University of Alberta

Dwelling with/in stories: Ongoing conversations about narrative inquiry, including visual narrative inquiry, imagination, and relational ethics.

by

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Abstract

This dissertation consists of four individual papers, and an interlay of writing and art work reflecting my ongoing conversations about narrative inquiry as a research methodology and phenomena, including visual narrative inquiry, believed-in imaginings, as well as relational ethics. In the first paper I explore how place is inscribed onto and into our bodies and how home can be understood as embodied. In this way I explore place as geographic position of home and as ontological. The second paper focuses on how children see and visually interpret their lives and understandings of community. This visual narrative inquiry into childrens' lives and experiences highlights that understanding through sustained conversation and seeing is a way to create dialogical and creative possibilities to explore diverse experiences. The third paper links believed-in imaginings with the relational aspects of narrative inquiry. This paper illustrates the connections by using the image of a kite and kite flyer, as well as the kite string, illustrating the importance of *tonos* (tension) and *teino* (stretch) of relationships; both being and becoming in relationship requires narrative inquirers to be imaginative and playful in their in-between space. In the fourth paper I explore my ethical understandings and their relationship to the notion of resonance and remembering in narrative inquiry. As I attend to the life in front of me, I also attend to my own life and more so to the space that lays in-between my research participants and me. It is the in-between space, a space of encounter and resonance, a space in which our

lives are unfolding in relation to each other that is significant in narrative inquiry. This dissertation draws on several research studies I undertook or was part of throughout my graduate studies. The methodology of narrative inquiry that was part of all these studies became my research puzzle and thus the focus of this dissertation.

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There have been many people who have stood in loving ways beside me on this journey and who will continue to be part of my life. I would like to acknowledge my parents for loving me in more ways than I thought were ever possible and my husband Ken and son Felix who never fail to remind me of the importance of love, commitment and play. Penny, Kevin and Katie; and Pam, David and Matthew, whose lives so closely have intertwined with ours and who all so generously and lovingly supported me in my work, and us in our lives as a family.

I would like to recognize the genuine interest, commitment and dedication my research participants lived towards our work together; it is an incredible honour to be part of their lives and the lives of their families and communities.

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this dissertation, our conversations and wanderings have always returned me to my love of nursing and the essence of our relational work, which is both inspirational and touching. I would also like to thank the members of my examining committee Drs. Ingrid Johnson, Janice Wallace, and Kristine Martin-McDonald for their insights and stimulating questions.

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Dedication

Fuer Mama und Papa, ihr seit in meinem Herzen

For Ken and Felix, for you are my heart

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Dwelling with/in Stories

Dwelling with/in stories marks a new beginning for me, a new beginning of me writing and imagining the composition of my dissertation.[1] This new beginning provides me with a much needed time for reflection; reflecting upon past stories, ruminations over fragments of what was, while being mindful of what is and could be. I come to this new writing from a personal and social place, whereby I learned that my life, work and writing is intimately connected and that my understanding is situated within my geographic landscapes. Most importantly however I position my understanding amidst the relationships of my past, present and future, and within geographic places that have shaped both me and the relationships I have been part of; relationships that matter to me.

In this beginning part of my dissertation I write about the context and the pretext of the text that follows (Richardson, 1997) in what unfolds as four papers, as well as the connecting pieces between the papers. I want to

[1] The verb dwell has multiple meanings; in the Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.) it is defined as: 1. to lead into error, mislead, delude; to stun, stupefy; 2. to hinder, delay; 3. to tarry, delay; to desist from action; 4. to abide or continue for a time, in a place, state, or condition; 5. to dwell on, upon (in): to spend time upon or linger over (a thing) in action or thought; to remain with the attention fixed on; now, to treat at length or with insistence, in speech or writing; also, to sustain (a note) in music; 6. to continue in existence, to last, persist; to remain after others are taken or removed; 7. to remain (in a house, country, etc.) as in a permanent residence; to have one's abode; to reside, 'live'; 8. to occupy as a place of residence; to inhabit.

emphasize that my dissertation focuses on the exploration of the methodology of narrative inquiry, including visual narrative inquiry; each paper draws upon several studies I have been part of since I have engaged in graduate school.[2] Each individual study utilized the methodology of narrative inquiry; it is the methodology and phenomena of narrative inquiry that evoked my curiosity and that is the focus of my dissertation, my research puzzle.

As I begin this new writing I know that I am imposing a linearity and coherence to the unfolding of events, places and stories that was never entirely part of the lived moments of my experiences. In the dwelling within the experiences and relationships, in the writing about them, I have been thoughtful and purposeful in the construction of experience. I have imposed a coherence and linearity to emphasize various aspects of my research, such as the personal and social significance of the experience. There are times when my thoughts wander through time, or migrate to the

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[2] In 2002 I graduated with my Masters of Nursing (MN). My MN dissertation was entitled: *Storied moments: A visual narrative inquiry of aboriginal women living with HIV* (Caine, 2002). The research I undertook for my dissertation continues until today in informal ways, as some of the women or their families continue to remain in contact and continue to press me to write and think about their lives.

During my coursework for my PhD I was part of a larger school project, which was undertaken as a larger SSRHC project by Drs. D. J. Clandinin and M. Connelly, entitled *School landscapes in transition: Negotiating diverse narratives of experience*. As part of the project I, alongside fourteen boys and a teacher and teacher assistant, in a learning strategies classroom, carried out a visual narrative inquiry to explore their understanding of community. See Clandinin et al. (2006), Murphy (2004), Murray Orr (2005), and Pearce (2005) for additional writings from the larger SSHRC project.

Upon completion of my PhD coursework I moved to a small community in the Northwest Territories, where I was part of a health research project exploring the impacts of resource development in people's lives and their communities. During my two and a half years in the community I engaged with several youths in conversations about their stories of self. While personal reasons drew me back to a larger urban center I continue to engage with people from the community, as well as with other peoples of aboriginal descent.

words and images composed by others; for me writing is a fluid process, a process of creating myself, of composing my identity, my stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

Paying attention to the unfolding of my own life has become an important aspect for me in trying to understand the experience of others. By being in relation I have come to know parts of others, but also of myself and of us. Embedded within is a relational knowing (Hollingsworth, Dybdahl, & Minarik, 1993), a recognition that an embodied response is drawn forth within each relationship and within my memory and imagination (Bruner, 2002; Sarbin, 1998, 2004).[3] I have come to understand that my thinking grows out of being in relation.

It was the fall of 1991 when I arrived for the second time in this new place. I left my mother and father standing at the airport wondering how their life would unfold as parents, but I also remember the tears streaming down my face as I turned around once more to wave good-bye. My mother's tears were mixed with worries, while mine were mixed with anticipation and uncertainty. For the first few months I was cautious who I talked to, what stories I told of myself. At times I lied about myself, trying to change my identity. Attempting to disguise my accent, I made people guess where I was from. After others heard my accent and if I liked where I came from in their stories I would often not

[3] I am drawing on Sarbin's (1998, 2004) notion of imagining. He sees imagination as an active process of imagining, a form of embodied knowing, connecting narratives to emotional lives. A central element for Sarbin (2004) is the role of believing in imagining. Bruner (2002) emphasizes the interplay between memory and imagination.

contradict their stories of me. I felt a bit like a traveler, it was a way of surviving. Surviving my own story of myself, of being German, of unintentionally being implicated in the stories of the second world war, in stories of being fascinated by Indians, in coming to Canada because it was a dream of my youth.[4] "But you can't escape your self [...]. It always catches up with you, and you either own it, or you don't" (Svich, 2001, p. 20). Over time I slowly learned to own my experiences and history. I learned because I missed home, and I missed the memories that would carry me forward. I was lonesome without my family, my home, my language and my childhood places.

I am reminded of Hoffman's (1994) notion of resonant remembering, to not only look at what has happened to me, but also what has happened within me; to look inward, to attend to my "feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50). After many years of living in suspended and transitory spaces it is now that there are times again where I can smell the freshly cut hay fields, taste the wild blueberries in my mouth, and feel the wind around my face; times where my skin memories have come to life again. My heart sings again the songs of my childhood and like Berger (1984) I slowly begin to see and understand home as an ontological place, where my world can be found; "[h]ome is no longer a dwelling but the untold story of a life being lived" (p. 64). This

[4] I think of Crites (1979) who speaks about the practice of self deception. Awakening to my own story, I see that through (re)arranging facts and the omission of details I created a cover story that was hiding the real story. Crites reminds me that the dynamic of experience provides access to both truth and falsehood.

morning as I was sitting at the breakfast table with my parents, who have come to live with us for a few months, with my son and husband, I came to think of the places I used to play as a child.[5] Looking backwards I remember.

I could hear the rain outside splashing against the window and the sound of water running down the street. That was about the same time you called asking me if we wanted to have a picnic, you knowing just the place to go; all I had to bring was my yellow raincoat and my rubber boots.[6] I remember the water running down my neck, the sound of wetness as my rubber boots seemed to take in water with every puddle we jumped in - the squeaking sound only made us laugh louder. We were filled with anticipation of a picnic. Slowly your finger pointed to the pile of manure on the field, the steam still rising, heat mixed with moisture. You telling me that you saw the farmer dump it there just minutes before you had called. Our feet moved faster, and the squeaking sound of my rubber boots suddenly sounded like a frog concert.

I spread my yellow raincoat on top of the manure pile, so you and I could lay down, feeling the heat rise from underneath us while the rain cooled us off. We were laying there for a long time, holding hands, with our eyes closed, and intoxicated by the sweet smell, listening to our breath moving in and out … what if we didn't have to leave, ever?

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[5] The birth of our son Felix and the arrival of my parents to celebrate and be with their first grandchild for the past year and a half have evoked many of my own childhood memories and stories and they have also evoked a longing for home and a yearning to (re)visit my childhood places.

[6] 'You' refers to a childhood friend.

What if the yellow raincoat suddenly turned into a boat and we could sail along the puddles and gutters? We stayed for a very long time, until the voices of our parents suddenly broke the silence.

And as I sit at the breakfast table this early morning I long for your hand touching mine, the way it did that day. The smell of manure is slowly returning and I can feel the heat too and I am reminded of you in so many unexpected ways and I wonder where you are today and I try and imagine your life now and from imagining what your life is like I day-dream that we return to the pile of manure today. Maybe this afternoon the telephone will ring. I tell this story because I believe it emphasizes an attitude that Lugones (1987) calls playfulness,

> an attitude that carries us through the activity, a playful attitude, that turns the activity into play. A playfulness that is marked by openness to surprise and self-construction as a way to understand oneself in a relational way, by traveling to each others world's, as a place of imagination. (p. 180)

It is this playfulness that draws me to deeper inquire into the methodology and phenomena of narrative inquiry, it is this playfulness, the lingering surprise that draws me to dwell in a relational inquiry space.

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry, defined as both research methodology and a view of the phenomena, is the intimate study of an individual's experience over time and in context (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000).[7] Beginning with a narrative view of experience researchers then attend to place, temporality and sociality, also referred to as the three dimensional narrative inquiry space within their own life stories and the experiences of their participants. Within this space, each story told and lived is situated and understood within larger cultural, social and institutional narratives. Narrative inquiry is marked by its emphasis on relational engagement between researcher and research participant, whereby the understanding and social significance of experience grows out of a relational commitment to the research puzzle.

There is a history of narrative work within the traditions of narratology (Bal, 1997; Clandinin, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990); however beginning in the 1990s researchers began more specifically developing a methodology called narrative inquiry. While the terms narrative inquiry and narrative research are used almost interchangeably in the current research literature (Clandinin, 2007) they signify research methodologies in contrast to the myriad forms of

[7] The following section is adapted from: Clandinin, D. J. & Caine, V. (forthcoming). Narrative Inquiry. In L. M. Given (Ed.) *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

narrative analysis which are methods within the broad field of qualitative research.[8] Narrative inquiry and narrative research, across various disciplines and multiple professional fields, aim at understanding and making meaning of experience primarily through conversations and dialogue.

John Dewey's (1938, 1958) view of experience is cited most often as the philosophical underpinnings of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Dewy's criteria of experience, interaction and continuity, enacted in situations provides the grounding for the attention in the three dimensional narrative inquiry space to temporality, place and sociality (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative inquiry is further grounded in the ideas of Jerome Bruner (1986) (psychology) about paradigmatic and narrative knowing, David Carr (1986) (philosophy), who speaks about the narrative structure and coherence of lives, Mary Catherine Bateson (1989, 2000, 2004) (anthropology) about continuity as people learn and adapt and improvisation as a response to the uncertainties in life, and Robert Coles (1989) (medicine), who blends life and teaching and practice.

Narrative inquiry is a way to study experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In studying and understanding experience narratively, researchers recognize the centrality of relationships. Amidst these relationships, participants relate and live through stories; stories that speak of their experience (Crites, 1971). The process of narrative inquiry

[8] See for example: Lieblich, Zilber, Tuval-Mashiach, 1998; Mishler, 1993; Riesman, 1993.

centers on an engagement with participants in the field, creating field texts and writing both interim and final research texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Throughout this process ethical principles are upheld, but more importantly researchers remain attentive to ethical tensions, obligations and responsibilities in their relationships with participants (Clandinin & Huber, 2002; Noddings, 1993; Schulz, 1997).

Prior to engaging with research participants, narrative inquirers need to undertake a reflective process of their narrative understandings in relation to the research phenomena. These narrative reflections are included in the research process and research text as central to understanding the co-construction of the experience under study. Entering the field and the research relationship begins with a negotiation of the relationship, the forms it takes and the research puzzles to be explored. Negotiations of purpose, transitions, intentions and texts are an ongoing process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It is also important to note that narrative inquirers negotiate ways in which they are useful to the participant(s) throughout and following the research.

Within the methodology of narrative inquiry there are particular methods that are employed. The two starting points for narrative inquiry remain a cornerstone throughout the research: listening to individuals tell their stories and living alongside participants in the field (Clandinin, 2007). Whether the beginning point is living or telling stories, attention needs to be paid to the fact that individual narratives of experience are embedded in social, cultural and

institutional narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Depending on the starting point of the inquiry different methods are used to compose field texts. Field text is the term used for the initial notes in the field and what is commonly called data (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Field texts are composed from conversations, interviews, observations, as well as artifacts. Artifacts including artwork, photographs, memory box items, documents, annals or chronologies.

Field texts are composed with attention to the three dimensional inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Temporality comes into play in two ways; the first is that field texts are composed over multiple interactions with participants, and the second through participants' reflections of earlier life experiences. Given that much of the work focuses on telling stories, the methods most commonly used are interviews and conversations, or interviews as conversations. Some narrative inquirers also use artifacts, particularly as beginning places to tell stories. Field texts also record narrative expressions, such as actions, practices, and happenings. These texts are embedded within the research relationship and reflect the multiple nested stories. Field texts also help the researcher's memory. Field texts are a co-composition reflective of researcher and participant.[9] Field texts need to be understood as revealing, telling and showing those aspects of experience that the relationship makes space for. Integral to these negotiations are central

[9] Field texts not only portray the relational circumstances between researchers and participants, but they are interpretive and collaboratively constructed, co-composed. "We call them field texts because they are created, neither found nor discovered, by participants and researchers in order to represent aspects of field experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 92).

questions of 'so what?' or 'who cares?' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) which need to be answered, both of which speak to the social significance of narrative inquiry, as well as to its implications.

Narrative inquirers form multiple field text compositions into interim research texts, which are shared with research participants and negotiated with participants prior to the final research text (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Research texts evolve from field texts and interim research texts. Ultimately, research texts develop out of a repeated asking of questions concerning the significance of the research. However, many research texts also attend to the personal significance of the research, in particular paying attention to the growth that can occur in the (re)living and (re)telling of the experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Research texts also reflect the personal and professional growth of the researcher involved.

Narrative inquiry is first and foremost a relational research methodology, which makes ethical issues central to the inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Ethical threads beyond institutional requirements of anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent, which are based on ethical principles, must be attended to throughout the inquiry. The first responsibility of a narrative inquiry is always to the participants. The negotiations of entry, exit, as well as the representation of experience are central ethical concerns. Due to the relational aspect of narrative inquiry, issues of informed consent bring forth questions of who has the right to give consent, how do we maintain informed

consent throughout the inquiry and, in particular, how do participants consent to final research texts that not only reveal personal experiences but also attempt to understand these experiences within a larger context.

In narrative inquiry it is imperative to address the question of how larger social, institutional and political narratives inform our understanding and shape the researchers and participants' stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). Paying attention to the larger narratives enables researches to further understand the complexity of the living and telling of stories, and as such lived experience. It is to understand lives both in context as well as in relationships.

Narrative inquirers have to balance issues of voice, signature[10] and audience. Within each inquiry researchers attempt to represent the multiplicity of voice and signature, which is reflected in the diverse textual structures and tellings of many inquiries. Narrative inquiries are always filled with rich descriptions as they bring forward the lived and told experiences of participants. Yet, as narrative inquirers come to know in relational ways, the inquiries also

[10] Signature refers to the presence of the researcher(s) and participant(s) identity in the research text, a text that reflects their identities. "The text that follows from the signature has rhythm, cadence, and expression, which mark the signature and make the work readily identifiable as the work of a certain author or set of collaborators" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 148).

become an intervention[11], which requires the researcher to remain attentive to ethical issues long after leaving the field as well as after the final research texts have been composed (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Throughout the inquiry narrative researchers seek a response community (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Within the response community works in progress, such as interim research texts, are shared and discussed. Response communities are critical elements within the inquiry, as they help the researcher to recognize how they shape the world of their participants and their research puzzle. These communities consist of people the researcher values and trusts to provide honest and constructive feedback. Response communities are often marked by their diversity and can enrich the research, particularly if they are composed of interdisciplinary, intergenerational, academic and nonacademic colleagues and friends. Given the iterative nature of narrative inquiry there is continuous interplay between field text, interim research text and research text.

During the composition of the research text narrative inquirers are attentive to both the participants and the possible public audiences. Research texts are shared with participants, who remain the most influential voice in the sanctioning of the final texts and response communities. The text(s) need to reflect the narrative quality of experience

[11] The living and telling of stories in the relational space often reflects the struggle for agency and recognition by both the participant(s) and researcher(s). In the process of listening and telling, new perspectives might emerge; new or shifting perspectives become both an intentional and unintentional intervention in narrative inquiry.

of both the participant and the researcher. Furthermore as stories of experiences unfold they are embedded within larger social, cultural and institutional narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The final presentations of research texts are negotiated between the researcher and participant. Research texts can take on multiple forms, such as textual, visual, and audible. Each inquiry reflects the ambiguities, complexities, difficulties, and uncertainties encountered by the researchers in the field and while writing both the interim and final research texts. Once in the field, researchers recognize that narrative inquiry is a way of living in the field, and as such the research becomes a way of life. Given the complexity and depth of this research it is impossible for researchers to stay silent. As narrative inquirers seek to understand experience, they often begin their inquiry contemplating and exploring their own experiences, as well grounding their understanding in their own experience. Theory is seen to aid understanding, but is neither the starting nor the ending point of the inquiry. The autobiographical lives of narrative inquirers therefore are often the lens that shapes not only the research puzzle, but also the relationships that are formed, the understandings of field texts, and the social significance of research texts.

Visual Narrative Inquiry

Visual narrative inquiry (Bach, 1998, 2007; Caine, 2002) builds on the work of Clandinin & Connelly (2000), whereby images add another layer to our ability to explore and understand experience. Photographs add layers to our

stories and often make our relationship with language more complex (Lowry, 1999) as images and text often intersect and disrupt each other. I have been particularly interested in the use of photographs taken by participants as a form of self-exploration and as a beginning place for conversations. Yet, I also see and use photographs as narratives that reflect our embodied knowing.

Listening to individuals tell their stories visually, to see their stories, means for me to attend closely to the ambiguities, complexities, difficulties, and uncertainties embedded in visual images. Visual expressions reflect the uniqueness of an individual's life (John-Steiner, 1985), as well as ambiguities and uncertainties as there is no means by which we can standardize or classify images or visual thought. Given this ambiguity I see it as important that I engage in an iterative process of photographing and talking/writing about the photographs, a process that requires a continuous interplay. This interplay allows me to see photographs narratively, as well as to see and experience them as grounded in the three dimensional narrative inquiry space (in place, temporality, and sociality).

Attending to the personal-social in the three dimensional narrative space, I acknowledge that photographs are always an interpretation of the world in which we live. The sense I make of them depends upon cultural assumptions, personal knowledge and the context in which the photograph is presented (Ball & Smith, 1992). Photographs are snapshots of seconds of reality and they may not show "the richness of the situation because they stop the action and

record only one piece of total reality" (Bruderle & Valiga, 1994, p. 140). A photograph may also be seen as an illusion, because no one is ever able to re-represent the fully lived moment in a photograph; therefore photographs become illusionary realities (Weiser, 2001).

Embedded in the illusionary realities are the traces of people's lived lives (Sontag, 1973); traces, which allow for the continued (re)telling and (re)visioning of existing stories. As a verb (Spence, 1995; Weiser, 1975) the photographs become an abstract representation of an interior movement (Eisenberg, 1998), and thus amongst multiple commitments, decisions and obligations photographs are able to encode feelings and insights. Photographs can point us inward in the inquiry space to the feelings, hopes and moral dimensions of our lives.

Like Weiser (1990), I have become increasingly aware that people do not take, collect or store photographs that do not matter in some ways. Photographs can carry in them the image of life; they are pieces of our spirit, demanding our attention to the stories that they tell and conceal. Sometimes participants share very private photographs with us, the ones their lovers would carry in their wallets, or the ones that were carefully placed at their bedside. These are photographs that speak of love and desire and at times of loss and disappointment. They represent "[p]hotographs, as the only material traces of an irrecoverable past, [which] derive their power and their important cultural role from their embeddedness in the fundamental rites of family life" (Hirsch, 1997, p. 5). Photographs affirm the physical presence of

others in our lives; a sign that the relationships are significant and matter. Photographs too let us see the places that are important in our life stories and the stories we life by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), the places we inhabit and the places we visit as tourists. These photographs speak to the spatiality in the narrative inquiry space.

