

HEARTFUL INQUIRY: A PARALLACTIC APPROACH TO ELA CURRICULUM

by

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Abstract

Before I embark on explaining the structure of this work, I would like to invite my reader(s) to seek resonances and dissonances with the words read from the page. While this conceptual thesis is written as a triptych – a set of three artistic works intended to be appreciated together – the individual parts speak to autobiographical and heartographical ruminations within the existing literature, thereby supporting a parallaxic approach to English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum. The autobiographical narrative is written in fragments. These stories of hopeful struggles, within schools as both a student and then an educator, are what have led me to become a language and literary researcher. While some may contest autobiographical writing in the academy, it is necessary to understand oneself in order to then understand the Other. The heartographical section is the *pièce de résistance*. It is the centerpiece of this thesis as the heart is the single life-giving organ from which everything flows; it fills the fissures of the earth and brings light-full hope amid the despair of darkness. This piece will bridge some of the ellipsis seen in the fragments and the telling rather than showing a parallaxic approach to ELA curriculum. The heartographical is the prominent present – pedagogically, philosophically and poetically – pulsing through the personal and the collective while heeding the past and questing without certitude courageously into the future. It is a place where the artist does not heed time or space in unleashing their inner spirit-between the experiences of the artist, researcher, and teacher. A/r/tography is an arts-based methodology that examines the contiguous relationship between and among the three identities. The slashes in-between the three identities present an interstitial space that I, as a neophyte to a/r/tography, have come to know as a place of responsibility to acknowledge that one never dwells only within one of these identities. As such, art, in its various forms, is always an invitation and a gift that passes on learned lessons from one person to another, from one place and time to another.

Preface

This thesis is the intellectual property of its author, Natalia Archacka. Due to the philosophical and poetic nature of this thesis, no BREB was required.

Table of contents

Abstract.....	ii
Preface.....	iii
Table of contents	iv
List of Figures.....	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Dedication	vii
Vulnerable hearts entangled by the nature of writing	1
Part 1: Ruminations on writing: Towards heartfelt inquiry	7
Part 2: Heartographical	52
Part 3: Some ruminations on heartfelt inquiry.....	79
Two “Lingering notes”	100
References	107

List of Figures

Figure 1 Nature wordle	67
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Acknowledgements

*Artists do not create in a void.
Their work is necessarily related to
the work of others, and their theorizing happens
within communities of affiliation.*
Rita Irwin & Stephanie Springgay, 2008, p. xxiv

An offering like this is never the work of one heart. First, I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Carl Leggo for his guidance, passion, and wisdom that have been invaluable to my graduate experience. I am also grateful to Dr. Karen Meyer and Dr. George Belliveau for their unending advice and support. Additionally, I would like to thank all professors for their knowledge and inspiration that have led me here today. I would also like to appreciate all a/r/tographers for their rich creative works that have helped me find the language I have always sought to bring voice to heartfelt thoughts. Finally, I gratefully acknowledge the financial support from the University of British Columbia.

*To all hearts
- near and far -
that have beaten, are beating, and will beat
re/searching for what it means to beat to a common beat.*

Vulnerable hearts entangled by the nature of writing

*Our hearts are never more than
a heart beat from breaking,
so how, how are we going
to care for our vulnerable hearts?*
Carl Leggo, 2011, p. 63

What is at stake when correcting mistakes?

A percentage or percentile?

A letter grade – A, B, C, D, F or incomplete?

A Promotion – pass or fail?

Do the stakes end with/in this superficiality?

No, there is much, much more at stake not only for the student and the teacher, but also for their relationship with others, the world and the host of its indistinguishable enigmatic questions.

What does writing reveal and conceal?

abandonment, abbreviation, ABCs, absences, absenteeism, absent-mindedness, abstracts, abstraction, abuse, acceptance, access, accommodation, accompaniment, accomplishment, accounts, accountability, acculturation, accuracy, achievement, acknowledgement, acronyms, acting, action, actions, activism, acts, actors, actuality, acuity, adaptability, adaptations, addendums, addictions, adequacy, adolescence, adherence, adoption, adulthood, adventure, adversity, advertising, advice, aesthetics, affect, affectation, affection, affiliation, aficionados, afterthought, agitation, age, agreement, alienation, alternatives, altruism, amazement, ambiguity, ambition, ambivalence, anagrams, analogy, analysis, ancestry, angels, anger, animals, animation, animosity, anniversaries, answers, antagonism, anticipation, anxiety, apathy, aphorisms, apologies, appearance, appointment, appreciation, apprehension, approaches, approval, aptitude, archetypes, arguments, arrangement, arrogance, art, artists, assemblages, assertions, assessments, assignments, assimilation, assistance, association, assumption, aspiration, attention, attitude, audience, authority, awakening, awareness, ...

backgrounds, balance, bands, bans, baselines, becoming, beginning, being, belief, belittling, belonging, belongings, beauty, betrayal, bias, binaries, birth, bitterness, (black)boards, blandness, blankness, blessings, blindness, blunders, blurriness, boldness, boredom, boundaries, boundlessness, braiding, brainstorming, bravery, breakthroughs, breadth, breaths, brevity, bridges, budgets, bureaucracy, business, busyness, ...

calligraphy, callousness, calmness, cancer, candour, captivity, carefulness, carelessness, career, catharsis, causes, caution, celebration, center, cerebration, ceremonies, certainty, cessation, chain reactions, challenges, chance, change, chapters, character, charisma, charity, charm, chasm, chaos, checklists, checks, cheerfulness, childhood, children, chills, choice, circles,

circularity, circumlocution, circumstances, citation, citizenship, civility, civilization, claim, clandestinity, clarity, class, Classics, classlessness, classrooms, cleverness, clichés, cliffhangers, climate, climate change, climaxes, clocks, closeness, closures, coexistence, coherence, collaboration, colours, comfort, commemoration, commencement, comment, commitment, common sense, communication, communion, community, comparison, compassion, competence, competition, complacency, competition, complexity, compliance, compression, compromise, concentration, conceptualization, concern, conclusion, condition, conditions, confidence, confession, conflicts, conflicts of interest, conformity, confusion, connections, connotation, conscience, consciousness, consequence, consideration, consistency, constraints, contemplation, contexts, contrast, contravention, contribution, controversy, conundrums, conventions, conversations, cooperation, coordination, copiousness, courage, coverage, cowardice, creation, creativity, *crescendos*, crimes, crisis, criticality, critics, criticism, critical thinkers, cruelty, cultivation, cultures, curiosity, *currere*, curriculum, custom, ...

danger, darkness, dazes, dazzlement, debates, death, debt, deception, decisions, dedication, deed, defeat, defense, defiance, delightfulness, delusion, democracy, denial, departures, dependence, depiction, depression, depth, derivation, description, design, desires, destruction, determination, devotion, dialects, dialogue, diaries, dictionaries, difference, difficulty, dignity, digression, dilemma, diligence, *diminuendos*, diplomacy, direction, disagreement, disappointments, disasters, disciplinarians, discipline, disciplines, disapproval, disclosure, discouragement, discourse, discovery, disease, discrepancy, discretion, discrimination, discussants, discussion, dishonesty, disobedience, disorder, disposition, dissimulation, distance, distances, distinction, diversity, division, doubt, drafts, dreams, dying, ...

eagerness, echoes, echoing, editing, editors, educated guesses, education, educational philosophy, educators, effort, ego, *ekphrasis*, ellipsis, eloquence, embarrassment, embodiment, empathy, emphasis, empowerment, emulation, enchantment, encouragement, endearment, endlessness, endowment, endurance, engagement, energy, enjoyment, enlightenment, entanglement, enthusiasm, environment, epochs, equality, equivocation, erasers, erasure, errors, escape, *essais*, essays, essence, ethics, etiquette, ethos, evaluation, evidence, evocations, evolution, eye-openers, eyes, eyewitnesses, ...

facilitation, facts, faith, faithfulness, falsehoods, fame, familiarity, family, farewells, fascination, fate, fatigue, faults, felicity, fear, fences, feet, figments, films, findings, finitude, fixation, flashbacks, flexibility, focus, forgiveness, flow, followers, fonts, footnotes, footprint, forethought, forgiveness, forgetfulness, formality, forthrightness, fortitude, fragments, frailty, free verse, freedom, free writing, friction, frustration, fun, funding, future, ...

games, gardens, gaps, gathering, gazes, generality, generations, generosity, genocide, genre, gentleness, genuineness, geography, gifts, giftedness, gist, giving, goals, God, gods, the golden rule, gracefulness, grafting, grammar, graphic organizers, gratitude, gravity, greatness, greed, grief, growth, guests, guidance, guidelines, guides, guilt, ...

habit, hands, handwriting, happenings, happiness, harkening, harmony, haste, hate,

havens, hazards, haze, healing, health, hearing, hearts, heart beats, heartbreak, heartfulness, heartlessness, heart-searching, heavens, help, helpers, helpfulness, helplessness, hero(in)es, hesitancy, hierarchy, highlights, hindsight, history, hobbies, home, homesickness, honesty, honour, hopefulness, hopelessness, humanity, humanities, humanness, humbleness, humiliation, humour, hunger, hurt, hybridization, ...

ideas, ideals, identification, identity, ideograms, ideology, idioms, idols, ignorance, illusions, illustrations, imagination, imagery, imbalances, immersion, impact, impatience, imperfection, implication, impossibility, imprisonment, improvement, impulses, inaction, inadequacy, in-between-ness, incapacity, incentive, inclination, inclusion, individuality, indifference, ineffability, inequality, inequity, inevitability, inferiority, inference, infinitude, influence, information, ingenuity, ingratitude, innocence, initiative, ink, innovation, insight, insistence, inspiration, instruction, instructions, instruments, integration, integrity, intelligence, interaction, interest, interpretation, interrelationships, intimacy, intricacy, introduction, introspection, intuition, inquiry, invention, inventors, invitations, issues, ...

jouissance, jamming, jarring, jargon, jealousy, jeopardy, jingles, jitters, *joie de vivre*, joules, journals, journeys, joy, judgment, juggling, jumbles, juncture, justice, justification, ...

keenness, keyboards, key, keys, keystrokes, keywords, kin, kindling, kindness, kinks, Kleenex, knacks, knowledge, knowledge-making, ...

labels, *lacunae*, land, landmarks, language, ... language learners, lassitude, laughter, law, laziness, lead, leaders, leads, leadership, leanings, learning, learning difficulties, leaves, legacies, legends, legislation, legitimacy, leisure, letters, liberties, lies, life, light, lightness, lifetimes, likeness, limits, linearity, lines, lingering, listening, literacy, literary devices, literature, (re)living, logic, loneliness, longing, loyalty, loss and/or love of self, others, and the world, ...

magic, magnetism, magnificence, majors, malnourishment, manners, masterpieces, masters, mastery, mathematics, maturity, maxims, mazes, meaning, meaning of life, measure, meditation, meetings, memories, memory, mentors, mentorship, mercy, messiness, metaphor, mind, mindsets, minority, minors, miracles, misery, misfortunes, mistrust, modeling, models, moderation, modernity, moments, moods, morality, mortality, motivation, motives, mourning, movement, multiplicity, muscles, music, musicians, musings, mystery, myths, ...

names, nationality, nations, nature, nearness, neatness, necessity, needs, negation, negativity, negotiation, neologism, neophytes, neutrality, newness, news, nexuses, nonsense, non sequitor, nonviolence, norms, noses, notation, notes, notebooks, note taking, noteworthiness, nuances, nuggets, numbers, nurture, ...

objectivity, obedience, obligation, obscurity, observation, obsession, obstacles, occasion, occupations, offerings, omissions, openings, open mindedness, opinions, opportunity, oppression, optimism, orchestration, order, orders, organization, organizations, orientation, orthography, Other, otherness, outcomes, outlines, outlooks, overbearingness, overcoming, overwhelmingness, ownership, ...

pace, pain, paintings, pagination, pages, paper, papers, parables, paradox, paragraphs, parallax, parallels, paraphrase, parenthesis, parenting, parody, participation, particularities, parts of speech, paragraphs, passion, passiveness, past, pathos, pathways, patience, peace, peacemaking, peculiarity, pedagogy, pedagogical philosophy, perambulations, perceptions, perfection, performance, perplexity, personality, persecution, personal growth, personality, perseverance, persuasion, pessimism, philosophy, pity, plagiarism, planning, plans, play, playfulness, pleas, pleasure, plot, poetry, poetics, poetic license, poets, policies, politics, pollution, pondering, portfolios, portraits, possibilities, potential, poverty, power, powerfulness, powerlessness, pragmatism, praise, praxis, prayer, preachers, preaching, precedents, preciousness, predictability, predications, prejudice, premises, preparation, prescience, prescription, presence, present, presentation, presentations, preservation, pressure, prevarication, prevention, pride, principles, priorities, printing, prioritizing, privilege, probing, problem solving, problems, proscription, process, procrastination, profit, progress, products, projects, promise, promises, propaganda, proportion, proposals, proverbs, provocation, proximity, psychology, publication, punctuation, pursuance, purpose, puzzlement, puzzles, ...

quality, quantity, quantum leaps, quarrels, quaking, questioning, quietude, quotations, quotidian practice, ...

racism, race, rapport, rationale, ravens, reaction, readers, reality, reason, reciprocity, regret, (re)reading, reading support, recognition, reconciliation, reflection, reflexivity, regurgitation, reinforcement, relationships, relaxation, religion, remembrance, repetition, representation, repression, reputation, research, research interests, reservation, reserves, respect, responsibility, rest, revision, rhetoric, rhetorical questions, rhythm, rhyme or reason, righteousness, rights, risks, risk-taking, rituals, routine, ruins, rules, ruminations, ...

sacrifice, sadness, safety, scars, scandals, scarcity, scenarios, scenes, scents, schedules, scholars, scholarships, schools, schooling, schools of thought, science, scientists, scope, scribes, second thoughts, second winds, secrets, segregation, self-deprecation, self-esteem, self-improvement, self-knowledge, selflessness, sensations, sense, sensitivity, sentences, serendipity, settlements, shame, sharing, shock, sight, sights, silence, silenced, silencing, simplicity, sites, smell, smoke, snapshots, social sciences, social work, society, solidarity, solace, sorrow, soul, soul-searching, space, specifications, spelling, spirit, spirits, spirituality, spontaneity, staccatos, stage directions, stagnation, stances, standards, stanzas, starvation, status, stereotypes, steps, stepping-stones, stigmas, stories, storylines, storytellers, storytelling, starkness, strategy, strength, stress, structure, struggle, students, study, subjectivity, success, suffering, superiority, support, suppositions, surrendering, surprise, survival, suspense, suspicion, sustainability, sweetness, sympathy, ...

tact, taste, teachers, tearing, tears, technology, teenagers, temptation, tenacity, tenderness, tense, tension, terror, thesauri, theorizing, theory, thoughtfulness, thoughts, tidiness, time, toolkits, topic, touch, tourism, trade, tragedy, travel, transactions, transformations, translations, translators, transparency, trauma, treasure, treatment, trust, truth, truthfulness, ...

ultimatums, uncertainty, unconcern, understanding, understatement, undertaking, ungratefulness, unhappiness, uniformity, unity, uniqueness, universe, unlearning, unoriginality, unpleasantness, unreason, unrest, untruths, unwinding, unworldliness, unworthiness, upbringing, updates, upheaval, uprisings, uproar, upset, upside, urge, uptake, usage, ...

vacillation, vagueness, variety, values, veracity, verbosity, verisimilitude, versatility, verse, version, veterans, vibrancy, viewpoint, vignettes, vigour, virtues, visceral, visualization, violence, vitality, vocabulary, vocabulary lists, vocation, voice, volition, vulnerability, ...

walls, wanderlust, war, war clouds, warmth, water, ways of being, living, and knowing, weariness, weather, weaving, weight, well-being, wildness, willingness, wisdom, wishes, wit, withholding, withstanding, witnesses, witnessing, wonder, wonderment, wordlessness, wordplay, words of wisdom, worldliness, work, workbooks, workshops, worth, worthiness, wounds, wrestles, writer's block, writers and writing - the world needs, writing fluency, writing support, ...

(e)xactitude, (e)xamination, (e)xamples, (e)xaggerations, (e)xcavations, (e)xcellence, (e)xception, (e)xcerpts, (e)xcess, (e)xchange, (e)xcitement, (e)xclamination, (e)xclusion, (e)xcuses, (e)xegesis, (e)xemplars, e(x)ercises, (e)xhaustion, (e)xhortations, (e)xigencies, (e)xistence, (e)xpectations, (e)xperiences, (e)xperiments, (e)xplications, (e)xplorations, (e)xpressions, (e)xpressiveness, (e)xtent, (e)xternalizing, (e)xtracts, (e)xtrapolations, (e)xtra space, (e)xtra time, (e)xultations, ...

yearning, ...

zest, zigzags, zing, zoning out, ...

The paper is the skin
 The pen is the instrument
 The superficial red marks
 on the pristine white page of words are
 the crimsoned faces
 the broken wounded hearts

While these pages can be destroyed, these markings remain etched in the minds of all who witnessed them. Will there be emotional scars?

How can the stake when correcting mistakes be lessened?
 Does the answer lie in colour?
 Cautiousness or consciousness of its use
 Changing the color of ink from red to green
 Does the answer lie in technology?
 Its advancement and/or its use?

How can voices stand side by side to care for our collective vulnerable hearts?

While I am exhausted in trying to shed light on the entangled nature of writing, I am sure I am far from exhausting what writing reveals and conceals. As such, I leave an ellipsis at the end of each of the twenty-six letters as an invitation for others to continue this entangled conversation. In this *to be continued* (...) space, I invite others to include their thoughts and to openly cherish their ways of knowing, being and living in the world. Then, I hope that one day we may communally linger in this place of ellipsis – the in-between space of richness and newness – to contemplate the following: what it means to write, what it means to e/valuate writing and most importantly, to what extent can writing help us know ourselves, the Other and the world.

Part 1: Ruminations on writing: Towards heartfelt inquiry

An attempt to join the “complicated curriculum conversation” (Pinar)

I come to this thesis with the heart of an educator who has been helping students of all ages learn in various educational settings for the past decade. While I specialized in English Language Arts (ELA) secondary education as well as English as an Additional Language (EAL) in my B.Ed. program, I have educated students in a variety of secondary school subjects and learning environments. In addition, I have worked with immigrant and refugee students as well as students with exceptionalities. As an individual caught in the in-between space as a student of the academy and also as an educator, I have always nurtured a profound passion for pedagogy, poetry, and philosophy; they continue to infuse all of my writing regardless of aim or audience. These passions are like the three musketeers wherein one calls on the others as the others call on the one; as such, they will form an underlying foundation for what I call heartfelt inquiry.

