Sore spots and skin grafts: Recovering the self(s) through autoethnographic inquiries of becoming (a teacher)

by

Liz Merkel
B.Ed, University of Victoria, 2004

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

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Dr Kathy Sanford, (Curriculum and Instruction)
Supervisor

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Abstract

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This qualitative study advances the possibility for pre-service teachers' transformational change in the ways that they consider teaching, learning and the culture of schooling via autoethnographic exploration. I interviewed 5 participants who chose autoethnographic inquiry to fulfill a seminar course in their Post Degree Professional Program at the University of Victoria. Using post structural methodology and arts-based representation, I introduce the palimpsest, a multi-layered and overwritten text, as a metaphor to express the complex, layered and constantly changing process of becoming (a teacher). A thematic analysis of the data revealed several phases/layers of the autoethnographic process experienced by the participants including: re-embodiment; hermeneutic phenomenology; and healing and transformation. Through these phases/layers, the participants questioned the institution within which they are 'becoming', informing and transforming the patterns they themselves assume. The aim of this study is to provide in-depth description of autoethnography that demonstrates its potential to illuminate discursive patterns dominant in the culture of schooling.

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Dedication

For my mum.

Epigraph

If I am truly to be a response-able teacher, the conversation must engage us all equally in change, in interrogating our identities and our role in institutions…And if I am truly to be a response-able human being, I must begin to account for the many identities I live, the shifting power relations I participate in, and watch carefully the ways in which they dis-able others rather than enable them. Further, I must learn to celebrate, rather than repress or deny, those identities that allow me to be human, to be woman, in my work.

(Nielson, 1998, p. 110).

An early introduction*: The* Story

I knew she would be a teacher at only three years old…

Here it comes.

I left her with her grandma, her aunt and her father…

Heart locked in sternum.

A furnace burning up from my belly through to my face, the red, hot stain of embarrassment.

And when I returned from the store, I couldn't believe it…

One thousand times told, enough with this story already!

She had lined everyone up in a row…

Teachers shouldn't…I don't…

Directing everyone, telling them what to do, exactly where to stand.

Mother.

It was so cute.

Re-covering this story myself,

I realize,

long after he had passed,

one thousand times embarrassed,

that was the only time he ever saw me be(coming) a teacher.

Introduction

In the summer of 2008 I began my process of autoethnography, recovering photos, old report cards, journals, letters, memories in an effort to re(-)search (graphy) my self and my positions (auto) in the cultures in which I dwell (ethno) (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740). Through this approach, I explored how my ingrained beliefs and actions potentially both enable and dis-able my students and my community, and how my history in the culture of schooling manifests in who I am as a teacher. I represented my inquiry through multi-medium artwork and video, articulating new insights and perspectives on my teaching philosophy and life with others. As I made sense of doing autoethnography, I began to see the immense benefit for the use of autoethnography in teacher education.

Why is autoethnography important to teacher education? How does it differ from reflection, from self-study and even from autobiography? Is the *sharing* of one's autoethnography a critical experience in teacher education and in autoethnographic practice ? What are the transformative potentials in engaging in an autoethnographic approach in personal and public levels? Does autoethnography impact the assumptions and beliefs about learning and society that pre-service teachers have spent a life in schools inculcating into social norms (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Pajares, 1992; Lortie, 1975)?

These are questions I began to have as I started to work with pre-service teachers through the University of Victoria's teacher education program. The following study advances the potential for pre-service teachers' transformational

change in the ways that they understand teaching, learning and the culture of schooling via autoethnographic exploration in teacher education.

Purposes of this study

This study is inspired to speak to a multiplicity of questions at both institutional and local levels. Firstly, I(t) hope(s) to begin to look at dominant discourses within which pre-service teachers are situated and how these discourses might be impacted, disrupted, shifted, or maintained through the process(ing), including the sharing, of personal autoethnographies. Although autoethnography is becoming more acknowledged and published as a method of qualitative research (Sparkes, 2002), the exploration of doing autoethnographic inquiry work is still rare in teacher education. The disruption of dominant discourses reveals the possibility for change in individual inquirers, but also assumes that those individuals who work (or will work) within the schooling system actually change the system itself. As Wheatley (1999) expresses, "[a]cting locally allows us to be inside the movement and flow of the system, participating in all those complex events occurring simultaneously….We never know how our small activities will affect others through the invisible fabric of our connectedness" (p. 45). Though for some it may seem small and isolated, the deep, intimate work of an autoethnographer is a local act with a larger intent (Ellis & Bochner, 1996).

Secondly, research concerning self-study and reflection in teacher development is both popular and prevalent in teacher education, but is often taken up as an isolated process, one done in relation to practicum work and criticized by

students as another ‘hoop to jump through’. This study advances autoethnography as a deep, embodied and recursive process in which pre-service teachers call up memories and experiences from the past that support certain discursive practices in the systems within which we/they work and live. This process is/should be very different from a class reflection, as the literature review and thematic analysis will further support.

Finally, although it is becoming more practiced and published, study of self remains ignored and undervalued by policy-makers: “Unless self-study research in teacher education begins to be taken more seriously as research by policy makers and the broader educational research community, the findings in these studies will continue to be dismissed by those who make policies” (Zeichner, 2007, p. 39). This research takes place at the University of Victoria, which is one of four research-intensive universities in British Columbia, and who, after four regional university colleges expanded to university status, are further compelled to offer and emphasize research opportunities in every faculty, including in professional programs. The pressure for this university to take up research practices in teacher education presents enormous opportunity for educational change if policy makers begin to value autoethnography as a research method. This study explores how the process of autoethnography might contribute to this educational change as a transformative research genre in teacher education, and its aim is to “provoke, challenge, and illuminate rather than confirm or settle” (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 20) the current, status-quo practices in pre-service teacher education and policy.

Guiding questions

In what ways does the process of doing autoethnographic inquiry in a seminar course impact the discourse(s) of the pre-service teacher/inquirer? How does the process of sharing the autoethnography impact (further or differently) those discourse(s) for both the individual and within the collective? What are the transformational qualities of doing autoethnography for those becoming teachers? Further, what *is* the process of doing autoethnography?

Context: Prevalent discursive issues in becoming a teacher

There are three concerns I identify below which led me to the development of this inquiry: "Good Citizenship", Transfer or Inheritance, and Fragmentation (and Dis-embodiment) in teaching and learning. Of course, there are additional concerns in education[1]one could problematize, and ones that emerge from the experiences of the participants, whom you will soon meet. However, these three big issues in becoming a teacher are significant to the ways in which this inquiry was conceptualized, and that re-emerge in different ways and articulations throughout the manuscript.

Good citizenship

Baldwin, Buchanan and Rudisill (2007) argue that historically North American learners are taught to practice good citizenship. This historical view of

[1] Education here refers to what Peter Abbs (1979) calls the "limiting form of schooling" (in Graham, 1991, p. 96).

good citizenship consists of accepting and unquestioning the authority and advice of adults: "Teachers model such good citizenship through their own conformity to the published curriculum and, by proxy, the hidden curriculum" (p. 316; see also McLaren, 1989). This act of good citizenship, "cultural preservation", "enable[s] social control to be maintained without the necessity of dominant groups having to resort to overt mechanisms of domination" (Apple, 1990, p. 3; see also Bourdieu, 1990; 1988). The discourse that demands "allegiance to the status quo" (Britzman, 1991) allows for authoritative and divisive discourses of expert/novice, teacher/student, evaluator/evaluated, success/failure, through its (e)valuation system and subsequent allocation of binary oppositions. These intrinsically violent dualisms[2] maintain social and cultural status-quo and the oppression of those on the subordinated end of the discursively constructed binary.

Immersed in authoritative discourse from childhood to university student in schooling, teachers move through the system first oppressed, then as potential oppressor: "Teachers possess the power to legitimate or refuse what can be spoken and who can speak. They have the power to authorize discourse as authoritative and internally persuasive" (Britzman, 2003, p. 240). Further, Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) argue that our pedagogic work is plagued in this power dynamic

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[2] See Derrida (1967/98) for more on the violence, severing nature of binary oppositions. This is also referenced in Stronach and MacClure (1997) as good reason to practice the disruption and opening of such dualisms. The author whose thoughts of the violence inherent in dualism resonates most for me, is Thich Nhat Hanh (2007): "A good organic gardener doesn't see the garbage as his enemy, because he has a clear perception of interbeing. He knows that he can use the garbage to make compost to enrich the soil, and the garbage can be transformed into flowers. He doesn't have a dualistic viewpoint. That is why he is at peace with the flower and at peace with the garbage….When you accept the nondualistic nature of reality, your way becomes nonviolent" (2007, p. 62).

that continues to promote, with "a mixture of tyrannical stringency and disillusioned indulgence", the "master" as "infallible", the student as incompetent. Under this ideology the student is striving for success in what she ought to be: "being-for-the-teacher" (p. 111).

Normalisation encourages the comparison, judgment and hierarchal categorization of what is developmentally and socially appropriate/not appropriate (Foucault, 1977; Marsh, 2002; Britzman, 2003). This normalisation is most overt when thinking about our standardized testing rituals and grading wherein students at all levels are compared against the "minimal threshold" (Foucault, 1977, p. 183). Less explicit, but as politically charged are the taken-for-granted practices which promote the discourse of normalisation. Students are judged "developmentally ready" according to their age and class, able and cultured according to their racial background, socialized and deficient according to their behaviour (Marsh, 2002; Britzman, 2003; McLaren, 1989; Kidd et al., 2008; Villegas, 2007; Baldwin, 2007; Brown, 2004; Foucault, 1977 [3]). The discourse of normalisation abounds in North American society and is embodied in pupils at all levels: From Marsh's (2002) study of Kindergarten children who deviate from developing writing skills at the "appropriate age", to Kathleen Rockhill (1986) who "despair[ed] over [her] incapacity to force [her]self into the straight-jacket of academe" (p. 12). In an effort

[3] "And, in the ensemble of compulsorily alignments each pupil according to [her] age, [her] performance, [her] behaviour, occupies sometimes one rank, sometimes another; [s]he moves constantly over a series of compartments- some of these are 'ideal' compartments, marking a hierarchy of knowledge or ability, others express the distribution of values or merits in material terms in the space of the college or classroom. It is a perpetual movement in which individuals replace one another in a space marked off by aligned intervals" (Foucault, 1977, p. 147).

to "fit" into their romanticized stereotypes of what a teacher is (Pajares, 1992; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999), pre-service teachers actively and/or passively take up this Discourse of Good Citizenship.

Transfer or Inheritance

The aspect of being "internally persuasive" is dangerously subtle, and discussed by Bakhtin: "affirmed through assimilation, tightly woven with 'one's word'…One's own discourse is gradually and slowly wrought out of other's words…and the boundaries between the two are scarcely perceptible" (Bakhtin, 1990, p. 343). So pervasive, this discourse is taken up as natural, as taken-for-granted, as essential in teaching: "[t]hus, they uncritically take up the state's ideologies as their own" (St.Pierre, 2000, p. 502).

Korthagen and Kessel's (1999) work regarding the "transfer problem" in teacher education identifies the first of three transfer concerns[4] as the students' resistance to take up new pedagogy or theory different from what they themselves experienced in schooling (p. 5). Lortie (1975) states this resistance comes from two decades or more of being rooted in the schooling system that they are now being asked to change. A sponsor teacher mentors the students, as adults, but the students have also been "apprentices-in-observation" their entire lives thus far.

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[4] Korthagen and Kessel's second concern is the "feed-forward": "In order to learn anything during teacher education, student teachers must have personal concerns about teaching or they must have encountered concrete problems. Otherwise the fruitfulness of the theory is not clear to them and they are not motivated to study it" (p.5). The last concern is regarding the relevant nature of work they do in teacher education programs. Teacher educators can not often give assignments nurturing a quick response or decision making that are skills necessary to be adaptable and responsive in teaching situations.

Further, most student teachers have felt successful in schooling, and have little reason to change the status quo as an "insider" (Pajares, 1992; Lortie, 1975). Thus, we are left with a cycle of reproduction wherein pedagogical diversity is limited and the inheritance of hegemonic practice dominates. This is the hegemonic inheritance that pervades/perverts education.

It *seems*, then, that pre-service teachers have little opportunity to be an agent of change. Freire's criticism of the (1970) "banking model" of education may aid to explain the lack of choices in agency, or rather the silences inherent. This humanist privileging of hegemonic ways of being (a teacher, a student) and sources of cultural authority in turn reproduces the dominant "choice", reproduces the marginal silences. As bell hooks states, "we are all subjects in history" (1994, p. 139; also, Bakhtin, 1990, amongst others), and thus are all complicit in the silences.

This humanist discourse of the "banking model" in attempt to produce "automatons" (Freire, 1970, p.74) also produces artificial definitions of right and wrong. As Gore (1995) states "Education *is* naming, communicating, and upholding norms" (p. 172). Gore surveys the "particular norms of good teacher practice" in education through a Foucauldian (1977) perspective, calling up again the relationship of good teacher practice-good citizenship.

Fragmentation (and Dis-embodiment)

Finally, this study hopes to illuminate and open up concerns about fragmentation pervading education, including the dualisms mentioned above. Jardine, LaGrange and Everest (2002) assert that "[s]chool teachers and university

teachers all, in their own ways, are living out a deep cultural logic of fragmentation" (p. 324). We see this fragmentation in a variety of curricular spaces and places resulting in **dualisms**: curriculum integration/compartmentalization (Jardine, LaGrange & Everest, 2002; Jardine, 1996; hooks, 1994; Britzman, 2003), teacher/student, administration/teacher (Britzman, 2003; Apple, 1990; Apple, 1986; Freire, 1970/1993; M.C. Bateson, 1996; McLaren, 1989), mind/body (hooks, 1994; Nielson, 1998; Bateson, 1972; Spry, 2001; Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1991), all of which bring subject/object into question. Further, Peter Abbs (1979) states that "[e]ducation in the limited form of schooling can thus be interpreted as a systematic flight from existence; an attempt to blot out the dirty smudge of self so as to secure 'pure objectivity' and 'final neutrality'" (in Graham, 1991, p. 96). The above short list is certainly not comprehensive, but is a beginning notion of the fragmentation and of the separations that exist in education.

Britzman (2003) is particularly concerned, as are many autoethnographers, with the objective/subjective dualism resulting in the subordination of experiential and embodied knowledge: "Fragmented experience is the shattering of experience into discrete and arbitrary units that are somehow dissociated from all that made that experience in the first place.…[T]he fragmentation of knowledge from experience, however, is so pervasive, that we come to expect personal exclusion" (p. 51). Teachers who have lived in schooling from Kindergarten to University graduation have experienced this deep fragmentation that permeates our curriculum. Could there begin to be a re(-)covery of self, self with others? How might we begin to value experiential, embodied knowledge? How might we begin to

recover those shatterings of experience in order to heal relationships, in order to make learning equitable for more learners?

> hooks encourages us that for too long
>
> bourgeois educational structures seemed to denigrate notions of wholeness and uphold the idea of mind/body split, one that promotes and supports compartmentalization. This support reinforces the dualistic separation of public and private, encouraging teachers and students to see no connection between life practices, habits of being, and the roles of professors. (1994, p. 16)

Many authors call for the understanding of teacher's "life practices, habits of being and roles", their beliefs dispositions and perspectives in order to create equitable and socially just learning environments for all students, to make change in the schooling systems (Pajares, 1992; Calderhead, 1996; Stuart & Thurlow, 2000; Kortagen, 1999). In answer, autoethnography asks that we look again at those political and historical events in our lives which shape all the above, and begin to "heal the artificial separation of subject and object, modulate the 'authorial voice' and acknowledge our subjective involvement in the creation of knowledge" (Bochner & Ellis, 1996, in Austin, 2007, p. 1). It is integral to the recovery of meaningful, "response-able" teaching (Nielson, 1998, p. 110) that we begin to consider ourselves part of collective agents, able to make change, and responsible for the social constructs in which we find ourselves working and living. Perhaps we might begin to see ourselves apart of the web of interdependence, "interbeing" (Thich Nhat Hanh, 2007), capable and culpable for the violence inherent in

fragmentation, in severing, in dualism[5]. But perhaps through this recovering of our experiences in the world, we also see ourselves integral to the recovery, the healing, of our relationships; the "pattern that connects" (M.C. Bateson, 1984) to ourselves, our bodies, to each other, to the culture and place in which we live our lives.

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[5] see Thich Nhat Hanh, 2007, *Buddha Mind, Buddha Body*.

The Fine Print

Terms of Dis- Agreement

These *Terms of Dis-Agreement* describe contradictory theoretical terms presented herein, and states the perspectives and conditions under which you, the reader, may consider reading this thesis. Please read this document carefully. By continuing to read this thesis, you are indicating your acknowledgement, though not necessarily your agreement, of the following terms and how they are utilized herein. It is recommended you review this dis-Agreement periodically if you have questions during the reading.

The thesis that follows is not an autoethnography. It is not a hermeneutic phenomenological study either, though both terms are used repeatedly throughout what you will read, should you choose to proceed. Rather, what follows is an interpretive study looking at the processes of autoethnography and re-presented by post structural means. However, I also interpret and articulate a significantly central part of the process of autoethnography by using vocabulary and tenets of hermeneutic phenomenology. You may ask: If post structuralism was advanced as a rejection of humanist research genres, i.e., phenomenology (e.g., St.Pierre, 2000), is it possible to write a post structural re-presentation of an experience I interpret with hermeneutic phenomenological language? Not even on the second page of these *Terms* and you and I have reached a contradictory impasse! In the attempt to guide your reading, the following fine print explicates how I understand and apply the following terms of dis-agreement: *post structural*; *hermeneutic phenomenology*; and *process*.

Firstly, the paradigm with which I approach my research is, as Lather (1992)[6] describes, a post-positivist one with the aim to understand, rather than predict, or confirm: "As interpretative research, its goal is the revelation of the participants' view of reality" (p. 89), and in this case, of their autoethnographic experience. Interpretive research rejects the positivistic notions that societal phenomena can be validated and universally known through observable and measurable means[7], and that truth is objective. My work, though an interpretive study, employs or borrows elements of the ***post structural*** in order to re-present my interpretation.

I have borrowed the notion that a post structural text "may not follow predicted patterns of report writing but may set out to deconstruct or disrupt report writing itself (Nielson, 1998; Richardson, 1997)" (Davies & Gannon, 2005, p. 321). This element demands patience from you, and attentiveness to post structural applications—I have tried to create places of uncertainty, discomfort and ambiguity for you, with the trust that *either you or I* might revisit those places later in the text.

---

[6] In Lather's (1992) outline of post-positivist paradigms there are four subheadings: prediction (meaning, positivism); understanding (e.g., interpretive studies, hermeneutics); emancipatory (e.g., critical theories, Freirean, etc.); and deconstruction (e.g., post modern and post structural methodologies).

[7] Auguste Comte (1798-1857), the author of positivism advanced that scientific methods applied to social phenomena can prove truths and form universal laws or principles of human life and activity. His work in positivism is an originating feature of humanism, as is Descartes'' (1596-1650) philosophies of mind/body dualisms wherein rational thought and logic of any (hu)man could discover fixed truths. "Like Descartes, Comte believed that observation provides unmediated access to the world and its features. He concluded that true scientific knowledge is based on facts garnered from the observation or visual experience of either the material or social worlds. Once again, we find the idea that there is a reality ''out there '' separate from the rational, scientific mind (the subject/object dualism) and that its truth can be discovered through careful, rigorous observation" (St.Pierre, 2000, p. 495).

Please anticipate an uneasy read and that you may feel unsatisfied or in waiting for a straightforward explanation.

I have borrowed the notion that a post structural text plays with and destabilizes structures that are taken for granted in everyday life, playing in the "gaps, discontinuities and suspensions of dictated meanings in which difference, plurality, multiplicity and the coexistence of opposites are allowed free play" (Bannet, 1989, p. 5, Lather, 1992, p. 90). I do so by playing with and manipulating words within text, but also by using art and form to manipulate themes within the text.

I have borrowed the notion that a post structural text is concerned with opening up rather than fixing and certainty: "The kind of opening which such work attempts is that of *rupture*—of interruption and disruption—in the (uncertain) hope that this will generate possibilities for things to happen that are closed of by epistemologies of certainty" (Stronach & MacClure, 1997, p. 5). Post structural texts are interested in interrupting and disrupting discursive structures, and as Derrida advances, we deconstruct discourse "not in order to reject or discard [it], but to reinscribe [it] in another way" (Derrida, 1967/98, p. lxxv). I have attended to the notions of opening up in my work, slipping at times from the paradigm of interpretation to playing with deconstruction (and back), hoping to leave you with the feelings of both uncertainty and possibility.

I have borrowed the notion that a post structural text assumes "the self as a constellation of possibly conflicting partial identities, contrasting the "fiction of a single true, authentic self" with a "reflexive self" that sustains multiplicity" (Denzin

& Lincoln, 2000, as referenced in de Freitas & Paton, 2009, p. 485). Here, however, is where the terms within this thesis become really dis-agreeable:

Autoethnography is a research genre implicating, complicating and, as the name suggests, indicating the "self' and using the pronoun "I": "Readers [and researchers] often take up and interpret "I" stories as realist tales about the self" (de Freitas and Paton, 2009, p. 484), as if there is a whole being, free from the "conflicting partial identities" viewed through a post structural lens. The notion of a "single true authentic self", is part of a humanist discourse that has dominated most of my life, if not yours, is not easy to escape or reject (Davies and Gannon, 2005) and is taken for granted, almost as "the air we breathe" (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 478). Therefore, and many of the thus mentioned authors might agree,

I must also borrow the notion that a post structural text is " [a] tex[t] in which contradictions can be embraced" (Cixous & Derrida, 2001, in Davies, et. al, 2006, p. 88) and wherein an acknowledgement is made that traces of the humanist and/or positivist self will emerge (and even dominate!) in such contradictions. You will notice not only the participants, not only me, but also some authors I cite whose words are searching to articulate a whole self, undivided. For example, you will notice my struggle with Parker Palmer's (1997) definitions of *identity* and *integrity* for teachers (see, for example, p. 137), though I reference his work extensively. I hope that as you read you will see elements of this post structural notion pushing up against the humanist and/or positivist articulations that are there.

It is with this embrace of contradictions that I now address the second term of dis-agreement, ***hermeneutic phenomenology***. Post structuralism pushes up

against research genres wherein there is an assumption of a truth to be found or an essence to be discovered. A central tenet of traditional Husserlian phenomenology is that there is a "return to the things themselves" (as referred in D'all Alba, 2009, p. 8; see also, Moran, 2000), and the idea of a fixed entity or phenomenon to be grasped indicates humanist discourse. How, then, can post structuralism sit comfortably beside hermeneutic phenomenology in the upcoming document?

The answer is: it can't. However, both conditions, post structuralism and hermeneutic phenomenology, do remain on an, albeit very broad, spectrum under Lather's (1992) aforementioned post-positivist paradigm scale. In addition, I am also responding to, and interpreting, the data provided me by the participants, who are making sense of their own identities in teacher education, often a very humanist endeavor (which I write much more about in relation to Britzman's (2003) phrase "struggle of voice" (see p. 56). In the second thematic section of this document, called *Recovering and re-covering: Autoethnography as hermeneutic phenomenological process*, I explain how I have interpreted their experience in doing autoethnography by using elements of hermeneutic phenomenology. These elements and how they might apply to autoethnographic experience first developed in my thinking after reading David Abram's (1996) *Spell of the Sensuous* and how he uses a hermeneutic phenomenological framework. Here I explain what notions of hermeneutic phenomenology I have borrowed in order to situate this interpretation with/in the post structural notions explained above.

I have borrowed the notion that hermeneutic phenomenological interpretation is significantly different from a purely phenomenological one in the

Husserlian sense[8]. I neglect to reference Husserl from most of this document, focusing primarily on the elements of hermeneutic phenomenology from Heidegger, Gadamer and, as mentioned, Abram. In the section regarding hermeneutic phenomenology, my intent is to lead you through a somewhat suspended reading, leading you through my interpretation of the experience of doing and articulating autoethnography. As such, you may feel frustrated that I don't mention certain elements of hermeneutic phenomenology soon enough.

I have borrowed the notion that hermeneutic phenomenological interpretation "asks the researcher to engage in a process of self-reflection to quite a different end than that of phenomenology. Specifically, the biases and assumptions of the researcher are not bracketed or set aside, but rather are embedded and essential to interpretive process" (Laverty, 2003, p. 28). The historicity and culture of the researcher is assumed as present and a part of the interpretation, and researchers pay attention to their subjectivity.

I have borrowed the notion that, unlike Husserl's phenomenology, there is not one fixed essence to be seen, but rather hermeneutic phenomenology interpretation engages an ongoing dialogue wherein understanding and thinking changes through re-articulations. Further, that "coming to a place of understanding and meaning is tentative and always changing in the hermeneutic endeavor" (Caputo, 1987, as referred to in Laverty, 2003, p. 30). The idea of an 'essence' to be

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[8] See Laverty (2003) for an extensive comparison of Husserlian 'pure' phenomenology and the hermeneutic phenomenology of Heidegger and of Gadamer. One significant point of departure is Husserl's belief in the Cartesian mind/body split and that a researcher takes an objective position. This is not so in hermeneutic phenomenology which assumes the prejudice of the researcher and the interpretation. See also Moran (2000).

discovered is unfixed, multifaceted and always partial: "Essence is not a single, fixed property by which we know something; rather, it is meaning constituted by a complex array of aspects, properties and qualities" (Van Manen, 2002). I address Van Manen's description of essence tentatively, as it isn't integral to my use of hermeneutic phenomenology herein, but rather as an answer for the frequently asked question that follows phenomenological claims: What about 'essence'?(!)

I have borrowed the notion that a hermeneutic phenomenological interpretation *can* engage in deconstructive activity. As Silverman (1994) argues, "The playing of play is the interpreting of interpretation. The playing of play is what Gadamer calls the "transformation of structure." …. [Gadamer, 1960/1998] indicates that this place of play, this place of interpretation, is also the place of language. Language is the horizon of a hermeneutic ontology. Language is the locus for the play and transformation of structure which occurs in interpretation" (pp. 30-31). The following document suggests that autoethnographers are engaged in the playing of play with language and languaging themselves differently in the world. At the same time they are deconstructing taken for granted discourse that suggests things are 'just the way they are': "The ''way it is '' is not '' natural.'' We have constructed the world as it is through language and cultural practice, and we can also deconstruct and reconstruct it" (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 483).

As there is an entire thematic section interpreting autoethnographic experience with hermeneutic phenomenological elements, I wish to end the *Terms of dis-Agreement* with one last definition. I use the term ***process*** throughout the manuscript and what I don't mean by the term is a mechanical, step-by-step

procedure I hope to dissect and/or advance. Rather, the meaning of process here is the layered experience of doing autoethnography, and in particular, for 5 young women who are in a teacher education program becoming professional teachers. This thesis will not list the steps to create an autoethnography. My intent is to immerse in the autoethnographic experience discussed by the participants and to lead you through that process with my interpretations and writing.

Literature Review

Autoethnography: What it is/is not/could/might be

Self-study, autobiography, reflection… these words are very familiar in qualitative research and especially in teacher education. Although autoethnography has obviously very similar roots to these words, I propose it has the potential to be a more critical approach to opening up dominant discourse and issues in teacher education. It is the re(-)search (graphy) of self and positioning (auto) in the cultures in which one dwells[9] (ethno)(Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740). Ellis and Bochner explain: "autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing and research *that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural*" (p. 739, my italics). Further, in his paper *What do people do: A Dani auto-ethnography*, Karl Heider (1975) first introduced this methodological approach to the anthropology research community. He created this term specifically to highlight each part of his approach in his work with the Dani, an Indonesian people: "This paper is a report of what can be called a Dani auto-ethnography: "auto" for autochthonous, since it is the Dani's own account of "what people do"; and "auto" for automatic, since it is the simplest routine-eliciting technique imaginable" (p. 3). Thus, the approach of autoethnography is not only a self-study, but self connected to, complicit in and responsible to culture, "in search of the nexus of self and culture. [Autoethnographies] show a self maneuvering through time and space to reveal how cultural logics enable and constrain" (Pelias, 2004, p. 11). Afonso and Taylor

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[9] Dwelling here is taken up as the Heideggerian notion, reiterated by Basso (1996): "multiple 'lived relationships'" (p. 106).

(2009) describe autoethnography as part of a “non-dualistic continuum…autoethnography as a study of the culturally embedded self” (p. 277).

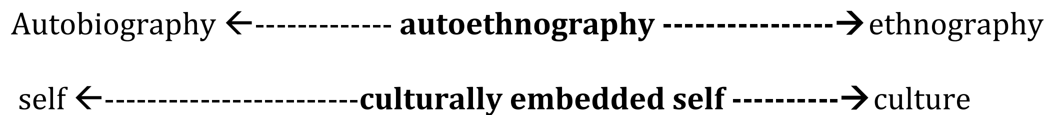

Figure 1: Diagram of the "culturally embedded self" adapted from Afonso and Taylor (2009, p. 277).