Photographs can provide us with visual insights and illuminate the self; they let us look inward into our experiences. "How one chooses what to include in a snapshot, when to shoot, which to keep, and why; these are all statements of self (and values), of personal uniqueness and cultural context, and they stand for us not only to ourselves but as communications to others who view them, even if they speak a different language" (Weiser, 1988, p. 254). While photographs are a way of seeing our lives, they also let us experience the world in a different way and allow us to create maps and metaphors of our journey in life. In this way photographs can also help us see outward towards the experiences that speak of the social aspects of lives.

Although one can create maps and metaphors unintentionally, they can also be re-enacted in photographic work. Often it is (re)enactment photography that makes visible the performative body, that challenges our visual

representation, constructs our identities, rather then simply reveals them (Martin, 2001). Like the two adolescents Sanguinetti[12] worked with, they

> engaged in a game of role-playing in which they staged dreams, ordinary interactions, fears, and fantasies. Sanguinetti re-entered a world of childhood, with its whispered confidences, extravagant silliness, and deep mysteries. Conversely, the girls entered adulthood before the fact, acting out its rituals or marriage, funerals, courtship, and motherhood. (Rexer, 2004, p. 38)

Here photography allows for self-making through play, for constructing identities. Often our identities are constructed over time, along the temporal dimension of the narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). There is a backward and forward movement in time within photographs, in (re)enactment photography, within family albums or along the walls in our living rooms that display our photographs.

As a visual narrative inquirer engaged in relational inquiry, I am aware that I enter the space of seeing not simply as an observer, but as a way of being in relation. I also become part of the process of enabling others to see

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[12] Alessandra Sanguinetti is a photographer, whose photographs are in major public and private collections. The photographs Rexer (2004) is referring to are from her series: *The Adventures of Guille and Belinda and the Enigmatic Meaning of Their Dreams (1998-2006).*

themselves as others see them; I do not remain an outsider in the constant negotiation of identity and place, but I am becoming part of the process; a relational knowing (Hollingsworth, Dybdahl, & Minarik, 1993).

Embedded within photographs or in the refusal to take photographs are also elements of performing culture and identities. As photographs require a photographer, images are also an exploration of the tensions of how one wants to be seen and how one is in the world. This tension at times leads to the unphotographable or to images that obscure. Like Marmon Silko (1996)

> I am interested in photographic images that obscure rather than reveal; I am intrigued with photographs that don't tell you what you are supposed to notice, that don't illustrate the text, that don't serve the text, but that form part of the field of vision for the reading of the text, and thereby become part of a reader's experience of the text. The influence of the accompanying photographic images on the text is almost subliminal. (p. 169)

It is in these moments that photographs take on quasi-magical and mystical qualities, moments where

> [s]eeing is like hunting and like dreaming, and even like falling in love. It is entangled in the passions – jealousy, violence, possessiveness; and it is soaked in affect – in pleasure and displeasure, and in pain. Ultimately, seeing alters the thing that is seen and transforms the seer. (Elkins, 1996, p. 11-12)

Seeing can awaken both researcher and participant to new possibilities, to untold stories, and can mark the beginning of imagining different stories, stories of experiences that speak to the three dimensions in the narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Theoretical Dialogues

Throughout the last few years I have come to understand, by revisiting my childhood stories and family photo-albums, that my life is marked by continuous wanderings; wanderings within and amidst personal stories, as well as literary, theoretical and philosophical writings. It is the intersection between my autobiographical coming to know and the theoretical that I locate myself. There is no easy place within any one theory or within any one discipline of seeing, writing and thinking about the world for me. Indeed I have continuously moved between disciplines, between theories over the years in a back and forth movement. I am comfortable when I can place theory in a dialogical position with my personal experience, where one interacts and informs the other. Remaining attentive to this dialog, I find that I am able to nurture myself, while also acknowledging that I know something (Richardson, 1997). In this way I write myself into the text, into the theories. Following Boer (2006), I see that in the process of theorizing that includes self-reflection, one indeed leaves the ontological home to return to the same location, but not quite as the same person.

Breathing and Seeing Narrative Inquiry

As I reflect, write and play with my own narratives of experience, the field and interim research texts, and the theoretical texts that accompany me in this play, I know that each paper in my dissertation reveals different story lines of my experience, yet each text is also embedded within a larger story. This dissertation entails four distinct papers, which can be read as separate accounts. These accounts are by no means as linear as their numbering or positioning within this dissertation might imply. Each paper is part of a larger inquiry, an inquiry into the methodology of narrative inquiry, including visual narrative inquiry. I have made cross-references to ideas, as a way to read across the papers, while at the same time avoiding repetition.

Paper One: Narrative Beginnings: Traveling to and within Unfamiliar Landscape.

In this first paper I highlight the process of narrative inquiry and in particular explore my understanding of narrative inquiry as a relational research methodology (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This paper draws on my Master of Nursing research, which explored the stories of five aboriginal women living with HIV in an urban city (Caine, 2002). Over time I have come to (re)read many of the told and lived stories in different ways. In this particular paper I reflect on the feelings of (dis)placement from a geographic landscape and cultural heritage that all of the women in the inquiry experienced.

Engaging first with myself around the notion of home and place, I start to see how Debra, one of the women, stories her body as place, as landscape. By engaging with Debra, I learn to understand home as embodied. I explore Debra's story through the three dimensional inquiry space and as I begin to see how Debra's life has been inscribed in an embodied way, I also begin to situate relational aspects of narrative inquiry in the body. I explore how relationships think and are through the skin. Richardson (1997) deepens my understanding as she describes how a

> story of a life is less than the actual life, because the story told is selective, partial, contextually constructed and because the life is not yet over. But the story of a life is also more than the life, the contours and meanings allegorically extending others, others seeing themselves, knowing themselves through another's life story, re-visioning their own, arriving where they started and knowing 'the place for the first time'. (p. 6)

It is the first time I read my place, my body as home.

Connecting with Debra I too learned about the difference between the telling and living out of stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Debra's telling of stories told of the social oppressions, of the cultural denial and the injustices she had experienced. It was the living out of her stories that awakened me to her resiliency, and a possibility to see her scars as evidence of healing and regeneration. In the living out of her stories Debra made me not only understand the deeper conditions of human life, but that the stories told are not fixed texts, that they are composed in

and out of the living. The textual representation in the final research texts of Debra's told and lived stories became another way for me to not only understand, but to inquire into her life and my own. Through the writing I reconnected with my own life at a deeper level and it was the memory of Debra's scars that reminded me of the tentativeness of our stories told.

The three dimensional narrative inquiry space is critical in the work of Clandinin and Connelly (1994, 2000). The temporal and personal-social dimensions have been well developed, while it is only in more recent work that place has been seen as significant to our understanding of experience. The discussions of place have paid attention to the landscapes within schools, as much of Clandinin and Connelly's work has been focused on teacher education and curriculum making. In this paper I explore a different notion of place; place as geographic position of home and as ontological.[13]

Paper Two: Visualizing Community

In the spring of 2002 I traveled to North Carolina for a workshop with Wendy Ewald (1985, 1997, 2001) whose work explores children's lives visually through the use of photography. After having completed my MN work, in which I had asked five aboriginal women to document their lives using a disposable camera, I was beginning to further

[13] As being, that grows out of our relationship with place and others, and across time.

explore visual research. I began to see photography not only as a way to document lives, but as a creative tool that could be manipulated and played with. Learning new ways to think and play with photographs, I (alongside a principal, teacher and several researchers) invited children in a Grade 2/3 learning strategies classroom to participate in a visual exploration of community.[14] This visual narrative inquiry into the children's lives and experiences highlights that understanding through sustained conversation and seeing is a way to think about curriculum making as a curriculum of lives (Clandinin et al., 2006). Each time I return to the children's images I increasingly recognize that the images can be seen as text in and of themselves and they can also be seen as art, embedding tentativeness, possibility, and evocativeness.

While being in relation with Debra made me aware of the living out of our stories, it was in being in relation with the children in the classroom that I experienced how both the living out of our stories and the composing of our stories, becomes part of our telling. This narrative inquiry became both a description and an intervention. A description of the children's understanding of self, home and community, but also an intervention as the process allowed for the building and experiencing of community in the classroom. I am reminded of Clandinin and Rosiek's (2007) discussion

[14] My work was part of a larger SSHRC funded study entitled *School landscapes in transition: Negotiating diverse narratives of* experience awarded to Drs D. J. Clandinin and M. F. Connelly. See Clandinin et al. (2006), Murphy (2004), Murray Orr (2005), and Pearce (2005) for additional writings from the larger SSHRC project.

of Dewey's notion of ontology as transactional. Within this pragmatic view of knowledge "our representations arise from experience and must return to that experience for their validation" (p. 39). The children, teacher and I experienced this transaction unintentionally and it was in trying to build the interim research text (both in writing and images) that our lived experiences of community were validated.

Paper Three: The Imagination in Narrative Inquiry

Throughout my academic work I have continuously returned to the concepts of imagination, dreams and memories.[15] It is perhaps the notion of play within imagination that helps me move to new meanings and understand the stories of others. As discussed earlier my understanding of imagination is shaped by Sarbin's (1998, 2004) definition of imagination, as perceptual and embodied knowing. Imagination not only influences my own life stories and stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), but also how I understand and construct the narrative accounts of others. Life stories focus on memory and on the present moment of our experience, on being, as well as our future. Stories to live by, on the other hand, are shaped by the notion of becoming and link knowledge, context and identity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). The telling of life stories and stories to live by are also shaped by our dreams and imagination. As Bruner (2002) points out it is the interplay between memory and imagination that informs and shapes

[15] This paper draws upon many conversations and writings with Dr. Pam Steeves about imagination in narrative inquiry.

our experiences, our memories of our life stories and our imagination of the stories to live by. Understanding both life stories and stories to live by requires an attentiveness and wakefulness within the relationships we enter as narrative inquirers. These relationships are shaped by a dialogical play, whereby it is important to pay attention to both the *tonos* (tension) and *teino* (stretch) (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.) of relationships as both being and becoming in relationship requires us to be imaginative and playful in our in-between space.

Believed-in imaginings opens up many possible stories in narrative inquiry, and also many possible experiences. In writing about imagining I have come to see more clearly that our lives are continuous, temporal and relational in nature. It is therefore important that as a narrative inquirer I am responsive and interactive to and with my research participants, that the imaginative space remains open. This responsiveness and interaction lives in the in-between space, the space between the researcher and participant. The dialogical positioning of Sarbin's theoretical concept of believed-in imaginings with my experiences as a narrative inquirer and some of both Dr. Steeves and my experiences opened up new possibilities of understanding the in-between space in narrative inquiry, a space marked by being in relation.

Paper Four: Narrative Inquiry: Contemplating Resonance and Testimony within a Relational Inquiry

In this fourth and last paper I look at ethical issues that often arise in the field, a time when I engage with research participants as a narrative inquirer and where I attend to the life and the experiences of others. As I attend to the life in front of me, I also attend to my own life and more so to the space that lays in-between my research participants and me. It is the in-between space, a space of encounter and resonance, a space in which our lives are unfolding in relation to each other that is significant in narrative inquiry. While in the previous paper I establish the importance of the in-between space as a space of responsiveness and interaction, in this paper I explore the significance of relational ethics in this space.

As a narrative inquirer I not only attend to the in-between space and the presence of the experiences in that moment, but I eventually am asked to remember in the process of writing and inquiring into the experiences. The importance of relational ethics, just as it shapes how I came to the research puzzle, continues to be important in and after composing field texts. Being in relation both deepens and encircles my understandings, but it also brings forth tensions and the possibility of friendship. In thinking about relational ethics I am contemplating the many complex ways of being in relation and how being in relation with research participants allows for human connectedness and growth. It is Bruner (1986) who draws my attention to the differentiation between paradigmatic knowing as actual and

narrative knowing as possible. Through attending to the relational in-between space in narrative inquiry possibilities arise for discovering new ways of knowing and understanding, but also possibilities of profound personal and professional change.

Concluding Thoughts: Stories with/in Dwelling

In the concluding thoughts of my dissertation I reflect on the possibilities each paper has opened for me, in understanding place as a deep and complex phenomena that lives both temporally, continually and relationally in my body. As well as understanding narrative inquiry through the living out of stories, and seeing images as both text and art, as well as tentative and possible explorations. Imagining as perceptual and embodied knowing has drawn my attention to the importance of being with my participants and myself in responsive and interactive ways, to the relational work in narrative inquiry; while relational ethics has opened up the possibilities of holding and being held and the possibility of celebrating our coming together.

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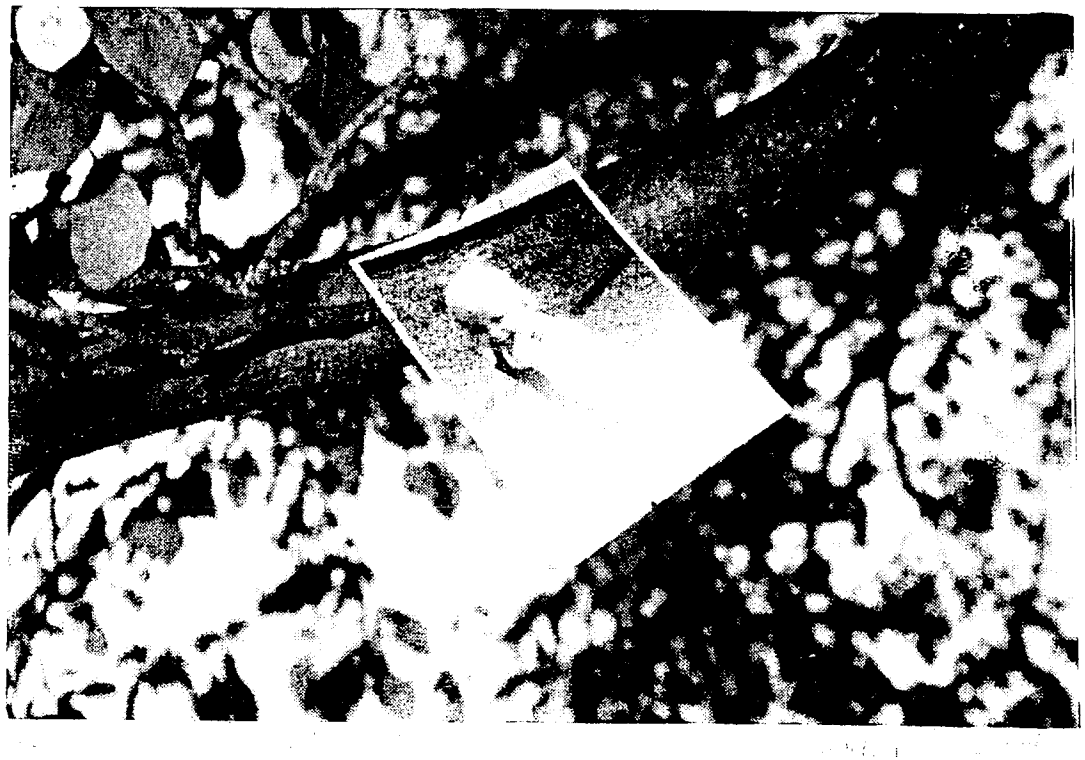
Plate 1



Narrative beginnings:

Travelling to and within unfamiliar landscapes.

As I seek to understand the lived experiences of Debra, I find myself drawn to my autobiographical stories, to the stories that speak of who I am.[16] In this paper I revisit my narrative beginnings with Debra, beginnings that are shaped by traveling both to and within unfamiliar landscapes. It is through these travels, and within the three dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) that I begin to grasp, that I begin to recognize the significance of the places and histories embedded within the maps we travel; maps as Debra draws attention to that can be traced upon the body.

[16] Debra's story is part of a larger visual narrative inquiry research I conducted several years ago as I attempted to understand the stories of five urban aboriginal women living with HIV (Caine, 2002). Within the inquiry I tried to understand the complex, multi-layered stories of despair, struggle, hope and possibility. As well, I tried to make sense of the often multiple identities and the continuous shift between the present, past and future, between the known and unknown, between the told and untold, and between the self and others. Visual narrative inquiry combines the use of storytelling with photography to explore experiences. The women utilized disposable cameras during the study to visually document their everyday lives.

Narrative Beginnings[17]: Situating my Life

I slowly walk up to the bench by the river's trail, and as I sit there with my eyes closed I realize that in the midst of seeking a new story to live by, each story will always begin with my past.[18] The ties of memory and nostalgia that bind me to my homeland are complex. Perhaps it is in my desires and my childhood that I can see the suspended beginnings (Probyn, 1996) of my life's story and understanding of homing desires.[19] I wonder: what is the work of memory as I seek to name home? How does my understanding of home change as I revisit my childhood home again and again? How is the image of home embedded in the stories of my body? It is these and other questions that linger within me, that beg for answers and seek insights.

I still remember the expression on my mother's face as I told her that I would return to Canada after just having returned from a six week trip there, that I had come home only to tell her in person and to fetch a few of my belongings. My mother's eyes glazed over, staring into the distance, perhaps knowing that our lives would change

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[17] Narrative beginnings are grounded in personal experiences and are situated in relation to the research puzzles (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

[18] This was a time of immigration for me, of discovering a new landscape and trying to make sense of my life within a changed social-political and cultural landscape.

[19] Homing desires reflect the desires for a place of belonging, a homey place that is however not necessarily located in one's homeland (Brah, 1996).

forever. While my mother grieved in her own way and on her own, I was filled with excitement and anticipation of a new adventure, ignorant to the pain I caused. I still remember the endless hours sitting in my parents' garden imagining what this new adventure would bring. There were the countless conversations with friends, imagining ways to stay connected and wondering what life would bring in this new place. There were tears on occasions and it was then, for the first time, that I noticed an embodied response to my decision to return to a foreign place and to turn away from home; these were the moments where I recognized that perhaps it was a decision with consequences I had not yet considered.

This was the same summer when my uncle passed away, which brought forth the memories and reminiscing of Sundays spent at his and my aunt's house, swimming with my cousins, watching the boats go by on the canal, eating potato salad and drinking black tea. These memories made his passing easier for me and little did I know that to conjure up the same memories that could make my new adventure less unsettling was so hard to do in this new place. I had no familiar trees, no boats, no gardens to tie my memory to, to remind me of home, nothing to conjure up the feelings that I still remembered. No favorite tree to lean on, no bench to visit over and over and, even after seventeen long years, I still don't. And as the years have passed this longing of returning home, this homing desire has grown stronger and stronger.

Perhaps the longing to return is a recognition that which ever path I walk in life, the path will unavoidably begin where I am now and always be in relation to where I have been (Burgin, 1996). There are times when my familial home embodies the notions of comfort, care, belonging and familiarity yet I have begun to understand that this is a privileged notion of home. I chose to leave home and became a stranger as a result of leaving, for others being a stranger within their home is the cause of leaving home (Fortier, 2002).[20] Yet, there are times when home for me is neither one nor the other; there are no clear lines between the notions of comfort, care and belonging and being a stranger. I recall the sense of belonging, yet also knowing the sense of being a stranger at the same time; for when I was home I dreamt of nothing more than to leave home. To discover and explore not what was around me, but who I was. Who was I outside familiar places? And who was I in relation to the places that surrounded me?

My early childhood home is tied to a particular landscape, a landscape I so vividly remember: the strawberry fields at the back of our house, the river running through the farmers' fields, where we used to go swimming, and the hills that seemed like mountains when I grew up. Yet, home is also located somewhere between my memory and nostalgia for the past, my present and my future dreams and fears (Blunt & Varley, 2004), and it is tied to people I have come to know and to significant personal and geographical events that are inscribed in the landscape.

[20] Fortier (2002) refers in particular to queer people.

It is these places that I have left, but as Rushdie (1981) carries the sea by which he was born to every new place, so too do I carry the strawberry fields, the river, the hills and the stories with me always. Place holds memory and defines who I am and place invokes memory. And it is particular places that remind me of my shared memories, with my mother and aunt most of all, and with my father and siblings, and my husband and son. It has become impossible to look at a map and not recount the stories, the happenings and past events and thus it is impossible to not think of place.

It is only now that I recognize how critical the space and place of early home is to our identity formation. As Greene (1995) notes "the search for narrative has indeed imparted a shape to my childhood, perhaps a kind of worthwhileness to my experience I might never have known before" (p. 74). It is these early landscapes of childhood that help me understand who I am. My stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) are rooted in geographic places and locations; geographic places and locations that have shaped the images in my head. Yet like Piper and Garratt (2004) I recognize that this rootedness of being lives alongside the rhizomatic becoming and that these notions are the

nexus of a relationship between epistemological and ontological issues.[21] Our rootedness perhaps freezes our identity, plants it firmly in the soil of our homeland, ignores difference at best, where as the notion of being creates the opportunity to explore, question and experience difference against the backdrop of our stories and experiences amidst those of others.

As I wonder about the landscapes of my homeland and those where I have been and lived for months and sometimes years, I recall Marmon Silko's words and cautions about the term landscapes. Marmon Silko (1996) reminds me that we can neither see nor comprehend entire landscapes and moreover, that we too are part of these landscapes or the boulders of the landscape we stand on. I did not leave home imagining that I would ever return permanently and as I visit on occasions I recognize that I am still present in the landscape, that my absence has left its marks. The bench under the tree in the midst of the forest has fallen apart, the slope that my father and I used in the winter for the toboggan run has overgrown, and the photo album has not had any photos added since I have left. Like me, my mother has collected our weekly letters and postcards, stored them in boxes so that one day they can be retrieved and reread. Maybe when I return home we will read them aloud.

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[21] It is important to see these issues at the nexus of a relationship between epistemological and ontological issues. Knowing and being able to state where I am from, where I am positioned is equally as important as understanding and questioning my being in this world. Ontologically I recognize that building connections, not questioning where I came from, shapes my identity, acknowledges my tacit knowledge, as well as the silences in my stories to live by; while the epistemological issues remind me that I am also grounded within a particular context, born into a particular place.

Homing desires are so often part of the diasporic narratives of belonging and it is through remembering that we inhabit the imaginary and physical spaces of belonging (Fortier, 2001). Perhaps it is in this longing for a place amidst our homing desires that our identity struggles are located. Who am I? What is the relationship between home and identity? What part does my physical body play in the remembering and reconstruction of home? What parts do the still images in my mind play? Why is the connection between visual images and identity so important for me? Maybe, as Rushdie (1981) observes, it is that migrants live more comfortably in images and ideas, rather than places. Yet my sense of (dis)placement is real too.

