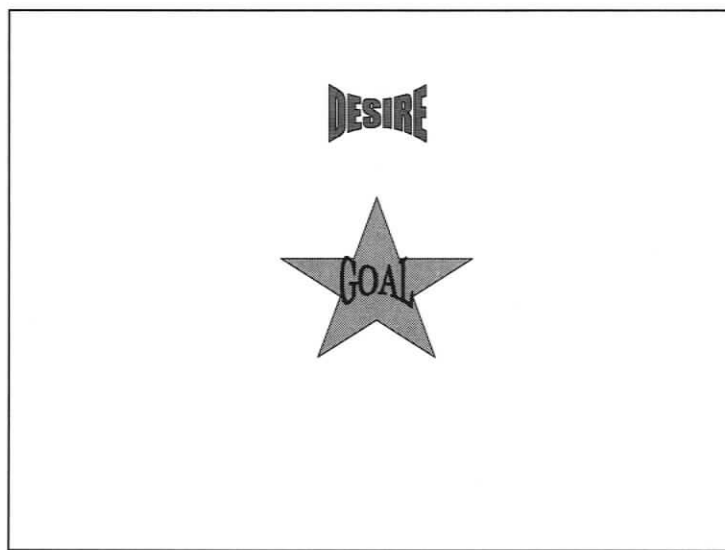


Figure 10: Desire – The First Element (McBurney, 1995).

Desire is my desire to accomplish or realize my central goal/focus. Desire has been a significant element in my ability to manifest my goals in the world. When I had a genuine desire to be a teacher I was able to learn/work consciously in that process and do the things I needed to do in order to realize that goal. When desire waned, I found it very difficult to realize my goals. When I did not want to be a teacher, it was difficult to muster the energy and inspiration to engage in the processes and assignments that were gateways to becoming a teacher.

Desire is the intention I bring to my goal/focus, contributing to living consciously via my PPFOR; it is rooted in spirit. Without desire there was disconnect from spirit and in my worst moments I lived in the trappings of ego described by Dyer (2004). My ego convinced me of untruths: that I was special and others were wrong.

In my present life I work to find a desire to be in the process no matter what. I genuinely desire to live a conscious life, so understanding ways of doing so is easy; actually doing them is sometimes a challenge, though a conscious one. Giving my best to my work at the medical school is an inherent aspect of my PPFOR and a quality I admire in others. Located in genuine desire I can move outwards to my situation, finding ways of doing so.

Effort – The Second Element:

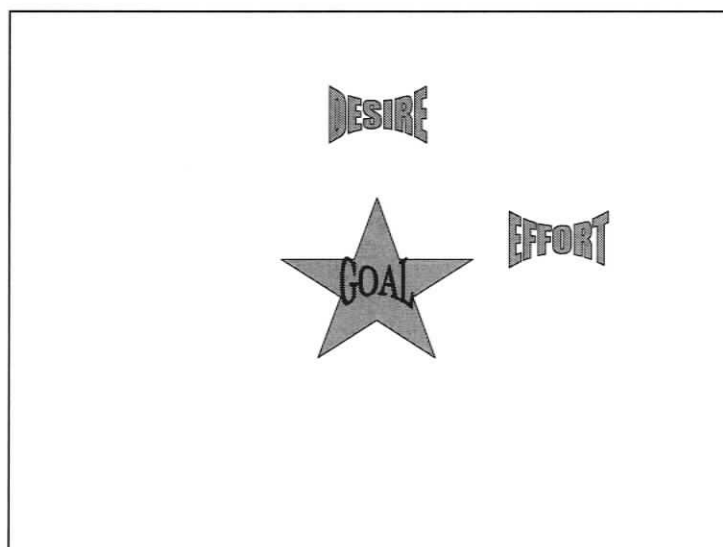


Figure 11: Effort – The Second Element (McBurney, 1995).

Effort is the personal physical action that helps manifest one's goal/focus. Effort is doing the work required in the physical world to accomplish a goal located in the physical world. Regardless of my level of desire, effort is what makes my goal live in the

world. I can sit around all day creatively visualizing myself writing a new song, but until I actually pick up my guitar I will find it very difficult to manifest a song into this world.

When I made significant effort in my undergraduate processes—doing the work required—I was very successful. When I neglected to go to class or do my assignments, I often failed miserably; there are more than a couple “F’s” on my transcript. Effort is the second element of the Star Process and reminds me I have to take action to realize my goals.

Failing to make effort disconnects one from living consciously by eliminating the physical aspects of life. In my life I seek to bring living consciously to every moment, to do so requires effort. Growing up on a grain farm in Manitoba taught me to work hard at whatever I do; I attempt to bring an honest effort to my job.

Confidence – The Third Element:

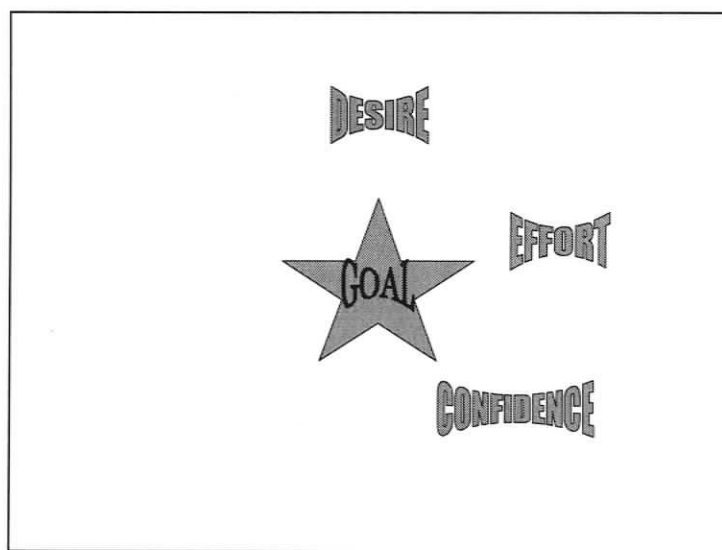


Figure 12: Confidence – The Third Element (McBurney, 1995).

Confidence has always been a significant factor in my ability to live consciously. Confidence is complex and elusive. With regards to the Star Process, confidence has two main aspects:

1. Confidence the goal/focus is possible.
2. Confidence that one can actually realize the goal or focus.

In working with remedial reading children I found that confidence was a significant factor in their reading difficulties. I have found that until I can convince them that they can become a reader, that reading strategies are only mildly affective. I always inform them that I 100% believe that one day they will read; I inform them that until they are ready to believe in themselves that I will believe enough for the both of us—and I never waiver or withdraw my belief. Eventually, their perception of what is possible shifts, their confidence increases and the reading strategies begin to work more effectively.

Confidence in the context of the Star Process relates to self-esteem principles. Branden (1994) writes: “self-esteem is the reputation we acquire with ourselves” (p. 69). Branden defines self-esteem as:

1. Confidence in our ability to think, confidence in our ability to cope with the basic challenges of life; and
2. Confidence is our right to be successful and happy, the feeling of being worthy, deserving, entitled to assert our needs and wants, achieve our values, and enjoy the fruits of our efforts. (p.4)

Confidence is a major contributor to self-esteem.

Building further on the above definition, Branden believes self-esteem has two components: self-efficacy and self-worth. Which he defines as follows:

Self-efficacy means confidence in the functioning of my mind, in my ability to think, understand, learn, choose, and make decisions; confidence in my ability to understand the facts of reality that fall within the sphere of my interests and needs; self-trust; self-reliance.

Self-respect means assurance of my value; an affirmative attitude toward my right to live and be happy; comfort in appropriately asserting my thoughts, wants, and needs; the feeling that joy and fulfillment are my natural birthright. (p. 26)

This is not to imply that one's self-respect is to come at the cost of the Other's, it implies that if I have the right, all others have it as well.

Bandura (2004) writes:

Efficacy beliefs play a central role in the self-regulation of motivation...people of low self-efficacy are easily convinced of futility of effort in the face of impediments. Those of high self-efficacy view impediments as surmountable through perseverant effort and improvement of self-management skills. (p.623).

How Can One Overcome Low Confidence?

What do you do when you discover you have issues with confidence? Is contextualized awareness enough to overcome it? In my own experiences I have found that awareness of confidence issues made me mindful of the situation and helped me to avoid perpetuating falling confidence, but it did not significantly raise my confidence level. There was certainly peace of mind discovering a cause, but discovery does not cure. Bandura (2004) offers four ways to develop stronger senses of self-efficacy:

mastery experiences, social processing, social persuasion, and reliance on physical and emotional states.

Bandura describes mastery experiences:

Successes build a robust belief in one's efficacy. Failures undermine it. If people have only easy successes they are readily discouraged by failure. Development of a resilient sense of efficacy requires experience in overcoming obstacles through perseverant effort. Resilience is also cultivated by learning how to manage failure so it is informative rather than demoralizing. (p. 622)

The best way to build confidence is to get out there and do one's best, choosing activities and exercises that provide a balance between challenge and easy completion. Some simplifying tasks early on may provide one with a confidence boost, but as Bandura points out, only easy successes create false confidence that is easily shattered. The Star Process can help create Bandura's resilience, making failure informative rather than demoralizing.

The next method to address low self-efficacy is via Bandura's social Processing. Bandura explains: "If people see others like themselves succeed by sustained effort they come to believe that they, too, have the capacity to do so. Competent Processes also build efficacy by conveying knowledge and skills for managing environmental demands" (p. 622). Star Process confidence addresses the belief that one's goal is possible, if one does not believe a goal is possible, one can use social Processing to realize that others are accomplishing this goal in their lives, so the goal itself is possible in the community if not yet possible in one's personal context.

The third way of strengthening low confidence is by the use of what Bandura refers to as social persuasion; he writes:

If people are persuaded that they have what it takes to succeed, they exert more effort than if they harbor self-doubts and dwell on personal deficiencies when problems arise. But effective social persuaders do more than convey faith in people's capabilities. They arrange things for others in ways that bring success and avoid placing them prematurely in situations where they are likely to fail. (p. 622)

If struggling with confidence, one could visit a counsellor, or a life coach to help get through the tough spots in life. Sometimes all it takes is to get an outside opinion. In my experiences, counselling has always been able to lift me from the lowest levels of confidence, enabling me to start or try again. And there are of course those antiquated resources we used to call friends; a good friend, who has your best interests in mind, can help boost confidence. I am blessed with good friends and family.

Bandura's final method of strengthening self-efficacy is when people learn to: "rely on their physical and emotional states to judge their capabilities" (p. 623). Once we become conscious of tension, anxiety, or depression as indicators that our self-efficacy is vulnerable, we can take steps to address the situation before it becomes too far-gone. Same goes for physical states, pain and fatigue are symptoms of low physical efficacy; listening to our bodies we can choose to rest or proceed consciously, understanding a failure may simply be due to fatigue.

Confidence, like desire, finds its roots in the spiritual realm. To live consciously and realize a goal, one must believe one can. When I believe something is possible, there

is a strength that underlies my action and belief; when I believe something is impossible I find a weakness that undermines my action—or inaction—and beliefs. There were times I felt this thesis was an impossible task. In those times of lowered confidence I found it very difficult to write. After I discovered the Star Process in 1994 I knew without a doubt that I could return and complete my education degree; living consciously, employing the Star Process, I returned and graduated.

Knowledge – The Fourth Element:

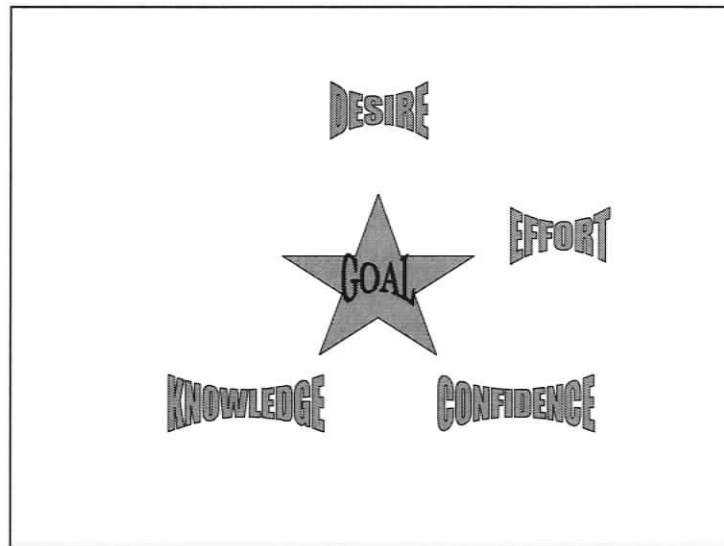


Figure 13: Knowledge – The Fourth Element (McBurney, 1995).

Knowledge is the fourth element of the Star Process and addresses three main components of knowledge:

1. Knowledge of Self (PPFOR)
2. Knowledge of Self in Process (Star Process)
3. Knowledge of the context of goal or focus.

The knowledge of self component is two-dimensional with the first component being knowledge of your PPFOR and how it informs conscious action and choice. The second

component is knowledge of self in process, focused on the elements of the Star Process. I know that desire, effort, and confidence are keys to my living consciously. I know that if I am going to stumble it is likely in one of these areas; knowledge of self invites me to raise my awareness with regards to my level of desire, effort, and confidence.

The next component is related to specific knowledge inherent to the focus or goal. If my goal is to create excellence in teaching, then what do I perceive excellence in teaching to be? What am I doing as a teacher that creates excellence? What do I need to do to create excellence as I perceive it? When I returned to the education program in 1995 I knew what was required to complete my degree. I knew that for my practica I would have to create an excellent Integrated Framework—an old nemesis—and do well in my practical experiences. I knew that I would have to complete all the assignments to the best of my ability while being mindful and respectful of the criteria and intended purposes of the assignments. Whether or not I felt a particular assignment was a hoop to be jumped was insignificant.

Knowledge of the context of the goal or focus is intended to make one conscious of what absolutely needs to be done in order to realize one's goal. In preparing for medical school, knowledge of focus and goal includes knowing what pre-requisites are needed in order to apply. There is nothing philosophical or interpretive about this component, it simply asks one to be conscious of what is required in order to accomplish the goal. These processes cannot be ignored or by-passed, one must be conscious of what is needed.

Knowledge of context asks one to consciously explore the context in which one is acting. In the same spirit as one's PPFOR, one must understand the Contextual

Philosophical Frame of Reference. What is the philosophical and political context? What do I know about the context I am operating in? If my goal is to change education, then what is education? What do I want to change it to? How am I going to accomplish that? Is my educational context open to change? In returning to teacher's college I had to understand the context—teacher's college—in order to successfully graduate from that context; I needed to know what was required of me—regardless of my opinion of those requirements. I also knew that because I had already been “excused” from the program once, that special eyes would be evaluating my each and every assignment and practical experience—I knew everything I did would need to be done well. I was going to have to earn the trust I had lost the year before.

Knowledge finds its roots in the physical. It is knowledge of self and context, but is also knowledge of how one's PPFOR “looks” in the physical context. Knowledge makes living consciously possible. I *know* how I want to be in the world, which helps me to identify how I need to *act* to live consciously.

Application and Responsibility for Knowledge Acquired (ARKA) – The Fifth Element:

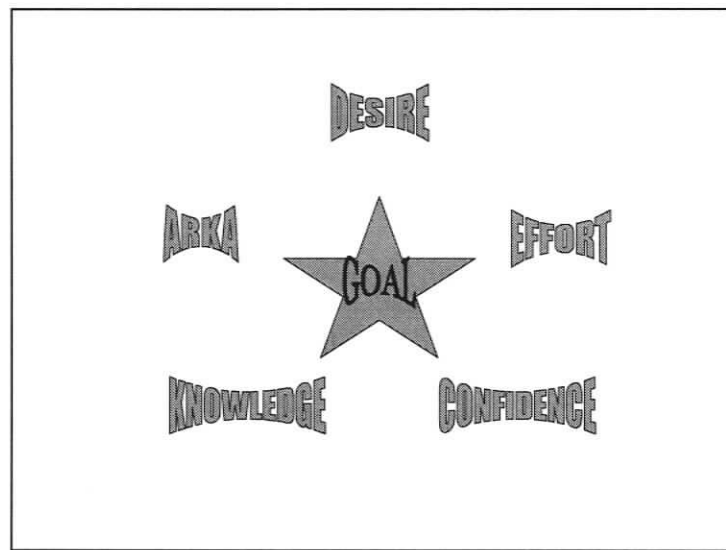


Figure 14: ARKA –The fifth element (McBurney, 1995).

Application and Responsibility for Knowledge Acquired (ARKA) is the element that puts knowledge into action; if the fourth element of Knowledge was talking the talk, then ARKA is walking the walk. ARKA often speaks to me through the “little voice” of my PPFOR. ARKA means applying knowledge acquired. ARKA means that once one accepts something as true, one is responsible for action pertaining to that belief.

ARKA is living consciously in the Star Process. All the elements lead to this point; a PPFOR remains an abstract principle until put into action. ARKA is all the elements in action; ARKA is living consciously. Branden (1994) defines living consciously:

To live consciously means to seek to be aware of everything that bears on our actions, purposes, values, and goals—to be the best of our ability, whatever that ability may be—and to behave in accordance with that which we see and know.

(p. 69)

Living consciously is awareness of how things are and choosing action that aligns with perception. Branden reiterates: “living consciously means more than seeing and knowing; it means acting on what one sees and knows” (p. 69).

ARKA is directly related to Knowledge and a PPFOR. If one believes in honesty, then one is responsible for acting with honesty—ARKA is making action reflective of a self-envisioned utopian society and ideal citizen. If a teacher believes in a method of education, then they are responsible for making that methodology a part of their practice or deal with the personal consequences and/or accept the subjective reasons they cannot practice in that manner. There is no way to avoid this responsibility because one’s PPFOR is going to wrestle with this dilemma subconsciously; the struggle might as well be conscious.

ARKA is simple as stated above: walking the walk, but simple does not imply easy. In *The Journeys of Socrates*, (Millman, 2006) the old monk Serafim teaches Sergei (Socrates) the difference between simple and easy, the conversation is as follows:

“...each day is a new life...each moment you are born anew. This is one meaning of grace, Socrates. Sometimes all you can manage is to pay attention, and do the best you can.”

“You make life sound so simple.”

“It *is* simple, but I did not say easy. And I promise you this: One day you’ll grasp its fullness, and it will be so clear and simple that you will laugh with delight. Meanwhile, all I can do is plant seeds. The rest is up to God.” [emphasis in original] (p. 231)

In the summer of 2001 I asked Dr. Pinar what to do when autobiography gets too hard, he replied: “If the waters are too rough, wade a while” (personal correspondence, 2001). His works and his words have planted seeds in my inquiry; through difficult times and significant effort I have discovered the elegant simplicity of autobiography. Today there is laughter in my heart.

ARKA is the living consciously component; it incorporates the aspects of every element, as well as one’s PPFOR. ARKA puts all these things together and asks one to *live* what one *knows*. It is that simple and that hard. It states: *If this is what you believe, then you must live it, or change what you believe*. Branden (1997) writes that we have three alternatives in a situation when person’s self-concept clashes with their behaviour:

1. They can revise their self-concept.
2. They can change their behaviour.
3. Or they can evade the contradiction. (p. 25)

Living consciously is living in the now with all its temporal complexities. Much of this thesis deals with living consciously—it infuses every word; there is little I can add that is not already in every word of this thesis.

