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**Stories within and between selves~
Identities *in relation* on the professional knowledge landscape**

BY

Janice Huber



A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

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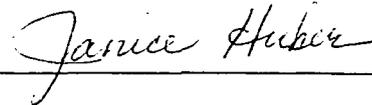
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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **Stories within and between selves~Identities in relation on the professional knowledge landscape** submitted by **Janice Huber** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



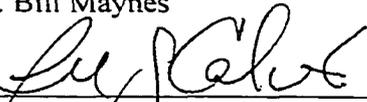
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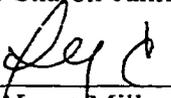
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ABSTRACT

Shifting inward and outward, forward and backward (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), this narrative inquiry explores Connelly and Clandinin's (1999) conceptualization of identity as "stories to live by." Negotiating across multiple research spaces and the diverse narrative histories of principals, teachers, and teacher-educators, stories were told, retold, and *re-imagined in relation*. These constructions and re-constructions of selves made visible the complex interface between identity and context.

Attending with care to the temporal and contextual unfoldings of self and other, multiple dilemmas and contradictions came forward. Exploring these tensions further, borders around stories to live by were revealed as situated within, and emerging from, both internal (interior) and external (exterior) landscapes. In the space between these two landscapes, hopeful possibilities for crossings emerged~crossings embracing of the fluid and shifting multiplicity of selves.

Understanding landscapes and selves narratively drew attention to the reified, decontextualized, and hierarchical scripts and structures profoundly shaping borders within and between selves attempting to negotiate professional landscapes. Often situated at the far edges of these same contexts, relational spaces~spaces embracing of multiplicity~were recognized as viable places of resistance where bordercrossings were understood as not only possible, but *necessary* for shifting school landscapes, district and provincial policy-making, programs of teacher education, and future research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In relation with our families we grew to embody communal storytelling places~
places we continue to draw strength from~
places sustaining us in our unfolding lives...

...in relation with friends and colleagues we shared stories~
stories reminding us that we are not alone...

...in relation with children and families
we awakened to the diversity of life histories
yearning to meet on school landscapes...in classroom communities...

...in relation with co-researchers...
people intimately connected with the life spaces of schools
we learned to embrace a multiplicity of stories~
educative stories~
stories profoundly shaping our understanding of self and other across time and place...

...in relation with all committee members
both internal and external
we were able to give voice to our knowing~
knowing living within and between the multiple lives...stories shaping this work...

...in relation with Jean and Michael we were invited...
to wonder...to inquire...to imagine narratively...

...in relation with one another...
we carry within...
courage...wide-awakeness...
attentiveness to the fragile, yet necessary,
space between~
carrying us
in this moment...
into tomorrow...
always...

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INTRODUCTION

Narratively Re-imagining¹

Janice Huber *in relation with* Karen Whelan

Scripts written for us
insidiously seeping in without our noticing
masking evolving stories to live by
shadowing awareness~
possibilities narrow on school landscapes.

We are carefully kept
positioned at the centre.
Beginning to...take-for-granted...blank out.

Slowly awakening to our inner dissonance,
we necessarily seek relation.

Yearning for openings, we move away
creating spaces *between* our selves and others~
spaces woven with love, mutuality, difference, agency, knowing~
morally and ethically resonant.

Self facing self~facing other...we learn
...courage...hurt...fear...depth...alternatives...wonder...uncertainty...
complexity...tension..hope...

Viable spaces
necessarily embracing
a profound sense of engagement *with*
...listening...responding...shifting stories...

Becoming present
past honored~present unfolding~future imagined...

With Intention

Our presence on the university landscape was embodied with shared intentions~intentions emerging from the sense of disconnection we were experiencing between who we imagined our selves to be and who we saw our selves becoming within the larger social contexts of our schools. What was becoming increasingly apparent to us

as we reflected upon our experiences on our multiple school landscapes, was the lack of spaces to construct relational stories~stories woven with wonder, open to narrative histories, and embracing of the multiplicity of our selves and others. No longer able or willing to silence the tensions these internal and external ruptures created, we imagined that relational doctoral work might offer hopeful possibilities for inquiry~openings where we could educatively explore the ruptures we experienced within our selves, and between others who shared our school landscapes.

Re-turning to our narrative beginnings shaping this inquiry, now three years into our doctoral program as co-researchers and co-authors, and eleven years into our shared history as friends and teaching partners, we give voice to the threads of relational intention growing from, and shaping, our exploration with others. Our uncovering of these threads helps to make visible the methodological and theoretical tapestry woven into, and textualizing, this narrative inquiry.

First thread.

Critical to our unfolding inquiries was Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) metaphor of the "professional knowledge landscape" which explores the social qualities of schools by drawing attention to people, places, and events and their temporal location and interconnectedness. Their expansive, metaphorical exploration of school landscapes created possibilities for us to understand the narrative, intellectual, and moral qualities shaping life in schools. Nested within this metaphor is Clandinin and Connelly's description of the "conduit," the dominant communication structure which packages and transmits policies and prescriptions onto the professional knowledge landscape of schools. Their conceptualization of the conduit illuminates how the current structure of school contexts are shaped, heightening our awareness of how the scripts funnelled down onto it, can, in turn, shape teachers' and principals' identities.

Engaging with Clandinin and Connelly's (1995, 1996) thoughtful inquiry into the complexities of the storied nature of the professional knowledge landscape of schools,

gradually, our gaps, silences, and tensions, shifted from the shadows of our experiences and were re-imagined. In conversation with others, we wondered what these often hidden qualities shaping our school landscapes might uncover if we were to think about them more deeply through the expansiveness of this metaphor? What could we learn about life in schools and programs of teacher education if these experiences were explored narratively? Clandinin and Connelly's (1996) research into teacher knowledge and professional contexts helped us to see that a multiplicity of stories—secret, sacred and cover stories; teacher stories, stories of teachers, school stories, stories of school—were profoundly shaping school landscapes. Reflecting further on this complex, multi-storied landscape, a new, profoundly troubling storyline came forward. This storyline, shared by teachers and principals, gave voice to their feelings of uncertainty, moral tiredness, and disengagement as they composed their lives across school landscapes. Attending to the multiple voices making this story audible, Connelly and Clandinin, in relation with other co-researchers, expanded their unfolding research to include a narrative understanding of teachers' and principals' identities on school landscapes. By attending to the shifting stories we live, tell, retell, and relive of our selves across multiple school landscapes, Connelly and Clandinin (1999) conceptualized identity as “stories to live by,” making visible the inextricable relationship between knowledge, context, and identity.

Resonating with Clandinin and Connelly's work, our sense of agency shifted as we awakened in new ways to our teacher stories. This shift in consciousness created openings where, in relation with one another and our co-researchers, we became able to recognize, name, and explore how our and others' sense of agency might be renewed. Reflecting on the narratives we told and wrote of our attempts to negotiate educative lives across multiple professional contexts, what became increasingly apparent to us was that the largely unquestioned and unquestionable stories shaping our school landscapes, and, at times, our selves, were deeply entrenched. Caught within these narrow places of possibility, the rich texture of our storied lives became submerged under more dominant

narratives of separate knowing, isolation, individualism, and sameness. Collectively, we began to puzzle over how our and others' narrative histories might more fully emerge within such contexts.

Second thread.

Our intentions to further understand the complex ways identity shapes, and is shaped within, school landscapes were woven across this multi-layered narrative inquiry. Alongside Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly, we wanted to learn more about how principals' and teachers' stories to live by can become marginalized on their school landscapes (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). We were drawn into the narrative histories of others like Capponi (1997), Cisneros (1984), Hoffman (1989), hooks (1995), and Lorde (1983) who told stories of their marginal experiences on the fringes of their social contexts. Risking through telling stories of, and inquiring into, these painful memories of their experiences, these women found strength to resist the power of the dominant narratives shaping their social contexts~status quo scripts shaping spaces of normalization, whitewashing, or the suppression of alternative life histories~by continuing to re-imagine their stories to live by in relation with others. Consciously engaging with these courageous narratives increased our desires to learn alongside others experiencing marginalization on their professional landscapes. As we thought about how isolated and predefined the scripted stories of "principal" and "teacher" can be on school landscapes, new wonders emerged. In particular, we wondered what we might learn about marginalization by attending to these very different positionings, school contexts, and staffing assignments. With a deep ethic of care (Noddings, 1984), and mindful of our intentions to mutually shape inquiry spaces where the multiplicity of our and others' stories to live by could live, we began to imagine who our future co-researchers might be.

To more fully understand identity and its narrative unfolding within morally and ethically constructed spaces necessitated our further exploration of the intimate interconnection between landscapes and selves. We resonated with the overlapping

themes, narrated from different vantage points, in the work of Butala (1994), Hoffman (1989), Kincaid (1997), Silko (1996), Trinh (1989), and Williams (1991), where they explore the necessity for viable relationships *within* a landscape~relationships enabling the self, in its multiplicity, to more fully emerge and unfold. Their work awakened us to embodied, relational, and physical landscapes, where the stories we live and tell, shift and change in a communal process shaping storytelling places where absolute truths are thrown into question. Their stories, and the thoughtful reflection they engaged us in, helped us recognize the value of these spaces in our own lives. Such communal processes promised to deepen our internal knowing, nurturing our movement outward onto the external landscapes of our multiple inquiry spaces where we might dare to enter into the life stories of others, and they, into ours.

Third thread.

As we explored the invaluable places these shifts in self had in our stories as teachers, and the qualities shaping the moral spaces from which they emerged, we were drawn into the work of other researchers whose life experiences inspired them to more fully understand these shifting, alternative localities of consciousness. A common thread we noticed across each author's work was their inquiry into the moral conditions shaping and emerging from two very different spaces~one where the self is *allowed* to merely exist and another where the self is *enabled* to become visible, shift, and grow. Needing our multiple inquiry spaces to be enabling places where our selves and the selves of others could fully emerge, we were attentive to what these authors were helping us to imagine. For Greene (1988, 1993, 1994) our movement from states of "taken-for-grantedness" toward "wide-awakeness" reveals shifts in our consciousness; Anzaldúa (1990), naming "selective reality" as a process of interpretation narrowing our spectrum of reality, attends to our "blinking out" of others' experiences, a state of consciousness where we fail to empathize with others; Lugones (1987) explores "world-travel" as the moral shifts we experience when we move from arrogant to loving perception; "moral drift," the

gradual numbing of our moral and ethical engagement with others, is brought forward by Coles (1989); the conscious and unconscious moral shaping which takes place in the meeting and mis-meeting between selves and others is addressed by Buber (in Friedman, 1991); Carr (1986) reveals our absence and presence to self and other in his description of our conscious and unconscious ways of acting in social spaces; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986); Belenky, Bond, and Weinstock (1997); Clinchy (1996), and Tarule (1996) address moral differences in the self and its relation with others as it shifts between separate and connected epistemologies; Lorde (1984) highlights the necessity for movement from places of silence to places of agency; hooks (1984) speaks to the different moral qualities that can be experienced in center or marginal positionings. In the field of education, Clandinin and Connelly (1995) uncover the intellectual, moral, and narrative shifts in consciousness between the “in- and out-of-classroom places” on school landscapes. Their work also provides insight into ways the stories we live and tell can be re-imagined, retold, and relived through participation in narrative inquiry spaces (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). In addition, Miller (1990, 1994), Hollingsworth (1992), Paley (1992), and Clandinin, Davies, Hogan and Kennard (1993) reveal the role teacher research can play in reshaping our evolving practice as teachers, principals, and teacher-educators.

Helping to shift our consciousness, these authors awakened us to ways in which distances, shaped on our school landscapes, had, at times, kept our selves separate and isolated from the selves of others. As Buber (1965) reminded us, it is in attending to distance that our need for relation becomes magnified. Openly facing the uncertain yet promising possibilities of entering into inquiry spaces with others~spaces holding potential for narrowing gaps between selves, we were drawn into Anzaldúa’s (1987) tellings of bordercrossings; Nelson’s (1995) reflections on facing self and Other, and Mullin (1995) and Bateson’s (1989) uncoverings of the multiplicity of identity. Their insights became vital to us as we attempted to explore the complexities we would need to

negotiate if we were to recognize possibilities of living in spaces where differences within our self, between our selves and others, and across multiple and shifting contexts, might be held and nurtured.

Fourth thread.

Our intimate connection with Buber's (in Friedman, 1991) description of his lived experiences on a "narrow rocky ridge between the gulfs where there is no sureness of expressible knowledge but the certainty of meeting what remains undisclosed" (p. x), strengthened our intention to locate our selves and our unfolding inquiry within diverse, relational research communities. As co-researchers, our narrative histories, composed in relation across diverse physical and temporal locations, emerged and expanded within our ongoing narrative research with Jean Clandinin, Michael Connelly, Annie Davies, and Chuck Rose. Living these stories, laid alongside stories we knew of other relational spaces, kept our gaze on negotiating similar inquiry spaces in relation with our teacher and principal co-researchers~people whose stories expanded our knowing of the relational qualities in which these inquiries are nested. Different from some of the plotlines defining our previous school contexts~plotlines illuminating prescribed roles and responsibilities with teachers and principals often positioned in hierarchical places of isolation, distanced from one another's narrative pasts~we were drawn toward alternative imaginings of knowledge as constructed in relation with others. Within these newly imagined spaces, we hoped to further interrupt the borders so profoundly shaping school landscapes and the narrow scripts around knowledge as owned, individual, dominant, fixed, and certain.

Not yet giving voice to the ways in which our narrative histories across diverse landscapes shaped our imaginings of how the qualities of our school contexts might be otherwise, Carr (1986) helped us come to recognize the central place ours' and others' personal narratives could have as we lived these new and evolving research stories. He wrote: "Narrative is our primary...way of organizing our experience of time" (p. 4). Our narrative histories "exist within a larger temporal context which is itself narrative in

character” (p. 114). Our life narratives, then, are necessarily shaped by, and inclusive of, other people. Resonating with Carr, we came to understand how our narrative histories could become both “the horizon and background for our everyday experience” (p. 4). Laying Carr’s ideas alongside Clandinin and Connelly’s (Clandinin, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) conceptualization of “personal practical knowledge” as teachers’ embodied knowing, shaped by our temporal past, present, and future experiences, and expressed through our practice, in addition to Trinh’s (1989) and Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule’s (1986) inquiries into the Western plotline separating our minds from our bodies (hearts), strengthened our need to risk vulnerability in relation with others, shaping spaces where both the common and different stories of our lives could be shared and explored.

It was our three research communities, inclusive of teacher, principal, and teacher-educator co-researchers, which we felt might offer alternative spaces of inquiry—spaces *away from* our school landscapes where our embodied moral and ethical intentions could unfold with consciousness. Openly embracing the work of others such as Greene (1988; 1995), Heller (1997), Behar (1993), Paley (1996), and Oyler (1996), who inquire into the possibilities of shaping ethical spaces of care (Noddings, 1984), where the voices which live within and between others are nurtured, significantly shaped our lived experiences in our unfolding inquiry spaces. Interweaving these authors’ voices with Lugones’ (1987) exploration of loving perception, our sense of responsibility to each of the people engaged in this inquiry, expanded. Locating her understanding of loving perception within her emerging relationship with her mother, Lugones helps to reveal what an ethic of care might look like. She discusses the moral qualities of loving perception as seeing with another’s eyes, entering into their life experiences, and witnessing, as best we can, their own sense of self from within their worlds, shaping relational spaces where understanding can emerge between self and other. As Lugones described: “Travelling to each other’s ‘worlds’ ...enable[s] us to *be* through *loving* each other” (p. 8).

Thinking about our intentions around living relationally, in morally and ethically constructed spaces with our co-researchers, we knew that the negotiation of *narrative* inquiry spaces was central to these intentions. Intertwining our imaginings around relational research with Coles' (1989) stories of his early work as a psychiatrist and the dramatic shifts he experienced in his knowledge of, and relationships with, patients as he learned to move away from measuring their life experiences toward attending to their unfolding narrative histories, our intentions to negotiate similar spaces *with* our co-researchers, were strengthened. We imagined that by living and thinking narratively in our research communities, we might shape spaces where we could engage both morally and ethically with one another, creating possibilities for a fluid and shifting construction of knowledge to flourish within and between selves. We were guided by the in-depth, narrative research Clandinin and Connelly (Clandinin 1986; Clandinin & Connelly 1994, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin 1988, 1990, 1999) have both experienced and inquired into over the past twenty years. Setting their work alongside Dewey (1938), Carr (1986), Crites (1971), and Kerby (1991), who also bring forward the interconnectedness of experience, narrative, identity, and knowledge, we knew that negotiating relational inquiry spaces~spaces open enough to explore the multiplicity and complexity of lives coming together~would necessarily be embracing of narrative exploration. Resonating with Connelly and Clandinin (1990), we knew that the negotiation of such relational spaces would require critical shifts in the traditional plotline of "researcher"~ a plotline often narrowly constraining relationships between self and other. Describing what it means to live narratively within and between others, they wrote:

We are, all of us, continually telling stories of our experience, whether or not we speak and write them.... We learned that we, too, needed to tell our stories. Scribes we were not; story tellers and story lovers we were. And in our story telling, the stories of our participants merged with our own to create new stories... (p. 12)

Fifth thread.

Consciously choosing to nest our evolving inquiry into stories to live by within narrative, relational, and unfolding research spaces, we imagined we might create openings where the educative and transformative possibilities addressed by Bateson (1989), Clandinin and Connelly (1995; 1998), and Dewey (1938), could live. Re-imagining the often bordered and dichotomous positionings present between~self and Other, certain and uncertain, conscious and unconscious, center and margin, mind and body~we hoped to reshape our knowing by attending to what happens to the self within, between, and across diverse stories, landscapes, and temporal locations.

The fourteen relationally authored papers growing out of this three year inquiry and constructed in relation with teachers, principals, and teacher-educators, are representations of the intentions from which this study broadened, deepened, and as Trinh (1989) describes, will continue to be imagined:

The story never stops beginning or ending. It appears headless and bottomless for it is built on differences. Its (in)finity subverts every notion of completeness and its frame remains a non-totalizable one.... The story circulates like a gift; an empty gift which anybody can lay claim to by filling it to taste, yet can never truly possess. A gift built on multiplicity. One that stays inexhaustible within its own limits. Its departures and arrivals. Its quietness. (p. 2)

Narrative Unfoldings

*Just as any part of a story
acquires its significance from the narrative whole to which it belongs,
so any particular story
depends for its sense on the larger narrative context of which it is a part.
~Carr (1986, p. 115)*

Over the past three years, our relational work was nurtured by our advisor, Jean Clandinin~a woman whose narrative history is also woven with stories of knowledge as

constructed in relation with others. Her courage to risk *with* us in this work, to listen deeply to the imaginings we shared for shifting the relational place of identity and knowledge construction from the edges of this and other institutional contexts, into the light of increased visibility, has made significant difference to the relational unfoldings of this multi-textured inquiry. The support of Jean and our committee members at our candidacies, and in response to our papers, as well as the conversations and important wonderings about relational work we were able to engage in with former colleagues, friends, family members, and graduate students at the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development, strengthened our commitment to keep with this work.

One of many intentions shaping our work was to push against the borders rigidly defining how knowledge is constructed and understood within institutional settings. While we feel the ways in which this inquiry was lived through and represented expanded some of these borders, if we had been able to expand them even further, our fourteen relationally authored papers would have been represented in a manner in which their textured unfoldings could be more visible. This intention, however, was constrained by the *still*, pervasively dominant story of knowledge as solitary, intellectual, fixed, owned, and measurable. Yet, as readers engaging with our texts, it is our hope that you will cross the borders so intrusively separating our relational storymaking into two “stand alone” dissertations. Engaging with the alternative, we invite you to explore this work through a more transient movement across the stories we and others have lived, told, retold, and relived. It is, for us, this movement across stories, this *between*, where hope lives.

Resisting fragmentation, our fourteen relationally composed papers, seven situated within each dissertation, are represented below in their temporal unfolding. Wanting to reveal the multiplex nature necessarily shaping and growing from relational work, we explore the epistemological complexities of each composition. Writing our beginnings representative of the relational ways in which this work unfolded, we were not attempting to lessen our work load, or to find an easy or quick way out. Instead,

grounded within our embodied knowing of what made moral and ethical sense, we represent the diverse stories woven across this inquiry as necessarily intertwined between the two dissertations. This research can never, merely, be reduced to (some) *one*'s body of knowledge. Instead, we would challenge, this work has unfolded within and across multiple inquiry spaces~spaces rich, textured, diverse, complex, evolving~narrative places honoring the past, unfolding the present~places where the future might be imagined more relationally.

Telling Stories Behind and Between Stories

In this section, we introduce two papers nested within each of the five narrative threads emerging from this inquiry. Described below are the relationally authored papers set within Huber's dissertation, referencing as well, the relationally authored papers set within Whelan's dissertation.

Narrative Histories.

Falling into the status quo script of knowledge as individual, the original drafts of our first papers were initially written in isolation. Awakening to how this non-relational script was over-writing our stories to live by and our intentions to engage in relational research, we returned to these pieces. Engaging in a process of relational response, we began to imagine ways to interrupt the taken-for-granted, separate and distancing scripts so often shaping the university context. It was in this middle space that both our writing and understandings of the inextricable connection between identity construction and reconstruction, *necessarily lived through in relation*, were transformed. Beginning to engage with both the particular and larger narratives of our relational work, and, as we listened to, responded, and told stories in our inquiry groups, shifting forward and backward from reflection to new reshapings of the papers we were writing and the stories we were living out, we entered more fully into one another's and our co-researchers lives. Living this process of relational knowledge making furthered our understanding of the narrative vantage points and pasts we each brought to our relational work. The paper below,

Living, telling, and retelling stories to live by: Negotiating the multiplicity of self across shifting landscapes (Huber & Whelan, submitted, 1999c) and, *Exploring the narrative unfolding of self across time and place* (Whelan & Huber, submitted, 1999b), make visible our growing awareness of the lack of relational spaces on school landscapes~spaces woven with narrative histories, where both common and different stories might come forward and be explored.

Living, telling, and retelling stories to live by: Negotiating the multiplicity of self across shifting landscapes (Huber & Whelan, submitted, 1999c). Janice's childhood memories of negotiating her self in relation with the physical and human landscape she lived within, invite us to explore Connelly and Clandinin's (1999) conceptualization of the interconnections among knowledge, context, and identity. Describing the ways storytelling shifted and expanded her knowing of self within both her childhood and teaching landscapes, Janice reveals how the educative qualities of these storytelling spaces emerged through moving "from the story told to the possibility of a retold story" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998, p. 252). These relational, storytelling spaces created important openings for Janice to meaningfully negotiate alternative stories to live by. In these spaces her self continued to grow, shifting and evolving in response to her changing landscapes.

Relational Inquiry Spaces.

Exploring narrative as an emergent, conversational, and relational research process, *Crossthreadings: Weaving a relational and emergent research tapestry* (Whelan & Huber, submitted, 1999a), makes visible the qualities, tensions, ambiguities, and promises emerging from relational research as it is lived out from multiple positionings and vantage points. Impassioned by our need to explore, further understand, and potentially interrupt the traditional institutional narratives profoundly shaping the relational space between us, *Entangled lives: Enacting transient social identities* (Huber & Whelan, submitted, 1999b), helped us uncover these scripts almost unconscious shaping of our evolving stories to live

by and the ways in which we, also, contributed to their reification. It was through this process of facing our selves that we became attuned to how easily we had taken on the scripts, perpetuating the same old plotlines which had so dramatically shaped our identities on our school landscapes. Recognizing the significance of the educative possibilities which emerge through self facing, our work to imagine alternative inquiry spaces, in both papers, inspired our exploration of the relational construction of knowledge and its shaping influence on identity.

Entangled lives: Enacting transient social identities (Huber & Whelan, submitted, 1999b). Through written words and alternative textual arrangements, this paper represents our evolving relational identities, enacted historically and in the present, across varying social contexts. Documenting our struggle to *unsay* the story of separate knowing shaping our university context and our selves, we explore the necessity of rewriting this script with presence to our interdeterminancy. Answering with our own lives for what we have experienced and understood internally and externally, while negotiating relational knowing across landscapes, was essential to our inquiry and the text of this paper. Making our selves vulnerable through telling of and inquiry into our relationship, we understand far deeper the possibilities and contradictions of such necessary, relational work. As this paper reveals, we have grown to find possibility and hope in the fluid and transformative nature of the relational space between, within, and across our selves and others.

Identity and Response.

Embedded within the multiple stories and diverse experiences coming forward in conversations with our principal and teacher co-researchers, were themes of marginalization on school landscapes. Moved by the tremendous trust emerging through the revealing of such vulnerable stories within our relational inquiry spaces, we were drawn to think deeply about the increasing lack of spaces on our school landscapes, and at times, within our selves to tell, retell, and relive these fragile stories. Because of the

growing absence of these trusting spaces within both our internal and external landscapes, these vulnerable stories were often submerged in isolating silence. Listening and responding to these stories within our multiple research communities, we were called to enter into their themes of marginalization from positionings which had, largely, been hidden from view within our school contexts.

Attending to the multiple stories coming forward, we were awakened to the profound place response can have in shaping the marginalization of stories to live by on school landscapes. These experiences, which live at the edges of life in schools, drew us to new wonders where we were called to think deeply about response~How was response lived within our school contexts? Did response take on the qualities of an unconscious, taken-for-granted process, always audible, yet rarely reflected upon or re-imagined on our school landscapes? Recognizing response as playing a vital role in shaping our experiences and therefore, our stories to live by, what might we learn by deepening our understanding of the relationship between identity, imagination, and response? Were there intimate connections between marginalization, positioning, and response? Like scripted plotlines, were there also scripted responses defined by the scripted roles shaping school landscapes? What were the internal and external stories which called us to position our selves, or to be positioned on the margins of our school contexts? It was around these wonders that the following paper, *A marginal story as a place of possibility: Negotiating self on the professional knowledge landscape* (Huber & Whelan, 1999d), along with *The place of storytelling: Patterns and vacancies on the professional knowledge landscape* (Whelan & Huber, submitted, 1999e), unfolded.

A marginal story as a place of possibility: Negotiating self on the professional knowledge landscape (Huber & Whelan, 1999d). In this paper, we explore the educative and miseducative qualities of response as told through one teacher's, Naomi's, stories. By reconstructing and making meaning of her stories through the conceptual framework of the professional knowledge landscape, we consider how Naomi's identity shaped, and was

shaped within, the in- and out-of-classroom places on her school landscape. Through a final retelling of her narrative, we pay close attention to the responses emerging from each of these fundamentally different places and we examine Naomi's negotiation of her stories to live by in relation to a school story of inclusion. This narrative focus enabled us to name borders of power, judgment and silence, and bordercrossings which are shaped within "public homeplaces" (Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997). For us, Naomi's stories of marginalization offer a place of possibility~possibility for understanding the central role that presence to our narrative histories plays in enabling us to live and to sustain stories running counter to those being scripted for us on school landscapes.

Moral Qualities.

As we engaged in the educative process of reading, reflecting upon, and talking about the transcripts of our research conversations, both among our selves and our principal and teacher co-researchers, our commitment to expose the moral qualities so often shaping our school landscapes, intensified. This additional layer of conversation, also important to shaping our emergent knowledge of identity, marginalization, and school landscapes, was fluid and multiple~occurring in kitchens, restaurants, living rooms, over the telephone, while driving~naturally unfolding in pairs, groups of three or four, not always as a collective group. What became increasingly visible to us as we attended more closely to these conversations, alongside our more formal research conversations, were the familiar scripts they revealed of feeling compelled to live safe, shiny, happy plotlines on utopian school landscapes~scripts where everything remains smooth, where complexity is denied. Exploring at the edges of these shiny, surface stories, with attention to the moral implications these harmonious scripts can hold for constraining the life stories composed by people who live on school landscapes, we wanted to make audible the experiences so often profoundly submerged in silence under these institutional scripts. Our inquiry into the relationship between the moral qualities of school landscapes and stories to live by, with attention to themes of difference, unfolds in two papers, *Beyond*

the still pond~Community as growing edges (Huber & Whelan, submitted, 1999a) and, “*They’re A Little Different, They’ve Got A Few Blue Stripes*”~*Stories of Difference on School Landscapes* (Whelan & Huber, submitted, 1999d).

Beyond the still pond~Community as growing edges (Huber & Whelan, submitted, 1999a). Concerned about the often stagnant nature of the stories lived and told of community, this text draws on Buber’s (1965) and Greene’s (1988, 1994, 1995) thinking about community as places that are always in the making, continuously infused with, shaped and re-shaped by the agency of diverse individuals. Inquiring at the edges of one story of teacher evaluation shared within our principal inquiry group, we work to understand its impact on the evolving identities of the people shaping and shaped by the social space of their school landscape. Troubling an externally defined script of community that becomes visible as this story of teacher evaluation unfolds, through conversation and in relation with one another, we tell stories and share wonders pushing against stories of community as harmonious, serene and beautiful social contexts. We engage in this work because we must. As this paper illustrates, to continue to ignore the stagnancy of social contexts shaped by these ideal representations of community, is to ignore the inextricable relationship between knowledge, context, and identity.

Relational authorship.

Dilemmas around co-authorship and naming were not new to us as we engaged in doctoral research. Previously negotiating a shared classroom space as teacher co-researchers involved in master’s research, issues of *who owned* our emergent knowledge surfaced around the writing of a thesis, professional presentations, chapters written in books, and journal publications. We re-awakened to these complexities as this narrative inquiry shifted from the private place of our shared teacher researcher relationship to the more public place of representing what we were coming to know as two co-researchers constructing knowledge in relation with principals, teachers, and teacher-educator co-researchers. Drawing strength from our narrative histories and our ongoing inquiry with

Jean, Chuck Rose, and Annie Davies, our intentions from the beginning of our doctoral research were to broaden our shared story of relational authorship. We felt strongly that relational research needed to invite all co-researchers to draw upon the field texts and knowing shaped through shared conversation so that co-researchers, in their own ongoing work, might also shift and grow. We knew that in order for this work to be meaningful to everyone involved in shaping it, we needed to re-shape the borders perpetuating the story of research as something being *done to* rather than *with* others. Respecting and honoring the stories our co-researchers told and the vulnerabilities they risked, we were also compelled to shape openings where their told stories might also shift from the private to the public, increasing the potential for others to enter into experiences and to grow from hearing voices too often held silent in research texts. Living the multi-faceted process of knowledge making in relation, we recognized that limiting definitions around authorship needed to broaden beyond the written text. The paper below, *Narrative inter-lappings: Recognizing difference across tension* (Sweetland, Huber, & Whelan, submitted, 1999), along with *Retelling silent stories~Imagining alternative stories to live by in relation*. (Huber, Whelan, & Huber, submitted, 1999) represents the two tri-authored papers mutually constructed within this inquiry and revealing our ongoing sense of responsibility to living research stories that push at hierarchical structures where the “researcher” is positioned as the owner of knowledge, and separation shifts theory away from practice, teachers away from principals, self away from other, etc. Replacing these images, in close relation with our co-researchers, we re-imagined spaces filled with presence to diverse voices~inquiry spaces recognizing that knowing is *always*, necessarily relational.

Narrative inter-lappings: Recognizing difference across tension (Sweetland, Huber, & Whelan, submitted, 1999). Recognition lives at the heart of our work in this paper. Drawing upon a fragment from a transcribed research conversation where the differences “within and between” (Trinh, 1989) us and one of our teacher co-researchers, created tension, we tell narratives behind what was initially spoken in an attempt to more

fully understand the complexities shaping stories of collaboration and school landscapes. Situated within a context of knowledge and understanding, this process of storytelling and response~*narrative inter-lapping*~enabled us to world-travel, expanding our understanding of our selves, one another, and the socially constructed spaces between us.

Returns.

In our two final papers, *Returns to multiplicity* (Whelan & Huber, 1999) and *Returns to relational agency* (Huber & Whelan, 1999), we travel deeply inward, thinking across the papers emerging from our relational spaces of inquiry with our principal and teacher co-researchers, and Chuck, Annie, and Jean. Reflecting on the knowing and profound place of understanding these relationships shaped, and continue to shape, in our lives, we ask questions of what might be...on schools landscapes, within district and provincial policy-making, programs of teacher education, and future research possibilities...if we were to attend more closely to the unfolding and shifting stories of our lives and the inextricable connection between these stories and our need for relation and voicefulness in our social contexts.

Returns to relational agency (Huber & Whelan, 1999). Attending to the silences around relational agency emerging across these narrative inquiries, we explore borders constraining this complex negotiation within social contexts and within selves, as well as voiceful openings shaping new possibilities in the spaces living within and between people. Recognizing the necessary place relational agency holds in interrupting the larger structures shaping our profession, we question...imagine alternatives.

Acknowledgement

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Endnote

¹ As we sat together to compose introductions to this multi-layered inquiry, we could not begin to imagine *how* or *why* we would separate our knowing into solitary pieces of writing, fragmenting the larger narrative context from which this work emerges. Consciously choosing, instead, to honor the moral grounding shaped by the multiple voices resounding and re-imagining selves, others, and school landscapes *in relation*, this paper offers a mirrored telling of *Narratively re-imagining* (Whelan & Huber, 1999c).

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CHAPTER 1

Living, Telling and Retelling Stories To Live By: Negotiating the Multiplicity of Self Across Shifting Landscapes Janice Huber *in relation with* Karen Whelan

*What matters is that lives do not serve as models; only stories do that.
And it is a hard thing to make up stories to live by.
We can only retell and live by the stories we have read or heard.
We live our lives through texts. They may be read, or chanted, or experienced electronically,
or come to us, like the murmurings of our mothers, telling us what conventions demand.
Whatever their form or medium, these stories have formed us all;
they are what we must use to make new fictions, new narratives.*
~Heilbrun (1988, p. 37)

Growing up in a rural farming community, my life was closely interwoven with the landscape on which my family lived, and, like the people before us, we changed the landscape because of our presence. Trees once stood where our farm yard now is and, just as a homesteader cleared trees creating spaces for a house, barn and shop, my family continued to shape the landscape. Building large sheds to store our machinery in or as shelter for the cattle to give birth and to nurture their newly born calves, more trees were cleared. Just before the land slopes gently toward the creek, my brothers, sister and I once played in the wild grass blowing freely in the wind. Today, granaries stand in this location and the sea of wild grass is gone. Those blades initially withstanding the heavy weight of grain trucks, eventually gave in. In their wake, the earth became packed and barren as an indelible path became etched from the main road to the granaries. Corrals and fences were built, criss-crossing and dividing the land into sections.

In time, the road stopping just north of our yard was built up and widened, changing the trail once winding its way south into sparsely inhabited land into a large, immaculately maintained modern road. Where my dad, uncle and great uncle, and a variety of hired men, once drove teams of horses pulling harvesting equipment in late summer and early fall, and hay wagons to feed the cattle in the winter months, the heavy imprint of two-wheel and then four-wheel drive tractors, replaced the horses' hoof prints. Silko

(1996) reminds me of the visibility of these changes; far less visible were the ways our lives became intimately interwoven with this landscape:

The term *landscape*, as it has entered the English language, is misleading. “A portion of territory the eye can comprehend in a single view” does not correctly describe the relationship between the human being and his or her surroundings. This assumes the viewer is somehow *outside* or *separate from* the territory she or he surveys. Viewers are as much a part of the landscape as the boulders they stand on. (p. 27)

The ways we shaped our landscape and how the landscape, in turn, shaped our existence as we lived within it, formed the contours of how I knew myself as a person: “it...[was] a matter of rootedness, of living inside a place for so long that the mind and imagination fuse” (Williams, 1991, p. 21). My experiences as a child, growing up in this rural landscape, were beginning threads woven into my identity, profoundly shaping the stories I lived by during my childhood and adolescent years, stories that, in some ways, are still woven into the present stories I live and tell.

Stories of Childhood Recalled

The seasons created an unforgettable rhythm in my life. Spring awakened the natural landscape surrounding us, signalling the time of year when our cows calved. As a child during this season, I grew to understand that as a family we would never venture too far, or for too long, from home. For my parents, this season, in particular, meant little sleep. On those occasions when I woke up in the middle of the night, I became familiar with seeing one of my parents sleeping, fully clothed, on the couch in our family room and I knew they were doing the night time checking of the cattle. I also became accustomed to waking up in the morning and hearing one or both of my parents having coffee at the kitchen table with a neighbour or local veterinarian. Whenever this happened, I knew that their presence in our house at such an early hour in the morning meant that, at

some point during the night, a cow had difficulty giving birth and my parents asked this person to help them.

Summer entailed yard and field work. As a young child, I thoroughly enjoyed how this work shaped our daily routines, especially those times when meals were eaten in the fields. When eating in a hay field, the bales took on alternative forms as my brothers, sister and I imagined them to be racing cars, space ships from distant and unknown planets or imaginary homes. Eating in a wheat or canola crop brought to life other imaginative play—the game became hide and seek as we ran into the tallness of the plants, trying to hide from or to find each other. These games quickly ended, however, when we discovered interesting insects or small creatures attempting to distance themselves from our play. Re-positioning ourselves to better understand these creatures, the smell and feel of the plants and soil became part of us as we pressed our young bodies into the contours of the land, trying to get as close to a creature as possible. In these moments I became acutely aware of my self and the landscape in which I was living (Stegner, 1955)—a profound sense of awe washing through me each time I discovered something new about a creature’s body or how it lived.

An important fall rhythm took shape as we brought the cattle home from the grazing lease where they ranged from May to October. Because this grazing lease was shared with other neighbour families, these week-ends were times when my family and I were closely linked with other families from within our community. Our farm was approximately 12 miles north of the grazing lease. In the early years, herding the cattle along the bushed-in trail was work barely completed before nightfall. Arriving at my family’s farm, all of the cattle were held either in corrals or nearby pastures over night. While I enjoyed trailing the cattle and calves home from the lease, I grew to dread what I knew would happen to them in the following hours. The move often separated them and, upon their arrival to our farm, they began to search for one another, their bellows filling the nighttime air. This, however, was just the beginning. Our calves were also weaned at

this time of the year. After our neighbours trailed or trucked their cattle north to their farms, we separated our cows from their calves. Although separated by distance and numerous fences, their bellows echoed for days as they called out to one another. For all of the years I lived through this process of separation, even though I knew the intellectual reasons for why they had to be separated, I had difficulty accepting them.

The unfolding of winter shifted the rhythm of our farm life, bringing other aspects of our survival in this landscape into closer perspective. During a harsh winter blizzard, our attention turned even more directly to the lives of the animals. In particular, the dampness of the snow as it melted and froze onto the cows' backs increased their chances of becoming sick. Whenever cold snaps persisted, my parents worried that we would not have enough feed and bedding to last through the winter. They also feared that a calf might be unexpectedly born outside, freezing to death because of such rugged conditions.

As the seasons overlapped, becoming interwoven with one another, my family continued to depend on the support of the people living in our community. The continuous presence of many hired men and neighbours working alongside my family had a lasting influence on my life. These hired men, ranging in age from 13 years old to well into their 60's, either lived with us or in a smaller house in our yard. The ways these men shaped my understanding of my self in relation to our landscape were as varied as each one of them. Three of the younger men became like older brothers to me. From the vantage point of my young eyes, these boys seemed so wise and worldly. Their stories hinted at experiences I had yet to imagine and the ways they related to me allowed me to easily accept them as extended family. Although my brothers, sister and I sometimes told our parents that they teased or played tricks on us, we loved their attention. The older men were also important to me. Because both of my grandfathers died before I was born, I looked at some of these men with the eyes of a child who had always wanted a grandfather.

One of these men brought his entire family to live with him during the year he worked on our farm. Of particular importance, to me, was his daughter, Gina. The same age as me, from the first moment we set eyes on one another, we were inseparable. After school or on week-ends, in her house or mine or somewhere outside, our relationship grew and our difference came to intrigue me. While I had blond hair, blue eyes, and white skin, Gina had brown skin, black hair, and brown eyes. In addition to our shared language, English, she also spoke a language I could not. Yet as we entered grade one together, I was both told and made to feel as though it was unacceptable that in my whiteness I would love Gina as I did. Negotiating our lives on this school landscape awakened me to stories of difference I had not yet experienced. The following spring, Gina's family moved back to their home. Heartbroken, I spent months longing for her to return.

Story and Context Shaping My Unfolding Identity

As days on this rural landscape drew to a close, our evening meals, whether they occurred in the fields or around our kitchen table, added another richness to how I experienced my unfolding life. As far back as I can remember, I see myself at the dinner table long after the meal was finished, telling and sharing stories. Engaging in this storytelling process connected me with both my own and others' pasts as well as to a communal past, present, and future, in a never-ending story. This storytelling process was, as Silko (1996) described, integral to my evolving sense of self:

The oral narrative, or story, became the medium through which the complex of Pueblo knowledge and belief was maintained. Whatever the event or the subject, the ancient people perceived the world and themselves within that world as part of an ancient, continuous story composed of innumerable bundles of other stories. (p. 30-31)

Although my stories of my self were not composed of *ancient* innumerable bundles of other stories, many of the neighbours and hired men, shaping my daily experience, lived in our community most of their lives and their stories helped me understand the history of

the farm where I lived and the larger community where my life was unfolding. Creating the images through which I lived, these stories became like maps (Silko, 1996), informing “what conventions demand[ed]” (Heilbrun, 1988, p. 37), while profoundly shaping the person I was becoming.

Many of the communal stories I grew up with focused on earlier people who lived within our rural landscape and the ways they negotiated themselves and their livelihoods within the context of our community. Three of these people immigrated to Canada from England and the Scandinavian countries. While their stories of the struggles they experienced constructing lives as homesteaders intrigued me, I was mesmerized by the stories they told of their early lives in Europe and their experiences during the First and Second World Wars. Living within and between my interior, embodied landscape and this physical, external landscape, these stories, and the images they created within me, were spaces where my past, present, and future understandings of my self were mediated. These people, their stories, and the stories my family told and continued to tell in communal gathering spaces, although never recorded in writing, stayed with me. They were the spirit carrying me from day to day (Sewall, 1996).

Shaped in these ways, my childhood “identity, imagination and storytelling were inextricably linked to the land” (Silko, 1996, p. 21). How I grew to understand and imagine my self was inseparable from living closely connected to the land, animals, and people who were part of my early experiences. The stories shaping me as I lived on this childhood landscape overlap with the stories I continue to tell, retell, and re-imagine. Shifting and expanding across time and place, attending to these stories helps me understand the ways “knowledge, context and identity are linked and can be understood narratively” as “stories to live by” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p. 4).

Overlapping Narratives: “Landscape” Takes on Deeper Significance

*Our life becomes a story that we are always in the process of discovering
and also fashioning, a story in which we both follow and lead—
a story that grips us with its necessity, possesses us unmercifully, and yet,
paradoxically, that we create and recreate.*

~Metzger (1992, p. 49)

Time, as significant for more than merely providing dates for when specific events occurred within my life, is central in Clandinin and Connelly’s ongoing research program into teacher knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin 1988, 1999). Understanding teacher knowledge narratively, Connelly and Clandinin (1988) bring attention to the temporal, narrative qualities of experience:

Humans make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves that both refigure the past and create purpose in the future.... In trying to understand the personal, one needs to ask questions not only about the past, or the present, or the future, but about all three.... Clues to the personal are obtained from one’s history, from how one thinks and feels, and from how one acts. (pp. 24-25)

Viewing time in this way helps me understand how my experiences connect across time in the stories I live and tell. Writing about the narrative quality of experience, Crites (1971) adds to my understanding of the interconnections between the temporality of experience and narrative knowledge. He explained that our sense of identity “depends upon the continuity of experience through time, a continuity bridging even the cleft between remembered past and projected future. Even when it is largely implicit, not vividly self-conscious, our sense of ourselves is at every moment to some extent integrated into a...story” (p. 302). Understanding my self, through time, in this experiential way, interconnects the stories I shared of my childhood landscape with Clandinin and Connelly’s (1995, 1996) work on “professional knowledge landscapes.” Clandinin and Connelly use a landscape metaphor:

...to talk about space, place, and time. Furthermore, it has a sense of expansiveness and the possibility of being filled with diverse people, things, and events in different relationships. Understanding professional knowledge as comprising a landscape calls for a notion of professional knowledge as composed of a wide variety of components and influenced by a wide variety of people, places, and things. Because we see the professional knowledge landscape as composed of relationships among people, places, and things, we see it as both an intellectual and a moral landscape. (1995, pp. 4-5)

My understanding of the landscape of my early years speaks to how I came to understand my self in relation with the physical and human landscape on which I was positioned and within which I grew up. What I attempted to uncover in writing of my early years was that the educative qualities of my experience emerged from the ways I learned to live *in relation* with this landscape—the people, the animals, our surrounding environment and the stories encircling us. When I lay these memories of my rural childhood landscape alongside Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) work on professional knowledge landscapes, their metaphorical understanding speaks to me through its focus on relational qualities and how we come to know our selves as teachers in relation to our surrounding school contexts. It is significant to me that Clandinin and Connelly (1995) interconnect their thoughts on the relational qualities of professional knowledge landscapes with intellectual and moral aspects. Doing so, they create additional connections for me between my childhood landscape and the professional knowledge landscape of schools.

As a child, I lived within the relational, intellectual, and moral negotiations continuously occurring around me. My memories of the contradictions I experienced when Gina's family left our farm and the dilemmas I felt around the separation of the cattle from their calves are examples of the ways these overlapping qualities shaped the

childhood stories I lived and told. One ongoing childhood dilemma strongly pulls at me as I think further about how these qualities shaped the stories I lived while growing up. As my memories unfold from this long ago time, I piece stories together, entwining my experiences.

Storied within our community as both a tyrant and a drunk, Orace was a man I came to know and love as an extraordinary human being. My first memories of Orace take me back to conversations I heard between my parents and some of our neighbours. At the time, I was young enough to only remember the words of their conversations and to sense the frustration and disappointment they felt. As I grew older, I understood more deeply my parent's words and actions around Orace.

The controversy connecting Orace's and my family's lives began when Orace came to live with us. His house had burned to the ground and his partner took their children to live elsewhere. No longer having a home of his own, he asked my parents if he could live in the vacant, two-roomed house in our yard. However, because of some of the stories told within the community about Orace, several of our neighbours thought it was inappropriate for my parents to allow him to live so close to my brothers, my sister, and me. Feeling that these concerns were unjustified, my parents invited Orace to move into the empty house. Soon, he became an integral part of our lives. Many mornings, as I was leaving for school, Orace would be sitting down for coffee with my parents. Often, he was already hard at work on some project he had undertaken to help my family. Prior to when Orace lived with us, he worked in saw mills and trapped animals to make a living. He was also a talented carpenter and he took great pride in helping my family and many of our neighbours with construction work. As I think back to my early years, many images of Orace come forward.

One dark, bitterly cold March morning, while my mom was on her 3:00am check of the cattle, she discovered both a new calf born outside and a heifer having difficulty trying to calve. Awakened to my mom's voice as she called my older brother to help her, I heard her explain that while he got dressed, she would also get Orace to help as my dad was away from home. Both intrigued by, yet somewhat fearful of what was happening, I, too, got dressed, and made my way to the calving area. When I arrived, I saw Orace pulling the calf sled, my brother trying to hold the calf in place as he walked alongside the sled, and my mom trying to keep the cow at a distance so they could get the calf to the barn.

Once inside, Orace helped my mom and brother get a heat lamp onto the calf while also settling the cow into the pen. No sooner were they finished this work, when their attention turned to the heifer having problems calving. With my face peering between the railings on the gate, I listened as my mom and Orace discussed what they should do. As they talked, they quickly decided that calling, and then having to wait for the closest vet to arrive, would jeopardize the cow's life. Instead, they decided their only option was to try to pull the calf. This in itself was no easy task as the heifer thrashed in the straw—getting up, lying down, getting back up. It took the strength of all three of them to pull the calf. Despite their best efforts, the calf was born dead. My mom, brother and I cried as we knelt in the straw beside the body of the calf; our sadness deepening as the heifer struggled to sit up-right and stand. Attempting to lick her calf, a low mournful moan escaped her mouth each time she did so. Orace stood in the shadows at the edge of the pen and, as I looked into his face, I saw how deeply he too, carried the pain of what had happened.

Moments like these, when I awakened to Orace's presence and response to the particular circumstances we experienced as we composed our lives within this farming landscape, helped me grow in my understanding of him. Through time and experience, I knew that regardless of how others from within our community viewed him, to me, Orace was a sensitive and thoughtful man. Orace continued to live and work alongside my family long after I graduated from high school and left my rural landscape. He remained in his home on our farm until just before he became ill and was hospitalized. Orace was 86 years old when he died and he was a man for whom I have profound respect.

Negotiating Stories To Live By on the Professional Knowledge Landscape of Schools

Identity flows between, over, aspects of a person.

Identity is a river, a process.

*Contained within the river is its identity,
and its need to flow, to change to stay a river.*

~Anzaldúa (in Keating, 1996, p. 63)

Attending to the relational, shifting qualities of the stories I lived, told and re-told, creates a background against which the multiplicity of my storied identity emerges. Although as a child and adolescent I used different language to describe how the stories

Orace lived and those told of him were teaching me, today, from my present vantage point, I recognize that Orace's stories awakened me to aspects lingering on the periphery of my landscape—the marginalization of those whose stories did not fit with the plotlines constituting our community (Nelsen, 1995). I do not mean there were never any situations when the stories Orace, my parents or I lived by, did not come into conflict. There were certainly times when this happened. Yet, by living in relation with Orace, I grew to recognize his life, both the very obvious features as well as the qualities not seen from a distance. In this upcloseness, Orace expanded my imagination with possibilities of new stories to live by.

Greene's (1995) thoughts on the multiplicity and narrative quality of my identity help me express how the stories I live encircle the multiplicity of my experience within and between the landscapes on which I have lived, and across which, I have composed my life (Bateson, 1989, 1994; Mullin, 1995). She wrote: "neither myself nor my narrative can have...a single strand. I stand at the crossing point of too many social and cultural forces; and, in any case, I am forever on...[my] way. My identity has to be perceived as multiple" (p.1). While my childhood landscape was situated within a rural farming community, my teaching landscapes have been situated across primary, elementary, international, rural and urban locations. The stories I live as a teacher are inseparable from the stories I live as: woman, partner, researcher, daughter, sister, neighbour, a child who grew up in a rural farming community, etc. These stories, continuing to shape and be shaped by the multiple landscapes I have experienced, and will continue to experience throughout my life, are "at once a fragment and a whole; a whole within a whole. And the...stor[ies]...have always been changing, for things which do not shift and grow cannot continue to circulate" (Trihn, 1989, p. 123).

As a teacher, the stories I lived by became visible through my "personal practical knowledge" (Clandinin, 1985, 1986; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), embodied knowledge "that is experiential, value-laden, purposeful, oriented to

practice. Personal practical knowledge is viewed as tentative, subject to change and transient, rather than something fixed, objective and unchanging” (Clandinin, 1986, p. 19). Exploring the stories I lived by within the professional knowledge landscape of one school context creates openings for me to further understand the narrative nature of my knowledge, my contexts, and my identity and the links between them.

Identity as Temporal...Multiple

Images of a multi-aged year five and year six classroom in a school classified as “inner city” come to me. Although I am not certain why my school was defined in this manner, what I do remember as I began to live as a teacher on this landscape, was that I attributed this designation to the “stories of school” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996) shared with me. These stories were that many of our students came from “disadvantaged backgrounds.” Feeling as though I knew nothing of the rhythms of living a “disadvantaged life,” during my initial months of working at this school, I associated my students’ “disadvantages” with the visible aspects storied to me: single parent families, unemployment, recent immigration, poor nutrition, substance abuse, etc. Trusting that living these stories “disadvantaged” my students, I engaged in a narrative process of meaning making similar to the ways I mediated a sense of my self as a child through the stories I heard and lived. Forming images through which I interpreted and made meaning of this new landscape, my personal practical knowledge was shaped in new ways.

Clandinin (1986) helps me describe the process I lived through:

Images, as components of personal practical knowledge, are the coalescence of a person’s personal private and professional experience. Image is a way of organizing and reorganizing past experience, both in reflection and as the image finds expression in practice *and* as a perspective from which new experience is taken. (p. 166)

The images I formed shaped the ways I positioned my self on this school landscape and they also began to shape the stories I lived there, particularly the stories I lived as I

interacted each day with the students in this year five and six classroom. Quite unconsciously, I fell into living out the plotlines constructed from the stories of school surrounding me. Sharing and exploring an unfolding story of one of these students, Miguel, helps me give a sense of the shaping influence these plotlines had on the stories I initially lived as a teacher on this school landscape, and of the ways my stories gradually shifted and expanded.

My first memories of Miguel are those of an average sized 11 year old boy—a boy whose dark eyes studied me from across a classroom as much as I was observing him. Miguel's dark features immediately marked him as composing a minority of non-white students in our urban year five and six classroom. Almost twelve years old and beginning his sixth year in school, Miguel was boisterous and playful, with an infectious energy that quickly drew in the attentions of his classmates. I soon learned that Miguel's first language was Spanish and that he and his family had recently immigrated to Canada from El Salvador. Within days of our first meeting, I also learned that Miguel had six younger siblings, four of whom were also attending our school. Working with some of the year three and four students on literacy development, I met two of Miguel's younger brothers and as I listened to the stories they told, I heard images of close family relationships. When I was on supervision, Miguel's younger sister, grasping tightly onto my hand as we walked, shared with me, stories of their family. In her stories, I heard images of respect and admiration, particularly for her older brother, Miguel.

