RESTOR(Y)ING RELATIONAL IDENTITIES THROUGH (PER)FORMATIVE REFLECTIONS ON NURSING EDUCATION:
A TEXTUAL EXHIBITIONIST'S TALE OF LIVING INQUIRY

by
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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES (Curriculum and Instruction) THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (Vancouver) February, 2009
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ABSTRACT

At the outset, I disclaim any knowledge or understanding what-so-ever, which is a peculiar stance to take for a nurse educator immersed in the language of “expertise,” “best practices,” and “champion” healthcare offerings. I do not disclaim knowledge to absolve my professional accountability, nor do I absolve myself of being responsible for my text, rather I apprehend this journey of sentience and incarnation as an infant experiencing and learning the world in which it finds itself. It is only through a naïve, furtive play that I am able to proceed, through the difficulties and paradoxical tensions of constructed identities, without complete paralysis. As I play and ponder my way through multiple methodologies, a representational form emerges between repetitious moments of contemplation, remembering lived experiences, and reflecting on philosophical discourses. The difficulty or tension lies in the provocation of identities, as nurse, educator, and mother, among many other stances and formulations. Each identified discourse compels me to challenge the gaps in my knowledge in new ways. As I explore, I unravel the forms of text\(^1\) that are various incarnations of narrative reflection. The choices I make are about inquiring through concept, form and identification, which I both uniquely challenge as an individual and hold in common by being socially and historically situated. Each transition, contemplation and provocation is hopeful and volatile. I am always attuned to how it is that I live the spaces between each, unknowing my “self” as my otherness, letting go the ideal/real and becoming the (/) through a relational pedagogy.

\(^1\) This text does not feel like the classic tale that has developed characters, a particular setting, beginning-middle-end (do not look for chapters here)… or even a particular theme that was pre-established and navigates the reader through the narrative. Rather, the narrative is more of a repository of ideas that have reflective excerpts that thread identities with various contexts and historicities, in a visceral cyclic movement of processing reflection. The footnote is an important tool of choice in such a narrative/non-narrative. Choose to follow a thread or continue onward without distraction. The interruptions are abrupt… I find this to be a necessary tool for the writer, beckoning the reader to pay attention. It is in the moment of being disrupted that one is attentive to another through the search for partial understanding, wanting to make decisions around connecting/separating and being attuned to how one wants to engage with the text. If the rupture is too invasive or evasive the reader gets lost and the interest dwindles… a fine balance in crafting all the interconnections.
At first glance the table of contents feels vague and uninviting. I ask that you, as reader, embark on this journey with some faith in the process. I offer an opening into particular structures and discourses to imagine otherwise and remember that in these unexpected spaces rests yet another story of complexity, wonder and awe.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This exciting and exruciating trip was filled with toils and turns of the heart and head, but none of it would have emerged had it not been for the following people. I want to thank my committee: Dr. Anthony Clarke (T) and Dr. Carl Leggo, co-supervisors and Dr. Anne Bruce, committee member. T was and continues to be the grounding force that stabilizes my inquiry and commits me to my journey as labeled and otherwise. T ensured that the technicalities of the processes were addressed, always attentive to the details and to the evasive connections between theory and practice. Carl, with his passion for moving and expanding language in familiar yet unique ways, acts as my socio-political compass with a critically astute orientation to conceptual detail. Carl took the time to move my work to another level of depth and connectedness. Anne, a strong focus of energy, holds and nurtures me with attentiveness, with her contemplative openings, musings and calm presence. In this space, I want to acknowledge that my committee prompted many of these writings to emanate from our dialogues, from their questions that moved me to deeper levels of connection with myself and others, the texts of others and my own text, as I continue to explore new ways to manifest within the textual discourses, of which I am always already (a)part. I am eternally grateful and altered for these offerings. I am especially appreciative of being given the space and support to explore the “twixts” and “tweens,” as I offer and question the structures that bind us to prescriptive norms, forms and identities.

I think it is difficult for those not engaged in this journey to understand how never-endingly isolating and simultaneously fulfilling it is. In general, it is difficult for others to have patience enough to realize that it takes time and energy between the usual working hours that are normally committed to writing a dissertation, to a nebulous process of being immersed in thought and contemplation. As a process, it cannot be engaged without the support of friends and family from whom at times you need assistance and at other times, space. Zofia, my mom, and Lajos, my dad, I thank for their time commitment and effort in helping take care of Baby A and for their love and support. My partner, Brent, I thank for letting me do what I need to do and “be” without question. Although I don’t think I relied on my friends as I had during my master’s degree, I appreciate our thought-provoking discussions, co-processing sessions, and the encouragements from my dear friends, who have been there when I needed them, Diana N., Saira D., Valerie T., Brenda H., Sandy W., and lifelong friend and squash buddy, Giz KT.

To all these supporters, advocates and mentors, I vow to make this work meaningful and to make it matter. I vow to continue this journey and move the text I live to diverse new vistas of thoughtful action.
DEDICATION

Not only do I want to include Baby A in this narrative, I would like to dedicate this work to her. I have done so off-handedly in the prologue, but who is Baby A to this text? Her inclusion and exclusion in the text has challenged me on many levels. I am challenged by not having her verbal consent, as we are just learning to communicate with one another in unfamiliar ways and words. I cannot fathom how she will perceive this narrative and her place in it, in the future. She helps me realize that I have become translator and narrator to a story that is not solely mine to tell, reminiscent of my conundrums around enacting the role of researcher and appropriating the stories of others as “data,” moving toward increasing abstraction.

Baby A (who was not yet Baby A, but rather a fetus-who-will-no-longer-be fetus nor baby when, and if, she reads this note) compels me to consider the narrative of my identity transition to the naming of “Mother” and “Parent.” I feel the gaze of traditional and post-structural scholars influencing and judging how I should perceive this constructed vision of myself. Baby A inspires me to persist in seeing myself as more than and different from this role title and the other roles and categorical identities I have become, particularly that of nurse educator (incorporating the beginning musings of scholar and researcher).

What has manifested through my indecisions in how to include Baby A is an homage to her and her pseudonym. As I share images of transitions and appearances, I offer a rendition of our natality\(^3\) in the spaces between (...), as I learn to see the world anew with her moving from inside to Being by my side. I share my reflections upon each incarnation of messy process, layering inclusions and exclusion always considering our (in)separability and our overt and covert presence-absence.

Since choice as the decisive factor in self-presentation has to do with appearances, appearance has the double function of concealing some interior and revealing some “surface” (...) there is always the possibility that what appears may by disappearing turn out finally to be a mere semblance. (Arendt, 1971, p. 37)

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\(^3\) Arendt (1958) stated that “action has the closest connection with the human condition of natality the new beginning inherent in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting” (p. 9). As human beings we shift and transition our perspectives and imaginings of how we connect to one another, learning different incantations and incarnations of our historicity and contexts.
INTRODUCTION

I do not think structures should have to feel like straightjackets, though it helps to keep form in mind at all times, to consider the aesthetic and structural design I want to convey. There may be stipulations from outside sources that at times influence my decisions, but these do not have to hinder my freedom of expression. When I have an idea for the purpose of and motivation for my writing, the shape becomes more fluid. When I have an idea about the foundational elements that move my writing, the shape becomes more solid. I like a porous shape, which is made possible more in the imagining than in the actual image, yet both are manifested simultaneously through the interplay between each. That is, a concept or image comes to mind and it is the reflection on either that simultaneously and inseparably manifests the other.

Reflective moment at some point in the written past:
Titles are fickle. The titles of my texts may come instantaneously as prompters for my writing. I may find a title emerges in the midst of my writing. A title may evolve at the end of the piece. I try to let go the need to find the label and “correct” wording. It is difficult, and at times painful, not to know what it is that I need to call “the piece.” Stepping back at a distance from my work usually allows the title to spontaneously emerge or combust.

If I had to give each page a title, which is what I crave to do at the moment, each title would be one word. The reader would be inundated with labels. Parsing the text in such a way is not conducive to a complex whole and similarly begins to negate a particular linearity and presumption of how the text should flow. Forming the text page by page is in itself problematic to the whole of the text, but in so doing my aim is to create mini-wholes which flow and collide with one another. There are choices I have made in terms of ordering, but those choices are an attempt to assist the reader in opening their frame of reference to the journey of twists and turns, to ride the ebbing and flowing nuances between each relative etch and sketch. The resistance comes from a need for the writer to manifest through the textual discourse.

And so... I will leave the titling for the moment and return to the form, sifting through the bits and bites that articulate what this is all about...If you are still reading this note to self and other, likely I still have not found the labeling useful or appropriate for this text.
PRE-SCRIPT
I wake in the middle of the night to Baby A’s call for food. She instantly resettles, but I can’t get back to sleep. I flick on the TV and find myself watching The Hilarious House of Frightenstein⁴. I remember watching this show a lot as a kid, mesmerized by the strange but interesting characters. Dropping into the Canadian 70s one-man show today, brought back warm feelings, but few concrete memories. As I observe The Count’s banter with his assistant, Igor, and his out of order monster, Brucie, in the background, I find the trip a bit surreal and upon a more matured look, realize the character play is quite witty. There is an abundance of castle characters, such as my favorites: the Wolfman, taking requests for songs from the late 60s/early 70s, to which he dances with his bat guitar and swirly “trippy” colored background wall; Grizelda, the self-proclaimed stunning Ghastly Gourmet who mixes concoctions that she declares are “the bomb”; the ghostly Librarian, amidst his dust and cobwebs reading from his antique books; The Oracle, who reads horoscopes from his crystal ball while sitars play in the background; Dr. PetVet who offers critters to Igor as pets, only to be rejected by his dungeon dwelling three-toed sloth. There are guaranteed goofy blunders, breaking dishes, and loud “gongs.” Nothing is ever executed to perfection in the spooky castle, except hypothetically by the Professor who teaches physics and math, way over the head of most young children watching the show. More than any other character, I am drawn to the narrative read by Vincent Price, whose spooky, yet melodious voice prepares us for each skit in the rhythmic time of poetry⁵.

The story you are about to read is one of twists and turns
You may expect to find a treat, instead you find an urn
And so I open my text today as an ode to Vincent Price
As a non-poet, non-artist, non-expert, my aim is to entice (...)
You in to the difficulties and tensions that abound
In the textual complexities that really do astound.
The ellipses in the twixt and tween are where I rest my head
Amidst the secret reveries that cannon from the dead.

⁴ http://www.frightenstein.com/
⁵ Oliver (1994) writes, “More poems begin with iambic meter than any other construction. The mood is relaxed, invitational—natural. (...) The most important point in the line is the end of the line. The second most important point is the beginning of it” (p. 52).
I am brought back to a time of playfulness and openness that I have not often felt in the same way. My incidental memory reveals a feeling of joy and longing, connecting me to other memories that surface aspects of who I am today...how I choose to tell my story. I find these moments to be the "foundational" threads to a complex text of twists and turns, one that explores as it lives and breathes each moment of uncanny strangeness and unexpectedness, causing me to stop and pay attention...be attuned to what is unfolding, what will be a historical text that I am socially situated within, as a dimension of my being. It has been exciting and difficult to make choices around the structuring of a random and swimming text. Structure and form have become a central aspect to how this text unfolds my story and how the text of other authors are then integrated and enfolds into my text.

It is through memories and happenings that I become more physically present with the text and simultaneously more effervescent, almost spiritual... yet rooted to the earth. I would refer to this engagement as embodiment or enactivism, which has always been a challenge for me to express in my writing in the past, other than through mere mention, as tokenism. So with each moment that I am present and sentient as I experience a reflection, memory, response to a text, or other significant feeling worthy of mention, I am drawn deeper into a cyclic and paralytic state...intricately webbing me from inside out...leaving me feeling quite unsettled, provoked and yearning for more. When I am in the midst of this trance-like meditative state, I feel lost and at home within each moment that dissipates, like an eternal comfort that precedes my existence... until I start toiling once again in the reflective turmoil, capturing the moments outside that precarious zone of betweens.

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6 Davis, Sumara and Luce-Kapler (2008) write that memory is how we make sense of our experiences through individual interpretations that are context bound, influenced by the form of a collective language. Using complexity thinking requires that one perceives their perspective “across different levels of complex organization,” such that learning events occur not in isolation but in relation and within complex systems of action and reaction. They suggest that although we share worlds and worldviews, this does not imply that we have “identical internal dynamics,” but rather that we possess idiosyncratic insights into phenomena (p. 59), whereby learning is nonlinear, dynamic and relation.

7 The body has been deconstructed in a multitude of forms from corporeal to systemic notions of organizing humans internally and externally. What I describe here feels like a separate sentience internally that belongs to my entity and expression as an external connection based on my interpretation of common language forms, as symbols and signs.

8 Varela, Thompson, and Rosch (1991) describe enactivism as “a dynamic and complex interplay of individual and environment, refusing to separate knowledge from action, refusing to forget the body.” Thus, for complexity thinking knowing is doing is being, an inseparability between complex systems. Cognizing agent, as co-emergent; the learner in her/his environment, is in an interactional/inter-relational dynamic, co-implicated in their ecological environment (Davis, Sumara & Kieren, 1996). Co-emergence has been described by Davis and Sumara (2006) as a means of “‘establishing a consensual domain,’ and ‘mutual specification,’ all of which are intended to prompt attentions toward the manners in which structurally determined complex unities affect one another” (p. 100). Co-emergence between body, environment (as space and context) and conceptualization incarnates the text as a representation of author in text, no longer separate and floating loosely between readers. The sentence needs to be almost palpable…how does one express one’s self within an objectified form, without risk of disembodied stasis?
Jardine (1992) writes a text that rejects “fundamentalism and representationalism,” where there are no givens, there is no “patriarch” in the “flow of bloodlines,” and “no section offers the whole” (p. 23).

I take Jardine’s lead and go with the flow, connecting to more than some esoteric pedagogical ideal. This is me as much as it is not me and who I want to be; foreigner, on the precipices and fringes of social de/construction, sensual and hopeful human being, wanting more and otherwise. The labels and identities are increasingly easy to shed, making purpose (what this is all about and what for) less tangible and less malleable to an external source of accountability.

Crossing boundaries and borders leaves one homeless, with a heightened sensuality and appreciation for the simple and aesthetic pleasures. I’m feeling more and more compelled to share my narrative as a way to open the door for others to do so in their own way. To offer different narratives to what we have been constructed to believe to be an age of entitlement, apathy, McDonaldized consumerism, globalism, and individualism, as much as requiring a political-social-ecological consciousness. I’m sucked into that vortex of complexity9 and labeling all the same, but I want to have hope and I want to play again. I strive to keep myself alive, on the cusp of danger, fear, hopelessness and unknowing. This may imply an eco-spiritualism or other unconventional form that esteems wellbeing, but most importantly it is out of respect for myself, others and a universe of living possibilities that I continue.

The devil’s dictionary defines hope as “desire and expectation” (Bierce, 2003). Freire’s (1992) self-reflective journey of process in Pedagogy of Hope, elicits an exploration of hope as more than emotional evocation or fixed entity. Freire raises a collective consciousness that is critical, as it is accepting of all that hope/hopelessness offers us in the epistemology/ontology of educational discourses.

9 Complexity thinking offers the device of ‘level jumping’. Level-jumping, as described by Davis and Sumara (2006) is a means of “engaging possibility – of moving across levels of complex organization to address prominent questions in education” (p. 107). By considering complex systems as dynamic and adaptive, interactions between components and systems “are not fixed and clearly defined” (p. 11); but rather, co-emergent. Interactions as co-emergent open the discussion between author and text, author and reader and hold the text as a medium of messages that is not predetermined, because it is filled with questions and unknowns. The reader and writer alike will not know their involvement and engagement with the text until they are situated within a particular moment when their engagement opens certain channels of communication between levels and layers of flow and flux. The emergent realm of level-jumping in complexity thinking is simultaneously examining the phenomenon of concern in its own right and paying attention to the conditions of its emergence. Level jumping also provokes the borders of the aesthetic and the rigorous, delineating art and science through a fractal lens. Davis (2004) uses fractals to explore the non-linear genealogies of education as hybrid bifurcations opening perceptions of possible worlds/worldviews beyond traditional Euclidian binary dichotomized representations of thought. A fractal lens through which we view a text, unfolds diverse dimensions all at once and randomness ensues. As we make choices as readers to engage in a text the energy manifests a wholly other and simultaneously always already inter-textual dynamic of possibility that is participatory and co-evolutionary.
For me, living inquiry requires an attunement to wholeness and the energy between things, ideas and beings. It is a relational way of reengaging what has always already been a singularity and shared commonness, but requires more than awareness. I turn to Bohm to reconnect my own Cartesian approach to explicating aspects of what it is that I’m doing, being and un-knowing. I aim to reunite the paradoxical flow and flux that are inseparable. Even the notion of dimensionality is a separation, albeit an attempt toward realizing wholeness.

Bohm (1980) argued against atomic theory as it was normalized into scientific ways of perceiving “the whole world in terms of movements of one single set of basic constituents, through a single void that permeates the whole of existence” (p. 10-11). He stated that as atomic theory developed, our view of the world became increasingly fragmented.

For it ceased to be regarded as an insight, a way of looking and men regarded instead as an absolute truth the notion that the whole of reality is actually constituted of nothing but ‘atomic building blocks’, all working together more or less mechanically. (Bohm, 1980, p. 11)

Bohm (1980) described his view of the world as “universal flux of events and processes,” where he suggested that instead of thinking of a particle, one is thinking of a ‘world tube’ as an “infinitely complex process” (p. 12), whereby the boundaries of the tube are connected through the extension of fields. “There is no sharp division between them, nor are they to be regarded as separately or independently existent entities” (p. 13). For Bohm, there is “unbroken wholeness of the totality of existence as an undivided flowing movement without borders” (p. 218), he used the paradox of unfolding-enfolding to explicate how, “What is is always a totality of ensembles, all present together, in an orderly series of stages of enfoldment and unfoldment, which intermingle and inter-penetrate each other in principle throughout the whole of space” (p. 233).

And so it is that paradoxes and dimensions, for me, represent an expository of connections of our perceived, yet artificial boundaries and borders of “ensembling” and layering that complexity, which in actuality is a simple whole.
The layering of images reveals and conceals the complexity of "being with" another in moments of unknowing presence and absence. As images and texts present themselves at random, a certain reality is apprehended and another becomes itself in the murky waters of living inquiry. Living inquiry for me is a becoming transformation, where context, social situatedness and historicity are in flux; that is, a fluid form of random patterns. As I manifest myself through this form and bear witness to the structuring of another, another bears witness to my discourses. Taylor (2004) contends that the narratives of such a matrix break from age-old forms and structures and take on a more organic narrative of our situatedness in the time/space continuum. The product of processing living inquiry, thus, is unpolished and always has potential to expand and contract into something otherwise, yet is always already a whole of sorts. What this potentially means is that the reality of "what is" varies according to multiple factors, conditions and random happenings that negate the author’s and the reader’s interaction with the text.
Are there only certain ways to read and write, as outlined by the respected scholar? Do I dare approach a text by entering through the margins, through the crevices that intrigue my distracted sensibility? Would I be naive and irresponsible not to go to the source, back to scholars such as Aristotle if necessary, to get at the essence of concepts and schools of thought? How have I bastardized the sacredness and whole of the text by plucking out quotes and excerpts? What would the author of that particular text think of my violent, volatile and violating tactics? How well do I even know the author of the texts I defile, in terms of their historicity and social situatedness, which if not contextually, at least conceptually, comprises the intentions behind the ideas I represent in my own haphazard approaches?

Language scripts a social text of complexity full of mystery and intrigue. Inherent in the conceptual interrogation and reflexive ritual of delving deeper, the author unearths the layered crisis of representation and power discourses that cavort with the reader, who, by bearing witness, becomes complicit in this ethical engagement.

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Derrida contends that the distinctions made between signified/signifier is a Western epistemological justification of opposing and categorizing phenomena. He does not privilege one from the other because he sees this relationship between signified and signifier as an arbitrary one. Derrida proposes an infinitely regressive dissemination of signs “to a ‘truth’ that exists only at a purely hypothetical vanishing point where the parallel lines of signifier and signified presumably meet. (Sugg, 1992, p. 239)

10 The term “ethical” has a heritage that holds privilege by those who have predetermined which texts and research has legitimacy, confining the parameters and conceptions of “truth,” “good,” “just,” and what is deemed “rigorous.” When those who determine the ethical principles are governed by institutions owned by corporations, we must inquire more deeply into the language, structures and forms that are given value and esteem by Western worldview standards. Order, chaos, rules, regulations, majorities and minorities are all contentious when power discourses include and exclude based on predetermined factors that deem some worthy and others not so. How do we consider the complexity of living ethics if they are written up and distanced from the context of living being in the world uniquely and commonly all at once?
Saussure uses the method of extracting meaning of a sign as "an artifact based on the relationship between signifier and signified" (Pinar & Irwin, 2005, p. 317)

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\begin{align*}
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\text{s} & \quad \text{signified (concept, reality)}
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"Saussure, provides us with an image of a sign as a relationship between a signifier (S) and a signified (s), between a word and a concept of reality" (Aoki, Pinar & Irwin, 2005, p. 428).

Saussure (Bally & Sechehaye, 1959) describes language as "both a social product of the faculty of speech and a collection of necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty; (...) a self-contained whole and a principle of classification" (p. 9). Saussure writes that speech, on the other hand, "belongs both to the individual and to society; we cannot put it into any category of human facts, for we cannot discover its unity" (Bally & Sechehaye, p. 9). Saussure makes the move to separate the parts of speech and language as a means of connecting/separating the social/individual text.

Bahktin (1986) in problematizing speech genres lays bear the historical separation between expressions of speech and forms of language as a distortion of the complex and multifaceted process of what he re-incites as an integrated utterance, reclaiming the abstraction of linguistic schema as a whole, social, contextual phenomenon.

All these artificial and conventional units neglect the change of speech subjects that takes place in any real live speech communication, and therefore the most essential boundaries are erased in all spheres of language activity: boundaries between utterances. Hence (in consequence of this) one also forfeits the main criterion for the finalization of the utterance as a true unit of speech communication: the capability of determining the active responsive position of the other participants in the communication.

(Bahktin, p. 82)
Aporia: the difficult or impracticable, [here] the impossible, passage, the refused, denied, or prohibited passage, indeed the nonpassage, which can in fact be something else, the event of a coming or of a future advent. [événement de venue ou d’avenir] (Derrida, 1993, p. 8)

Derrida (1993) crosses the possible and impossible borders of language and translation and confronts the threshold of death, where he writes that “we are engaged here toward a certain possibility of the impossible” (p. 11). The aporia becomes problematic, exoteric, difficult and through the act of hermeneutic repetition, a “vulgar paradox” in which tensions are paralyzing...we are thus at an impasse, at “the very place where it would no longer be possible to constitute a problem” (p. 12).

For Derrida (1993) an aporia becomes a single duty that recurrently duplicates itself interminably, fissures itself, and contradicts itself without remaining the same, that is concerning the only and single ‘double, contradictory imperative” (p.16). As such Derrida contends that the aporia becomes the test of the antinomy of a “recurring form and inexhaustible singularization” (p. 20), where a third person is required to preserve the “iterable trace” as in an ethical and political duty that respects the secret

(Derrida, 2005, p. 162).

Derrida’s secret is part of an inaccessible archive whereby “the secret is that there is no secret,” as such, it becomes an absolute of sorts “in that no word is ever Final, no Story ever all comprehensive” (Caputo, 2000, p. 17, 6).
The uncanny strangeness that remains secret and hidden, perhaps only unconsciously reveals itself in cryptic dreams, somehow familiar and yet masked in symbolic chaos and layers of tricks, which Cixous (2006) describes as, "a tapestry of signifiers."

Dreams sleep deep. Now I contemplate their psychic faces at leisure, their long haunted bodies, and to be sure I discover their secrets...*they know too much.* (...) Dreams are theatres which put on the appearance of a play in order to slip other unavowable plays between the lives of the avowal scenes: you reader-spectator are aware of this but you forget what you know so you can be charmed and taken in. (p. 2-3) (...) I imagined you have no respite save when you are able to sleep. But even sleep is no refuge for you awake in the same place, the same time, you have ceased to suffer for a few hours and the suffering of being in a time which stands still starts up instantly. (Cixous, p. 15)

Between the moments of wakefulness from a dream, its memory and the possibility of dreaming again, Derrida (2003) recounts what must be read between the lines of Cixous’s texts where "the dream keeps watch, inflexible, ever ready to summon up the wakefulness, the consciousness ever vigilant in the memory of the dream" (p. 40).

Cixous (1994) wrote that, “the orange is a moment” (p. 88) of re-juiced sanguineous time, through a peeling away the layers of the text. This becomes a paradoxical journey where, "it’s a matter of slipping between two oblivions, or of leaping from one memory to another memory, and the edges are hazy" (Cixous, p. 89).

Within such texts of distinction, Derrida contends that libraries are places devoted to "keeping the secret but insofar as they give it away" (p. 20)

Giving a secret away may mean telling it, revealing it, publishing it, divulging it, as well as keeping it so deeply in the crypt of a memory that we forget it is there or even cease to understand and have access to it. In one sense a secret kept is always a secret lost. (Derrida, 2003, p. 20)
Gallop (2000) focuses on the discipline of “close reading” whereby it is more important to look “at what is actually on the page, reading the text itself, rather than some idea ‘behind the text’” (p. 7). She proceeds to encourage the reader to look beyond the identified themes, or main points, and pay attention to the marginal, extraneous or trivial information that captures our attention. Gallop describes how we as writers tend to overlook the actual, but rather see the intention behind the ideas we are trying to convey.

As I attempt to heed the warnings and follow directions by summarizing contributions of other authors in my own text, I am lost in my usual haze of dissent and play on complexities... such as, Derrida’s arche-trace.

The value of the transcendental arche [origin] must make its necessity felt before letting itself be released. The concept of the arche-trace must comply with both that necessity and that erasure, it is in fact contradictory and not acceptable within the logic of identity. The trace is not only the disappearance of the origin,...it means that the origin did not even disappear, that it was never constituted except reciprocally by a non-origin, the trace, which thus becomes the origin of the origin. From then on, to wrench the concept of the trace from the classical scheme which would derive it from a presence or from an originary non-trace and which would make of it an empirical mark, one must indeed speak of an originary trace or arche-trace. 

(Derrida, 1974, p. 61)

Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) described Derrida’s form of deconstruction of rhetoric as ironic, where “paradoxes, absurdities, and jocular contradictions overflow” (p. 153). It is through the cracks in the façade of a text that “an apparently insignificant wound is in reality bleeding through the entire body of the text” (p. 154). By destabilizing the meaning of a text, language becomes “ambivalent, evasive, metaphorical and constitutive, rather than unequivocal, literal and depictive” (p. 151). Arche-trace is not only about inverting a hierarchy of language, but to go further as an ‘intertextuality’ to free play with non-referring signs (structures of difference) in the gaps between speech and writing, as both difference and deferral. The intentionality of the author in terms of referents is deferred indefinitely with only a trace left of the work that has no origin, here the absences become more important than experience (under erasure) as presence, which Western world metaphysics privileges (Alvesson & Skoldberg).

11 My presence in this moment is languaged as a trace of existence. Archived and excavated before my bones are laid to rest, before my blood has clotted and before I have taken my last breath.
Atwood (2002) describes the act of writing as "the setting down of words" (p. 4), which she contends is not an altogether difficult task for anyone literate with implement in hand and a surface for marking down. The difficulty comes in the “socially acknowledged role” (p. 4) that challenges one to uphold a status in society. “But happy the writer who begins simply with the activity itself – the defacement of blank pieces of paper – without having first encountered the socially acknowledged role” (p. 5).

How I incorporate the text of another and my “own” text is a volatile and variable exercise. Do I want the writing that flows from the read to be central, marginal, parallel, integrated? Do the reflections as layers of distance expose/explore the cracks or become interlopers within the textual discourses? Does my time/space context and situatedness disrupt the text I write and/or melt the artificial binaries I have attempted to expose/explore? Do the margins/borders/edges of I/we appearances as identities, intentions, and vestments lacerate and eviscerate all that has manifested as (im)possible? Do these paradoxical complexities unravel the artificial wor(l)d I perceived\textsuperscript{12} as simultaneous hope$\leftrightarrow$hopelessness.