Finally, teacher educators Burdell and Swadener (1999) explain autoethnographies as “narratives that draw from collective experience, struggle, and identity contestation in ways that illuminate the complexity of, and contradictions to, assumptions in various disciplines, often serving as manifestos in their respective fields” (p. 22). Thus, autoethnography is not only a reflection, not just the study of self, but very purposefully and critically created to respond to the collective struggle and experiences of a community, local or global. This approach is meant to provoke, disturb and transform the cultural collective.

As I have argued, autoethnographic literature is distinct from that of autobiography, self-study and reflection, though often lumped together. For the purposes of this study, I have primarily reviewed literature concerning only autoethnography, with the exceptions of necessary well-referenced authors of self-study in education, who have laid foundation for autoethnographic work in teacher education. Autoethnography as a formal and recognized approach has a short history in qualitative research (let alone in teacher education), and therefore, I draw upon more recent work from the past ten years. This literature review was begun

before my data analysis to situate my study in the field. However, as I began to learn about my participants' experiences with autoethnography, I needed new vocabulary to describe the process. This literature review is a starting point for understanding autoethnography, but continues to develop and weave through this manuscript.

Autoethnography in/as Research

Carolyn Ellis (1999), whose renowned contributions to autoethnography have changed the face of qualitative research, likens autoethnography to the zoom lens of a camera: "backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred" (p. 673). Autoethnography is usually written in the first person, though it features multiple voices through its dialogue and interactions. It seeks to reposition readers as co-participants by evoking emotion and comparison with, and critical comprehension of, the text. Autoethnography requires an artistic, systematic and well-written text/representation in order to connect to readers. Finally, what seems like one of the most difficult qualities of autoethnography is the honesty and vulnerability the in which authors engage for impact and to draw the audience into the inquiry (Ellis, 1999; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Sparkes, 2002; Pennington, 2007; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001).

The ways of undertaking and presenting an autoethnography takes many forms and often borders on a/r/tography (art-research-teaching)(Irwin, 2004), wherein authors engage in many modes of representation and present/perform

respectively. An autoethnography may end up as a narrative, an interweaving of story and scholarship (Diamond, 1999; Payne, 1996; Ronai, 1996; Persilli, 2005; Ellis, 1999; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Tsang, in Sparkes, 2002; Duncan, in Sparkes, 2002). Some autoethnographies are presented by a script modeling a conversation had (Ellis & Bochner, 1996). Some inquirers use different visual and dramatic art methodologies: drawing (Derry, 2005), painting (Hamilton, 2005), drama (Lang, 2005), batik (Diamond & Halen-Faber, 2005) and even clothing and shoes (Weber, 2005). One of the most evocative ways in which to explore this research approach is through poetry (Tillman-Healy, 1996; Spry, 2001; Butler-Kisber, 2005; Brogden, 2008).

Selecting a variety of data for analysis, autoethnographers might use any significant artifact of a life experience to accompany "memory work" (Sironen, 1994; Spry, 2001; Ellis, 1999; Brogden, 2008), systematic sociological introspection[10] (SSI)(Ellis, 1999; Bochner & Ellis, 2000) and personal narrative. In *The* Story, the poem prefacing the introduction, I chose an anecdote that my mother tells over and

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[10] Systematic sociological introspection, or SSI, will be discussed in further detail on page 93. Simply put, it is a method wherein a researcher "pay[s]attention to [one's] physical feelings, thoughts and emotions" (Ellis, 1999, p. 671) in/as part of the analysis. Ellis has coined this term, and explored it in depth, claiming that "[r]esurrecting introspection (conscious awareness of awareness or self-examination) as a systematic sociological technique will allow social constructionists to examine emotion as a product of the individual processing of meaning as well as socially shared cognitions… [and that] introspection can generate interpretive materials from self and others useful for understanding the lived experience of emotions" (Ellis, 1991, p. 23). The reason I hesitate to go into detail about Ellis' SSI at this juncture is because I had quite a difficult time understanding what it meant until I did my own autoethnography. Even then, I could not articulate with appropriate vocabulary my interpretation of SSI. It wasn't until I looked at the data for this study and thought about hermeneutic phenomenology that I began to see ways to explain how I interpret SSI. This interpretation is explicated in the second theme of this manuscript called *Recovering and re-covering: Autoethnography as hermeneutic phenomenology.*

over to new (and old) friends and family, then began to explore my emotional and physical rememberings.

After choosing artifacts as data, an autoethnographer begins to *re-cover*, re-examine pieces and stories of her life, viewing them in perhaps a new light, through new perspectives, new identities, time and space. With *The Story*[11], I looked systematically at how the story my mother told so often was part of who I am as a teacher, and as a daughter. I also began to look at my becoming a teacher situated within a hierarchal discourse that I knew and performed at the age of three. I began to see the story my mother tells in a very different way, to look at my motivations for teaching in a very different way. This process of re-embodying the memory with emerging emotional and physical evocations was my initial interpretation of SSI, but as you read further, you will find that the analysis of this study demanded a new, deeper, and more substantial understanding of what is happening in the process of doing autoethnography.

Embodiment and healing

Autoethnography is often/predominantly used to explore the healing of the fragmented or broken physical body after trauma (Ellis, 1999; Sironen, 1994; Tillman-Healy, 1996; Spry, 2001; Sparkes, 2002; Tsang, in Sparkes, 2002; Duncan, in Sparkes, 2002). It also calls for experiencing again, a re-embodiment, a healing of bodily experience and knowledge: "When the body is erased in the process(ing) of scholarship, knowledge situated within the body is unavailable. Enfleshed

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[11] The poem *The Story* prefaces this manuscript.

knowledge is restricted by linguistic patterns of positivist dualism- mind/body, objective/subjective" (Spry, 2001). Spry discusses how her performance of autoethnography is an embodied method to release and restore bound knowledge situated in her bodily experience. In this process she challenges the social constructs within which she lives, opening up the dominant discourses in her "personal/professional/political" life.

David Payne, in *AutoBiology*, also challenges these discursive dualisms which "dislocate the body and its ownership from the self" (1996, p. 49) in his autoethnography, wherein his narratives are re-lived, situated, placed, re-embodied and seek "[t]he recovery of his body, his authority, from patriarch[al discourse" (p.69). He recalls a life experience (working in a factory as a younger man with long term union workers) to sense what was learned, what knowledge was developed, even though/because he was not in a traditional education environment. From my perspective, students in North American culture are often asked to be 'objective', to disassociate knowledge from lived experience, and as teachers this means we may discount our previous/present life experiences as learners, as teachers; *we may discount our students' previous/present life experiences as learners, as teachers*. The quality of embodiment is a central theme that emerged through the thematic analysis and is elaborated in the first thematic section of this study, *Recovering the Body*.

Validity

As a relatively new and intrinsically/explicitly subjective genre, the research community heavily critiques autoethnography for both a lack of validity and quality. Sparkes (2002) states that "witnessing" is a central value of the genre, and that author-researchers have a responsibility to readers to tell about what happened with intentionality and sincerity (p. 97). Further, as the author exposes vulnerabilities (feelings, struggles, solutions, stories), it causes readers and participants to do the same (Pennington, 2007). As Pennington describes in her research of pre-service teachers reactions to teaching in diverse cultural areas, "[o]nce I told her my story, [the study participant] shared her *real* feelings" (p. 96). The validity of this genre lies in its ability to impact and engage individuals and collectives towards dialogue and conversation.. Ellis states (1999), "language is not transparent, and there's no single standard of truth. To me, validity means that our works seeks verisimilitude" (p. 674). Sparkes (2002) refers to Lather (1986) and the notion of "*catalytic validity*" (p. 201) as being a tenet of autoethnographic inquiry: "the degree to which the research process energizes participants and alters their consciousness so that they know reality and can better transform it" (p. 201-2). This verisimilitude is dependent on the author's ability to move the reader from passive to active readership, which is why a variety of visual and textual mediums are explored.

Autoethnography in Teacher Education

Johnson (2007) argues that it is important to study the life history of pre-service teachers as their "experiences and beliefs suppor[t] and/or constrai[n] them in developing an ethics toward teaching that is grounded in equity and social justice" (p. 300). Johnson traces the life history of pre-service teachers to deconstruct what experiences and dispositions allow those individuals to have an "ethics of access" for their students. A large body of literature supports the importance of studying teacher's beliefs to making schooling not only effective, but also more equitable for students (Goodson, 1992; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Munby, 1982; Munby & Russell, 1989; Korthagen, Loughran & Russell, 2006; Lortie, 1975; Korthagen & Russell, 1999; Calderhead, 1996; Pajares, 1992; Stuart & Thurlow, 2000). In this research I propose that autoethnography has the potential to address this literature, but also to offer possibilities to investigate the hegemonic institutions within which teachers work and are worked. The "objective of such self-study is to help candidates understand how their level of identity formation may impact their teaching and to develop a growth plan to move them to a higher level of competence" in transgressing traditional, often inequitable, patterns of education (Solomon, Manoukian & Clarke, p. 75).

The representations of autoethnography are texts that are most often more accessible to a wider audience than traditional research texts allow, and have elements of performance (Holman Jones, 2005) that open up dialogue in collectives of people:

[a]vailable critical narratives and autoethnographic texts provide vehicles for

> talking to each other, often across the borders of discipline and identity locations. For those of us located inside pragmatic, credential-oriented, and technology-driven corporate university settings, opening such spaces for dialogue creates possibilities for re-engagement, resistance, and reading ourselves into the process of educational and social change (Burdell & Swadener, 1999, p. 26).

Further, Austin and Hickey (2007) support that autoethnography in teacher education is a powerful way to enable

> a socially-transformative teacher education program…that draws intending teachers into a consideration of their own silence and/or privilege in the face of injustice, one that provokes the conscientization necessary to understand the power of contemporary socialization processes that support structures of inequality, oppression and exploitation as achieved largely through the colonizing of mass or popular culture by the dictates and imperatives of global capital. To us, a critical practice of auto ethnography is one way of opening up such an orientation. (p. 4)

Burdell and Swadener (1999), teacher educators, believe autoethnographies should also strive to "decolonize" research. At the end of the article, however, the authors warn that as autoethnography is more widely used, it is important to make sure that many voices/stories are heard, and not just those who have historically been heard in traditional genres. Typically, researchers still often sit in hierarchical positions to decide whose voice gets to be heard. The sharing and discussion of autoethnographic work in pre-service teacher education may be a significant aspect

that pushes research in teacher education to become a "critical practice", one that transforms. In this way perhaps inquirers, and collectives of inquirers, may ask *Whose voice isn't being heard?* This is a clearly a departure from the reflections completed in (some) curriculum subject courses[12] regarding one's practice, kept to oneself or shared with one instructor.

[12]I initially named the curriculum subject courses as "methods courses" in my writing. This term niggled at me, and then even more so at my first draft readers. The name "methods course" was one employed by my professors throughout my teacher education program, and is still carried on by some faculty and students in the program I work and study in today. Discursively problematic, it indicates a technical/rational metaphor of teaching with curriculum fragmented at best. Considering the implications of this word, 'methods', it seems fitting that both faculty and students may envision (reflective) work as a lockstep task with little meaning. A different emphasis on or name for curriculum courses (rather than 'methods') could support programmatic shifts valuing integrative and cohesive teaching and learning (as recommended by teacher education literature, e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2006). Ironically, the title of the next section in my thesis also needs further thought and problematizing, but remains my research 'methods' and certainly food for thought.

Methods

This study hopes to open up the conversation regarding the process of creating and sharing an autoethnography in a pre-service teacher seminar class. This study is a qualitative and interpretive inquiry about doing autoethnography. My methodology and analyses are in re-presented by post-structural[13] theoretical perspectives and applications. I have struggled with writing about autoethnography, as it is, as Holman Jones (2005) vividly describes, "a balancing act". I have been conscious of the necessity to honour and reflect the difficulty and complexity, the layering and unlayering, of autoethnographic processes in my methodology. As Reed-Danahay (1997) describes:

> The ability to transcend everyday conceptions of selfhood and social life is related to the ability to write or do autoethnography. This is a postmodern condition. It involves a rewriting of the self and the social. (p. 4).

My methodology and analyses were conceptualized with the postmodern condition of autoethnography in mind, always struggling in the balancing act of trying not to fix understandings of autoethnography, whilst at the same time inherently fixing through the analyses and writing. Thus, what follows is sometimes (and what began as) a linear Masters paper that sometimes diverges into (and what emerged as) rhizomatic-like threads with the intention of understanding and describing the complex processes of autoethnography experienced by the pre-service teachers with whom I worked. Further description and explanations of my methodology is forthcoming after (the very linear) address of my methods.

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[13] Refer to the *Terms of dis-Agreement* previously advanced.

Research Method and Data Collection

Five participants volunteered to participate in this study, beginning approximately six months after completing their autoethnographic inquiries as part of the seminar class that I taught in the fall of 2008[14]. There were two sections of the seminar class that fall, and my section had 11 students, 4 of whom chose to do autoethnography. After receiving my ethics approval from the Human Research Ethics Board at UVic, I emailed those 4 students with an invitation to participate in the study and with the consent form attached in full. In addition, I emailed one student, Julia, from the other section of the seminar who had contacted me to show me her work. All the students I contacted accepted my invitation, except one student who had changed both permanent and email addresses. Thus, I had four students to begin with, three from my seminar section and Julia from the other. After the initial focus group, Julia forwarded one of her classmates my email invitation as she thought her classmate, Chloe, would like to participate. Chloe then emailed me, and

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[14] This course is called "Elementary Field Experience Seminar" and is a mandatory course for all new Post-Degree Professional Students. The syllabus description lists the objectives of the course as: "The course provides opportunities for you to reflect on your development as teachers, to work collaboratively with your peers and teachers in the field, and gain greater understanding of the micro and macro aspects of teaching. The seminar format allows time for discussion, reflection and focus on group concerns. This course focuses on planning and implementing the curriculum, effectively managing student behavior and diversity, and acquiring strategies for orchestrating the many demands and responsibilities inherent in the role of educator" (ED-P 360 course syllabus, 2008). In this course that takes place in the first term of the program, the students are responsible for: completing 8 entries on an electronic portfolio; 5 contributions to an online forum; an independent visit to an alternative setting for teaching and learning; and an inquiry project/presentation to their peers. They also share their planning for their upcoming practicum placement. In short, the way I describe this course is that it is a connective place to bring your ideas together from the many different courses and new teaching experiences and begin to make sense of your ideas and beliefs about teaching and learning.

we began a research relationship in that manner. I initially chose to only send invitations to students I knew and whose work I had seen, as my research questions were focused on the process of autoethnography, and not the work/artifact itself. Further, I did not want to put any student in a vulnerable position wherein they were disclosing their life stories with someone unknown (e.g., me). My ethical considerations for this research included this concern, knowing that the students had already shared their work with their classmates at least six months prior. That is, I anticipated that the participants would not be opening up painful memories as part of this research as they had already shared their work six months prior. Because Chloe contacted me, however, I felt comfortable starting a new relationship with her, expecting her to share what she felt appropriate. All the participants were female, which is not surprising as only one student in my section of the seminar was male, and he did not chose an autoethnographic inquiry. This statistic mirrors the well documented fact that the majority of teacher candidates are White women, generally in their 20s (e.g., McDonald, 2005; Solomon, et al., 2007; Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004; Milner, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Lenski et al., 2005). The participants are introduced in detail following the description of the research methods, as well as further explanation of the seminar class format.

I first invited my participants to an informal focus group to begin the conversation about their experiences with autoethnography and some participants brought in artifacts that triggered their memories of creating their projects, such as their autoethnographic representations. However, these artifacts were not used as

data as I was interested in the process of autoethnographic inquiry for pre-service students, not in the products themselves.

I approached the methods for this study with Neilson's (1998) definition of inquiry in mind:

> Inquiry is less a stance and more an intentional gesture, a re-bodied approach to working with people, particularly women, on projects which matter to them locally and globally. Inquiry is a conspiracy, a breathing together, for which we need the conditions of being "together" and sharing a climate, or air, for breathing. Inquiry values, rather than fears, difference… (Neilson, 1998, p. 262)

With this approach in mind, I brought the participants together for the initial focus group in July 2009. Neilson's notion of inquiry was enabled by the pre-service teachers' prior relationships with each other and with me, as will be further articulated in this manuscript. I had some predetermined questions ready but as I anticipated and hoped, an emergent conversation arose leading my understandings of not only autoethnography, but also of the methodologies for this study, in new directions (as discussed in the methodology section). This focus group was audio recorded and transcribed.

Following this focus group, I held informal interviews with each participant, also taking place in July 2009. Interviews were approximately one hour long and were also audio recorded and transcribed. In these interviews I felt that the participants spoke very candidly, and that together we engaged in conversational approach to interviewing. As is made clear throughout the study, these

conversations were significant to extending the participants' understanding of their work as well as to mine. After the transcribing was complete, I gave the participants an opportunity to read and respond to their individual interview transcripts.

Lastly, I set up a blog on a moodle platform for further thinking and for discussions to take place though participants are not in physical space together. The blog was not an engaging medium for participants to contribute, though a few individuals wrote reflective pieces on questions I posed. I quickly realized that the blog was not necessary in light of the in-depth interview sessions, though I have used the few participant responses as supportive data. In my initial analysis I hand-coded the transcripts thematically, allowing for multiple interpretations to arise from my readings. I then used N'Vivo to organize my codes, shaping them into themes to be able to see patterns emerging from multiple participants. A thematic and interpretive analysis of the data revealed several phases/layers of the autoethnographic process experienced by the participants including: re-embodiment; hermeneutic phenomenology; and healing and transformation. These three broad phases/layers are discussed in detail as the three major thematic sections of this thesis.

In December 2009, after I had done the first layers of analysis of the study I invited the participants to an informal group session to present my thematic concepts from the data, and to hear feedback from them. All the participants seemed pleased and agreed with the themes I had articulated, and I felt confident to move on. At this time, one participant (Billie) told me an experience she had had in the last months of her teacher education program that relates directly to her

experiences with autoethnography. We then met for coffee to further discuss this transformative experience, and she gave me permission to use this conversation as data for the study. In addition, I use two artifacts from participants to strengthen the arguments of this study, and these were given to me to use with permission from those participants as indicated where they appear in this manuscript.

Context and participants

This study's purpose is to understand and illuminate the transformative possibilities of autoethnography in teacher education, and therefore the data and analysis focuses on the processes of doing autoethnographic work. The intent was to describe in detail and depth what might be happening as individuals, specifically pre-service teachers, take up this genre of inquiry. However, the participants' description of the process is inseparable from the context of their autoethnographic work and themes. In order for you, the reader, to connect to and follow this current study it is essential that you be briefly introduced to the five participants and to the context of the four-month seminar class in which they began their autoethnographic inquiry. They are all Post-Degree Professional Program (PDPP) students who I met and taught in the first month of a 16-month program, and who volunteered to be a participant in this study. The following is but a sketch of what they did and a description of their work, and though I have been cognizant to try not to essentialize each individual, I am constrained by the conventions of written text and my own notions of what you need to know to continue on. The intent of these brief

descriptors is not to fix the participants in time or definition, but rather to provide images to reminder you who each individual is, and of the context of their inquiry[15].

Introducing me, the seminar instructor

I can recall standing at the front of the room vividly, the skin on my face prickly and hot and my guts churning over and over as I stood in front of a room of pre-service teachers who waited for me to speak. Why had I thought it was such a brilliant idea to invite students to do an autoethnography for an assignment? Why was I about to allow myself to be so vulnerable as to show them my own autoethnography?

It was September 2008 and this was my first time teaching a seminar course in the teacher education program. The syllabus for the course requires students to take up an inquiry project and only two months after completing my own autoethnographic inquiry for a Masters course, I was already taking the it on the road, offering this research genre as an option for their inquiry project assignment. What's worse, I had convinced the instructor of the other seminar class to offer it as well, and would have to present my example to her class too.

The seminar classes have small numbers of students, approximately 15 in each section. The course runs for an entire term and two sections are scheduled at the same time each week, making it so that instructors can plan together and come

[15] All the descriptions of the participants' work are direct translations from their explanations during the focus group or interview sessions. Square brackets indicating modifications for clarity have been taken out to enable a fluid read so that the reader might become easily familiar with the participants, but any changes made were for clarification only.

together for guest speakers and presentations. On this particular day, both classes were staring back at me, waiting to find out what the word "autoethnography" means.

The other instructor had just finished explaining the criteria of the inquiry project assignment from a power point. In a nutshell: Choose an issue you are interested in, explore the topic, represent your findings, present to and discuss with the class, receive informal feedback from peers. Topics might be things like: Being a Teacher-On-Call; Learning difficulties; Bullying policies; Environmental education; The teacher's union, etc. My co-instructor gave an example using the topic "Field Trips".

And then there was *my* inquiry project.

My autoethnographic inquiry was a video wherein I explored themes including, but not limited to: becoming a teacher through stories my mother tells about me, through my memories of schooling and in reflection of my father's passing; deficit discourse through my relationships with others and desire to 'help'; values of community through my nomadic teaching experiences; and the notion of 'good citizenship' through my report cards and relationship with schooling. I applied a raw, mostly unedited voice-over to photos that are or show my data, and I connected it to literature on the necessity for pre-service teachers to engage in in-depth self-study.

I began by telling the students that I am nervous and that I have only shown this inquiry to two people previously. I explained my process of approaching my autoethnography, the concept of memory work, and the collection and diversity of data. I told them that many people, including me, consider this to be a form of research, and that I knew that some of them would find this presentation challenging to their preconceived notions of what research looks like. I told them the criteria was the same as the conventional inquiry project, but that they would develop an approach and a representation that fit their data and their personal histories. I knew that it wasn't enough to try to explain it and, though I wished impersonal explanation of "method and steps to doing an inquiry project" would suffice without exposing myself and my amateur video, I knew what an immersive and transformative experience doing autoethnography was for me and for my teaching. I felt responsible to offer it to them, knowing what I heart-fully know. And so I showed it.

Introducing Lani

Lani was the first to arrive to class everyday. She was always the first to respond on our online forum that we used in the seminar class. And, it's not surprising, she was the first to present her autoethnography.

"I made a story book with photos and paintings exploring my years living in Hawaii and their impact on my life and my future as a teacher. Each page looked at different times/characteristics/experiences that had shaped me".

Lani is a Caucasion American woman who spent a large portion of her childhood growing up in Hawaii. Her storybook led our seminar class through her autoethnography page by page, revealing the systematic analysis of her multiple pieces of data. "*I called my mum and asked her about some of the report cards and things about my past as well, and then I had a memory box that had photos and artwork I did as a kid and things from Hawaii, so I looked through that, and thought about it, talked to my husband…*"

Lani read/performed each page just as a skillful storyteller would, showing the beautifully handcrafted pictures to the class. The subject of the book, Lani herself, grows up over time and with/in various cultures. Metaphors of magic, re-birth and spirituality provided embodied images to the audience of her growth that led her to her present.

She spoke about experiencing being ostracized and bullied as "the ghost" in her school, an outsider in traditional Hawaiian culture. She later explained she felt hesitant to present this particular story, not knowing how others might perceive this controversial piece. She also spoke about being fearful as a child, about her close relationship to her parents, and about time spent in Japan as an ESL teacher before coming to the PDPP program.

Though she is an extremely reflective individual, Lani has never experienced a school assignment that requires so much vulnerability and personal inquiry as an autoethnography. Lani has often identified herself as being fearful of opening up to others and exposing herself, and doing autoethnography challenged her fears of being vulnerable. "*I was surprised at the evolution from fear based to a stronger*

person who has tools to deal with things because doing it I realized as a kid everything was fear based for me".

And so, for the purposes of this study about autoethnography, remember Lani and her autoethnographic storybook. You will learn more about her process(ing) of autoethnography as you continue.

Introducing Billie

"I use my experiences through religion as an example of institutions in general in my autoethnography because that's how people, how I, came to understand power, came to understand, that because I'm Caucasian, because I'm female, because I'm living in North America, this is how I am to be in the world, and this is how I relate to different people, and it almost gives an understanding of roles, right? …and how I become to understand myself through a lot of those kind of contexts too and how you come to that idea of power, not just who has power but how power functions, so that different levels of authority aren't to be questioned. And the way information is proliferated, the kind of authority that information carries, and depending on who it's coming from what it means; How that kind of structure was entirely normalized, how there's so many doctrines and rules and how these rules are to be followed out… Religion's an interesting kind of concept and how it influences people. Not to say that it's negative or positive, right, but the structure that you experience even to the most minute details; how you're supposed to approach people, have your hands, say things, how that's your access to that community. So, your membership in that community is

also dependent on this and… you become really fluent in understanding those norms and so,that can be applied to school as well, right? The way that you read these norms and not challenge them and learn the ropes of fitting into these communities, was transferred a lot into school and seeing institution as rigid because, especially as a child going to church, that was just something way beyond our control. We talk about how we want to (quote/unquote) 'influence government structure', and that is an institution but there's school, religion, certain institutions where there's no question, it's entirely beyond influence, and so, yeah, the way that you understand yourself in those roles is really interesting and the way that dictates your behaviour."

Accompanying her provocative conversation with us, her seminar class, Billie presented a canvas with a tree collaged through the middle, surrounded by painted hands layered over one another. She collaged pictures of people and quotes that represented her data and to the themes of her inquiry, but she vehemently emphasized the importance of the process of her work and that her canvas was but an artifact for our reference.

Billie's process(ing) of her autoethnography continues through her first teaching practicum, resulting in feelings of defeat and disappointment, for reasons you will read.

And so, for the purposes of this study about autoethnography, remember Billie and her autoethnographic exploration of religion-as-institution. You will learn more about her process(ing) of autoethnography as you continue.

Introducing Julia

"*Liz! I've been looking for you everywhere!*" A Caucasian woman who looked familiar to me came towards me in the hall of the Education building holding a large mass of cloth in her arms.

"*I want to show you my autoethnography*," said Julia proudly. I then remembered her face from the day that I stood in front of both sections of the seminar, shaking as I pressed play on my autoethnography video. She was not in my section, and we had never actually spoken at that point, but she sought me out as we have something unique, autoethnography, in common.

She unfolded the cloth revealing something beautifully detailed and obviously to which she rigorously attended. Her quilt had four distinct sections with embroidered statements or questions:

*"basically I thought about it and went, these statements are the ideas of what I want **[hopes and dreams**] to be as the absolute wonderful perfect teacher, **fears** of being the exact opposite, that teacher that we all remember and hate, and then **thoughts** and then **promises**, things that didn't quite fit into hopes and dreams but things that I thought related and made sense and they all have a specific time period or event in my life that they've attached to …."*

"*How did you present this*?" I asked in wonderment.

She told me that she just lay the quilt down in front of her peers and allowed them to look and then ask what each statement that caught their eye meant. Like opening a gift, she would then tell the life story that underpins the statement.

After I learned more about Julia through our research sessions, I learned what a difficult and significant experience doing an autoethnography must have been for her. Despite holding two degrees (English and Anthropology, respectively), she has deep-seated fear of handing in assignments and presenting her work to others, which developed from a major life experience in schooling that formed as a focus in her autoethnography.

"Well what I found is that a lot of my interest and my love of learning was found outside of school; not inside school, which I guess is kind of a sad thing. I guess the one that kind of defined me the most was grade 3 and I had a horrendous teacher."

"What happened or what was she like?"

"Well, I was a very disorganized person, still am, and she was one of these people who really felt that people needed to be organized and so she was going to fix me. And um, she didn't, but in the process I ended up in remedial. I went from being somewhere in the top middle of my grade 2 class to the bottom of my grade 4 class....I would get my work done, I would hand it to her and she would say 'It's messy, do it again.' So then I never got the work done because I was so worried and concentrating on being neat that I would be slow and I would never be able to finish. Umm, so of course that helped out with things like [now], you know – I don't like handing things in to people, I don't like people looking at things I've worked on because they're likely to say 'it's not neat, it's not done, it's not right, it's not this, it's not that, it's not something else'."

Taking these anxieties into consideration, Julia took a big risk to complete an autoethnography and she explained in detail how absolutely "terrified" she was to

present her work to her peers. After her presentation, however, Julia felt a great relief and explained:

"I felt quite good afterwards and looking at it now, its like, yeah ok, that's how my mind works, right there on my quilt. It's nice to have it there and I went and did something that I never would have done 5 years ago or another time. I'm very proud of it."

And so, for the purposes of this study about autoethnography, remember Julia and her autoethnographic quilt. You will learn more about her process(ing) of autoethnography as you continue.

Introducing Chloe

Chloe was a student in the same seminar section as Julia, and came later to this study after Julia told her what I was doing. She volunteered her time and her story though I had never met her before. Chloe was born and raised in Victoria, is Caucasian, and will pursue teaching in French immersion. Before university, Chloe traveled to France to be a nanny for a French family. This experience with both French and children inspired her to return to Victoria to pursue a French degree with a Spanish minor, and then to enroll in the PDPP program.