Step Three – The Circle of Thought:

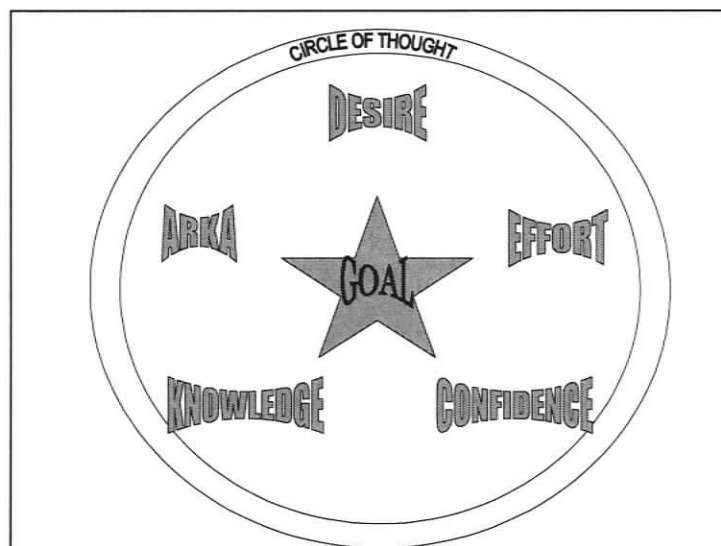


Figure 15: The circle of thought (McBurney, 1995).

The circle of thought makes connections between the elements, providing the opportunity to realize how interconnected these aspects are; perhaps it is metaphorical of our connectivity to all beings and all things—all things are connected all ways always. When I lived unconsciously I found there was disconnect and dissonance in my life, affecting my ability to live consciously and respect the attributes of ARKA. When I did not desire to become a teacher I failed to make the effort required to be successful in my academic endeavours, a lack of success contributed to lowered confidence, which subsequently diminished my desire even more, which in turn led to less and less desire effort. The elements do possess qualities unique to themselves, but are also interconnected and influential upon one another as well.

As I move forward in my life, attempting to live consciously, I am mindful that of this interconnectivity that resembles the autopoietic network described earlier by Capra (1996). I pay attention when my desire wanes or when my effort is lacking. When I am

living consciously I can make adjustments along my way so that I can still arrive at my intended destinations without getting mired in my ego.

Step Four – The Visual Representation of Transformation:

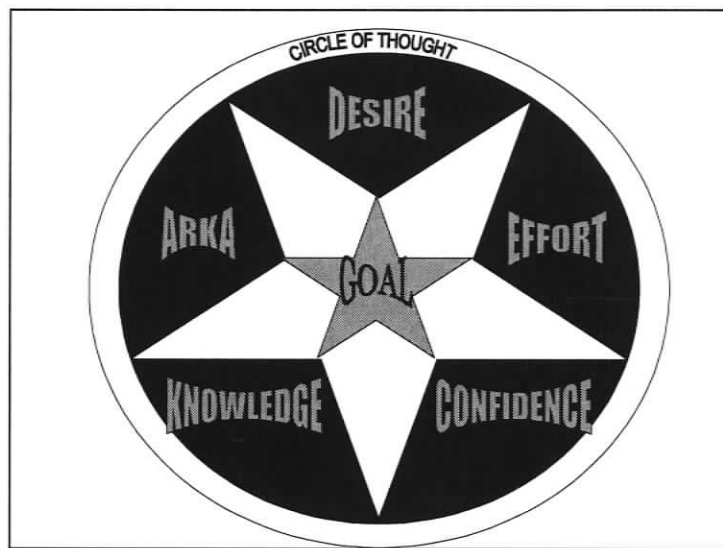


Figure 16: Transformation of Initial Goal/Focus (McBurney, 1995).

Finally, if one has successfully demonstrated all the elements, one can shade in those areas representative of those elements—as I have done above. The central star has dramatically increased in size and visually represents achieved success.

That is the overview of the Star Process. In the following sections I connect the Star Process with living consciously, my education, and my teaching practice.

Chapter Three:

The Star Process and My Undergraduate Education:

In this chapter I explore the shift of the Star Process and living consciously from the context of my life as a person in the world, to my undergraduate education context and my life as a student in the education program, learning consciously. First of all, the connection between the Star Process and Living Consciously will be expanded.

Deepening the Connection Between the Star Process and Living Consciously:

The Star Process is a process that is intended to assist one in living consciously in a variety of contexts. The previous section introduced the Star Process and its connections with living consciously. The following figure situates the elements of the Star Process within the mind, spirit, and body framework:

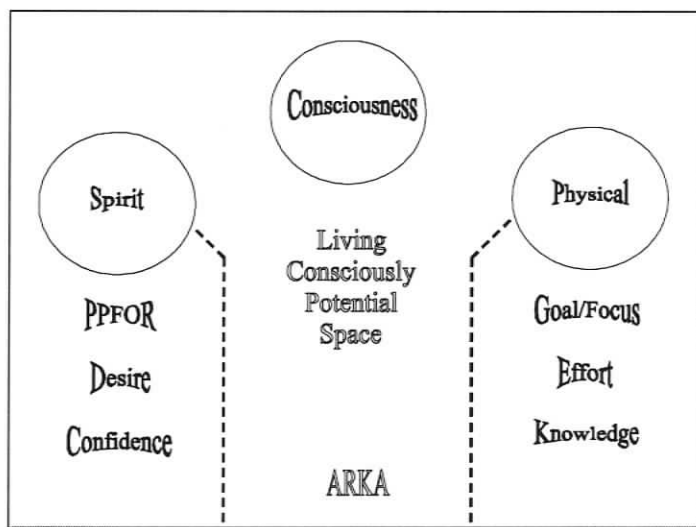


Figure 17: The Elements of the Star Process Combined With Mind, Spirit, and Physical (McBurney, 2006).

The overlap representing living consciously has been removed in this figure; the living consciously space in this figure is represented by the funnel in the centre space. In the spirit column is my: PPFOR, Desire, and Confidence; while in the physical column are: Goal/Focus, Effort, and Knowledge. ARKA shares the funnel with Living Consciously. In this illustration the components are separated and a potential space for living consciously exists. This is a representation of times of living unconsciously.

The following figure illustrates how I invite the separate elements into the living consciously/ARKA funnel.

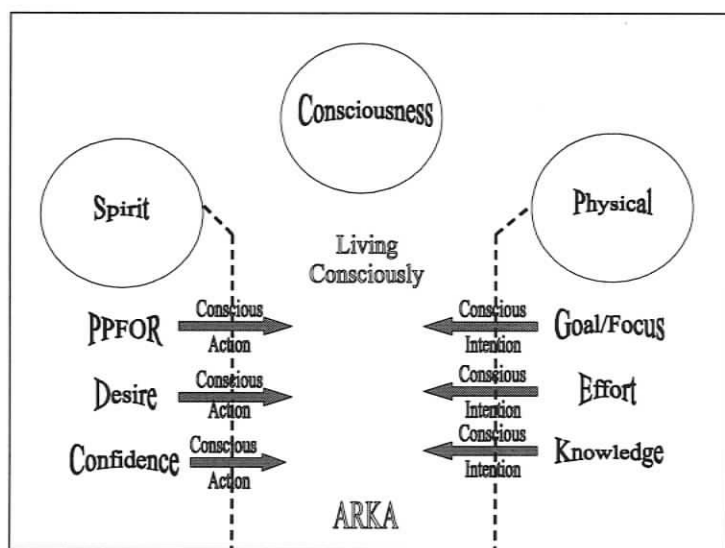


Figure 18: Consciousness Inviting Star Process Elements into Living Consciously (McBurney, 2006)

When the elements exist in the realm separate outside living consciously, the elements can be invited into the living consciously space using a process from the opposite column. Consciousness invites physical elements into the living consciously

funnel with the spirituality of conscious intention. Consciousness invites spiritual elements into the living consciously funnel with the physicality of conscious action.

If I find I am struggling to live consciously, I look into my life to understand where I may be trapped: my head (mind), my ideas (spirit), or my ego (physical). If I am trapped in my head I look to invite spirit and the physical into my life using the processes of creating conscious action and bringing conscious intention to my situation. If I am trapped in my ego, I attempt to bring conscious intention to my efforts, knowledge, and actions. If I find myself a “holy man on a mountain” I bring conscious actions to my PPFOR, my desire, and confidence.

Shifting the Specificity of Context From Life to Undergraduate Education:

In 1994, after leaving school, I engaged in a reflective autobiographical process that led to discovery of the Star Process. In the fall of 1995 I returned to teacher’s college to complete my undergraduate degree in elementary education. The Star Process had assisted me in living consciously in life, what I needed to do to be successful in my education was to shift the specificity of my context from a person in the world to a student in teacher’s college—to learn consciously.

Earlier in this document, living consciously was illustrated in the following figure:

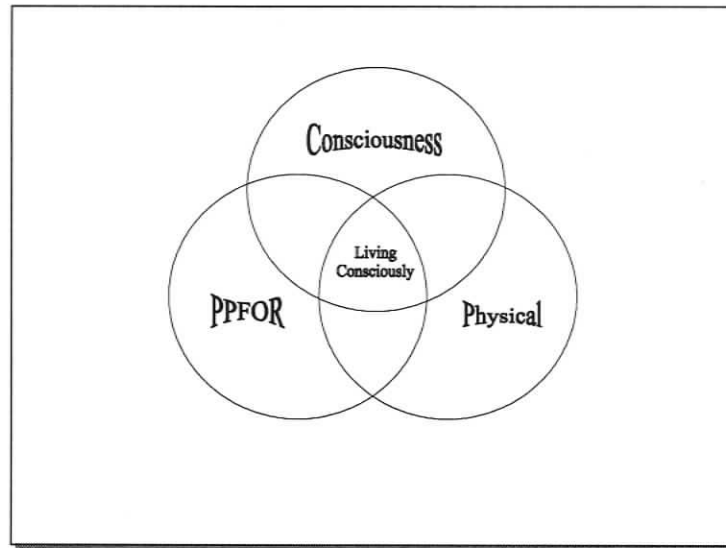


Figure 19: Living Consciously (McBurney, 2006).

To shift the Star Process to the more specific context of undergraduate education required a change in specificity from living consciously to learning consciously.

As I shifted the specificity of the context from self in the world to self in the education program, my plane of consciousness, my tension became more specific because I needed to understand my location and my situation more specifically as well. If living consciously is: understanding what you believe about life and making those beliefs part of how you physically live your life, then learning consciously as a student teacher in the education program became understanding my theories and practices of education.

Ultimately, learning consciously is illustrated in the following figure:

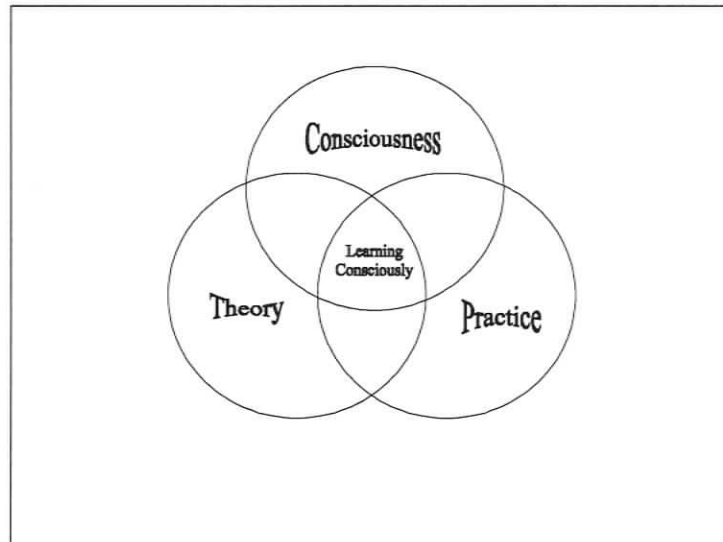


Figure 20: Learning Consciously in Education Program (McBurney, 2006).

Learning consciously is an aspect of living consciously. My theory of education is contained in my PPFOR and my practice of education manifests in my physical life.

The challenge—my tension to locate myself within my own theories and beliefs about education and situate myself within education—was that as a teaching neophyte I knew little teaching theory and had limited teaching experiences. As a student teacher I realized that I needed to rely on the Other—my instructors, sponsor teachers, and education—for theoretical knowledge and opportunities to practice. I needed to surrender to processes designed for me as a student teacher and let my own theories and practices emerge as I matured as an educator. I did not ignore my own PPFOR, but looked for ways to situate myself in the world of the Other while letting my personal location as a teacher emerge as I learned. The transfer of teaching knowledge in the undergraduate context was predominately from Other to self; once I accepted that, I was able to utilize the Star Process to help me succeed in my undergraduate education.

Using The Star Process to Facilitate Success in My Undergraduate Education:

Returning to school in the fall of 1995 my goal was to complete my program and graduate. In the year away from school I re-discovered a genuine desire to complete my degree and become a teacher. I made a commitment to myself to give my very best effort to each and every assignment and practical experience. If I was going to fail on this attempt, then I was not going to fail because I failed to try. I was confident that I could complete my degree. First of all, I watched many of my friends successfully complete fourth year; I knew at the very least that successful completion of fourth year was possible. Most importantly, the year of reflection and self discovery had awakened a confidence I had never experienced before—I knew I could do it.

With regards to knowledge, I most significantly had a new knowledge of myself in process; I had the Star Process. I knew where I had stumbled previously, I knew my potential pitfalls. This knowledge of self helped me predict possible problems and work through them before they became overwhelming. I also had a new knowledge of the educational context in which I was learning. I surrendered to the situation, remained open to the Other's theory and practice, and let my own personal location emerge in process. I had learned of myself in the world, now I shifted what I knew about that process to learning about myself as a teacher in education. Finally, I utilized the final element of the Star Process, ARKA, and applied the knowledge I acquired, remained open to new knowledge, and accepted responsibility for my education.

Two years later I successfully completed my undergraduate degree, graduating *With Distinction* on the Dean's List. The education program had changed little in my year of absence; it was I who had changed significantly. The processes of the Star process

made it possible for me to succeed where once I had failed. There were many moments during those two years that I felt apprehension, frustration, confusion, and struggled with desire, effort, and self-confidence, but the Star Process helped me keep focussed on the goal of graduating and becoming a teacher.

Chapter Four

The Star Process and My Graduate Education:

In this chapter I explore the conceptual shift of the Star Process and living consciously in life and my undergraduate education to my graduate processes. I came to graduate school with the Star Process, but this process was a life process that was not articulated in the educational processes of learning and teaching consciously. I did, as discussed in the earlier chapter, use the Star Process in my undergraduate education, but my use of it in my undergraduate degree was an undefined shift of context from life to education; a lived felt coherence (Pinar, 1975/1992, p 20). Graduate school forced me to articulate and understand the Star Process academically in an academic context.

Shifting the Specificity of Context From Undergraduate to Graduate:

In 2001 I entered graduate school with hopes of exploring the Star Process in an academic context. Since becoming a teacher in 1997 I had gained some teaching experience and a process of defining my beliefs about educational theory and practice had begun. My teaching experience in elementary school made me realize that though I loved teaching and loved children, I did not love teaching children. If I was going to continue a career in education, then it was going to have to be in a different context. This realization contributed to my decision to apply to graduate school.

In graduate school I was exposed to new ways of thinking about and perceiving education and curriculum. I was able to transfer my undergraduate understanding of learning consciously to the course work aspect of my graduate program; however, when

it came to the research element of my graduate program I struggled understand the shift in context.

Graduate school assumes one has teaching experiences and ideas about education; the context shifts to a conversation about educational theory and practice. There is also the research component of graduate work, a sharing of my knowledge with the Other. As a graduate student, I am expected to contribute to the whole with my research.

Graduate school forced me to locate myself in my own educational theories and practices and to situate myself in the whole. *My Location: A Plane of Consciousness of Highest Tension* described my struggle to do so while articulating my PPFOR; in many ways it tells the story of my academic graduate journey. In graduate school I was exposed to various methods of inquiry, but autobiographical inquiry intrigued me the most. I realized there were already modes of inquiry that resembled the Star Process. Pinar's (1975/1992) *currere* most specifically captured my interest because I believed it resonated with the essence of the Star Process; it also reminded me of the process I used in 1994 when I discovered the Star Process.

The following sections will explore *currere* as a mode of autobiographical inquiry and define how I have used it as the method of inquiry for this thesis.

Currere

In 1975, William Pinar introduced a mode of inquiry he called *currere*; *currere* is curriculum in the Latin root verb form (Gough, 1999, p.2). *Currere* also means: "...to run the course, or running the course" (Pinar, 1995, p. 515). Gough (1999) writes:

As elaborated by Pinar and Madeline Grumet (1976, 1981), *currere* became central to the work of an expanding cohort of curriculum

theorists...who privileged existential philosophy, phenomenology and hermeneutics in the pursuit of the ‘reconceptualisation’ of curriculum studies...both currere and comparable methods of investigating ‘storied lives’—such as Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin’s (1990) ‘narrative inquiry’—seek to understand and question the ways in which curriculum is constituted in the subjectivities of teachers and other curriculum workers by encouraging personal (and sometimes collaborative) reflection in stories generated through such procedures as autobiographical writing and journal-keeping (p. 2).

In this section Pinar’s autobiography is discussed, as well as the influences of existential philosophy, phenomenology, hermeneutics, and psychoanalysis on autobiography.

The Four Moments of Currere:

Currere contains four moments: regressive, progressive, analytical, and syncretical.

In the regressive moment, one regresses into existential lived experience, generating data by recalling the past, enlarging and transforming one’s memory; Pinar (1975/1992) writes: “One returns to the past, to capture it as it was, and as it hovers over the present” (p. 21). He writes the biographic past is: “...usually ignored. Ignored but not absent. The biographic past exists presently, complexly contributive to the biographic present” (p. 22). One goal of the regressive moment is to cease marginalization of the past’s influence, to become conscious of the past and its impact on the present.

Consciousness of the past reveals what has become our habitual response to the world. Pinar explains:

Unconsciousness perpetuates itself. Hence the formation of habit, of habitual responses to seemingly characteristic stimuli, responses that are to varying degrees (we say) adjustive, or not. The habitual surface is the public, the outer, and its strength or the force of habit, is probably positively correlated with unconsciousness and capture by the past, the superimposition of past issues and situations and persons onto the present. The complex of habitual responses is constitutive of the present personality. Its predictability is its habituality is its unconsciousness is its pastness. (p. 22)

Pinar's unconscious habitual response is reminiscent of Rand's (1966) description of a "sense of life". She writes:

Long before he [sic] is old enough to grasp such a concept as metaphysics, a man makes choices, forms value-judgments, experiences emotions and acquires a certain *implicit* view of life. Every choice and value-judgment implies some estimate of himself and of the world around him—most particularly, of his capacity to deal with the world. He may draw conscious conclusions, which may be true or false; or he may remain mentally passive and merely react to events (i.e., merely feel). Whatever the case may be, his subconscious mechanism sums up his psychological activities, integrating his conclusions, reactions or evasions into an emotional sum that establishes a habitual pattern and becomes his automatic response to the world around him. What began as a series of single, discreet conclusions (or evasions) about his own particular problems, becomes a generalized feeling about existence, an implicit *metaphysics* with the compelling motivational power of a constant, basic emotion—an emotion which is part of all

his other emotions and underlies all his experiences. *This* is a sense of life.

[emphases in original] (p. 25-26)

Both Pinar (1975/1992) and Rand (1936) understand the influence of past on present, a relationship that becomes problematic when its influence is unconscious. For Pinar, the past made more conscious helps us to understand our located situatedness; located in self, situated in society. For Rand, consciousness of one's "sense of life" can not only illuminate one's perception of oneself, but the world as well. For both, the consciousness of the unconscious empowers one for change. The Star Process marked an increase in my own consciousness of self and context, empowering me to change.

In the regressive moment we return consciously to the past to understand its influences on the present, so we may know ourselves more consciously, more completely. Who we are, is founded in who we were, to understand who we are, and why we do the things we do—to contextualize ourselves—it is necessary to understand the past experiences that have developed our personalities, our habits. As Pinar (1975/1992) writes: "To ascertain where one is, when one is, one must locate the past" (p. 22).