One fall morning, as I worked in a room adjacent to the school office, my attention was suddenly drawn to a conversation taking place in the outer office area. The halting, ashamed, apologetic voice belonged to one of my students...it was Miguel's. As I listened, I heard the volunteer to whom Miguel was to report, berate him for his late and inconsistent school attendance. Although separated by a solid concrete wall from Miguel, I felt his humiliation. Feeling my anger rise toward the volunteer, I left what I was working on, motioning for Miguel to come with me. Walking the short distance to our classroom, I noted that the hallway clock showed 9:55 a.m.. Miguel was indeed over one hour late for school. Entering the classroom, my mind filled with memories of many conversations that had unfolded in this and other staffrooms about "truant" students, children labelled as "lazy" and as "rule breakers" because their attendance was sporadic and inconsistent. Turning toward Miguel, I wondered for the 100th time...why

was he so often late for school? His story, in response to my wondering aloud about what I was thinking, left me stunned.

Shamefully hanging his head, Miguel's story unfolded. I listened. Only as his words travelled across the distance separating us, did I begin to understand that an important rhythm in his life, as the oldest son of a large, newly immigrated family from El Salvador, was to start each day by helping his school-aged siblings get ready for school. He prepared their breakfasts and helped them get dressed and arrive at school on time. In between their leaving on time and his own late arrival to school, he organized lunch for himself and his siblings and did laundry. Always arriving at school somewhere between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m., the personal rhythms of Miguel's life were glaringly obvious, often defined as different and, according to the temporal rhythms of the institution in which we found ourselves, they were unacceptable. School started at 8:42 a.m.! There were, no exceptions to this rule.

As I initially lived my stories as teacher in relation to Miguel, I carried an image of him framed within the boundaries of my own white, middle-class, stories of school. These stories were reinforced by similar stories of school shaping our school context. Not until I entered Miguel's humiliation did I *begin* to "recognize the 'other' in...[my] self" (Kohl, 1994, p. ix), my inner tensions urging me to learn more about him. Maybe my stories of Orace resurfaced from somewhere deep within me, reminding me to pay more attention to the particularities of the lives Miguel and his family were composing. Or, maybe I began to remember the disillusionment and rebellion I felt as a child when Gina and I started grade one together and how, in this new social context, I learned that the stories of friendship we were negotiating were considered unacceptable.

These tensions pulled me into deeper conversation with Miguel, to a space where he could name and explore the contradictions he was experiencing between his home and family landscape and our school landscape. It was in this space that I finally began to hear *his* stories, causing me to translate less of Miguel's stories through *my* experiential history, beginning, instead, as Lugones (1987) wrote, to travel toward his world:

The reason why I think that travelling to someone's 'world' is a way of identifying with them is because by travelling to their 'world' we can

understand *what it is to be them and what it is to be ourselves in their eyes.*

Only when we have travelled to each other's 'worlds' are we fully...[present] to each other. (p. 17)

Attending differently to the stories Miguel, his brothers, his sister, and his mother shared of their lives, my understanding of *their* worlds, my world and our school world, slowly shifted and expanded.

As the first two months of Miguel's and my year together were drawing to a close, I began to spend Saturdays at the school to meet with each of the students and their parents or grandparents to share and celebrate our work in the classroom. It was on one of these late fall Saturdays that I first met Miguel's mother. Sitting beside his mom as he began to talk about his experiences in our classroom, Miguel explained that he would speak in Spanish and English so that both his mother and I could understand what he was saying. Switching from one language to the other, Miguel talked about our classroom space and his classmates. He read pieces of his writing and shared thoughts about himself as a writer. He showed his mother some of our work on light and color and he talked about his passions for math and sports.

Engaged while Miguel was sharing, his mother finally spoke. Her words, translated by Miguel, told of her dreams for her son. She wanted to know how Miguel was behaving...did he listen when I asked him to do something? Did he get along with the other children in our classroom and school? Did I think he would be able to finish high school and go on to university?

Shifting uncomfortably while his mother spoke, Miguel began to gather his work and get up from the table. His mother, however, pulling on his arm, motioned for him to sit back down. As he did so, she spoke quickly and only briefly with him. Turning toward me, tears brimming in his eyes, Miguel tried desperately to contain his emotions until he was finished speaking. His words and the feelings they created within me, will stay with me forever: "Mrs. Huber, my mother and I just want to thank you for everything you've done for me."

When Miguel finished speaking, my journey toward understanding the narrow definition of life on which our attendance policy was based was just beginning. Miguel's

world, and the personal rhythms through which he knew and understood himself, were denied by our attendance policy defining that he *should* be arriving at school on time and he *should* miss no more than a maximum of two days per month. The rhythms on this landscape were foreign to Miguel. Nowhere in our policy was there space for understanding the role Miguel lived within his family context. Nor was there any recognition that his parents did not fit the status quo, middle-class plotline of working from nine until five. Instead, they found themselves working shifting hours while negotiating a variety of part-time jobs.

In trying to understand how Miguel experienced borders between his family landscape and our school landscape, I needed to attend to what his voice was saying and to what his stories were telling me (Greene, 1988, as quoted in Charger, 1996). In so many ways, I understood and recognized my own family stories in the stories Miguel was authoring. He took his role within, and his responsibility to, his family as seriously as I continue to live these stories within my family. Yet, in travelling to Miguel's world, I needed to attend to the *differences* between his stories and my stories, his stories and the stories of school shaping our school context. As Coles (1989) reminds us, "their story, yours, mine—it's what we all carry with us on this trip we take, and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them" (p. 30). Miguel was trying desperately to continue authoring stories that made sense within the particularities of his own family, historical, and cultural context. And, plotlines of success *were* entwined into the stories Miguel, his mother and their family were living. Their stories of success, however, were overshadowed by more dominant stories constructed around different cultural and historical plotlines. These dominant stories were lived out on our school landscape in terms of policy prescribing success around many plotlines. Strict adherence to the school attendance mandate was one plotline of school success. When interpreted through such narrowly defined stories of success, Miguel's, his mother's and his family's stories went unheard.

Retelling and Reliving Stories To Live By

*The unity of self, not as an underlying identity but as a life that hangs together,
is not a pre-given condition but an achievement.*

Some of us succeed, it seems, better than others.

None of us succeeds totally. We keep at it.

*What we are doing is telling and retelling, to ourselves and to others,
the story of what we are about and what we are.*

~Carr (1986, p. 97)

Laying my childhood stories alongside the shifting stories I lived with Miguel and his family helped me think harder about the educative qualities of the storytelling spaces I have experienced. Writing and reflecting on my stories of Orace, the tension I felt around the separation of the cattle from their calves, and Gina's leaving, helped me recognize the significance of my childhood storytelling places in shaping the shifting stories I lived by. As a child, these storytelling spaces were negotiated with my family and the people living and working alongside us and, in these relationships, I found spaces, not to solve the tensions I felt through these experiences, but to grow in my understanding. For example, when Gina and her family returned to their own home, I initially saw our parents as somehow contributing to Gina's and my separation. However, as I questioned and listened to my parents, and as they explained that Gina's family's home was next to the nearby lake and that her parents also made a living by selling fish, my understanding of why they were gone, shifted and expanded. It was in similar spaces of wondering that my stories of Orace also shifted and expanded.

Although I am not certain how old I was when he first came to live in the small, two-roomed house on our yard, I do remember my initial fear of Orace. Laying in my bed in the darkness of night, I often imagined him, wrapped in a skin of an animal he had hunted, creeping up the steep, narrow stairway toward my sister and me. Although my dad and some of the hired men teased me when I shared these stories, the continuity of Orace's presence in my life, hearing him tell less frightening stories of himself and witnessing the respect and compassion he also showed toward animals, helped me story him in different ways. Over time, during those occasions when a new story of Orace

emerged, like those times when he would come raging out of the door of his house, telling my cousins, brothers, sister and me to play somewhere else or he would “nail our hides” to one of the boards he dried animal skins on, although momentarily scared, I also remembered other images, other stories of him—the nights he sat at our table telling stories of his youngest sons who were close in age to me, watching him plant flowers with my mom or playing cards with my dad and neighbours. When I think about the multiplicity of stories I knew of Orace, I am again reminded of Lugones’ (1987) thoughts on ‘world’-travellers who experience “being different in different ‘worlds’ and having the capacity to remember other ‘worlds’ and ourselves in them” (p. 11). Living alongside Orace, I experienced the differing stories he lived and told and the differing stories I told of him across these experiences. When, for example, Orace acted in ways that scared me, this present experience was negotiated against a rich history of other experiences with him—a narrative history shaping each emerging new story I constructed of him.

As I think back to these experiences and the ways storytelling shifted and expanded my understanding, I realize that something more than just “telling my stories” happened within these spaces; the educative qualities of these storytelling spaces emerged through moving “from the story told to the possibility of a retold story” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998, p. 252). These relational, storytelling spaces created important openings for me to meaningfully negotiate alternative stories to live by. In these spaces my self continued to grow, shifting and evolving in response to my changing landscapes.

Eventually finding my self positioned on a school landscape as Miguel’s teacher, I came to my work with him, at a distance from the stories he was living. As already storied, this school landscape was also a storytelling place. However, the storytelling shaping this landscape was significantly different from my childhood landscape. Describing their concerns with how storytelling seems to be becoming commonplace in the educational literature, in inquiry, and in research writing, Clandinin and Connelly (1998) help me think further about these differences. Wondering if “telling the same story

again and again with no edge or tension for inquiry” (p. 250) creates a “kind of reification” or “fixed sculpture of our story, captured and frozen in time” (p. 250), Clandinin and Connelly reflected on how the educative “promise of storytelling emerges when we move beyond regarding a story as a fixed entity and engage in conversations with our stories” (p. 251). My interpretation of the “disadvantaged” stories shaping our school context initially kept them frozen and unchanging as I began to work with the year five and six students and their families. In growing relation with Miguel and his family, however, and *off* my school landscape, I learned to retell and live new stories of him.

While as a child and beginning teacher, I was not thinking nor speaking of my experiences on my childhood or school landscapes narratively, the background for my shifting stories of Miguel, of my learning to retell and relive new stories of practice in relation with him, was shaped through ongoing narrative inquiry within a teacher-research group initiated by Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly. Since 1993, the Alberta inquiry group has been composed of Jean Clandinin, Chuck Rose, Annie Davies, Karen Whelan, and myself. Continuing to be a place where storytelling, and making sense of the stories we tell, matters, we meet on a regular basis during the school year, spending Friday evening and Saturday together. The tape recorder hums as our stories unfold, circulating and shifting (Trinh, 1989) as we tell, listen to, and respond to one another’s stories. The story we compose over each one of these week-end get togethers is a story of inquiry described by Connelly and Clandinin (1990) when they write that “people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience” (p. 2). Within our teacher-researcher inquiry group, the positionings of storyteller and narrative researcher overlap as we tell, inquire into, and write narratives of our told stories and our experience of responding to and inquiring into them, within a caring community of co-researchers.

Paying attention to the multiplicity of stories shaping our professional landscapes is an important part of what we do within our inquiry group. For example, as I shared the

initial stories I was constructing of Miguel with my co-researchers, I embedded them within a larger story of figuring out how to teach in a school classified as “inner city.” At this point in the school year, my stories were constructed around plotlines shared with me as I became a new staff member at this school. The stories circulating around me on this new landscape were stories of “single parent families,” “families surviving from month to month supported by government social assistance programs,” “children and families who were new immigrants to our country,” as well as stories of “poor nutrition,” “child neglect and abuse,” and “parental substance abuse.” All of these stories were nested in a larger story of these children as “disadvantaged learners” because they came from “disadvantaged backgrounds.” Sharing various versions of this “disadvantaged inner city school” story within our inquiry group, the responses given back from my co-researchers were wonders about the particularities of the childrens’ lives. “What did these plotlines of disadvantage and inner city really mean?” they asked. Their wonders helped me realize that the images created by the stories I was repeating were very different from the stories and images I was coming to know of Miguel and the other year 5 and 6 children I worked with each day. Beginning to realize that, from a distance, some of these plotlines overlapped with all of the children I had taught, both in Canada and in The Netherlands, my co-researchers’ responses to my stories helped me think harder about how quickly the story of “disadvantaged background” had been translated into stories of these children as disadvantaged learners, both on our school landscape and within my self.

When the members of my group asked me about the particularities of the children’s lives with whom I was working, I told stories of how I was coming to know them:

At the beginning of the school year, Megan storied herself to me as a twelve and a half year old girl who was “L.D.” Not knowing what L.D. meant, I had asked her. She explained that in her second year of school she was diagnosed with attention deficit disorder and had been attending school in a segregated setting since then. When I wanted to know more about how this

“disorder” affected her, Megan explained that “what it basically meant, was that her brain needed to learn whole to part whereas the school system operated on a part to whole framework.”

No where in this story or in any of the other stories Megan shared with me, were there plotlines of living with a single parent, of a lack of food, or of abuse or neglect. There were, however, storied fragments of financial concern, of periods of time when both her parents had been unable to find work. There were also stories of intense distrust of a school system that seemed so unable to provide educational experience for all students.

I also told stories of other children, stories of Alicia and Daniel and their lives lived with their mothers and of their feelings of inadequacy because they were not living the stereotypical family stories of mother, father, circulating around them.

Response from my inquiry group members which asked me to look behind, between, and across the stories told to me of the children I was working with and their families, helped me to begin to see how narrowly these stories painted my students’ lives. In what ways were Megan’s, Alicia’s, or Daniel’s backgrounds disadvantaged? Against what or whose standards were they being labelled as such? Were *their* backgrounds *the* cause for the disadvantaged learner stories constructed for and told of them?

In these awakenings, I was drawn to attend more closely to what the stories of living an inner city, disadvantaged life were overlooking. Some of my students did story themselves as: not living in expensive homes, living with only one parent or with grandparents, recently moving to Canada from another country, coming to school hungry, having experienced abusive situations or substance abuse. Yet, while the stories they lived by interwove some or all of these experiences, the stories they were composing were multiple. They also lived stories woven with threads of love, tragedy, family, loss, responsibility, etc.—plotlines also woven into stories I too lived and told of my self. Beginning to recognize what these disadvantaged plotlines “blanked out” (Anzaldúa, 1990) and “took for granted” (Greene, 1993), helped me to become more awake to how easily I had fallen into them. Even on the morning when I finally and impatiently asked

Miguel why he was so often late for school, lingerings of these school stories were shaping my frustration with him. Understanding his lateness only through the frames of these school stories, I remained blind to, and at a distance from, the stories he was living, telling and retelling of himself.

My gradual shift from viewing my students as characters living out the roles scripted for them through our disadvantaged stories of school, to facing that I, too, had become a character within these stories—a character perpetuating limited and limiting stories of these children, was also shaped through response within our inquiry group. My most dramatic memories of experiencing this learning to *hear* the differing stories of those around me, of moving from the plotlines at the centre of the stories I was living and telling, to begin to hear those at the periphery of my experience, occurred when other members of our group shared stories that created inner tension for me. Feeling as though their stories were conflicting with the stories I was living and telling of this landscape, the safety of the plotlines I had been living within, were slowly interrupted.

When my early stories of life in this year five and six classroom were framed around the frustration I felt because I had not yet met so many of the children's parents, and my co-researchers responded with stories of their experiences lived out in vantage points different from those I had yet to imagine, subtle openings were created where I began to re-imagine my stories in new ways. For instance, when I listened to my co-researchers' stories of negotiating the landscape of school with single or shared parenting responsibilities themselves while also working full-time, I was drawn to think harder about the complexities shaping the lives of my students' parents. Viewing the parents of my students within the limited borders constructed around poverty, abuse, or lack of responsibility, I had not imagined that by stopping to listen to *their* stories, I might understand their worlds in different ways.

I was, and continue to be, significantly awakened by the gratitude Miguel's mother asked him to express at the end of our first meeting. Although I was not yet

awake to the particularities of her life or to the plotlines around which she was composing her story as Miguel's mother, her words stayed with me...initially because they were so unexpected. Slowly, I began to awaken to the tremendous faith she was placing in me to *hear the difference* between the stories constructed and told by others of her and her children and the stories they *were* authoring of their lives.

Composing Storied Identities: Futures Shaped Through Unfolding Stories

We inhabit 'worlds' and travel across them and keep all the memories.
~Lugones (1987, p. 14)

Several years have passed since I became the teacher of the year five and six class on the school landscape where I met Miguel and his family. In this passage of time, my stories of them have been told, retold, and relived many times. Similar to my shifting stories of Orace, these retellings have been significantly shaped through ongoing relationships with Miguel and his family. Continuing to experience a storytelling place within our teacher-researcher group, inquiring into the complexities of teacher knowledge, identity, and school landscapes, each of my retellings of Miguel and his family broadens my understanding of their worlds and of myself in relation with them. Retellings occurred for me even as I wrote this paper; retellings through which I became more profoundly aware of how much I learned by attending to Miguel's and his family's stories. One memory of Miguel and his family continues to tug at me:

One winter evening over a year ago, the telephone rang. Shyly, until he knew he was talking with me, Miguel's voice travelled toward me. His voice, shifting as he recognized my voice, wondered how I was doing with my work at the university. Was I planning to visit the school soon? Three of his younger brothers and sisters still attended school there...he often stopped by on his way home from the nearby junior high school. Maybe if I was visiting the school, we could get together for a bit? Reflecting on what my time looked like over the next week or so, I suggested that maybe I could bring my dog to the school yard and he and his brothers and sisters could meet us there. When I arrive at his house on the Sunday afternoon we

have agreed on, he is beside my car before I get the dog out of the back seat and onto his leash. I must come into the house, he says, his mother and father also want to visit with me.

Some time later, I find myself sitting in their living room. Surrounded by photo albums, many of the pictures document their incredible journey from El Salvador to Canada. In a circle surrounding these visual narratives of their experience, are Miguel, his parents, his sisters, his brothers, myself...all of us sitting on the living room floor.

Both then and now, I continue to think about the significance of my presence in Miguel's family's home and again, I know in ways that are almost inexpressible in words, the profound role story telling and retelling has played in the unfolding stories I live and tell, as a teacher, woman, researcher, partner, friend, sister, daughter, child who grew up in a rural farming community, etc.

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CONNECTING CHAPTER 1.1

Exploring the Narrative Unfolding of Self Across Time and Place

Karen Whelan *in relation with* Janice Huber

*The Looking Glass through which I step into the past
releases me to go on into the present....
It's only when you come to a certain point...
that it becomes clear how the beginning should go,
and what importance it has within the whole.
And it's usually after revising backward from the middle
that one can go on with the rest.
~Hoffman (1989, pp. 241-242)*

I relate well to Hoffman when she describes moving backward from the middle to create a beginning for her writing. Beginnings are difficult. You must have faith that the stories you lay down will eventually lead to some larger whole and that this whole will have some strength and meaning embedded within it. I offer a beginning in the form of a story. It is a beginning that came to me only at the end, after I explored the multiple “places of crossing” interconnecting my experience across different landscapes.

On the very last day of the school year in my junior high setting, my twenty six grade seven students and I set out on an adventure. We had decided that we wanted to spend our last day together, so we had settled on a hike through our local ravine with our destination being a small lake and picnic area where we could spend the rest of the day eating, relaxing, and having fun. The weather was on our side as we gathered together in front of the school with our knapsacks, baseball caps, bug spray, and sunscreen. We were well-prepared to head out on this trek. One of my students, Tyler, had already designated himself trail guide. He claimed to have walked these trails a thousand times; he knew the way. We followed confidently. Before long, the heavy outside sounds of the larger world faded into the background, becoming a distant hum as we moved deeper into the interior of the ravine. As we continued on, the worn and well-marked trails became more rugged and uncertain. We had to negotiate large, fallen trees, thick underbrush, and branches which whipped back at us from those who walked on in front. At one point, we came upon a wide creek which appeared impassible to my adult eyes. With no makeshift bridge in sight. I informed everyone that I thought we might have to turn back. They had other ideas in mind. “One big running leap would get us to the other side,” one of my students offered. I hesitated for a moment and then thought, “Why not? After all this was supposed to be an adventure.” Not being as agile as my young hiking partners, my running leap left me half covered in

ravine sludge. With smiles on their faces, Ryan and Mark reached down from the other side and hauled me up the embankment. It was at about this time on our journey that I began to seriously wonder about Tyler's orienteering skills as our trail guide.

At the outset, we had agreed to stick together on this hike, yet as the day wore on, some students disappeared on the rough trails ahead while others lagged far behind. I was beginning to feel a little apprehensive. "Could people actually become lost in a city ravine?" I wondered. Before leaving the school that day, the thought had not even crossed my mind, but it began living there in vivid colour as our journey continued. The peak of my anxiety came when one of my girls developed shortness of breath after apparently being stung by a wasp. This quick, little jaunt through the ravine was beginning to take on the qualities of a living nightmare. Finally, at long last, we heard the sound of city noise breaking into our ravine world. It was the most welcome sound I had heard in the past two hours. We had made it to the other side where we celebrated our last day together in friendship.

I entered my career as a teacher much like I entered the ravine that day. I felt well-prepared with my backpack of skills, beginning teacher knowledge, and fresh, new ideas to bring into the classroom. Filled with a naive certainty, I thought I knew the way. If I did become lost, I had trail guides, for both my parents, as teachers, had traveled these paths a thousand times. I could trust in them to show me the way. Like the challenges which the ravine presented, my multiple school landscapes have presented me with obstacles in different shapes and sizes, ones I have had to carefully negotiate in order to move on. As a beginning traveller, my first steps on my new school landscape were both bold and uncertain in the same moment. There have been others with whom I have shared my landscapes, who have journeyed on ahead, their distance bringing separation. They were unaware of my tentative negotiation of the rugged terrain and snapping branches that whipped back at me. But there have also been hands reaching out to me, helping me up when I have fallen, helping me to see the possibility in crossing seemingly impassible borders. In moments of heightened panic and uncertainty, when I as a teacher have experienced shortness of breath, there have been those who have traveled along-side me,

both on and away from my school landscapes, staying close as we negotiated our respective surroundings. Others have been like trail scouts, sharing their unique vantage point and understanding from where they were positioned further along on the trail. And there have been openings, fresh and inviting openings, that have brought me to visible “places of community” where I have been able to celebrate and openly wonder with others on this professional journey.

Reflecting on the multiplicity of these stories, I am reminded of my day in the ravine; of feeling certain and then lost, of travelling smooth, well worn paths and then venturing out into unknown territory. My stories provide me pathways of discovery, bringing meaning and form to my journey as a teacher. I have let my stories guide me in this writing process, one story leading into the next. I have had to follow these stories at times with uncertainty and a lack of inner direction, and at other times with a great deal of faith, knowing that in this narrative unfolding, I would come to further understand my evolving sense of self.

Clandinin and Connelly (1995) helped me to understand these feelings, these inner knowings of my self that live inside me, as my “stories to live by.” They are grounded in my very being. As Sewall (1996) so eloquently describes, they hold “the spirit that carries me from day to day” (p. 1). These inner stories, always in process, continuously revisited and recomposed within the context of my life experiences, hold promise as I try to “understand how knowledge, context and identity are linked and can be understood narratively” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p. 4).

Writers such as Bateson (1989, 1994), Carr (1986), and Dewey (1916), helped me to understand my “self” as something that is always in motion, a “story in the making” (Carr, 1986, p. 161). In this paper, I offer stories from my childhood landscape and school landscapes. These multiple landscapes which inform me and shape my identity are deeply connected; they overlap, and are constantly, “changing and growing, sometimes disappearing from view, sometimes struggling to emerge and to evolve over time”

(Neumann & Peterson, 1997, p. 9). By following these stories, I am able to attend more closely to how the stories I live by have been composed and recomposed, intimately interconnecting my sense of self across time and place.

Childhood Beginnings: Emergent Shapings of My Stories to Live By

Through the stories we hear who we are.
~Silko (1996, p. 30)

Illuminating the interplay between my personal landscape, where my stories to live by emerged, and my professional landscapes, on which my stories continue to be shaped, helped me explore the construction and reconstruction of my knowing from a richer and more expansive standpoint. As Greene (1995) points out, “the narratives we shape out of the materials of our lived lives must somehow take account of our original landscapes if we are to be truly present to ourselves” (p. 75). As I began to unravel the childhood beginnings of my stories to live by, it was stories, those told, written, heard, felt, and read, that enabled me to understand, in all my diversity and complexity, the person I am becoming.

There are pieces of certain texts I have come across in my readings that seem to resonate within my very being. They are more than just connections or insights, they are a part of me, inextricably linked to my past, yet central to my present life and my wonderings around understanding identity narratively. I find myself revisiting these pieces often, letting the words and images wash over me again and again.

One of these passages is found in the opening pages of Trinh’s (1989) book, Woman, Native, Other. Her passage begins, “It Was Long Ago...” and in the unfolding of her text she describes a group of villagers, much like a family, who gather together in a place of shared storytelling. The communal space of the village in which Trinh sets this text is familiar to me, it is a place I know. In this place of community, stories matter deeply and are shared in a rich and relational way:

The story never stops beginning or ending. It appears headless and bottomless for it is built on differences.... The story circulates like a gift; an empty gift which anybody can lay claim to by filling it to taste, yet can never truly possess. A gift built on multiplicity. One that stays inexhaustible within its own limits. Its departures and arrivals. Its quietness. (p. 2)

Much like the story Trinh describes here, the stories I live by have no rigidly defined beginnings or endings. They are, as Silko (1996) defines, “continuous story[ies] composed of innumerable bundles of other stories” (p. 31).

My evolving identity, shaped narratively, is centered within other stories of community. In particular, my family has provided me a sacred place of community and storytelling. Silko’s discussion of “communal storytelling” helps me understand more fully the central role my family played, and continues to play, in shaping my stories to live by. In her description of the Pueblo oral tradition, Silko describes a storytelling community where conflicting versions of a story are welcome, where truth lives within a web of differing versions and contradictions, and where “stor[ies] might also serve as a map” (p. 32). Growing up with parents living stories as teachers, allowed me a place to construct and reconstruct my stories of school. My childhood landscape was intertwined with differing and often contradictory stories of school landscapes: my own, my mother’s and my father’s. Representing these small pieces of stories, set within the context of my family life, helps me illuminate the interplay between knowledge, landscape, and my stories to live by.

I am warmed by the memories of those lazy Sunday afternoons when my family; my two brothers, sister, parents, and I, would arrive home from church and sit down together in the living room to listen to our favourite records. On a good day, my dad would dance some silly jig and make us all break into laughter. I can still picture myself lying in the patches of sunlight streaming through our large living room window onto the soft shag carpet. It was in the safety and comfort of this setting that I remember

the sharing of stories taking place. Sundays became a day to “catch up” on the week gone by, and to wonder out loud about what might lie ahead. Since both my parents were teachers, the exchange of stories almost always centered around school. School stories, shared by all, took on a place of importance in our home, and our family life moved naturally to the rhythm of the school year.

My parents were also actively involved in the school programs that influenced my brothers, sister, and me. They were very much interested in what we were experiencing in school. My father once spent nearly half a day in my grade three classroom carefully observing what went on there. My parents were concerned because I had come home crying one day and did not want to return to school. My grade three teacher had her “favourites,” and I, with my chubby, freckled face and messy red hair, had not been one of them. Whatever my father said or did that day on my behalf, helped to make my world at school more secure, and the worries in my eight-year-old life dissipated.

Many of my weekends as a child, and then later as an adolescent, were spent in my mother’s school where she was working as both a teacher and principal. I loved travelling with her to the north side of the city to a small, four classroom school called St. Williams. This was where my mother had her first principalship, and, I believe, it is also where I began to internalize what I thought teaching and learning was all about.

Just entering this building made me feel like I was coming into the warmth of my own home. While my mom was putting up colourful bulletin board displays or responding to her grade two children in their journals, I would be off exploring and revisiting my own familiar places in this school. When it was just my mother and I in this place, I felt as though I were the Queen in my very own magical land. It was so very different and somehow separate from the place I called school. In the small, cozy library, no bigger than my own living room, I would cuddle up on the floor with the large grey seal my dad had won at the local Klondike Days exhibition. Here I would read books and create my own fantasy world in which the puppets on the library shelves would come to life and play and talk with me. Later, I would move into the front entrance way and climb into a teepee and pretend I was the friend of a warrior girl, brave and strong. Together we would sit around the campfire and tell stories of courageous battles. Crawling out of the teepee would bring me back, once again, to the world of the school and I would wander over to watch the fish swim endlessly about in the round fish-bowl standing on a stool by the front door.

Inevitably, as the day wore on, I always ended up in my favourite place of all, my mother's classroom. The class guinea pig would squeal with delight each time I visited! At this time, twenty years ago, when phonics workbooks and rote, passive learning dominated my life and controlled my mind in school, my mother's classroom was a rich and creative learning environment which spoke loudly of her love for and interest in children. Her bulletin boards were filled with children's artwork and writing. There was a circular listening center at the back of the room where I could go to listen to stories on tapes. She had a reading corner with a picnic table and many small pieces of patchwork carpeting covering the floor, along with soft pillows and stuffed animals. There were secret nooks for writing all over the room with stickers and special paper in them. In these places I could write about anything my heart desired; no one stood over me to direct my thoughts. I even recall the old, discarded bathtub my mom dragged in from home, and set up in the center of her classroom. One year the children used it as a cozy reading spot, and another year they filled it with dirt and grew a garden.

This was the kind of classroom and school in which I loved to be. It was alive with the spirit of children even on the weekends when they were not physically present. This place became a central part of the dream-image I embodied about the kind of teacher I might someday become.

My father's work with children was more specialized and in many ways more marginalized than my mother's. He taught in segregated settings with children who had severe hearing impairments and cognitive learning disabilities. Most of my visits to my father's school happened during the day while he was working with his children. When I had time off during my junior high and high school years, I would head over to his school which was located right in our own community. When I came into the school I had to climb two flights of stairs and travel through two sets of solid double doors in order to arrive at the separate wing of the school where he and his children lived.

Like the children, my father's life as a special education teacher was distinctly separate and isolated from the mainstream of school life. His was a lonelier world than my mother's, one that I felt would take greater courage in which to live. The distance I had to travel through the hallways of this school to arrive at my father's classroom spoke loudly to me of how apparently insignificant these children's stories were in the lives of the rest of the people who shared this building. It was only when I entered my father's classroom that I felt the warmth and acceptance of these children who had so many special needs. My father was very much in tune with their

unique interests. I can recall the year he transformed his entire classroom into the bridge of the spaceship Enterprise so that the children could reenact their favourite episodes of Star Trek and imagine themselves as the fearless leader, Captain Kirk. I was always amazed at the incredible amount of patience my dad displayed through his work with his children. These were really my first experiences of being around others labelled as “mentally disabled,” as these people were kept hidden in places unknown to me while I was attending school.

At first I was fearful of their differences and approached their disabilities with caution. I recall one summer afternoon when a young man came up to me while I was sitting on our front porch and began to talk and gesture to me in a strange and incoherent manner. Filled with fear, I ran inside and yelled for my father. My dad came out and warmly greeted the man, a former student, with a hug and a handshake. He began to talk to him in a language they both knew, sign language. I watched from the window in amazement as they laughed and communicated in their own shared world. I learned so much from my father that day. I saw first hand the important work he was involved in and the difference he was making in the lives of those with disabilities. Through being a part of his work over the years, I have come to a deeper understanding and appreciation of people who are different from me.

Although these are only fragments of my childhood experiences, they are critical stories of a larger whole; they are the foundation on which I built, and continue to build, the stories I live as a teacher. The beauty and strength held within childhood memories are captured by hooks (1996) when she, too, reflecting on the importance of her narrative beginnings, writes “the beauty lies in the way it all comes together exposing and revealing the inner life of a girl inventing herself—creating the foundation of selfhood and identity that will ultimately lead to the fulfillment of her true destiny” (p. xi). It is only recently that I have come to recognize how influential these early experiences were in shaping my evolving stories to live by as a teacher. My experiences growing up with two parents as teachers became integral threads in the narrative unfolding of my life. My own experiences in school inspired very little in me in comparison to the rich, life shaping experiences I was surrounded by in relationship with my parents as I grew up. These experiences had the most profound impact on my desire to become a teacher. Their world

became a part of my world. It was a world I knew I fit into and one which I understood. I felt safe there and I knew I could be my self. I knew with great inner confidence that my embodied dream-image of becoming a teacher would someday be realized.

My Beginnings As A Teacher: Awakening to Shifting Stories of Community

And this, it turns out...is what I long for--the comfort that comes from being cradled... the freedom from insignificance.

~Hoffman (1989, p. 160)

The place of connection and safety on my childhood landscape, carefully woven with time, care, and the sharing of stories, presents a dilemma for me, for it is at once, both strong and fragile. Growing up in a family that provides me support, believes in me, sees and reaffirms my gifts, and gently nurtures me, provides me strength. By living in a space that was safe, relational, and trusting, I became accustomed to these qualities. Moving from the relational space of my family to the public space of teaching in my first school, brought forward feelings of discontinuity much like those I experienced as a child in school. Once again I felt disconnected from those surrounding me; feelings of distance and rejection resurfaced.

At my first school, I learned very quickly that I was not a welcome addition to the staff—I cost money and the staff was obviously not in favour of the principal's decision to hire me midway through the school year. This became evident at the first staff meeting when the principal spent the greater portion of the time trying to justify why I had been hired. It was determined that because of the large class size of thirty, the children in grade one were at risk as many had not yet begun to read or write. The grade one class had been split in the mornings so that I would teach half of the children language arts and math while the other teacher, Susan, would work with the remaining fifteen children in the same areas. From the outset, I believed that I did not stand a chance with this teacher as I felt she viewed my addition to the staff as a reflection of her own inadequacy. I became a constant reminder of what I felt she must have perceived as her own inability to cope. A wall of distrust, fear, and resentment quickly built between us—the four walls of my classroom and solid wood door soon became an architectural armor protecting me from the outside world.

As a beginner in my first professional community, I found myself alone in a foreign territory where I did not speak the language or know the customs. My positioning on this landscape, both as a newcomer and as a perceived intruder in the eyes of my teaching partner, only served to enhance my sense of isolation. Like Butala (1994) who arrives as a stranger on the landscape of southwestern Saskatchewan, I too, as a beginner in this new land, was desperately searching for a relational place, a “stable spot” where my stories of self could unfold. Although this was my shortest lived experience on a school landscape (six months in total), it had a powerful, shaping influence on my developing identity as a teacher.

Images From the Landscape: Shaping My Knowing

*An image is a bridge between evoked emotion and conscious knowledge
words are the cables that hold up the bridge.
~Anzaldúa (1987, p. 69)*

The landscape as an image or metaphor for understanding my experiences makes sense to me. I have been influenced by the thoughtful writing and research of people such as Bateson (1994), Butala (1994), Clandinin and Connelly (1995), and Silko (1996), who situate themselves and their understanding of their worlds in this metaphor. The landscape metaphor, as Clandinin and Connelly (1995) describe, “has a sense of expansiveness and the possibility of being filled with diverse people, things, and events in different relationships” (p. 4). The images this metaphor draws forth in me are critical as I begin to explore the places of crossing between my childhood and professional landscapes and their shaping influence on my evolving stories to live by.

To be hidden “within the safety of anonymity, of secrecy” (Heilbrun, 1988, p. 112) within my isolated classroom context, allowed me, in a very *individual* way, to develop and explore my skills in a less threatening environment. As Clandinin and Connelly (1995) remind me, this private and safe place, fairly free from scrutiny, was central to providing me the freedom to live my stories of practice, stories that made sense

to me and to the children with whom I worked. However, this new physical space had a profound impact on my “knowing” of self and others. Not only did the walls serve to keep others out, but they also kept me contained within. There were no intersections or meeting places with others, except outside of my classroom where I shared only the “safe stories,” ones which would not tarnish the image I felt I had to project to others. I recognize now, “through the flashes of insight that come from going over old memories,” (Bateson, 1994, p. 30) that the wall that went up between this teacher and I was, at first, largely constructed by those on the “professional knowledge landscape” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) around us. In justifying my arrival to the staff midway through the school year, the principal made apparent to everyone, staff, parents, and children alike, that the grade one program was in jeopardy and that the children required additional support. At a public level, this was explained away by the large size of the class which had thirty children in it, but the less visible story was that the teacher was struggling...the first large brick in our wall was laid.

My school landscape became a place of “separate knowing” characterized by a “depersonalization both of self and of others” (Schweickart, 1996, p. 312), a place where images of war began to surface. The emotional environment became fraught with tension over territory, positioning, and intentions. The physical environment became one of barriers and blockades, anything that would stop the perceived enemy in her tracks. As Clinchy (1996) points out, these places of separate knowing become defined by relationships which take on an adversarial stance and by discourse which is argument. For Susan and I, positioned as we were, a war on our shared landscape seemed inevitable.

In some instances, the armour of my own classroom was not enough to ward off impending intruders. In the first weeks in my program with the grade ones, I planned to do a winter theme and set up what I thought would be creative and motivating centers for the children. They had already begun to generate rich vocabulary and interesting ideas to get our reading and writing experiences underway. Susan came into my room one day, and told me that I had to do “pets” because that was what she had been doing

and it was the theme in the reading series, Pets and Puppets. I knew that this was an older reading series that promoted repetition and controlled language in its text. There was simply no way I was going to use it in place of an experience-based program which drew on the language and lives of my students. My background in language arts was strong and I confidently headed off to talk to my principal. . . I was met by a wall.

My principal felt it was critical that I do the same unit as the other grade one teacher as we had to be seen by the parents as a team. The use of the reader was also a must because parents would question why I was not using one when the other teacher was. I went back to my room feeling deflated and helpless. What was I going to do? I glanced over at the stack of red plaid phonics workbooks that Susan had given me, and worried that this would be next on her list of things I had to do with my students. How much of my self was I prepared to give up in teaching this class? How badly did I want this job?

This experience with my principal left me feeling increasingly frustrated and alone, creating a distinct division between the knowledge and feelings I carried within me and what I was being *told* to know, think, and feel. This embodied knowledge, “knowledge that is grounded in bodily cues and experiences,” (Goldberger, 1996, p. 352) has always been critical to my ability to make meaning of my life. Memories of the separation I experienced as a child between my family and school landscapes, intensified my present sense of becoming detached from the dream-image I embodied of my self as teacher, an image shaped through relation with my parents as teachers. I did not want to relive the story imposed upon me as a child in school, a prescriptive and isolating story narrowing the possibilities of the person I was becoming. Instead, I imagined creating, with these children, the sense of discovery, wonder, and belonging which I had experienced at my mother’s school.

My stories to live by, shaped by storytelling in a family setting where people knew and understood me, began to bump up against a story of school, initially characterized by isolation and separate development. The absence of these communal contexts in my beginnings as a teacher caught me off guard and had a significant impact on my evolving sense of self. As Bateson (1994) points out, “taking on a new role or

entering a new institution are both transitions when the self is put at risk” (p. 66). In my fragile beginnings, a different story of school emerged and began to define me in ways I had not anticipated.

My principal’s decision that day left me with a tight feeling in my stomach, an inner pull telling me that something was not right. This internal struggle filled me with a sense of discontinuity and anger. I was angered by these imposed borders, both external and internal, and I feared that their shaping influence might rigidly re-define my practice. I struggled with the apparent insignificance my stories as a teacher seemed to hold on this school landscape. As a newcomer to this professional context, I was positioned to live on the margins, observing others from a distance. There was no customary celebration or formal induction which automatically guaranteed my acceptance in this new professional world; I would have to find my own way. I knew that eventually I would have to learn how to live with my new colleagues, learn to find common ground, yet I wondered how much of my self, “the stuff of my identity, that can be felt in the bones,” (Hoffman, 1989, p. 194) I would be required to give up in the process. It was in this space, largely defined by external forces, that I experienced my first conscious professional memory of feeling as though I was losing my mooring and being cast adrift on a sea of uncertainty~it felt as though the stories I embodied no longer mattered.

Negotiating External and Internal Borders

One afternoon, Susan surprised me by asking me out for lunch. As we sat together at the mall, she proceeded to tell me that I needed to “tone down” my classroom. She felt it was a little too “showy.” These comments were timely as our parent-teacher evening was just around the corner. Because we taught the same children, she felt it was important that the parents see us as being on “equal” ground. I responded by telling her that the children and I had worked hard to create a space we loved, one that felt comfortable and was filled with the things that were important to us. I was not willing to compromise on this. She did not take my response well, and our drive back to the school was filled with an uncomfortable silence.

Our discussion that day reaffirmed for me that my way of living with children was understood only at a surface level—as showy, rather than as emerging from a narrative history, vital to who I was becoming as a teacher. Like Trinh (1989), I also came to see that “ ‘difference’ is essentially ‘division’ in the understanding of many” (p. 82). Living the script of the showcase classroom and teacher in this first school setting did not help my relationship with my new colleague. As Trinh (1989) points out, being perceived to be living out such a script of specialness “easily creates a distance—if not a division—between I-who-have-made-it and You-who-cannot-make-it” (p. 86). Susan began to resent the comparisons the children, parents, and other staff members were making, while I began to feel imprisoned in these scripts, unable to imagine how my colleague and I could ever come to know one another. More bricks were laid in the wall which came to define us as competitive rivals.

*I have almost forgotten my dream.
But it was there then,
In front of me,
Bright as a sun-
My dream.*

*And then the wall rose,
Rose slowly,
Slowly,
Between me and my dream.
Rose slowly, slowly,
Dimming,
Hiding,
The light of my dream.
Rose until it touched the sky-
The wall.*

~Hughes (1968, p. 426)

My growing fear of rejection, or being viewed as a failure, was overwhelming for me in my first year as a teacher. Anzaldúa (1987) reminds me of the danger involved with hiding parts of my self in the shadows. Such actions leave us feeling an overwhelming fear that we will be “found out.” As Greene (1988, borrowing from Arendt, 1958, p. viii) so aptly points out, “it is the function of the public realm to throw light on human affairs by providing a space where persons can show ‘in deed and word, for better and worse, who

they are and what they can do' ” (p. 114). This, however, was not how I experienced the landscape of this first school context. Instead, my experience resonates with Anzaldúa's understanding of what happens to our self when our vulnerabilities are viewed as “shameful” or “not normal.”

*She is at their mercy, she can do nothing
to defend herself.
And she is ashamed that they see her so exposed,
so vulnerable.
She has to learn to push their eyes away.
She has to still her eyes from looking at their feelings-
feelings that can catch her in their gaze,
bind her to them.*

~Anzaldúa (1987, p. 43)

I wish I could have come to see the wall that “slowly rose” between Susan and the stories I was living by, and my experiences in this school context, as a personal challenge, as an obstacle I could have overcome (Greene, 1988), but at the time its ominous presence blocked my vision and prevented me from seeing Susan, let alone knowing her. It also profoundly shaped how I saw my self. Lugones (1987) describes these borders as ones shaped out of our own arrogant perception of others, and cautions that if we continue to perceive people arrogantly, we fail to identify with them. The non-relational scripts shaping this school landscape left little hope for Susan and I to learn to “travel to each other's ‘worlds’ ” (p. 4)...to know one another's stories to live by.

Resistance: Shifting Stories to Live By

When, as an eight year old child in grade three, I was made to feel small and insignificant on my school landscape, it was my Father's need to enter that story which gave me the courage to resist the darkness of oppression and to be able to continue imagining something different for my self. Anzaldúa (1987) names this oppression as a dark underworld, the “coatlicue state,” a lonely place filled with uncertainty and tension that has the potential to bring movement if we choose to create an opening for our selves. It is a place where “our greatest disappointments and painful experiences—if we can make meaning out of them—can lead us toward becoming more of who we are” (p. 46). For me,

the transformation of the darkness I experienced on this school landscape came in the form of inner resolve, a determination that I was not going to live my life as a teacher in this separate and isolated manner. Perhaps the memories of my father's marginal experience as a teacher of children with special needs, shaped the necessity I felt to push against these "stories of school" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996). It must have been the fighter in me, my "Shadow-Beast" (Anzaldúa, 1987), that part of me that refused to be defined and constrained by a higher authority, that enabled me to rebel. In doing so, I was able to "[keep] the ground of my own being" (p. 16) and hold onto my stories to live by.

After some sound advice from my mother, I phoned up the language arts consultant and invited her out to my classroom. Her visit proved to be most reinforcing and freeing for me as a beginning teacher; a voice from on high was giving me the go-ahead. She told me to shelve the workbooks and to continue my winter theme, sprinkling in the Pets and Puppets only when necessary (which proved to be only when I was being observed and evaluated by my principal). I was slowly learning the rules of the game.

It was during this first act of resistance in my profession that I learned I could find a sense of personal agency by placing my self outside constricting restraints and "ready-made narratives" (Heilbrun, 1988, p. 50). I began to live a "counterstory" which Nelson (1995, p. 24) defines as "narratives of resistance" enabling us to challenge or reconfigure the more dominant narratives in which our own stories are embedded. What was missing in my counterstory, however, was a necessary place of community *on* my school landscape. Instead, the roots of my counterstory took hold *off* my school landscape in conversations and reflections with my mother and father; two people concerned with the lives of children and the life space of schools. This space off my school landscape allowed me a boundaryless storytelling place where, "the remembering and the retelling were a communal process" (Silko, 1996, p. 31) and where, "the promise of storytelling emerges when we move beyond regarding a story as a fixed entity and engage in conversations with our stories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998, p. 251).

Self and Other: Living Stories of Distance and Relation on the Professional Knowledge Landscape

*It is no light thing to be confirmed in one's being by others....
For in its essential being this gift is not a looking at the other,
but a bold swinging—demanding the most intensive stirring of one's being—
into the life of the other.*

~Buber (1965, p. 78-81)

Unlike the communal storytelling space of my family context, my knowledge as a beginning professional was confined to the space of my classroom. My lunch hours and recesses were spent in the classroom where I felt the most untouchable and where the “secret stories” that I carried in me could live more freely. In this isolating space, the limitations placed upon my growing knowledge as a teacher were enormous, moving my self further from knowing which “arises within social contexts and in multiple forms” (Lyons, 1990, p. 174). Like Butala (1994), and Lorde (1984), I felt positioned within my new community as an outsider, and my stories to live by became increasingly silenced. It is not at all surprising that I became a recluse in this first assignment, consciously detaching my self from the rest of the staff.

The dividing line between my “in-classroom” and “out-of-classroom” place on the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) became a very distinct border: a border “set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 3). For the most part, the walls of my classroom did provide me protection. In my private enclave, I could live the stories I wanted to live and shape the experiences I wanted to shape. Outside of my classroom, I was never quite certain what to tell or not tell and so I developed a “conventional mask,” one that would hide my true being in the world (Greene, 1988). The stories I told while wearing this mask became my cover stories: they were stories of confidence, self-assurance, and competence as a beginning teacher. Shifting back and forth between “secret stories,” stories I felt free to live within my own classroom, and “cover stories,” stories which fit the external story plotline of the out-of-classroom place, shaped a yearning in

me for spaces I had lived beyond my school context—spaces where my self was free to shift and grow in its multiplicity.

It was many years of storytelling set around teaching and learning taking place in the rich, communal space of my family that allowed me insights which, from the outside, were perceived to be beyond my years of experience. From the vantage point of Susan and other experienced teachers on this landscape, there appeared to be a predetermined amount of knowledge a beginner was to have within their repertoire; apparently I did not fit this defined space. My family helped me to appreciate that the construction of knowledge moves well beyond the predictable, step-by-step teaching often defining my own experiences in school as a child. It was through the experience of hearing, sharing, and constructing many stories over time in a family setting characterized by safety, trust, and authentic response, that my knowing was gently nurtured and stimulated. As Coles (1989) attests, we can be offered the wisdom of others through stories told in community until this wisdom becomes, truly and unforgettably, our own. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) define this embodied teacher knowledge as, “convictions and meanings, conscious or unconscious, that have arisen from experience (intimate, social, and traditional) and that are expressed in a person’s practices” (p. 7).

Living the “narrow spectrum of reality” (Anzaldúa, 1990), partially created through cover stories, my knowing of others on this school landscape was profoundly shaped in absence of community. With these multi-layered boundaries around self and other in place, there was little hope or possibility of developing meaningful relationships. Everything simply remained on the surface. In such isolating spaces, perspectives become foreshortened. With the emotional and physical borders separating us, Susan and I could only ever hope to hold very limiting and narrow viewpoints of one another. As Hoffman (1989) reveals, it is in these confining spaces that “others tend to become puzzling Others—and so do our selves, which grow in strangeness and uncertainty in direct proportion to the opaqueness of those around us” (p. 267). There was no one person in

my school that I could talk with in order to make sense of these experiences and their shaping influence on my stories to live by. My sense of self was left in a very fragile and uncertain state. In these confining spaces, filled with physical and emotional borders, the faces of those I worked with were distanced from me and I became distanced from my self. These are the stories and experiences I carried within me from my first six months of teaching.

Moving Toward Stories of Relation

It would not be until late in the first year on my second school landscape that I would find a space where I could live authentic stories of self~shifting, in relation with others, the stories of who I was becoming as a teacher. Reflecting on my memories of one of the students with whom I worked in this school context, creates an opening for me to begin to give voice to my knowing of a relational space that emerged between my self and two significant teachers~Maureen and Eunice~a space that continues to embrace my understanding of the possibilities which become present when self and other live in relation.

At the start of the school year, Kendall was a child in my classroom who was shy and quiet~a child with big brown eyes who looked out at the world from a face that seemed forever downcast. He lived with his grandmother, Alice, and his older sister in a small house situated on the corner directly across the street from the school. Alice was a big, burly woman with a gruff temperament. She made regular visits to our school office with one complaint or another. Often times we felt these visits were created by Alice out of her own need for company and conversation.

Kendall's March conference was one I was not looking forward to. Alice frightened me even on her better days, and there was much I needed to share with her about Kendall and my concerns for his well-being. Our communication throughout the school year had not been the greatest, but on this particular day she really let me have it. She told me that all of Kendall's problems in school had started when he came to my class, that he hated school and hated me. Kendall sat silently at the table throughout this rampage until she finally stood up, grabbed his arm, and stormed out of the classroom.

I sat there in the stillness of my empty classroom with the stinging impact of her words still hanging thick in the air around me. I became engulfed by those words, by my own inner frustration, by the isolation surrounding me. I laid my head down on the table and cried. It was in this moment of what seemed like hopeless despair that Maureen and Eunice, two of the veteran teachers on staff, walked into my room. At first, I was extremely embarrassed that they had caught me with my guard down in what must have looked like a pathetic moment of weakness. I soon felt differently as they came and joined me at the table to discover what was going on. I am certain they must have been surprised that I was reduced to this state, although they did not say so. Not unlike my first school setting, I had portrayed a fairly strong and shiny suit of armour for the greater part of the year and I had a sense it was time to just be me. I poured my self out to them, letting them see all of what this experience with Kendall had made me feel. They listened and nodded; they understood. They both shared their stories of children who, for one reason or another, left them feeling like failures. Eunice reminded me of a boy in her class who had been dragged out of the room earlier that year. She said that she had been so humiliated by my witnessing of that experience because she felt that I must have wondered why she could not handle the situation, after all, she was an experienced teacher.

It was the sharing of these vulnerable stories on a quiet afternoon in March that forged a new space for Maureen, Eunice, and me. It was the beginning of both a personal and professional conversation that would sustain itself over time, distance, and many life changes. Ours has become a connected relationship, grounded in safety and trust, and it continues to carry us forward to this day. As women who cared, Maureen and Eunice displayed to me that day the embodied essential qualities which Heilbrun (1988) speaks of: “friendship, intimacy, admission of vulnerability, the openness of loving gesture” (pp. 101-102). It was our conversation, authentic concern, and real response brought about by the surfacing of this underground story, that finally allowed me to enter a space where I could let my armour down on my school landscape. Opening my self and others up to my fears and vulnerabilities was critical to this *crossing* to a new place of understanding. This is best captured in Anzaldúa’s (1987) discussion of “*la facultad*” which she describes as the capacity to see in the surface of our experiences, the meaning of deeper realities.

There is a deeper sensing.... It is anything that breaks into one's everyday mode of perception, that causes a break in one's defenses and resistance, anything that takes one from one's habitual grounding.... deepen[ing] the way we see...people; the senses become so acute and piercing that we can see through things, view events in depth, a piercing that reaches the underworld (the realm of the soul). (p. 39)

On that day in late March, with little of the school year left ahead of me, Eunice and Maureen reached their hands across the border, similar to the one which had so profoundly separated Susan and I on my first school landscape, helping me to live new stories of understanding, connection, and possibility~stories of hope. By sharing our common experiences we were able to dissolve the distance between us and find a new place of understanding (Clinchy, 1996). We were able to arrive at the insight Bateson (1994) speaks of: “ that depth of understanding that comes by setting experiences, yours and mine, familiar and exotic, new and old, side by side, learning by letting them speak to one another” (p. 14). It was a place of intimate connection. Together we were veteran and novice, experienced and inexperienced, living differing stories, yet in the end, it was our differences which enabled us to imagine a relational space on the landscape of this school.

What strikes me as being critically important about this new space was that it allowed my discomfort and uncertainty a place to live in a more public and visible way. This place had a distinctly different feel to it, and it directly influenced my continuing relationship with Kendall and his grandmother. The experience and wisdom that Maureen and Eunice brought to our relationship helped me to imagine other ways of reaching out to both Kendall and Alice. By the close of the school year, I felt I had made a difference in their lives, and they, in mine. The relational space we re-imagined, helped turn my story of personal failure into one of possibility. It was this place of possibility that became central to my continuing search for other professional landscapes, where my desire, “[to

live] a life that connects to others, one that makes moral sense,” could grow (Coles, 1989, p. 139).