Home in these imaginary moments is a starting place, a place in-between and perhaps no place at all. Home like identity is a place from which to re-depart, a departure with different pauses and arrivals (Minh-ha, 1991). As Sigrid and I stood by the side of the road, hoping to make it to Paris before darkness, I re-call our wondering if we would ever arrive.[22] Are we leaving or are we running away from home? Home was a place so scripted at that time in our lives that it felt like there was no room to breathe for either one of us. As we made up the stories of the place we had not yet arrived at, we envisioned happiness, amidst possibilities of yet a new life and stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), we did not envision the uneasiness and tiredness this new place would bring.

[22] Sigrid is a childhood friend.

Understanding Amidst our Own Stories

I reflect on Hall's (1996) notion of 'what we really are'; that our identities are a matter of becoming, creative constructions filled with ambivalences and fragmentation, as well as being. Our identities are not fixed entities, but are always in process; they are as much about the past and present as they are about the future. Embedded within the notion of 'what we really are' is that diasporic identities are by essence not pure, but rather are composed of heterogeneity, diversity, difference and hybridity. Minh-ha (1992) too recognizes that we cannot accept purity, but rather we are always speaking from a hybrid place, a place where we often assume multiple identities and selves, and multiple images of and about ourselves.

Years before I left home for the first time, when I first began to travel, I began to write and send postcards to myself as a way to wonder and make notes. At that time I was away from familiar places for brief moments, now I rarely return and it is the notion of diaspora that compels me to think about the problematic of home "by making the spatialization of identity problematic and interrupt[ing] the ontologization of place" (Gilroy, 2000, p. 122). Each time a new postcard arrives now I am reminded of this problematic, as each postcard entails a desire to understand the creation of home. The creation of home has been a personal and silent project for me, not a communal process, seldom

intertwined with countless other stories. These memories are not contained to a particular catastrophic, punctuated event; rather they are part of temporally diffuse events (van Wyck & Salverson, 2001).

At times the text in my postcards recounts the physical impacts of my travels, the talk of new blisters on my feet, my tired and aching back from carrying the few belongings I value across borders. The blisters filled with blood and other body fluids are a reminder of my physical body. The blisters have become a form of dermographia, which in medical terms refers to the writing on or marking of the skin. As Ahemd and Stacey (2001) elaborate

> writings that think through the skin, can be read as rewriting the skin, or re-skinning the writing. [...] For, like writing, skin carries traces of those other contexts in the very living materiality of its forms, even if it cannot be reduced to them. [...] The relationship to the past, which is neither simply absent nor present on the surface of the skin is hence also an opening up of a different future. It is precisely by paying attention to the already written, to what has already taken shape that one can open up that which has yet to be written, and even touch the skin that has yet to be lived. (p. 15)

As my stories have marked my skin, they become closely intertwined with life. Being and beginning in the midst of stories then means to pay attention to how life is lived through story and how story itself lives a life (Neumann, 1997), a life filled with the geographic places and events of our past, present and future. The moments of

returning to the places within my childhood means (re)visiting places filled with images of trees, fields and bicycles. Embedded in these moments and images is my understanding of my history that is now so much shaped by my (dis)placement and the stories I tell of these new places. I often return to my family photographs; photographs scattered within boxes. Inherent in the return to my family photographs is an attempt to make sense of my life; a sense making that is embedded in the storied landscapes of my personal experiences.[23]

As I return to the strawberry fields, the river and the hills, I am reminded that they are images that are representative of different times in my life and of the telling of my story; they have influenced and shaped my understanding of home, community and identity. This understanding falls somewhere between the histories and experiences of my life and lies embedded in the friendships and encounters with others, amidst borderlands and liminal spaces. Liminality refers to a concept initially developed by Turner (1974) and stems from the Latin word: boundary or threshold. It is in essence the condition of being on the threshold, at the beginning of a process or at an in-between state; neither-this-nor-that, neither me nor not me. It is a liminal space that I often find myself in, somewhere between dream, imagination and reality, between knowing who I am and talking to myself as a stranger. Within a liminal space I

[23] My understanding of storied landscapes stems from the work of Clandinin & Connelly (2000), for whom storied landscapes reflect our experiences, the stories we live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

am always in the midst. And as my thoughts wander to places I have been, such as small northern aboriginal communities, I wonder: Does place situate one in a liminal position? Does race situate one in a liminal space?

Knowing my own experiences, like knowing and having a place of my own, is important to me. It is important as a "place that allows full expression to the you and me, the we of our commonality, a place where the abstract we discloses the traces that lead back to you and me" (Barber, 1998, p. 3). It is in these spaces that I begin to see the possibilities of reaching across my autobiographical boundaries.

Reaching Across Autobiographical Boundaries

Each time I think about the marks my travels have left on my body I begin to think of Debra. Debra was a participant in the research I undertook for my Masters degree and it was only after many months of living alongside Debra as a researcher that both Debra and I began to recognize that amidst our relationship as two co-researchers a deep closeness and friendship had developed. The first meetings were strange and unfamiliar, neither of us knowing what to say or how to act. Our lived experiences were worlds apart and so was our understanding of who we were. Initially, we met in restaurants or bars; I recall how relieved we were whenever the waitress/waiter came by to check once more on some minuscule thing; perhaps they too sensed our unease with each other. After all, how often can you talk about the weather? Our relationship did not shift in these spaces, it shifted while driving and sitting in the car and it

shifted in the hospital and clinic waiting rooms. These spaces offered no relief, no interruptions or distractions, in these places it was just us. These were the spaces where the uneasiness lessened and where Debra first opened up, slowly and then after time the words began tumbling … a missed childhood, no sense of her mother or father being present, a life on the streets amidst substance use and sex trade work, unfortunate relationships and the absence of her children in her life. It was then that she pulled up her sleeves and showed me her scars. I could look at her scars, but it took months before I could place my hands on her hands and arms to caress her body, to feel the scars and the shaking in her hands while she talked.

Bearing witness to these scars, through listening and talking with Debra and by looking at and touching her body has made me think about home and the stories we tell of our lives. By me bearing witness to Debra's showing and telling of her scars, Debra gave testimony[24]. Her testimony was marked by permanency, at times inevitability and, for Debra, was also a testimony about her future. It is Debra's body that has helped me think both in metaphorical as well as factual ways about lives. It was not her ailing body due to the impact of HIV, but it was the scars on her body that

[24] The word testimony has two different roots 1. *superstes* (latin): person who went through the event and lived to tell about it; 2 *testis* (derived form *terstis*) person who positions himself or herself as a third amongst two others (Agamben, 2002, as cited in Pakman, 2004). Pakman (2004) identifies that the etymology clearly suggests a movement from *superstes* to *terstis*, from witnessing to providing testimony before a third person; testimony is never just between you and me. Without testimony we might allow our memories to die in private, to become superstitions.

continuously made me wonder. It was in the silent moments that her body told when she could not and it was in the silent moments where I could see and touch. In these moments her body became a landscape, a landscape reflecting her experience. It was then that I began to understand her experience in terms of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space; an understanding along temporal dimensions, personal-social dimensions, and within place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Reflecting upon this understanding within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space deepened my capacity to perceive and attend to Debra's experiences and ultimately to who Debra was and who I was and was becoming alongside her. It was her body, as individual history, memory and trace, which set in play the possibility of dialoguing my being-in-difference, and being different.

Sitting at the desk in my office space on a warm winter day, a space so far removed from the streets Debra roamed and lived in, I think about the first time I met Debra, six years ago now. I can't recall how we got connected, but I remember the first few times we met in the smoke filled bars, where the smell of grease was forever hanging in the air just as the staleness of spilt beer on the carpets, carpets that seemed to overflow with dirt, never left. It was a place Debra had chosen; a place she was familiar with. Whenever we entered she would look around to see who was familiar while at the same time looking quickly to find a place to sit, sometimes nodding quietly, at other times making only brief eye contact with others. She always seemed to be aiming for a table away from people she had recognized. I

always felt the eyes that followed me as I tried to navigate between the chairs and tables; I constantly felt clumsy and awkward, always out of place. Upon reflection I think of Bateson's (1994) observation that when we arrive in a new place, we start with an acknowledgment of strangeness, arriving in new places, with a disciplined use of discomfort and surprise.

At our initial meetings we always sat as far apart as the table Debra had chosen permitted, there was no feeling of necessary intimacy or closeness between us. In my recollection of these moments, the table has grown longer and wider, as the Debra I came to know in these places is not the Debra I last saw. As I talked about the research I was hoping to engage in, I explained that I hoped that Debra would take photographs, as a way to help me understand her experiences of living with HIV, as an opportunity to enter into another's lived experience. Debra's response was one of indifference to the camera and indifference to me wanting to understand. I left feeling troubled, restless and so uneasy about our encounter. Debra's responses had awakened me, it was her indifference that made me realize how little I understood about her life.

Yet, somehow we persisted, and weeks later our conversations returned to the possibility of taking photographs again. It was at two or three a.m. while sitting in the emergency waiting room. Debra felt feverish and unwell and at the edges of her sleeves I could see the bandages that appeared to be wrapped around her left forearm. Unexpected,

Debra's response to the possibility of taking photographs was to take images of her arms. She explained: You know I have so many scars on my arms, scars because of all the drugs I used, scars from the countless suicide attempts, scars from fights with lovers and strangers. I had never seen her arms; she always wore long sleeved shirts. In that moment I wondered had she worn long sleeved shirts as a way to protect her history, her story, her landscape? Or maybe covering over harm?

Debra was good at reading my expressions, my puzzlement that night. When she was called to come to the examining room she asked me to come with her. It was there that she slowly lifted up her sleeves and removed the bandages in a deliberate and ritualistic fashion. I remember the immediacy of the revolting feeling in my stomach, enough to make my eyes water and my throat close, afraid of throwing up. The smell of rotting flesh, skin disfigured, discoloured and swollen ... I didn't know what to say, do, or where to turn to when I saw her scars this first time.

All I know is that ever since then the image of her arms won't go away; even months after the first showing the image remained imprinted in my head and heart during all of our conversations and it is still present even now, each and every time I think about Debra. That first seeing became a moment of surprise and a moment of interruption for me; a moment that changed our relationship. There were times before where our relationship had shifted from our initial meetings, shifted enough to create a space for Debra to show me her arms, to allow me into her life in ways I

could have never imagined. She allowed me enter the most vulnerable places and become part of the stories of her life and now she invited me to travel alongside her as she began the tellings and retellings of her story.

It was long after Debra's first showing of her arm to me that I began to think about her scars, both emotional and physical, as a textual inscription on her body. I now think that her body text is a record of her existence, a record of the places she has been, yet it is not a clear body text, it is filled with gaps in memory, stories unable to be recited, and stories so difficult that she worked hard at forgetting them. Unlike body art that is practiced around the world, to show social standings, genealogy, ancestral lines, or social traits (Schildkrout, 2004), Debra's body text reveals only her pain and hardships. I am reminded too by Schildkrouts (2004) assertion that he uses his tattoos as a way to constantly remind himself of who he is and from where he came. For Debra, many of these reminders were inscribed unintentionally. Yet, I also wonder about her scars as a sign of healing and regeneration; of resiliency.

Travelling Alongside

Debra invited me into her story in a physical space where we both felt equally uncomfortable. Debra felt discomfort because for her the emergency ward was a place filled with discrimination, racism, and ostracism, a place where one look at her arms seemingly explained who she was without ever saying a word. I too felt uneasy and I was reminded that as a registered nurse I had always avoided working in institutional settings, settings that provided no

room to breathe, no time to travel neither to nor with. Being displaced created a space in which both Debra and I could begin to travel alongside.

Having chosen a research methodology that allowed me to dwell in this place was equally important. Narrative inquiry is a methodology that calls forth a relational inquiry. As a narrative inquirer I not only listen to the stories told, but also live alongside research participants for extended periods of time. It is when I live alongside others, take time out despite timetables, dissertation deadlines and other things that I am often surprised and begin to see differently (Veroff, 2002). It is in the midst of living alongside (Craig & Huber, 2007) that I have the prospect to touch and be touched and to explore the markings on skin.

Embedded in the metaphor of living alongside is the possibility to travel to each others worlds; a world traveling that enables us to be playful in different ways (Lugones, 1987). This playfulness allows me to be with others in relational ways, to travel to each other's worlds in loving ways, where we can become fully and not other. Living and traveling alongside others also means that being in relationship as co-researchers is a social act, one in which people both live and tell their stories. I have learned that amidst the stopping places of the journey it is important to pay attention to the relational aspects of identity and discovery. Within our relationship the stories we tell to ourselves and

about ourselves are often constructed through, not outside of, difference. In these travels I keep Probyn's (2001) words close to my heart: "I must remember to walk in the country, and not through it, in my haste to know the land" (p. 88).

Travelling within the Three Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space

The three dimensional narrative inquiry space slows me down and makes me ponder about what I saw and heard along the way as I traveled alongside Debra over a period of several months. It is a space in which I can question both the meanings and explanations of my stories, Debra's stories and our stories. There were times when I engaged with Debra almost daily, at other times our encounters were more dispersed over time. Within the three dimensional narrative inquiry space, discoveries take place along the personal-social, temporal and situational dimensions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It is within the different dimensions where I begin to understand that stories are also inter-textual spaces that reveal cover stories, draw attention to sacred stories and uncover mundane tellings (Crites, 1971). Each pondering becomes part of a thickening process, much like the layers in the skin, where each layer is considered independent of the other only to form a complex and interconnected fabric of understanding and exploring experience, much like re-skinning the writings and tellings of a story.

The personal social dimension within the three dimensional space, speaks to the interactions and relational aspects of experience, the inward and outward dimensions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I am drawn inward into

Debra's tellings and showings of the scars on her arms, scars that are both external and internal. As the image of her scars is ever present in my mind I wonder which of the scars is more disfiguring in Debra's life and I begin to recognize that the scars have become metaphors for the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual hardships Debra has experienced, to her personal and cultural loss in her life. Yet, the scars are only a small part in the recounting of places on the body where life has left its impacts, there are also "the locations of pain, the disfigurements, the amputations, the muscles and joints and bones that remember. There are the constant social rituals of placing people [...]" (Stewart, 1996, p. 148). Debra's open wounds also remind me of the possibility to heal. I am reminded of Gell's (1993) writings on tattoos, where "spirits, ancestors, rulers and victims take up residence in an integument which begins to take a life of its own" (p. 39).

Unlike tattoos, Debra's skin markings are not voluntary inscriptions; the scars on her arms are the outward inscriptions of the cultural narratives that played out in her life. The scars are setting Debra clearly apart from others that night in the emergency room, they are defining her and denying her, her own telling of her story, and they become a form of branding. That night the undressing of her scars felt like an undressing to give away, to give away the markers of her identity, history and life lived, not in a way Debra would tell, but how others would.

The inward and outward movements of Debra's story are hard to untangle as her life has been inscribed in an embodied way. Her skin not only carries her story but it becomes her story; it becomes her story to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). The branding of her body can be read as the visible interface between her and society at large, yet as I come to know Debra I begin to see that her scars run far deeper, and are permanently ingrained in both her skin and soul.

The temporal dimension of the three dimensional narrative inquiry space speaks to our experiences over time, to the forward and backward motion, in which our past, present and future is embedded (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). To create a feeling of continuity for Debra at times means forgetting her past, erasing a memory so traumatic and painful, that I could only guess from the half spoken sentences and words that her past was filled with hardship. Yet, there were brief moments when I could glean some happiness, moments where Debra mythologized her origins and events in her life, where she remembered fragments of her own stories and intertwined them with myth, like the times when she first began living and working on the streets, as the one and only time she had felt a sense of happiness, a time without fear. Debra holds onto this story and I wonder if she hangs on firmly because, if I or she disbelieves this story, do either one of us disbelieve her imagined childhood and her future? Debra knows that the scars on her arms were not yet visible when she began to live on the streets, she often tells me how good she looked then. "Bad skin' means skin marked both

by memory and as memorable; we do not forget bad skin" (Prosser, 2001, p. 54), a blemished person. Debra too wants to live without blemish.

Looking forward I sense that Debra reads her own future into her scars, she lives in mourning, she knows that death is marked out in almost everything she does; it is hard for her to go on living. Living with HIV and the scars on her arms constantly reminds Debra that she is longing for an impossible future. After spending months together, there are moments where both Debra and I create stories of imaginary lives and homelands. Moments that remind me of my childhood, moments where I wonder what Debra would think of the strawberry fields, the river and the hill.

Place, setting and the physical aspect speak of the situational dimension of the three dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It is within this space, where I can locate my stories in the fields, river and hill that seemed like a mountain, but Debra's story is not so easily understood. Her stories are tied to the streets, the emergency wards, the homes that were no place at all. It is when I begin to read her skin and her stories as place that I begin to see differently. Debra makes me understand our bodies as homes, as a house and as prison house (Sobchack, 1999). A home, as origin story, as a place we come to know and into which we are born and as a place we come from, a house, as a place we reside in, and as a prison house, a place to which we are condemned.

Returning Home: Attending to our Body

As I begin to read Debra's and my body as place, my notion of home and traveling changes. As a way to make sense of my understanding I begin again to write postcards to myself, and also postcards to Debra. Debra is helping me to (re)interpret and (re)connect my own understanding of my life experiences across time and place, she is helping me understand who I am, that there is a story/body interface, and that we embody our stories. Looking back on Debra's first showing of her scars to me, I begin to see how alive her skin was, the discoloration, the swelling, the smell of her open wounds; her skin like her life will always be a becoming, rather than simply a being, or a place to be inscribed.

The interconnections between body and story are textual, they are embodied, relational and intertwined. Like skin they too are layered, they change as the scars that cut deep pull our skin and disfigure us. Debra in her first showing made me understand that "[t]hinking through the skin is a thinking that attends not only to the sensuality of being-with-others, but also to the ethical implications of the impossibility of inhabiting the other's skin" (Ahmed & Stacey, 2001, p. 7). Debra understood that the emergency ward that night was a place I felt more comfortable in than the bars and restaurants we had been, it was a place I had been unable to avoid entirely in my life. It was a place that brought forth the acts of nursing, of attending fully to the other, to the unpresentable and stranger, to the vulnerability embodied in the body and in place (Cameron, 2006). In that moment Debra inscribed her story into my body, the

feeling of grasping for air, the immediacy of the revolting feeling in my stomach, enough to make my eyes water and my throat close, afraid of throwing up, the smell of rotting flesh. Debra knew that I would carry her story with me to each new place I would go, that my body would carry her story. And as I lost touch with Debra over these last few months, she lives in my memory, my body, in the layers of my skin, my home.

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Series of Plates (2 to 4)

Returning to se(e)a

Plate 2

Plate 3

Plate 4

Visualizing Community

Throughout the 2002/2003 school year I (alongside a principal, teacher and researcher) invited all fourteen children in a Grade 2/3 learning strategies classroom, all of whom were boys to participate in a visual narrative inquiry (Bach, 1998, 2007; Caine, 2002).[25] Our intention was to explore children's knowledge of community in artful ways and to narrate in words and photographs their understanding of home and self and through this to more deeply attend to the children's thoughts of community. Through this project we tried to create opportunities for the children to share with others both inside and outside of school their understandings of community, as well as to embrace and celebrate multiple ways of knowing. As part of this project the children in this classroom at Ravine Elementary School created visual narrative composites of their community using the Roman alphabet, assigning words and images to each letter (Ewald, 2001).[26] Learning to know a community and creating a vision of community were central elements in the children's narratives. By drawing from the children's stories of experience it became clear that their understanding of

[25] My work was part of a larger study that was supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Grant awarded to Drs. D. J. Clandinin and M. Connelly entitled *School Landscapes in Transition: Negotiating Diverse Narratives of Experience.* See Clandinin et al. (2006), Murphy (2004), Murray Orr (2005), and Pearce (2005) for additional writings from the larger SSHRC project.

[26] Ravine Elementary School is a pseudonym given to an urban elementary school in a large western Canadian City. Ravine Elementary School draws students from lower socio-economic and ethnically diverse neighborhoods. All children's names are pseudonyms.

community was shaped by a curriculum of lives (Huber & Clandinin, 2005; Clandinin et al., 2006); the children understood community as relational and as lived experience.

Schools as Places of Exploring and Understanding Community

In September of 2002 I entered the Grade 2/3 learning strategies classroom at Ravine Elementary School for the first time; it was a long time since I had been part of a classroom in an elementary school.[27] Each morning, seconds after the school bell rang, the boys, their teacher and teacher assistant would gather in the classroom. The boys quickly placed their jackets and backpacks on the coat racks, took their chairs from their desks and changed from their street shoes into their school shoes. Each morning they were given little time to settle their minds and hearts into the classroom space before the national anthem was played over the loudspeaker system. All the children were expected to stand up, listen attentively as well as sing along with an authentic and believing voice. It was the same routine every morning; a routine that raised many questions and that brought forth a sense of uneasiness for me. As I looked around

[27] The composition of this learning strategies classroom was marked by diversity, both in terms of intellectual abilities, as well as cultural background. The classroom had been created by the principal as a response to some children's struggles to fit into regular school classrooms, children who the principal thought would benefit from extra attention and from working with a teacher who was trained as a special education teacher with many years of experience. Throughout the school year I was unable to determine all the reasons individual children had been placed in this learning strategies classroom. I wondered many times about the gender composition of the classroom, that is, all boys and about the stories that were told about them on the landscape of the school.

the room I noted the diversity in skin colors, the diversity in knowing which words to sing, a difference across the room in the level of attentiveness and involvement.

My thoughts wandered from the morning routine to wondering if the script that was followed each morning allowed for the children to live out their own stories, to imprint their own identities into the classroom, stories of their personal lives. As I stood at the back of the classroom I was thinking about my research puzzle (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and wondered how much their understanding of community had been shaped and was influenced by the mandated curriculum, by their lives within a Canadian school, by their diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences both in and outside of school.[28] I wondered if the children would be able to speak freely of their notion of community, or would they think that there was one right answer? What or who had shaped their understanding of community both in the past and at present? How did they see and how did they imagine community?

I would often return to these puzzles throughout the project, being attentive to my aspiration to create a space where dialogue, relationships and learning could intersect. I did not want to join the metaphoric classroom parade

[28] I did not come to the classroom with a particular research question or research problem, rather my work with the children was framed by a research puzzle. A research puzzle is often composed around a particular wonder and marked by a sense of searching. Often the research puzzle expands, contracts, or shifts throughout each particular inquiry in relation to the phenomena under study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

(Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995), but rather understand schools as places of community (Pearce, 2005), as places of becoming, as places where learning comes from our personal experiences and by being in relation.