I strongly believe that every child is gifted, but that not all children are capable of exploring their giftedness within an atmosphere of conformity. Students need to express their voices in order to keep their curiosity alive, to reach their potential, and ultimately to learn how to be global citizens. The school system we have in place has in many respects not changed for over 40 years since Maxine Greene (1971) wrote “Curriculum and Consciousness.” Today, just as she wrote then, we still have programs of “intended learning” called prescribed learning outcomes found within the integrated resource packages of our disciplines, in which we again “pay too little attention to the individual in quest of his own future....” (Greene, 1971, p. 127) However, as a poet, I remain hopeful for “hope, conscious or unconscious, is what sustains the

poet” (Miłosz, 1983, p. 37). Why seek change? Here I lean on Philip Jackson’s (1997) observation, which is still very applicable today:

As he [the student] learns to live in school our student learns to subjugate his own desires to the will of the teacher and to subdue his own actions in the interest of the common good. He learns to be passive and to acquiesce to the network of rules, regulations and routines in which he is embedded ... Like the inhabitants of most other institutions, he learns how to shrug and say, “That’s the way the ball bounces.” (p. 125)

ELA: To be or not be – an art and/or science?

Writing is not a McDonald’s hamburger. The cooking is slow, and in the beginning you are not sure whether a roast or a banquet or a lamb chop will be the result.
Natalie Goldberg, 1986, p. 37

Writing in classrooms is seen as an easy endeavour with enough practice, especially when seeking to please the teacher and getting on with things. There are conventions that need to be followed. There are parts of speech that need to be in order. Paragraph structure within the hamburger essay model to be replicated. Answers to short and long questions to be given. But is writing really seen this way in the world? A world of chaos and disorder in which people do not heed language and silence; a world of technology in which words and worlds are invented and reinvented; a world of different languages and cultures forming mosaics, each with their own unique ways of being and communicating, which are often not reflected within the curricula of schools. In this mosaic, do we really *want* to learn from each other? I hope so because it is the only way to advance in be(com)ing human and helping one another understand the world and our place within it. But, then again, I think not.

Why are many students failing to find joy in ELA classrooms? Do we not all, regardless of our differences, use language to communicate? Is language not *at* the heart of ELA? Is not language an art? Classically, rhetoric was written about by Cicero, Quintilian and Aristotle as the *art* of persuasion. More contemporarily, rhetoric is known as the *art* and science of language. John Dewey (1897) in his seminal article “My Pedagogical Creed” wrote, “when science and art thus join hands the most commanding motive for human action will be reached, the most genuine springs of human conduct aroused, and the best service that human nature is capable of guaranteed” (p. 40). To what extent is this Deweyan scene seen in ELA classrooms today? Perhaps we should go back to the basics. What does art require that science does not? Heart. Here, the heart does not refer to the muscular organ or the courage and enthusiasm to persist in reading, finding information and/or writing about a topic; instead, the heart that art requires refers to the center of a person’s emotions to tell what is heartfelt. Poetically, this telling is known as an inscape. But in order for the telling to happen, there needs to be responsibility, transparency, and vulnerability. If ELA is merely – and I use this adverb sparingly – a science, then do students adequately develop these intricate and intimate human traits? If the answer is yes, let’s close the case. What happens if the case remains open? A question, perhaps among many, arises: how can ELA be an *art* as well as a science? I would like to propose *one* answer – not *the* answer – based on my experience as a student and as an educator.

Why focus on writing?

As a student and as an educator, I feel I have been beckoned to (re) examine the role of writing in ELA secondary schools in British Columbia. I have seen over the years how writing is often only expected of students without being talked about. It is seen as a means to an end – a shallow utilitarian outlook – where students write assignments to (perhaps) please their teacher,

get a grade, pass, and graduate. My heart aches when I see this, but even more so when students simply go to the end of their assignment to look for a grade upon receiving it back. Why do students often dismiss any written feedback? Does writing deserve to be looked at in this manner? Should students only read a short story, novel, and poem to write about the theme, mood, conflict, etc.? Is this all there is to a work of literature or to a work of art more generally? Are life-long learners driven by answering simple comprehension questions? Do they write about the obvious or are they interested in the metaphoric sense – never ceasing to question the unquestionable in the spirit of “I don’t know?”

To what extent can writing be defined?

Writing in the common sense is the dead letter, it is the carrier of death. It exhausts life. On the other hand, on the other face of the same proposition, writing in the metaphoric sense, natural, divine, and living writing, is venerated; it is equal in dignity to the origin of value, to the voice of conscience as divine law, to the heart, to sentiment, and so forth.
Jacques Derrida, 1976, p. 17

While Aristotle, Ferdinand de Saussure, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau have addressed the question, what is writing? Jacques Derrida (1976) notes that the point of origin becomes ungraspable as this question naturally unfolds to two further questions: where and when does writing begin? (p. 28). While reading Derrida’s (1976) *Of Grammatology*, I was lost in his use of linguistic contortions, in the seeming lack of logical development of saying the same things in a seemingly different manner. Perhaps, I ultimately witnessed Jacques Derrida, one of the greatest philosophers of all time, trying to say what cannot be said. I soon realized that in my wonder for seeking an alternative to the role of writing, I have started to wander and raise many thought-provoking questions. But I did not worry too much as I partially took refuge in a line of J.R.R. Tolkien’s poem “All that is gold does not glitter” wherein the poet says, “Not all those who

wander are lost.” However, it is important to note that Derrida’s aim in writing this book was to bring back the value of writing as it has been seen as subservient to speech, thanks to the Saussurian structuralism present at that time. In a similar vein, Hélène Cixous (1997) also worked through this structuralism and concluded:

The signified and the signifier work together without my being able to say which one leads, because the one calls for the other. And vice versa. How? A kind of work takes place in this space that we do not know, that precedes writing.... (pp. 28-29)

Although I am a questioning soul, I will not continue to ask if “what is writing?” is a worthwhile question because I see its resonance with Roy Harris’ thoughts on the question of “What is language?” Harris (as cited in Berger, 2011) notes: “The concept of language is one we take so much for granted that ‘What is language?’ sounds a very odd question” (p. 14). Writing about writing is also difficult to pin down, as I attempted to convey in the prologue, because of all that it reveals and conceals. I wonder whether writing about writing escapes our understanding because it is too close to us in that we are unable to detach ourselves from the fabric of life, where language and writing are two important threads woven within. This leads me to consider that perhaps the only medium with which we can define writing is writing itself. Can writing be left undefined as a way to acknowledge its openness to possibility and opportunity, to its uncanny nature? If so, perhaps a better question to address is: what is writing good for? Such a question may perhaps provide the key to understand the *reasons* why we write as an individual, as a student, as a teacher, and hopefully open the door to dialogue, a dialogue between these and other identities. Perhaps these answers will reveal what the act of writing does for us as human becomings rather than human beings (Aoki). Now I wonder, if the essence of art is mimesis and writing is an art, are there no limitations to this imitation? Why, then, is writing so constrained?

In this process, I believe Jacques Derrida's call to embrace writing in the metaphoric sense rather than writing in the common sense, opens up the possibility to examine writing as a unique place to frolic with curricula big ideas philosophically. I will work within the interplay between the concepts of being and becoming in relation to language and silence as they unfold within writing a method of inquiry practice; within this practice, students would be invited to know themselves and become global citizens as they embark on their own different yet shared life journeys. As such, I intend to illustrate how heartfelt inquiry within this practice aids ontogenesis, which refers to an individual's development. If a classroom can be seen as a community of practice where thoughts are shared, then such writing would reveal all the unique inscapes present within one time and space. Imagine what a rich learning environment this could become!

Why Socratic thought and not high school philosophy courses?

Wonder is the beginning of wisdom.
Socrates

As a former philosophy student, I join Luce Irigaray (2002), a well-known French feminist philosopher, in asking, "Why thus has the wisdom of love and, in part, wisdom itself, been forgotten? (2002, p. 4). Although Irigaray is a philosopher, her question does not rely on the etymological definition of philosophy, which is the love of wisdom; instead, she asks about the wisdom of love. Can this be a play on words? Perhaps. But can it also be that there is a bidirectional arrow or equal sign between the love of wisdom and the wisdom of love? It is a worthwhile rumination indeed. Through my research, I have found that philosophy education is hard to find in the North American context. In the United States, Edmonds High School in Edmonds, Washington has had an introductory philosophy course. However, it was unsuccessful

because it was too structured; that is, it was based on a university model that examines metaphysics, epistemology, logic and ethics. While this kind of approach to philosophy was retrospectively seen as too much for these high school students to grapple with, many students actually reported back that the course, through an examination of abstract concepts, “had given them a firmer foundation than most of their classmates had for doing college work” (Reinhert, 1967, p. 236).

Here in Canada, Ontario is the only province to offer a philosophy curriculum in high school. While examining the integrated resource package for the grade eleven and twelve philosophy classes, I have started to see why this curriculum is not being adopted in any other provinces. There is an immense amount of content to be covered in only a two-year period. The grade eleven curriculum strands address philosophical questions, philosophical theories, philosophy and everyday life, applications of philosophy to other subjects, as well as research and inquiry skills. Where does one begin as a teacher? Presumably the teacher would start with three or more philosophical questions to be addressed in relation to their philosophical theories. However, where does the student begin? It would be a large assumption to say in the same place, because students would likely be overwhelmed by the course content and a lack of prior philosophical quests. Moreover, the grade twelve curriculum addresses three or more of the following: metaphysics, logic and the philosophy of science, epistemology, ethics, social and political philosophy, aesthetics as well as research and inquiry skills. Again, how can teachers begin to teach so much when students are still novices to the discipline of philosophy? I simply believe that the curriculum demands exceed what students can handle in a very short time and, therefore, hinders not only their understanding of what it means to study philosophy but more importantly, their quotidian quest into the love of wisdom. Upon reading the Pinto et al. (2011)

study that sought to find out how teachers structured these two Ontario philosophy courses and how they engaged their students, I was surprised to learn how the teachers who had the most experience in philosophy (minor, major, or grad studies) did not teach more than those with little to no experience in philosophy (p. 52). Here, I cannot help but wonder how these decisions were made and what was the anticipated outlook.

Perhaps what these models illustrate is how “philosophy, anthropology, theology, and those sciences that tell us what it means to be human can be dangerous if they become ideologies that dictate reality; instead, they need to be understood as the means by which we humbly listen to and marvel at reality” (Vanier, 2008, p. 16). As a result, I would like to suggest an ELA education focused on Socratic thought and global citizenship while heartfully and artfully practicing (fragmentary) writing as a method of inquiry within the interplay of language and silence. As such, I have attempted to conceptualize heartfelt inquiry as a response to the rigid post-secondary approach to philosophy seen in Ontario high schools as well as the lack of philosophical thought and global citizenship education in the national curriculum, especially in British Columbia. But why include philosophy in schools in the first place? Personally, I advocate for philosophical thought for many reasons. Firstly I concur with Socrates that “an unexamined life is not worth living” and as such, it is important to know thyself in order to know the other and our collective place within humanity. What happens if a person does not examine their life? According to Martha Nussbaum (2010), an American philosopher and classicist, these individuals are often too easily influenced and/or often treat one another disrespectfully (pp. 50-51). Secondly I believe students who engage in philosophical thought develop their critical thinking skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills, as well as their research and analysis skills. John Dewey believed philosophy is needed “to meet the dawning self-

consciousness of the student ... as well as to balance the relations of his studies ... because it is an excellent way of ‘cultivating openness and flexibility of mind’” (as cited in Hahn, 1967, p. 219). A year later, Alfred Whitehead (1968) noted, “the use of philosophy is to maintain an active novelty of fundamental ideas illuminating the social system” (p. 174). In the end, I concur with Nussbaum (1997) who claims:

Philosophical questioning arises wherever people are. These students are discovering that philosophy is not an abstract, remote discipline, but one that is woven, as Socrates’ arguments were woven, into the fabric of their daily lives, their discussions of life and death, abortion and revenge, institutional justice and religion. Philosophy breaks out wherever people are encouraged to think for themselves, questioning in a Socratic way. (p. 17)

Voices like these heard decade after decade echo Adrienne Rich’s (2001) call that “we have to keep on asking questions still being defined as nonquestions – the ones beginning *Why...? What if...?*” even when “we will be told these are childish, naïve, ‘pre-postmodern’ questions” as these questions “are the imagination’s questions” (p. 167). Socrates is known for claiming that philosophy begins with wonder. Alfred Whitehead (1968) has continued this Socratic thought by adding, “And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains” (p. 168). In wondering why wonder is so important, I have come to realize that often as we transition from childhood to adulthood, we lose the natural ability to wonder as it is associated with a child’s love for the world. Once some of us start to age, we become like a bird trapped in a cage – a cage of conformity.

Heartful inquiry: *An answer to ELA?*

The heart is divided into four chambers carrying deoxygenated blood through the right atrium and ventricle into the lungs. Then in turn, the oxygenated blood from the lungs is carried through the left atrium and ventricle into the body. Heartful inquiry is what propels the blood in and through the heart's four cavities. Where does it get its force? It is grounded in the literature on writing where play sets its pulse. This "field of play" is integral to what Laurel Richardson and Elizabeth St. Pierre (2005) call "writing as a method of inquiry." These written fragments are gems waiting to be unearthed or philosophical musings around knowing thyself and global citizenship entangled around the interplay between language and silence. Like one person cannot exist without others, so too one of these elements of force cannot exist without the others. Why? Because art or rather the "heart of aesthetics refuses binary oppositions, simple judgements, and epigrammatic solutions. Instead, the heart of aesthetics pulses with questions, curiosity, openness, and imagination" (Leggo, 2012, p. 142).

Heartful inquiry is parallaxic as it "encourages teachers and researchers to acknowledge the power of their own shifting subjectivities and situatedness, as well as to value and acknowledge learners' perspectives and experiences which directly influence the constructs conceptualized in learning" (Sameshima, 2008, pp. 51-52). One's heartstrings are tugged when engaging in heartful inquiry, as it is a process in which students learn *with* heart rather than *by* heart. First and foremost, students learn in the Socratic spirit to "Know Thyself." Knowing oneself is like Biblical self-love for in order to love someone, we must first love ourselves; therefore it is only when we know ourselves that we may come to know the Other. To know the Other is to slow down, pause, and ruminate on what it is that intrigues us. How do we come to know the Other and ourselves? This knowing occurs through recursive reflection, reading and

writing. While in the process of attending to our hearts to find what is at heart, we reach out to other hearts amid ours and those beating in faraway lands. Heartful inquiry is love for the future by wholeheartedly attending to the present while remembering the past.

Why heartful inquiry in ELA?

Does not literature speak of human quests through time and space? ELA is a discipline of great finesse because of its inextricable and unassailable connection to stories that lend themselves to speaking of me, of you, of us, of others and in the process, learning from one another and with each other about be(com)ing human. Moreover, Jean Vanier (2008) highlights a further aspect of stories in relation to their historical significance and power to touch hearts:

Spiritual masters in sacred scripture often tell stories to reveal truths and to awaken hearts. Jesus spoke in parables; Hasidic Jews and Sufi teachers tell tales; Hindu scripture is full of stories. Stories seem to awaken new energies of love; they tell us great truths in simple, personal terms and make us long for light. Stories have a strange power of attraction. When we tell stories, we touch hearts. If we talk about theories or speak about ideas, the mind may assimilate them but the heart remains untouched. (p. 90)

Why should we be concerned about becoming human? Here, I would like to deconstruct this term: becoming human. First up is the verb “becoming.” I concur with Rita Irwin (2008) who claims “becoming never ends, for becoming is a continuous process inherent in the knowing-through-inquiry process” (p. 73). While these words speak of becoming a practitioner, I believe we are all practitioners regardless whether we are students or teachers. Why? We are *all* innately bound by language. As such, becoming as process is important to heartful inquiry, as we should not only try to learn from the womb to the tomb, but also try and leave the world not the way we were born into it, but better so others who follow may have hope to in turn do the same. As

Richard Weaver (1985) notes: “As long as man is born into history, he will be feeling and responding to historical pressures. All of these reasons combine to show why rhetoric should be considered the most humanistic of the humanities” (p. 206). What is the big picture? It is one of a chain of life in which the links are hands holding others *ad infinitum*. At this point it is important to see we are not human beings, but human becomings as we live in quotidian uncertainty towards a certain quietus. As Hélène Cixous (1997) understands, “We are all haunted by the question of our mortality. And thus haunted by the question of what it is to be human” (p. 32). Up next for examination: “human.” Perhaps in our daily life we do not think about this word too much, but Cixous (1997) reminds us, “We must absolutely not let go of the word ‘human.’ It is so important” (p. 31). What does being human mean? Richard Miller (2005) says “to be human is to be able to step out of the moment, to be able to represent oneself to oneself and to others, and to be able to reflect on what has been and to consider what might be” (p. 111). Now I ask: why should this be my task? Cixous (1997) asks, “Why do we live?” to which she answers, “I think: to become more human: more capable of reading the world...more faithful to what we are made from and to what we can create” (p. 30). This is why I have set out to seek this as my task.

Why speak of the heart?

To speak of the heart is not to speak of vaguely defined emotions but to speak of the very core of our being.

Jean Vanier, 2008, p. 87

The heart is a forgotten part of the body. It is often taken for granted until a rapid heartbeat or aching in the chest calls our attention from within. But does not everything flow from it? It provides our bodies with oxygen and nutrients while carrying away waste. And yes, while it is also the powerhouse of emotions, it remains humble, as it does not seek what emotions seek; instead, the heart seeks a “personal relationship with another, a communion of hearts, which is

the to-and-fro of love” (Vanier, 2008, p. 63). While each of us has a different heart, these hearts together *are* the common denominator between us as we all are born, live, and die. However, our hearts are also the most vulnerable of parts within our bodies. Why? Because the heart is where the art of love is born and so “love and vulnerability go hand in glove” (Cixous, 1997, p. 22). This love causes “a vulnerability which is whole [and] exceeds our grasp. We cannot control it, hold it, shape it, or mold it. We simply stay open to it, the tension between the possible and impossible” (Snowber and Wiebe, 2012, p. 448). This openness to vulnerability within the heart “lets the waters of compassion, of understanding, and of forgiveness flow forth” that in turn, indicates a mature person (Vanier, 2008, p. 102). To what extent does this picture of the heart entangled with/in love and vulnerability represent learning in our schools?