Images Speak Through Me: Attending To My Embodied Landscape

*I am an act of kneading,
of uniting and joining that not only has produced
both a creature of darkness and a creature of light,
but also a creature that questions the definitions
of light and dark and gives them new meanings.*
~Anzaldúa (1987, p. 81)

My writing comes to me in short bursts of awareness and at odd moments when I least expect it. Images captured from a visit to my parent’s home become moments of awakening, bringing form to the important fragments and abstract thoughts which live inside me and are a part of my research. Anzaldúa’s (1989) words speak to me of the importance of attending to these connected images which emerge at the crossings of my internal and external landscapes as I search to transform my life experiences into new learning and creative potential:

Only through the body, through the pulling of flesh, can the human soul be transformed. And for images, words, stories to have this transformative power, they must arise from the human body—flesh and bone—and from the Earth’s body—stone, sky, liquid, soil. (1989, p. 75)

These moments of awareness and transformation remind me that my wonderings and puzzlements are embodied, that they travel with me as I live my storied life. As Trinh (1989) reaffirms, “we *are* our bodies.... We write—think and feel—(with) our entire bodies rather than only (with) our minds or hearts” (p. 36). This understanding of knowledge as something that is experienced or acquired with *all* of who we are, and embedded within the landscapes we live on, has been important to my work. It helps to make less rigid the boundaries which often sharply define how knowledge develops, and it gives me permission to attend more fully to the images and feelings which I sense around me as I live my life. Equally important is my recognition that:

To write, to be a writer, I have to trust and believe in myself as a speaker, as a voice for the images. I have to believe that I can communicate with images and words and that I can do it well.... I cannot separate my writing from any part of my life. It is all one. (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 73)

With this in mind, I chose to clothe my moments of insight (Bennett, 1997) in poetic form, giving voice to a way of knowing with which I am comfortable, so that I might be able to communicate the meaning of these images more thoughtfully to my self and others. An image I describe in the following pages helps bring shape to, what at moments, seems inexpressible.

It is not surprising to me that one of these sensory flashes of insight came as I made one of my regular visits to my parent's home. On this particular visit, I arrived to find the house empty, with the exception of our family dog, Mobi. I decided to have my usual cup of coffee anyway and sat down on the couch in front of the large living room window. It was in this quiet and peaceful place that my entire being experienced a visual image, sent as a gift from the exterior landscape, that helped me to put words to an abstract thought that had been playing around inside my mind for some time. Butala (1994) describes beautifully how these split seconds of insight are experienced, "as if the inside of my body were, at such times, a darkened theater into which a shaft of wisdom, some visionary light, suddenly is thrust before the light goes quickly out again" (p. 96).

These are the words that came to me in that moment:

*I sit at my parent's home,
Mobi, our family dog, is at my side.
I am filled with a peaceful and quiet stillness.
The early afternoon sunlight plays through the
branches and casts itself upon my lap.
I am struck suddenly by this play of shadow and light,
and I begin to run my fingers over the blurred grey hues
that live somewhere in between the branch's shadows
and the sun's gentle rays of light.*

*It is in this border in between,
the grey that emerges from the blend of darkness and light,
that I am able to find some hope.
It is in contrast that difference is revealed.*

Although this image of contrast which emerges from darkness and light may appear to be commonplace, it is a metaphor that has guided me for many years. I found its presence in papers I wrote as an undergraduate, in drawings I sketched, in poetry I wrote, in picture books I love, in symbols I bring into my classroom, and in my teacher planning sheets. I am learning that these metaphors that live within me, have importance; they, too, are central to my stories to live by. By attending to them more thoughtfully, I am able to deepen my understanding of my self, others, and the landscapes that shape me. As Bateson (1989) describes, “A metaphor goes on generating ideas and questions, so that a metaphorical approach to the world is endlessly fertile and involves constant learning. A good metaphor continues to instruct” (p. 135). The metaphor I am describing, brings form to my understanding of the differing landscapes that intersect, intertwine, and overlap with one another across my experiences. It has been the living on, and negotiation between, these multiple places that compelled me to return to a university setting and begin a doctoral program. I wanted to have the necessary time, distance, and space to be more reflective about the shaping influence of the multiplicity of these landscapes; to ask questions of them, and to search out new meanings.

Awakening To Difference

As I think about how my stories to live by are negotiated through distance or relation with others, I am thoughtful of the words spoken by Nelson Mandela to the people of his country in his Inaugural Speech: “[Our] playing small doesn’t serve the world. There’s nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you” (Mandela, Inaugural Speech, 1994). Reflecting on sharing my stories to live by without diminishing that of another, I have come to recognize that it is something I must continually negotiate in my relationships with others on the

professional knowledge landscape of schools. I remain fearful, however, of the shrinking self which Mandela speaks of, for I have lived this story and I have felt the dramatic impact it can have on my evolving identity. The landscapes on which these shrinking selves live are places of normalization that, “wipe[s] out differences, forcing them to be repressed, to become matters of shame rather than pride” (Greene, 1993, p. 212). I do not want to hide any stories of my self within the school landscapes I live on in this profession; I want all of my self, in my multiplicity, to be out there. By communicating the truth of my self at a place of crossing with other people’s lives, I may inspire them to be more completely themselves (Jong, 1995). As in the story of Maureen and Eunice, they too, might inspire me to be more completely my self.

It is recognition of this intimate interconnection I have with the lives of others that makes it necessary to examine more carefully the impact I have upon them. In attempting to erase or bury my stories of discomfort, I face the danger of experiencing what Coles (1989) describes, through the story of another, as “ ‘moral drift’... an indifference to others that can become a habit” (p. 116). Looking more closely at my painful stories, writing them down, reflecting upon them, and reconstructing them, allows me to move closer to understanding the harm I may have caused others, and, thereby, my self as well. It is this discomfort which informs me and offers a fresh starting place for new understanding (Bateson, 1994).

As I read back over my stories, distanced now by the months since I set the words down in text, I heard and saw something different given back to me, something that at first was not apparent. In my stories of Susan and the tremendous struggles we experienced as we tried to negotiate our relationship, I saw places or openings where I could have crossed, where I could have reached out and somehow made things different. What might have happened had I responded differently to Susan when she asked me to tone down my classroom? In place of my silence, I could have shared with her the strong images I carried within me from my childhood, of the classroom spaces my parents

created with children, revealing more of my self with her that day. Perhaps then she might have come to a deeper appreciation of why the physical environment of my classroom was so very important to me and to what I believed about children, teaching, and learning. If I had asked more questions of her at that moment, I might have opened up a whole conversation about what was causing her discomfort~I might have heard more of the stories she was living by. Instead, my response narrowed the possibilities for further exploration of the dilemmas defining our relationship. It has been through other stories, like the relational one lived out between Maureen, Eunice, and my self, that I have been provided a more expansive understanding of how difference can help us to resonate across boundaries and our common struggles can come to present a common meeting place. For Susan and me, at that place and time in which our story unfolded, and in the manner in which we were positioned on the landscape, we were unable to address the basic challenge which Bateson (1994) believes we face in an interdependent world: “to disconnect the notion of difference from the notion of superiority, to turn the unfamiliar into a resource rather than a threat” (p. 233). Had I the insight I do today, I would have responded differently. Of that, I am certain.

Attending to Places of Crossing

It has been both my living and negotiation of contrasting worlds; the dark and the light, the center and the margins, the public and the private, the personal and the professional, the distant and the close up, the found and the chosen, that informs my work and provides me a framework for understanding the stories which I have chosen to tell. By living in these contrasting worlds filled with change and diversity, I have been “privileged to enter, if only peripherally, into a diversity of visions” (Bateson, 1994, p. 12). The place that lives in-between these contrasting worlds is a place of crossing, a grey area that connects these contrasting places. Those who dwell in these grey areas live in an uncertain yet hopeful state of existence, for they simultaneously live on the margins of this difference while also being provided a more expansive view of the contrasting worlds

which they must constantly negotiate. It has been through the multiplicity of my experiences and changing vantage points across landscapes, that I have been allowed to see and understand more fully my storied self and the storied selves of others.

There are many thoughtful writers who, like Anzaldúa (1987), are struggling to provide shape and definition to the contrasting and differing landscapes they experience so that they might better understand the spaces which exist “in-between.” These grey areas which emerge at the crossing places of shadow and light, of difference, have been given many names in the literature, but perhaps the quality or nature of these spaces are not so very far removed from one another. Anzaldúa (1987) calls these spaces borderlands where people of diverse cultures meet in dialogue to create new traditions; for Greene (1995), they are places of imaginative possibility where diverse others can appear more fully before one another; Bateson (1989) thinks of them as meeting places at the edges where lines are blurred, allowing new vision, creativity, and imagination to emerge; for Trinh (1989) and Silko (1996), they are places of community and shared storytelling where ambiguity, tension, and contradiction are invited; Nelson (1995) refers to them as chosen communities where counterstories which disrupt the dominant narrative can thrive; for hooks (1990) they are places of understanding where the center and the margin are a part of a larger whole; for Buber (in Friedman, 1991, p. x) they are the narrow ridges where there is “certainty of meeting what remains undisclosed;” for Clandinin and Connelly (1995) they are educative spaces where the expression of the desires for storytelling, relationship, and reflection can live.

A quality I found unique to all of these writers is that they, themselves, live on the margins of experience. It is in these places, “located outside dominant power structures,” that the marginalized can begin to “articulate their histories, needs, and desires ‘for themselves’ instead of only in the ways encouraged by their ‘masters’ favored conceptual frameworks” (Harding, 1996, p. 446). The writers mentioned above have come to recognize diversity, tension, and ambiguity as central to their understanding of their

experiences, and they openly resist appeals for unity and harmony. It is that ever competing “center” that calls for “homogeneity within the self” and dictates, “observable constraints on behaviour” (Mullin, 1995, p. 12), that marginalizes these same writers. Throughout their diverse lives and careers, these individuals have been called to straddle two or more different worlds and have found themselves torn with where to anchor themselves, whether it be between: theory and practice, margin and center, illegal alien and citizen, feminine and masculine, visible and invisible. Although they constantly feel pulled by a master narrative that prescribes unity, it is their recognition of living in and between these multiple worlds, and their open acceptance of the uncertainty and diversity which live there, that has provided them a richer and fuller appreciation and understanding of the merging borderspaces which live in the grey “in-between.” bell hooks (1990), a feminist African-American writer speaks of what it means to live in these differing worlds in a manner that enables one to see more wholly:

Living as we did—on the edge—we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked from the outside in and from the inside out. We focused our attention on the center as well as on the margin. We understood both. This mode of seeing reminded us of the existence of a whole universe, a main body made up of both margin and center. (p. 149)

In my continuing work in a research community with Jean Clandinin, Michael Connelly, Janice Huber, Chuck Rose, and Annie Davies, and our investigation of the professional knowledge landscape, I am inspired to think about what these in-between places, these relational spaces, might look like in schools, what their qualities might be, and how they might come into being. If it is in contrast that difference becomes more visible, then the dilemmas which arise out of the clash between the in-classroom and out-of-classroom places (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995), the interior and the exterior landscapes (Silko, 1996), and the public and the private realm (Arendt, 1958), create an opening for possibility. It is in the overlapping of these contrasting places that a new hue may form

and where the stories of teachers' lives may emerge more fully and authentically on the landscape of schools. It would seem reasonable to assume that these relational spaces, with all the promise they hold, would be openly embraced in schools where imagination, community, and storytelling are so vital. Yet, my stories and experiences speak to me of an *increasingly* fragile existence of these spaces in schools. It is, therefore, not only a recognition and understanding of these relational spaces that is critical to understanding the narrative unfolding of selves, but an appreciation of the barriers which prevent these places from coming into being, and of the distancing which prevents us from seeing the possibility of what these spaces might offer.

Narrative Unfolding *In Relation*

May my story be beautiful and unwind like a long thread....

A story that stays inexhaustible within its own limits.

~Trinh (1989. p. 4)

There are countless other stories I could share of both the connected and disconnected spaces I have continued to experience throughout my career as a teacher, of the “educative” and “mis-educative” spaces I have lived (Dewey, 1938). But what seems important to me is my own recognition and growing understanding of how necessary it has been to have lived in differing positions and landscapes, both professional and personal. To have lived multiple stories of borders, bordercrossings, and relational spaces, has brought me to an appreciation of what the presence and absence of these critical places in my life have come to mean to me. In addition, I have developed a deeper recognition of the struggle involved in creating places of crossing which hold the potential to move me from places of confining borders to relational spaces of possibility. By opening my self up to “multiple layers of vision” (Bateson, 1994, p. 12), I can begin to broaden my vantage points on my shifting landscapes and see more of what, at first, may not have been visible. It is with these new eyes that I may be allowed to see more clearly

how my stories to live by shape and are shaped by the relationships I enter into on the landscape of schools.

As Bateson (1994) describes, “learning to know a community or a landscape is a homecoming. Creating a vision of that community or landscape is homemaking” (p. 213). My “familiar and safe homeground” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 13) has come in different forms throughout my career, yet what has remained constant has been what sustains me; the affirmation, understanding, safety, care, and hope I find in relation with the people who live in these spaces.

There is a moral quality to these relational contexts~a quality I find ever-present in the space my family continues to provide me. Hoffman’s (1989) description of her homeland captures the powerful and life-shaping place my own personal landscape has been for me.

The country of my childhood lives within me with a primacy that is a form of love.... It has fed me language, perceptions, sounds, the human kind.... No geometry of the landscape, no haze in the air, will live in us as intensely as the landscapes that we saw as the first, and to which we gave ourselves wholly, without reservation. (pp. 74-75)

Negotiating relational spaces, like the landscapes I share with my family, colleagues like Maureen and Eunice, and my research community, are essential to my growth, to my evolving stories to live by, and to my intimate knowing of other’s stories to live by. These spaces allow me room to wonder aloud and to think deeply about my life experiences~spaces in which my identity, imagination, and capacity for storytelling remain boundless. These spaces help me to understand what it means to live relationally.

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I wish to acknowledge the significance of the multiple relational spaces where my stories continue to unfold.

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CHAPTER 2

Entangled Lives: Enacting Transient Social Identities

Janice Huber *in relation with* Karen Whelan

Each morning we come together in the comfort of our borrowed office space, a place we have slowly come to claim as our own. At first this place remained stark, our presence unnoticed; a typical university office space. Over time we began to leave remnants of ourselves behind; important writings, favourite books, snacks and treats left in storage. We also began to gather new treasures, a round table, our little stuffed frog named Ponder, and magnets and note pads to personalize our space. Recently a colleague draped a flowing, colourful Kente cloth across the window, a representation we have come to see as symbolic of our journey on this university landscape. Its bold unfolding speaks to us of our determination to draw strength from what we know and from one another.

With morning sunlight streaming through the windows, our days begin in conversation over coffee. On one such morning, our talk leads us to wonder about how we might write our relationship? We knew we would be expected in twenty odd pages or so to try to give an account of our research experience, our relationship, our shared work, and the many dilemmas emerging out of it. Within the confines of a traditional, academic paper, we wondered how we could possibly express what we wanted to. Several cups of coffee later, our ponderings lead us to imagine ways to move beyond the scripted story of what an academic paper *should* look like. The results of our imaginings is the writing that follows.

The story we tell is set within a present university landscape with both of us positioned as doctoral candidates, and within an historical narrative context embracing the multiple landscapes of our lives. At times, our storytelling stays within frames, while at others, it breaks free. In this way, we feel we have honoured the temporality of our shifting identities across moments and memories we have lived together. By sharing our words with you, we hope to bring insight into what the living of our relational space has

meant to us, to our stories to live by¹, our knowing of one another, and the multiple worlds we share. Unpacking a story of our relationship is what this paper is about.

You and I are close, we intertwine; you may stand on the
other side of the hill once in awhile, but you may also be me,
while remaining what you are and what i am not. (Trinh, 1989, p. 90)

Trinh's words speak to us of our relationship, a relationship in which our thoughts and words, feelings and interpretations of our worlds have become entangled. Bringing an intense knowing of the *other*-knowing that is not smooth and predictable, but textured, knotted, and frayed by our difference~our entanglements have been necessary to the relational space we have determined together. In knowing one another these ways, we have learned to expect ambiguity, uncertainty, and moments of tension. Borrowing Trinh's (1989) thoughts on the multiplicity of identity and the infinite layers that live within and between selves, and their overlappings, we work to "unsay" the story of separate development, shaping our institutional context (and at times, our selves) rewriting it with presence to "interdeterminancy," an awareness of the profound interconnection between *self* and *other*.

The textual representations shaping this paper are not merely aesthetic creations but important sensory re-presentations of the story we negotiate and the wonders we explore together. Our play with alternative textual arrangements, like relational writers who have gone before us (Clark, 1998; Cushman, 1996; Godard, 1994; Yancey & Spooner, 1998), is another way to re-present the journey of our entanglements~exploring moments of intersection between our narrative histories as well as moments of distance. Because the story we give an account of was shaped by boundaries and limits, as well as fluidity and movement, we hope that, as reader of this text, you will become part of the transient process we live (Clark, 1988).

Pushing against dominant constructions of what counts as theoretical knowledge, de Lauretis' words (1984, in Godard, 1994) strengthen our intentions as relational writers:

Strategies of writing and reading are forms of cultural resistance. Not only can they work to turn dominant discourses inside out (and show that it can be done)...they also challenge theory in its own terms, the terms of a semiotic dependency space constructed in language, its power based on social validation and well-established modes of enunciation and address.

(p. 53)

For us, our writing is an act of resistance~a “counterstory” (Nelson, 1995) grounded within our stories to live by, defiantly created to bring words to our relational knowing, while simultaneously intending to eradicate the borders placed upon our knowledge, our writing, and the limited possibility for relational knowing within our specific institutional context. Working to turn the dominant discourse inside out, we re-present our relationship in multiple ways: words set in structured and unstructured form; poetry; story; fluid and unbounded text~alternative symbolisms co-constructed to bring meaning to our experience.

At times, the relational story we tell speaks of our closeness~of standing together on shifting landscapes: the coming together of a teacher and a researcher as co-learners in a negotiated inquiry; of our situatedness as teachers within the same school district; and as graduate students returning to a university context. At other times, our story will reveal our positioning in different places or on different landscapes: as individuals who grew up in two distinctly different settings; as undergraduate students separated by a strongly scripted story of competition; and as two women living in different countries. It is significant to us that in both our distant and intimate positionings, we have been able to look out at our worlds from differing vantage points, taking in and making meaning of our surroundings relationally. We recognized that by exploring our similar and differing positions on the multiple landscapes we had and were continuing to negotiate, we would allow further understanding of our~selves² and our relational space to emerge.

Breaking Free From the Identity Enclosure

Trinh's distinction between "I" and "i" has been important in our understanding of our relational space. She moves beyond a limiting and self-contained understanding of identity~"I," to one which is fluid, relational, and ever-embracing of the multiple stories that shape our lives~"i." Her work begs us to move beyond a bordered sense of self to a consciously created place where the categorical conventions which so often define as separate, can leak.

"I"
BOUNDED
SELF DEFINED EXTERNALLY
CONTAINED
CLEAR EASY TO READ AND
INTERPRET
INDEPENDENT SELF SUFFICIENT
FITTING THE FRAME
DEFINABLE EXPLAINABLE
CONSTRUCTIONS THAT LIMIT
BORDER
FIX IN AN UNMOVABLE STATE OF
EXISTENCE
CROSS NO BORDERS
QUESTION NO BOUNDARIES
STAY STILL STATIONARY
BOUNDED

"i"
*i move i question ~~i am~~ fluid and
transformative i ~~meet~~ other i's
in my ~~boundaried~~ and boundaryless
journey
i cross borders
redefine patterns i bring new
meanings to old myths i am multiple
many always evolving
shaping and being shaped
i am at once self and other
i am strong yet need to be held
i look in ~~and out~~ i am
vulnerable i am counterstory i push against
frames i contradict i am communal place i am commonplace i see through many
eyes hear ~~with many ears~~ i feel with the hearts of familiar strangers
i am weaving text*

Consciously positioning our~selves in a relational way, we increasingly moved to deeper layers of understanding our~selves, one another, and the space which lives between us. Our growing awareness and acceptance of these infinite layers, which live between and within, allowed us to cross borders and to move out from our~selves. For us, these "bordercrossings" (Anzaldúa, 1987) have not, as the dominant story dictates, meant a giving up of self in order to meet the other. Instead, they have created openings for us to explore, in trust, the multiplicity of our~selves in relationship with one another, shaping a richer and more expansive relational landscape. Clark (1998) framed his understanding of

this social process of knowing, as “travel”:

It is only when...[she]...travels ‘humbly away’ from the certainty and control of identity that is enabled by [her]...familiarity with elements of a home territory that [she]...can recognize in [herself]...a commonality and, more importantly, an interdependency with others whose lives and home places are very different from [her]...own. (p. 14)

Attending to our home places was an important quality of our ongoing relational negotiation. Encountering one another’s home places increased our recognition that certain plotlines embedded within the shifting landscapes of our lives remained present, although always evolving within our multiplicity. These plotlines, emerging from our childhood landscapes, places where our initial stories of self were shaped, became interesting puzzlements for us. Returning to these landscapes through our reflective presence to them, the relational threads we continuously negotiated since childhood, created a space to look forward and make meaning from.

Fragments of Childhood Landscapes

*The narratives we shape out of the materials of our lived lives
must somehow take account of our original landscape
if we are to be truly present to ourselves.
~Greene (1995, p. 75)*

As we laid fragments of our narrative beginnings side-by-side, we recognized with new insight, both the differences and similarities between and within our childhood landscapes. These story fragments are, at once, singular and plural, holding experience we share with one another and with many others. As Royster (1996) describes, “individual stories placed one against another against another build credibility and offer...a litany of evidence from which a call for transformation in theory and practice might rightfully begin.... [Our] stories in the company of others demand thoughtful response” (p. 30). Becoming attentive to the necessity of this response, to the stories we told of our~selves, the stories of self others shared with us, and the transformative

process experienced through the telling and retelling of stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998), brought us to an edge—an inquiry space from which to begin to tell our story of relationship.

As each day drew to a close, our evening meals, whether they occurred in the fields or around our kitchen table, added another richness to how I experienced my girlhood within a rural landscape. When meals were eaten in one of the fields, my dad and his helpers stopped their work, and leaving their equipment idling, the rhythms of their motors echoed toward us as we gathered together to eat. The memories I carry of these meal time gatherings are those of listening to the stories circulated by our neighbours, our hired men, my parents, my brothers, my sister, and I. Many of the stories shared in this communal space, focused on earlier people who lived within our rural landscape and the ways they negotiated themselves and their livelihoods within the context of the land and community in which they were living. Three of the storytellers who commonly came to our table were men who had been pioneers to Northern Alberta, having immigrated from England and the Scandinavian countries. Even though I had not yet been to England, as I listened to the stories one of these men shared about the years he spent there during the Second World War, my mind painted clear images of this distant place. These stories, and the stories my family told and continued to tell as we gathered together, although never recorded in writing, stayed with me. They are stories inextricably linked to the particularities of my rural family and community landscape—stories told and shared that shaped my childhood memories.

I am warmed by the memories of those lazy Sunday afternoons when my family; my two brothers, my sister, my parents, and I, would arrive home from church and sit down together in the living room to listen to our favourite records. My dad would often dance some silly Maritime jig and make us all break into laughter. I can still picture myself lying in the patches of sunlight that streamed through our large living room window onto the soft shag carpet. It was in the safety and comfort of this setting that I remember the sharing of stories taking place. Sundays became a day to “catch up” on the week gone by, and to wonder out loud about what might lie ahead. The exchange of stories often centered around school as both my parents were teachers. School stories, shared by all, took on a place of importance in our home, and our family life moved to the rhythm of the school year. This rhythm carried naturally into our summer months allowing our family time to travel together, the six of us crowded into our station wagon. With our sailboat, the Godolphin, trailing behind us, we headed out for adventure to the beaches and oceans of the east and west coasts of Canada. My childhood memories are filled with long ferry boat rides where my mother read our favourite books to us, the sound of ocean waves, the early morning call of the sea gull, and with family stories shared within the closely knit quarters of our sailboat home on the sea.

The story we were composing as collaborative researchers, shifting, forward and backward, past and present, called us to attend to the overlappings of our childhood stories. What came forward for us in these childhood fragments was their exposure of our-selves as girls within particular physical and relational landscapes. Our attention could have remained focused solely on these descriptive features. But, choosing to see past these childhood experiences in new ways (Greene, 1995), we recognized how they “reveal[ed] the inner life of a girl inventing herself—creating the foundation of self-hood

and identity” (hooks, 1996, p. xi). With new insight, we saw that the “web of memories” creating our understanding of relational identity was grounded within the particularities of the terrain of each of our childhood landscapes (Silko, 1996, p.43). Common markers that stood out for us as we retraced these fragments, and other stories we told of our early landscapes, were the strong sense of community and the place of storytelling which our family contexts provided. For each of us, our childhood landscapes held a “special regard for telling and bringing together through the telling” (Silko, 1996, p. 58). These early communal spaces, shaped through storytelling and connection with others, became rooted within us. They became stories we continuously renegotiated on alternative landscapes.

Noting these intersections within our narrative histories, we began to pay more attention to the ways the common threads in each of our stories guided our negotiation of our relationship and of the inquiry in which we were engaged. This process of childhood “rememory” (Greene, 1995) helped us become increasingly aware of why we felt so determined in our need to work *in relation*. These relational intersections between past and present, and within and between one another, were important entanglements we struggled to keep in the foreground of our current story as doctoral candidates on a university landscape. Doing so, meant the difference between meaningful engagement or predetermined disassociation. Sustaining our relational space became a matter of real urgency.

The Background of Our Relational Space

Thinking about how we might reveal the temporality of our relationship over a ten year period across shifting social contexts we recognized there was no complete, unified story which could define us within a set boundary. We chose to tell of our relational selves through vignettes, fragments of stories which, like our-selves, have no definite borders; “fragments that never stop interacting while being complete in themselves” (Trinh, 1989, p. 143). The images we create in these texts shade off gradually at the edges, forming a background which makes visible our living of a relational “i” with all

of its infinite possibilities and layers.

As we initially began to compose these fragments, it felt natural and comfortable to allow those stories which called to us, to come to the foreground. Sharing back our written words, shaped out of our beginning images, we felt a strong desire to respond to one another's storied fragments. By creating our text in this way, we allowed the "i," the "you/me," the "our/we" (Trinh, 1989), to intertwine as friends, co-planners, co-researchers, co-teachers~living within shifting places of home.

Home~Spring, 1995

I hear the back screen door opening and know that when Karen sees me standing at the kitchen sink, she will ask how my day was. Even though I try to control my voice, I am unable to. Becoming louder with each word I speak, my emotions spill forth as I wonder, "Am I going to spend the rest of my career feeling so alone? What's wrong with me?" Karen does not back away from my frustration, but instead, comes to stand beside me, and gently responds, "You're not alone, Janice. You have 24 children in your classroom who love you. You're there for them." Her words allow me a space to share my story of a staff meeting that afternoon, where our conversation became increasingly focused on moving away from multi-aged classroom groupings and toward grouping children according to their abilities. Conversation with Karen helps me to understand why I am so troubled, why I can't let go of the dreams I have for these children. As Karen listens and responds to my story, I am able to reshape my understanding of this afternoon from a sense of hopelessness to one of insight.

Home~Fall, 1995

It has been a difficult day and I am weary and drained of emotion. I enter quietly through the back door and head down to my basement suite. I feel a need to be alone, to get my head around the events of the day. What do these parents expect of me? I can only give so much to them, to their children. My inner thoughts swallow me into greater despair. Finally, I drag my tired bones off the couch and climb the stairs in search of a glimmer of hope. I find Janice. "What's wrong?" she asks, sensing my distress. I share with her my story~a troubling parent, a difficult child, my own inner struggle. She hears my words, receives them as they come, and offers back her own understanding. It is a space of comfort that brings me renewed hope to face the next day.

University~Winter, 1996

We have been here for two and a half months. This is not how I anticipated this journey. Why do so many people keep asking us about being seen together? What troubles them about our relationship, that they feel the need to tell stories away from our ears~stories about hearing only one voice~stories that label and define us as inseparably dependent? What do such comments mean, about us? About them? I sense a border building between Karen and me. Am I just imagining it? I wonder if Karen feels it too? Where is this coming from? Being connected with others is what drew me back to this university place...it is central to why I am here...I need to talk with Karen about how I am feeling...I need to hear how she is feeling.

University~Fall, 1996

My arrival at the university is filled with uncertainty. Did I make the right decision in coming to this place? My first weeks in my new surroundings leave me feeling isolated and dislocated. Single office cells, empty hallways. Where was my community? Where did I fit in? I shared my feelings with Janice. She knew, she felt it too. We decided it was important to shape a space for our~selves. It was a Sunday afternoon and Janice's parents were in town. We decided to make a day of it, even the dog came along.

We headed over to the university with coloured paper and treasures to decorate our new office space. We moved our desks side-by-side, a symbolic gesture of how we wanted to live in this place. We shaped a personal space for our~selves, a home base to ground us and to allow us to position our~selves in a way that made sense to us on this new landscape.

Home~Summer, 1994

I have not seen Karen for almost a month. It's so good to be sitting here once again having tea together. Our stories tell of the places, people, and things we've experienced over this summer break. I love to hear Karen's stories of her sailing trips with her family. In her stories, I hear stories of myself and my family. Sometimes I need her to tell me one of her family stories just so that I will feel closer to my family even though they are so far away. Tonight, these stories lead us back to our shared work as teachers. We wonder what the year ahead will hold for us. We wonder about the children we will be working with. We begin to explore the possibilities for planning a year-long key idea together. Our excitement builds. "Imagine what we could create with our children," we say. "Let's explore a garden metaphor."

University~Winter, 1997

Our collaborative work, planning for the experiences we shaped with children, was so rich and exciting. Do I really believe we will be able to achieve the same

level of sharing at the university in our work together? It is our first collaborative working day we have set aside especially for us. Janice and I travel down the hallway on the sixth floor to a room that will provide us a private, uninterrupted working space. We come loaded down with books, transcripts, reflections, observations, and questions. We spread them out across the table and begin. As I sit in this space I am reminded of our many cooperative planning sessions which took place around the dining room table. I am filled with a warm and familiar feeling as we share our talk and wonder, our laughter and thoughtful silences. Yes, we have managed to carry this space with us.

School~Summer, 1992

It is late afternoon in June, the last day of our school year together. Janice sits beside me on the sun-warmed cement encircling the playground. We watch and listen as the children, whose lives have been so intimately interwoven with our own, laugh and play around us in the sand and the sun. I glance over at Janice and wonder what she is thinking as she sits beside me in her quiet stillness. Is she too, thinking about the many conversations we had, thoughtful reflections which took us to different levels in our understanding of this group of children and of each other? Perhaps she is remembering back to our shared moments in the classroom and the connections we were able to make together. I want to reach out to her and reassure her that this is not the end, that there is no need for sadness. Yet, I too, am filled with an overwhelming feeling that something very precious, very different, is coming to a close.

School~Summer, 1992

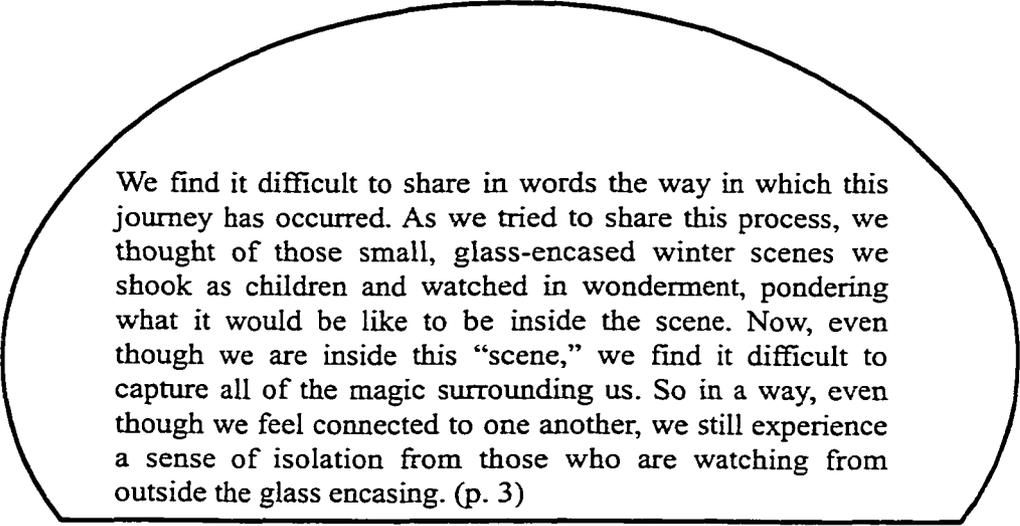
There was no need for words. Sitting beside Karen, I could feel her reassurance that our relationship would continue in so many ways. Inwardly, I knew that her acceptance of my presence in her life helped me to cross internal borders and to begin to retell my story of living an isolated life on my school landscape with fresh insights and imaginative possibilities. I knew that our thoughtfulness about voice, and how our knowing was tightly intermingled with children and with each other, would forever live with me as I continued my teaching life.

University~Winter, 1994

We have been invited to talk about our collaborative relationship at a research symposium at the university. We gather in a small classroom with the desks formed into a circle for conversation. There are professors and researchers all around us. I feel nervous and somewhat intimidated in this foreign place, but I want to speak well for Janice as this is her community. I want these people to understand as we have come to understand. I want to provide insight inside our experience. When it is my turn to speak, I am caught by my emotions which well up from somewhere deep inside. I find it difficult to bring words to the experience. We were teacher and researcher, researcher and teacher, living side-by-side, shifting places. I look out at the people who surround me in this institution of higher learning; some look skeptical, some nod with understanding, others appear disinterested. I turn to Janice. In her eyes I see recognition. We have lived this research relationship together, it is a part of us now. It fills me with strength.

As women, friends, colleagues, and co-researchers, these stories illuminate the shifting nature of both our understanding and living of our relationship. The multiplicity of our relational positionings, shaped by our temporal horizons, continues to unfold. *We* are, a story in process.

Additional memories of our temporality came forward as we remembered other fragments from our shared past. Reflecting on these memories invited us into another terrain of possibility and meaning making. Not so long ago, we storied our working relationship as one that was uniquely exclusive~one we had difficulty explaining and which we felt others had difficulty understanding. Our metaphor was that of living inside “a glass-encased world”. In earlier writing (Whelan & Huber, 1994), we explored this metaphor more fully:



We find it difficult to share in words the way in which this journey has occurred. As we tried to share this process, we thought of those small, glass-encased winter scenes we shook as children and watched in wonderment, pondering what it would be like to be inside the scene. Now, even though we are inside this “scene,” we find it difficult to capture all of the magic surrounding us. So in a way, even though we feel connected to one another, we still experience a sense of isolation from those who are watching from outside the glass encasing. (p. 3)

Our research relationship led us to think harder about our metaphor of a glass-encased world and its intersections with wonders shaping our inquiry. This metaphor posed an important dilemma for us~it left us in a position of looking out and trying to explain in words and images what we knew we had discovered in a relational way. It also left us feeling as though others might see us as closed off and separate from them. We did not want our relationship to be viewed as though we were living it in a manner that was uniquely exclusive~to encourage such thinking would only contribute to the ideology of

“specialness” we were trying to dispel, “a division~between I-who-have-made-it and You-who-cannot-make-it” (Trinh, 1989, p. 86).

Continuing to unpack this metaphor further, we found possibility in the tensions it offered. From its beginning, our relational story had been enclosed within a larger story of individuality, self reliance, and independence. The central plotline running through this story was one in which “i am *tolerated* in my difference as long as i conform with the established rules. Don’t overstep the line” (Trinh, p. 87). We had often experienced difficulty explaining our relational knowing to others. In numerous contexts where we tried to tell others about how we knew one another, our words felt harshly judged, and often, unfairly condemned. We wondered if it was our difficulty with painting an unfolding representation of our relationship for others, coupled with the stifling responses our words so often received, that kept us from trying to explore it more fully. Connecting our knowing of one another with the work of other feminists (Anzaldúa, 1987; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, Tarule, 1986; Noddings, 1984; Trinh, 1989) who situated identity not as separate and unique, but as interconnected and relational, created a resonance within us. Our intersections with these women helped to fracture the glass encasing, surrounding us with new stories of relational identity~stories in which we were able to look “inward, outward, and in-between” (Trinh, 1989, p. 96).

Situating our relationship within a consciousness of difference no longer confused with specialness, created openings for making sense of our deviation from the dominant notion “difference as uniqueness or special identity” (Trinh, 1989, p. 95), marking the beginning of our attempts to enlarge our “identity enclosure.” Awakening to these possibilities shattered our glass encasing, significantly shaping our ongoing inquiry, particularly when we began to view our relationship through Anzaldúa’s (1987) notion of a “borderspace,”³ a malleable, shifting, and unbounded space where we could explore the infinite layers which lived between and within us. Our continual reflection upon the qualities of this borderspace led us to additional insights. Breaking free from our previous

metaphor of a glass-encased world, we came to understand our relationship as a “mestiza,”⁴ a consciousness embracing openness, ambiguity, contradiction, difference. Our relationship became one in which the circle of our identity enclosure “widened, stretched, opened” (Behar, 1993, p. 342)~one which was becoming inclusive enough to hold the multiplicity of our~selves and others.

Landscape for a New Mestiza

Through Anzaldúa’s (1987) understanding of her self as a mestiza, we began to find a language to name the process shaping our relationship. She describes *la mestiza* as a new consciousness where:

[There is]...a conscious rupture with all oppressive traditions.... She communicates that rupture, documents the struggle. She reinterprets history and, using new symbols, she shapes new myths. She adopts new perspectives.... She strengthens her tolerance (and intolerance) for ambiguity. She is willing to share, to make herself vulnerable to foreign ways of seeing and thinking. She surrenders all notions of safety, of the familiar. Deconstruct, construct. (p. 82)

Anzaldúa’s *la mestiza* consciousness is a struggle of borders, both interior and exterior; a struggle she names as “above all a feminist one” (p. 84)~necessarily transforming “I” into a relational self. This transformational process was central to our journey as doctoral students.

From the outset of our co-authored narrative inquiry, we were conscious of our intention to continue living in relationship with one another. Indeed, it was relationship that drew us to pursue doctoral work~not in the sole quest of obtaining a Ph.D., but of having sustained time to work alongside one another and the members of our ongoing inquiry group~Jean Clandinin, Annie Davies, and Chuck Rose. What we were unprepared for as we began to negotiate the landscape of our particular institutional setting, was how disruptive our *need* to live relationally would be for others who lived within our

university landscape. At the same time as we were awakening to our mestiza existence, we were simultaneously learning that there were established traditions to live by on our university landscape~separate presentations and papers, cubicle-d office and desk spaces, doors shut to the outside world, and competitions for awards which brought silence and isolation. This silence, shaped through oppressive traditions, sliced through us like a razor, separating our knowing of *one* from the *other*.

Shifting Identity: From “Specialness” to Difference

We have *all* been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignoring it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate. (Lorde, 1984, p.115)

Lorde’s knowing of the “institutionalized rejection of difference” is a story we too, struggled to make sense of as we negotiated our university landscape. There were many points of separation for us throughout our two year journey as doctoral students~necessary departures of one from the other which brought new perspectives, new understandings~a broadening of the relational space we shared. There was one separation, however, that was so invasive, so destructive, it threatened our relational knowing of one another in ways we could never have imagined.

The process of writing a research proposal is a daunting task for any graduate student, for two people who were trying to negotiate a relational understanding of this process, it became an impossible task~immobilising our efforts, suppressing our relational imaginings. No longer were we defining *our* space~the university, with all its rules and codes, was defining it for us. Within our particular department, we were told that relational research was unscholarly. It would most certainly affect our chances at an academic position down the road. A collaborative dissertation was unheard of. It would never happen! Instead, we were expected~Separately, Individually~to “prove” our~selves academically worthy, our words held up against one another’s to be compared...judged.

Tentatively, I approach him after class, a three hour class focused on proposal and dissertation writing. My interpretation of so many of his words is that collaborative research is somehow “less than” more traditional research, where creating and adding to the stockpile of theoretical knowledge should be the exclusive intent of the researcher. Feeling somewhat intimidated, although passionate about the possibilities of relational research, I wonder about its potential, particularly within our profession where most research involves inquiry with other living beings. “Oh, I’d be pretty cautious with collaborative research,” he replies, then adds, “You know, in most circles, collaborative research is not considered academic nor rigorous.” He continues speaking ...something about how I better make certain “my” advisor agrees with collaborative research and that the Faculty of Graduate Studies approves of the study.... “Just so you don’t waste time doing collaborative work,” he concludes. As he is speaking, his words become increasingly distant from my world. Quietly, I wonder if we will ever be able to negotiate a relational inquiry as two doctoral students within the landscape of this particular university department. What politics and power will border our imaginings? How will these plotlines impact others who have supported and shared in our struggles and dreams toward negotiating relational research contexts?

The tendency to dichotomize human experience is persistent, powerful, and pernicious. Dualistic categories are such an organizing force because they provide a simple classification system that allows even the most complex and elusive qualities to be compared and contrasted in bold, clear terms. (Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997, p. 19)

We were not immune to the reality of this dominant classification system on our departmental landscape~it was one we had lived for four long years in our undergraduate program. What took us by surprise was that the organizing force of this system once again invaded our fragile relational space as doctoral students, attempting to compare and contrast in bold, clear terms, the multiplex and elusive qualities of our relationship. In the

beginning, “to refuse the mask, refuse the double-play of competence/performance, the binarity of opposites” (Dupre, 1994, p. 29), was too great a risk. Remaining silent, we started to believe that we had no place to ground our relational knowing within this university context, we felt little choice but to enter the competition~the race to candidacy.

We seldom traveled to university together anymore.
We seldom sat side-by-side~talking and wondering aloud.
Our writing became surrounded by secrecy and silence,
hidden away on shelves and in files at home.
Our evening phone calls diminished.
We, like so many other graduate students, were beginning to live
the acceptable story~
we were beginning to live alone.

I remember the phone call and the tearful words as though it were yesterday. “I can’t live like this anymore. What is happening to us? Why aren’t we sharing our writing? If our relationship goes on like this much longer, I don’t think I can take it. I didn’t come to the university to live this story.” Initially, these words hurt and drew forth an angry response. “You can’t just give up! We are in this together. When you say you want to leave the work, are you also saying you want to leave me, to leave us? What affects you, affects me.” This conversation, over the distance of the telephone, ended abruptly, without closure. Yet the words had been said, and in the saying, we had to face, with deepened recognition, a rupture in our relational knowing of one another.

i weave between moments of
disillusionment.
This is a “cover story”⁵
i say
A story we keep telling everyone,
including our selves. “Oh yes, we say,
“We’re doing relational research.”

Yet, the story we live is a separate one
~individual meetings
~separate writing
~little discussion on shared possibilities
Such a focus on “I.”

i lose heart in this oppressive endeavour.

Where is it leading?
This work means everything to me~i will not leave it.
Yet, living this competitive, disconnected Ph.D. story,
i feel the contradictions.

Is there a way for me to remain in this inquiry
Somehow?
Can i continue as a teacher-researcher,
without the oppression of obtaining a degree?
The learning would be no less.

We could have allowed our~selves to be swallowed whole, eventually coming to live this “taken-for-granted” (Greene, 1994) story of individuality and competition; and perhaps, if we had been alone, this risk might have been even greater. But we were not alone~we had the friendship and support of our advisor, Jean Clandinin and the grounding of our relationship *within and between* one another. Drawing strength from our entangled relationships, we fought back. Saying in words and actions, what had, at first, been made “unsayable” within the pervasive story lived out on our university landscape, brought us to a stronger place of knowing~relational knowing nested within our historical narrative context, embracing the multiplicity of our landscapes from childhood to our ongoing work with Clandinin and Connelly. We recommitted, through the sacredness of our relationship, to one another~to live again as we had intended~to break through barriers together and to voice our knowing collectively~“to give vent to a plural language that [caught] all the nuances of [our] words beyond fixed definition, that abandon[ed] the order of...ownership. A language of relations, of drift, alive with all our seedings” (Dupre, 1994, p. 29).

*We began sharing our writing once again,
responding to one another's words with insight and care,
interweaving our thoughts and feelings.
We sat side-by-side,
traveled the hallways together,
appeared collectively at our department office,
sending a clear message of our intentions as doctoral students.
We began to dispel old myths, simultaneously shaping new ones.
We reimagined stories which held
promising spaces for our relational knowing.
We moved forward in tandem.*

*Embraced by those who also knew
had themselves spoken our questions
Listened to and received with care
Fragile openings began to appear
in the border separating selves
on this landscape.*

This script of separateness was not for us.

*Hope came in sharing our vulnerabilities~
slowly removing masks
of certainty,
Speaking instead, knowing through story.*

*Separation shifted, embracing
~connection
~shared writing
~our knowing in relation
A gift, held precious.*

The identity enclosure, shaped by suffocating forces on our university landscape, was shattered through our profound recognition of our grounding of self within relational knowing. Beginning to construct new ways to live on our university landscape, side by side, closely connected~we uncovered these oppressive traditions in relationship with one another and those who shared our struggle. In this larger relational space we grew in courage. We began to question out loud, to contradict, to dispel old myths and to shape new ones in which our relational story could have a place.

Coming to this place of intense self-confrontation and rebirth, we worked again to blur the externally imposed self/other boundaries defined by those who felt they had the power to enforce them and those who appeared to acquiesce to this power. Only as we emerged from this process could we see that our necessity to rework the distance placed on us, could be deconstructed, reconstructed, and reimagined, recreating space for understanding “identity in the light of what might be” (Greene, 1995, p. 77)~*relationally*. With intentions straining toward such a horizon, the notions of separation and distance insidiously duplicated on our university landscape, called us in even stronger ways, to come together and give words to what we were experiencing. It was the beginning of documenting our struggle to live a relational “i” on our university landscape.

*There we were, two...[friends] walking side by side,
transgressing a silent border
simply by being together.
~Behar (1993, p. 240)*

We knew that our relational story to live by would continue to weave a thread of ambiguity and that the structure of our relationship would emerge as we lived it (Anzaldúa, 1987). Drawing strength in one another, our relationship once again became similar to Anzaldúa's mestiza place, where we were able to trust in one another and our uncertainty; where listening and responding become as important as the stories we shared and, where the meaning we made, created openings for us to imagine alternative possibilities. Our mestiza simultaneously became the text, the process, and the puzzle of our inquiry. It is a borderspace ever drawing us forward and grounding us in our research. Living our~selves and our research in this relational way, re-positioned us at different vantage points within our university landscape. Consciously, we traversed from the center of a dominant story inscribed through an implicit blueprint of territoriality (Clark, 1998), where we felt ...

Isolated

Afraid Alone

Silent

Distant

Torn

Angry

Incompetent

Small

Diminished Invisible

...to the fluidity and openness of the margins, where we could live...

reflective

close

tentative

engaged

connected

you me we

together

caring

Continuing to compose relational stories on this university landscape, we re-turned passionately to work we saw as necessary, deconstructing the rigid notions of individuality and competition, while constructing alternative possibilities for continuing to live a mestiza story, not only (between and within) our~selves but (across) others.

Unsayings

You try and keep on trying to unsay [the dominant story], for if you don't, they will not fail to fill in the blanks on your behalf, and you will be said.

(Trinh, 1989, p. 80)

Drawing on Mary John's (1989) understanding of the notion of "sanctioned ignorances" as knowing "we cannot tell ourselves we know" and that "we have to repress of ourselves in the process of becoming educated" (p. 340), Behar (1993) reminds us of the profound importance of asking hard questions about how our identities are shaped as we work to attain a university education. We have attempted to keep Behar's challenge in the foreground of our work in this paper—moving across, within, and between stories. Answering with our own lives for what we have experienced and understood internally and externally while negotiating relational stories of self and knowing across landscapes, has been essential to our inquiry and the text of this paper. Making our-selves vulnerable through the telling and problematizing of our relationship, we understand far deeper the possibilities and the contradictions of such necessary, relational work.

Endnotes

¹ "Story to live by" is the narrative understanding of identity conceptualized by Connelly and Clandinin (1999).

² We use our-selves to represent the relational way we understand our evolving identities.

³ We do not claim to know the same borderspace Anzaldúa speaks of, however her description of a space embracing multiplicity has profoundly shaped our relational work.

⁴ Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness, although outside our direct experiences, speaks to us of a hopeful place where the struggle for diversity both within and between self and others is embraced.

⁵ Cover stories constructed by their authors to appear "certain" and "expert" in places of vulnerability are discussed by Clandinin and Connelly, 1995.

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CONNECTING CHAPTER 2.1

Crossthreadings: Weaving a Relational and Emergent Research Tapestry

Karen Whelan *in relation with* Janice Huber

The earth's natural fibres, gathered in many ways and from diverse places across the landscape, hold promise as they are spun into delicate threads.

In their gentleness, rough hands inscribed through time and experience, draw out the fragile fibres. In their raw colours and textures they are spun, twisted, and reshaped as they begin to take on a new form. Each thread has its own inherent beauty~burly, fine, coarse~bringing abundant richness to what is created.

There is no wooden loom to frame this tapestry. This one will be handwoven, the warp and the weft coming together with knowing hands.

With extreme care, the threads are stretched and spiralled becoming entwined with one another. These entwinings, creating places of crossing, bring strength to the fabric.

As these contrasting threads come together they make visible, patterns and irregularities. Designs appear in imperfect form, their flaws bringing beauty to the emerging wholeness of what is created. They may spin out from the center, fray at the edges, or appear as fragments randomly scattered throughout. Some may start as loose threads at the fringe and move inward. It is this difference which weaves life and richness into what is being spun.

If a thread breaks, a knot must be tied to reconnect this thread with others.

At times, knots can appear and be smoothed out, or they can remain, adding a deeper quality to the look and the feel of the weaving. Knots are necessary in a weaving. The wisdom of the weaver comes with knowing that the weaving is at once complete and incomplete. There is beauty and significance in the whole that takes shape, yet the crossthreadings which occur in this tapestry, will forever inspire future weavings.

In this paper, we borrow from Montero-Sieburth's (1997) metaphor of a Mexican Indian weaving. Describing her life history, she speaks of how experience is woven through multiplicity and is "strengthened by what comes before and after, ...[where] each knot on its own exudes the strength and durability that comes only from being braided together as a whole" (p. 124). Her thoughts inspired us to interweave our thoughts and

feelings of the research tapestry we had been creating. Reflecting back upon the first ten months of shared conversation in our inquiry groups with teacher and principal co-researchers, laid alongside our ongoing work with three co-researchers in our larger inquiry space~Chuck Rose, Jean Clandinin, and Annie Davies~our “Crossthreadings” poem began to take form. Wanting to *mark* the significance of the relational spaces we had, and would continue to share in upcoming months with our co-researchers, the fluidity and openness of poetic form enabled us to create images representative of what we had shaped together, and what these negotiated spaces had come to mean to us. As the tapestry of the poem we were weaving began to emerge, we experienced “poetry as illumination” where, as Lorde (1984) describes, “we give name to those ideas which are~until the poem~nameless and formless, about to be birthed, but already felt” (p. 36).

Only after the words had been spun out and woven together in poetic stance, did we begin to recognize the importance of what we were attempting to name. We could have composed in more traditional format, yet the aesthetic entanglements within and between the words of our poem, inspired through metaphor, brought an intensity of thought and feeling to what we wanted to say about the texture of the work we were embracing. As the relational space of our research tapestry zigzagged with interlacing threads across our poem, we knew it was essential to share “Crossthreadings” with our principal and teacher co-researchers as a symbolic representation of our journey together.

Months later in the midst of writing our co-authored papers for our dissertations, we returned to our crossthreadings poem and to Montero-Sieburth’s (1997) autobiographical account shared through knots, which she stories as critical moments in her life tapestry. Once again, her work inspired us. In this paper we too, share critical events, stories, and experiences of our emerging research tapestry. This text tells many stories winding across our three year narrative inquiry focusing on marginalization and identity on the “professional knowledge landscape of schools” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Revisiting each of the stanzas within “Crossthreadings,” unravelling in metaphor

and words, this paper seeks to resonate with our experience as co-researchers weaving threads over, under, within, and across multiple inquiry spaces. In sharing these accounts of our experiences, we hope to make visible the complex tapestry which was hand-woven in relation with our co-researchers—a tapestry rich with the multiple experiences and stories lived out by teachers and principals on shifting school landscapes.

Entwining Multiple Threads Into Our Tapestry

Our beginning threadings into this larger emergent research tapestry began in 1991 when our work as teacher-researchers within our classrooms became knotted within a larger research community. Although this research community shifted over time, it has been a significant space off our school landscapes. At present, we are a group of five people who gather together from varying positions on the landscape several times throughout the year—principals and teachers, as co-researchers—wondering aloud about what is shaping our experiences on the professional knowledge landscape of schools, and how we, too, shape these contexts. In coming together as researchers, we co-authored a common ground in which to share our stories—stories filled with tensions, wonders, and possibilities. Our thoughts and words are not shaped in isolation but, rather, through our interconnectedness and the sharing of our collective stories over time and place. It is not at all surprising that these people, with whom we are deeply connected, have similar wonderings; it should be expected. As Hamilton (1995) writes, “the ties of shared history...bind us together” (p. 90). Our stories have interwoven within and between one another—attaching us in profound and lasting ways, making the sharing of our stories both powerful and life-shaping. Josselson (1996) speaks to this attachment in her work: “Attachment and the affection that accompanies it is one of the most profound of human experiences.... [It] is our sense of emotional belongingness.... Attachment resides in an experience of emotional linkage—the sense that space can be overcome if necessary...” (pp. 44-45).