Leggo (2004) writes: I cite others, not in order to prove I have read lots of scholarly literature, but because I like the words in the citations, with their lyricism, their sensual evocations, their signifying possibilities. These citations are not an official summons to appear in a court, and they are not a military award for meritorious performance. I cite in order to incite and excite as I have been incited and excited by the energetic words of others. Like Martin Amis's proposal: "That's what writing is, not communication but a means of communion. And here are the other writers who swirl around you, like friends, patient, intimate, sleeplessly accessible, over centuries" (2000, p. 268). (p. 66)

\textit{I turn to Leggo when I feel helpless and hopeless, no longer playful and excited about learning from another. It is frustrating to get swallowed by the text of another, as it is to feel like I am alone in my representational form and approach to this relational dialogue. How is it that we can feel so alone amongst a sea of so many who have travelled the path before us?}

\textsuperscript{12} At times, the paradoxes I apprehend feel necessary (I/we needs, sameness/difference, connecting/separating, revealing/concealing) and at other times the conceptual paradoxes feel confining (good/bad, the world being round or flat). It is easy to allow the dichotomous mood to infiltrate the paradoxical oneness, creating a separation.
Hay que sostener los pasos rotos,
cruzar entre tejados y tristezas mientras arde
una cosa quemada con llamas de humedad,
una cosa entre trapos tristes como la lluvia,
algo que arde y solloza,
un síntoma, un silencio.
Entre abandonadas conversaciones y objectos respirados,
entre las flores vacías que el destino corona y abandona,
hay un río que cae en una herida,
hay el océano gopeando una sombra de fleche quebrantada,
hay todo el cielo agujereando un beso.

We must hold up the broken steps,
cross among roofs and sadesses while a thing
burns consumed with flames of dampness,
a thing among rags as sad as rain,
something that burns and sobs,
a symptom, a silence.
Among abandoned conversations and breathed objects,
among the empty flowers that destiny crowns and abandons,
there is a river that falls upon a wound,
there is the ocean beating the shadow of a shattered arrow,
there is all the heaven piercing a kiss.

From *Enfermedades en mi Casa / Illnesses in my Home*
The I/we interstices offer the (im)possibility of living a praxis that is narrative in its reflectiveness and common in its active generative potential. It is how we live in this crevice, which does not feel big enough for another, but for whom we make space... to feel the wounds we share as a form of compassion and respect...to hold the tensile and fragile structures at a distance...to apprehend these forces that draw us together and tear us apart. The paradoxical push/pull of the energy/power that de/re-structures our complex worldviews is dynamic and dimensional beyond our perceptual comprehension.

Thoreau (1968) wrote in the voice of “I” stating, “We commonly do not remember that it is, after all, always the first person that is speaking. I should not talk so much about myself, if there were anybody else whom I know as well. Unfortunately, I am confined to this theme by the narrowness of my experience” (p. 1).

The shift in using the pronoun “you” to using the pronoun “I” feels more attentive and less dictatorial. “We” have evolved leaps and bounds from the third person, objectified text. Narrative inquiry has the effect of energizing and embodying my contributions as I take tenuous leaps, “listening to light” along the nebulous path I read and write with another, always already nesting in Thoreau’s perspectival “I.”

“A text that listens, which belongs to the listening modality, attempts to push the reading process towards the discovery of this fabrication, of oneself in the region of one’s own symbols, of one’s own textuality; the reader is always invited to weave links among the different parts of himself.” (Daignault, 2005)

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13 I prefer to apprehend than to comprehend as a form of getting to partial understanding. Rather, I hold at a distance, arrest my connection with said idea as a perception from a vague grasp (an imagining impossibility), much like policies and ethical standards I critique. I come from the place of my most familiar entering from the periphery, from the outside, in...never completely connecting to the other as a whole together, but always othered as a manifestation of my relational self. How many ethical manifestos and policies have been written by “outsiders?”
**Conception** → an abstract idea or concept or mental symbol conceived...associated with representation in language or symbolism...a unit of knowledge built from characteristics...the devising of a plan or idea...the way in which something is perceived...ability to imagine or understand

**Reproduction** → as copy or memesis (imitation)...of a work of art

Words transform and take shape in each defining movement toward and away from comprehension. As I attempt to connect with my body, I move toward Grumet’s (1988) rendition of these terms through feminism and curriculum. No longer held at arms length, conception and reproduction become a relational cyclic churning of human being and becoming. Conception and reproduction become active and sensuous. These acts are personal as much as they are what we share in common as ethical engagements with another. Grumet writes from experience, from the space of body knowledge (Merleau-Ponty, cited by Grumet) where we perceive how our lives are complex and intertwined, as much as we ourselves hold in secret that which is unique to ourselves. Grumet holds that secret no more, she feels it is too important to privilege that knowledge to only herself and her child, although the task of sharing is a complicated journey that always involves another and needs consideration of how we affect the other with each move closer to the common.

In an effort to solidify those connections, I return to complexity thinking and consider Varela, Thompson, & Rosch’s (1991) notion of the embodied mind (here they also refer to Merleau-Ponty) who speak to the lived and contextual aspects of cognitive mechanisms. I still feel the shards of fragmentation of human structuring (here they cite Husserl) when they refer to mind ↔ body through reflection as embodiment. Varela, Thompson, & Rosch reference Buddhist mindful meditative practices (also embodied) as they make links between human experiences and the science of the mind, they do so through cyclic reiteration. As my mind is about to implode on itself, I begin to notice the parallels between the language of integration, and that of fragmentation and duality.

**Reflection** → the process of the thoughtful meditation or rumination, inquiring into the human condition...an exercise of introspection and awareness...philosophy of consciousness...serious thought or consideration...throw back mirror image

**Contemplation** → The word comes from the Latin root templum (from Greek temnein: to cut or divide), and means to separate something from its environment, and to enclose it in a sector. Contemplation is the Latin translation of Greek theory (theoria). In a religious sense it is devotion to a type of prayer or meditation...disambiguation...thoughtfulness

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14 All basic definitions on this page adapted from [http://www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com) and [http://www.wiktionary.org](http://www.wiktionary.org)
Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) account for the differences between reflexivity and reflection as one of specificity. They contend that the discussion moves from the practicalities of qualitative research methods to one of ontology and epistemology.

Reflexivity: Ways of viewing the world by “acting back on and reflecting existing ways of seeing” (Clegg & Hardy, 1996, p. 4) and engaging in “metatheoretical reflection;” an applied practice that is integral to the “overall process through which research is produced” (Morrow, 1994, p. 228) (cited in Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, p. 248). They further distinguish that reflexivity is the particular form of reflection that focuses on one aspect of research and methodologies, speaking in terms of levels of interpretation.

Reflection: Turns attention ‘inward’ towards the person of the researcher, the relevant research community, society as a whole, intellectual and cultural traditions, and the central importance, as well as problematic nature, of language and narrative (the form of presentation) in the research context.

(Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, p. 5-6)

Reflexivity is a hallmark of excellent qualitative research and it entails the ability and willingness of researchers to acknowledge and take account of the many ways they themselves influence research findings and thus what comes to be accepted as knowledge. Reflexivity implies the ability to reflect inward toward oneself as an inquirer; outward to the cultural, historical, linguistic, political, and other forces that shape everything about inquiry; and, in between researcher and participant to the social interaction they share. (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2002, p. 222)

I write this text as an alternative research piece, in that sense reflexivity is implicit in each statement, claim, and iterative composition. I move between reflexivity and reflection, as I weave a methodological and substantive text. Reflection is the predominant approach I use to prompt the text to unravel its layers, to untangle a story that is (im)permeable. In so doing, I unravel and untangle myself, always aware of the significance of how this affects others and the planetary dynamic we live.
Pearson (2001) and older noted references of Heath (1998) and Smith (1998) focus on describing the technique of reflective writing as a means of assessing undergraduate student calculative and contemplative approaches to critical thinking. At the time, nurse educators were engaging in beginning dialogues around the use of reflective practice narratives (RPNs) as an evaluative tool. From my personal experience as student turned educator, RPNs have become a staple to the assessment of nursing student practice, particularly with the focus on the transition to the professional role, decision-making and critical thinking. There have not been significant movements in the discussions beyond structured writings focused on professional growth, narrowly identifying pre-determined competencies and quality practice indicators.

Scheckel and Ironside (2006) describe a study emerging from a narrative pedagogical framework that moves beyond the singular emphasis on critical thinking, which they claim privileges analytical thinking (problem-solving). Their analysis revealed the theme, “cultivating interpretive thinking,” defined as “nurturing thinking that is analytic, reflective, embodied, multi-perspective (pluralistic), contextual and communal” (p. 159). A narrative pedagogical approach provokes conventional thinking focused on outcome-oriented or competency-based education, expanding the dialogue to include feminist, critical, postmodern, and phenomenological pedagogies. The intent is to de-emphasize delivery of information that is memorized; rather, to engage students in discourse discussions that generate new insights and expand concepts and ways of being, as well as knowing and doing, which are already prevalent in nursing. By bringing the student into the foreground as they engage in relational contexts, the complexity of her/his social situatedness within systemic and personal frameworks is nurtured and manifested as a necessary component to the dynamic.

How is it that we are able to make assessments of reflective practices when we are not encouraged to model reflection in our own practice, other than through professional competencies that are distinct from program-based evaluations of individual teaching approaches? Rather than having the expectation that reflection is required of individual educators, professional development activities centered around student reflective practices could support and encourage instructor/professor self-reflective engagements in her/his pedagogical approaches to teaching and research. If we were to give ourselves permission to write between the lines and parameters of knowledge-based practice indicators and free flow the ideas (Goldberg, 1986) without being dissuaded from written down narratives, where would we be? Rather than producing structured written up documents for the sake of evaluation and securing the documentary reality of the healthcare system, the nursing profession from the lens of academia could offer inter-ruptions to the status quo of those documents through the possibilities that would flourish from a more open critical, post-modern, feminist approach to the reflective narrative?

The idea I am attempting to convey is not that there is one feminist, critical and/or post-modern approach, but rather I speak through a lens of viewing the marginalized majority and its potential to cultivate the everydayness of living inquiry through their thoughtful actions and intentions.
Fine (1994) compels me to re-member that once I have uttered a thought or written it as such it becomes otherwise, separate from me, in all its complicit and complex historicity. I then manifest my constructions, just as I do a text of constructs as a disconnection, a dissonance and a “distance” where that incarnation becomes otherwise, open to interpretation and representation. As I read this writing, “I” become the omniscient voyeur acknowledging my “social containment,” in the precarious space between the professional voice “legitimated against the noisy vernacular of the other” (p. 16) and the ventriloquist researcher/educator offering “voices and experiences as the vehicle for social representation” (Fine, 1994, p. 17). Clarke & Erickson (2003) write that an educator’s practice ceases to be professional without inquiry, leaving practice as “perfunctory and routinized” (p. 5).

I consider the movies, Garden State (Braff, 2004) and Fight Club (Palahniuk & Uhls, 1999). Each reveal a loss of identity and meaning, to experiential angst; souls that are soulless searching for a sentient and thus violent way into the chaos, randomness and arbitrary presence the characters manifest in their roles. It is like we need to feel the pain of suffering in order to know we are alive, otherwise we are nothing and no one. Simultaneously, I realize that my presence still feels the emptiness beyond my attempts at re-incarnating the sentience of my existence, which has always been resting dormant in numbed isolation.

Little Miss Sunshine (Arndt, 2006) and Napoleon Dynamite (Hess, 2004) are quirky and make you want to vote for the underdog, we are compelled in how we can relate to the everydayness of our attempts to uphold a certain decorum and image in an age of competition and alienation, these films remind us that we all have dreams and hopes of belonging and being ourselves. We find ourselves teetering somewhere in between acceptance and exile, holding onto those few (if any) precarious supporters that seem to believe in us and in so doing sustain a bit of faith and hope that our presence matters and deserves acknowledgment.
Creating time and space for reflection is dangerous.

As we consider our social situatedness, politically, economically and culturally within academic, governmental and other professional healthcare communities, we begin to see disparities between what is valued in our work and what we acclimatize toward without question, contemplation or critical assessment. We continue to take on the burdens of the healthcare system without considering imagining otherwise. Gordon (Buresh & Gordon, 2006) has been a tireless advocate for, and provocateur of, nurses reclaiming their strength through voice and presence, as political activism. Sadly, more frequently than not it is the individual nurse, rather than the collective, who takes on the burdens of current issues in healthcare, trapped in the efficiencies and busy-ness of institutional mandates. Whether it is the academic, policy maker, bedside nurse or nurse educator, our random and disparate advocates are not enough; we need to model and mentor what we expect of students. We need to enact our views from our diverse collective contexts and interdisciplinary landscapes, to influence the change we expect of future generations of nurses, including the future of nurse educators, in shaping the direction of nursing education.
THE SPACE ADJACENT - empty place where each can move freely

a semantic constellation where spatial proximity borders on opaque time

convenience borders on the correct relation

in the place of the neighbor

what is right proper

in the place of the other

facing oneself to the other as he is or she is

the inscrutable role of empty space being in advance already contains

an empty space offered is the one to burn

a neutral substance without representation

without description as absolutely unconceivable

the coming to itself of such singularity

love as the phenomenon of taking-place it is a whatever singularity

"for use of the proper" - bare

"the most difficult task"

(Hegel, 1990, p. 235)

Masks

Being at its most universal as a "mirror" side genus and species

UNIVERSALITY - A PARTICULAR

Intellectual indication, one thing is shown and another thing is meant

like an exemplary singularity or a multiple singularity

A WHATSOEVER-SINGULARITY - DERIVED FROM MANOE

BING IN ITS

REAL FORM

MANNE OF BEING FOR "A..." A being that with a mode of being while remaining singular and not indifferent

MULTIPLE ANDVALID FOR ALL

cannot pass between similarity and ethics

the being exposes itself in its qualifications continually engendered from its own nature

Phenomenal function and the will of the one

Can it be in

without being master of its own being and that it does not remain below earth

makes one of itself as it is

free in the self

hust, an ethics, existence being engendered

state that manner is one that does not belong to us and that does not find us but engenders us

A MANNE OF BEING FOR "A..." ALSO THE PLACE OF WHATEVER SINGULARITY

improvement in measured and appropriate in its own being

the property, which our species as our proper being, manner, which we engender as

In everything that exists

THE INDETERMINACY OF NOT-THE-THING

kinds of events for our help

we fall away from the only thing that makes possible being able to not-be

A PREVENTATIVE

I expect

...
I insert\textsuperscript{16} the roughness and draftiness of my scripts to expose the raw and messy as both process and product, as an inverted hierarchical gesture of form. It is this form of academic writing that does not usually make the final cut, which is central to my text. Let it breathe in its fragile power in this tenuous space, without introduction or excuse, like it has always belonged. It was in this form of text that I felt most present with my work. By tracing the pathways of streams of consciousness, incidental happenings, connections and provocations with the social narratives that attracted my attention, I became more open to the possibilities of learning and exploring new forms of writing.

The random strokes of the pen connect and separate ideas, linking thoughts into forms not yet visualized. This pseudo-narrative\textsuperscript{17} is foretelling an evolution that I do not yet completely apprehend, but it was in this subconscious space that a written lyric met symbolic notes and made music. The strokes are inscribed and incised into the page with the precision of a scalpel. I come back to this feeling for inspiration, when I am lost in the form and language of another. I remember my chaos and uncertainty; my infatuation with layers and cyclic complexities. It was in this nether space that I felt the most comfortable with my work, the most me, sensuous, raw, and exposed...a textual exhibitionist.

The margins and the spaces between lines hold potential to the storied absences. In some ways it feels like the “true” and “real” aesthetic representation is lost when the draft is discarded. It is in the drafty draft that we expose the text to our breath and compel the reader to listen for the echo of our voices... distant and melodious.

\textsuperscript{16}By explicating my intentions regarding the text that precedes this page, I alter the dynamic of having one page stand on its own. At times, I do so on the same page and in other instances the connection emerges at a different moment, which would alter the image as representational form that I may not want to be altered...tricky. Some of the writing in these inbetween connector pages contains random bits and bites that I want included, but which do not fit those unalterable pages, which also adds to the randomness and simultaneously unsettles my own expectations for flow and order. How is this problematic for the reader? Should the reader’s accessibility to the text be my central concern?

\textsuperscript{17}I am not completely certain of my choice of terms here. I believe that “pseudo” comes from not perceiving my-self as a story-teller. This text does not feel like the classic tale that has developed characters, a particular setting, beginning-middle-end (do not look for chapters here)... or even a particular theme that was pre-established and navigates the reader through the narrative. Rather, the narrative is more of a repository of ideas that have reflective excerpts that thread identities with various contexts and historicities, in a visceral cyclic movement of processing reflection. The footnote is an important tool of choice in such a narrative/non-narrative. Choose to follow a thread or continue onward without distraction. The interruptions are abrupt...I find this to be a necessary tool for the writer, beckoning the reader to pay attention. It is in the moment of being disrupted that one is attentive to another through the search for partial understand, wanting to make decisions around connecting/separating and being attuned to how one wants to engage with the text. If the rupture is too invasive or evasive the reader gets lost and the interest dwindles... a fine balance in crafting all the interconnections. The repetitions are subtle and call for attentiveness to the movement of the text the form that guides the process.
I begin to let go the definition of words, particularly those toward which I have negative connotations. As I play between words, there is an attempt to know, which feels restrictive and painful, whereby the need to know shifts to another layer of complexity and unknowing as inquiry manifests.

Interruptions become tangential, not that there is anything wrong with the tangent\textsuperscript{18}. Incidents and happenings infiltrate the centre for more than an instant to shake things up as I become myself in new ways. Paying attention to the dis/inters through the narratives we are, I/we tensions manifest the gaps and cracks. The spaces we perceive and conceive become (im)possible. Is this desirable? The limen thrives on the ritual it critiques; through the difficulty I am reborn in historicity as more than and different from the sum of historical situated, identified selves.

There is something very important about the spaces between various pieces of text. The “jumps” or “gaps” are, in a sense longing to be filled and there is no single, prescribed, “proper” way to fill them. They are gaps in which something just might unexpectedly happen. The gaps are invitations for the particular reader to speak, to write, to generate meaning out of the empty, unfilled space. The gaps are like the fecund margins between forest and field or between ocean and beach and, as deep ecology suggests, “life erupts at the boundaries.” Not all of these gaps will work for everyone. And no one will fill any one gap exactly the same way as anyone else. And certain gaps will haunt or frustrate or resist or provoke. (Jardine, 1992, p. 9)

When a reading gives me pause to provoke it (flux), it becomes as important as the reading that connects and encourages my fluidity. Beyond the written-ness of the content, the structure and form hold my attention...make me pay attention...attend to the performative/communicative space of openings between myself and another (different from I/other). Through these attunements I am better able to connect with my metonymic selves, my presence and open to a sense of oneness with others. These moments lie in abandon unless I gather up my resiliency and take the next step toward action in whatever form, as a thoughtful commitment to maintaining that level of connectedness.

\textsuperscript{18} Tangent: a topic nearly unrelated, but having a point in common.
I take images and language that catch my attention, reflect on my connection or perceived dissonance to “x” construct, then attempt to deconstruct the form by playing with the text on the page. The interplay between visuals, concepts and the emergent residual reflexive praxis, manifests a narrative that is familiar and simultaneously otherwise.

I become increasingly unhinged and other-wise, masking and wearing layers of identity over this ‘me’ I am through the text that becomes me.

I want to feel integrated, yet I am always taking things apart to analyze aspects of the whole.

What this means is that the notion of wholeness and fragmentation is paradoxically unfolding and enfolding in the energy of the social text I live.

The academic is still expected to build a logical argument and establish a framework that houses ideas in an accepted representational package. The only way one would be permitted to include the roughness and “draftiness” of process work would be by example and demonstration within pre-determined, accepted formats.

MacIntyre (1987) writes about the importance of educating a public that fits into the expected “social role and function” (p. 17) that are required of its members. He highlights the conditions that are necessary to manifest “the important aspects of [a society’s] shared social existence” (p. 18).

MacIntyre’s platitudes and utterances of “canonical status” (p. 19) respect the valued traditions that have been established by certain power discourses of rationalism and modernity, which he ascribes to the age of enlightenment. In academia, the standards and expectations regarding form and structures of knowledge have not significantly shifted, though the contributions from feminist perspectives and post-structuralist thinking has been revolutionary.
Barthes (1977b) proclaimed the death of the author whereby “writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing” by separating the text from the power discourse that the author, as authority, constituted in the text by virtue of that authorship (p. 142). “How can we ever know the precise intention of the author?” he asks.

By making the text more accessible and rigorous, did Barthes expose the secret that there is no secret? He provided openings to multiple interpretations, which shook up the taken-for-grantedness of how the author was represented; the shift was thus made toward author as “scripтор” of a text that unfolds itself in the reading. With the focus on the reader as interpreter, translator and purveyor of meaning, how do we enlist the writer back into the circle to move the writing to a different place of processing, making meaning and critical reflection of diverse approaches into the text?

There may be a third textual entity: alongside the readerly and the writerly, there would be something like the receivable. The receivable would be the unreaderly text which catches hold, the red-hot text, a product continuously outside of any likelihood and whose function—visibly assumed by its scripтор—would be to contest the mercantile constraint of what is written; this text, guided, armed by a notion of the unpublishable, would require the following response: I can neither read nor write what you produce, but I receive it, like a fire, a drug, an enigmatic disorganization. (Barthes, 1977a, p. 118)

Do we not get further and further from the act of speech, from the voice that we share in common and hold as foreign, by feigning dis-location and dis-identification? On the one hand this disconnection manifests a different type of text that may express itself as cryptic or overt in its utterances. On the other hand, do we discredit the historicity of the text and the construction of the author’s scheme of coming to some form of meaning (which may include happenstance and incidental nuances); because we do not engage the complexities of layers that manifest the text as a discourse in flux, rather than as a static entity?

Aoki (Pinar & Irwin, 2005) writes: “For the Japanese, a person was a HITO, the graphic strokes signifying that it takes at least two to make a person – a person is a twofold of self and other. The English word “individual,” in contrast, is an entity unto itself, a self “in-divisible,” a totalized self. (p. 327)

Foucault (Faubion, 1998) in reference to “what” an author is challenges us to “study discourses not only in terms of their expressive value or formal transformations but according to their modes of existence,” modes he contends circulate, valorize, attribute and appropriate these discourses (p. 220). Such modes vary between cultures and are modified as such. Foucault in questioning the privileges of the subject concurs with Barthes that “it is a matter of depriving the subject (or its substitute) of its role as originator, and of analyzing the subject as a variable and complex function of discourse (p. 221).
I reflect on Ideas\textsuperscript{19} (Kennedy, 2001) representation of “Shifting selves: Japanese mirrors” as a point of connection with the notion of identity. Kennedy asks, “What if our identities were malleable through the spoken language? Shifting pronouns in relations between one another as (in)formality of address.” He continues that, “context is all important and meaning shifts.” Interpretation through a lens of “fixed points of reference” of “the other” dwelling outside of that framing as it is challenged. The illusive, adaptability of the Japanese notion of “shifting selves” plays with western concepts of that otherness.

\begin{quote}
I listen to Hungarian gypsy music played on traditional Japanese instruments and I am reminded of Myuki whom I met as an exchange student in Poland, as we studied Polish together. I pondered our locatedness of how we came to be situated, I searching for identity through an immersion into the language and culture of my heritage and Miyuki searched for interest’s sake, exploring spaces between cultural identities. Her exploration of Polish history and culture, would take her back to Japan to open a Polish restaurant and perform Polish plays in original dialogue, with translations, for a Japanese audience, always attempting to stay as true to form and interpretation as possible. What I did not realize then, as I consider this memory now, in the midst of Aokian metonymic moments of learning, is how she inter-ruputed my ideas of what was expected and possible and most importantly, she helped me consider the significance of opening to different spaces of how to manifest that possibility.
\end{quote}

Fugarasi, describes the English voice-overs of ads in Japan as playful non-dichotomized, non-translated, non-sequiturs. Shimizu states that rather than one structural dichotomy between Japanese and English, numerous dichotomies were introduced through modernization… the problem of dichotomization “cannot be tackled by a snapshot approach,” but rather is an historical problem. Historically, the borrowing of languages and cross-overs to/from Japan were easily transported across the waters (transition), more so than the possibility of invasion during times of war. Until Chinese literature was introduced into Japanese oral tradition, there was no written textual language of Japanese. Chinese influence in religion, art and written text were beginning influences that migrated into the Japanese psyche. Importation becomes changed in a way that imitation yields its own significant moments in history: interpretation and translation in Japan holds written text in esteem, whereby that which is taken in is abstracted and becomes an ongoing narrative that forms Japanese life. Komanami described the word identity as one that came “from outside,” in the struggle to express meaning through similarities. “There was no concept or word for identity, when you make up a dictionary you make up letters to mean it, but we learn the concept with the word” (Matsuda). I-den-ity is Japanese in Japanese context and the imagination is in Japan, so it is becoming, “Japanese culture as a way of knowing sees the body as always changing, moving, with energy going through “a sort of liquid;” a paradigm that sees the flow of energy in, out and within the human being. “A kind of negotiated free trade zone to whatever comes its way and proves interesting.”

\textsuperscript{19} Canadian Broadcast Corporation-CBC, program, Ideas, Paul Kennedy, 2001, summarizes discussion among contributors.
How I manifest as an incarnation of the text I write is negated by the tensions within my intentions, as well as the connections and separations I make with other narrators and their storied texts. The text thus becomes more than an objectified construct or conceptual discourse. Rather, there are elements of a historicity that are revealed and concealed as I investigate a particular author’s situatedness during the writing of their text. What emerges is a metonymic narrative that I then weave into my own text, whereby my situatedness may overtly appear in the writing. Conversely, it may be a subconscious sub-narrative or cryptic and secretive open ended question that invites another random reader to interact with and search for their own connections. The person reading that text may be prompted to add layers to create a new narrative, which then opens to a continuum of connections, living and breathing new incarnations along a tenuous path of puzzles and possibilities.
What is my narrative? I start hodgepodge searching through my repertoire of stories as nurse educator, as “bedside” practicing nurse, as graduate student, all falling short by default…faulty identifiers to signify the happening…give it meaning, when I have the need to make meaning. Now I return to these stories in a nihilistic mood. So what? What does it matter that I was so and so…I got the experience because I was that name, but does that name somehow make the story typical or at best identifiable for others who want to connect? Does it make me the Polish-Hungarian-Canadian misfit everyone expects me to be…I have not even broached that layer of identity confusion and construction? Do I surprise anyone with this tale? Could the tale ever ultimately reveal or conceal some presence and absence that unravels the identifiers and dissipates the context and historicity?
Happiness meets all reasonable criteria for a psychiatric disorder. It is statistically abnormal and consists of a discrete cluster of symptoms; there is at least some evidence that it reflects abnormal functioning of the central nervous system; and it is associated with various cognitive abnormalities—in particular, a lack of contact with reality.”

(Bentall, 1992, p. 95)

When I started both my masters and doctoral degrees, I felt like a fish out of water. Every incremental step in higher learning feels like a plunge into the ocean without a lifeboat. I quickly learned that indeed there are more questions than answers. It is frightening to let go the belief that you have a very clear and specific idea of where you are going and who you are. All my previous learning became unraveled as I began to inquire deeply into what I thought I knew. My world felt less secure and tangible.

As a master’s student, I remember the doctoral students in our classes looking bored and I always felt that they were talking another language, when I was just learning to speak. I felt like a groupie, wanting to be part of their reading groups. Sadly, aside from them having no interest in my haphazard contributions, at the time I didn’t have the time or courage to devote to the hegemony of Gramacy or immerse myself in the “fundamental” feminist scriptures of scholars like Butler, Cixous, Haraway & Kristeva (to name a few).

As a masters student everything was new and overwhelming, especially for my colleagues who had a family and work life that demanded a lot of their time. There were lots of walking therapy sessions with topics ranging from Plato to Playdough and how we hypothesized connections with everything inbetween.
I took advantage of the learning center and their resources, because I hadn’t been in school-mode for a while. It was useful to get suggestions from others partaking in workshops regarding studying, writing, reading, decreasing procrastination, thesis and defense how-tos, etc. and to share our common experiences. I went through the gamut, from career counseling to thesis completion workshops. These workshops didn’t always help me improve my skills, but the process did help me figure out what I didn’t want and that we were all struggling within certain institutional constraints to figure out how we wanted to meet those expectations.

Procrastination is a healthy pastime in small doses. I didn’t fight the need to do something else, but tried to pay attention to how often this happened, when it happened and why it happened. I began to recognize the signs that were YELLING at me to regain homeostasis.

I find that what I write is less important than just making myself take the first step. I will only do something if I feel compelled to do it. So the atmosphere, environment and conditions are important factors that make that practice happen as a routine. Sometimes the computer works best and other times I need my journal and favorite pen. It helped to consider all the options available and to give myself choices...but in the end the goal was just to write something!