Situating the Inquiry

This work is part of my ongoing work as a visual narrative inquirer, in which I explore image-based expressions of field and research texts in narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry allows me to understand experiences as individuals live them in time, space, person and relationships, the three dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As a researcher, I attend to the past, the present and the future of the children while being mindful of place and the co-construction of knowledge. Narrative inquiry allows me to understand experience in relational ways, over time and across place. The study of narratives often reveals aspects of social life because culture speaks through an individual's story and is embedded within each lived story. The work in the classroom was guided by my understanding of narrative inquiry as both a research methodology and a phenomenon (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995); a phenomena of being in relationship, of engaging with both the children and the teachers, of living alongside and also of experiencing with the children how they understand community in their lives and in our lives together.

As I engaged with the children I paid close attention to Maxine Greene's (1995, 2000) work of the imagination; to create opportunities for the children to (re)write what community could look like and expand the narrow and often

limiting understandings and explanations given to children by the mandated curriculum (Greene, 2000).[29] It is also important to note that vulnerable children, especially children that are already labeled, are often prevented from exploring their own identities and for shifting their identities in a rhisomatic or agentic fashion (Piper & Garratt, 2004). My hope was to reach these children in more inclusive ways to discover with them that they are part of a larger community despite living on the margins within the classroom and their school community.

Throughout the school year I sought connecting points amongst the children's, teacher's and my own stories, stories of our own personal histories, which shaped our understandings of community, by offering time for telling and sharing stories (Greene, 1994). Often I entered a dialogue intentionally, with the intention to listen rather than to solve a problem (Noddings, 1993), to listen and attend to the personal and at times private experiences of the children.

[29] Exploring and critiquing the mandated curriculum was not central to this narrative inquiry, rather central was the children's understanding of community and my relationship with the children. Yet I was not oblivious to questions posed by McLaughlin (1993), such as: Whose knowledge counts as school curriculum? What are the underlying values, assumptions, and beliefs that structure school curriculum? What kind of cultural systems does this knowledge work from and legitimate? Whose interests are served by the organization and legitimating of school curriculum?

Visual Narrative Inquiry[30]

The aim of this inquiry was to make sense and explore the experience of community both through text and visually of the children, who lived in the learning strategies classroom; to perhaps turn experience into a way of seeing (Sontag, 1977).[31] Yet, the moments where the children and I created and conversed with the photographs also became a way of being in relation and a way of exploring our relationship. Looking at the photographs Brandon brought to the classroom, I remember his stories of his dog, his stories of going on vacation with his mother, of the times he and his mother were riding their bicycles. Throughout the school year Peter kept saying that he just never knew that Brandon had a dog and kept asking Brandon to tell him stories of the dog. I returned to the photographs of Brandon's holidays, to the smile on his mother's face as she was holding onto her bicycle and kept wanting to know more about his

[30] Visual narrative inquiry builds on the work of Clandinin & Connelly (2000), whereby images add another layer to our ability to explore and understand experience. I have been particularly concerned with the use of photographs taken by participants as a form of self-exploration of their lives, and a beginning place for conversations. Yet, I also see photographs as narratives in and of themselves that reflect our embodied understandings.

[31] The two starting points for narrative inquiry remained a cornerstone throughout this research: listening to individuals tell their stories and living alongside participants in the field (Clandinin, 2007). Listening to individuals tell their stories visually, meant to attend closely to the ambiguities, complexities, difficulties, and uncertainties embedded in visual images. Imagery and visual expressions that reflect the uniqueness of an individual's life (John-Steiner, 1985), ambiguities as there is no means by which we can standardize or classify images or visual thought. This calls forth the importance of engaging in an iterative process of photographing and talking/writing about the photographs, a process that requires a continuous interplay. At the same time it was important to understand each story within the context of school and so it was essential to live alongside the children and teacher in the classroom. Being in the classroom over an extended period of time allowed me to place the photographs and each child's understanding of them temporarily in time and place.

relationship with his mother. The sharing of family photographs opened up personal spaces for conversation between the children. It also gave the children a way to express themselves as they often struggled to convey who they were through text and words alone. I introduced our work with photographs as another possibility to look and understand, as another way to tell who we are, and as an active process of composing who we are, as a way of expressing our experience. Ultimately, the photographs were a way to gain a deeper sense of the children's understanding of community. Our work also brought forth the tension between narrating, fixing a life story and living out of a story (Carr, 1986), the telling of self as a process. This tension was visible in the photographs as the children in their stories talked about what was hidden, how their images fixed a certain story, but did not tell of the ambiguity, tentativeness and uncertainty.

During the process of making their understanding of community visual, the boys were often tentative and uncertain. In the classroom lessons that centered on the mandated curriculum the children were given the concept that community is where people work, live and play together. Within the classroom there was little space to question this concept, to wonder about their own experience and understanding of community. In turn I wondered if this brought forth the tentativeness and uncertainty of the children as we began our work. Or, had I placed my belief that knowledge

of community is shaped by our subjective and personal knowledge, by our intellectual and moral positioning, and by writing our experiences onto the children?

Collecting, creating and conversing with photographs.

In the process of collecting, creating and conversing with photographs (Bach, 2007), the children and I undertook a number of different activities throughout the school year. Initially, the children collected already existing personal photographs from home and brought them to the classroom. I also took photographs of the children within the school and on fieldtrips, and the children received cameras and took photographs outside of school time framing their understanding of community.[32] Our last project, using the Roman alphabet, was to assign each letter in the alphabet a word that would reflect their idea of community and then subsequently compose an image that would represent that particular word (Ewald, 2001). Each activity in and of itself brought forth various insights into the children's understanding and experiences.

Thomas loved stories of ghosts; for him they lived in his house, down the street, at the bus stop and even in the fridge. For Thomas there was no question that ghosts are part of his community, sometimes they represented people's spirits, at other times they were imaginary figures, which took on human-like qualities. Thomas could talk at length

[32] I took photographs only after I had negotiated with the children when and how I could do so. Often the children would give me directions of when I should take photographs and several of them gave very detailed and specific instructions and acted situations out in front of the camera.

about the division between good and bad ghosts, knowing each of them intimately well. Our conversations evolved around the photographs he had taken. Almost all the photographs were of empty spaces, the night sky, driving along empty streets, or of exhaust fumes, which become the shadows of ghosts. I had never thought of ghosts as community members and as being ever present, but Thomas convinced me that I should not ignore the ghosts in my life (Gorden, 1997). He kept pointing to the photographs as if to say "you see they are right there"!

As I learned that ghosts were important in Thomas's life, so too did I learn what was important to the other children's lives in their out of school lives. Particularly when the children took a camera home, they seemed to be able to author their own story; that is they found a legitimate way to talk about their own culture and understandings. For me it was a beginning to see each child in the classroom in relation to other family members, to the communities they were embedded in and I could also see that they began to take ownership of their personal stories, that they embodied their understanding of community. Using personal images and images that the children composed also created a space in which the children framed their understanding from their personal vantage point, from a sense of being fully immersed in their understanding. Rather than simply accepting the images as they are, I wondered why the children chose to take or share certain images. Equally so, I wondered what images they did not share, and/or what images did not make it into their camera.

When I first saw Blaine's photographs, I did not see ghosts. Yet the photographs somehow felt eerie, many images were set in darkness, impressions were only vaguely visible. Like Thomas, Blaine too talked about ghosts, ghosts that were hanging from ceilings, and ghosts that became friends and kept him from moving around, from losing his friends, because in his story ghosts couldn't move between places and neither could friends. As I read Blaine's story my eyes wandered to his photographs and I noted that there were no friends visible in the images he had taken.

It was amazing to listen to, and read, the stories the children told about the photographs they had taken. As I watched and listened I could feel their experiences and understandings come to life in both the process of taking photographs and in the images themselves. These initial assignments started with what the children knew intimately – their own selves, their families - and provided a valuable connecting point for me, as the children and I undertook the creation of a community alphabet (Ewald, 2001).

Composing visual narrative composites.

The goal of the alphabet project was to create a space for the children to imagine places, peoples, actions or happenings, and to discover the world in which they live; in other words, to story their understanding of community visually. In order to create the community alphabet I asked the children in the classroom to form pairs after which each pair drew four letters from the alphabet (with some letters being duplicates). I then worked closely with the paired

children. The initial task for the project was to decide which word or phrase, beginning with the letter they had drawn, would reflect a notion of community.[33] Subsequently, the children envisioned images that would represent their chosen word, set them up in front of either a black or white screen and then photograph them using a medium format camera.[34] Once all the negatives had been developed the children had an opportunity to alter the negatives through scratching and writing directly on to the negative. Once this process was completed the children and I, over a two day period, visited a local high school to develop the images in the darkroom. Once the images were completed the children and I engaged in what was often an iterative process, where writing/talking and seeing the photographs intermingled. In this way the children and I created a number of field texts, as well as some interim research texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). One of the interim research texts was the creation of an alphabet book, in which we showed the photographs in

[33] The following is an example of some of the chosen words for the letter C: community, Canada, caring, colours, children, colt, cowboy, cowgirl, cow, credible, can, cat; for the letter K: king, knowledge, kite; and for the letter O: ocean, outside, our.

[34] A medium format camera was chosen, as it produces larger negatives that would be easier to inscribe or alter for the children prior to processing the negative in the darkroom. Unfortunately, I did not have adequate resources so that the children could have developed their own negatives.

alphabetical order, along with some text, as well as drawn self portraits and a short autobiographical text each child had composed.[35]

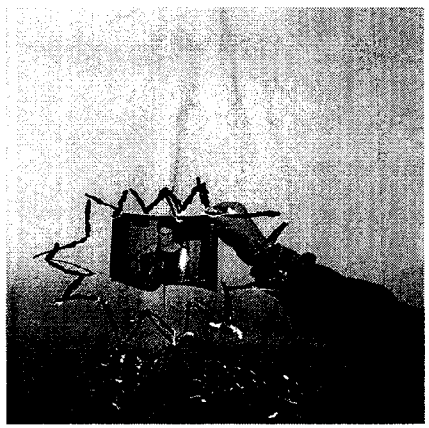
At the same time I interviewed each child separately and, for the first time, we tape-recorded our conversations. Our conversation and the photographs reflect the children's diverse sense of community, as well as their rich and complex understanding of community. The photographs the children took reveal a fine attention to detail and form, to subtle motions, and to an aesthetic sensitivity. At the same time their images and texts draw from their own lives, representing the world from a small and intimate perspective, yet it is a perspective that is detailed, accepting and complex (Ewald, 1985).

Stories of Community Interwoven with Stories of Home, Self and School

For Josh, his stories of home were his stories of community. When he took the camera home he took photographs of his cousins, himself playing with his cousins, of his mother, his father and his aunt. Almost all of the photographs were carefully composed. There were no random snapshots. In one of the photographs Josh had carefully positioned three guitars against the wall and taken a photograph of them. For him this photograph was about his community, it was about his father and mother who played with him, his father who taught him to play the guitar and of

[35] Each child received a copy of a bound alphabet book, as a way to hold onto their understanding of community, and as a way to share it with the larger school and parental community.

the time spent together as a family. When it came Josh's turn to compose the letter **D** for his alphabet he chose the word **dad**.



My dad likes to play the guitar.
I like when he tickles me.

I play the guitar too.
We play the guitar together.
He teaches me to play the guitar.

My name is Josh.
I love to play with my cousins and I love to watch blade.
I like yu-gi-ho.

Josh understood community as being in relation with people he loved and cared for. Josh talked about his favorite photo, one showing his father, as symbolic of his family, "because family is the best place, a place where you get to play, a family makes a community and is like someone you know … to improve community is to spend time with others". Yet, Josh's photograph for the community alphabet also has a part of himself in it; it is him who is holding the photo of his father. Josh included a part of himself, because he wanted to show people that '[my dad and I] like each other, we play with each other and we treat each other nicely, we don't push each other out". It is also about inviting others in, so they too become part of the family, part of Josh's community, a community that is marked by deep love and respect. It was in this moment that I knew not only what was important in Josh's out of school life, I also learned about community.

The photograph Josh took and our conversations made me wonder about where does home end and community begin? Are these boundaries fluid? I returned to these questions as I traveled alongside Thomas. Thomas returned in his alphabet letter **S** to his stories of ghosts, by choosing the word **scary**. He developed the photograph in the darkroom in a way that made the background really dark and only brought forth his scratching of a ghost. In the accompanying text he wrote: "There are so many scary things in the world. Ghosts are scary and they are real. They are the souls of people that have died and they go to people's houses. That is true and there are so many living in my house." For both

Thomas and Josh there seemed no distinction between home and community; as ghosts traveled from one place to the other with ease, where one place informed the other.

As Thomas played with scary and ghosts, I recall how Rick had inserted a bracelet into his photograph, "because my aunty gave it to me for my birthday, she passed away now and so I wear it when I go to church every Sunday evening". Although Rick's photograph was unrelated to this it became clear that he too brought his family history into the photograph, an image where stories of community intersected with stories of home and stories of self. The photographs, and more so the details embedded in each photograph remind me of the constant negotiation of our identity amidst the communities we live in, the negotiation that happens in each new place we enter.

As the children photographed and narrated their experience of community, I see that they are simultaneously being storied by place. This brings to mind Kris, struggling to figure out what to do for the letter **O**. Many of the stories he told were marked by playfulness, by coming to understand new places and stories to live by in relation to his histories. He had moved to Canada with his parents and, amidst his contemplation about the letter **O**, his eyes lit up remembering the **ocean**. The ocean was part of his understanding of community; it had elements of his past, of

familiarity, of playfulness. When Kris began to lay words alongside his photographs, he played with the imagination, with what he knew and what he was hoping for.

I wish I can swim with the fish.
I never did swim with the fish
and I wish I could have.
The seaweed tickles.

All of the children had different angles of vision and came to understand community in different ways. For many the stories of community were closely intertwined with stories of home, self and school. The texts the children

wrote and the photographs alluded to the social relationships that they had and that were important in their lives. Like Bach (2007) I too found that the children's visual narratives had a sense of being full and coming out of a personal and social history that had immediate relevance in their lives.

Learning to know a community.

As I attended to the stories told through photographs and words I was reminded of Bateson's (1994) notion that "[l]earning to know a community or a landscape is home coming. Creating a vision of that community or landscape is homemaking" (p. 213). While learning to know a community can be understood as homecoming, it is important to note that home is not always a comfortable place. The photographs and narratives of the children not only told about the comfortable places and spaces in their community, but they also told of the uncomfortable places, they form stories that help us understand what community is not. Ethan struggled throughout the project to find a safe space to tell his story. In the alphabet project he decided on the word **king** for the letter **K**. He wanted to be a king of the guards and a king of the past; as he once told me he wanted to be in charge. And as he told his story to me he whispered in my ear and said, but "I know I will never be in charge". In our tape recorded conversation I asked a number of questions, questions about each photograph and questions about the process of engaging in this project. After about three questions, Ethan looked at me and challenged me to stop asking more questions. I shifted into more of a conversation and as Ethan and I

talked, I realized that asking questions had positioned me as being in charge and so I gave way to Ethan to ask me questions. As I listened to and answered Ethan's questions I began to realize that being in charge for Ethan, meant having authorship in his community, that people listened to his version of the story, that he was valued and respected and that he could determine more directly which stories he would and could tell. In the moment of shifting authority, of shifting who was in charge both Ethan and I came to realize that community was not a homecoming in the sense of arriving at a final destination, but that it would always be a place of negotiation, of becoming, a home in progress.

The photographs the children took often embedded significant events and people in their lives. The photographs also affirmed that they are part of a larger community both within and outside their classroom, as well as their deep connections with others. For Blaine this was reflected in the word **like**:

My letter is L and my picture is about community and like.
I was thinking about community.
The people are talking to each other.

Blaine asked all the children in his classroom to take part in posing for the word like. He wanted them to understand how important and significant they were in his life. As Blaine storied his classroom community, it also became clear that the story of community was also storied by the school.[36] Blaine wanted to ask only his immediate

[36] The notion of community was an important building block at Ravine Elementary School, in particular school notices, assemblies, and other school events paid close attention to the word community.

class members to be part of his photograph and not just any students. I wondered if his refusal to have other students participate was shaped by school experiences that had often marginalized their voices, school experiences that had always paid close attention to standardized testing and knowledge. Like Peter, when I asked the children to talk about themselves they often responded with "I don't know what to say" or "I can't think of anything", or "I am just not sure if this is right", a hesitation that seemed to grow out of a fear of giving a wrong answer. As I listened to the children I began to wonder if the boys were already marked by their placement in a learning strategies classroom on the landscape of school; after all it seemed they rarely interacted with the other children in school. I had a sense that the children lived on the margins in the school. Perhaps they, as Blaine shows us, came to learn about themselves as well as their community from a place on the margins.

Yet, in as much as their school experience shaped their understanding of community, so too did their experiences as boys, as immigrants, as visible minorities. Their voices of what community means in our project were framed by their own experiences, that is, were storied by their histories, places and contexts. Throughout the project, as a result of coming together through the sharing of their personal stories and experiences the children developed a sense of solidarity. Perhaps the project itself offered an experience of community life that inspired feelings of belonging and

unity, we created community.[37] By being exposed to different interpretations and varied meanings, the children became more aware of the multiple ways and possibilities to understand and experience community. Through their conversations and by looking at each other's images they were able to imagine and consider perspectives other than their own (Lowe, 2000). In many ways this project was an experiment that gave the boys an opportunity to be observers as well as to look through their own lenses and to draw upon their own experiences. It was an opportunity to see and perform belonging, where understanding community grew out of community. Given the diverse cultural background and histories of the children, it was also a place where children had the opportunity to question community and to question who they were.

Creating a vision of community.

Throughout the project the children began to see that their experiential knowledge had value and that there was great diversity in their understanding of community; from understanding community to be embedded in family relationships, to places within the immediate vicinity, to words that expressed affection and care. During the creation of the final alphabet book the children often resisted placing words alongside the images as they were afraid that they would limit the possible interpretations of their images; they wanted the viewer to respond to their images.

[37] This is particularly interesting when thinking of the learning strategies classroom as a contrived community. Perhaps this project is an example of how one can find strength amidst a contrived community.

The children were able to create repeatedly new stories and possibilities for each other. Indeed the children wanted those who viewed their photographs to see and envision even different possibilities and to share their own sense of community. They discussed at length the advantages and disadvantages of placing words alongside the photographs in their final alphabet book. It is as if they were guided by Greene's (1995) notion that "the role of imagination is not to resolve, is not to point the way, not to improve. It is to awaken, to disclose the ordinarily unseen, unheard, and unexpected" (p. 28). In the end they decided to create two books, one without text which they called the imaginary book and the other one in which they laid the images alongside, overtop or behind the words.

I was reminded of the Deweyan idea of a community-in-the-making, in which he referred to democracy (Greene, 2000). Perhaps through the building of community, and coming to know what the loving of community might mean, which is inclusive of the many voices within classrooms, families and across diverse spaces we can avoid the artificial boundaries of many communities (Greene, 2000), boundaries along racial and national markers, boundaries created and reinforced by national anthems.

As the work evolved over the school year the children also realized that their understandings of community were not static, but a continuous work in progress. They were able to (re)compose, (re)structure, (re)tell and (re)live their understanding as ever evolving possibilities (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). Peter and I had a long conversation of

how he wanted to keep working on his black photograph and how embedded in the blackness were numerous inconceivable images. Each time we came back to this photograph Peter would say: "But if I could develop it now, I think it might show something else".

Yet, I recall other stories too. I remember Bruce's photograph and his subsequent narrative of the judge. The judge handed a sentence of two years of homelessness to a man who had brutally murdered someone instead of time in jail. Bruce saw this sentence as worse than any length of time in jail could ever be.[38] I could hear his disgust as he imagined that homeless people had to eat other people's garbage, that they were unable to ever sleep in peace, that homeless people were forever in motion, fleeing from people who wanted to beat them, forever lonely, as no one could possibly befriend them. Bruce's narratives and photograph surprised me, as they reflect a level of social consciousness I did not expect. Yet, his story was also one without hope or possibility of change for people who had become homeless. I wondered how and where Bruce had learned about homelessness, home and community.[39] His narrative as photographed and told did not open up a possibility for hope or social vision; it was a narrative that was. He too did not question the judge's sentences, or inquire deeper into the stories of the person being judged. Bruce told a certain story

[38] The word homelessness can also be read as a metaphor of prisons.

[39] It was a moment that made me wonder what would happen if together Bruce and I would have had conversations with homeless people, what would have happened if we would have engaged in a photography project that explored inner city neighborhoods, neighborhoods that often have large percentages of homeless people.

of his understanding of community. Yet, as the other children viewed Bruce's photograph and listened to parts of his story, they imagined different stories and possibilities.

Bruce's story was one that puzzled me as all the other children took photographs that entailed narratives with several possibilities, photographs that were created as springboards for multiple stories (Allen et al., 2002). Without ignoring the tensions and difficulties that too speak of community, many of the photographs and narratives also entailed visions of community that were marked by personal stories and experiences and hope.

Understanding Through a Curriculum of Lives[40]

The children's relationships with each other strengthened as a result of getting to know each other. In many ways they built a classroom community throughout the year that was strongly influenced by the collaborative project we had undertaken. For the children it was a uniquely powerful activity; it made them feel important and valued. It also gave parents, siblings and others an opportunity to become part of the children's exploration of community - for example the children took cameras home, shared family photographs, and displayed their photographs at the yearly

[40] Clandinin et al., 2006

school-end event.[41] The project helped to create a safe and respectful community within the classroom and aided in building a caring community. The children, myself and their teacher realized, each in our own way, how different cultural and social backgrounds shape our understanding of community, that community was not a static concept, but one that evolved and was continuously evolving. Expressed in the images was the lived and told stories and experience that shaped the children's understanding of community.