This larger research context, combined with our own desire to work relationally as co-researchers, led us to the exploration of an area which mattered deeply to us and which we found increasingly puzzling in our daily lives as teachers. In conversations which guided our decision to pursue doctoral studies, we continuously pondered the differing influences which the “in-classroom and out-of-classroom places” within each of our schools, was having upon our “stories to live by” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995).¹ Being able to view our school landscapes from these two shifting vantage points, the in- and out-of-classroom places, we were intrigued by how invisible the educative qualities of our professional contexts were becoming. We became increasingly concerned as we discovered how narrow the range of possible spaces was to share stories of our lives composed across multiple landscapes. There seemed to be fewer and fewer spaces where we could explore what mattered to us as teachers: living in relationship with the children with whom we were working and their families, making sense of new district initiatives that we felt were distancing us from our colleagues, and exploring the inner struggles we faced daily in our lives as teachers, women, researchers, partners, daughters, sisters. We wondered what impact the increasing invisibility of these educative spaces had, and were continuing to have, upon our evolving stories to live by as they came into conflict with our changing “school stories” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, 1996). As Greene (1994) describes, when we “suffer the erosion of community...[we] reach out for a connectedness we feel has been lost” (p. 11). It was this incongruity between our stories to live by and the “sacred stories” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Crites, 1971)² which we felt were creating borders on our school landscapes, that lead us to wonder about the lives of other teachers and principals and how they, too, were making sense of living on the professional knowledge landscape of schools.

The Threads of Our Tapestry Expand

In order to make visible, and to further understand the multi-layered complexity of school landscapes, we were drawn to broaden the tapestry of our research conversations. This occurred as we invited seven educators to engage in conversation with us. On a regular basis over 18 months, we entered into conversation with two different groups of co-researchers: one group included four principals and the other group included three teachers. These co-researchers came from: urban and rural settings, school contexts set within differing socioeconomic communities, segregated and integrated classroom sites, and programs institutionally defined as academic and non-academic. Their experiences cut across multiple landscapes: they were female and male; some were newcomers to their positions, while others were experienced in their positions. In their collective experience, they worked with children of diverse ages and with diverse needs across various school landscapes.

Our co-researchers brought a rich diversity of background and experience to the research space we negotiated. While they shared passionate commitments to the teaching profession, they also told stories of the “dilemmas” (Lyons, 1990) they faced in their work. Each of the co-researchers, whose stories became knotted with our own, were consciously chosen because of their positionings, and were invited to co-author the weaving of this research tapestry in the hope of composing a place where we could “weave meaning and identity out of...[our] memories and experiences” (Myerhoff, 1978 in Heller, 1997, p. 19). Because of their unique pedagogy or experience, each of the co-researchers engaged in this inquiry was situated on the margins of our profession. Like Bateson (1994), Greene (1988, 1993), and hooks (1990), we believe that the different and marginal positioning of our co-researchers brought clarity and possibility to imagining schools alternatively. Such positionings enabled our co-researchers to share stories that ran counter to those being scripted for them. Choosing not to situate themselves at the center of the school stories being constructed and lived out by their districts or

governments, they were able to discover, as Heller (1997) describes, “vital, hopeful knowledge” in their marginal positionings~knowledge holding promise for informing educational practice and research (p. 160).

Threads of our co-researchers’ understandings of the marginal positionings they lived are woven throughout the tapestry of our research conversations. As they described their work in past and present contexts, they revealed stories of their marginal positionings and the profoundly shaping qualities these experiences had on their evolving stories to live by.

Maxine: I left a regular ed. setting and went to the special ed. setting, and found this incredible experience of being completely pushed out, based just on the fact that I was the teacher of that program.... I already had a feeling and not really knowing, probably for the first six months, what was happening... [yet] knowing what I felt, and knowing that it was an incredible change. As I looked at it, I realized what was happening to myself and even...more importantly, what was happening to the children I was teaching. (October, 1996, pp. 8-9)³

Peggy: I found that the biggest thing that I’ve noticed [since people have heard about my becoming a principal], [is that now]...I am supposed to *be* the principal.... But I wasn’t really the principal [yet]. What I find is, that the kind of dialogue that they would have with me is a different dialogue than the dialogue teachers have with each other.... There’s been a subtle shift. (June, 1997, p. 41).

Danielle: I think...one of the ways I...would be marginalized would be [as] a new and temporary contract.... I guess this year was very different for me because...as temporary contract you’re not really...a part of the staff. You’re sort of really welcomed at the beginning but half way through you really aren’t because you might not be there. (October, 1996, p. 10)

While stories like these, of lives lived on the ragged edges of our professional contexts, include themes of marginalization through positioning, they also uncover the shaping influence these experiences have upon our stories to live by. Whether the marginalization was explicit, as Peggy’s story of her shift in positioning from vice principal to principal highlights, or if it was shaped implicitly as Maxine and Danielle tell of, we see the

dilemmas experienced and shaped out of these stories. By sharing these fragile threads of our lived experience within differing school contexts, the background of our research tapestry became interwoven with other threads—threads of vulnerability and trust. These threads were necessary in sustaining the texture of our weaving as its complex patterns continued to take shape.

Weaving Ethical Threads

As two doctoral candidates, our initial research relationship, composed in our master's programs, became the warp and the weft from which the textured threads of our relationship within our principal, teacher, and larger inquiry spaces continued to be woven. Although our initial collaborative experience took place some years past, the deep sense of faithfulness we felt for one another remained constant. It was our knowing of this earlier relational space, one shaped by mutuality and connectedness, which called to us, initially informing our negotiation of our relationship with our co-researchers in this study. As our inquiry with our principal and teacher co-researchers began, we felt the need to tell stories around plotlines of our history together, and around plotlines of our negotiated research relationship. The first transcripts of our conversations with our teacher inquiry group uncover our necessity to “say” (Trinh, 1989) this story of our selves in relation:

Janice: When I did my masters work with Jean four years ago, I... spent a year in Karen's classroom. We were looking at how children were making sense of their knowing and how, if we listened to their stories and tried to create possibilities for them to share their stories in the classroom...[we might] come to understand in ways that were quite different from the traditional forms of evaluation.... Karen and I got along quite well and spent quite a bit of time in the years after that doing planning together.... We just spent a lot of time talking and sharing stories and learning a lot from one another. (October, 1996, p. 1)

Our historical plotline was also interwoven into our initial principal conversation as Karen brought forward the possibilities offered through relational knowing:

Karen: I don't know if you've...had the experience of being...researched versus being a part of something. I have as a classroom teacher and there's a very different feeling. When Janice came into my classroom and spent the year with me and...was literally in there all the time, I mean we just lived together in that space. Everything...she wrote...came back to me and we talked about it and...it gave me voice.... It was very collaborative and very rich and...we're all hoping that that's what this will be, is that every step of the way you'll feel a part of it. (October, 1996, p. 6)

In telling these stories, our intentions were not to duplicate our past research relationship within each of these new contexts. Instead, our intention for sharing stories of our relational space was to return to and ground our work within each of these inquiry spaces, fully recognizing and necessitating the shared process of meaning making. Bateson (1994) speaks of these returnings to past experience as a vital way of knowing. She writes: "because it is impossible to step into the same river twice, one can learn from each return" (p. 44). We knew our return to our research relationship would take on a different feel as we interconnected with the lives of these diverse people.

The trust, safety, and promise we nurtured within our relationship as two co-researchers were the threads we wanted to carry with us. Similar to Anzaldúa's (1987) metaphor of the turtle who carries "home" on her back, we wanted to carry the home of our relational knowing with us as we entered into new relationship with our teacher and principal co-researchers. Weaving these essential threads of care into our research conversations created openings, to not only travel to one another's worlds (Lugones, 1987), but to name the silences which so often place borders around research relationships~erasing relational knowing, replacing it with the script of *I* the Researcher and *You* the researched. A story of this border came forward early in our conversations with our co-researchers:

Janice: [Referring to a presenter who had spoken that day at the university]. He really challenged the people in the class to not be using a rape model of research, where, so we get a Ph. D., but what do you get? How will this [our shared inquiry] be helping you in your practice (Karen: Exactly) in your schools? Rather than us...

Emily: I agree with that. I have felt that way in many years of working with the university.

Peggy: Have you?

Emily: Oh, absolutely. I've had my work written up and I've had people go out, and I mean I don't resent it, but I mean, well sometimes I do, but it doesn't eat away at me. I remember one time where there were a whole flock of them in...studying the dynamics of the school. One of them went off to write a book about school culture; another one went across Canada at conferences talking about a principal in a school who did this and this and this. I thought, 'It's such a joke, really.'.... You're not given any kind of appreciation at all, not that you want your name in lights, you know, you're not looking for that, but just...Because what it is, is all of your craft that you have developed in the hours and the years that you put into it, that you're willing and openly willing to share with anyone, right, because otherwise nothing moves forward. But then, people come and just take advantage of it, and I resent that. (October, 1996, p. 37)

Consciously pushing against this pervasive research script which stripped and denied Emily's identity, it was our collective "recognition of and longing for relatedness" that created openings for the multiplicity of our selves to emerge as we worked to mutually shape our inquiry space (Noddings, 1984, p. 6). One example of our shared necessity to weave these ethical threads of negotiated agency within our narrative inquiry, came forward in a research conversation that took place eight months into our work together.

Karen: ...Janice and I have been reading this book...it's by Marmon Silko.... She says, and this is something that really struck me, that your identity, your sense of self, cannot emerge on a landscape unless you are in a viable relationship with another person or that your relationships are meaningful, significant, relational.... I can't help but think about administrators. I mean, I just find myself...really struck with how then, I mean I see it when you're here, I see all of your sense of self as administrators. I mean, you share so much of every part of your self with each other.

Tony: But you don't do that with everyone. (Peggy: No.) We do this here. I would never have lunch with a group of administrators and...(April, 1997, p. 36).

Tony and Peggy's recognition of our inquiry space as significantly different than other professional contexts, spoke to the necessity of continually negotiating the ethical grounding of our relational research space. Such understanding, such living, strengthened our commitment to each other and sustained us throughout our weaving of this research tapestry.

Weaving Relational Threads of Difference

Our knowing of the necessity for relationship within research spaces was encouraged and stretched as we read the work of Trinh (1989), and we were deeply moved by her thinking on the multiplicity of self and the inherent relational qualities within identity. Working within and across her own and other's "multiple presences," Trinh wrote:

'I' is, therefore, not a unified subject, a fixed identity, or that solid mass covered with layers of superficialities one has gradually to pull off before one can see its true face. 'I' is, itself, *infinite layers*.... Whether I accept it or not, the natures of *I, i, you, s/he, We, we, they,* and *wo/man* constantly overlap. They all display a necessary ambivalence, for the line dividing *I* and *Not-I, us,* and *them,* or *him* and *her* is not (cannot) always (be) as clear as we would like it to be. Despite our desperate, eternal attempt to separate, contain, and mend, categories always leak. (p. 94)

The interdeterminancy of the overlappings Trinh works to uncover became central to our meaning making within our inquiry. Through her work on the "identity enclosure," framed through notions of "difference as uniqueness or special identity" (p. 95), we gained courage, through our relational overlappings with others, to push against the dualistic notions of separate development which mark traditional thinking around identity. Trinh writes that, enlarging, if not removing, the fence imposed between self and others is an ongoing process, work that is necessary to create additional openings for

interdeterminacy between and across identities, encouraging yet other layers of possibility where “i am not only given the permission to open up and talk, i am also encouraged to express my difference” (p. 88).

Expressing difference had often been risky on our school landscapes and, for the most part, something not encouraged. Emily, one of the co-researchers positioned as principal on her school landscape, expressed her knowledge of the risk in being different on school contexts when she said: “I used to say to...[my superintendent], ‘You always say the principals should take risks, but as soon as we take a risk, we step out, and do something a bit different, then you get your knuckles rapped’ ” (October, 1996, p. 39). Emily spoke further to the ever-present dilemma of this script lived out on school landscapes by bringing forward an image of reification: “Just...keep it the same, keep it safe, don’t make any ripples and we’ll just go along like a bunch of little wood soldiers (October, 1996, p. 36). Greene (1994) shares a similar caution when she writes that to refuse difference is to petrify our selves. Conversation around these dilemmas on school landscapes brought forward important places for crossing within our research tapestry. Negotiating an inquiry space in which the sharing of the fragments of our lives could resist this pervasive script that difference should be suppressed if not erased, encouraged us to embrace difference as a quality on our school landscapes that we must remain necessarily awake to.

Reading Trinh’s work, alongside the work of others, increased our determination to live a research space that might take on the qualities of what Anzaldúa (1987) calls a “borderspace,” Greene (1988) calls an “authentic public space,” and Belenky (1996) calls a “public homeplace;” places where “every voice is being heard...[,] where the...member’s most driving questions and concerns [are addressed]” (Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997, p. 15), and where “diverse human beings can appear before one another...the best they know how to be” (Greene, 1988, p. xi).

Negotiating the weaving of such a space necessitated tying new knots of relational identity into our emerging tapestry. As Anzaldúa (1987) writes: “A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning of a long struggle” (p. 80). It was a struggle we embraced in our passion to “unsay” (Trinh, 1989) the isolation and separate development so pervasively inscribed on our school landscapes. Each one of us was called to recognize the work involved in sustaining the sense of relational agency of which Anzaldúa speaks. Together we imagined living a research story which could be open and dynamic, fluid and ever-changing, shaped by each one of us as co-researchers, regardless of whether our positioning was at the university or on the landscape of schools. The transcripts of our conversations are interwoven with the thoughts we, as co-researchers, shared about these possibilities:

Cheryl: I think you’re going to find when you move around and visit with principals at large, that their stories are going to be the same. When you meet with the secret group as we are, I think the stories will be that much more specific. You’ll get the ‘nitty-gritty,’ whereas the others maybe, they might say, let’s say there are concerns about staff, there are concerns about this and that and they may not feel as comfortable to embellish. Now my comfort level is here. I know all of these people very well and for years.

Tony: This is all a very natural sharing because we naturally talk to each other throughout the school year, quite a bit on the phone, or meeting for coffee or lunches and just talking about what we are doing in our schools. I feel very, very comfortable.

Janice: We thought about that too, when we thought about who might want to be working with us in this way. Because it takes a long time to build...[a] sense of trust so that it is safe enough to feel comfortable, to tell the real things about what is happening. (October, 1996, pp. 4-5)

We did not want the stories binding together the context of our inquiry spaces to remain at a surface level, as Cheryl describes, leaving them empty of the richness, diversity, and pull of coming to understand others’ lives. Instead, we wanted to imagine a mutually constructed place where our “secret stories”⁴ could be heard and where we could

transgress the borders which often seem to separate self and Other into confining identity enclosures on school landscapes. The possibility for weaving such an understanding of one another's lives frequently came forward in conversation within our teacher and principal inquiry spaces. The following fragment highlighting this possibility, is taken from the text of one of our conversations within our principal inquiry group:

Karen: You know one thing that's very clear, is that teachers do *not* understand the life that principals live. (No they don't)... Unless they have...some insight, they just don't know what your lives are like.

Emily: There's no way they can know.

Tony: Sometimes I find it, [well] here...we can dialogue; at school you can't share anything with anybody. (January, 1997, p. 56)

For our inquiry groups of teacher and principal co-researchers, shaping a relational space, where our faith in one another could guide us, allowed our stories to interweave in textured and original patterns. It was our intention to honour all voices and the multiple stories that shape our knowing, to author a story of our inquiry space as a site where "voice, dialogue, relationships, and learning [could] intersect" (Tarule, 1996, p. 276). By approaching our research in this way, we moved away from the risk of hearing "cover stories"⁵ to a space where our secret stories could unfold. Metzger's (1992) caution heightened our sensitivity toward this risk. She writes:

When we are told that something is not to be spoken about, we understand this to mean that this something should not exist—should not, cannot, must not, does not exist. In that moment, our reality and, consequently, our lives are distorted; they become shameful and diminished. In some way, we understand this to mean that *we* should not exist. To protect ourselves, we, too, begin to speak only of the flat world where everything is safe, commonplace, and agreeable, the very small world about which we can all

have consensus. Soon we don't see the other worlds we once saw, for it is difficult to see what we are forbidden to name. (p. 32)

Shaping a space where authentic stories could unfold and become entangled with the stories of others meant that we would also risk becoming vulnerable with one another, vulnerability not often expressed on our school landscapes for fear of the retribution such expressions might receive. As we thought about the ways in which the genuine threads of our lives might become knotted, and in order to protect the visible identity of our co-researchers in this study, we recognized how essential it would be that our coming together should occur off the landscape of schools. Negotiating our inquiry space within private spaces and places of home, we continuously worked toward nurturing an expansive context where the contradictions and dilemmas shaping our lives could be named and explored.

Weaving Storied Threads

The texture of our inquiry was thickened with the strands of storytelling, conversation, and caring, with the embodied knowledge of our co-researchers and ourselves continuing to serve as the backdrop of our research tapestry. Because the focus within our study was embedded in this often silenced way of knowing, for us, there could be no other way but to ground our ongoing inquiry in narrative knowing. Storytelling enabled us to tell, share, explore, retell, and reimagine our relational lives. As Clandinin and Connelly (1995) point out:

Teachers know their lives in terms of stories. They live stories, tell stories of those lives, retell stories with changed possibilities, and relive the changed stories. In this narrative view of teacher's knowledge, we mean more than teachers' telling stories of specific children and events. We mean that their way of being in the classroom is storied: As teachers they are characters in their own stories of teaching, which they author. (p. 12)

In our research context, we understood Clandinin and Connelly's narrative view of knowledge as shaping each one of our lives. A story uncovering how we knew our lives narratively, was shared by Danielle in response to our conversation around teacher evaluation and *the* knowledge so often valued on school landscapes:

Danielle: Well and I think I was telling you last year when I got evaluated by...[my principal], the first time that he came in, I had planned a lesson around The Mitten [by Jan Brett]. And I thought it went really well, like half the kids, somehow we were starting to do a story about changing the story of a mitten and I was quite excited with the way that it went and it took off so that the kids were rewriting that book. I'm sure billions of people have done it, but I...thought that I had made it up in my head that night (laughter). But anyway, we go for this talk, and this was my first evaluation last year. And he [my principal] didn't notice anything that I thought went really well.... He was saying, 'How did you think it went?' (Karen: Not a language arts person?) No. And [he said], 'Well did you notice this, did you notice this?' or just whatever. And he said, 'Well, I noticed that you didn't ask... [Sergio] a question.' And I said, 'Oh, I'm sorry.' Who knows what I said, but anyway and then [he said], something about that I didn't change my questioning techniques.... Like he was looking to make sure, that's what the problem was, I asked too many of the same kinds of questions. Now this...[Sergio] had been away for a whole month being sick, he had just come back. I can't tell you how many times I wanted to go in there and say that, but I never did. (April, 1997, pp. 27-28)

As Danielle's story made visible, her knowing of her self as a teacher was storied, intimately shaped by the context of her classroom and in relationship with her students. While she told this story to highlight her understanding of the narrow range of knowledge possibilities shaping school landscapes, her telling also made explicit the significant place the authorship of her own knowing had in her understanding of her self as a teacher.

Whether we were positioned on the larger professional knowledge landscape as teachers, principals, or university researchers, we recognized that the stories we lived were multiple. It was our engagement in the process of authoring our lives within the fluid and shifting story contexts shaping us (Carr, 1986) which drew us to tell stories.

Weaving Conversational Threads

In...conversation...we are created and cradled, given back to ourselves in the intimacy of connection.... I talk(s) to you and you answer(s) in a rise and fall that is not transcendence but two subjects swimming in 'our sea' ...splashing the swelling surface of our being in words. We are born singly but together. We exchange gifts. (Godard, Knutson, Marlatt, Mezei, & Scott, 1994, p. 123)

Conversation as a vital way of knowing is addressed by many feminist writers. As Trinh (1989) writes, "speech...creates a bond of coming-and-going which generates movement and rhythm...life and action" (p. 138). Clinchy (1996) speaks of connected knowing as a reciprocal process in which "neither partner disappears into the other; each makes and keeps the other present" (p. 232). We placed tremendous value in the connected knowing living within the multiple spaces of conversation within this inquiry. Our conversations with our co-researchers helped us to understand how their positioning, as individuals often living on the margins of their professional contexts, allowed them to develop a different way of knowing; one which strengthened them as they embraced the fluidity within themselves and the worlds they travel within and between. They understood that it was these same margins which isolated, and made vulnerable, their stories to live by. Describing marginalized lives, Goldberger (1996) says, "their way of knowing is truly contextual and constructed in that they have learned firsthand how situated and power-related ways of knowing can be. Knowledge and knowing are, for them, a matter of strategy and survival" (p. 356). In listening carefully to the voices of our co-researchers, to the stories and life experiences they shared, a much more contextualized view of the landscape of schools emerged.

*For people who have felt powerless and at the mercy of forces that are faceless,
the opportunity to tell [their] truth is deeply meaningful
~Capponi (1997, p. 100)*

Through the depth of our exploration together, we found common ground, a borderspace, where the distance between us dissolved, leading to the mutual construction of knowledge. One of our co-researchers spoke to the common ground shaped through conversation when she said: "...when we dialogue here and we all come, we're at the same level of communication and dialogue and so we have certain things understood~it's the unspoken" (October, 1996, p. 14). This common ground as a place for the construction of knowledge was illuminated further in the following conversation:

Karen: I'll tell you something, though, what I have learned from listening to you is that, well, we've talked about this, there is no way that teachers know how marginalized your experience is living as principals. (Peggy: Really?) We do not see it. We do not see it as teachers. We do not see your isolation. We do not see your struggle.

Peggy: What do they see? What do you see? What would you say they think they see?

Janice: I'm not even sure that we take time (Peggy: To think about it?) I think a lot of it is kind of taken-for-granted.

Karen: We don't see your vulnerability. That's what we don't see. Do you know what I mean? I think, but here, because you share it with us, I mean, like I know Janice and I are going to go back to our schools with a whole different understanding of who administrators are.... Because this is a group and we've heard these common stories, now you realize that it isn't just one story. (September, 1997, p. 40)

Within this common ground, holding our difference, we were allowed to express, in words, those stories often surrounded by silence and separation on our school landscapes. As Clandinin and Connelly (1995) reaffirm, "[we] need others in order to engage in conversations where stories can be told, reflected back, heard in different ways, retold, and relived" (p. 13). Within these relational places, the "possibility for awakenings and transformations" are held and nurtured (p. 13). In this fragment of conversation, Tony reminded us of the importance of our interconnectedness in our shared inquiry space and of our inextricable attachment to one another.

Our stories, when first offered to one another, were the fragile threads of ourselves which were nurtured through careful listening and thoughtful response “as a storyteller opens her heart to a story listener” (Behar, 1996, p. 2). One such story came forward at the tail end of one of our conversations with our principal co-researchers in which we had spent a great deal of time exploring conversation on school landscapes.

Cheryl: It came to a head over the way he treated some students and I was quite angry hearing him treat them this way and I thought, ‘I’ve got to cool down’ because emotionally I was just, I thought, ‘I’m going to deal with this in all the wrong ways.’ So I went off to Safeway to get some treats for the meeting we were having, came back and this teacher happened to be sitting in the office. So I went in and I thought I was going to be very, very cool, but I approached it and said, ‘I have to share with you some disappointment which I just witnessed about half an hour ago.’ And the teacher said, ‘What do you mean?’ And I said, ‘You were shouting at the students.’ He said, ‘I wasn’t.’ [I said,] ‘Yes you were. You were shouting at them and not dealing with this in an appropriate way at all.’ And so what really threw me off was he began, it was his attitude and his cockiness toward me and I thought, ‘No, I have to leave, I’m taking this personally.’ So I said, ‘You know what, I think I have to cool down.’ And I said, ‘But we are going to talk about this again because this is very important.’ As I was leaving, this person said, ‘Well, sorry!’ and I shut the door. I was so tempted to open up the door again and I thought, ‘Don’t do this. Don’t do this.’ This was Friday.

Karen: I could never talk to another person that way.

Cheryl: I know. Nor would I ever talk to the teachers [that way]...I was just dumbfounded. So anyway, the long and the short of it is, finally we sat down. I waited until Wednesday because I was still hot and I couldn’t remove myself personally from it and deal with it rationally. So we finally met and I said, ‘I have to share with you how I felt personally hurt and slighted’ and shared that, you know.

Peggy: But you did do it.

Janice: What did he do? Did it matter?

Cheryl: It might have, but it was more important that I share it.

Peggy: Yes.

Cheryl: But I'll tell you, as much as I was hurt, I know that there's going to be a dramatic change at least.

Janice: It hurt.

Cheryl: Right, in the way things are dealt with. And I did say this, I said, 'If that had been your child sitting in one of those chairs, and you, as a parent, would you feel comfortable having them talked to in that way?' And I'll tell you, never in my days would I ever talk to...

Karen: Like how much courage you must have had to face those [issues]. A lot of people would turn the other way.

Cheryl: [Well, I was]...on my cell phone on the way home, crying. [Saying,] 'You won't believe what happened to me!'

Karen: But so many would turn the other way and just let that go, don't you think?

Cheryl: Oh, yeah. (September, 1997, pp. 41-42)

Cheryl's vulnerable telling shaped an "educative" (Dewey, 1938) space where we explored the necessary yet tremendously fragile place of conversation on school landscapes, while simultaneously trying to live it ourselves as we listened to and responded to her told story. Cheryl's description of the hurt she felt and the image of her driving home in tears was one of many significant moments in our ongoing conversations~moments of vulnerability shared by all...moments that stayed with us.

In these intimate exchanges, we reflected our selves back to one another, while also creating possible images for who we were becoming. Our selves were constantly in process, being constructed and reconstructed in the contexts of our relationships. We understood that "constructed knowing is much more than the understanding that knowledge is contextual and situated and that the knower is always a part of the known.... Constructed knowing is flexible, responsive, and responsible knowing as well" (Goldberger, 1996, p. 357). It was, and continues to be, the deepness of living these

conversations in diverse ways; with one another, with our larger research group, and with our teachers and principals, where we find promise for understanding our selves and others on the landscape of schools. As Tony, one of our co-researchers, reflected, “I think the different perspectives bring a richness to the study and to the dialogue” (October, 1996, p. 6).

Like the web of relations Silko (1996) describes through the criss crossing threads of the Pueblo people’s lives, the structure of our research tapestry emerged as it was made, through conversation. We too, needed to listen and trust, having faith that meaning would be made. A fragment from our early transcripts captured our negotiation as co-researchers to live storied relationships:

Maxine: Do you see kind of taking a focus on the various nights, or do you have sort of questions, areas you’re looking at, or are the questions coming from ourselves?

Janice: I think it’s more that way, Maxine.... I hoped that what would happen as we start to get together [is] that we will just come together and talk about our practice wherever we might be living out that practice and telling stories—things that maybe we’re wondering about or trying to make further sense of. So...by sharing a story, maybe one of you will respond to it and help me to think about it in a new way.... So I think we’ll do that together. I think as the transcripts come back too, and we start to look at them, and you’ll each get copies of the transcripts, that probably we’ll start to see things in there that maybe we’ll want to talk about further or explore a little bit more; that as you sit and read those you start to wonder about that in a different way that we maybe didn’t have a chance to explore and then we’ll find a space here to do that.

Maxine: I’m excited because the in-classroom and out-of-classroom places have posed a great dilemma, many dilemmas for me. I think probably for all of my career as a teacher, but I think that I’ve become more aware of it, I’d say, in the last two years as a teacher of children with special needs, so I’m really interested and excited to be a part of this.

Jean: I think it’s...really important not to have an agenda, and not to have questions, because I think that as people tell their stories, I mean it is the stories that are important. (October, 1996, p. 6)

Our research tapestry revealed that “conversation as a research method [was] very likely to yield stories as data. If we want[ed] to understand people’s understanding, we [were] apt to discover meaning in their stories” (Florio-Ruane, 1991, p. 240).

Weaving Research Texts

Continuing to shape a space, where stories held meaning, was central to our inquiry. As Trinh (1989) reminded us, “story depends upon every one of us to come into being. It needs us all, needs our remembering, understanding, and creating what we have heard together to keep on coming into being” (p. 119). In negotiating such a space for story at the outset, we committed to a shared conversation group which would be constructed not by the sole questions and separate interests of our selves positioned as researchers, but by the multiple stories shaped by all of us living within diverse contexts. We did not want to separate our selves in a position of power, asking others to tell their stories, “but...reveal[ing] little or nothing of ourselves; [or]...make[ing] others vulnerable,...[while] we ourselves remain[ed] invulnerable” (Behar, 1993, p. 273). Like Maxine, we, too, felt the excitement and necessity to be part of such an inquiry.

As we reflected on the transcripts of our conversations, we found promise in identifying emerging and recurring threads which could expand our relational tapestry. These evolving field texts offered us further wonders which we continued to bring to our conversations with our co-researchers. It was critical to provide a space for conversation around these transcripts. Our intentions to “speak with—rather than for—each other” (Keating, 1996, p. 61), and to represent our lives in a manner which honoured our crossings within and between self and other, were illuminated in the following conversation:

Karen: We’ll be starting our writing and that’s what we’ll want to bring back to you, and we’re thinking with the transcripts,...what we were thinking of doing is going through them and looking for themes or key concepts.

Cheryl: I think that’s a very wise idea.

Karen: And were going to flag them and kind of highlight them for you.

Cheryl: I can hardly wait to see the themes!

Karen: We'll still be having our story sharing time (Tony: Absolutely.) when we get together, but we want to start sharing our work with you as well and Janice and I were just thinking about how we might do that....

Janice: Well, I think what's really important is when we start to do the writing...even if it takes us longer, what's critical is that you have a chance to read it and that you're feeling comfortable with how we're pulling, I mean we'll pull maybe from this transcript...in one section and right next to that, there's something from the very first transcript, so that you're feeling represented in a way. Because Karen and I are representing you...in a text that we'll be writing and it's important that you're feeling comfortable with what we do. And also, we'll be laying what we've learned as a result of our conversations with you alongside the conversations that we've had with the teachers in our other group and that adds another layer to the work too.... And there may be times when we try to combine both from the teacher transcripts (Peggy: It must be fascinating.) and from your transcripts.

Karen: Your voices, your stories are identifying the threads for us. We're not taking our own frame and kind of saying, 'This is what we're looking for' because that's what happens [in some research contexts].

Tony: You're taking it out of what we say.

Karen: Absolutely. In fact the last line of our proposal says, 'We will go where the stories lead us' and that's what we're doing.... We talk about you as a group and we don't call you participants, we call you co-researchers because we don't see you as participants and we hope you don't feel like you're just (Tony: Not at all.) (Cheryl: No, no.) people that we're getting something from because this has been a journey for all of us. We don't come here with our (Janice: Agenda.) No, we don't. You are the agenda. (September, 1997, p. 38)

Necessary Knottings

As our conversation with one another and our co-researchers from within our larger communities were woven and knotted together, further openings for imagining how

bordercrossings might reshape new stories of living on the professional knowledge landscape of schools were created. “Bordercrossings” are the ongoing struggles described by Anzaldúa (1987) of recognizing and working to cross interior and exterior borders. Many threads of this struggle, of our increasing willingness and desire “to remind you of your me-ness, as I discover you in myself” (Lorde, 1984, p. 11), were spun into the tapestry of our research text. One example of bordercrossing came forward as Maxine responded to Naomi’s story of the tensions she experienced while attempting to work alongside the special needs teacher in her school, whom she felt positioned himself above her.

Maxine: Well you know, as you were talking, it makes me think so much of this unattainable position in a lot of ways that you’re placed in when you’re a teacher of students that have been labelled.... Like I think of some of the things that you have said and I, you know the whole time I’ve been thinking to myself, did I do that? And, would somebody say that about what I’ve done? And I’ve been thinking.... I’ve been trying to distance myself from that and really listen to what you’re saying. (November, 1996, pp. 26-27)

In Maxine’s response, we see her listening to Naomi’s story as she wove threads of Naomi’s understanding with her own experience of being positioned on a school landscape as a special needs teacher. By naming and exploring the tensions Naomi’s story brought forward for her, Maxine made visible her “looking inward and outward” (Anzaldúa, 1987, 1990; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; hooks, 1984; Trinh, 1989) as she tried to see from the vantage point constructed by Naomi’s text. Maxine’s further unravelling of Naomi’s story, laid alongside her experience of being placed in an “unattainable position,” thickened the tapestry of our inquiry space. Tension~both our own inner tensions, as we remembered and shared stories of the dilemmas we experienced on school landscapes, and the tensions other’s stories drew forth for us~were knots; as necessary in our research weavings as were those stories with less tension-filled edges.

In such an inquiry space, where difference was respun and new threadings became knotted, tensions were no longer hidden in the background of our tapestry, but were brought forward, making new designs in our relational knowing. As Greene (1994) reminds us, “something life affirming in diversity must be discovered, even as something shared emerges out of the diversity, something that can be deeply—if only provisionally—recognized as constituent of a common world” (p. 23). This thread, made visible again and again throughout our work together, was described by Tony when he shared, “[we] challenge each other...look at it this way or look at it that way, [to wonder,] have you thought of this idea? You’re always learning and questing to learn in different areas, it’s not a, you don’t just get together to...[complain] or to tell each other how wonderful we are (Peggy: Exactly.). No, it is to stretch and to learn” (January, 1997, p. 42).

Tapestry Remnants: Edges of Possibility

Like the natural fibers of the earth, our stories are woven from the raw material of our life experiences, shaped from the diverse landscapes on which we have lived. As weavers of our own stories, whether spun out through our writing or conversation, we make visible our experiences to our selves and others. In sharing our stories with one another we come to recognize their unique qualities and how important this is in bringing texture and richness to our conversation.

We weavers, who gather together to spin stories, know how essential it is that these delicate tellings of our selves be received and cradled in gentle hands. Our stories are passed with care from one weaver to the next and together we are able to both draw out, and intertwine, our multiple storythreads. It is at these places of crossing that we are able to see, to feel, to understand, and to take responsibility for one another as weavers of stories.

We recognize and celebrate the difference that our stories bring, they are the warp and the weft of our conversation. This difference works into the overall beauty of the tapestry, no storythreads are left out. Even the less visible threads that often appear in the backing of tapestries are pulled forward. The tapestry, woven out of our shared storytelling, knows no

boundaries. There are always threads that hang loose, inviting new stories to be respun from those already told.

In our conversations, the patterns of our stories are woven in different ways. These stories may be central to our experience or they may be stories that we have yet to understand, they live on the edge of our consciousness. At other times we are uncertain where our stories are leading us. There is great hope to be found in inviting these stories, that live at the edge of our experience, into the conversation.

In these kinds of storytelling relationships, different knots take form. Some may appear in entanglements, creating confusion and disorder, while others appear as interconnected knots which bring strength and possibility to the shared story fabric~both are necessary. Those who understand and tell stories in the wisdom of the weaver, recognize the expansiveness of the tapestry that is continuously being woven in our storied lives.

Endnotes

¹ Our inquiry is nested within Clandinin and Connelly's (1995); and Connelly and Clandinin's (1999; 1988) work on teacher knowledge and professional contexts. As part of this research program, our inquiry is concerned with teacher and principal identity and the ways teachers and principals shape, and are shaped within, their professional landscapes. In Clandinin & Connelly's (1995) view of teacher knowledge, "our best understanding of teacher knowledge is a narrative one" (p. 12). "Story to live by" is the narrative conceptualization of identity framed by Connelly & Clandinin (1999) in their extensive work on narrative as it intersects with teacher knowledge and professional contexts.

² Borrowing from the work of Crites (1971), Clandinin and Connelly (1995) highlight sacred stories as pervasive stories on school landscapes that "remain mostly unnoticed, and when named, are hard to define" (p. 8). Connelly and Clandinin characterize the "theory-driven view of practice shared by practitioners, policy makers, and theoreticians as having the quality of a sacred story" (1996, p. 25).

³ Dates denote the temporal quality of our taped and transcribed research conversations which took place over an eighteen month period with each group of co-researchers. These conversations, embodying the narratives of our experience, were negotiated on a regular basis with each group and were approximately two to three hours in length. This data comprises twenty-one transcripts from which this paper and others emerge. In addition to these taped conversations, our conversations with our teacher and principal co-researchers continue as we share back and receive response to our ongoing writing.

⁴ Clandinin and Connelly (1995) discuss secret stories as those stories of practice which teachers often only tell in safe places to colleagues with whom they share trusting relationships.

⁵ Cover stories constructed by their authors to appear “certain” and “expert” in places of vulnerability are discussed by Clandinin and Connelly (1995).

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CHAPTER 3

A Marginal Story as A Place of Possibility: Negotiating Self on the Professional Knowledge Landscape¹

Janice Huber *in relation with* Karen Whelan

Storytellers are influenced by the telling of their own stories. Active construction and telling of a story is educative: The storyteller learns through the act of storytelling.... [and] in their telling in relationship.... It is an education that goes beyond writing for the self because it has a responsive audience, which makes possible both an imagined response and an actual response. These possibilities, the imagining of response and the response, are important for the storyteller. The possibilities are important in an educative way because the meaning of the story is reshaped and so, too, is the meaning of the world to which the story refers. (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, pp. 155-56)

This paper is about the storytelling to which Clandinin and Connelly refer. It is about telling stories to our selves and to others with whom we are in relationship. It is about how this telling, active construction, living out, and reconstruction of our stories, influences our selves and those around us. Response and the imagining of possibilities live at the centre of what this paper is about. The teacher's story we make sense of within this paper is a story of "miseducative" (Dewey, 1938) qualities, a story in which impossible contradictions, gaps, and silences are named. This story is situated within one school context in which the storyteller/teacher who lived this experience uncovers her struggle to understand and to resist the response she received through negotiating her self within her professional surroundings. Located within a western Canadian province, in a large junior/senior high school, this story centres around issues of integrating students with special needs into "regular" programs. A context is described in which students with special needs are identified for individualized programming within a segregated setting in

the school. Students who were labelled as “special needs” were selectively integrated into what is traditionally defined as “non-academic” courses, and were assigned classroom aides to assist with individualized programming.

This story was shared within the context of a narrative inquiry (Carr, 1986; Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Connelly & Clandinin 1988, 1990) including eighteen months of taped and transcribed research conversations between a group of five teacher co-researchers who felt the need to construct a community away from our school landscapes, where our most vulnerable stories could be explored. The telling of this story was important for this particular teacher and for all of us as co-researchers—storytellers, storylisteners, and storyresponders in relationship with one another. The storytelling context, shaped by a responsive audience, was profoundly educative in that through the sharing of this story, the meaning of it was reshaped from beginning images of hopelessness to those of possibility.

Our paper begins by situating this inquiry within a narrative conceptualization of teacher identity and the professional contexts in which teachers live and work. Our reconstruction of the first meeting with the teacher co-researchers with whom we are in conversation provides an introduction to the methodological grounding which shapes our study. The introduction also provides an overview of the story we worked to understand in conversation within our teacher inquiry group and throughout this paper. Unpacking this story through the framework and narrative language developed by Clandinin and Connelly (1995) in their conceptualization of a “professional knowledge landscape” revealed the storied qualities of this school context and the central role response played within this storying. We conclude this paper by focusing on the ways in which response was continuously negotiated and lived out on this school landscape. Our purpose in this final exploration is to uncover the borders shaped out of response, as well as the possibilities for “bordercrossings” (Anzaldúa, 1987)—those hopeful meeting places where

the retelling of our stories create possibilities for imagining our selves in relation with others in new ways.

Understanding Identity As “Story To Live By”

Our understanding of teacher identity is grounded within Connelly and Clandinin’s (1999) narrative conceptualization of identity as “story to live by.” In their research into teacher knowledge and school contexts, they reveal how we tell storied compositions of our lives to “define who we are, what we do, and why...” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). A sense of fluidity shapes our story to live by as it is composed over time, recognizing the multiplicity of situations and experiences we embody. These multiple storylines interweave and interconnect, bearing upon one another and on how we come to understand our selves (Clandinin, 1997). We live, tell, retell, and relive our life stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998) as we negotiate our selves within and across various contexts. For example, within the context of our own lives, we may draw upon our understanding of our selves as women to make meaning of a particular experience. Although this knowing will also be present as we make sense of our selves in other situations, it may dwell in the background while our self understanding of being elementary teachers may come more to the foreground as we make sense of another situation. As teachers, our story to live by is “both personal - reflecting a person’s life history - and social - reflecting the milieu, the contexts in which teachers live” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

Understanding teacher identity as story to live by calls for a relational understanding between teachers and the contexts in which they work. In this way, teachers both shape and are shaped by their particular school landscapes. Considering schools as professional knowledge landscapes creates openings for exploring the storied nature of teacher identity while also challenging us to think about each school context from multiple vantage points. In the next section of this paper, we reconstruct a teacher’s story, following the shifting nature of her story to live by as she composes her teaching

life both inside and outside of her classroom context on the professional knowledge landscape of her school.

Reconstructing Naomi's Experiences

It is our first time coming together with our group of teacher co-researchers. We are nervous and somewhat uncertain of how the evening will unfold, yet in the same moment, our sense of excitement and anticipation draws us to this conversation. We are a group of both strangers and acquaintances, gathering from various school landscapes. In the privacy of Janice's living room, we sit together, surrounded by candlelight, food, and wine. A common storyline joins us together—our lives as teachers.

This common experience enables us, with ease, to pick up on the threads of our lives, connecting stories of where we last saw one another. After a few moments, the room becomes quiet, a sign that it is time to begin this new research conversation between us. Feeling a need to tell of our selves, as researchers positioned at the university, we (including our advisor, Jean Clandinin) each share stories of what has brought us to this exploration of a narrative understanding of teacher knowledge and identity. Our stories, centering around research themes of margins (Anzaldúa, 1987, 1990) and positionings (Miller, 1994), create an opening for our co-researchers who are positioned as teachers on the landscape, to begin to share their stories. The circle of storytelling broadens as we go around the living room, listening to each teacher co-researcher share of her life. When our storytelling has passed nearly full circle, there is one last pause, an invitation for Naomi, who has not yet spoken, to share her story.

Naomi begins to tell the story of herself by situating her narrative within a rural junior/senior high school landscape. She describes her teaching assignment as very specialized, being the only teacher hired in this position within her school and school district over an eight-year period. Naomi's description speaks, to a certain degree, of the loneliness and isolation which surrounded her as she composed her teaching life, a context she describes in her own words when she states, "I really didn't have anyone that I could

plan with.” Having noted how this particular positioning shaped her life as a teacher on this school landscape, Naomi quickly emphasizes that her sense of marginalization was far more profound than her visible positioning on the landscape as the only teacher of a specialized program. She begins to describe this deeper sense of marginalization when she says, “Certainly when I started teaching there, I don’t think I was on the margin at all. As time went on, though, I very much became an outsider.” Naomi unpacks her knowledge of becoming an outsider by recounting how she came to recognize that she was not following the “status quo” story of her school. The magnitude of choosing to position herself in this way was expressed when she reflected, “I guess personally I made that choice but as a result of it, I quit my job because I couldn’t be there anymore and agree.” Naomi explained that in order for her to make sense of her experience and to continue to exist on this school landscape, she consciously chose to position herself outside the “school story”—a story shaped by a mandate of inclusion for students with special needs (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, 1996). She reflected her deepening awareness of this story by saying “I think I initially started to go there [outside the school story], maybe not consciously, but I think soon it was a conscious decision and I was not prepared to be there in any other way.... I think it was the only way that I could make sense. It was the only way that I could exist.”

Naomi’s sharing in this first conversation speaks to us of her internal struggle, of her need to live in a space where she could “make sense” of her experiences in an “educative” (Dewey, 1938) way, constructively shaping her ongoing practice. In our second conversation as a research community, Naomi moves deeper into this story. She does this by unpacking experiences which led her to resign from her teaching position, leaving her school and her teaching community.

Naomi began to speak of these experiences by introducing herself and “the special needs teacher” (who we named Brian) as two central characters in the story. In her first few words, Naomi positioned herself as living within her classroom on her school

landscape. Through Naomi's eyes, Brian was positioned as someone who had influence in her program, yet lived distantly from the physical space of her classroom. At the outset, we learned from Naomi that Brian, alone, determined the placement of each special needs student. We also discovered that when a student with special needs (who we named Alicia) was placed in Naomi's room, a program aide (who we named, Laura) was assigned to work with Alicia. Outlining the constraints of her timetable and teaching assignment, Naomi emphasized her struggle to negotiate a meaningful program for Alicia so that she would experience success.

The tension in the relationship between Naomi and Brian became apparent at the first reporting period, and was heightened at each successive reporting period. At the centre of this tension was the confusion over who would be responsible for determining and assigning Alicia's grade. In the first reporting period, Naomi both determined and assigned Alicia's grade. However, she was troubled by being prevented, by a school directive, from indicating to Alicia's parents that she was working on a program which had been modified to meet her particular learning needs. Through Naomi's telling, we learned that her desire for authentic dialogue with parents was in conflict with Brian who lived a story of keeping parents happy at all costs.

In the second reporting period, another special needs aide, with whom Naomi had little interaction, informed her that Brian would "do the mark" for Alicia. Naomi was not involved in determining Alicia's grade, yet she discovered that her name was recorded beside the assigned grade on the report card which was sent home. In this situation, and in those following, Naomi attempted to understand this practice through conversation with Laura, the special needs program aide who was working in her classroom; the special needs teacher, Brian; her principal; her vice principal; and her colleagues on staff. As the plotline in this story developed, Naomi continued to question Brian's practice in "marking" the student's work. In Naomi's telling of the story, it appeared to her as

though Brian deflected his responsibility onto others and eventually storied her as a teacher who simply did not understand how to mark students with special needs.

As the story continued, a border began to appear between Naomi and Brian. Her intolerance over the absence of communication and understanding which was shaping their relationship led Naomi to request a meeting between Brian, Laura, and herself. Having Laura present at the meeting was responded to with resistance from Brian. However, Naomi insisted that Laura's voice be present because of her intimate understanding of Alicia and the classroom program. Following the meeting, Naomi learned that Brian storied the event as an upsetting exchange, as he felt Laura's questions embarrassed him in front of Naomi. In response to their meeting, he requested that the school administrators "fire" Laura. Naomi countered his telling of this event to the administration with her own version of what happened, and Laura's position was maintained.

Naomi described the aura of silence she experienced as the story continued to unfold into the second school year. At the edges of this silence, Naomi recalled witnessing "horrendous things" continuing to take place. Conversation in relation to the growing dilemma surrounding this school story began to occur only in secrecy, when "nobody was in the vicinity." For Naomi, her school landscape became a place where there was an intolerance for tension. Because her story to live by necessitated exploring tension in relationship with others, her understanding of the complexities of her school landscape was pushed further to the margins.

Naomi countered this push, continuing to resist the school story by challenging Brian's living out of it. Her principal responded to Naomi by consistently dismissing her concerns, eventually telling her that she must either support Brian or say nothing at all. Naomi's story closed with a profound sense of loss in the relationship she had lived with her principal. Her deeply felt sense of marginalization, shaped by the conflicting nature of the stories being lived and told on her school landscape, ultimately led her to leave her school community and to resign her position with the district. Finding no place for her

story to “exist” on this school landscape, Naomi felt she was left with no choice but to leave.

Retelling Naomi’s Story in Terms of the Professional Knowledge Landscape

While Naomi’s recounting of her experience as a marginalized member of this school community was painful and troubling, her story holds educative promise for understanding school contexts and teachers’ stories to live by. This promise led us to reconsider Naomi’s story by focusing on the shaping nature of Naomi’s school context on her story to live by as a teacher.

We began this exploration by drawing on Clandinin & Connelly’s (1995) conceptual framework of the “professional knowledge landscape”³ which enabled us to make meaning of Naomi’s story through a focus on her story to live by and on her experience in “two fundamentally different places” on her school landscape—“the one behind the classroom door with students, and the other in professional places with others” (p. 5). When we discuss the physical space *inside* Naomi’s classroom, we draw upon Clandinin and Connelly’s (1995) metaphor by referring to this place on her school landscape as her “in-classroom” space. When we discuss Naomi’s experience *outside* her classroom on this school landscape, we refer to these spaces as “out-of-classroom” places. Inquiring into Naomi’s experience within each of these places, her in-classroom and her out-of-classroom places on this school landscape, allowed us to examine the unique qualities of these places and the differing ways in which Naomi authored her life within each.

Naomi’s In-classroom Place on the Professional Knowledge Landscape

The conceptual framework of the professional knowledge landscape views teachers as actively engaged practitioners who are attempting to author meaningful lives, telling and retelling themselves through their classroom practice (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) as they respond to the shifting policy expectations and social issues which

surround their work, and to the specific needs of their students. From this vantage point, teachers are not viewed as empty vessels waiting to be filled by the ideas of others, but are understood as “holders and makers of knowledge” (Clandinin, 1997, p. 1).

Within the in-classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape of schools, the moral authority for a teacher’s understanding of her story to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) is self-authored, shaped by each teacher’s particular narrative history and negotiated in relation with students. Because teachers position themselves within their classrooms around the story they embody of themselves as teachers, the in-classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape of schools is often characterized by a sense of safety and secrecy. While Clandinin and Connelly (1995) caution that this secrecy should not be glorified, they also note that it plays an important role in shaping the epistemological nature of the in-classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape as a space in which teachers feel “free from scrutiny...[and are able] to live stories of practice” (p. 13) which honour their embodied knowing. It is in this way that the in-classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape is epistemologically and morally grounded in narrative knowledge. This narrative grounding enables the in-classroom place to be educative for teachers, as their stories to live by can be negotiated without judgment framed by the “theoretical knowledge and the abstract rhetoric of conclusions found in the professional knowledge landscape outside the classroom” (p. 12).

As we listened to Naomi tell stories of her in-classroom place on her school landscape, she shared telling images of how she viewed this space. Early in her storytelling Naomi described her in-classroom place as “my space,”—an important image which awakened us to her strong sense of agency within this space. Beginning to describe her concerns about Brian’s placement of Alicia into her classroom, Naomi explained, “Because he was special needs...he was involved in everybody else’s program. And so you couldn’t really just sort of say, ‘Well as long as you stay out of my space, I’ll deal

with this...because he was a part of your space.” Naomi’s description of her in-classroom place helped us to see that this was a space of belonging for Naomi, a secure place for her “self authorship” of her story to live by as teacher—one she felt determined to protect and uphold (Carr, 1986).

We were also drawn to Naomi’s images of herself as a teacher within her classroom space through her stories of experience with students. Naomi’s understanding of her in-classroom place, and her ability to shape it, were evident when she discussed her struggle with the constraints of her teaching time-table. Recognizing the limitations this time-table placed upon her students and, in this particular story, upon Alicia, Naomi said,

After I got to know my grade seven classes then [Alicia] was in one too where we met. Generally I had my students for a 40 minute class and an 80 minute class. Well, 40 minutes for all of my students was too short, for [Alicia] it was really, I mean she would just barely get her stuff out and get started and now it’s time to finish...that class just really wasn’t the type of setting that she should have been in. But my other two grade seven classes were a lot better, so finally after many discussions I got her moved into a different grade seven class that only had 80 minute blocks and so I’d see her twice one week and only once the next week, so that wasn’t the best, but it was better than that 40 minute class and it was a much better environment. Plus she was in the biggest grade seven class and then afterwards she was in the smallest one.

Naomi placed significance in this event and, as she told this story, we began to see that one of the threads woven into the story she was composing was that of working in close relationship with students. Naomi’s focus on what was best for this particular student led her to the out-of-classroom place on her school landscape and into “many discussions” with colleagues. Within her recounting of this experience, there was a sense that the negotiation of Alicia’s timetable on the out-of-classroom place may have been

difficult. However, Naomi appeared to view the negotiation as morally necessary because, as she described, Alicia's first class placement "just...wasn't the type of setting that she should have been in." We were also left with the sense that, regardless of the difficulties Naomi experienced through this out-of-classroom negotiation, she eventually felt that she was able to successfully negotiate a better situation for Alicia. In this way and in this particular instance, we felt as though the story she was authoring as teacher was honored, both within her in-classroom place and on the out-of-classroom places on the professional knowledge landscape of her school.

Other qualities of Naomi's ability to negotiate her identity within her classroom were shared as she storied her relationship with Laura. We learned of the relationship which developed between Naomi and Laura when Naomi said, "I did have an aide and she was absolutely wonderful and she basically taught me how to modify and that type of thing, you know, meet that little girl's needs." By storying Laura as a co-teacher, Naomi made visible the deep sense of respect and validation she felt towards this woman. She described how their relationship enabled them to modify a program which made sense for Alicia. Through Naomi's telling of their relationship, we saw her recognition of Laura as a person who mattered in her life. Her words spoke to us of a relationship in which mutuality created openings for educative conversation, risk taking, and the imagining of possibilities for a student who had been defined as "special needs." It was being in relation which enabled them to work together in the best interests of Alicia.

Naomi's story of Laura created an image of negotiation which occurred with authenticity. We wonder if the relationship they shared may have led Naomi to become more trusting of the out-of-classroom place on her school landscape with the intent of also engaging there "in conversations where stories can be told, reflected back, heard in different ways, retold, and relived in new ways" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 13). Being in relationship was an overlapping thread in Naomi's story of both her students and Laura. This led us to believe that relational understanding of experience was a central

plotline in Naomi's story to live by. These two stories of Naomi's in-classroom place on her school landscape also revealed that, within this space, Naomi was deeply engaged in living and retelling this story of herself in negotiation with those who shared the in-classroom space—the students and Laura.

This was not the plotline which Naomi's telling took on as she continued to unpack more of her experience on this school landscape surrounding her work with Alicia and other students with special needs. Increasingly, Naomi's crossing of borders between the in- and out-of-classroom places on her school landscape created tensions for her. As Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) work highlights, "when teachers leave their classrooms and move into another place on the professional knowledge landscape, they leave the safe secrecy of the classroom and enter a public place on the landscape" (p. 14). These out-of-classroom places on the professional knowledge landscape are "dramatically different epistemological and moral place[s]" (p. 14). In the next section of this paper we explore numerous qualities of the out-of-classroom place on Naomi's school landscape and the ways they shaped her story to live by.