The regressive moment is not for interpretation, but to be present in the past. Through written exploration, the past begins to take shape, as Pinar describes:

Bringing the past to the present by printing it. The words begin to coalesce to form a photograph. Holding the picture in front of oneself, one studies the detail, the literal holding of the picture and one's response to it, suggestive of the relation of past to present. (p. 24)

Like holding a developing Polaroid photo, consciousness clears the fog, develops the image, slowing revealing the picture.

In the progressive moment, "...one looks forward to that which is not yet the case, the future—like the past—inhabits the present. Meditatively the student of currere imagines possible futures" (Pinar, 1995, p. 520). Pinar (1975/1992) writes: "we have found that the future is present in the same sense that the past is present. It influences, in complicated ways, the present; it forms the present" (p. 24). The progressive moment is one in which we travel forward in linear time in order to take photos of possible futures, Pinar suggests that progression, "dwelling in imagined future states" (p. 25) should be done several times on different days over a period of time; naturally more progressions over a longer period of time deepens the experience. Pinar states: "such elongation of the experiment reduces the possibility of distortion of temporary preoccupations. Increased is the likelihood that the photographs taken are reflective of more lasting anticipations" (p. 25).

Emerson (1841/1996) writes: "it is essential to a true theory of nature and of man [sic], that it should contain somewhat progressive" (p. 40). For Emerson, our "true theory of nature" is essentially connected to places we have not yet arrived, pointing us toward infinity and infinite futures. In the progressive moment, Pinar invites us to explore the infinite possibilities—represented by his photographs—which are not yet the case. Greene (1988) writes that to find or create an "authentic public space" requires: "...a consciousness of the normative as well as the possible: of what *ought* to be, from a moral and ethical point of view, and what is in the making, what *might* be in an always open world" [emphases in original] (p. xi). To create authentic open spaces in our lived present, we need to be mindful, to make conscious, the futures we may be subconsciously moving towards; our subconscious actions may well be leading us to a reality that will

eventually force its consciousness upon us. This leads us to Rand (1966), who asked whether reality will be chosen “by mind or by chance” (p. 30); mind being consciousness, a conscious choice; chance being unconsciousness or evasion—a conscious choice to ignore one’s perception of the world, one’s inner voice, one’s PPFOR.

In the analytical moment, one examines, initially at least, the present. The photos of past and future have been taken; in the analytical moment Pinar (1975/1992) asks us to set these photos aside in order to: “describe the biographic present, exclusive of the past and future, but inclusive of responses to them” (p. 25). Pinar (1995) states: “The analysis of *currere* is like phenomenological bracketing; one distances oneself from past and future to be more free of the present...What is this temporal complexity that presents itself to me as my present?” (p. 520-21).

It is here one explores the present, as the past and future were explored in the regressive and progressive moments; Pinar (1975/1992) explains: “photograph the present as if one were a camera, including oneself in the present taking the photograph, and your response to this process” (p. 26). Like Kierkegaard’s self, simultaneously I am photographer, participating subject, and viewer, objectively photographing myself while subjectively reacting to myself in a biographic situation. In the analytical moment I see myself taking the picture; I know I am analyzing. I capture the moment, react to the moment, I am the moment.

Pinar breaks down analysis as follows: “*Ana*—up, throughout. *Lysis*—a loosening. Conceptualization is detachment from experience” (p. 26). This detached loosening up and throughout resembles the Zen Buddhist experience of Satori as explained by Suzuki (1956):

...in Satori there is always what we may call a sense of the Beyond; the experience indeed is my own but I feel it to be rooted elsewhere. The individual shell in which my personality is so solidly encased explodes at the moment of Satori. Not, necessarily, that I get unified with a being greater than myself or absorbed in it, but that my individuality, which I found rigidly held together and definitely kept separate from other individual existences, becomes loosened somehow from its tightening grip and melts away into something indescribable, something which is of quite a different order from what I am accustomed to. (p. 105)

Currere can result in Satori, I have experienced it in my own inquiries. The analytical moment, unlike the progressive and regressive, is a moment of interpretation, making “more visible what is lived through directly” (Pinar, 1975/1992, p. 26), a moment to:

Study the three photographs. What are they; what is their individuality? What fundamental theme(s) do they express? Why are they as they are? ...Juxtapose the three photographs: past, present, future. What are their complex, multi-dimensional interrelations? How is the future present in the past, the past in the future, and the present in both? (p. 26)

As the analytical moment winds down, it delicately shifts from the analytical moment to the moment of synthesis.

Pinar (1975/1992) of the analytical moment writes: “description via conceptualization is breaking into parts the organic whole” (p. 26), the synthetical moment is the reintegration of parts to whole, but its sum becomes greater, as one understands one’s parts more deeply, and consequently the whole as well. The synthetical moment re-enters the lived present and asks: “...who is that? Listening carefully to one’s

own voice one asks: what is the meaning of the present?" (Pinar, 1995, p. 521). Pinar responds:

Make it all whole. It, all of it—intellect, emotion, behavior—occurs in and through the physical body. As the body is a concrete whole, so what occurs within and through the body can become the discernable whole, integrated in its meaningfulness...Mind in its place, I conceptualize the present situation. I am placed together. Synthesis. (Pinar and Grumet, 1976, p. 61) (p. 521).

The synthetical moment is a moment of simultaneously accepting the dynamic nature of your being, even those elements of self that are diametrically opposed; you are located in your own landscape and situated in the world—comfortable, confident, conscious.

In Pinar's four moments I find the influence of Joseph Schwab (1969) and the "organic connections" of the quasi-practical. Making the organic connections between past, present, and future is an exercise of the quasi-practical. In *The Practical: A Language for Curriculum*, Schwab (1969) discusses how law is based on past cases: "It is this recourse into accumulated lore, to experience of actions and their consequences, to action and reaction at the concrete case, which constitutes the heart of the practical" (p. 21).

Autobiography is an invitation to investigate one's accumulated lore. The goal of autobiography is not only to understand who and where one is, and where and whom one wants to be and become, but to investigate how one has acted, to connect action and consequence, and thus ground one in the context of action. How have I acted? What were the consequences of my actions? How do the answers to these questions assist me in choosing future action? Autobiography is an exercise of simultaneously investigating,

prosecuting, defending, and judging one's own past, present, and future; an invaluable critical thinking exercise. As Grumet (1981) states:

Now in this process [autobiography] the original author, the original audience, and the contemporary reader are one in the same person...The 'self' that we discover when reflect on our experience is as Sartre (1972) has argued, a construct, an interpretation that we make after panning for meaning in the stream of our experience and trying to identify the rocks that gleam through the silt. (p. 126)

This reflective atemporal journey awakens one to the complexity of life and living, creating a space for the tenses of self—past, present, future—to exist simultaneously in conversation. In this conversation one comes to know one's temporal selves, travelling through one's accumulated lore, tracing a line from past to present to future. Sitting here now I can, surrendering myself to vision, trace a line from my roots on the farm, to undergraduate education, to graduate school, to instructor in the gross anatomy lab; I can connect the dots, though the past young farmer may not have believed it possible. From here I can look towards a future, seeing myself travelling further into academia; there is a subtle voice that longs once again for the simple life, but I am unsure if this voice is one of "remembrance or anticipation" (Grumet, 1981, p. 115).

Influences on Currere

Currere has many influences: existential philosophy, phenomenology, hermeneutics, and psychoanalysis (Pinar, 1995; Gough, 1999; Bullough & Pinnegar 2001).

Baldwin (1995) notes that Existentialism began as Kierkegaard's reaction to Hegel's abstract rationalism. Existentialism focuses on the "existing individual, and its from this special use of the term 'existence'...to describe a distinctive human mode of being that existentialism gets its name" (p. 257-259). Greene (1978) describes Kierkegaard's decision to become an author:

...Soren Kierkegaard describes himself sitting in the Frederiksberg garden on Sunday afternoon asking himself what he was going to do with his life. Wherever he looked, he thought practical men were preoccupied with making life easier for people...“(making) spiritual existence systematically easier and easier”...He decided, he says, “with the same humanitarian enthusiasm as the others,” to make things harder, “to create difficulties everywhere.” (p. 161)

These created difficulties were to awaken people to their freedom and help them develop an awareness of a “personal mode of existence” and release them, as individuals, from being subsumed under “abstractions like ‘the Public,’ lost in the anonymity of ‘the crowd’” (p. 161). One hundred and forty-eight years ago, Kierkegaard wrote these words articulating my contemporary fears and my enduring interest in a concept of autobiography and living consciously—a dream of awakening a “personal mode of existence” for not only myself, but others as well.

Kierkegaard was a devoted, if not eccentric, Christian who planned a career in the Church but changed his mind as he became more and more disillusioned with the modern practices of Christianity. He felt Christianity had made Christians dependant on the Church for spirituality, ignoring their own personal relationship with God—which he termed as “inwardness”, the absolute relationship with God, committing of oneself to live

as Jesus Christ did. Under various pseudonyms he publicly criticized the Church (Baldwin, 1995; Ozmon & Craver, 1995). Kierkegaard felt that modern society, including the church, had objectified its citizens, marginalized the spirit, and thereby led to a loss of individuality and a spiritless society.

In the final moment of currenre, the synthetical moment, there is a placing together of self, a synthesis of all the pictures taken in other moments. Kierkegaard wrote of synthesis while discussing the self in one of his final papers: *The Sickness Unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening*, under the pseudonym Anti-Climacus. Kierkegaard (1849) writes:

A human being is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation that relates itself to itself or is the relation's relating itself to itself in the relation; the self is not the relation but is the relation's relating itself to itself. A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short, a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two. (p. 13) (as cited in Storm, <http://www.sorenkierkegaard.org/kw19.htm>)

The self is not a static entity, but a dynamic relationship that emerges when one engages in action, an “ongoing conversation” (Doll, 2005) between the spiritual (infinite, eternal) and the physical (finite, temporal). The self is the synthesis, neither the spirit nor the body, but the whole spiritual essence expressed through the physical body, the relationship: a conversation of mind. The mind is not the relationship between the body and spirit, but the mind’s relating of itself to itself in body and itself in spirit. The synthetic moment of autobiography, if rooted in Kierkegaard’s synthesis, is an intimate

knowledge of the self, eternally and temporally—“what is this temporal complexity that presents itself to me as my present?” (Pinar 1995, p. 521). The synthetic moment assists us in moving forward because we understand ourselves as dynamic relationships—“I am placed together. Synthesis.” (Pinar 1995, p. 521).

Heidegger’s existentialism focuses on the Being, or *being-in-the-world*, which is not necessarily *the* individual, but “largely rests on the individual interpreting and constructing a personal world of meaning” (Ozmon & Craver, 1995, p. 247). This personal world of meaning is also situated in society with others, not necessarily a world of our choosing, but one that requires investigation; in order to know ourselves we must to some degree know our environment (Baldwin, 1995). Heidegger is also a force involved in phenomenology, another influence on autobiography. Heidegger strives for depth of meaning via *dasein*, which is “Human being in the sense of ‘being there’ ... *dasein* is always arriving out of a past and anticipating a future” (Ozmon & Craver, 1995, p. 255); as is the process of *currere*.

Phenomenology as philosophy, according to Grossman (1995): “...has its own method, reflection on the essences of mental acts, and has its own subject matter, consciousness. Phenomenology, according to this conception, is the study of the essence of consciousness” (p. 660). Phenomenology as qualitative inquiry focuses on “lived experiences” of a “concept or the phenomenon” (Creswell, 1998, p. 51).

Creswell (1998) identifies four themes of phenomenology:

1. A return to the traditional tasks of philosophy
2. A philosophy without presuppositions
3. The intentionality of consciousness

4. The refusal of the subject-object dichotomy

“A return to the traditional tasks of philosophy” is returning to the tasks of philosophy conceived by the Greeks: “a search for wisdom”, as opposed to the empiricism that dominates traditional research (Creswell, 1998, p. 52).

As “a philosophy without presuppositions” phenomenology asks us to suspend our judgments as to what is real in “the natural world” until it is discovered via exploration of the data; this is Husserl’s notion of *epoche* (Creswell, 1998; Inwood, 1995). *Epoche* is an aspect of Husserl’s phenomenology; Heidegger does not believe that one should, or can, bracket out preconceived notions. *Dasein* represents Heidegger’s shift from Husserl’s bracketing.

Autobiographical writing is sometimes a creative representation of the world as seen by the author; when the author attempts a sense of distancing, writing often becomes a combination drawn from experience, fantasy, and literature (Pinar, 1995). In this process:

...currere does not constitute a reflective retreat from the world, but a heightened engagement with it...in this way, phenomenology and the aesthetic process share that distancing from the everyday and the familiar in order to see them with a freshness and immediacy which is like seeing them for the first time. (p. 415)

Pinar (1995), of the relationship between currere and *epoche*, writes: “currere is designed to act as the phenomenological *epoche*, slackening ‘the intentional threads which attach us to the world and thus bring them to our notice’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, quoted in Grumet, 1976a, p. 40)” (p. 415).

The third theme of phenomenological research: “The intentionality of consciousness” (Creswell, 1998) is the notion that consciousness is directed towards an object. With respect to autobiography Pinar (1995) writes:

The notion of ‘constitution’ [as reciprocity between subjectivity and objectivity in experience and meaning] central to both *currere* and Husserlian phenomenology, is founded in Brentano’s formulation of ‘intentionality’ as a fundamental structure of consciousness... [and] specifies that all consciousness is consciousness of something, and so the subject, as subject, is accessible to oneself via the object intended. (p. 414)

Autobiography, like Husserlian phenomenology, accepts consciousness as not a “passive recipient”, but an active dynamic relationship between self and world where knowledge and understanding reside; thus the importance and significance of “lived experience” in autobiography and phenomenology (Pinar, 1995). Husserl believed an exploration of the whole consciousness, including the peripheral edges, and therefore practiced disciplined reflections; *currere* is an example of such a practice (Pinar, 1995).

Creswell’s (1998) final theme of phenomenology is “the refusal of the subject-object dichotomy” where the reality of objects are “perceived within the meaning of the experience of an individual” (p. 53). As Grumet notes:

Objective constitution is the life of the subject; knowledge of self becomes knowledge of self as knower of the world, not just as a passive recipient of stimuli from the objective world, not as an expression of latent subjectivity, but as a bridge between this two domains, a mediator. The

homunculus of educational experience resides in each cognition. (As cited in Pinar, 1995, p. 414)

In conclusion, Pinar (1995) summarizes the relationship between phenomenology and *currere*:

Currere as autobiographical self-report communicates the individuals lived experience as it is socially located, politically positioned, and discursively formed while working to succumb to none of these structurings. It is, in an essential way, phenomenological in character. However, it is not exclusively phenomenological. (p. 417)

Hermeneutics has also been identified as an influence of *currere* (Pinar, 1995; Gough, 1999; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). Ozmon and Craver (1995) explain: “where phenomenology seeks an ordered description of the objects of consciousness, hermeneutics concentrates on the interpretation and meaning of conscious experience over time. Language is central to hermeneutics because it is through language that fruitful interpretation and meaning are secured” (p. 257). Hermeneutics gets its name from Hermes, messenger to the Greek gods, and refers to the art of interpretation (Inwood, 1995). Hermes is also thought to have been a “trickster” and thus his messages were often in need of interpretation.

An interesting point to ponder with regards to autobiography is this notion of Hermes as a “trickster”. If Hermes was not always honest in his conveyance of message, then only two knew the “truth” of his message: Hermes himself and the god who sent the message. In autobiography we investigate our experience, interpret it, and become Hermes, discovering the truth of our message, reconnecting with the god who sent it.

Perhaps this is what Pinar (1988/1992) means by a: "...Heideggerean regression to a preindividual preoedipal merging with the Source" (p. 21).

Norris (1995) writes the hermeneutic circle "has to do with the inherent circularity of all understanding" (p. 353). This circularity addresses temporality, circling through past, present, and future moments. It also addresses a cycle of interpreting the whole via its parts, and the parts via the whole. Oberg (Wilson & Oberg, 2002) relays that Caputo's (1987) flux of the hermeneutic circle is one that spins out from the familiar to the general, resembling what Heidegger called the paradox of proximity: "that which is closest is a source of insight into a generality" (p. 5). This implies that what is closest to me—my particular lived experience, my subjective perception—is lived experience and perception of, and provides insight into, a more general public experience; a synthesis, a cyclical relationship between my view and the public view. The method of autobiography borrows from all these aspects of the hermeneutic circle.

Along with existential philosophy, phenomenology and hermeneutics, *currere* is also influenced by psychoanalysis (Pinar, 1995, p. 515; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 13). Grumet (1976) (as cited in Pinar, 1995) writes:

Psychoanalytically, *currere* as interpretation of experience involves the examination of manifest and latent, meaning, conscious and unconscious content of language, as well as the political implications of such reflection and interpretation...*currere* "is what the individual does with the curriculum, his active reconstruction of his passage through its social, intellectual, physical structures" (1976b, p. 111). (p. 521)

Freud explored the subconscious, believing it influenced our conscious lives; traditionally the subconscious influence has been viewed as negative, though this is not necessarily true. These subconscious desires are inherent to our nature and require attention, which via psychoanalysis is most often discussed as repression of desires and impulses (Branden, 1969). Peterson and Gonzalez (2000) write: “Freud, a quintessential modernist, posited that unconscious motivation was the mechanism that determined behaviour. Unconscious motivation occurs out of one’s awareness but is revealed clinically through free association and in daily life through slips of the tongue and the jokes one finds amusing” (p. 142).

Currere shares psychoanalytical foundations of subconscious influences on conscious life, utilizing strategies of free association writing, “the craft of autobiography” which brings to light “ego structure” via conversation between non-ego—external and internal (including Jung’s collective unconscious and personal)—and ego (Pinar, 1995). Autobiographical investigation illuminates not only the subconscious personal beliefs of self, but those rooted in the collective unconscious of society.

Currere is not however, psychoanalysis: “Currere is not a form of therapy designed to treat symptoms. It cannot employ self-reflection to the degree that psychoanalysis does to free the subject from...behaviors overdetermined by unconscious impulses, defenses, or repetitive compulsions” (Grumet as cited in Pinar 1995, p. 521).

Currere, in general, has been influenced by existential philosophy, phenomenology, hermeneutics, and psychoanalysis. Each autobiographer will have different foci and influences on their particular inquiry. Some will relay heavily on

phenomenology, while others may be more hermeneutical; autobiography can also employ post-modern and poststructuralist perspectives.

The above has been an overview of autobiography in general, identifying its foundations and location within the larger frame of qualitative research, and some of the variations that reside under the umbrella of autobiography.

What Makes Autobiography Research?

Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) ask: “when does self-study become research?” (p. 14). Self-study, they reply, becomes research:

When biography and history are joined, when the issue confronted by the self is shown to have relationship to and bearing on the context and ethos of a time, then self-study moves to research. It is the balance between the way in which private experience can provide insight and solution for public issues and troubles and the way in which public theory can provide insight and solution for private trial that forms the nexus of self-study and simultaneously presents the central challenge to those who would work in this emerging area. (p. 15)

The intersection Bullough and Pinnegar refer to is the intersection of private/personal self with the public Other. Feminist autobiography explores a woman’s private/personal biography as it intersects with history in schools and society. Women’s private experiences, shared via autobiographical inquiry, provide author and reader an insight into the private lives and public issues of women, while opening both to the knowledge provided by public theory. Clandinin and Connelly’s (1998) *Personal Practical Knowledge* explores the private experiences and public issues of classroom teachers,

providing insight as to how teachers practice teaching—how they think about it, how they feel about it—while creating a community, a space for teachers to compare personal biography and history; a process that informs both the autobiographical teacher and a community of practitioners.