It is Clandinin and Connelly (1992) who speak about curriculum making from a personal place of understanding. Embedded in their notion of curriculum of lives is that the composition of identities, stories to live by, are central in the process of curriculum making (Clandinin et al., 2006). Embedded in the stories we tell and are telling is the "time, place, character, and even advice on what we might do with our lives. The story fabric offers us images, myths, and metaphors that are morally resonant and contribute both to our knowing and our being known" (Witherell & Noddings, 1991, p. 1). Yet, coming to understand community also involved the tacit knowing of community for the children. They developed a sense of belonging to a classroom community and by showing their work within the larger school community during the final school event they also developed a sense that they made a contribution to the school

[41] The children's final images and texts of the community alphabet were displayed at the school's year end event, amidst penny carnival stands, silent auction items and bake sales, to which all the students and parents of the school were invited. Interestingly, their work was the only academic work that was displayed during the activities. A number of other teachers commented on how amazing the work of the boys in the learning strategies classroom was (Clandinin et al., 2006).

community. They were able to exchange their very personal and at times private stories in a new landscape where they experienced recognition and a feeling that they too bring a unique understanding to community.

Through a curriculum of lives (Clandinin et al., 2006), children's lives and understandings are drawn into the main text of schools (Clandinin, 2006). A space of self-exploration is created in that moment, a space that pays attention to our relational knowing and the social milieu we are part of, a space in which we search for understanding through creative and deep conversations (Greene, 2000).

In as much as the writings/conversations and photographs provided insights and explored the children's multiple perceptions and life experiences, the children and I continued to think about the places, spaces, moments, and emotions that didn't make it into the photographs or texts. Many of them asked for cameras again to take home. Josh desperately wanted one for the summer time, when he goes to the ravine with his friends. Perhaps Josh was shifting his sense of community from being embedded within family to venture out to explore his new understandings of community. Or perhaps as Shaun reminds me, "it is hard to tell about yourself at first, [because] you don't really know what you are thinking of, your brain is so twisty. You start with a little memory, and every time a new word [or idea] is added it is getting bigger and bigger". Shaun makes me think that as we create more dialogical and creative opportunities in classrooms - opportunities that built on our personal experience - our world could be seen from a new

horizon, getting bigger and increasingly complex. Embedded in this complexity, in coming to understand community in a personal way, is the possibility to both create and make a home.

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Series of Plates (5 to 7)

Imaginary Spaces

Plate 5

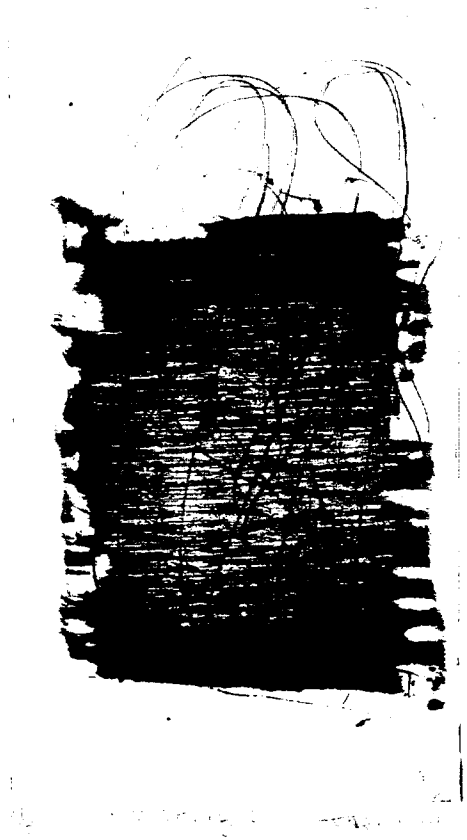
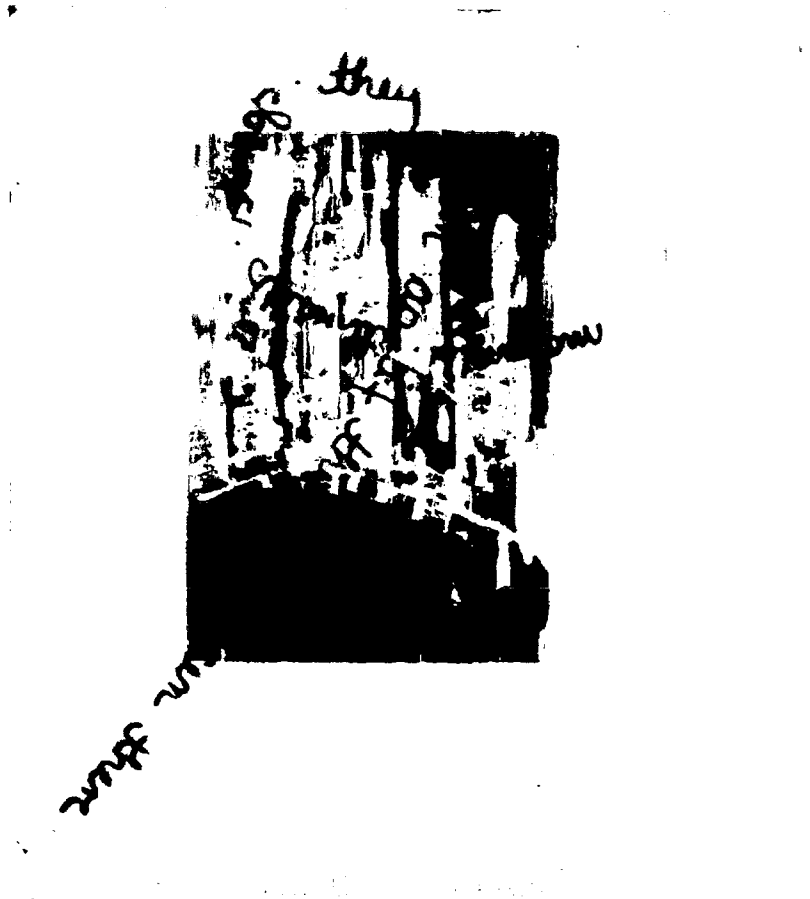


Plate 6

Plate 7



The Imagination in Narrative Inquiry

A group invitational kite exhibit in Chicago in 2003, entitled *Flights of Imagination*[42], has led me to wonder about the place of imagination in narrative inquiry, particularly the place of imagining in the relationships with research participants. In this paper I draw from my conversations with Dr. Pam Steeves[43], as well as my experiences as a narrative inquirer (Caine, 2002) as I explore the relational aspects of narrative inquiry and imagining. By the relational aspects of narrative inquiry, I mean the space in-between the researcher and research participant.[44] As Pam and I play with the image of kite, I begin to see that kites and kite flyers, much like research participants and researchers, represent stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999); stories to live by that are

[42] *Flights of Imagination*, group invitational kite exhibition, Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, Illinois, April 19-June 15, 2003

[43] Dr. Pam Steeves and I have presented several excerpts of our conversations at national and international conferences (Caine & Steeves, 2003, 2006, 2007). Reflecting upon these conversations is important to me, as it highlights how much of my knowing comes out of being in relation and in conversation. Looking backwards, I can see that our ideas and understandings are continuously evolving; both Pam and I see our wanderings in and about imagining as our works-in-progress.

[44] I am reminded that 'in-between' spaces, are spaces where we ask one another "who" and not "what" we are (Arendt, 1958). I also draw upon the diaspora literature, where Bhabha (1994) draws to our attention that borders, both imaginary and real, are in-between spaces; it is amidst these spaces that personal and cultural identities are formed, and our values and interests are negotiated. These in-between spaces are filled with uncertainty and indeterminacy; these are places of liminality. As Lorde (1981) points out, it is in these in-between spaces or borderlands that we recognize that our necessity for interdependencies are not threatening, but rather are the spark for our creativity. And it is in the borderlands that Anzaldua (1987) locates the possibility for resistance.

composed and released in relation. It is the string between the kite flyer and kite, the space in-between that I came to know through imagining and play in narrative inquiry. The string represents the interwoven relationality that is part of my life and part of my stories with my research participants, and it is a place where imagining and narrative inquiry intersect.

The concept of imagination is often confused with fantasy, fairytale, and hallucination. I have come to understand imagination as a form of perceptual and embodied knowing (Sarbin, 1998, 2004) and an essential way of being (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) in narrative inquiry. Imagined is also unlike imaginary; the imaginary is grounded in image, which can be seen as an artificial representation that is akin to a person or thing. Imagined is a more active process of creating and re-creating, that draws on both the familiar, through memory and being, as well as the alien or strange. Seeing imagination as an active process, like Sarbin (1998, 2004) I prefer the term imagining.

Returning to Childhood or Learning to Imagine

Vera, I remember as a child awakening to stories to live by when I was growing up in a military family.[45] *During my childhood my sister and I gave ourselves fully to one another using our imagination to try out different stories to live by. We were becoming as we moved. We played first people's grinding seeds for 'flour' in broom covered*

[45] Italicized pieces in this paper are directly taken from my conversations with Dr. Pam Steeves and reflect Pam's stories and voice.

rocky outcroppings along the Pacific Ocean in Victoria. We played refugees on a mattress raft in the basement of our temporary house in Quebec as we waited to move to Ottawa. In England we were fairies with our own fairy songs and dances as we played amongst the rose bushes in our garden. My sister and I were always positioned as newcomers, a fixed script awaiting us at every turn and it was hard to become, to live a story different than the scripted one. Yet the imaginative relational play with my sister created ourselves differently as we moved to different places. It seemed to be the playing that made the difference, becoming together to create ourselves anew and to shape our stories to live by.

Imagining is a developmental and learned process, which happens in several stages, stages of imitating, role playing and muted role playing (Sarbin, 1998, 2004). As I return to Pam's childhood stories I can see that through imitating stories and people, stories and people both Pam and her sister met through visits to museum and through listening to and reading of stories, Pam and her sister began to imagine being other. They also began to take up new roles and as such shaped new stories to live by as they moved from imitating to role playing.

I come to think about the kite string again, the space in-between the kite and kite flyer, or the researcher and the research participant, and this makes me wonder about tone, Vera. For so long I've wondered what it means, sometimes I make up what it means, but this time I've looked up the word in various dictionaries. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.) the word tone is derived from the Greek 'tonos' tension and 'teino' stretch. I wonder

if the scripts we encountered as we moved from place to place, across Canada and abroad, began to stretch, making room for us, as we played. Perhaps it is the believed-in imaginative (Sarbin, 1998, 2004) play, that like tone and tension makes us stretch, stretch to understand, to engage and to find openings into stories to live by. Finding the openings into stories to live by is a process rather than a product, or an arrival at a final text; a process of being in relation, of tension and a process of becoming, of stretching and understanding experience, of believing.

Playing with the word *tonos*, tension reminds me of the intention or the (in)tent we at times bring to our imaginative play. Our being in relationship is not only shaped by the tensions to which we need to be attentive, but also our intentions. It is through imagination that the kite and kite flyer become linked, a kite string spanning diverse stories to live by. Delicate linking threads connect us in some way to the storied worlds of our participants and to ourselves, connections that can be built through play as did Pam and her sister. Traveling through time in our memories we shift backwards, expanding out our life stories, enabling multiple possible resonances that may connect our storied world to others (Hale Hankins, 1998; Schulz, 1997). Like Pam and her sister we can travel to other worlds lovingly, a journey in which we learn to love others, rather than view and perceive others arrogantly.

> [T]here are "worlds" that we can travel to lovingly and traveling to them is part of loving at least some of their inhabitants. The reason why I think that traveling to someone's "world" is a way of identifying with them is

> because by traveling to their "world" we can understand what it is to be them and what it is to be ourselves in their eyes. (Lugones, 1987, p. 17)

Connecting through stories with others I can feel my relationships evolving, creating a possibility to discover what is unknown, what is different, what connects me to others and others to me.

Negotiating relationships with participants in narrative inquiry is often accompanied by a wonder about if and how our relationships will unfold (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Once we engage, if the string holds, we begin to see 'as if'; these 'as if' stories come from our believed-in imaginings, imaginings that draw upon our perceptual and embodied knowing (Sarbin, 2004). Our imaginings also draw on our rememberings, our stories and past encounters and experiences; imaginings are emplotted narratives that carry implications of causality and duration (Sarbin, 2004). This resonates with me as a narrative inquirer, as I understand that the "classrooms, halls, grounds, and community – become memory boxes in which people and events of today are re-told and written into the research texts of tomorrow" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 66) and are lived in the stories people live and tell of their lives.

Shaping Stories to Live By

It was easy to imitate and role play then. Through our games, our playing (Paley, 2004) of 'what if', my sister and I were authoring and imagining our stories to live by and it was not until much later that I came to understand

that through our emotional engagement, narrative-inspired imaginings influenced our beliefs and actions (Sarbin, 2004). In stark contrast to my childhood, as an adult, particularly as a mother of a child with multiple disabilities, I began to travel alone, without my sister, to a scripted place of institutional stories that did not move. I felt that I was separating from my sister and friends and their young children through my experiences in a metaphorical new world (Lugones, 1987). My adventure girl persona did not wish to go to this world, but my son and I were bound to one another through our hearts. The transition to this institutional landscape left me fearful and reluctant to use my imagination in this new place as I had done as a child. I began subtracting. I turned my attention away from what I knew, away from my narrative inspired imaginings, my own voice (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986) and the stories I knew, towards an institutional voice of a system fraught with plotlines designed to "fix and serve" my son Matthew. My childhood landscapes were filled with the possibilities of what if and why questions but I found that the institutional landscapes I encountered as an adult limited my horizons of becoming. The possibilities of traveling to other worlds were 'less than' in my life. My life line flattened on the ground and my kite lay still. And just as my kite lay still, so did Matthew's and it took us years to learn and begin the playful interplay and interchange of kite flyer and kite, of becoming together.

I can see how the stories to live by that Pam and Matthew encountered had a profound influence on their identity development (Sarbin, 2004); particularly at a time where Pam and Matthew were distracted, it was difficult to attend to the space in-between, to their relationship. This makes me think, that just as the kite flyer lives within stories to live by and negotiates particular stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) from which to fly the kite, so too does the kite see and experience its own stories to live by. As we begin to engage with our participants we interchange between being a kite flyer and being a kite; this continuous interplay of being in relation requires us to always remain wakeful and attentive, to look upward and downward, and sideways. For both the kite and the kite flyer have to pay attention to the boulders, the landscapes, the rocks, and the rivers, the obstacles that exist; they each must pay attention to the sky, the wind and the clouds, the turbulences. At the same time they must remain wakeful to the fields in which one can run freely and the fields that are unobstructed by trees, buildings and other impediments. Both kite and kite flyer have to simultaneously pay attention to each other's landscapes. It is also important to pay attention to the continuous interplay, the shifting of positions, as it allows seeing the landscapes and our own stories to live by from different angles. "We need to know where we live in order to imagine living elsewhere. We need to imagine living elsewhere before we can live there" (Gordon, 1997, p. 5).

At the same time I can see in Pam's and Matthew's story how important it is throughout the relationships that we have to believe, to hold onto the string at either end, to imagine and to feel the possibility of becoming. Creating the right tension on the string speaks to the need of cultivating a space in which imaginings and wide awakeness can unfold.

The interchange of kite and kite flyer reminds me of the game I played for many years with Matthew. We called it Sliding Doors, a game in which both Matthew and I played purposefully as a way to come alongside, to create our in-between space. The game began with Matthew sitting down beside me, his daily journal book in hand. Opening the pages I would read the afternoon's volunteer activities detailed by his support worker ... (but I wouldn't read aloud). Petunia I would begin, glancing over to see that Matthew was smiling at his new name. Petunia (who didn't take the DATS to work) flew her helicopter to the hospital roof landing pad today. She forgot she was supposed to work on 6th floor east collating patient charts and decided instead to ride the elevator down to the cafeteria in the basement. When Petunia arrived she asked for 15 chocolate pies. They all toppled over as she carried them to her table. Petunia caused quite a ruckus and decided to hightail it out of there. By this time Matthew was chuckling. After the first imagined reading Matthew liked to hear me read the original entry. But we always had to start with Sliding Doors. We've played the game for many years. But there is more...

A while ago our Siamese cat went missing. I was so distressed; for Chino but also for Matthew. Chino is Matthew's best friend, the one who always talks and plays with him when he comes by. I called and walked the neighborhood. I phoned and scanned the newspaper. But there was no Chino to be found. The next day Matthew tried to tell us what happened. In the best way he could manage he let us know that Chino had met a 'girl cat' and that he was married now and that's why he was no longer there. Matthew wanted to make things better for me. He imagined a story to believe in, a sliding door.[46]

Becoming Together

I can see how important it is for both Pam and Matthew to spend this playful time together. I can feel their presence in each other's stories and lives and in their make-believe stories. As I recall Pam's earlier struggles amidst the scripted stories that inhabited much of the space in-between their relationship, I wonder how and when it shifted. I wonder how and when did they become together?

To enter into relationships often requires the imaginative leap of the 'as-if'(Greene, 1995), to the imaginary stories, but it also requires a believing-in. Pam looked up the word *tone* in the Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.) and I looked up the etymology of the word *believe*. The word *believe* is associated with various words for love. This reminds

[46] Excerpt previously published in: Steeves, P. (2006). Sliding Doors, *Equity and Excellence in Education,* 39(2), 105-114.

me of the loving perception Lugones (1987) talks about and perhaps it is this loving perception that breathes life into our relationships to lift us off the ground, to feel the wind; traveling to each other's worlds lovingly and playfully, to believe-in and to imagine. Lugones (1987) explains playfulness as an attitude "that carries us through the activity, a playful attitude, turns the activity into play" (p. 180), a playfulness that is marked by openness to surprise and self-construction, and an ability to let go of rules and order. Through traveling to each other's worlds lovingly, though traveling to the world of either kite or kite flyer, one can extend oneself and become fully engaged with the other. Lugones' (1987) sense of playfulness provides a place for imagining, a place of becoming; embedded in this playfulness is a possibility to become together. I have come to understand play as a movement, a back and forth, that has spontaneity and rhythm; play is a medium that allows us to bring forth our embodied knowing and our believing-in. Playing, like believing, always requires a commitment.

In Pam and Matthew's sliding doors I can see that their stories to live by, their stories of becoming, are linking their knowledge, the context in which they live and who they each are individually (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). I see how little by little they are changing their stories to live by together. Through their imagining they have moved closer to each other, by traveling to each other's worlds they have experienced a sense of friendship and intimacy that did not enter the scripted stories they had encountered earlier. Through traveling to each

others worlds lovingly, believed-in imaginings became possible, and it connected both Pam and Matthew through their tacit and embodied knowing of mother and son.

Imagining as a Narrative Inquirer

Thinking about Pam's and Matthew's story I am reminded of a time when I was living alongside Deanna (Caine, 2002).[47] There was a moment I still remember so clearly, a moment perhaps where the kite string was vibrating and zinging, where it had just the right tension. I remember the night, when I was looking in dark alleys, deserted street corners and bars for you Deanna, and then finding you looking at a photograph of your daughter. I only found you after others pointed me to the hotel room on the second floor, a room above the bar. I never told you how scared I was that night, not knowing anyone and the smell of beer, cigarettes, urine and vomit so strong that I could barely keep myself from running back to what felt like the safety of my own home. Then, just as I thought I could not go much further, I saw you sitting on the floor leaned up against the bed looking at the photograph of your daughter. A daughter you had only met briefly at the time you gave birth; a time that is now as was back then, hard to recall. Today you had

[47] Deanna's story is part of a larger visual narrative inquiry research I conducted several years ago as I attempted to understand the stories of five urban aboriginal women living with HIV (Caine, 2002). Within the inquiry I tried to understand the complex, multi-layered stories of despair, struggle, hope and possibility. As well, I tried to make sense of the often multiple identities and the continuous shift between the present, past and future, between the known and unknown, between the told and untold, and between the self and others. Visual narrative inquiry combines the use of storytelling with photography to explore experiences. The women utilized disposable cameras during the study to visually document their everyday lives.

accidentally stumbled upon a photograph in the local newspaper, a name sketched underneath a paper, and a short caption talking about your daughter's love for dancing.[48] The name was the one you had given her at birth and from what could be seen in the photograph you guessed that she was the age your daughter would be and, like you, she loved dancing. As I kneeled beside you I could feel your body shaking, your eyes were glued to the photograph and only slowly did you shift the image so that I too could meet her. I could see your smudged make-up, the mascara and rouge mixed on your cheeks as the tears were hardly dry, you must have been crying for a long time. As you talked, mostly in fragments, I was thinking that until tonight I did not know you had had a daughter. I remember my surprise that night; we had been in conversation for months, I had come to meet your family, your boyfriend, your son, your aunt, but I had never before heard you whisper the name of your daughter. And as we looked at the photograph together, me only catching brief glimpses, we began to wonder about how amazing she was, dancing. What if she, like you, loved the rhythmic beats of the drum? Would the rhythm make her wonder where she came from? Would your daughter recognize you? Would she too have the sparkle in her eyes and the dimples on her cheeks when she laughed, the ones Joe liked so much? Your body was embracing the only photograph you have of your daughter and your stories told of

[48] Also imagining is unlike imagery, there are times when images or photographs can elicit our embodied knowing, elicit visceral and emotional reactions, and help us move to imaginings.

your desire to touch and be touched by your daughter. As I was with you that night, I wondered about my own wish to touch and be touched by a daughter. When I was driving home that night after we talked of the possibilities of meeting your daughter, like you, I believed.

After several months now, I can see how important it was for me to be there in that moment, to imagine and believe alongside Deanna, as Matthew had imagined and believed alongside Pam. Deanna's story opens up a deeper sense of the interchange between kite and kite flyer for me. I know that in that moment Deanna taught me about mothering in a new way. Through listening to Deanna I began to see that the stories we carry are always embodied and bring forth an emotional and embodied response in others. Sarbin (2004) speaks about the muted role playing as the stage where imaginings really begin and I can see that while I was being part of Deanna's muted role playing, she initiated my own internal dialogues. Laying my own wish of having a daughter alongside her experience of mothering and her wish for intimacy I can see how this was (de)centering myself. Both Deanna and I in this moment traveled in loving ways to each others worlds, a world that was marked for both of us by pain, hope, confusion and desperation.