Naomi's Out-of-Classroom Place on the Professional Knowledge Landscape

In contrast to the safety and self-authorship which shape the in-classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape, the out-of-classroom place is one largely defined by a sacred story of theory over practice (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). In this out-of-classroom place, policies and prescriptions, holding "theoretical knowledge claims," are delivered from above via the conduit—the dominant communication pipeline which links teachers' lives to their school boards, governing agencies, and associations. This theoretical knowledge arrives into the lives of teachers in the form of new curriculum materials, textbooks, and policy mandates. They are scripted into teachers' lives, often with no substantive place for conversation about what is being "funneled down." Teachers are often left to make sense of these materials behind their classroom doors in secrecy and silence, negotiating these theories in relation to their story to live by.

The sacred theory-practice story enters the school landscape with a “moral push,” leaving teachers caught in what Clandinin and Connelly (1995) describe as a “split existence.” Teachers begin to struggle with their own knowing—knowing that is grounded in their narrative histories and is embedded within their in-classroom practice—and their negotiation of a sacred knowing, a prescriptive, “you should” kind of knowing which shapes the out-of-classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape. It is this tension which causes teachers to experience the out-of-classroom place as abstract, a place that “floats untethered” with “policy prescriptions [that]...are torn out of their historical, narrative contexts” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 11). On the out-of-classroom place, the self-authorship, which can be felt within the in-classroom place, becomes defined by an abstract “other,” and the moral quality of the landscape becomes pre-scripted from outside. In this way, the out-of-classroom place can become a “depersonalized” and disconnected place for teachers to live their storied lives.

In Naomi’s story we are presented with an explicit example of the dilemmas and sense of split existence which become shaped by a teacher’s movement between these two profoundly different places of knowing, defined by dramatically different moral qualities. The sacred story which arrived onto Naomi’s landscape from some abstract place along the conduit, appeared to be one of inclusion; a story loaded with moral implications for teachers. Naomi first faced this new school story when a student with special needs was placed in her classroom and, in her telling of the story, we sensed there was little discussion surrounding the placement—it was simply an expectation. Describing her understanding of this situation, Naomi said, “[Brian] picked which teacher they’d go in with.” As Naomi recounted how the story of inclusion began to take hold on the professional knowledge landscape of her school, we began to see her story coming into conflict with the larger school story, and with those positioned distantly, outside of her classroom context: office support staff, other program aides, Brian, and the school administrators.

Naomi faced her first moral dilemma on the out-of-classroom place when she was met with a prescriptive message from the office staff regarding the reporting process for students with special needs, such as Alicia. Naomi's intention was to communicate openly and honestly with the parents about Alicia's program. However, when she attempted to enter a conversation with the office staff about this process, offering her knowing and understanding of Alicia as she had lived it in her classroom, she came into direct conflict with the conduit and was told, "No, we want her [Alicia] to do the same as everybody else.... We're not going to do a different style of report card." Feeling strongly about this issue, Naomi countered this response with, "That's fine, I'll just type up a letter and tell her mom, explain to her what we've been working on." She was met with, "No, you can't do that either." On the out-of-classroom place, as Clandinin and Connelly (1995) point out, "teachers are not, by and large, expected to personalize conduit materials by considering how materials fit their personality and teaching styles, classrooms, students, and so forth" (p. 11). Naomi was disturbed by the depersonalized message she received in this situation and the way in which she was forced to send home a mark in the report card which she felt "wasn't the truth." It was in this critical moment of "self-sacrifice" that we saw Naomi's determination to live by what she knew. There was a sense of future possibility as she discussed her intention not to be constrained by the story of inclusion shaping the school landscape outside her classroom during the next reporting period.

The impact of the out-of-classroom place on Naomi's story was felt once again when she told of receiving another prescriptive message regarding the marking process, this time sent from Brian via his program aide. Naomi recalled the aide saying, "You're not supposed to do a mark for [Alicia], [Brian] is going to do all the marks for all the kids." The distance with which this message was delivered led us to wonder about the pervasive story which was shaping Naomi's school landscape—one in which spaces for authentic conversation were diminishing. By introducing a new character into the story, a

“messenger” to deliver information, Brian re-shaped the relational space between himself and Naomi, creating distance and separation. Naomi’s response to this widening gap in their relational space was to seek out further conversation and connection so that she might better understand the marking process being implemented by Brian. As she recounted her story of this incident, Naomi recalled thinking to herself, “I’m sure he’s going to come and have a meeting with me because he’s never been in this classroom. He doesn’t have any idea what [Alicia] is doing, so how could he possibly make a mark for her?” However, as Naomi remembered the unfolding events within this story, she shared that Brian did not come to speak with her and in the growing absence of conversation between them, a mark was entered into Alicia’s report card, with Naomi’s name placed beside it. The story, centering around inclusive practice, once again took on an abstract quality (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) as the characters in this story lived out their practice in a distant, depersonalized, and disconnected manner.

The embeddedness of this story within her school landscape became apparent as Naomi struggled to create openings for conversation with Brian. However, as she told the story, we came to see that these attempts ended in disappointment, creating further dilemmas for her. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) describe that in the absence of places for conversation on policies funneled down the conduit onto the school landscape, “discussion...is removed from matters of substance to matters of personality and power” (p. 11). Listening to Naomi’s story, we heard how she experienced this shift from conversation to personality and power, as she described Brian’s reaction to a meeting she had arranged between him, Laura, and herself. “I requested that [Laura] be there because, you know, she too works with [Alicia] so she should contribute to this. I mean she probably knows the most out of all of us how [Alicia] feels during all of those activities.” Naomi was troubled when Brian responded to her request with resistance. Naomi said, “He didn’t want [Laura] there and I just said, ‘Well she, in my class, she works with [Alicia] in my classroom so, she’s coming’.” Brian’s apparent devaluing of Laura’s

position on the school landscape came into direct conflict with the relational story Naomi lived by within her classroom, placing stress on the intended conversation which she had imagined would shape their meeting.

Following this meeting, Naomi recalled how she felt Brian's final response was played out through personality, position, and power, "He wanted [Laura] fired because she asked him questions that embarrassed him in front of me." This dramatic and alarming response to what Naomi had imagined as a conversation to bridge their understanding between the in- and out-of-classroom places on the school landscape only served to create further distance between Naomi and Brian and their stories of one another.

Personality and power become even more embedded in discussions outside Naomi's classroom context as the story Naomi was authoring eventually came into direct conflict with her understanding of Brian's story. When Naomi questioned Brian about his positioning within the school story, she described him defining it as a "power-over" (Josselson, 1992) positioning in which he would "monitor" and "supervise" her practice, and the practice of others within the school. Naomi recalled,

One day I got really angry at [Brian] and I said, 'Tell me what your job is here?' I said, 'You know, you just live off the sweat and tears of the other teachers here.' He told me that he had to be hired in our school to monitor the teachers because we weren't caring enough individuals and we were just cruel to the kids and he was there to save them.

Unpacking how troubled she was by Brian's description of himself as being hired to monitor her because she was cruel to Alicia within her classroom, Naomi said, "He told me that one day, that he was hired to monitor me as well as the others and I said to him, 'So...do you view yourself as being my supervisor?' He responded by saying, 'Yeah' and I said, 'Well, that would be the day, and if you're ever in that position, it will certainly be the day that I cease to work here'." In Naomi's telling of this angry exchange between them, we sensed her struggle with this story. Caught between the borders of personalities

and positions of power, shaped by the larger school story, we recognized her hopelessness in being able to enter into an educative conversation surrounding students with special needs in places outside her classroom on the landscape of her school.

This critical absence of a space for conversation for Naomi, reached its final, dramatic conclusion when she discovered that her principal, whom she respected, cared for, and trusted, attempted to silence her knowing in the face of the dominant school story. Describing two stories of the distance she began to experience between herself and her principal, Naomi recounted being “called down” to her principal’s office after school to address the increasing tension between Brian and herself. As she told this story over the discussion of their confrontational exchange which had taken place between herself and Brian regarding his position in the school story in relation to her own, she said:

As a result...my principal call[ed] me down and sa[id], ‘Did you have a talk with [Brian] today?’ ‘Yup.’ ‘Well what happened? Did it get, you know, a little out of hand?’ And I said, ‘I don’t know, I don’t think it got out of hand, it was just very truthful.’ ‘Well did you tell him that you didn’t think he did much at our school?’ And I said, ‘Yes, I told him exactly that. That’s exactly how I feel and I would tell him that again because I haven’t changed my opinion at all since.’

The determination and conviction with which Naomi spoke about this exchange gave us insight into the strength of her story and her recurring need for “truthful” conversation. Naomi’s sense of connection with Alicia and Laura created a moral space in which their knowing of one another shaped a relationship where care was central. In her telling of the story, we saw that Naomi was unwilling to compromise her “self positioning” as a teacher who cared about her students and Laura. However, we learned that, in her first meeting with her principal regarding this tension, the message Naomi received was, “You can’t tell people stuff like that...” In a second meeting with her principal, behind the closed doors of his office, Naomi’s story to live by bumped up against the school story

once again, and in this meeting as well, Naomi received a silencing response. “He said things like well, ‘We do all kinds of things in our school, Naomi, graduation and volleyball teams and na, na, na and we have special needs here.’ And I’m kind of going, ‘Oh yeah. How does a [special needs] program fit into extracurricular, you know?’.” Her principal replied by saying, “We have to support those things and if we can’t support them, then the least we can do is say nothing at all’.” It was at this moment in Naomi’s storytelling that we were most profoundly struck by the shaping nature of the out-of-classroom place on Naomi’s story to live by. Temporally casting her relationship with her principal in a past sense, Naomi shared, “I did really like my principal.” We imagine Naomi’s embodied knowing of this man may have been at least partially shaped by her recognition of his response, which seemed to honor her agency during the tension surrounding Laura’s dismissal, resulting in her position being maintained. Naomi expressed her painful awakening to a different understanding of her principal as she began to realize that the person, with whom she had always found a space for authentic conversation outside her classroom, was also no longer able to hear her words. In one silencing instance Naomi was told to “say nothing at all,” and, in another, she recalled her principal saying, “Look, I don’t want to get involved with special needs. I know nothing about it, as long as everybody’s quiet and happy...”

Reinforcing this message, we discovered that Naomi’s vice principal would only enter into conversation with her in the hidden corridors of the school when, “...nobody was in the vicinity.” In the face of the powerful school structures and prescriptive conduit story which was shaping the professional knowledge landscape of her school, Naomi’s story was pushed aside, to a place of silence. As she continued to resist the “accepted school story,” her story to live by became marginalized, moving further and further to the edges of what was defined as acceptable on her school landscape. Naomi described her outside positioning in our first conversation when she said, “I guess I went to the margins [of the ‘status quo’ story of the school] because I wasn’t willing to

participate in some of the things that I saw happening [t]here.... You do live in that isolation...” Ultimately the dilemmas which arose out of the abrasion between these two dramatically different moral spaces on the landscape—Naomi’s in-classroom and out-of-classroom places—became too overwhelming for Naomi. It was at this point that she decided that she must leave the school.

Response on the Out-of-Classroom Place on Naomi’s School Landscape

By carefully following Naomi’s story as it wove its way through both the in- and out-of-classroom places on the professional knowledge landscape of her school, we were struck by the response as it developed in Naomi’s story, both how it was given and the ways in which it was received. In this particular story, our challenge to more fully understand response was intensified as we learned of a school community, at least through the eyes of one teacher, where her story to live by came to live at the margins of the school story, surrounded by a profound sense of silence and isolation. The tensions which emerged between Naomi’s story and the school story brought forward the significant gap formed as imagined and actual response came into conflict on the school landscape. The presence of this tension caused us to wonder about response—both how it is shaped by the school story and, in turn, how it shaped Naomi’s story to live by. As we listened to, read, and re-read Naomi’s story, we began to look more closely at response. Living with this story over time enabled us to see some of the ways that response shaped, and was shaped by, Naomi’s story to live by, her relationships with her colleagues, and the larger school story of inclusion.

Interweaving our previous unpacking of Naomi’s story, through our focus on the in- and out-of-classroom places on her landscape, we continue this inquiry by exploring how the story of school, shaped through response, impacted Naomi’s story to live by. Making meaning of Naomi’s story, as lived out on a professional knowledge landscape, enabled us to illustrate that the teacher story Naomi was authoring was deeply grounded

within her narrative knowing of herself as living in relationship with others. Such a view of Naomi's story revealed that as she crossed the border between her in- and out-of-classroom places on her school landscape, she consistently attempted to negotiate her relational story through conversation with various other characters with whom she interacted. It was both the actual and imagined response received by Naomi, as well as the response she gave in return, that uncovered the ways in which the borders on Naomi's school landscape were constructed and lived out.

The dilemmas Naomi faced as she crossed these borders eventually drew forth her counterstory of resistance and insubordination (Nelson, 1995)—her story to live by which became a counterstory within her particular school landscape. Naomi named her “counterstory to live by” in our initial research conversation when she said, “I went to the margins...because I wasn't willing to participate in some of the things I saw happening there and as a result of that, I wasn't following the status quo of my school.” Naomi's reconstruction of herself within her spoken text highlighted her determination to live her story in a way which she felt was educative. Even though this determination to stay with her story eventually led her to resign, there was a hopeful edge to her telling in that she came to see her resignation as an educative alternative to negotiating her story on a school landscape which she increasingly experienced as miseducative. In the final section of this paper, we return to Naomi's storytelling of her professional knowledge context, looking closely at the borders and bordercrossings shaped out of the response on both the in- and out-of-classroom places on this school landscape. As we take a closer look at response by naming these borders and bordercrossings, we hope to gain further insight into the story Naomi authored as it was negotiated within and between borders shaped by the school story of inclusion.

Borders and Bordercrossings on the Professional Knowledge Landscape

Borders of Ownership

The first border made present to us through the telling of this story, one of ownership, spoke to us of the significance of the in-classroom place in Naomi's life as a teacher. It is not surprising to us that this place, described with such passion by Naomi as, "my space," was one she held sacred and was determined to protect. Looking carefully at this protective stance provided us insight into the nature of Naomi's response, where it came from, and the border that was shaped as a result. Naomi's classroom was a visible space on the landscape in which we were able to see her living her story in a meaningful and educative manner as highlighted through her telling of the relational story she composed alongside the students and Laura. We saw a shift in the safety of Naomi's classroom place, however, when the story of inclusion began to break through the protective border she had constructed around herself and her classroom. We believe the construction of this border was grounded within Naomi's narrative history with previous school stories imposed upon her, and was shaped along with her present response to a school story of inclusion she had little understanding of, and even less authority to negotiate as a member of this school landscape. Faced with the threat this school story presented in relationship to her story, she struggled to protect the one place on the landscape she intimately understood, a place which made moral sense to her as she worked in relation with her students.

Negotiating Bordercrossings

Naomi's understanding of the restrictive structures imposed from the out-of-classroom place on the school landscape was evident through her discussion of negotiating the school timetable to meet the needs of her students. In this context, the school timetable became symbolic of a "sacred story" (Crites, 1971) in the out-of-classroom place. These kinds of stories can confine students' and teachers' lives within predetermined frameworks and can become "internalized" and "absorbed" into a "taken-

for-grantedness” (Greene, 1993, 1995) of experience. Naomi’s knowledge of this sacredness made the crossing of this border even more significant. Her response, reflected through her re-negotiation of the school timetable, indicated her courage and conviction to stand up to this story of school even when this task seemed a challenge. Her success in addressing this challenge was a critical moment in Naomi’s story. The response she received was a hopeful sign of possibility within the larger school landscape as it affirmed her knowing while also helping her to recognize that the story she was authoring could be honoured in places beyond the boundaries of her classroom. In this event, we saw a shift in Naomi’s internal border of ownership. This shift enabled her to recognize the importance of her story to live by and the place it had in reshaping the borders constructed between her classroom and those outside her classroom.

Bordercrossings, within public homeplaces.

The response given and received in the relational space between Naomi and Laura was not evident within the telling of this story, yet, this does not diminish its importance in Naomi’s experience of living on this school landscape. Through Naomi’s telling of the value of Laura to this program, a much different story of ownership and borders emerged, quite different from how Naomi storied the borders between herself and Brian. Naomi was open to the presence of Laura in her classroom and together they shaped a relational space, through response, which we imagine enabled both of them to live a story that made sense. As we read and reread Naomi’s telling description of Laura, we were left with the image of “seamless” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1997), although continuously negotiated, bordercrossings in which the “self” was never placed in jeopardy, but rather, was enriched by seeing and being present to the other. In Buber’s (1965) sense of “making present,” Naomi was able to recognize herself through her relation to this other self, her program aide, Laura. The fluidity of distance and relation negotiated between them was ever-present. As Friedman (1965), referring to Buber, highlights:

Making the other present means ‘to imagine the real’ to imagine quite concretely what another...is wishing, feeling, perceiving, and thinking.... a bold swinging into the other which demands the intensest action of one’s being.... One can only do this as a partner, standing in a common situation with the other. (p. 29)

Naomi’s deeply felt sense of Laura as a woman who embodied knowing of Alicia, made visible Naomi’s “bold swinging” into the story she perceived Laura was living. The “public homeplace” shaped between Naomi and Laura was the classroom, a safe place in which they could authentically enter into one another’s presence (Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997).

Borders of Positional Power

The borders of positional power emerged for Naomi when she recognized that the larger school story of inclusion being played out on her school landscape came to define Brian as someone who had direct power and influence within her in-classroom place. Naomi’s tension with Brian centered around his positioning which allowed him to solely select the teachers with whom the students with special needs would be placed. Her understanding of the role Brian played within the school context drew forth an immediate border for Naomi, between herself and Brian. Naomi saw herself positioned on one side, with no voice in decision making, while Brian was positioned on the other side, with a powerful decision-making voice. This border of power manifested itself in multiple ways through the response exchanged on the school landscape.

Sameness.

In the discussion surrounding the report card which took place at the school office, the border was shaped by response which dictated a message of unity in which, “We all must be the same”—a message common on school landscapes and one shaped by forces of power and control in out-of-classroom places. Naomi’s challenging of this response was seen as a threat to the unified story of school. Unlike the response she

received regarding the school timetable, this response restricted her story to live by and forced her into conflict with the school story of inclusion. In this social context, power dictated “the suppression of the elements of personal relation in favour of the elements of pure collectivity” (Friedman, 1965, p. 25) and Naomi’s story to live by, with its central plotline of human relatedness, was placed at great risk.

Distance.

A border of distance became present in the story through the manner in which the second reporting period was addressed. The face-to-face conflict which emerged through the response of “sameness” sent from the school office was reshaped to a more distant and evasive form of response as messages were delivered indirectly from those in positions of power on the school landscape. Naomi’s telling of her expectation that Brian would come and meet with her regarding the marks he placed on Alicia’s report card, awakened us to a widening gap forming between the imagined and actual response which took place in this story, and how profoundly this response was being shaped by the larger school story. When Brian’s actual response of not coming to engage in conversation with Naomi did not meet with her expectation, her tension over this distance between her imagined and his actual response was intensified and the space between solidified. As Friedman (in Buber, 1965) writes, “when [we] fail to enter into relation...the distance thickens and solidifies; instead of making room for relation it obstructs it” (p. 22). It became apparent to us that as the school story of inclusion thickened and reified itself on the school landscape, so too did the relational story being lived out between Naomi and Brian. For Naomi, this distancing response came in conflict with her embodied knowing of living in relationship with others, pushing the story she was attempting to author into a vulnerable and isolating place on this school landscape.

Confrontation.

Naomi’s need to confront the multiple borders, forming both within herself and between herself and others on the exterior landscape of her school, caused her story to

live by to enter an even more fragile state as her experience and understanding of the story of inclusion became even more marginalized. Naomi's recognition of her more vulnerable place on this school landscape did not prevent her from attempting to create an opening through conversation with Brian regarding the report cards, however, in the process, she inadvertently strengthened the existing borders between them, shaping additional ones as well. The relational story Naomi was determined to negotiate was "rapidly redefined on the landscape as [a] conflicting story" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995).

Arrogance.

One of these additional borders appeared to be that of arrogance as Brian responded to Naomi's search for understanding by consciously separating himself from both Naomi and Laura, redefining his positioning to Naomi in terms of power over as her "supervisor" and "monitor." This new event in the space between brought forth an emotional response in Naomi which caused a shift in her image of Brian as well as her image of self (Josselson, 1992). This new border of arrogance hastened the solidification process of the school story and caused Naomi to rage against it as her story to live by struggled to survive. It was becoming, "more and more difficult to penetrate the increasingly tough layer which [had] settled down on...[her] being" (Buber, 1965, p.78).

Borders of Judgment and Silence

Naomi's conscious decision to live her story—one which ran counter to the school story—positioned her in a place of extreme vulnerability. This was powerfully illuminated through the silencing response she received from her school administrators regarding Brian and the school story of inclusion. The message of support and acceptance of the school story at any cost was uncovered for us in Buber's (1965) description of social contexts in which, "the life between person and person seems to retreat more and more before the advance of the collective" (p.73). The response from both her principal and vice-principal created a border of secrecy and silence, pushing Naomi's story to live by to the far "ragged edges" (Greene, 1994) of the advancing school story. Living on that edge equated

to living in isolation as the space for relatedness became more scarce on Naomi's school landscape. For Naomi, who understood her world through deep and connected relationship with others, this edge became too fragile a place on which to stand. Without the embeddedness of her relational story within this social context, Naomi had no "place" to "exist." Hope came through an ultimate act of resistance for Naomi—leaving her school. Like bell hooks (1997), who so knowingly describes this critical moment of self recovery, "standing on the edge of the cliff about to fall into the abyss, I remember who I am" (p. 182), we imagine that Naomi may have experienced a similar awakening. We have no way of knowing what Naomi's response of resistance may have done to reshape the school story of inclusion. However, we do know that Naomi's leaving moved her to an educative place in which she could be true to herself—one best described through her own words:

I think that's very difficult to stand on the outside of things and say, 'Yes, I will fight for this.' I think that it's only really when you come into those places of 'there is an end to this' that you can make that choice.... I made the decision that if things weren't going to change there, then I was going to leave.... I made that decision, now I'm free to say what I want.

Imagining Possibilities

Those who have been excluded by the mainstream, or who have chosen to live and/or learn apart from it, may be the very people to help us find particularly effective ways to learn in community—ways less skewed by conformity, less dominated by institutional aspirations; ways perhaps truer to the basic human needs we all...share—to first and foremost feel that we matter to those around us. (Heller, 1997, p. 160)

There is no doubt that Naomi was profoundly influenced by telling and living her story of herself on this school landscape. Had she a choice in living her story, she may not have eventually resigned from her position at this school. However, as Clandinin and

Connelly (1995) have highlighted, “teachers must, of necessity, tell stories...because... [storytelling] is...the most basic way, that humans make meaning of their experience” (p. 154). Naomi’s need to mediate her story to live by as she negotiated the school landscape, shifted her experience of this professional context from educative to miseducative. This may not have occurred if she had continued to tell her story only within the confines of her in-classroom place on the school landscape. Unlike so many of the teachers with whom Clandinin and Connelly worked, who told “cover stories” of themselves as a way to manage their tensions between the in- and out-of-classroom places on the professional knowledge landscape, Naomi did not, even though doing so was at her own peril, pushing her to a marginalized and isolated place on her school landscape (p. 157). So what was it that drew Naomi to keep trying to tell her story on the out-of-classroom place on her school landscape even after she was told to be silent?

We believe that Naomi’s resistance to telling a cover story was grounded within her story to live by of “one-caring” for others (Noddings, 1984). It was this that enabled her to remain ever present to her embodied knowledge of herself. Because Naomi’s embodied knowing of herself as a teacher was immersed in an “ethic of care,” she could not take her gaze off her responsibility as she lived in caring relation with her students. It was this thread within Naomi’s story that made it necessary for her to cross over the border between her in- and out-of-classroom places. However, radically different from the response she had experienced within her in-classroom place, the response on the out-of-classroom place was not grounded in relation but, instead, shifted to negotiating her story to live by through a conduit-delivered mandate on inclusive education. In the beginning fragments of her story, we sensed her hopefulness about this negotiation but as her story continued it seemed to become evident to Naomi that little, if anything, was negotiated on the out-of-classroom place. Although this moral dilemma caused tension for Naomi, she refused to deny her knowing or to fall into the plotline inscribed for her through the school story.

Early on in our work, as Naomi shared her story of marginalization and again as we reread her telling from the transcript, we felt a deep sense of hopelessness about the way in which we read her story as profoundly and miseducatively shaping her story to live by. We kept focusing on the conclusion of this story and Naomi's decision to leave her school landscape. What we could not see at such a distance from her telling were the possibilities which her story offered. Only as we began to explore the intricacies of Naomi's story did we begin to awaken to the educative ways in which the meaning of this story was reshaped. It was Naomi's resistance, lived out in this story, that became educative for each of the teacher co-researchers engaged in this inquiry.

Our first awakening occurred as we tried to make sense of what drew Naomi to keep trying to tell her story on the out-of-classroom place on her school landscape even after she was told to be silent. We were drawn back to Naomi's introduction to her story where she described her sense of living outside the status quo story of her school. What could we learn from her story of choosing to position herself in such a marginal place on her school landscape? Returning to the literature where other writers had shared their experiences of such positionings, we began to reread Naomi's story in new ways.

Were these marginal positionings not more hopeful than those positionings which shaped the living and telling of cover stories? Anzaldúa (1990) helped us to think harder about what can happen to our sense of self as these masking roles exact a toll—"After years of wearing masks we may become just a series of roles, the constellated self limping along with its broken limbs" (p. xv). Naomi's story certainly did not present such an empty and debilitating image of herself. On the contrary, our continual rereading of Naomi's story led us to uncover stronger images of her personhood. Naomi's story was not one of internalized oppression imposed upon her from a distance. Instead, we saw Naomi as a woman who was intent on acquiring her own agency, of authoring her own story to live by. Unlike the school story which seemed disembodied, Naomi's story to live by was grounded in a narrative history which seemed to offer her the strength to

sustain her isolated positioning in places on her school landscape outside her classroom. Drawing on Hurtado's (1996) notion of how we acquire and use "subjugated knowledge," we wondered if Naomi's deep sense of presence to her embodied knowing of self had enabled her to temporarily suspend or repress the "knowledge" pouring onto her school landscape through a sacred story of inclusive education. Was her alternative understanding of this story what enabled her to "resist structures of oppression and create interstices of rebellion and potential revolution" (p. 386)? Had it been her presence to her own knowing which had enabled her to dwell within an in-between positioning, gaining the courage to name the lack of spaces for differing ways of knowing to exist on her school landscape? In ongoing conversation with Naomi within our teacher inquiry group, we came to believe so. And, in this believing, we came to recognize Naomi's story as a place of possibility—possibility for understanding the central role that presence to our narrative histories plays in enabling us to live and to sustain stories that run counter to those being scripted for us on school landscapes.

End Notes

¹ Published in Teaching and Teacher Education, 15 (4) p. 381-396.

²Because of the vulnerable nature of this story, pseudonyms have been assigned to the characters in order to protect their identities.

³An in-depth understanding of the term "professional knowledge landscape" is developed by Clandinin and Connelly (1995) in Teachers' Professional Knowledge Landscapes. Our work in this paper draws upon Clandinin and Connelly's following description:

A landscape metaphor.... allows us to talk about space, place, and time. Furthermore, it has a sense of expansiveness and the possibility of being filled with diverse people, things, and events in different relationships. Understanding professional knowledge as comprising a landscape calls for a notion of professional knowledge as composed of a wide variety of components and influenced by a wide variety of people, places, and things. Because we see the professional knowledge landscape as composed of relationships among people, places, and things, we see it as both an intellectual and a moral landscape. (p. 4-5)

A central focus in this paper is toward understanding the relationship between one teacher's story of marginalization on her school landscape and her identity. Clandinin and Connelly's metaphor helped us uncover the multi-dimensional qualities of this teacher's context. Viewing her professional landscape from multiple vantage points provided insight into her knowledge context while also engaging us in questions of relationship—between this teacher and the shifting people, places, and things on her school landscape. Understanding this teacher's story from a place perspective, we were able to explore her differing experience in two very different places on her school landscape, her “in-classroom place” and the “out-of-classroom” places. The temporal qualities of this teacher's narrative created openings for us to inquire deeply into the ways the story of inclusive education was shaping her school landscape. By focusing on the personal history the teacher embodied as she negotiated her professional landscape, her knowing of her self in relation to a variety of diverse people, places, things, and events, became visible.

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CONNECTING CHAPTER 3.1

The Place of Storytelling: Patterns and Vacancies on the Professional Knowledge Landscape

Karen Whelan *in relation with* Janice Huber

*If we are to become attuned to those places, become
aware of those places, where our selves and the
selves of others are to be intertwined, we must
be open to our own horizons, to the patterns and, yes,
the vacancies in the landscapes against
which our stories are told.*

~Greene (1994, p. 21)

The images Greene's text draws forward for us are central to the tension which bring us to this work. In our experience as teachers living on school landscapes, it is a tension between what is and what might be. It is a horizon we strain toward "the ability to make present what is absent, to summon up a condition that is not yet" (Greene, 1988, p. 16). Greene's words remind us of our need to remain present to the texture of our school landscapes, to the ways in which our relational knowing is dramatically shaped by the patterns and vacancies that define us within predetermined boundaries.

*We have felt the constraint of patterns,
those elements in regular arrangement
that bind us,
attempting to direct our lives.*

*The repetition of this pattern weighs heavy.
Our fear~
to be fashioned after, or fall into, a predetermined decorative design~
one intended to cover over our self.*

*Our response~
to flee toward openings in the tightly woven fabric;
places of less restrained texture,
created through tension~
places where our irregularities can resist,
shaping flaws in the oppressive patterns;
disrupting the decorative design.
Our distinctive form and style
brings diversity and imperfection~
resistance, viewed*

*as marring the fabric,
work we are unable to look away from.
It is interwoven with the stories we live by.¹*

*Our strength~
drawn from those who choose to see possibilities,
shaped through our flawing;
bringing us hope for imagining other irregularities~
irregularities we know as necessary.*

It was our experience of both the presence and vacancy of storytelling relationships between our selves and the principals who shared professional contexts with us, that kept us awake to the importance of negotiating a place for story on our school landscapes. We remember those profound moments of intersection within our schools when our stories intertwined with those of our principals, creating images which remain with us: the loving embrace of a child, vulnerable uncoverings in journal responses, the connected wonderings in a staff meeting, intimate exploration of tensions in a staff workroom, and the awesome experience of shared celebrations of learning when parents, teachers, children, and principals came together in community.

Over time these images became more and more fragile to draw upon, and were replaced~shattered by external forces of business-driven models of accountability, student achievement, and curriculum mandates. Our places for storytelling became increasingly vacant on our school landscapes. No longer did we seem able to find any places to be in relationship with our principals~places where we could wonder with voice or be uncertain~where we could share the struggles and accomplishments of a young child, who, although nearly finished her first year in school, was just beginning to make sense of written text. No...instead we were told to follow a predetermined and certain pattern so that a child such as this would “measure up” to “outcomes, expectations, and indicators” (Edmonton Public Schools, 1989)~prescribed results. And as if this pattern was not heavy enough, we were soon told that teachers, too, “needed to achieve the Quality Teaching Standard” of “knowledge, skills, and attributes” (Alberta Education, 1996, p.

24). This was to become the new language which framed and measured our knowing. In our search to overcome the oppressive constraints these prescribed patterns placed upon us and the children with whom we worked, we often storied our principals as responsible. With little understanding of their positioning, we cast our principals as filters to the theory being funnelled down from above, and, because of the “miseducative” (Dewey, 1938) impact this abstract material had in our lives as teachers, borders were often experienced between our selves and our principals.

Understanding School Contexts as Professional Knowledge Landscapes

The landscape against which our stories were told is one best understood through Clandinin and Connelly’s (1995) notion of a “professional knowledge landscape.” The expansiveness of their landscape metaphor enables us to attend to both the patterns and vacancies which emerge as relationships are composed between people, places, and things within schools.

The constraining patterns we spoke of in our poem, which attempt to direct our lives as teachers, often come to us from outside our school landscape. These patterns, “funnelled down” from above, feel like mis-matched fabricated designs, abstract and distant from our own patterns of knowing that emerge from our classroom practice. We become present to this vacancy between our own knowing and knowing prescribed for us because these “theoretical knowledge claims [are] uprooted from their origins” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 9). Unlike our teacher knowledge which is rich and contextualized, this theoretical knowledge stands abstract and is not grounded in the lives we compose with children in our classrooms. It is not surprising then, that teachers receive this objective and disconnected knowledge with great reservation, as it comes to them pre-packaged in the form of curriculum documents, assessment and evaluation mandates, teacher resources, and professional development. This makes visible the first, and perhaps most pervasive place of vacancy for teachers who negotiate their lives on school landscapes: an absence of space for conversation, exploration, and understanding of the theoretical knowledge which is shipped

to them via the conduit, “the dominant communication structure” (p. 9) which attempts to fashion them into a predetermined decorative design.

In this out-of-classroom place teachers’ identities are placed at the greatest risk and are threatened to be “covered over” by what Clandinin and Connelly (1995) name as a “sacred story”~one in which “the universality and taken-for-grantedness of the supremacy of theory over practice” dominates (p. 8). The possibility for a “vacancy from self” to emerge in this out-of-classroom place is ever present, bringing fear and uncertainty into the lives of those who must negotiate its terrain. This fear leads teachers to construct “cover stories” on the out-of-classroom place~stories which mask the “secret stories” they live by in safety within their in-classroom spaces.

The dilemmas shaped out of crossing back and forth between the tightly stitched borders of the in- and out-of-classroom places are enormous and illuminate yet another vacancy on the landscape of schools. Although both principals and teachers may experience “the research conclusions, the policy prescriptions...(as) torn out of their historical, narrative contexts” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 11), because principals are held responsible for delivering this “knowledge” to teachers, they too, become closely associated with the conduit and the oppression teachers experience as a result of the knowledge funnelled through it. When the principal is perceived as part of the pre-defined fabric of the conduit, and the theoretical knowledge dumping onto the out-of-classroom place on the school landscape is delivered by the principal to teachers as “received knowers” (Belenky, Goldberger, Tarule & Clinchy, 1986), there is every possibility that the lives of principals and teachers will become separate and distinct from one another. The repetitive patterns of received knowing create borders not only between teachers and principals, but around what counts as knowledge.

Negotiating Inquiry Into the Professional Knowledge Landscape

As we thought about working with principals in the context of this narrative inquiry into teacher identity and the ways it shapes and is shaped by the professional contexts of schools, we were filled with a great deal of apprehension. However, by paying close attention to this visible tension, we were called to think more deeply about where this fear and discomfort was coming from. The tension itself spoke to us of the critical importance of hearing principals' stories, and reminded us of the powerful and interconnected place they have in the lives of teachers who share professional spaces with them on school landscapes. Knowing this, we could not turn away~to do so would surely jeopardise a richer, more expansive understanding of the professional knowledge landscape. Principals were necessary and vital to our research conversation~we would invite them in.

A new thread in our work with Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly placed a particular emphasis on those who live at the margins of professional contexts. Our interest in this work was grounded in our own stories of teacher identity, stories of negotiation of self on our varied school landscapes. We knew that there were others who were also attempting to understand the complexities of who they were as they negotiated their professional contexts. Like us, they too, had stories aching to be told. As Greene (1995) reminds us: "if we are indeed to make the margins visible and accessible, if we are to encourage dialectical movements from [the] margin...and back, we ought to open larger and larger meeting places" (p. 150). By opening up and enlarging our meeting places within our research inquiry, to include both teachers and principals, we hoped to enter conversations which would indeed make the marginal experiences of all people who share the professional contexts of schools, more visible.

As we sat together around our regular meeting place on the sixth floor with Jean Clandinin, our advisor and co-researcher from our larger study, our conversation moved thoughtfully between us, shaping many questions and considerations to which we held

few answers: Could we actually enter authentic and meaningful conversations with principals? Would they let us see them in real ways? Principals are so much more visible than teachers, how would we protect their identities? As teachers, positioned as researchers, would we be able to let our borders down? How would we feel about sharing our authentic stories with a group of principals? How would principals feel sharing their stories with us, two teacher-researchers? While we were hesitant and tentative about crossing the borders we had constructed of principals from our experience on multiple school landscapes, we felt it was necessary to try to negotiate a storytelling place in which the lives of principals and teachers could intersect. The challenge to invite principals into our narrative inquiry proved to be important to enhancing the complexity and depth of our research. Drawing together four principals on a monthly basis, we engaged in conversations which were taped, transcribed, and returned to them for their response.

The Place of Storytelling Off the School Landscape

The story of negotiating our storytelling place off the professional knowledge landscape of schools is an old story, a familiar one—a story told by many who know communal storytelling places (Allen, 1994; Silko, 1996, Trinh, 1989). It was also old and familiar in the context of each of our lives. Our family landscapes had sustained communal storytelling places as had the relationships we negotiated with friends, within differing research inquiry groups, with colleagues, and with children we had taught. What was unique about our negotiation of a storytelling place with our group of principal co-researchers was that we had never before negotiated such a place with a group of principals. On the contrary, principals had often been central to the tensions we expressed in the stories we told of school landscapes. Yet, within this new context, what we were asking, both of these principals and of our selves, was to create an alternative space to those on our school landscapes—an unknown and unfamiliar space for principals' and teachers' lives to intersect, a space where storytelling could bridge our personal and

public lives (Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997) and our living of separate positionings on school landscapes as teachers and principals.

Negotiating this in-between space necessitated an ongoing openness to the “articulation of multiple perspectives out of which something common...[could] be brought into being” (Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997, p. 155). Understanding our own narrative histories in relation to one another’s, was the “something common” which our storytelling created. Such understanding did not require the erasure of our own personal knowing, but instead, encouraged a sense of “self-consciousness” (Lugones, 1990), of speaking face to face, in which our multiplicity was no longer muted but created openings for seeing and hearing the relatedness of the stories we lived by. Our self-consciousness required “consciousness of the normative as well as the possible” (Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997 quoting Greene, 1988, p. 155), enabling our storytelling place to evolve, to grow, and to change as our stories were shared. In this space we were able to become acutely aware of the possibilities created when the lives of diverse selves cannot only live alongside and rub up, but meaningfully intersect with one another. Such “consciousness of...difference” (Ling, 1990, p. xv) shaped our storytelling place as we negotiated increasing expansions of understanding, both of our selves and in relation to the stories shared.

The story we tell in this paper is grounded within our experience of this communal storytelling place~a story of hope for imaging alternatives to the vacancies in the professional knowledge landscape against which our stories are told.

Response to Stories As Places of Crossing

Recognizing the educative importance of the bordered relationships we sometimes experienced with principals on our school landscapes was a necessary realization for our further exploration of why the borders between our selves and our principals, living off the school landscape within our research group, quickly began to fade away. What was different about the response within our research conversation that enabled us to move

beyond internal borders, to cross over and understand the world through one another's eyes? It was our interest in these questions which drew us to think harder about the ways in which the response lived out between our selves and the principals as co-researchers, living off the school landscape, enabled "bordercrossings" (Anzaldúa, 1987).

In our present time, there is a goodness to, and a necessity for, rugged independence among individuals. But this is often best served and supported in good measure by deliberate interdependence with a community of other souls. Some say that community is based on blood ties, sometimes dictated by choice, sometimes by necessity. And while this is quite true, the immeasurably stronger gravitational field that holds a group together are their stories. (Estes, 1993, p. 29)

As we began our search for a story we felt would make visible the bordercrossings we experienced through response, one in particular stood out for us. A storied moment we well remembered from our numerous conversations as a research community was one which brought the vulnerable, relational space between our selves as teachers and principals, into the foreground. Many times in our conversations, our storytelling moved away from stories we lived ourselves, to include those told to us by others, close friends and colleagues, off the landscape of our school communities. Becoming witnesses to their often marginalized and vulnerable stories enabled these stories to become part of our narrative histories, thereby broadening our understanding. As Heller (1997) explains, "the words of marginalized people transformed in....stories...embody more than...new narratives of life experience"(p. 20)~they become events which offer us increasingly complex vantage points, reshaping the ones we presently hold. In the act of witnessing, the vulnerable stories of others' intersect with our stories, merging their told and our embodied stories into a new narrative~a new event. These "secondhand, firsthand" stories, as Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) point out, can expand our experiential base through our empathy for others. The story that frames this paper was a

story which emerged outside of our own direct experience; it was a secondhand story. Through response, the impact of this secondhand story was felt by each one of us as we searched for understanding, bringing our own stories and personal histories forward from our diverse positionings as teachers and principals. Problematizing these positionings by becoming present to one another's narratives, created openings for "radical possibilities" to emerge (hooks, 1995) through our storytelling.

Exploring the place storytelling and response had within our conversational space, we saw significance in this story, and the role it played in reshaping our internal borders and creating places of crossing between our selves positioned as teacher-researchers and our principal co-researchers. Indeed, we recognized that the telling of this story was nested in the response given and received through the shared conversation within our research group. The story was shaped, reworked, and reimagined through our conversation, revealing the significant role that response played in shaping bordercrossing possibilities. Borders were not only crossed in our understanding of the story but in the living out of our conversation between our selves as teachers and principals.

In this paper, our interest lies in unpacking the place response had in the negotiation of these borders. To aid us in this endeavour, we identified eight central response themes which wove throughout our conversation. They appeared to us, as Trinh (1989) writes, with "no catching, no pushing, no directing, no breaking through, no need for linear progression" (p.1). By exploring each theme, set within the context of our research conversation, we hope to make visible the qualities of response which were present. These themes, presented in the order in which they emerged in the conversation, are: mirror stories, a search for meaning, negotiating meaning, connected stories, naming, possibility, personal stories, and moments of bordercrossing.

It is important to note that the conclusions we drew, and the assumptions we made, particularly about the administrators who are central characters in the story we work to understand, were shaped out of our own experience. We have no way of knowing

what the intent of their actions were, nor is our central focus with figuring out what they might have been. Rather, it is our exploration of this story as a group of teacher and principal co-researchers, which is of interest to us. Through our figuring out of this story, our filling in of gaps, our questioning and need to explore it more fully as a research community, there was a coming together and a looking both inward and outward that took place. What we found deeply intriguing about this story, as we examined it more carefully, was that the central plotline which ran throughout the secondhand story paralleled what we, as teacher-researchers, were trying to understand about our own relationships with this unique group of principals, as well as with those principals with whom we had shared school landscapes. While trying to understand the construction of the borders in this story, we were simultaneously seeking to deconstruct our own so that, as hooks (1995) points out, new paths and different journeys could become possible.

Response Themes: Creating Openings for Bordercrossings

On the particular June evening when this secondhand story was told, we were gathered around a table in our cozy restaurant hide-away. Our principals were alive with conversation about the frustrations they faced with technology and networking their schools, up-coming staffing decisions, and the latest news from their central district office. Later, the conversation turned to their growing concern over the number of Professional Relations Commission investigations into school communities, and the impact they felt these investigations were having on staff relations, and on the individual lives of both teachers and principals involved. It was this concern which became the catalyst to our evolving conversation about decision making, power, and the relationships which are negotiated between teachers and principals on the landscape of schools.

As one of our principals took us back to an earlier part in our conversation where the issue of changing teachers' classrooms was raised, our secondhand story emerged "circulate[ing] like a gift; an empty gift which anybody....[could] lay claim to by filling it

to taste, yet...[could] never truly possess. A gift built on multiplicity. One that stay[ed] inexhaustible within its own limits. Its departures and arrivals. Its quietness” (Trinh, 1989, p. 2).

Emily: Well, look at the situation that you talked about in a school of a friend of yours, where the administrator got...up and told...ten out of thirteen teachers [they] had to change their classrooms for next year.

Karen: And the way they approached it was, ‘There will be no discussion regarding this matter. This is a decision we have made. You will live with it, and there’s no questions asked.’ That’s how it was presented.

Tony: I was in a school where our principal did that. (Peggy: Were you?) And I was an administrator, yes. I was in a school where the principal walked into a staff meeting and I remember spending, I mean, as an administrator, I knew behind the scenes, I spent the weekend with her with the school map figuring out who goes where. And she marched into the meeting and told them, ‘This is our school plan.’ She photocopied it [and said], ‘You’re going here, you’re going there.’

Emily: And did they do it? They didn’t do it, did they? She backed off didn’t she?

Tony: Oh, no, no, no. They did it.

Mirror Stories

The response in the opening of our conversation brought forward the theme of what Heller (1997), borrowing from Trinh (1989), calls “mirror stories.” These are stories of our own lives, often paralleling the story being told, which we relate to one another as we search for connection~“seeing in each other’s...[stories]...some truth about [our] own lives” (Heller, 1997, p.78). As seen in this portion of the conversation, Tony responded to the secondhand story by relating one of his own stories~his knowing of staff moves from his perspective as a vice-principal. In his telling, Tony pulled forward his knowing of the historical context of the story. Doing so enabled him to see the story from at least three vantage points~from his own, from the principal’s perspective, and from the

teachers' perspective. Tony's mirror story, describing staff moves made on a piece of paper as he and his principal figured them out over the weekend, provided an opening as we struggled to understand Karen's story of Kate, whom it appeared, was being forced to change classrooms by the administrators in her school. Tony's response immediately brought to the foreground of our conversation the multiple vantage points through which the situation of classroom moves could be experienced and understood.

As a form of response, Tony's mirror story had an important place in the negotiation of a bordercrossing within this research conversation. In this case, we saw Tony placing himself in a vulnerable position by admitting his own role in a series of teachers' classroom moves within his previous school setting. However, at the same time, his telling of the mirror story, clearly indicated his concern with how the process was carried out. This was evident when he described, "She [the principal] marched into the meeting and told them... 'You're going here, you're going there!'" Tony's sharing of his concern over this process was important in at least two ways~his story validated the concern Karen expressed at the outset while also highlighting the multiplicity of interpretations surrounding such a story, depending upon how the characters were positioned in relation to the events being lived out. In this way, we saw the potential of mirror stories and the vital role they played in shaping further openings for continued storytelling.

We recognize that in order for mirror stories to find a place in conversations, an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, and care must be present. "As a storyteller opens her [his] heart to a story listener" (Behar, 1996, p. 2) the teller must know that their most vulnerable stories will be received openly by others who will listen thoughtfully, and respond with honest caring. Noddings (1992) describes this "caring relation" between two human beings as characterized by an "open, nonselective receptivity to the cared-for" (p. 15). A full receptivity in which "one-caring" really hears, sees, or feels what the other is saying and where one is present to another's need and responds in a way that another

receives and recognizes. For our research community, this caring relation was lived out through the receiving and recognition of one another's efforts with caring response.

A Search for Meaning

As our conversation around this story continued, response seemed to take on "a search for meaning" quality as questions were asked and more detailed information about the story was shared.

Emily: But Karen, didn't you say that your friend is in a classroom, it's in the inner core?

Karen: She's been in it for 14 years. And it's a beautiful classroom with the cozy corner and all that stuff. And she takes a lot of pride in her room, like her room is just meticulous. And she's got to move out to the portable.

Peggy: They want her to go to a portable?

Karen: It's been used as a lunchroom for the last three years.

Emily: Didn't you say that she's very upset, that it's wrecked her whole year?

Karen: Well she is. I went out with her this weekend. She said she's been walking around with an anxious stomach and everything.

Emily: See, that is ridiculous. Like what is the point of that? What is the point?

Peggy: What was the point? What was the philosophy?

Karen: Well and that's what I think. That's why I think Kate needs to challenge it.

Janice: They [the teachers] don't know; there's no discussion?

Karen: Well exactly. I think they're trying to justify it pedagogically by saying that if you group people together, they're going to cooperatively plan together, which we know is a crock. (Peggy: It's an artificial grouping.) Yeah, it's forced teaming. So that's their rationale, is that they're going to work together and it's really caused a lot of...But anyway, the bottom line is, they've created a wedge between [Kate and] the admin, who is a

new admin team, the principal and the VP [vice principal]...(Emily: Ooohh!)

Peggy: Ooohh! Is this a learning experience? Don't change any rooms, Peggy.

Karen: No, but you know, the sad thing, [is]...I started writing the story last night because this is a critical story in my, like what we're thinking about because she [Kate] supported that admin. team all year long. Kate has been one of their cheerleaders.... (Peggy: This is important, yeah.) There's been some rumblings.... But, anyway, Kate has been their advocate all year long and then she also, Kate switched grade levels this year, which was a huge decision for her to go into [grade] six. She's never taught six before, it's got all of the achievement exams. She did that, thinking, you know, and she was all excited and was planning the curriculum, wanted me to sit down with her. Now this happens, and she can hardly look at the two of them because, and it's not so much that they've asked her to move as how they've asked her to move. (Tony: The process. The way.) The whole process. Like that's what it comes down to is...I said, 'Where is your voice in this? Why wasn't this negotiated? Why, what is the rationale?' (Emily: Why doesn't she speak?) Well, she is going to speak, but she said she is so upset right now, so emotionally upset so she knows that she couldn't. And so she wants me to help her kind of write it up, so I said I would.

We saw this common search for meaning as an important form of response. As a collective group of co-researchers, we placed value in this secondhand story by staying with it (Whelan, Huber, Rose, Davies, & Clandinin, submitted). This is a quality of response we often find absent on our school landscapes in conversations which take place amid the rush of staff meetings and committee meetings as we scramble to move through set agenda items.

The attention given to this story illuminated another place where the borders faded between our positionings as teachers and principals on the professional knowledge landscape. That our stories were of importance to one another's lives, even when the story made visible the tensions between principals and teachers, was significant to us. This helped to shape "common ground" on which we could all stand and "face" (Nelson,

1995) one another as well as our selves. In this way, “the soil of our individual places was being transformed into something that contained us all” (Heller, 1997, p. 132).

When Peggy questioned, “What was the point? What was the philosophy?”, we imagine that she felt the story was important enough to her own understanding of her self to inquire further about it. At an even deeper level, Peggy may have recognized the importance of the telling of this story to our research group and, in asking further questions, affirmed our need to stay with it. Whichever the case, Peggy’s search for meaning invited Karen to share, in greater detail, the story as it was experienced through Kate’s perspective. For Peggy, it appears as though this sharing created a moment of discovery, made evident when she rhetorically asked, “Ooohh! Is this a learning experience?” We wondered if Peggy’s words spoke of the value she placed in the telling of this story and, if so, was she reinforcing the need to continue our conversation? We imagine that Peggy’s response may have spoken to the “world travelling” (Lugones, 1987) she simultaneously experienced as she listened to Karen’s words while also travelling to her experience of other school landscapes, making thoughtful connections between her past experience and possibilities for her future intentions.

Our desire to understand this search for meaning through our storytelling, led us to pay close attention to less visible qualities of our response. For instance, when Karen said, “I think they’re trying to justify it pedagogically by saying that if you group people together, they’re going to cooperatively plan together, which we know is a crock,” she uncovered a story which may have shaped the administrators’ decision to move Karen’s friend. We wonder what role the uncovering of this story may have played in our conversation. One aspect may have been that revealing the possibility of this unconscious influence shaping the administrators’ living out of this story, drew us to dig deeper into the story, rather than turning it into a search for blame by casting some characters as “right” and others, as “wrong” (Whelan, Huber, Rose, Davies, & Clandinin, submitted).

Karen's further telling of this story brought to light an additional quality of our search for meaning. Not only did her ongoing description of how her friend was experiencing the story uncover a border between the teacher and administrators in this story, but she illuminated how unaware we may be of these borders on our school landscapes. The visible signs of the border for Kate appear to have gone unnoticed. Our insight into a possible border and the lack of response to it on this school landscape seemed to have direct impact on what happened next in our conversation.

Like mirror stories, our common search for meaning brought the people in our research conversation even closer together, focused around a common concern. This common concern, we imagine, came forward from a "community welcoming of difference and sensitive to need" (Greene, 1994, p. 23). As Greene describes further, "something life affirming in diversity must be discovered, even as something shared emerges out of the diversity, something that can be deeply~if only provisionally~recognized as constituent of a common world" (p. 23). For us, this recognition came forward as our stories became critical places where our knowing could be constructed and reconstructed. There was a great deal of moving beyond our selves in our search for meaning, movement that was vital in shaping future bordercrossing possibilities.

Negotiating Meaning

Shifting from a theme of searching for meaning to a theme of "negotiating meaning," seemed to occur next within our conversation. As we shared our response to this secondhand story, we allowed others to see our worlds, to enter into them, and to bring their own stories and understanding to our worlds. In the end, we came to live within a richer, more expansive world, "thickened," in Geertz's (1995) sense of the word, by our shared experience.

Karen: ...It's when that relationship [between teacher and principal] is broken, like in the case with Kate right now, that I would start to worry. (Tony:

Yeah.) You've got one of your most supportive staff members in tears for three days in a row. I think you need to look at that.

Janice: And there's been no response from them?

Karen: No response.... Kate couldn't even teach one day because they came and told her at recess time that she was going to be one of the ones [being asked to move].

Peggy: Mmm, very interesting story.... It shows you what an impact such a decision can have.

Tony: Sure it does, absolutely.

Karen: Well, and it shows me, it shows me...I mean Kate had spoken beautifully about that leadership team this year and what it shows me is that they really are just looking at this as they want change, they wanted it to be this way and they don't care who they railroad over to do it. And to me, that's not knowing your staff and knowing each, like I look at someone like Kate, she's been there 14 years in the same classroom, she has a beautiful environment.

In this place within the conversation, different meanings negotiated through the story became evident and additional borders came forward. We wonder if the lack of relational response drew forth our own inner tensions as our narrative histories intersected with the story being told? Were there past events in our lives that coloured the importance we placed in relational knowing? Karen's inner tensions, grounded within a personal history shaped both within and outside school contexts, appear to come forward in her discussion on what the secondhand story "shows" her. Through her perspective, Karen expressed that, what the story was teaching her, was that there was a gap in understanding one another's worlds. Karen's personal history with Kate allowed her to know her in deeper ways than her administrators appear to in the story. We imagine this shaped an inner tension for Karen between her own knowing of Kate and how she felt the administrators knew her.