Chloe sat next to me on a bench on campus, the warm sun beating on our skin. She began to tell me the background for her autoethnography, and how and why she chose the data for her inquiry. Chloe's autoethnography focuses on her relationships with members of her family:

"I think I was in grade 11 or 12 that my mum told me that my dad was paranoid schizophrenic and you know, to keep it under wraps because people he was still sort of friends with might find out and that it might get to my best friend. Her dad helped him move out to another apartment when I was 15, and looking back I can totally see that my mum had given up years and years before and really, she was terrified of striking out on her own because she didn't have post secondary education, she didn't have a career, it was kind of the typical 'oh my god' but she got out for her own sanity. Her being an immense role model was important in my autoethnography as well because partly she just went, ok, you know, doesn't matter how hard this is, this is what I have to do. But it was just really really hard for her. Well, she kind of came out of her shell in a lot of ways. Actually, going back to role models, it's important to go back to my brother and the fact that, growing up, he had a temper, things would just set him off, and looking back on it, it's like, wow, because my dad was like that. I remember holes in the wall."

To represent her research, Chloe searched through boxes of photos, choosing significant ones and stories to place in the pages of her mother's *Joy of Cooking* book, purchased the year Chloe was born. The cookbook serves as a metaphor for Chloe that will be looked at with more detail in the upcoming reading. Chloe's experience of autoethnography provides a slightly different approach in that she has mentally and emotionally revisited her relationship with her father over and over again in order to come to grips with his illness. When she talks about him, she does so in a very matter-of-fact way, understanding that "*It's not because I don't love him or care about him, but he's so tortured by his demons that I don't think… until he passes on,*

he's not going to be at peace." She calls the content of her autoethnography "*not necessarily foreign territory*." However, when she spoke it aloud to her seminar class she surprised herself by becoming involuntarily emotional. She articulated her autoethnographic 'findings' to me with embodied metaphors about the ways in which her history is inscribed on her skin. She explains these moments of surprise and embodiment that arise through sharing her autoethnography aloud.

And so, for the purposes of this study about autoethnography, remember Chloe and her embodied autoethnographic cookbook metaphor. You will learn more about her process(ing) of autoethnography as you continue.

Introducing Hannah

When Hannah began her presentation, I don't think that anyone in our seminar class knew what was coming. Hannah is a quiet individual in class and generally was not one to speak out in discussions. She did not stand up in front of the class like the other presenters when she began her presentation. Rather she sat in her chair and took out a handmade book created by a child, an "autobiography" assignment she completed in Grade Four. As she read stories about things a grade four student likes (pizza), dislikes (bugs), and places visited (the beach), I anticipated some sort of greater connection, hoping (with judgment) for something "more rigorous". After she finished she said, *"When I read this again I thought how strange it was that everything was so happy and positive."* Then she took out a

journal that she wrote after she had found this grade four autobiography, reflecting on recent discoveries about the past.

The year before entering the PDPP program, Hannah had taught in Korea as an ESL teacher. But before she left to return to Canada she knew there was something else she wanted to do.

"It was 3 weeks before I was coming back to Victoria and I had on a piece a paper the name and the number of a lady who worked at the social welfare agency and I was kind of nervous, but I called her up.

I said, 'Hi', and I gave her my Korean name because I have a Korean name too, 'I was adopted, do you have my records on file?' I asked.

'Oh there's a few of you here, when's your birthday?'

I gave her my birthday.

'Oh I found your file', she said. So she sent me the email and it said, 'Unfortunately I couldn't find out anything about your parents or the person who found you, but I found your case file of when you were in the orphanage.' This file kind of told me about myself and the kind of person I was as a kid… I didn't open up the attachment at first: do I really want to open that up? And then I did and it wasn't anything really detailed, just really basic about when I was three until five years old when I was at the orphanage and then I was adopted. It talked about social skills: Did I play with others? Did I get along? Everything was fairly positive. For the autoethnography, I was reading back on my experiences when I was really young because I was adopted and lived with a family for a couple years and then I lived in a foster home for a year before my parents now adopted me, so I know a lot of it was kind of blocked and… that's kind of

the way I adapt to things now, I just kind of move on, right? Try to not think about it, but it's always there. And I kind of wanted to write about that experience and why I want to be a teacher and what made me be a teacher…".

At the age of three, Hannah was found alone on the streets of Seoul, clutching a blanket, and was taken to the orphanage. When Hannah was first adopted from the orphanage and sent to Canada she was mistreated in the home:

"The mom, she was she wasn't all there, mentally and all that….she just wasn't fit to have another child. They already had a son of her own, I don't remember much but I do remember her and certain things that happened, that's not a good memory."

After being transferred to an interim foster home, Hannah was adopted by her current parents. Her father is from Ontario and her mother originally from Trinidad. Her parents are featured in her Grade Four autobiography. In addition to her journal and presentation with her Grade Four autobiography, Hannah also wrote a poem entitled *Who am I?* The autoethnographic research she did was the first time she allowed herself to spend time connecting her past with her present:

"A lot of times I found out that I haven't actually really dealt with it…when I was looking at my autobiography and then looking again through like, the files that I had…and then I'm, kind of, like, putting together the pieces…"

Hannah, who has so often pushed past or through uncomfortable memories, performing composure and strength, often doesn't open up to people easily. However, within two months of knowing the students in our seminar class she recovered parts of her history, and with confidence allowed us to see/listen/feel parts of herself she previously hid away. She felt compelled to ask and explore who

she was/is in order to *be able to respond* to her future students with openness and understanding, and to *be able to respond* to those in the seminar community that her openness would foster connective, collaborative relationships.

And so, for the purposes of this study about autoethnography, remember Hannah and her inquiry of *Who am I?* You will learn more about her process(ing) of autoethnography as you continue.

Shifting and accidental methodologies

From Collective Biography to…

Zeichner (2007) attests that research concerning self-study is highly critiqued because it generally assumes small-scale studies by definition. However, and in alignment with the characteristics of autoethnography, each voice in my small-scale research group (re)presents experiences of her/his/my/our culture of schooling, illuminating dominant constructs of the culture at large. As Deleuze and Guattari would say, "[s]ince each of us was several, there [is] already quite a crowd" (1987, p. 3). I began this study proposing that I would not be concerned with each participant's contribution as a case study; Rather, I would look at/for the discourses within which their experiences are encased. I had hoped to perform a methodology of collective biography wherein it is not the individual story(teller) that is highlighted, but rather, how "individuals are made social, are discursively constituted in particularly fleshy moments" (Davies, Gannon & Browne, 2006, p. 4).

A collective biography is a compiling and interweaving of narrative pieces or vignettes. Davies, Gannon and Browne would name these short narratives mo(ve)ments: “to signify the simultaneity of specific embodied *moments* and the *movement* toward the subject as process that can come about through the mode of telling”. (Davies, Browne, Gannon, McCann, Hopkins & Wihlborg, 2006, p. 92). This methodology encourages the reader to look past whose narrative is whose, but instead look for the mo(ve)ments present regarding experience in education. In fact, this is demonstrated explicitly in the (re)presentations of collective biography in that participants are generally nameless, referred to in the narrative mo(ve)ments as *I* and in the analysis as *she* or with a gender neutral pronoun. This reiterates the collective experience, and thus, highlights the issues and discourses identified. My intent was to take up this methodology to “make visible, palpable, hearable the constitutive effects of dominant discourse” (Davies, Gannon & Browne, 2006, p. 5), and focus on the implications for the “larger picture”. In other words, the participant’s experiences would illuminate dominant discourse in pre-service teacher education and not their individual lives. But what actually happened was something much different, much more emergent, and something that afforded me an opportunity to reconsider my methodological perspectives in regards to this study about individuals doing autoethnography.

Against the grain of traditional research performance wherein researcher knows best and the research plan stays its course, I believe it important to describe my shifting and uncertain methodology here and explain the emergence of a more fitting way of analyzing and (re)presenting this particular data. There is another

word that is not as intentional as 'emergent' but explains my process with honesty and accuracy: Accidental.

> Accidental ethnography is, among other things, about being *ready* when something potentially significant erupts into my world—a sign, a hint, a clue, a dream, a whisper, a secret, a fragment of a memory, an aside, a look (sharp or otherwise), an innuendo, a surge of energy, a moment of passion, an inspiration, a small smile, a direction or misdirection. Readiness is about being…about being in tune, somehow, so that, while not knowing what might come up, I may somehow figure out how to improvise a way into and through an evocative, compelling story. (Poulos, 2010, P. 55)

Throughout my interviews and conversations with my participants I tried to maintain the end-goal vision of the collective biography, but there was one "potentially significant" something that (int)e(r)rupted into my line of methodological thought that I could not shake:

> *Liz: When you do an autoethnography, do you feel that it is just your story, or do you feel that you are in some ways contributing to something bigger?*
>
> *Chloe: All of the above [but] I think that it is <u>my</u> story…it's <u>my</u> family story*

The emphasis with which Chloe spoke about *her* family caused me to question whether the collective biography, in its under-emphasis of the individual, might serve to erase the voice, experience and inimitable stories of the individuals too much in this particular context.

Though I am still fascinated with collective biography and its possibilities, I knew then that it could not serve this research, nor its participants. I had been so

focused on illuminating (or proving, perhaps?) the generalize-ability of autoethnography (Ellis, 1999), and how it potentially speaks to the human condition at large, that I placed the individual and the collective in a binary, privileging the latter for its more socially acceptable status as a legitimating quality of academic research.

My methodological question then became: How do I honour both the voice of the individual(s) and the collective in my methodology? How do I (re)present the voice and story of each individual, whilst demonstrating the potential of autoethnography to speak for the collective experience? After re-reading the transcript of my conversation with Chloe, the process of accidental ethnography took hold and not only has my methodology shifted, but so has my theoretical perspective with which I approach this study as you will read.

Chloe's autoethnography centres on her experience and memory of growing up with a father with paranoid schizophrenia. In our candid conversation, Chloe was describing his bouts of rage and control, and his position as the patriarchal "boss" of the family. I asked her if, in addition to his disorder, it was part of his personality to be controlling.

Chloe: it's so hard to say where his paranoia stops and where he begins…. Um, that's a really hard question.

This one sentence was the turning point in my thinking. Chloe articulated a metaphor for, and the very underpinning of, autoethnography: "it is very difficult to

discern, at any moment, precisely where this living body begins and where it ends" (Abram, 1996, p. 47; See also, Bateson, 1972). That is, the "localization and boundaries of the self" (Bateson, 1972) are not easily discernible, and it's difficult to understand where the self begins and ends[16]. In my thinking about autoethnography I had conceptualized the self and the collective as somehow wanting for separation, just as I had asked Chloe to identify her father as separate from his illness.

As Holman Jones (2005) confirms, it is "[a] balancing act. Autoethnography and *writing about autoethnography*, that is. Autoethnography works to hold self and culture together, albeit not in equilibrium or stasis. Autoethnography writes a world in a state of flux and movement- between story and context, writer and reader, crisis and denouement" (p. 764, italics added for emphasis). I have found *writing about autoethnography* to be a wobbly state of imbalance at best, and that the interview with Chloe illuminated the difficulties of writing in what are essentially in-between states, perpetually in-flux. Thus, I sought a methodology that might come closer to exhibiting the fluidity, movement and connectivity between the individual and the collective in autoethnographic participation.

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[16] Gregory Bateson (1972) describes the difficulty of recognizing where the self begins and ends in his chapter "The cybernetics of self: A theory of alcoholism". He provides a poignant metaphor of the blind man's self: "Or consider a blind man with a stick. Where does the blind man's self begin? At the tip of the stick? At the handle of the stick? Or at some point halfway up the stick? These questions are nonsense because the stick is a pathway along which differences are transmitted under transformation, so that to draw a delimiting line *across* this pathway is to cut off a part of the systemic circuit which determines the blind man's locomotion" (p. 318, italics in original).

...The Palimpsest

In order to write about autoethnography, and about those individuals who do autoethnography, I have chosen to create a palimpsest methodology to (re)present the findings of this study, and to provide an overarching metaphor for discussing and viewing the process of autoethnography. A palimpsest is the overwriting of one text on another partially erased text. For centuries before the advent of modern day paper, most texts were recorded on leather, papyrus or parchment in Europe. These resources were expensive to supply and often scarce, especially the parchment. Parchment was made from the stretched and limed skin of animals, calves, goats or sheep, and was valued over papyrus for its quality. In such short supply, parchment was habitually scraped clean of its previous text in order that a writer might recycle the leaf. Often the writing of the original text was not entirely erased in the process of scraping and washing the parchment[17]. Davies (1993) explains as follows : ‘‘one writing interrupts the other, momentarily overriding, intermingling with the other ; the old writing influences the interpretation of the imposed new writing and the new influences the interpretation of the old ’’ (p. 11).

The palimpsest is significant in demonstrating the difficulty of “becoming” a teacher, and the assumption of a new identity that is so specifically ingrained and performed in Western Eurocentric schooling . Pre-service teachers have particular notions of who and what a teacher is from their lives as students (Lortie, 1975; Feiman-Nemser, 2001), and have to reconcile their histories and selves with what they ‘ought to be’. They are scraping off old writing and the new writing is layered

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[17] Definition adapted from Hornblower, S. & Spawforth, A. (2003). *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.

over top of its history. However, the pressure 'to be a teacher' with such ingrained stereotypes, with which students have a life time of examples, seems to encourage a complete painting over, as if students could erase the traces of the past. Hannah articulates this tension: "*I think like, I, sometimes I'll present myself [as a teacher] the way I think people want me to be instead of like, being, like who I am right? Like, oh maybe they'll judge me in a certain way or I don't know.*" Billie continues "*It's funny how people [in teacher education] get caught in that 'fake it til you make it' kinda thing, like everyone's putting on that kind of show, and then it's hard to articulate [who they are]…*"

Pre-service teachers, including the participants, struggle to reconcile their previous image and experiences with their preconceived notions of what a teacher *should* be. Britzman (2003) calls this a "struggle of voice":

> student teachers worry over how others see them, how others listen to them, and how at times they feel as if they must censor their thoughts, hold back suggestions, avoid controversies, and even delay their creativity until they become a "real teacher"…The struggle for voice is a conflict between old and new events, with what will be discarded and what will remain as the self becomes something other than itself (pp. 20-22).

Reading the description of "struggle of voice", there seems to be an ominous tone of repression and despair, but as Britzman resumes, one's "teacher identity" is born of this conflict, through the biographical, emotional and institutional impediments that present themselves through teacher education. We are continually writing and re-writing our selves, even when we struggle to present ourselves as something or

someone separated from our past. I struggle with the word *become:* How does one *become a teacher*? When one *becomes* something else, is there, as Britzman suggests, a discarding of the old self? Is that even possible? What happens in the space between the old and the new?

We are in a continuous state of *ideological becoming* (Bakhtin, 1981), shaped by the language and discourses of others that we assimilate and take up as our own. How we are subjected and discoursed, of that we are not often even aware. Althusser calls it *interpellation* (1971, in Britzman, 2001), Volosinov calls it *interindividual* (1973, in Marsh, 2002), but however you call this unconscious taking up of language and societal constructs, to question it is to better understand how we live in the world, and as teachers, how we live with our students. Marsh (2002) explains simply that "[a]s individuals piece together identities from the discourses made available to them, they simultaneously create possibilities and constraints for the identities of those with whom they are in relationship" (p. 336). Pre-service teachers, in a struggle for voice, are determining and negotiating their positions in the cultural realm of schooling. Positioning refers to not only the ways in which discursive practices constitute social beings, but also the ways through which social beings might negotiate new positions (Davies & Harre, 2007). Positions are available and assumed in particular cultural contexts, and those positions demand compliance to the constraints of those positions in speaking and acting the appropriate discursive conventions. Bullough and Draper (2004) explain positioning in a clear way as it pertains to teacher education, emphasizing the relevance of positioning as we discursively identify our 'roles' as teachers, learners,

teacher educators: "speakers (principals, teachers, university supervisors, [students and student teachers]) bring to their interactions different claims or rights to speak, and they perform different duties and have different responsibilities and obligations that reflect differences in the distribution of power and authority. Shifts in position bring with them different ways of being with others and open or constrict the range of possible ways of making sense of interaction and relationship" (Bullough & Draper, 2004, p. 408). Who assumes particular positions in the culture of schooling seems explicit and often unquestioned. For student teachers the possibility to explore different ways of being and becoming teachers is constrained by dominant discourses operating within the culture and institution of education.

As Davies, Gannon and Browne (2006) emphasize, however, we are not confined to only one discourse, "even when that discourse has become dominant and capable of diminishing and dismissing critical and contrary discourses" (p. 63). Working within and from a palimpsest framework to represent the hermeneutic and reflexive potential of autoethnography, we might begin to see the possibility of contrary discourses, alternate perspectives and multiplicity of selves in *becoming* a teacher.

The palimpsest metaphor expresses the complex, layered and constantly changing process of *becoming*: It acknowledges the difficulty of locating oneself/selves in an institution wherein the identities of its members are ingrained in its history and manifest in its dominant discourse. An individual's experiences and identities prior to entering a teacher education program have not disappeared in the assimilation, but rather "[s]ubjects are ‘ incessant fields of recoding that

secure identities''(Spivak, 1993, p. 211) that overlap and sediment and which are, in fact, palimpsests, erased yet partially visible identities still in play" (St.Pierre, 2000, p. 504). Autoethnographers use reflexive measures to locate and embody partial identities, perhaps coming to clearer understanding of the histories and conditions that resulted in the self/selves they have become/are becoming.

The American artist Nora Lehmann[18] (2009) writes in her blog a definition of palimpsests that beautifully articulates the metaphor of becoming that frames the analysis of this study:

> All paintings are literally palimpsests, of course, layer over layer, the final image a thin surface crust over the history of its own making. And our bodies palimpsests of the years of our lives, although never scraped clean but only perpetually overwritten. Every new experience lying atop the accumulation of previous ones, so that we can only make out our past through the scrim of all that has come between. The illegible sum of our parts.

What Lehmann describes is a perpetual process of covering and recovering of a canvas, or a lived life. The theme of recovery is the great thread weaving through this study and will emerge over and over, appearing with multiple meanings and images, throughout this writing.

Reading Notes

The following text is written to mimic the process of autoethnography that the participants describe—doing autoethnography is like unfolding layers of a

[18] See http://paintersprogress.wordpress.com

canvas to, for a moment, get a glimpse of what has been overwritten in our lives. The way I have approached this text is to allow for readers to engage in unfolding these layers, hopefully with the feeling of going deeper as the reading continues. This demands patience, as I have spent time describing the process, sometimes leaving the reader in suspended pause, and sometimes stopping in moments of discomfort. I have tried to create these pauses and layers to immerse the reader in the layers of doing autoethnography that are represented by the three different thematic sections below.

The first section, *The Recovery of the Body*, describes the embodied experience and knowing of doing autoethnography. This embodiment and sensuous experience is of low priority and status in academic communities. This chapter suggests that autoethnography instigates the recovery of this kind of knowing that has been neglected, and often nonexistent, in pre-service teacher's schooling experiences.

Further, the double meaning of recovery here calls to the archeological image of digging up. Participants dig up, recover, memories and data from the past. As if scraping layers off their palimpsest lives, they explore their life histories that have been covered up in the course of living.

The second section, *Recovering and re-covering: Autoethnography as Hermeneutic Phenomenological Process*, advances that participants are engaged in hermeneutic phenomenological inquiries when doing autoethnography. This

theoretical framework explains the process that, as Holman Jones supports, is a balancing act and often difficult to articulate. Recovering and re-covering is a central tenet of Heidegger's description of hermeneutic phenomenology, the revealing and concealing element of such a process. Participants, like with a zoom lens, undergo complex experiences of looking at data closely, then often covering it back up or removing themselves, only to return to the same data again, seeing something new for the first time.

The final thematic section is called *Recovery as Healing and Transformation,* which plays with the word recovery to describe the qualities of healing autoethnography provokes. This section proposes multiple and perhaps unlikely definitions of healing and how participants' healing is a transformative process in their thinking about teaching and learning. A particularly significant transformation is the participants' increased confidence and desire to be response-able (Neilson, 1996) teachers.

After unfolding the layers of doing autoethnography, I then propose recommended conditions for inviting pre-service teachers to do autoethnography in teacher education programs.

Throughout this manuscript are modified palimpsests created purposefully to illuminate the thematic analysis of the data gathered for this study. They are modified so that you, the reader, view the palimpsest as a whole, the participants'

words overlapping one another to emphasize the complexity of *becoming*. However, each leaf of the palimpsest can be read separately in order to spend a moment on each layer if desired. This approach honours the collective and constructive process of this research, and the notion that the findings of autoethnography speak to inquiries of the human condition on a wide cultural scale, whilst letting individual words stand legibly on their own. These modified palimpsests (re)present not only the themes, but they are also reminders to the reader of the layered process of doing autoethnography and of reading this manuscript. They are created to reinforce my perspective of autoethnographic work as recovery on multiple levels, a non-linear and recursive process that allows pre-service teachers to recover moments of their palimpsestic lives. This recovery has the potential to illuminate discursive patterns dominant in the culture of schooling within which they are 'becoming', informing and transforming the patterns they themselves assume.

Recovery of the Body

Being "too sensitive"—Schooling the body

In his 2006 address at the annual TED (Technology, Entertainment & Design[19]) conference, Sir Ken Robinson articulated his concern and observation that from the time children are very young, the ways they learn are conceptualized in disconnected body parts. That is, in entering kindergarten children have opportunity to move, experience, sense, touch, learn and show learning with their bodies. As they get older, the sensing body becomes seen as irrational and illegitimate, and the mind made a fetish of the academic community. "Truthfully, what happens is, as children grow up, we start to educate them progressively from the waist up. And then we focus on their heads. And slightly to one side" (Robinson, 2006; see also, Robinson, 2009). He comically describes academics as disembodied heads, the head (slightly to one side) valued as rational and reasonable, and severed from the wild "headless horseman" (Spry, 2001) body. The gruesome nature of this image isn't for naught- it depicts the violence and hierarchy in the mind/body dualistic philosophy that encourages a denouncement of our bodies and the experience of our lived lives in schooling.

The Cartesian reductionist view of the world, sculpted through Newtonian science of mechanics in the 21st century, is a view often taken up to make meaning of a complex and unpredictable world. Wheatley (1999) states:

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[19] See http://www.ted.com to watch Robinson's presentation at the 2006 TED conference.

> this reduction into parts and the proliferation of separations has characterized not just organizations, but everything in the world during the past three hundred years. Knowledge was broken into disciplines and subjects, engineering became a prized science, and people were fragmented - counseled to use different "parts" of themselves in different settings. (p. 27)

This severed perspective of life and knowing serves to underpin schooling institutions and experiences, the rational, scientific mind given high status over intuition, memory, and knowing located in other parts of the body. In order to legitimize truths (the ultimate assessment question—what and how do you know?), philosophers reduced the body into parts working independently from one another, and the fluidity of a whole body is sacrificed. Was Descartes comforted when he realized there was a way to *really know* something? I imagine him breathe a sigh of relief when he first conceptualized that if he could just reduce the lived life into parts, it may be more easy to understand. "The erasure of the body encourages us to think that we are listening to neutral, objective facts…we are invited to teach information as though it does not emerge from bodies" (hooks, 1994). Our ongoing efforts to assess, give value to, and know are pacified by a reductionist, "objective" expression of thought.

It isn't that one's body isn't present during one's schooling (both as a teacher and a learner)- however, the body isn't (re)presented in/as credible work.
Spry (2001) explains so evocatively that

It is not that our bodies haven't been in our work, rather, they have been

> shrouded in our [education] by dualistic separations of Mind and Body. We have been expected to accept the myth of the [learner/teacher] as a detached head—the object of Thought, Rationality, and Reason—floating from research site to research site thinking and speaking, while its profane counterpart, the Body, lurks unseen, unruly, and uncontrollable in the shadows of the Great Halls of the Academy (p. 720).

Though Spry is talking about research here, I took the liberty of replacing research with education in the first square brackets in order to emphasize that Cartesian philosophy follows us into every area of inquiry- teaching, learning, research- inclusively. A researcher/teacher/learner must arouse courage if she/he wants to be seen with this unruly and uncontrollable body, rarely seen in public. When asked if she would show her autoethnography to her family or people she works with, Billie explains:

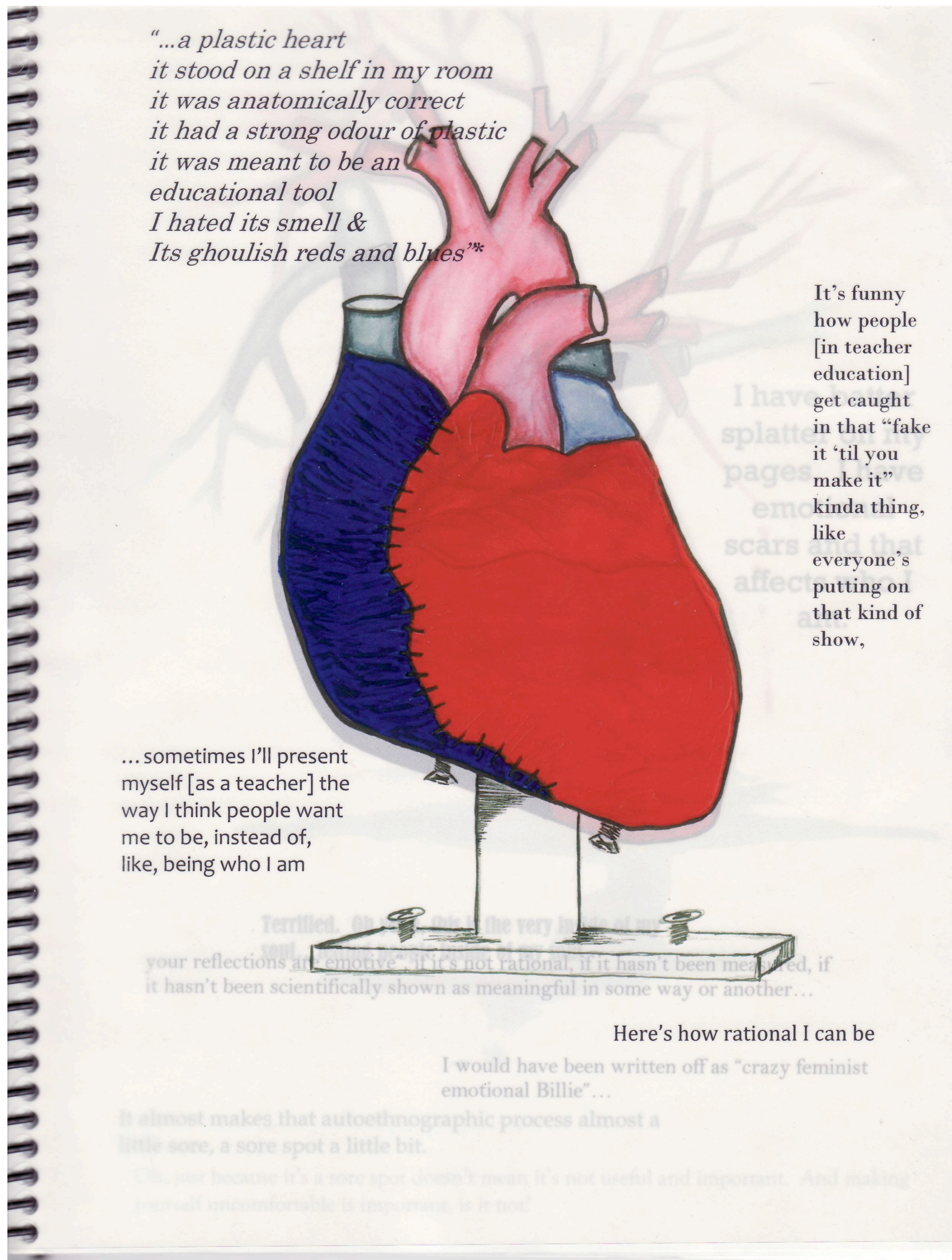
> *I don't think I would have shown anyone else because I think that I would have automatically assumed it would have been discounted as…"your reflections are emotive", if it's not rational, if it hasn't been measured, if it hasn't been scientifically shown as meaningful in some way or another, then I think that it wouldn't have been interested in showing it to anyone because I would have been written off as… "crazy feminist emotional Billie"…*

Unfortunately, women along with their bodies, are often seen as "the hysterical and embarrassing relative[s], 'shut in[s]' in the academy's ivory tower (Spry, 2001, p. 720). Billie talks at length about how her family have questioned, made jokes about and dismissed her interest in feminist philosophy, and her mother (a teacher) and

others have repeatedly told her that she is much "too sensitive". She has been advised in the past not to go into social work because she is too emotional, will become too invested in others and will burn out quickly.

Bronwyn Davies (1992) explores the notion of how one experiences embodiment and embodied knowledge, and clearly states her agreement with Elizabeth Grosz' (1994) descriptions of the ways in which bodies are "inscripted", both violently and subtly, through the "norms and values" established through institutions and societal beliefs that demand conformation/confirmation and accountability (pp. 15-16). As Billie aforementioned in regards to the Catholic Church, one gains access to the community even by learning how to holds one's hands. The ways in which our bodies are (in)scripted are rarely explored, though "attending to physiology can open up new ways of understanding the various ways in which embodiment conditions everyday being-in-the-world" (Barnacle, 2009, p. 23). It was in the process of autoethnography that these participants began to articulate stories of their bodies. It was often surprising to the participants when an emotion or bodily reaction arose from their inquiry, and they spoke candidly about this surprise. The following section explores the attendance to and recovery of the body through autoethnography through: the language and metaphor used to describe their inscripted body; the emotional reactions to their work; and the incredible discomfort involved in recovering something that for so long remained "lurk[ing] unseen".