Fragmented writing

*All I want is to illustrate, depict fragments,
events of human life and death, each unique
and yet at the same time exchangeable.*
Hélène Cixous, 1994, p. xxii

While reading *The writing notebooks of Hélène Cixous* (2004), I lingered not only in the wise words written within fragments, but also in the fragments themselves. I have come to see their powerful way to convey the interplay between thoughts and memories, the past and the present and in turn, never-ending explorations. Yet, these musings offered as fragments also provide a glimpse into how a writer can be caught in an intimate act of fragmented writing in which no one might know what is going on, except for the writer themselves. This glimpse is a profound play between two *m*-nouns: mastery and mystery. Hélène Cixous’ many written volumes about memory, life, writing and life writing testify to how she has mastered the genre, if you will, of fragments, which are by their very nature, mysterious. While Cixous (1997) says her writing

“always starts from something unexplained, mysterious and concrete” (p. 43), she denies writing to be a mastery; instead, “it is nevertheless an exercise of virtuosity” wherein there is a “relationship to language which is such that all the seams, all the veins of language, all the layers, all the resonances are in activity, are in tension” (Cixous, 1997, p. 38). As a result of her texts luring me in within this play, I will try to write the first part of my triptych thesis as fragments. In the process, I have come to concur with Hélène Cixous (1998) that “cutting is an art I have acquired” as “when I write I do nothing on purpose, except stop.... Nothing is more natural and more necessary. All living beings ... know that one must cut and trim to relaunch life” (p. 144). This art of cutting and trimming resonates with Anita Sinner (2010) who artfully and heartfully writes about “taking up the notion of sojourning as a way into grand (familial) narratives” in fragments as they

are intentionally open to interpretations, to relational connections, to questions for which there are not necessarily answers ... fragments are ambiguous, and deliberately so, as all stories are deliberate and shared in the particular, like a sequence suggesting continuity that is actually discontinuity. (p. 75)

A further inner layer in this ambiguity of fragments is that while I am in the process of writing fragments, I pose questions but I do not necessarily provide *the* or *any* answer at all. Here, it is important to note that while both Hélène Cixous and Anita Sinner write in fragments, their writing is autobiographical. But why write autobiographically?

It's one version

*All biographies like all autobiographies like all narratives
tell one story in place of another story*
Hélène Cixous, 1997, p. 178

An autobiography is an account of a person's life written by that person. As much as it can be a story of that one person, it is also a narrative play, in which there are countless animate and/or inanimate actors, without whom the story is unable to be told. As a result, I do not believe the need to write autobiographically can be self-explanatory; therefore, I have to look towards what is at heart of (auto?)biographies: ethics. "We can call this autobiography, but it's one version. The blind person's version" (Cixous, 1997, p. 87). This is an important consideration to make, as we may never see what and/or whom someone else sees. Over the years and in various conversations, I've seen myself and others struggle to fixate a definition of ethics. Some have said that ethics is what the law requires of its citizens or what feelings of right and wrong people have in particular situations; still, others have explained that ethics pertain to the religious beliefs a person holds. Laws and feelings may deviate from what is ethical and although religion is at the root of ethical principles, ethics cannot only apply to religious people.

In the course of my studies in rhetoric and philosophy, I have come to appreciate ethics as a branch of philosophy that is derived from the Greek word *ethos*, which refers to the trustworthiness or credibility of the writer and/or speaker. In essence and for the brevity of this fragment, ethics is really about our relations and commitments to the 'Other.' The difficult task is to let the 'Other' be other without exposing or imposing one's view, style, attitude and/or ethos onto the Other. In addition, it is important to remember that no matter how much we try to feel into what the 'Other' is feeling, we are unable to do so fully because we are trapped in our bodies. While it is essential to be attentive, sensitive, and responsive to the different life circumstances and perspectives that the Other may express within dialogue, I suggest that a person entering into dialogue needs to first know themselves. Here, I see eye to eye with my mentor, Carl Leggo (2008) as "I think we live with too many lies, and, therefore, with little sense

of who we are and who we can be” (p. 21). How, then, can we enter into dialogue? Paulo Freire (1970) suggests that we enter into dialogue through the virtues of love, humility, faith, and hope. Furthermore, I concur with Leggo (2008) that we “need to write autobiographically in creative and courageous ways that acknowledge how each of us is composed in the intersections of multiple processes of identity shaping and re-shaping” (p. 17). As such, I believe fragments pave the way to self-knowledge.

An attempt at fragmented writing

The following are fragments of experiences that I have co-experienced with teachers, professors, and students as well as fellow classmates and colleagues. In saying this, it is important to remember that I am offering one perspective, which may or may not resonate with my readers. These fragments or narrative nuggets are important because they tell a personal tale of becoming a writer and an educator interested in the question of what it means to write. Moreover, the stories within these critically creative restored nuggets have led me to find my calling as a language and literary researcher who is re/examining ELA curriculum. As such, they demarcate the beginning of my inquiry, an inquiry that will never cease because it does not see any creases. What then does it see?

A garden of infinite paths

In kindergarten, I learned how to engage with the letters of the alphabet and how to write and read the worldly words that emerged from this engagement. In retrospect, I must say I truly felt the etymology of kindergarten, as I was a child in a children’s garden – playfully prowling the paths while experiencing and experimenting with the secret scents of sounds and words. While in primary school, I learned not only to write sentences and then paragraphs, but also to draw illustrations in the upper un-lined portions of the journal pages to complement the words on the

lower lined portions of the page. While I was never artistically inclined, I drew – stick persons, trees and flowers, rivers and roads, etc. Image(s) as word(s). Word(s) as image(s). Does one depict more than the other? Today I realize like William Burroughs that “sometimes one picture is equal to 30 pages of discourse, just as there are things images are completely incapable of communicating.” I wondered then how long would my playmates and I be officially allowed to complement text with image within the walls of the classroom.

An abrupt turn from infinite paths to “one way or the highway”

Then, in secondary school I learned to write to meet the requirements of the assignment at hand, mostly answering short and long questions about literary devices within literature. During this time, I also learned about the magical hamburger model for essay writing; I could say all I needed to say concisely in only five paragraphs. The introductory paragraph that orients the reader, identifies purpose, outlines scope, and states the thesis. Three body paragraphs each with different supporting details sandwiched between the topic sentences and concluding sentences. Lastly, the concluding paragraph known for wrapping the essay up by restating the thesis and summarising the argument. Not *a* model, but the *one* and *only*. No derivatives or alterations. One way or the highway.

Woundedness on the highway

In a nutshell, I learned how to write in English for over a decade in a strictly structured way. Did I always conform? No, I have become a wounded writer many times because I resisted the ascribed structure in favour of *my* way rather than *the* way. Wound/scar ... injury ... teacher ... hurt ... student ... instrument ... Wounded. After all, who was I as a child, in relation to a teacher, to know what was best for me and/or how to write the “right” way ... the “right” way...I wondered how many “wrong” ways there were ... Why were they “wrong”? Although my

teachers never wrote an “F” on any of my assignments and never said I did not have a chance to become a writer (my childhood dream), the comments I received – scribbled in red on my written work – called me back to adhere to structure. Structure. What does it mean? For whom does it mean? Alfred Whitehead (1968) wrote, “to be human requires the study of structure” as it is what differentiates us from animals (p. 76). But how much structure is too much? Red. Red is symbolic for... did this symbolism shine through or bleed through? Questions – I wondered then as I continue to wonder today ... Structure was utterly necessary in order to continue to “exceed” expectations that would once again place my name on the Honour Roll. On a roll ... experiencing a prolonged spell of success? A spell? Do I believe in magic? Was that it? *Exceeding* expectations by conforming to *structure* in order to earn a place among those who ace. Does an ace have a face? Can the ace not interlace his/her own unique trace with grace, rather than face disgrace and erase the heart’s embrace? What does an ace *ace*? What an idea! However, the diastolic rhythm of my heart silently assured me there is more and to persevere in the journey by finding tiny slivers of freedom to write freely in accordance with my heartbeat. So I did.

I wrote words onto the lightly lined, white canvases sewn into my black bound journals or on random pages ... for family and friends, for myself ... however, somehow unworthy for a grade and/or comment in school. All through high school, something was missing.... Since I was a child, I was able to complete most puzzle-like games I attempted – crosswords, Rubik’s cube, Tetris, Scrabble, Sudoku’s, etc. During the five years of junior and senior high, I tried to construct a conceptual puzzle of the mandatory and elective courses I undertook; it was a puzzle like no other in its solving, but I had a heartfelt need to see how the interlocking pieces of the big picture illustrated the value of education for myself, for others, and the world. I have succeeded

in my effort, but only to a mere 90 percent, as there was a remaining missing piece in the heart of the puzzle; this elusive 10 percent central piece included intricacy beyond words. So, the search *for* and *into* the unknown began ... literally and metaphorically.

Stepping-stone(s): In search for the missing piece

I was tired ... really tired of this model. I needed change. So the journey to freedom began after turning an adult and going off to a *place of mind*. As I entered through the gate of the university, a call from within called forth – *Tuum Est* (It is yours). Philosophy major. The love of wisdom. Learning to weave the classics amid the contemporaries.... Searching for simplicity ... complexity ... simplicity within complexity. Serendipitously finding complexity within simplicity. Epistemology, metaphysics, logic, ethics – bio-medical, business, environmental.... Yes, the philosophical literature was mine ... to concur, to confute, to investigate, to prove and disprove, to linger with and question.... The writing? Yes, writing too began to be mine. With open invitations to write papers in ways that unleashed the inner spirit in a theoretical conversation on the page. No format, no structure.... Any instructions? 1.Logical. 2.Engage the reader(s) with the literature. That cannot be too hard, I thought. Caveats? Of course, there must be some... Only one – a limit of two pages due to the frequency and rigorous nature of these and other assignments. Oh, well I thought ... maybe if I endure this phase of the journey, there will come a day *sans* limit. Could philosophy be the missing piece of the puzzle? Perhaps, but it really was too early in my scholarly and personal journey to say, yay or nay. Nonetheless, it was *mine*. Was it the place of mind that made it *mine*?

The other side of the same coin – English major. Strategies to academic writing, English grammar and usage, history of the English language, the structure of modern English, stylistics, dialectology, Old English literature, Canadian literature, sociolinguistics, history and theory of

rhetoric ... just the beginning of listing the myriad philological branches I engaged with ... an intricate weaving of language and literature. Structure? Yes, taking all the required classes for English majors with some electives. Writing structure? Yes, absolutely ... especially during the first year – a critical year in which writing was taken to a different level. Students were invited to learn the conventions of writing in an academic milieu by reading textbooks grounded in genre theory and engaging in exercises that solidified student understanding. In retrospect, it was a truly daunting experience! Structure? Check. Page limits? Check. Citations? Check. How was I prepared for all this during the first years of my education? By conforming to structure.... Was I prepared in any other way(s)?

Thankfully, as the years went by, structure became less and less important ... for professors and for me personally. Was I a rebel in the system? Maybe covertly, but not overtly. I will continue to write differently.... I will continue to develop my own style.... I will agree to disagree.... Were these options even possible? Yes, they were indeed. Did my wounds heal? Were there any scars? Forgive and forget. Can I forget? I knew that I had more and more freedom to write words that shed insight on how philosophy and philology called on each other, to complement the other and co-exist rhetorically in the other. It was still *mine*. Wonderfully *mine*... Nonetheless, I questioned how I had come to that point.... Did others follow suit and develop their own ways? If so, did they thrive or strive to survive? A different story all together ... definitely one worthy to be told in a different context. I was confident *it was mine* somehow.

***Imagination is more important than knowledge.
Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.***
Albert Einstein

Imagine you are a colleague of William Shakespeare. While Mr. Shakespeare is satisfied with his yet unpublished play... rewrite the scene of the last act, independently or in groups of two to four, which may find its way into the final manuscript. Be creative... Some possibilities include changing the setting – time and/or place...exploring different genres – short story, graphic novel, comic strip, video, live performance, etc.... In the end, you will present your work to Mr. Shakespeare and his actors... Write a reflection describing the writing process as well as the rationale for the alternative ending you've written.

The above? An example, among many others, of an invitation extended to my students. As an educator working through different units of study within ELA curriculum, language and silence have always been close to my heart.... While helping students navigate through Shakespearean plays, I have naturally, but in retrospect somewhat indirectly, referred to this important connection between language and silence. Did I make *it theirs*? Although I knew the direction of my students' projects as there were regular conferences leading up to the presentation, I was awestruck to see how language and silence found a place in the projects ... directly and indirectly. Some students used the language of the day while others used more contemporary language while attending to appropriateness. Silence, on the other hand, was used in a multitude of creative ways. Some of the written scripts referred to contemporary problems often silenced in schools and society, while others silenced the roles of more prominent figures and gave voice to those who were marginalized. Yet other students used silence in writing stage directions with prompts to wait or pass by in silence.... The pages of graphic novels offered an

intricate balance of text and blank space in the fragmented pictures. The authors of short stories worked slightly harder to convey what characters knew and didn't know. My students described characters "drifting into an unresponsive depression of silence"; their character's jaw dropping; "silence becoming eerie." Another student ended their short story with the following powerful six words, "Then, soon after everything went silent." These words invite the audience to ponder possibilities, as this apparent alternative ending in its uncertain certitude is really an opening rather than a closure. A torch of creative responsibility passing from heart to heart, mind to mind and perhaps even, hand to hand. What gifts to receive!

In inviting my students to imagine, they have used language and silence in profound ways, ways that even surprised them as I have come to know from their reflections and our discussions. The power of imagination ... without direct instruction. *It was theirs*. Will they now *make it someone else's*? I hope so. I know I will continue to *make it theirs*, as *it was made mine* over a decade ago.

State of stagnation

Gunther Kress (2000) argues that our educational system is in a stagnant state because it is entrenched in educating a 19th century audience for the stability of the times, rather than catering to our 21st century students with "an education for fluidity, for instability" (p. 139). I am baffled how my experience as a K-12 student resonates more than a decade later with the many experiences of my students. But what is a decade in relation to the inertia seen within curriculum? While reporting on a Swedish study of close to a century's worth of student examination papers in literature, Gunnar Hansson (1992) observes "It takes a long time – 20, 30 or even 40 years – for a new approach in literary research to find its way into school teaching and to gain a dominant position there" (p. 147). Over the years, many of my students have noted

how talking and writing about reading is a widely accepted practice unlike talking and writing about writing. Why? Are reading and writing not two interchanging steps of the same ladder? To what extent does this approach help and/or hinder not only student writing but also their reading and learning? Why do we not promote a culture of both reading and writing?

Sean Wiebe (2008) speaks about a classroom as a writing community in which he teaches writing to writers, not to students. In this approach, Wiebe notices how these self-identified writers convey “commitment and care of writing practice” that “carries over to one’s sense of self, even to confidence as a human being, and to a resonance in writing that is artistry in craft, but also artistry in an aesthetic living” (p. 95). When will most teachers start to think this way? Do students write only *in* and *for* class? What about social media, texting, blogging, using smartphones and computers to write? All this writing shows how “writing sustains, writing keeps the heart warm, the words warm” (Wiebe, 2008, p. 99). These different ways of writing are the creatures of the deep, the *lacunae* within the literature on the pedagogy of writing waiting to be appreciated more and/or bridged with existing theories and practice. I have employed some of their power in my pedagogical practice, and I will employ more. Like Wiebe, in my teaching writing, instead of saying our students, I’ll say our writers.

I have never let my schooling interfere with my education.

Mark Twain

What are these fragments? Critically creative writing. A weaving of good and bad experiences that have brought me here today. Why offer criticism creatively? To avoid wounded hearts? To sensitively share a personal account in which others co-authored the story? I am thankful for my schooling as I realize I was fortunate enough to go to school to learn and have many fond memories of teachers, classmates and schools. In the end, this creative criticism of schooling is

offered with a humble heart, as it is merely one story. It was my heart that never let my schooling interfere with my education. The daily inner rhythm of diastole and systole allowed me to take great, great strides towards the development of my trifold passion for pedagogy, philosophy and poetry. Furthermore, these heartbeats helped me persevere to conceptualize an alternative approach to ELA classrooms. The missing piece of the puzzle? Philosophical thought.... It has changed the way I have and will continue to educate ... the way I read and write the world of ... of ... of ... into existence ... the way I live in the world in the multiplicity of identities I hold.

***The meaning of life is to find your gift.
The purpose of life is to give it away.***
Pablo Picasso

As a writer, I heed Mary Oliver's "Instructions for living a life" as I love to "pay attention/be astonished/tell about it." As an a/r/tographer, I see the resonance of these words in the practice of living inquiry. Living inquiry is one of the many a/r/tographical branches conducive to a humbling and grounding process that calls for awareness, attention, and attunement to daily life (Meyer, class notes). The slashes and commas are places of dialogue in and among that which they demarcate while creating openings, openings that now assist me in my practice, studies, and beyond to be more present in the world. What is the meaning of life? The answer may lie in a myriad of ways rooted in the multiplicity of identities. So perhaps a subsidiary question can be posed: how is this meaning presented to the world? Personally, it is through writing as I write regardless of the time of day or night, the place and space I find myself in, the state of mind and health I may have, the intertwined identities I sometimes struggle with. When I write, I follow the heart rather than the mind. It seems to me that I am gifted with the ability to linger with/in ...

especially nature. As Hélène Cixous (1997) notes: “To write is to note down the music of the world, the music of the body, the music of time” (p. 46).

In *Imagination and time* Mary Warnock (1994) explains how “the world of nature can speak to us if and only if we can shape it into an idea, or impression, of our own” (p. 33). My heart guides my mind to re/mold my own impression of nature’s beauty. Then, the mind somehow mystically beats as one with the heartbeat, and together they guide my hand to bear witness in written traces for reasons unknown to me. I do not need to know, but I wonder ... is it to open the eyes of the other who may often not take notice and/or appreciate commonplace occurrences due to everyday haste? However, how does this re/molding occur? It is done through words – yes, words – what Don Cupitt, a Cambridge theologian, calls truth. He compares truth to music or love as “truth is no longer something out there; it is a way with words...” that “flow continually out of us, like living water” (Cupitt, as cited in Warnock, 1994, p. 23). A profoundly entangled triptych of humanity, language and nature. When I was a child, I have to confess I often wrote to please. Now, I write about what my soul sees – the bees flying with ease, the breeze of the seven seas, the decrees that unease, the disease overseas, the displeasure of detainees and deportees, the expertise of trustees, the fresh breeze after decades in the deep freeze, the key of knowledge that frees, the pleas asked for on knees, the leaves on trees that are never at ease, the unease to appease.... “Another story, another truth” (Cupitt, as cited in Warnock, 1994, p. 23). The story calls on the truth as the truth calls on the story. This union is full of timeless wonder and wisdom that silently and subtly calls upon Chuck Larkin’s reminder of how “storytelling links the inner outer me to the inner outer thee with the world that was, is, and will be.”

Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.
Edgar Degas

As a child I wrote to tell a story, but I did not realize an intrinsic trait of story – no story is ever the whole story. Realizing this over time, I have come to a place where I write to show rather than to tell a story. I must say it is not an easy endeavour as I do not always know where the line is drawn; however, I also recognize that showing a story takes the audience(s) beyond merely listening or hearing the storyteller's voice to make connections within and beyond the trajectory of the story. Showing a story is an art that is often forgotten, misunderstood or taken for granted due to its silent yet communicative portrayal of connection. It is an art that requires more effort to walk through the desert and find the greatly anticipated source of water. Are the rewards greater in showing than in telling the story for the author and/or the audience(s)? I write this thesis not to give any answers; I know I will never find answers. Rather, I am here to write as an artist, an aspiring curricular scholar, and an educator in hope that my words may arouse if not inflame, evoke if not provoke heartfelt feelings that will incite a conversation and perhaps, sow some seeds that may one day spring up, and thrive.