A close look at the role our expression of inner tensions may have played in helping us to negotiate meaning in this story is captured in Anzaldúa's (1987) work on the "mestiza consciousness," a new consciousness shaped out of an "inner war," a struggle of interior borders. Within this complex, inner struggle, we are able to make sense of our own narrative histories, as they intersect with our surroundings~people, places, and things. Anzaldúa articulates this struggle as:

This step is a conscious rupture with all oppressive traditions.... She communicates that rupture, documents the struggle. She reinterprets history.... She adopts new perspectives.... She strengthens her tolerance (and intolerance) for ambiguity. She is willing to share, to make herself vulnerable to foreign ways of seeing and thinking. She surrenders all notions of safety, of the familiar. Deconstruct, construct. (p. 82)

We see in Karen's expression of her inner tensions the most evidence of the struggle Anzaldúa connects with the meaning making we are engaged in, particularly as we explore perspectives alternative to our own. Through her response to Kate's situation, shaped within the context of our conversation, Karen uncovers possibilities for both Kate's and the administrators' thinking behind the events of the story. A careful reading of Karen's words leaves us with the sense that, like Kate, she has also spoken beautifully about "leadership teams" she has worked with. The rupture in her knowing of the value of this support seemed to occur when she added, "they don't care who they railroad over to do it," a reinterpretation that we imagine Karen may have been simultaneously experiencing as she spoke.

Our discussion around "broken relationships" between teachers and principals would seem a sensitive topic, particularly in a research conversation in which both teachers and principals were present to one another. Yet, we see in Peggy's response, her recognition of both her positioning as principal as well as her understanding of the impact such a decision could have. Karen's willingness to make herself vulnerable as she

expressed other ways of understanding this secondhand story spoke of the context of our storytelling place and, in particular, to the response which was able to come forward. As Witherell and Noddings (1991) capture, “stories and narrative.... attach us to others and to our own histories by providing a tapestry rich with threads of time, place, character, and even advice on what we might do with our lives” (p. 1). Through this story, sensitive issues were allowed to surface, and through our expression of our own inner tensions in relationship with one another, additional understandings emerged.

Connected Stories

Janice’s response, as a teacher and co-researcher attending to the telling of this secondhand story, appears to have picked up on not only Karen’s words, but the tone in which she spoke. Through her relational knowing of Karen, Janice was able to carry the conversation to a different place, highlighting yet another theme, “connected stories.” Through Janice’s questioning, we saw her attempt to make a connection between the story being shared, and one she was already familiar with because of her relationship with Karen. Unlike mirror stories, we see these connected stories emerging from ongoing relationships in which shared experiences and stories are central. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) highlight both the epistemological grounding and the nature of the context in which connected stories emerge, through their discussion on the collaboration involved in “connected-knowing” groups. They write:

In connected-knowing groups people utter half-baked half-truths and ask others to nurture them. Since no one would entrust one’s fragile infant to a stranger, members of the group must learn to know and trust each other. In such an atmosphere members...engage in ‘connected’ [criticism].... Through mutual stretching and sharing the group achieves a vision richer than any individual could achieve alone. (pp. 118-119)

Janice’s response brought forward a connected story, which we believe, further stretched our understanding of the secondhand story.

Janice: [Karen], wasn't it that way at [your former school]? Because when you moved...

Karen: [The principal] forced some moves last year and again it was received the same way. But [he] didn't deliver it the way these people delivered it.

Janice: It had been open for conversation.

Karen: Yeah and I think...he [the principal] didn't come in and say, you know, 'This will be!' you know, that kind of message. He didn't do that.

Janice: But could you have stayed in your [grade] two classroom and taught your [grade] five?

Karen: No. No. I moved my room. No.

Peggy: But was it designed for a five?

Karen: And I was okay with it. But part of it too, Janice, is, with Kate...I think that room, I mean, I was only there for two years in that room and they're all the same, the rooms. It doesn't matter that you're on this side or that side, they're all the same. But they're moving her from a core classroom, she feels that they're putting her out to pasture. I mean...her room looks like Janice's and my room does. And it's not just (Emily: A lot of pride in that room). It doesn't just look that way, it lives that way. (Peggy: Yes.) So they're taking a teacher like that, because she's teaching six now, if she had gone to three, she would have stayed in her same classroom.

It is interesting to think about where connected stories come from and why they take on such an important place in conversations. In returning to a connected story of Karen's experience on another school landscape, Janice helped Karen figure out possibilities which might also exist for Kate. We imagine that Janice's questions came from a place of care and concern~nurtured within a storytelling place where "we are created and cradled, given back to ourselves in the intimacy of connection between the first and second person" (Godard, Knutson, Marlatt, Mezei & Scott, 1994, p. 123).

We recognized that Janice's connection to this shared story brought the conversation to a different place of understanding, by allowing us to bring forward

another image of principals, an image less harsh and judgmental in comparison to the image portrayed in the secondhand story. The response shaped out of the connected story enabled Karen to lay her own emotional response to a past classroom move, alongside that of Kate's. Karen's response about her experience with a former principal "...He didn't come in and say... 'This will be!' ", followed by, "...And I was okay with it," illuminated another perspective for understanding the secondhand story. This exchange between our selves as teachers may have allowed our principal co-researchers to see the value we placed in our own relationships with principals, in this case, one based on a relationship where "knowing" one another was acknowledged.

Naming

As the exploration continued, Emily's response highlighted another theme in our conversation, "naming." Naming took on tremendous importance in the unpacking of this story as Emily boldly uncovered the underlying issues she saw embedded in this secondhand story, creating additional openings for our own narrative histories to come forward. Thinking about the story in this way, seems to have reminded us of the critical importance these issues can have on our evolving identities. It also helped us to recognize the impact of bordered relationships we previously experienced on multiple school landscapes.

Janice: Can [Kate] go back to [grade] three?

Karen: Well, no, now all the decisions have been made, but I mean...she feels like...

Emily: That's like a betrayal!

Tony: Absolutely!

Karen: See, and I said to Kate, she felt embarrassed, she phoned me three times on the day that it happened in tears, and she just isn't an emotional person like that, about stuff like that, but she just...on the second or third call, she said, 'You know, Karen, I just feel really embarrassed that

I'm calling you about this stuff' and I said, 'Kate, this isn't just about the move (Peggy NO!). This is about how it has made you feel.' And she said, "You're right' and that's when she started talking about how...

Emily: It's devalued her.

Karen: It has totally. And that's so important to Kate, so how well do they really know her? Like talk about trying to understand the other? You know, I mean they're just seeing it through their eyes.

We see our naming response as an act of resistance~one in which our vulnerabilities could no longer be held within as "harboured secrets" (Fine, 1992, vii). Emily's naming response drew us to identify with our own experience as we thought about what may have happened in the relational space between the teacher and administrators in the secondhand story. Her use of strong naming words, such as, "betrayal" and "devalued," brought forward intense images, images that raised the significance of Kate's story to an almost alarming level in our conversation. Through Emily's naming, there was a profound recognition, for all of us, of just how serious and fragile relationships can become on school landscapes. Naming enabled us to "transgress creatively at the negotiated boundaries of 'what [was] possible' " (Fine, 1992, p. ix) within the context of this story. Pushing these boundaries added an additional quality to our storytelling place~our movement away from our separate positionings of teacher and principal. Instead, the response that came forward seems to be like that described by Noddings (1984) as she writes about the interconnection between our actions toward one another, and caring:

Caring involves stepping out of one's personal frame of reference into the other's. When we care, we consider the other's point of view, [her]/his objective needs and what [she]/he expects of us. Our attention, our mental engrossment is on the cared-for, not on ourselves. (p. 24)

Possibility

Naming pushed our thinking and our need to understand Kate's experience, as a collective group, to an increased necessity for *self* and *other* understanding. Through our recognition of the importance of this story in our own lives, and that we could be characters in it our selves, we realized that our insistence in staying with the story reflected our growing need to look inward at our selves and to imagine how we might deal with a similar situation, "us[ing] imagination in a search for openings without which our lives narrow and our pathways become cul-de-sacs" (Greene, 1995, p. 17). Imagination was central in bringing us to another place of possibility in our conversation~to an additional opening for bordercrossing which enabled us to see hopeful alternatives.

Emily: Well they should examine...

Karen: That's what I said to Kate, I said, 'Nothing changes if you don't at least let these people [her administrators] know how this has made you feel.'

Emily: But then if she were to stay in her room, who would go out there?

Karen: Well, she won't stay in her room. I think when they said [you have to change classrooms] they've almost hung themselves. As a teacher in a classroom when you say something to kids, like, 'I'm going to take your recess away if you do this' and then even if they do it and you really don't want to take their recess away...you've got to follow through on it. I think they're in that position. They've said this, they've said it very clearly, it's power.

Tony: You can't back down.

Janice: Well, maybe her going in and talking, and saying...

Karen: Maybe. I've told her that, but she doesn't want to.

Janice: That might create a possibility...

As we searched for a hopeful way for our understanding of this story to continue, we explored possibilities from Kate's vantage point. We imagined that if she could feel

empowered to act, she might be able to change the situation defined for her by her administrators. However, we recognized something important about the positioning of the administrators in this story. Karen's statement, "I think they're [the administrators] in that position. They've said this, they've said it very clearly, it's power," followed by Tony's comment, "You can't back down," is illustrative. For us, Tony's response highlighted what we came to understand more fully within the context of our research with this group of principals~the often impossible positioning of principals on school landscapes. Tony's response brought us additional understanding about positional power~once set forth, it is difficult to move back from. The border of power which emerges through our telling and response around this secondhand story did not stop our conversation, in fact, it seemed that the surfacing of it, called us to dig even deeper. Our desire to have the central character in this story, Kate, share her pain with her administrators seemed to become as strong as our own desire to make visible our collective understanding of different sides of the in- and out-of-classroom border.

Peggy: Well, I think this is very...interesting because it shows that a decision, like even the fact that it can break the relationship and it may never heal. But the other thing is that the teacher...

Karen: But Peggy, none of you would ever do that. I could never see, you might do something like that and you might...

Peggy: Well, I'm going to make mistakes.

Karen: Of course you are, but, the thing is, I don't believe that any three of you would not pick up on that fact. I mean she was crying in her classroom all afternoon and she's been distant with them since. I think any of you would go and find, explore that.

Tony: Approach her.

Karen: Yeah. They have not yet.

Tony: But don't you think that by her going to see them, [that] would maybe cause them to reflect?

Peggy: I think that is the next step.

Karen: I do and I have told her that, but she is so, she's still so emotional about it, she wants to write it down and Kate's not a writer, so she wants me to kind of help her find words for that, but she really wants them to know how it's made her feel and she does want to communicate that, but she doesn't think she can do it by just sitting down with them because she thinks she'll break down and then she won't be able to communicate what she is feeling and all of what she's feeling. So, she does want to go, but it's just fresh, it just happened last week.

It is interesting to note that, at this point, the conversation focused on the teacher taking action to resolve the situation, with little mention of the administrators taking a role in reimagining their decision. We wonder if, at this place in the telling, the principals within our group arrived at a place of empathy and recognition for the administrators represented in the secondhand story, a side of the border they know through their own professional experiences. Did they sense that the administrators might not have been aware of Kate's feelings in this situation? Did they sense that Kate might have misunderstood the intent of the classroom changes?

Our previous conversations with our principal co-researchers captured their moments of frustration over miscommunication and misunderstandings which can take place as they negotiate relationships with teachers. Often, they spoke with us of their desire for teachers to come to speak with them and to openly explore their feelings and reactions to the decisions being made on their school landscapes. Perhaps it was their understanding of borders they have lived on their own school landscapes which brought them to a different place in their understanding of the administrators in this story. As Greene (1988) writes, "multiple interpretations constitute multiple realities; the 'common' itself becomes multiplex and endlessly challenging, as each person reaches out from his/her own ground toward what might be, should be, is not yet" (p. 21). Our

“common” as a research community was becoming increasingly multiplex as we each gained comfort reaching out from our own places of knowing which intersected with this story, attempting to understand and imagine possibilities for both the teacher and administrators in this story, as well as our selves.

Personal Stories

The complexity of our storytelling thickened again as Peggy shared a personal story. Different from mirror stories and connected stories, personal stories come forward from experiences of self within a given context. They come from a need, as hooks (1990 in Heller, 1997) writes: “to incorporate in the manner of telling a sense of place, of not just who I am in the present but where I am coming from” (p. 46). They do not serve to mirror the story being told; instead, they add another layer to the “thinking through” of the story plotline.

Peggy: The other thing that is an interesting study, because when I first went to the school that I’m at, in both years it was very difficult to build team. I found that the people that worked with you so well, you had to be careful not to take advantage of them because you had one or two on the staff that were so negative, so inflexible, that absolutely nothing, that you gravitated naturally to the others. You had to always be on your alert that you never took advantage of them because it was not fair, but sometimes the most negative and aggressive bully would never be moved [referring to classroom moves] because of, you know? (Emily: Wouldn’t dare.) Wouldn’t dare. Because it would take all of your energy (Karen: To do it.) To make that move. But having said that, you know, unfortunately,...you can see how, let’s say, as the administrators dialogue and they get excited and they get carried away with this vision, you can be carried away with the vision or the plan, but you have to remember, like I’ve said, the most complicated part of this job is when all the people are there. You know, when you’re working away on paper you can do all kinds of things (Tony: Sure you can.) but the (Tony: Human spirit.) human interaction...

In her response, Peggy seems to see educative possibility in unpacking this story as it relates to her own experience. She places value in her narrative knowing when she says, “The other thing that is an interesting study....” That our personal stories of our

experiences are valued in the conversational space of our research inquiry means everything. As seen through Peggy's story, our places of crossing became multiple as she shared her struggles of being a principal who desires to live in relationship with teachers. Peggy's story "offer[s] us other eyes through which we might see, other ears with which we might make soundings" (Coles, 1989, pp. 159-160). She awakened us to simultaneously understand both positions, that of the teacher and that of the administrator. We were able to travel with Peggy as she shared her story and her understanding of the good intentions the administrators likely had, as well as her recognition of the distancing which can occur when something is decided on paper, rather than in connected relationships with others. Her words stayed with us, "...but you have to remember, as I've said, the most complicated part of this job [being a principal] is when all the people are there...."

The sharing of this story was significant to us. These are the vulnerable moments of principals' lives we so rarely see as we work and interact with them on our own school landscapes. Peggy shared an authentic story, one which allowed us to enter, at least for a moment, into the inner complexities shaped out of a principal's positioning on a school landscape.

Moments of Bordercrossing

After working with the previous text of this story, we were not surprised to discover the theme "moments of bordercrossing" which we highlight to make sense of what happened next in our conversation.

Emily: See, the administration are envisioning something wonderful happening with this move of people....

Karen: Because that's all that's on her mind is this move and how she thinks she's being....

Emily: She thinks they want to get her out to the back where her room's not being viewed?

Janice: Yeah, invisible?....

Karen: I just wish those people could see how every summer Kate and I go in there and we fix that room up and she brings out all her...[treasures] and she positions them just so. [She says,] ‘Do you think the kids would like this here?’ Like if they could see that, they’d know how heart wrenching this is to see this happen.

Emily: It’s just going to wreck her whole year.

Karen: Oh! She’s already talked about how this is, she just feels that she’s going to go and just.... A good friend of hers who is a retired teacher, said, ‘Well you can’t let this drag your whole life down.’ I mean you really can’t, but I do think, I said, ‘I agree with [her], but I do think you need to communicate it.’....

Tony: But if she, do you know what? If she can’t do it, because if she feels she’s going to break down, then maybe she should write it out.

Emily: Let her break down. Then they’ll see how disastrous it is!

Imagining bordercrossing possibilities seemed to shape our response as we shared thoughts on how differently the administrators in the story might feel if they could see aspects of Kate’s teacher’s story, aspects which appear to be vacant in their understanding of the situation. An implicit quality, that seemed to occur in this final section, was our need to see the characters in face-to-face conversation. Even the suggestion that Kate should communicate with her administrators through writing, was not seen to be close enough. It seemed important to us that in order for the existing gap between Kate and the administrators in the secondhand story to diminish, the telling of authentic stories was necessary, qualities highlighted by Greene (1993) and Anzaldúa (1987) for bordercrossings to occur. What we realized, through our final reflection on this text, was that the retelling of our own stories was inherently necessary in order for bordercrossings to take place. In the case of the secondhand story, it became significant to us that both the administrators and teacher involved would work to negotiate places where they could restory their current understanding of one another, restorying that was

also necessary for all of us within the communal storytelling place we negotiated in our research conversation.

Similar to the borderlands imagined by Anzaldúa (1987) which become present whenever two or more cultures or people of difference edge one another, seeing from multiple vantage points created moments of a borderland space in our conversation. Through our ongoing response to this secondhand story, we moved increasingly closer to possible “retellings” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998), shifting our understanding of the secondhand story as a story of principal agency at the cost of silencing Kate, to reimagining tension as an educative opening for further understanding the professional knowledge landscape of schools. Our ongoing response and our recognition of the important place of tension, brought us to our momentary borderland experience.

Through Story We Know Who We Are

Our interest in the role played by response in our conversation surrounding this story has not been to simplify the complexities involved in the process of bordercrossing or to lead our readers to conclude that these moments of profound educative possibility occur with ease. The vacancies in the landscape, against which our storied lives as teachers were told, drew us to negotiate a storytelling place with this group of principals. Our inquiry into these vacancies has given us strength~“the result of silencing has been stronger voices; out of humiliation and handicap has emerged beauty and strength” (Ling, 1990, p. 17). This is the story we have lived with our principal co-researchers.

What our unpacking of this story helped us to see was that “existing, surviving, and creating between two worlds” (Ling, 1990, p. x) is not only possible, but holds tremendous educative significance. Unlike the vacancies on the landscape we sometimes experienced between our selves and principals within our professional contexts~a landscape littered with shoulds and should-nots, with patterns shaped largely through abstracted knowledge~the context of the storytelling place we negotiated within this

inquiry group, has been rich, filled with the diversity of our collective lives. Response has lived at the heart of this negotiated place~response shaped through a deep sense of connection, of knowing and being in relation with one another and the storied lives we are authoring. We will carry the hope created through response to story with us as we continue to work toward negotiating storytelling places on future school landscapes~ “places where our selves and the selves of others [can]...be intertwined” (Greene, 1994, p. 21).

The response themes we have given an account of within this paper are not meant to be exhaustive nor prescriptive. Instead, we imagine that the response shaped through story, will, like the stories shared, continue to circulate, shaping response as multiple as the lives being lived. When Gilligan (as discussed in Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997, pp. 51-52) interviewed women to trace their moral thinking, she named the themes she heard as an “ ‘ethic of care’ or ‘the response orientation’ to moral conflicts.” Her work uncovers that within an orientation of response, tensions are explored through dialogue; understanding is negotiated “through conversation, storytelling, and perspective sharing” (p. 53). Clandinin and Connelly’s (1998) work on narrative, storytelling, and story retelling in the field of education, is indicative of the ways response can reshape the professional knowledge landscape of schools:

Education is interwoven with living and with the possibility of retelling our life stories. As we think about our own lives and the lives of teachers and children with whom we engage, we see the possibility for growth and change. As we learn to tell, to listen, and to respond to teachers’ and children’s stories, we imagine significant educational consequences for children and teachers.... No one, and no institution would walk away from this imagined future unchanged. (p. 203)

Inquiry, set within our relational, storytelling place with this group of principal co-researchers, might be one way to imagine the significant educational promise that

becomes possible when teachers' and principals' personal histories intersect. We were profoundly changed through the response shared and shaped within the storytelling place of our principal inquiry group. This is one story we tell of our experience. At our most hopeful moments, we trust that our exploration of this story will provide us, our co-researchers, and others who read our work and live storied lives on school landscapes, with some direction~some possibility that will enable reimagining the relational space on our school landscapes. We lived this experience and can only share our story of it, but perhaps in doing so, we can invite others to begin to share their stories and to cross their own borders.

Endnotes

¹ “Story to live by” is the narrative understanding of identity conceptualized by Connelly and Clandinin (1999).

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CHAPTER 4

Beyond the Still Pond~ Community as Growing Edges Janice Huber *in relation with* Karen Whelan

*A pebble does not enter a pond
without a ripple moving out
and in time
touching every single shell.
We are all,
every one of us,
in this thing together.
~Masters (unknown reference)*

Places of community, as externally defined and prescribed by the dominant culture, are discussed by many (Anzaldúa, 1990, 1987; Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Greene, 1988, 1994; Lorde, 1984; Trinh, 1989). The concern we share with these writers surrounds some of our own experiences in school contexts where non-negotiable spaces begin to enclose the range of possibilities for stories we imagine composing as teachers. We are particularly concerned when the diverse and complex life space of school becomes sentimentalized, reducing stories of community to scripts of simplicity and sameness. In these sentimental places (Yancey & Spooner, 1998), moral and ethical issues can become bounded by externally prescribed roles and responsibilities set within a seemingly necessary hierarchical order, with some members of the community holding *power over* others.

It was in conversation with Emily¹, one of our co-researchers negotiating stories of her self as principal on a school landscape, that our understanding of community deepened. Her metaphor of community as “still ponds” awakened us to attending closer to the stories of community lived, told, and retold (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998) between ourselves and our principal and teacher co-researchers in a two year study into identity and professional contexts. In Emily’s metaphorical understanding, such communities risk becoming the still ponds of our social contexts~communities that stand serene and beautiful in their apparent harmonious order~smooth surfaced and manicured, each pebble

in its place. These surreal places, glossed-over by pervasive and prescriptive stories of community often shaping school contexts, are in jeopardy of evolving into spaces where life is no longer viable. When a pond becomes increasingly still and stagnant, its edges encroaching in upon it, the life of the ecological community risks gradual suffocation.

Our call to write this paper emerged from the depths of such still pond communities, and through our intense need to “break through and disrupt...surface equilibrium and uniformity” (Greene, 1994, p. 161)~surface stories which are often upheld as ideal representations of community within our social contexts~everyone in their place, everything running smoothly. Having lived beneath such surface stories ourselves, and at times, helping to perpetuate their survival, we knew the exacting toll they demanded on our evolving stories. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) help us understand our evolving identity as “stories we live by”~stories creating openings for understanding the multiplicity² of who we are within shifting social contexts.

Although these glossy stories of community were, in our experience, almost never named or explored as we had lived as teachers on multiple school landscapes~because to do so would have often meant “ostracism, alienation, isolation...[or] shame” (Anzaldúa, 1990, p. xv)~in the trusting space shaped by our storytelling over 18 months within our research conversations, we were ready to risk vulnerability, knowing that, in this space, increased marginality would not shape response given back to the stories told. Openly, we began to wonder: What might happen if the careful and predictable order of these school communities were disturbed? How might the story of community in a school be re-imagined? What new metaphors of community in a school might emerge? And, how might these alternative stories, images, and metaphors reshape our understanding and living of community within school landscapes? Courage to make visible what lay submerged and ignored below these seemingly serene communities came through relationship and inquiry.

Our interest in exploring these questions grew out of indepth conversation with three research communities³ who inspired our desire to “make present what...[was] absent, to summon up a condition...[of community] that is not yet” (Greene, 1988, p.16). The narrative context of our ongoing research conversations within these three groups, often brought forward stories of absence and presence to community within schools. Needing to explore these themes more closely, we re-turned to transcripts of the conversations we engaged in with a group of principal co-researchers over an 18 month period. One particular story shared within this inquiry space, illuminating several of the dilemmas we, as co-researchers, expressed surrounding issues of community on our school landscapes, offered a place from which to begin our exploration. This story, at its surface level, centered around teacher evaluation. However, moving beneath this read of the story, less visible dilemmas surrounding community, relationship, positioning, and identity on school landscapes became visible. Attending to the “growing edge” (Belenky, Bond & Weinstock, 1997) of this narrative provided places of possibility for re-imagining metaphors of community.

Negotiating Alternative Narratives of Community

*Authentic public spaces....
require the provision of opportunities for the articulation of
multiple perspectives in multiple idioms,
out of which something common can be brought into being.
It requires, as well, a consciousness of the normative as well as the possible;
of what ought to be from a moral and ethical point of view,
and what is in the making, what might be in an always open world.
~Greene (1988, p. xi)*

Our re-telling and re-imagining of this story necessarily encompassed a consciousness of the normative as well as the imagined. We needed to situate the story first within the frames of the dominant, prescribed notion of community~one which significantly shaped our selves and our worlds~in order to more fully understand the external influences shaping the characters within the story. This firsthand saying, seeing, and feeling was necessary to our exploration of alternative imaginings of community. Our

negotiation of these two worlds, the normative and the possible, along with our fluid and shifting movement between and within them, provided for fewer, “moral blind spots” (Belenky, Bond & Weinstock, 1997, p. 55) and less “moral drift” (Coles, 1989) as we explored the contradictions and dilemmas shaped out of the negotiation of these worlds. Anzaldúa (1990) reminded us of the importance of remaining consciously attuned to these “blank spots” in order to broaden rather than narrow our spectrum of reality. She wrote:

‘Selective reality,’ [is] the narrow spectrum of reality that human beings select or choose to perceive and/or what their culture ‘selects’ for them to ‘see.’ Perception is an interpretive process conditioned by education. That which is outside of the range of consensus perception is ‘blanked out.’

(xxi)

Sharing stories of community that had often lived at the *edges* of the harmonious, serene scripts shaping our school landscapes, along with the vital response these stories received in our inquiry groups, necessitated our moving outside the still pond metaphor and the frames placed upon our conscious knowing. Expanding the edges of this tightly defined story and our own understandings of community, brought a form of release inspiring new images to take shape.

It was not surprising then, that we experienced the unpacking of this story from the transcripts of our research conversations as an educative process—a form of freedom in which we were “empowered to think...to become mindful, to share meanings, to conceptualize, to make varied sense of...[our] lived worlds” (Greene, 1988, p. 12). These lived worlds, encompassing both our presence to, and absence from, community within our social contexts, or, as Buber (in Friedman, 1991) described it, our “meeting” and “mismeeting,” profoundly shaped our selves as we struggled to understand the moral and ethical issues which abound when lives *meet* in complex and varied patterns on school landscapes.

Scenes of Possibility~Living the Edge of Inquiry

*Concentration is too precious to belittle.
I know that if I look very narrowly and hard at anything I am likely to see something new—
like the life between the grass stems that only becomes visible after moments of staring.*

*Softening that concentration is also important—
I've heard that the best way to catch the movement of falling stars
is at the edge of vision.*

~Bateson (1994, p. 104)

Writers who document their travel across landscapes, often attempt to express in words the shifting terrain unfolding around them (Butala, 1994, Silko, 1996, Lopez, 1989). To these travellers, portraying multiple portraits of the landscape is a technique they draw upon to present images representative of their experience. Hallendy (1996) is one such traveller who drew on this form of portraiture in his text when he described his experience of seeing an inuksuk on the northern Canadian landscape:

Alone in the deepest sense, I find myself atop a barren hill and am rewarded with an unobstructed view from every direction.... At first it appears to be nothing more than a speck in the distance. Soon, it creates a focal point, and I am moved from the centre of my universe to its periphery. As the distance closes, I stop in my tracks, transfixed by an ancient message left upon the landscape. Stone upon lichen-encrusted stone, it is an *inuksuk*, the signature of an arctic hunter who has passed this way on a journey that would continue for his lifetime. (pp. 37-38)

In Hallendy's work, as in others who entice such images from their experience, the textual multiplicity that comes forward through the portraits they create, is expansive~creating openings for understandings of both the particularities and the generalities, the normative and the possible~of the landscapes on which they have travelled. Our use of *scenes* within this paper, is similar to Hallendy's. Each scene, named through our thoughts as co-researchers as this story unfolded, closed the distance between our evolving stories to live by and the characters who became visible, creating openings for imagining alternative visions of community on school landscapes.

Scene I: 'We've got it on paper, but we don't have it in practice'

At the outset of her telling of this narrative, Emily, as a principal held responsible for, and as a person living in relation with her teacher colleagues, seemed compelled to name the multiple tensions she was experiencing around teacher evaluation along with the inner conflict these tensions created for her. Bringing these tensions into closer perspective for herself as storyteller and ourselves as storylisteners and storyresponders, placed us in a shared space calling us to begin to move beyond the moral blind spots that might otherwise, have limited our view of community on school landscapes.

Emily: We had this guy today giving a talk...because our district has this document that they've put together...in evaluation. And they've given all of these accolades to our district and how wonderful we are, but you know the thing is, we've got it on paper, but we don't have it in practice. We've got a wonderful [teacher evaluation] document, but when you look at the kinds of things you see going on in classrooms, we as administrators, I don't think are accepting responsibility.

Karen: Administrators are not doing their jobs?

Emily: If you've got poor practice in classrooms, right, that's a tough part of our job but we don't talk about that. We can just sit back and say, 'Aren't we wonderful, we've got this document in place.' But what are we doing about this document?

Karen: I think that must be the most challenging part of your job.

Emily: Absolutely. I have a teacher right now I should be working, I mean I am working with.

Karen: Because you get into all kinds of moral....

Emily: Yes you do.

Tony: And ethical issues....

One of the tensions Emily uncovered in the beginning of this telling, was the gap she experienced between her district's policy for teacher evaluation and the lived teaching

and administrative practice she was witness to within classrooms and schools. Describing this tension, Emily's concerns seemed grounded, not so much in the problem of "poor practice in classrooms," but within her positioning as principal within this situation. Emily's intersection between her externally defined positioning on the school landscape with two closely related tensions~principal as responsible and the lack of conversation around poor practice in classrooms~provided meaningful insight into the "uneasy professional environment[s]" that can exist in schools. Clandinin and Connelly (1995, referencing Cuban, 1992) spoke to this quality when they wrote:

Dilemmas...are conflict-filled situations that...are not soluble, [but are] something educators at all levels experience relative to theory and practice. As educators, therefore, we work in an uneasy professional environment never sure of our position relative to theory and practice, constantly confronted by the conflicting claims of theory and practice. (p. 6)

Although these dilemma-filled professional contexts described by Cuban (1992) and Clandinin and Connelly are directly shaped by dominant scripts, some of which pre-define relationships between teachers and principals on school landscapes, what enables the landscape to rarely shift from its uneasy state, or to draw upon its uneasiness to infuse educative qualities into the landscape, are the silences surrounding these often unquestioned "sacred stories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Crites, 1971).

Emily's story gave voice to the silent, ever-presentness of dilemmas on our school landscapes. Her words highlighted the shaping qualities living these dilemmas in silence can have on our evolving stories to live by. Positioned by those further up in the hierarchical structure of her district, it became apparent that Emily was situated on her school landscape in the uneasy space between theory surrounding teacher evaluation and actual practice within classrooms. She would be held responsible and accountable for living out this policy prescribed from above.

Listening to and reflecting upon the weight of the scripted story of community from the vantage point of individuals often externally positioned on school landscapes in a place of power and as “solely responsible”~that of principal~brought forward a different perspective from which to experience the struggle to nurture and re-imagine community within school contexts. Equally intriguing for us, as we became engaged with the alternative lens this story turned on community, was the strong sense of multiple vantage points brought forward, which seemed to reveal a need or desire to travel to other’s worlds and to understand different perspectives and positionings (Lugones, 1987). A similar sense of world-travel shaped our inquiry space, so that through a profound sense of feeling, we too, were able to connect across our stories to bring forward images of community living at the edge of our experience and imagination.

Within the narrative context of our research conversations, our stories became the “meeting place” (Buber, 1965) for our co-construction of new possibilities and metaphors~the growing edges of our exploration into our understanding of community within the common social context of school. We identified passionately with Buber (in Friedman, 1991) when, upon reflecting on his life, he expressed:

I did not rest on the broad upland of a system that includes a series of sure statements about the absolute, but on a narrow rocky ridge between the gulfs where there is no sureness of expressible knowledge but the certainty of meeting what remains undisclosed. (p. x)

The sharing of our stories on the narrow ridge of our research conversations, enabled us to become increasingly accepting of our uncertainty, and hopeful of what we might uncover in our “self-unfolding” (Buber in Friedman, 1991, p. 124).

Emily’s very positioning as *principal* left her with no narrow ridge on her school landscape upon which to name the tensions this positioning created for her. With no space for further conversation around the gaps she felt between theory and practice, brought forward by the teacher evaluation document, Emily appeared to become situated

in a place of separation and isolation. Sharing in Buber's (1965) understanding of the dialogue that might be shaped in such uncertain places, dialogue embodying the contradictions and ambiguities present in any life composition, Belenky, Bond & Weinstock (1997) recognize that "illuminating what has been ignored requires a profound openness to dialogue and connection" (p. 54). Often, the stories we shared around community were not easy to say or to immediately understand. In relation with one another, however, we grew to embrace the light of alternative visions, reclaiming our own knowing as we re-imagined community as sites to be "experienced and interacted with" (Lorde, 1984, p. 37), fluid, shifting, and ever-changing. In order for us to meaningfully explore our contradictions, dilemmas, and uncertainties in relation to community, it was essential that we lived in Buber's (1965) "between"~a genuine place shaped by mutuality, profound caring, and trust between self and other.

In was in the place of our research community that Emily was able to give voice to her sense of entrapment within a matrix of normative stories~the "wonderful" teacher evaluation document, principal as responsible, and school community as an unrippled pond. Emily's struggle to maintain agency as she reflected upon the moral and ethical implications the teacher evaluation document created, made visible, yet another dilemma. Her reflection: "I have a teacher right now I *should* be working [with]" and "we as administrators, I don't think are accepting responsibility," revealed other prescriptive and dichotomous positionings placing burden on how Emily felt able to live on her school landscape.

Emily knew that the teacher evaluation policy was delivered to her school landscape with a district prescription of should (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Yet, she was internally guided by a sense of responsibility grounded in an "ethic of caring" where "fidelity is not seen as faithfulness to duty or principle but as a direct response to individuals with whom one is in relation" (Noddings, 1986, p. 497). This strong sense of care for another came forward as Emily shared images of the teacher with whom she was

in relation. Illuminated within this sharing was the conflicting nature of her internally guided story of caring laid alongside the externally prescribed story of teacher evaluation. Naming her dilemmas within the context of our inquiry space, created openings that “demanded a more complex, more troubling conception of community” (Greene, 1994, p. 12)~a conception we worked to imagine in conversation as more of Emily’s story unfolded.

Scene II: ‘Nobody has helped me’

Emily’s “ethical self-positioning” (Rich, 1986 as quoted by Perreault, 1995, p. 31) became increasingly visible as she revealed a specific classroom situation where her story of being in relation with teacher colleagues came into conflict with the prescribed policy on teacher evaluation. As Emily brought her self into being through her multi-textured telling, she moved us underneath the surface story of teacher evaluation on poor practice, creating an embeddedness of meaning within time, “ensuring that the perspective of the ‘seer’ is made an aspect of what is seen” (Perreault, 1995, p. 32). We were drawn to more expansively understand the events smoothed over by the script of the “wonderful teacher evaluation document,” as Emily’s narrative unfolded. Her story urged us to travel toward the experiences often submerged through such a pervasively unquestioned story and to the ways these experiences can shape our evolving stories to live by.

Emily: Picture this. You’re an administrator in a school, okay? Picture this scenario. This is one of many, one of hundreds right? You have a teacher in your school, who spent his entire life in a [secondary] school...and probably was excellent doing it. He’s bumped out of [secondary] school, he’s bumped into elementary, he’s totally out of his element. So you have him on your staff, you’re looking at some things he’s doing that you know are not appropriate for learning for [elementary] ...and you’re sitting down with that person and you’re asking some questions about his practice...you’re saying, ‘I’ve noticed that there’s a lot of copying of notes off the board.’ He becomes very defensive, he figures his career’s on the line, because you’ve got an insecure person now because he’s already in elementary, he knows he’s out of his element. So the first meeting doesn’t go that well. The second meeting goes much better. But

still I have to deal with it. Now...there's a person who's on the verge of.... What he said to me was, 'I came out of [secondary]; nobody has helped me.' I think he's doing the best that he can.... But it would be like putting me in a [secondary] school, and saying, 'Teach [secondary physics].' (Karen: And you'd fail.) I would. And that's not fair to the teachers. (Tony: Not fair to the kids.) It's not fair to the children, but what do you do? Do you fire that teacher then? What do you do with that teacher? That is a moral and ethical issue. (Tony: Exactly.) And I have to respect the dignity (Tony: Of that teacher)....

Throughout this fragment of her story, Emily revisited the tensions she felt around the document, once again highlighting the dilemma dwelling between her understanding of being responsible to the teacher and children for whom this policy would have direct impact, and the sense of responsibility embedded within the document—a sense of responsibility where one acts solely out of duty rather than relationship (Noddings, 1986). As we revisited Emily's story, we wondered if this taken-for-granted sense of duty might well construct the moral blind spots which numb us to our surroundings, to one another, and to our selves.

Pressing against this reified narrative, the ethical positioning Emily appeared to consciously choose in relation to this teacher, was one of care as she attempted to engage in conversation with him around his teaching practice. Intending to live a relational story of “supervision...[as] a meeting of two persons, a shared possibility for each of them” (Coles, 1989, p. 8), Emily described that her intentions for creating a meeting space with the teacher, were initially met with fear and defensiveness making more visible the hierarchical structure which can separate teachers and principals, even when they push against its construction. By sharing this scene of the story, Emily named one of the most pervasively miseducative qualities of school landscapes—the narrow range of possibility for places where educators can “engage in conversation where stories can be told, reflected back in different ways, retold, and relived in new ways” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 160).

Emily's words, "he becomes very defensive, he figures his career's on the line," lead us to wonder what submerged aspects of the school landscape, in addition to the teacher evaluation policy, may have been contributing to her tensions. We began to wonder if, in positioning herself in a relational way, Emily's story to live by came into conflict with another, possibly even more pervasive plotline than that scripted through the teacher evaluation document—an institutional story "reward[ing] silence and conformity," while prescribing "policies and institutional actions that value exclusion and separateness" (Benham, 1997, pp. 298-299).

Choosing to continue to imagine and to live out alternative, non-hierarchical positionings for her self as principal within this story, and to "not hide behind the mockeries of separations that have been imposed upon us and which so often we accept as our own" (Lorde, 1984, p. 43), Emily questioned: "...but what do you do? Do you fire that teacher then? What do you do with that teacher?" Her questions were not posed to bring forward answers or quick-fix solutions to her dilemmas but to create deeper reflection into the scripts shaping still pond communities.

We saw the beginning fragments of Emily's story as critical ones to attend to—they provided us with the normative, the prescriptive, the narrow range of possibilities—a necessary starting point which helped us to see more clearly the externally defined image of community shaping this school context. It was with this recognition, this consciousness to the normative, that we were able to move beyond old myths, simultaneously shaping new ones (Anzaldúa, 1987) through our increasing desire to resist normalization and to, instead, embrace the shared agency shaping our wonders around this story. Our conversation and our common need to imagine alternative images of community, continued to draw us into the depths of the still pond story of community that can shape our professional contexts. We began to think about responsibility as it had been defined on our school landscapes—as being held and enacted by certain individuals—

and as it might be re-imagined as embracing of all those who attempt to live a story of care in social contexts.

Scene III: 'It's the responsibility of the whole school'

Coles (1989) wrote: "the whole point of stories is not 'solutions' or 'resolutions' but a broadening and even a heightening of our struggles" (p. 129). The next scene of Emily's story, demonstrated this broadening and our yearning to more fully understand the complexities in the meeting of lives on school landscapes.

Peggy: So we know [there's questionable practice] in our schools....

Emily: That's a job I should be doing right? My job now, let's look at Emily, principal, instructional leader, what should I be doing? I should be doing something about that.

Janice: But you are.

Emily: Well, trying to. But then I go to you and you're the [other] teacher, okay, now you, you're an exceptional teacher. You've got really beautiful books that you've spent hours designing and centers and everything your kids are doing [is wonderful]. Are you going to hand that whole...[program] over to another teacher? Maybe not. Cause maybe you're going to say, 'Why isn't he putting in those same amount of hours?' That's the dilemma. If I went to you and said, 'Would you mind, I notice you've got this really wonderful book, and this teacher needs help,' you might say, 'No. I put in fifteen hours developing that book, myself, he didn't do anything, I'm not giving him my book.'

Janice: One day I might have said that. I wouldn't today.

Emily: But that's what happens.

Karen: See, really, morally, it's not just *your* responsibility.

Emily: It's the responsibility of the whole school.

Tony: And the district.

Karen: Well, particularly that teaching community. (Emily: Yeah) Like, morally, that other teacher should be able to reach out to that person.

Emily: Yeah, but that isn't [happening]. That is bordercrossing.... I haven't asked the other teacher, but if I did, I know the answer I'd get back. I would be surprised if she would say, 'Certainly, go right ahead and copy them.' But I need more than that. I need you as that teacher to sit down and help him, but what am I saying by doing that? I'm letting other teachers in the school know that he's got a problem. It's dicey.

In this scene of the story, Emily's wondering about how others, living on or connected with the school landscape, might respond to a request to share responsibility for helping the teacher, created an opening for further wondering about why Emily, as principal, felt scripted as being solely responsible for reaching out to this teacher. Moving from our previous focus on the general ways in which mandates are funnelled down onto our school landscapes (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) to a consideration of how such a scripted story of community might be played out in this particular school, enabled ripples to form and to push out, widening the story of community framing our professional landscapes.

The first ripple disturbing the still pond story of community moved into our conversation when Emily reflected on how she was "trying to" do something to help the teacher. Woven into Emily's recognition of her attempts to help, was her knowing that she, alone, could not be of assistance to the teacher. As old as the story of isolation and separate development is within our social contexts (Trinh, 1989), Emily's wonders about how a teacher colleague might respond to a request to help, highlighted that this story was still alive and continuing to shape school landscapes. Once again, we saw Emily imagining a story of community "where human beings are at the core" (Lorde, 1984, p. 28)~a relational story of hope where the possibility of truly meeting one another on school landscapes might occur.

Our imagined story of community~one which morally calls *all* of its members to be responsible for one another (Greene, 1995)~rubbed up against the pervasive, still pond story of community~a story of isolation and silence surrounding issues or problems on

school landscapes. Emily named this abrasion when she stated, “It’s dicey.” The script of community we are often subtly shaped to live in our schools is one in which the harmonious surface story needs to be maintained~a story ensuring that the teacher in need, not be identified. Every pebble in its place. Our experience told us that under the surface of these silencing stories, these blank spots, was a cry for help that could go unnoticed for years~a cry which the teacher made audible in this conversation with Emily when he said, “Nobody has helped me.”

Emily’s wonders around “letting other teachers in the school know that he’s got a problem,” created additional ripples in the story of community currently shaping her school landscape. Like a double-edged sword, the lack of spaces to openly name and explore the dilemmas, contradictions, and tensions shaping our lives as they are composed in professional contexts, forms a border hindering relational knowing while also creating a profound sense of disconnection from self. Alongside Greene (1993), we wondered at the cost of this loss of personal and negotiated authority for imagining and then living, alternative conceptions of community~expansive images that are “responsive to increasing numbers of life-stories, to more and more ‘different’ voices.... This is what ought to be attended to, even as we resonate to what is common, what is shared” (p. 218). In making this cry for help morally audible to us, through the sharing of this story, Emily brought us to a place of real urgency in our search for possibilities which might allow us to expand the encroaching edges of still pond community stories.

Scene IV: ‘Look at me...I’m still learning new things’

The “structured silences [and] imposed invisibility” (Greene, 1993, p. 211) which so often come to define the most marginalized individuals within still pond communities, became alarmingly present as another scene in Emily’s story unfolded.

Karen: But what if you said to the teacher in need, have you asked him if he was willing to receive assistance?

Emily: Yes, I have asked him that. And he is. (Karen: From another colleague?) [Nodding no]. So it might have to be from outside the school. (Tony: Right).

Peggy: You'd set him up with a similar grade?....

Emily: He needs help with planning, that's what he needs help with.... At first he was really defensive, right? I said to him, 'First of all you need to know, that number one, I really have a lot of confidence in you and I support you 100% and you need to know that. Okay? That's the first thing you need to know.' And I said, 'Secondly, if I can get you a resource or something in your hands that's going to help you as a teacher and is going to help those kids to better meet the Program of Studies...' I should be able to do that.... I said, 'Look at me. I have been in education for [many] years, I'm still learning new things.' Like we should be able to do that. And he said, 'I'm sorry I was so defensive the first time.' But you know, I know what he's done. He's gone to look at the Program of Studies since I've talked with him, and he recognizes...that he's not teaching the research skills and he's not doing the hands-on, and so he already knows that reading and taking notes off the board is not the right way to go. But see, to help him and help the kids, I mean this...[will be] a year's work with one person.

Emily's wondering if assistance for the teacher "might have to be from outside the school," spoke to the profound silences surrounding dilemmas within schools contexts. It reminded us of Belenky, Bond and Weinstock's (1997) thoughts on the pervasive qualities of "Otherness and silence" living at the edges of many social contexts. Reflecting upon a tradition of "drawing out the voices of the silenced and making communities more nurturing places to live" (p. 3), they spoke to the necessity of understanding individual lives as inextricably interwoven in the life of the community.

With this understanding of community in mind, we could not help but imagine what *might be* for this teacher *if only* his community might become infused with similar values, encouraging a context where not only the principal felt responsible. but where the larger community of people who lived and worked there each day, felt responsible as well. Emily's re-turning to the conversation with the teacher seemed to become an important meeting place, one narrowing the distance which so often threatens to separate

us on school landscapes. In this more *intimate* space, shaped through the uncovering of vulnerabilities in conversation, Emily's need to ensure the teacher that her intentions were genuine and came from a place of caring and support for both himself and the children, was expressed.

As Emily described her ongoing conversation with the teacher, she brought forward an image of this landscape that stood in stark contrast to what is often seen when the school landscapes are viewed as harmonious. Had Emily yielded to being shaped by this silencing plotline, it is very unlikely that she would have been able to make her self as vulnerable as she did in conversation with the teacher. That she does make her self visible to the teacher—"Look at me. I have been in education for [many] years, I'm still learning new things," appeared to help the teacher glimpse a less stagnant image of his professional landscape—an image of learning as an ongoing, multi-textured process, not occurring separate from those who work alongside him on the school landscape. The teacher's apparent shift in relation to Emily, from a place of defensiveness to a more open positioning, was a necessary ripple in disturbing the still pond story of community. His willingness to "move through being afraid to whatever lies beyond" (Lorde, 1984, p. 146) highlighted the trust he placed in Emily, marking the beginning of their work together to create educative learning experiences for the children in his care.

The authenticity of this meeting was significant in the story as it seemed to shape foundational layers of trust which were necessary in order for the teacher to "face" (Anzaldúa, 1990) himself and reflect further upon his practice. This was described by Emily when she said:

He's gone to look at the program of studies since I've talked with him, and he recognizes...that he's not teaching the research skills and he's not doing the hands on...

Anzaldúa (1987) spoke to the educative possibility embedded within facing "our greatest disappointments and painful experiences" (p. 46), and challenged us to draw meaning

from them so that we might become “more of who we are” (p. 46). She wrote: “ ‘Knowing’ is painful because after ‘it’ happens I can’t stay in the same place and be comfortable. I am no longer the same person I was before” (p. 48). It was this sense of movement, of becoming, as one faces self in relation with other, that left us hopeful as we listened to Emily’s telling. Within the moral space the teacher and Emily created through conversation, they appeared able to put faces on each other as they began to imagine a new vision of what community might be (Nelson, 1995)~a vision attempting to break free of silence and Othering. As this fragment of Emily’s story made visible, it was a vision that necessarily began with self-facing, in this case of acknowledging the ways that we too, (regardless of positioning) perpetuate the myth of community as untroubled and smooth surfaced. The possibilities for expanding the edges of still pond communities became increasingly hopeful as our exploration continued. Could this vulnerable teacher find a space, in relationship with others who shared his social context, to become more of who he was? And in this shifting context, could Emily, as well, be freed to become more of who she was?

Scene V: ‘It’s easier to ignore it’

Emily: When that [individual from central office] was talking today, I couldn’t help but think what a very big responsibility we have to ensure that the practice in the classroom is as good as you can get it. And what a difficult job that is....

Karen: See, and isn’t that your most important...

Emily: It should be. It should be our highest priority....

Peggy: Then the question is how do I [as principal] go into those classrooms?

Emily: [Referring to a representative from the local teacher’s association.] So what they’re looking at now is that principals have the responsibility to be supervising teachers **all** the time...based on the assumption that people are competent. It’s based on certain principles, that people are competent...and that the focus is on growth.... However, it also has

another little piece attached to it and that is that you're supervising all the time. So if you identify a situation like I've just discussed with you right now, which is a teacher struggling with planning, so therefore a poor program is being presented to kids; now I have a responsibility to go in and either, well not necessarily evaluate, but certainly work through this.

Peggy: Monitor this and demonstrate that you're...[fulfilling your responsibility.]

Emily: Yeah. I kind of thought with the [new teacher evaluation plan] that we were almost stepping back from this, mother is watching, father is watching kind of scenario (Tony: But not anymore.) I don't think so, I think what we're seeing is **you** [the teacher] set a goal for yourself but **I** [the principal] have to be looking at what you're doing and if I feel there's something wrong, then I move into evaluation.... If I don't do something, now this is what I hate about this job. If I don't do something about the situation in my school, I'm being incompetent as a principal. I am not living up to my...

Peggy: But Emily, you know that you will do something, but how many of our colleagues are choosing to ignore it?

Tony: It's easier to ignore it.

Peggy: It is easier, and every school I've worked in, that's been my experience. (November, 1997, pp. 14-18)

In discussing the nature of freedom, Dewey (1938) points to the enduring importance of intellectual and moral freedom in which:

Strait-jacket and chain-gang procedures...[have] to be done away with if there...[is] to be a chance for growth of individuals in the intellectual springs of freedom without which there is no assurance of genuine and continued normal growth. (p. 61)

We wondered what impact the constricting teacher evaluation policy had upon the intellectual and moral freedoms of the teaching and learning community within Emily's school context. Where was the freedom to grow within a "mother is watching, father is

watching” framework of supervisory leadership? And, what impact did such a framework have upon the evolving identities of those who shared this community?

It was Emily’s words which helped us to explore these questions more closely. We were struck by the emotion brought forward when she uncovered her feelings about being externally positioned as an “evaluator” of teachers: “This is what I hate about this job.” For Emily, the role of supervisor or evaluator, ruling over and above the teacher, was one that did not provide her the intellectual and moral freedom to which Dewey referred. Instead, this positioning created tension and dissonance within, as Emily struggled to understand the narrow definition of principal shaped from a distance by some unknown Other who was disconnected from the “historical narrative context” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 11) of the school.

Through the narrative unfolding of Emily’s story, we felt privileged to share in her painful internal struggle when she expressed, “If I don’t do something about the situation in my school, I’m being incompetent as a principal. I am not living up to my...”. Emily’s unfinished thought heightened our necessary recognition of the profound shaping influence these external scripts~oppressive scripts that hold our selves hostage to their demands~have upon our stories to live by as members of complex social spaces.

There are many who have informed our understanding of the miseducative place this stripping of intellectual and moral freedom has upon the self; “instances of people who feel themselves to be determined by outside forces or by some nameless fatality, and who feel hopelessly isolated from a world where people coming together might bring change” (Greene, 1988, p. 25). We felt this sense of hopelessness defined by some nameless Other when we concluded our conversation with the recognition that the dilemmas and tensions which surface on the still pond of our school communities are “easier to ignore,” to suppress and submerge beneath the surface.

It was not with a sense of turning away or taking-for-granted that we came to this place in our conversation as a research community. Indeed, it was our heightened

recognition and awareness that this often *is* the story of community lived out on our school landscapes that pushed us to move even deeper into understanding this story.

In a sense, we brought to the surface moral tensions surrounding community which had remained partially submerged or blanked out from our consciousness. Their surfacing was partly what made this paper possible, but more importantly, it provided us possibility to return to our own community contexts with new insight, understanding, and agency which might help us nurture further uncoverings in the glossed-over surfaces which were now more visible to us.

Perhaps, through our narrative exploration of community, told through the frame of teacher evaluation, we were able to experience what Anzaldúa (1987) called *la facultad*, “the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface” (p. 38). Anzaldúa spoke of the fear which developed this proximal sense of *la facultad*. We wondered if our shared fear, as a group of co-researchers, grew out of what we saw as an impeding state of quiet stillness in the state of our school communities—a state we felt threatened our relational knowing, endangering our ability to reach out to those in need through a communal sense of shared responsibility, caring, and desire for common growth at the edges of our experience.

Re-visionings

*Re-vision—the act of looking back,
of seeing with fresh eyes,
of entering an old text from a new critical direction...is an act of survival.
Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched
we cannot know ourselves.*

~Rich (1979, p. 35)

Although it was necessary to bring some form of conclusion to this paper, we knew that our reflection on community would continue. Our conversation marked the beginning of this transformational process in our own lives as educators, of situating our selves within an inquiry space where the shifting of our conscious and unconscious

selves, of our learning and our “ignore-ances” (Ellsworth, 1997) became present. The transformational journey Emily’s story began for us, is a journey without certainty or end. Because of the shifting nature of our social contexts, and therefore, our identities, our struggle to imagine and to negotiate images of community that might expand the encroaching edges of our still pond metaphor, will inevitably continue.