Palimpsest One



(Original in pencil, ink, acrylic & watercolour; printed on transparency paper)

"...a plastic heart
it stood on a shelf in my room
it was anatomically correct
it had a strong odour of plastic
it was meant to be an
educational tool
I hated its smell &
*Its ghoulish reds and blues"**

It's funny how people [in teacher education] get caught in that "fake it 'til you make it" kinda thing, like everyone's putting on that kind of show,

...sometimes I'll present myself [as a teacher] the way I think people want me to be, instead of, like, being who I am

your reflections are emotive', if it's not rational, if it hasn't been measured, if it hasn't been scientifically shown as meaningful in some way or another...

Here's how rational I can be

I would have been written off as "crazy feminist emotional Billie"...

It almost makes that autoethnographic process almost a little sore, a sore spot a little bit.

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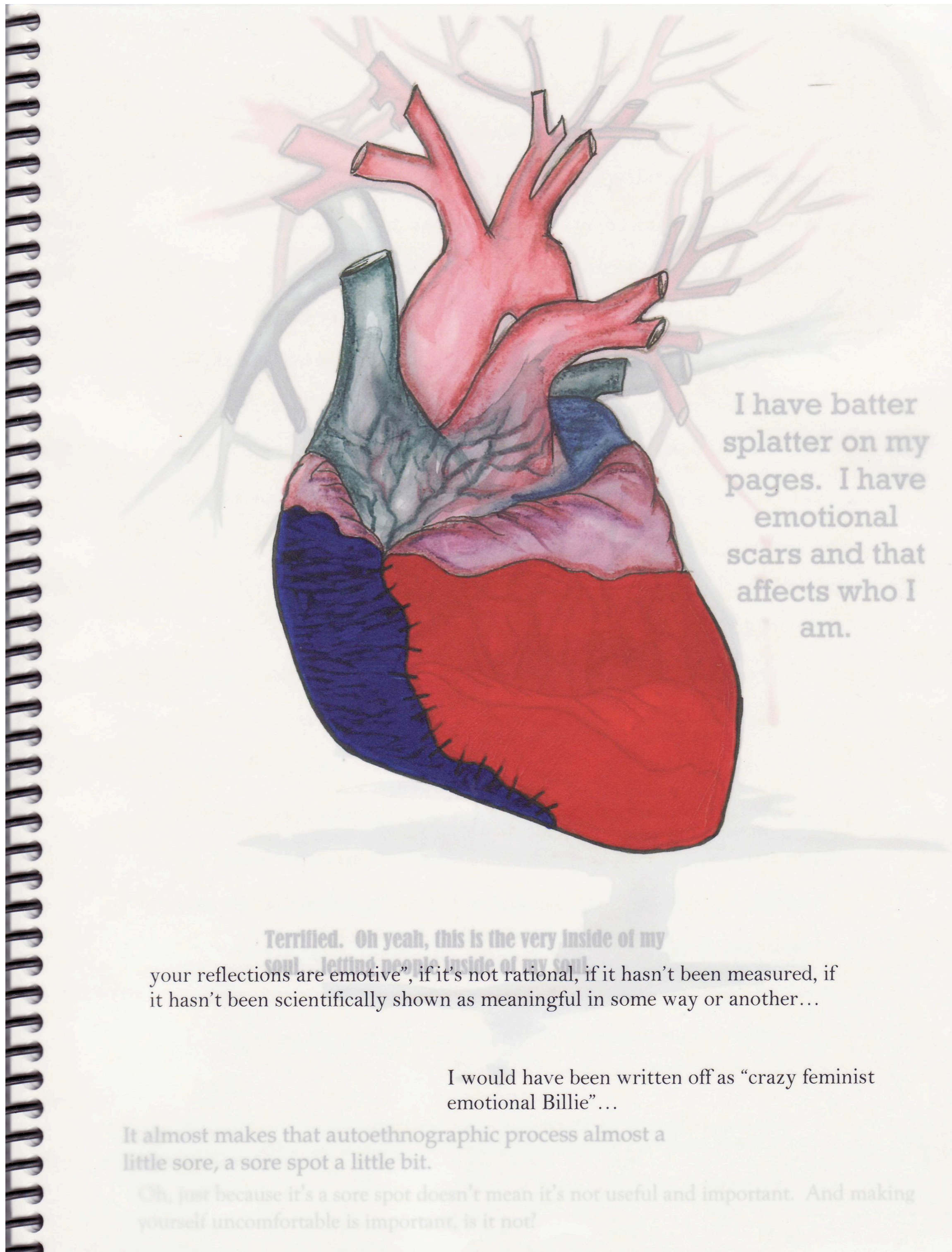

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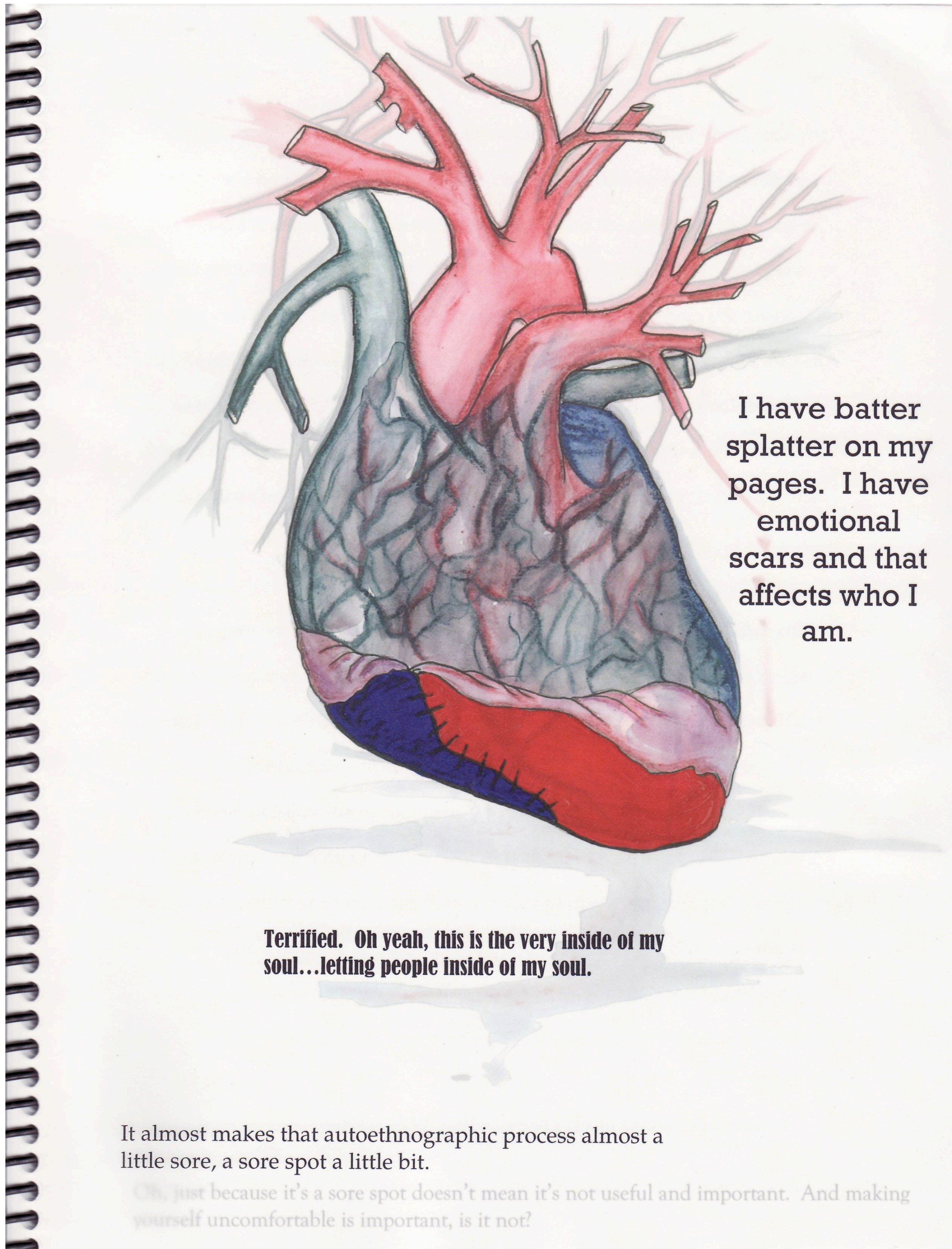

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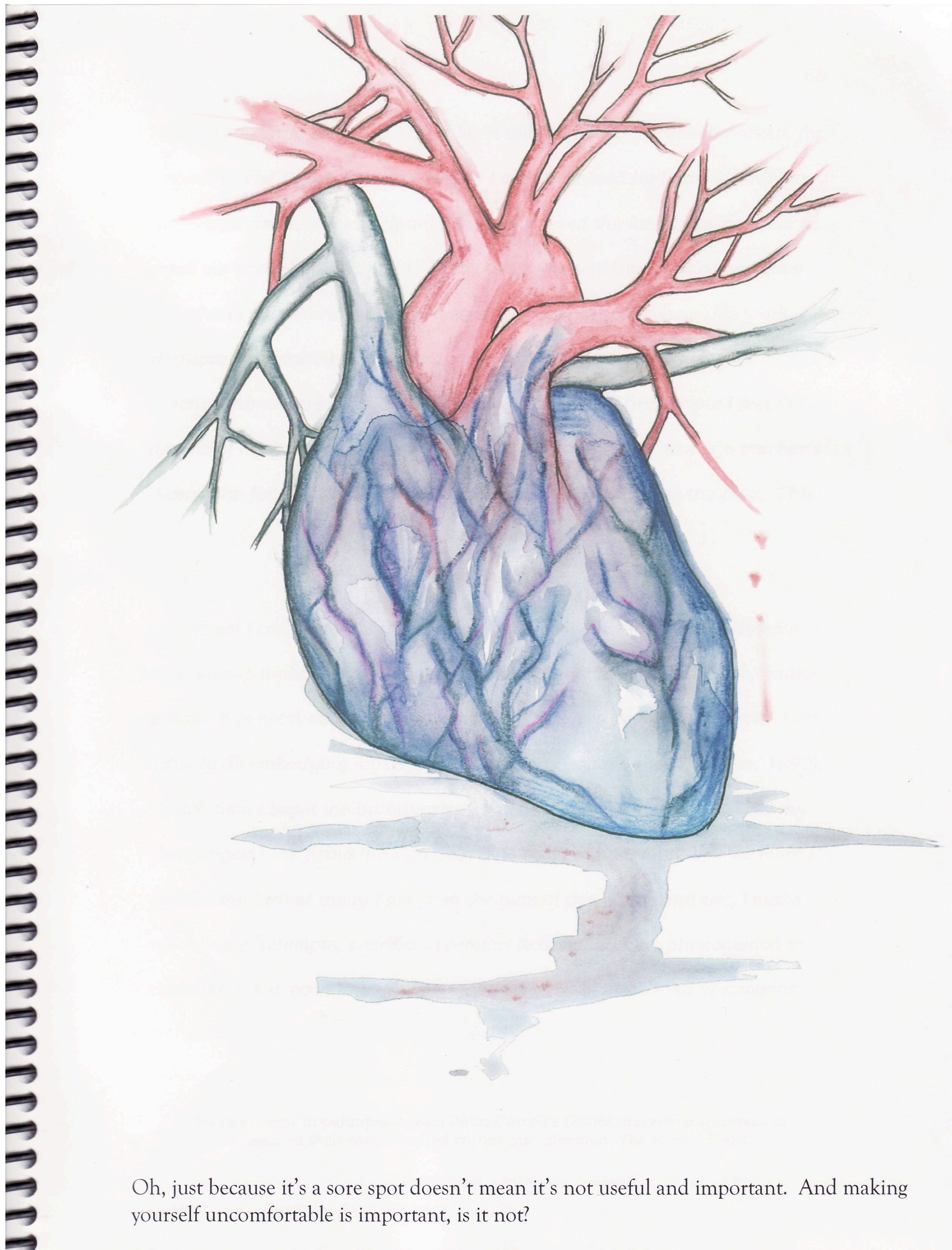

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I struggle to write the piece I have been thinking about, dreaming about, for months. The Recovery of the Body. I am fascinated by how visceral the memories are in my participants' interviews and the language they use to tell me about how they feel. How I will represent my work comes alive when I tell others about the recovery of the body and how this work disrupts our thinking of Valid and Important study and knowing. It makes sense (Abram, 1996). Re-reading my participants' transcripts I feel the depths of my belly, the sorrow of abandonment, the disgrace of a teacher's scorn, the fear of a father's anger and the joy of recovering the past. This is important to report.

And yet I can't write. I begin to quantify the scars of a lived body with referencing and the conventions of academic writing. And it doesn't make sense- it is not a sensitive response, a sensual response to the work. I am actively disembodying myself from the stories in my writing (Davies, 1992). Each time I begin the introductory sentence I squirm in my seat, and my body rejects the fixing through language that I am attempting. The more I write the further away I am from the guts of this idea. And yet, I make continued attempts, sacrificing comfort to articulate this phenomenon to readers~ It is good enough methods to (re)present this kind of knowing.

* Poem excerpt in palimpsest from John Carroll's (2008) *dissecting sparrows to understand their song* situated within his collection, *The Plastic Heart.*

Sore spots and skin grafts- Re-embodied knowing

> *This breathing body, as it experiences and inhabits the world, is very different from that objectified body diagrammed in physiology textbooks, with its separable "systems" (the circulatory system, the digestive system, the respiratory system, etc.) laid bare on each page* (Abram, 1996, p. 45).

The literature regarding autoethnography emphasizes memory work as a significant process in the recovering of data from a lifetime of stories and experiences (Sironen, 1994; Spry, 2001; Ellis, 1999; Brogden, 2008). How the participants chose what data to analyze, what incident or memory to pull up into the present, is a thought-provoking question, and one that the participants sometimes have difficulty answering. Pelias (2004) describes this elusive selection process: "remembering begins in the body, in vague feelings, in the sensuous before it claims its story" (p. 50). Lani describes that she chose particular stories for her storybook by evaluation of how strongly she felt about/towards/through them:

> *Lani: Well, there were sort of themes [and stories] that stood out as things that had influenced me in the person that I had become. So, I started, I themed them and then, within the themes I picked the stronger ones, or even within the story I picked the ones I had room for as well*
>
> *Liz: What do you mean, "the stronger ones"?*
>
> *Lani: Yeah, good question. Stronger emotional reaction and more memories around that I guess.*

The participants struggle with their assessment of why these particular memories are important to them and to what they say about the culture of schooling and teaching, but they spend time allowing the bodily reaction to arise in order to make

sense. Memory work entails this kind of space and connection and how or why memories emerge is not easy to verbalize. Julia uses ambiguous words to describe her process of selecting thematic statements to embroider on the quilt:

> *Julia: You look at them and you go 'here's the, here's the statement.' And…you know, there's a little bad feeling cause it's a fear or there's a little good feeling cause it's a promise or something.*

As Davies (1992) asserts, trying to articulate knowledge felt by the body with the constraints of words never captures the visceral certainty of the feeling itself, and this work was, for many, (including myself) the first time in academia to try to do so. The way that the heart pulls in the body when recalling a moment of joy is diminished by finding just the right word to describe how and why it feels, and the vocabulary and grammar often doesn't make sense in conventional arenas. However, when we tell our embodied stories aloud, it often *makes sense* to others, not because of the spoken word necessarily, but because of the body's capacity to know, to connect to story in turn with a physiological response or remembrance. Abram (1996) describes the sensuous nature of these stories, and re-defines the term *make sense*:

> A story that makes sense is one that stirs the senses from their slumber, one that opens the eyes and ears to their real surroundings, tuning the tongue to the actual tastes in the air and sending chills of recognition along the surface of the skin. To *make sense* is to release the body from the constraints imposed by outworn ways of speaking…It is to make the senses wake up to where they are (p. 265).

When in the space of memory recall there is a sense of “waking up” that sometimes surprises the autoethnographer. Chloe, in describing her data collection, tells one particularly poignant example of this sensual and emotional recall when exploring her relationship with her Dad whose paranoid schizophrenia estranged them emotionally.

> *Chloe: I think I maybe had a vague idea of what I was looking for, but I think it became much more concrete as I actually did it. I don’t think I really had that much of an idea until I actually started. And when I was doing it, I found a picture of myself as a baby with my Dad, like my Dad was holding me, and I got really emotional. I don’t think I’d ever seen that picture and I’d never thought about it before, I don’t think I’ve ever seen a picture of him holding me, ever. And so it really made me question a lot of things in some ways.*

Chloe later explains that during the process of this study, this one picture was one of the biggest surprises for her, especially as she has spent a lot of time thinking about her dad’s disorder and her life as a child with him and never before had she seen this photo. She recognized a memory from her life that stirred her senses, evoking her emotions. Chloe had a moment of “waking up” and seeing her father differently. She couldn’t image him holding her, taking care of her, and nurturing her, his daughter, because for most of her life she had to nurture him, tiptoeing around the illness that imprisoned his body and mind. She began to *make sense* of her life with him, and how it impacts her life as a ‘becoming’ teacher.

Chloe chose to represent her autoethnography in a way that illuminates the re-embodiment she discovered as she analyzed her data, and the metaphor she describes is one that evokes images of embodiment, of tenderness and of violence:

> *And I sort of used the metaphor of the cookbook…when you open it up, there's batter splatter on the pages and it makes it more real, right? And so I kind of used it as, you know, I have batter splatter on my pages. I have emotional scars and that affects who I am.*

The visceral, embodied language of an individual who is exploring how her identity fits within the culture of schooling is articulated in her cookbook metaphor. An image of this un-perfect and battered nature is rarely discussed in the said and unsaid curriculum of teacher education in my experience, and in respective literature. Pelias (2004) in a chapter section entitled *The missing body: A sentence concerning what is absent in scholarly writing* agrees

> What is missing in scholarly writing: skinned skin, revealing not what is hidden but its thickness, its toughness, its torment, forming a scab that itches (don't pick), crusting into brown-and-black palimpsests (don't pick) that are historical markers (all histories, of course, can be picked apart to uncover what is underneath; there are incidents that happen that we must account for and that account of us), tattooed[.] (p. 7)

In creating medieval texts, the sheep's skin was pulled taut, transformed into parchment, was written on, scraped and washed off again and again, forming a new text- the new overwriting the old. The skin was literally inscribed with conceptions/performances of history. Chloe's association with the skin and her

scarring is so pertinent as the skin is the presented, bare, to others. That is, the skin is our body's outside performance. Chloe is de/reconstructing her identity as a new teacher, recovering those histories that have layered to form the identity/identities she performs as teacher/learner/daughter/woman/wife. Spry (2001) describes how "[t]he autoethnographic text emerges from the researcher's bodily standpoint as she is continually recognizing and interpreting the residue traces of culture inscribed upon her hide from interacting with others in contexts" (p. 711). Chloe's metaphor demonstrates her bodily standpoint, and the deeply entrenched stories in her life that have scarred her skin, altering her performance and identity in the world. By re-embodying memories, she is "recognizing and interpreting" the residue of her past, and articulating how it impacts her becoming a teacher.

The participants not only experienced embodied responses when analyzing their data. When the participants presented their work to their peers, the experience and their autoethnographic inquiries evoked further embodied and very emotional responses that often surprised them.

Billie explains:

> *I was surprised for sure at my reaction the day I was sharing it. I was so nervous…I don't know, whether it was a physical reaction, like adrenaline, but I just felt so teary (laughs), um (long pause)…..*

The physical reactions that emerged when the participants had to articulate their selves and their work highlights something Spry (2001) calls the "dynamic and

dialectical relation of the text and body"[20]. That is, the autoethnographic work continues in and through the body over the layers of process: "In the fieldwork, writing, and performing of autoethnography, text and body are redefined, their boundaries blurring dialectically (Conquergood, 1991)" (Spry, p. 711). The identities explored in autoethnographic work are not fixed, and the performance of one's findings are altered in the articulation, the physical and oral presentation, of the work. The ongoing dynamic and dialectical nature of autoethnography and the intrinsically subjective and living researcher troubles the notion of a world easily researched and categorized. It troubles[21] the notion of researchers/teachers/learners as disembodied heads and objective spectators. It illuminates the relationship between research and the social worlds wherein which the researcher/teacher/learner lives. Julia explains how experiences in her childhood re-emerged physically in her body during her presentation:

> *You know, your chest gets a little tighter, a little shaky, who knows what's going to come out of this. I know intellectually that if I bring this into a university classroom no one is going to go "Oh well that was stupid" but there's that little voice in your head, especially if you were bullied or picked on as a young kid there's always that little fear that someone is going to go "that was stupid" so you're always just a bit worried that that's going to happen.*

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[20] The dialectical process of autoethnography will be further discussed in the upcoming section regarding autoethnography as a hermeneutic phenomenological process.

[21] I intend the word 'troubles' as Davies (1992) defines: "the same as when we say "the seas were troubled," where *trouble* means to agitate or make rough. I use the word *troubling*, rather than "deconstructing" or "putting under erasure," since I find that [some] readers of deconstructive texts take deconstruction to mean a dismantling that obliterates the binaries and the boundaries between them. Binaries are not so easily dismantled" (p. 14, italics in original).

Julia is recovering moments of her past that have been buried or forgotten in adulthood, but that show how emotional the experiences were at the time. The memories of her experience as a child being bullied by a teacher in Grade 3, and further bullied by peers, bring up a swell of emotion and remembrance. It also brings up significant power dynamics between teacher and student that can enable or disable the latter.

In one of her many descriptors of what autoethnography is, Holman Jones appropriates a quote from Grumet's (2001) work on autobiography: "Autoethnography is… 'a catastrophic encounter, a moment of vulnerability and ambiguity that is sensuous, embodied, and profoundly implicated in the social and ideological structures of their lifeworlds'" (Holman Jones, 2005, p. 765). This kind of research is a form of "accidental ethnography" wherein the findings can potentially reveal and *cause* bruising of ego and discomfort in the body. We find, through autoethnography, evidence of our complicity in social and cultural institution, and ways in which we have been disabled or enabled in our relationships with others and ourselves, as Billie shares below.

In Billie's interview, she disclosed an incredibly poignant example of "catastrophic encounter" that caused her to bear discomfort and bruising. For this study, interviews were held after participants had completed their first practicum in elementary school classrooms. Billie had returned to the Catholic elementary school where she herself had gone to school and where her mother teaches. Billie's autoethnography had focused on the conventions of institutions and how people are subjected, given or denied access, in certain ways. Billie describes herself as an

idealist and someone interested and active in social change. When Billie began her practicum she tried out activities she felt were seen as unconventional and had the potential for more democratic engagements. She thought teaching would come naturally and found quickly that it didn't, and after the second of five weeks, had a breakdown of confidence. For the remainder of the practicum she took up the mentor teacher's practices, used textbooks and worksheets and relied on more traditional activities to get through the placement. Rather than struggle against the grain of the routines of her more traditional teaching mentor, she defaulted to practices she had previously criticized. Billie felt very strongly about how her practicum experience (dis)connected to her autoethnography:

> *That's what I mean, when I say there was this incongruence, this is, the autoethnography is the kind of thing where if I was, damn, I would be a great university professor, sitting there and be able to engage and get people to try to work together to critically think, and the theory and then me being thrown into the practice and totally floundering, so, it almost makes that autoethnographic process almost a little sore, a sore spot a little bit.*

Billie left her practicum feeling bruised and in a state of dissonance. Just as a bruise indicates bleeding under the skin, Billie was bearing the discomfort under a collected front until our interview together. I asked her how she might reconcile these feelings and the dialectical process of autoethnography continued over the course of our interview.

I asked her,

Do we continue to do autoethnography knowing that they could become sore spots?

Billie replied:

Oh, just because it's a sore spot doesn't mean it's not useful and important. And making yourself uncomfortable is important is it not?

Billie's reconciliation with her autoethnography continued after our discussion and through this dynamic process, an unanticipated transformation occurred in her thinking about teaching. She also provides possible responses for the question she asks above. However, I leave her story here, with bleeding under the skin, pausing for a moment to delve a little deeper into her question: *And making yourself uncomfortable is important, is it not?*

Discomfort and the act of opening

In the spring of 2009 I attended a session at the CSSE conference (Canadian Society for the Study of Education) entitled *Discomfort as a Pedagogical Tool.* Tasha Diamant, at the time a Masters' student at the University of Lethbridge, read her writing from the podium and about half the way through explained her work: *The Human Body project* (www.humanbodyproject.com). Her project entails (but is not limited to), on a number of occasions in a number of different venues, standing in a room fully naked, participants, visitors and spectators looking on, not speaking, responding by drawing or individual writing. As one might imagine there is an undeniable discomfort and vulnerability in this act.

> I dwell in the realm of discomfort
>
> I work in the realm of discomfort
>
> Sorry but I probably make you uncomfortable
>
> Part of me feels sorry about disturbing your peace
>
> Another part says fuck you. I'm not gonna focus on that because that comes from my own feelings of rejection; but it's only fair to mention that it's there.
>
> Another part knows discomfort is the only way most people wake up. Case in point: me
> (Tasha Diamant, April 2009 blog).

Something about Tasha's work resonated with me then and now. It is an act of courage, risk and incredible openness to lay oneself bare in public space, and the metaphor is both uncomfortable and unprecedented. Those aspects society name imperfections are exposed, along with the ideals, and yet through this discomfort one might come closer to "waking up" to who we are as teachers and as sentient beings. "[G]ood teaching cannot be reduced to technique. Good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher….Identity and integrity[22] have as much to do with our shadows and limits, our wounds and fears, as with our strengths and potentials" (Palmer, 1997, pp. 16-17). In order to come closer to understanding their identity and integrity, these participants put themselves in spaces of veritable discomfort and vulnerability.

Each and every individual in the group echoed their feelings of discomfort in

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[22] Palmer's notions of identity and integrity are discussed, and both utilized and challenged in further detail in the final thematic section, *Recovery as Healing and Transformation*. He defines "identity is a moving intersection of the inner and outer forces that make me who I am, converging in the irreducible mystery of being human" and "[i]ntegrity requires that I discern what is integral to my selfhood, what fits and what does not…By choosing integrity, I become more whole" (p. 17). His definition is articulated here to support the continuation of the reading, but will recur in later sections as mentioned.

doing and presenting their autoethnography. There is an element of the naked body there, a body of work stripped of traditional academic conventions and teacher education jargon, leaving just the self/selves. Often used was the words "open" and "opening" to explain the process. Julia explains that in doing this work she felt *"[t]errified. Oh yeah, this is the very inside of my soul….letting people inside of my soul."*

Each participant was opening up layers of her identities, exposing with vulnerability her insides. Like opening sutures, this often triggered emotional and adrenaline responses in the body. Lani describes in detail her response:

> *It was emotional. It was scary….Yeah, there were definitely some emotions around some of the things I was sharing and tapping into some of the emotions I felt as a child experiencing these things. So definitely emotions in that way, and then emotions in, will I be accepted after I have shared these things?*

The participants, like Tasha, chose to present themselves with a nakedness and openness rarely seen or appreciated in academia. Not only were they moved emotionally and physically, but so were their classmates.

Carolyn Ellis (199) writes at length regarding the emotional emphasis, or rather, core, of autoethnography, arguing "[i]f you let yourself be vulnerable, then your readers are more likely to respond vulnerably, and that's what you want, vulnerable readers" (p. 675). This quality of autoethnography allows the reader to come closer to understanding the phenomena that is being researched through their empathetic, dis/connective and engaged response to the text/presentation. Hannah

remembers the response of the class when she was reading her reflective and analytic journal about being abandoned on the streets of Seoul:

> *Hannah: I remember I looked up and I could see people crying and there were tears and I was like 'ahh, you don't need to....don't cry' cause then it like, kind of got me really emotional about it.*
>
> *Liz: Why do you think they were crying?*
>
> *Hannah: I don't know,....you just don't know, so many things in a personal experience, and they, [the audience] like, share it and, wow, it's amazing like, what you've gone through and how you've dealt with it.*

It is not comfortable to be in a room where everyone is crying, and I remember that day vividly. As the facilitator of the group, I wondered whether or not to try to comfort Hannah, to take a break, or to speak to the situation. Not only had Hannah opened herself in vulnerability, but so did many of her classmates. Abram (1996) describes so acutely the raw and tender moments of opening and being open to our senses and emotions: "Like suburbanites after a hurricane, we find ourselves alive in a living field of powers far more expressive and diverse than the strictly human sphere to which we are accustomed." (p. 65). We were truly *making sense* of the story: What does this story mean for us? How does it connect to Hannah's identity as a teacher? To my identity as a teacher? As a child? As an adult?