If I tried to exhaust the reasons why I write in the multitude of identities I hold dear in my quotidian quest, I would not have space for anything else. As a graduate student, I write to engage in a conversation between past vital voices and the ever-present voices of colleagues living near and far. I write abstracts, proposals, and papers to present at conferences about many entangled curriculum conversations, not to crack the code or change mindsets, but to converse in circles of interdisciplinary passionate scholars – to collaboratively reach a new height in understanding our common hope. I write essays not to show what I know about a given topic, but

as an attempt to understand the other, whoever or whatever the other is, and to let them be other so they might teach in their other-ness different ways of being, knowing, living, loving....

More generally, while these reasons revolve around the ability to connect, to dwell in and to reflect, I cannot help but bring an ethical light to whatever I write, even while writing autobiographically. As a former philosophy major, questions drive my writing adventures. Yes, adventures because I am in search of the unknown – unheard, unsaid, unseen, untouched, rather than the unknowable – unhear-able, unsayable, unseeable, untouchable. As an artist, researcher, and teacher it seems to be difficult to stray away from critical reading. I sometimes need to remind myself what it means to read for pleasure. However, I have found myself engaging in what I call self-critical writing. When I write, I question not only my written work, but also more importantly, my writing journey. I am hesitant to let my writing free even while I realize the purpose of my life is to give it away. I waver and waver before I release my writing into the world – even if it only goes a foot away. I do not consider it to be complete; my work, especially my writing, is never finished. Yes, I do have deadlines. However, I am not a human *being* but a human *becoming* and as such, I remain hopeful to devise something more worthy of the words in this world when I revise. I am reluctant ... it is not good enough. What does “good enough” mean? For whom does it mean? As for the writing process, I question the worthiness of my voice, as I have asked and continue to ask, “Who am I?” to write about the Other and others.... I question the breadth and depth of words I choose to write into existence within my work.... I question, on all grounds, the limited experience I have compared to those who are more... more.... I question the appropriateness of the writing style I employ to write about.... I question how to bridge the gap between my audience’s prior knowledge and my understanding of.... I question how I portray in words and wordlessness the inextricability of language and silence

within the time and space I wholeheartedly embrace.... I question the minimal knowledge I have of the world, the Other, and myself.... I question why there are conventions.... I question.... A question spawns a question. Are these questions out of place or do they interlace? In my case, I definitely pass a lace through the spaces in/between these questions in my daily writing s/pace.

Pedagogical logic: Pro(du)cess(t) vs. produc(ess)t

Process. Product. The language of assessment. Writing seen as a product of the process. Why is writing seen as a product produced in a processing plant with production lines running 24/7 to produce profit? I dislike this language around the assessment of writing. Nonetheless, I ask, which of the following is correct? A. pro(du)cess(t) or B. produc(ess)t. Does the process form the foundation for the product or does the product form the foundation for the process? Logically, the former for obvious reasons. Why then does pedagogy not value logic? How can summative assessment win the day with formative assessment in the figuration of a grade for an assignment and/or a course? What value is there given to thought in its movement? To what extent is the trajectory, the “how” of thought, seen as unguide-able and the “what” of thought seen as guide-able? Can students be guided in “how” to think rather than (merely) “what” to think? Can there be more successful students if the process triumphs over the product, the “how” triumphs over the “what”?

How can I keep up?

As I write my thoughts here and there about this and that, I am constantly humbled. Although I yearn to write in the present, I cannot fulfil my dream due to my finitude within the ephemerality of time. I can only write after the present. Am I true to the passing moment when coerced to write after it? When I sit and write in my study, I am often overwhelmed with different thoughts, moving here and there. Alfred Whitehead (1968) has said wisely: “It is never

bare thought or bare existence that we are aware of” (p. 166). He continued to explain this complexity and I concur that each person is “essentially a unity of emotions, enjoyments, hopes, fears, regrets, valuations of alternatives, decisions – all of them subjective reactions to the environment as active in my nature” (Whitehead, 1968, p. 166). While I loved to write as a child growing up, I wondered: how can I keep up and write all my thoughts? At first, I tried to record my thoughts aloud. But then, I wasted precious time to replay that, which overwrote my concurrent fleeting thoughts. Then, one day an English teacher recalled the words of an American radio personality, Earl Nightingale, who said: “Ideas are elusive, slippery things. Best to keep a pad of paper and a pencil at the bedside, so you can stab them during the night before they get away.” From that time on, I became determined to always keep a notebook or a Notes app at hand to catch my fishlike thoughts regardless if they came before or after forty winks or a good night’s sleep. Today I continue to write everywhere I go, as I am grateful for the thoughts and words that flow from daily connections and reflections.

The *key* of fragments

Although musical sonatas or concertos are written either in a minor or major key, they concurrently contain *keys* to both of these doors. Let me explain. Fragments too are concurrently minor and major. They are not minor due to their small size, but due to their sad and/or pensive effect, much like *Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor*. They are places where writers and/or audiences frequently feel emotional. Fragments, once they are written on a page, remind me as a reader that a writer needed to peel an onion, layer-by-layer to find the quintessence worthy of an audience’s time. Time? What is it worth? While I cherish my time, I worry about the layers that are thrown out. Will I/you/us make a mistake because a story was thrown out? Fragments are also major because they are poignant reminders of what was, is and can be within the fabric of

human experience; their charm is found in the fact that they do not seek to speak to solitary experience. Rather, they speak to a sociably accessible experience as we are in the world because *of* others, *with* others, and *for* others. These prepositions not only speak to human finitude and frailty, but also to the friction that lies within. As such, these flakes faithfully braid a fateful account of these three f-nouns. Fragments are powerful. Where, then, is fragmentary writing seen in schools?

Writing as a method of inquiry

Laurel Richardson (2005) claims, “nurturing our own voices releases the censorious hold of ‘science writing’ on our consciousness as well as the arrogance it fosters in our psyche” (p. 961). I must admit that while I am drawn into Cixousian fragments, I also want to demystify their nature by finding their *key(s)*. Why the demystification? I was inspired and intrigued by Hélène Cixous’ style, as I have not encountered it before. Up until this point, I have not frequently thought of writing as a method of inquiry. But as I began to write about what I experienced in those fragments, I could not help but notice that I had developed an understanding of these magical narrative nuggets because I have put pen to paper. I have trusted the writing process so much that in doing so, I have come to understand something I did not understand before. Jacques Derrida (1978) explains this well when he notes how “writing is *inaugural*... It does not know where it is going, no knowledge can keep it from the essential precipitation toward the meaning that it constitutes and that is, primarily, its future” (p. 11). In much of my writing and pedagogy, I am seeking to recognize with Elizabeth St. Pierre (2005) how “writing *is* thinking, writing *is* analysis, writing *is* indeed a seductive and tangled *method* of discovery” (p. 967).

Can students reach a greater understanding of x and/or y by setting pen to paper and seeing where the writing process will take them? I believe schools underestimate how writing

can be used, as a method of inquiry and, therefore, it also does not nurture unique student voices. In addition, this method illustrates how writing is a physical effort. That is, writing comes about by writing, by working the hand or foot. A truism. I would not have thought much about x, before I put pen to paper, hands to keyboard. However, writing as a method of inquiry also shows how, “concepts must be experienced” (Manning, 2009, p. x) and that “thought is ontogenetic: it propels more thought” (Manning, 2009, p. 8). Can ELA curriculum address the following questions: What does it mean to write in fragments – to peel the onion? Which lived experience(s) are worthy and not worthy of fragmented attention? To what extent can a person be in fragments trying to write fragments? What lessons do fragments teach and whom do these lessons reach?

Knowing thyself

Education is not a “one size fits all” idea. Students who are unable to jump through the hoops of structure fall through the cracks as a result of education not appealing to what they are passionate about. Many scholars, such as Michael Wesch (2008), understand how “students – our most important critics – are struggling to find meaning and significance in their education” (p. 5). Elliot Eisner (1967) echoes the millennia old Socratic wisdom “an unexamined life is not worth living,” when he states that “an unexamined belief in curriculum ... can easily become dogma which in fact may hinder the very functions the concept was originally designed to serve” (p. 109). Whether on the quest to question generalities or particulars, life or curriculum, one needs to heed Socrates’ words, know thyself, for only when one starts here, will one know how to get there and embark on the to and fro journey in becoming human through knowing the “other,” whatever or whoever the “other” is in their otherness.

We are told in Plato's Republic about a dialogue between Socrates and Euthydemus in which Socrates asks Euthydemus whether he noticed an inscription "Know Thyself" upon a visit to the oracle of Delphi. Upon hearing that Euthydemus saw the inscription, Socrates immediately asked him whether or not he paid attention to these words and, furthermore, whether or not he considered who he was as a result of seeing these words. Socrates was taken aback by the lack of Euthydemus' attention so much that he took these two words to heart; he made them the foundation of teaching other hearts, hearts like Plato's and Xenophon's who lived to tell his story for generations to come. While these words may seem ancient, they are nevertheless, worthy of attention as I see eye to eye with feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray (2002) who notes:

It seems that man, in the unfolding of culture, of History, has not ceased moving away from himself. He has legislated over the world, particularly with his language, he has explored the interior and exterior of his horizon, he has even ventured outside his planet and his atmosphere, but, about himself, what does he know? (p. 47)

What does it mean to know who we are? As Jean Vanier (2008), a Canadian philosopher and humanitarian, unfolds his thoughts about *Becoming human*, he weaves together an intricate quilt whereby he states, "compassion is maturity and maturity is acceptance" wherein "maturity, then, is to discover who we are" (p. 114); he continues to say that by knowing ourselves "with our gifts and flaws, our yearnings for truth and justice, and our compulsions and blockages, we begin to take our places in society, each of us just as we are, working for peace, unity, and justice" (p. 114). Do our students know themselves? Can they take their place in society? I personally did not know myself through my K-12 schooling. It was not until I reached university that I began to know myself through schooling. I note that while I have not known myself through schooling, I was fortunate enough to begin this process through my education; that is, the way in which I was

brought up. However, I realize not all children are fortunate enough to be raised in these conditions. This is one additional reason why I will advocate for Socratic thought within schooling. Today, I realize I will never fully know myself as I remain humbled by the hungry spirit within me as I inquire into the words I read and write – all in an attempt to know what I do not yet know. Nonetheless, I believe it is only by the process of trying to know myself through writing about my experiences with writing that I may in fact try to help others in their writing. In *Fides et ratio*, an encyclical letter on the relationship between faith and reason, Pope John Paul II (1998) illustrates the historical importance of this admonition as well as some of its questions:

in different parts of the world, with their different cultures, there arise at the same time the fundamental questions which pervade human life: *Who am I? Where have I come from and where am I going? Why is there evil? What is there after this life?* These are the questions which we find in the sacred writings of Israel, as also in the Veda and the Avesta; we find them in the writings of Confucius and Lao-Tze, and in the preaching of Tirthankara and Buddha; they appear in the poetry of Homer and in the tragedies of Euripides and Sophocles, as they do in the philosophical writings of Plato and Aristotle. They are questions which have their common source in the quest for meaning which has always compelled the human heart. In fact, the answer given to these questions decides the direction which people seek to give to their lives. (pp. 1-2)

I suggest in the framework of heartfelt inquiry that to know oneself is to know one's heart and it, in turn, leads us on our way in becoming human. However, Jean Vanier (2008) describes how we turn a blind eye to the heart:

We tend to reduce being human to acquiring knowledge, power, and social status. We have disregarded the heart, seeing it only as a symbol of weakness, the centre of

sentimentality and emotion, instead of as a powerhouse of love that can reorient us from our self-centredness, revealing to us and to others the basic beauty of humanity, empowering us to grow. (p. 78)

Painfully, I have witnessed this disregard for the heart, both as a student and as an educator. As such, this thesis on heartfelt inquiry is from beginning to end my humble attempt to bring back the heart's significance.

Richard Miller (2005), an English professor at Rutgers University, asks in his provocative book *Writing at the end of the world* whether it “is possible to produce writing that generates a greater sense of self-understanding?” (p. 25). Yes, I believe it is possible, but only if students write about what it means to know themselves through the practice of fragmentary writing as a method of inquiry. It is important to remember, however, as Jean Vanier (2008) reminds us:

We do not discover who we are, we do not reach true humanness, in a solitary state; we discover it through mutual dependency, in weakness, in learning through belonging wherein belonging is a school of love where we learn to open up to others and to the world around us, where each person, creature, and thing in our world is important and is respected. (p. 41)

Are our schools places of such belonging? I'm not sure, but I believe ELA classrooms are an excellent place to examine this Socratic call because they have the potential of becoming writing communities in which writing as a method of inquiry is practiced. Is the maxim, know thyself, only considered by philosophers, theologians, and English professors? No. The concept of self-knowledge is talked about in psychological circles as well. David Funder (2010), millennia later, sheds light on Euthydemus' lack of concern and, in turn, Socrates' concern with this unconcern

by noting, “attending to the self is actually rather difficult” (p. 673). Moreover, Funder opines that you know yourself by “searching for your interests and testing your abilities” and by doing so, “you are more likely to make wise choices about education, occupation ... and everything else that matters” (p. 678). What further words of wisdom does he offer? “The best advice toward self-knowledge is probably to be yourself” (Funder, 2010, p. 678). Where do our students’ interests lie? What are their passions? Can students truly be themselves at school?

During a Kansas Health Foundation Leadership Institute keynote address, Margaret Wheatley (2000) called upon the participants to place passion before structure. When I lingered in her thoughts, I began to ask myself: when do students in our schools explore their passions? There are only four possibilities – before structure, after structure, concurrently with structure, or never, perhaps better referred to as “on their own time.” Based on my experiences as a student and as an educator within the public K-12 system, I’m afraid that often the latter of the four possibilities remains true. How then, can passion re/gain its respective place within curriculum? Only when educators start to feel comfortable in the place of tensionality between Ted Aoki’s two curricula worlds – adhering to the curriculum as lived within the curriculum as planned.

Cracking open words to help the world: Tension in the in-between

Leonard Cohen’s refrain in his poem “The Anthem” speaks to the power of a crack and what it offers the world – the crevice allowing light. A “crack” in Cohen’s words is found “in everything” for it is “how the light comes in.” Heeding Cohen’s words, Ted Aoki (2000) cracked the concept of curriculum forevermore by demarcating it as such: *currículum*. This simple yet complex demarcation is a profound offering to the world of education as it presents a timeless twofold understanding of curriculum: “curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-live(d)” in which

one lives within the other (p. 322). Ted Aoki's crack not only allows light, but illumination into the power of the critical-hermeneutic evaluation orientation. As Aoki (1991) claims:

the evaluators' interest is directed not so much to the level of attainment of knowledge, skills, or attitudes; nor to the merit of ideological interests, assumptions, and approaches; nor to in situ portrayals that constitute the cultural lives of people. Rather, the interest is in seeking out the quality of ontological meanings in the lived experiences of students, teachers, administrators, and parents. (p. 179)

The immense power of this orientation caused curriculum-as-it-was-known to fragment. Ah, the power of fragments and fragmentation returns again. While I do not know how Ted Aoki decided to "crack" this word by severing it on the vowel "u," I humbly try to "crack" a word that has lighted an enlightened path in my world. Why? Because I hope it may illuminate its forgotten role in curriculum. In my daily path, I linger and dwell in the question, "what does it mean to become human?" As I walk along this long winding path, I find it entangled in many branches and paths. What does it mean to help others to become human? How can I do this as an artist? As a researcher? As an educator? What is the word I decide to split? Philosophy. Etymologically, the love of wisdom. Pedagogically and personally, the missing piece in the curriculum puzzle.

As a language and literacy researcher who attends to the language of others – especially great humble curriculum giants like Ted Aoki, I too throw an arrow like Cupid to splice the love of wisdom on a vowel. The result is *philosophy* and in it, I find two understandings of philosophy: philosophy-as-mind and philosophy-as-heart. Philosophy-as-mind walks behind the curriculum-as-planned for the mind works on implanting and implementing the prescribed learning outcomes found in the IRP's into personal, pedagogical practice; the mind is the organ that dictates actions in tune with surviving rather than thriving as a teacher. As such, philosophy-

as-mind pertains to the so-called pre-planned lesson plans concerned with students producing a product. When considering philosophy-as-heart, it is important to be mindful that while the eye is an organ through which the world is seen, it is also the window to the soul. As a result, philosophy-as-heart walks behind the curriculum-as-lived for through the eye, the soul within the heart seeks to speak about what it sees, not to seize or displease, but to be ethical and help it and other hearts to become human by co-witnessing the world. As a result, the philosophy-as-heart is concerned with thriving as an educator and therefore, valuing the process.

Like the fictional yet resonating persona of Miss O who struggles in the tensionality between Ted Aoki's two curriculum worlds (1986/1991), Miss A has and continues to find a place of ethical tensionality between these two perceptions of philosophy. This tensionality arises even when tutoring students rather than "teaching" them, as I know that my approach is not necessarily in key with the "prescribed" way. I guide my students towards finding within them the love of wisdom by teaching them to question; to dwell and linger with/in language and silence; to help them understand what it means to be human so hopefully, they may accompany others on their way. This guidance is why I have a vested interest in curriculum theory and also why teaching is in quotation marks, as I believe teaching to be *of* the plan – the curriculum documents. Educating, then, is an intricate he/artful weaving of the plan within the multiplicity of the students' and teachers' lived experiences with/in the world. Moreover, I believe teaching is of the mind and educating is of the mind *and* the heart; as such, educating is developing the whole child while guiding them along the path of becoming human.

On the importance of play ... in writing

*My book writes itself. Creates itself. Secret.
With jubilation and play.
With French. Within French.
Hélène Cixous, 1998, p. 141*

Play. What does it mean to play? What is its alternative? John Dewey (1910) in his seminal book *How to think* claims, “In play, interest centers in activity, without much reference to its outcome.... In work, the end holds attention and controls the notice given to means” (p. 217).

Play as process and work as product. But why should we play? Martha Nussbaum (2010) explains: “As play develops, the child develops a capacity for wonder” (p. 99). The UN convention on the rights of the child (2013) sheds light on the heart of play for both children and adults:

children learn by doing; they explore and experience the world around them; experiment with new ideas, roles and experiences and in so doing, learn to understand and construct their social position within the world ... Participation with children in play provides adults with unique insights and understanding into the child’s perspectives. It builds respect between generations, contributes to effective understanding and communication between children and adults and affords opportunities to provide guidance and stimulus.