I eventually began making graduate school feel more enjoyable by making it a job. When I always have my work on my mind, I live to work. Conversely, if I maintained the attitude that I must focus during a certain part of the day, I was better able to work to live. The statement that balance is important – is an obvious one, but those affirmations are usually the hardest to comprehend and are easily overlooked. Having stated the need to be obvious, I take this with a grain of salt, because otherwise I would have to call myself a hypocrite. We live in a world of instantaneity and yet our minds are always so filled with elsewhere and otherwise...it is an elusive moment. I waiver between being attentive and letting go, sometimes I just need to find that space of wellbeing and JUST BREATHE!
In choosing my supervisor and committee for both graduate degrees, I went through a series of infatuations, divorces, and academic suicides...but I shall save the reader the drama. What I will say is that it was important to do my research and not jump the gun when I stumbled upon someone who I thought would be a great fit. It was really a challenge to find supporters that had a mutual interest and who were free, but not so free that they would script the whole of your work.

Everyone knows everyone in academia and it's difficult for faculty to take on a student that disassociated with another faculty member, regardless of the circumstances. I came to be a bit more distant and business-oriented when it came to committee matters for fear of inappropriately representing my intentions.

During my first year of doctoral studies, I was less involved socially, of my own volition, as I engrossed myself in difficult ideas and philosophies of the world. I felt even less informed and secure about the process of getting to the dissertation than the thesis, and even more afraid to ask. It seemed that we were suddenly expected to know the ins and outs of faculty and their work, comprehend the processes of academia, and were to have read all the great philosophers.

I am a loner, but I am not alone. I do not speak as part of a collective voice. As a researcher and teacher, my voice echoes other voices, but it does not seek to mimic or impersonate other voices, or to silence other voices, or to harmonize with other voices. Instead, I seek to cry out like trumpet calls an urgent invitation to listen to the light, to wake up, to know the world differently, outside the typical parameters and predictions.

(LePera, public presentation notes, June 20, 2002)
As a doctoral student I felt a bit more focused and indulgent at the outset, not necessarily any clearer, but driven and absorbed. It was like I had a newfound familiarity with things that I didn’t remember acquiring in my repertoire of knowledge. I was actually able to have conversations and contribute to class discussions... at least at a level of comfort with the master's students. I felt privileged to witness the lectures of professors and guest speakers whom I previously encountered one dimensionally on paper. I attempted to glean meaning from their difficult texts, as I added more perplexing literature to my repertoire of reading.

The teachings of each professor were of great importance and I was in a trance with their every question, being careful to provide noteworthy contributions to class discussions. Those who had nothing to say, became invisible and those who were well versed in their performance were commended. I learned to hold my tongue, until it was appropriate to share and until I was very prepared to do so.

Doctoral students in their second year were poised and even a bit condescending as they elaborately, extensively and very deliberately quoted their philosophical favorites in conversation. This performance even occurred in our grad student meetings. I learned quickly in my classes that it was necessary and expected to wear my “ah-ha” and postulates on my sleeve, as I walked the tight rope with every word I uttered, tweaked and refined. One inappropriate or nervous laugh and I came teetering to ground zero. Although I continued to ponder many questions and knew what I did not believe in, I continued to feel homeless and no more certain about the housing and shape of my inquiry.

Patton and Protevi (2003) conjure up Derrida’s secret language from the abyss between "the silence of sounds" and the foreignness of speech (la parole), beyond the play of veiling and unveiling, as "neither presence nor absence" (p. 155).
The transition that is made from academic training to becoming a professional is a leap of faith. When you don’t have the supports and mentors in place, it is easy to lose faith. The world of safety and risks infiltrates the conceptions of ethics that hold a precarious balance between judgments of good/bad, black/white, where the complexities of everyday-ness and grey-ness become anomalous and volatile.

Everyone wants a “how to” manual, but no one takes the time to read these guides. The result being a distance between the documentary reality and what actually happens in practice, with a lot of apathy toward responsibility for actions in between.
Community made remarkable

heard!

cultural habits

TIME

wounds

treatment

seniors waiting for care

access

Lifestyle®

balancing

Purchase

excellence

power

government more accountable
Clarke (2007) uses the example of cooperating teachers in his call for increased collaboration and responsibility between professions and universities in the development, recognition and organization of the student teacher in practicum. The transition made from student to registered practitioner for both teachers and nurses alike requires a unity between the expectations of practicing organizations, the public and, diverse vested interest groups including academic institutions and professions who sculpt and promote images of the practitioner.

Buresh and Gordon (2006) highlight the urgency of increasing credible representation of nurses in the journalistic media in their research, "Who Counts in News Coverage of Health Care?" They describe a virtual invisibility of nursing's public voice in healthcare coverage. They also discovered that journalists covering these stories were unfamiliar with what nursing was about or what nurses had to offer. What Buresh and Gordon attempt to recover is the voice of nursing beyond a "virtue script" of what nursing has to offer the public discourse. They found that nurses tended to "downplay and devalue basic nursing work in direct care while elevating an image of 'elite' nurses in advanced practice, administration and academia" (p. 8).

Campbell (2000) contends that the technocratic conceptualization of what nurses do as "non-value added work" is a necessary means of organizing, managing and making nurses more cost efficient, thus "eliminate[ing] the nurse as subject of her knowledgeable and intelligent actions" (p. 190-191).

Who within the field of nursing education and practice will take the responsibility for educating nurses and student nurses to be publicly minded and political? Who will challenge the documentary reality that is organizationally making nurses more invisible and silent? Do we need to take a step back and once again ask, "What is nursing?" What other questions do we need to be asking regarding the conditions that manifest the interdisciplinary and interprofessional relationships that nursing advocates and to which nursing contributes? How do we bring to light the presences and absences of nursing education and its resulting healthcare discourses?
Why do we gravitate toward professionalism? What does professionalism teach us? It seems that the expectations that result from the “code of ethics” and “standards of practice” give us a moral compass through which we also identify ourselves. Are these guides and policies what we need to maintain and uphold the social norms of society and the status quo?

Documents at the academic and professional levels of learning create an environment of surveillance, where we monitor “at risk” behavior in our “duty to report” practices that are questionable. The knowledge and learning of nursing is boxed and tiered based on linear models of learning (i.e. novice to expert) and checklists that account for the “doing of nursing” to track institutional efficiencies.

Darville (1989) drew attention to the importance of locatedness in the practice of writing, whereby the power of who is writing is recognized in organizational discourse. Darville described literacy as “a social process (p. 4), where the documentary reality in organizational literacy, gives legitimacy to what is “written up” as an aid to memory or a way of relating experience (p. 9). He contends that our insistence in writing down the narrative “is a defense against being disappeared in how they write it up” (p. 15).

Intentionality and authenticity are put into question when professionalism meets the institutional and documentary reality of what actually happens in practice (Smith, 1975).

The fact is not what actually happened in its raw form. It is that actuality as it has been worked up so that it intends its own description. That actuality has been assigned descriptive categories and a conceptual structure. The structure incorporates a temporal organization which both marks the boundaries of what actually happened so that it comes to have the form of an ‘event,’ ‘episode,’ ‘state of affairs,’ etc. (...) Using that interpretive schema to organize the actuality does not appear as imposing an organization upon it but rather as a discover of how it is.

(Smith, 1975, p. 258)
Thorne (2006) speaks to the future of nursing education as a recognition of our professional history amidst the diverse perspectives, moving toward an ethical vision of preparing nurses for the issues of today. While this approach may seem an obvious evolution, within nursing there are challenges within those diverse perspectives in how it is that we move together and what body of knowledge will informing our journey. Kim (2000) writes that there are nurse scholars who move nursing forward through “multiple conceptualizations of persons and different grand theories in nursing,” while others argue that we need a “unifying perspective that provides the focus of the nursing discipline” (p. 38).

Kim (2000) reflects on the “pluralism” in nursing, whereby “nursing has pursued multiple paths to develop knowledge with different commitments to philosophies and epistemological orientations,” she draws our attention to the focus of nursing knowledge in the past three decades:

- Conceptualizing the key and essential phenomena of concern
- Identifying the nature of nursing problems and different ways of solving such problems
- Understanding fundamental human processes associated with health and illness through development of multiple theories
- Identifying the impact of environment on human functioning and health
- Advancing technical supports that enhance human health. (p. 37)

Thorne (2006) takes a more business-oriented approach to the future of nursing education, by looking at the current state of nursing shortages, shared global issues of epidemics and natural disasters, need for system redesign and being accountable to stakeholders. Thorne insights a leadership approach that focuses on evidence-based, competencies for practice where inter-professional education, research and technological advancement will be necessary. She states that as we move outward, we must consider our “positioning” in the knowledge we are contributing that speaks both to “the language of pathophysiology and molecular biology” as well as to “the discourse of spirituality and holism” (p. 616). Thorne calls us to stay relevant by extending ourselves from teaching roles to practice, professional service and research, the assumption being that not all educators contribute in a multifaceted way to the vision and expansion of nursing education.

[A}s we become more educated and more expensive, we also become more expendable unless we know how to translate our inner conviction that nursing matters into an objective, defensible, business case that clearly documents the value that a knowledgeable nursing workforce brings to a healthy society. (Thorne, 2006, p. 618)
As I play with and inter-rupture language, I consider how ‘(in)query’ and ‘inquiry’ are a layering between the latter as process and the emergent product as social text written/unwritten, scripted/unscripted in our storied ways of being. Do I offer a space for open communication in the classroom that engages and supports living (in)query? What happens to the process between the plan of action/outline and how things actually unfold? Do I provide space for ongoing assessment of how we are/are not collectively connecting (to) (in)formation?

How do I establish trust with these individuals who have been labeled ‘student,’ with whom I will co-inquire? Do I create a safe environment? Is being safe the goal? Is safety possible or is safety an illusion that we aspire toward, when in fear of being found to be ‘wrong doing,’ or in some way fraudulent or unethical?

Who benefits? Who pays? Who decides?

How does the potential for ethical confrontations inhibit our process of inquiry? What does ethical mean in the context of living inquiry? How do we in our (in)formativity construct the boundaries between I/other that represent respectful negotiations of co-creation?

How do I negotiate being a ‘newbie’ in the world of teaching/learning, where I struggle with my own insecurities in skillfulness, with the curriculum philosophy, while searching for the philosophy I espouse, as I live (in)query of the multiplicities that do not feel consistent and congruent within my conceptualization of living inquiry?

At times, I find it difficult to focus on the philosophy of the curriculum and I become the ‘task master’ and ‘at risk student’ detector (as though this were my designation by default). I consider how we, as educators, are encouraged to label the diverse student population into manageable sectors (i.e. ‘at risk’ student, student with special needs, etc.). When we extend our services to meet the unique needs and learning styles of students, we tend to typify and be deterministic in our approach, as put forward by curricula with constructionist tendencies. For example, courses that attempt to acknowledge diversity, but approach differences in a constructionist stereotyping of individuals; assuming similar responses from approaches that are predetermined based on like/similar characteristics grouping individuals. What happens to those that fall between the acknowledged categories; between the predetermined, identifiable margins?

Am I guiding the learner toward the curriculum and facilitating as a means of navigating through ‘the system,’ versus stepping back and learning from the diversity of individual perspectives to (in)form our curriculum and methods of engaging in praxis? Lather (1991) challenges us in research and pedagogy to salvage praxis as an ‘interruptor strategy,’ “[u]ncovering the particularity and contingency of our knowledge and practices at the core of whatever generative advances we might make regarding our purposes and practices (p. 14).”

Randall (1995) wrote: The stories we are (...) implies that our stories are incomplete: that our lives are adventures still unfolding, mysteries yet unsolved, open books for whose endings we can but wait and see. (...) '[W]e’ are on some level storytellers, free to tell ourselves however we wish; that there is therefore an intrinsically imaginative dimension to being human. On the other hand, (...) [t]o suggest that we are stories, as opposed to merely have or can tell stories, may unsettle us with the suggestion that the ground on which we stand is really shifting sand; that, even at our healthiest, our 'identity' is not a single reality but a multiple one. (p. 11)
What is the intention behind spending so much time and energy creating traps and identifiers for ‘the at risk student?’ Are we seeking to maintain standards and/or justify our work in a particular way? How do we unpack the discourses that paralyze us between concerns for safety of the public (as dictated by registering bodies that guide the profession) and the pedagogical concerns of meeting individual and collaborative student learning needs identified by those students, who resist classification and are simultaneously designated as ‘student nurse ‘x’?’

At Risk
Mis-re-presentation
Precludes me,
as I am labeled, categorized, diagnosed
Dis-eased.

In my everydayness,
I am becoming
Othered,
Not I; somehow different from me.
My (i)dentity
BRANDED ©

At risk of being human
The students are struggling with my attempts to get them into “yet another circle.” I am not surprised by their resistance. When did we become en-forcers of our collaborative curriculum? We do not believe in straight line, passive classroom learning here, therefore we opt to “strongly encourage” circles? Do I as an educator even have a sense of the meaning and background of why we started sitting around in circles in the classroom?

I notice my resistance, in the midst of trying to get my head around the material and timeline I have self-imposed (in my drive toward efficiency and professional accountability), which haze my usual inquiring mind. Have I merely become a medium for some disconnected message? I continually have to remind myself not to forget; not to forget what I have taken for granted as a given of my own learning process, of coming to expect and assume others are on “the same page.” I go home to journal and “be reflective.” I’m not there yet, I never seem to be there, yet here I am. I am continually labeled “the novice”...by whom? I am resistant to the notion of linear views of learning, yet the “I” constructs self-implode me.

At the moment, I feel I am the sole member of my idealized learning collective, but I’m not living the dream. My sense of space is gaping between planned curriculum and lived experience like an open wound, raw and exposed to the elements. All the ideas are swirling in my head, drifting in vacuous clouds of omniscience. When I am catapulted back to the reality of a consciousness of what is actually happening, I am struck by the pained expressions of boredom searing from the eyes of a classroom of onlookers. I suddenly see Freire’s (1970) banking system and vaults – empty vessels waiting to be filled with information. My visioning is blinded by the emptiness of their gaze, as I no longer imagine my claims of unique beings, but rather passive bystanders bearing witness to this accidental trauma, as if they were watching me as their TV...waiting to be entertained...waiting for the message they are supposed to memorize for the exam. I come to realize that this performance is a re-presentation of my alienation and isolation, where I stand out there alone. I am safe behind the lesson plans and prescribed formulas of a preset curriculum, talking my monologue about idealized values and beliefs...and as long as I do not look at those faces, the status quo is maintained.
What I remember
Looking into their eyes
Feeling some connection through our suffering...
Our human condition
Shared energy
Holding the fragile pieces of identity
Here Otherness fills the space
Empty void
Abyss of humanness
I share that responsibility
Careful not to drop the tension

I have so much to learn from others, yet how am I prepared to listen and cultivate open spaces that engage these beings that appear to me as faces frozen in time, rotting from decay? When I pay attention to these moments of stasis, I become increasingly open and vulnerable to the unknowing and questioning. I use multiple modes of engagement (dubbed instructional skills), as a means of connecting through our otherness, as I’ve been instructed to do. To deliver the content we try small group work, we try collage, and we try narrative. I am starting to see little changes, a comment here, a smile there and I hear a laugh from the corner. I have not yet felt a profound change, except perhaps in my approach to the way the content is shared, as well as in my expectations and assumptions around the delivery and reception of information. I feel I am more open to listen to the silence and hold the tension with my own intentions. I begin to notice the humanness between the deca-dence (as a transience/transitioning between musical cadence and bodily decay) and the cracks between the lines, where a smile emerges.

“The challenge for educators is to learn to embrace teaching as pedagogical action that permits cracks to appear in order for learning to happen” (Fels, 2004, p. 76).

How do I negotiate the different learning styles and take into account individual approaches to learning and living (in)query? How does my quest to be organized dictate a certain dynamic, putting forward a proclamation that I am showing preparation by example and perhaps confirming that I am focused on my own performance in the presentation of (in)formation?

Academic Performance: A space of learning both within and without through which action-process occurs utterly through form and simultaneously through the destruction of form (Fels & Stothers, 1996, p. 257).

I consider Fels & Stothers’ notion of academic performance as I re-visit and question my own performa@tivity in the social text of academia: How are my questions open, inclusive and provocative in the face of a curriculum that at times feels closed, fixed and undisputed in its relative truth/knowledge base? How does this performance differ and extend to the arena of practice as we attempt to live in the difficult and (im)possible complex space of praxis?

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20 Humanness, I describe as a processing (in)between moments of flux and flow, challenging the juxtaposition between identity construct and whole energy, living (in)query, thus surviving, a unique and shared human situatedness amidst simultaneous otherness and wholeness (adapted from Szabo, 2005, p. 7).
Today I am en route to visit some community schools, where nursing students in their child health rotation are now practicing. A decade ago, this would not have been a standard place of locating nursing practice. There are several reasons for the shift toward community in this way. Decreasing availability for practice placements and increased competition between multiple populations of professional students and schools in those placements has inspired nurse educators and placement coordinators to become creative. As a member of the public and one who has always been identified as a nurse located in acute care settings, this shift forces me to challenge my own preconceived notions and limited imagination of how we could be engaging students in diverse community placements.

From my teaching mentor, I learn that the schools have an expanded, specialized curriculum based on various determinants of health, to meet the needs of students who have diverse challenges and barriers to accessing the mainstream public school system. What my mentor encourages me to do is to return to my principles when I am feeling at a loss\(^{21}\) for finding my way through uncertainty. As I witness her reflection-in-action\(^{22}\) (Schon, 1983) with the students I am less ambivalent about my move toward uncharted territory. I begin to realize that we all have questions, as nurses and teachers. It is our collaborative effort toward inquiring bi-directionally and between the professions/disciplines that prompts us to move in relationship with one another, to co-create interdisciplinary and inter-professional possibilities.

Going back to reflection-in-action as demonstrated by this instructor, I am reminded of the tension between bringing forward diverse ways of speaking to reflective practice narratives (i.e. experientially-based, evidence-informed or other structured and unstructured configurations) versus considering a principle-based or theory-based approach that all members of the faculty subscribe to, as they illuminate assignments and other evaluative tools. At every juncture our engagement with students exposes our own tensions with the curriculum we are living. How do we choose to live those inconsistencies and adhere to or challenge “foundations” that guide our journey? I cannot be the only one asking and considering this question. Yet, by reflecting on my practice I am better able to consider the factors that have brought me to this point and to consider what this instructor (in keeping with reflection-in-action) called, the “so what?” and the “now what?”

\(^{21}\) As a professional nurse, I am hired into the academic educator role for my “expertise” in contributing to the content delivered through the curriculum. What actually happens is that I teach content that is not my area of interest or expertise, learning as I go in my mis-matched situatedness.

\(^{22}\) Schon (1983) writes that the reflective practitioner begins with “nonunderstanding and nonacceptance” (p. 296) and is willing to suspend belief and he/she engages with openness into a process with the client. Understanding in this light is always partial and knowledge is co-created with the “experience of surprise” and spontaneous intuitive elements that emerge from our unique experiences that contribute new responses to the thinking action that manifests.
Just breathe

Take a breath
Inhale and exhale
Inspire oxygen and expire carbon dioxide
Diaphragm relaxes and contracts

Am I using my abdomen or my chest?
Infants are obligate nasal breathers
Mechanical ventilators do the work of breathing differently
Relaxation exercises get me to notice my breath
Paroxysmal movements are worrisome
The agonal breath is agonizing

Air flows through me to another
We exchange molecules
We are connected in so many ways...
Respiration
Contemplation
Biophysical and interpersonal communication and collaboration

When I feel the surface tension
Feel the wanting space
in reflection...
Take a moment
Sigh...

23 I want to be able to breathe my own breath, in my own way. At times, however, learning how to breathe in new ways, in new contexts helps enhance my breath, not only for the purpose of the exercise/activity, but learning the “how tos” also enhances my overall approach to breathing, makes it more effective. Contemplating and reflecting on “breath and breathing” helps me realize that the air I breathe is shared and precious. What is challenging is to meet another “half way” not only through my voiced expectation, but especially in listening to what I do not want to hear from those I have deemed “passive” recipients who do not share my motivation in our exchange.
I create a list of “how tos” for other nursing students travelling to international locations, based on my volunteer nursing experience in a small Zambian community in Africa. What I notice in the spaces between list and living the experience is that the Western worldview encroaches upon both as my most familiar. It is easy to imagine asking the same questions in the North American context. It has become difficult for me to separate myself from the patterns I have been taught, even in the midst of what I would call the shattering of my paradigm, during this African experience. The paralysis of foreignness causes me to revert to the old documentary reality that has instructed me in how to approach a situation. I fall back on a procedural approach of assessing the situation. What is actually required is a new set of questions in a new framework of thought, which I do not have the skills or comprehension to encapsulate in a list.

Questions to consider before you embark on the international nursing experience:

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<tr>
<td>What do you know about the culture and languages of this country? How/who informed this information?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is culturally appropriate when communicating and physically interacting with adults, children, elders, women, men of the community you are visiting?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there certain times of the day, days of the year, that services should not be provided in respect to environmental factors, religious ways of being and general social conventions? Is there an inappropriate time to enter someone’s home?</td>
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<td>How do you approach others in the form of greeting and respect when you engage in your practice?</td>
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<td>When establishing rapport, what are some important phrases and salutations that you should know?</td>
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<td>Are there translators available and/or documents/other forms of communicating essential information that offer quick reference in case of difficulty in translating both common conversation and medical terminology?</td>
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<td>What is impolite or inappropriate in presentation (consider attire/dress codes)?</td>
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Specific questions drawing on professional ethics and accountability to the public you serve in the realm of international responsibilities (liability):

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<td>What are the expectations and assumptions of you, specifically do you clearly know your role in interaction and intervention of service provision (there may be layers of expectations among practitioners, from the community and from the organization for which you work)? What are your roles and responsibilities as outlined by the organization for which you work?</td>
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<td>Do you have and/or need written orders before you assess and intervene with individuals in the community?</td>
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<td>What are the afflictions and remedies common to this area of practice?</td>
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<td>What services and treatments are available to the community?</td>
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<td>What services are free of charge and to whom do these exemptions apply?</td>
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<td>What sorts of supplies do you take with you on each community visit? What is available in terms of resources when out on site in the community and how accessible are those resources?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there forms that structure your visits? If not, prepare the questions and assessment strategies you consider appropriate in lieu of the expectations and assumptions of the organization, in conjunction with the individuals whom you serve.</td>
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The tension among views leads to a question about the nature of the relation between an erosion of the progress narrative in life and in thought. Certainly the relation is not straightforwardly causal, in either direction, but neither is it wholly contingent. Yet it is clear at the very least that recent changes in the character of the world history – including all that travels under the rubric of globalization, the emergence of significant nonstate national and international actors, the end of a bipolar international order, and the ambiguous development of identity-based political formations – have catalyzed popular and intellectual historical consciousness. (Brown, 2001, p. 8)

In searching in the midst of uncertainty and unknowing, it is important to be aware of how I am informed, where that information comes from, as the process opens to the possibilities of imagining environments and relationships in ways other than presented as a givenness. For example: How do I prepare myself by questioning the party politic around pandemic fear and enforced immunizations? How will I work with individuals whose labels and diagnoses affect perceptions of their experience as more than a dis-ease and label, identifying and categorizing western notions of ‘the self’ and the construction of social demographics?

I consider the multitudes of people I encounter who are being educated to accept methods and truisms about what is healthy and what quality of life represents in the face of drawing attention to cultural differences where ‘have/have not’ nations reside. Everything is simple at face value when you are being encouraged to comply. In my questioning of the artificial and imposed binaries, I no longer have a sense of how to proceed, when the meanings, assumptions and expectations become foreign to ‘what is’ in my present moment of ‘being with.’ I become increasingly paralyzed when the response is silence.
Reflective Narrative Moment

Today we are greeted by masses of children. Hundreds of smiles and cheers infuse our undeserving ears.

Why are they so happy to see us?

“Musungu, musungu!!”

Our whiteness precedes us.

They sing with spirit in welcome.

I begin to cry uncontrollably, hiding my face from their smiles.

I don’t know what to do with this energy around me,

Seeping into my vulnerability, into my privileged ears… I am overwhelmed.

I continue to cry when we return to our safe sanctuary compound.

I cry because of the conditions in which these people live.

I cry because I am able to reside with plenty of food, water, security and shelter.

I cry because I will return to a better life of options and amenities.

I cry because the majority of Zambians cannot read and write in their own language let alone read Westernized banners of righteousness.

I cry because I sanitized my hands after I touched each child with their infestations.

I do not know what else to do and so I cry.

I feel the layers of my privilege pervade and obtrude the distance between how I find myself situated in the moment, as I re-view pictures that seem to be less filled with stories, than the aesthetics and politics of how ‘the other’ lives. A dis-stance which in the moment feels safe and almost ethereal, yet paradoxically I am aware of my (in)tensionality as I consider how to re-visit my journey. A re-membering in a way that honors the living learning that was co-created and experienced in the liminal spaces of being with others as more than ‘other’/ ‘out there.’
As I walk down our street, under the persistence of the yellow sun, with everything naked, the children bare, the old men with exhausted veins pumping on dried-up foreheads, I was frightened by the feeling that there was no escape from the hard things of this world. Everywhere there I saw the crudity of wounds, the stark huts, the rusted zinc abodes, the rubbish in the streets, children in rags, the little girls naked on the sand playing with crushed tin-cans, the little boys jumping about uncircumcised, making machine-gun noises, the air vibrating with poisonous heat and evaporating water from the filthy gutters. The sun bared the reality of our lives and everything was so harsh it was a mystery that we could understand and care for one another or for anything at all.

(Okri, 1992, p. 161)

Willinsky (1998) challenges educators to pay attention to the ongoing neocolonial Western influences on worldviewing, being written and learn-ed. I ponder our locatedness, so dis-stanced from the influences that lurk deep within the constructs of our collective consciousness. To imagine otherwise, but to continue to be deterministic or constructionist in that vision, holds onto the nightmarish soliloquies of history as a mysticism embedded deep within our psyche.

Our life appears to be a sad music. (...) Suffering is our home. (...) We did not make this strange bed that we have to sleep on. But this world is real. (...) When you play in the streets and see the children die, and hear the mothers weep, and hear the old ones sing of each miraculous birth, is your heart untouched? We have sorrow here. But we also have celebration. We know the special joys. We have sorrow, but it is the sister of love, and the mother of music. (Okri, 1992, p. 337)
We travel late at night. My Lonely Planet travel guide says this is dangerous. The bus driver, who controls not only our passports but our destiny, navigates through the sea of wandering souls with amazing skill. Men search the night for cheap beer and the only entertainment that doesn’t cost up front. I feel the necrosis of neo-colonization as the darkness engulfs us. The bus screeches to a halt. Who is stopping us this time? The feelings of fear, uncertainty and, un-knowing churn in the gut of my head. There is no sense of sacred here. Safety feels like a broken promise, when guarantees are written in tainted blood. Freedom and rights feel arbitrary.

“[M]an would know nothing of inner freedom if he had not first experienced a condition of being free as a worldly tangible reality. We first become aware of freedom or its opposite in our intercourse with others, not in the intercourse with ourselves “(Arendt, 1958, p. 148).

Rights and freedoms belong to whom: the adult male who seeks his pleasure in the night, the faithful women infected with HIV, or the infant, raped to cleanse the living dead? Have we all heard those stories too horrible to imagine? The I/we continuum is an abyss of unimaginable complexity and collateral damage. Yet, these are only stories to me. I do not live that reality, but rather, I make these stories part of my assessments...my judgments.

Arendt (1971) questions the conditions that bring us to recognize “our enormously enlarged historical consciousness” (p. 12). I question if we as humans have enough presence, compassion and forgiveness for all of humankind to live the stories that connect us. Instead we seem to continue to dis-stance ourselves further in the fight for rights and freedoms, by acting without thoughtfulness, further separating ourselves from each other in our righteous indignation.
Cheru (2000) wrote, “The key to building durable social solidarity will depend on the degree to which Westerners are willing to accept and learn from Third World political expression that explores religious or historical themes using non-Western or indigenous means.” (p. 131)

Today after some needed rest we visit a place we are informed is called a “shanty town.” I hate the term “shanty.” The rift of “us and them” gets bigger with each categorization and label. There are plenty of labels: AIDS, TB, STDs… Where did they come from, but Western medical diagnostic discourse? The brands of western civilization: pandemics, epidemics stop at the border of us and them, nationalism sets in when it comes to threatening our security of what we believe to be our rights and freedoms. Fix the problems and conquer by contribution, before things get out of control...out of our control. Research justifies our intrusiveness. We feel sorry but make no apologies. We are here to help the less fortunate than ourselves.

North-South solidarity must be built on the basis of equal partnership and on the recognition that poor people’s knowledge about their own reality (and how they might go about solving their problems) counts most, even when that local perspective appears on the surface to be inconsistent with (or less relevant than) the analysis and wishes coming from the North.