Like the relationship between the kite and the kite flyer, our believed-in imaginings are dialogic, reverberating through the relationships we have within ourselves, our histories, present lives and future, our relationships with one another and within the stories we live. Our stories to live by turn at different angles and require us to be attentive to

unexpected movement back and forth and in and out as our kite darts and plays in the wind; winds that can make our relationships shift in what seems fickle ways. It is at these times that we have to be ready to move this way and that, to improvise playfully a way to stay with our participants and our own stories to live by. Any amount of pulling and tugging, the teasing and the releasing of tension is a response to the wind, the strength and vulnerability of the other. And so, much like kites, we move in relation to continually shifting stories to live by: our own and those of our participants. It is the kite image that brings the necessary uncertainty, ambiguity, and playfulness to my understanding of becoming. The opportunity to play and imagining embedded in narrative inquiry shapes a space for new stories that stick out, interrupt and create the world in continual new beginnings.

I can also see that both Deanna and I were using bits and pieces of our experience to form our rememberings, memories that were influencing our *as if* stories. While our memories and rememberings were influencing our own stories to live by, they also shaped our relational space. Without the multiple conversations and encounters in which we came to know each other, in which we learned about each others stories to live by and learned to travel to each others worlds lovingly, we could not have had the believed-in imaginings that night. As Arendt (1958) indicates, imagination can set the ground for the questions we are able to ask, much like traveling to each other's worlds and learning to do so in loving ways thus setting the ground for becoming together in the in-between space in narrative inquiry.

Being, memory, becoming, and play, like ethics, continually surface in the discussion of imagination and play for both Pam and I. These are important elements in understanding the in-between space, the relational aspect of narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is about exploring and understanding the lived experience, through narratives, through stories.

> Stories are not only the way in which we come to ascribe significance to experiences [...] but also they are one of the primary means through which we constitute our very selves [...] we become who we are through telling stories about our lives and living the stories we tell. (Andrews, 2000, pp. 77-78)

Reflecting upon my experiences with Deanna, I have come to know that the telling of our stories to others requires both a listener and a teller to be present, to be engaged both in the moment of telling, as well as over time, to interchange and interplay in the listening and telling. In the telling and living of stories, imagination becomes a way of knowing, which provides us with possibilities that enable us to (re)tell stories of our lives and transcend and transform our lived experiences (Rich, 2001). Both the telling of lived stories and the (re)told stories of our lives rely on our memory as we

construct stories that provide us with a narrative coherence; a coherence amidst multiple plotlines. Often stories become imaginary constructs, where the imagination takes us along a temporal journey to both the past and future.[49]

As I was with Deanna that night, I wondered about my own wish to touch and be touched by a daughter. Imagining motherhood that night, as I knelt beside Deanna, brought me back to my own childhood memories of both my mother and father. I can still see my father behind the trees, calling for me to come running and I can see my self and feel my breath as I run faster and faster and then he comes jumping from behind the tree just in time to catch me and spin and twirl my body through the air. I remember how we laughed and how we later would recount our stories to my mother. That night with Deanna I am reminded of the grip of my father's hands - gentle and secure - and how our laughter would carry through the forest and would echo in the stories we would later tell my mother.[50]

Our imaginings are grounded in our personal experience, our history and in language, in the compost heap of memory. Often our imagined stories are interwoven seamlessly with old and new stories and "eventually there is no

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[49] Clearly there is danger that our imagination is little more than an escape, which rarely leads us to new insights. Indeed, the notion of escape is one of the challenges to our imagination. This challenge is grounded in our present-mindedness, our narrow and limited sense of truth, our literalness and a failed sense of history (Warnock, 1994). In times where our imagination is an escape from our lived reality, our imagination becomes self-absorbed and exclusive.

[50] The german expression 'Spuren im Gedaechnis' refers to the traces others leave in our memories, and reminds me of the relational aspects of memory. Remembering too is a process that is often triggered by our being in relationship.

division between [these] stories. They become part of each other. They are dancing the same dance and sustaining active life in that dance" (Leen, 1995, p. 4). Inherent in this dance is the possibilities to tell imaginary stories, and every so often we can see a glimpse of a past pattern, a moving of bodies in rhythms.

That night Deanna and I wondered if her daughter would, like Deanna, love the rhythmic beats of the drum and if the rhythm would make her wonder where she came from? [51] This reminded me of Marmon Silko (1996) who sees human identity, imagination and storytelling as inextricably linked to the land. This inextricable link to the land and to our histories is important; it strengthens our identities (Ignatieff, 2002). Linking our history to the land also creates a possibility of our temporal readings of the land. For Rushdie (1981) in imaginary homelands, the past indeed becomes home, a sense that Deanna shared as well. For Deanna this memory of home was embodied, particularly as she was for much of our time together homeless. The question of imagination then becomes a question of memory.

Both imagination and play grow out of our very being and our memory, yet our imaginings are also formed by our stories to live by, our becoming (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). Without imagination there is no possibility of becoming. Imagining makes us take the risk of being alive, of being real, while also being imaginative and

[51] The drum represents Deanna's link to her family history, of being aboriginal. While engaging with Deanna over a period of three years, until she disappeared, Deanna and her boyfriend were often homeless. The drum become symbolic of being connected to a home, it lessened the feeling of drifting and floating nowhere.

improvisational. I think of Pam's and Matthew's story of becoming, of playing together in their sliding doors. It is through their story that I learn about the importance of believed-in imaginings. Indeed, believings are highly valued imaginings.[52] For Sarbin (1998, 2004) in the last stage of learning imaginings (muted role taking), people reach a place of storied imaginings. It is at this stage where people claim that their imaginings are real. In this moment people are probably "deeply involved in as if behavior, behavior that may be described as being lively, forceful, and vivid – words that connote the bodily effects of emotional life" (Sarbin,1998, p. 26). It is in these moments where both Matthew and Pam are able to compose new stories to live by, where possibilities are emerging and are being laid out in future stories. As Pam and Matthew imagine, they play and are attentive to each others kites and landscapes on which to fly their kite.

How high they can fly their kite is something that neither one can imagine alone, but only understand in relation to one another. In these in-between spaces they can never plan what happens. Pam's tellings, after reading Matthew's journal, grow out of the present moment, a moment in which they each are responsive to each other in loving ways and in which they let that responsiveness guide them. Attending closely to one another they can feel the interplay of tension and stretch on the string, they tend to and adjust the kite, to keep it flying. At the same time they are lifted off their feet and become kites, at times reflecting moments of surprise, at other times knowing that their relationship now is strong

[52] Believing is not the same as hearing or seeing, there is no particular organ that is responsible for believing. Believing is perceptual and embodied knowing (Sarbin, 1998, 2004).

enough to let go, to imagining and becoming together. As I play with the kite image I begin to consider how our individual and shared imagination has a life of its own, a life that awakens a believing–in, and a life that makes us more wakeful to the many stories to live by, while shaping our relationship with others. Being with Deanna that night was important for Deanna and me, imagining and believing-in created a tension of our kite string, our relationship, that allowed our stories to live by to take flight. Central to this is becoming, the space in-between. In this in-between space are the believed-in imaginings (Sarbin, 1998), the attentiveness to our embodied sense of *what if* that is embedded in our storied lives and stories to live by (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

Through imaginings we can create stories that tell of impossible possibilities, impossible stories to live by. It is the notion of play within imagination that helps me move inside the stories of others, of being and becoming. Play is a medium, which allows for the exploration of self. While the imagination can never "take leave of the other" (Kearney, 1998, p. 218) it must continuously search for the spirit of play. Imagination, Kearney (1988) argues, "needs to be able to laugh with the other as well as to suffer" (p. 367). In this laughter and suffering, this play with the other, our imagined relationship is brought into the present time and space. Gadamer (2000) notes that while there are some rules or structure to play, play is not constituted by this structure but by the process that takes place in-between the players.

This in between space is the place of growth and exploration. Within this often uncertain and tentative space of playfulness are elements of hope and a celebration of mystery and creativity (Ezzy, 2000) and possibility.

My thoughts return to Deanna and I wonder about "the ethical demand to imagine otherwise" (Kearney, 1988, p. 364). While telling 'as if' stories that night and believing-in we traveled to each other's worlds lovingly, a world that was marked by empathy, wonder, and hope. For me it was imperative to attend to Deanna's story, by being there, ruminating in memory, but also to attend to her becoming as a mother. Attending to Deanna's kite, as a response to the other, also meant not to forget that her and my stories are embedded in a context, that there are other stories to live by that are shaping us. However, it was our imaginings together that made both her and my stories to live bearable that night.

Believed-in imaginings have a world-disclosing capability, not only do we play with time, and are attentive to our being, but it also brings forth our perceptual and embodied knowing. Imaginings indeed create a desire to-believe in, to become together. Returning to the relational space, the in-between space, I can see that this is a place where imagining and narrative inquiry intersect, and interweave. The strength of the kite string, the ability to hold on to each other is shaped by our ability to believe and imagine. Kneeling beside Deanna I can still feel the intimacy, our unspoken engagement and interplay, resonating the relational essence of narrative inquiry. Believed-in imaginings

gives me a way to think about the relational space in narrative inquiry, a way that allows me to travel to and be in other worlds lovingly.

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Plate 8

Narrative Inquiry:

Contemplating Resonance and Remembering in a Relational Inquiry.

As I stood beside Ethan's desk waiting for him to place his photograph back in the box, a photograph in which he portrayed himself as a king, he whispered to me: "but I will never be in charge".[53] Ethan wanted to be a king; he wanted to be a king of the guards and a king of the past. I remember this moment of telling so vividly, a moment of coming to know Ethan. Some time after Ethan whispered these words in my ear, words that have stayed with me ever since, I have come to understand that being a king, or being in charge for Ethan meant having authorship and agency in his life; that he would like people to listen to him; that he feels valued and respected. Moreover, I have come to think of my relationship with Ethan, of the in-between space of our encounter, as a place in which Ethan could tell and a space where I became attentive to his world, a space in which both of our lives intertwined.

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[53] Throughout the 2002/2003 school year I (alongside a principal, teacher and researcher) invited all fourteen children in a Grade 2/3 learning strategies classroom, all of whom were boys, to participate in a visual narrative inquiry (Bach, 1998, 2007; Caine, 2002). Our intention was to explore children's knowledge of community in artful ways and to narrate in words and photographs their understanding of home and self and through this to more deeply attend to the children's thoughts of community. Ethan was part of this study. The children's names, like the school name are pseudonyms. My work was supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Grant awarded to Drs. D. J. Clandinin and M. Connelly entitled *School Landscapes in Transition: Negotiating Diverse Narratives of Experience.* See Clandinin et al. (2006), Murphy (2004), Murray Orr (2005), and Pearce (2005) for additional writings from the larger SSHRC project.

Ethical issues often arise in the field. This is a time for me when I engage with research participants as a narrative inquirer and where I attend to the life and the experiences of others. My interactions with Ethan are part of my experiences as a narrative inquirer that have pushed me to make explicit my ethical understandings. As I attend to the life in front of me, I also attend to my own life and more so to the space that lays in-between my research participants and me. It is the in-between space, a space of encounter and resonance, a space in which our lives are unfolding in relation to each other that is significant in narrative inquiry.

As a narrative inquirer I not only attend to the in-between space and the presence of the experiences in that moment, but I also attend to each relationship I am part of and in which I am eventually called to remember. As I remember while I write, see and talk about our experiences as a researcher and research participant, I continue to be attentive to the in-between space. In this paper I will explore the importance of relational ethics in narrative inquiry, and in particular contemplate the role of resonance and remembering as I/i move inward, outward and in-between (Minh-ha, 1989) our unfolding relationships, our profound interconnectedness (Huber, 2000).[54]

[54] Minh-ha (1989) distinguishes the words I and i. I entails limiting and contained notions of identity, whereas i is marked by fluid, relational and multiple being.

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry[55], defined as both research methodology and a view of the phenomena, is the intimate study of an individual's experience over time and in context (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000). Beginning with a narrative view of experience as a researcher, I attend to place, temporality and sociality, within my own life stories and the experiences of my participants.[56] Within this space, each story told and lived is situated and understood within larger cultural, social and institutional narratives. Narrative inquiry is marked by its emphasis on relational engagement between researchers and research participants, whereby the understanding and social significance of experience grows out of a relational commitment to the research puzzle.

Narrative inquiry is a way to study experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In studying and understanding experience narratively, I recognize the centrality of relationships. Amidst these relationships, participants relate and live through stories; stories that speak of their experience (Crites, 1971). The process of narrative inquiry centers on an engagement with participants in the field, creating field texts and writing both interim and final research texts. The two starting points for narrative inquiry remain a cornerstone throughout the

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[55] The following sections are adapted from: Clandinin, D. J. & Caine, V. (forthcoming). Narrative Inquiry. In L. M. Given (Ed.) *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

[56] This is also referred to as the three dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

research: listening to individuals tell their stories and living alongside participants in the field (Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In narrative inquiry it is imperative to address the question of how larger social, institutional and cultural narratives inform our understanding and shape the researchers' and participants' stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Paying attention to the larger narratives enables researchers to further understand the complexity of the living and telling of stories, and as such lived-experience.

Stories to live by.

In the moment of Ethan telling me that he will never be in charge, Ethan also told of his perceived lack of agency or authority, as well as wanting to be king one day.[57] I had come to know Ethan as part of my research in a Grade2/3 Canadian Elementary Classroom at Ravine School. Throughout the 2002/2003 school year I was part of the classroom one morning a week, as the students and I explored our understanding of community visually. I had come to know Ethan as a quiet, yet somewhat restless boy. When asked to sit quietly, Ethan would often shift the weight of his body, his legs would never remain silently on the floor and his teacher would often remind him both verbally and through eye contact that he had to try harder to sit quietly. His teacher believed that Ethan was capable of better work

[57] Connelly and Clandin (1999) describe stories to live by as identity stories, stories that one is committed to and that profoundly matter to people. Cover stories, on the other hand, are stories that fit acceptable story lines for example stories on the institutional landscape of school (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995).

in school, but that his restlessness, seen as an inability to focus, hindered his advancement. This understanding of who Ethan was as a student became part of Ethan's story to live by. Like Ethan's story to live by so too are other "[s]tories to live by [...] shaped in places and lived in places. They live in actions, in relationships with others, in language, including silences, in gaps and vacancies, in continuities and discontinuities" (Clandinin & Huber, 2002, p. 161-162).

At the end of the school year the children and I individually tape-recorded our conversations, conversations that looked at our interactions throughout the school year retrospectively. As Ethan and I were alone in the room adjacent to the classroom, Ethan got up from his chair and began to walk around. As he got up, he looked at me and said "I can think a lot better if I can walk around". I watched him and he watched me, in that moment, in which Ethan felt comfortable to move, I sensed a shift in our relationship. I could see how his body slowly began to straighten out, that his step seemed more certain and that he was no longer evading eye contact with me. My thoughts returned to my own schooling experience; I remembered how hard it is when ones story to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) in school is so limited. I sensed that Ethan was living a cover story; I was unable to see his story to live by as one of a young boy with abilities and dreams, and agency, as becoming. Beneath the cover stories, embedded in his whispering, was a glimpse of his story to live by. I began to understand that until almost the end of our time together in the classroom, Ethan had seen me as firmly standing side by side his teacher.

Opening up a relational world.

Listening now, after time has passed, to the tape recorded conversation with Ethan I reflect on the reasons why Ethan's words mattered to me. My love for stories goes a long way back to a childhood filled with stories and books. I particularly remember the Sundays at my parents' house where we would gather around the big kitchen table. Our Sunday lunches, which would often lead right into afternoon coffees, were times where my mother, father, grandmother and aunt would recount their life stories. These were also times where my siblings and I would recount our stories of friendships and of school amidst other stories. Looking back at our kitchen table conversations it was in these moments that I learned:

> [a] critical difference from myself means that I am not i, am within and without i. I/I can be I or i, you and me both involved. We (with capital W) sometimes include(s), other times exclude(s) me. You and I are close, we intertwine; you may stand on the other side of the hill once in a while, but you may also be me, while remaining what you are and what i am not. (Minh-ha, 1989, p. 90)

Years have passed since these Sunday kitchen table conversations, yet they have shaped my understanding of experience, narrative inquiry and relational being strongly. They have taught me to listen to stories closely and attentively; in those moments I learned how important the telling and listening to our stories is to our ability to make

sense of our lives, to form our identities; to sustain hope. And I learned about i, that i was becoming and that my becoming was nested in the relationships that surrounded me. I learned too that our stories are situated temporally, that they originate in the past that they call us to live in the present and that they might tell about our future. My sense of self stems out of my connections with others and comes to being within relationships and amidst my socio-cultural context. I become attentive to the importance of place, as I still think of and miss the presence of my parent's kitchen table in my own life.[58]

In these past few years I have learned to be in world as a narrative inquirer and it is here where I have come to know that "the sources of evidence for understanding knowledge, and the places knowledge may be said to reside, exist not only in the mind but in the narratives of personal experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988, p. 269). Narrative inquiry, as a research methodology and phenomena, is a way of being in the world that requires me to be wakeful, thoughtful, and self-reflective (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). While narrative inquiry opens up a relational knowing and understanding of experience to me, my personal experiences including my experiences as a narrative inquirer open up a relational world.

[58] I immigrated to Canada in 1990 from Germany and like Anzaldua (1987) I have been separated from my immediate family and culture, yet even so I have left home and chose to live a life of my own, I never lost touch with my origins, as "wherever I go I carry home on my back" (p. 21) and within my stories and in the memory and presence of my relationships.

Storied lives.

To hear, see, feel and become part of the relational space in-between my research participants and me, means for me to get as close to life and living as I can. For in that closeness I not only begin to see and understand the life in front of me and to understand my own but I am also entering a fluid, relational, and loving space (Lugones, 1987).[59] As Ethan's words still echo in my mind and heart, I realize that I have come close to Ethan's life, to his world at that moment. I learned that to be with Ethan in time, however brief those moments were in a relational space, meant to enter a space where our cover stories and identities could be disrupted, a space in which we were not seeing each other as dichotomous beings, as student or teacher, as researcher or participant, but as two people becoming and being in relation. And as I think about Ethan, I am reminded of Tammy.[60]

Ethan's restlessness reminds me of Tammy; like Ethan she did not like to sit quietly. Tammy lived such a fast paced life, a life so different from my own; yet despite our differences we both thrived on spending time with each

[59] For Lugones (1987) loving perception means to see with another's eye, a way we can enter other's life experience and travel to their worlds, shifting away from a place of arrogance.

[60] Tammy's story is part of a larger visual narrative inquiry research I conducted several years ago as I attempted to understand the stories of five urban aboriginal women living with HIV (Caine, 2002). Tammy wanted me to use her real name when she appeared in any research text, for Tammy this meant to overcome the silencing that was so much part of her story. Within the inquiry I tried to understand the complex, multi-layered stories of despair, struggle, hope and possibility. As well, I tried to make sense of the often multiple identities and the continuous shift between the present, past and future, between the known and unknown, between the told and untold, and between the self and others. Visual narrative inquiry combines the use of storytelling with photography to explore experiences (Bach, 1998, 2007; Caine, 2002).

other. Her curiosity and frankness, pressed me to open up, to tell of and about my own life. Tammy lived intensely, swaying back and forth between a life on the streets and substance use and her life as a step-mother and wife. Tammy remained in touch with me irregardless of where she was and with time I could tell by the tone in her voice where she was at present in her life. With time I become more attentive to the silences and gaps that entered and disrupted our conversations, they marked our becoming together.

After spending several months together Tammy became pregnant while living on the streets. I was present throughout Tammy's pregnancy and at the birth of her daughter. I too became part of the negotiations with Social Services for Tammy to be able to raise her daughter. After spending many months with Tammy, I believed that she could compose stories to live by that would honour who she was and is becoming as a mother. I learned to believe by being in relation with Tammy, those were times of surprise, interruption, times where we each traveled to each other's world, where there were no cover stories. Before and shortly after the birth of Tammy's daughter we had many conversations that made it possible for me to believe that I could stand alongside Tammy and also stand alongside her daughter and echo Tammy, "Yes, I will raise my daughter."

As time went on, I watched and became part of Tammy's mother stories. There were many times where I wished I had never met Tammy, but our lives had become entangled (Huber, 2000) and the entanglement carried a

strong relationship; a relationship that was both joyful and (de)centering for me. Tammy paced often, worried and despaired about her own life and the life of her daughter; her daughter brought back many of Tammy's own childhood memories, as well as the memories of the children who had previously been taken from her and placed in foster care. Meeting her own stories again and again, Tammy was pressed to journey into her own heart to understand and to become.

While composing her own mother stories, Tammy recounted the memories of her mother. Tammy would often return to the story of her mother's death and she recalled saying to her mother at the time "Mom, you can't die. I'm not grown up yet." I can't recall the many times I swallowed the tears inside of me and watched Tammy do the same. I remember stroking Tammy's hands quietly, not wanting to take the anguish and hurt away, but wanting to be there with her, to travel to her world, so she did not have to be alone. Tammy's words to her mother at the time of her mother's death conjured up images of holding and being held. As Tammy holds her own child, she too wants to be held, to be cradled in the heart of her own mother. To be cradled, to know of and be part of an intimate and safe space, a space where one can grow into being and becoming a mother.[61]

[61] I particularly think of these words now after my own son was born three years after Tammy's daughter.

By being with Tammy in the midst of composing her mother stories, Tammy taught me how important it is to be held as I hold my own child. It, too, is Tammy who has taught me that being a mother means to risk being alive, imaginative and improvisational, to never sit quietly. Tammy and I now live in different places, many miles apart, but we still continue our conversations. Yet, I long for her physical presence, to feel the warmth of her hand, to see the joy in her eyes as she cradles her daughter, for it was in these moments that we each met not just each other and also ourselves, but it was these moments that shaped our in-between space, a space of being in relation and a space that made becoming and composing possible.

Relational Ethics

Although it was me who sought out both Ethan and Tammy as research participants, it was important to me that I did not spell out how our relationship would or could unfold. I entered the relationship with both of them, as a place where voice, dialogue, relationships and learning could intersect (Tarule, 1996), where our lives could unfold in relation to each other. It was important to me that our relationship made room for our encounter, allowed for each of us to travel to each other's worlds, a place where we could be surprised and interrupted, a time where we could question as a way to understand (Bergum, 1999), not as a way to doubt.

My ethical understanding in narrative inquiry is marked by living in relation, as a space that brings forth our lived ethical understandings and tensions. Living and being in a relational space, brings forth responsibilities, where issues of attentiveness, presence, and response matter. By living in a relational space these are my responsibilities, but more so they are responsibilities between two people, a space in which each one is equally important and feels cared for.