(p. 4)

While working towards a heartfelt conceptualization of heartfelt inquiry, play and playfulness have been seen numerous times. Where? John Dewey played with the concept of education. He did not seek simplicity or singularity, but rather complexity and multiplicity. He conceived education as a necessity of life, as social function, as direction, as growth.... Hélène Cixous’s “self-portrait of a blind person: it is always the other who makes the portrait, in an endless *play*

of referral – from you to the other to the other you(s), etc.” (p. 86). Ted Aoki’s (2000) play by cracking the word “curriculum.” Why did all these great minds play? John Dewey (1910) wisely notes:

To be playful and serious at the same time is possible, and it defines the ideal mental condition. Absence of dogmatism and prejudice, presence of intellectual curiosity and flexibility, are manifest in the free play of the mind upon a topic. (p. 218)

Play pushes parameters. It is a space in which innovative thought is born into place at a unique pace. The ideal mental condition. Thomas Edison has said, “I never did a day’s work in my life – it was all fun.” How can this be? It seems this may occur if we find our passions and pursue them with perseverance. What more is there to say about play? One keyword here is, curiosity. Over time, I have seen “curiosity” as a modern name for traditional Socratic “wisdom” because as Philip Jackson (1997) in “The Daily Grind” explains:

Curiosity, as an instance, that most fundamental of all scholarly traits, is of little value in responding to the demands of conformity. The curious person typically engages in a kind of probing, poking, and exploring that is almost antithetical to the attitude of the passive conformist. (p.125)

In “Inspiring the curriculum,” Ted Aoki (1987) recalls how he was troubled “teaching an ethic – an ethic that separated work from play, that sublimated work and deemphasized play, and sanctified the rather simple-minded attitude of either work or play, but never, never, work and play together” (p. 358). Are teachers troubled like Aoki by the lack of play or have they forgotten about the importance of play? Perhaps it is not these teachers who have forgotten about play. Maybe it is the curriculum theorists and/or developers? Either way, there is no replay of a child’s play (or lack thereof). How many more minds need to show us how “mental play is open-

mindedness, faith in the power of thought to preserve its own integrity without external supports and arbitrary restrictions?” (Dewey, 1910, p. 219)

Echoing Hélène Cixous’ words and fragmentary writing style, I say: my thesis writes itself. Creates itself. Secret. With jubilation and play. With English. Within English. What happens when I write? I play. Not with clay or the colour gray as I’m not so artistically inclined. Instead, I play as I may, with letters and words to build blocks of thoughts not only to convey my heart’s array, but more importantly, to shed light on the world’s disarray. “What I write then knows neither limit nor hesitation” (Cixous, 1998, p. 141). I ask in disbelief: How can I be so free, as a bee? In the end, I stray in my play as I attempt to give the right of way to that which I notice is silenced away. “My business is to translate emotions into writings” (Cixous, 1998, p. 143). Will I go astray on my way? I do not know, but I will not go halfway. Rather, I will go all the way to obey the Lord’s way: “Now write what you have seen, what is, and what is to take place after this” (Revelation 1.19).

Fragmentary writing: a bridge between Socratic thought and global citizenship

*Fragmentary writing is, ultimately, democratic writing.
Each fragment enjoys an equal distinction.... Each ... has its hour of glory.*
Jean Baudrillard, as cited in Leggo, 2012, p. 153

Richard Miller (2005) asks: “Is it possible to produce writing that generates a greater sense of connection to the world and its inhabitants?” (p. 25). I would like to suggest it is possible, if students first know themselves and then, engage in assignments that speak to them as being a minute yet important part of the world. How can this be done? Students can engage in fragmentary writing as a method of inquiry that speaks to their relationship to global citizenship. What is global citizenship? Kathy Bickmore (2009) defines global citizenship education as “designed to encourage students to imagine the future, to notice and predict effects of today’s

actions on tomorrow's lives, and to recognize, respect, and care about diverse other problems" (p. 274). Why is global citizenship education important in the Canadian democratic context?

Martha Nussbaum (2010) addresses this question when she claims:

The ability to think well about a wide range of cultures, groups, and nations in the context of a grasp of the global economy and of the history of many national and group interactions is crucial in order to enable democracies to deal responsibly with the problems we currently face as members of an interdependent world. (p. 10)

I agree with Kathy Simon (2001) who observes how "moral and existential questions are barely discussed in many high school classrooms – even though such discussions are generally regarded by students to be their best learning experiences" (as cited in Bickmore, 2009, p. 275). In the end, I concur with Kathy Bickmore (2009) who explains just how much global education is of utmost importance for peace-building citizenship in an interdependent world:

It responds to the global dimensions of conflict and insecurity that already affect the lives of diverse young people in North America and worldwide, and prepares them to make responsible and effective choices in light of those global dimensions. (p. 285)

Emotion and cognition: An often forgotten relationship

*Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries.
Without them humanity cannot survive.*
The Dali Lama

In "We feel, therefore we learn: The relevance of affective and social neuroscience to education," Mary Helen Immordino-Yang and Antonio Damasio (2007) describe how "without adequate access to social and cultural knowledge, ... children cannot use their knowledge efficaciously" (p. 6). I have heard that in some BC secondary schools, the geography curriculum is gradually accumulating dust, as it not sought by students enough for there to be a class size

sufficient for instruction. One may only begin to imagine why this is the case. I sometimes find that students think Africa, not South Africa, is a country. What links do these students form when they hear Africa and the Third World? Do students understand how earthquakes happen from which one third of a country's population – eight million people – perish in a matter of minutes? To what extent can they attempt to understand a fellow Nepalese classmate whose family sleeps under the open sky in fear of further tremors? Awareness is important to keep in mind as Jerome Bruner said in Charles Laird's documentary *Through These Eyes* (2004): "without awareness, there is moral and mental death."

In a similar vein, History 12 is also an elective. How much do mature students receiving matriculation know about World War II and the Holocaust if history lessons stop a year earlier with the mandatory Social Studies 11 curriculum, which only briefly covers this important chapter within a wide scope of events and issues? What message is this sending about human existence and/or history in the making? Furthermore, perhaps there are Ukrainians and/or Russians in the class. Are they treated with compassion? To what extent does schooling leave geography and/or history to the imagination? Do students and/or their families watch or read the news when free time often revolves around music, sports, computer games, laser tagging, paintballing, parties, and other fun extra-curricula activities? "Indeed, 21st century schools may be called upon to take over many of the functions once assigned to homes" (Noddings, 2007, p. 400). For some pedagogues, the light that has lit their passions is growing dimmer and dimmer not due to stress, family issues, or burning out – although these factors do affect teachers. This light is dimmer and dimming because students are not interested in learning about the structure of the earth they walk on daily, the struggles others have or had, where and under what

conditions others live, and ultimately, how people have risked their lives despite the odds to make the world the place these students were born into.

As I dwell in these times of conflict, I am reminded of Immordino-Yang and Damasio's wisdom "knowledge and reasoning divorced from emotional implications and learning lack meaning and motivation and are of little use in the real world" (2007, p. 9). The result? "Individuals use one another so as to get desired results, without reference to the emotional and intellectual disposition and consent of those used" (Dewey, 2008, p. 8). My heart hurts when I witness these situations. Are these two subjects not about reading, books, media, writing, language, silence, lives writing themselves into history? Do they not speak to "our capacity to imagine [that] allows us to take pleasure in others' joy, to cringe at others' pain, to be present even when we are not?" (Neilson, 2008, p. x) While I do not believe students should be forced to take either of these classes, I do believe they can become a natural part of curriculum, especially within ELA classrooms.

Whither human history?

If our society has difficulty in functioning, if we are continually confronted by a world in crisis, full of violence, of fear, of abuse, I suggest it is because we are not clear about what it means to be human.
Jean Vanier, 2008, p. 78

Mahatma Gandhi. Mother Theresa. Nelson Mandela. The Dali Lama. Karol Wojtyła. Nicholas Winton. Esther Hillesum. Are these the only moral exemplars? What about the many righteous men and women who risked their lives and the lives of their loved ones to save people who they did not know? I have found that in conversations when I mention Nelson Mandela or Mahatma Gandhi, some students do not know who these historical figures are. The life narratives of these and other heroes and heroines who have acted bravely and with care tell tales of the sick and

dying, oppression, uniting religions in dialogue, living to tell a story of others dying for them because of their race.

What was going through the minds of these individuals, their motives? Empathy, self-esteem, forgiveness, social responsibility, spirituality.... Whatever the reasons may be, it is important to remember they were moral in their way of living life, but also that they were mortals just like us. These mortals used language and silence to communicate despite difficult situations. Their lives have truly embodied their teachings and have taught us what it means to be human. Colloquially, this embodiment meant that they not only talked the talk, but also walked the walk. Rather than using language in an instrumental way as a “disembodied tool of communication, these individuals understood language in an “embodied way – a way that allows [them] to say, ‘We are the language we speak’ or ‘Language is the house of Being’” (Aoki, 1992, p. 264). Didactically, Gandhi’s call, “Be the change you wish to see in the world,” and Mother Theresa’s advice, “If you judge people, you have no time to love them,” and Karol Wojtyła’s reminder how “Work bears a particular mark of man and of humanity, the mark of a person operating within a community of persons” ... and ... and ... *ad infinitum*.

All these individuals and many others have left great legacies beyond words, but legacies not spoken about will wither. I dare not ask whether the efforts of their hearts were in vain for I fear that would be ineffable and cause great heartbreak. Instead, I ask to what extent can they inspire us and others into making the world a better place for surely we live our days amid similar situations that need to be addressed and resolved before they perpetuate into the monstrous. Ending these musings, I would like to add that the link between these and other exemplars lies in the fact that these wo/men while experiencing malnourishment and various hardships never experienced the poverty of their hearts, as they remained spirited to the end. Can

we try to be like them? Will we listen to them and learn what it means to live within fragments of the past? What it means to re/build from fragmented ruins and/or memories? They have much to offer. Will we listen?

Part 2: Heartographical

Storytelling

I share with you my stories,
as I hope that my stories will become yours
and that my voice will help your voice be heard.
After all, “Story is the mother of us all.” (Christina Baldwin)

Stories are like blood cells that flow in our veins,
as they are pumped through the body by way of the heart.
May they be said aloud before the earth closes our eyes,
only then will our hearts not pump blood in vain through our veins.

History has shown that blood has the power to reveal, unite and divide.
Are stories not the same?
If stories are like blood, then they too have the power to reveal, unite and divide.
Can we risk telling our stories due to the latter of the threefold?

If we can, then we risk building new barriers, borders, boundaries that may require a lot of
dialogue to break down.
If we can't tell stories in fear of them forming a divide, then are we being truthful and
courageous to ourselves, to others, and to the world?

Is dialogue not rooted in love, humility, faith, and hope?
If it isn't....
How can we build a future, without knowing the past?
How can we not repeat the mistakes of our forefathers, if we are not cognizant of them?
The worst truth is better than a void or a lie,
a void or a lie that permeates and perpetuates all that we and future generations do.

I believe in storytelling.

It reveals us to the Other.
It connects us to the world.
It unites us across time and space.
It sets *the* uniform beat we cannot escape
– a beat of our collective finite and fragile hearts.
Let us not forget then,
one written beat mysteriously knows the next unwritten beat.

*Love is like a butterfly, hold it too tight, it will crush.
 Hold it too loose, it will fly away.
 – Unknown*

A/r/tography is a heartfelt methodology of love for the world. It embraces living and that is not only being inquiring relational, but also reflective. It examines the contiguous relationship between the researcher and artist, teacher. Living in the interstitial spaces between A, R and T the requires courage, creativity, responsibility and vulnerability. Our words to the world call upon unlimited combinations to inquire through a creativ(e)ntanglement of life writing, and these modes of inquiry: narrative, living, performative, musical, poetic and visual artistic. A/r/tography of a butterfly who is an eternal quest into becoming human. It is a delicate letting go remembers this teaching, “Until you spread your wings, you’ll have no idea how far you can fly” into the – Unknown (to touch the Other)

“Omne trium perfectum”

Everything that comes in threes is perfect.

Every set of three is complete.

Why is the # 3 the noblest of all numbers?

It is a sign of synchrony – 1, 2 and 3

Where is it seen?

Everywhere

Artistically,

triptych – a set of three works intended to be appreciated together

A/r/tographically,

identities – artist, researcher and teacher

tasks – art making, researching and teaching

relationally – way of living, inquiring and being

forms of thought – praxis, theoria and poesis

Celestially, the sunlight, moonlight and starlight

Competitively, medals/awards – gold, silver and bronze ... 1st, 2nd and 3rd

Environmentally, three r's – reduce, reuse and recycle

Economically, sector theory – primary, tertiary and secondary

Geologically,

time – eras, periods and epochs

different types of rocks – igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic

compositional layers of the Earth – crust, mantle and the core

kinds of tectonic plate boundaries – divergent, convergent and transform

Haematologically, RBCs, WBCs and platelets suspended in plasma.

Immunologically, the body's lines of defense against infection –

Physical and chemical barriers, non-specific immune response, specific immune response

Legally,

categories of Old Testament laws – ceremonial, civil and moral

branches of government – executive, legislative and judicial

ways for defendants to defend themselves – legal services, retained counsel or self-representation

most common criminal defenses – insanity, intoxication or self-defence

major legal systems – continental, Anglo-American and religious

types of offences – summary, indictable and hybrid

Mathematically,

1st odd prime number, 2nd smallest prime
Pi (3.14159)
the only # to = the + of all the #s below it
triangles – three straight sides and three angles

Musically,
Three Tenors – Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo and Jose Carreras
Waltz – three beats to a measure
triad, a chord of three musical notes – the root, the third and the fifth
trio, a group of three musicians
trio, a composition written for three musicians
triplet, three evenly spaced notes in the space of two notes of same rhythmic value
pedals on a piano – to soften, silence and sustain sounds (L-R)
types of clef – G, C and F

Nutritionally, main meals of the day – breakfast, lunch and dinner

Pedagogically,
basic tenses – past, present and future
irony – verbal, situation and dramatic
essay structure – introduction, body and conclusion
ellipsis – three dots between two words, each with a single space on either side
levels of education – primary, secondary and post-secondary
domains of learning – cognitive, affective and psychomotor
fundamentals of education – reading, (w)riting and (a)rithmetic (Sir Curtis)
triangulation in assessment – conversations, products and observations (AB, ONT)
types of learning assessment – assessment for/as/of learning
possible understandings of school – “rational thinking,” “doing,” and being and becoming (Aoki)

Philosophically,
modes of persuasion – ethos, pathos and logos
types of love – eros, philos and agape
aims of rhetoric – delight, instruct and move
major rhetorical arts in the medieval period – *ars praedicandi*, *ars dictaminis* and *ars poetriae*
big three in Greek philosophy – Socrates, Plato and Aristotle
philosophies of China – Daoism, Confucianism and Buddhism
major branches of philosophy – metaphysics, epistemology and axiology
proofs for the existence of God – ontological, cosmological and teleological argument

Poetically,
major types of poetry – narrative, lyric and dramatic
anapest – two weak syllables followed by a strong syllable
dactyl – a strong syllable followed by two weak syllables
Haiku – a Japanese poem of seventeen syllables in three lines of five, seven and five
Tercet – a stanza with three lines

trimeter – three metrical feet per line
Robert Service's poem "The Three Voices"

Politically, the political spectrum – left, center and right

Religiously,
monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam
Jewish Patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
Jewish pilgrimage festivals – Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot
Pillars of Judaism – Torah, Temple service and acts of kindness
Books of Tanakh divided into three categories – Torah, Nevi'im and Ketuvim
theological virtues – faith, hope and love
places of the afterlife – heaven, purgatory and hell
Holy Trinity – Father, Son and the Holy Spirit
Christ's threefold function – Prophet, Priest and King
religions sharing the holy land of Jerusalem – Judaism, Christianity and Islam
Holy sites of Islam – Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem

Scientifically,
variables in experiments – independent, dependent and controlled
elements a fire needs to ignite – heat, fuel and oxygen
Newton's three laws of motion
movement – left or right, backwards or forwards, up or down
division of pregnancy into three trimesters – 1st, 2nd and 3rd
branches of the trigeminal nerve – ophthalmic, maxillary and mandibular
functional regions of the trapezius muscles – superior, intermediate and inferior
cardiac cycle – a complete heartbeat – diastole, systole and the intervals between
composition of the outer wall of the heart – epicardium, myocardium and the endocardium

Sociologically, historical triangulation – education, politics and economy (Vanderstraeten)

Storytelling-ly,
The three musketeers
The three little pigs
Goldilocks and the three bears

Writing is...

Metaphor is one of our most important tools for trying to comprehend partially what cannot be comprehended totally: our feelings, aesthetic experiences, moral practices, and spiritual awareness. These endeavours of the imagination are not devoid of rationality; since they use metaphor, they employ an imaginative rationality
George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, 1980, p. 193

So metaphor must come from a different place than that of the logical, intelligent mind. It comes from a place that is very courageous, willing to step out of our preconceived ways of seeing things and open so large that it can see the oneness in an ant and in an elephant.
Natalie Goldberg, 1986, p. 35

Writing is
a forever friend
a chaotic puzzle
a fragrant garden
an ungraspable trickster
the unearthing of the earth

an awe-inspiring metamorphosis
the soul that dwells within your dust
an untamed horse racing towards the sunset
a clock ticking and talking in and out of storylines

the key to the unknown door in the house of doors
the un/conceived he/art begging for life in the world
a journey in the desert where footprints are under erasure
an intricate and vulnerable dance of words whirled by worldly winds
the kindling of an inner flame rather than the fulfilling of an outer aim

Writing is... Writing is... Writing is... Writing is... Writing is... Writing is...

light, but only through perseverance.
the he/artful act of writing shows the soul its inner
what one does with the pen to achieve *x*, but is *the pen* itself;
comprehend partially what cannot be comprehended fully,” I realize writing is not
As a writer, walking up and down these stairs in action, thought and language “trying to

An alphabet soup

A	Art, <i>Art history</i>
B	BC First Nations Studies, Biology, Business education
C	Calculus, Chemistry, Communications, Comparative civilizations,
D	Dance, Drama
E	Earth science, <i>Economics</i> , English First Nations, English language arts, English literature, <i>Environmental science</i> , <i>European history</i>
F	Fine arts, French
G	Geography, Geology, German
H	History, Home economics
I	Information technology, Italian
J	Japanese
K	Korean
L	Law
M	Mandarin Chinese, Mathematics, Music
N	
O	
P	Physical education, Physics, Planning, <i>Psychology</i> , Punjabi,
Q	
R	
S	Science, Social studies, Spanish, <i>Statistics</i> , <i>Studio art</i>
T	Technology education
U	<i>US history</i>
V	Visual arts
W	<i>World history</i> , Writing
X	
Y	
Z	

The alphabet soup above represents the “big picture” of BC secondary school curriculum where the subjects in italics are AP courses available in some schools.

Here, I do not seek what’s wrong; rather, I ask: what’s possible here?

What are the possibilities for curriculum design, especially for the N/O/Q/R/X/Y and/or Z?

What if religious education and queer studies were built into the fabric of curriculum to build compassion and cooperation within communities?

Ellipsis: a pulsing in-between

*Becoming comprises ellipses and eclipses.
Invisibility and silence take part in becoming.*

Luce Irigaray, 2002, p. 100

Ellipsis - *Elleipsis* (Gr.) – to leave out

Silence ... invisibility ... becoming

(...) Three dots between two words, each with a single space on either side

... Silence ...