(Cheru, 2000, p. 130)

The branded multinationals may talk diversity, but the visible result of their actions is an army of teen clones marching – in ‘uniform,’ as the marketers say – into the global mall.

Why do we speak in terms of North/South, First/Third, Us/Them? How did international economic relations do such a good sell on the phenomenon of globalization to make us feel it our right to open the borders uni-directionally? How are we helping grass roots development when our presence is overt in our interactions with other countries? The McDonaldized individualism of “we” lingers in the Coca-cola and Bin Ladin t-shirt logo-ization of black market distribution, littering the unpaved streets with ever more meaningless signage.
Despite the embrace of polyethnic imagery, market-driven globalization doesn’t want diversity; quite the opposite. Its enemies are national habits, local brands and distinctive regional tastes. Fewer interests control ever more of the landscape (Klein, 1999).

STOP

I move from the space of reading and writing education to what I perceived as my experience as a student, while I was simultaneously engaged in the educator role. This is not a narrative of someone else’s story, other than by implication of coming into contact with my process. This narrative inquires provocatively, deeply, and reflectively into the narrative process of writing itself and myself down, as I write up the dissertation.

24 Applebaum (1995) draws attention to the stop that arrests attention; calls for the abrupt, sharp and brute force that is violent in its eruption of awareness, which he describes as “a shift from passivity to activity to face the unknown” (p. 81). This shock of attunement is one of resistance and brings to mind Krishnamurti. Krishnamurti (1989) contends that it is in the constant state of paradoxical flow and flux that humans manifest in (as an extension) and of (inseparable from) the world; humans thus, are an extension of the world. “Because the actor always moves among and in relation to the other acting beings, he is never merely a “doer” but always and at the same time a sufferer. To do and to suffer are like opposite sides of the same coin, and the story that an act starts is composed of its consequent deeds and sufferings” (Arendt, 1958, p. 190). “Suffering exposes the vulnerability of human existence, its lack of defense against the play of the flux” (Caputo, 1987, p. 278). Caputo, in describing the notion of flux through the “openness to the mystery” states:

But it is the face of suffering which puts teeth into the mystery and prevents us from confusing the mystery with an object of poetic reverie or from using it as the occasion for a recollective leap out of existence, which only leaves the rest of us to face the worst. (Caputo, p. 277)

Being human necessitates a violence and we suffer in resistance, where we live the gap between seeing and acting; “[o]ur constant struggle is between what is and what should be” (Krishnamurti, p. 32). He furthers that, “It is only when I see something immediately that I see the danger – not as a process of thought, analysis. When you see a precipice there is an immediate action. So, seeing is acting” (Krishnamurti, p. 25). Caputo (1987) describes “violence that violates as difficult to discern from secondary and derivative interpretation, [which] recovers the things themselves” (p. 64). For Caputo the process of resistance through paradox is both “recovery and violence, both restoration and destruction” (p. 64).
He could not get away from that grim notion that true violence is that of the self-evident: what is evident is violent, even if this evidence is gently, liberally, democratically represented; what is paradoxical, what does not follow of itself, is less so, even if it is imposed arbitrarily: a tyrant who promulgates preposterous laws would all in all be less violent than the masses which were content to utter what is self-evident, what follows of itself: the “natural” is, in short, the ultimate outrage.

(Barthes, 1977a, p. 85)
Butler (2004) writes that “a frame for understanding violence emerges in tandem with the experience, and that the frame works both to preclude certain kinds of questions, certain kinds of historical inquiries, and to function as a moral justification for retaliation” (p. 4). How it is that we interpret events, justify our actions and question anything is based on the experiences we have with education, enculturation and external constructions of our reality. Brown (2001) asks how we “might conceive and chart power in terms other than logic, develop historical political consciousness in terms other than progress, articulate our political investments without notions of teleology and naturalized desire, and affirm political judgment in terms that depart from moralism and conviction” (p. 4). If we consider Brown’s returning backward as a charting of historicity in terms of languaging a progressive story, our reflexive gaze on the cyclic nature of our present, reveals the paradoxical balance between claims and hopes, as a crack or break between (im)possibility and imagining otherwise. For example, when I consider globalization as an economic term, I struggle to see openings in the overt display of neo-liberalism disguised as ‘missionarism’ and moralism. When I focus on the human capacity to be congenial and giving, I attempt to approach the same situation with a healthy dose of cynicism, as I unlayer the masks of expectation and reflect on the potential nature of the human condition.

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It is not as if an “I” exists independently over here and then simply loses a “you” over there, especially if the attachment to “you” is part of what composes who “I” am. If I lost you, under these conditions, then I not only mourn the loss, but I become inscrutable to myself. Who “am” I, without you? When we lose some of these ties by which we are constituted, we do not know who we are or what to do. (Butler, 2004, p. 22)

Butler writes through the tensions of corporeal vulnerability, which she describes as the task of mourning in who counts as human.
Hospitality?

For Derrida (Dufourmantelle & Derrida, 2000) the foreigner [l’étranger] is the one who pushes the question, being in question, puts “me” in question (p. 3). Like Kafka’s “K.,” the foreigner is on trial for reasons never revealed for an unspecified crime (Kafka, 1925/1968) for which he is accused and subjected to judicial process. Similarly, Derrida (Dufourmantelle & Derrida) attests to the legal courtroom language (as sophistry, rhetoric and juridical jargon), for which the foreigner must ask for hospitality, “which by definition is not his own,” and thus having imposed upon him translation as “the first act of violence” (p. 15). Hostis (hospitality) originally meaning ‘stranger’ emerges as xenos (also meaning stranger), as foreigner becomes one with a right to hospitality (xenias), insistent on the reciprocity of commitments that extend to the family, generation and genealogy (Dufourmantelle & Derrida).

If hospitality is implicit in violence and foreignness, the host becomes hostage to that extension of himself that he avails to another, dependent on reprisal. The ethical engagement thus perplexes these good intentions with expectations of receiving something in return, perhaps even acknowledgement of the offering received. We engage with another hopeful that our actions and efforts are perceived and received with congeniality; otherwise we are left mute to the process, to others, and to ourselves. When the connection is denied a favorable response, we are held ransom to the abyss of the precipice, where thoughtfulness and sentence are numbed into the discovery of the dark side of our humanness. Paradoxically we are always on the edge of the precipice, on the verge of unknowing ourselves, becoming increasingly unpredictable as our expectations are exposed to the foreignness with which we so easily subjugated another. How does this awareness bring hopefulness that we can be otherwise and still perceive of foreignness and even, violence, as a form of abrupt disruption, in an accepting and hospitable light?

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25 Is hospitality a learned behavior, or as social beings are we innately hospitable? Is a host volatile and unpredictable based on conditions that manifest the choice between hospitality and violence?

26 When we are judge and jury opposing a foreigner who speaks a different language and who is enculturated otherwise, different from our knowns, what constitutes an ethical engagement? Are we disillusioned by our safeguards and need to protect those deemed vulnerable by our knowledges and standards/norms...those who are foreign to our policies, or have been judged to be otherwise?

27 The language of imposition described by Derrida is classically the way he interacts methodologically with the text. The paradox of everything through the opposite, its other.

28 Derrida (2003) expands the notion of genealogy through archival secrets of the public library (specifically referring to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, where he contends that nothing is beyond question and literature is non-reducible to appropriation of knowledge, as traditionally mastered by sovereignty (yet the text is held in high esteem as signifier, comparing Cixous’s dream work and another work of “genius,” Manhattan). Here Derrida’s text continues his dialectic giving reading the power to throw oneself [se jeter] (as we are both: alien to, and belonging to, a heritage by naming) into Omnipotence-otherness. “The unconditional hospitality of this singular gift exposes us and disposes of us before we so much as dream of proposing, inviting or awaiting any predetermined being whatsoever” (p. 48). He continues that “fiction” holds the appearance of reality in a simulacrum, where many aporias (philosophical puzzles, as rhetorical devices) begin their journey through the secrets of literature (like illusive dreams and hauntings of uncanny strangeness) between singularity and generality; between an increased awareness of wakeful consciousness, “a more conscious consciousness” (p. 43) and the realm of the unconscious. Between Derrida’s delirium [dé-lire] and Cixous’s forgetting of reading/forgetread [oubli re], a repetitious homonymy avows the unavowable as a metonymic echo.
I find the act of unconditional hospitality to be extremely difficult to imagine other than in abstraction, even when I am facing someone I profess to love on a good day. How do you manifest the conditions of something that is unconditional when we as human beings always have expectations and needs to be met? Our thinking gets in the way of how we are “being with” another. Our presencing with others is tensioned by the intentions we impose during each act of kindness, each utterance and each gesture.

I comprehend that extreme forms of hospitality are not conceived for the everyday interaction, otherwise there would be chaos to the ordered, structured, superficial distinctions made in the laws that distinguish right and wrong doing. But, here once again we are setting limits by conceiving grandiose ideas and not applying them, thus implicating ourselves, as complicit in our pre-determined ethical engagements.

I am paralyzed in the moments of working through the complexities of a conceptual discourse, imagining what that would look like in actuality and then in my imaginings, feeling stifled by the (im) possibility of a shift in the way we are called to be otherwise (I'm thinking even beyond scientific paradigms here). I wonder what is the point of all these philosophical discussions and critical assertions if not to ACTUALLY DO SOMETHING ABOUT WHAT WE ARE IMAGINING IS IMPOSSIBLE AND IMPORTANT.

If we are unable to consider how we would act in the everyday in a different way, how are we ever to change the big picture of who and how we are? If we can never know who we are at the end of ethics then what sort of change are we (not) expecting?

I think of how I have been haphazardly using toxic laundry detergent, dish soap, diapers and being generally wasteful in this ecological time of instability. This is no longer about me and my imminent cancer, it is about that unforeseeable future with its infinite consequences up to and including the finitude of all living things and beings.
I forget to hold the gaze of awe and wonder, with the open eager eyes of baby A, seeing things anew for the first time with a hospitable and open heart. What I see is that my gaze has shifted to my need to protect her and expose her to certain knowledges, to shape her learning through the guise of fear. I have once again fallen off the wagon, drunk with prescripts and duties and expectations of reciprocation and self-revelation...all a reflection on me and of me.
Agamben (1993) contends that love is the unconditional irrevocable hospitality "of taking-place in a whatever singularity," something that "every single being has "always already in common" (p. 23-25). Simultaneously, in every being there exists "the possibility of not being, that is...impotence" (p. 26).

Reflective narrative moment

Today I am confronted by another incident that makes me ponder how difficult hospitality is in reality. As I stand in line waiting my turn at the grocery store, I am drawn into a conversation with a man who kindly asks me about baby A, who is perched in the nook of my arm.

"How old is she...she must be about 8 months."
"Yes, she is."
"How do you find it going through the day with one arm?"
I laugh, considering the weight of the world on my arm.
"Do you have children," I ask.
"Oh... no."
There is a pause. (...)"What is her name?"

After the name slips from my mouth, I'm immediately paralyzed with fear. Why did he ask her name? Is he some kind of a predator, sizing her up? Perhaps he is involved in human trafficking and has scripted her kidnapping. I clutch her with both arms, thinking how foolish I was to be open and inviting to this stranger.

He notices there is a change in my countenance. He is silent. I pay for my things, rapidly grab my bags and fly out the door of the store. I am afraid. There is no room for his presence in our space.

I must return to Caputo's (2000) end of ethics where this complexity helps me remember that I do not know who I am, nor do I know what or whom it is that I expect in the midst of awe and wonder. Caputo writes that it is the accidental event that surprises and yet implores us to be open and hospitable to the coming of the wholly other.
I consider how popular culture imagines the alien in movies such as, “Men in Black,” (Cunningham, 1997) “X-Files” (Carter, 1993-2002) and “The Matrix” (Wachowski & Wachowski, 1999).

The alien is assimilated and policed by a special society of federal agents, in Men in Black. Agent: Mickey? How many treaties you just violate?
One?
Agent: Try seven. That’s enough Mikey. You hand me that head. Put up your arms and all your flippers.

The message: Humans are superior, but afraid and need to contain the foreigner.

The Matrix offers a choice of red or blue pill to decide on the type of lived reality you want to choose.

    MORPHEUS: You take the blue pill and the story ends. You wake in your bed and you believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill and you stay in Wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit-hole goes.

In one reality you continue to play the game (alienated as the mechanized version of enslaved self) and in another you become party to the unknown in which there is a constant struggle not to give in to the game.

In the X-Files (Hibbes, 2002) the “truth is out there” and federal agents, Scully and Molder, are trying to find it. The idea of engaging with this line of thinking is that we struggle to distinguish truth from fiction, leading to a sense of human alienation as our lives are being constructed for us. Essentially, we are alien to the reality we are living and the alien out there is kept secret and away from our sheltered view of the world. Ironically, this view of the world is how we live from day to day, exposed to the elements, naïve to “the truth” out there and somehow to our ability to find truth in who, what and how we live.

In these scripts, the world of fantasy and fiction is not unlike the reality we live from day to day. In fact, the unbelievable is believable and the alien is among us…but it’s a secret we seem to need to be protected from, or else chaos or some other form of rebellion/anarchy would ensue. It is like “the other” out there, cannot trespass on our internal composure and perceived reality…let everything remain perfectly “normal” and abide by the status quo, let’s not rock the boat and allow for the foreigner to shake up our carefully contained world paradigm.
I feel my search for identity is somehow embedded with this term, "foreigner" holds me hostage, as foreign to myself. Is it the craving and striving to be otherwise...the longing to belong that b(l)inds me, as ALIEN to another and especially to myself, in a perpetual state of crisis? Schacht (1971) excavates the word in its Latin origin alienus as "belonging or pertaining to another," derived from alius (meaning other or another) (p. 8). Schacht writes that we all become refugees in the nation in which we reside as alien to ourselves. I ponder the thought that I have become anonymous and anomalous to the nature of being human, or perhaps it is in being human that we are innately alien.

Light passes through me lightless, sound soundless, smoking nowhere, groaning with sudden birds. Paper dies, flesh melts, leaving stockings and their useless vanity in graves, bodies lie still across foolish borders.

(Brand, 1997, p. 48)

Kristeva, citing Freud in his psychoanalysis of the dynamics of the unconscious (Kristeva's italics), writes that the other is "of the strange" and as such is Unheimliche that is, indeed, "repression itself and its perviousness (...) this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression" (Freud, 1919, p. 241 cited in Kristeva, 1991, p. 182-184).

In our society any man who doesn't cry at his mother's funeral is liable to be condemned to death...he doesn't play the game. In this sense, he is an outsider to the society in which he lives, wandering on the fringe, on the outskirts of life, solitary and sensual.

(Camus, 1942, p. 118)
Strangely, the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity. The foreigner comes in when the consciousness of difference arises, and he disappears when we all acknowledge ourselves as foreigners, unamenable to bonds and communities.

(Kristeva, 1991, p. 1)

As I write these words, I am drawn back to the act of writing and how I write the foreign into my text, as I represent myself in my text. The layers of distance permeate what I thought was a conceptual discourse, to one that feels representational, narrative and somehow ethical, in the imperative sense...inseparable, except by the necessary space of ellipses.

29 This contentious notion of ethics constantly reappears in my work. I seem to be writing it in (perhaps out of habit or some subconscious sense of obligation that I cannot shed) and not wanting it written in.

30 Ellipses offer an opening to omissions and silences not overtly explicit in the text...always already a presence in symbolic absence.
Eco (2001) writes that the process of translation requires the public text, which is “a machine conceived for eliciting interpretations” (p. 6). He furthers that because one cannot be a good critic of oneself, interpretation needs to be left to another. He also contends that translations from one language to another through interpretation may be “faithful” but are never literal; as a result you get the “sense” of the text. Each frame of reference adds different words and meanings and “a good translation is not concerned with the denotation but with the connotation31 of words” (p. 8). Ricouer (2004) proposed the notion of oneself-as-another. In explicating translation he stated that we have the capacity and need as humans to mediate between speakers and worlds of meaning. The translator is the middleman between the author and reader (oneself-as-another), who works through “common experience[s] of tension and suffering” and the “impulse to reduce the otherness of the other” bridging meaning that was once alien to one’s own repertoire of understanding (Kearney introduction, in Ricoeur, 2004, p. xv-xvi). Through translation, expropriation of oneself becomes appropriation of another, opening the other as “a host of the foreign” whereby the dialogue between holds the historicity of words, with “alterity residing outside” and within one’s own language (Kearney, p. xviii). Ricoeur states that such an otherness distances meaning and sentence of oneself32. When we consider what constitutes identity, translation is implicit in connecting ourselves within and without, where our narrative33 is interwoven and intertwined socially, politically and historically within the “creative tension between the universal and the plural” thus ensuring the “task of translation34 is an endless one, a work of tireless memory and mourning, of appropriation and disappropriation, of taking up and letting go, of expressing oneself and welcoming others” (Kearney, p. xx).

31 The connotation of a word is used to name “non-literal senses of a word, sentence or whole text” (Eco, 2001, p. 9).
32 Getting back to potentiality and the coming to being of some state... translation and interpretation as language indicates we are necessarily fragmented, whether by perceived dichotomy or through paradox, dis-stance, distinction and separation are necessary.
33 Here I think of how I as author, am necessarily separate from the text that is dis-stanced as we recall and narrate the text. Otherwise. Perhaps this is about multiple wholes and multiplicities. Can we speak of many and difference, without being dichotomous and fragmented?
34 Benjamin (1968) presents the task of the translator in the following:

Where a text is identical with truth or dogma, where it is supposed to be “the true language” in all its literalness and without the mediation of meaning, this text is unconditionally translatable. In such case translations are called for only because of the plurality of languages (Deleuze). Just as in the original, language and revelation are one without any tension, so the translation must be one with the original in the form of the interlinear version, in which literalness and freedom are united. For to some degree all great texts contain their potential translation between the lines. (p. 82)

As I read Benjamin’s description of the task of the translator, I consider his fate as the tragic character of his own narrative. Arendt (1968) writes, “What Benjamin said of Kafka with such unique aptness applies to himself as well: “The circumstances of this failure are multifarious. One is tempted to say: once he was certain of eventual failure, everything worked out for him en route as in a dream” (Brief II, 765 cited in Arendt, p. 11). Through Arendt’s accounting of his “attempt to capture the portrait of history in the most insignificant representations of reality, its scraps” (Brief II, 764 cited in Arendt, p. 17), I go back to the diacritical layers of translation between his text, Arendt’s rendition, my account, and I find Ricoeur’s citation of Freud that stated the translator’s task is a work of remembering, mourning, salvaging and some acceptance of loss and once again foreignness resurfaces.
Ricoeur (2004) cites Arendt in stating that "the thing to be done so that human action can simply continue" is the task of translation. (p. 19)

**Difference leads to violence**

| sameness leads to homogeneity-conformity |

**PLACING LANGUAGE AT A DISTANCE**

| NOMADS |

| “[I]t is in retranslation\(^{35}\) that we most clearly observe the urge to translate, stimulated by the dissatisfaction with regard to existing translations” (Ricoeur, p. 7). |

**faithfulness versus betrayal**

| gap between the universal and empirical languages between what is *a priori* and what is historical |

| “Bringing to light the complexities of those languages which make it necessary each time to learn the functioning of a language” one would need to translate “within a selfsame natural language” (Ricoeur, p. 17). |

**work of mourning**

| WORK OF MEMORY |

| the gap between equivalence and total adequacy |

| ACCESS |

| peculiarities revealed in the gap |

| lays bare everyday processes of a living language |

| misunderstanding \(\rightarrow\) misinterpretation \(\rightarrow\) gives rise to interpretation (Schleiermacher) |

| It is always possible to say the same thing in another way \(\rightarrow\) reflexivity of language |

**Beneath the diversity of languages there are hidden structures that either bear the trace of a lost original language that we must rediscover or consist of *a priori* codes, of universal structures, that is, transcendentals that we must manage to reconstruct\(^{36}\) (Ricoeur, p. 15-16).**

| Polysemy \(\rightarrow\) each word has more than one meaning |

| Connotations \(\rightarrow\) affective hidden contexts peculiar to a circle, class, group |

**Source of ambiguity chiefly concerning the relationship of the signified**

| All we have are points of view, perspectives, partial visions of the world |

| Sequences of sentences are textures which weave the discourse into other sequences \(\rightarrow\) narrative |

| where you can “always tell a story in another way by changing the plot” (Ricouer, p. 27) |

**Rhetoric: language games/aporias**

| In the SECRET we rediscover the untranslatable (Steiner) |

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35 Translation as dissatisfaction with existing texts or in my case forms, thus articulating different approaches or entry points (cracks) into the text.

36 This statement helps me realize that my ideas have been there already, in a more eloquent and flowing way...but I must come to them myself, through my connection with the other and with myself as I remember, reflect and reconfigure the social text through a narrative I name mine/ours.
Ricoeur (2004) alludes to the paradoxical play between reader and author that bridges through a chiasmus, as an exchange of remembering and mourning. Ricoeur writes of the mother tongue as sacred where “the language of reception [is] subjected to the test of the foreign” (p. 5). Ricoeur contends that translation perceived as an “inflexible semantic exercise wrongly makes it a rule to translate word for word, the same word receiving a fixed equivalent in the target language” (p. 6). He furthers that “intertextuality is concealed in the actual stamp [la frappe] of the word. Intertextuality which is sometimes equivalent to revival, transformation, refutation of earlier uses by authors who fall within the same tradition of thought or opposing traditions” (p. 6).

There is a resistance between “the text to be translated and that of the translation’s language of reception” (Ricoeur, 2004, p.8). The translator’s ambivalence comes from paradoxical and opposite forces between one’s own language and that of another through which the “work of remembering” and the “work of translation” resists one another, whereby “the work of mourning” emerges in the “giving up” of the ideal translation (p. 8). The author and the reader hold the tension in how the intentions to meet the other play out. There is an “ambition of de-provincialising the mother tongue, which is invited to think of itself as one language amongst others, ultimately to see itself as foreign” (p. 9).

Ricoeur (2004) and Derrida (2003) both speak of building up the universal library “from which the untranslatabilities would all have been erased” (p. 9). Ricoeur contends that “there is no perfect translation, without losing something, until we reach an acceptance of the impassable difference of the peculiar and the foreign” (p. 9). He continues that universality as such “abolishes the memory of the foreign” whereby “all those who are foreign” erase history “into language’s stateless persons, exiles who would have given up the search for the asylum afforded by a language of reception” (p. 9-10).

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37 I compare universality to “the generalist” in nursing education practice discourses, where we attempt to teach to a blanket approach to nursing that doesn’t exist. What is a generalist in nursing or education? What do we hope to accomplish with such language? What is a specialist for that matter? It seems that the discord between being either/or is what holds us to the tension between both extremes by being a cobbler of many fragmented representations.
According to Ricoeur (2004), *linguistic hospitality* in the translator’s task emerges from the following:

And it is this mourning for the absolute translation that produces the happiness associated with translating. The happiness associated with translating is a gain when, tied to the loss of the linguistic absolute, it acknowledges the difference between adequacy and equivalence, equivalence without adequacy. There is its happiness. When the translator acknowledges and assumes the irreducibility of the pair, the peculiar and the foreign, he finds his reward in the recognition of the impassable status of the dialogicality of the act of translating as the reasonable horizon of the desire to translate. (p. 10)

As Ricoeur (2004) recovers happiness in all its potential frailty, foreignness resurfaces that negotiable other, the unknown secret and aporetic text.
I revisit Barthes, remembering Benjamin’s, “Task of the Translator38.” If the author is dead, what happens to the translator? Words like “death,” “tyrannical,” “negative,” and “lost” cover the page and leave me feeling uneasy, floundering once again in the midst of violence. How might we read between the lines in an effort to disrupt the discourses of text, author and translator...what or who is left, if anything or anyone?

We are now beginning to let ourselves be fooled no longer by the arrogant antiphralstical recriminations of good society in favour of the very thing it sets aside, ignores, smothers, or destroys; we know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth39: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author. (Barthes, 1977b, p. 148)

The power shift here is notably important. But, ultimately as the shepherd finds his way home, as reader/writer less certain of anything and more attuned to otherness, I ask, “Is it not in becoming the identity of reader/writer that we open ourselves to the multiplicity of the text, locating our mythology within it?” If that identity is lost (I’m all for it) how is it that we move into the cracks between “x” identity and “y” identification, as a historicity, as well as a possibility of manifestation? It is through memory and recycling that we hold the tensions of discourses that challenge us to aspire toward a natality of difference and shifting paradigms? Tricky. Once again one foot is stuck in a box (let’s call it a discourse) dragging it along.

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38 Benjamin (1968) represents the task of the translator in the following:

Where a text is identical with truth or dogma, where it is supposed to be “the true language” in all its literalness and without the mediation of meaning, this text is unconditionally translatable. In such case translations are called for only because of the plurality of languages. Just as in the original, language and revelation are one without any tension, so the translation must be one with the original in the form of the interlinear version, in which literalness and freedom are united. For to some degree all great texts contain their potential translation between the lines. (p. 82)

39 “Mythology, n. The body of a primitive people’s beliefs concerning its origin, early history, heroes, deities and so forth, as distinguished from the true accounts which it invents later” (Bierce, 2003, p. 94). Cohen (1956/2006) writes that “it is important to understand one’s part in a legend” (p. 55). What is my part of the legend/legacy I will leave behind, if anything at all?
Repetition

By virtue of repetition the individual is able to press forward, not toward a sheer novelty which is wholly discontinuous with the past, but into the being which he himself is. By repetition the individual becomes himself, circling back on the being which he has been all along.

(Caputo, 1987, p. 12).

If repetition is possible, it is due to miracle rather than to law. It is against the law: against the similar form and the equivalent content of law. If repetition can be found, even in nature, it is in the name of a power which affirms itself against the law, which works underneath laws, perhaps superior to laws. If repetition exists, it expresses at once a singularity opposed to the general, a universality opposed to the particular, a distinctive opposed to the ordinary, an instanteity opposed to variation and an eternity opposed to permanence. In every respect, repetition as a transgression. It puts law into question, it denounces its nominal or general character in favour of a more profound and more artistic reality. (Deleuze, 1994, p. 2-3)

Using Caputo's (1987) words, repetition is “a creative production which pushes ahead, which produces as it repeats, which produces what it repeats\(^4\), which makes a life for itself in the midst of the difficulties of the flux” (p. 3). He states, “Repetition aims at not the actual but the possible” (p. 91). Caputo (1987) asked, “What then is absolute? Is there anything about which we can have absolute assurance that it is solid and unshakeable” (p. 46)?

Caputo moves from interpretation through repetition in Radical Hermeneutics (1987) to “the absolute secret” driven by our “passion for non-knowing” in More Radical Hermeneutics (2000), which he describes as a rereading the tensions between interpretations “clinging tenaciously to the edge of the cliff” (similar to Krishnamurti’s precipice of action) through a “more originary experience” that playfully affirms the multiplicity of meanings (p. 3). In so doing, Caputo solicits Derrida secret that lies beneath the surface of the text in its unreadability and missed meanings or intentions. Caputo then turns to Foucault who plays with non-knowing through claims of “facticity” and universality of human nature, as canonical and institutional forms of organizational discourse, always resting in the in-between that is left unspoken and without name. He de-operationlizes ethics as an overly prescriptive guide, or manual for dealing with violence, attempting to consider the directions we take to “maximize and optimize the possibilities of human flourishing and minimiz[ing] violence, by allowing for the invention of new forms and the coming of things we have not foreseen” (p. 10).

\(^4\) Here I think of processing what is repeated. Each time I see this work, which I used in my Masters as well, I rekindle my relationship with hermeneutic cycling and recycle my own material and learning in different configurations. I’m always building on the blocks of my shaky foundation, which continue to crumble below me as I continue to claw my way through the rubble.
**Hermeneutics**

the art of deciphering *indirect* meaning

**Symbols**

expressions of double meaning

a primary meaning referred beyond itself to a second meaning which is never given immediately

Incommensurability versus comparability

**Rhythm**

**Loss**

**Translating and being translated**

**Interpretation**

**Transmutation**

“Commencement Myths” based on the Bible

created an original separation

attempting to gain order from chaos

Making fraternity an “ethical project”

the broadening of the horizon of their own language + formation

What is one’s own must be learned as well as what is foreign (Ricoeur, 2004, p. 21)

Learn thy self before you learn another and venture into foreign territory, but can we ultimately ever really know ourselves or another?