To allow oneself to remain open takes courage, but it has the potential to, as Ellis supports, connect individuals. Parker Palmer (1997) states that "[t]he courage to teach is the courage to keep one's heart open in those very moments when the

heart is asked to hold more than it is able, so that teacher and students and subject can be woven into the fabric of community that learning, and living, require" (p. 17). As Hannah interpreted, her classmates were actually *sharing* the experience with her as she presented. She interprets their embodied response, their tears, as taking part in understanding her story and her identity. She was weaving her classmates into her experience, and building class community.

In her experience, Lani shared things that she had never spoke aloud to her husband, let alone a group of people:

> *Well, I had never had to do something which opened yourself up with such vulnerability so the process of getting ready to present it, I practiced with my husband which I had never talked to him about some of the things about, like maybe about how my mind worked, I had never really put that into words, so I did that with him, and then doing it in front of the class presented such a different part of myself that I don't choose to show many people.*

Doing autoethnography, including presenting and sharing with others, invited students to be "vulnerable observers" (Behar, 1997) in their inquiry into teaching. Lani's explanation demonstrates the connective potential of sharing autoethnographic work and the generative possibilities of dialogue and community. Although the process generated discomfort, there was an element of emotional connection wherein "we find ourselves alive" with others and our embodied experiences.

Holman Jones (2005) describes a further notion of discomfort in doing autoethnography – the "triple crisis" of "representation, legitimation and praxis" (p.

766). In teacher education this triple crisis is present- what and whose knowledge is considered valid and given status. How we fit into the constructs of the profession proves our legitimacy. Billie explains the difficult tension in sharing autoethnographic work:

> *By using that and presenting it to people, this is a lot of the background, this is where I'm coming from as an instructor, is presenting that emotive and that would be the sensitive, the uncomfortable part, not being like, here's my organized lesson plans and here's how rational I can be*.

As the participants opened up their lives in their study and presentations, they also began to trouble the triple crisis by doing work that is personal, emotive and sensing/sensitive. Their autoethnographies also trouble the discourse that the teacher is an expert and is infallible and their autoethnographies trouble the notions of teacher identity versus student identity; Rather, we see it becoming increasing difficult to set binaries when confronted with personal stories that give way to multiple ways of 'becoming'. Stronach and MacClure (1997) describe the troubling of binaried thinking as rupture. I would like to appropriate their definition and attribute it to the opening demonstrated through autoethnography: "th[e] kind of opening which such work attempts is that of the rupture- of interruption and disruption- in the (uncertain) hope that this will generate possibilities for things to happen that are closed off by the epistemologies of certainty" (p. 5). For many student teachers who observe the culture of schooling, there appears epistemologies of certainty that are visually and/or tangibly represented by lesson plans and products that are easily assessed by validating bodies (e.g., teacher

educators). The process of doing autoethnography troubles those certainties, as Billie continues:

> *And there's a discomfort with that, that there are no answers and that makes it nice when you're presenting it, that no body can say "that's not good, because it's wrong". The fact that our experiences are unlimited and the ramifications are unlimited and how deep everything goes [makes some uncomfortable]…..*

The ways in which autoethnography has the potential to disrupt binaries is discussed further in the study, as the layers continue to unfold, and will support the notion that autoethnography is a process of *Recovery as Healing and Transformation.*

It is in this difficult, often muddied (Stronach and MacClure, 1997) rupturing that student teachers find discomfort, crisis and perhaps possibility as they overwrite their identities. Holman Jones (2005) articulates that "[a] crisis is a turning point, a moment when conflict must be [observed] even if we cannot resolve it. It is a tension that opens a space of indeterminacy, threatens to destabilize social structures, and enables a creative uncertainty" (p. 766). The crisis is one of perception, of seeing things differently, or rather, sensing things differently, than one had previously. A lifetime of schooling and envisioning oneself in the position of teacher ingrains in one certain perceptions about the world, and one's position in it. These participants explored a way of researching that troubles professional and objective distance, embodying the knowledge of their lived lives, and opening up; within the act of autoethnography, they begin to challenge the discourse of fragmentation and dis-embodiment. The "waking up" Tasha Diamant experienced through baring her skin to others is not so different from the opening of selves

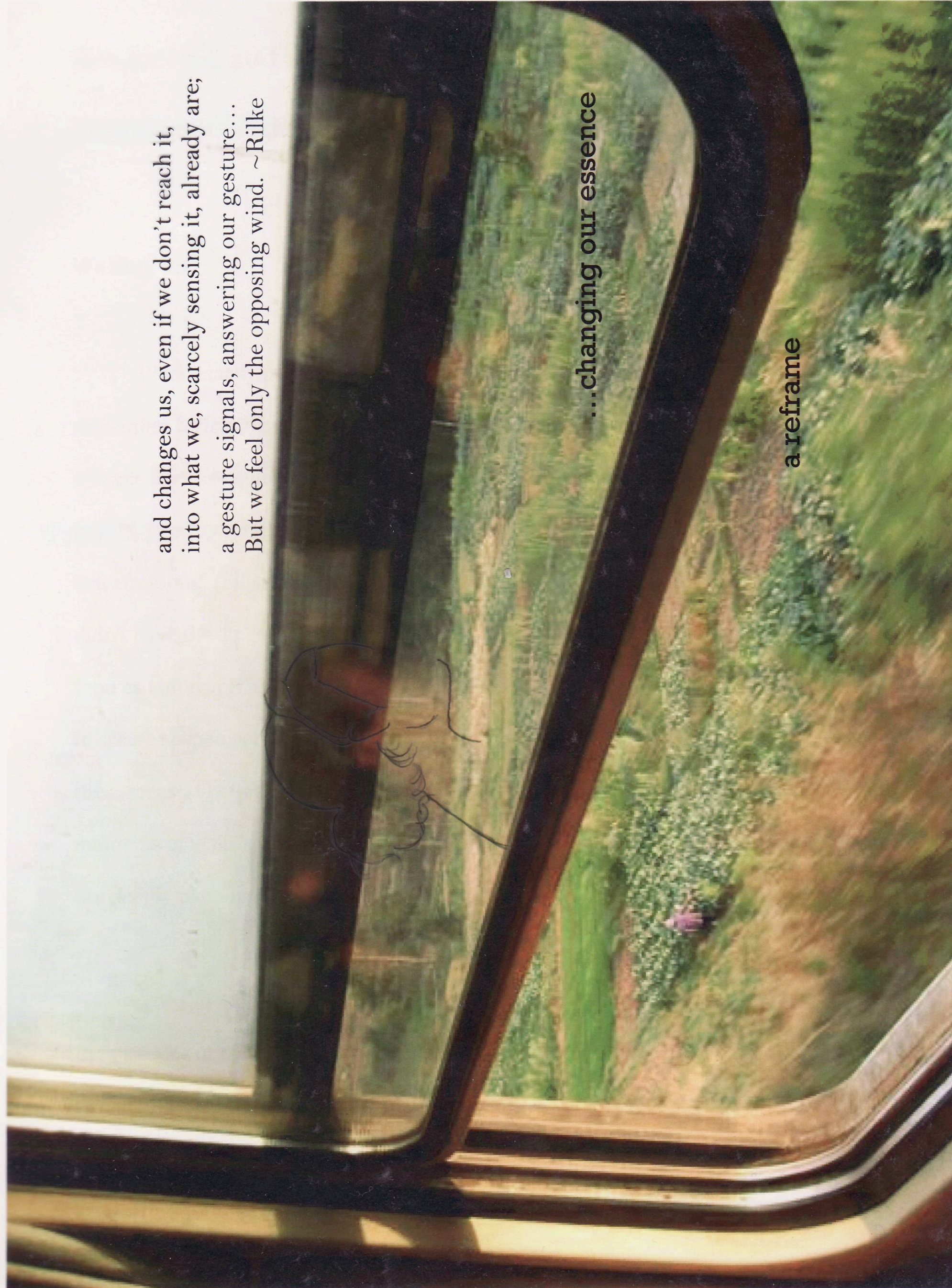
through autoethnographic work. Recovering the body and recognizing the stories, memories and knowing located in our bodies has the potential to transform our perceptions about the world in which we live, learn and teach.

> As we reacquaint ourselves with our breathing bodies, then the perceived world itself begins to shift and transform. When we begin to consciously frequent the wordless dimension of our sensory participations, certain phenomena that have habitually commanded our focus begin to lose their distinctive fascination and to slip toward the background, while hitherto unnoticed or overlooked presences begin to stand forth from the periphery and to engage our awareness. (Abram, 1996, p. 63).

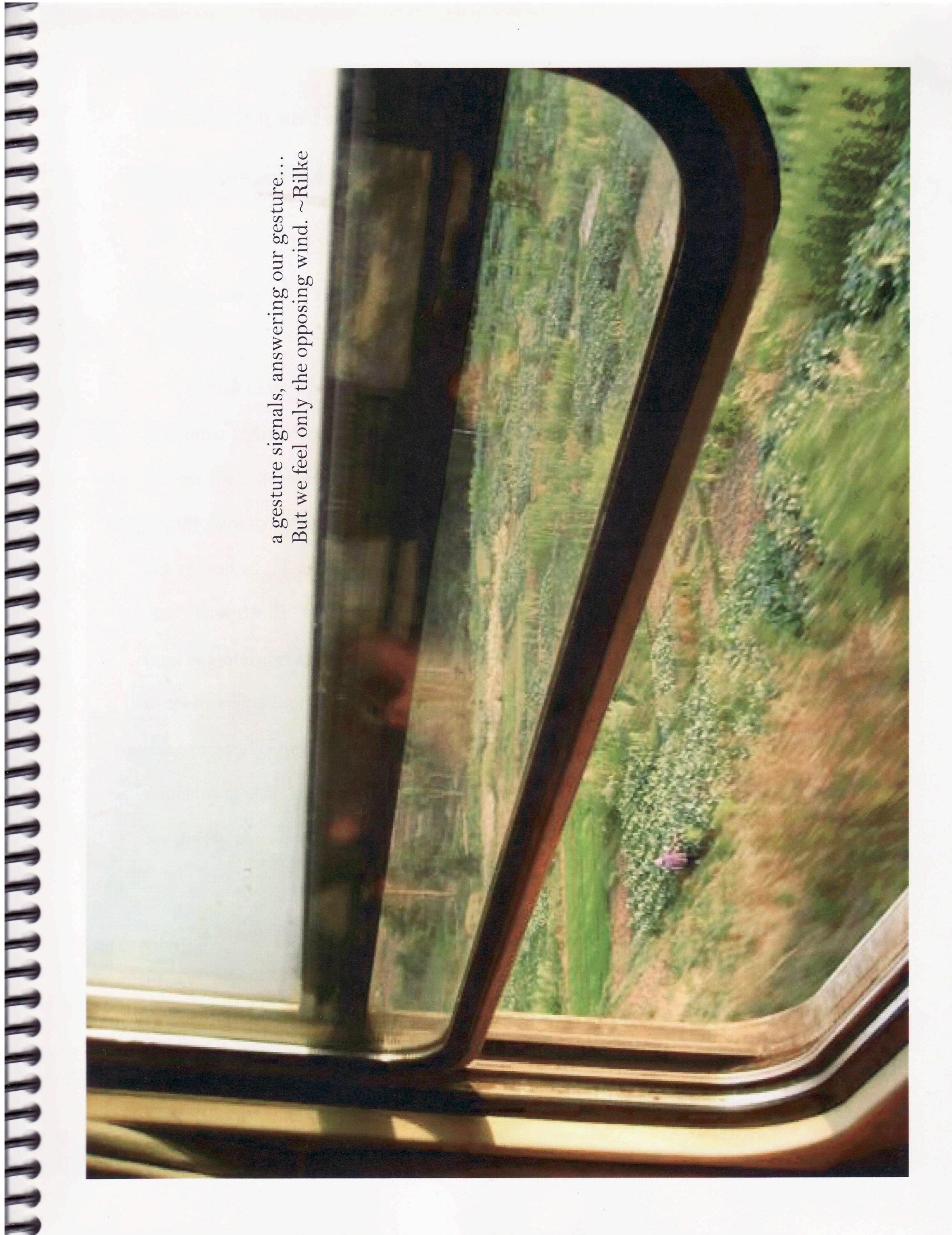
Palimpsest Two

(Original in pencil and ink; printed on vellum)

(Original in pencil and ink; printed on vellum)



(Original in pencil and ink; printed on transparency paper)



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Recovering and re-covering: Autoethnography as Hermeneutic Phenomenological Process

Waking up

What exactly *is* happening in these moments of “waking up”? I can remember trying to explain the process and analysis of doing autoethnographic work to my colleagues, that which Carolyn Ellis calls *Systematic sociological introspection*, wherein one “pay[s] attention to [one’s] physical feelings, thoughts and emotions” (Ellis, 1999, p. 671; see page 24 for definition). Until I analyzed the data for this study, I felt I didn’t have the language with which to describe the process of autoethnography (and as I interpret, that which Ellis calls SSI) in depth. The following section intends to create suspension in the reading in order to dwell in *what is happening* in this process. I believe that the experiences of my participants illuminate how the moments of waking and the embodied processes of doing autoethnographic inquiry are processes of hermeneutic phenomenology. The section herein uses the language and my understanding of hermeneutic phenomenology to describe and interpret the participants’ experience. (See *Terms of dis-Agreement* to review how these terms (do not) fit with a post structural framework.)

The difficulty in explaining one’s process in autoethnography is that it entails the qualities of what Antoinette Oberg (2003) calls the “practice of paying attention and not knowing” (p. 123). As articulated in the previous chapter, how does one

choose an event from a lifetime to explore? Abram's (1996) philosophical framework for *making sense* of the world is derived from hermeneutic phenomenological underpinnings, as he describes the aims of such work, "to describe as closely as possible the way the world makes itself evident to awareness, the way things first arise in our direct, sensorial experience" (p. 35). Elements of readiness, like that of "accidental ethnography" (Poulos, 2010), and "paying attention" were instrumental for the participants to recover memories for inquiry. Chloe describes, "*Um, I'm not sure if I had a real process for doing it, but I recognized several things as being really important in shaping me as a person and so I mostly focused on those things."* Chloe demonstrates the hesitancy in not knowing, and also how those "things as being really important" arose nonetheless. Brogden (2008) explains that, both data and analysis in autoethnographic work, "in a Derridean sense, arriv[e]- ce qui m'arrive (what arrives to me)" (p. 2008). As I understand, in Western-Eurocentric culture, the quality of not knowing is heavily de-emphasized, and allowing something to arise in your body or into your consciousness is not popular practice. The participants chose to sit with their lived experience, allowing some events to surface, and others to lie dormant (for the time being). This attentiveness and readiness is "consistent with Edmund Husserl's call to 'the return to the things themselves,' a central tenet of the various branches of phenomenology" (Dall'Alba, 2009, p. 8). That is, it is the phenomena itself that directs the inquiry, and the way of seeing is responsive to the phenomena. This is in contrast to the inquirer setting a preordained method from which to quantify or categorize the phenomenon—which makes it all the more difficult to articulate and/or defend. Van

Manen (2007) offers a description of the work of a phenomenologist, concurrently articulating my understanding of that of an autoethnographer:

> Not unlike the poet, the phenomenologist directs the gaze toward the regions where meaning originates, wells up, percolates through the porous membranes of past sedimentations—and then infuses us, permeates us, infects us, touches us, stirs us, exercises a formative affect. (p. 12).

It is a way of seeing[23] differently, or in Heidegger's conception, "to let something be seen" (Heidegger, 1927/62; Moran, 2000), and for an autoethnographer, it is often those lived experiences and memories percolating under/on/through the pores of the skin that arise when one is ready to gaze upon them.

The recovering; or the revealing…

Earlier, Billie put forward the cultural principles embodied in institutions, "made body by transubstantiation achieved by the hidden persuasion of an implicit pedagogy" (Bourdieu 1977, p. 94) that lead to the seemingly insignificant ways we access said institutions (e.g., how we hold our hands (Billie) or "stand up straight!" (Bourdieu). The events in our lives that have in/formed our identities, although we have lived them, are hidden phenomena. Through a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, the potential that we might "let something be seen" arises. Julia describes

[23] The metaphor of sight is prevalent in phenomenological writing, which is oxymoronic in that phenomenological inquiries often involve that which is unable to be seen. I use the words 'seeing', 'gaze', 'sight', etc. as well, to describe the revealing of a phenomenon previously concealed. The notion of sight is just a metaphor, to provide a point of connection to describe phenomenological inquiry. More accurate might be the word 'insight'—that is, seeing inwards into the self, or the thing itself.

further how she allowed data to surface:

> *then you go back and you start thinking and then you realize that this is from that memory that was traumatic or joyful or just silly or you know…cause they're all there. Umm…and yah so you've got the like, grade 3…gosh, I'm still talking about grade 3,…it goes on for ages and a number of [themes from my autoethnography] all fit from that area… the idea that you need to talk these things through or they're going to just sit there…these little time bombs that are going to get you in trouble.*

The trouble that Julia talks about resonates with Billie's concern for ways of being that go unquestioned in the name of institutional practice. Specifically, Julia is concerned that she will treat her students in the disrespectful, harmful way she was treated as a grade three student who didn't measure well in the institution of schooling. Over the course of time, the participants left experiences covered, hidden, from sight—perhaps they were too painful, too traumatic, or perhaps, as Julia suggests "just silly". The innocuous nature of holding one's hands a certain way to receive the sacrament doesn't seem to deserve attention, and yet this "hidden persuasion" signifies one's identification, or perhaps, one's Being-in-the-world:

> Manifestly, it is something that proximally and for the most part does *not* show itself at all: it is something that lies *hidden*, in contrast to that which proximally and for the most part does show itself….Yet that which remains *hidden* in an egregious sense, or which relapses and gets *covered up* again, or which shows itself only '*in disguise'* is not just this entity or that, but rather

> the *Being* of entities….This Being can be covered up so extensively that it becomes forgotten and no question arises about it or its meaning. (Heidegger, 1927/62, p. 59).

Hermeneutic phenomenology, as a form of understanding, is described by Heidegger in *Being and Time* as: 'dis-closing', 'un-covering', 'dis-covering', 're-vealing'; However, as one encounters autoethnography with a hermeneutic phenomenological process, one comes closer to understanding(s) through 'recovering'. That is, the inquirers have lived those moments once before, covered over by time, institution, social expectation, and lived experiences. Allowing their gaze (or attention) to fall on the embodied memories that erupt into the present, a new element of the phenomena is revealed: dug up, looked at again, recovered. Hannah explains how she repressed elements of her lived life and how they were recovered in her process:

> *I really wanted to know at that time what did I think of, like, who I am and, when I got that information [from the Korean orphanage about her adoption] I didn't really, you just kind of push it aside like 'ok, I've dealt with it' but lot of times I found out that I haven't actually really dealt with it…when I was looking at my [grade four] autobiography [data] and then looking again through like, the files that I had [from the orphanage]…and then I'm like, kind of like putting together the pieces and…*

Further, this recovery, seeing something that was there and yet not there, often surprises. It is as though we see a different side, as Abram (1996) describes

his clay bowl (pp. 51-2) for an entire two pages, seeing and sensing it from every angle. He rotates the bowl on every axis, sensing from every position, and in every context it lies (on the table, in his hands, in the light): "informed by my previous encounters with the bowl, my senses now more attuned to its substance, I continually discover new and unexpected aspects" (p. 51). The bowl is the same being as before, but sensed anew and perhaps, from a new position or perspective. Remember Chloe's earlier description of how taken aback she felt when she uncovered the photo of her dad holding her as a child. She continues,

> *I was surprised by how emotional I got at that one picture when my dad was actually holding me. And I don't think I was emotional right away, or it might have been a little bit, but definitely when I actually talked about it out loud, it was more of an emotional thing, or maybe, just thinking about it was kind of, like ok, you're thinking about it but you're not articulating it, so it's less, definitely less meaningful. And then you're really more confronted by it when you try and explain it to somebody else, and this is a surprise in some ways, because I've been dealing with this [his paranoid schizophrenia] for, how long?*

As Abram describes how his perception changes through this looking and re-looking, this paying attention, so too does Chloe's memory of her father. She is confronted each time she articulates or senses her new perceptions of her relationship with him, developing a new and deeper understanding of the relationship itself and of how it in/trans/forms her.

…what we couldn't grasp, grasps us:

blazingly visible, *there* in the distance—

and changes us, even if we do not reach it,
into what we, scarcely sensing it, already are;
a gesture signals, answering our gesture . . .
(From *A Walk*, Rainer Maria Rilke)

...And the re-covering; or the concealing

From this description of autoethnography I don't mean to indicate that this kind of in-seeing/insight leads to an accurate or final understanding. Rather, as with Abram's bowl, when one side is seen, other sides become unseen for that moment. The moments of revealing and concealing are in flux, and even after recovering a 'moment of being' once hidden, it might be covered up again. However, just as the bowl is still there, as is the 'moment of being'. Julia explains, in regards to her autoethnographic quilt:

> *I think I need to have it somewhere where I can look at it once in a while and just say 'ok, this is coming up, you need to sort of address that again' you know, cause it's, they're [fears, hopes, etc.] going to come back, you know, they're all going to come back because it's circular.*

The introspection required for autoethnographic inquiry is not easy nor is it quick, but it is intensive. Such intensive inquiry is not sustainable without some pause and some re-covering (covering back up) of the vulnerable selves and memories uncovered. "For the interpreter to let himself be guided by the things themselves is obviously not a matter of a single, "conscientious" decision, but is "the first, last and constant" task." (Gadamer, 1960/98, p. 267). I remember clearly the day I put down all my photos, report cards, and data artifacts, turned off the video

camera, and in complete exhaustion, said "*I don't know if I can do this anymore*." I was looking too closely. Of course I returned to my autoethnography and keep returning. Coincidentally (or not), Ellis' (1999) metaphor for autoethnography as a zoom lens is similar to Heidegger's "setting down the subject": "in giving something a definite character, we must, in the first instance, take a step back when confronted with that which is already manifest—the hammer that is too heavy. In 'setting down the subject', we dim entities down to focus in 'that hammer there'" (Heidegger, 1927/62, p. 197). Through a zooming in and out, a setting down and picking up, a revealing and concealing, one creates an immersive experience in trying to understand a phenomenon, to understand one's being-in-the-world.

The notion of circularity that Julia brought forth above is significant, and the metaphor and physical gesture that I often take up to explain the constant recovering and re-covering, the revealing and concealing, is a circling motion. More appropriate, however, is a recursive spiral, going deeper with revolutions (Oberg, 2003). I envision the spiral positioned in such a way that there is a zoom lens attributed—that is, orbiting closer to phenomena on the revolution in and moving away on the revolution out. Of course, the spiral is integral to the understanding of hermeneutic phenomenology in regards to the hermeneutic circle. The circle (or, rather, the spiral) is essential in explaining what I propose is the hermeneutical and dialectical nature of autoethnography, which is further discussed in this section.

Billie's story continued

Before I continue discussing the ways in which I think autoethnography is a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry, I want to return to Billie's lingering bruising. The revealing and concealing, spiraling nature of autoethnography is illuminated so clearly in the continuing example of Billie's experience with autoethnography. As it left off in the previous section, Billie felt a sore spot in regards to her autoethnography after completing her first school practicum. I left the interview with Billie feeling sore myself, that perhaps there was something I could have done to prevent her discomfort, although she thanked me for the interview and said it had provided some clarity. That was in August 2009. I had really only been in contact with my participants via email until the following December, when I invited them for a coffee and meeting. I explained to them about my initial analysis and they all liked the ideas. After some casual conversation I asked what they had done for their final course of the PDPP program, an inquiry course, wherein students undertake one final inquiry project and present to their peers.

Billie's inquiry centred around how communities envision change collectively. When I sent her the transcript from our interview together, she noticed how sore she really was and how hard she was on herself. Unbeknownst to me, she took her printed interview transcript, chose words that spoke to/troubled her, and cut them out. She painted a canvas, re-positioning and layering her words in a new, non-linear design, emulating a metaphor of an undercurrent. When she presented her inquiry, she explained how important it is to dream, individually and

collectively—to envision social change in whatever shape or form, because it is through that creative and collective imagining of the impossible that it is made possible. Billie explained that idealism and imagining is important, even if she is still learning her "being in the world", and she can't be so hard on herself for not being "perfect"[24].

When I imagine Billie's thought process over this 16 month period, I imagine it as a spiral, at points revealing her understandings of self/selves in the world, and at others concealing. The spiral itself is important, and *all* points on the spiral, even the sore spots, integral to her greater and continuing understandings. Her initial autoethnographic inquiry revealed to her emotions and understandings about her being that were previously hidden. She then entered into her practicum and to endure the institutional qualities of which she herself had questioned, concealed her autoethnography from her sight. Her feelings about it were sore, bruised, and bleeding under the skin. It was not until our interview session wherein her autoethnography was recovered partially. Then after reading her interview transcript and spending time with/in her words, a new perspective was revealed. She re-appropriated, (literally) recovered, her words, and presented them in a different form and space, with new meanings.

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[24] Billie's re-covering of her transcript can be seen in the final palimpsest preceding the section on *Recovery as Healing and Transformation.*

Re-covering through re-articulating

My beginning question about sharing

When I first formulated my questions for this study, I wanted to know if and how sharing one's autoethnography changes the experience for the participant. I now see this question as naïve and incorrectly envisioned. Autoethnography is always a performative act, a fumbling towards knowing and performing selves with/in/of the world. "This is a hallmark of autoethnography and autoethnographic performance—speaking in and through experiences that are unspeakable as well as inhabiting and animating the struggle for words and often our failure to find them" (Holman Jones, 2005, p. 772). The participants "performed" their autoethnographies in a variety of explicit ways: reading a story, sewing a quilt, discussing a cookbook, reading a journal, painting a collage. There are, however, other ways they perform their autoethnographic inquiry, exploring their layered identities, positions, relationships with self and other. As impossible as it is to separate performer from performance (Holman Jones, 2005, p. 774), I wish to focus on the struggle of articulating oneself in autoethnography, and the inherently layered, hermeneutic ways in which we try to do so. This struggle is manifest in language and in our communications, our sharing, with others.

As someone who has lived a lifetime with a man with paranoid schizophrenia for a father, Chloe spoke candidly that she had reflected on his disorder at length before committing these memories to her autoethnography. She related that it was often in the context of relating to a friend struggling with mental illness, or connecting to a movie with similar characters. Her words below, although

documented earlier, reinforce how her inquiry and its presentation aspect was a different experience:

> *I had already internalized a lot of those thoughts already but not put them into words, but definitely when I actually talked about it out loud, it was more of an emotional thing, or maybe, just thinking about it [before] was kind of, like ok, "you're thinking about it but you're not articulating it", so it's less, definitely less meaningful.*

The struggle to actually articulate, to form words to represent embodied knowing and feeling, is hesitant, as one is actually performing a side of self to others. For example, remember how Lani, in the previous chapter, explained that after she created her storybook she spoke the words out loud to her husband, and then to her peers, making her feel incredibly vulnerable.

Further, Billie explains her preparation of her performance:

> *The process of it was really exciting, [but] was still difficult because I wasn't sure how I wanted to place information together, or what things to share, what things not to share, giving an incomplete picture. This idea of incomplete picture and misunderstanding is really a big one for me, and being misunderstood.*

Although one is choosing what to share, there is a hermeneutical element wherein "the creative contingent positioning of words may give rise to evoked images that can move us: inform us by forming us and thus leave an effect on us" (Van Manen, 2007, p. 25). When words are spoken aloud we are, in fact, in the midst of articulating ourselves, our identities, both to ourselves and to others. The many

layers of inquiry result in "outer speech for the development of inner speech and the sense of mind" (Belenky, et al., p. 33), each time performing our becoming, seeing for ourselves how it sounds and is received.

For Billie, she is worried about being misrepresented, but the truth about "herself" is so fleeting and multiple that there is no other possibility than to be misrepresented. Autoethnographic acts are "as much about ellipsis and erasure as much as they are acts of constitution....The "self" is simultaneously constructed and deconstructed" (De Freitas & Paton, 2009, p. 497) each time the inquirer speaks in an effort to represent and come to a closer understanding of herself/selves. As mentioned earlier the metaphor of a recursive spiral, or the (modified) hermeneutic circle demonstrates this kind of recursive inquiry that the autoethnographer experiences as they re-cover the same material, re-articulating to others.

The hermeneutic circle as described by Heidegger (1927/62) and discussed by Gadamer (1960/98) is not "a vicious circle, or even of a circle which is merely tolerated. In the circle is hidden a positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing, and we genuinely grasp this possibility only when we have understood that our first, last and constant task in interpreting is never to allow our fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception to be presented to us by fancies and popular conceptions" (Heidegger, 1927/62, p. 153; see Gadamer, 1960/98, p. 266). This circle assumes that in order to understand something we already have some sort of experience or understanding in order to interpret phenomena. We aren't neutral in our interpretation, and thus, must keep alert to the fact that we are, in fact, interpreting through past experience; Partially scraped off texts underpin the new

writing, manipulating the overlaid text. Gadamer's interest in the dialectical nature of hermeneutics is of particular interest to what is happening as autoethnographers try to speak themselves with and to others.