An awkward or nervous silence – should it be such?

Can it transform into a comfortable silence in which resonance amid dissonance is sought?

.... Invisibility ...

An omission of unimportant words due to their ... to the world.

Are they really unimportant? Who's to say?

... Becoming ...

A pause – a place of connection between writer and reader(s) to revere vulnerability in closeness yet eerie distantness

An unfinished thought – trailing of thought and/or hesitation due to...

Fear? Who and/or what is the writer afraid of?

Ellipsis is used in writing for brevity and/or clarity

To what extent are these virtues really virtuous in writing what may never be thought of or written again from our unique hearts?

What does ... mean? Is it the interval *in-between* two heartbeats?

What and/or who is blotted out? Blocked? Covered? Concealed? Darkened? Hidden? Obliterated? Obscured? Shaded?

Sun by the moon?

Sunlight by the moonlight?

Lightness by darkness?

Hope by despair?

Insight by ...?

Delight by ...?

Truth by ...?

Ways of being?

Knowing?

Learning?

Living?

Voice(s) awaiting becoming, invisibly and/or silently, in utter patience

Ec(h)opedagogical existence

Gardens are places to contemplate the complexity of Creation
within the
enigmatic enchantment that
emanates these enclosed earthly spaces.

Schools are gardens where teachers help seedlings in their becoming.

Like seedlings, students grow rain or shine
as both these events through the language of movement and nourishment spell

L-O-V-E

I

F

E

The heavenly tears and smiles that
 fall
 fall fall
 regardless of

winter spring
 - (or) summer
 - fall
 - -
 - -
 - -

upon the fertile grounding of literature
 and allow the roots of these seedlings
 to break free from initial passiveness and discover
 through continuity and interaction (Dewey)
 unknown passions and paths
 – the rhizomatic (Deleuze & Guatarri)
 shoots - that mysteriously dwell poetically
 with/in the heart.

The worldly words of wisdom endlessly ec(h)o-ing ec(h)o-ing ec(h)o-ing)))))
within the language and literature of the two curricula worlds (Aoki) are

The winds that aid fecundity;

allow

seedlings

to

burrow

deeper

&
deeper
&
deeper
into their kernels
- the simplicity and profundity of
our collective stories —
so they may “begin to see the rich garden [they]
have inside [them] and use that for writing”
(Goldberg, 1986, p.15).

May the unearthed words of wisdom, written through burrowing in our hearts, help other hearts
in their becoming.

Forgotten artist(s) and art(s)

In spite of seeing fire blight,
I delight at the sight of an eagle's flight
Whose soaring wings lift me to new height
To write despite my silent plight
To reach new insight and hopefully invite
Minds and hearts to (re) unite
And have their stories come to light
That would otherwise turn to dust by night

When I write, I want to be forthright rather than to feel contrite
As I wish to be a lowly leading light rather than a klieg light.
When I write, I want the right to turn on the red brake light
As I wish to provoke and evoke that which may not delight.
When I write, I want to be like a Turkish delight
As I wish to inspire minds past what is seen and to delve into the unseen rose waters of insight.
However, I do not write about stage fright, as I have never played a role in Twelfth Night.

Like Robin Hood draped in a cape,
I wish to be a knight draped in a bright white cape
– Lined or unlined – on which black legible marks would be seen even on the darkest of nights
To incite hope and not fright
To write earthly loving words into this chaotic world
May these words be swirled and curled by heavenly winds
To bridge the Old World with the New World.
Can heeding these wrangling whispers and shouts help the Third World?

Who is/are the forgotten artist(s)?

Can chaos cease if the artist(s) is/are remembered and revered?

What is/are the forgotten art(s)?

How can (these) art(s) help the world?

UBC: A place of mind

I walk into the Neville Scarf building where one of my first graduate classes will start in twenty minutes. As I walk through the corridors, I realize I will take my seat among many who have come to this place of mind, which is constantly ranked in the first 40 universities of the world. I come with a humble heart to this collective space ready to inquire, be inspired, and to imagine being instrumental in implementing meaningful change. As a soon-to-be inventor, I take a minute or two to ponder how to make the world a better place for not only this generation, but for generations to come. In doing so, I realize that I seek that what lies both within and beyond theory from renowned scholars in my chosen field. As I find my way to my classroom, I hope that over time and through my passions I may acquire enough knowledge to one day say, I have done my best in being true to what I believe and hopefully, have touched some hearts towards seeing value in the arts.

While sitting outside the classroom waiting for the room to be vacated, I begin to examine my identity and see that I am bold yet meek, connected yet unrelated, open to new ways yet restricted by my finitude. My mind wonders and wanders in unknown directions. It is here and now I have a flashback to prior convocations and under/grad orientations in which I heard the words “Tuum Est.” Other students start to come and we start conversations to get to know one another. It is now, in these conversations that I realize that I will now witness the gates of knowledge, opportunity, and possibility being opened wider than ever before. Once the previous students vacated the space, we slowly moved in and took their seats while continuing to talk to each other. Did they also pass a torch to us, which we in turn, will pass to the next class? The professor enters the class. I catch myself asking one last question in the minutes before the lesson starts. How will I, as an individual and part of a collective community, use this truism to help guide my work both within and beyond Academia?

Language allows me to

Articulate and accept appreciation
Brainstorm with bewilderment
Communicate across cultures
Dissect past denotation
Educate and be educated
Fuse notions into feasible frameworks
Give thanks for God's grace
Help others and be humbled
Invite intriguing intentions
Juggle and juxtapose rather than jumble
Know no bounds in seeking knowledge
Love and be loved
Meditate on the meaning of life
Nurture narratives
Object to injustices
Phrase and rephrase problematic postulations
Question the unquestionable
Renew myself through reflection
Support students as they strive
Tend to those whose thoughts have been tranquilized
Understand human frailty, finitude, and friction
Voyage with vigour and intellectual rigor
Write with wonder about the wonders of the world
Xerox my zeal for life
Yearn for mutual understanding
Zero in on nuances

In the end, I am awestruck by the power of language as it transcends the countless artificial boundaries of quotidian life. No matter where I am, where I'm at, whether in solitude or among the multitude, language is always there. In saying this, I realize I am in the undefined in-between for I am neither here nor there.

I will forever remain humbled by the power of language.

Tears are prayers too...

When language fails me in my pain,
Tears stream on the transparent windowpane of my eyes
While these earthly droplets flow, they defy all laws of gravity
For they do not fall but are raised to heavenly heights on the wings of my guardian angel

Is it not miraculous how these minute, light tears
carry on their shoulders such big, hefty solemn requests
that no medicine can address
that no other being can embody
in all their wisdom?

No one wants to suffer pain,
but how in the *earthly* way –
Can there be gain without *pain*?

No one wants to suffer pain,
But how in the *heavenly* way –
Can there be glory without *sacrifice*?

Language		never		fails					
	These		droplets		are	my		words	
		I		need		not	fear		
			God		is	always		near	

(These hanging statements are these tears as they make “sense” regardless if they flow from the top or defy gravity by being read from the bottom up.)

May my eyes always shine with His light and delight regardless of the soul’s joys or sorrows.

Nature...Part I

I look out the window to see
You are a true wonder
I marvel at your beauty
How the night turns into the day
The day into the night
You are simply ineffable

You are a giver of unending love
I sustain myself with your boundless bounty of fruits
Yet I offer you nothing in exchange
Help me learn the way so that I may
Be worthy of you
In all my faults against your loving heart

As long as my heart beats
All the other organs do not retreat
All my bodily systems work in tandem without thought
Like a baby who does not heed to teethe
I do not heed when I breathe or sneeze
May I never seethe

I seek to see through your eyes
In my human frailty and finitude
The beauty of creation from womb to tomb
In a more nuanced way that praises
How a beginning is an end and
An end is a beginning regardless of the happening

I realize I am born out of ashes and
That to ashes I'll turn at the
End of my earthly journey
I beg you to teach me the lessons I need to be taught
As I feel a heartfelt need to teach others
So that your nature may never be neglected
But neared with reverence by all

Nature...Part II



Figure 1 Nature wordle

Can this picture be worth a thousand words if it only has a set number of words?

What does *this wordle* represent that the poem does not represent, and vice versa?

Forever intrigued by the un-

By the un-born baby's heartbeat
 By the thoughts that are un-voiced
By the un-predictable nature of life
 By the voices that are left un-heard in "conversation"
By the un-felt forlorn feelings of the fortunate
 By the actions that cannot be un-done
By the un-willingness to acknowledge and appreciate the "other"
 By the words of wisdom left un-said
By the un-faceable situations among people
 By the stories left un-spoken
By the un-feasible but frequently followed frameworks
 By the history of man that cannot be un-written
By the un-solved mysteries of life

In short, there are days when I am disheartened by the irreversible life that passes me by in my midst.

May I have the willingness to witness as I wander in the world and the words of wisdom to write with regard to the un- for those whose eyes perhaps have been made blind by what is habitually sought....

What is Silence?

A complete absence of sound
Really – is it that simple?
In my humble opinion, it is much more meaningful.
It is found in dialogue, law, literature, music, nature, philosophy, poetry, psychology, spirituality
It IS everywhere ... if only it would be noticed.
It is oppression, poverty, remembrance, and hunger

Oppression?
Withholding voices....
Institutionalized, systemic, and/or internalized oppression
How do we free those who are constrained?

Poverty?
Lack of food, clothing, shelter, water
Lack of monetary funds, education and/or resources
Lack of spirit – the three greatest gifts of hope, faith, and love
Alongside with humility forming the foundations of true education
Poverty perhaps = mere ignorance
Are we satisfied with what we have?

Remembrance?
Remembering the war dead, a family member, a friend, or better times.
Why do we repeat our mistakes? Why do we not improve our ways?

Hunger?
Yearning for food, money, fame, career, a better life, etc.
Hunger is like a person.... It lives among us and within us
It touches all of creation in mysterious ways.
Once it begins, it is hard to end.
Why is it innate to human nature?

Is this rumination a DETOUR from silence?
NO!

By extension, silence is seen everyday, everywhere, and it too minutely or significantly
rather profoundly changes our lives.
Silence knows no barriers ... not conversational, cultural, geographical, historical, judicial,
linguistic, musical, pedagogical, spiritual

Does silence have a sound?
Is the question an oxymoron or a rhetorical question?
A question that resonates with Simon & Garfunkel's 1964 song "The Sound of Silence"
Silence speaks when worldly words wither

How often does silence really silence us, the other and the world?

Silence contains what no words in this world can explicate
It is so telling ... it may be a need for attention, a time for reflection or perhaps prayerful
connection

The sound of silence – yes, silence DOES have a sound
Have you ever listened to it?
John Cage's 4'33"
It can catch you by surprise
Are you prepared for it?

I do not like to prescribe,
But silence should not be overlooked, disregarded, trampled on
Every sound of silence should deserve utmost respect

Why then is silence not revered?
Are we deaf, ignorant, live life in the "fast lane"...?
Whatever the reason may be
Our ways need to change in order to make the world a better place
Silence has, is, and will continue to remain elusive, mysterious, and powerful.

It is commonly said, "one person can make a difference."
I beg you to make your footprint by listening to....

Signs of silence: Fragmented heartbeat

Silence

A seven-letter word – noun or verb

So subtle yet striking, soundless yet sound-full

Where are the signs of silence seen and what do they mean?

			In a/the...				
			Line	of	thought		
			Site	of	historical significance		
		Story	of	(non) fiction			
	Book	of	wisdom				
Call	of	birds					
	Growth	of	trees				
	History	of	mankind				
	Way	of	love				
		Place	of	worship			
			School	of	life		
			Position	of	authority		
		Place	of	learning			
	Use	of	language				
		Sequence	of	numbers			
		Formulas	of	mathematics			
		Methods	of	science			
		Process	of	becoming			
		Science	of	computers			
		Speeches	of	leaders			
	Field	of	battle				
Learning	of	students					
	Research	of	scholars				
	Lessons	of	teachers				
		Where are the signs of silence on a...					
	Sheet	of	music				
	Page	of	words				
	Canvas	of	colour				
	Stage	of	action				

Who really sees these *signs* as signs of silence?

Whose silences do these signs represent? – Silencer's, silenced, ...

To what extent are these signs of silence *silent*?

How long will they remain silent?

Who do these signs of silence *reach*? What do they *teach*?

How long are their lessons remembered?

How can those who silence and those who are silenced

define the relationship between silence and time?

Do I slow down to listen to these signs or do I pass in haste and say, "What a waste ... of time?"

Breaking binaries by bridging our being

On the one hand, there are traditional dichotomies that have existed through history...

Good vs. Evil

Light vs. Dark

Man vs. Woman

On the other hand, there are more hurtful binaries between wo/men...

Us vs. Them

White vs. Black

Rich vs. Poor

Teacher vs. Student

Such human fragmentation leads to conflict, wars and cruelty.

Individuals in these top-down approaches are deceived, downtrodden, and discriminated against.

I call on everyone I know and on those I do not know in time and space to realize

We are all connected because...

We are all humans.

We are all teachers.

We are all mortal.

For whether we are conscious or unconscious of it, people look at our life

It is through life that the so-called “others” are influenced by our deeds and words.

Why is this? Language is sermonic (Richard Weaver)

The question that remains is,

Why are we so

÷

in our connected nature?

The barriers of fear, greed, cynicism, defeatism and nationalism blind the so called “us” from a common denominator - the fact that we all work and look towards a future.

These visible and invisible walls need to be broken down or else humanity will not be able to solve any global issues revolving around hunger, disease, conflict, poverty or the environment.

Solidarity must go before battle in the name of mankind, as there can be no betterment in society until each person is respected as an individual.

In the end, no matter what societal position we take, we are not alone.

We live with others, because of others, and for one another.

Therefore, it must follow - never one against another.

What is philosophy good for?

P ... pondering the imponderable

H ... harkening to and learning from the timeless wisdom of those before us

I ... investigating the sense of self, identity, community and the world

L ... learning essential transferable skills

O ... opening up to different possibilities of knowing, living and being

S ... slowing down to linger with ... what really matters

O ... opening the mind to the possibility that things may not be as they appear just like in a mirror

P ... probing into that, which is often taken for granted or forgotten about

H ... heeding the power of language in its entirety

Y ... yearning to know and question more and more just like the Energizer bunny that keeps on
going and going ... *ad infinitum*

Wisdom gained through time: A triptych abecedarian

Accept time as a ceaseless wonder that intrigues even the greatest minds
Add to a conversation but acknowledge those who influenced you
Ask, and it will be given to you

Be conscious that time is a gift to be cherished and shared with others
Be aware that you have the power to make a difference
Beckon voices that have been voiceless

Challenge your thoughts
Contribute your own minute mark on mankind
Conceive the world as a community of creation

Defend the defenseless
Delineate that which needs to be described, never leaving anything unsaid or undone
Do to others, as you would have them do to you

Elevate that what has been forgotten if it's exemplary and/or ethical
Elongate elements of ecstasy and empathy
Express gratitude for what you have received

Finish what you have started
Follow God's will not your own
Forgive and forget

Give your gifts graciously
Grant healing some time
Guard you heart, for everything you do flows from it

Humble yourself with the cyclical and linearity of time
Hone criticality and creativity
Honour virtues that have been forgotten

Infect others with your passion for knowledge
Intervene whenever you see harm
Inspire minds to inquire and imagine

Journey on the path less known
Judge nobody for his or her action or in-action
Justify your thoughts

Kindle flames of curiosity
Kneel as often as possible before God to keep yourself grounded
Knock, and it will be opened to you

Learn from the womb to the tomb
Look through the eyes to see the soul
Love your neighbour as thyself

Name injustices by their name
Note that what is noteworthy
Navigate into the unknown with hope of making it known

Move from impossibility into possibility by being in proximity to opportunity
Minister the Word to the world indirectly and/or directly
Meditate on the meaning of life

Obey the law and the Law
Operate under no assumptions
Organize rather than compartmentalize

Pay tribute to those who were before you
Pursue your heart's calling
Pray for those you don't know in space and time

Quench the flames of discrimination
Quest for and question the unquestionable
Quicken with aid to those in need

Renew yourself through reflection
Recycle, reduce, and reuse
Rejoice in life's sorrows and joys

Share your story with others
Strengthen your brothers and sisters in faith
Seek, and you will find

Tend to those whose thoughts have been tranquilized
Translate cautiously to avoid losing meaning and intention
Touch the hearts of others by living tenderly

Urge others to be the best they could be
Understand suffering as a means to strengthening
Uphold the tradition of passing on values from generation to generation

Vacate your seat to those in need
Value diversity
Vocalize verisimilitude

Work with dignity and honour
Walk through the small gate and wander on the narrow road
Worship together

X-ceed what is expected of you
X-ercise regularly for a healthy mind and body
X-press your thoughts respectfully

Yield to traffic
Yearn to live in adherence to the Truth
Yield to the needs of others who live a yonder

Zero in on nuances
Zig and zag through life's maze zealously
Zoom into silences telescopically

A great educator...

Assumes nothing
Builds rapport with students
Contributes to meaningful change by the lives they touch
Discovers the giftedness of every child
Educates the leaders of tomorrow
Facilitates fruitful discussions
Guarantees success with perseverance
Hones critical thinking skills
Inculcates students with a sense of respect for others and their ways
Juxtaposes that what can be juxtaposed
Knows how to adapt accordingly given different situations
Listens to every sound, including the sound of silence
Models not only class work, but also what it means to be human
Nurtures originality and creativity
Opposes anything that may be unethical
Plants, through their passion, the seeds of wonder that will with time cultivate into wisdom
Questions their own thoughts
Reflects and refines regularly
Seeks support from others outside their expertise to help striving students succeed
Transforms students' fixed mindsets into growth mindsets
Understands what it means to be young
Values the voices of students at all times
Wanders in wonderment
Xeroxes materials well in advance
Yearns for more knowledge by continually inquiring
Zeros in on problems when they occur rather than discounting them

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Are these maxims difficult to aspire to when taken as a whole? Perhaps.... But they are vital to bringing up a new generation, a generation that has great potential, if (and perhaps) only if, it is taught by great educators.

Am I a great educator? How can I improve my way(s)?

## **Grammar – 7 or 8 tips or traits**

**Get the pronouns right**

**Recognize the difference between non-restrictive and restrictive relative clauses when deciding to use either *that* or *which***

**Always use the subjunctive to express wishes, possibilities or hypothetical situations**

**Match up subjects and verbs**

**Match up verbs to collective nouns**

**Eliminate any sentences starting with a conjunction or ending with a preposition**

**Replace double negatives in the same clause by using a single negative**

Are these the rules and tools by which we live by? If so, have we considered the etymology of “grammar” in that it comes from “gramarye” which means magic? Why then not let the magic unfold, encourage different forms of writing like free writing or creative writing and recreate the acronym?