“Because there is no absolute criterion for good translation; for such a criterion to be available, we would have to be able to compare the sources and target texts with a third text which would bear the identical meaning that is supposed to be passed from the first to the second” (Ricoeur, p. 22)

A good translation can aim only at a supposed *equivalence*

the only way of criticizing a translation is to suggest another alleged, better or different one

Rosenzweig, as cited by Ricoeur writes that “to translate is to serve two masters, the foreigner in his strangeness, the reader in his desire for appropriation” (Ricoeur, p. 22-23)

form of LINGUISTIC HOSPITALITY bringing the author to the reader reader to the author

work of recollection

work of mourning applied to renouncing the very ideal of the perfect translation

maintains the nostalgia for the original language

control over language by means of the universal language

Giving up the dream of the perfect translation is still the acknowledgement of the impassable difference between the peculiar and the foreign. (Ricouer, p. 23)
In the moments of questioning is this someone else speaking or is this me, I read Caputo (2000) and I/we artificial boundaries dissolve into commonalities on a time space continuum of happenings, manifesting a narrative surrounding the nature of questioning and of my situatedness in a particular context of historicity. Donnie Darko41 comes to mind as I read, “the end of ethics is a little bit like the death of God for people who still believe in God” (Caputo, p. 174). These happenings and singularities that fuse into this moment of perplexity and wonder in my mind are not irrelevant. That I rush to write this wave of connections into some meaningful form that gets lost in translation between the thinking and the writing through the next abyss of openings, manifests something wholly different than I intended, but is no less interesting. These moments of revelation are no longer as important as they are intriguing and mystifying. That which is lost and found in the compost heap of memory... accidental and incidental happenings, are moments shared in this disruptive representation of contingencies and meanderings.

The trace of the secret that is unknown to anyone, but somehow gives us faith and hope is one that guides my inquiry. As I re-search, no longer secure with “an ethic” or want of one particular methodology, I linger in the uncertain, indefinite and non-essential randomness of happenings that provoke me. I search for patterns and a language for this journey of thoughts, memories and emerging stories that are not his-story... somehow of me... not belonging to me, but rather... to another singularity bearing witness to the text.

41 Donnie Darko (Kelly, 2001) takes us on a confusing, scary ride into the recesses of the mind and the tangent universe. Labeled schizophrenic, Donnie shares a world of possibility and potential in the spaces between thoughts, discourses (between science, psychology and religion) and realms, between wakefulness and a dream, in between identity (...) and the manipulated dead.
Maturana (1987) considers the situatedness of the observer not as explanatory, rather as relational in questioning and addressing the issue of responsibility, within the context of knowledge, by considering what constitutes “adequate conduct”. He furthers that, it is within the domain of specialization that one may respond to said action or position, because there is a common classification that acknowledged forms of assessing knowledge between disciplines, that is, adequate conduct.

Maturana (1987) proceeds to consider how adequate conduct emerges in a system, through the use of, and clarification of, languaging a unifying mechanism. Specifically, he states that the interaction between professor and student reveals a coherence in the domain of what constitutes the professor and what constitutes the student. An interruption in the coherence of either domain will result in inadequate conduct in the other and simultaneously be affected by the circumstances of recognition. “The phenomenon of cognition (...) is necessarily relative to the domain in which one observes structural coherences which are the result of the histories of interactions of the organisms” (p. 81). Varela (1987) writes that moves are being made to spell out “a mechanism by which cognitive processes can be understood and built, a mechanism by which unities can endow a world with a sense through their structure and history of interactions” (p. 53). In speaking to the paths of adaptation and change manifesting in evolutionary terms, he writes about “the possibility of a world view beyond the split between us and it, where knowledge and this world are as inseparable as the inseparability between perception and action” (p. 62) as a “laying down” of the world. Maturana and Varela (1992), ascribe to the importance of being attuned to the senses of one’s experiences as a necessary means of survival in the problems we confront through “the praxis of our living, coupled to a surrounding world which appears filled with regularities that are at every instant the result of our biological and social histories” (p. 241). They speak to the network of interactions, dependent on our history, which characterize our becoming, “as an expression of our manner of being autonomous living systems” (p. 241).

Adequate conduct houses an ethical jurisdiction around a frame of reference that does not feel as universalized as the policies and laws that judge and deem general good and bad determinants. Complexity thinking offers flexibility through perception and action unique to the individual and common to each individual as being human.
Varcoe, Doane, Pauly, Rodney, Storch, Mahoney, McPherson, Brown and Starzomski (2004) conducted a study to focus on the everyday ethical challenges of nursing practice. They locate nursing ethics as an evolving field that is largely influenced and shaped by biomedical discourse. Varcoe et al. contend that the focus of ethics tends to be directed toward “highly charged medical situations, while [nurses and other healthcare professionals] fail to see the ethical tensions and issues that lie within their daily experiences” (p. 317).

Doane (2002) speaks to the moral identities that arise out of “relational and contextually-mediated processes” (p. 627), whereby the construction of moral agency is one that is multifaceted, complex, reflective, dialogical and an ongoing process of “valuation and meaning-making” (p. 633). Doane highlights the tensions between grand and personal narratives, intrapersonal expectations and interpersonal historical, relational and institutional contextual forces that create conflict in how nurses exercise their moral agency. “These nurses were faced with bringing orderliness to their actions and to their identity as moral agents in spite of the conflicting demands on them that contravened their ability to ‘do good’” (p. 633). Doane challenges educators to develop a pedagogy that can support nurses in the following ways:

- Become moral agents; to see ethics as something it is, not merely as something they follow;
- Learn consciously to pay attention to their relational experiences and the contextual forces affecting them and to recognize the conflicts of values in which they are engaged;
- Develop the knowledge and ability to live in and navigate their way through the complex, ambiguous and shifting terrain of ethical nursing practice;
- Actively to narrate their response, including making decisions and acting in relation to values that can support their own evolving identity as a moral agent.

(Doane, 2002, pp. 633-634)

Doane, Pauly, Brown and McPherson (2004) explore how it is that educators develop pedagogical approaches that can “support students to become and remain moral agents” as these nurses navigate “through the complex, ambiguous and shifting terrain of ethical nursing practice” (pp. 240-241). What they discover in their study is that student nurses find it is important to create opportunities to “reflect on ethically troubling situations, to have time to engage in conversation and thought, and to experience adequate support to sustain a sense of personally involved moral agency” (p. 249). As a means of “practice[ing] ethically amidst the social, political, economic and organization contexts of health care, (...) students require understanding and knowledge of health care structures and health policies” to make choices and become more self-aware of their moral agency in ethical decision-making.
Caputo (2000) challenges the notions of universal principles in ethical decision making, which he contends are a placated, sedentary response to contemporary, challenging issues. In our current state of affairs, we hold policies, laws, and ethics to such esteem that they become fundamentalist incursions of rights imply duties (Peterson & Lupton, 1996). We as humans have become apathetic in our inability to access each other within the institutional and other organizational “red tape.” These technicalities and obscurities have distanced our documents from our experiences, made our actions invisible and our voices silenced and extinguishable... no longer imagining the singularity and wholeness Caputo, Bohm and Agamben (1993) contend we are “always already.”

Thinking at the end of ethics means that the most serious reflection is conducted at the frontiers, in the passage beyond the present borders, limits, or ends, where we are forced to think anew, to confront what we did not see coming, to cross over into foreign lands, to rethink what we thought we knew in the light of what now imposes itself upon us and impresses upon us how little we really did know.

(Caputo, 2000, p. 179)

Reflective moment:
How do you describe what this is? How do you choose what to include and what to exclude when everything is random and incidental? Does it become about an aesthetic presentation, or a structure/form that has rules necessary to the engagement? I think more than anything this is about being reflective about those inclusions that manifest and the exclusions that did not make the cut. What are the conditions and features of a particular work in a particular situatedness? How do context and historicity reveal and conceal themselves (not personified)? These approaches and decisions are going to be different for each author and reader. The questions will also vary. The only practical aspect that I see is an inquiry that is not about a particular methodology, but rather includes itself under scrutiny and deconstruction in the face of other similar yet different discourses. Caputo takes me to a space of nuance and possibility. What if we imagined otherwise and our engagement is to deconstruct the ethics that we take for granted as being necessary and implicit in how we connect with another? I consider how it is that we tend to communicate with one another and the virtual connectedness that has replaced face to face interactions...
Facebook is a precarious space of transience. People come and go and interact from a virtual space of proximity. People who haven’t connected in ages and those who see each other daily float in and out of this nether space of being with another…but not really. There are different social utilities for this space. I like to play word games, map where I have been, create friend collages and send/receive messages to let people know I’m thinking of them and identify our shared interests. Similar to e-mail, spam advertisements infiltrate the space and it becomes commercialized, which apparently, as Facebook administrators tell us, keeps the service free for users. The lights are flashy. The profiles are similar in that they all have the same format. You can choose applications to make them somewhat different. I don’t feel anonymous like I did in the chat rooms of the early 2000s. I do feel a bit voyeuristic as I access other profiles and travel to different lands, convocations, birthday celebrations…each photo and comment reveals something about that someone I thought I knew, or that someone I haven’t really gotten to know. I am often surprised, intrigued and compelled to share glimpses into my own narrative. The mood of the day and my status are features I choose to share. How I choose to convey myself or how I see others wittingly or unwittingly share something of themselves becomes a furtive and simultaneously revealing exchange. It feels absurd to have professors, students, friends, children of friends and old classmates all sharing this space…the randomness gives me a feeling of solidarity I no longer experience in my everyday “reality.”

Today I find out AH has passed away…on Facebook. It seems so strange to know someone from a distance and be connected virtually and now spiritually, or some other metamorphosis of connectedness. I’m losing distinction between the layers of connection. We are here and we are not here, I mean I’m sitting alone in my living room in the middle of the night scavenging through the connections as they filter through my viewing. First I find a multilingual play on aporia, then a random comment posted months ago about AH’s passing, as I stumble from another connector (person’s) site for a reason completely disconnected in intent. Could it be her who has passed away…really? When I go to her site to check her activity there are posts made in memory of her. Her facebook page has become her memorial in a way like no other could be…we can keep going back and it is actually a continuation of a journey between us that does not have the same classification of familiarity. This site lives forever as long as we nurture it and feed it with activity. I think I will return tomorrow with a virtual card, perhaps another day with virtual flowers. It’s like going on a quest to reconnect on another level. Does AH “feel” more at peace and connected to the whole we are, as we feed this liminal zone with thoughts and intentions wishing her well? The virtual space represents something unique to the passing into another space of being.
Caputo (2000) beseeches us to have faith in The Secret ...the wholly other...the singularity... with fear and trembling on the horizon of hope and expectation. For Caputo, this anticipation is not an expectant complacency that there will be an actual presence, as if we could know this to be true, as if God had whispered this knowledge into our ear. Rather he implores us to gift unconditional love without duty as a moral “ought,” without the gifting being a charitable donation to be written off, which would ultimately be to our benefit. Such love is not about obligation, but rather it is about being thoughtful and paying it forward without expecting anything in return. It is a space of authenticity and genuineness, rather than generalize-ability or universality. It is a state in which we become foreigner to ourselves, homeless, destitute and abandoned, but ready to be hospitable to the wholly other.

In this time of apathy and efficiencies, Caputo (2000) compels us to see beyond the crisis in the schemata, to keep an eye on the idiosyncrasies of the singular situation, signaling the end of ethics, demanding everything of us. Caputo’s affirmative action is not about laws and duties, which he labels “coercive structures” (p. 186)

I go back to bearing witness and wonder how we hold the tensions of our historicity (what has worked in the past) and consider what about that past we want to bring forward, perhaps in new ways. How do we meet the challenges of technological communication and approaches to efficiencies in healthcare and nursing education, amidst the complex human relational dynamics that beckon us to face each other and ourselves?

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42 Caputo (2000) defines general schemata as “the beliefs and practices we have grown up with, that we have grown up in, that have shaped and formed and nourished us and made us to be what we are” (p. 182).
Cody (2001a) describes the ethics of bearing witness as necessary to healthcare practices, especially related to situations of human suffering and justice. Bearing witness is “attesting to the veracity or authenticity of something through one’s personal presence” (Cody, p. 289). As he relays the professional qualifications and performance of ethical conduct as nonmaleficence (doing no harm), he asks, “How can one keep from doing harm if one acts without knowing what the reality of the lived experience is for the person?” (p. 290).

“Bearing witness happens face-to-face in moment-to-moment living, but it also takes multidimensional forms, such as rituals, testimonies, documentation, literature and art” (Cody, 2001a, p. 290).

Rodney and Varcoe (2001) argue that the nursing profession needs to consider ethical values behind economic decisions made in healthcare. They speak to the invisible work of nurses as being obscured when “[n]urses routinely distanced themselves emotionally from patients in order to preserve time for the nursing work that “counts.” Since emotional labour is often invisible, many nurses [use such a] strategy” (p. 41).

Naef (2006) writes that bearing witness is of “utmost importance” to the quality of life that enacts our “moral agency” in nursing practice (p. 146). In citing Levinas (1979, 1998) he contends that it is the face-to-face encounter that connects us as human beings and opens us to our humanity. As we are awakened to seeking the “epiphany of the face” as a reflection of something we cannot comprehend, “the manifestation of humanity itself” (p. 147), we are called to bear witness as “a form of ethical resistance” (p. 148). As Levinas and Cody (2001) argue (cited in Naef), in refusing to bear witness we are in fact not only morally reprehensible to one other, we are in fact committing a violent act toward humanity.

While I believe that bearing witness is a privilege that I hold as a nurse and nurse educator, I struggle in wondering how it is that you teach bearing witness as an ethical engagement, without enforcing or creating a foundationalist theoretical complacency in praxis. How do we teach future nurses, educators and policy makers to bear witness in a non-prescribed way? Can you teach someone to be present and bear witness? How do we write policies about bearing witness? How might we reimage policies in light of “invisibilities” that are not accounted for in documentary reality? How might such “policies” look in light of our need for more “face-face” interaction...thus, transforming the written up document? It seems to me that it is the written down narrative, a/r/tographic representation and the performative act that enables a living praxis, brings us face to face with human potentiality. In classrooms that are not conducive to face-face contact and labs that are focused on simulation technology this vision seems inaccessible and thwarted. How do I create an environment, within the context of the shifting nature and confines of the current existing pedagogical environment, that speaks to nursing’s history and social relational dynamic of bearing witness, and promote enactivated connections to the written up critical theories of self/other?
Report from the hospital

We used matches to draw lots: who would visit him.
And I lost. I got up from our table.
Visiting hours were just about to start.

When I said hello he didn’t say a word.
I tried to take his hand—he pulled it back
like a hungry dog that won’t give up his bone.

He seemed embarrassed about dying.
What do you say to someone like that?
Our eyes never met, like in a faked photograph.

He didn’t care if I stayed or left.
He didn’t ask about anyone from our table.
Not you, Barry. Or you, Larry. Or you, Harry.

My head started aching. Who’s dying on whom?
I went on about modern medicine and the three violets in a jar.
I talked about the sun and faded out.

It’s a good thing they have stairs to run down.
It’s a good thing they have gates to let you out.
It’s a good thing you’re all waiting at our table.

The hospital smell makes me sick.

(Szymborska, 1998, p. 95)
Through dialogue and critical thinking, more is required of the teacher-student relationship, where both take on an active collaborative presence (Freire, 1970; Hooks, 2003). What this means is that traditional power discourses, although always already implied in any human relationship, are called into question and offer a critical pedagogy that deconstructs western taken-for-granted notions of the how-tos of education.

Perhaps rather than seeking to name this engagement as praxis, it is practical wisdom that I seek. Ricoeur (2007, 1992) writes that practical wisdom (prudence) is an enterprise in applied ethics, an Aristotelian (Sachs, 2002) notion of phronesis that necessitates active engagement. Arendt’s (1981) focus on phronesis is through the accountability of intersubjective valuation of judgments and a preservation of the discourses that influence those judgments in an effort at thoughtful action. Arendt (1978) connects Aristotle’s take on phronesis as “practical reason” and praxis as “performing the art,” through proairesis, where “what actually happens is that, reason and desire being in conflict, the decision between them is a matter of ‘preference,’ of deliberate choice” involving intentions (p. 61). “Incontinence” or inaction is not desirable.

*But how is it that desire to make a choice for the betterment of another (as well as oneself, or perhaps in place of the betterment of oneself) manifests the face of the ethical engagement as praxis? The choices we make are influenced by our experiences, our history and many other factors that shape our coming to co-creating ways of being at a particular point in time. How is it that educators manifest practical wisdom, if proaireses, as a deliberate planning ahead, is a preference between alternatives? It seems that our instructional skills are not quite enough to deal with the everydayness of choices that come our way, particularly as we consider the grey areas of good/bad and right/wrong in the midst of living that polyvocality.*
Gadow (1999) writes that nursing philosophy requires a coherent framework for ethics, which she elaborates as a dialectical layering between subjective immersion, objective detachment, and intersubjective engagement, which evolve on a time/space continuum. The purpose of the dialectic, is to mediate, that is to bring forth the opposition and negative, between the layers as a form “mutually enhancing” and ultimately strengthening relationships between elements that “are no longer mutually exclusive” (p. 58). This “ongoing self-negation at the heart of the dialectic” between thesis-antithesis-synthesis is a characteristic rhythm between “simplicity, opposition, and reconciliation” that gives rise to complexity and “further cycles of differentiation” (p. 59).

Keeping in mind the above dialectic relationship, I will focus on the third of Gadow’s (1999) three layers: the postmodern ethic of “intersubjective ethical engagement,” as it pertains to “contingency on the relational narrative and constructed contextual meanings of the good” (p. 58). In regard to the notion of perceiving engagement, Gadow writes that “the valuing of persons requires perception of each one’s uniqueness” (p. 63). “Engagement cannot be regulated by principles; they would remove the relation from its grounding in actual persons and orient it toward external authority” (Gadow, p. 63). The postmodern ethic is based on the contingency of meaning and personal interpretation of experiences that are relative to the meaning-maker (Gadow). It is through this lack of comfortable universality, through the shared experiences of the abysmal abysses and gapping gaps of wounding, when “ethical certainties fail and nothing remains,” Gadow writes, that we co-create an engagement with the danger of “joining another in vulnerability” (p. 64).

Gadow (1999) situates this relational narrative in the metonymic spaces between particularity of either person and beyond that relationship; as “more than personal but not universal” (p. 64). *In so doing, Gadow brings attention to our present ethical engagement through our historicity, which has transformed via a dialectic relationship with the black and white dichotomous approach, to a grey re-cycling that proceeds to reflect and refract off of that negation to become otherwise. What Gadow does for my processing is foster an acceptance that “it’s okay” to be in the uncertainty of the moment, as long as we are mutually aware and co-creating it together, through the tensions/negations that transform our transitional ways of being into being otherwise as reflective learning...and hope.*
As I reflect on my efforts to splice the gap between practice and theory, stuffing an abyss with more empty concepts that seem to sift through rather than hold substance, I turn to hooks. hooks (2003) writes of a creative, expressive dreaming and imagining that takes from theory and experience in small doses. She doesn’t claim to know, but rather shares a narrative that exposes the vulnerability of practical wisdom. She doesn’t stop there either, she could focus on her own insular feelings of what her life is like, but instead she speaks of her students and her attempts to instill in them a “daring to courageously cling to open-mindedness” (p. 195). She speaks through her fear, as she manifests her presence of the “prophetic imagination.” It is an imagining that goes “beyond a private daydream” to take risks to “find out what connects us, reveling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community” (p. 195-197).

I consider these words and reflect on my responsibilities as a nurse educator, writer, and parent (struggling-in-identity) living these complexities all at once. It is in this spirit of quiet contemplation amidst a fervent desire to manifest a presence (challenging when you relinquish identity), by example, which holds the dominant discourses in question and even puts “presence” in question, as it manifests (Arendt thoughtfulness-in-action)... that I return to Meyer’s Living Inquiry course outline (2005). I’m drawn back into her narrative which she creates as she is preparing for our course, walking, contemplating and paying infinite attention to the world around her and how she finds herself in that world. I remember it was not in the theorizing of what that was about, it was and is in the living it through.

Meyer writes field notes from her visits to the Beach to invoke themes of inquiry into place, language, time and self/other: “Since I too am a visitor here, I pay close attention to the way the day unfolds on the Beach. Inwardly, I’m aware of feeling empty without my usual routines. What do I do with my self? Now and then my restless mind rushes in, filling the bareness with whatever it has stockpiled—thoughts, opinions, and fears. When that happens, the Beach disappears. I no longer see” (Meyer, 2006, pp. 158-159).
I remember her folded arms,
cradled tightly against her chest.
*Her stare intensely focused on the absence in her bosom.*
She would not lift her gaze to meet my hopeful smile.
The air felt stale and suffocating.
*My mouth was dry and my heart raced.*

She made a move toward me and I froze.
As she shifted her focus I felt the change in her countenance.
*She locked her eyes on me,*
As though she had lost something and was searching for it there.
*I suddenly felt cold and empty.*
*I accepted the full weight of her arms,*
and began to cry.

This experience occurred in a Performative Inquiry class. We were asked to think of a memorable moment in our lives where some form of learning occurred. Quite honestly, I do not remember the details of the activity, because the effect of the action was so powerful that I felt blind-sighted. I did not have a frame of reference for handling this information and I felt isolated, alone and vulnerable to the elements of our shared experience. I immediately expressed my anger outwardly to the instructor, as we debriefed the situation. At the time, I wanted a buffer, guide, “how to manual” or any opening disclaimer that would prepare me from experiencing potential harm. I did not expect my experience in a classroom environment to have such an impact. As a nurse, in the context of practice of nursing education and bedside care, I feel as professionals we prepare others and ourselves to negotiate our relational space through ethical guidelines and standards of practice, as we invite another to consider what that participation will entail. As an education student, I felt my “guard” was down and I was face to face with another human being sharing the rawness of their experience with no frame of reference with which to gather my selves to be thoughtful in my response. I was just as raw as she was. I learned immensely from that experience, particular in considering what teaching as improvisation feels like.

*What were the factors that brought us to this point? That invisible protective shield was not there. We were real and present with one another. I was not privileged and prepared with a sterile document of her information in advance.*
For Garoian (1999) performing pedagogy is juxtaposing text, image, speech and action, mostly through free play. In so doing, students learn to critique stereotypes and challenge assumptions. Such a pedagogical approach “recognizes and encourages the tradition of rebellion as a natural aspect of students’ creative and mental development” (p. 31). The mental and critical processes that occur through creative thinking in performative pedagogy depend on “situational aesthetics” where “the relationship between the artist, the art-making process, and the community are considered part of the art work” (p. 32). Through ritual practices, the facilitator of the process becomes a “luminal servant” transcending roles, to transform consciousness and provoke cultural customs, by promoting an embodiment that repositions knowledge through re-incarnations that politicized and an-aesthetize the body.

*When I hear students struggle with the language and continually asking the same questions about thematic content (i.e. health promotion practices and teaching/learning approaches), I no longer think about the disparities in the same way. I want to learn to get to the root of the questioning of each individual person and group who is telling me that they just don’t get it. Where is the gap in that process and what are the tools at our disposal?*

*Le jeu, le pastiche ~ Play, parody*

Among the many illusions he sustains about himself, there is this very tenacious one: that he likes to play, and therefore that he has the power to do so; yet he never wrote a parody in his life (...) though he often wanted to. There might be a theoretical reason for this: if it is a question of baffling (*dejouer*) the subject, then playing (*jouer*) is an illusory method, and even contrary in effect to what it seeks to accomplish: the subject of such play is more stable than ever; the real game is not to mask the subject but to mask the playing itself. (Barthes, 1977a, p. 142)
Is the act or performance of writing relegated to the space of lost identity? How has the power of the text as multi-dimensional space of no origin, simultaneously become one of rigid interpretation? Where does that leave our narratives of human imperfections? Is the post-structural movement one of superficial scripts and prescribed rigor? Are these attempts at movement actually static gestures that inhibit the freedoms that qualitative researchers profess to advocate and embody? From one dimensional scripts to narratives that uphold positivist procedural traditions, I see an advent of robotic mimesis in many of the qualitative approaches to research. Perhaps Kuhn’s paradigms have not quite shifted, but rather the incremental change has always held the beliefs and values of the old world in which it is trapped for fear of silence/non-acceptance.

When I look to critical theory, literature and philosophy I have difficulty finding a niche, other than through language practices and discussions between conceptual discourses. I look to pop culture philosophy for ways to creatively represent media and images, but get stuck in the technological rut of not being proficient in this domain. What results is a mediocre attempt at cobbling together word art and reflective narratives that do not quite measure up, but feel good in some moments and unsettling in others.
As I stand over and behind a group of students writing a midterm exam, I consider my pedagogical situatedness. The term pedagogy is thrown around a lot among faculty and I am beginning to question how many faculty actually have a handle on what the language means. As I do my research, I begin to realize that it is not an external definition I seek, but rather one that I perceive will fit my own practice and way of being within the tensions of the structures that impose deterministic ways of seeing other colleagues and other students.

While pedagogy is deeply implicated in the production of power/knowledge relationships and the construction of values and desires, its theoretical center of gravity begins not with a particular claim to new knowledge, but with real people articulating and rewriting their lived experiences within rather than outside of history. (Giroux, 1994, p. 284)

Grummet (1988) writes about “the look of pedagogy” and how it creates a Foucaultian power discourse of untouchability and invulnerability. Touch has become a bad thing. Our distance between speaks volumes of silence. The assumptions and expectations surround practices of surveillance, where evaluative tests diagnose measurable learning to which we are imprisoned and institutionally dismembered.

van Manen (1990) views pedagogy as a culturally-defined, lived experiential perspective. He contends that although the term has been roughly equated with the act of teaching, instructional methodology, curriculum approach, or education in general (...) [t]here has been little attempt to pose the question of the nature of pedagogy, to dialogue about the meaning of pedagogy in our everyday lives” (p. 142). van Manen continues that the elusiveness of this intentional praxis may be ineffable.

As I consider just a few perspectives amidst multiple and diverse thoughts on the topic of pedagogy, I return to imagining living inquiry, contemplation, playfulness and mindfulness amidst the complexity of the pedagogical possibilities. I hold the precarious balance between identifying my approach to what it is that I do and identifying myself through that approach, whereby a fixed definition is undesirable and getting there is what it is all about.
Curriculum scholar, Aoki, bridges the signifier and the signified in the liminal space between identity/identification creating ambivalence in “the tensioned space of both ‘and/not-and.’ [This is] a space of conjoining and disrupting, (...) a generative space of possibilities, a space wherein tensioned ambiguity newness emerges” (Pinar & Irwin, 2005, p. 318).

Aoki articulated these inbetween spaces as metonymic moments; where he contends that we are “living in the spaces of between, marked by the cracks in the words” for example, “curriculum-as-plan/curriculum-as/live(d);” a difficult and ambiguous pedagogy of possibility (p. 321). Aoki uses Cohen’s lyric philosophy to unsettle curriculum conversations through history as a metonymy, “There’s a crack, a crack in everything; that’s how the light comes in” (Pinar & Irwin, p. 321).

Aokian scholar and student, Palulis (2003) writes:

I’m drawn to certain hybrid writings – to the discursive flow of ‘to and fro’ writing – aware that chiasmatic movements are never reciprocal but lean toward. Circles colliding – only by entering another circle can you crack the movement. Metonymic writing seeks to rupture (t)exteriority. (...) Drawing from the notion of Metonomy as a chiasmatic ‘in-between’ space of metaphor/metonymy, the place of the slash – the place of the gap – is the space of generative possibilities in a drifting, uncertain habitation – in moments of persistent in/stability. (p. 266)

Palulis, writes through the third space of Aokian openings, where im/posibility offers a re-location between writer/reader. She uses the work of Derrida, Lacan, and Zizek to track the illusive ontological gap, furthering the chiasm as a site of pedagogy. Palulis offers a (t)exteriority demarcating a “diaspora of words” that (in)habit the gap of tensionality and in/stability; “a parasitic writing/reading relationship – one devoured by the other” in the space of resistance of writing a “paper that is not a paper” (Palulis, 2003, p. 264).
performance and performativity

Fels (1998) reveals performance through the etymology of the word as a multiplicity of possibilities, where “(d)ance is action. And the prefix per- suddenly takes on a split-personality when juxtaposed with the word form meaning “utterly, throughout and through’ form but also ‘to do away, away entirely or to destruction” (Fels, p. 30) of form. Fels’s performance is an imaginative “space-moment” of learning not-yet realized with action-interaction potential in an unfolding landscape and space “between structure and chaos” (p. 30), as improvisation “embodying both process and product” (p. 29).
Simultaneously, Fels provides a provocative perspective of performance that “seeks to create-destroy equilibrium” in its elusive, impossible to capture, “not-yet-real” imagining of a possible world (p. 33).

Butler (1996) describes the notion of performativity as a way of asking how language becomes the acting subject that can injure in specific and bodily ways by naming and thereby constituting or producing subjects.