Currere invites us to explore our private/personal educational moments. The regressive moment invites us to return to a time when our temporal biographies joined with the moments of history; the progressive moment asks us to envision where the personal/private and the public may merge in the future; the analytical moment asks us to temporally contextualize ourselves at the present crossroads of biography and history, and the syncretical solicits simultaneous acquiescence. Each moment, each autobiographical investigation explores the intersection of private biography and public history, where the private/personal of the author reflects a facet of the Other's milieu. A journey into the milieu presents the autobiographer with the opportunity to understand not only the milieu, but one's self as well; in this same journey the public autobiographical writing informs the milieu of itself.

This is what I hope to accomplish with this work; to not only understand my own processes, but to share my own process—the Star Process—with the autobiographical research milieu.

Negotiating a Balance.

The key seems to be finding this balance where Self informs the Other and Other informs Self. Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) write: “Each self-study researcher must negotiate that balance, but it must be a balance—tipping too far toward the self side produces solipsism or a confessional, and tipping too far the other way turns self-study

into traditional research” (p. 15). Ironically, balance is a precarious term because of autobiography’s temporal nature. In the end, a self-study needs to demonstrate balance between biography and history, self and other, but at particular moments along the way the scales may tip to solipsism or traditional research. One must keep in mind that a negotiation is: “a discussion aimed at reaching an agreement” (Oxford Dictionary, p. 601). At times one must confess one’s self; while at other times access the contemporary literature—finding a balance between speaking and listening, a discussion. Pinar (1995) writes: “currere may seem solitary work, and it can be. Indeed, Pinar asserts it must be, at least occasionally” (p. 523). In interacting oneself and one’s voice with a chorus of others, one must have some knowledge of one’s self and what one wishes to say. In the end we strive for a balanced negotiation. As Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) write, each autobiographer must find their own balance.

Oberg (Wilson & Oberg 2001) writes: “...the more deeply inward into my interest I follow the spiralling, the more forcefully it moves outward [to the social/political] when the time comes” (p. 8). Oberg’s private/personal interest eventually spirals outwards into the public, intersecting her biography with the history of the Other; the inquiry itself negotiates the overall balance. What began as a personal/private moment of voice, shifted forcefully outwards to listening when her voice resonated with, or seemed to rub up against, contemporary public discourse; a discussion evolves and in the end a balanced inquiry emerges.

Autobiography itself is an individual process without firm traditions or guidelines; its processes are as individual as are its autobiographers. Creswell’s (1998) book: *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions* explores the

traditions of: biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. If one's research is in one of these traditions, Creswell's book can be used as a thesis-writing guide; this is not to imply that all researchers working in one of the above traditions approach their research the same—there are many ways to work within a tradition. However, I have yet to find a book or article that has done for autobiography what Creswell (1998) has done for these five traditions; this is both disconcerting and promising. This dilemma is the double-edged sword of autobiographical research; there is freedom and uncertainty, choice and responsibility. On the one hand there is a freedom of choice and expression, and on the other, responsibility for these choices and uncertainty of whether or not one is “doing it right.”

Proceeding Autobiographically:

Oberg (Wilson & Oberg, 2002) writes: “My method of writing this paper articulates a process of researching in this place where there is no conceptual map and no method guarantees results. I rely on my own resources, proceeding autobiographically” (p. 3). As I wander further into the quagmire of autobiographical research I have come to realize that by its very nature, autobiographical research will always be double-edged. Each researcher's journey into personal history and lived experience is individual and unique; consequently each autobiographical representation is individual and unique as well. Their narratives are invitations to swim in the soul of their experience, an opportunity to see another's perspective. I have come to realize that autobiography is an effective—if not always efficient—method of inquiry *because* there are no firm traditions stifling the researcher with an imposed “right” way to do it; as Dr. Pinar encouraged me to do in his email: “...revise it to suit your own purposes.”

Oberg (Wilson & Oberg, 2002) explains what it means to proceed autobiographically:

Proceeding autobiographically in research means simply that my life is the site of articulation of an enduring interest, the site where, through writing, my research topic takes shape. My life is not the eventual topic, nor is the eventual topic *in* my life in the usual sense of "contained" within it.

However, the fact that the site is *my* life makes a difference. My life is not a neutral site; not just any topic configures in that site. Nor is my writing a neutral process that describes a topic that is already there. Rather the topic configures as it does through my writing. However, although the topic constellates from my life and through my writing, the topic is not particular only to my life. Paradoxically, the process of autobiographical research writing I describe here produces topics of general interest within the larger social/political context of life in general. [emphases in original]

(p. 4)

Oberg's "Proceeding autobiographically" shares some qualities with Kierkegaard's (1849) definition of the self as a relationship of synthesis: "The self is a relation that relates itself to itself or is the relation's relating itself to itself in the relation; the self is not the relation but is the relation's relating itself to itself" (as cited in Storm, <http://www.sorenkierkegaard.org/kw19.htm>). Oberg's "proceeding autobiographically" has the same dynamic synthesis as Kierkegaard's self. My research topic is not my life, but located in my life, yet its being located in my life does not necessarily intersect it with

the public situation either. Autobiographical research is a dynamic synthesis: the relation relating itself in one's life—one's biography—to itself in the life of the Other—history.

A Significant Breakthrough – A New Direction:

As part of my research I read Pinar's (1994) *Autobiography, Politics and Sexuality: Essays in Curriculum Theory 1972-1992*, and Greene's (1978) *Landscapes of Learning* and (1988) *The Dialectic of Freedom*; reading these works has forever changed my perception of autobiographical research. As I read through these collections of essays on curriculum I found myself drawn back to the introductions written by Pinar and Greene, introductions offering a more personal insight into their books and their lives. Reading these introductions I was struck with the realization that these collections of essays were autobiographical.

Pinar's (1994) collection offers a linear documentation of his emerging autobiographical method of curriculum; as well as, when read carefully—or autobiographically—a documentation of his academic and personal becoming. The introduction to this collection offers a very personal and reflective look at his life and his life's work; this introduction locates the essays on curriculum in his life while contextualizing them in the field of curriculum inquiry. In the essays however, he moves away from himself, exploring autobiography and curriculum inquiry; he seldom implicates himself in the first person, shifting to public metaphors of life and/or literature.

Greene's (1978, 1988) collections offer the same personal reflective introductions, grounding the essays in her life and curriculum inquiry, but shift away from herself as she writes the essays themselves. Greene is the master at using the public domain of literature as metaphors to illustrate what must be her private/personal

experiences. Her writing is powerful and inspirational, but her essays are not personal or wrought with overt inclusion of personal story or reflections; the personal is there however, cloaked behind the choices she makes with respect to topic and literature. Each time she approaches the private/personal, she shifts to an example from literature.

What I found awkward—as the reader—in the many autobiographical theses I read while researching this topic of autobiography was the overt personal confessional as *representation* of the autobiographical process. I emphasize representation here to emphasize that autobiography is an invaluable method of private/personal inquiry that may not necessarily require a private/personal confessional style of writing. Greene's (1978) personal landscape—one's personal history, one's lived life—is intended to ground one's transcendence, as she illustrates in her essays; however, though her essays are ground in her personal landscape, perhaps even *about* her personal landscape, her essays contain no first-personal confessionals.

Pinar's essays, though often about autobiography, rarely contain overt personal first-hand accounts of his personal life. His essays have a more personal flavour than those of Greene, but still Pinar shifts to literature, philosophy, and contemporary curricular discourse when the private/personal moves to the fore; like Greene, the private personal exists, but is cloaked between the lines of his writing—there if you read for it.

Many of my frustrations and false starts in the writing of this autobiographical thesis have been a result of my resistance to being mired in the mundane, writing a confessional journal that proposes nothing new while defending that which has past. Much of my early writing fell into this trap; it took a while, and a lot of writing, to find the balance proposed by Bullough and Pinnegar (2001). It was when I realized that the

Star Process could be my contribution to autobiographical research, that I was able to find this balance for myself.

Autobiography, Politics and Sexuality (Pinar, 1994) is not only about autobiography, but *is* autobiography; however, it is also much more. It contains the personal without becoming solipsistic or treading too deeply into the private. It is about education, but it includes the periphery and politics as well. It invites us to explore the ways we think about teaching, but it is not just a book about thinking or teaching. It suggests without preaching, creating openings, inviting us to explore new philosophies and ways of becoming by reflecting on the way things were, are, and could possibly be. It is after his implied *perhaps*, that I begin to search and discover what follows the *perhaps* for me. What will we discover when we take time to complete, each for ourselves, statements that begin with *perhaps*?

One goal of this thesis was to take Pinar's lead, emulating his style, investigating autobiography while simultaneously being autobiography. My focus, my motivation, has always been to make the subconscious more conscious, to live consciously, so that we are less often surprised, not by life, but by ourselves. I believe this to be the goal of autobiography; it is most certainly a fundamental goal of the Star Process. In this thesis I do share the personal—perhaps a function of my neophytic autobiographical and academic immaturity—but I have made a conscious effort to make the private/personal autobiography the subconscious subtext of this autobiographical inquiry. My private and personal “I” exists in and around the writing, in its style, its tone, and focus; hopefully creating new openings, inviting you to explore life, teaching, and education via the

beautiful vehicle that is your self, your visions, your beliefs—to look at life, living, and education through your private “I”.

Greene’s (1988) *The Dialectic of Freedom* as another example of an autobiographical inquiry worthy of emulation. Though *The Dialectic of Freedom* is a collection of essays exploring the notion of freedom, it also an elegant example of autobiographical inquiry from one of the most elegant writers I have ever had the pleasure of reading. Greene (1988) writes:

This book arises out of a lifetime’s preoccupation with quest, with pursuit. On the one hand, the quest has been deeply personal: that of a woman striving to affirm the feminine as wife, mother, and friend, while reaching, always reaching, beyond the limits imposed by the obligations of a woman’s life. On the other hand, it has been in some sense deeply public as well: that of a person struggling to connect the undertaking of education, with which she has been so long involved, to making and remaking of a public space, a space of dialogue and possibility. (p. xi)

Greene, in this introduction, grounds her collection of essays on freedom in the lived experiences of her personal landscape.

Oberg (Wilson & Oberg, 2002) writes: “Proceeding autobiographically in research means simply that my life is the site of articulation of an enduring interest, the site where, through writing, my research topic takes shape” (p. 4). What arises out my enduring interest is this desire to explore and understand the role of autobiographical understanding and conscious awareness upon the lives of people in process, or whom Greene may call: “...the freedom of people in search of themselves” (p. xi). A quest I

hope is simultaneously deeply personal and public as well; a quest that began and is facilitated by Star Process processes.

Shifting From Self: Pinar, Kafka, Greene, Miller, Chopin, and Me

The main difference between the autobiographies I read and the autobiographical inquires of Pinar and Greene is not the degree of the private/personal that is shared, but more so the manner of private/personal inclusion. When the autobiographical inquires of Pinar and Greene begin to tread into the private/personal, they make a subtle shift away from themselves into literary or academic examples.

In his article: *The Trial*, Pinar (1976/1994) uses Franz Kafka's novel, *The Trial*, as a metaphor to illustrate and support currere as a method of inquiry. Pinar (1992) in his introduction to his collection of essays writes: "Certainly the mainstream of the field found the method of currere...difficult to appreciate, and so I made some effort to speak to what I took to be its importance. For this work I turned to Kafka's *The Trial*" (p. 2). The first seven pages outline the story of Joseph K., his arrest, trial, and execution; Pinar (1976/1994) opens with: "Some one must have traduced Joseph K., for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning' (Kafka, 1968, p. 1). So begins Franz Kafka's *The Trial*" (p.29). Later in the article, Pinar writes: "K.'s arrest, my arrest is multi-dimensional" (p. 38). Joseph K. is a metaphor for Pinar himself; the trial of K. captures the autobiographical essence of Pinar's particular private/personal experience. The trial of Joseph K. as a metaphor is much more powerful than if Pinar had written about his own personal feelings, because we can enter the metaphor without feeling like we are entering into his personal life. The private/personal exists in the article, but cloaked behind Joseph K. Twenty-eight years later, Pinar's metaphor of K., captures the

essence of my own experiences—thus I enter the world of Joseph K., Pinar, and autobiography.

Greene is the master at shifting away from herself, using examples from literature; the personal/private of her life as: “a woman striving to affirm the feminine as wife, mother, and friend, while reaching, always reaching, beyond the limits imposed by the obligations of a woman’s life” (1988, p. xi) is cloaked behind literature in her public representations. For example, Greene (1988) uses Sue Miller’s (1986) novel *The Good Mother*, sharing the story and struggle of the main character Anna Dunlop as a single mother “who is legally free”, but whose “space for freedom has been narrowed hopelessly...there is no question but that whatever freedom she could have achieved would have been conditioned by obligation and relationship” (p. 59). Greene also uses Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* and her main character Edna Pontellier, Greene writes:

Like so many women of her time, she has let herself be victimized by what she has taken for granted “through habit” as natural, as given. But her “awakening” is also an illusion...caught between her own illusions and what she perceives as the arbitrary requirements of society, she has no choice. She cannot even summon up the possibility of a fully independent life without a man. She is legally free; she is wealthy; she is beautiful and talented; she has a family; and she dies. Nothing follows. The universe is unperturbed. (p. 63-64).

Nowhere has Greene written she *is* Dunlop or Pontellier, but it is hard not to relate their struggles with what must have been Greene’s struggles to define herself as a woman and an academic—a faculty member at Columbia University since 1965 and at several colleges before that; as Greene (1988) writes: “from the beginnings of my career, trying

with some difficulty to be accepted as a philosopher of education...” (p. xi-xii). The literature she chooses is more powerful because the connection is implied; the private/personal exists between the lines. Her use of literature creates a safe “authentic public space” (1988, p. xi); safe for we can all meet in the world of literature, each knowing for ourselves the reasons and meanings these metaphors relate to our own lived experiences, providing confidentiality while sharing in public.

Reaction from Dr. Pinar.

After writing the above two sections I was curious as to whether or not I was “on-track” or “missing the mark”; with this uncertainty I sent these to sections to Dr. Pinar. He graciously agreed to read these sections and responded as follows:

Your point about the first-person confessional as THE representation of autobiographical work is important and insightful. In recent years, I've used the phrase "indirect autobiography" to portray what you have astutely noticed. Your self-reflection (proposing nothing new while defending the past) sounds harsh but admirably self-critical, something too often missing in autobiographical work.

Your exposition of Greene and my use of Kafka is just right. (email correspondence, August 16th, 2004)

With renewed confidence, believing in my intuition, I returned to my inquiry knowing that I needed to explore this unfolding awakening moment—simultaneously along-side the autobiographical inquiry into the Star Process—endeavouring to explore, and at some level create what Pinar (2004) referred to as an “indirect autobiography”.

I found in my infancy as an autobiographical inquirer, that the personal voice often came to the fore, speaking stridently; I felt a need to honour that emerging voice as

it contextualized my journey and the Star Process as well, rooting it in my life and thereby providing a way in for the Other as well. It was difficult to shift this personal writing to data. There are times when an academic voice spoke, or a wiser older future self, at these times I did accomplish in some ways an indirect autobiography. As I mature in this process I hope to be able to emulate Greene and Pinar; this is certainly a goal for the future, which inhabits both my present and past.

Currere as the Process of This Inquiry:

Early in the process of my inquiry I wrote Dr. Pinar, asking how I might go about using currere; what is the method of currere? He responded: “Don't feel you must follow the method as I have outlined it. Feel free to revise it according to your purposes, okay?” (Email correspondence, April 8, 2003). With this in mind I began to explore autobiography, thinking about how to use it as a methodology, but also how to “make it my own” so to speak, reflecting my own beliefs and processes while tying it to the Star Process and living consciously.

Me and Michelangelo:

What sculpture is to a block of marble education is to the soul.

(Joseph Addison)

I liken my approach to autobiographical writing to my perception of Michelangelo's approach to sculpture.

Me and Michelangelo Free-Writing – May 16th, 2003

As I sit here and prepare to write my thesis, I feel it may be important to explore, and attempt to articulate, the manner I am approaching “doing” this thesis before I

actually do it. As I began to think about exactly what “doing the thesis” meant, I realized that this is very similar to “doing” life and living; I hope this work reflects the philosophy of life and living I attempt to bring to my life each and everyday. This connection between life and thesis has made me realize that once we have identified the essence of *what* and *why* we are doing something, the *how* we are going to do it often comes to the fore; I have found this to be true many times in work and in life.

At the outset of this process, sitting here with pen and page, I know and believe my thesis exists somewhere full, complete, and approved. Somewhere within me, within the universe—in a non-linear spiritual reality—exists a completed linear physical thesis, all I need to do is find it and let it out. That is not to say that it will be born in a single instant; it will take some time and effort for it to emerge.

I realize that once this thesis does emerge, it will not be a beginning or an ending, but a place I passed through, stayed long enough to listen, giving its essence voice through me. The thesis I submit will have a beginning, middle, and end of sorts—in and of itself it will exist fully and completely—but in the grand scheme of things it will exist as a photograph of what was once and is now.

When I think about articulating this process of awakening and exploring it autobiographically I am reminded of how Michelangelo approached sculpting. Michelangelo believed that his figures already existed, trapped within the marble; he believed it to be his purpose to awaken or release these figures from the stone. In the same fashion a naked body is slowly revealed as one lets the water out of a bathtub, Michelangelo chipped away stone freeing his trapped figures.

Like Michelangelo I believe that my thesis already exists full and complete, all I need to do is to release it, not from marble—though there are days when this seems more real than metaphorical—but from my lived experiences existing in the context of my awakenings. This thesis is encased in experiences I will explore via writing; writing is how I am going to present this thesis, therefore writing, through writing, must be how I am to find it.

Michelangelo released his figures by chipping away pieces of marble with his hammer and chisel. I intend to release my thesis by chipping away pieces of writing with pencil and paper. I will, via the writing of my experiences, exploration of my ideas and philosophies, chip away the words and phrases that are encasing the final completed document. I will write many words, many sentences, many papers, fill many scribblers, perhaps even explore creatively through songwriting and storytelling, but in the end a final product will emerge. I have a vision of Michelangelo standing in front of his *David* with pieces of marble, pieces of the *Not-David* at his feet. I can see myself with a final bound document in my hands, where scraps of paper marked with ideas and diagrams, notated *Tim Horton's* napkins, scribblers, papers, and journals—pieces of the not-thesis—lay at my feet. Pieces of writing or pieces of marble, both physically articulate a necessary process of understanding, a process of becoming and being, a transformation of aspiration into actuality, the ideal to real—theory into practice.

Did Michelangelo have a vision of *David* while he stood there looking at the marble or did *David* emerge as he put hammer to chisel? Perhaps it was a little of both. Perhaps he knew that *David* existed in the stone, but did he know *David's* face? Contextually knowing the appearance of a man, Michelangelo could begin to chip away the stone and

let the delicate personal features of *David* emerge as he engaged in the process of sculpture—releasing *David* from the stone, letting the water out of the tub, awakening him from slumber. I imagine that Michelangelo spent many hours with that slab of marble, sitting there in silent conversation with the *David* who was to eventually emerge.

Michelangelo, while conversing with the *David* still trapped asleep within the marble spoke with the essence of *David*. *The Oxford Dictionary* (2001) defines essence as: “the quality which determines the character of something” (p. 304). The moment Michelangelo could sit there with the revealed awakened *David*, accepting that the sculpture was complete, was the moment in which the essence of *David*—the spirit or quality determining *David’s* character with whom Michelangelo had silently conversed—had physically manifested itself in marble; the spiritual essence of *David* became physical through the mind and effort of Michelangelo. I believe my thesis will become a physical reality via Michelangelo’s process.

My experiences are like pieces of marble encasing my thesis; as I travel through these experiences in autobiographical exploration and writing, I will be putting hammer to chisel, having silent conversations with the essence of autobiography and living consciously. I will travel through the experiences that have led to my own awakenings, making it possible for me to be here investigating the value of autobiography and living consciously in life and education.