One read of this paper might leave our audience with the distinct impression that our still pond metaphor is a fixed and determined state for school communities. This, however, does not represent the multi-layered complexity of the experiences we shared as a group of co-researchers. We gave voice to many hopeful and inspiring narrative accounts of our school communities in which the edges were alive with growth, where there was movement and new life, and where those who shared these communal spaces reached out in caring and in need for one another. The fear that drew us to write this paper was that the still pond becomes the common story~that disruptions and over-flowing edges become seen as disorderly or chaotic. There will be moments of calm in our communities~our hope is that these do not become the norm upon which we are defined and judged. If, as Greene (1988) writes: “The degree and quality of whatever freedom is achieved are functions of the perspectives available, and of the reflectiveness on the choices made,” (p. 80) then we must hope that our perspectives grow to be broad and multiple, and that our choices emerge out of ongoing, expansive reflectiveness.

Endnotes

¹ In order to protect the identity of our co-researchers, pseudonyms have been used in place of their given names.

² So many (Anzaldúa, 1987; Bateson, 1994, 1989; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Carr, 1986; Lorde, 1984; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, in press; Greene, 1995; hooks, 1996, 1997; Lugones, 1987; Mullin, 1995; Trinh, 1989) have helped our thinking about the multiplicity of our evolving identities. If we were to summarize what we have learned about multiplicity across these writers and from our collaborative work with one another and with each of our three inquiry groups, we would want to highlight

that our selves are never static, fixed identities but continuously fluid and shifting. Because we resonate with the thinking of Connelly and Clandinin (1999) who believe that we live by stories and that these stories are the closest we can come to making sense of and sharing our experience, and therefore our knowledge (Coles, 1989; Greene, 1994; Heilbrun, 1988), we attend to the multiple storylines which become visible over time as we give accounts of our selves. Our contexts, social situations and positionings play an inseparable role in shaping the story(ies) we are (simultaneously) living by at any given moment. For instance, within the context of our ongoing collaboration with this group of principal co-researchers, we, Karen and Janice, have at times lived by and shared our stories as teachers as we negotiated meaning within our group conversations. At other times, because of the threads woven into the stories being shared, the stories we live by as women, or as daughters, researchers, etc. became more visible.

³ Our narrative inquiry has involved ongoing taped and transcribed conversations over an 18 month period with two distinct groups of co-researchers: a group of 3 teachers and ourselves and a group of 4 principals and ourselves. This inquiry is an extension of our ongoing work with a group of 5 university based co-researchers including ourselves. Our research within each of these contexts is nested within Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) and Connelly and Clandinin's (1999; 1988) work on teacher knowledge and professional contexts. As part of this research program, we are concerned with teacher and principal identity and the ways teachers and principals shape, and are shaped, within their professional landscapes. We invited each of the principal and teacher co-researchers to engage in conversation with us because of their unique, marginal positionings on their school landscapes. We felt that understanding more about their marginality might also expand our understanding around identity.

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CONNECTING CHAPTER 4.1

“They’re A Little Different, They’ve Got A Few Blue Stripes”~ Stories of Difference on School Landscapes Karen Whelan *in relation with* Janice Huber

Broadening and deepening our exploration of the shaping influence of out-of-classroom places on school landscapes and on principals’ and teachers’ evolving identities pulled at us throughout our three year inquiry. Out-of-classroom places, as described by Clandinin and Connelly (1995), are places of abstract language and “implied prescription for teachers’ actions”~places where teachers and administrators are expected to “speak the language of the conduit, that is, they speak of plans, of results, and of policy implications” (p. 14). In other words, out-of-classroom places are often experienced by teachers and principals as reified contexts where there is little, if any, space to inquire into or imagine alternatives. Yet, as our inquiry into principal and teacher identity and professional contexts unfolded (Huber & Whelan, 1999, submitted a, b, c; Huber, Whelan, & Huber, submitted; Sweetland, Huber, & Whelan, submitted; Whelan & Huber, submitted, a, b, c, d), we heard again and again, in the stories we and our co-researchers shared, dilemmas around identity shaped within reified contexts.

Writers such as Anzaldúa (1987), Bateson (1989), Connelly and Clandinin (1999), Greene (1995), Hoffman (1989), Lorde (1984), Lugones, (1987), Mullin (1995), and Trinh (1989), each in their own way, expanded our thinking around identity by exploring it as multiple, fluid, and evolving, intimately connected with and shaped by shifting contexts, challenging the status quo notion of identity as fixed, unified, and separate from other selves and landscapes.

In our teaching stories, we often tell and hear of out-of-classroom places as places we feel less safe to position our selves within~places where our embodied knowing can become overwritten with uncertainty~creating moments within our selves of disillusionment, emptiness. These moments are, as Connelly and Clandinin (1999) describe them, profoundly shaped within contexts where our evolving identities, our

“stories to live by” balance on a fragile boundary between experience that might educatively or miseducatively reshape our identities. The moments we experienced on these out-of-classroom places on school landscapes cause us to turn away and, at times, to run away from the educative possibilities these contexts might offer. However, it is this narrative understanding of our selves and our professional contexts that compels us to think again about the very nature of the shifting social contexts we experience on school landscapes. In this paper, we think deeply about why the external space of out-of-classroom places, spaces filled with such diverse people, stories, and events, presents so many internal dilemmas~dilemmas profoundly shaping who we imagine our selves to be in relation with others on school landscapes.

Attempting to further understand these contexts which seem to live outside the safety, agency, and relational spaces we had lived, and continue to negotiate in our classroom contexts, we re-turned on the transcripts of research conversations with our principal and teacher co-researchers.¹ Their stories, our stories~told, retold, responded to, and re-imagined over a three year narrative inquiry into the “professional knowledge landscape” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) of schools~illuminated the storied nature of the out-of-classroom place and the shaping influence these stories can have on our evolving identities. Clandinin and Connelly (1995, 1996), Davies (1996), and Rose (1997) explored these stories as “school stories.” Their work helped us to understand the influence they can have on shaping school contexts and selves.

Living away from our school landscapes for a two year period during our doctoral residency created opportunities where we had sustained time to listen and respond to the stories our teacher and principal co-researchers shared with us, and provided us with the necessary space to attend to the stories we, too, had lived. The stories we shared kept us awake to the unfolding stories of school shaping each of our contexts and to the selves we were trying to negotiate within these complex, multi-layered spaces. One plotline weaving across our stories was the narrowing of possibilities experienced on our school

landscapes. We found ourselves drawn into stories of budget cutbacks profoundly shaping the lives, practices, and relationships among principals and teachers, and among teachers, children, and their care-givers. We also told and heard stories of sameness becoming more dominant on school landscapes~stories where *all* children were to embody the same experience and, in the end, be measured by tools distanced from the rich diversity of life stories shaping their understandings of curricula; stories where *all* care-givers were measured against a narrowly defined standard of “parents” as mother, father, white, middle-class, double income, English speaking, etc.; stories where *all* teachers were to skillfully and efficiently deliver curriculum, without question, within the tight framework of district and provincial mandates, and they, too, were to be measured by tools separate from the stories emerging among them and the children they lived alongside; and, stories where *all* principals would be held *solely responsible* for school results and balanced budgets, absent from the human qualities and diversity of needs ever present within their school contexts.

Opening up school stories such as these lives at the heart of this paper. We turn toward the educative possibilities which might emerge as multiple and alternative storylines are revealed through a narrative inquiry into the social contexts of school, principal, and teacher identities. A pervasive theme which seemed to subtly thread these multi-layered plotlines together was one which placed difference, with all of its multiplicity and complexity, outside of the “acceptable” school stories. Recognizing the multiplicity of difference shaping social contexts, difference both within and between our selves and the selves of others, offered us important entry points into exploring the tensions we so often saw emerging across the stories of difference we and our co-researchers shared around trying to live educative lives on the out-of-classroom places on school landscapes. Listening to our stories of experiences and drawing on the stories of our co-researchers, we inquire into difference, exploring how, in the collective experiences of nine unfolding lives, difference was denied on school landscapes. We also attempt to

reveal the shaping influence this denial had on the identities of the storytellers themselves, and others sharing professional contexts with them.

In this paper, we explore the delicate shadings living at the narrative intersections of sameness and difference, working to shift stories of difference from a place of absence on school landscapes, to a place of presence. In this pulling forward, we attempt to expose the sometimes unconscious, yet always pervasive, scripts suppressing possibilities for re-imagining how stories of difference might be lived out on professional landscapes. It is, as so many others described, the kind of work where self and other are both involved, meaning that by exploring the tensions around identity created by school stories, we must also face the ways which our responses to them have continued to shape our school landscapes.

Opening Up Stories of Difference on School Landscapes

Scripting a Landscape

We knew that bringing stories of difference to a more visible place in our exploration of identity necessitated an uncovering of the relational and non-relational qualities shaping out-of-classroom places in school contexts. Although we heard stories of difference in both our teacher and principal inquiry groups, a conversation in one of our principal research conversations shapes our exploration in this paper. In our growing attentiveness to school landscapes, we have come to recognize, through the unfolding narratives of our four principal co-researchers, how they too, by their very positioning, can be placed marginally within the social contexts of schools. Yet, we feel strongly, as Bateson (1989) does, that insights from the edges offer important places to open up the inviolable, status quo center, drawing in a more expansive view of the complexity of school landscapes~the “centre and margin both involved” (hooks, 1984).

We enter these stories through research conversations which took place between our selves and our principal co-researchers, Peggy, Emily, Cheryl, and Tony², in which

they tell some of the stories being lived out within their schools. As the following story unfolded, Peggy highlighted the shadowed, almost secretive, qualities school landscapes can take on, often sharply defining or narrowing possibilities for relationships. She said:

If you look at the issues...it's big what we see. On the surface, everything looks very lovely.... But what you find really disturbing is what you find under all of this. (October, 1997, p. 23)

Peggy's description of a lovely "surface" story of school drew us back to an earlier paper, *Beyond the still pond~Community as growing edges* (Huber & Whelan, submitted, a), where we explored the pervasive story of "sameness" which can too often submerge, what Peggy named, as the invisible issues on school landscapes. Making visible this surface quality was an important point of entry for Peggy as her story unfolded, and for us as we awakened to what her story was helping us to understand about difference, and its place within school contexts:

They [teachers] had professional corporations, private businesses, they might as well have had a back door right to the parking lot and gone home. They don't come together as a community, they run their own show, they bring in their own boxes, you go into the classroom, it's like a mini empire. Like they just don't collectively have any need. (October, 1997, p. 27)

Peggy's description of isolation and separate practice as the accepted story on this school landscape intensified our attentiveness to the pervasive influence such stories can have on shaping the relational space among those who live in this shared social context. In particular, we were drawn into the impact this taken-for-granted story had on one teacher attempting to live a *different* story within the confines of the larger acceptable school story. Peggy described this teacher within our research conversations as her "crow boy,"³ a literary reference illuminating her marginalization on this school landscape because she chose to live a different, less acceptable story. Peggy described how the teacher's unique expression of creativity was resented by staff who storied her as untidy and unable to fall

in step with their expectations for how physical spaces should be utilized and kept within the school:

I couldn't believe how cruel a professional could be towards another, but it was an accepted practice in that school.... I still have been appalled by the nature and maliciousness of the comments directed at this one teacher.... It breaks your heart. (October, 1997, pp. 29-30)

As the layers in Peggy's telling unfolded she grew to recognize the out-of-classroom place as a context where perceptions can shape stories of "mis-fits" and, as she makes visible, the accepted practice, on this school landscape was to "isolate" those who were perceived as different. Her story left us wondering about how the acceptable school story not only shaped the story of difference one teacher was attempting to negotiate, but how it, in turn, was shaping the multiplicity of storylines possible on this school landscape. What danger do selves face, we wondered, in taking on these non-relational scripts. Do we, in this process, consciously or unconsciously begin to cover our basic need for relation? Peggy drew us to think harder about the work of Anzaldúa (1990), Greene (1995), and Coles (1989) who speak to this unconscious shaping which can so profoundly alter our ability to empathize and enter into relational understanding with someone we have constructed as an Other. These authors' discussions of the moral implications of such a "perceptual reality"~a reality in which the diverse narrative histories of a self become overwritten by the collective, "selective reality"⁴~heightened our need to understand how such stories can become so powerfully constructed on our school landscapes.

Attempting to interrupt accepted, non-relational stories such as these, which can, at times, permeate school contexts, Emily, Peggy, and Tony thought further about what might be necessary to shape more inclusive, relational school communities~spaces where difference might have a place to live and evolve:

Emily: And part of what you need is time. Time is so precious in school.

Peggy: But are we busy you know...maybe it's a flag because maybe, are we doing all the right things or are we busy, so busy that we have lost sight of some meaning in the workplace? We have these committees, we are managed to death, we've got schedules and time-tables, and we're getting much better at what we do; it's a level of organization I think that none of us probably even dreamed was necessary, I'd say even 20 years ago. So from the outside, for appearances sake, all our reports, everything we do I think is at a much more sophisticated scale but you know, are we missing something...because our communities are very fragile.

Tony: At times it seems in the school we're afraid to show we're humans. You're afraid.

Emily: That's a frightening statement.

Tony: Yeah, it is. It's a frightening statement.... We're afraid to show our humanness [to wonder]...how can we make this better, how can we work on this, what's the problem here, let's problem solve and sometimes there's no humanness.

Emily: Well it's a very different profession I think in the last few years. (October, 1996, p. 16)

As we returned to this conversation we were struck by the openings it created for re-imagining school landscapes. As Emily highlighted, time is precious on school landscapes. Reflecting upon time narratively~that is, the temporal unfolding of our storied lives~helped us to see school landscapes from a more expansive view point. Alongside the work of others trying to open up linear notions of time by attending to the connections between experience as nested in situations (Dewey, 1938), as shifting across past, present, and future landscapes (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Crites, 1971), and as continuously shaped, reshaped, and carried within us via our narrative histories (Carr, 1989; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), we saw that when time was only considered important on school landscapes in terms of time-tabling, there were no openings to explore the diverse and often conflicting nature of our identities (Bateson, 1989; Mullin, 1995). Without these openings for exploration, we learn to take on the

identities prescribed by the school stories shaping our landscapes. Tony's and Peggy's awareness of the relational spaces of school contexts and the selves living there was reflected in their descriptions of fragile communities where fear of expressing our humanness becomes our only *given* reality. Caught in the selective reality growing out of and shaping shiny school stories, as Peggy brought forward, the complexity, tensions, and ambiguity holding such promise for re-imagining school landscapes become smoothed over, denied.

The stories our principal co-researchers shared in this research conversation left us wondering~when fear becomes an unrelenting quality on school landscapes that slowly seeps in, often without our noticing, beginning, in turn, to shape the stories we live out in these contexts, what happens to the multiplicity of storylines threaded within and across our narrative histories? Where do these stories find a place to live? Our principal co-researchers' stories helped us to think harder about how these layers can suppress alternative and diverse storylines, becoming instead, covered over by stories thickly laden with non-relational qualities: being managed to death, scheduled, time-tabled. There is a strong sense in their tellings of a loss of agency, and in that loss of agency, the multiplicity and diversity of self, what Tony names as humanness, seems to become buried beneath a school story of sameness, efficiency, organization...all for appearances sake only. For us, our co-researchers' stories highlighted ways in which this loss of agency can begin to suppress our ability to inquire into our school contexts. And, we imagine, it is in this inability to inquire, that scripted stories begin to shape our selves and our contexts.

Did she say why she had been quiet? What does it mean?

As we continued to revisit the transcripts of our research conversations, wondering further into the ways school stories shape school landscapes and selves, we saw openings where alternatives to fear might be imagined~spaces where the complexity and ambiguity of our lives on school landscapes might be accepted as holding value.

Exploring alternatives to fear, we were drawn into Tony's telling of a story of a long time support staff member whom he described as breaking her silence by risking, in a staff meeting, to share her stories of the school history. By attending to the stories the support staff member told of her experiences in this school context, we imagine that Tony's interest in hearing her story, created an opening for her to shift from a place of fear to a place of voice. Tony's telling of this event started to unfold in our research conversation when he described a professional development day he and his staff engaged in around school vision statements:

Tony: It was really interesting and a support staff member was very tentative, very shy, and for the first time just began to dialogue—it was wonderful. You could hear her, she has been in the school for 11 years and she just started to talk about the whole history of the school and what it means. It was really interesting to hear her perspective.

Jean⁵: Did she say why she had been quiet? What does it mean?

Tony: You know Jean, I think maybe we had so many new people come last year and a new principal. She is just naturally kind of timid and shy and she was a little apprehensive about the meeting because she didn't know me very well.

Emily: I think teachers are very reluctant no matter how much you try to create an open environment of communication. I think people are reluctant to speak.

Cheryl: Principals?

Emily: Well yeah, or even, don't you feel that if you're having a discussion that it's always the same three or four or five people who speak; others who don't say anything and will just say it in the parking lot.... A lot of people won't say anything through the meeting and you've got people that are enthusiastic, some people who say nothing and they go and growl about it behind the scenes. I find that very frustrating and I don't know how you get people, it's so hard I find to get people to really [open up]. It's not just the fear of the principal, it's the fear of your own colleagues. (October, 1996, pp. 13-14)

We were struck by Emily's response to Tony's story and her experiences with ways in which fear can shape and reshape landscapes and selves. What is still buried beneath the surface of this story, we can only imagine through our own stories of school laid alongside Emily's dilemmas and the work of Clandinin and Connelly (1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), that school landscapes have become so prescriptive that our selves can no longer safely emerge. Emily's frustrations around helping her staff to open up communication with one another do not take place within a vacuum. Rather, these frustrations are embedded in a complex landscape which she seems to have little influence in shifting. In other words, the school stories have become so thick, so pervasive, that Emily's intentions for relation within and among her self and colleagues, might never be realized.

Who does the self become within non-relational contexts?

Continuing to share stories of their school contexts, shifting away from naming qualities that can shape these contexts to more personal stories, our co-researchers drew us deeper into the complex layers which form when self and other attempt to negotiate lives within these spaces. This shift from naming to personal stories, where self and other are both explored as they intersect, and shape one another, helped us to see the influence non-relational contexts can have on identity. Our co-researchers' inquiry into the stories emerging from their school landscapes left us wondering about who the self becomes within such non-relational school contexts. Beginning with her understanding of how one teacher became storied non-relationally on her school landscape, Peggy described:

Peggy: It [non-relational stories told of them] diminishes their spirit. And isn't it interesting that it's often the creative one and the spirited one and the risk taker who is perceived as the one at the bottom.... The secretary says to me, 'I just would like to tell you that you'd better be careful' and the former principal said... 'that teacher is really dangerous and you'd better watch out for her'.... It's just amazing how we're judged.

Janice: How does she survive?

Peggy: Not very well I don't think. (October, 1997, pp. 34-38)

As we listened to Peggy's telling of this creative, spirited, risk-taker whose self she perceived as being 'diminished' within this school context, we saw how Peggy, too, was becoming positioned within the non-relational story being told of this teacher. We wondered how Peggy would choose to enter this teacher's story. Her admission, "It's just amazing how we're judged," seemed to foreshadow her own internal struggle with how to position her self within this seemingly non-relational story. If she aligned her self with the marginalized teacher, would she then also face the threat of taking on the story of being "dangerous," someone others should "watch out for?" And, if she aligned her self *within* the non-relational story being shaped around this teacher, what impact might she have on the already fragile self of the marginalized teacher? Who, we wondered, would Peggy become within this story? And, what were the school stories on this landscape, plotlines shaping such non-relational stories in the first place?

It is painful to face survival as a possible state of existence on school landscapes. Yet Peggy's description of this teacher's diminished spirit is all too familiar to us. It is a story, we too, each lived and wrote about (Huber, submitted, c; Whelan, submitted, b). We also heard it echoed many times in the stories of our teacher and principal co-researchers. Laying these stories alongside one another's, through a process we named as "narrative inter-lappings" (Sweetland, Huber, & Whelan, submitted) deepened our meaning making, shaping possibilities we saw as hopeful for re-imagining non-relational stories within future social contexts.

Laying Emily's story of a teacher named Paul, and Tony's story of a 'veteran' teacher alongside Peggy's story of the spirited teacher, we began to see difference as a common thread in these stories~difference shaping separation, marginalization, and rejection between self and other living on out-of-classroom places in these three school contexts. Like Peggy, Emily imagined the hurt one teacher must have experienced as he tried to express him self within his school context:

Emily: You know what I noticed about him when I first went [into the school] is that the teachers often made [fun], he was the brunt of everybody's jokes.... People were always putting him down in a joking sort of way.

Peggy: He's a little different. He's got a few blue stripes.

Karen: Trivialize him by their jokes.

Emily: They do. The jokes, they don't realize the jokes trivialize him like he's meaningless.... And they say things to him like, 'Oh, well, it's *only* Paul.' Or they'll say things like, 'Oh [teacher] transfer time, get Paul [a form]' and it's always done as a joke and he always jokes back but I've always felt that he was hurt by it. (October, 1997, pp. 33-34)

Similar to Peggy and Emily, Tony's concern over the marginalization of an older teacher on staff, close to retirement, revealed the value Tony placed in knowing more than simply the surface story of this teacher. He said:

I want him to end his career in a positive, dignified way. And, I mean, he's funny. He has a sense of humour that people maybe in the district don't know, and the wonderful comments he writes on children's report cards. The wonderful comments. Other people would not see his tender side. They don't see that.... But I do, you know. And he's wonderful. He really is. He's what [kids on the margins] need. (October, 1997, p. 36)

Peggy, Emily, and Tony's attempts to move into the life experiences of these teachers reminded us of the importance of what Lugones (1987) described as " 'world-'travel," a way of moving within and between one another as we mutually negotiate social spaces. The ability to see from another's vantage point, to open our selves enough to travel to another's experience seemed critical in our co-researchers' understanding of how non-relational experiences were shaping the selves these teachers were becoming, or were limited to expressing, within their school contexts.

As the stories of their school landscapes continued to unfold, we wondered what shaping influence, Peggy, Emily, and Tony's knowing of these teachers' lives might have

on shifting their stories from non-relational plotlines to ones in which others might be invited to enter in a different, more relational way into the life stories these teachers were composing. In our relational inquiry and in the work of others (Rose, 1997; 1999) the scripted role of principal as positioned on school landscapes in hierarchical roles of authority *over* others was explored. Yet, in our principal co-researchers' stories we heard them pushing against such distanced, separate positionings, drawn instead toward alternative possibilities holding the potential for reshaping relational spaces that Noddings (1984) described as emerging from an "ethic of care" (Noddings, 1984). Could Peggy, Emily, and Tony's understanding of these teachers' stories shape a more relational context where the teachers, who lived at the edges of the acceptable school story, might begin to see themselves differently, becoming more fully who they imagined themselves to be in relation with others? And, in this increasing emergence of self, might the other staff members begin to shift their stories of these teachers, imagining instead alternative ways of living *in relation* with them? Understanding the critical shifts which might occur between self and other when a non-relational space becomes restoried more relationally became imperative to us as we continued to listen and respond to the stories of our co-researchers.

Shifting stories between self and other~shaping relational landscapes

Returning once again to the transcripts of our research conversations with our principal co-researchers, we began to see the necessity for openings where conscious shifts could take place so that non-relational contexts might become re-imagined relationally. In a story of a conversation with her vice principal regarding a school staff meeting, Peggy explained that she was thinking about the way the vice principal positioned her self in relation to the marginalized teacher on staff (the teacher Peggy described as spirited)~a positioning in which the vice principal appeared to align herself with the non-relational story being scripted for this teacher. Peggy described how, as she sat with the vice principal, she consciously shaped the conversation in "the form of

questions,” hoping, we imagine, to create openings where, together, they might explore the shifting relational qualities profoundly shaping voice, agency, and identities in this particular school context. Peggy spoke of this event by recounting her conversation with her vice principal:

‘I shut you down yesterday [in the staff meeting].... Do you know why?’
Let’s talk about yesterday.... You did beautiful work. It was wonderful professional dialogue. It was the kind of dialogue you long to hear a staff talking about, that they’re excited, that they’re identifying things, that they want to grow. That people that maybe didn’t have a voice in that school, suddenly have voice. We’ve shifted the whole dynamic of people who had no voice in that school. Now they are having to present voice and not being taken-for-granted as the opinion of the group. (October, 1997, p. 32)

Peggy then told of how she tried to help the vice principal remember an earlier conversation they shared with the marginalized teacher:

You had a person in your group [in the staff meeting] who spoke last June...when we met with her in the one-on-one’s, she told us that she felt like she was on the perimeter of the school. (October, 1997, p. 32)

We were intrigued by the openings we saw Peggy trying to create in this conversation with her vice principal~openings where the vice principal’s consciousness might potentially shift as Peggy shared her own shifting consciousness about the marginalized teacher, their positionings as vice principal and principal in relation with others on the school staff, and the shifting school landscape. That Peggy’s attempt to engage her vice principal in conversation unfolded as it did helped us, as researchers inquiring into difference on the out-of-classroom place on school landscapes, to see one possible way in which conscious openings begin to shift stories emerging between self and other. Peggy spoke of intentionally beginning their conversation with wonders, moving then to an

uncovering of the educative “dialogue” which “shifted the whole dynamic of people” from a place of voicelessness and taken-for-grantedness to one in which they were able to “present voice,” while also reflecting back to an earlier vulnerable moment in which the marginalized teacher disclosed her feelings around being positioned at the “perimeter of the school.” The courage we imagine Peggy needed to engage in this kind of inquiry into the relationships between selves and stories shaping this school landscape, reminded us of Anzaldúa (1987) and of how necessary courage is if we are to shift away from our surface perceptions, imagining instead, alternative ways we might live with, and understand, others. Describing this process, Anzaldúa wrote:

La facultad is the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface.... This shift in perception deepens the way we see...people; the senses become so acute and piercing that we can see through things, view events in depth, a piercing that reaches...the realm of the soul. (pp. 38-39)

While we have no certainty of knowing how this shift in consciousness might have reshaped the relational spaces on Peggy’s school landscape, Emily’s response, within our inquiry space, helped us to imagine future ways in which landscapes and the selves living within them, might unfold more relationally. Emily responded:

I’m willing to bet you will change the attitude of that staff toward that teacher by the dignity that you treat her with and the fact that you stood up for her.... [Emily imagines that the staff might begin to think] maybe there’s more to her [the marginalized teacher] than meets the eye.

(October, 1997, page 32 & 36)

In Emily’s response to Peggy’s story we were struck by what she highlighted about the relationship between positioning and the negotiation of relational spaces on school landscapes~spaces where the multiplicity of *all* selves might become visible. Emily reminded us of the importance of attempting to position our selves *relationally* in the

stories of others. Many authors expanded our thinking around the profound place of relationship in the unfolding of selves. Silko's (1996) and Trinh's (1989) attention to finding viable relationships within our landscapes for our selves to more fully emerge, and Buber's (1965) and Noddings' (1984) reflections on our human need for connection, were deepened as Emily responded to Peggy's story by once again reflecting on her shifting positioning in relation to Paul, the teacher situated at the margins as "the brunt of everybody's jokes" (October, 1997, p. 33).

Emily: You know what really opened my eyes was one of the things Paul did last year and I didn't even know about, because I think he might have been...maybe marginalized at some point in time but, last year a parent wrote a note. He had a kid in his classroom last year and I could see Paul doing this, this kid had lots of problems so Paul, if you can believe this, every single day of the entire year, he spent time with this kid. Isn't that amazing? Like at lunch time or after school and that kid...did really well. [He did this] without telling anyone, no one knew right, he's not bragging about it or anything like that, I didn't even know it was happening.... The parent wrote a note about it at the end of the year, thanking him and sent a copy to me. So when I got it, I wrote Paul a letter.... And I said, 'Congratulations on this wonderful letter, I think it's a tribute to your commitment to this child, you've made a difference in his life.' I went on and said what I really felt. You know what? That was an absolute turning point, I felt. In terms of him, maybe recognizing what the strengths are that he has 'cause he does have a lot of good skills. He's very hard working, very committed to kids and I don't think he's a joke, and I never treat him like he's a joke, ever. So it's really cut back [the joking] it's almost non-existent.... It's just almost shut right down.

Karen: He's seeing himself differently and that's causing other people to see him differently too. (October, 1997, p. 35)

What Emily drew our attention to in this telling were the "secret stories"⁶ (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) Paul was living on this school landscape~stories, which when told, helped shift her stories of him, creating a "turning point," a relational shift, enabling Paul's strengths to emerge more visibly on this school landscape. And, in this emergence of self, we imagine, that others might also restory him differently as their

awareness of who he was grew in relation with them and others sharing this school context.

What Might Be?

Shifting Stories~Shifting Identities on the Professional Knowledge Landscape

Significant to what our co-researchers' stories of difference drew our attention to was the taken-for-grantedness that can shape the stories defining the out-of-classroom places on school landscapes. Describing taken-for-grantedness as a kind of unconsciousness, enabling silence and invisibility to thrive, Greene (1993) spoke of how spaces can become shaped where "normalization...wipes out differences, forcing them to be repressed, to become matters of shame rather than pride" (p. 212). Greene's thoughts and the stories we inquired into, make visible how our social contexts can begin to take on these qualities, creating spaces where some voices are no longer heard. Not only does the suppression of some voices perpetuate non-relational, hierarchical qualities that, in turn, can begin to shape stories and contexts, but they can also make it extremely difficult for those voices submerged in silence, without a sense of relation with others, to break free of the pervasive isolation confining them. We heard in the stories of our co-researchers, concern for breaking through such confining spaces on school landscapes~imagining instead spaces where self and other in relation might consciously embrace difference. It is, we imagine, work that is not unlike that shared in the relational inquiry space from which this paper emerged~work beginning from attentiveness to story, shaping imagined worlds where we might consciously question...wonder...think again.

Endnotes

¹ These inquiries are nested within Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) and Connelly and Clandinin's (1999; 1988) work on teacher knowledge and professional contexts. Since 1993 we have been part of a larger research community negotiated by 5 people from varying places on the professional knowledge landscape. Recently, this program of research and the inquiry unfolding within this shared research space, became concerned

with teacher and principal identity and the ways principals and teachers shape, and are shaped within, their professional landscapes.

In order to make visible and to further understand the multi-layered complexity of school landscapes and identity, we (Karen and Janice) negotiated inquiry spaces with seven educators. Over a two year period, we entered into conversations with a group of four principal co-researchers and a group of three teacher co-researchers. Our co-researchers came from: urban and rural settings, school contexts set within differing economic communities, segregated and integrated classroom sites, and programs institutionally defined as academic and non-academic. Their experiences cut across multiple landscapes: they were female and male; some were newcomers to their positions, while others were experienced in their positions. In their collective experience, they worked with children of diverse ages and with diverse needs across various school landscapes.

² In order to honor the identity of our co-researchers, pseudonyms have been used in place of their given names.

³ Crow Boy by Taro Yashima (1983) is the story of a young Japanese boy and his marginalization within a classroom and school context.

⁴ Anzaldúa (1990) describes selective reality as “the narrow spectrum of reality that human beings select or choose to perceive and/or what their culture ‘selects’ for them to ‘see’ ” (p. xxi).

⁵ Because of the larger context of this narrative inquiry into identity and professional landscapes, Jean Clandinin was part of our initial research conversation with our principal co-researchers.

⁶ Clandinin and Connelly (1995) describe secret stories as stories we tell in safe places, either away from out-of-classroom places or our school landscapes.

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CHAPTER 5

Narrative Inter-lappings: Recognizing Difference Across Tension

Wendy Sweetland, Janice Huber, and Karen Whelan

*We have been socialized to respect fear
more than our needs for language and definition,
and while we wait in silence for that final luxury of fearlessness,
the weight of that silence will choke us....
It is not difference which immobilizes us but silence
and there are so many silences to be broken.*

~Lorde (1984, p. 44)

This paper emerged from our ongoing conversations as teacher co-researchers and our desire to co-author work enabling us to explore collaboration and to potentially problematize the notion that it is a smooth, time-efficient, easy process. With our collaborative conversations shaping our shared history, we recognized that in negotiating this work in relation, the educative possibilities for understanding one another and the collaborative nature of our inquiry, might also deepen our understanding of the complexities shaping our school landscapes. In many ways, the shifts and re-shapings of this paper parallel our own journeys as we negotiated the tensions of this text and the differing perspectives brought forward as our lives intersected with it. It seemed the more we began to face one another and what this work might help us to understand, the greater our intention became to stay in conversation, even when moments of tension surfaced “within and between” ourselves (Trinh, 1989), shifting, and at times threatening to rupture, the stability of our collaborative grounding.

Tension, as a necessary and vital quality to collaborative processes involving diverse groups of people, is addressed by many writers (Anzaldúa, 1987, 1990; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, 1998; Greene, 1995; hooks, 1984). We resonated with Buber’s thoughts on tension expressed through conversation in relation, (translated in Friedman, 1991) when he wrote:

Real speaking takes place out of tension.... Speech is not community, but multiplicity. It is born of a living dynamic. This fruitful essential tension

expressed through speech acts as a stimulus to come toward each other.

(p. 126)

An essential tension that drew us together was found in the transcribed dialogue of one of our many research conversations¹. Drawing upon this transcript fragment as a research text in which tension became present, this co-authored paper seeks to document our journey of learning to seriously embrace our silences around difference as we negotiated our coming toward each other. As three teacher co-researchers engaged in “collaborative narrative inquiry” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), we knew our experiences with collaboration were deepened through our multiplicity. Together, we experienced moments of acceptance and recognition of one another and the stories we shared; we also experienced moments of tension, shaped through difference, when we were unable or, at times, unwilling to understand one another’s stories.

We begin this paper by first attending, through story, to some of the tensions we experienced around this fragment of transcript which became a space necessitating exploration of our differing perspectives. Following this, we make visible our narrative inter-lappings as we engaged in response to our tensions. Essential to our recognition of one another was this process of telling and responding to stories of our lives. It was through this process of narrative inter-lapping that world-travel became a significant consideration in our meaning making within this text. Lugones (1987) described “world”-travel when she reflected on her negotiated relationship with her mother. She wrote:

Loving my mother also required that I see with her eyes, that I go into my mother’s world, that I see both of us as we are constructed in her world, that I witness her own sense of herself from within her world. Only through this travelling to her ‘world’ could I identify with her because only then could I cease to ignore her and be excluded and separate from her.

(p. 8)

Throughout this paper, it was our intent to illuminate our travel, both internally within our selves, and externally, to one another's worlds (Anzaldúa, 1990; Lugones, 1987) as inherently connected with collaboration and the complexities shaping school landscapes.

Experiencing tension as a possibility for travelling to one another's worlds rather than suppressing, segregating, and taking for granted our difference (Mullin, 1995), was not an easy nor predictable journey. Learning to openly embrace and explore our difference, even in moments when we felt most afraid and vulnerable, required strong commitment to *self* and *other* and, courage to continue travelling. Our travelling to one another's worlds has been, and will continue to be, an ongoing process of constructing, de-constructing, imagining, re-imagining.

Negotiating the Terrain of Our Knowledge

*Spoken as opposed to written speech is the great discovery,
the great rediscovery, of the life of dialogue.
The genuine spoken word is spoken in the context of relationship,
of mutuality, and takes its very meaning from the fact that it is said by one person
and heard by another who relates to it from an entirely different ground....
~Buber in Friedman (1991, pp. 125-126)*

Our place as the three co-authors of this text, and the larger place of our teacher co-researcher inquiry group, were negotiated. Our inquiry group was shaped by five teachers embodying diverse life and school experience. Collectively, our experience encompassed work with kindergarten to grade twelve students in rural, urban, international, and special education settings—cutting across a mosaic of cultural and socio-economic possibilities. From these positionings, our common need to make sense of the dilemmas, gaps, and silences within our lives, drew us together. Our inquiry is contextualized within Clandinin and Connelly's (1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) ongoing narrative inquiry into the "professional knowledge landscape" of schools, with a particular focus on exploring marginalization and identity as they shape and are shaped within diverse school contexts.²

Our conversations were not framed within the boundaries of set or hidden agendas with predefined questions and predictable answers; threatening our becoming “too single-minded and goal oriented, straight ahead, one foot in front of the other” (Johnson, 1997, p. 59) with the *researcher* positioned as leader and the *participant* as follower. Our conversations, which took place on a regular basis over eighteen months, embodied a much different feeling. Like travellers embarking on a journey with an open itinerary, we ventured toward embracing uncertainties, as we opened our selves toward possibility (Bateson, 1994). By collectively honoring our embodied, narrative way of knowing, we allowed our lived stories to come forward, shaping the foundation of our research conversations. Like the women who gathered to imagine their work in Women’s Ways of Knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986), we too, gathered in one another’s living rooms and around our dining room tables to share and explore our stories. This space became terrain rich with the diversity of our experiences, wonders, and dilemmas. Each of our conversations were taped, transcribed, and negotiated between the members of our teacher co-researcher inquiry group. This paper, in addition to other papers emerging from this narrative inquiry, was also shared with our teacher co-researchers.

Situating Our Inquiry

Coming together to co-author this paper, drew us back to the transcripts of our research conversations. Interestingly enough, each of us found ourselves drawn to the same fragment—one which seemed to illuminate a moment where tensions surfaced. As we began to think about how we might give an account of the tensions each of us experienced around the transcript fragment, we recognized there were, and continue to be even as we write this paper, multiple interpretations of the spoken words, now freeze-framed in one small piece of transcript, set within one of many ongoing research conversations. How, we wondered, could we possibly tell of this moment of tension in a way that made sense

to each one of us and represented, as thoughtfully as possible, our feelings and interpretations around some of the text?

After considerable wondering and numerous attempts to reach common ground around sharing with readers some of what was discussed within this research conversation, we felt that an opening for each one of us to tell of how we experienced it from our own vantage points was necessary. In many ways the transcript became somewhat of a touchstone shaping a rhythmic drift~forward...backward...inside... outside. And yet, within each rhythmic movement, there evolved and continues to evolve, a growing depth of understanding that far exceeds any single interpretation we might offer to contextualize this work for readers. As already discussed, what mattered to us in this text was that we might learn more about collaborative processes, school landscapes, and one another as we explored the differing perspectives and experiences we each brought to our initial research conversation, and to each of our ongoing conversations as this paper unfolded.

Travelling to Karen's World

Like Hoffman (1989), this storytelling and unpacking necessitated writing my self through a process of "translating backwards." The story, emerging from my wonders around the tensions I experienced in our research conversation, brought forward additional threads which helped me to further explore these tensions as I attempted to make visible the additional shifts I experienced. The reader will need to enter the story in the left-hand column, followed by the exploration of tensions in the right.

Situated and Relational World Travel One March Day In A Principal's Office	Facing The Tension
It was a stressful school cycle in mid-March when I decided to drop by my mother's school. Report cards had just gone home and student-parent-teacher conferences were about to begin. When I arrived in her office, I found her looking weary with signs of frustration showing on her face as she read through a child's school cum record. She closed her office door and began telling the story of a concerned parent who had called that morning, upset and uncertain because	I begin with what I remember about the end of the conversation that night. I can recall my emotional apology as I tried to explain why I felt it was necessary to defend the stories of principals I was telling, stories which always seem to necessarily involve my mother and her life as a principal. I remember receiving caring response and affirmation for the different stories I carried forward with me because of my relationship with my mother. However, the nature of the

her child had come home the day before in tears after receiving a report card filled with C's and D's in language arts. The mother relayed how hard her child had been working at his writing, with her trying to support and assist him at home. Now, with the arrival of the report card, the child was left feeling deflated~his efforts appearing to have gone unnoticed. My mother reassured the concerned parent that she would meet with both her child and the teacher to try to understand the situation more fully.

As our conversation around this incident continued, there was a quiet knock at the door. A young boy, head hanging down, making little eye contact, entered the office. He appeared particularly fragile to me, and I sensed an inner relief, knowing from my daughter's stance, that he was entering into caring hands~the hands of my mother, the hands of his principal. At that moment I was conscious of my self becoming an outside observer, watching, within the intimacy of this office space, what took place between my mother and this child. Taking in the scene, I became acutely aware that this was a rare event~*seeing* my mother's private interactions as she lived her life as a principal on the landscape of this school. There was something distinctly different from hearing a story, as I had so often in our shared mother-daughter relationship, and seeing its unfolding in front of my eyes.

My mother gently placed her arm around the little boy's shoulder, inviting him over to a cozy seating area in her office surrounded with the books, stuffed toys, and precious treasures she carefully collected and placed within her office to help children feel comfortable. She quietly asked him if he would like to read the piece of writing his mother had hoped he would share. Although at first reluctant, he finally began reading. I watched as my mother leaned in, intently listening to the beautifully descriptive passage of his story. I became awakened to the multiple selves she brought to this context~mother, principal, caregiver, teacher, enabler.

conversation still left me wondering how far we really can travel to one another's worlds. How much of what we see and feel can others see and feel from our own vantage points? As a starting point to the tensions, I asked myself, why the emotional response? Why the tears that night? And why the need to justify my relationship with my mother, who lives as a principal within school contexts?

It was partly these wonders which called me to write the story of my experience in my mother's office. It is my story of world-travel~a shifting from the periphery to the center that helps me to understand the complexities of my mother's positioning as principal in deeper ways. The telling of this story brought forward an additional wonder: How does this different knowing of a principal's world shape my self~the self I brought to the table that night in conversation around the lives of teachers and principals on school landscapes.

Through the work of Anzaldúa (1987) and her discussion of the contradictions a self can experience through the "straddling of two or more cultures" (p. 80), I began to reflect further on my own experience of straddling different worlds. My footing, at times, seems to lie in two different worlds, that of teacher and that of principal, with my mother's world continuously shifting from the periphery of my experience to the center. My growing awareness of the multiple shifts I experience as I travel within and between these worlds has been important to my understanding of the contradictions I experience as I negotiate this difference.

Looking back at my intention in writing the story that lies across the border of these pages, I recognize now, that it arose from my need to "show," (Trinh, 1989) through my intimate knowing of my mother, what it "might be" (Greene, 1995) to live a principal's side of the border. It helps me to understand the tension I experienced in our research conversation, around the sense of resistance I perceived as I tried to tell stories from the principal's world.

The child's story told of two young mischievous girls squatted in the woods peering in through a window on an ornery character. He described the girl's raincoats crackling like fire. This imaginative language in the child's passage, and the timid and uncertain manner with which it was shared, did not go unnoticed by my mother. She reached out, taking both of his small hands in her own, and said, "Robert, I'm not just saying this...You are an incredible writer. This is beautiful writing." At this point, my mother called me over, shifting my role from silent observer to participant in this story. I recalled her saying, "And here's my daughter, she's a teacher too, and she loves writing. Karen, come and listen to this!" I, too, expressed amazement over this child's writing, simultaneously recognizing my mother's intense need to provide care in this child's life. This principal's response, on this day, mattered to this child.

Moments after the child's departure, we sat together looking through the child's writing, much like the mother must have done the night before. On each page the teacher had written comments such as "far too much here" with words emphatically underlined in the child's writing. In other places, marks appeared in the margins along with the comments, "too messy," "not enough here," and "you don't need this..." These comments felt vague and disconnected from the descriptive passages the child had just shared with us. We wondered where they had originated from and what purpose the teacher might have felt they served in improving this child's piece of writing and his image of himself as a writer.

As my mother reflected with me, I found my self travelling with her, through this story, to the complexity of her positioning as a principal in this school. With relational understanding, I knew of a parent, frustrated, angry, and concerned, who was unable to meaningfully connect with her child's teacher; I knew of a child, fragile, and lacking confidence in himself as a writer;

Reflecting further on the story of my mother as principal, I discovered additional themes which seemed to parallel some of the tensions I experienced on the evening of our research conversation.

One theme became illuminated as I re-read Lugones' (1987) discussion on "world"-travel in which she describes differing ways of "being at ease in a 'world' " (p. 12), highlighting such qualities as being "humanly bonded," and having "a history with others that is shared, especially daily history" (p. 12). Her words helped me to understand why I developed an increasing feeling of ease in the world of the principal. It is a different world from one I live as teacher, yet, it encompasses a language I have come to understand and a vantage point that is familiar to me now, having grown up in daily conversation with my mother as principal.

Recognizing the intimacy of this shared history helps me to explore some of the contradictions I experienced with the un-ease shared that night as others spoke to their experiences in relationship with principals, and responded to my words, around power and authority. I, too, have lived moments of un-ease in relationship with principals as I struggled for agency in the face of power and authority. Yet, there is something different I am able to negotiate through the relational context and shared history I live with my mother, that helps me cross some of these borders. Lugones (1987) cautions, however, that being at ease in a world can also be dangerous as it may cause us to "have no inclination to travel across 'worlds' " (p. 12). I wonder if I expressed my different knowing in arrogance that evening, and in doing so, separated my self from each of you-making world-travel an impossibility? In this way, I could "remain untouched, without any... [apparent] sense of loss" (Lugones, 1987, p. 5).

How, then, do I tell this story of principal in a more "loving," less "arrogant" way so that I do not situate my self distantly from others? And, how

I knew of a teacher whose written response to a child's writing had gone unchecked and who was evidently unaware of the damage it was causing. I was also reminded that this was only one story~one child, one parent, one teacher. I became witness to this one event and knew it could not be easy...this positioning as principal. Who, on her school landscape, could my mother talk to in order to make sense of these dilemmas? How would she respond to them in a way which honoured the diverse lives of everyone involved?

As we sat side-by-side~mother and daughter~principal and teacher, we tried to imagine possibilities from different sides of the border. She spoke of how she might invite conversation with this teacher around the concern expressed from the parent's vantage point, and I responded with how vulnerable this might make me feel from a teacher's positioning. It was the beginning of a hopeful exchange, although short-lived, as the next knock at the door sounded, interrupting our conversation.

do I live with the contradictions I feel inside when negotiating these different worlds? When I shift to the world of the teacher and tell stories of moments of tension with principals, I feel more "at ease" in conversation with other teachers. At times, when I cross to the principal's world, and enter into a space that seems to separate, trying to tell stories from a principal's positioning, I experience greater un-ease~and the familiar hearts of my friends become strange. How do I develop "flexibility in shifting" between worlds, where I might feel like an "outsider," to places where I might feel "more or less 'at home' " (Lugones, 1987, p. 3)? What borders did I construct, in my arrogance that evening, which prevented others from shifting to my world, and my self to theirs?

Buber (1965) reminds me that a meeting of "I and Thou" requires a "between" shaped by mutuality, reciprocity, openness, and attention to one another. Because I was unable to move out from my self, beyond my own "blank spots" (Anzaldúa, 1990), there was no chance for meeting that night~I stayed inside my story. I remained detached, frozen in my stance, both by your response, and by my reification of my own narrow perspective~"repeating, repeating, to prevent myself from 'seeing'" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 5).

As I think about trying to live a story of diversity, one which celebrates the multiple stories we each bring to the conversation, I am reminded by Trinh (1989), of how difficult a challenge it is "to live fearlessly with and within difference[s]" (p. 84). The exchange which took place between all of us that night really amplified this for me. It seemed that we each were trying, straining perhaps, to convey meaning to one another from our own vantage points, and from our own personal histories of our experiences with principals and power. Words became significant and were interpreted with the lenses we each brought to the conversation. At times, it felt like we were moving away from a conversation in which our differences were present, to one in which we were searching for "rightness" and "wrongness." I experienced great discomfort when the conversation moved to this place.

The process of writing my self through this tension has been an educative one. It helps me understand more deeply why we might move to what Lugones (1987) describes as "arrogant perception"~the failure to "identify with," "love," and understand in a particularly deep way, the world of another. We have witnessed and experienced a great deal in our lives, and we have much to share with others~we *need others* to understand. Each of us was passionate about what we felt that night; these

were stories we have lived. I imagine there were moments when we moved within our selves to our own knowing, a place that we can choose to keep hidden from others. It seemed that this caused a rupture in our attending to one another, or at least in my attending to you.

Although I thought I heard what you were saying that night, and thought I understood, I still felt a strong pull to draw you to my side~to help you see and understand my relational knowing of one principal's world. I recognize now that my story is only one telling, my "selective reality" (Anzaldúa, 1990), and in trying to bring you to this place, I found my self absent, and yes, resistant, to your stories. It makes me ever-present to the need for continuous negotiation~continuous world-travel, and the need for "multiple ways of seeing and multiple dialogues in a world where nothing stays the same" (Greene, 1995, p. 16). Our difference will always be present. It is finding hope in this difference, this necessary tension, which informs me in ways it never did before.

Travelling to Wendy's World

There are multiple ways to read this split text format. You might read the left-hand column in its entirety from beginning to end or, you might travel across each page moving from the left-hand column to the right-hand and back again.

As I contemplate and attempt to offer my personal account of the tension I experienced that night in February, there are many places I might begin. I could start with my early experiences as a beginning teacher. I might start with my childhood experiences with teachers and principals as an elementary, junior high, or high school student. Or, I could begin with the present, and what I have come to know and understand~with your commitment, friendship, and love~in our work together.

Shortly after our heated discussion around teacher and principal power and authority and the Code of Ethics, as if beckoned by some mystical force, I sat down and wrote the poem that follows:

Between

I leapt down the stairs,
Clash!

Have you ever chased waves? Have you ever run toward the sea, the moist sand gently caressing your toes; paused, as the cool, foamy water kisses the tips of those toes, and anticipated the ocean's return. At that moment, as you wait, watch the waves, and prepare yourself for the ocean's next swell, have you ever experienced that feeling of being suspended in time? Then suddenly, feeling the rhythmical surge of the waves, you turn and run toward the warm, dry sand, the water racing toward and threatening your dry heels.

I have chased waves and I could play this way, running back and forth, in and out, giggling, and enjoying the water, for hours. I'd like you to keep this playful image~the three of us chasing waves together on some distant, tropical shore and the poem~ firmly planted in your mind's eye as I try to

Bang!
And broke through the doors of
freedom,

The warm, fresh air caressing my
lungs as I sauntered towards home.

beat

At the tiny white house half-way
between school and home, my joy
always peeks.

beat

beat

I have noted every detail of that
house:

beat

beat

beat

The hanging eaves exposing a rusty
nail on the north east corner;

beat

beat

beat

beat

The torn sheer, now mended,
covering the living room bay window,
concealing the contents within;

beat

beat

beat

beat

beat

The shrinking edges of the front
lawn retreating further from the
side walk with each passing season.

beat

beat

represent my feelings and
interpretations around the tension I
experienced that evening.

The Hidden Self

Following my Mom's second
marriage, in so many ways, I often
felt like a guest in my own house
and family. I remember asking,
"When are we going home?" Always,
the response would be, "You are
home Wendy!" Although I learned to
accept my new school, community,
and life as a step-daughter, I rarely
felt at home in these spaces. Instead,
I learned to live on the threshold~a
place of beginning or entering and
conversely, a place of ending or
leaving. Or, as Anzaldúa (1987, as
quoted in Lugones, 1992) describes,
I lived in a state of "intimate
terrorism," petrified and unable to
respond (p. 32).

While we were learning our new
parts as wife, step-father, and step-
daughter, the tension, often thick
and heavy, hung throughout our
household like the branches of spruce
trees after a heavy, wet snowfall. At
a very early age, I learned to look
for signs indicating the mounting
tension and the argument or volatile
outburst that would inevitably
follow. I also learned to listen to
voice tones and watch body language,
to avoid confrontation. In the
beginning, especially during times of
tension, this middle space became a
place of comfort and refuge for me.

For a while, I lived an exquisite
cover story~the toys, the swimming
pool, the family vacations, masking
the ever-mounting fear, anger, and
loneliness I was experiencing inside.
After a while, however, this silent
middle space became a place of

beat beat beat
 beat

As I cross the midway point~the beautiful white house with its exquisite detail becoming hazy and no longer in view~my breathing and heart-rate quicken.

beat beat
 beat beat beat
 beat beat

The moist palms of my hands slip off the door knob, as I try to open the back door of my house.

 beat
beat beat beat
 beat beat beat
 beat

Facing the windowless redwood door, I search the grains of wood for a clue....

beat beat
 beat beat beat
 beat beat

Would I find welcome within?

beat beat
 beat beat beat
 beat

sorrow, regret, and isolation.

That evening, as the tension in our conversation mounted, I can recall re-living the cycle I so often experienced as a child. I remember my heart-rate and breathing quickening, and the palms of my hands becoming moist. As Lugones (1992) describes: "the self-in-between in the Coatlicue state, the resistant state, needs to enact both strategies of defense against worlds that mark her with the inability to respond and distractive strategies to keep at bay the fear of having no names" (p. 34).

As soon as the controversial words of resistance left my mouth, recognizing the fissure in relational knowing they seemed to be causing, I was filled with regret. Feeling "exposed and open to the depth of my dissatisfaction" (Anzaldúa, 1987, as quoted in Lugones, 1992), I wished I had remained silent. Lugones (1992) continues by saying: "The strategies of defense against harmful sense are insulating strategies: she uses rage to drive others away and to insulate herself against exposure; she reciprocates with contempt for those who have roused shame in her...." (p. 34).

While I desperately needed to be understood, I think my childlike need for approval and acceptance, and my desire to insulate my self, thwarted my ability to be present to you and the conversation. Instead of listening to what was being said, I became angry and defensive. Drawing on Lugones (1992), in that moment of tension and conflict, I ceased to be "playful" and failed to "world"-travel.

Would there be a trace of happiness
captured in her eyes or a hum in her
voice?

beat beat
 beat beat
 beat

I open the door,

beat
 beat beat
 beat

And cross the threshold,

beat
 beat
 beat

Scarcely breathing,

beat
 beat

I listen.

beat

Silence.

The Self Emerges

As a child I constantly questioned and, yes, challenged what I was learning. Looking back, I think I was trying to picture the world, and my place in it, differently. You see, I desperately wanted an unconditional, open, and honest relationship with my stepfather. I was searching for an environment that supported and nurtured dialogue, and acknowledged difference. For many reasons, unfortunately, this just wasn't possible.