It is important to distinguish performance from performativity: the former presumes a subject. … The notion of performativity, and performative speech acts in particular – understood as those speech acts that bring into being that which they name. … So what I’m trying to do is think about performativity as that aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names. Then I take a further step, through the Derridean rewriting of Austin, and suggest that this production actually always happens through a certain kind of repetition and recitation. (Butler, 1996, p.112)

I hesitate to attempt to comprehend the subtle differences between performance and performativity. When I consider the language that necessitates speech through the reiteration of that importance, the two become inseparable and I wonder is it possible to have one without the other when we as human bear witness to another as a spectator (Boal), enactivating a human text of complexity? Each incarnation and incantation is a rehearsal for the grand finale.

As I play with Davis’s rendition of education, I consider the malleability of worlds and worldviews. How did we come to mean anything, when everything feels so transitional and interconnected (everything becoming everything else)? Hypotheses are disproved and language fluctuates based on trends in societal norms. The text itself has the potential to become otherwise…but the memory and image/symbolism that is attached to our perceptions seem to be written in indelible ink in our minds. If we are mindful of the inductive and deductive roots of our learning, we become increasingly attentive to the archives and traces that education promises and also more alerted to our historical roots that will not let go.
Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman (1995) write that, "Knowledge—understood post-structurally as the reduction of difference to identity, the many to the one, heterogeneity to homogeneity—is violence." (p. 481). They continue by citing Serres (1992) that "to know is to kill...to commit murder, to terrorize" (p. 198), where for Daignault (1992) "thinking is a passage between suicide and murder...between nihilism and terrorism" (p. 199). I linger between these “unacceptable” forms of violence; of elicit foreignness. I question the assumption of knowledges that inform us that this is so (including my own skepticism), as well as the trust in those deemed knowledgeable. Who decides when you cross the line (any line that is deemed worthy of dichotomy)? Who benefits and who pays the price bestowed upon the citizen incarnate, through his/her rights and responsibilities?

Meaty Question
Through educational discourse, Aoki calls for the need to revisit the notion of vocation (Pinar & Irwin, 2005). By attunement to the revealed and concealed (in)dwelling in un/recovering silent narratives of curriculum, praxis resurfaces in Aoki’s vocality, as vocation. He writes about “effective teaching” amidst “teaching competence,” where he describes teaching as a “deeply practical vocation,” amidst the “predicament” that teaches as a “pragmatic one” (Pinar & Irwin, 2005, p. 190). Simultaneously, Aoki’s calling forth reframes notions of “competence” and “efficiency/effectiveness” by asking how it is that we frame language within a particular context and social location in the educational landscape.

Aoki renders the leader and expert incomplete as teacher becomes (in)dweller, not as “authentic leader (…) but rather in his attunement to the care that silently dwells.” The happening of moments as contextual and sensual in calling forth vocality/vocation/voices of the discursive othering of ourselves in education, e/merges in e/valuation. We become manifest in the cracks and metonymic openings of our pedagogical textuality.

When considering conceptions of competence (the alternate of which could only be incompetence) and science (as empirically seeking one truth, or proof/evidence of that truth), how might we be more open to what the conception of competence has to offer? Young and Paterson (2007) contend that the challenges of nursing curricula are encountered when graduates must meet professional competencies. They further that “student-centered” learning is a means of working through the tensions that emerge between the expectations of the academy and the profession. The language mildly shifts and alters from a modernist interpretation of “competence” that is dichotomous and impervious to movement, to one of openings and possibility where tensile forces offer flexibility and dialogue between disparate points of view.

_I am engaging in this privileged conversation because I am a professional. What do I miss because of this guise? If professionalism is about protecting the public what are we protecting them from…our humanness?

Protect and serve…do no harm
Surveillance and screening…
Am I a cop?
How do I want to be perceived? How do I want to act, mindful of the tensions between ways of being and the possibilities that bring us to action otherwise?_
While I aim to present the language of competence as being challenged through deconstruction, the language of evidence-based practice is being challenged in its revision, based on interpretations of its meaning in the field. Mitchell (1999) engages in the dialogue of what constitutes evidence in relation to directives in nursing practice as a contentious issue, evoking the notion that evidence-based practice “underestimates the complexity of large systems, in which chaos is the rule, despite careful planning” (p. 31). She continues that “[e]vidence, by necessity, is knowledge that is standardized across populations.” (p. 31) While “evidence may provide direction for the development of procedures, techniques, and protocols that nurses and others are asked to perform” (p. 30), evidence is “value laden and theoretically driven” and “proponents of evidence-based practice oversimplify and misrepresent the complexities of human relating and the realities of multiple competing values, including those of the client, in the nurse-person process” (...). As a result, Mitchell expresses the concern “that nurses are being portrayed as empty (thoughtless) beings who must be directed (...) based on research evidence. The idea that nurses require evidence to know they should listen or be open to unique patterns of health, for instance, is a dangerous notion – if one can take it seriously at all” (p. 32).

Doll (1993) holds the tension of what is deemed evident, by altering the posterity of “who” is deemed competent, citing Schon (1983) who stated, “Students may well ‘suspend disbelief’ in the teacher’s authority, remaining open to the teacher’s ‘competence as it emerges’ through actions and interactions” (p. 4). Schon in his study of the “competent practitioner,” considers a different model of “reflective practice” for the practitioner, as one in which personal and individual competence is “generated not through certified courses of study but through reflections on and in lived experience” (Doll, p. 46). Doll writes, “The primary emphasis in any competence model is not on the deficits of Being but on the powers of Becoming,” giving insight into the transformational potential (p. 49). Doll invites the tensions between competence and performance, where “competency-based” curriculum movements of the 1970s come into question.

Doll engages in the dialogue around competence as a reciprocity that is tacitly held between teacher and student. Such a view adds an element of responsibility between client/patient and RN or student nurse, whereby the knowledge that is shared is opened to mutual expectations of how that knowledge manifests in the relational context. Patient/client teaching is paramount in the advent of shorter, more acute and emergent visits to the hospital and outpatient settings. The traditional models of healthcare practitioner as “expert” have shifted with not only efficiency models of service, but especially with the proliferation and increase of technological means of providing service: telehealth provisions of service; easily accessible website information on diagnosing signs and symptoms; and pharmacological advertisements that appeal to the public. In so doing, the medium of the message bypasses the traditional control of the health professional’s formative input to media infiltration, propagating further inquiry and internet exploration rather than ongoing consultation with a professional on a face to face-face basis.

43 The family as expert also needs more attention as we increase the complexity of caring for health challenges on an “outpatient” basis, thus the evident and competent is not about regulating the practitioner, but rather, offering optimal learning environments conducive to evoking potentials between multiple layers of active participation. Adding another layer of complexity looking at population health, we must consider new vistas of community care and involvement.
Aoki (Pinar & Irwin, 2005) brings forth the problematic instrumentalization of competence, as managed, skilled, instructed and diagnostic of a “manipulative ethos” (p. 127). What also manifests in abstract conceptualization of competence is the critical analysis, which for Aoki is an etymological excavation of the root words within their historicity, which offer different possibilities in appearance. For example “competence” as a becoming is rendered incomplete, transitional, in process; always juxtaposed between the abstract and the concrete. Metonymy, as proposed by Aoki, generates a “horizontal” or lateral space of discourse, one that does not fix a “subject location.” Through an etymological uprooting, Aoki dives into the words themselves as signified. The Latin root is “com-petere,” “com” meaning “together,” and “petere” meaning “to seek.” In a root sense, then to be competent means to be able to seek together or to be able to venture forth together (Pinar & Irwin, p. 130). The analysis of “competence in teaching as instrumental and practical action” becomes one that is not just that of a spectator’s point of view. Through his writing, Aoki (Pinar & Irwin), demonstrates his method of theorizing, as his narrative unfolds, the reader is invited to consider this engagement as one of dichotomy/paradox, all at once, as framework and not/framework of competence as praxis.

Freire (1997) writes, “I need the world as the world needs me. (...) I am a totality and not a dichotomy. (...) Only an education of question can trigger, motivate, and reinforce curiosity” (pp. 30-31). Freire (1970) challenges us to be in process, where “the human body becomes a conscient body that can capture, apprehend, and transform the world so it ceases being an empty space to be filled with contents” (p. 33). Freire and Aoki hold the precariousness and need for further inquiry into the human condition and structures of that condition, in high esteem. By being dialogical, critical and mutual, as a movement toward authenticity, a consciousness (as intentionality of being conscious of) emerges, “where ‘reality is really a process, undergoing constant transformation” (Pinar & Irwin, 2005, p. 75). As such, for both Aoki and Freire, praxis becomes action and reflection of humans in their life world as a necessary means of transformation. This volatile “pedagogy of the oppressed” holds power as central to de-centering in the discussion around competence, which Aoki manifests as tension in his narratives of multiplicity through his autobiography of lived experience.
When I began the journey into exploring competence, expertise and evidence-based inquiry, I was extremely resistant. As someone deemed forever neophyte, I reactively and prematurely decided I wanted nothing to do with studying these conceptions. As I explore the historical significance and evolution that these terms have the potential to offer, I feel more open to conceiving nursing education otherwise. That is, I open to heed the complexity of what “champion” conceptions, such as competence, have to offer to both nursing and education, which may transform other rigid aspects of disciplines and professions (i.e. standards) into interdisciplinary and interprofessional landscapes of possibility. As I explore positions, identities and ways of being, I implore the reader to be open to the process and form of possibility through each rendition of structure and deconstruction of such positioning and conceptions.
“I” meets “we” in a living praxis that is akin to living inquiry, because it beseeches us to engage actively in thoughtful pedagogical intersubjectivity.

Aoki writes: “In action-oriented language, praxis is action done reflectively, and reflection on what is being done. Within this view, knowing arises not from inward speculation but from intentional engagement with, and experience of lived reality. It is thus a practical way of knowing guided by its own telos. Hence, praxis has as its main interest further praxis” (Pinar & Irwin, 2005, p. 120). “Praxis” (practical action), constitutes reality by intersubjective actions of “beings-as-humans,” through re-cognition of “mutual understanding,” amidst the practical interest of “securing authentically the always precarious intersubjectivity.” (Pinar & Irwin, p. 132)

For Freire (1970), praxis is about revolution, liberation and possibility; thus, praxis is “the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it” (p. 79).

Curriculum as a living praxis becomes located in a historicity and social situatedness that is becoming and being in each rendering, re-cycling and attentive moment of engagement. Curriculum when viewed as praxis research, according to Lather (1991), is a pedagogy of reflexive engagement in a critical, social, human science, being respectful of the parameters of the present lifeworld and experiences of participants within an awareness of social and historical contexts of that present.

parapraxis
A slip of the tongue (or pen) that reveals the unconscious mind
A fancy word for the Freudian slip

It is a slippery slope of word games44 and contrived meanings that also offer a playful rendition of how “mindful” approaches to complexity are less about directly implied interpretations and more about imagining otherwise and going with the flow of what comes to mind.

44 I play with the language and meaning of texts that connect with my notions of what this is about... without aiming to defend or apologize for my speech and actions, I cultivate the metonymic space of opening to the possible.
*Currere* is described by Pinar (2004), with whom it originated, as a meditating on the remembered past “in order to understand more fully, with more complexity and subtlety, one’s submergence in the present” (p. 4). Pinar describes four moments to the method of *currere*: regressive (past, memory), progressive (“what is not yet,” imagining possibles), analytical (distancing to create a subjective space examining both past and present), and synthetical (together re-entering the situatedness of lived present, conscious of “ones embodied otherness” (pp. 36-37). These moments he suggests are important to “both temporal and cognitive movements in the flux of autobiographical study of education experience,” ways of relating knower and known as a way of describing the ontological structuring of education experience (p. 35).

Doll (1993) invites a cross-disciplinary perspective, which he suggests is necessary tension to expand and imbue the episteme of *currere* and the new cosmology of complexity (through recursion as iteration) in the post-modern. Pinar (2004) refers to autobiography, in particular, as a revolutionary act “in which one’s views of ‘others’ are taken to be just that. Such notions invite us to understand curriculum as a verb, as *currere*. “*Currere* seeks to understand the contribution academic studies makes to one’s understanding of his or her life (or vice versa),” as a layering within the social, political and cultural critique (p. 36).

*How does Pinar revolutionize his own practice, beyond its epistemological and ontological theoretical discourse? How does Pinar live *currere*? For me, it is more meaningful to connect the author with his text; to get a sense of where these ideas are coming from, beyond a synopsis of what is out there in the world of curriculum, I want to know how it is done. Otherwise, the text is less meaningful to me, as I consider it as another bit of prattle\(^45\); some arbitrary position that sounds like a good idea. If the person isn’t living the praxis does that make the work less valuable, particularly from an educational perspective?*

\(^45\) Penney and Warelow (1999) excavate the literature on praxis and come up with the caution that praxis can be meaningless without reflection on the theory-practice gap. Whether it is through journaling or face-face collegial support, the authors encourage educators to make a concerted effort to debrief and reflect on their experiences of moving theory in action. *How is it that we as educators challenge ourselves to be reflective of our interactions with the literature in translation as more than theory, as living the curriculum and pedagogical way of being we aspire toward. What of the experienced and acclaimed professors, how do they find the courage and support to engage in or continue the journey of self-reflection?*
*Currere* “as a process of experiential transformation” (Doll, 1993, p. 97) is conceived in Pinar’s (1975, cited in Doll) work as “the infinitive form of curriculum (...) to emphasize the person and process of ‘running’ the course, the experience an individual undergoes in learning, in transforming and being transformed. Such a view includes both content and process, with the context embedded within the process, forming part of it.” (p. 13)

Pinar (2004) in his progressive phase of *currere* considers the subjective other, as “one who writes to become other” in cyberculture, as a means of “stylistic experimentation,” such as in hypertext (a form of non-sequential electronic text) and through a fictional imagining of the present (i.e. through poetry and dreamwork) (p. 126). “Theory so understood becomes a passage out of the knotted present, (p. 127) (...) like a ‘remembered dream’ (...) *currere* is an effort to sidestep the ego, to find a passage to material the ego has covered up, denied, evaded” (p. 128).

*Currere* is active and in constant process, in theory. As I move my own practice forward, I consider how it is that I make this happen after the completion of my dissertation. I currently have supportive colleagues who nurture my growth and reflection, but “writing it down” is where I foresee challenges, unless it is in the effort to publish those reflections. I will need to consider how this work could be brought forward to faculty and to my own initiatives of bridging the gap.
Pinar (2004) challenges educators to “reconstruct the subjective and social spheres in curriculum and teaching” (p. 15) to consider curriculum as a multifaceted process whereby we engage in policies, texts, and standardization through “complicated conversation[s]” (p. 19) living the interdisciplinary spaces. The questions of “What is curriculum?” and “What is education?” are important to consider before an interdisciplinarity can manifest those knowledges in a meaningful way, both internally and externally to the disciplinary discourse.

Cody (2001b) identifies interdisciplinarity as a reference point of interbeing in “situations and conditions in which interdisciplinary collaboration is accepted and practiced.” Interdisciplinarity thus refers to “knowledge, collaboration, and education that involve multiple disciplines or professions, respectively, working with mutually understood and accepted concepts and principles toward shared goals” (Cody, p. 275). Pinar (2004) calls for an attunement to the cultivation of “original thought” as self-reflexive process toward which curriculum theorists aspire.

For Pinar, curriculum engages the complex conversation of each discipline with the intersections of sociopolitical locatedness leading to an interdisciplinarity that has disciplinarity as a pre-requisite to engage in that conversation. Cody (2001b) comments that “as knowledge proliferates and becomes ever vaster and diversified, the question of whether disciplines are the best structures in which to “house” or “grow” knowledge presents itself. And ultimately, in this environment of rapid change and infinite complexity, even more profound questions of ontology and epistemology arise” (p. 274). The interdisciplinary conversation, as such, exposes knowledges that could potentially have more grounding. Conversely, exposing the shaky foundations of each knowledge ‘base’ cannot go unnoticed, as we become increasingly diverse in our complexities (Doll, 1993).

Swanson (2004) dislodges and unearths the notion of “roots/routes” or foundations to gain new insights in to the histories, epistemologies, practices and prejudices we take for granted. She contends that in order for “mutually transformative possibilities” to arise and manifest pedagogies of hope, we must consider how our contexts are co-created through “ubuntu (humble togetherness)” (p. 137).
In preparation for my job interview, I am confronted with the challenge of pseudo-teaching a fifteen minute presentation on a topic pertaining to nursing practice. I choose interdisciplinarity. Not the wisest choice, considering the time frame, but I venture forth. The topic is vast, as is the extended version into the realm of professionalism and interprofessionalism. One pseudo-student asks the ever important question: “So what? What does interdisciplinarity matter to my practice on a day to day basis?” I falter. I give a response that does not feel satisfactory to me. I speak to the future of interdisciplinary classroom discussions where interprofessional discourses open to diverse health and human science students (i.e. social work, education, medicine, physiotherapy, government policy writers/enforcers etc.), offering a curriculum that broadens our horizons as each discipline enter complex healthcare situations together.

I have gotten so caught up\(^46\) in my excitement around abstractions that when I try to imagine the reality of interdisciplinarity, the application becomes nebulous. What does interdisciplinarity offer the nursing student looking for a concrete example of how this assists them in finding their nursing voice and presence, amidst the community of professionals where they have the potential to lose that voice and presence in the idealized interdisciplinary space? Would it be so bad to mix and mingle with other disciplines and get lost in the process?

There is a great need for some nurse theorists to focus on better definition and increased autonomy for the discipline and profession\(^47\). Other scholars praise interdisciplinarity for added complexity giving depth to their study of disciplinary spaces and dialogues. What I notice\(^48\), being situated in a cross-disciplinary faculty in education during my graduate studies, is that I am afforded a fresh look at language and contexts. I do not feel the pressure to offer a nursing voice, other than by default of my own familiarity. I enter into a cacophony of voices, amplified by discourses in education and individuals looking for more conceptual definition and clarity.

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\(^46\) Another layer of getting lost surfaces as I reflect on this narrative and the fact that I have not really identified with the label of nurse or nurse educator. The textual dialogue and intertextual discourses seem to revolve around conceptual language more than identity, yet ironically as I attempt to cleanse my self of any one label’s grasp…my context becomes increasingly hazy in the nether space of abstraction.

\(^47\) Client is referred to as individual/person, family, community, group and/or populations.

\(^48\) I find repetition a useful tool in getting closer to the idea I’m playing with…playing around with ideas that stumble into and out of lucidity and importance, as I stumble onward.
A group of third year students, who are working in different settings in the community, are struggling with their “scholarly projects” because they do not know how to bring the unique nursing perspective forward for their chosen topic, “Communicating with school-aged children with special needs.” One student says, “We work with teacher assistants and I really don’t see what nursing has to offer that is different?” Another student recalls her experience with a social worker and considers the skills that she brings from a biomedical perspective as “being with” is what it is that is different” the rest of the group sit in discouraged silence. I begin to ask them questions to trigger their comprehension of what they offer that is unique to the scope of registered nursing practice, in the way of assessment and communication, applied to different settings. They begin a lively discussion, nodding heads with moments of affirmation and scribbling of ideas, but I still focus on one student who is at a loss. How are we educating students to enter into interdisciplinary and inter-professional conversations through the competencies that are expected, if we are all teaching disparate information without a vision of the whole program? How do we speak to the process of becoming a nurse without adequate tools to evaluate comprehension of knowledge of “what is nursing” amidst the professional arena of “what is nursing’s scope of practice?” It is in this way that identity resurfaces through a context of interdisciplinarity, through which knowledge is questioned as different from other knowledge based being sequestered.

Scott and Hofmeyer (2007) contend that interdisciplinarity in its evolution has become a contentious and often strictly conceptual discussion in healthcare, whereby actualization is limited by fear of encroaching and crossing disciplinary boundaries. Scott and Hofmeyer write that we need to extend the interdisciplinary discussion to action, through the context of undergraduate education. They conclude that it is through “explicitly constructing social and spatial contexts that encourage transformation of disciplinary boundaries to achieve new levels of knowledge integration” (p. 491) that we must proceed. It is through academic community partnerships, rather than as individuals that we will be more successful in our future delivery of effective, quality healthcare research (Scott & Hofmeyer).
Recently, I had the asthma educator from the local children’s hospital come to speak with the students. She is a respiratory therapist by profession and is a certified asthma educator. The talk is informative and visual and the students in giving feedback appreciate her expertise and approach to teaching. I begin to question how a nurse would deliver this lecture differently and then shift my thinking to considering how it would be to have us collaboratively teaching the next time around. I could begin with the assessment of the respiratory system, addressing the foundational aspects of communication with families (framed in a family-centered care approach, mixed with the theory of complexity thinking) and she could enter the conversation with the current initiatives, tools and medication that is being used. We could then both go through the teaching/learning for children/families through our different professional approaches to issues in community and acute care settings. It is by example that these particular students believe their best learning happens (this I discover when I ask for their feedback). They state that they learn particularly well through the sharing of stories. Perhaps giving space and time to debrief and engage them with further questions directed at interdisciplinarity-in-action, at the tail end of the lecture, is where the transformation and awareness of their scope of practice and disciplinary knowledge occurs.
Bergum (2003) speaks to Aoki’s relational pedagogical approach as embodiment, improvisation, and interdependence, using Gadow’s relational themes of being the teaching (embodiment), doing the teaching (improvisation), and locating the teaching in the reciprocal world as home (interdependence) (p. 122). Through Gadow’s work, Bergum argues that “nurses become disembodied—become an instrument—like a machine” (p. 123) as they become increasingly reliant on abstractions and technological things to engage in practice. “Monitoring” practices move the nurse away from the client at the centre of the care “to the end of the bed, to the desk, and even to another town” in the case of regionalized and internet dependent means of consulting with colleagues and providing care (p. 123). Bergum prompts us to consider how it is that the “patient” has also become dis-stanced and removed “as an apparatus” that functions in the simulated scenario, essentially, as Aoki writes, “when we lose our ability to touch one another we become disengaged from our bodies, making of us disembodied, dehumanized beings, indifferent to the nihilistic drying out of inspiritedness” (Pinar & Irwin, 2005, p. 359). Bergum, similar to Aoki, challenges us to hold the tensions of that mutual alienation, by questioning how it is that we “inspirit” the curriculum and “not fall into technological traps that separate knowledge from experience, let technology direct human action, or separate the person from the part” (Bergum, p. 123). Bergum asks us to pay attention to evolving our sentient experiences, of all our senses, not only the visual observation skills dominant in nursing assessment, as being “vital to developing ability in the quality of relations with others especially patients” (p. 124).

I would stress the importance of being attentive and in tune to our senses as educators, before we expect as much from our students. How we feel as a presence in a given moment. Situating ourselves more than thoughtfully, critiquing the “sick” smell of “health”care institutions. Toole (1999) who writes about mindful meditation, describes the simple exercise of washing dishes as a way of connecting with the experience of touching the suds, smelling the soap, hearing the clanking of the dishes and seeing the movement of the water, as a more mindful way into the experience of dishwashing. As nurses, how might we extend such an exercise to an inpatient unit in a hospital, for example, sit with a family of someone at the end stages of palliative care in a hospice setting?
When considering the challenge of teaching another to bear witness, I am specifically interested in how nursing educators are taking up the new wave of simulation technology. Memesis is the key, I’m told. It is expected that we treat each scenario as if it were “real.” These practice sessions are about promoting anticipatory guidance and critical thinking. The message is strong that we are expected to model the behavior we expect of the students…believe in the simulation.

We are encouraged to recognize the efforts of the students in what they get “right.” There are checks and balances, we are told. The student should perform a simulation within their “scope of practice” as designated by their professional body. It is not simply about enacting the procedures to complete a task/skill, this is a process of learning that continues within and beyond the “set up” environment.

“But Meti-man Stan isn’t real,” I quip. “What efforts are we making to connect to our humanness in light of scenarios that speak to standard responses and reactions?” I am given a reply that seems to be sufficient for the rest of the group, but I’m still dissatisfied. How do we discuss the challenges of communication and assessment in light of the humanness that isn’t there? Will this type of lab interaction and debriefing prepare students for what actually happens in practice by working through simulation exercises, even when there are opportunities for person to person interaction? Do we need to use the techno manikin simply because it is there, we paid for it and now we have to justify our spending and use it at whatever cost? What about traditional lab student to student partnerships requiring human to human contact? Are we opting out of role play, group work, random communication and touch? The students are having a hard time engaging in “small talk” with clients, perhaps the bells and whistles need to start with the basics, predating simulation technology.

Let it be known…I do not believe Meti-man Stan is real.

Perhaps no one can ever really prepare for life and what is thrown our way in practice/reality, where the lines become blurry. Somewhere in the world of scientific inquiry and nursing process approaches (passé in some circles and alive and kicking in others), it has been deemed that it is no longer covertly safe to try out our skills of communication, along with the procedural ones, on human subjects, so we have mannequins. We have pilot studies with placebo drugs (if you are the lucky recipient), but the communication and assessment factors that go with procedural practices are becoming less visible and emphasized as a form of expectation and overt evaluation of nurses’ work.
It is my view that the relational, interactive aspects that are not addressed by simulation technology are at risk of becoming archaic, extraneous and as Campbell (2000) highlights, invisible. The role play is not playful, nor is it focused on the human interaction, but rather on the procedure and "critical thinking" that has a problem-oriented, outcome-based focus of inquiry. The recipient of care is not real and the scenario therefore, will never replace, nurture or foster relational capacity. Group work is considered arduous by the students, even though we maintain that such collaborative engagements are the basis of inter and intra professional teamwork. The undergraduate student is also, as mentioned above, less willing and able to make "small talk" or establish rapport with a client, before diving into a procedure or addressing the intervention they had planned to initiate. The cumulative effect of this shift in how we communicate comfortably and effectively has been navigated by our dependency on technology as a means of making everything more efficient. The fallout is that we have less time to actually connect on any meaningful level as we attempt to keep up with the work created by our tools of modernity. How do we move forward in a way that meets halfway...that is how do we communicate through the space between what is happening in reality and what we esteem to be pedagogically and humanistically important.

How do we playfully engage students to get them moving and connecting through touch again? I look out the window to see a group of students standing on a school bench, guiding and supporting each other across a plank, which will connect them to another bench. What could they be doing? Perhaps it is a communication or team building exercise?

I know these are not nursing students.

There is a group who appear to be stuck. Someone, likely the facilitator, comes by to offer suggestions or prompts, because they soon reconfigure themselves and try a new approach.

What new approaches do I offer? Where do new faculty get their ideas, beyond the icebreaker scenarios given in instructional skills workshops, to promote enactive participation, without getting the usual response of disapproval? It seems that we get a lot of ideas about giving and receiving feedback, but not so much information arming us with creative approaches to delivering information. The gap between nurse and educator is deeply felt when you begin the journey, without the skills. My "spidey" senses tingle when I hear what has become a standard response...somewhere along the line they are receiving passive information from another nurse turned nursing instructor and my job becomes more challenging...but I cannot perceive it and them as arduous...it is all in my attitude.
Flesh shifts the face as it needles the internal organs
Digital fingers cross the nerve, pulse the body
Flesh dies, organs mutate
You feel the nausea waves hit
The techno-mutate future where my android body belongs...home

Human flesh meets data sound
Electronic needle carving
With files deep from the android sound memory
Telebody plays the sound-images of the recombinant mind.
...anticipates the impact of biogenetics on the cultural nervous system
...compresses all the codes, present and future
...sequencing, splicing, editing, filtering
into a controlled scripture of transgenic music.

The skin of the organic body is stripped away
Performance itself mutates into blue-blur motion
Vortexing the kidneys, rewiring the bowels,
fibrillating the heart,
sound purging the spleen, splicing broken synapses in the nerve net.

What if biotech does something fundamentally different
from previous technologies,
not simply disturbing the ratio of the senses,
but reconfiguring the senses,
creating mutations and hybridities
of the previously separated ratio of the senses?
An eye hears.
Skin speaks.
A recombinant body whose noise bleeds.
Eyes that see but have no vision...

Adapted from Kroker (2004)
Mixed media collage, JSH
“Which body? We have several.” I have a digestive body, I have a nauseated body, a third body which is migrainous, and so on: sensual, muscular (writer’s cramp), humoral, and especially: emotive” which is moved, stirred, depressed, or exalted or intimidated, without anything of the sort being apparent. Further, I am captivated to the point of fascination by the socialized body, the mythological body, the artificial body (the body of Japanese costumes), and the prostituted body (of the actor). And beyond these public (literary, written) bodies, I have, I may say, two local bodies: a Parisian body (alert, tired) and a country body (rested, heavy).

(Barthes, 1977a, pp. 60-61)

In order to resist organ-machines, the body without organs presents its smooth, slippery, opaque, taut surface as a barrier. In order to resist linked, connected, and interrupted flows, it sets up a counterflow of amorphous, undifferentiated fluid. In order to resist using words composed of articulated phonetic units, it utters ong gasps and cries that are sheer unarticulated bocks of sound.