**Grounded in change and in today’s reality**

**Recognized for its eloquence, an “unteach-able” trait, found in words**

**Accentuated by its capacity to be without constraint**

**Magi(fo)cal**

**Attributed to a growth mindset**

**Renowned for its creativity**

**Yearned for by everyone within society regardless of societal stratification**

**Enhanced by spontaneity**

### **Part 3: Some ruminations on heartfelt inquiry**

#### **On the nature of heartfelt inquiry**

*Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think.*  
Albert Einstein

I agree with John Willinsky (2008) who in a foreword to a curriculum studies reader reminds us, “a powerful aspect of language is how effectively a single word can end up framing one’s thinking about a phenomenon” (p. ix). My single word: becoming. I am a student of *becoming* an artist, researcher, and teacher among the many other identities I hold at the heart of my existence. Ted Aoki (1987) offers his readers three understandings of school. Curriculum in school can focus on: intellectual skills, practical skills, or “the becoming of human beings” (p. 361). Heartful inquiry is based on this third understanding of school that “emphasizes a reflective reviewing of self and world, as well as the taken-for-granted assumptions that make possible our seeing and acting” where “teaching is understood not only as a mode of doing but also as a mode of being-with-others” (Aoki, 1987, p. 361). Furthermore, heartful inquiry is grounded on the Freirean notion of problem-posing education that “affirms men and women as beings in the process of *becoming* – as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality” (1970, p. 84). Paulo Freire reminds us how this process of becoming “bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation” (p. 84).

In a he/artful braiding of stories that embrace relationality in the world, Erika Hasebe-Ludt et al. (2008) speaks to the profundity of stories wherein “a call for transformation

always originates from specific geographic locations and their unique narratives” (p. 66). Due to the principle of transformation, one heartfelt inquiry is not like another, as each is precious and unique. As such, I believe that by engaging in heartfelt inquiries, students would see the act of writing as a way of finding and acknowledging their own multifarious identities and by doing so, would be able to appreciate others within the classroom and world community of writers.

Writing would be seen as the precious ephemeral present beating amidst the un/known past into the certain unknown future. In “Embracing the world, with all our relations,” Antoinette Oberg says that “reflecting occurs through a practice of emergent writing, which is writing in a place of non-judgment from the midst of unknowing without a predictable outcome” (p. 64) as “what is expected is not what occurs and what occurs is noticed only in reflection (Hasebe-Ludt et al., 2008, p. 67). I believe Antoinette Oberg’s emergent writing may be nested within the Derridean concept of natural writing, which is “immediately united to the voice one hears upon retreating into oneself” (1976, p. 17). Whether emergent and/or natural, such writing is authentic and critical reflection “considers neither abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relations with the world. In these relations consciousness and world are simultaneous....” (Freire, 1970, p. 81) As Ted Aoki (1978/1980) understands:

Critical reflection leads to an understanding of what is beyond; it is oriented towards making the unconscious conscious ... but is also oriented toward the implications for action guided by the newly gained consciousness and critical knowing. (p. 106)

By engaging in heartfelt inquiry, students would be given research time to browse and read news stories from around the world in various categories (sports, health, technology, world, etc.) with the intention of finding a pre-existing or new concept of interest and inquire into its nature, acquisition and/or examination. Class discussions could be held to help students explore the

difference between opinion, faith, wisdom, belief and data. A possible discussion question could be: when and why are such distinctions important to make? Then, students would embark, with the guidance of the teacher acting as a facilitator, on their own inquiry projects into these concepts. My hope within heartfelt inquiry would be that with time, students would tap into the acquisition of knowledge through memory, language, imagination, reason, emotion, faith and the senses. Students would then write thought papers on their individual and collective inquiries. They would present their inquiry questions and findings to their colleagues in various multimedia mediums. What rules around research time would there be within this heartfelt inquiry approach? First, the teacher would set up a non-judgemental space of respect during the research process, discussions and presentations. Second, students would be asked to use inside voices and an emphasis would be placed on learning to listen to others. Third, students would ask their colleagues for help before asking the teacher. Fourth, the teacher would also embark on their own inquiries to model the process for their students. Imagine the possibilities within these inquiry experiences. Here I use “experiences” in the Aokian understanding that speaks to a “hybrid, including the notions of ‘past experiences’ (*lived* experiences) and ‘ongoing experiences’ (*live* or *living* experiences)” (Aoki, 1996, p. 418).

What is the two-part thread of heartfelt inquiry that speaks to the process of becoming through problem-posing education and critical reflection within a critical hermeneutic evaluation orientation? Slowing down and blurring lines. Ted Aoki (1986) calls upon pedagogues “to make time for meaningful striving and struggling, time for letting things be, time for question ... and hoping” in the tensionality between the two curriculum worlds (p. 43). But why is it important to slow down and make time for...? *In praise of slow* (2004), Carl Honoré notes, “the benefit of slowing down is reclaiming the time and tranquility to make meaningful connections with



people, with culture, with nature, with our minds and bodies” (p. 277). What, then, does it mean to live in this way? Hélène Cixous (1997) addresses this question within the temporality of time as she wisely notes:

To live, one must live in the present, live the present in the present ... The worries which are the masters of most people prevent them from ever being in the present. Instead, they are in a menacing future, in a projection that destroys everything around them and beneath their feet; or in a rehashing of a baneful past. (p. 33)

Czesław Miłosz (1983) spoke of blurring lines within language arts when he noted, “differences between literary genres are fading away: the neat division between novel, story, poetry, and essay is no longer so clearly maintained” (p. 70). In “Curriculum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century,” Nel Noddings (2007) describes how curriculum reorganization requires “stretching the disciplines from within and blurring the lines between them” (p. 400). What does stretching disciplines and blurring lines speak of? While perhaps offering one of the most forthright criticisms of early 20<sup>th</sup> century curriculum, Alfred Whitehead (1967) has provided an answer to this question when he claimed:

There is only one subject matter for education, and that is Life in all its manifestations. Instead of this single unity, we offer children – Algebra, from which nothing follows; Geometry, from which nothing follows; Science, from which nothing follows; a Couple of Languages, never mastered.... (Whitehead, as cited in Noddings, 2007, p. 400)

Where and to what extent is this slowing down and blurring lines seen within curriculum today?

**Evaluation -> Valuation: A necessary move**

*Value! Don't evaluate!*  
Friedrich Nietzsche, as cited in Manning, 2009, p. 218

In “The case against grades” Alfie Kohn (2011) notes, “grades tend to diminish students’ interests, create a preference for the easiest task and tend to reduce the quality of students’ thinking” (pp. 29-30). He also notes that this trifold effect of grading has not been contradicted within recent research. While John Dewey (2008) wrote the following words about IQ tests, I believe they can apply more generally to quantitative assessment:

How one person’s abilities compare in quantity with those of another is none of the teacher’s business. It is irrelevant to his work. What is required is that every individual shall have opportunities to employ his own powers in activities that have meaning.

(p. xiii)

As an educator and a student, I have come to see two assessment paths. The path of evaluation looks at learning *by* heart. Those who teach or seek *what* to think, follow this path. Information is stored in short-term memory for recall on a test or essay to be written shortly. As such, it is concerned with the product rather than the process. Today many of our assessment practices tend to value the product rather than the process. Unfortunately, many times the product may not meet the expectations and the message sent via the “grade” to the student and/or the parent(s) is that of failure. Why is this? Is it the student’s “fault” in that they did not pay attention or lacked motivation? Or perhaps it is the teacher who has remained passive and established an environment of conformity, an environment that prevents many gifted students from exploring their giftedness.

On the other hand, the path of valuation looks at learning *with* heart. Those who teach or seek *how* to think pursue this path rather than the other. As such, valuation is a transformative form of assessment because it values the process rather than the product. As heartfelt inquiry values the heart, it also values valuation. Educators would actively monitor student progress

within the process (i.e. establishing checkpoints – individual conversations of students with educators, learning logs, etc.). If educators upon monitoring students see little or no progress in learning, they might take various measures to enable the student to succeed such as guiding them to given sources, establishing timeframes by which different parts of an assignment need to be done, etc. Students would be asked to document their process in portfolios as portfolios permit teachers to “refrain from grading individual papers and limit [themselves] to writerly evaluative comments – and help students see this as a positive rather than a negative thing” (Elbow, 2000, p. 401). Peter Elbow continues to explain how “portfolios are particularly helpful as occasions for asking students to write extensive and thoughtful explorations” (p. 402). These explorations would be seen within these portfolios as a set number of works chosen by students from their journal entries, field notes, thought papers used for class presentations, poems, and any other ruminative reflections documenting the journey of their inquiry process.

### **Heartful inquiry within curriculum documents**

The current 2007 Integrated Resource Package for BC English Language Arts is a well-structured document around the three pillars of ELA 8-12 instruction: oral language, reading and viewing, as well as writing and representing. Upon reviewing the IRP, I have found there to be several appropriate and gradual changes as students advance from grade to grade. As an aspiring language and literary researcher, I personally did not like and still do not like having learning outcomes being preceded by the verb, prescribed. Why? I think learning outcomes should be described in curriculum documents because their writers do not know the student body or the milieu students’ construct in a particular time and place. Moreover, I believe prescriptive learning outcomes (PLO’s) prevent teachers from living in the tensionality between Ted Aoki’s two curricula worlds. That is, teachers are unlikely to venture into the curriculum-as-lived

experiences due to time constraints to “cover” the curriculum-as-planned as their lesson and unit plans work around fulfilling as many PLO’s as possible. While indeed many things are implemented from the current IRP’s within classrooms as a result of being heeded across B.Ed. programs, some parts deserve more attention if any such curriculum packages were to stay at the end of the day. To what extent are local needs addressed or student input sought when selecting topics? To what extent are parents and guardians invited to “support, enrich, and extend the curriculum at home?” (2007, p. 13) To what extent is formative assessment seen as “practices that students learn to analyze and critique their work ... thus advancing their learning and achievement” as Belanger et al. (2001) claim? Although the current IRP’s are written carefully within the scholarly conversation, that in and of itself, does not suffice.

On the other hand, the newly proposed BC Transforming Curriculum and Assessment documents seem to offer more curriculum flexibility, perhaps because they are structured around three core competencies, seven big ideas, and several learning standards around curricular competencies and content. As I read through the revisions of these documents, I notice there is an ongoing emphasis within the big ideas on students understanding themselves in relation to others and to the world, as well as an increased consideration for the concept of language as reflected within the following excerpt:

- Language and text can be a source of creativity and joy.
- Exploring text and story helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world.
- Developing our understanding of how language works allows us to use it purposefully.
- Language can shape ideas and influence others.

The three core competencies include: communication, thinking, as well as positive personal and cultural identity. These competencies and big ideas then trickle into learning standards that focus on using oral, written, visual, and digital texts to comprehend and connect as well as to create and communicate. I believe there could be a greater acceptance and perhaps appreciation of heartful inquiry under the language of the new documents. For example, while the personal and social competency document does not mention the terms, know thyself or global citizenship, it nonetheless speaks to these terms as it “encompasses the abilities students need to thrive as individuals, to understand and care about themselves and others, and to find and achieve their purposes in the world.” In a similar vein, the big idea around exploring text and story also alludes to global citizenship. Moreover, the big ideas around language and text express the significance of heartful inquiries being rooted in the assemblage of language and silence within writing as a method of inquiry practice to comprehend and connect as well as create and communicate using various texts.

More generally, the language of the new documents also corresponds to the various theoretical underpinnings of heartful inquiry due to exploring curriculum terms such as: concept-based curriculum, deeper learning, inquiry-based approaches, interdisciplinary learning, and self-directed learning. By using terms like these and placing the concept of language at the forefront of big ideas, these transforming curriculum documents seem to provide hope that they are truly concerned with the heart of ELA education – “intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies that all students need to develop in order to engage in deep learning and life-long learning” (Core Competencies). Heartful inquiry could begin as a unit of study in and of itself as a way for students and teachers to familiarize themselves with this approach. Once a greater

understanding would be reached about what heartfelt inquiry is, then it could perhaps trickle in into mini-units within the main units of ELA curriculum. This gradual approach could maybe ensure a better understanding of what it means to fully engage oneself in heartfelt inquiry.

## **Language**

*The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.*  
Ludwig Wittgenstein, as cited in Leggo, 2012, p. 141

We learn the world through the language of savour, sight, smell, sound, and/or through strokes. Moreover, we use bits and pieces of the pentad of (silent) language to escape language in conversation and/or the conventions within written language. Why is language so powerful? According to Ivan Brady (2008) language is the “key connector of the various perspectives, styles, and smoothings and uncoverings of arguments in science and poetics” (p. xii). Echoes of these words are seen in the thoughts of Laurel Richardson and Elizabeth St. Pierre (2005) who understand, “language is how social organization and power are defined and contested and the place where one’s sense of self – one’s subjectivity – is constructed” (p. 961). Similarly, Luce Irigaray (2002) describes how “language is the tool, the *techne*, which the speaking subject uses in order to exist in a world, to dwell in it and to continue to construct it as human” (p. 38). Perhaps C.S. Lewis in his introduction to *The four loves* (1960) weaves all of these thoughts about language as he explains, “Language is not an infallible guide, but it contains, with all its defects, a good deal of stored insight and experience. If we begin by flouting it, it has a way of avenging itself later on” (p. 2). Can we understand language if we do not listen to its flip side – silence?

## Listening to silence: Learning to write

*Soon silence will have passed into legend.  
Man has turned his back on silence. Day after day he  
invents machines and devices that increase noise and distract  
humanity from the essence of life, contemplation and meditation.*  
Jean Arp

As a child listening to music on an AM radio, I tuned in to listen to all time favourites on AM650 CISL. I listened to the Beach Boys, the Beatles, the Mamas and the Papas, Elvis Presley, Roy Orbison, Mary Hopkins and many others. Among these artists were Simon and Garfunkel. Little did I know then of what I know now about language and literacy, about education, about life in general. Nonetheless, I was drawn into a 1964 song, “The Sound of Silence,” and in particular to the words of “people talking without speaking/ people hearing without listening.” Now almost two decades later, I’m beginning to see why I lingered with these words. What does it mean for people to speak rather than to talk, to listen rather than to hear? When speaking or writing about listening, I recall Luce Irigaray’s question: “How to listen to the other, to open oneself, horizontally, to the other’s sense, without preventing the return to oneself, to one’s proper way?” (2002, p. 58). I would like to suggest that to listen rather than to hear means to attend to our heart(s) in the wholesomeness of language, especially in the silence in-between. In these heartbeats, “growth towards openness means dialogue, trusting in others, listening to them, particularly to those who say things we don’t like to hear, speaking together about our mutual needs and how we might grow to new things” (Vanier, 2008, p. 34). What, then, does listening have to do with writing? As Natalie Goldberg (1986) writes, “Writing ... is ninety percent listening. You listen so deeply to the space around you that it fills you, and when you write, it pours out of you” (p. 52). Listening in/to silence. The triad of silence, listening, and writing.

### **The silenced speaking non-silently to the silencer about silence**

Stacey Waite (2013), a queer, intersexed poet, scholar and activist, tells a two-fold tale of how he misinterpreted class participation both as a child in the process of coming out and later, as a teacher who adopted a normative understanding of participation. However, this all changed when one day, Andy a silent, reflective A-level student taught him to listen through an essay, “Stupid is as Stupid Does,” in which he wrote, “Silence in a classroom is quite frequently even at levels of higher education, taken as a sign of dysfunction” (p. 66). As Waite spoke about his amazement as to how a silent student spoke out about silence in a non-silent manner, he wondered about the ways to encourage more students to write about their learning process and what is of value to them in the process. In the end, Waite considers how thinking queerly about participation might mean thinking about students’ bodily expressions in a room or valuing a student’s comment that is “inappropriate” or socially awkward.

While writing generally about people like Andy – the silent ones, Peter Elbow (2000) writes, “*when* they say something, their words often seem remarkably powerful: more umph, more conviction, more presence – their words more ‘gathered up’” (p. 174). After reading Stacey Waite’s story, I wonder in what other contexts do the silenced speak non-silently to the silencer about silence. What can these voices contribute to the learning process? What silence(s) do they attempt to voice? Adaptation? Bullying? Gangs? Obesity? Poverty? Racism? Stigma? Suicide? ...? Can each individual in their identities as a student and teacher muster the courage to ask the Leggoian question: “am I one of the silenced/or one of the silencers?” (2007, p. 100) How can we lead one another on the path to ask such provoking questions? Perhaps one way is to engage in heartfelt inquiry whose foundation is built upon knowing thyself through language and silence. Diane Cameron, a participant in Peter Elbow’s “Voice and Silence” workshop, has expressed,



“the silence [during the workshop] has helped me hear the voices better, to listen to myself. I feel more connected to myself, more grounded than I have in a long time” (Elbow, 2000, p. 175).

Cameron’s comment testifies to Erin Manning’s notion of experiencing concepts. The above is evidence, as Richard Miller (2005) suggests, how “when the personal and the academic are set loose and allowed to interrogate one another with no predetermined outcome ... a different kind of ‘writing that matters’ is getting produced...” (p. 48).

### **Where does silence s(l)eep?**

*It doesn't matter what you think.  
Words are found responsible  
all you can do is choose them  
or choose  
to remain silent.*

Adrienne Rich, as cited in Glenn, 2002, p. 274

Edgar Lee Masters in his emotional poem “Silence” addresses how silence seeps through the sundry stages of our solo yet shared sentience. However, in the beginning of his exploration, he poses an important question: “For the depths, of what use is language?” Here, Masters foreshadows the text that comes next illustrating how people are “stuck with silence” as a result of attempting to explain what it is to be a soldier, to be suddenly gripped by the hand of the dying, etc. While the provoked imagery is indeed one may say nostalgic, it is nonetheless a poignant reminder of how silence is inescapable. Perhaps the poetic power of provocation will lead minds and hearts on their way to a better understanding of what silence is, and in turn, teach them how to learn to listen heartfully in today’s silence-stricken world ridden *with* loud silences. Musicians, poets ... show us the way to what it means to listen – listen to the other in their otherness, listen to signs of silence as a way to bear witness to and learn about our vulnerable heart(s). Are we listening to their voices or do we cast aside their works while labelling them as

“nostalgic?” Can I ethically begin to ask whether an individual can seek and find joy or *jouissance* with/in silence? While embarking on an exploration into silence, I ask how can I engage in “drawing silence like/the sun calls the sea” and after realizing “I have no language/for silence, how can I utter/a poem about silence?” (Leggo, 2007, p. 94-95).

### **What is silence?**

*silence is the unarticulated,  
the unspoken, the unwritten  
that cannot be articulated,  
spoken, or written but*

*silence is not inarticulate*  
Carl Leggo, 2007, p. 96

Maxine Greene (1971) speaks of the growing child in relation to the silence of primary consciousness, which she defines as “the fundamental awareness of being present in the world” (p. 4). How do schools and curriculum cultivate this silence of primary consciousness as the child develops and grows? At this point in time, I call upon Paulo Freire (1970) who notes, “human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true words, with which men and women transform the world” (p. 88). Where are these true words found in the silence of primary consciousness? While human existence is not silent because of our inner heartbeats and the outer daily happenings of the world, many nations and their systems of education have become eager for national profit and are living in what Martha Nussbaum (2010) calls a “silent crisis.” This crisis is characterized by “heedlessly discarding skills that are needed to keep democracies alive” and in turn, prevents citizens to “think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person’s sufferings and

achievements” (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 2). Heartful inquiry is *a* possible way to break away from this foul play. But what is silence? Personally, I believe silence is where the heart is ... pulsing away regardless of what’s happening.