Gadamer's (1960/98) 'hermeneutical ontology' is centred around the thinking that we are embedded in history and culture, as is the assumption of autoethnography. He believes that it "is the tyranny of the hidden prejudice which makes us deaf to what speaks to us in tradition" (p. 270). Prejudice here is in the true sense of the word- a preconceived opinion or experience. We are always interpreting through a particular lens, but are not trapped entirely by it: "What we find happening in speaking is not a mere reification of intended meaning, but an endeavor that continually modifies itself, or better…it risks our prejudices—it exposes oneself to one's own doubt as well as to the rejoinder of the other" (Gadamer from "Text and Interpretation", cited in Moran, 2000, p. 271). For Gadamer, it is through speech and dialogue that the revealing of the 'matters themselves' arise, that understanding comes into being, as a chapter title in *Truth and Method* announces: "language is the medium of the hermeneutic experience". Heidegger (1927/62), also concerned with sharing and dialogue, speaks about 'further retelling', in which meaning is revealed and/or concealed for speakers and listeners. The participants involved in sharing autoethnography are engaged in further retellings and at each layer of retelling, and in-between, are deconstructing their former prejudices and constructing new ones. In recursive fashion, visiting the same stories with different positioning of words, in different lights and in different dialogue with self and others.

Consider Billie's recursive re-covering of her autoethnography explained above. After our interview Billie contributed a post to the online forum I created for further data collection. She writes:

> *Teary eyed, I admitted to Liz that my last practicum made me face my potential lack of personal integrity. I sat in the seminar class proclaiming idyllic values and visions of education. I get into a class and textbooks, work sheets, and directed teaching wormed its way into my teaching practices. I felt that all of the teaching pedagogy I had developed left me with incredibly high expectations for my practicum. By the end of the five weeks, I was not even willing to reconsider my autoethnography because I felt fraudulent. I wonder now, did I miss the point?*
>
> *Debriefing some of my practicum experiences in light of the autoethnography with Liz [in our interview] was cathartic. For me, the conversation that has occurred regarding the process has been incredibly potent. What I am thinking about now: <u>Autoethnographies as an ongoing conversation with oneself and one's community.</u>"* (underlined for emphasis)

The dialogue we shared was incredibly potent in the sense that it allowed for a revealing and clarifying of what and who we are together and individually. Through the re-articulation of the autoethnography work Billie had done, she was

able to recover and re-connect with her experience, allowing her to manipulate the interview transcript into a new yet same entity.

Significance of Mirrors

As one engages in autoethnography, which, I propose is a hermeneutic phenomenological experience, one circles through recovering and re-covering, revealing and concealing, one's emerging life memories, as advanced above. In doing so, however, it is an inherent quality of this kind of work that the subject one studies becomes unfamiliar for a moment, as Gadamer (1960/98) describes hermeneutics is, "a polarity of familiar and strangeness" (p. 295). If one's lived experienced is the subject of inquiry, it's likely that at times one doesn't even recognize oneself. de Freitas and Paton (2009) trouble the pronoun "I" that is used and taken for granted in autoethnography, problematizing the notion of a transparent, true "self". They cite Denzin and Lincoln's (2000) argument that "the time of the fiction of a single true, authentic self has come and gone", and that research should acknowledge the "self as a constellation of possibly conflicting partial identities" (as cited in Freitas & Paton, 2009, p. 485).

Julia demonstrates the tension of introspection and the potential for seeing oneself in a different, unexpected and sometimes uncomfortable way. She fumbles with the pronouns as she makes sense of her subjectivity:

> *Well looking at yourself anytime tends to be a growing thing, umm…but looking at it through other people's eyes* *you sort of, or I, you* *sort of get a different picture of what it is.* [underlined for emphasis]

Julia illuminates so clearly the difficulty, the "balancing act" of the autoethnographer's position, and the fragmented and multiple selves of an always-becoming identity. She also indicates an element of misrecognition, a different picture of self, that may or may not be entertained by autoethnographers. "This misrecognition (meconnaissance) is the act of seeing an ideal-I where there is a fragmented and disarticulated body" (de Freitas and Paton, 2009, p. 490). This misrecognition can be very uncomfortable, as was the case for Billie, who felt fraudulent in regards to her autoethnography, until she misrecognized again through our dialogue and her further introspection.

de Freitas and Paton offer an incredibly strong visual to elaborate on misrecognition of self. In their study they took portraits of participants by capturing their photos in reflected surfaces; the participants were then asked to reflect on their portrait, whereupon many couldn't immediately recognize themselves in the reflection. This concept is modeled after the work of a Montreal artist named Andrew Forster who captured mirror images of people for his book *Facing* (http://www.reluctant.ca/index.html). de Freitas and Paton describe that these "'self' portraits in *Facing* display an incredible array of diverse expressions as each participant regards her/his self, some with an interrogative gaze, others as though meeting an old friend or foe, and some as though encountering a stranger" (p. 488).[25] It is often when she identifies that the image in the photo is actually her that

[25] The second palimpsest, which prefaces this section, shows a photo that I took on a train in South Western China. It shows a woman working in the fields below the train track. Just after I read de Freitas and Paton's article I was looking through my photos as I often do, dreaming of far away places and times, when I noticed a figure in the reflection of the train

there is the kind of surprise and/or discomfort arises. Consider Chloe's photo when she identified herself as a child being held by her father, or Hannah when she received information about how quiet she was as a child in the orphanage, or Billie when she didn't recognize herself in the ideals of her autoethnography in light of her practicum.

Similarly I used my reflection in the mirror for an element of my autoethnographic inquiry. I was inspired by Frida Kahlo and her autoethnographic self-portraits, who said "*Since my subjects have always been my sensations, my states of mind and the profound reactions that life has been producing in me, I have frequently objectified all this in figures of myself, which were the most sincere and real thing that I could do in order to express what I felt inside and outside of myself".* I studied myself in the mirror for long periods of time, sketching my self-portrait. There is a different, zoomed-in aspect of misrecognition involved in sketching oneself with care. I was so focused on sketching my features, getting the slope of my nose just right, counting the stray eyebrow hairs to pencil them in, gently shading in the dark mole under my left eye. After looking at myself in such close focus and length I didn't mutter the usual self-judgments regarding my over-size nose, the fact that I hadn't plucked my eyebrows for weeks, or that I should cover up the mole under my left eye with makeup. Though they seems like incredibly superficial details in regards to my autoethnography, I was struck by how I was, as Julia said, "able to look at myself and get a different picture", both a facing and "de-facing" (de Freitas & Paton, 2009). The following is part of the conversation I had with Lani in

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window frame. This image and my own surprising misrecognition illustrate the phenomenon of misrecognition in a very literal and metaphorical sense.

her interview. I am describing my portrait sketching in reply to her misrecognition through her autoethnography, and she poses a thoughtful definition of my description:

Liz: I felt like I did look at things close enough that I could see them instead of just judge them right away, was that similar to you?

Lani: Yeah

Liz: To see imperfections in that way and sort of meditate with them and you just sort of sit with them and think "huh" rather than "Oh that's so bad, I don't like that about myself" but it sort of changed the way I saw those things.

Lani: Yeah, exactly, like a reframe on it for sure.

Lani offers a word that makes hermeneutic phenomenological sense, and an accurate interpretation of my/her/our experience: reframe. Each participant in the study described a particular moment, or a few moments, wherein a reframing took place. For example, Julia mentions the surprising result of reframing that occurred, shifting her many fears and anxieties about teaching into more positive, confident feelings.

Liz: Is there anything that surprised you while you were doing this?

Julia : Well, funnily enough, how often you could flip fears into something the more positive places.

She talks about the fears being flipped on their heads, a very visual image of reframing an abstract and embodied concept. Though the participants have startling moments of misrecognition it's the very act of identification and confrontation that moves them from spaces of unknowing and discomfort through

becoming to spaces that are potential healing and transformative: "If I am willing to look in that mirror, and not run from what I see, I have a chance to gain self-knowledge—and knowing myself is as crucial to good teaching as knowing my students and my subject" (Palmer, 1997, p. 15). This reframing is significant not only to the hermeneutic phenomenological process, but also to the healing from evocative, uncomfortable openings (which will be discussed further in the subsequent section called *Recovery as Healing and Transformation*).

Our ontological selves

The process(ing) of autoethnography disrupts normative values of productivity in university, particularly in professional programs, wherein assignments and outcomes are generally product-oriented, providing tangible, often visual, evidence of knowing.

> In professional fields such as pedagogy, psychology and nursing, the dominance of technological and calculative thought is so strong that it seems well-nigh impossible to offer acceptable alternatives to the technocratic ideologies and the inherently instrumental presuppositional structures of professional practice. (Van Manen, 2007, p. 19)

In teacher education the products might consist of lesson plans, unit plans, essays, or tests. Even 'reflections' become product-oriented as students complete one reflection, two reflections, etc., in linear fashion with a beginning and conclusion. Billie, who emphasized frequently the opportunity autoethnography provided to

focus on the processual experience, contrasts this assignment with her previous experiences with 'reflections'.

> *I think it was more true, well, for me, more true to a lot of the theory around [autoethnography] again because it made it a process, it wasn't a one time reflection. Even now I think, why did I choose that? Why didn't I choose these things to think about? And it's interesting that it still came to be a product, for the seminar, even though it was inspired by a process, right?*

Though Billie was enabled to explore the open criteria and process, not everyone chose to undertake an autoethnography, and this is perhaps, as Billie later affirms, due to the uncomfortable departure from the ingrained and safe creation of an inquiry product (e.g., research and present in PowerPoint or poster form).

If autoethnographies are hermeneutically phenomenological and processual, how might they be conceptualized as a beneficial, transformative activity for pre-service teachers in which to engage? Or rather, how might we name this activity for others with whom we share in institutions traditionally governed by productivity?

Dall'Alba (2009b) offers thoughtful response to these questions in *Learning Professional Ways of Being: The ambiguity of becoming*, underpinned by Heidegger's argument that transformation of self should be education's central purpose:

> When the familiar or everyday appears in a new light, the way is open for other possibilities, other ways of being. Becoming a teacher, physiotherapist or lawyer, then, involves 'turning around' or transforming the self. Through interrogating and re-shaping assumptions about what it means to teach, provide physiotherapy or apply the rule of law, new ways of being are

> opened to aspiring professionals and can begin to take shape. It is not only a question of epistemology but, more particularly, of ontology. (Dall'Alba, 2009b, p. 37)

The prioritizing of skills, knowledge acquisition, product development and output in teacher education is so heavily emphasized that one's 'Being-in-the world' is devalued as an integral site of interrogation in the becoming of a teacher. Ontology of/for teaching and learning is shadowed by epistemological emphasis; processes of learning and being are subjected to the production and evidence of knowledge and skills. Dall'Alba and Barnacle (2007) advance an 'ontological turn' in response to this observation, "challeng[ing] this emphasis on what students acquire through education by foregrounding instead the question of who they become" (p. 679).

Max Van Manen (2007)[26] compliments the notion of the 'ontological turn' by advancing the term 'phenomenology of practice', arguing for the value of phenomenological inquiry in professional becoming.

> [A] phenomenology of practice operates in the space of the formative relations between who we are and who we may become, between how we think or feel and how we act. And these formative relations have pedagogical consequence for professional and everyday practical life. (p. 26)

He carries on to play with the term 'formative', suggesting that phenomenological endeavors are 'in-formative', 're-formative', 'per-formative' and 'pre-formative'. Further, and significant to this study, they are transformative as they "reac[h] into

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[26] Van Manen uses the term phenomenology freely, though I am using the term hermeneutic phenomenology throughout my work (see *Terms of dis-Agreement*). I think this article is a beneficial connection to my thinking, and so I reference him here leaving his term phenomenology as is.

the depth of our being, prompting a new becoming" (p. 26).

Lani powerfully describes the transformative potential of negotiating the ontological turn in teacher education through inquiries that are autoethnographic and hermeneutically phenomenological in process:

> *Um. We're always going to be in life with ourselves so we can learn about it the way everyone else does things, the way society works, but if we don't learn about how we function within that I don't think we can change our uh… all we'll be doing is learning facts and we won't actually be changing our essence*[27]*. So to reflect on who we are, and how we work in the world, allows us to change whereas if we didn't reflect on it we probably would be the mouthpieces for someone else's horrible teachings*. (underlining for emphasis).

Lani is articulating the deeply formative possibility of autoethnography described by van Manen's phenomenology of practice. She demonstrates that she believes that dominant discourses exist in the history and culture of schooling that can be easily inherited through the assumption of skills and facts without the critical reflection of our ontological selves and knowing: "who we are and how we work in the world". She puts forward a poignant definition of phenomenology that aligns well with van Manen's perspective of phenomenology: *all we'll be doing is learning facts and we won't actually be changing our essence.*

As Billie remarked, however, it is interesting to note that there was still an

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[27] One of the tenets of Gadamer's notions of hermeneutic phenomenology, and one most recognized as a phenomenological measure, is 'essence illumination' (*wesenserhellung)*. This "shedding light on the essence of matters" (Moran, 2000, p. 249) conceptualizes essence as multifaceted and unfixed, rather than essentializing matter by pinpointing what or who it/she/he is.

element of concrete and potentially evidential product creation in these autoethnographies. Products were the representations of the inquiries ranging from art projects to photos or journal writings, though for all the participants the process emerged as the more impactful aspect of the inquiry. If the process is prioritized, what, if any, is the significance of creating a product or artifact?

When asked about the process/product balance (put forward in a very binaried way), Chloe answers "*I guess it [concerned] both because the product represented the process, so I wouldn't really try to separate the two too much.*" I think of Brogden's (2008) conceptulization of "art-I/f/act" calling to Ellis' (2004) autoethnographic "I": "In art-I/f/act-ology, the I is positioned in the cent[re] of our art and our acts..." (p. 858). The products of our autoethnography have the potential to serve as artifacts of the layers of self we accumulate and act in this life. They are imperfect as their completions cannot, and do not, represent fully the processes that the authors undergo, and continue to undergo. Billie, particularly concerned with this misrepresentation remembers "*In terms of the presenting, well, the day of, that was the first time I even thought of it as a product and I remember being completely disappointed with the product in terms of a physical art piece rather than it as an autoethnography*". Other participants felt differently about their products. For example, Julia, who generally feels anxiety about and rarely proud of her school assignments, emphasized how proud she was of her quilt. She conceptualizes her quilt as

> *kind of a snapshot of that time. Like I said, if I could I would add a bunch more things because I've learned a bunch more things about myself that hopefully*

will make me into a better teacher…each time I read them I see where it came from now, as opposed to just being you know 'this is what I'm worried about, I'm worried about not connecting. Why am I not connecting?' Well now it's there, it's a whole…as soon as you read it it's there – that's why it's there. Yah it's like a little memory thing sitting right there and it's got all the little pieces that I need. So If I look at it I can go 'that one, yes, got it. I will remember that, I will remember not to do that.' And that's why this is something important, you know?

The product is, as Chloe articulated above, a representation, another way of articulating one's hermeneutic phenomenological process, speaking, painting, writing it aloud.

When Billie and I discussed the sore feelings she had in regards to autoethnography, she added that she felt even more frustrated that she had so heavily emphasized the powerful process of autoethnography only to teach in a heavily product-oriented manner, privileging epistemological concerns. Keeping Julia's previous interview in mind, I responded.

Billie: …the immediate lesson [every]day working in this 5 week [practicum] seem like it's a product and it feels like every [teaching] evaluation [is a product], I didn't stay in the mindset to consider this [practicum] a process necessarily, so what do you do? Wear a reminder bracelet?

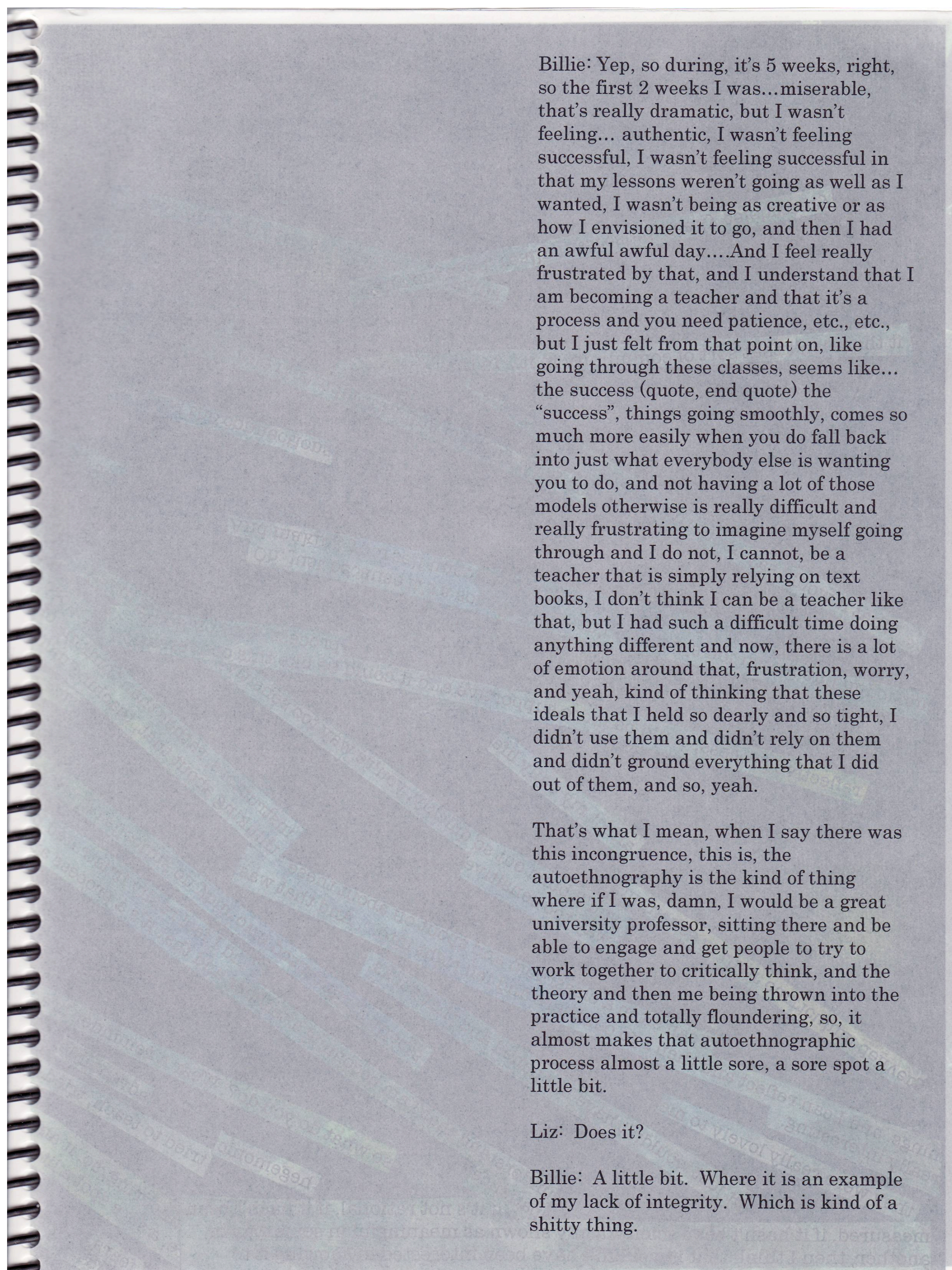
Liz: Could your autoethnography serve as a reminder bracelet?

Billie: Yeah. Yeah it could. Yeah.

The development of products and representations through autoethnographic inquiry illuminate not only the ongoing and ontologically grounded process of this work, but also the difficulty in separating research, analysis, representation and stability in all forms of qualitative research. It questions assessment, generally, but particularly of research, and requires a shift in thinking, perhaps in alignment with the advance of the 'ontological turn'. Autoethnography, as an engagement with hermeneutic phenomenological processing, however, offers opportunities for such questioning, and for transforming practice. Assessment of autoethnography is further discussed in detail in the *Conditions and response-abilities for offering autoethnographic inquiry in teacher education* section.

This section has intended to dwell for a moment in the murky, churning spaces of autoethnography, illuminating the hermeneutic phenomenological and ontological qualities that are difficult to undergo and then to articulate. It speaks to the word 'becoming' and leads towards a discussion of transformation through such inquiry, which commences in the subsequent section.

Palimpsest Three



Billie: Yep, so during, it's 5 weeks, right, so the first 2 weeks I was…miserable, that's really dramatic, but I wasn't feeling… authentic, I wasn't feeling successful, I wasn't feeling successful in that my lessons weren't going as well as I wanted, I wasn't being as creative or as how I envisioned it to go, and then I had an awful awful day….And I feel really frustrated by that, and I understand that I am becoming a teacher and that it's a process and you need patience, etc., etc., but I just felt from that point on, like going through these classes, seems like… the success (quote, end quote) the "success", things going smoothly, comes so much more easily when you do fall back into just what everybody else is wanting you to do, and not having a lot of those models otherwise is really difficult and really frustrating to imagine myself going through and I do not, I cannot, be a teacher that is simply relying on text books, I don't think I can be a teacher like that, but I had such a difficult time doing anything different and now, there is a lot of emotion around that, frustration, worry, and yeah, kind of thinking that these ideals that I held so dearly and so tight, I didn't use them and didn't rely on them and didn't ground everything that I did out of them, and so, yeah.

That's what I mean, when I say there was this incongruence, this is, the autoethnography is the kind of thing where if I was, damn, I would be a great university professor, sitting there and be able to engage and get people to try to work together to critically think, and the theory and then me being thrown into the practice and totally floundering, so, it almost makes that autoethnographic process almost a little sore, a sore spot a little bit.

Liz: Does it?

Billie: A little bit. Where it is an example of my lack of integrity. Which is kind of a shitty thing.

(Original transcript printed on vellum)

(Original created by and copied with permission by Billie in paper, unknown paint & glue on canvas; printed on heavy paper)

Hannah's poem[28]

Who am I?

For the first eight years of my life
this changed a lot.
I was unsure and confused.

Am I Kim Sun-Hi?
Am I Hannah Davies?
Am I Hannah Thomas?

Am I Korean?
Am I Canadian?
Am I from Trinidad and Tobago?
Am I from Ontario?
Am I from the west coast?
Or the east coast?

Who am I?
Am I adopted?
Am I accepted?
Do I belong?
Am I all of these?
Or am I none of these?

Who am I?
I am all of these and more.
These are always
evolving,
revolving
and constantly changing.
These are all of my realities I have come to appreciate
accept and love.
These are the realities I will share with my students in the classroom.

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[28] Hannah is a pseudonym. The second stanza of her poem has been changed to reflect pseudonyms rather than her name(s) that she used in the original. Thank you to Hannah for giving permission to copy and adapt her poem for the purpose of this study.

Recovery as Healing and Transformation

Carolyn Ellis (1999) states that her goal in autoethnography is "the same as Dorothy Allison's (1994)—to take the reader by the throat, break her heart, and heal it again" (p. 675). Autoethnography's potential to do this, to evoke, provoke and stir readers, is a central tenet of the genre. However, Ellis' description of the reading process lends a poignant image for the process of the autoethnographer herself. She engages in a recovery of the body, awakening to her history in a visceral, emotional and undoubtedly uncomfortable process, and if she is willing to acknowledge the face she first misrecognises, comes to a different understanding of her being-in-the-world. What are the transformative implications of this work? What reconciliation comes to the raw feelings of discomfort, to the vulnerable body, and to the open sutures discussed in the previous chapters? I interpret the experiences of the participants in this study as a deep and unusual healing process, a recovery from the disquiet of inquiry.

Ellis (1999) promotes the "therapeutic value" of autoethnography as "action research for the individual" (p. 677) as she describes her well-documented relationship with her PhD student, Sylvia, a breast cancer survivor. As articulated in the literature review, autoethnography is often a genre taken up those whose physical body has experienced trauma and illness, and the inquiry attends well to the physical recovery alongside the accompanying emotional uprising. However, through the hermeneutically phenomenological nature of the inquiry,

autoethnographers recover their identities and histories in ways that are invisible to the naked eye, hidden palimpsests beneath the skin.

The healing that transpires is not necessarily a resolution in the popular sense of the word, and certainly not a removal of the inciting matter that discomforts. Healing doesn't necessarily indicate a happy ending, a scar-less result. Rather, it is often an acceptance of new perspectives of self, a reconciliation with life experiences that have been shrouded for many different reasons. Nielson (1998) calls for inquiry that promotes a recovery of this sort: "I must learn to celebrate, rather than repress or deny, those identities that allow me to be human, to be woman, in my work" (p. 110). Lani describes how through her inquiry she views herself differently:

> *Liz: you said you did this to find out who you are and you did it with the focus of teaching and learning. So… did that change the way you see yourself at all?*
>
> *Lani: Yeah, it did. I always thought I was too quiet and too… uh too much of a rule-following push-over to be a teacher. And doing the AUTOETHNOGRAPHY made me realize that those qualities might be ones that would make me a better teacher, so yeah, definitely…I was surprised at the evolution from fear based to a stronger person who has tools to deal with things because doing it I realized as a kid everything was fear based for me, and now that I'm an adult I can look and it and see why I was feeling that and then see why the kids [I teach] might be feeling some of the things they might be feeling.*

The healing that Lani describes is less a fixing of identity, but rather an opening of

what it means to be a teacher. She recognizes multiple ways of being-in-the-world and therefore, this healing is both restorative and disruptive. Lani is restored, comforted, by seeing herself as strong ("I guess I am braver than I thought!") rather than quiet and fearful. However, the definition of what it means to be a teacher becomes more multiple and uncertain through her new perspective.

Hannah's recovery through her autoethnography is very complex and multiple, as she broached and embodied experiences of her abandonment and adoption that she had previously and purposefully buried as a coping/emotional survival mechanism. She describes the rigor, healing and, perhaps, catharsis of her process(ing):

> *umm…it was a little bit difficult cause it was just so open right like you're just so open and vulnerable to like everyone cause it's really personal information. But, like I thought it was a really good thing to do and it's, it's easier for me to like talk about that kind of stuff now...it actually felt kind of good*
>
> *Liz: Did it?*
>
> *Hannah: yah. It felt good to write it down cause it was like a, almost like a closure cause I found out some information so it wasn't just like a 'oh no' so it felt kind of good to be able to write it down*

The reasons she chose to engage in this kind of inquiry warrant and receive further discussion in the response-ability section forthcoming, but it is significant that her search for "who she is" also led to a more multiple definition rather than a fixed one, similar to Lani's example above.

> *Liz: Are there other things that it helped you to see about yourself differently or…?*
>
> *Hannah: I think so, to not hold back and maybe not to portray myself how I think I should portray myself as a teacher.*

In both the ancestral and cultural sense, Hannah's question for her inquiry, and the title of her poem she wrote afterwards, was *Who am I?*[29] This inquiry led to answers that are unfixed and multiple, and yet Hannah felt comforted and empowered by them. Perhaps this is an interpretation of Reed-Danahay's (1997) claim that autoethnography is concerned with the "bi-cultural identity" of subjects: "One of the main characteristics of an autoethnographic perspective is that the autoethnographer is a boundary-crosser, and the role can be characterized as that of a dual identity" (p. 3). From this study, I perceive autoethnographers to be experimenting with not just "bi-cultural identity", but rather poly-cultural identity. Through her inquiry, Hannah began to conceptualize her identity as poly-cultural, in a very literal way, and to situate herself in what Ted Aoki (1996) calls "the tensioned space of both 'and/not-and' [that] is a space of conjoining and disrupting, indeed, a generative space of possibilities, a space wherein in tensioned ambiguity newness emerges" (p. 318). Healing with/in autoethnographic inquiry emerges from and into, as Aoki suggests, a "space of conjoining and disrupting" that is not necessarily comfortable or easy to articulate, but that generates new and unfixed perspectives with which to see and be in the world.

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[29] Hannah's poem can be read on the page preceding this section on page 111.

The implications for a recovery of this sort manifest when considering Hannah's experience with her first practicum supervisor who criticized her for not performing as animatedly and openly as a "stereotypical" kindergarten teacher, but attributed her reserve to her cultural upbringing based entirely on her skin colour. Hannah recounts her feelings about this experience with a nod towards the themes of her autoethnography:

> *Because I'm not like super open with people right away, like I don't feel comfortable…and [my supervisor would] say something like, "maybe in your culture you don't feel comfortable, with your [Asian] background you don't feel comfortable being open and having open lines of communication".*
>
> *I knew that within my own self that that's something I need to work towards, but that's kind of who I am as a person right? And maybe there's different ways to…feel [and be] that right? I definitely felt like 'oh jeez, you're kind of just targeting…you're looking at me, at how I look on the outside" and making like, you know, these notions that "that's just the way you are. You need to work on that"*

The alternate discourses that Hannah generated through her autoethnography allow for multiple ways to be in and diversely contribute to communities. Consider Deleuze & Guattari's (1987) metaphor of a rhizome, which contrasts relational multiplicities with the arboreal dominant or binaried metaphor:

> a rhizome has no beginning or end: it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb 'to be' but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, 'and…and…and…' This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb 'to be'. (p. 25)

In the opening up of discursive practices through autoethnographic research we might be able to unearth more ways 'to be' in the world as teachers, evoking the multiple and influx "and…and….[and/not and]" rather than 'or'. As Hannah so clearly questions in her interview, "*cause, like, who am I really right? Like, there's so many different things*".