(Deleuze & Guattari, 1972, p. 9)

Is not the Freudian eroticized body, sustained by libido, organized around erogenous zones, precisely the nonanimalistic, nonbiological body? Is not this (and not the anamalistic) body the proper object of psychoanalysis? (...) The Unconscious is a parasite that uses the body, forcefully distorting its normal functioning. For that reason, a hysterical subject turns away from her biological body in disgust, unable to accept that she “is” her body. In the strict psychoanalytic perspective, one should thus distinguish between two bodies: what Miller calls the “body-knowledge,” the biological body regulated by the knowledge contained in its genome, and the “body-jouissance,” the body that is the proper objet of psychoanalysis, the body as the inconsistent composite of erogenous zones, the body as the surface of the inscription of the traces of traumas and excessive enjoyments, the body through which the unconscious speaks.

(Zizek, 2004, p. 93)

As I continue to strive toward embodied, sentient incarnations of living praxis and inquiry, I am continually challenged to wonder how it is that I perceive lived experience. My tacit interpretation of how it is I manifest myself in the world, as more than perceived worldview, as connected to the planet is made malleable by the language that imaginatively and aesthetically caresses my envisionings.

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The technological movement does not evade my senses as I learn to adapt and adopt new ways of thinking, being and doing in diverse environments of learning. Each collision ignites new cadences on the waves of complexity.
Rhthyms of systole and diastole...
The world of matter and energy falls in the natural course of things from order into disorder.
But life reveals the inherent countercurrent to this tendency, transforming matter and energy into more and more organized patterns through the ongoing game of evolution.

There is a point, or rather a long series of points, at which our innocence and free play of imagination and desire collides with reality, with the limits of is and is not, with the limits of what can and cannot be. The freeplay of imagination creates illusions, and illusions bump into reality and get disillusioned.

Surprises, mistakes, accidents, anomalies, and mysteries pop up to baffle us and fertilize the mind-field. These lead to new rounds of discoveries, which create the next phase of complexity, which awaits a new synthesis.

Adapted from Nachmanovitch (1990)
The words blur and blend back to the natal, to the connection with Baby A, to the language of our genesis and the genesis of our being between the worlds that predate us on a continuum of historicity of worlds not yet born. The intent, thought, and embodied experiential journey I take reflects back on me, as I reach outward grasping hold of anything tangible and everything that offers possibility.

As I read through Abram’s (1996) description of his sentient experiences. The very narrative I implore is central to the text is the one I skip through in search of the nuggets that capture a commonality or provocation of my own text. I want the gist of it, the meat, and the substance. What is it that is most important to me...to another reading this text? For me it has become about junctures of connection and separation, leaving the descriptive and prescriptive sloughed off. Is this efficiency or something else?

Am I becoming de-sensitized as Abram (1996) suggests:

Caught up in a mass of abstractions, our attention hypnotized by a host of human-made technologies that only reflect us back to ourselves, it is all too easy for us to forget our carnal inherence in a more-than-human matrix of sensations and sensibilities. Our bodies have formed themselves in delicate reciprocity with the manifold textures, sounds, and shapes of an animate earth. (...) To shut ourselves off from these other voices, to continue by our lifestyles to condemn these other sensibilities to the oblivion of extinction, is to rob our own senses of their integrity, and to rob our minds of their coherence. We are human only in contact, and conviviality, with what is not human. (p. 22)

Abram’s (1996) text is one that is eco-spiritual in its relation between humans and the world. The space between which necessitates rich description. Additionally, the experiential narrative, similar to Grummet’s (1988) text, evolves the relational dynamic. I seem to miss the mark...miss the magic, the textures, the rhythms and the sentience of the embodied world each author is attempting to convey in her/his text. My narratives feel very cerebral, rather than visceral in the sensual way. My sense is to perceive experience and reflect on that experience as a form of narrative. As Grumet encourages us to reproduce ourselves, I think of this as a recycling hermeneutic enterprise in how we incarnate who we are...in each moment of attunement and awareness we are brought back to Arendt’s natality and we are reinvented in our always already complicit-ness...thoughtful and sentient. Holding the tension between who, what, where, when and how we aspire to be and the history that holds us to our responsibilities of being human to each other, all living beings and the earth and the violence in how we incarnate ourselves in the world, toward the world and toward other beings.
I’m on the edge of land looking out at an ocean full of swells and white caps; everything feels unsteady, volatile and turbulent. I think there are seals and dolphins in the water, but I never see them surface. I must get to Baby A. She is in the hospital and I’m trying to find her location through the computer, but keep getting sent to other links that have nothing to do with the hospital. Somehow I figure out that she is on unit D and I am now jumping through the swells trying to get to her. I am full of guilt and anger as I bark at the incidental people (who I think are nursing instructors trying to be helpful) around me. I reflect that the way I’m behaving is all about me and not about Baby A. “Get over yourself,” I tell myself in disgust.

I suddenly find myself in the hall outside the unit. There are many people around, some say, “Hi” in recognition, remembering me from my previous role as nurse at the hospital. I do not recognize the faces, but feel ashamed that I am not at her side, that she is not in my arms. I recall that she must have been in Emergency by herself, without either of her parents. How could that be? This thought gives me an increased sense of urgency and guilt. “I will sleep at her bedside through the night, no matter who tells me otherwise,” I tell myself. No one is telling me otherwise.

I enter the room with my gown, ready to wash my hands and my partner is sitting there without a gown. I am angered that he is once again not following the rules of what is expected and I proceed to explain to him why it is necessary to wear this gown… “…and look at everyone else wearing their gowns in their rooms. There is another patient coming to share this room and they also have a respiratory infection, so you have to protect other children from getting mutated infections.” I continue on my rant, “Those that aren’t wearing gowns aren’t on isolation,” I am now fuming as he continues to just sit there. In the midst of my explanations (ad nauseum), I feel my distance from A. I go to her with the intent to see and touch her. She is the size of a peach and I do not fully see her with all the blanket wraps and lines attached to her.
I am awakened by my partner searching for the alarm clock. I cannot get back to continue where I left off in the dream, so I begin to consider the hidden meanings and links to what was going on in this warped, yet very believable dream. I consider that this dream was dreamt after a night of preparing for a respiratory lecture for pediatric nurses, I’m also sure I had a Chai tea latte before bed.

There were at least two reflective moments within the dream itself that almost felt like I was making links between the dream and what I perceive to be “true” in my alternate reality. As a mother, nurse away from bedside care, educator and overall as a human being who does not feel I have a handle on any of these domains, I feel the vulnerability, guilt and shame I detest. Another layer of reflection emerges as I write the dream between baby A’s waking and morning routine, as I continue preparing for the classes and get her ready for another day away from home. There are parts of my life that feel very structured and unyielding, yet in my thought processes I am so random and chaotic and my dream felt like I was trying to take control without care and attentiveness to others.

On another level of reflection, I move from contextual to conceptual perception. I am feeling the pressure of needing to organize myself; of inevitably multitasking and at times not hiding my feelings of flux and disarray as well as I could, as I try to spend a moment longer with Baby A than I have allotted myself; and wanting to spend quality time with her, being present and attuned to her, opening to learn from her playfulness and attentiveness to her surroundings. My priorities are not linear, there are no superior and inferior orderings to the chaos or patterned intentions I feel. I’m shifting to and from motherhood, academic pursuits, and career orientation. None of these priorities feel compromised, each could deserve more attention, but my dream world is still charged with feelings of angst and uncertainty.

Each tension feels all encompassing and each has taken over who I am in some form, at some point in my life. At times, I feel powerless over these choices and decisions that I am apparently making. Acknowledging that I was not necessarily comfortable in navigating my life before A gives me an increased sense of uncertainty and precariousness with the living of my life as I re-script the prescripts of my social-relational text. In this part of my life, I feel random and somehow more connected to others, thus less existential and fringelike, not necessarily because of wanting to be so, but rather because of a sense of expectancy. I am not obliged, but rather called forth to be otherwise, in different ways of expansion and extension to that social text, of which I am a part; complicit. While I know I am not alone in the journey of tensions between balancing identities and how we live inbetween each, I feel it is necessary to give voice to these feelings as I aspire for wellbeing through dreams, or otherwise. I need to have the space to connect with these layers and not silence those tensions I live, as I implore others to do the same and create change and hope that we may infuse our work with the complexities that pull us in many directions.
Maturana and Varela (1992) consider the notion of love as a necessary enactment in the “recursive social human dynamic,” whereby they contend that “without love, without acceptance of others living beside us, there is no social process and, therefore, no humanness” (as social phenomenon) (p. 246).

As humans our contingency “to be” takes place in the (...) ellipses between omnipotence and impotence. The ellipses of the text offer a moment to breathe, give pause and reflect as a contemplative praxis.
Riley-Taylor (2002) writes about a relational nexus of complexity that recognizes our rhythm, as an ecological spiritual awareness. A dynamic process where no thing exists in isolation and we are united by “a connecting universal principle with all that is in a constant of creation” (p. 20). Riley-Taylor envisions an ecospiritual praxis that “might help rethink the interrelationality of our lives and of our schools based on ethical foundations of interdependence, justice, and ecological sustainability” (p. 24). For her, place and community are essential to our wakefulness to the sacred and relational, as we aim to sustain our relationality with one another and the planet.

Jardine’s (1992) rendition of ecospiritual process evokes a mystical opening in the text that surfaces our connectedness to the earth and to each other through our “collective suffering.”

Interpretation is a form of mourning. A form of grief. Finding that the world operates beyond my wanting and willing, blessed with spooks and spirits made harmless by my excess. Opulent. (p. 49)

For Jardine (1992) hermeneutics are a “form of grieving and lamentation,” whereby as humans we “cry out into the Earth, bearing witness to the logic I am living out” (p. 244). Oliver’s (2005) poetry calls for attentiveness and attunement to nature as she leads us down a path of connectedness to the earth, drawing us to nature for inspiration and solace, as we work through the tensions of our reality. “How important it is to walk along, not in haste but slowly, looking at everything and calling out Yes! No!(…) To pay attention, this is our endless and proper work (p. 151).”
Agamben's (1993) “whatever as such” potentiality is a difficult paradox as “a point of departure for a discourse on ethics in that there is no essence, no historical or spiritual vocation, no biological destiny that humans must enact or realize” (p. 44). He speaks to Derrida’s irreducible aporia and Caputo’s (2000) “imperceptible trembling of the finite” (p. 54-57). By asserting that “whatever is the figure of pure singularity” as the wholly other, Agamben plays with the difficult paradox and antinomy.

Agamben plays with our connectedness to everything as though we were ever disconnected from the wholly other, who is only “whatever as such” under dis-guise and thus sensually and perceptually othered. *How do we proceed through the paralytic tensions, if not through the guise of prescribed discourses?* As our views of the world continually shift, so too do our needs and knowledges. The difficulties with which we toil and play, pull our paradoxical dances into a temporary union. If only for a fleeting moment of abstraction, we are compelled to renegotiate our space in the gaps where our steps meet and may offer different renditions of that dance. *It is in this space of acute attentiveness that we may give up the opportunity to take the given whole and playfully and possibly painfully, imagine otherwise.*
THIS WORLD WHICH IS MADE OF OUR LOVE FOR EMPTINESS

Praise to the emptiness that blanks out existence. Existence:
this place made from our love for that emptiness!
Yet somehow comes emptiness,
this existence goes.
Praise to that happening, over and over!

For years I pulled my own existence out of emptiness.
Then one swoop, one swing of the arm,
that work is over.
Free of who I was, free of presence, free of
dangerous fear, hope,
free of mountainous wanting.

The here-and-now mountain is a tiny piece of a piece of straw
blown off into emptiness.

These words I’m saying so much begin to lose meaning;
existence, emptiness, mountain, straw: words
and what they try to say swept
out the window, down the slant of the roof.

Rumi (Barks, 1995, p. 21-22)
Mixed media collage, JSH
What I have noticed in the crafting and re-construction of this text is that the ordering of images and excerpts has been important, although I contend that it “should be” otherwise. The aesthetic form and flow of ideas is important to the conventions of writing and communicating ideas. I, as writer and reader, cannot seem to let go of the devices that bring me comfort and solace as I plod through the difficulties and tensions. I also notice the choppiness of attempting to introduce chaos in some sections that leave me feeling dissatisfied. Concepts such as “interdisciplinarity” and “praxis” become easily abstracted as the narratives protrude from the discussion of structure and form of process. Sub-narratives are only examples and do not add meat or substance to the textual expansion.

So why not remove the disparate objects and keep to the flow and texture of the text?
It was all part of the process.
Though bits are rearranged to “make it better,” there are tensions within the text that are intended to create discomfort: living-praxis-reflection-as ethical engagement; wellbeing (inclusive of eco-spirituality-meets techno-media blitzkrieg); violent-hospitality-in translation from the foreign and the alien. These anomalies are also integral to the tangibility of praxis and interdisciplinary, which become otherwise as identity and positioning are infiltrated by inquiry.

The WordArt is a way of playing with texts that are not my most familiar...I wear these languages to see a potential fit...hold words that protrude and obstruct my own comfort. The visual images without and with language are a way of offering a different perspective...a way to get into the text and attempt to imagine it otherwise.

Inquiring into the process becomes the messiness and rawness it professes to be through the difficulties that present themselves. That I do not tidy up and sweep under the rough copies for my eyes only are part of the intention to make that complexity of the text acceptable and uncomfortable to the reader’s need to get a certain kind of package. My own statements become w(hole)y as I open my textual inquiry deeply into roots and foundations. The playfulness of process work is as difficult as it is hopeful...and so I continue.
Doll (1993) reads “Descartes’ methodology\(^{51}\) of ‘right reason’ as rationalism, which was as certain and dogmatic as the scholastic one it replaced, and Newton’s mechanistic science was predicated on a stable, uniform, cosmological order” (p. 21). Doll (2006) brings to light the taken-for-granted acceptance of method/methodology in academic thought. He describes the history of “this imposition” through its etymology: “Method from the Greek \textit{meta} (follow) and \textit{ados} (way)” (p. 86), taken up from the pre-modern era as Latin method (foreign to Greek), adopted in the 16\(^{th}\) century by the Puritans and Protestant persuasions of northern Europe. Doll writes that Humanist scholars took up the pragmatism and functionality as efficiency, where “[k]nowledge memorized\(^{52}\) was substituted for the act of knowing” (p. 87).

\(^{51}\) Descartes (1637/1998) formulaic protestant methodology emerged as a series of reflective meditations in which he posited concerns for notions of Truth, God, self, things, nature of mind/body, and matters of existence between the relations of each. Descartes contributed a rigid dichotomous separation between objective reality and subjective experience in his discovery of “a preexisting world” (Doll, 1993, p. 32); a methodological means of controlling and extricating known from the knower.

\(^{52}\) Trueit (2006) contends that this mimesis has the effect of containing the playfulness inherent in open systems of complexity (such as in “extraordinary events”), replaced by modernist presumptions that “words do represent play,” thereby closing the discussion beyond the semantic (p. 97-98). The methods of representation thus, effectively, also close to the generative potential of \textit{poiesis} (as creative) and to the “thresholds of play” described by Trueit. Trueit extends the memesis of play to Nachmanovitch’s (1990) notion of “play space” (\textit{temenos} in Greek thought) “a delimited sacred space within which special rules apply and in which extraordinary events are free to occur” (p. 75). Nachmanovitch (1990) writes order into the extraordinary event different from the modernist conception of methodology through the notion of “free play”:

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\text{[G]reat moments in science occur when the seeming complexity of the universe is suddenly resolved by seeing an underlying design or motif that explains things more deeply. One casts off hypotheses or themes, gradually zeroing in on clearer and more coherent patterns and principles. Surprises, mistakes, accidents, anomalies, and mysteries pop up to baffle us and fertilize the mind-field. This leads to new rounds of discoveries, which create the next phase of complexity, which awaits a new synthesis. (p. 105-106)}
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Doll’s (2006) persistence in exploring the imbeddedness of tensions surrounding the conceptions of the pragmatic and etymological historicity of method; seeks Dewey (1910/1933) in re-envisioning “method,” by looking at alternative frames of reference to revitalize its conception. Doll looks to Trueit’s \textit{poietic} and Dewey’s interactive relational perspective, differentiating the general (knowledge that is experiential in relation to others) and the individual (acquired habits, requiring “initiative and originality”) (p. 87). Doll, through this exploration of the “deification of method,” illustrates the complexity of situatedness, environment, and reflective relational capacity emergent in the “process of recursive iteration,” as a coming to know differently (p. 88).
Ellis and Bochner (2000) begin their story of autoethnography in conversation, going against conventional third-person passive voice academic writing. They write the “I” into a “handbook genre to argue against writing in the handbook genre” as a means of arguing for “greater accessibility and experimental forms” (p. 735). I witnessed a demonstration of this conversational technique in several conference presentations. It is a tricky approach to pull off, when you are performing in dialogue and not “genuinely” engaged in a conversation, with a room full of spectators. What Ellis and Bochner do is speak to the complexity of engaging a narrative that is historically and socially situated and representative of a particular, group, community and culture.

Autoethnography belongs to the autobiographical genre where the autoethnographer connects through their personal experience to the “wide-angle lens” of their social and cultural affiliation (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). Autoethnographers speak to a cyclic dynamic of revolving the story through a variety of forms: short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social science prose.

In these texts, concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality and self-consciousness are featured, appearing as relational and institutional stories, affected by history, social structure and culture, which themselves are dialectically revealed through action, feeling, thought, and language. (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739)

In a chapter in their qualitative research handbook, Ellis and Bochner (2000) give the example of a woman diagnosed with breast cancer as they continue their narrative. I am drawn to their narrative as one having purpose and significance; one to share with others who can connect through similar experiences. I am left with the question, “For the purposes of research and valuing each other through the process of living inquiry, does everyone (as unique human being) have an important story to tell, regardless of how they have been identified as being part of a particular group, community and/or culture?” When I consider the context of nursing in academia and the expectation of sharing narratives that have particular intentions and directions based on research funding and population health initiatives, I imagine the difficulty of those who do not self-identify with pre-determined/istic categories for various reasons. How do we as researchers connect with their stories?
I talk to my friend S, also a graduate student, who provokes me with the word “attunement,” which she says is different from attentiveness, paying attention, active listening, different from empathy...

"Is it about presence?" I ask.

“But presence is when you are still cognizant of yourself?” she replies apprehensively.

“You think so?”

“Yeah.”

S:

When you are attuned to somebody else, you go into the background and the other person goes into the foreground...that’s how you read all those things about them...(silence) their eyes, their actions, their words, their body language... (silence) that intuitive sense that comes. When I read somebody its more, it’s also the feeling I’m getting as I’m listening. As I read the Pegagogy of Becoming I feel the definition for attunement is somehow shallow and superficial, standard education issue (I think of army issue at the moment of writing and thinking what she is telling me... what we are obliged to deliver by order of the sacred script of techno-rational discourse), but what I’m trying to do is not cognitively and logically understand that kid, I’m trying to understand his/her inner reality.

Emotional, psychological and social intimacy is a part of it...a person’s inner reality is every experience, a person’s biological makeup and pre-disposition...all those factors intermingling to form their phenomenological awareness. What we are attuned to is what we will make a priority. Right now people are attuned to money...if we are attuned to the earth and children we would start seeing them and caring for them...we wouldn’t put them into these abstract symbols (letters and numbers) to make them good economic citizens.

“I have to write you into my text S., our dialogue is important on many levels.” I consider my friend to be wise, but she is not fully attuned to the value of sharing her beliefs with others.

This writing will hopefully go to her to reread and consider her evolving connection to the language of attunement, as well as to the parameters that may become more rigid or malleable, depending on her situatedness in a different moment with different information and experiences that shift her perceptually solid and shaky foundations. What I do not tell her is that the process of discussing and writing as she speaks her thoughts of process is what I consider to be more important than settling on words and descriptions...I’m back to my nebulous processing as I am drawn to conversations that communicate our learning through conceptions and renditions...and tangents.
Kincheloe (2001) reads Levi-Strauss (1966) who describes the bricoleur as a handyman/handywoman who employs trickery and cunning and the tools available to pick up the left over pieces and paste these together. Kincheloe credits Denzin and Lincoln (2000) who speak to the interpretive and aesthetic representations that the bricoleur offers as montage of complexity. They call forth Levi-Strauss’s Jack of all trades, do-it-yourself-er and Richardson’s crystallization, mix in the metaphors of montage, quilt making, and jazz improvisation…and the bricolage emerges.

Kincheloe (2001) contends that the central discussion surrounding the use of bricolage rests in the balance between disciplinarity/interdisciplinarity. Kincheloe claims that the bricolage is not about “the pursuit of some form of proceduralization, but rather opening to “an elastic conversation” that aims for “faded disciplinary boundary lines” (p. 683). In so doing, he also asserts that interdisciplinary discussions are based in deep disciplinary knowledge, which the bricoleur must have in order to usurp the dialectic nature of the relationship between the two. Kincheloe furthers that the rigor that is necessitated in this process surrounding the boundary53 work, emerges from a deep study of the underlying disciplinary structures that covertly and overtly shape the study of “x” knowledge in each disciplinary discussion. Kincheloe recommends a Foucauldian-like genealogical analysis of the power discourses and the input of feminist perspectives to surface the borders of disciplinarity necessary to manifest a critical structure for the bricolage.

I am drawn to Kincheloe’s (2001) initial writing before he became more formulary and prescribed in the “how tos” of the bricolage (Kincheloe, 2005), which inevitably happens with all methodologies to give the researcher a guide through the process. Something happens when structures are imposed and bind the ideas into methodological straightjackets and I go back to my resistance to the initial courses that taught me qualitative methodology and courses that used nursing models to guide our practice to make things more tangible. I straddle the tangent (as idea/thought) and the tangibility (as practical application). During my masters and then doctoral course work, there was a transformation that happened for me, as we began to open our inquiry to the descriptions that were made muddy, as we explored the identified methodological approaches through writing practices that manifested what was “most important” to us, as we lived the inquiry. It was in those permissive and exploratory spaces of learning to un-know and de-label methodology that philosophical assumptions became effervescent and connected to “methodology,” which came to life as a form of expression and a process of journeying that zone of metonymy.

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53 Wilber (1979) writes that our every decision, word and action is based on “the construction, conscious or unconscious, of boundaries” (p. 17). He continues that when we draw boundaries we “manufacture opposites,” which tend to eradicate half of the relational dynamic, setting up false dichotomies (p. 20). Our tendency is to “treat the boundary as real and then manipulate the opposites created by the boundary,” rather than questioning “the existence of the boundary itself” (p. 20). Wilber counters this tendency by turning to Eastern approaches to the whole. He cites Tzu who elaborated that “all opposites arise simultaneously and mutually (…), they come into existence together” (p. 25). Wilber uses the example of a concave/convex figure, where only one line separates and simultaneously is wholly shared by both. Tzu (1972/1997) writes, “Being is born of not being” and so it is that “the greatest form has no shape” (p. 40-41).
I ponder some of the following questions put forth by Leggo (Narrative Inquiry course handouts, 2006) in re-searching narrative and education, where he writes “I am no longer eager to construct a grammar of rules and categories and standards and forms to explain narrative research. Instead I want to pursue gramarye (meaning magic, occult knowledge, alchemy, necromancy, and enchantment) which invites mystery and wonder and openness.”

Leggo’s list of questions includes, but is not limited to the following:

Who tells/writes narratives? Who can tell/write narratives? Who has the right to tell/write narratives?

Are narratives true? What is true/truth?

How are narratives constructed? Constrained? Construed? What rhetorical strategies and codes are used? What are the generic conventions of narratives? How are narratives shaped by convention(s)? How can narratives be reconceptualized through contravention?

What are the differences between writing narratives and telling narratives?

What are the generic conventions of narratives? How are narratives shaped by convention(s)? How can narratives be reconceptualized through contravention?

What are the differences between writing narratives and telling narratives?

What are the similarities and differences between your narratives and my narratives?

Is a narrative always partial? Always filled/riddled with holes (and hopes) and gaps?

How do I respond to narratives I do not like? Find morally and ethically reprehensible?

Is a narrative a process? method? product?

What are the lines of connection between a narrative and chronology, order, space, hierarchy, pattern, choice(s), structure, and integration?

What narratives are told/written/lived/translated/perpetuated in schools? What narratives are not told/written/lived/translated/perpetuated in schools?

How does narrative relate to hermeneutics?


What is similar and what is different in the following:

Phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology, radical hermeneutics, human science research, ethnomethodology, ethnography, action research historiography, anecdotes, ethnography, memoirs, reminiscences, case studies, lifewriting, life history, biography, autobiography, creative nonfiction, fiction, poetry, drama, narrative poetry, narratology, journalism (new and old), mythology, mytho-poetics, history, cinema, personal practical knowledge, stories of teaching, cinema, postmodern fiction, journals, diaries, letters, court records, reports, comic books photography, art (I would add, bricolage, a/r/tography as métissage, and autoethnography to the list)?

How does a narrative relate to a reader’s responses? In other words, how does a narrative invite or constrain or nurture or construe or construct a reader’s responses and counter-narratives?

What are the rhetorical strategies of narrative?

Is narrative research undertheorized? Can narrative research be used to bridge the gaps between theory and practice?

Is a narrative quest a narrative quest/ion/ing?

What is the etymology of narrative?
Springgay, Irwin and Kind (2008) begin their rendition of speaking about a/r/tography as a notion of community, akin to Agamben’s “coming community,” that is “re-imag(e)-ined as a set of circumstances that are not fixed but are ever evolving” (p. 83). This site of re-searching experience has multiple factors influencing its relational manifestation as it moves from process of creation toward product, shared in a venue with others. They contend that “a/r/tography is a methodology that resides in the space of the in-between” as a means of unsettling and redefining community knowledge and ideas of what constitutes research, as well as the identities of those within that shared communal space (p. 84). It is through living inquiry as a participatory and evolutionary complexity that fluxes and flows inward and outward, through our relational dynamics that the a/r/tographer is called to “be engaged in artistic ways of knowing, doing, and being (Springgay et al., p. 89). *I wonder what the location, perhaps more specifically the locatedness is of the a/r/tographer amidst this complexity of no fixed address or position? How does that community transform and translate to the participants of the coming community (which includes the participants bearing witness to the artistic process) who are co-evolving, but not co-creating the process?*
I view Leggo the a/r/tographer with his colleagues and fellow artists performing a rendition of music, poetry and photography at the Provoking Curriculum conference in 2005. This is my first exposure to the a/r/tographic process. I am mesmerized by the fluidity and communion. I feel invited as a spectator, simultaneously bearing witness to the process of arts-based research. Yearning to be a part of such a process, I leave with a sense of wonder and awe and a question – what is art? Is art about talent, professional affiliation, interest, passion? If art does not necessarily preclude participation secondary to any preordained mastery, is it enough to contribute to the dialogue through openness to the human need to share the aesthetic philosophical expressions, creations or emotions of being human?

I consider the ethic of my engagement to the arts-informed process of inquiry through various points of entry (not necessarily in this particular order): as researcher, educator, nurse professional, academic, mother and non self-identified artist, which begs the question – who is deemed worthy the title of artist and communicator of artistry? How is being informed by art versus basing your work in art negotiated? I recently asked these questions of my dissertation committee, not really expecting an answer. We engage in a lively conversation and debate, where I feel inspired to go forth and explore. Perhaps all I seek is permission to be nameless, but engaged. Such an engagement continues to challenge my sense of ethical responsibility and makes me question to whom it is that I am responsible, aside from myself when I remain nameless in the contexts through which I seek recognition, acknowledgement and guidance. If everyone comes from a historical landscape, is located in a particular social situation and strives to be part of a community or communities within the larger frame of just taking up space, then namelessness feels (im)possible. I bracket the difficulty to aspire toward a hopeful alternative.

The discussion always brings me back to something greater than the topic at hand. I go to a place of working through the order and disarray I feel in living as a human being. This representation, as such that is, is always about something else, something I cannot comprehend nor adequately explicate, but it is in the process of moving the inquiry through the representative form that I strive to continue and implore others to join in the journey.
Running ahead of my shadow,
a shadow
too large,
going to overwhelm
you (dear)
reader.

This linear subjective writing that has to have, at least, an order to it, so we can pursue
this together, so that I don’t leave you out of the picture, after all, that is what
I endeavor
to do,

draw
you
in 30

not leave you out in the cold,

drying up on an over heated
sidewalk,

to question
motives

30 Oh ... this is so hard as it can equally drive you away. I know this. There is a part of
you that (possibly) finds all this rearrangement of text irritating and superfluous to the
relevant information you want out of this text. However, I find the more I set the challenge
of ‘alternative writing’ to my art students, I see newness of ‘reading’ that challenges my
own pedagogical notions, and I feel overjoyed.