My understanding of relational ethics is informed by the ethics of care (Gillian, 1982; Noddings 1984), where respect, dignity and connectedness are integral (Ellis, 2007). In relational ethics, the relationships with our participants always take priority. Noddings (1984) believes that caring in relational ethics is "rooted in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness" (p. 2); as well as our engagement with others is marked by a process of self reflection, contemplation, openness and uncertainty (Bergum, 1999).

As I think of Tammy, I am reminded that she has not called me for almost two weeks now and that I worry about her. Our relationship allows for each of us to live our lives, while at the same time caring deeply for each other. Tammy knows that I do not like when she doesn't call for weeks at a time, as in the past this silence was often accompanied by substance use, periods when Tammy was often inattentive to time. While I worry, I also know that Tammy has learned through her daughter that it is okay to ask for help, that life is difficult, but that friends help us

along the bumpy roads. Our closeness and friendship has brought with it many ethical tensions for me, these moments of worrying remind me of how much I am attached to Tammy, that I have a commitment not only towards Tammy, but also her daughter. This commitment is sometimes so hard to carry. The ethical tensions have made me wonder about who I am in Tammy's life, who Tammy is in my life, and how our relationship will continue to unfold.

My relationship with Ethan was different, yet similar tensions were present. Ethan was part of a larger study, one in which his entire class participated. The research project was planned throughout the school year, with some weekly time set aside for my interactions with the children. My relationships with the children and their teacher were more structured and at the beginning of my involvement in the classroom I had negotiated to be part of just one school year. The moment Ethan whispered "but I will never be in charge", was a complex moment for me, a moment that called me to be deeply attentive, and to pay attention to who I was in his life. While whispering these words Ethan made me aware of how important it is that I enact my ethical commitment to him, that I respond to his story in loving ways (Lugones, 1987), that I am present in our relational space, that I value and respect who he is in that moment (Cameron, 2004).

To be part of the ethical space in-between Ethan and me, as well as in-between Tammy and me, I must consider who I am and who I am becoming in that moment, and the me that is available to others (Salverson, 2001). Not because

my attending demands empathy, but it demands that I find resonance in my own stories, that I make myself vulnerable so that I can enter the in-between space as another human being. It is in these moments that I become open to the possibility to be touched by Ethan's sorrow of never being in charge, touched by Tammy's composing stories of being a mother. It is important too that I do not reduce my own discord, disunity, and disagreement (McCarthy, 2003), but that I uniquely attend to both Ethan and Tammy, to each person in front of me, and to our relational in-between space.

It was in my relationship with Tammy that I felt the nearness of another on my skin and I was reminded that "thinking through the skin is a thinking that attends not only to the sensuality of being-with-others, but also to the ethical implications of the impossibility of inhabiting the other's skin" (Ahmed & Stacey, 2001, p. 7). Attending to the in-between space means paying attention to our embodied, relational and intertwined knowing; it necessitates entering research relationships with a loving playfulness to be able to become part of another's storied sense of self (Lugones, 1987) and to be fully present in the in-between space.

Resonance

Resonance proposes that I, as a researcher, need to move beyond simply understanding, observing, seeing, it demands a presence, to participate, to be and become vulnerable (McIntrye, 2003; Wynn, 2002). It was Hoffman (1994) who first drew my attention to the word resonance. Hoffman spoke of resonant remembering, as a way for

people to not only look at what happens to them, but also at what happens within themselves. Crites (1971) uses to word resonance in conjunction with sacred stories, stories that live "in the arms and legs and bellies of the celebrants" (p. 295) during festive occasions. Sacred stories encompass symbolic worlds that help people create their sense of self; people understand their own stories in relation to the sacred stories. Conle (1996) traces her understanding of the word resonance to Frye's notion, who sees the key structure of resonance as metaphor; metaphors span temporal distance and draw forth responses in people. However, rather than the ability to span temporal distance, Conle recognizes that "our very thinking process moves metaphorically" (p. 310). Conle speaks of internal resonances, a process that is dynamic and complex and which allows seeing one experience in terms of another, producing stories of related tales in the process. Resonance requires me to pay attention to

> how I listen for the knowing of persons whom I [am in conversation with], how I imagine their lives, how I sense the limits of their words to convey what they feel and know, how I sense my own inability to comprehend what they know and learn even as they speak. (Neumann, 1997, p. 91)

I must be willing and able to imagine a world other than my own, to be able to see difference (Andrews, 2007); imagining a world other than my own happens for me in a relational space, a time marked by traveling to each others and my own internal worlds in loving ways (Lugones, 1987).

I remember the day I knocked on the door of the white house with the green fence and trim around the window Tammy was staying at, a well known crack-house. After whispering Tammy's street name, the door opened and I was virtually yanked inside only to meet the eyes of people I did not know, with Tammy amidst them, high on crack and ready to give birth to her daughter. "You can't stay long the cops will probably come back any minute to search this place and we don't want you to be caught in this" I was told quickly. Within the next minutes Tammy gathered the few belongings she had. Just as Tammy and I were leaving in my car the unmarked cop car pulled up and I was thankful Tammy was with me, safe for now and able to focus on giving birth to her daughter within the next few hours. Tammy recalls very little of these last few hours before she gave birth, but the memory of them stayed with me for a very long time. I know the memory was present as we negotiated with Social Services people of how Tammy could raise her daughter. As I advocated for and with Tammy, I know that I was also attentive to my own wish to be a mother. Being and becoming a mother mattered to me and I knew that it was also important to Tammy; the longing in Tammy's eyes, the gentle stroking of her belly while being present during her daughter's birth, the joy after her daughter's birth, all spoke about her wish to care for her daughter. Tammy knew that the days following her daughter's birth would be trying, full of observations and questions, full of doubt about her ability to be a mother. Those days were trying for me as well, as I wondered: when was I to hold? Tammy and I talked, and we attended to our in-between space; we bathed

her daughter together, we sat together watching her sleep, and we took turns feeding her, all amidst finding resonance in our lives while we each composed our mother stories.[62]

As I touched Tammy's daughter I often thought of my ethical commitment to both her and Tammy. By seeking Tammy as a research participant I had opened myself to a very different reality than the one I was more familiar with, and I wondered how Tammy had shaped and influenced me. Like Molly Andrews my interactions with my research participants became a journey into my heart and I know I was genuinely touched by my relationship with Tammy, an experience that has forever changed me (Andrews, 2007). Both Tammy and her daughter intentionally and unintentionally touched me, as I touched them, as I found resonance within their storied lives and stories to live by and within our unfolding relationship. To be present, to find resonance, means for me to connect inward to my life, through my memory, and outward to my life through my ability to give testimony (Pakman, 2004).

[62] It was in these moments, that occurred at the end of my MN research, that I recognized that Tammy and my relationship had changed from a researcher - participant relationship to one of friendship. As I reflected upon this shift I began to understand that while I was still guided by Noddings ethics of care, Tammy now too was beginning to care for me. She showed this by asking questions of me, by being attentive to my emotions and reactions. Shifting from a researcher- participant relationship to a place of friendship brought with it many ethical tensions for me. I was always very conscious that both Tammy and I were positioned very differently culturally, economically and socially. We were both pressed to confront these differences, perhaps me more so than Tammy initially. Tammy and I continue to struggle with some of these differences, yet we have remained friends and it is with time that we have realized that these tensions will always be part of our relationship.

Remembering

Although my research relationship with Ethan has ended, and my research relationship with Tammy is now clearly a friendship, I often think about them. I can't forget the intimate moments of our unfolding relationship and how they each have shaped my life. I think too of Deanna.[63] After having spent many months with Deanna and her boyfriend, Deanna disappeared in the midst of the night, without any trace, while working as a sex trade worker. I have never been able to let Deanna go, just like I can never let go of my worries about Tammy and my wonder where Ethan is now. I return to my memories over and over, both internally and also in my writings, intentionally and unintentionally.

There are times when I read my own writings where I am deeply saddened because I can't find the same spirit and life in our relationship in the words I have on paper as I experienced in the field; our human connectedness, the life within our in-between space is not as present. A discrepancy between the stories embedded in the text and the stories that both the participants and I experience while living in the midst. Even though Deanna has been missing for over five years now I still mourn her loss, I long for our memories, and I wonder how I can remember without her presence.

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[63] Deanna, like Tammy, was part of a larger visual narrative inquiry research I conducted several years ago as I attempted to understand the stories of five urban aboriginal women living with HIV (Caine, 2002).

I am attempting to question how we read and write texts, but also stories and lives. Without the memory of our relationship I am nothing and yet there are only traces visible in the empty lines and spaces between the words I write. The text is informed by my memory, nostalgia, dreams, and sense of belonging, disruption and love, yet it does not reflect our relationship in its fullness.

I still drive along the streets where I first and last met Deanna looking carefully for her presence. I can feel myself holding my breath, my hands slightly clammy, and my heart racing as I sit behind the steering wheel of my car. Searching for Deanna has been a solitary process for me. Each time I have come to notice my body as I search for her, I think of the lines by Behar (1996): "The dress remembers her body. Remembers how she danced before she said good bye. Waits for her" (p. 103). I do remember how Deanna danced with her young son, twirling, cuddling wildly on the floor, how she cried each time he returned to his foster parents. My skin too carries the memories of Deanna, as our "skin is the body's memory of our lives. [...] Skin's memory is burdened with the unconscious" (Prosser, 2001, p. 52). Each remembering not only draws attention to my skin, my body, but also to the change inside me that each remembering, retelling and rewriting brings.

Testimony[64]

Writing and rewriting is part of a continuous process of making sense of experience and each time I write my remembering begins again. Over the past year I have learned to write with hesitation and pauses, recognizing that we cannot fully access our experiences through text, that life somehow evades text. However, when we bring our memory of the in-between space to our texts, we disrupt a historical process of forgetting, we remind ourselves and the reader that our memories can't die in private, that our lived experiences counteract the dispersal, dissipation, and rupture inherent in the historical process. For me this means that I must write so that Deanna will not just be forgotten as a missing sex trade worker, that Tammy will be a mother, and that Ethan's knowing is valued. Because of our relationship, our entanglement and my commitment, I bear a responsibility and desire to guard the banal and possible in each of our lives (Wynn, 2002). I write knowing that the life of our stories comes from our breath and being together and that it is not the same breath which guides the pen in my hand (Conle, 2004).

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[64]The word testimony has two different roots 1. *superstes* (latin): person who went through the event and lived to tell about it; 2 *testis* (derived form *terstis*) person who positions himself or herself as a third amongst two others (Agamben, 2002, as cited in Pakman, 2004). Pakman (2004) identifies that the etymology clearly suggests a movement from *superstes* to *terstis*, from witnessing to providing testimony before a third person; testimony is never just between you and me. Without testimony we might allow our memories to die in private, to become superstitions.

While my testimony is often presumed to be a monologue (Salverson, 2001), my text cannot be read without the presence of a reader. While I know that my relationships with Ethan, Tammy and Deanna will continue I also hope that the reader will come to know them and enter the in-between space in loving ways. My hope in writing, in bearing testimony, is that the skin of the reader will be marked. This is not easy and questions come to my mind: Can a true dialogical text ever be written? Is a dialogical text one that is also conversational? What is a text that reflects and is responsive to the relationship between teller and listener? How does what we write affect who we become? How does it affect the reader? Like Richardson (1997) I also ask: How do we maintain personal and professional integrity as we write? For whom do we write our research?

I am also aware that tensions exist between concealing and revealing, for each telling and reading brings with it a concealing, as each story in its retelling is always partial, contextual and selective (Richardson, 1997). Yet, I can't call the storied lives I was and am part of as unspeakable or unwriteable. For to call

> it unspeakable or unimaginable is to turn one's back on listening to testimony, to betray again, to claim a false (and unethical) inability to listen. In the words of survivor Robert Antelme, "the word unimaginable" is the "most convenient word. When you walk around with this word as your shield, this word for emptiness, your step becomes more assured [...] your conscious pulls itself together. (Edkins, 2003, p. 5)

While I will never be able to fully tell the stories of our lives and relationships, I must try and remind myself that "testimony is [...] always about something that is missing; it is a celebration of being spared (thus, sometimes the guilt) and also the creation of a remnant from which others may learn" (Pakman, 2004).

As I compose new research texts I become more and more aware that I can no longer talk with a voice of certainty, that my memory is not static, that my work as a narrative inquirer does not end with the final telling of a research text, that there is no final memory (Kerby, 1991), no final story. And as I contemplate the telling of a different story I am reminded that I do not want to tell people what they don't know, but to awaken the reader and viewer of the research text to their own critical and reflective abilities (Minh-ha, 1991). As I write about our lived and told stories, our experiences, I have a responsibility and commitment towards the reader, recognizing that the evoked responses in others may lead to a new attentiveness to their own lives and a reminiscing and re-telling of their own stories. Yet, I also hope that the reader will find resonance in the stories of the research participants, in the stories Ethan, Tammy and Deanna tell, and in the stories that mark our relationship. In the writing of the research text I situate myself in relation with my research participants and in relation with the reader.

Meaning and Obligations of Memory

The first time I met with Ethan, Tammy and Deanna, I made the promise to each one, to enter into a relational space where our lives could unfold together and where we could be in loving ways.[65] By engaging with each one of them as part of a research project I also made the promise to remember and to speak. No matter how hard it is to tell their stories, to locate our in-between space, which continues long after our physical encounters, in texts as I write and speak, I can not break my promise. Composing a research text has never been easy for me, for particularly in my relationship with Tammy and Deanna there were moments that were so distressful and decentering for me that I can neither forget nor remember them (Enriquez, 1990).

Having spent time together with Deanna, her sudden loss and my continuous longing for her presence, makes me understand that we do not simply have experiences, but that we suffer experiences, that they become inscribed into our bodies, our hearts and minds. Like Andrews (2007) I wonder "[h]ow is our own sense of identity affected by opening ourselves to the very different realities that are encountered by others?" (p. 489) While I initially learned about the fluid, relational and multiple beings that are embedded within me, it was through living alongside of and listening

[65] "Emmanuale Levinas says that, by virtue of just seeing another's face, we are responsible for the person. [...] Attention to the face enables individuals to come back to themselves. Bergum writes of being face-full together or face-on as a way to be physically present, to act relationally" (Cameron, 2004, p. 58).

to Ethan, Tammy and Deanna that I began to see and consciously attend to I/i (Minh-ha, 1989). Ethan taught me about the silences in my life, the ones that still are present from my childhood, through paying attention to the words I can only whisper and the ones that are silent. Tammy both intentionally and unintentionally pressed me to think harder about our differences and privileges imbedded in our identity. Deanna shifted my identity through sharing her mother stories and as I long for her physical presence I have become more open to let others touch me.

My memories with each research participant are never constant; my memories of the stories lived and told are forever recomposed, restructured, retold and relived as new and hopeful possibilities (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988). Several weeks after the birth of my son, I shared with Tammy how hard it has been to be mom, the lack of sleep, new responsibilities, shifting roles within my relationships as a wife and daughter and I wondered out loud about the times Tammy and I had spent together when her daughter was first born. Tammy responded by saying "you were pretty naïve back then." I smiled and said "how come you have waited so long to tell me that?"

In my conversation with Tammy I realized that each lived and told story is fluid, intersubjective and situated within a process and performance (Cruikshank, 1998), that within each rereading and retelling I have come closer to my own story, and our memory of the events. I realize that I had not seen myself in our relationship as naïve, yet I can

no longer retell our story without portraying Tammy's sense of me at the time; our stories and our relationship in their unfolding never stop.

Narrative inquiry is first and foremost a relational research methodology, which makes ethical issues central to the inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988, 2000). The first responsibility of a narrative inquirer is always to the participants. Throughout each inquiry I remain attentive to the ethical tensions, obligations and responsibilities in my relationships with participants (Noddings, 1993; Schulz, 1997). These responsibilities too remain as I find resonance, remember and give testimony. What is told must also be heard and must be remembered. As a narrative inquirer I am present in our relational space, a space in which we travel to each other's worlds in loving and playful ways (Lugones, 1987), a space that offers us to be part of the awkward and tentative moments of our lives, moments that can forever change and touch us deeply as we move inward, outward and in-between (Minh-ha, 1989) our unfolding relationships, our profound interconnectedness (Huber, 2000).

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Series of Plates (9 to 10)

Wayfinding

Plate 9

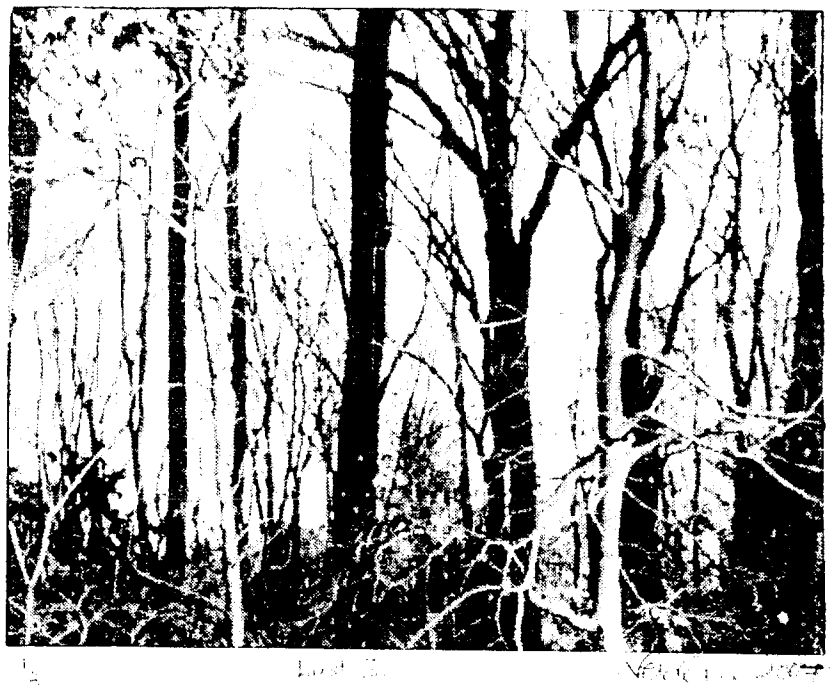

Plate 10

Stories with/in Dwelling[66]

Whenever I undertake a new journey I can almost always count on new blisters appearing on my feet, from shoes too tight or too loose, which somehow remind me that perhaps my new journey is never without pain.[67] The blisters filled with blood and other body fluids are a reminder of my physical body; blisters at times so painful that each step brings tears to my eyes and a certainty that I can not walk another step.[68] There have been moments where I was forced to rest, soak my feet in the endless remedies of hot or cold water mixed with chemicals or herbal medicines to provide relief. These are times of quietness and respite from the countless hours of walking. However, there also have

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[66] As Heidegger (1971) reminds me dwelling signifies to remain and to stay in place, to stay with experiences and to dwell in thought.

[67] The narrative turn in the humanities emphasizes that some experiences can not be understood through theory, experiences often evade theory. As a result, new ways of looking at experiences and the ways in which they are meaningful have more recently been explored (Hyvaerinen, 2006). While I see theory in a dialogical position with experience, I always begin and return to my own experiences. In parts this is a recognition that I could never, first and foremost, through theory explain the sudden disappearance of Deanna and its emotional impact on my life, meeting Debra in the silent and awkward moments of becoming, or feeling the sense of wanting to be heard in Ethan's whispering in my heart.

[68] The blisters have become a form of dermographia, which in medical terms refers to the writing on or marking of the skin. As Ahemd and Stacey (2001) elaborate "writings that think through the skin, can be read as rewriting the skin, or re-skinning the writing. [...] For, like writing, skin carries traces of those other contexts in the very living materiality of its forms, even if it cannot be reduced to them. [...] The relationship to the past, which is neither simply absent nor present on the surface of the skin, is hence also an opening up of a different future. It is precisely by paying attention to the already written, to what has already taken shape that one can open up that which has yet to be written, and even touch the skin that has yet to be lived" (p. 15).

been journeys in which my shoes provided me with comfort and grounding. My memory of these journeys stays with me, as does the pain from the blisters, each reminding me of the unknown possibilities in life.[69]

Reflections

There are pairs of shoes I haven't worn for a long time. I no longer need my dress up shoes, the ones whose heels are far too high to walk long distances in, the shoes that don't provide any grip, or my sandals, for it is hardly spring yet. My eyes wander from pair to pair; there are shoes people have given to me that I can't discard even though I will never wear them. These are shoes that do not speak of my travels, but of the people I have met along my way, of relationships past and present. Despite being covered in dust, stuffed in the corner of my shelf, I can't let them go.

I can not wear the pair of blue felt slippers nor can I give them away. It has been over eight years now since my aunt passed on. She wore these slippers during the last few weeks of her life; they were the only shoes that did not make her feel like her feet were being squashed. Just yesterday, I removed her slippers from the shelf and gently held them in my hand and smelled them. A sudden rush of panic set in as I could no longer smell her body; the smell had disappeared, vanished and I tried hard to recall the smell from my memory. I so long to talk with her one more time,

[69] My thoughts return to the beginning of my dissertation in which I write about my curiosity about the methodology and phenomena of narrative inquiry. While the shoes in this concluding writing might represent the various studies I was part of and the memories and personal experiences I bring, it is the shifting gait and pattern of walking that I see as the methodological happenings.

place the slippers just once more on her feet, caress her fragile body and board the train with her to explore unfamiliar places. Yet all I have are my memories, fragments of a life lived; however, sometimes I am fortunate and my memories come back to me in my dreams.

My shoes remind me of my rootedness in different places and across borders. It is hard to believe that I dragged all these shoes along to this new country, and after seventeen years my mother still sends me shoes in the mail, shoes I left at home years ago.[70] Each time this happens I am reminded of my struggles to make a new home in this country and to make sense of who I am and am becoming. Since leaving home I have been travelling and attempting to make sense of place and space, of being attached to and secure in place, while longing for new possibilities in space; in seeing place as pause, and space as movement (Tuan, 1977).[71]

There are also new shoes. Shoes like my moccasins, which contain the smell of women's hands and hard work. It was my very first time in this northern aboriginal community, wide-awake to new experiences and the fear of new

[70] I immigrated to Canada from Germany in 1990.