As one inquiring into expanding definitions of what it means to become a teacher, I am somewhat, selfishly, comforted by the notion that Hannah was able to challenge conventional assumptions of teacher identity and the 'transfer or inheritance discourse' for her own notions of 'becoming' (though she couldn't vocally say anything to her supervisor at the time). Spry (2001) describes performing autoethnography as "a vehicle of emancipation from cultural and familial identity scripts that have structured [her] identity personally and professionally" (p. 708). The participants, particularly Hannah, Lani and Billie, articulate their becoming as loosened from the culture (in)scripts of teacher education and schooling. Additionally, Chloe has somewhat re-conceptualized her role in her familial script, and re-articulated what it means for her identities as a teacher.

The participants are experimenting with "poststructural multiplicity" as St. Pierre (2000) describes, as "agency seems to lie in the subject's ability to decode and recode its identity within discursive formations and cultural practices" (p. 504). Through the hermeneutic phenomenological process of autoethnography, all the participants were engaged in intentional, attentive and responsive decoding and recoding. In post-autoethnography interviews, all of them seemed more confident in their ability to do so.

Diamond (1991) describes their experience as

> perspective transformation [that] is the emancipatory process of becoming critically aware of how these structures or schemata both enable and constrain the way teachers see themselves and their relationships and then reconstituting this structure to permit a more discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings. Teachers need not be confined by their personal history. (p. 17).

This perspective transformation enables (pre-service) teachers to challenge the transfer or inheritance discourse that overwhelms teacher education. For example, Julia was prompted by her extreme and (often) paralyzing fear that she would inflict as much trauma on her students as was inflicted on her by her grade 3 teacher. She describes her quilt as something that will remind and inspire her to choose how she wants to be in this world in difficult times wherein the immediate response might be to rely on ingrained and hierarchal structures of (her) schooling. Of note, however, is the grace with which Julia, after doing her autoethnography, gives

herself if she makes a mistake. For one who is so anxious and fearful to make mistakes, especially with children, she seems comforted by the fact she has the potential and agency to choose her being-in-the-world. Julia has experienced "mutual shifts among the components of the system, such as among *myself,* the *teacher I am,* the *teacher I want to be*, the *teacher I fear to be* and *pupils"* (Diamond, 1991, p. 123). No longer in nice, neat and scary categories, Julia has shifted these components, "*flipping the fears on their heads*", recognizing the many ways to 'become' a teacher.

As I argue, the recovery that takes place through autoethnographic inquiry is demonstrated by disrupting binaries as inquirers reconcile their many identities that both en-able and dis-able themselves and others with whom they are in relationship. Elements of resistance towards Grand Narratives in teacher education and schooling emerge, freeing inquirers from dualistic interpretations of becoming (a teacher). In addition to the troubling of individual identity formation demonstrated by these autoethnographies, there is also a "heal[ing of] the artificial separation of subject and object" (Ellis & Bochner, 1996, p. 301). Autoethnography offers profound experiences of recognition and misrecognition of both self *and other*, as autoethnographers present their lives as central, lived sites for meaning making about the culture in which they are situated. As Spry says, "in autoethnographic performance self *is* other" (p. 716, italics in original; See also Reed-Danahay 1997). The participants echo how impactful autoethnographic performance was to their understanding of their classmates, and consequently influenced their thinking about self and/as/with other. In response to my question

about how it changed her thinking of teaching and learning, Hannah identifies her developing notions of community. She in-sightfully links her experience in the seminar community to her future elementary school students.

> *I think it's beneficial 'cause each one of us [in the seminar] has a story to tell right? And I think it's important to let our students know that they can, if they want to, tell their story cause it just makes each one of us so unique and we can add to the group.*
>
> *Liz: How do you mean 'add to the group'?*
>
> *Hannah: umm..it just makes it a more like, rich.....someone can be, like, "oh no", might feel ashamed to think about what other people might think about them but we can all connect. We can really connect to each other. We can be able to relate to "oh no, I can understand where you're coming from and I can definitely relate to that."....a more open community kind of thing and one that's safe.*

The notion of connecting to others through autoethnography runs deeply through the interviews of the participants. The presentation and subsequent discussions of autoethnographic inquiry afforded the audience opportunity to connect or disconnect from the text/inquirer: "the dialogic process allows performers to present to the community others for consideration" (Pelias, 1991, as cited in Spry, 2001, p. 716). When Hannah presented her autoethnography I don't think any of us in the room anticipated what we witnessed. Hannah, as she notes, is one of the more quiet and reserved students, and I superficially expected an inquiry that was presented with quiet reservation and stoicism. Billie explains how Hannah's deep,

emotional and embodied inquiry transformed her thinking and our seminar community:

> *[T]he experience of seeing people in classes and feeling like you kind of know them, that in and of itself reinforces something that we, book-cover, right? Don't judge a book…. Like particularly with [Hannah]'s…. it blew me away. And it also made me feel more of a community and connection with other instructors, rather than thinking of yourself in your own classroom universe, thinking that teaching more of a collective thing.*

Billie and Hannah articulate with conviction the transformation of thinking about selves-as-teachers, situating themselves in-between individual and collective. Through the experience of opening up to and with others, they recognize the rich and multiple possibilities of communities. I view this recognition as another form of recovery, healing the binaried opposition of self or other wherein the identification of self and other becomes both blurred and connected, allowing for multiple understandings of identities within the social, and, further, multiple understandings of the shared identities and relationships of teachers, learners and researchers. They "recognize the power of the in-between", a challenge that Holman Jones advances for the future of autoethnography (p. 784). Holman Jones describes the work of inquirers who discover/recover the in-between as "straddling the fence—with one foot planted in the realm of uncovering and celebrating difference, multiple subject positions, and ideological and political pluralism and with the other foot firmly placed inside the possibility of a community experience, a shared sense of agency, and concerted action directed at social change" (p. 783).

I interpret encounters with/in the in-between as potential healing, as a possibility to recover from the violent dualisms and categorizations culturally inscripted in our lived lives, and instead to re-inscribe to notions of the in-between. Perhaps another word that enhances this interpretation is *freedom*. As Hannah aforementioned, it felt good and cathartic to write down her re-embodied history, and after re-articulating it several times through writing, speaking, creating and performing poetry, it is now much easier to think and talk about. Julia, who was seemingly paralyzed by her grade three experience articulates something close to relief in being able to "flip the fears on their heads", changing them to hopes. For autoethnographers, there arise moments wherein it is possible to transgress the categories, stereotypes and traditions of becoming a teacher. If just for a moment, an inquirer settles in the in-between, there is greater potential for freedom, and therefore change. Holman Jones (2005) references Kershaw (1999)'s definition of freedom that describes this potential: It is "the freedom to *reach beyond* existing systems of formalized power, freedom to create currently unimaginable forms of association and action" (Kershaw, as cited in Holman Jones, p. 783). Billie's re-covering of her autoethnography after our interview demonstrates Kershaw's definition of freedom both in process and in content. As aforementioned, a sore spot was dwelling within Billie in regards to her autoethnography. She felt that her idealistic and resistive critique of institutions was abandoned once entering the institution wherein she taught for her first practicum. Seven months after her practicum, she re-inscribed her interview with me, cut out and re-arranged her text, her words and the experience that gave her discomfort. She exhibited agency to see

and situate that experience differently, and expressed her freedom from her previous conceptions of who she should be, an unyielding and faultless teacher for social change. After creating the collage and presenting it to her peers, she explained how she saw again that it was the process of becoming that was important, that there is freedom in the in-between. Significantly, her presentation to her peers was on the importance of the idealist and resistive ideas with which she first approached her autoethnography. She advanced that community dreaming, hoping and generating leads to greater possibility. Even though it might seem impossible and overly idealist and ambitious, the collective conversation and creative dreaming allows viable and "currently unimaginable" ideas for social change to arise and become a reality. She articulates her feelings of freedom from the binaried lens that she placed on herself after her first practicum.[30]

Response-ability through healing and transformation

By opening up the discourse of what it means to become a teacher, participants shake loose the notion of "good citizenship" in teaching that is concerned with cultural preservation and allegiance to the status quo (as aforementioned in the literature review). Their thinking shifts from what they 'ought' to be to how to teach and learn by honouring their identity[ies] and

[30] I offer my great appreciation and admiration for Billie, who allowed me to utilize her artwork for the third palimpsest and to demonstrate transformation through autoethnography in such a vivid way.

integrity[31]: "When I follow only the 'oughts', I may find myself doing work that is ethically laudable [by institutional standards] but that is not mine to do. A vocation that is not mine, no matter how externally valued, does violence to the self—in the precise sense that it *violates* my identity and integrity on behalf of some abstract norm. When I violate myself, I invariably end up violating the people I work with" (Palmer, 1997, p.19). From the very moments the participants chose to do an autoethnography, they were performing acts of responsibility that transcends the 'oughts' of the institution of teacher education and schooling. In this inquiry process the focus was not on lesson plans, teaching strategies, or behaviour management techniques that they 'ought' to master; rather, the participants who chose to do autoethnographic work were concerned with investigating how they are historically and culturally situated in the vocational culture in which they are 'becoming'.

Throughout this study a similar thread weaves, begging the question *why:* if this kind of inquiry can be emotional, sometimes uncomfortable and unlike other assignments, why would students choose to take it up? There are numerous factors that afforded the students the opportunity to try autoethnographic work in this seminar. (These factors are discussed in-depth in the upcoming section regarding conditions for doing autoethnography). As a preliminary example, I presented my inquiry first and emphasized how I felt a responsibility to share it with them. Through the literature review I found that one of the most critical factors in preparing teachers to teach in culturally responsive ways was self-study. In my teacher education program I had never done anything like self-study,

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[31] Please refer to Palmer's definitions of integrity and identity in the section, *Recovery of the Body.* These notions are referred to in upcoming paragraphs.

autoethnography or even reflexive reflection work. After discovering this, I felt a responsibility to do an autoethnography as I want to be a more responsive individual. I shared the realization with the students that I had never done reflexive self-study before doing my autoethnography. I also shared with them that now I had done this work I felt a responsibility to not only offer them the choice to do this kind of work, but also to share my own autoethnographic findings with them. In response, some students felt a sense of responsibility to investigate self/selves as members of school culture at this time. Each participant in their own way wanted to question not only their impact and positioning in schooling, but also the cultural status quo. Billie, explains her perspective:

> *I really value individual voice and experience, and think the scariest thing is people who are blind to their own influence in their curriculum delivery or teaching instruction or however that manifests itself, so that is really scary for me so it was something I was already really excited about and so actually to walk in and have that be an option and to have a lot of theory and alternative discourse and such in our seminar being present was super exciting*.

The concept of fear is a driving force for many of the participants, as Billie articulates- fear of reproducing taken-for-granted teaching strategies that privilege some and oppress others. There is an underpinned understanding in their teaching philosophy that they are entering into a culture where they will be in positions of power and authority, and they believe they have a responsibility to investigate what they believe as they want to be responsive in their relationships with children.

Hannah explains that *"no matter how much you say 'I'm an objective individual,' we all come with our own personal beliefs and attitudes, and biases*" that influence the way we respond to children.

My interpretation is that the participants all express a desire to become more response-able (Nielson, 1998) teachers, able to respond to those with whom they work, in equitable, compassionate and empathetic ways. They are demonstrating a responsibility/response-ability that transgresses the traditional notions of responsibility that evokes the 'oughts' of the profession.

Through this inquiry, these participants are subscribing to a "we teach who we are" perspective of teaching described by Parker Palmer (1997). He advances that "when I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are" (p. 15). Lani explains in her words that:

> *If we are confused and screwed up within ourselves then we're unable to be an open ear to students and I think that's one way we help students, to be an empathetic ear, and we're unable to look at things with unclouded eyes, our students situations, and be willing and able to offer advice or not if that's what needs to happen*.

In her perspective, teaching is much more than delivering lessons and she wants to be able to respond to her students as individuals appropriately and with care. She further challenges the critique of autoethnography as a selfish endeavor (see Sparkes, 2002, pp. 88-94) by advancing her belief that one must be "*happy and whole*" before they can be responsive to students: "*So even though maybe it looks selfish, it's making me be a more capable person and that in and of itself is not selfish*".

Palmer's central idea that it is the identity (knowing of self) and integrity (becoming more whole) of a teacher that makes for good practice is reflected in her statement. Although I agree with the underlying notions of learning about and healing self, I feel it's important to trouble the humanist language/concept that one can ever be a whole or undivided self. As aforementioned, one aims towards a better understanding of self but never a whole or fixed understanding. Palmer's concept of wholeness is significant, however, as the etymological sense of the word heal is "to make whole."[32] There is definitely an important relationship between Palmer's notion of integrity-as-wholeness and autoethnographic healing identified herein, but with the latter grounded in post-structural notions that the self is never whole or wholly understood.

The reasons why Hannah chose to do autoethnography continue to stand out as an incredibly powerful example of responsible teaching in order to be more response-able. Hannah describes herself as someone who doesn't open up easily to others, and as a coping mechanism has often pushed away thoughts of her past history in the Korean orphanage and in the foster homes she lived in before being adopted. She reported to the focus group that her autoethnographic inquiry was the first time she ever really spent time thinking about and recovering those emotions, the feelings of abandonment, and the ways in which she has always coped. Not only did she begin to recover these moments, she also shared them with a group of people she had known for two months. I am still overwhelmed by her courage and

[32] Online etymology dictionary, www.etymonline.com.

by her extraordinary demonstration of responsibility to students she has yet to even meet:

> *I think that the most important thing was, for me, was, I needed to be able to…be um...be sure about who, like, know that I know myself… of like who I am, and with that it really influences like your philosophies in the classroom*.

In a very literal sense, Hannah began a process of exploring who she is, genetically and culturally, as aforementioned. When I gathered the participants together for a focus group seven months after completing our course together, significant transformations had occurred for Hannah and her understanding of her history. After opening up through autoethnography she continued her exploration, contacting one of her foster parents who treated her with care and who she hadn't seen since her adoption seventeen years ago. She asked questions about who she was at that tender age, learning more about the teacher she is now. She freely opens up to the focus group about her conversation with her previous foster parent:

> *It explains a lot though about how you are as a person at the time, I know I was speaking to Lily (pseudonym) and she said when you first came [to me] you were very tiny, very routined, had to have things a certain way, you didn't show a lot of emotions to people, you didn't smile a lot, this kind of stuff, but after a while you are a totally different person, who you are came out, and it was really good to have that conversation with her because [knowing who I was as a child] was something that kind of bothered me a bit, but I can now put it behind me because I know more about it. So that autoethnography kind of was the*

> *beginning of this thinking about it as well.*

The potential for healing through autoethnography is, again, illuminated in Hannah's words, but why she chose to go through this for the first time and what she learned demonstrates a transformative act much larger than the self. Her desire to be a response-able teacher who is open to her students so that they might be open to her is more important than her own comfort. She explains how important it is for her to make students feel comfortable and safe to share their own stories and histories and to be able to open up about who they are. She is preparing to teach students who are the age she was when she experienced living in the orphanage, moving to Canada, moving from home to home as a foster child and then being adopted. When asked how her autoethnography changed her teaching and her thinking about teaching, she explains:

> *I think [I learned] the importance of like how you respond to your students, instead of just the process of 'getting through the day, so I'm going to teach you.'*

Hannah is describing what Aoki (1992) calls the innermost layer of teaching that goes deep beyond the mechanics and politics of the profession into the relational and complex essence of teaching: "the teacher *is* the teaching" (pp. 187-197). He calls for a movement to "reorient ourselves so that we overcome mere correctness so that we can see and hear our doings as teachers harboured within pedagogical being so that we can see and hear who we *are* as teachers" (p. 197, italics in original). Hannah's extraordinary care for and responsibility to her future students

is a moving and courageous act, and one that I believe transgresses the 'oughts' and 'ought-to-bes' that pervade teaching and schooling.

The desire to be a response-able teacher is prevalent in the perspectives of all the participants, and through their work they all disturb hegemonic properties of schooling that have oppressed some individuals, and at times, themselves. However, the participants describe their responsibility to/for change on a fluid continuum ranging from the very personal to the community at large. Julia clearly explains her fears of reproducing the behaviours enacted by her grade three teacher that negatively impacted her feelings of self-worth and ability. She feels a responsibility to be self-aware and to reject the authoritarian identity of a teacher so ingrained in the history of schooling who might disregard a child's individuality and struggle. Rather, she hopes to be responsive to children and their individual struggle and strength.

> *I want to make sure that the things that have affected me or that have caused issues, positive and negative, that I manage to keep the positives and sort of, deal with the negatives so that I don't do this to somebody else.*
>
> *Liz: what do you mean, "deal with the negatives?"*
>
> *Well, make sure that I know they're there so they're not just kind of, sitting in the back of my head and you know, some day some kid's going to come up and hit the right button and I'm going to go 'eerhh' and this kid's going to be in the same position I was in grade three, and really messed up and not knowing what they're doing and lose all confidence in themselves. I don't want to be the cause*

of that. And I especially don't want that to be the cause because I didn't know that [trigger] was there. If that makes sense. I don't want to do it by accident especially. I'm pretty sure I wouldn't do it deliberately but, you know....And I think that's why I got into anthropology, you get into that idea of 'the things we have done because we think we're doing the right thing' and they turn out to be the exact wrong thing to do, you know.

As Julia makes sense of her autoethnography aloud, she moves from a very personal and emotional narrative through to thinking about a much broader picture about institutional discursive practices. She is both responsibly investigating her complicity in the culture of schooling and troubling hegemonic, colonizing discourse. Her articulation unfolds from the personal to reveal a global discourse that threatens and dominants those who are having "the right thing" done to/for them. Billie, on the other hand, approaches responsibility in a different way, seemingly beginning with the grand narratives that have been made explicit to her and then becoming more focused in the ways in which she is personally implicated:

That's what I was nervous about in teaching in general, is [that it] socializ[es] people to repeat....But it's interesting because I'm thinking about it now, and since then, I've been thinking about why would I have chosen those [themes of religious institutional rites] to begin with, and that in and of itself makes me nervous because there's a lot of things that are even deeper, even more unconscious, even more, um, hegemonic that are assumptions that I'm not even really thinking about. Like for example, child development at the base of it, like how do you go into a classroom and not have in your head what parenting

> *looks like, what, at certain age groups, what people are, you know what I mean?*

Billie's questioning into normalizing discourse demonstrates the powerful and potential opportunities autoethnography affords, and also the unmistakable onus presented to pre-service teachers to question and keep questioning "*the things we have done because we think we're doing the right thing*", as Julia poses. The onus for response-able teaching comes not from a seminar instructor like me (though I can do my responsible work and offer autoethnographic and/or other provocative opportunities), but rather it comes from the deep, reflexive process(ing) of autoethnographic inquiry. The participants are making sense of their complicity within a culture, and are moving fluidly between self and other, local and global. They articulate "that they are part of a larger struggle and that they have a responsibility to reform, not just replicate, standard school practices" (Cochran-Smith, 1991, p. 280). I would argue that they were already questioning these responsibilities to reform, and autoethnography was presented as an opportunity at the right time.

My perspective is that the participants who created and shared their autoethnographies with their seminar groups have done so to pursue their responsibilities and to become more response-able. They also demonstrate the catalytic potential of autoethnography. When asked about the validity of autoethnography, Chloe explains how one person's transformation can influence many, calling again to the quality of response-ability.

if we are thinking about how [autoethnography] affects us as teachers then that [speaks] to how we are going to have different relationships with our students, and then you're talking about 25 young people every year, over the course of your career, that's a lot of people that you [interact with].

I've seen some documentary films that are basically the product of one person, and they've really changed the way I've thought about something, so then, wow, they've changed the way everybody has potentially thought about that issue.

As these autoethnographers came to realizations that their work is transformative there became an emphasis on responsibility not only to the students with whom they (will) work, but also to the larger teaching community. By bringing up issues that are (at first personal) into the public arena, autoethnographers provoke questioning, troubling and self-inquiries from the community members with whom they share. As Lani says, *"But by sharing our autoethnographies we're making the other people question themselves and find acceptance and answers in our stories."*

Though to some it seems self-indulgent, I felt compelled to share my autoethnography with my seminar students. I knew that my inquiry had changed my teaching practice and that it was my responsibility to present my questioning and the process of autoethnography to them, perhaps if only to share something of my heart, to be vulnerable to them, and to be open in my uncertainty and questioning. What has become central to my understanding of teacher education through this study of autoethnography and from the words of my participants is that good teaching demands an attentiveness to our relationships with others, and a different definition of responsibility. To me, Hannah's act of autoethnography is a

responsibility of grand proportions, a demonstration of what Palmer (1997) calls *the courage to teach*: "so that teacher and students and subject can be woven into the fabric of community that learning, and living, require" (p. 18). As Hannah spoke about her presentation, she spoke about how the presentations strengthened the relationships of the small seminar group and I clarified what I thought she might be inferring.

> *Liz: Did you feel a responsibility to us, to the seminar group to share your story too [in addition to your future students]?*
>
> *Hannah: I think so. I think it would just help, just to be able to understand each other, where we're coming from.*

That Hannah was acting in ways that leave her open and vulnerable in order to connect the collective demonstrates an empowered and transformed teaching philosophy. As Billie aforementioned, it was a surprise to many when Hannah presented her autoethnography with vulnerability, pain and depth, as she was often quiet, seemingly shy and distanced. Yet she assumed a leadership role within the collective, not by standing at the front of the room or demanding they engage in a teaching activity. Rather she actively opened her heart so that others might do the same and perhaps further develop the bonds of the community. She is engaging in Nielson's (1998) notion that "[I]f I am truly to be a response-able teacher, the conversation must engage us all equally in change, in interrogating our identities and our role in institutions (p. 110). Hannah is approaching becoming a teacher with courage and response-ability, allowing her own history and fear to be exposed

so that others might feel connected to the community.

Pre-service teachers who act in the face of discomfort and fear so that they may be more responsive to students and colleagues are those who "work against the grain".

> Perhaps most importantly, teachers who work against the grain must name and wrestle with their own doubts, must fend off fatigue of reform and depend on the strength of their individual and collaborative conviction that their work ultimately makes a difference in the fabric of social responsibility. (Cochran-Smith, 1991, p. 285)

They seek allies from those who are also/always becoming, and do so by exposing their histories and fears, sitting in places of personal discomfort and unknowing as an act of responsibility to future students, to their colleagues in collaborative environments and to their selves.

The experiences described in this manuscript illuminate the personal difficulty and uncertainty an autoethnography potentially entails, but also the process of recovering from forging into unknown territories of the self. The recovery from such inquiry reveals a transformative way of thinking about self and/with others in the world, and as Diamond (1991) advances, transformative thinking is central to revitalizing teaching.

> The chief resource that teachers bring to teaching is not simply the skills that they have acquired in their training but instead it is themselves, the people they are, the viewpoints that they have adopted. Teachers can each learn to

> be scholars of their own consciousness and experts in the remodeling of their experiencing of the experience of teaching. A teaching life thus comes to consist of a creativity cycle, a continuous progression of provisional supposition and experiment, exploration and explication, surmise and closure, looseness and tightness, of learning and relearning, of incumbent and challenging hypotheses. (Diamond, 1991, p. 123)

The participants describe the process of taking an inquiry stance into their own lives, histories and philosophies in and around teaching and schooling. The transformation Diamond describes originates in the hearts of teachers who (want to) work against the grain, and who want to be response-able to those with whom they work. Teacher Education programs have significant capabilities in providing guidance and space for students to "learn to be scholars of their own consciousness and experts in the remodeling of their experiencing of the experience of teaching". For those programs that want to initiate such autoethnographic assignments, there are a number of conditions that enable pre-service teachers to explore this genre, as observed from this study. The following section describes the recommended conditions for teacher educators to be response-able to pre-service teachers in the process of doing autoethnographic inquiry.

Conditions and response-abilities

for offering autoethnographic inquiry in teacher education

By illuminating and dwelling in the autoethnographic experiences of pre-service teachers in the three sections above, I wanted to make manifest the possibility and potential of autoethnographic inquiry in teacher education programs; I wanted to unfold the complex process for the reader so that the moments of healing and transformation emerged with weight and perhaps surprise; I wanted to make a case for autoethnography's presence in teacher education programs. However, the question remains (always): What might that look like? What are the conditions for doing autoethnographic work in a teacher education program?

With thoughtful feedback from the participants of this study, the following speaks to these questions, articulating the responsibilities of teacher educators who choose to do autoethnography, and the provoking issues that arise from considering autoethnographic practice in predominantly grade-based university programs.

But who am I to advance these recommendations? What follows are recommendations arising from one seminar instructor's experience, and thus are paradoxically both in-depth and limited observations of the experience. Further, only Lani, Hannah and Billie were in my class section, whilst Chloe and Julia were in my co-instructor's section. Below I speak mostly to the seminar environment I facilitated, an experience I share with the first three participants. I did, however, present my autoethnography to both clas sections at the same time in the same

room, inviting all the students to explore this method of inquiry as my co-instructor and I maintained the same criteria for the course. My position as facilitator and my choices at the beginning of the semester certainly influenced the direction of the seminar course, and many of those choices are reflected not only in the recommended conditions but also the issues discussed herein. However, many of the choices I made and explored were supported by literature I read in the preparation of my own autoethnography. In the following recommendations, I hope to provide acknowledgement of these poignant authors, of the participants and their feedback, and of the structure of the seminar course itself that afforded me the ability to explore the conditions for doing autoethnographic work.

Developing safe spaces and relationships

I had one umbrella goal in mind that fed my initial planning and teaching in the seminar: to create a safe space for students. The seminar course at UVic has the potential for teacher educators to be able to explore this goal as the number of students in each section is, on average, fifteen people. Further, the fact that the course is marked complete/incomplete allows the students to relax somewhat and also to take risks (discussed in further detail below).

I begin the seminar courses I teach by going outside on campus and creating a story-telling web with yarn with the students. Holding the ball of yarn, I start the web by telling an autobiographical story of a time I was a teacher. The story I told for this particular group narrated my summer spent as a willow tree planter on the Shuswap River restoration project wherein I learned to listen. I learned this lesson

from the late Mary Thomas, a Secwepemc Elder who my co-workers referred to as Grandmother[33]. Sitting on the edge of a lake in the Shuswap Nation she told us just to listen. And I did, hearing for the first time the whirring of dragonflies across the top of the water, the beat of my own heart, and maybe even the heart of the land. Instead of just plundering deafly along in my summer job, I began to listen to the stories of my Secwepemc co-workers, and sometimes to tell my own.[34]

I told this story on the first day of our course for a number of reasons. One, I wanted to disrupt the traditional notions of what it means to be a teacher and to encourage alternate interpretations of my prompt, "recall a time where you were a teacher". Two, I wanted to begin the conversation by re-articulating my lesson learned that day on the lake—I work towards being a listener as a teacher. This re-articulation focused me on what I want my role to be as a seminar instructor—a responsive listener (which is not always the case when ego gets in the way)—and I hoped it also stated this position for my students. And three, I wanted to be the first in the group to present an open heart. After I told my story, one of the group would connect to it in whatever interpretation they like, and I would pass the ball of yarn to the next storyteller. As each person storied, the yarn became more layered, more

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[33] The extraordinary work of Elder Dr Mary Thomas in preserving the Secwepemc language, in teaching ethnobotany to countless young people including myself, and in caring for the wellbeing of children is well-documented (see http://www.spiritmap.ca/marythomassl.html; http://www.landoftheshuswap.com/msite/maryt.php; http://www.shuswapcentre.org/join.html). In amongst her many awards and recognitions, she holds two honourary degrees, one from the University of North Carolina and one from the University of Victoria. I did not realize her many respected accomplishments at the time—she was Grandmother to my colleagues, and someone whose short presence in my life left indelible prints in my teaching.

[34] Please visit http://landoftheshuswap.com/ to learn more about the land of the Secwepemc people where I grew up and to which I returned to be a part of the Salmon River Watershed Project team.

complex, more intertwined and non-linear as it was passed from storyteller to storyteller. At the end I asked "what might this web mean for teaching and learning?" I will leave the reader this question to ponder for another time, as that branch takes us away from the autoethnographic question at hand/heart.

Lani remembered this activity and recalled that it was an element that made her feel more comfortable:

> *the first day we did that webbing activity and [we] had to talk about personal connection and that made it a lot safer because [we] don't feel alone. And that's what I was afraid of. So, having people share a personal connection and having that be an expectation [set the tone].*

Lani is the only participant who specifically recalls this activity as important to facilitating a safe space, but all the participants recall that they felt safe enough in the seminar to take a risk in sharing personal histories. Hannah describes how the size of the seminar impacted her feelings of safety:

> *I think [we could try autoethnography] because our seminar group was a lot more intimate, like it was smaller, fewer amounts of people, and that you [Liz] really fostered the environment to be safe and welcoming.*

Parker Palmer (1997) who advocates for teachers to take up self-study echoes the importance of creating safe spaces in the teaching community.