(Full page excerpt of a/r/tographic text, de Cosson, 2003)
Darts (2004), also an a/r/tographer, reminds me of Adbusters, so I google him and go to his blog, which leads me to YouTube, which leads me to wordle.net (indirectly, of course). I am instantly taken by the amazing ability this computer generated program has in performing the words onto the page. Wordle makes you pay attention to words and choices as they are scattered onto the page at random and seemingly intentional order. I realize my word art is about the words more than the surrounding images that Darts uses in his writing. The play and tensions between words hold my attention.
Fletcher (1994) created a text for the visually curious, who want to think outside the box. His motives are aesthetic and perceptual, where “the typography expresses the sentiment.” On YouTube [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meKUDU0sH5w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meKUDU0sH5w) he describes this text as a cross between a collage and a “box of goodies.” He mixes the symbols of images and words, adding the dictums and maxims of others, reassembled.

An important note is how he divides his text into 72 sections, or “slices of life,” each having a distinguishing image that can be viewed as one thing or another, both at once. I’m drawn into Fletcher’s artistry, but once again fall short in my own attempts at bringing the image with crated skill into my written text...the words continue to hold me hostage.
Sterling (2005) disrupts the standard text by mixing up the pages. We, as readers, are projected from one frame of thinking into another frame and confounded by the thread. I consider contacting the publisher for another copy before I realize this is not an accidental disruption, but rather an intentional one that takes me bouncing through the discourses of technology, consumerism and ecological fallout. His scripting affirms my need to contain my thoughts on one page. Get at the gist of what is most important about a topic, or perhaps most trivial depending on the frame and leave it at that. My initial challenge of connecting disparate ideas feels less problematic as I learn from Sterling, but what becomes more important is the matter of presentation and how it is that I aim to connect with the reader, without imposing too much direction and guidance, or conversely, leave the reader floundering.
Métissage

Tracing roots and routes →
linguistic artifacts, theoretical construct, literary strategy, research praxis

Interweaving tests and images → braiding strands
Mixed fibers resists heterophobia

Opposes transparency → power to undo logic and clarity of concepts

MAKE MUDDY

Reading praxis → dialogic and heteroglossic

Attend to interreferentiality of texts

Writing praxis → imagine and create plural selves and communities

Thrive on ambiguity and multiplicity

Respectful of diversity critical of neocolonizing repression

Collective responsibility

Relating responding resonating re(as)semblances

Mysterious memories

(Chambers, Hasebe-Ludt, Donald, Hurren, Leggo & Oberg, 2008, pp. 141-153)

54 While we strive for transparency in some contexts and instances, in others we long for the possible dimensions of obscurity.
Along the edge of some platforms in the London underground, words of warning that have always fascinated me are painted in big white letters:

**MIND THE GAP.**

The space of the screen is the non-place of the alcatory. The very rigidity of the code makes chance not only possible but unavoidable.

I first noticed this sign when I was waiting for the train to take me to Freud’s reconstructed home on the outskirts of the city. If, as Lacan insists, the unconscious is a gap-like structure, then the admonition to mind the gap might be understood as the most important message of psychoanalysis. But the structure of the gap defines more than the unconscious; consciousness itself is impossible apart from the inarticulate gaps that articulate awareness. In our explorations of the contemporary mediatrices, we must remain sensitive to the implications of the gap that interrupts discourse. While virtually face-to-face, our conversation is not immediate. Though it is slight, there is an undeniable delay that defers communication. Between the sending and receiving of a message, there is a slippage of approximately 0.25 - 0.5 a second. This delay is a function of the necessity of translating the signal from analog to digital and vice versa. Once the audio and visual signals have been digitized, they travel across fiber optic lines at the speed of light. But translation takes time and this time defers presence. In our effort to emphasize the sophistication of the technology, we must never forget the time of translation. This time is precisely the gap we are called to mind.

(Taylor & Saarinen, 1994)
Taylor and Saarinen’s (1994) text provides visual diasporas of black and white pop culture media projections, with a plethora of grey undertones of subversion and media philosophy inbetween. What intrigues me is the dialogue between pages, where we visually engage in the hypertext, as we are asked to mind the gap which is gaping for us to PAY ATTENTION!!!

What I learn from these texts of provocation and exploration is that the views of language we see vary in each rendition as we read, write and reflect. Within the text there are iterations and layers that unfold the processes of becoming, where the mysteries lurk in the liminal spaces. As I read Bruce, Feng, Nishizawaumiko, Palulis, Russel and Worthing (2003), read Abrams (1996) the layering unfolds my reading of methodological reiterations.

The clay bowl resting on the table in front of me meets my eyes with its curved and grainy surface. Yet I can only see one side of that surface—the side of the bowl is invisible, hidden by the side that faces me. In order to view that other side, I must pick up the bowl and turn it around in my hands, or else walk around the wooden table. Yet, having done so, I can no longer see the first side of the bowl. Surely I know that it still exists; I can feel the presence of that aspect which the bowl now presents to the lamp on the table. Yet I myself am simply unable to see the whole all at once. Moreover, while examining its outer surface, I have caught only a glimpse of the smooth and finely glazed inside of the bowl. When I stand up and look down into that interior, which gleams with curved reflections from the skylight overhead, I can no longer see the unglazed outer surface. This earthen vessel thus reveals aspects of its presence to me only by withholding other aspects of itself for further exploration. There can be no question of ever totally exhausting the presence of the bowl with my perception; its very existence as a bowl ensures that there are dimensions wholly inaccessible to me, most obviously the patterns hidden between its glazed and unglazed surfaces, the interior density of its clay body. If I break it, hopes of discovering these interior patterns or the delicate structure of its molecular dimensions, I will have destroyed the bowl; far from coming to know it completely, I will have wrecked any possibility of coming to know it further, having traded the relation between myself and the bowl for a relation to a collection of fragments.

(Abram, 1996, p. 51)
When depth gives way to surface understanding becomes understanding.
To comprehend is no longer to grasp what lies beneath but to glimpse what lies between. (…)
Understanding has become impossible Because nothing stands under.
Understanding has become unavoidable because everything stands between.
(Taylor & Saarinen, 1994, understanding, p. 1-2)

Taylor and Saarinen (1994) extend the discussion of inbetweens through social texts into the realm of the virtual, asking us to “mind the gap” (gaping, p. 5), in which the imaginary of understanding resides between the critical hypertext of cyberspace and restructured pedagogies. Paying attention to “the common sense of our everydayness,” their notion of the mediatrix of simcult, “renders the notion of an established canon passé” (the academy, p. 8-9). As I stand in the interstices of language, pedagogies and identities, I consider the a/r/topography of my praxis as art, research and teaching that is lived in the inbetween spaces of métissage.

Métissage is a language of the borderlands (…) of multiple identities. If we conceive of researching, teaching and art-making as activities that weave in and through one another – an interweaving and intraweaving of concepts, activities, and feelings – we are creating fabrics of similarity and difference. In these intralingual acts, there is at once an acceptance of playing with particular categories and a refusal to be aligned with any one category.

(Irwin, 2004, p. 28-29)
Aokian sp(l)icing in metonymic moments is both being attuned to discourses and being otherwise. As I read Bruce et al. (2003), read Aoki, read Kristeva, read Barthes and read Brummet, the interplay and intertextures provoke my own need to fit my presumptive mold. There is something visceral and beautiful about being lost in words, letting them soak you in and soak through you. I become the description. There is a difference between thinking and being the narrative. I feel it when I write and when I read; every apprehensive reflection pertaining to identity distances and others me from the text. When I lose myself in the text, there are no artificial separations...very different from being lost to a textual other. There is an aesthetic at play that may also become more than and different from the author’s intended content.
I think of Bruce, Feng, Nishizawaumiko, Palulis, Russel and Worthing (2003), who linger in Kristeva’s inter/textual spaces between words, deep within the I/not-I third space non-space “as inky spillages from etymological traces” where they are both “host and hostage to the word.” I am hopeful when I witness communication between authors reading and rereading the work of others, remembering their own experiences or incidental happenings that compel them to make certain choices in how they reinvent their own texts. This example is more than a group of names on the page reiterating the same information in slightly different ways under the pressures of the adage, “publish or perish.” I feel their dialogue is genuine, rich in self-reflection and that each author is living and embodying the textual discourse. I aspire to such an engagement, one that is ethically reflective in its process.

Bruce et al. (2003) position themselves into provocative Aokian metonymic sp(l)aces of improvisation where curriculum comes under erasure, but only through questioning the un/canny moments of textual re-currents/recurrence. Their inter/play is one of awareness as sensual attunement within a perceived world, taking shape and forming the appearances of what we deem to be real and true. This attunement emerges in the cracks......gaps...opening into liminal spaces.

55 Appearances manifest as apparitions in “the space of the real/not real” where categories hold less value and there is an ontologic-epistemologic inter/play.
56 “Liminal as playing to the edge of the possible at the edges of im/possibility where language leads language into direct, non-conceptual awareness...”
I emerged from my schizophrenic feverish mode last night, writing and pondering and feeling like everything flowed\textsuperscript{57} through me. Today I’m back in flux\textsuperscript{58}. I look at this same work with different eyes, exposed to new happenings and readings and I no longer feel confident that I am even asking appropriate questions. What was lucid and exciting, now feels like superficial gestures and unkempt utterances. I am confronted by the realization that what I set out to do has been detoured into the direction of focusing on what constitutes rigorous research, inquiring into the background of ideas that still taste new and tantalizing, and surprisingly unfamiliar in terms of my comprehension of comparative and critical literature. I go back to my intentions and wonder if this thrown-ness is what it needs to be, perhaps I was getting sucked back into the trap of thinking I could “understand,” that I had suddenly held a grasp of knowledge for a fleeting moment.

\textsuperscript{57}Csikszentmihalyi (1990) described flow as “being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one like playing jazz. Your whole being is involved, and you’re using your skills at the utmost.”

\textsuperscript{58}Caputo (1987) in describing the notion of flux through the “openness to the mystery” stated:
But it is the face of suffering which puts teeth into the mystery and prevents us from confusing the mystery with an object of poetic reverie or from using it as the occasion for a recollective leap out of existence, which only leaves the rest of us to face the worst. (p. 277)
This has been a process of coming to inquiry through language and image. When we begin to question the housing and identification we choose (i.e. nursing education, profession, discipline) the questions go deeper than the superficial naming into what the purpose and meaning of our venture is...deep into the hermeneutic roots and recyclings of languages, translations and interpretations. Peeling away the layers with the ultimate aim toward the unacknowledged presence/absence, paradoxical tensions through the appearances (as apparitions), and semblances (at a glance, through a circumstance, remembrance) of being seemingly so.

What strikes me is that I do not want to separate this into a methodology section...I am grouping methodologies by habit, but I want these to be more intertwined with the reflection and praxis of description that is unfolding the process of this text. As I do not have a ‘legitimate’ focus to this writing, I weave the ideas of methodological discourses through various lens, trouble these and integrate the fluidity that washes over the text ...I do not want to get sticky stuck in the flux; no fundamentalist, principle-guided discourses are necessary here (maybe that becomes my discourse...eh!).

In the midst of my journey (toward the “final stages” of my dissertation I am prompted by one of my supervisors, Carl Leggo, to “seek out Knowles and Cole’s work on Arts-informed research.” Knowles and Cole (2008) distinguish arts-informed research as a way of “redefining form and representation and creating new understandings of process, spirit, purpose, subjectivities, emotion, responsiveness, and the ethical dimensions of inquiry” (p. 59). A light bulb moment – AH HA, STOP! How could I have missed such valuable information? I guess I shouldn’t be surprised, since evidently I was looking in the wrong places and trying to make a fit where there was not one to be found. I read this excerpt and through my research discover that there is a Centre of Arts-Informed Research (CAIR)! Not only am I not alone, but my journey is really just beginning. I contemplate trashing this whole project, feeling it is naïve and outdated...there are books being written using similar process work that have preceded my musings and wanderings with more sophisticated depth of scope... which I have yet to read! I reconsider. Sigh. The point of my whole line of inquiry is that I come to inquiry and re-search in a unique way, simultaneously it is through “the getting there” that I venture forth to find important connections. And so, I continue, somewhere in the middle of the text within the new gaping gap, processing my way through the tension.
I can relate to Knowles and Cole’s (2008) comment that “the language of the academy and all that it symbolized fell short in its ability to capture and communicate the complexity of human experience in all its diversity” (p. 57). I can relate to their struggle in meeting academic expectations as needing to “extract life juices” from their work, where sentience, physicality and emotion are “wrung dry” from the living elements of qualitative research representation. Knowles and Cole seek and offer inclusive and respectful approaches through arts-informed research, which honored the diverse ways of knowing and aim to connect the communities not only within, but especially beyond the academy.

I consider how participatory action research and community action research have been taken up in the past, where I have witnessed a panel of researchers representing “the community” discuss the research that was conducted and relayed the participants’ perceptions. The power of the academy is deep in the language of research. It is one thing to shift the language to make it more inclusive and accessible, but a wholly other issue to shift the power of who shares and creates that language and how it is represented and abstracted (at this point in history, for the sake of the academy). Are we willing and able to let go the need to complicate and thus necessitate explication and maintain the fine line between common language and conceptual wordspeak?

The question then becomes, “What is the point of the academy?” This is a scary question for those who seek the façade of the ivory tower to justify their purpose and meaning. The adage, “the more I learn the less I know” perhaps speaks to the invisible shield that schools us to believe that we need particular knowledge to progress as a society…as a civilization. As soon as our worldviews shift and we see beyond the round and the flat versions of what is deemed “real,” the possibilities of a dimensional otherwise becomes an endlessness of complexities and we are lost. Organizing ourselves in terms of structures, knowledges and frames of references helps some of us get through the day, but what does it do to those who have become ostracized or oppressed for the sake of those conquering identities? This is not a simple situation of being in the know, but rather about how it is that we become obscured and shielded from the wholeness of living our humanness together through the complex dynamics we create. A step toward that paralysis, without getting sucked into its vortex, would be to begin paying infinite attention to those who are not deemed to be in the know and consider how we are making those relational connections, through their eyes…letting go our most familiar to mutually co-create a shared vision of possibility.
As I read about Knowles and Cole (2007) experimentation with process and form (once again, how did I not read this before), I begin to connect with their exploratory awakening. I felt that longing and satisfaction in expressing diverse aesthetic ways of being as I also pushed boundaries, both my own and what constitutes the parameters of belonging to the academy. There is a lot of de-schooling and deprogramming that occurs in this process work. It was not an easy feat to give myself permission and stop the continual voices of apology from streaming through my pursed lips. I appreciate their affirmation that what I am doing is not focused on being judged as performing “marginally acceptable” scholarship (p. 58), but instead I perceive this work as a way of expanding our discussion on what scholarship entails and how “scholarly” looks and reads. That is, the representation and presentation of work that evolves naturally as opposed to being written up and abstracted for the sake of keeping to a particular preapproved form and language. Making such statements gets complicated by “who” the reader is that I intend to connect with and “what” the product is that inevitably emerges, making it hard to let go “the stuff” and hold onto the humanity.

Simultaneously, I appreciate that there is space for me to attempt to present and represent this approach within the academy. That the Faculty of Graduate Studies will allow for this work that is neither traditional, nor purely manuscript in appearance, is a beginning invitation to the conversation of possibilities and pedagogies of hope. In this regard the university maintains its space for questioning, learning and provoking knowledge for the sake of wholeness (Milward, 2006), amidst all the other tensions around duties and expectations. Collaborating and communicating alternative approaches fosters an interdisciplinarity in this case, through the guise of methodology, as exemplifying ontological and epistemological inseparability.

The challenge for me continues to be one of identification and perhaps classification. I do not self-identify as an artist, both in my training and the representational form of my work. Is my work informed by the arts? I perceive that I am informed by a barrage of qualitative research methodologies and critical literature through post-modern philosophical lenses, not necessarily arts-based or strictly arts-informed in origin, yet I identify with Knowles and Cole’s (2007) description of arts-informed research, perhaps more than any one other research approach. What I bring to the discussion are images of expression that connect with images and texts of language that manifest through my reflections and conceptual meanderings, which arise in the flow and flux of process-oriented revolution. The “re” manifests the historicity and contextual locatedness that essentially is an evolving upheaval and anarchy to the “was” and “is,” hopeful of a “will be” that is unknow-able, open and inquisitive, as it then potentially manifests in some incarnation amidst tensile interdisciplinary pedagogical discourses.
Putting it out there

Bringing forth the everydayness of our humanness in all its complexity and randomness.

Breath-taking DISCOVERIES in RE-CYCLING!!!!

I needed to get back into the practice of my pedagogical aspirations as a living, breathing inquiry of praxis, to ignite the spirit into all this (...). As I struggle to find and learn the material I am expected to teach nursing students in an undergraduate nursing program, my reflective narrative flows forth. As I begin looking at the material I am about to teach I create a mind map to structure my thinking [insert map here].

All faculty are expected to attend a “Pedagogy Party” and I go expecting to have a fruitful conversation about the curriculum and how to connect the material above in some meaningful way. Instead, I sit through the discussion that is focused on clinical practice wondering what is going on. There is no mention of what pedagogy may mean to us individually or to the program, it is as if the word was just thrown in and the whole presentation is a step back into technical rationality (Doll, 1993; Schon, 1983), as we proceed to work through lab simulations.
I feel paralyzed in the not knowing and not being... how is it that I am not being, I’m not dead... but my perspective has become invisible... nullified out of the conversation... I don’t even go there, I just exist... not as an existential presencing, but rather without Arendt’s thoughtfulness and common sense... I’m just sitting there, afraid... living to die... no inquiry, no natality or inquisitiveness to be found... just there. I’m doing what I am told with my mask-like countenance. “It’s all laid out and done for you. Don’t reinvent the wheel,” I am reassured by my colleagues, my mentors.

My wheels are spinning in this nether space of being a new mother, a graduate student and new staff member of an institution that feels filled with candy apple perfection. Somewhere in the back of my mind I am remembering wanting to inquire into the process of learning, to always challenge systemic ways of thinking, to reflect on my practice. Each fleeting critical question (which we say we are encouraging students to make) is instantaneously being squelched by my identities of not quite being there (as grad student and newbie... “Don’t worry yourself about belonging to important curriculum committee discussions, you have enough on your plate”) and I am identified as one of the herd, no one in particular (as stereotyped mother who left her child early to go back to work and likely is still suffering from pregnancy brain... “She is interested in philosophy” or something like that...) and in transition. I keep getting sucked back into the vortex of teacher/student boxes, organs as systems of knowing and assessing boxes and institutional/professional discourses that language and box me further into my corner of silence.

My pedagogy is not solely about being critical, or blissfully hopeful. It is about the tensile play inbetween living as we are in our boxed worldviews that structure and organize our ways of knowing, being and doing, and striving to imagine otherwise, as we live and experience the world within the layers of boxes we encounter on a day to day bases in our lives. My pedagogical vision is not born in isolation or solitary confinement, it is steeped in the complexity of the was, is, will be, as I/we relational communities, as much as the unique, personal and sensual aspects of being. Being complicit requires my attunement to the historicities that inform nursing education, as well as the expectations, assumptions and priorities that are making themselves prominent in my everyday practice and living complexity.
I want to get at the deep roots in meaning making, honoring diverse ways of knowing: personal, narrative, artistic, aesthetic embodied. But I think it is more than telling stories. It is what those stories evoke in us. I read another’s story with less interest when it is wrapped by the “need to know” text. So why do I expect others to read my text? I need to write things down to get to a space of the written up. Others may have the skill to get to that island, but I’m stuck on Eco’s (1995) “Island of the day before,” rehashing this hash, amidst dreamscape and figments of my imagination. In fact, as I go back to Eco’s historical narrative, I ponder the complexity of his layers and my layers in an inseparable cosmological farce. What I am sharing are tidbits of what comes to me as I am provoked. Streams of consciousness, memories that are jarred into a moment of being, kindling the fire with a bit of warmth and solace to remind me that indeed I am alive. Pinch me and I remember to breath, or recoil in pain. I remember that in all possible worlds this is some form of reality, perhaps not even historically significant, but somehow more than just conceptual chaos. I dangle from those threads of consciousness, at times like a puppet waiting for another author to pull my strings. When I write it, I have to believe that my story is one that someone can identify with on some level; otherwise I wouldn’t offer it up...or would I, perhaps even merely as a sign of hope?
I feel like I’m always walking on that fine line,
    tight rope walking,
walking with toes curled
    taught to the core,
holding my self in,
holding in that something that may just splatter all over the pavement below.

The safety net looks solid from a distance and seems impenetrable
    As though it were woven with the strongest of fibers,
    but I see a hole.
It is torn all the way through the weave
    I can see through the whole deep down below the surface.
I waiver,
    I am not 100% certain that my fall will be absorbed
They would be sopping me up off the floor
    Scrape and scoop me up
Blow my ashes to the wind
    All the pain and suffering...
Yet in the end I don’t even exist except as a whisper of a memory

This is where my mind goes
When I’m walking the line
Tight rope walking.
How do you find hope amidst the reality of failure? I stand in front of yet another class feeling lost and afraid. They see me for what I am, a fraud. My philosophical pretense exposes me for the fake I am. This is not my bag, not my cup o’ tea, this gig is up! This is not what I signed up for, yet I have this deep sense of needing to be here.

As I stand with my clicker staring at the third of three blank screens, in the third room in three days, I start to wonder if someone is playing a bad joke on me. How can it be, on the third day of three rooms that have malfunctioning equipment that once again none of the technological devices are working? To make matters worse, there is no available tech support person to be found in this bad joke turned nightmare? I do not even like using PowerPoint, nor do I want to be teaching the content I am delivering. It is all painful. Armed and dangerous, that is what I am.
I want to open this Pandora’s Box! Give it life and regenerate my visions of a different kind of praxis—the one of (im) possibility where hope and play reign supreme (still accounting for power discourses, of course, as I’m not an idealist) over hegemonic silos, organizational structures, role identities, stereotypical diagnoses, etc. The acknowledgment that these pre-determined knowing/doing approaches exist is a frame of awareness and attunement…of mutual respect. As the paradigms shift, we continue to drag one foot in the old reflected boxed worldview to remind us who, what, where when and why we are knowing/being/doing in each particular moment of randomness and chaos. How are we living these complexities of inquiry and unknowing as we step tentatively into the new box…are we curious, hopeful, sensual, “healthy,” contemplative, and playful as we roam madly off in all directions (inclusive of the spaces between and layers imploding and exploding between our consciousness and reality)? It is hard to run with boxes on your feet.

Jan D’Esopo, Galleria, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

[Insert breath here] Sigh...
Each recycling effort revisits the factors that brought us to this space of tension (consider the cultural, economic, psychological, social, spiritual, emotional, physical, political, ecological, etc. factors, not in any particular order or linearity). Perhaps if I/we go “there” not to dwell, but to consider the indwelling, symbiotic, at times parasitic relations that hold us… fragment our always already w(holeness) and singularity in the I/we chasmic ontological/epistemological theory/practice gapping diasporas…awaiting one another with a hospitality that reminds us of our foreignness and discomfort of living unknowing and imperfection…perhaps, things would be different…perhaps, we would be different in our humanness and our sense of wellbeing. These tensions become tensile forces out of our control. Perhaps in questioning and being curious about the (im)possibilities that are emitted, we may view the tensions as liquid and light energy, un/dis/re covering all that is in its (ness)?

Smile © Laugh (ha-ha!) Breathe again (sigh...)

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59 I still have difficulties taking steps toward the other…another, to connect, rather than generalize our otherness.
When we assess these light, liquid energies that get us to step back (in an embodied presence), breathe and imagine otherwise, perhaps we may begin to contemplate the sentience of our relational capacities that already are. The context of the moment (including historical social situatedness) that influences our presencing, attunement, attentiveness in “communication” (I wish I had a better word) becomes otherwise.\(^6^0\)

I seek a blitzkrieg of media images and come across a record label of world music. Tolkein’s quote haunts me like a ghostly presence in my meanderings. “Not all those who wander are lost,” followed closely by, “How did I get here?” making “one giant leap” quite appealing…and here, Krishnamurti’s precipice and Appollinaire’s cliff come to mind.

The revisions of this text are based on multiple face-face and e-mail conversations with my committee who nurtured and provoked my draftiness by questioning: abrupt transitions; cursory judgments without depth of understanding; and connections that were not always explicit. The majority of this draft turned dissertation has been a journey taken by an infant scholar rooting around by reflex. The reflections take hold of concepts as the infant grasps at straws with a ravenous hunger and simple inflections of curiosity about the straw’s taste, function and movement. I have matured with the text becoming more courageous and heartfelt. The direction and flow between connections does not feel as linear, but rather is more overlapping and winding into a tensile coil. I aim for breath and poetic movement between the pages to reconnect body and earth. The dance between WordArt and examples of alternative texts plays with the notion of methodology, where the alternative texts are not fixed on the methodology, but rather are uniquely crafted renditions of expression. I continue to feel transitional and hopeful, which is why it is important to elucidate what the text was, is, and has the potential to become, as I move beyond the fixed idea of “x” construct with you, dear reader, to an alternative landscape of exploration, being flexible in the not-naming and fluid in the play with identifiers.

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\(^6^0\) Other, in this context does not imply dis-stance or organizational wordspeak, but rather implicates that familiarity of being who we are, as we are, with the (im)possible, not yet determined, always already present. Thus, ontologically and epistemologically speaking the other becomes “as is” through unknowing and unbeing. Here I think of Derrida’s aporetic musing between being dead and undead, insighting Caputo’s dead ethics with the hope and play of that (im)possibility. There is a striving for otherwise that is a relational way of being with another, as much as it is a way of being ourselves (in all the complexity and randomness that being entails as humanness; that is, being alien, foreign, and human).
Today I go to the site where some of the nursing students will be practicing—the hospital. It is new and does not feel as toxic as I had anticipated. I’m surprised by the number of connections I make on my visit. There are educators from various disciplines who are eager to speak to their area of specialty and offer insight into new initiatives, regional protocols, procedures and pathways, which would all be very beneficial to the application of theory we are currently teaching the students. I find several eager volunteers, inspired by the possibility of teaching in a different capacity, teaching in a different context. My role as facilitator is ignited and feels more interprofessional and collaborative.

From this experience, the disconnection between practice and theory had a lot to do with communication and effort. When I made the effort to extend myself, on behalf of the faculty, out of my zone of comfort, without fear of losing some sort of territory, something transformational happened. I felt I became part of a larger community of educators, part of reigniting a community of educators who had not been connecting to each other because of their shifting landscape, part of a community that had not been extending themselves beyond their own zone of comfort to the greater community of educators and co-learners, who would benefit from what they had to offer. Whether the move is from academia to the public discourse or from academia to sites of practice, the channels of communication, when they are opened as appreciative and inquiring as living learning, yield the fruits of hope.

Random in appearance and manifestation, each avenue into the centre of complexity provided fodder for the re-cycling of a narrative turned artful representation and “art” not ever explicitly identified as such. Identity amidst the quest for freedom from the known is the epistemological stance of such a venture. To encapsulate the growth and learning as it has evolved would require multiple renditions of this text with painstaking, explicit direction. Instead the ontology as it is embodied by the unidentified mis-fit emerges through example and exploratory reflection. This is not a “how to” manual and it is not meant to bore into you with details that are intended to be explicitly significant to the work of another. What has manifested is an expository text (not by order or sequence, but rather as exposé and description) that feels process-oriented, living and breathing the trauma, drama and transition of a learner of life. As author, critic and dabbler in artistic process, I hope that I have provoked a need for the telling and sharing of stories.
POST-SCRIPT

I live in comfortable awkwardness. From my mind’s eye I can project a laser view of the world but the beam does not always penetrate me, it mostly just emits random sporadic, ineffectual rays of dissonance, contemplation and imaginings. What will it take to shake me up? I want to have an influence enough to shake others up, but first I have to remember to keep mussing up my own complacency and comfort. It is easy to get comfortable, not in the feel good way, but just to become settled.

It is difficult to “end” a narrative in process. From a practical standpoint my examples and process work are just beginning to manifest into action plans. I am also finding it difficult to stop writing my process-turned-performance, in that I want to continue to share what I write as a reflective narrative. I feel ready to move on with the next steps and refocus my energies, or what is left of the zeal that inspired me to begin. Part of me is fearful that my text and process will end here. So... I will heed my supervisor, T’s, advice and end as I began on a poetically crude, yet playful note:

I thank you for taking the time in this space
to reflect on complexities,
here’s hoping you will find more time and a place
to share authenticies

For now, as I drag my box behind
I imagine otherwise
As I aspire to keep in heart and mind
Wellbeing, in dis-guise

I would like to make a vow to you
To hold the tension and dis-ease,
To consider the discordant eco-techno-spiritual credo
and all those alien living in-queries.
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