What I find most intriguing is that I am both Michelangelo and *David* in this process, releasing the essence of myself from the confines of myself. I intend to discover my thesis about living consciously and autobiography in the same manner I discovered

living consciously: in the context of my life. It will be necessary for me to “write consciously” in this process.

* * *

With Michelangelo my inquiry began; the foundational essence underlying this autobiographical inquiry rests upon a silent conversation with Michelangelo.

How Did I do it?

As *Me and Michelangelo* describes, I wrote and I wrote, and I wrote some more; my writing is my data. For this inquiry I have written more than 1500 pages. This includes drafts I thought were this thesis, only to realize that I had once again my drafts had only created more data. Finally, I was able to embrace emergence and this thesis was born. In the following pages I will attempt to articulate the nebulous process of this inquiry.

Data Collection:

Data collection in this inquiry utilized Pinar’s four moments of currere: Regressive, Progressive, Analytical, and Synthetical. This exploration was done by means of substantial writing: journal writing, papers, stream of consciousness free writing, thesis writing that became not-thesis, reflections, remembering, ideas, sketches, stories, songs, and musings. Perhaps that part of myself that encouraged me to write to understand and journal all those years ago had looked to a future—that is now my present—realizing that I would need these windows to the past in order to completely create this inquiry.

With the focus of my inquiry in mind—autobiography, living consciously, and the Star Process—I autobiographically explored awakening moments when I discovered the Star Process and subsequently living consciously.

The Regressive Moment.

In the regressive moment I traveled back to the moment I initially discovered autobiographical inquiry—or an informal variation thereof—as it intersected with my discovery of the Star Process and the subsequent process of living consciously. I returned as Pinar (1975/1992) describes: “One returns to the past, to capture it as it was, and as it hovers over the present” (p. 21). In the regressive moment I became conscious of my past, exploring my unconscious habitual responses to the world (Pinar, 1975/1992)—the moments preceding discovery of the Star Process. This was a complex process as simultaneously I was juggling multiple regressions. First of all, on one layer I regressed to the time when I discovered the Star Process, which in and of itself was born out a regression—an exploration of my past experiences from that point backwards in linear time and consequently formed a second layer. Finally, this thesis is emerging currently, forming yet another layer as look temporally from this present moment.

Writing my way through moments, exploring them mindfully I photographed the present as described by Pinar (1975/1992):

Bringing the past to the present by printing it. The words begin to coalesce to form a photograph. Holding the picture in front of oneself, one studies the detail, the literal holding of the picture and one’s response to it, suggestive of the relation of past to present. (p. 24)

In the regressive moment, I relived these moments, experiencing them once again and my reactions to them, resisting the temptation to interpret the meaning attached to these moments.

The Progressive Moment.

In the progressive moment I looked ahead to possible futures, attempting to see where these roads I walk may lead; making conscious futures I move towards. I tried to envision the role of the Star Process, living consciously and autobiographical inquiry, not only in my own future life and educational practices, but perhaps in the future of educational inquiry as well. I worked to see now "...what ought to be, from a moral and ethical point of view, and what is in the making, what might be in an always open world" (Greene, 1988, p. xi). Making conscious my visions of future helped me to create now, in the present moment, the beginnings of these visions, so that I may choose my reality "by mind and not by chance" (Rand, 1966). Once again, of the progressive moment, Pinar (1995) wrote: "...one looks forward to that which is not yet the case, the future—like the past—inhabits the present. Meditatively the student of currere imagines possible futures" (p. 520).

Once again this is multi-layered; as in returning to the moment of the Star Process and I had to recreate a progressive vision that looked forward to the future from that point in linear time to a place that is currently my present—and the future as well—but from that point in time it exists solely as the future. Well all the while, the progressive moment of this unfolding inquiry, looked ahead from a present moment that differed in temporal linear location from that of the Star Process.

The Analytical Moment.

The analytical moment is two-fold: the exploration of the present, exclusive of the past and future; and the analysis of the “temporal complexity that presents itself to me as my present” (Pinar, 1995, p. 521). Looking at my present, exclusive of past and future, I explored the present moment in the spirit of the regressive moment: being mindful of the way my present is, suspending my judgement or rationalizations of why it was so. As Pinar (1975/1992) suggests, taking pictures with my writing captured where my autobiographical journey was in the present moment. As mentioned earlier, I was lucky I began to write and journal around the time the Star Process was born, thereby providing me with some pictures from the past.

I began to interpret my autobiographical moments, these metaphorical photos of past, present, and future; as Pinar suggests:

Study the three photographs. What are they; what is their individuality? What fundamental theme(s) do they express? Why are they as they are? ...Juxtapose the three photographs: past, present, future. What are their complex, multi-dimensional interrelations? How is the future present in the past, the past in the future, and the present in both? (p. 26)

In this moment I wrote and wrote, making connections with past, present and future. It was in the analytical moment of this inquiry that I realized that my inquiry *is* what it is about—an autobiography about autobiography.

The Synthetical Moment.

Pinar (1995) describes the synthetical moment:

...who is that? Listening carefully to one's own voice one asks: what is the meaning of the present?...Make it all whole. It, all of it—intellect, emotion, behavior—occurs in and through the physical body. As the body is a concrete whole, so what occurs within and through the body can become the discernable whole, integrated in its meaningfulness...Mind in its place, I conceptualize the present situation. I am placed together. Synthesis. (p. 521)

This whole thesis, this final collection of writing, is the synthetical moment of my unfolding autobiography; simultaneously there are infinite syntheses. The pages of this thesis ventured through all moments—regressive, progressive, analytical, synthetical—providing descriptions and explorations of the moments as they intersected with autobiography, the Star Process, and living consciously; however, as writer I attempted to be mindful that I was writing the synthetical moment. In this moment I realize that when the process of creating this thesis is done, this thesis will shift from synthetical present to form yet another regressive photograph.

New Looks at the Old Data:

The first process was to go back through the data collected autobiographically—journals, musings, stories, songs, papers, and free-writing—searching for pieces that were connected to my discovery of the Star Process. This writing became my new data, helping me document, be mindful of, and contextualize the emerging autobiography.

Creating and Writing in an Authentic Public Space:

To explore this concept of public space and articulate my choices of representation, I want to re-visit Greene's (1988) introduction, where she writes:

This book arises out of a lifetime's preoccupation with quest, with pursuit. On the one hand, the quest has been deeply personal: that of a woman striving to affirm the feminine as wife, mother, and friend, while reaching, always reaching, beyond the limits imposed by the obligations of a woman's life. On the other hand, it has been in some sense deeply public as well: that of a person struggling to connect the undertaking of education, with which she has been so long involved, to making and remaking of a public space, a space of dialogue and possibility. All this has meant a continuing effort to attend to many voices, many languages, often submerged in cultures of silence or overwhelmed by official declamation, technical talk, media formulations of the so-called "true" and the so-called "real." [emphases in original] (p. xi)

As has been written, the autobiographical undertone and utility of Greene's writing is made clear. In this inquiry, I struggled to attend to the voices described earlier, to find a public space to share the person/private that has created the Star Process, a now public process. Greene continues:

The aim is to find (or create) an authentic public space, that is one in which diverse human beings can appear before one another as, to quote Hannah Arendt, "the best they know how to be." Such a space requires the provision of opportunities for the articulation of multiple perspectives in multiple idioms, out of which something common can be brought into being. It requires, as well, a consciousness of the normative as well as the possible: of what *ought* to be, from a moral and ethical point of view, and what is in the making, what *might* be in an always open world. [emphases in original] (p. xi)

I have, in this inquiry, attempted to appear in this space, as the best I know how to be, searching to articulate my perspective—one of the multitude of perspectives on autobiographical inquiry—opening out to a consciousness of possibility in life and education; my quest, my pursuit, my enduring interest.

This “authentic public space” Greene discusses is a space she has infused with her private/personal passion for possibility—personal and private—via a style of writing that suggests her private/personal passion without an overt confessional thereof. She shifts away from herself using “...imaginative literature and philosophy...stubbornly seeking out those questions in fictive and poetic worlds, in personal narratives” (p. xii). This autobiographical inquiry differs in the sense that the personal narrative through which I am seeking out these questions is my own; a narrative that teases out the Star Process and illustrates an unfolding autobiographical inquiry.

The following illustration demonstrates my perception of this “authentic public space”:

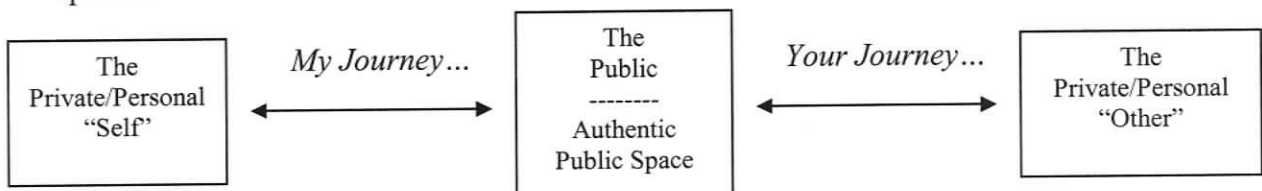


Figure 21: The Journey Into Authentic Public Space (McBurney, 2006)

The private personal is the autobiographical work I have done, contextualizing my understanding in my lived experiences, or as Greene (1978) calls my “personal landscape”. As I shifted to the authentic public space I attempted to cloak the private/personal in my public representation, using literature, philosophy, story, and contemporary discourse as metaphors of my journey. Gough (1999) states: “Metaphors

matter. We need to be aware of the metaphors we and others are using to critically assess their appropriateness” (p. 63); metaphor, appropriate or not, enables personal connection.

The authentic public space is where we converse, though this conversation may be spiritual, virtual, and metaphorical. The Other can enter this space more openly, making metaphorical connections to my writing and representation; this space is more open because metaphorical connections are found in your own private/personal lived experiences, your personal landscape. As Greene (1978) writes: “It is my view that persons are more likely to ask their own questions and seek their own transcendence when they feel themselves to be grounded in their personal histories, their lived lives. That is what I mean by ‘landscapes’” (p. 2). It is from here we journey away from one another, back to our selves.

Each journey travels in two directions: my journey from the private/personal to the public authentic space—where we converse in one form or another—then back again to my private/personal space. Your journey is the same: from your private/personal to the authentic public space and back again. Of course this is simplified and linearized; as with the synthetical moment, we occupy both spaces simultaneously.

My Journey Into the Authentic Public Space:

As the author of this document, conscious of its creation, I have followed a deliberate process of defining my inquiry, locating it within myself, and situating it in my perception of the public Other.

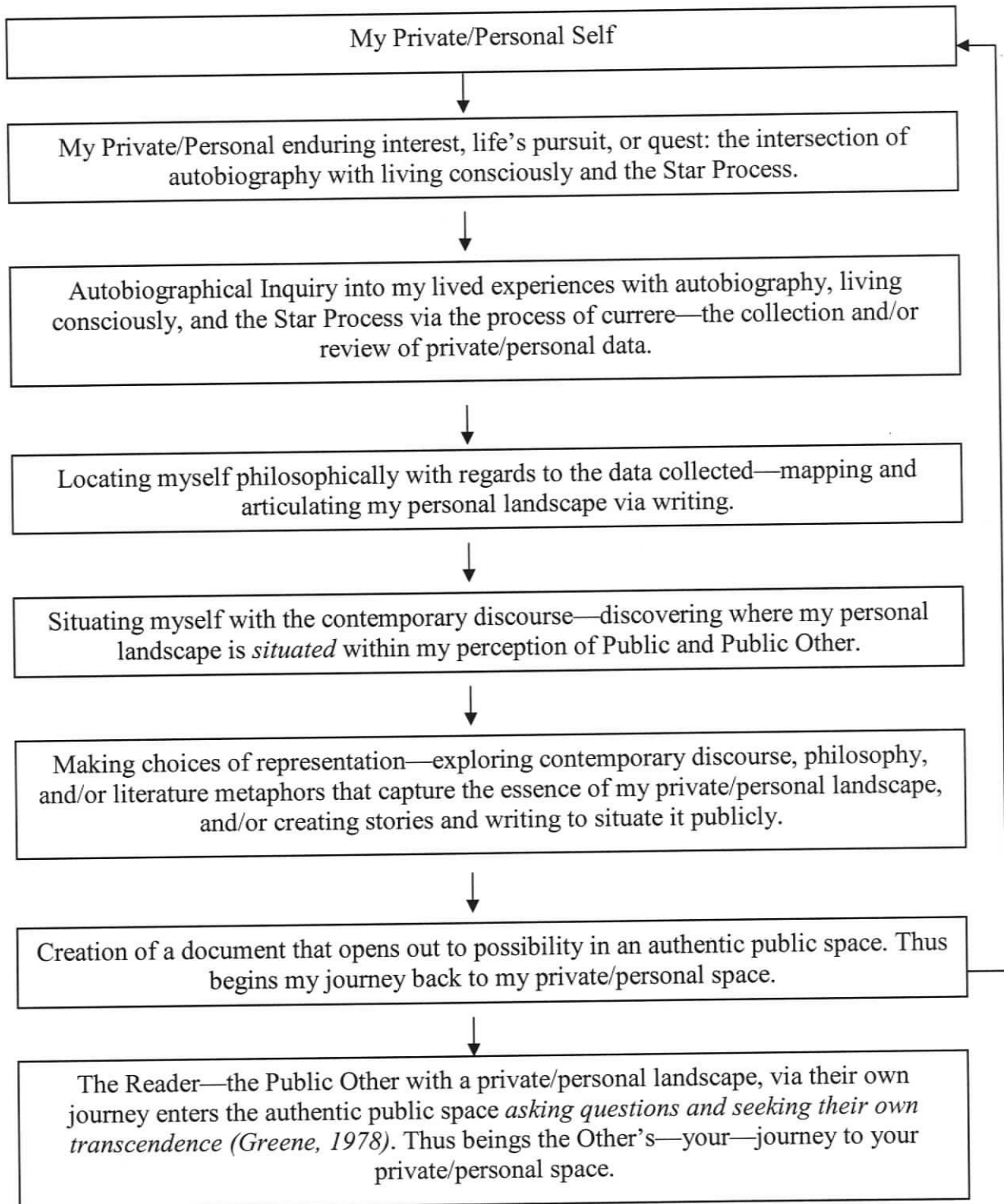


Figure 22: The Journey Into Authentic Public Space (McBurney, 2006)

Authenticity, Quality, and Integrity in Process:

Earlier in this thesis I examined Emerson's (1841/1996) notes on "a foolish consistency" and I felt that in this "methods section" a discussion of validity and reliability was warranted. I realize these are terms that are generally associated with quantitative research, not qualitative; however, questions inspired by the essence of validity and reliability will always arise. What makes this research? Bullough and Pinnegar (2001), as stated in the Review of Literature, feel that autobiography becomes research when "biography and history are joined" (p. 15). Creswell (1998) cites Lincoln's (1995) eight standards for quality and verification, some of these seemed to fit, but one in particular led me in a new direction. One of Lincoln's standards is: "positionality...text should display honesty and authenticity..." (p. 196). How was I going to display honesty, authenticity and integrity in my investigation of the Star Process, living consciously, and the unfolding autobiography?

Pinar (1985/1992) in *Autobiography and Architecture of Self* asks: "is there an authentic self?" (p. 201). This article explores a path of authenticity, exploring its relation to truth, true, genuine, and honesty. In a free-writing exploration associated with this article and the authentic self I wrote: "The authentic self is a self that demonstrates *honesty* in process, not *truth* in product." (Journal, 2003)

Considering these issues, I remembered someone else who had significantly contributed to my inquiry: William E. Doll Jr. Dr. Doll often teaches during summer semester of the University of Victoria; I was fortunate enough to be in one of his classes. I was also lucky enough to attend the ceremony that honoured Dr. Doll's contribution to curriculum studies in the summer of 2005. Thinking of that day, I remembered the paper

he read: *Teaching Good*, an elegant—but somewhat abbreviated—autobiographical account of his career as an educator. Remembering this paper I realized I may have found a way to articulate how I had inquired with honesty, integrity, and authenticity.

In summary of his life of educational inquiry, Doll used an illustration to represent his work in the curriculum field. This body of work includes his four R's of richness, recursion, relations, and rigor; his five C's of currere, complexity, cosmology, conversation, and community; and finally the three S's of science, story, and spirit. As I remembered him speaking of these elements of his life's inquiry I began to wonder if perhaps I may be able to utilize—borrow from Doll's work, from his life—a way in which I may address the issues of honesty, quality, integrity, and authenticity in my own work. It made perfect sense, for these are not only qualities that reflect the work of Doll, but from my own experiences, the person as well. I knew I could use his work to ground my inquiry in honesty, quality, integrity, and authenticity; helping me to find a balance between biography and history (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). This illustration of Bill Doll's life of inquiry is as below:

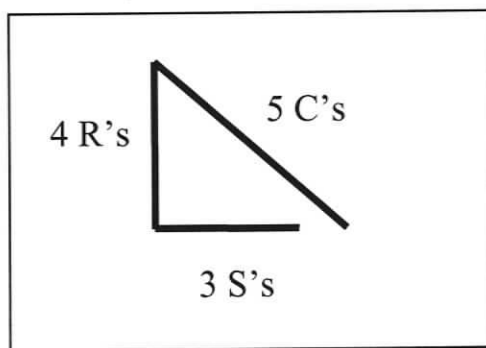


Figure 23: Bill Doll's (2005) Graphic Representation of His Life Work.

From: W.E. Doll. 2005. *Teaching Good*. Copyright William E. Doll. Used with permission.

Doll (2005) of this illustration writes:

In a modernist manner I could ideograph the foregoing as a triangle with the “rightness” of the triangle reminding me of how modernist I really am, and with a gap “left” in one side of the triangle that iterations might occur—iterations to bring forth all sorts of fascinating, yet-to-be shapes, qualities, thoughts. (p. 5-6)

It is through this gap that I entered into Dr. Doll’s work with my thoughts, qualities, yet to be shapes and unfolding iterations of my self, knowing his twelve points could guide and ground my inquiry in honesty and authenticity.

Not only did Doll’s triangle ground me, but it also intersected my life and research with that of Doll; it honours Dr. Doll as one has significantly influenced me as an educator, a philosopher, and as a person. Dr. Doll reminds me that all things contribute to curriculum, whether it is from the “left” or “right” or from science or story; however, more correctly for Dr. Doll this would be: “left” *and* “right”, science *and* story.

The Four R’s:

In a *Transformative Curriculum* (Doll, 1993) one is transformed via the process of education, not merely filled via transfer of data from teacher to learner, education should change us; the four R’s are components of what Doll’s transformative curriculum.

Doll (2005) writes:

As a group, the 4 R’s provide a way to develop and evaluate the quality of a “good” curriculum: one useful for post-modern times. These four have attained a good deal of attention for those searching, as I have been, to move beyond the confines of modernist methodologies—to search for that “third space” which is excluded in modernist thinking. (p.3)

The four R's provide me with a way to evaluate the quality of this process represented by this thesis; like Doll, I search to move beyond the confines of modernist thinking. Evaluation, in this sense, is not only used as a method to evaluate this work when it is complete, it is a measure, a consciousness if you will, of the quality of my honesty and authenticity *during* the autobiographical process.

Richness.

Richness is a quality that creates depth, layers of meaning, and multiple possibilities or interpretations (Doll, 1993). From this richness one should not be tied-down to a tightly pre-set plan (Doll, 2005). As Doll writes: "This point, of course, came from my Deweyan background and his insistence that plans and actions come from activities—ends emerge they are not pre-given" (p. 3).

This thesis created depth, or more correctly honoured the layers that emerged in the course of my inquiry. I approached this inquiry with openness, following where my inquiry led, not by plan; this complicated the course of this inquiry, but this complication simultaneously enhanced its richness.

Recursion.