In “The syntax of silence,” Carl Leggo (2007) reminds us how “silence convenes the alphabet/lexicon, syntax, speech, writing/and signification, to spell language” (p. 96). Leggo (2011) expresses this profundity in yet another way, “there can be no language without silence, without the presence of absence” (p. 64). Presence/absence. What does it mean? To what extent is it an existential pairing within the story of life? What role do the senses play in this delicate interplay that takes place every day? During an IAACS 2015 keynote address, William Doll summarized Edgar Morin’s work by saying, “our own way of knowing prevents us from knowing.” How, then, do other cultures in their way of knowing understand presence/absence? When submitting an appropriate calligraphic work for the cover of a *JCT* issue, Ted Aoki (2000) chose the Chinese characters, Yu-mu. Aoki’s rationale to choose Yu -presence/mu-absence lies in the fact how

both “presence” and “absence” marks the space of ambivalence in the midst of which humans dwell. As such, Yu-mu is non-essentialist, denying the privileging of either “presence” or “absence,” so deeply inscribed in the binarism of Western epistemology. As the groundless ground in traditions of wisdom, the ambiguity textured in yu-mu is understood as a site pregnant with possibilities. (p. 323)

To what extent can Western curriculum learn from different cultures? I do not know.

Presence/absence. Indeed, Max Picard sheds light on this inextricable relation by saying “there is something silent in every word, as an abiding token of the origin of speech. And in every silence there is something of the spoken word, as an abiding token of the power of silence to create

speech” (as cited in Glenn, 2002, p. 263). To what extent can students attest to this intricate process? Can silence be seen in the school scene as an opening that aids understanding and the emergence of questions that lead into heartfelt inquiries? Perhaps and only if we linger with, why is a rhetoric of silence seen as strange and/or nostalgic in education on all levels when in fact, “silence and silencing still greet us in every library, every archive, every text, every newscast – at every turn”? (Glenn, 2002, p. 261) Glenn’s work suggests the reason lies in placing too much emphasis on speech. Yes, the overemphasis of speech calls me back to the days and work of Jacques Derrida.

After navigating through some of the murky waters of Derridean thought, I have come to understand that Derrida wrote *Of Grammatology* (1976) to challenge the scholarly thought of the time that writing was in fact, not secondary or relative to oral speech as it had been proclaimed. While Saussure’s structuralism deemed language and writing as two separate systems of signs, it revolved around seeing writing as subservient to language as it existed for the mere purpose of representing language. Derrida’s criticism of this structuralism focused on suggesting that written symbols are in fact, legitimate signifiers on their own. Why is there such a reverence of speech in relation to language and silence? In *Modes of thought*, Alfred Whitehead (1968) sheds some light on this overvaluing of speech in relation to writing – an act in which language and silence, directly or indirectly, yet, naturally dance:

Writing as a factor in human experience is comparable to the steam engine. It is important, modern, and artificial. Speech is as old as human nature itself. Speech is human nature itself, with none of the artificiality of written language. (p. 37)

To what extent is this attitude still present almost five decades later in our society and in our schools? How often do students read the words of writers about writing to be inspired in their

own writing? How often do students write and/or talk about writing? While sustained silent reading is a well-known practice within the walls of many classrooms, I wonder whether and how often the other half of literacy is reflected in the practice of sustained silent writing. How much value is honestly given to journal writing? Why should I begin asking these questions about writing? “We are a growing culture of writers” (Leggo, class notes). Why is writing important to curriculum, to instruction, to life? Writing, like the philosophical assemblage of language and silence, binds humanity. No one can escape writing. Even if we do not physically write with pen or pencil in hand or foot – a situation difficult to imagine as we live in a technological era in which opportunities and possibilities beg us to write words onto screens – thoughts write themselves into existence. Thoughts write themselves in our minds as we write ourselves into existence by the very breaths we take. Our lives and our stories are written innately in the lives of others for we coexist with others, as we inhabit a mutual time and space within the world. So, even if we do not write, others write our lives and our stories for us. Writing is everywhere as life is in every nook and cranny in a world far and wide. “Writing is everything, unconditional. There is no separation between writing, life and the mind” (Goldberg, 1986, p. 34).

### **Can silence surpass this all-powerful speech?**

*How often do we truly feel comfortable with long periods of silence? When we're with strangers, or even casual friends, when the conversation falters, we panic and do anything to fill up the air... Could it be that silence reveals even more than speech does, and that's what we fear? Again, I'm thinking of silence replete with meaning, resonance. And to be willing to share that meaning – not fear it – requires a relationship of trust.*

Emily Dickinson, as cited in Elbow, 2000, pp. 180-181

In an attempt to answer whether silence can surpass speech, I lean on the snippets of cultural teachings passed on by my students to me in conversation over the years. I remember one day

how one Chinese student recalled Lao Tzu's teaching on how "silence is a source of great strength." I recall another time when a Portuguese student shared a proverb she has always held close to her heart: Words are made of silver, but silence is made of gold. These student voices remind us how silence permeates through timeless secular and non-secular thought. While I am sure I have left out many other cultural teaching on the notion of silence, I look forward to future conversations in which I may be gifted with further insight.

While the above represent some of the voiced student thought on silence I've had the pleasure to hear, I've also witnessed the unvoiced thoughts about silence when working with refugee students and students with exceptionalities. For refugee students, silence first occurs due to the fear of being caught and then, of reliving traumatic experiences. For students with exceptionalities, silence occurs due to differences. As I unearthed some of this difference first through reading some of the IEP's and attending their meetings and then, holding heartfelt conversations with these students, I began to see as I listened more and more the precious gifts hidden within these silences. Anne Dalke (1995) notes how several American women writers like Ellen Glasgow, Willa Cather and others,

celebrate silence as a gift: they suggest that, when we do not speak, we may listen, hear, understand, even communicate in other ways. Silence may function as an altogether alternative means of communication, not dependent on speech for fulfillment. (as cited by Elbow, p. 177)

As I write this portion of my thesis, I wonder where is such silence – which is made of gold and acclaimed to be the source of great strength – actually seen in the conversation and texts of school curriculum. If ELA curriculum exists without a dialogue between art and science, language and silence, then "there is no communication, and without communication there can be

no true education” (Freire, 1970, p. 160). While true education is a timeless concept (Dewey, 1897; Freire, 1970; Vanier, 2008), I consider it to be the space where our aim is to encourage the “critical examination of information, a commitment to examine all sides, and to allow genuine interest – perhaps even enthusiasm – to develop” (Noddings, 2007, p. 404). This in-between space is where the strange becomes familiar, where uncertainty is certain, where questions don’t end with an answer. It is a space where identities overlap to inform each other and where unheard voices are heard in a humble spirit. In sum, the in-between space is a place where tensions ease or cease between binaries and the lived curriculum exists within the curriculum-as-planned. As such, the in-between is a bridge “we are in no hurry to cross over; in fact, such bridges lure us to linger” (Aoki, 1996, p. 316). I am very cautious of the generalization I am about to state, but I think that many people are afraid to hear the sound of silence – to cease speech and seize the moment at its sound of richness and promise. Why? Perhaps because people do not trust that through listening to one’s heart, meaningful connections will be (re) made.

Silence in fact surpasses speech as it keeps things open (Susan Sontag, as cited in Elbow, 2000, p. 177). I wonder whether or not one can tie a heartfelt knot between two forgotten arts – writing and silence. Does writing begin in silence and reciprocally, silence begin in writing? How can curricula documents and educators address this relationship “to reach for the unspoken, the meanings that are hard to find or don’t want to go into words?” (Elbow, 2000, p. 182) In embarking on heartfelt inquiries evolving around knowing thyself, writing as a method of inquiry through fragments, and learning what it means to be global citizens all through the lenses of language and silence, flames continue to be kindled as students learn *with* heart rather than merely *by* heart. I concur with the Whiteheadian notion that “an assemblage of philosophical ideas is more important than a specialist study. It moulds our type of civilization” (1968, p. 63).

As such, I believe the assemblage of language and silence, the two sides of the same coin that allow communication, is a key part of what Whitehead calls a philosophical outlook:

A philosophic outlook is the very foundation of thought and of life. The sort of ideas we attend to, and the sort of ideas which we push into the negligible background, govern our hopes, our fears, our control of behaviour. As we think, we live. (Whitehead, 1968, p. 63)

As I write these words about a philosophical assemblage I am mindful of voices that may say, let children be children. Here, I recall the words of Jerome Bruner who in “Man: A course of study” noted children are capable of authentic intellectual activity from an early age and that children need to engage in discovery learning. While Jean Piaget’s “Theory of Cognitive Development” has been criticized for being age-specific or not acknowledging cultural differences, I believe some may overlook one important fact, the fact that children as early as eleven years old moving into adulthood, develop concerns for social issues as well as issues around identity. To what extent do schools address these issues?

### **A writing story ... about silence**

*Silencing what we already know is often more useful in order to let the other appear.*  
Luce Irigaray, 2002, p. 165

Laurel Richardson and Elizabeth St. Pierre (2005) write about writing what they call, writing stories. “These are narratives that situate one’s own writing in other parts of one’s life such as disciplinary constraints, academic debates ... community structures, research interests ... and personal history” (p. 965). Not knowing then what I know now about the works of curriculum scholars, I experienced in the writing of a collaborative poem, “What is silence,” how through a simple reciprocal gesture I was able to enter, as John Dewey would say, into the lives of my



students. What was this simple reciprocal gesture? “The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach” (Freire, 1970, p. 80). In other words, I presented myself as a student to my students and in doing so, we taught each other what we know. Are we not all students of life and of all it involves regardless of our age? This writing story, written in my mind then and written down in my thesis now, evoked then as it continues to evoke now “new questions about the self and the subject; [indeed, it reminded and continues to remind me how my work is] grounded, contextual, and rhizomatic” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 965). Why work on silence in such a way? Not to win a game or to gain fame; rather, to fulfill the Socratic aim to kindle flames. To what extent were flames kindled during this exploration of silence? *A writing story...*

One day while working on a multi-modal poetry unit with a social justice focus, it dawned on me that I should start to write poetically about these issues and share my thoughts with my students. If you will, it was my attempt to give voice to silence.

Scaffolding? Check. Modelling? Check. Trepidation? Check. Vulnerability? Check. The result? A cascading effect of sharing whereby my students continued the complicated conversation around silence. In the collective poem “What is silence,” my students and I sought to explore the discomfort society experiences within issues of social justice. We sought to trouble the definition of silence, that is to say, there is only one universal definition. But is there? Is not silence equivocal? My students and I wanted to show that silence is seen everywhere yet often not talked about anywhere. In the beginning of each stanza, we wanted to bring up a social justice issue in one word with a question mark at its end as to trouble its meaning. Then, we sought to explain what we thought it was, where it was seen. The final line of the stanza was not

an end to the social justice issue, but rather an opening in the form of a question that seeks to trouble our unique and individual yet, collective human position.

In the second part, we wanted to explore the nature of silence in that it knows no confinement and that it should be revered for its mysteriousness. We wanted to leave a message that we hoped might at least be considered. As part of this message, we decided to end the poem with a sudden suspension of words and leave a blank page as an artistic statement. We hoped that the blank page provided a physical and metaphysical space to linger and reflect on the significance of silence. We wanted our audience to at least begin to feel, hear, and see the sound of silence. Why focus on social justice issues? To encourage conversation within a society that does not like to wonder about the silences that are problematic. I wonder now: To what extent would the writing stories of my students resonate with my writing story? In retrospect, I hope that within this collaborative process my students witnessed how:

One of the main aims in writing practice is to learn to trust your own mind and body; to grow patient and nonaggressive. Art lives in the Big World. One poem or story doesn't matter one way or another. It's the process of writing and life that matters. (Goldberg, 1986, p. 12)

## Two “Lingering notes”

### On the power of incantation

An incantation is a series of words said as a magical spell or charm. When I try to understand various concepts, I often like to ask: Where is it *seen* and what does it *mean*? What does it *teach* and whom does it *reach*? I believe Gregory Orr (2002) in *Poetry as Survival* answers these questions and much more,

With incantation, the self discovers that it can be sustained, if all else fails, through rhythmic repetition alone. In these instances, incantation is like a woven raft of sound on which the self floats above the floodwaters of chaos. (p. 106)

Without a doubt we can attest to these words as we, either personally or through the lived experiences of others, have once slowly emerged out of such floodwaters – death, trauma, cancer and other problems.

In a conversation it can lead to contemplation.  
In an oration to a congregation it can lead towards salvation.  
An incantation can be  
an evocation towards exploration  
an expectation of explanation  
a fragmentation in a generation  
an invitation towards jubilation  
a preparation for provocation  
a rumination about translation and transformation without the tabulation of trepidation  
a vibration of temptation

In the context of this work, I would like to ask: can an incantation help a writer, regardless of age or whether or not they are a sage, unleash their inner spirit and write like they’ve never written before? Natalie Goldberg (1986) invites her readers in *Writing down the bones* to free the writer within. She accomplishes this without a doubt as she sketches writing as act of discovery with

her endless mantra, “Don’t worry.” While I have not counted the number of times she says these magical words, I am sure this incantation has helped more writers be more confident than anyone could ever imagined. Can all teachers, not just English teachers follow suit in Natalie Goldberg’s footsteps? To what extent does incantation rely on structure? What is the relationship between incantation and personification? How can this be reflected in poetry and prose within heartfelt inquiry? The question I end my contemplation with is whether or not an incantation can help the ministry of education in the elimination of evaluation and in the validation of valuation.

Why?

Because an incantation steers away from cessation into the creation of a conversation.

**Who am I?**

Great art speaks with heart

\*

Great art - are you lost in modernity for eternity because of con-form-ity?

\*

Uncomfortable

Unsettling

Unknown

Can an art of the un- be learned by heart?

\*

**Who am I?**

\*

Looking for x and/or y in words is

All in vain as I remain

Silenced by slips of the tongue or pen

Still, the solution silently sleeps

Waiting and waiting

to be awakened from a deep, deep sleep and to be seen in the scene of life

\*

**Who am I?**

\*

As I write word by word

I try to stir in the

Unheard that needs to be heard

Another idea

Another story

Another voice

\*

**Who am I?**

\*

What is missing?

The blank is yours to make peace in this conversational piece

As it is willing to forgive for it is the lingering heart of art

- The bridge to the forgotten art dwelling within your heart

\*

This gaze causes a haze. It puts my heart ablaze.

I cannot laze in my days. I must raise my praise in your ways

For in your presence & in your absence

as the two are one and the one is two

I stand amazed at the array of *essais* in your essays

\*

**Who am I?**

\*

In sync with the world

the tick and tock of earthly time

Viscerally I feel the rain  
– pain and unknown gain –  
pounding at my heart's door again  
    in the intervals between the diastole and the systole  
I cannot rest in this unrest  
    Do not be afraid!  
    Please open the door and allow me to walk to thee

\*

Fear closes us down. Love opens us up - fear excludes and trust includes  
Open the door in the name of Love

\*

An embrace  
– blessing in disguise –  
streams of tears on my face  
I ask, “How could I?” as I beat my breast  
Please forgive me.  
I ask for courage, as in you  
I try to bravely bear my burdens  
Remembering mine will always be much lighter

\*

Who am I?

\*

Self-knowledge unearths passion  
Passion requires perseverance  
In order for the will to be fulfilled  
And words to flourish

\*

Although the days I do not yet know  
bring me no woe,  
I cradle and rock to and fro  
The power of now in a *nouveau tableau*

\*

Who am I?

\*

It is yours and what is yours, is mine.  
We are one in adequacy  
Standing on the bridge in-between  
– the genuine chain of education –

Where continuity and interaction  
Form the two sides of the same link  
Allowing dialogue to pass across *difference*

\*

What are the three peas in a pod of becoming human?  
Responsibility, transparency, and vulnerability

\*

Will reconciling intergenerational hurt  
With words of heartfelt apology and genuine guilt  
Suffice to restore relations under the continental quilt?

\*

Amid the air of malaise,  
without delays but with craze,  
the pianist plays the polonaise.  
Is it a phase that stays and sways  
Feet and hearts to dance in new and old ways?  
Or perhaps  
It is a part of a phrase that conveys an array  
of that which continues to decay.

\*

Who am I?

## The circle of life

*What has been is what will be,  
and what has been done is what will be done;  
there is nothing new under the sun.*  
Ecclesiastes 1:9

As I began, I end ... with a poem. Why? I have come full circle. As a circle ends in the same place that it started, I too end in the same manner and place I began. After much thought, I have returned to the beginning. Little did I know then of what I know now. What then do I now know? I have come to know the other and myself in written ways I did not anticipate through lingering in the nexus between theory and practice through the identities I hold in the temporality of time. What does this all mean? Not much. Why? Perhaps, due to my fixation on the process of becoming that permeates my earthly deeds and words – seeds that concede my creed, but that supersede my needs. I also end as I began, because I concur with lyricist Tim Rice who in The Lion King song, “Circle of Life,” wrote: “There’s more to see than can ever be seen/ More to do than can ever be done.” Have I in this lyrical circle of lyrics that humbly guides through the virtues of hope, faith, and love found my place in the circle of life? I realize that when I write something, something else unknown to me – near and far – concurrently breathes its first breath. Can this be explained as an unnoticed cacophony or perhaps, as a harmony of hearts across the hemispheres? What more? All of these efforts to write reflect the process of grafting, as Derrida would say. Our thoughts are mere echoes of the thoughts of others – said differently, in a different space and/or time. Familiar, isn’t it? Yes, the forgotten significance of play and its preciousness within the play of life – predominantly centered on work. A play with the same words played differently wherein there are many plays-on words – by different actors in the



same world. But there is a common thread – the thread of finiteness under the sun that stitches together what we call humanity.

While we may create some new words along the way as we play, the words and spaces in/between are already there, waiting to be explored. What is at the heart of word(s) and/or space(s)? Meaning. But why ask about meaning? Because as Eero Ropo eloquently expressed in an IAACS 2015 keynote address, “talking about meaning opens up student minds.” Personally, I believe meaning resides in each and every precious, vulnerable human heart and this is why we need to learn to listen to our heart(s) through heartfelt inquiry in ELA classrooms if we are truly concerned in addressing: whither human history? “We must continue to open and trust in our own voice and process” (Goldberg, 1986, p. 12). As a poet, I will end this “lingering note” on the poetic note that meaning is not blind; instead, meaning as it binds, reminds hearts to follow the winds of its finds. *Tuum Est*.

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