> Our task is to create enough safe spaces and trusting relationships within the academic workplace - hedged about by appropriate structural protections - that more of us will be able to tell the truth about our own struggles and joys as teachers in ways that befriend the soul and give it room to grow. Not all

> spaces can be safe, not all relationships trustworthy, but we can surely develop more of them than we now have so that an increase of honesty and healing can happen within us and among us - for our own sake, the sake of our teaching, and the sake of our students. (p. 21).

I argue further that if teacher educators are interested in asking pre-service teachers for self-study in any form or sincerity, they are compelled to work towards encouraging safe spaces. It is their response-ability to consider the conditions for doing autoethnographic work that resists academic norms and history and puts pre-service teachers in vulnerable situations.

Modeling and sharing to facilitate safe spaces

When I decided to offer the opportunity for students to do an autoethnography, I knew that I had to share mine first, taking Pennington's (2007) lead. She advances "autoethnography as pedagogy" in her study working with White pre-service teachers in predominantly Non-White communities, and she found that once she shared her autoethnographic stories the pre-service teachers opened up in a much deeper, more vulnerable level. With this in mind, I set out to be the first to open up, though I was nervous, fearful and somewhat embarrassed as the reader might recall from my description in the context section. I almost backed out several times. When I presented it to both sections I prefaced it by saying I was feeling somewhat nervous as I had only shown it to a couple of select individuals at that point.

All the participants have said that it was important to them that I share mine, whether for an example of the assignment or of my teaching beliefs. For Lani, who had particularly strong fears of being vulnerable, my sharing was of significance to her feelings of safe space.

Liz: What made it a safe space for you?

Lani: The modeling of having you share yours and show that you are open to vulnerability.

After our interview, I pursued this notion further and asked Lani what she thought when she observed my autoethnography for the first time. She responded on the blog.

Liz, your sharing your autoethnography surprised, frightened, and soothed me all at varying times. At first I was surprised with how frightened you seemed of sharing your autoethnography because I had placed you, as I naturally do with teachers, as somewhat hero-like. I couldn't believe that someone so very capable could be concerned that we would see her work as subpar (because that was what I thought you were worried about). After I saw the work I realized that you were likely more worried about being judged, and feeling vulnerable. And that was when I was frightened.

Lani poses a critical problematic in the way we perform as teachers: as "hero-like", infallible, unemotional and expert. "We [a]re socialized to be good students and teachers, to say everything is fine, to not appear troubled" (Pennington, 2007, P. 101; also, Britzman, 2003). When she witnessed my complicit self, my vulnerable self, my heartbroken self, her constructs of good teaching shifted. In sharing my

autoethnography with my students, I invited them to explore their vulnerable selves and to connect to who I was as a teacher and as an individual. I coaxed the development of a community in my class by performing an unconventional teacher role. In fact, they even supported me! They gave me positive feedback, and thanking me for sharing something so personal. If I was to invite students to open their lives to the class community, it was my response-ability to open up first. "To expect reflection and comprehension on the part of pre-service teachers about diversity without modeling my own development was to remain in the role of the traditional pedagogue. Sharing my personal story broke the wall of my instructive, above the fray, position I resided in and put me into the chaotic area of exploring [pedagogy] with my students" (Pennington, 2007, p. 100).

It is not an easy task to open oneself up to the observation of others, let alone be the first to do it. However, I believe it is critical that teacher educators engage in like inquiries if they expect pre-service teachers to perform such reflexive and vulnerable processes. As Korthagen, Loughran and Russell (2006) advocate, "learning about teaching is enhanced when the teaching and learning approaches advocated in the program are modeled by the teacher educators in their own practice" (p. 1036; see also, Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Pre-service teachers are in continuous modes of observing the teaching philosophies and approaches of not only their mentor teachers in classrooms, but also past teachers and teacher educators. Throughout this manuscript you might notice this trend, as the participants often referred to teacher educators and past teachers as reference points to situate themselves as teachers and their becoming. Further, it provides

opportunities for transformations of thinking and teaching for teacher educators to model their autoethnographic work, and encourages an empathetic and authentic class community.

Developing Class community

By sharing my own process of autoethnography, not only did I offer a piece of myself to both sections, but I also demonstrated that I value self-inquiry, arts-based methodologies and personal story as research. For some people who wanted to try this methodology there was an assumption of trust and safety that their work and opinions would be validated in the class, including me, that I was compelled to honour. Though it was ultimately up to the collective as a whole as to how their work would be received, there is an element of responsibility that the teacher educator set the expectations for class interactions and peer feedback. Lani, who aforementioned her views of teachers as "hero-like", is validated by the community's acceptance of her feelings and her autoethnography. She describes her motivation for doing this project as entirely different from what she normally does.

Liz: What were you driven by, mostly?

Lani: Self-realizations and self-knowledge and wanting to learn more about something and having it be valued by you that is something that I would want to learn about is actually something you say is ok to learn about, whereas I think in education we're always told this is what you have to learn about whether or not you want to doesn't matter, so having you validate my desires…

Liz: Me as the instructor, or me as a peer?

Lani: You as the instructor, and then the class community including you as peers.

Lani describes her usual motivation for doing good work as teacher directed and valued. She has often worked for good grades and to please the infallible, expert teachers. Her inquiry led her to experience a different and personally transformative motivation, but was still enhanced by the acceptance and support of her class community. Significantly, she clarifies her image of me as both an instructor, and as a peer in the class community. I attribute this to her altered opinion of me as a teacher-as-expert to teacher-as-"vulnerable observer" (Behar, 1997, from her book *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*, as discussed by Carolyn Ellis, 1999; 2000) through my autoethnographic presentation. What she seeks is building relationships with her colleagues, rather than regurgitating what the teacher wants.

Further, Billie describes that as individuals continued to share their work, the relationships began to strengthen within the class community. This experience actually transformed Billie's beliefs about teaching, and allowed her to observe the generative possibilities of sharing "who we are as teachers":

And it also made me feel more of a community and connection with other instructors, rather than thinking of yourself in your own classroom universe thinking about that, teaching more of a collective thing.

Autoethnographic disclosure connects individuals to each other, illuminating the human condition. In particular, for those who experience the "struggle of voice" (Britzman, 2003) of becoming a teacher, it is important to not feel all alone, as Lani

had feared. When Julia shared her quilt that exposed her fears to her colleagues she was somewhat surprised to find that many others could say that they feared the same. When I shared my autoethnography exposing my fears and failures, many, and Lani in particular, were surprised that the "hero-like" teacher might also have doubts. In the last sentence of *Teaching Community: A pedagogy of hope,* bell hooks (2003) writes, "[m]oving through that fear, finding out what connects us, reveling in our differences; this is the process that moves us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community" (p. 197). As a collective the seminar students began to develop philosophies about teaching that consider and work through the fears put forward by the autoethnographers in the class. In meaningful communities there is trust and a shared vision, even if individuals disagree on particular points, and that collective vision gives way to hopeful and often empowered pedagogy (hooks, pp. 105-116).

The development of a class community is a critical condition for students to feel safe to take risks in sharing their autoethnographic work, and at the same time, the sharing of autoethnographic work enhances the class community. In this cyclic process, the students develop relationships that inspire more: more dialogue, more connection, more disconnection, more possibility for both argument and for agreement, and perhaps, more perspective on what it means to become a teacher. Developing a class community is consistent with both Korthagen et. al (2006) and Feiman-Nemser (2001) who argue that effective and responsive teacher education programs offer opportunity for pre service teachers to work closely with their peers. Autoethnography is one way of working intimately with peers, learning from

each other and fostering relationships for further collaborative work. Billie explains her experience of our seminar group, and the importance of fostering a class community with shared vision:

> *The fact that people were really affirming made it easier and we all recognized what we were doing, the kinds of processes and the kinds of feelings that it brings up. We had a really empathetic group, which we had spent the course of that term developing.*

Billie's statement makes it sound like the group had developed strong bonds and trust for the entire 4 month term before sharing autoethnographies, but in reality, the first individual to share in our seminar presented after six weeks of being in class together. The group dynamics developed quickly and the students were able to assess the safety of the community.

Thus far I have commented on the class community of my section of the seminar. However, Julia and Chloe were in the other section. Although their seminar instructor led the class differently, both women felt that the seminar was a safe environment to share their work. Julia, who doesn't usually like to share her work at all explained the environment of her seminar:

> *this cohort we're in is extremely supportive which is really nice to see cause it's like 'ok, you know, I can do these things.'….I have had classes where you can just, you see there are some people in there who have their idea of what's right and what's wrong and you know, I'm not sure that I would be comfortable putting my view out there to that person you know, because that person has a definite idea that this is what you should do.*

Liz: Does that come from the instructor or from the students?

Julia: It can be either… I've had teachers that are 'it's my way or the highway' and there are times when you have students…they have the 'right' view point. It's theirs and whatever anyone else says is wrong 'cause theirs is the right way, and anyone with a different viewpoint hasn't been educated properly. I don't want to put myself in a position where you can tell me that my way is wrong.

In introducing autoethnography as a research methodology to both sections, I made explicit that how the students chose to do the process and representation of their autoethnography would hinge on who they are as an inquirer, and what their data might be. I believe that there is no universal systematic way of doing autoethnography, and that the embodied and contextual process of autoethnography will unfold the directions the inquiry needs to go. For some students like Julia this is a safety measure—there is no right or wrong approach or outcome. For some students like Lani this is an epiphany—the teacher as expert isn't expecting the right answer. For some students like Billie, this is freedom, but for others the freedom from an expected outcome and prescriptive criteria could be disconcerting and overwhelming.

Billie explains both the difficulty and the freedom of an assignment wherein the inquirer drives the project and it's criteria. She proposes the reasons why some students may have chosen the more conventional inquiry project over autoethnography, and why she felt the freedom of the latter:

it made it perhaps more difficult in terms of, [students] didn't know what the expectations were, but the way you introduced it, using your own as a model

made it really clear that there were no criteria, per se, and you gave examples to guide us, but that for me, I found, I really liked. And I thrived on it, and I was REALLY invested and engaged and thought about it a lot. I think that a lot of other people [have difficulty as they're] not delivering the expectation, trying to give their best shot at making a product that the teacher expects and wants to see.

…. we've done presentations, whether or not there was set criteria, we know how to create our own criteria, we're university students, how many presentations, intro, conclusion, PowerPoint, done, right? And so I think that some people found that either [autoethnography] was an emotional thing, they didn't want to talk about these things, because it is making them in that moment of vulnerability, but in addition I think that level of engaged metacognitive kind of thinking process involves a lot more energy.

Liz: Yes. Did you feel like it did?

Billie: Yes, but it wasn't the kind of thing were I was like "I'm putting in so much energy and I'm stressing about this" or whatever. A fear I had going into the program was that it was going to be quite prescriptive and blind to the alternative [methods] and it was just going to be assignment-delivery, which, coincidentally, most of the other parts of the program has been, so I found [the open criteria of autoethnography] really energizing as well.

Those who are engaged in autoethnography would likely concur that there is no one way to approach autoethnography as the subject, researcher, methodology, research instrument stems from self/selves. As I propose, it is more an unfolding, emergent

process and to prescribe criteria for new autoethnographers is to undermine the embodied process it provokes and that which leads to transformative thinking about self/selves in the world. However, Billie's speculation on why some students felt inhibited by the lack of structure and criteria rouses questions about how to balance an open criteria with "structural protections" (Palmer, 1997) that support students for whom open and student driven criteria is overwhelming. As the facilitator of this course I am reminded that "we teach who we are", and that what I feel comfortable with is not comfortable for all my students.

Something that both Billie and Julia's perspectives draw attention to are two further important conditions to consider for implementing autoethnographic inquiry in pre-service teacher programs: choice and assessment issues, which will be discussed below. These two elements are extremely critical to the "structural protections" of an autoethnographic assignment.

Choice

The students had a choice whether they wanted to carry out their inquiry project with an autoethnographic approach or a more conventional research method. Those who chose the latter started with a question and then answered it through readings or interviews or observations of the particular phenomenon they questioned. This condition of choice was necessary for students to feel comfortable in this assignment. As Billie mentioned, autoethnographic inquiry demands a lot of emotional energy, care, vulnerability and "engaged metacognitive thought". As it is an unconventional practice for many of the students, they also have to be attentive

to the process, think outside the typical research box, and create a process and representation that works for them. Students have to be in a mindset that they want to challenge themselves in this particular way, and if they are not ready, I imagine it would feel terribly uncomfortable, oppressive and in the end, a less meaningful experience. However, students who don't partake in their own autoethnographies are offered possibilities to engage in the work of others who present, and this is an incredibly rich experience as well, as described in previous sections.

Billie furthers her discussion about the choice aspect of the assignment and compares her autoethnography to the mandatory reflections of her curriculum subject courses:

> *It's different. I think that the fact that it was a choice, I got to choose what I was reflecting about and the fact that the reflection was for me…made me change the entire approach, and I think that was a huge distinction between the two…*

Billie values the open criteria of the assignment and that not only did she choose this approach, she also chose how to go about it. Further, when one chooses to share an autoethnography one has the agency and discernment as to what parts of self and history to share. In this way, even those who choose to do autoethnography can still be protected by their own feelings of safety/unsafety. They can assess the community dynamics and the context will determine the performance of particular identities and the concealment of others. [35] All the participants related that it was

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[35] Some, including me, would argue that this aspect of choosing what kind of data to highlight is a property of all research, but that autoethnography is a genre that illuminates the researcher's interpretive standpoint explicitly.

absolutely crucial that they be provided with the choice of doing vulnerable autoethnographic work, and those who chose autoethnography felt empowered to explore as a result of that choice.

Assessment questions

The other aspect that Julia so demonstratively alluded to is the problematics of assessment pertaining to autoethnography. Reading back the transcripts of my interviews with each participant, I am intrigued by my own uncertainty with the assessment of such an assignment. To each individual I ask, "How do you assess an autoethnography?" and none of us, including me, can answer definitively. Those who engaged in autoethnography articulated the value of the process, but how could/would this process be assessed in an academic professional program?

> *Lani: I have no idea. (laughs). I was shocked that that was even an option because I don't know. I know that the growth that I found from it was huge and I never felt so motivated on any project in my whole entire life, so for personal assessment, that's easy, yeah, but I don't know how you would assess it.*

Further, as Julia aforementioned, she would not have chosen to do such personal inquiry if there was an underpinning definition of a right and wrong method and outcome. This is an assignment for a course—so (how) can teacher educators assess such personal, vulnerable work?

The seminar course at UVic is currently graded as complete/incomplete, so there was flexibility to explore different methods of inquiry. What we chose to do in

order to respond to the assignments created, both autoethnographies and more conventional inquiry projects, was to give feedback and engage in dialogue as a class[36]. In a discussion we first responded orally and then students would often respond again on our class forum after having some time to process and to write down thoughts. As a new instructor I at first felt uneasy about not administering more formal feedback to the students, but after the first minute of Lani's autoethnography I knew that the more responsive approach was to help provoke conversations, ask questions, and connect to curricular concepts and history. Unfortunately the popular notion reigns in education that if a grade isn't awarded and work isn't categorized students won't be engaged. I find Lani's definition of "personal assessment" above to be more common when students presented their inquiries. The conditions established in the class (safe spaces and developing relationships, class community, and choice) motivated students to be responsible to their peers. They were accountable for a short presentation and discussion wherein they chose the content and form. Further, and most importantly, these are students who want to be teachers, who have chosen to be in a professional program, and who ultimately want to contribute to the community. Just like every class, just like every assignment, not every student will be as motivated for personal assessment as Lani was in her autoethnography. However, the students who are present and engaged

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[36] In addition, the students were to follow the general criteria of the assignment given for the more conventional inquiry project. In general, the understanding was if the student completed the assignment and met the broad criteria (see p.32 to review a general descriptor of the assignment), they would be eligible to receive a 'complete' for the course. The blog forum was particularly useful to follow up with students, to ask questions for clarification or for deeper understandings. If a student completed all of the assignments for the course, they would receive a 'complete'.

in conversation in the authoethnographic presentations of others are in collective exchange of ideas, challenges and questions about teaching and learning whether or not they themselves did an autoethnography: As Billie articulated, teaching is (can be) more of a collective endeavor rather than an isolated one.

Autoethnography as an assignment challenged all of us, the students and me, in our thinking about assessment. The challenge reinforces that autoethnography emphasises ontological processes rather than evidence of epistemological change in new skills, products or facts (though ontology and epistemology are inseparable) (D'All Alba & Barnacle, 2007). Billie explains how this assignment was different from other reflective assignments wherein she has been asked to describe how her learning about teaching is evidenced in ways tangible, often visual, to others.

> *[T]he fact that it wasn't meant to be something measurable [was different] like "this is what happened then, this is what I would change, this is how it will change my practice in the future", it didn't necessarily need to be in any form, like A, B, C… these are the criteria that needs to be involved.*

I interpret her explanation of autoethnography as an assignment exploring the "ontological turn" (Dall'Alba & Barnacle, 2007). As D'All Alba and Barnacle advance, moving towards ontological emphasis in university settings and assignments poses considerable difficulty and disruption as historically assessment is depends on products and skills that are tangible enough to instructors that they can assign a grade. Evidence of knowledge usually takes form in tests, papers, presentations, referencing and sometimes, in education particularly, "reflections".

Lani illustrates the prevailing notions of assessment in university with her

recollections of her first response to my introduction of autoethnography:

Now, my first impressions of the autoethnography were that it seemed like a very scary but very cool thing to do. The second thought I had was "is this really research? If I do the autoethnography isn't it sort of a cop out, taking the easy assignment? If it doesn't have library research and APA style citations then it doesn't really have validity, does it?"

As Lani soon after discovered, autoethnography without conventional assessment is/can be a very rigorous process. Her transformation in thinking about validity and assessment is expressed with incredible clarity as she explains a shift in motivation:

> *Yeah, yeah, yeah, definitely. I never knew you could do a project like that in a class (laughs) at a university level. So absolutely and I was blown away with how different I felt about doing that project than I felt about doing any other project, and like, the motivation that was there, I was so driven. Like I'm driven anyways, but driven for a grade, this was driven by a whole different thing. And so, if we could figure out a way to do that with all education, it would be incredible.*

Lani puts forward a complicated challenge for "all education", but I believe the possibilities for multiple interpretations of assessment become both more urgent and tangible when pre-service teachers have experiences similar to Lani. When one feels "driven by a whole different thing" than a grade, something that comes from the inner self and the desire to be response-able, one experiences the empowerment of education: the freedom of education (hooks, 1994).

Still I cannot answer the question "How do you assess an autoethnography?" and I don't expect that will change. I do understand, however, that by being uncertain about and questioning the assessment of a research project, the problematic of assessment in general, "with all education", become patently apparent. As Neilson provokes, "[w]hen we make the assumptions and the norms of research problematic, we make the assumptions and norms of life together on this planet problematic as well" (Neilson, 1998, p. 263). By engaging with pre-service teachers in this challenging discussion, we work together to disrupt traditional notions of validating others' work. Perhaps instead of asking the question over and over again, "How do you assess an autoethnography?", we begin to ask together, "Why do we want to?"[37]

Ongoing critical conversations

One of the most important conditions that contributes to fostering meaningful and transformative engagement in autoethnography is one that is structurally and programmatically the most difficult to provide: On-going critical conversation. This condition is dependent on one of the most recommended criterion for teacher education programs: coherence in teacher education programs.

> Programs that are largely a collection of unrelated courses without a common conception of teaching and learning have been found to be relatively feeble change agents for affecting practice among new teachers (Zeichner & Gore, 1990)….[C]reating coherence has been difficult in teacher

[37] Thank you to Dr. Kathy Sanford for pointing out this very important question to me.

education because of departmental divides, individualistic norms, and the hiring of part-time adjunct instructors". (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 306)

Although students in teacher education often remain in cohorts they move through courses that are often structurally and conceptually fragmented (Darling-Hammond, 2006; see also Feiman-Nemser, 2001) and once a course is finished it is on to another. An example is the seminar course I taught which ran from September to December only.

By their very nature, autoethnographies are not projects with a conclusive ending; They are views of one's life that are recovered and re-covered as one continues to live. Over the course of my Masters program my autoethnography in which I first engaged has continued to shift, expand and be reconsidered as my thinking continues to shift, expand and be reconsidered. Individuals are in constant movements of becoming, and autoethnographic inquiries are in-depth, immersive periods of introspection that become strong memories on which to reflect. To recall a previous section, the metaphor Julia used is of a still photo that has captured the process:

> *It's kind of a snapshot of that time. Like I said, if I could I would add a bunch more things because I've learned a bunch more things about myself that hopefully will make me into a better teacher. So it's kind of, you know, a snapshot, and each time I read them I see where it came from now.*

Rather than treat the autoethnography as a product disembodied from the researcher that can easily be forgotten, it has the potential to be a process that evolves over the course of a pre-service teacher program. By engaging the zoom-

lens qualities of autoethnography, pre-service teachers might create snapshots over time that provide reference points from which to develop and transform thinking.

In order for autoethnography to be taken up as an evolving, on-going process depends on the community involvement established initially as a condition for introducing the approach. My interviews with the participants demonstrated so clearly to me how important on-going critical conversation is to the further potential of transformation with/in autoethnography. As I conceptualize autoethnography as a hermeneutic phenomenological process, it follows that to re-articulate is to enter into new understandings and re-imaginings of self/self in the world. For example, Lani and I had a lighthearted conversation about how brave it was for her to do autoethnography when she usually feels fearful to be vulnerable to others.

> *Liz: It's interesting that you chose to do the autoethnography because you have said that you don't really like showing your vulnerabilities and to do something like that is… takes such bravery I think, so you sort of took two journeys there, or one, but looked back at your fears and reframed but also you actually shared your autoethnography.*
>
> *Lani: That's true!! All right!!*
>
> *Liz: AND you also shared at WestCAST (Student teacher conference)!*
>
> *Lani: Yeah, I guess I'm braver than I think. (laughing)*

Though she had transformed her thinking drastically about what or who is a teacher, she had another moment of mis-recognition prompted by my response to

her. Returning to one's autoethnography engages one in recovering memories again, and new interpretations might be considered.

Billie provides the strongest argument for on-going critical conversation, as our interview together, the return to the sore spots of autoethnography, was the turning point towards reconciling her uncomfortable memories of teaching in her first practicum.

> *Billie: I have so appreciated this conversation!*
>
> *Liz: Really?*
>
> *Billie: Yeah, I really really really have. In terms of benefits [to volunteering for this study], check that off (laughs). No really. Because I think that after that point that I felt like I couldn't handle it anymore, wasn't meeting those ideological, wasn't bringing my autoethnography into practice, wasn't doing that, I think that me turning off like, that was that point, not having to engage in it,*

As I have advanced previously, the mo(ve)ments of transformation and healing arise through seeing the self differently and from the process of revealing/concealing. For Billie, this conversation was integral to making sense of her becoming a teacher. When I asked her if autoethnography should be used in teacher education programs if it puts individuals in uncomfortable positions, she further explains the criticality of on-going critical conversation:

> *I think if it were more widely used [in the program] then the process, that on-going reflective process, could be more supportive and it could be like this conversation where I'm like, "yeah you're right, even though it was [an*

> *undesired experience] like that, let's think about it and move on" and use [autoethnography] to continue on, and it would be that continuation rather than [the example of] simply me with the traditional teachers at the school I was at, and um, feeling like "oh, um, I don't really want to think about that, go there at this moment", you don't have that kind of sounding board or…. you're not articulating it and there isn't that sort of community in it… in that [latter] approach.*

From many outside contexts pre-service teachers are having curriculum modeled for them that encourages fragmentation, disembodiment and individual creation of teaching philosophy. As Billie relates, her experience in her first practicum school discouraged her and she felt alone in her struggle to act on the philosophies of teaching and learning she had previously articulated in her autoethnography; we need others to question and support us in our becoming, allowing us further opportunity to re-articulate ourselves and our being in the world (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p 1030).

The opportunity for on-going critical conversation in regards to autoethnography hinges, however, on the structure and coherence of individual teacher education programs. Again, this particular condition that would enrich autoethnographic experiences raises overarching questions about the norms of educative institutions and the fragmentation often exhibited. I have had students take up autoethnography (those both in the year of this study and in the following year) who did not have an interview seven months afterwards. I trust that their process of autoethnography was meaningful at the time and will re-appear in their

thinking at a later date. However, I also believe that pre-service teachers are situated in programs that are demanding, fast-paced and often fragmented (for the variety of reasons Darling-Hammond suggests, mentioned above, but also as students make sense of new concepts). They are also entering into professions with a variety of hegemonic institutions and rites that they have been a part of for the majority of their lives; by offering opportunities to re-visit previous beliefs and understandings with support and dialogue, students continue to explore themselves and their response-ability as teachers and learners in the culture of schooling. It is demonstrated to me through this study that teacher educators have a response-ability to consider in what ways on-going critical conversations are viable. I imagine these ways will/could be generated from and in response to the relationships and safe spaces established with their students, including, but not limited to, courses wherein autoethnography is an option.

Postscript

I resist summing up what cannot be summed- too much has come and gone now to be pinned down in a conclusion or a closing. What is seen as both the difficulty and poignancy of autoethnography and other forms of life writing is that conclusions are impossible, and when attempted, are *good enough methods* at best. Not concluding does tend to leave a reader in spaces of discomfort, and in want of an answer to "what does this all mean?" As Billie articulates earlier, *[t]he fact that our experiences are unlimited and the ramifications are unlimited and how deep everything goes [makes some uncomfortable]…..* Though this study is *about* autoethnography rather than an autoethnographic study, I have felt compelled to write in such as way as to evoke the layers and suspended moments of autoethnography for the reader. Thus, a conclusion in the traditional sense would push up against what has come before, not allowing for the "unlimited" ramifications of what this all might mean.

This word, *ramifications*, is significant and rooted in the latin *ramus*, meaning, "branch". Billie's description of the unlimited ramifications of doing autoethnographic study calls to the multiple and rhizomatic roots/routes and branches of the work, and to the futility of pretending there is an easy and conclusive answer. The short postscript to follow, therefore, must be a close that doesn't, not really. It is a closing in John Holland's sense (1998): a *closing in on* what autoethnography might be and how it changes the inquirer; a *coming closer* to understanding what it means *to become* in all its difficulty and complexity. Also, it's

an en-closing of a layer situated in many others, for now re-covering up these perceptions and illuminations of autoethnography that will emerge again for me and for you in another space and time.

Re-covering this story myself[38]—this story that implicates and complicates how I am part of the history of education—I began engaging in a process of autoethnography, troubling the notions of (my)self, other and the parameters therein. The potential of this genre is its ability to "rewrite the self and the social", the term for which Reed-Danahay (1997) is renowned. There are moments of misrecognition that emerge from paying attention and not knowing (Oberg, 2003), wherein through a new turn, a reframe, the autoethnographer perceives, or rather, senses herself situated in—both a part of and apart from—the culture in which she dwells, positions previously unseen. In my own suspended moments of misrecognition, like eyes adjusting to the dark, I begin to recognize and articulate my being-in-the-world: for a fleeting moment, *I realize*.

This story[39] and the stories of my participants are deeply rooted in our histories, ingrained and inscribed in palimpsestic layers, and are difficult to recover, and digging them up provokes embodied and uncomfortable bruising and sore spots to surface *(long after he had passed).* Engaging in autoethnography both

[38] Remember the poem *The Story* I wrote as part of my own autoethnography, and found on page 2 of this manuscript.

[39] Referring here to both the story of this manuscript and the story in the poem alluded to in the above footnote and through this postscript.

demands and allows an inquirer to re-embody those experiences, and like probing with a zoom lens, *make sense* of them and what they mean for the ways in which self and society are intertwined.

All at once, we (might) recognize the hegemonic structures and routines that exist and flourish within our lives, but also our complicity, and perhaps even our agency, in history. The taken-for-granted inscriptions on the body of schooling that form the ways in which we learn to learn, and learn to teach, pass in and out in thousands of moments throughout our lives in schools, often unnoticed. *(one thousand times embarrassed)* The reflexive, embodied and hermeneutic phenomenological work of Lani, Billie, Julia, Chloe and Hannah begins to unearth the difficulty and complexity and multiplicity and strangeness and inheritance of becoming a teacher in the culture of schooling. Their work disrupts notions of self, and at the same time envisions new definitions of learning to be(come) a teacher with dialogic relationships at the heart. Again, repeated for its profundity: "*What I am thinking about now: <u>Autoethnographies as an ongoing conversation with oneself and one's community.</u>" (Billie).*

This definition of autoethnography describes a process of inquiry that resists fixing and acknowledges multiplicity and the layered "already are" (Rilke) of *becoming.* This definition alludes to our response-ability to others with which we live, learn and teach. This definition exudes the movement "*to celebrate, rather than repress or deny, those identities that allow me to be human, to be woman, in my*

work[40]*".* *(that was the only time he ever saw me)* In teacher education, wherein the struggle of voice hovers, perhaps autoethnographic inquiry presents possibilities for a pre-service teacher to engage in ongoing conversations with self/selves and with community, rewriting and transforming the way she might sense herself *be(coming) a teacher.*

[40] See Nielson (1998) quote in the epigraph.

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