Recursion is from "recur, to happen again" Doll (1993). Doll writes that as thoughts loop back on themselves, "thoughts on thoughts", distinguishes our consciousness and the way we make meaning (1993). Bruner (1986) writes: "Much of the process of education consists of being able to distance oneself in some way from what one knows by being able to reflect on one's own knowledge" (as cited in Doll, 1993, p. 177). Doll (2005) writes that recursion is "... (re)visiting that seen, to see it "yet again, for

the first time”—is certainly a key part of the iteration sequence so important for chaos theory” (p. 3).

In the process of this inquiry, I did re-visit old data, data that led me to the discovery of the Star Process. I created new data surrounding the process of the Star Process, and looked at that yet again. I wrote and wrote, re-visited this writing, looking with new eyes, listening to the conversations. As Pinar (1975/1992) wrote of the regressive moment: “One returns to the past, to capture it as it was” (p. 21), I returned to the past several times, attempting as Doll (2005) invites, “to it see again, for the first time” (p. 3). In the process of creating this thesis I developed many drafts, drafts I felt *were* this document; however, many times I returned to these drafts, looking with fresh eyes at what I perceived to be thesis; drafts often became data.

Relations.

Doll (1993) explores relations in a transformative curriculum and believes relations are important both pedagogically and culturally. Pedagogically, relations must honour the processes of emergence—richness—and recursion. It is the relationship between things that provide meaning and complexity, therefore it is in these relationships we should explore in our research and create in our teaching. Cultural relations are relations that contextualize our selves in a greater context—within the classroom, the school, education, community, the world; what we do matters, having affects far beyond the initial encounter.

In my inquiry I have been mindful of relations; recursion enabled me to consistently contemplate relations, relations between temporal photographs, between my own work and the work of others, between my temporal selves, between my self and the

Other. The Star Process itself was born from and focuses upon relationships; temporal relationships and relationships between the elements of the Star Process.

Rigor.

Rigor, Doll (1993) writes: “In some ways the most important of the four criteria, rigor keeps a transformative curriculum from falling into either rampant relativism or sentimental solipsism” (p. 181). Rigor is one’s commitment to consistently contemplate and apply the previous R’s; always open, always searching for more layers and new combinations. Rigor in this inquiry means making a commitment to honesty and authenticity, to follow the threads that emerge in inquiry, regardless of whether or not these threads were planned or how they “paint” or portray my life.

In this inquiry I committed myself to honour the emerging inquiry, following where it led; not blindly, but recursively. All I can do here is state that I have, to the best of my ability, been rigorous in the process of my inquiry. The Star Process and the autobiographical process of currere are hard work; for one to emerge from this work one must have rigor.

The Five C’s:

In his chapter; *Ghosts and the Curriculum*, Doll (2002) explores the history of curriculum; a conversation with the ghosts that hang in the curriculum, those he feels have had influence on the way we teach: Ramus, Tyler, and American Industrialism. He illustrates how these influences have created our modern mindset and thereby our modern curriculum. He also visits his favourite ghosts: Whitehead and Dewey; these

conversations lead to Doll's vision of the five C's, C's creating a transformative post-modern curriculum.

Currere.

Currere has been discussed extensively in this thesis; I will not regurgitate information about currere in this section, but explore Doll's discussion of currere. Doll writes: "Since the time of Ramus and Comenius, we have considered curriculum almost extensively as the course to be run, not in terms of the personal experience of running" (p. 43). The goal for Doll is to create a transformative curriculum, education that transforms people—learner and educator—rather than a transfer knowledge from teacher to student. He writes: "if education is to be *transformative*—changing the quality of experience for the individual—then, I along with John Dewey, believe curriculum must start with the individual" [emphasis in original] (p.44).

Of currere, Doll writes: "In simple terms, currere is the self's exploration of its experiences (really, experiencing); in more complex terms, it is the relation of the self to the self in the self's evolution with the world" (p. 44). Once again, in Doll's (1993) *R* of "relations" is Kierkegaard's (1849) definition of the self relating itself to itself in the relation. An undeniable aspect of currere and the Star Process is relationships, not only in the static sense of a relation, but the act of relating as discussed by Doll, Pinar, and Kierkegaard.

Currere is the method and focus of this inquiry, its influence is apparent. I chose currere because I felt it was the best way to convey the Star Process, autobiography, living consciously, and my journey as a teacher and a graduate student with the most honesty, integrity, and authenticity.

Complexity.

Complexity is something that has been part of this inquiry long before this inquiry formally began. On October 31, 1995, two days before handing in a major project for my fall practicum—the same project I had failed miserably at the previous year—I was suddenly inspired to write the following: “the complexity of the universe lies simply in the combination of an infinite number of simple ideas” (journal entry, 1995). This too relates to *relations*; I realized it was the combination, or the relationships between things, that was complex, and not necessarily the things themselves. This was about one year after I started my own autobiographical inquiry, an inquiry that led me to the Star Process. Exploring complexity more formally with Dr. Doll returned me to this time in my life.

Doll (2003) writes that Ramus and Tyler worked to simplify the process of learning, making learning and teaching simple. Doll believes we cannot bifurcate simplicity and complexity because we are finding via scientific study that nature and the universe embrace “...not simplicity, but complexity” (p. 45). A transformative curriculum must realize that “these two form a union, not a discreet difference” (p. 45). He writes:

Self-organization and emergence, themselves really a unity, do become the central activities around which the theories are built. The metaphysical view that the complexity-chaos-nonlinear constellation adopts is that the universe *is* creative: it is in constant flux, moving from *simple* complex order toward an ever-evolving more *complex* complex order. [emphases in original] (p. 45)

The key, Doll writes is: “that nature, life, organization all occur when there is a sufficient but simple level of complex interactions, and that from these complexly simple

interactions new and more complex levels of nature, life, organization arise” (p. 46). This inquiry has had a sufficient level of complex temporal interactions; as does the Star Process itself, where interactions of single relatively simple elements become more complex and provided a greater depth of understanding when the elements interact with one another. A mindfulness of complexity helped me to create this inquiry with honesty, integrity, and authenticity.

Cosmology.

Cosmology looks at the universe as “an ordered whole” (p. 46), not so much as reducible to smaller and smaller components, as scientific study has traditionally looked at the universe. Once again for Doll, and myself as well, cosmology is concerned with the relationships that constitute the universe, in the same way Kierkegaard (1849) defined the self as relation. Doll (2003) writes:

It is this sense of a pervasive wholeness which prompts Alfred North Whitehead (1967b/1925) to assert that all of us share an instinctive faith in there being an ultimate order of nature: we “trust that the ultimate natures of things lie together in harmony that excludes mere arbitrariness”. (p. 46)

I often reminded myself to follow the emerging inquiry, to surrender to its process, having faith that it would lead me where I needed to go; there are no accidents in life or inquiry. This faith in the process, in the universe, made it possible for me to inquire with honesty, integrity, and authenticity.

Many events during the process of developing this thesis seemed at the time to be devastating set-backs. In the end these delays and set-backs became gifts that were critical to the maturity and complexity of this inquiry. Without these set-backs and delays

my thesis would not have evolved as it has. Faith in the universe helped me to remain in the process and not walk away as I had in the fall of 1994.

The positive affects that these set-backs and delays had on my academic journey were also apparent in my personal and professional lives. Without these set-backs and delays I would have left Victoria and not been in the right place at the right time to attain my position with the Island Medical Program. Again, there are no accidents; faith in the universe allows me to perceive set-backs and delays as potential opportunities. I accept my life and all its processes with genuine gratitude.

Conversation.

Conversations, Doll writes, are “human activities that people do, as people” (p. 49). He goes on to explore the relationship between conversation and convergence:

...there is a historical binding between conversation and convergence—through personal conversation we turn ourselves about and converge or come together. In conversation lie our hopes for both convergence and transformation: We become transformed as our differing views converge on that which presently is beyond us, and the situation itself changes or becomes transformed as we go through the convergence process. (p. 49)

Gadamer (1993/1960 as cited in Doll 2002) wrote:

Conversation is a process of coming to an understanding. Thus, it belongs to every true conversation that each person opens himself to the other, truly accepts his point of view as valid and transposes himself into the other to such an extent that he understands not [just] the particular individual but what he says. (p. 49)

This inquiry *is* a conversation; it is a conversation between my temporal—past, present, future—selves, with imagined conversations with my mentors, with my Ghosts. It is a conversation with the voice I hear when I write, the voice that questions. Listening to these voices while I wrote helped me maintain honesty, integrity, and authenticity. Honouring these voices, making them part of this inquiry provides the Other with openings to themselves through my writing. As Doll writes:

...the goal here is to have teachers and students respect honor, understand their own humanness, the “otherness” of each other of which the self is made as well as the “otherness” of the texts studied and the ways of thinking inscribed in them. (p. 50).

Community.

Community, according to Doll, holds the C’s together. Community once again relates to relations, understanding the dynamic world of relationships that contextualizes everything. Doll writes “...no matter how we envision community, it is important to realize that community is the vehicle by which we transform and transcend ourselves” (p. 52).

It is into the community of inquiry I travel as I formalize this inquiry and the Star Process. I offer the Star Process to the autobiographical inquiry community; not as the right way or the best way, but as an example of the way I utilize autobiographical inquiry. I know it has significant value in my own life, personally and professionally.

Keeping community in mind helps me to maintain a balance, a balance between biography and history, making autobiographical inquiry research (Bullough & Pinnegar,

2001). Being mindful of community makes it possible to create with honesty, integrity, and authenticity.

The 3 S's:

The bottom leg of Doll's (2005) triangle is composed of the 3 S's of science, story, and spirit. Doll inspired by Bruner's (1996) the *Two Modes of Thought* which contrasts science and story and embraces science as a mode of thinking, but not *the* solitary mode of thinking. Doll (2003) writes:

This complementary split of modes of thought and thinking is often considered in terms of the quantitative (science) and the qualitative (narrative or story). For years, as I have pondered the quantitative-qualitative distinction, I have felt a certain something was missing: a sense of the spirit which lies in that "third space" (Serres, 1997) both separating and uniting "science" and "story." (p.2)

Quoting Whitehead, he cautions that "...we have mistaken our abstractions for concrete reality" (p. 5); a problematic blend of story and science. He offers the following as a more fruitful convergence:

A more "binocular" view of thinking (Bateson, Ch. 3) would be to combine the analytic with the aesthetic, the normed with the narrative, the quantitative with the qualitative, the proven with the personal, the scientific with the storied in a dynamic dance of the Yin and the Yang. It is in this dance, this movement that I find space for spirit. (p. 5)

It is the "dance" between story and science that creates the third space for spirit (Doll). Story, he writes:

It is life and its complexity of personal experiences which story brings forth. Story proves nothing and attempts to prove nothing. Rather, it wants to subjectively draw the reader into its world and convince him or her of the validity of that world via the “lifelikeness,” or “verisimilitude” of the experience the reader has in engaging the “text.” Further, the openness of the text, its uncertainty, is what gives the story power. (p. 5)

Infusing science and the recursive, where thoughts are like feedback loops that loop back on themselves (Doll, 1993). Doll (2003) believes the third space, for spirit, emerges as follows:

The only way to deal with interpretation in a world where culture and self, text and interpreter are constantly shifting is via recursive feedback loops. That is, via an interpretative, on-going interaction between text and translator, each one continually “dancing” with the other... Emergence is, of course, a key concept in the complexity sciences (Johnson, 2001). Emergence, the process of producing the new, the process of creativity, comes out of performance... In the space produced by the feedback loops, the dance, or the play—this space of “the third”—there exists, I believe, “spirit.” (p. 7)

It is the play of dance that produces and tempers the passion of spirit, as follows:

...a passionate approach to teaching and learning is, I believe, necessary by itself it certainly is not sufficient. A spirit filled only with passion too often enslaves the possessor within an ideology. Lest we become slaves to an ideology, as we have been slaves to a method (Doll, 2004), we need a counterbalance: play. Play here is that Wittgensteinian playing *with* of boundaries (Genova, 1995, p.123.) Hence,

the binding force of passion, is counterbalanced with the liberating force of play. The tension between these two, an essential and productive tension, produces that “third space” where newness, creativity, generativeness reside. I see our task as curricularists and instructionists to look at the complexity sciences with an eye to seeing the spirit inherent within these sciences, a dynamic spirit—“born of the echo of God’s laughter” (Kundera, 1958, p. 158)—and featuring the interplay of *passion and play*. (Doll, 2003, p. 9)

Doll’s three S’s remind me that my story is only a piece of this inquiry; my story is part of a greater story emerging in the field of autobiographical inquiry. For this inquiry to be research it must intersect with history (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). To be mindful of honesty, integrity, and authenticity in this process I perceived his S of science to be the collected knowledge of autobiographical and curriculum inquiry. There is spirit infusing both, but my spirit (PPFOR) is simply my interpretation of spirit; there is a spirit to the field as well, a spirit of the Other. This interaction of my spirit with the spirit of the Other in this “on-going conversation” (Doll, 2003) opens me and the Other to the “otherness of each other” (Doll, 2003).

This dynamic dance, my recursive journey, is taken with hopes of producing something new, the Star Process, in the context of my intersection between biography and history (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). With regards to the Star Process itself, this is the dynamic dance of living consciously, to incorporate my PPFOR intentionally into the actions I choose in my physical life. With regards to Freire’s (1970) conscientization, this is ensuring that action and praxis are dynamically integrated with one’s conscientization processes.

Before I move further into the context of autobiographical inquiry I will share Doll's (2005) graphic illustration of science, story, and spirit:

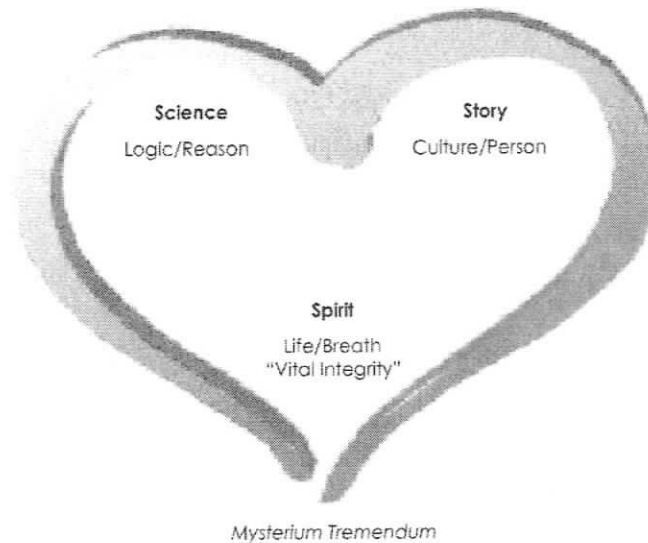


Figure 24: Science, Story, and Spirit Doll (2005).

From: W.E. Doll. 2005. *Teaching Good*. Copyright William E. Doll. Used with permission.

The Context of Autobiographical Inquiry:

This section examines autobiography as a mode of qualitative inquiry. It explores the roots of autobiography, contextualizing it in contemporary research.

Autobiography:

Pinar (1995) identified three major streams of scholarship for autobiographical study. These streams demonstrate enough particularity to be distinguished from each other; however, as streams flow together and apart, so do the streams of autobiographical scholarship. Pinar (1995) describes:

Major concepts of this stream [autobiographical theory and practice] include currere, collaboration, voice, dialog journals, place, poststructuralist portraits of self and experience, and myth, dreams, and the imagination. The second stream we characterize as feminist autobiography, major concepts of which include communication, the middle passage, and reclaiming the self. The final major category of studies are those efforts to understand teachers biographically and autobiographically, including biography and autobiographical praxis, the 'personal practical knowledge' of teachers, teacher lore, and the biographical study of teachers lives. (p. 516-17)

In the following pages I will explore these autobiographical streams of scholarship.

Feminist Autobiography

Feminism explores the marginalization of women, creating spaces for voices that have been silenced by the primarily patriarchal power structure; feminist autobiography urges women to explore their marginalization in the context of their own lives. Smith (1998) writes: "Examining issues in equity, power, social structure, agency, self-definition, and their interrelations, so it is argued by feminists, will be enhanced by the writing of all kinds of personal narratives of all kinds of lives of all kinds of women" (p. 210). Pinar (1995) discusses Madeline Grumet's exploration of "what teaching means to women" and writes: "Autobiography becomes a means of disclosing the experience of women that has been banished from curriculum discourses. It allows lived experience to be revealed and expressed, unlike mainstream educational research which in its obsession with measurement obliterates subjectivity" (p. 549).

Of Janet L. Miller, Pinar (1995) writes:

Miller demonstrated that autobiographical reflection and insight contribute both to resistance and emancipation for women in schools. In feminist theory, then, autobiography is one means to find passages between private and public, a way to express shared knowledge with a community of scholars. (p. 551)

The “middle passage” for Grumet and Miller is this space between public and private experienced by teachers, a space occupied by the curriculum. Both Grumet and Miller use autobiography not only to awaken an understanding of oneself, but as a means to change as well. Greene (1978) echoes this sentiment: “Perhaps a new revolution can then take shape, an educational revolution generated by the rejection of sexism. In the course of such a revolution, we may all rediscover ourselves” (p. 254).

Feminist autobiography is a methodology exploring voice, or the silencing thereof, in the context of a woman’s life, delving into issues of power, equity, societal conditions and conditioning; autobiography locates her within a personal understanding of these issues and assists in the situating of herself in society—finding her voice. These personal understandings, found in her lived experiences and relayed to us through autobiographic narratives, awaken us to the issues faced by women. For the feminine reader, these narratives may inspire her to explore the issues in the context of her own life and perhaps the courage to work towards her own emancipation. For the masculine reader, it allows us, through the written narrative, to experience society from a perspective we have not lived, awakening us to the lived realities of women. This provides an opportunity for all to see the self as other and the other as self.

This graduate program has awakened me to new realities I had never perceived. I have never thought of myself as a male chauvinist, nor do I feel I have acted like one, but I never fully appreciated that my perception of society, and its spiritual influence on me, could be totally different than woman's perception of society and its influence on her; conversations with colleagues, curriculum classes, and reading autobiographical narratives written by women have made me aware of what Greene (1978) refers to as: "the multiplicity of possible perspectives" (p. 166). I realize that my passage—though existing in the same physical space—is different than the passages of others.

Greene (1988) writes women are legally free to do, choose, and be anything they wish; however, in a subjective reality of circumstance women are limited in their freedom to do, choose, and be, not only by the societal context—and its inherent perspective of women—but by attitudes of self founded in this context as well. Greene (1978) explored this relationship between context and sense of self:

I want to discuss the lived worlds and perceptual realities of women because I am so sharply aware of the degree to which they are obscured by sex and gender roles. I am convinced that the imposition of these roles makes women falsify their sense of themselves. (p. 213)

Feminist autobiography creates an opening for women to explore this relationship—imposition of the male perspective on her perceptions of self and society—affording her the opportunity to understand the nature of her existence and subsequently have some control over its interpretation.

Feminist autobiography explores issues of power, voice, social structure, and equity in the context of life as a woman in society, but it can also explore these issues

with respect to race, culture, and sexual orientation. Smith (1998) writes: "Anyone who has ever felt left out, ignored, or powerless has the beginnings of an understanding of the feminist and minority perspectives that have arisen in recent decades with great vigor and anger in the field of biography and autobiography" (p. 210). The methods of feminist autobiography need only a subtle shift in focus to investigate the nature of being in society. Roxana Ng states: "Race, class, and gender are relations that have to do with how people define themselves and how they participate in social life. They are not mere theoretical categories" (as cited in Pinar, 1995, p. 315). Issues of race and class, as well as gender, may cause individuals to "falsify their sense of themselves" (Greene, 1978, p. 213); perhaps autobiographical methods can help us authenticate our sense of self.