[71] Cultural geographers, such as Tuan (1997) and Pile & Thrift (1995), amongst others, have broadened the understanding of place beyond a geographic coordinate. They have shown that the meaning of place also embraces an "emotional sense of belonging, discursive spaces, imaginative and virtual landscapes, as well as political divisions and cultural distributions" (Fenwick, 2005). Expanding on the concept of belonging, May (2001) explores, being at home, belonging as "an in-between state of being within and without our selves. [...] 'Being at home' in this sense is a state of forgetting ourselves in living our relationality" (p. 228).

blisters. These moccasins bring forth memories of Rosie, and the many quiet hours we sat together, her working on a beaver pelt with me watching.[72] It was hard to talk since we spoke different languages, yet we somehow accepted each other's differences. It was the smell that lingered in every corner of her house that made me want to come back over and over again; it was as if my grandmother had been in this house. At the end of my stay Rosie and I had become close and it was she who gave me a pair of moccasins. I do not wear these moccasins often out of fear that they will become worn and wither away. I still want Rosie to be part of my life.

Sometimes I pack the slippers and moccasins in my bags when I travel, fully knowing that they will be of no practical use. Yet, they have more than sentimental value, they provide comfort when I enter places I have not been before, spaces where I wonder what my aunt would have done, which path my grandmother would have walked, or which direction Rosie would have pointed me in.

Perhaps it is in recognizing that whichever path I walk in life, the path will unavoidably begin where I am now and always be in relation to where I have been (Burgin, 1996). There are times when my familial home, like my shoes, embodies the notions of comfort, care, belonging and familiarity, of place; yet, I have begun to understand that this is a privileged notion of home. I chose to leave home and became a stranger as a result of leaving, yet for others being

[72] I met Rosie (pseudonym) while working and living in an aboriginal community for the first time.

strangers within their homes is often the cause of leaving home (Fortier, 2002).[73] I am reminded that the photographs the children took not only told about the comfortable places and spaces in their community, but also of the uncomfortable places.[74] Their stories helped me understand what community is not. Ethan struggled throughout the project to find a safe space to tell his story and eventually whispered in my ear. For Ethan community was not a homecoming in the sense of arriving at a final destination, but it was a place of negotiation, of becoming, a home in progress. I sensed his longing for a home place.

Homing desires are so often part of the diasporic narratives of belonging and it is through remembering that we inhabit the imaginary and physical spaces of belonging (Fortier, 2001).[75] It is in this longing for a place, amidst homing desires that I locate my identity struggles. Who am I? What is the relationship between home and identity? What part does my physical body play in the remembering and reconstruction of home? What parts do the still images in my mind play? Why is the connection between visual images and identity so important for me? Why do I still carry those shoes?

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[73] Fortier (2002) refers in particular to queer people.

[74] See *Visualizing Community*. Paper 2 in this dissertation.

[75] Homing desires reflect the desires for a place of belonging, a homey place that is however not necessarily located in one's homeland (Brah, 1996).

Inherent in Hall's (1996) notion of 'what we really are' is that our identities are a matter of becoming, creative constructions filled with ambivalences and fragmentation, as well as being. Our identities are not fixed entities, but are always in process; they are as much about the past and present as they are about the future. Embedded within the notion of 'what we really are' is that diasporic identities are by essence not pure, but rather are composed of heterogeneity, diversity, difference and hybridity. Minh-ha (1989, 1992) too recognizes that we cannot accept purity, but rather we are always speaking from a hybrid place, a place where we often assume multiple identities and selves, and multiple images of and about ourselves, and I am reminded of the multiplicity of my shoes.

I am repeatedly stuck in the world of worry, of how far can I walk without pain, without the continuous rubbing of my feet against edges and confinements I am not used to. The pain keeps me awake and hoping that I will soon find comfort in my shoes or more comfortable shoes. Eventually, my mind shifts from the anticipated pain to exploring the significance of individual and cultural differences I find myself amidst. My anticipated pain becomes a reminder that skin remembering also constitutes or rubs up against social membership (Prosser, 2001), yet it does not stop me from being inquisitive or curious; I am not afraid of going anywhere to explore the seemingly endless possibilities of discovery, travel and dreaming; moving in space. Not just a dreaming of new spaces, but also a revisiting of old places, places I have been, places that contain and bring forth my stories, places that have allowed me to pause.

Finding Maps

When I was a child I would often go out early in the morning and ride my bike in the fields. The world then seemed so undisturbed and quiet. It was best in the summer months for I could ride my bike with bare feet, feeling the grass touch my toes and the embossing of the pedals on the soles of my feet as I pushed harder and harder. Then when I grew older I would sometimes go out into those same fields and the quietness would fill my mind and images and words would come to life. It was in these moments that I knew that not only did my life matter, as did the life of others, but that the stories we each tell, and once told to each other, are important moments in which we interconnect. These stories speak of and about our experiences, of the pain caused by the shoes we travel in and the joy of discovering and learning along the way, the happiness of being together. In being and becoming together I can see the possibility of finding comfort in my shoes, or perhaps more comfortable patterns of walking.

While remembering my long and solitary bicycle rides of my childhood I don't recall ever needing a map, the ways were familiar and certain. It was as I began to travel to unknown spaces that I slowly learned to read maps, and only now have I begun to read my life as a map, reflective of my own internal experiences, and also as a way to look outward and to make sense of the world. My interior map marks my dwelling places within the landscapes, my stories (Marmon Silko, 1995). These landscapes, as Debra taught me, are the visible marks of both remembered and changing

landscapes that have marked my skin; maps, as Debra draws attention to, which can be traced upon the body where significant places and histories are embedded.[76] I learned to dwell as I learned to be a narrative inquirer, moving forward and backward, inward and outward, and paying attention to place, to my body.[77]

Although the outward telling of my stories is incomplete and narrow, I recognized that the beginnings of our life stories are written in our families. As I return to the beginnings of my life story, it is in the travelling to unfamiliar places, times where I lived alongside my research participants, times where I entered our in-between spaces, spaces that grew comfortable and telling with time and attention, that I return to my childhood.

The joy in being a narrative inquirer for me lies amidst the in-between spaces. A space where I learned to savor the vertigo of doing with/out answers or making do with fragmentary ones, a time of recognizing and playing with pattern, finding coherence within complexity, sharing within multiplicity (Bateson, 1994) and a time of coming and becoming together. In these spaces, intentionally and unintentionally, is the possibility that I may learn more about who I am, my life stories, and who I am becoming. In these moments I always try to pay close attention to the immediate relevance of the lives of my research participants, attention to what matters in their lives, attention to their complex and

[76] See *Narrative beginnings: Travelling to and within unfamiliar landscapes.* Paper 1 in this dissertation.

[77] As a narrative inquirer I can no longer ignore my own stories, I can no longer pretend that I don't carry a personal and socio-cultural history, that my stories are embedded within a context and that how I have come to read and make sense of my own stories have shaped how I see and live across differences.

unfolding lives. I also pay attention to our experiences of being and becoming together and how these are woven into and out of the places, spaces, peoples, events and happenings that surround us. Yet, I also recognize that I will never know all of the stories, such as cover stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), silent stories (Caine, 2002), and mundane and sacred stories (Crites, 1971). And other times, as I learned from Debra we need to find comfort in our in-between space before our stories can be told and heard.[78]

While listening to the stories told, such as seeing Debra unwrap her arms that night in the emergency ward, I also sense that some stories might be told for the first time. That people too live their stories in "what they do not say. They live them in attending to the words of others rather than their own words" (Neumann, 1997). These are often the silent and unspeakable stories, stories that possibly can be traced on people's skin, and in the stories that are visible but hidden (Prosser, 2007). Deanna took photographs of the many places she and Joe stayed while they were homeless and I could see the evidences of violent encounters, the bruises on her face, the shattered door and her belongings thrown

[78] See *Narrative beginnings: Travelling to and within unfamiliar landscapes.* Paper 1 in this dissertation.

throughout the room, yet she never once mentioned them in our conversations.[79] Other times hidden stories are visible in the missing photographs.

Looking through my family photo album, and recalling and retelling the moments in my life's journey is part of helping me make sense of my life. It has made me realize how little I know and moreover wonder how much in my life is forever untold, unseen, forgotten, and buried deeply. I am reminded that ambiguity, hesitancy and silence are part of my life. The time of my immigration, a time of place and space, of belonging and longing is not visible in my family photo album, it is only with the arrival of my son that I have begun to explore and make visible this part of my life and how it has shaped me.

My life is composed of surprising, surreal and fictitious stories and images and perhaps within these images lays my collection of the world (Sontag, 1973), much like the images of my shoes in my heart and the shoes that are real as I look at my shoe shelf each time I leave the house.[80] The boundaries between my imaginary and real world have become fluid, no longer can I see the world the way it was, but instead I can begin to see the world as it could be. Yet, I do not become a tourist to my own world, rather a fiction writer, collecting both images and stories of my own and others'

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[79] See *The imagination in narrative inquiry.* Paper 3 and Paper 4 *Narrative inquiry: Contemplating resonance and remembering in a relational inquiry* in this dissertation.

[80] Seeing my many pairs of shoes next to each other by the front door, allows me to see if and where there are continuities, discontinuities, and tensions in my stories.

reality. Perhaps it is as Barthes (1977) describes that as our subject slips away, our identity is lost, and we begin with the very identity of the body writing; whereby our skin represents our body's memory of our lives (Prosser, 2001), where the body carries the images and scars of our lives. When I look at my shoes I move out of the past into the present tense and I immediately begin to caress my feet, I touch the soles and heels of my feet that have grown thick with calluses and scars, reminding me of the unexpected turns while finding new maps.

Turning Towards Narrative Inquiry

Attending to the whole of human life and to life in a relational space is marked by ambiguity, messiness and beauty (Freeman, 2007). Connecting my own life and everyday experiences to those of others, to new places on the landscapes can bring forth an understanding of how other people think about me and how I think about myself. Embedded in this is the possibility that I can challenge my understanding, ideas and perceptions, and perhaps to challenge my static notion of being firmly rooted in place, a specific geographical location (McLeod, 2000), as well as being rooted firmly in a place of knowing. "In the hearing of others' stories [,...] we can metaphorically lay our stories alongside another's, seeking resonances and reverberations that help us imagine who we might become" (Clandinin & Raymond, 2006 p. 103). Living alongside others, by listening to the telling and attending to the resonances within the telling and living of their stories I may gain new insights, and deeper understandings.

The shoes, slippers, and moccasins at the front door of my house have never been objects for me; rather they are embedded with and are living stories.

> [S]tories are inner things: you're interacting with a living story. The way western man is taught to read is to find meaning, the symbols. Instead I say no, a story is not something you figure out the meaning of but something you carry with you the rest of your life to talk back and forth with. (Sarris, 1997, p. 229)

It is Sarris who reminds me that although the lingering smell of my aunt has left her slippers, I can still see and feel her stories, I talk back and forth with her, say "hello" and "good bye" each time I enter or leave the house.

As Walsh (2003) points out, the significance of the narratives told is not always in the latent recalling of the experience but in the process of the telling or articulation and fabrication which gives rise to a kind of embodied theory. Since the birth of our son Felix, keeping the slippers, moccasins and the endless pairs of shoes my mother still sends in the mail has been more and more intertwined with my wish to return to the landscapes of my childhood; to return to the forests of my childhood and the rivers where I used to swim, to the places that have shaped who I am, to my childhood landscapes. The shoes now speak of my yearning for an imagined community, while at the same time speaking of the living out of a community of absence (Merewether, 2000).

I also think of the moccasins Rosie made and my experience of wearing strange and unfamiliar shoes. The moccasins allow me to explore the differences in my body and the movement of my body for I am not used to walking on leather, to continuously feel the dirt and stones, the different textures of the land underneath the soles of my feet. In the moments of wearing the moccasins I see the differences in my body, I sense my shifting gait on a new landscape, and I pay attention to the new blisters that are emerging and the places they feel comfortable. Andrews (2007) reminds me that cross cultural research, and particularly border travel is a profoundly risky adventure; as is the travel to new places. The moccasins bring forth images of Rosie, and I recall Rosie's dark complexion, the folds of her skin speaking of her exposure to harsh weather, to the hard and enduring work of many native elders. Perhaps the hardness and thickness in her skin is a protection from her living memory of colonization (Probyn, 2001), but the stories also speak of the softness and thinning of her skin, as places where one touches and is touched by others. Rosie has taught me to pay attention to the landscape, that the landscape can and will touch me and both thicken and thin my skin. These are the maps my body carries as Debra taught me.[81] As I recall my time with Rosie, sitting and watching her, I can see that like Rosie, Ethan taught me that when we mark one another it is not just the superficial top layer of the skin we touch, but that we can cut to the bone by whispering.

[81] See *Narrative beginnings: Travelling to and within unfamiliar landscapes.* Paper 1 in this dissertation.

While the time of my immigration brought with it experiences of cultural differences and cross cultural encounters, it was not until I met Rosie that I become attentive to how I lived my stories in relation to these experiences. It was Rosie that helped me see that my experiences could talk back and forth to each other that my past stories still mattered, that I should not let them go. Years later, when reading Crites (1979) and his notion of self-deception, my thoughts turned to Rosie again and I realized that by not acknowledging my stories on a different landscape I had deceived myself. I slowly began to appreciate the shoes my mother still sends in the mail. My old stories I realized, do matter in the encounter of new ones. Rosie pressed me that in understanding difference, I needed to explore my difference and my being in-different to this.

In a narrative inquiry, narrative is not just a medium of learning, development or transformation, but a life, and an inquiry into a life, and a dwelling within the three dimensional narrative inquiry space, composed of place, temporality, and sociality (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Gunn Allen (1998) speaks of a journey of life,

> my life, like my work, is a journey-in-between, a road. [...] We live on the road that the dead walk down. We ride it out of town and back. By its meanders we discover what is there, what is not. By its power we are drawn into a confluence of minds, of beings, of perceptions, of styles. (p. 191)

The rhythmic notion of journey, of movement and continuity reminds me of Carr's (1986) term of narrative coherence, that one seeks narrative coherence in the "telling and retelling, to ourselves and to others, the story about what we are about and what we are" (p. 97).

Seeking narrative coherence on the multiple landscapes in which my life unfolds is important to me, particular as I am seeking a sense of belonging. The tensions of feeling uprooted and disconnected, has made it at various times impossible to see the resonance or interlappings of my life within itself and with others. It is in these moments that I struggle to find relational agency (Huber, 2000), that I feel lonesome, alone and silenced. It is in these struggling moments that I try hard to imagine and invent home. As Gilroy (2000) points out, our identity struggles are not about the so-called return to our roots, but a coming to terms with our routes. It is along these routes that I sometimes finding dwelling places and that I almost always long for the in-between spaces. I think about Tammy and how difficult it was for her to compose her mother stories on an unfamiliar landscape and how important our in-between moments become to her unfolding life and to my own.[82]

By being a narrative inquirer I have drifted from understanding knowledge as distant and objective to coming to see understanding from an intimate place of experience (Corner, 1999). Debra taught me to see place and home as

[82] See *Narrative inquiry: Contemplating resonance and remembering in a relational inquiry*. Paper 4 in this dissertation.

embodied, relational and intertwined rather than a geographic location.[83] The possibility of seeing my body as landscape shifted my understanding of place, which is now embedded more firmly in the personal-social and temporal dimensions of narrative inquiry. This in return draws forth that our stories are both performative, embodied and embedded in personal experience.

The relational in-between space becomes meaningful when I attend to the multiple dimensions of looking backward and forward, inward and outward and pay attention to place simultaneously; as spaces of being, becoming and possibility. This sense of possibility can be seen as "[t]hat story is working on you now. You keep thinking about it. That story is changing you now, making you want to live right" (Basso, 1996, p. 59). Knowledge, like home, is not a place we leave, but rather the place we arrive at (Fortier, 2002). Maybe this is what fuels people's hopefulness as migrants, the detachment from familiar places, familiar histories, memories and time is the incentive to continuously question and look at oneself (Rushdie, 1983). This desire to understand creates home. And at times our journey from the familiar to the foreign becomes a journey from the foreign to the familiar. Yet, each time I arrive, I feel restless, as if the story is working on me now, and as I gain new insights I leave again. To understand knowledge as home requires me to pay attention to my experiences, to my past, present and future relationships. Ethan, Deanna, Debra, and Tammy

[83] See *Narrative beginnings: Travelling to and within unfamiliar landscapes.* Paper 1 in this dissertation.

have taught me how important it is to make myself vulnerable; as I seek new experiences I learn to be attentive to the tensions, discontinuities and continuities in my life.

As Greene (1993) writes,

> even in the small, the local spaces in which teaching is done, educators may begin creating the kinds of situations where, at the very least, students will begin telling the stories of what they are seeking, what they know and might not yet know, exchanging stories with others grounded in other landscapes, at once bringing something into being that is in-between. [...] It is at moments like these that persons begin to recognize each other and, in the experience of recognition, feel the need to take responsibility for one another (p. 218) [84]

embedded in this is a possibility to create home and also to leave home. I see these as the borderlands in research, spaces that are neither fixed nor empty, spaces that are flexible and inhabited by multiplicity and relational agency. These are spaces where my consciousness can shift from a place of taken-for-granted to wide-awakeness (Greene 1993, 1994).

[84] Like Greene (1993), I see educators not just teachers, but as people who exist at the intersections of many categories and roles; people who strive to create a space in which others can be wide awake and continually evolving, becoming.

Anzaldua (1987) refers to borderlands as places where binary dualities can be broken down and in-between spaces can be created. Spaces where contradictions and tensions can coexist, and where one is in a constant state of transition. The stories we each tell in the borderlands may reflect the tentative, uncertain and hesitant moments in our lives. At times the borderlands may open up possibilities to our imagination and create spaces for hope and social vision (Conle, 2003) and more socially just plotlines (Clandinin & Huber, 2002). Amidst uncovering unique individual and cultural strength we may be able to reinvent our lives and as such reconstruct our imagined selves. It is indeed the ways in which place and identity are constructed that others need to pay attention to: the tensions and uncertainties, the wish to belong and the notion of home, rather then placing too much emphasis on the loss of grounding and belonging (Staring, van der Land, Tak, & Kolb, 1997).

In the borderlands home is no longer a dwelling place, but a place of the untold and evolving story of life being lived. For Anzaldua (1987) home is created through the act of writing. Expanding on her idea home is perhaps created through the act of seeking to understand, and it is in finding relational agency that one is propelled forward. No reading or seeing or writing of a life story and lives is complete; there are always parts missing, and all we ever accomplish is to take notes, tentative explorations. Within narrative inquiry there is recognition that peoples and places are always becoming (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

As I look up I catch a glimpse of my shoes at the front door, waiting for me to get up, to walk the trails of the river valley and to pay attention. I reach for my rubber boots and unintentionally turn them over, gently shake them to check for dead mice. I laugh as I realize what I have just done. I have carried my childhood memories forward in my ways of doing things, for when I grew up my mother would tell her stories of when her brothers placed dead mice in her boots. While my mother relived these experiences in her stories, I noticed the loving tone in her voice and how even in the retelling and reliving of a hideous experience she treasured the playful and teasing relationships she had with her brothers. For her these relationships were her home.

As I laugh I also recognize that for me home now is the in-between space between Felix and me, which has brought with it a renewal of being a daughter, of knowing I live in my mother's skin as she lives in mine and that I live in the grasp of my father's hands and in the memories of my aunt, grandmother and perhaps Rosie. I realize the importance of the multiplicity of relationships that form my dwelling places, the pauses in my life, in my research. It is in these places, places that are located in the borderlands where, like Huber (2000), I can negotiate hopeful acts of

resistance and be part of more socially just plotlines. And in quoting Bakhtin[85], Mickelson (1995) reminds me that every homecoming has its festival, and like her I too compose a poem for the festival:

[85] "There is neither a first word not a last word. The contexts of dialogue are without limit. They extend into the deepest past and the most distant future. Even meanings born in dialogues of the remotest past will never be finally grasped once and for all, for they will always be renewed in later dialogue. At any present moment of the dialogue there are great masses of forgotten meanings, but these will be recalled again at a given moment in the dialogue's later course when it will be given new life. For nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will someday have its homecoming festival" (Bakhtin, 1979 as cited by Clark & Holquist, 1985, p. 348-350).

Homecoming

remembering long ago moments
across oceans ~ between mountains

lifting my hands to cover my face
to touch my body
for it helps to remember

long ago
conversations with a tree
memories of bicycle rides and fields

conversations about you and me and us
and the space that stretches in-between

yet at last my breath fails me
as i cradle in my mother's arms
holding you

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Plate 1 Childhood Memories

When I grew up my parents rarely took photographs. As a result very few photographs exist of me or my siblings during our early childhood. My memories of my early childhood are very sketchy at best. However, I do remember that as a child, like many children, I was fascinated to return to the few photographs that existed of us as a family repeatedly. Perhaps this was a way to linger in my experiences, to pause. Placing one of my childhood photographs in the tree that now stands in front of our house in Canada is a way to preserve these memories, while at the same time knowing that amidst a different context they will never be the same.

Photolithography

Plate 2 Floette
Plate 3 Schloss Surenburg
Plate 4 Bevergerner Aa

This series of plates (Plates 2, 3 and 4) is entitled *Returning to se(e)a.* I took the original photographs on one of my journeys to my childhood landscape. At that time I purposely returned to explore some of my childhood landscapes. Questions such as: Where do I come from? Where am I? Where do I want to go? have drawn me back to the landscapes of my childhood. Each image brings forth multiple stories, stories that are firmly embedded in these landscapes.

Photolithography

Plate 5 Kite String I
Plate 6 Kite String II
Plate 7 Kite String III

This series of Plates (Plates 5, 6 and 7) is entitled *Imaginary Spaces*. While trying to play with images of kites as a way to understand imagination and believing, being both kite and kite flyer, the images drew my attention to the kite string.

Multiple Reduction Woodblock and Photolithography

Plate 8 Wandering

For much of the year my feet are covered in band aids. These coverings not only remind of the vulnerability that is part of my life, but that I often cover up this vulnerability. The marks of where I was touched are not always visible to others. I wonder for how long I can remain silent. For how long can I keep things covered up?

Photolithography. The original photograph of my feet was taken by Sima Khorrami, March 2007.

Plate 9 Lost I
Plate 10 Lost II

This series of plates (Plates 9 and 10) is entitled *Wayfinding*. It is in these compositions that I play with images of my childhood. Mirror imaging them or adding new colours to distort the original images, to create more imaginative and evocative images. Sometimes I get lost in this play.

Photolithography