An on-going debate, redefinition, and refinement of *multiculturalism* continues, however multiculturalism, in whatever definition, keeps to the fore our need for an awareness of racial and cultural issues. Connelly, Phillion, and He (2003) write:

...we have begun to puzzle over the significance of cross-cultural narrative work, and how this harmonizes with, and strengthens ongoing work in, narrative multiculturalism. Following the tenets of narrative inquiry we believe that we will make progress in working our way through these puzzles by continuing to work in multicultural life situations... (p. 382)

Queer Theory is an emerging area of study, which like multiculturalism or cultural studies, has drawn from feminism. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) state:

The cultural studies and queer theory paradigms are multifocused, with many different strands drawing from Marxism, feminism, and the

postmodern sensibility...The cultural studies and queer theory paradigms use methods strategically—that is, as resources for understanding and for producing resistances to local structures of discrimination. (p. 35-36)

Sumara and Davis (1999) write:

...queer theory asks that the forms of curriculum and the relations of pedagogy be appropriated as sites to interpret the particularities of the perceived differences among persons, not merely among the categories of persons...queer theory does not ask that pedagogy *become* sexualized, but that it excavate and interpret the way it already *is* sexualized...that is explicitly heterosexualized. Moreover, rather than defining queer identities in strict reference to bodily acts and aberrant or quirky lifestyles, queer theory asks that the continued construction of the narratives that unruly category “heterosexual” be constantly interrupted and renarrated.

[emphases in original] (p. 192)

Exploring issues of power, voice, social structure, and equity in the context of your life as a person in society is an invaluable exercise, regardless of status and location; for those whom are marginalized it may be a necessary one. Freire (1982) believed that the oppressors were as much, if not more, oppressed by the act of oppression; therefore we could all benefit from an autobiographical understanding of the private, personal, and public. Although I have never consciously contributed to the oppression of women or marginalized groups, my lack of conscious awareness of difference between our perspectives and circumstances contributed to the context, the milieu of women and those of other races or cultures. To live consciously I must be consciously aware of my

location, my situatedness, and the “multiplicity of possible perspectives” (Greene, 1978); autobiography accomplishes this for me. Freire (1982) writes: “Those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly” (p. 47); Freire seems to encourage autobiographical understanding of one’s location and situatedness as well. Autobiography is not emancipation, but it may be a necessary part of the journey, a journey that may begin with autobiography at the “intersection of biography and history” (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001).

Studying Teachers’ Lives

Pinar (1995) has divided the next stream of autobiography—the study of teachers’ lives—into four tributaries: *Autobiographical Praxis*, *Personal Practical Knowledge*, *Teacher Lore*, and *Biography*. The first tributary is based on Butt and Raymond’s (1992) work in teachers’ *Collaborative Autobiography* and *Autobiographical Praxis*. The second is Clandinin and Connelly’s (1998) *Personal Practical Knowledge*. The third, *Teacher Lore*, explores the experiential stories informing teacher practice. The final tributary is Goodson’s (1992) biographical study of teachers’ lives. Pinar (1995) believes these four autobiographical tributaries are connected by a focus identified by Elbaz (1991): “looking at teaching from teaching from the inside” (as cited in Pinar, 1995, p. 554), and perhaps related to what he himself has described as: “working from within” (Pinar, 1972/1992).

Collaborative Autobiography and Autobiographical Praxis

Collaborative autobiography and autobiographical praxis focus on the significance of teachers’ personal experiences in schools, writing about these experiences, and the necessity of sharing this work with others (Pinar, 1995, p. 554).

Autobiographical praxis is not limited to the experience of teacher in classroom, but also the experiences of a person in the world who happens to be a teacher. Praxis finds its roots in the work of Freire. Heaney (1995) defines praxis:

Praxis is a complex activity by which individuals create culture and society, and become critically conscious human beings. Praxis comprises a cycle of action-reflection-action which is central to liberatory education. Characteristics of praxis include self-determination (as opposed to coercion), intentionality (as opposed to reaction), creativity (as opposed to homogeneity), and rationality (as opposed to chance).

Greene (1978) defines praxis as: "...a type of knowing oriented to transforming the world" (p. 13). Pinar (1995) writes: "Autobiographical praxis refers to conceptualizations of teachers' knowledge. Praxeology refers to the meaning and understandings of human action...Butt characterizes his methodology as autobiographical praxeology" (p. 556). Autobiographical praxis therefore is the creative intentional individual investigation of meaning, understanding, and transformation of one's life as a person and teacher in society; autobiographical praxeology is the conveyance of this knowledge with others, thus forming collaborative autobiography. The four basic questions of autobiographical praxeology are:

1. What is the nature or my working reality?
2. How do I think and act in that context and why?
3. How, through my worklife experience and personal history, did I come to be that way?
4. How do I wish to become in my professional future? (Pinar, 1995, p. 556).

Collaboratively sharing autobiographies “enable us to begin to understand the curriculum as experienced by teachers” (Pinar, p. 556). Autobiographical praxeology, in its own way, explores the four moments of currere. The Star Process, like autobiographical praxeology, asks one to explore and understand one’s self in a specific context.

Butt and Raymond prefer the methodology of biography to that of phenomenology, because in their opinion, biography emphasizes both conscious and unconscious aspects of past, as opposed to present, which they believe is the preoccupation of phenomenology (Pinar, 1995). I would argue phenomenology explores the conscious and unconscious aspects of the past *through* the present moment, as it exists there, hence its seemingly obsession with the present moment.

Personal Practical Knowledge

The next tributary to the stream of studying teachers’ lives is the work of Clandinin and Connelly (1998) who describe the intentions of their personal practical knowledge journey:

...we saw ourselves as engaging with teachers in shared inquiries into their ways of living and telling their stories...engaged in improving their practice, for if teachers began to participate in these shared inquiries, then practices, we believed, would change for the better. (p. 152)

Where autobiographical praxis provided great breadth—the classroom experiences of teachers located within the lives of people who are teachers—personal practical knowledge of Clandinin and Connelly “presents a view of knowledge and theory as residing in the heads of real teachers” (Pinar 1995, p. 557). Personal Practical Knowledge is what Clandinin and Connelly refer to as the implicit theories of teaching

and learning practically employed by teachers each and every day, a combination of theory and practice rooted in their lived experiences (Pinar, 1995). It is not that Personal Practical Knowledge is oblivious to the personal lives of teachers, but focuses on the work of teachers. Connelly and Clandinin (1987, as cited in Pinar, 1995) write: "...the emphasis in narrative is on how people know classrooms" (p. 558).

Clandinin and Connelly (1998) define Personal Practical Knowledge as:

A term designed to capture the idea of experience in a way that allows us to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons.

Personal practical knowledge is in the teacher's past experience, in the teacher's present mind and body, and in the future plans and actions.

Personal practical knowledge is found in the person's practice. It is, for any one teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation. (p. 150)

In opposition to Clandinin and Connelly, Butt and Raymond believe that Personal Practical Knowledge's focus on practical knowledge marginalizes the personal—outside the classroom—which they believe is a vital part of what makes teachers who they are (Pinar, 1995).

Connelly and Clandinin investigate teachers' lives through narrative, which they define as: "the making of meaning from personal experience via a process of reflection in which storytelling is the key element and in which metaphors and folk knowledge take their place" (1988b, as cited in Pinar 1995, p. 558). Connelly and Clandinin employ a variety of narrative methods of investigation, such as: "journal records, interview

transcripts, observations, storytelling, letter writing, autobiographical writing, class plans, newsletters..." (Pinar, 1995, p. 558). Connelly and Clandinin (1998) discuss the progression of their work:

As our work progressed, we came to see teacher knowledge in terms of narrative life history, as storied compositions. These stories, these narratives of experience, are both personal—they reflect a person's life history—and social—they reflect the milieu, the contexts in which teachers live. (p. 150)

Connelly and Clandinin found their work, their narratives, becoming more complex, with "interwoven and multilayered scenes and plot lines" and thus "...adopted the metaphor of a 'professional knowledge landscape' to help us capture this complexity" (p. 150).

This "professional knowledge landscape" is the composite of two very different places, the "in-classroom place" and the "out-of-classroom place" (p. 151). The out-of-classroom place is identified as the knowledge and information of practice that arrives from outside the classroom—from administration, ministries of education, theoreticians, etc.—and expected to be implemented by the teacher, in the classroom (p. 151). The in-classroom place is the "secret place" where "teachers are free to live stories of practice" (p. 151). Elbaz (2002), using narrative with education graduate students in Israel, adapts Connelly and Clandinin's knowledge landscape metaphor for "possibilities of telling and retelling stories on the 'narrow ridge' between schools and universities" (p. 408).

Narrative reports utilize fiction's use of time and place to organize experiences: "time and place become written constructions in the form of plot and scene respectively. Time and place, plot and scene, work together to create the experiential quality of narrative"(Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, as cited in Pinar 1995, p. 558). Narratives as

written, change understandings, and as writers “re-story” experience, they must practice honesty—demonstrating an understanding that narrative is subjective—and courage to tell incomplete stories that not only paint our brightest moments, but expose our shadows as well; avoiding the creation of Hollywood plots and happy endings, yet still looking to the future with hope and possibility, setting up possible sequels. As Greene (1978) writes: “...I am interested in trying to awaken educators to a realization that transformations are conceivable, that learning is stimulated by a sense of future possibility and by a sense of what might be” (p. 3-4).

Teacher Lore

Teacher Lore is defined as: “...the study of the knowledge, ideas, perspectives, and understandings of teachers. In part it is inquiry into the beliefs, values, and images that guide teachers’ work. In this sense, it constitutes an attempt to learn what teachers learn from their experience” (Schubert, 1991 in Pinar, 1995, p. 561). *The Oxford Dictionary of Current English* defines lore as: “a body of traditions and knowledge on a subject” (p. 534). These traditions of teaching have, according to Schubert, two basic origins of inquiry: the first is the curriculum as developed by teachers interacting with students, and secondly, the personal insights, constructs, and theories of action founded in experience (Pinar, 1995). Teacher Lore is usually reported in one of two ways: as a literature review—a review of teachers’ stories that include meaning and modes of inquiry—or Schubert’s primary studies, which include interviews with, and observations of, teachers (p. 562).

Pinar writes: “This strand of autobiographical research, with its emphasis upon reflexivity and lived experience, shares with the work of Clandinin, Connelly, Goodson,

Butt, and Raymond a commitment to explore the lived experiences of teachers” (p. 562). There is in *Teacher Lore*, as with others, a focus on community and a sharing of stories: “we hope...that teacher lore is increasingly acknowledged as a legitimate form of educational inquiry, one that engages collaborative efforts of teachers, scholars, and others interested to interpret praxis in ways that would not be possible without serious dialogue, conversation, and sharing” (Schubert, 1991 in Pinar, 1995, p. 562). I discovered the Star Process in my lived experiences and have adapted this understanding and utilized the process to new contexts and experiences.

Biographical Studies

Smith (1998) writes: “For the educational and social science researcher interested in qualitative methods, biography—and its variants, autobiography, life history, and life story—seems a rich and only partially exploited form of inquiry for reaching multiple intellectual goals and purposes” (p. 217). Smith divided this stream into three strands. The first strand is the stories of teachers in the day-to-day lived experiences, stories that “attempt to change both the teachers themselves and the educational system of which they are apart” (p. 215).

Pinar (1995) identifies Goodson as a scholar working in this strand of biography. Goodson, like Connelly and Clandinin, is interested in teachers’ lived experiences, but resists their intense focus on practice, he believes: “A more valuable and less vulnerable entry point would be to examine teachers’ work in the context of teacher’s lives” (p. 564). On one hand he applauds the biographical elements of personal practical knowledge, yet on the other he states:

But again the person is being linked irrevocably to practice. It is as if the teacher *is* her or his practice. For teacher educators, such a specificity of focus is understandable but I wish to argue that a broader perspective will achieve more...In short, what I am saying is that does not follow logically or psychologically that to improve practice we must initially and immediately focus on practice. Indeed I...argue for the opposite point of view. [emphasis in original] (p. 563)

Goodson, like Butt and Raymond, ask us to not marginalize the “teacher-as-person” in favour of the “teacher-as-practice” (p. 564); life surrounding the classroom possesses valuable insight into the lived experiences of teachers. The Star Process and living consciously have significantly contributed to my educational processes, assisting me to learn and teach consciously.

The second strand identified by Smith (1998) is a strand composed of “teachers with alternative visions” (p. 215). Smith believes these “non-mainstream voices” added to the dialog about teaching and education by adding a more personal reflective approach to educational praxis.

The final strand of educational biography identified by Smith (1998) is action research, a cycle of:

...proposing, planning, implementing, observing, recording, (through diaries and journals), reflecting, and writing, teachers have begun to talk about their teaching, their hopes and desires, their immediate context of a particular group of pupils, a particular school with its particular principal and staff of colleagues...I would argue that a more powerful way of

thinking about action research is to construe the activity as “really” a piece of teacher autobiography. (p. 216)

This rings true with the two aims of Participatory Action Research identified by Reason (1998):

One aim is to produce knowledge and action directly useful to a group of people—through research, adult education, and sociopolitical action. The second aim is to empower people at a second and deeper level through the process of constructing and using their own knowledge...raising...conscientization, a term popularized by Paulo Freire (1970) for a “process of self-awareness through collective self-inquiry and reflection” (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991, p. 16). (p. 269)

Heaney (1995) provides the following definition of conscientization:

Conscientization is an ongoing process by which a learner moves toward critical consciousness. This process is the heart of liberatory education. It differs from “consciousness raising” in that the latter frequently involves “banking” education—the transmission of pre-selected knowledge. Conscientization means breaking through prevailing mythologies to reach new levels of awareness—in particular, awareness of oppression, being an “object” in a world where only “subjects” have power. The process of conscientization involves identifying contradictions in experience through dialogue and becoming a “subject” with other oppressed subjects—that is, becoming part of the process of changing the world.

The Star Process is my process of conscientization, pushing me always onwards in hopes of reaching new levels of awareness of myself as a person in the world and as a student and teacher.

Newman (1998) likens action research to the unfolding plots of mystery novels, as it “begins in the middle of whatever you are doing” (p. 3); Gough (2002) makes a similar connection, linking crime story with educational inquiry. In line with Reason (1998) and Smith (1998), Newman (1998) writes: “By exploring both familiar and unfamiliar situations, we position ourselves to be able to interrogate our professional practice” (p. 8). In relation to Freire’s conscientization, Newman concludes:

The outcome of such self-education is the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions operating within my practice as well as in schools and school systems. But recognizing inconsistency isn’t the end of practice-as-inquiry. As I learn to detect disparities between my practice and theory, I need to take action; I need to change what I do. (p. 23)

Newman demonstrates not only the value of action research, but the role of autobiography and qualitative inquiry as well. With its scope reaching out to “schools and school systems” the value of the “self-education” demonstrates that action research may be as Smith (1998) states “a piece of teacher autobiography” achieving Greene’s (1978) “plane of consciousness of highest tension” (p. 166). Like Newman (1998) I needed to change what I did as an undergraduate student in order to successfully graduate; this change led to discovery of the Star Process, a process that continues to inform me as a graduate student and an educator.

Smith's (1998) three strands of biography are grounded in lived experience. From Goodson's biographies of teachers, through inquirers with alternative visions, to those who approach inquiry via action research (Reason, 1998; Newman, 1998; Berg, 2001), all are working to understand their particular present locations and situate themselves in the greater landscape—with visions of improving both.

Using the Star Process to Learn Consciously As a Graduate Student:

With respect to the Star Process, one goal in this process was to autobiographically explore the Star Process, shifting living consciously to the context of learning consciously. In this exploration I hoped to understand this autobiographical process that has so dramatically influenced my life. On a purely practical level, another goal was to simply graduate.

The Star Process has had such a significant affect on my life that I had a genuine desire to understand this process as one in my life as a person in the world; as well as understanding this process as a student and teacher in the context of education. I also had a genuine desire to share this process with the Other because the Star Process arrived in my life as a gift of satori. Although I discovered it in my life, I have had trouble conceptualizing it as my discovery or my process; I feel as though I am simply the one who found it, sharing it with the Other seemed important for that reason.

Even with all my experience with the Star Process there were times I struggled to make an honest effort when I became overwhelmed with the scope of researching and creating a thesis. In the end, I can look back and conclude that I have made a significant effort, but I must also concede that there were times I needed to take Dr. Pinar's advice and "wade awhile".

Like effort, I often struggled with confidence in this graduate process. When I struggled with confidence, I looked to the other elements of the Star Process, like effort, to help me succeed. In the context of graduate school I knew that graduating was possible; many students graduate every year, so I was confident that completing this program was possible. There were times I was not sure I could do it personally. Investigating the Star Process was the reason I came to graduate school, but it was so personal that shifting the context from life to education was problematic. In the end, “wading awhile”, helped to boost my confidence, as did participating in the University of Victoria’s Speakers’ Bureau. Taking the Star Process out to the community helped me realize that there was value in the Star Process; feedback from groups of students in Dr. Lauzon’s undergraduate classes and local high schools seemed to indicate that the Star Process could be useful to them in their life and educational processes.

One of my most memorable speaking engagements was at the Garth Homer Society for Special Needs Adults in transition. I was brought in to speak to a group of Special Needs Adults who were just finishing up a course on change, that is: getting new jobs or moving out on their own. This was a very moving experience for me and I feel I received more from all of them than they received from me. First of all, by the end of my two hours I looked around, listened to the conversations we were having and I realized that they understood—they were talking about living consciously, connecting aspiration and actuality processes. It was in that moment that it really struck me that the Star Process had potential. I realized that the only thing holding it back was me. I left the Garth Homer Society that day with the inspiration and confidence to complete this work.

As I struggled with my confidence in this process I made an important realization: confidence as a conscious element of the Star Process does not mean I am confident; confidence is an element of the Star Model *because* I struggle with confidence. The same held true for the other elements as well, just because effort is an element of the Star Process does not necessarily mean that effort comes easy to me; it means I need to be aware that a lack of effort can lead to a lack of success in my processes.

With regards to knowledge in the graduate context, I needed to know myself in this educational context; the Star Process helped me navigate my personal challenges. As mentioned earlier, I needed to gain knowledge specific to the graduate context to succeed. On the one hand, this was to listening in the ongoing conversation with the Other, to explore contemporary discourse and participate in the required coursework. This was quite similar to my undergraduate experiences and shifting the context from undergraduate to graduate in this regard was not difficult. On the other hand, part of this ongoing conversation was my own voice, to speak, to share with the Other my experiences and research. This was difficult, especially using autobiography, to find the “balance between biography and history” (Bullough & Pinnegar 2001). There were times I was out of balance existing too much in either realm, but when I realized that part of the graduate context was my research, my voice sharing with the Other, I was able to find that precarious balance.

Finally, I used my awareness of the elements of the Star Process and put them into action, ARKA. Once I added action to my intention I was able to authentically engage in my graduate education. Another key to ARKA, was the realization that part of my

responsibility as a graduate student was to research and in my own small way add to the milieu of the Other.

The Star Process and My Life As An Educator:

In this section I explore the Star Process as it has intersected with my life as an educator. The following figure illustrates my perception of teaching consciously:

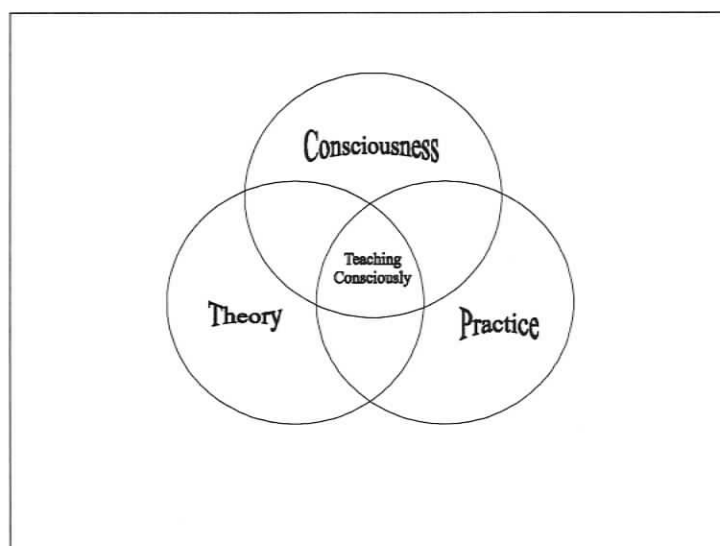


Figure 25: Teaching Consciously (McBurney, 2006).

Shifting the Specificity of Context—Teaching Consciously:

Before returning to graduate school I worked with children in remedial reading environments as well as in elementary schools. I used the Star Process to assist me with children who were experiencing reading difficulties. I worked with one particular student who was a grade three student whom everyone suddenly realized had trouble reading.

In the initial meeting with this student I realized that this student had outstanding comprehension of stories, but comprehension until this point had been oral comprehension. As this student progressed into grade three, everyone—including the

student—perceived this student as a reader because of the comprehension skills demonstrated. As more independent reading and math word problems were introduced the student struggled; everyone realized there was a reading deficiency. The student's perception of self was one of a "reader" and the sudden realization of being a "non-reader" devastated the student's confidence. The student also began to act out in class; behaviour that was never observed before.

Using the elements of the Star Process, I believed the first obstacle to this student becoming a reader was re-building confidence. In my first meeting with this student I said: "I think you can be a reader, but the first thing you need to do is believe in yourself." Immediately the student emphatically responded: "You can't ask me to do that! I can't believe in myself!" I knew in that moment that it was confidence that we were going to have to begin with. I responded: "Well until you can believe in yourself, I will believe enough for the both of us." As I worked over the next several weeks with this student I focussed on re-igniting her confidence in reading and her other educational experiences as well. As the student's confidence began to re-emerge, reading strategies began to strengthen reading ability—catching the student's reading skills up with comprehension skills. The next report period the student's marks and comments returned to what was once normal for this student; as did the student's behaviour at school.

Moving Away From Elementary Education:

As I accumulated more experiences as an elementary school teacher I began to realize that elementary education was not for me. Initially this caused a lot of angst as I had worked long and hard to become an elementary school teacher. Once again I turned to the Star Process to assist me. As I thought about my PPFOR and the context of

elementary school I realized they were incongruous. I realized that I was thirty years old and already I was a cynic; I fell out of love with teaching and did not like the person I was as an elementary school teacher. Using the Star Process I decided to move away from elementary education.

At that time I also had significant medical complications in my life; a ruptured disc in my back made it near impossible to do anything. My family physician was incredible during this period of my life; his efforts on my behalf and his way of practicing medicine inspired me to investigate medicine as a possible career. While in poor health and during my convalescence, I returned to school to complete the pre-requisites for medical school. In the end, I would decide—using the Star Process—that the chances of successfully gaining enrolment to medical school were low; I simply felt I was too old to invest time in a process that had no guarantees.

While pursuing the medicine pre-requisites I took a course in human anatomy. The following semester I was lucky enough to become a lab assistant in the anatomy lab and was exposed to education in a new and exiting context. I realized I was an educator; part of my inspiration to apply to graduate school was the possibility of becoming a lab instructor. In the end I spent eight semesters teaching in anatomy lab; two as an assistant and six as an instructor. The context of the anatomy lab resonated with my PPFOR; a love for education and being an educator was re-kindled. During the process of my graduate program, medical education became part of the University of Victoria context. A position as anatomy lab technician was posted and once again I was fortunate enough to be offered the position.

Using the Star Process to Teach Consciously:

Working in the gross anatomy lab, and closely with the professor of anatomy, I realized I was exactly where I wanted to be. The professor, recognizing my passion, desire, and willingness to learn and do more in the lab, made it possible for me to grow and become an educator in the gross anatomy lab. As I neared the end of my graduate processes, instructor responsibilities were added to my technician responsibilities.

With more teaching experiences and an understanding of my own theories about education, I once again shifted the specificity of my context, exploring practices that resonated not only with my PPFOR, but with the medical school and medical students as well. In this context the Other became the curricular theories and practices of education I had explored, the medical school curricular context within which I teach, and the medical students themselves. The conversation with the Other is complex, I must personally situate myself within the medical school theoretical context because as an instructor I am responsible for conveying specific content to the students. My voice, shared with the Other, is one of expert in the anatomy lab; the intention of my PPFOR lives within my practices and choices. My theories and practices are composites of Other and Self.

The challenge in this context is to find a balance between my theories of teaching and those of the medical school, choosing practices that resonate with both, while remaining mindful of the students' needs and expectations. The tension in this context is to negotiate a balance in this ongoing conversation. Another challenge is to be an "expert" in Gross Anatomy and assist medical students in acquiring knowledge of the human body. Teaching consciously is this dynamic balance of theory and practice, what Freire (1970) called praxis, which again is made possible through conscientization.

Becoming an educator in the medical school context required that I alter my perception of self in this environment. I will never be the one who cures cancer or the common cold. I will never perform an emergency surgery that saves someone's life. But starting in 2010, there will be twenty-four doctors who graduate from the Island Medical Program every year; I will have in some small way helped these once students to become physicians working to save lives and promoting health in our communities. As an educator I understand my role is one of a cog in the wheel facilitating the education of physicians.

In the context of the Gross Anatomy lab my goal as an instructor is to effectively facilitate medical students in their acquisition and understanding of human gross anatomy. I have a genuine desire to accomplish this goal because the students need to know and understand human gross anatomy; this is knowledge that will assist the students as they move onward to becoming medical doctors in society. I make a genuine concerted effort each and every week to give my best to each lab. Giving my best is a quality that comes from my PPFOR. Medical students are extremely busy, bombarded with an astronomical amount of content; to honour their voices I need to be at my best as instructor in order to maximize their educational time in the gross anatomy lab.

As a new instructor I work hard to bolster my confidence in the gross anatomy lab. I know that confidence is an element that can affect successful teaching so I make significant effort to review and study the material of each lab so at the very least I know the content inside out. I also accept that as a new instructor, my confidence as a gross anatomy instructor is in progress; years from now I will be able to look back on several teaching sessions to affirm confidence in my teaching and anatomical knowledge. For the

time being, I will have to work harder in other areas of the Star Process to help me build confidence in my teaching experiences. As mentioned I look to content knowledge and make an effort to ensure I know the content I present; this is ARKA, knowing what I need to do to be successful as an educator—teaching consciously.

At the beginning of my career I need to spend time and energy locating and situating myself. As the years progress I will not have to spend as much time utilizing the Star Process to assist me in teaching consciously because experience and wisdom will begin to inform my teaching consciously more than the Star Process. At times of angst, when challenges in my educational context arise I may once again turn to the Star Process in order to understand my role in these challenges.

Teaching at the medical school is a new and challenging experience; the content is a far cry from the elementary classroom context. In order to soothe my angst I use an old and familiar process, the Star Process, to help me be and become a successful instructor in the Gross Anatomy Laboratory.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and Recommendations:

The research questions in this inquiry were:

1. What is Autobiographical Inquiry?
2. What is the Star Process?
3. How do the Star Process and autobiography inform living consciously, learning consciously, and teaching consciously?

What is Autobiographical Inquiry?

Through this research I explored autobiographical inquiry in two ways. First of all, I explored the contemporary curricular discourse, the present body of autobiographical inquiry knowledge. The second way I explored autobiographical inquiry was to utilize it, most specifically currere (Pinar, 1975/1992), as my research methodology. This was complex because I was investigating the autobiographical Star Process.

In this research process I have discovered that autobiographical inquiry, in all its forms, seeks to raise one's consciousness of one's personal location and one's contextual situation. Autobiography is not unlike Freire's (1970) conscientization, a raising of consciousness coupled with action. Conscientization is designed to dispose of a "culture of silence" (Freire, 1970). People are silent because they do not understand themselves, their own power, or their context; conscientization and praxis help people to know more and act differently. Conscientization and praxis help individuals know themselves and

their contexts more intimately so that they may choose and understand for themselves and not mimic the context as oppressor, oppressed, or repressed (Freire, 1970).

Autobiography is a form of conscientization and praxis. Currere (1975/1992) is “running the course of curriculum” (Doll, 2002). Currere invites the autobiographer to understand one’s self in the contextual processes of education. Currere and its four moments of regression, progression, analytical, and synthetical (Pinar, 1975/1992) work to raise one’s consciousness of one’s self interacting with the curriculum and one’s life, as explained by Doll (2002): “The self of currere, the very beginning of curriculum as Dewey knew so well, must always interact with the text of life. It is this *interaction* that forms the process of curriculum” [emphasis in original] (p. 50).

The experience of this inquiry has caused me to believe that autobiography as mode of inquiry can assist one in understanding one’s self, one’s educational context, one’s learning, and one’s teaching. This understanding can be beneficial in helping one choose practices that resonate with one’s theory while being mindful of the educational context of their teaching. This understanding when shared in autobiographical inquiries can provide the Other with a window to itself; we are all selves that form the Other.

The Challenges of Autobiography:

For those who may be considering autobiographical inquiries of their teaching practices or in their graduate programs I would like to share some of the challenges I have encountered in my experience with autobiographical inquiry. Autobiography is hard work. It was a lot harder than I thought it was going to be. It was tougher than I thought to write about my experiences and glean out relevant information. The actual writing and putting together of this document was far more complex than ever I imagined. When

research is your writing, it is hard to distinguish what is what. What is research? What is data? What is representation? These are difficult choices to say the least. It was also difficult to make choices to cut pieces of writing, creative pieces that ended up as data as opposed to representation. All inclusive, I wrote approximately 1500 pages to complete this inquiry. Autobiography is hard work.

This challenge relates to Grumet (1981) who wrote, that the autobiographer is “the original author, the original audience, and the contemporary reader” (p. 126). Wearing all these hats in the process of inquiry is difficult. Which hat do I choose? Which is most appropriate? Many times in this inquiry, while wearing my writer’s hat, I thought I had created a synthetical moment of currere, only to conclude later as the reader, that I had written another regressive, analytical, or progressive moment. To address this challenge I learned to listen to the advice of my supervisors, committee members and all those people who read it along its way and provided feedback. I learned to ask myself if my so-perceived synthetical moment addressed my research questions or placated my ego. If the answer was ego I returned to Doll’s (1993) R of recursion, cycled through another iteration to find the essence of the writing that specifically related to my research problem.

Another challenge of autobiographical inquiry was finding Bullough and Pinnegar’s (2001) balance between biography and history, or self and Other. In this inquiry, balance is something I realized at the end of my journey. There were times I slipped into solipsism and there were times I exclusively explored the Other, but in the end I found balance, even though there were times during this process I was out of balance.

I have realized that balance in autobiographic inquiry is a sum of efforts calculated at the end of inquiry. It was important during my inquiry to surrender to the moments as they emerged, solitary or communal. As Pinar asserts: “currere may seem solitary work, and it can be...it must be, at least occasionally” (p. 523). I also had to spend time in the educational community of the Other, exploring the research of others—my tension to locate and situate. It was a challenge to explore this community, for as Doll (2002) writes: “Community, with its emphasis on both care and critique—an emphasis that requires a high degree of trust—is what helps elevate us above ourselves. Currere without community easily falls into solipsism, a point Bill Pinar recognizes but one that escapes his critics” (p. 50). Finding balance was a challenge, but learning to trust my supervisors and community helped me to balance biography and history, community and currere.

I also discovered that I found a balance between history and biography when I embraced indirect autobiography to represent this research. Many drafts of this thesis contained overt private personal confessionals that left me mired in the mundane of my life. The essence of Star Process was getting lost in stories about me; the autobiographical work was to get the research out of these stories about my life. As I learned to shift away from myself and into the literature—academic and popular—I found that I could research and articulate the Star Process and tell my story indirectly through these choices of literature. To tell my story indirectly required more effort because I had to find references and literature that first articulated the Star Process and captured the essence of my story second.

What is the Star Process?

Through the process of this inquiry I have come to understand that the Star Process is an autobiographical process that helps me to live consciously in my life by connecting what I believe about life (PPFOR) and how I actually live my life. In my teaching the Star Process helps me to connect my theories and practices of education in my particular educational context. The elements of the Star Process: Desire, Effort, Confidence, Knowledge, and ARKA (living or teaching consciously) define, for me, the ingredients and possible pitfalls for my realization of success as a person and an educator.

How did autobiographical inquiry result in the Star Process?

In 1994, in the educational context of my undergraduate degree, I found myself failing at school and life. After being denied the opportunity to participate in my practical experiences I realized that I needed to understand my life. In this tumultuous time I decided I needed to understand how the processes of my life had contributed to my successes and failures; intuitively I engaged in an autobiographical process that was basically Pinar's (1975/1992) *carrere*. I use intuitively here not to stroke my ego, but to emphasize that in one of my darkest hours my instinct was to autobiographically understand for myself my self. The process that began in 1994 resulted in the discovery of the Star Process, the focus of this inquiry.

Six years later I enrolled in a graduate program and have used Pinar's *carrere* to research autobiography and the Star Process—an autobiography of autobiography. This research has enriched and deepened my understanding of the Star Process and autobiographical inquiry.

How do the Star Process and autobiography inform my practice of education?

As was explained in Chapter Four, the Star Process helps me to be conscious of my location and situation, to balance my theories of education with my practice of education while being ever mindful of the context; to bring intention to action and action to intention. The Star Process reminds me to be conscious of the five elements and their dynamic connectivity. What I lack in experience and confidence for example, can be tapered by my efforts to enrich and deepen my anatomical knowledge. The Star Process does not mean that educating is easy for me, it simplifies the process; I still have to do the work.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Star Process:

The following section will explore the strengths and weaknesses of the Star Process discovered in the course of this inquiry.

The strength of the Star Process is that it helped me to understand my life has meaning and that exploration of my experiences and a conscious perception of my context helped me to locate and situate myself. The strength of the Star Process for me is that it is a process contextualized and developed in my life and thus helps *me* in *my* processes. That being stated, it also illuminates possible weaknesses. Those weaknesses are: that the elements of the Star Process—as situated in my life—are not necessarily elements located in the life of others; and: my particular cultural context and experiences are privileged and bias.

It was always my intention that the principles of the Star Process and living consciously would provide an example of how I used my own life and experiences to create and understand the Star Process; that it was the autobiographical process of

creating the Star Process that had potential. The Star Process was intended as an invitation, an example of what is possible if one investigated one's own life and educational experiences. Through the process of this research I have discovered that though I intended and implied this openness I had failed to make this explicit in my presentation of the Star Process. I have also discovered that though I perceived, believed, and understood openness, that there was potentially a lack of openness.

This inquiry has made it possible for me to realize that though I have both admired Plato's process of creating and articulating *The Republic* and criticized Plato's presentation of the ideal society as *the* way society should be, that I had made the same error by not making more explicit that it was my creation of the Star Process in the context of my life that was of the most value. In the process of this research I came to understand that I had created my own "republic" and failed to make more explicit that it was the process of imagining and articulating the ideal that was more important than the ideal imagined. I have come to realize that the Star Process became my republic. My real desire, my intention, was to invite others to look at their lives and educational experiences to create a Star Process of their own; a star process that may have five elements, six elements, or three. These elements may resemble my elements, but there may be new and different elements contextualized by their experiences. The Star Process was intended as an invitation, not an expectation; I realized that a weakness of the Star Process' presentation was that I failed to make more explicit the implied implicit intended openness.

The implied openness made more explicit, ironically illuminates a potential strength of the Star Process: its openness. One's PPFOR is uniquely one's PPFOR and

thus ARKA and living consciously should be located in one's unique—but contextualized—situation. Each individual's Personal Philosophical Frame of Reference should help guide one to live in accordance with one's own values and principles. ARKA is the most important and unique element of the Star Process because it encourages one to acknowledge and utilize the qualities of one's PPFOR. The Star Process does not require one to have the same PPFOR as me, but requires and assists one to live in accordance with a personally understood PPFOR. This leads to the another weakness of the Star Process—its cultural bias.

The second and most significant weakness of the Star Process I discovered in this research was that I had previously failed to understand and appreciate that because the Star Process was located in my life, it was also situated in privileged cultural context. The Star Process is located in my life/educational experiences and is therefore culturally biased. I am a middle-class white male who grew up—and still lives and works—in a predominantly patriarchal Caucasian context. I grew up in a homogenous community that provided a very narrow cultural cross-section. Before this inquiry I failed to realize that because the Star Process was located in my life that it was also situated in a cultural of privilege and bias. If my situation were different, my location would be different as well. The elements of the Star Process may not exist as they are if my experiences were contextualized by a different culture or if I were not part of the privileged faction in my own culture. I attempted to virtually explore the autobiographical processes of those faced with cultural or gender bias, but it was not until I neared the completion of this research that I realized the Star Process was founded in my situation, a situation of bias and privilege.

Recommendations:

I recommend that this research be taken out further into the community, to share the Star Process with the Other as an example of the possibility of autobiographical research. In sharing it with the community I will also be provided the opportunity to learn more about the Star Process. One way of accomplishing this could be to pursue a doctoral dissertation that explores the Star Process in the educational community of students and teachers to see if the Star Process can do for others what it has so dramatically done for me. Perhaps after much effort and research the Star Process could become the Star Model Process.

Another method of sharing the Star Process with the community would be to develop full and half day seminar/workshops for school district professional development days. In these workshops I would like help teachers explore and understand living consciously in their lives and teaching consciously in their careers. By means of the Star Process we could explore their theories about teaching and their practice of teaching; this process will illuminate potential gaps and begin an investigation that may help close the gap between theory and practice. Some gaps will be the result of a dissonance of self, other gaps will be the result of their perception of the education system or their particular education context—school or school district. Regardless the knowledge acquired, conversation should be fruitful, potentially benefiting teachers, students, administrators, school districts, and education. These workshops will hopefully begin on-going conversations with themselves and amongst themselves.

Creating a workshop for first year university students may help students traverse their undergraduate journeys more effectively and efficiently. The Star Process began in

my undergraduate education making the context of this workshop relevant to their undergraduate situation. As a graduate student I have made several presentations to Dr. Lauzon's undergraduate first year class; these have been well received and feedback seems to indicate that the Star Process was potentially useful to them as undergraduate students.

In conclusion, the Star Process has potential and possibility with regards to its next steps: seminar/workshops for schools, students, personal interest groups as well as a more in depth study that could explore whether or not the Star Process can accomplish for others what it has for me. I used it to complete this process. I use it everyday in every way. With the Star Process I move one, searching for a balance between my spirit and my ego, to live consciously on my plane of consciousness of highest tension (Green, 1978).

I opened this inquiry with a quote from the Dalai Lama, and shortly I will end it in the same way because it captures the essence of my inquiry; it also demonstrates the circularity of infinity—I am never done with this process, living consciously is an ongoing commitment. When this all began in 1994 I knew I had the possibility of being better, and I reflected on that. When I came to graduate school in 2001, I knew I had the possibility of being better, I reflected on that. Now, as I leave this inquiry, I still have the possibility of being better. I will continue to reflect on that.

One thing that can't be doubted, the "possibility of a quality" is within us. It is called prajna. We can deny everything, except that we have the possibility of being better. Simply reflect on that.

Dalai Lama (1998, p. 184)

Appendix A:

Permission statement from Dr. William E. Doll JR..



LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY
AND AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

August 12th 2006

Kurt Mc Berry
Univ. of Victoria

Dear Kurt -

I am honored you wish to my images —
open triangle, open heart, stable contrasting science
and today — in your own work. Your work
adds lustre to my images. I am pleased to
give you permission to reproduce them.

Best to you in all your academic endeavors.

Wm L. Doll, Jr.
V.F. and P.R. Eagles
Professor of Curriculum

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