Anzaldúa (1987, as quoted in Lugones, 1992) describes this new, ambiguous state of being as "the new mestiza." She says: "It is this learning to live with *la Coatlicue* that transforms living in the Borderlands from a nightmare into a numinous experience. It is always a path/state to something else" (p. 34).

My search for acceptance and for open, honest, and relational spaces that acknowledge and celebrate difference persists today. No longer a place of refuge or isolation, for me, the threshold or middle space has become a place of hope and possibility for what "might be" (Greene, 1995) or as Lugones (1992, referring to Anzaldúa, 1987) says, it is a place "characterized by the development of a tolerance for contradiction and ambiguity, by the transgression of rigid conceptual boundaries, and by the creative breaking of the new unitary aspect of new and old paradigms" (p. 34).

Travelling to Janice's World

August 4, 1998~The split text format of this writing helps me to play with crossings between multiple temporal, internal, and external borders. Writing from a present locatedness on the left-hand side of the page I cross over to past locations on the right-hand side of the page. As you read, I ask you to travel with me.

In her work on playfulness, world-travel, loving and arrogant perception, Lugones (1987) describes world-travel as a process of "inhabiting more than one 'world' at the same time and 'travelling' between 'worlds'" (p.11). Her thoughts on world-travel offer me a way to think about the tension I felt around our research conversation.

In earlier pieces of writing where I explored some of these tensions, I drew on memories of experiences with issues surrounding power~negotiated and unnegotiated authority~ both within my personal and professional landscapes. Travel~☞, ➔, ✕.

Each time I finished a piece of writing, in which the telling and unpacking of these and other memories was central, I was left with the uneasy feelings that I still had not made sense of what I felt, both as we were engaged in our research conversation and each time I re-read and reflected upon the transcript. Insight into these feelings came slowly and not without much more tension. Travel~☹.

What bothered me about my stories and earlier pieces of writing, was the sense of closure I felt when I re-read them. Even though I unpacked the stories by situating them in particular contexts and by drawing upon other lived experience and literature to help me make further sense of the tensions they created within me, they seemed lacking when I remembered how I felt as we were initially engaged in conversation. Travel~✧.

Re-turning to these pieces of writing with Lugones' (1987) thoughts on world-travel in mind, I wondered why it was so difficult for me to express (both then and now) the feelings I experienced as our conversation around power and authority unfolded. Had I been experiencing "being different in different 'worlds' and of having the capacity to remember other 'worlds' and...[myself] in them" (p. 11)? Beginning to

☞ **Feb. 19/98**~During one of my re-readings of the transcript, I recalled my feelings in situations of unnegotiated authority when my personal knowing was denied or erased and substituted by the enforcement of "received knowing" (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986). For a moment, I became a 7 year old child as I remembered the diminishment I felt when my teacher reprimanded me in front of my classmates. Her words, and the feelings they created are still carried within me: "You're a naughty girl Janice-look at your dress! Your skirt is nearly ripped off! Little girls are not to be climbing trees with boys."

➔ **July 11/98**~Our metaphorical discussion on principals being "lynched" caused me to remember incidents when I too, contributed to and participated in similar activities. In one school context, falling into a pervasive plotline of protecting certain children from their parents, I began to live this story in relation to one student's mother when I shared with colleagues my suspicion that she had attended open house, impaired. Caught up in this story, my anger toward this woman and my growing sense of needing to protect her child, grew. Unquestioningly, I participated in conversations (with interested colleagues from my profession and others) about this mother's lack of ability to look after her children. Only as I began to consider her world, did I begin to imagine what my role in her life might be, other than that of distant teacher in relation with her child.

✕ **July 11/98**~Re-reading our discussion around the Code of Ethics reminded me of other de-situated policies and the disturbing silence they create. I remembered the turmoil of "keeping my mouth shut" when, many recesses, I witnessed one young boy being sent to the janitor's room to pound nails into a board because those who positioned themselves in places of power over him, felt that engaging in this

re-read my stories and writing through Anzaldúa's (1990) thoughts on the need for simultaneous bordercrossings between our interior and exterior landscapes if we are to develop agency in creating identity in relation with others, I wondered if the stories I told and reflected on in my earlier writing were an unconscious beginning into this process. Were my feelings of incompleteness as I finished this writing connected with an interior process of deconstructing and re-constructing my identity? And if they were, what was changing within my self? If "we inhabit 'worlds' and travel across them and keep all the memories" (Lugones, 1987, p. 14), had my feelings as we talked, been related to world-travel? Had I, in the midst of our conversation, and in each re-turning to it, been experiencing memories of being a different person in different worlds? Travel ~ ~~is~~.

Reflecting on the temporality and multiplicity of my experience helped me to understand more of what I was trying to figure out about this intersection between past, present, interior and exterior landscapes. Bateson (1994) writes that the "self is sometimes regarded...[as] a thing rather than a process" (p. 59). Laying my memories alongside her work helped me to recognize that my self has not been "identical through time...[but] fluid and variable, shaped and reshaped" (p. 64) through ongoing experience. As I looked back to some of the stories I told (ie. ~~is~~, ~~→~~, ~~X~~), the multiplicity of my experience through time, became increasingly apparent to me.

I wonder if it was this travel, off remembering my self across multiple landscapes, that my earlier writing seemed to be missing. In making further sense of my tension, I wonder if I needed to travel, "within, between, and across" (Trinh, 1989) landscapes, slowly becoming conscious of my temporal and multiple shifts from being one person to being a different person as I compose my life in relation with differing people and situations?

Some of my memories of school landscapes and unnegotiated power were stories I carried with me as I came to our research conversation. Were they stories that created borders within my self and

activity might teach him to handle his apparent anger. As I walked to the staffroom for coffee and then a few minutes later, retraced my steps, I often met his eyes as he peered through the crack of the doorway in the room imprisoning him. And, while some days, I risked entering into the room to talk with him, even after being reprimanded for doing so, I desperately wanted to maintain my position as teacher on this school landscape...I kept silent.

☉ July 11/98~I explore this transcript with no sense of certainty. Recognizing my uncertainty has been a significant uncovering as I thought and wrote about this and other reflections. At times, the complexity of attempting to say~both drawing out and naming my shifting and multiple interior borders as they intersected with the borders constructed around qualities of school landscapes we explored within our conversation~felt overwhelming. Each time I tried to give a written sense of the tensions this transcript created for me, I struggled with the entrapments of certainty.

✧ Feb. 19/98~In this section of the transcript, we began speaking in generalizations and certainties, creating categories of faceless others (Nelson, 1995) as we shifted away from storytelling and the communal truth we were negotiating to "a" more certain, absolute truth. Shifting from 'wondering with' to 'speaking to' one another, we somewhat abruptly, seemed to move away from the opportunities this conversation offered. I wonder why...how...this happened?

✧ Feb. 19/98~The lack of exploration of difference has been a border creating tension for me through our conversation. Talking about principal power and authority caused me to remember and, in my remembering, the gap I experience between my self and others in situations of unnegotiated authority, came forward. Was our initial research conversation, another example of unnegotiated authority? Writing and reflecting on the tension I experienced around our conversation helped me to recognize the multiplicity of my experience and that I will never, finally, arrive at a fixed truth as to where my tensions come from. I have only started this journey~recognizing

eventually, between us as our conversation shifted from exploring our school landscapes and differing worlds, away from story and toward the essentialism of certain standpoints? I wonder if these differences, of no longer finding our conversation open to inquiry or exploration behind the stories being told, and within my self and between our stories, contributed to my tension? Was it the intersection of these multiple borders, and the silence around them, that hindered me from being fully present to you...from travelling to your world's...from recognizing your difference? Travel~ O.

the tension I feel around the silence created through unnegotiated authority has been an important experience for me...it is a journey toward understanding that I will continue.

O June 16/98~After months of soul searching, of fragmented compositions written as I attempted to situate some of the many edges our transcript drew forward for me, I am becoming more attuned to how very necessary, yet difficult, bordercrossing is. I am beginning to realize that tension and bordercrossing are inextricably linked. Our work in this paper gave me the rare, ongoing opportunity to remain awake to both the constantly shifting, possibilities and difficulties of bordercrossing.

Our Narrative Inter-lappings

*Wandering...with a conscious step, an openness to experience...
 may sound aimless, a flotsam and jetsam drift,
 but it is as purposeful in its way as the migration of monarch each fall.
 Like their erratic, drifting flight,
 it only looks aimless taken a step at a time....
 I may not see the pattern if I only look at individual shards with their cryptic,
 broken makings, turning them over in my mind.
 but from the perspective of time my wandering is as intentional as the butterfly's,
 and as necessary. It is taking me where I most need to go, allowing room for growth,
 and time for learning. How will I know what lies over the next ridge,
 beyond the next trails turning, along a creek, in the corners of my mind,
 if I don't give myself permission to wander?....
 I need to let the experience direct me, one find leading to the next.
 I unravel a thread left by nature, follow it through labyrinths and long, slow loops,
 and bring home treasures I never could have planned....
 Wandering gives me a new set of eyes—
 or removes adulthood's blinders from the ones I have.
 It is permission to see as well as to wander....
 and [creates] a willingness to go beyond my safe, homey environment,
 my comfortable and comforting preconceptions.
 ~Johnson (1997, pp. 59-60)*

Our thoughts on narrative inter-lappings were shaped by the work of Connelly and Clandinin (1999) and their narrative conceptualization of identity as “story to live by” and how this self-authored story shapes and is shaped by, the multiple and interconnecting landscapes on which we live and work. Laying Connelly and Clandinin’s work alongside Greene’s (1994) work on the vital necessity of a “formation of

community—and self-within-a-community—that is open to difference and change” (p. 11), and what we were attempting to understand within this context of tension, about our selves and one another, we wondered, if in becoming more attuned to one another’s stories, we might begin to understand the tensions we each felt surrounding the transcript. Needing to stay in conversation with one another as we worked to explore our difference, we felt that by each one of us sharing a story we connected with the transcript, and through our response to one another’s stories, we might begin to move closer toward more fully recognizing one another in our difference.

The storytelling and response which follows, travelled across e-mail and by hand, and was continuously negotiated through ongoing conversation. It was this process of world-travel through storytelling and response that engaged us in the “collaborative nature of...construct[ing]...knowledge.... [where understanding] develop[s] in the give and take of conversation.... [and where] people [are] engage[d] in...mutual question posing and dialogue...[creating] a good chance that they have entered into a developmental process that will perpetuate itself” (Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997, p. 7). We knew that if we were to retell the story of distance we had lived, and were continuing to live, around this section of transcript, it was necessary for us to embrace the uncertainty of our tension, not knowing where the unfolding of this paper might lead us. If we were to travel together, we knew we would have to respect each person’s wandering. Our treasures became the stories we shared with one another, stories that took us to places of understanding we had not yet imagined.

A Story Fragment From Wendy

My heart leapt as the telephone rang, I looked down to find myself unconsciously crossing my fingers and toes. We could share a simple meal. I would help myself first and pass the potatoes in the wrong direction. I might be able to share a thought about my day without a self-conscious worry or damning judgment. My efforts would be appreciated just because I had tried. I would spill a drop of milk on purpose, just because. I would talk excitedly with my mouth full and with one elbow on the table. I would eat a leisurely dinner. I would relax. I could be. As Mom hung-up the telephone I held my breath. I

recognized the familiar look in her eyes as she said, "He'll be home at five."
Love, Wendy

Something stirred deep within me Wendy as I read your fragment of a meal time experience. I could not help but think of the significant place meal time, and other gatherings around my parents' kitchen table, played in my girlhood. I thought hard about responding to your story with one of my meal time memories. I chose not to—not because one of those stories would not have also been a story to learn from, but because other images also came forward for me. I became drawn into those moments...memories of other gatherings...other bordercrossings made each day as I left my home and travelled to the world of school. As these memories pulled at me, I once again became that child, that teenager, from so many years ago.

What was that all about this morning!?
Can't you even say good morning when I speak to you? I will not allow you to continue to demonstrate such a negative attitude toward me when you're in this school! Do you have no respect for authority!?! (Angrily)

Silence. (Inside...what a ----- you are! If you think this intimidation is going to make me speak, you're in for a surprise buddy.)
(Arrogantly)

I'm speaking to you! (Angrily)
What a disappointment you must be to your parents.

Silence. (Inside...you have no idea what my parents think about me, how dare you even bring them into this. What, he thinks that's going to scare me!)

At the rate you're going, you'll be pregnant by the time you finish high school. Do you know that? Look at the riff-raff friends you're hanging around with. (Arrogantly)

Silence. (Inside...it's working, he's really angry because of my silence...what a loser you are!) (Arrogantly)

I could suspend you right now because of your attitude.

Silence. (Inside...go ahead, try it!)
Go ahead. (Laughingly)

Wendy, I understand this mealtime fragment within your story through memories of my own...interconnections between two landscapes we now know as separated by substantial physical distance...yet profoundly connected through overlappings such as these within our narrative histories. I honor the trust you have placed in me by sharing this memory...Love, Janice.

A Child's Heart...Response To Wendy ... I travel to understand this story for it is not one I lived growing up. It is both unfamiliar and yet strangely familiar. I know this sense of silencing~this conscious and debilitating shutting down of self. I have felt it in other spaces and places in my life. Yet this is not what I want to say. At this moment, I feel the need, the unmistakable yearning, to travel to this story~to know the heart of this young child. I picture her in my mind's eye with brown hair, bangs tossed about her deep, dark eyes. She looks out at me, and I feel her need to be accepted, to be wrapped in a hug that speaks louder than any words ever could. She is both stranger and friend. Her child eyes, familiar to me now, hold a sparkle that illuminates the fire and passion that lives in her soul, waiting for moments of release. Love, Karen

A Story Fragment from Janice

Always,
her presence could be felt across the room. Yet,
 silence
 surrounded her.
No one spoke about "her problem" in her presence.
When she entered common space,
haunted eyes followed her movements,
 quickly shifting away before she raised her head.
Avoidance maintained...looking away, sometimes above her head into the eyes of
another...more often, at the floor.

Experts analyzed/scrutinized. Away from her, we wondered about the terror of her situation.
Yet, without speaking, we, watched from a distance.

 Vulnerability, hers/ours.
gnawed, constantly
but was never enough to unbind our muzzled voices.
In our absence, she shriviled...
 yes, in our presence she became pale, tiny...invisible?

In the night, isolated & alone, she disappeared. Replaced by someone better, more capable,
less inadequate.

 And then?
 We (including her replacement) talked.
The horror of her experience though, still incomprehensible. Still separate, still remote-
from our own.

Sorrow and Regret...Response to Janice

Regret~I am filled with sorrow, shame for what might have been, what could
 have been...if only I had...

I read Janice's words, set in poetic stance, and know them, the message they speak binds
me to them. I am called to draw up the pain of stories I have lived, stories I have been a
central character within~silencing, shutting down others...a teacher in crisis sharing the
"common space" of our staffroom. Did I ever reach out to him, sit myself down beside
him? Did I ever try to hear his story?

 A student teacher pulled into a principal's office one gray
 morning~shrivelling, slowly shrivelling...my words~advising,
 consoling...her body~searching for a place to hide. And yes, away from
 these people~separated by a safe distance from them~I tried to make
 sense, to understand more fully~I still do. But their stories are absent
 from me now and I will never know as I need to. Regret. Love, Karen

Response from Wendy ... Janice, thank you for sharing your story. Your
recollection reminds me of my first long-term, replacement teaching assignment
following a year of internship. I replaced elementary school teachers in a
variety of positions including, French Immersion and Early Childhood to Grade
Six. Being 'a substitute' was a challenging job!

 In early October, I received a call to replace an 'ailing French Teacher'.
As soon as I arrived at the school, I experienced an unusual tension. The staff
member who greeted me, although pleasant, shifted uncomfortably and avoided

eye contact with me. At recess, the staff room fell silent when I entered. I asked the teacher across the hall if the French teacher had been ill for some time. "We're not to talk about it!" She gasped, as she quickly closed the classroom door behind her. At lunch, the principal waved me into the library and told me the teacher I replaced was suspended, and that I would likely be asked to continue at the school, pending the outcome of the hearing, for the remainder of the year. "The *better*, more capable, less inadequate replacement teacher", I spent much of the rest of the year isolated, alone, and in silence.

Several years later, having acquired a continuous teaching contract, I lived this similar plot-line once again. With the end of the school year fast approaching, assessment and testing were common topics of discussion in the staff room. The grade six teacher, who was new to the staff that year, and I talked about 'practice exams' and a variety of ways of preparing the grade six students, especially those suffering from exam anxiety, for the upcoming Achievement Exam in Language Arts. Although I did not teach the grade six students, directly, my interest grew out of my involvement with, and concern for, two year five/six students whom I taught. They, too, would be writing the Language Arts Achievement Exam in June.

We received staff meeting agendas with large amounts of time allotted to Achievement Exam preparation. So as to provide as much "continuity" and "consistency" as possible, we were instructed not to plan off-site trips during 'Exam Week.' We were asked to be extra-vigilant with our students about hallway noise and disturbances. The monthly school newsletter, with the exam dates bold, enlarged and holding the front page position, reiterated the importance of a good night's sleep and a balanced diet when preparing for tests. Hog-tied, we watched. Muzzled, we complied. Every detail or reminder chummed into the water, added to the ever-mounting tension we experienced on the school landscape.

The second last Monday of the year found us obediently gathered in the staff room for a brief meeting during the morning recess. The grade six teacher, who was the last to join us, solemnly entered the staff room and asked for our attention. The room fell silent as we turned to face her. She held a small piece of paper in her trembling hands. As she strained to meet everyone's questioning gaze, she told us that to prepare her students for the format of Language Arts Achievement Test she had photocopied the exam, changed the content, whited-out the identifiable portions that were particular to the exam, and gave it to her students as a practice exam. She said she had since discovered that it was a horrible (and as it turned out, an unforgivable) mistake. As tears welled in her eyes, she continued by saying, for the sake of the reputation of the school and staff, she would be resigning her position effective immediately. We all sat there stunned.

I remember looking around the room. I looked at our administrators. Weren't they going to say anything? I wondered. I scanned the French and Music teachers who also taught the grade six students. Didn't they have anything to offer? They, too, sat in silence. Finally I said, "You're not saving my reputation." I continued, "I don't want you to resign, you made a mistake.

We've all made mistakes." The stench of a cover story³ filling the staff room, I advised, "I think you should contact the ATA before you make any rash decisions about resigning." Her broken down and battered looking eyes betrayed what her small smile would not. She simply replied, "Thank you." The bell rang and everyone hurried off to the safety of their classrooms.

By the staff meeting that Thursday afternoon, the grade six teacher was replaced by a "better, more capable, less inadequate teacher." With the absence of a space to talk, each of us sat in fear, isolated and alone. I wondered, "Who would be next?" I am sickened by our lack of compassion. I am embarrassed by our inability to act. I am disgusted by my lack of courage. I am angered by the loss of trust I experienced, and continue to experience, as a result.

Love, Wendy

Response to Karen and Wendy ... Your response to my story of a colleague defined as a teacher in crisis, helped me see beyond this experience in new ways. Your thoughts encouraged me to travel to other vantage points to make meaning of this experience while simultaneously exploring additional tensions that come forward for me as I revisit our transcript.

One of the places I am drawn to within our transcript, surfaces around the discussion on the diffusion of principal authority on school landscapes and how principals are concerned that if they do not have authority to make decisions around curriculum and staffing, the school landscape could "really, really crumble" (Excerpt from Teacher Transcript of Research Conversations, February, 1997, p. 13).

Re-turning to my story set alongside these images, I wonder so much more about the impossibility of our current school structures. What compels me to think harder about both the story I told and our transcript, are the silences they contain...silences that, if evoked, might help me to understand more about the cracks in our current structuring of schools. I want to pay attention to these silences and to the tensions located within them.

One of the silences I am drawn to, in the intersection of these two texts, is the positioning of principals. The sense of unequal positioning I interpret through the text I paraphrased from our conversation, creates strong borders for me. From my perspective, embedded within these words and the text on either side of them, is the notion that there is a necessary dichotomy of power between principals and teachers on school landscapes. My interpretation of this text, is that, depending upon who has power, some one wins while some other loses. And, only now, do I see the parallels between my story and our research conversation. Recognizing these qualities within my own narrative history helped me to imagine alternative positionings for the characters in my told story. Although not explicitly storied in the text I wrote of this "teacher in crisis," I am holding some one or some thing responsible for my colleague's diminishment. Is it my principal and, if so, why?

My principal was, after all, the only person on our school landscape with the authority to document a teacher's practice and to bring in outside consultants to try to fix my colleague. Ironically the fragile sense of community on this school landscape did crumble after our colleague disappeared. In conversations between her replacement, myself, and others, we storied our principal as holding the responsibility for what had happened.

As I think back to the story I told of my colleague, vivid images of my encounters with her come forward. Due to time-tabling arrangements and my work in literacy development with children from across the school, until the mid-winter weekend when my colleague's presence was finally, visibly erased from our school landscape, I saw her, face to face, two mornings per week. The few words passed between us always felt forced and uncomfortable. Not once did I ask how she was or attempt to bridge the distance preventing us from having conversation about what was happening to her. Today, I wonder if I was afraid that in hearing

her speak about her situation, I might have felt more compelled to respond, to take some responsibility for what she was experiencing, alone.

Never did I pause from the immediacy of my work with the children within this school, to wonder about what I might do to reach out to this colleague or to my principal. Nor did I, in the months following, ever engage in conversation with my principal about this situation or how she felt about its unfolding. Instead, the tensions this story created, remained silent in public places on our school landscape.

Further reflection on the text of our conversation, my story, and my growing dis-ease with them, helped me to uncover possibilities for making sense of why our discussion around power and authority on school landscapes, was/is such a site of contestation for me. Exploring the tensions I experienced both as we were emersed in this conversation and now, months later as I think about the narrative history I bring to this conversation, offered me important threads of self-awareness. I recognize that my inner conflict is situated within a history of tension with experiences of "power over" (Alter, 1993 referring to Kreisberg, 1992) lived alongside experiences with negotiated authority—stories of communities as places that are always in the making (Greene, 1993), places where the tensions between people are named and explored, with the intention of gaining deeper insight into differing perspectives. I know these negotiated places as communities where people recognize and take responsibility for one another and where all people are viewed with authority and as actively engaged in authoring meaningful lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). I know unnegotiated places as spaces of "silence that hollow us" (Anzaldúa, 1990, p. xxii referring to Coverdale, 1989).

So who was hollowed in the story I tell of my colleague? We all were—my colleague who was seen to be in crisis, my principal, the other teachers on my staff, and myself—not to forget the children she taught and their parents and caregivers. We were all hollowed because the school landscape both shaping and shaped by us, was not expansive enough to explore the tensions surrounding this story. In places where we might have engaged in conversation around these tensions, only silence, pervaded. Entrenched in this silence, the situation my colleague and principal were living within, and our possibilities for exploring it, slipped away. Whether my principal chose the responsibility we gave her for what happened to our colleague, I will never know. What I do know, through further reflection on these texts, is that tension was not viewed as educative on this school landscape. Instead, it became a border which kept us separate and un-response-able to one another, and to the community(ies) we might otherwise, have negotiated. Thank you for helping me to think more about this. Love, Janice

A Story Fragment From Karen

Staff Relations ... The memo appeared in my mailbox early one morning as I was preparing for the day ahead with my students. In formalized fashion, it read: Your attendance is requested at a meeting to be held today at 4:00 pm. The topic was listed as "staff relations," and it was signed by my principal. Five names appeared on the memo, all members of our upper elementary teaching staff who resided on one side of the school. I wondered about the formality of this letter. It seemed unusual in the context of my relationship with this principal. Why not just speak to me, or extend the invitation for conversation on the whiteboard, as was tradition at our school?

As the day wore on, my anticipation and anxiety surrounding the impending meeting, weighed heavily, and I found it increasingly difficult to concentrate on the children in my classroom and what we were attempting to accomplish. My mind trailed away from them as I began to imagine what this meeting might entail.

Relationships among the five of us had indeed been tense and uncertain, with personalities clashing, constantly pushing up against one another. Masks were worn around some but not others, cover stories were rampant, and there were widening gaps in conversation amongst certain individuals, creating painful silences which constantly had to be negotiated. My teaching partner next door, my confidante and friend,

described this atmosphere in a letter she wrote to me at a point of extreme vulnerability. "It's like walking a mine field, Karen. My steps are tentative and filled with fear, and I am never certain when the next explosive charge is going to go off." I understood her metaphor and recognized my own contributions to escalating the volatile tension. Yet I, like my colleague, was unable to imagine how to live differently within this dysfunctional relational space which seemed to plague our corner of the school landscape. As time passed, my collegial neighbour and I began noticing the impact these unexplored tensions between teachers were having upon the children with whom we worked. We did not want them to become witnesses to our inadequacies and inability to relate. We resolved, above all else, not to let this absence of relationship filter into the lives of the children. Our only solution at this point, was to layer on more masks, and to tell greater and more elaborate cover stories, in order to protect the children from seeing our own inner frustrations and tensions. The weight of these masks—these false stories—at times seemed unbearable. Love, Karen

Response from Wendy ... Karen I am struck by your story of staff relations. Oh, the dreaded memo—I have rarely experienced anything good coming from it. It makes me think about the positive power of relational knowing. It makes me thankful for the relationship we share. Your story reminded me of an incident, earlier in my career, where relational knowing was absent and where a cover story helped to create an impenetrable border between myself and another teacher on staff.

My morning routine was fairly well established by my second year of full-time teaching. After a long drive to school, I would arrive an hour before the first bell, check my mailbox, make a cup of coffee, and relax before attending to the remaining few necessary preparations for the day that lay ahead. As I tackled the impossible task of emptying my mailbox, I discovered a folded letter with a sticky memo attached, requesting my presence at a meeting after school, and it was signed by my principal.

The letter, written in very formal language, directed to my principal and copied to myself, objected to my actions taken with regard to student files I had obtained from another teacher's classroom without her consent. My colleague's concern came from what she felt was a violation of her personal and professional anecdotal records of a child, and her fear over my possible abuse and misrepresentation of this information when shared with parents. The teacher also expressed additional concern over the role she felt the principal and secretary played in sanctioning the event.

I was stunned with disbelief. I had just seen this teacher, yet I hadn't an inkling of the anger or distrust that glared at me from the pages I held in my hands. For the rest of the day, I recalled the events and conversations of the previous days, searching for clarity or direction, replaying them in my mind.

Several of the students in the program I taught that year had also resided in a part-time placement in a segregated program for students with special needs. The current arrangement—the pulling in and out from classroom to classroom and the absence of team-planning—posed a great deal of tension for me, especially during periods of assessment.

I discussed my discomfort with the teacher in question. I asked about her methods of assessment. She described anecdotal note-taking, informal testing, and observation as viable and legitimate methods of assessment. Although I agreed with the efficacy of the assessment strategies she presented, I had not been assessing the students in this fashion. She directed me to the files in the office for more information. Our conversation helped to ease my tension. I appreciated her suggestions, as I had been anxious about an upcoming meeting with the parents of a student whom we shared.

Several days later, the school secretary tried unsuccessfully to locate the files. With the permission of the school principal, accompanied by the secretary, we located the files in the teacher's classroom. Looking back, I think I was searching the files for confirmation or an affirming word that the path I was charting was an appropriate course of studies for the student. I never intended to represent or misrepresent the content of the files in any way.

Later that afternoon we gathered. In attendance at the meeting were the school principal, the assistant principal, the secretary, and myself. Surprisingly, the teacher of the students with special needs was absent. We discussed the events as they happened and decided to create a more thorough system of filing for the students in special programs. I never had the opportunity or the courage to talk with the teacher. Living a cover story, an impenetrable, un-negotiated border developed between us. Love, Wendy

Response from Janice ... Dear Karen~

The fragile nature of the space between the colleagues you tell of and your self, leaves me remembering some of my relationships with colleagues. In some contexts, the colleagues I am thinking of lived in the classroom next door to mine, sometimes they lived down the hallway, often, their classrooms were across the school from me. Never was the physical distance between us great, and yet, we had such difficulty travelling to one another's worlds.

As I write, I am remembering those brief moments when I caught a glimpse of their worlds...

...hearing one of my colleagues tell of the struggles his young daughter was experiencing as she began school...

...listening to another colleague share fragments of a story of a holiday terror that was continuing to shape her life...

I recognize that these moments were shaped by a connection between our personal lives—a bridge enabling us to travel and to see, if only momentarily, the other's world.

This travel to one another's worlds did not stop further tensions from emerging between us. In the future, however, when I became present to our next moments of tension, these colleagues were no longer faceless to me—I knew some of her/his story and she/he knew some of my story. Knowing each other in this way, shaped how I thought about our tension...sometimes it lead to another intersection where we shared more of our personal lives.

There are so many people I have worked with, yet not had this experience.

Karen, your story, and the reflections it nurtured, left me wondering about the place of tension on school landscapes...we seem to, so quickly, want it smoothed over, not explored. Does this encourage more cover stories, additional masks? Your story leaves me wondering how our school landscapes might be reshaped if we saw tension as educative. Thank you for helping me to think more about this. Love, Janice

Response to Wendy and Janice ... As I read back over our shared words, I was struck by the relational quality of our story fragments and response, and how these have allowed us to construct our knowing over time. I was equally held by some of the strong images that come into focus through the telling of our experiences on school landscapes. Wendy, you describe the “impenetrable border” that was constructed between your self and another colleague, while Janice, in response to one of my fragments, tells of the “fragile nature of the space” which becomes defined between our selves and others as we try to negotiate our lives within school contexts. These images are familiar to each of us—they resonate with so many stories we have lived, both within and outside of school—stories of separate development, of one over some “faceless Other” (Nelson, 1995). A central tension made visible through our story fragments is a need, a desire to be in relation—self and other both involved (Buber, 1965). Simultaneously, through our responses to one another, and through our ongoing struggles to negotiate this writing space, we have made visible our need to live in relation to one another. Our stories, shared back and forth like gifts (Trinh, 1989) speak of our presence between and within selves—other moments, tell of our absence to one another; moments of distance and uncertainty. What we are composing together, as teachers, writers, women in conversation, is what we seem to yearn for in our relationships with others. We seem to be living what Belenky, Bond, and Weinstock (1997) call, “a tradition that has no name.” “This tradition rejects the notion of an Other—that there are inferior people incapable of becoming full participants.... This tradition rejects dualistic constructs that presume feelings and thoughts are separate and opposing processes. Instead, it envisions hearts and minds developing in tandem.” Knowing this tradition, has been about knowing each of you in profound relation. I am overcome by the significance of this—to what it might mean in our future relationships and in our present ones. I still recall Wendy speaking of how this space has helped her to imagine different ways to live in relation with her sister. What an amazing testament to the quality of this space, of what we have managed to shape together.

Have I told you lately how much you both have helped me to grow? This process has not been an easy one, yet we have managed to stay with it, committing our selves to one another...and I am so thankful for this. The tensions, still vivid, were and continue to be necessary to this space. I remember back to the piece I wrote in the early morning following one of our first intense meetings:

Raw Thoughts

No matter how hard my body and mind will it...I cannot sleep.
 Disconnected and inexpressible sound bites and images
 play and re-play through my mind...
 what the other said, what I said
 her eyes, my own
 reprimands, demands to express, silences.
 I am filled with intense emotions,
 inexpressible thoughts, stammering;
 feelings of wanting to rip my chest open to release the pressure
 ~to scream, “I feel raw inside~exposed...”

The intensity of our conversation, of our shared emotion, frightened me at the outset. Our stories, our readings of the transcript, and the images it held for us seemed to rub up against one another, exposing our selves in vulnerable ways. This difference, at first seemed to shape those “impenetrable borders” we have too often experienced with others on school landscapes. This was a terrifying moment for me in many ways—it marked the juncture in which I had to ask my self the question: “If I cannot stay in this conversation, one which was being shaped out of our combined ‘imaginative possibility,’

where then was the hope for entering into meaningful conversation with others who would share my future professional landscapes?"

It seems that our need to stay in conversation, in relation with one another, was stronger than my need to leave~the we becoming more binding than the I. And I think about the time and space we provided one another, recognizing our differences in meeting tensions~necessary distance, silence, time to be alone yet still connected. There was such a deepening recognition through this whole process that still leaves me somewhat amazed... How did this all happen!?

Love, Karen

Future Inter-lappings

*What [we] need is a politics that takes difference seriously,
a politics aimed at creating selves and communities
in which differences are not merely suppressed,
segregated, or taken for granted, but explored.*

~Mullin (1995, p. 24)

This paper began many months ago. It shifted and took shape through shared conversation and open wonderings and, through ongoing storytelling and response where our tensions and differences exposed our selves and our vulnerabilities. It was this world-travel through narrative that brought us to momentary bordercrossings~moments of seeing each other that became so necessary in our eventual move away from silence and toward exploring our difference.

As we think about the significance of the space we negotiated through our narrative inter-lappings, we are drawn to wonder about how this work will shape our return to school landscapes. We have come to know the reality of some school landscapes as scripted through a dominant story of dualism, separateness, and the binarity of opposites (Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997; Trinh, 1989). We wonder, is it the lack of spaces for continuous conversation and the openness to wonder, that encourages and continues this dominant story? Or, is it what happens within these conversational spaces that perpetuates the dominant story? Have we, as Ellsworth (1997) wonders, given conversation a "transcendental status" without much thought about the stories that live behind, around, or beyond it? Have we assumed that conversation is "capable of everything from constructing knowledge, to solving problems, to ensuring democracy, to constituting collaboration, to securing understanding, to building moral virtues, to

alleviating racism or sexism, to fulfilling desires for communication and connection” (p. 49)? By assigning conversation this position, have we overlooked that conversation “is not a neutral vehicle that carries speakers’ ideas and understandings, back and forth across a free and open space between them” (p. 49) but that the “rugged terrain between speakers that...[conversation] traverses makes for a constantly interrupted and never completed passage” (p. 49)? We believe so.

As storied in the beginning of this text, the tensions we experienced within our research conversations could have been left silent, unexplored. That we risked their exploration deepened our understanding of our selves, one another, and the spaces between selves in so many social contexts. Our work in this paper gave us insight, not only into our particular lives and the tension we came to in one research conversation, but also into possibilities for re-imagining collaborative inquiries and school landscapes. Attending to the stories which live beyond, within, and between the spoken, as we have in this paper through our narrative inter-lappings, might re-shape conversational spaces on school landscapes and within research communities.

If our agendas expanded from finding solutions to deepening our understandings, the silence around difference we worked to explore in this text, might also re-shape school and research landscapes. Our work in this paper has shown us that one way this deepening might occur, is if we were to become attuned to the stories each one of us is engaged in composing and, if we were to begin to share these stories of our lives with one another. Paying attention to the differences as well as the similarities between our stories, might break the silence so necessary if we are to begin to recognize one another’s worlds. Perhaps, in recognizing our multiplicity, distance and separation may no longer be borders keeping us from coming more fully toward one another.

Endnotes

¹ This narrative inquiry was situated within Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) ongoing research into the professional knowledge landscapes of schools. Drawing together a group of five teacher co-researchers over an eighteen month period, each of our conversations were taped and transcribed, becoming the field texts from which this paper emerged.

²Our advisor and friend, Jean Clandinin, played a significant role in our work on this paper. For her continual encouragement for us to stay in conversation and to explore the educative possibilities of our tension, we are sincerely grateful. Jean's response to, and conversation around emerging drafts of this paper, played a central role in helping us to shape this text.

³ Cover stories constructed by their authors to appear "certain" and "expert" in places of vulnerability are discussed by Clandinin and Connelly (1995).

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CONNECTING CHAPTER 5.1

Retelling Silent Stories~ Imagining Alternative Stories To Live By In Relation

Marilyn Huber, Karen Whelan, and Janice Huber

Unsayable stories~

*shaped through shifting contexts, multiple vantage points,
our sense of self in and out of relation.*

*What we do not attend to, lingers unnoticed
becoming unutterable absences~
creating fear of vulnerability,
shaping a sense of unending repression
from self, Others.
Anaesthetizing souls.¹*

*In this
unquestioned, taken-for-grantedness,
distance, separation...scars.
Selves de-tach from landscapes, one another, within.
In our stillness, we move into the background,
positioning our selves, being positioned~
victims of silence.*

*Only those acceptable stories voiced, shape our foreground.
While the hidden, untold messages of silent stories,
create numbness...enduring voicelessness.*

*Unsayable stories~
shared through a language without name.*

*Slowly, embracing the multiplicity of their meaning,
disclosed through presence to sight...sound...feeling.
We trouble these often unspeakable scripts,
in their up-closeness we begin to attend.
Bringing insight, exposure.
Risking vulnerability, uncertainty.*

*Yearning to see, to hear, to feel, to imagine...to become voiceful,
of what lives on the other side of silence.²*

In their work of listening to and describing women's ways of knowing within and across multiple contexts, Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) make visible

“how women’s self-concepts and ways of knowing are intertwined” (p. 3). Troubling silence and the life it shapes, they quote Eliot (1985) who says: “We should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence” (p. 3). This paper grew out of our desire to look again at our silent stories and to attempt to engage in the “bordercrossing”³ (Anzaldúa, 1987; 1990) necessary to shift our told stories of silence from miseducative to educative (Dewey, 1938; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995), from merely telling to “retelling and to reliving our stories” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998) as we imagined our lives on our school landscapes. Our inquiry within this text is primarily concerned with the shaping influence of silence on teacher identities and ways of knowing~identities we understand narratively through Connelly and Clandinin’s (1999) conceptualization of “stories to live by.” Clandinin and Connelly (1995) understand the stories we tell of our selves, most often in safe places and relationships of trust, as temporal, fluid, and shifting, linking “knowledge, context and identity” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994, p. 4).

Situated within a multi-layered narrative inquiry into teacher identity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), an ongoing thread woven into our teacher-researcher conversations was our growing need to think narratively about silence, voice, and the tensions expressed at their places of intersection. In a place situated and nurtured off our school landscapes over a two year period, we, along with two other teachers, came together as a group of five co-researchers to share stories of the reciprocal shapings we experienced between the landscapes on which we lived, and our shifting sense of our selves. Moving toward a deeper understanding of the intersections between our contexts and our selves, and the ways in which our selves shape and are shaped within this interface, was central to our construction of this collaborative paper as three co-authors.

Entangled Metaphors Re-shaping Our Knowing

The expansiveness of metaphor, explored by many (Bateson, 1994; Greene, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Lopez, 1989), played a significant role in guiding our understanding as we began to look deeply into some of the

dilemmas our multiple school contexts presented to our understandings of our evolving stories to live by. Reading Bateson's (1994) description of metaphor as "double-sided offering both new insight and new confusion" (p. 133) reinforced our desire to search further into our narratives of silence and reminded us of the uncertainty we might face within them. Knowing courage was necessary to re-turn on and begin to retell our silent stories, we drew strength from the words of women, like Bateson, who lived different life stories from our own, yet experienced parallel plotlines of silence. She wrote, "a metaphor goes on generating ideas and questions, so that a metaphorical approach to the world is endlessly fertile and involves constant learning. A good metaphor continues to instruct" (p. 135).

Two metaphors in particular were helpful. The first metaphor was that of the "professional knowledge landscape" developed by Clandinin and Connelly (1995) as an expansive way to think about school contexts as "filled with diverse people, things, and events in different relationships" (p. 4). Nested within this complex milieu are multiple stories: "teacher stories~stories of teachers~school stories~stories of school" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, p. 24). Laying Clandinin and Connelly's metaphorical understanding of school landscapes alongside Hallendy's (1996) metaphor of inuksuit^t on the Northern Canadian landscape as "silent messengers," a bridge between voice and silence began to take shape. Situating his text within a 30 year relationship with the Arctic landscape and people, Hallendy storied his experiences of meeting and coming to understand the inuksuit; describing them as "seemingly simple stone constructions" representative of "vital form[s] of...communication...rich, or even richer" than other more acceptable, dominant forms (p. 38). Hallendy told unforgettable stories of his experiences of learning how to see, hear, and feel the inuksuit. He explained that becoming present, in this particularly deep way, significantly shaped his attention to, and understanding of, alternative forms of human expression. Hallendy helped us to begin to attend to those forms of communication which are not always expressed in language and can often be

misunderstood as insignificant through their apparent silence. Laying our silent stories alongside the metaphorical threads we interpreted through Hallendy's writing awakened us to ways in which these stories might also be understood as symbolic markers of narratives shaping our school landscapes~stories which we often experienced as inexpressible, unsayable, inaudible, unexplorable. As Davies (1996, drawing on Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; 1996) expressed:

I step with care
onto a complex landscape
of shifting values...
understanding the power
of the sacred story
to hold within its vortex
not only a story of school
but a multiplicity of school stories
and teachers' stories too...
some silenced on the school landscape
trapping teachers' knowledge
in a vacuum
of cover stories (p. 256)

Hallendy (1996) also wrote of a spiritual consciousness that came upon him from his experiences on the land and from “ ‘the people who...survive on the land’ ” (p. 39). He described how his relationship with the Arctic landscape and people developed his understanding of the silent messages carried by, held, and shared through the inuksuit:

At first it appears to be nothing more than a speck in the distance. Soon, it creates a focal point, and I am moved from the centre of my universe to its periphery. As the distance closes, I stop in my tracks, transfixed by an ancient message left upon the landscape. (pp. 37-38)

Our attachment to one another, through relationships growing out of our inquiry group, also brought us to different understandings of the silences marking our lives as they were composed across various school landscapes and positionings. Although the transcripts of our research conversations were threaded with stories told around focal points of silence, within the immediacy of *telling* these stories~of finally giving voice to them in spaces of

trust with our co-researchers~we were often not able to move toward alternative vantage points on their periphery long enough to imagine possibilities for their retelling. Our work in this paper was one opening where we could begin to “engage in conversations with our stories” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998, p. 251) nurturing ongoing narrative inquiry where our movement toward alternatively imagined vantage points, at the centre and at the edges of our experience, began to re-shape the stories we told.

Re-constructions of Necessity~Laying Our Storystones

*Aligning objects on the landscape,
and even aligning oneself to both visible and invisible entities,
appear to have practical, symbolic, and spiritual applications.
~Hallendy (1996, pp. 42-43)*

The story fragments we re-present within this section of the paper, emerged from several transcripts of our research conversations. Playing with Hallendy’s metaphor drew us to think of our told narratives as *storystones*~“stones selected and arranged with great care” (Hallendy, 1996, p. 38)~necessary beginnings upon which to construct and re-construct alternative stories to live by. Returning on each story involved a fluid and shifting movement “backward and forward, inward and outward” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 77), a process of wondering at the edges of our told stories of silence and of working to create openings to “both the[ir] visible and invisible entities” (Hallendy, 1996, p. 42). For these re-constructions to become, as Hallendy (1996) described, “objects of necessity” (p. 44), something that would help us navigate our future school landscapes with voice, we realized that our stories needed to be *retold in relation*. Together, we began to wonder: What or whom were the silent messengers on our school landscapes? What secrets did they have to tell us? What hidden stories lived beneath their masked voices? What roar might we hear on the other side of their constructed silences? What possibilities might live in those thunderous openings where silence and voice meet?

In the following text, we invite our readers to engage in our process of story retelling by entering our silent stories at their centre and moving beyond their silencing

borders to the wonders laying at their peripheries. As we negotiated the text of this paper and the storystones included within it, we continued to struggle with identifying ourselves as characters within our stories, knowing the power some of the plotlines shaping the stories of school we were revealing, still had on our present school landscapes. We were also concerned with making visible the identities of the others who became present in our tellings. Acknowledging the places of vulnerability our stories were told from, as well as the trust we negotiated as we shared them, we chose non-identifiable pseudonyms for our selves and our story characters so that the fear we experienced while living through these stories might no longer constrain us.

First Storystone: Sightlines Shaping the Landscape...Shaping Selves

*An inuksuk in the shape of a window,
[is] used for sighting and aligning.
It either frames a place that may or may not be in view
or signals a precise direction.
~Hallendy (1996, p. 40)*

Reflecting on the inuksuit Hallendy described as acting as windows, framing and narrowing sightlines and aligning them within a precise direction, Orié's "empty" and "blank" images of a teaching colleague with whom she shared a school landscape, allowed us to wonder again about the possible sightlines constructed by the stories of school on our professional landscapes and of the profound contradictions and silences potentially created through these narrow framings. Was it possible that a similar perceptual framing allowed Orié to see only what lay within the

prescribed and
s i g h t l i n e s
her? And, if so,
to the construc-
framings? What
feel such an

Orié: I guess what I'm trying to say is maybe there's different ways we live in schools because, like there's a man on...[my] staff that I only ever said about three words to in all the...years that I was there. Hi and good-bye, or something like that, and yet I've been to his house twice for staff parties, and yet, I know nothing about this person. I feel, when I say his name and I conger up his image in my head, it's empty, it's blank.
(April, 1997, p. 21)

pre-determined
constructed for
who contributed
tion of such
caused Orié to
extreme feeling

of detachment as she lived alongside this colleague on a school landscape? What forces could

separate and bring such distance between her self and this Other? What enabled Orië to experience our narrative inquiry space differently?

Second Storystone: Locating Dominant Stories on School Landscapes

*Often the placement and arrangement of inuksuit
are as carefully thought out as their construction....
For the Inuit elders,
some inuksuk-like figures were revered as materialized forms of power,
not as symbols, but as actual loci of power.
They were never approached.
~Hallendy (1996, p. 39)*

An enduring thread woven into our research conversations was the pervasive story within our profession of *being knowledge-able*. Our second storystone drew us to pay more attention to the lack of possibility we perceived for being vulnerable and making our uncertainties visible on our school landscapes where stories around teacher evaluation became reified as “actual loci of power.” We wondered about the relational borders created when dominant stories of school

Suzie: Last Tuesday in our course we talked about having relationships with principals and why is it that there’s so much riding on the line if you want to talk to the principal and say, ‘It’s like this’ or ‘It’s like that’ or ‘Can I have some help here?’ or ‘What do I do there?’....

Orie: Well, I just think too that it’s such a funny notion we have about this whole process [of teacher evaluation], you know? I mean I just keep thinking back to in a classroom, I mean if you had a child that started Year One and couldn’t write, you wouldn’t ship them off back to Kindergarten.... But logically if a teacher’s having difficulties, if that’s indeed what the problem is, I mean, we don’t just, why is there this notion of so you get rid of them?

Clara: Well you know why? Because...you’re replaceable. You’re replaceable, you’re just a person.... We’re not going to work with you and help you grow, we’re just going to replace you. That’s why. Supply and demand.

Suzie: I don’t know. I think about when I became a good teacher (laughter).

Clara: When was that? What was the magic moment?

Orie: One sunny, spring day...(laughter).

Clara: A ray of light came through my window and I became ‘a good teacher.’

silence alternative stories of possibility. What perpetuated these dominant stories on our school landscapes and prevented them from being approached and diffused of their power? And, why such fear around alternative stories? We wondered how the lack of spaces where our uncertainties could be made visible, and openly explored, shaped our evolving selves. Without such spaces is it possible to be attentive to our

Suzie: But it wasn't in my first year of teaching. Like I think there's so many overwhelming things to deal with. But that's not an assessment of who you are as a person or as a teacher. I mean you're trying to learn that curriculum and stay one step ahead, and you're having to deal with that boundary from being a student to being a teacher, like the responsibility is just tremendous.... I know when I first started teaching, I had junior/senior high so a lot of the kids were really close to my age, and I wasn't used to that. I mean at the university, it didn't matter if somebody was two years younger...they were the same as you. And then, all of a sudden, you know, being a teacher now you're supposed to be *the* person in charge *over* these kids.... So I think that's completely unfair to assess somebody off their first year....

Orie: And I think it depends upon the context too.... I was completely unprepared for what awaited me [in my third school setting.] I was *so* unprepared [as I faced the complexities this professional context presented to me] that I mean people would have been blown away had they really known how afraid I felt inside. Not confident about what I was doing, you know? And yet because I had been teaching and had a master's degree, it was as though I had the answers. (April, 1997, pp. 4-5)

narrative histories shaping our teacher stories, to our school landscapes, and to the stories of those who share our school landscapes? How might our experiences within our teacher co-researcher inquiry group shape new stories of possibilities for negotiating dominant stories of school framing our landscapes?

Third Storystone: Unquestionable Stories...Arranged Silences, Separations

*We all possess a spirit,
only the way we are arranged temporarily separates us.
~Hallendy (1996, p. 40)*

As we re-read Clara's storystone, her words made visible how the living out of one "unquestionable" story of school of providing parents voice in the classroom placement of their child, created a silencing separation threatening the possibility for relational knowing on this school landscape. We wondered, how

do unquestionable stories of school become present on school landscapes, consequently shaping our selves? Does our temporal arrangement or positioning in relation-

Orie: [The selection of teachers] happens in my school with parent requests.

Maxine: But it's interesting *how* the parents request.... It's very much a hidden agenda....

Clara: We have a form that goes out requesting that parents describe the learning environment they would like their children to be in.... It got really bad last year in my room because there are two teachers, [one] who runs this wonderfully innovative, child driven curriculum in the classroom and [one] who's...scary is the way I'd describe [that person]....

ship to these scripts influence
our evolving stories to live by?
Do these unquestionable
narratives begin to demarcate
our selves and Others with
reifying labels~“good teacher,”
“bad teacher”? What impact
do these silences and separa-
tions have on possible spaces
for knowing another’s stories
to live by?

Suzie: So what happens when all of them sign up for the one teacher’s class and not for the other?

Clara: Well that’s what does happen. You try to honor as many as you can.... It’s so wrong what happens, it also builds an incredibly unprofessional environment among staff because with the “classroom request forms” that come out every year, you hide them because I’m not going to give the teacher next door the form that says basically, “Don’t put my child in so and so’s room,” because how damaging is that to a teacher’s self, you know? And so that happens, what you’re talking about, it breaks down professionalism, but in the end, I guess it comes down to the teacher, right, and the child? And for me, when I make that decision [in isolation] it’s hard when you have a teacher that is destructive to children, to want to put any child in that classroom environment. (November, 1996, pp. 13-16)

Retelling in Relation~Translations of Possibility

*The inuksuk, its mere presence...
wraps me in the folds of humanity...
Soon I meet another inuksuk, and another, and another.
I am no longer alone.*

~Hallendy (1996, p. 38)

Our intentions in retelling our storystones were not to find fixed answers or happy endings but rather, to look further, deeper, more expansively at our landscapes~to wonder, understand, to imagine alternatives to our told stories.

Places and Voices~Awakening to Shifting Identities

To be inclusive of both our similarity and difference, our retelling in relation needed to attend to what Rodman (1992) described as “multilocality” and “multivocality”~the intimate and direct connections between place and voice in our lives~connections we recognized as critically imprinting our evolving stories to live by. Our multilocality as co-researchers embraced difference and similarity across urban and rural childhood landscapes to elementary, junior high, high school, and international school contexts. Living within and between these multiple and diverse landscapes

brought depth and texture to our understandings as we laid our lived stories alongside one another's within the common locale of our narrative inquiry community. What became clearly audible to us as we engaged in this inquiry process of *narrative inter-lapping*⁵ was how situated and common experiences of voice and silence were in our lives. Like Belenky, Bond and Weinstock (1997), this communal thread left us hopeful that places of voice could occur in multiple contexts, in spaces infused with a relational knowing of self and other.

Responding to our told stories with a depth in perception encompassing our seeing, hearing, and feeling~our seeing of the "taken-for-granted" (Greene, 1995), our hearing of the untold, the unquestionable, the alternative, and our profound need to feel self and other *in relation*~engaged us in necessary acts of resistance in response to silence. Perreault wrote (1995) about these critical shifts the self experiences when we begin "to speak the fragmentation, the suppression, [and]...to resist, to refuse it" (p. 35). Narrative shifts in our growth toward "wide-awakeness" (Greene, 1993; 1994; 1995) around our silent stories occurred as we began to resist singular and narrow storylines, attending instead, to the *multiplicity* of our unfolding narrative histories. Exploring our silent stories from these multiple vantage points, entailed "facing" (Anzaldúa, 1987; Nelson, 1995) how we, too, at times, had both consciously and unconsciously played a part in shaping them. We could not help but wonder what openings might have been experienced on our school landscapes if, for example, Suzie had risked feeling vulnerable and had shared her wonders and uncertainties with her principal. We also wondered what retellings of their colleagues' stories Clara and Orié might have witnessed had they been courageous enough to begin to openly question the non-relational stories of school narrowing their social contexts. Engaging in these re-turnings helped us to begin to fracture the border between the silences we experienced on our school landscapes and the voiceful retellings made possible in our inquiry space. This resulting new space became one of possibility, shaping alternative translations and imaginings, bringing new understanding to how we

might not only express our selves across multiple future contexts, but also continue to resist the oppressive impact of silence on self. Our space of inquiry took on renewed meaning, not only between us, but within us. It became a transient⁶ relational space we grew to embody.

Localities of Relation.

Looking for the silences inter-lapping across our storystones, we saw that in each story, our silences had, as Trinh (1989) wrote, been a “response in its own right.” However, she cautioned that “without other silences...[our own silence risks going] unheard, unnoticed; it is simply one voice less, or more point given to the silencers” (p. 83). This process of inter-lapping our silences raised our consciousness to, and recognition of, whom or what our “silencers” were on our school landscapes. Gradually, we began to attend to how our silences may have given the dominant stories of school “one more point,” strengthening their presence on our professional landscapes, and, in our silence, we became “one voice less.” Embodying this new consciousness around silence, something interesting began to appear as we re-read our research conversations on either side of our told stories of silence. What we began to notice was that our silent stories had been shared in response to wonderings within our inquiry group about the gaps in, and yet possibilities for, relational knowing on our school landscapes. As each of our newly emerging voices inter-lapped, what became profoundly apparent was that relational knowing itself was an immensely silent story on our school landscapes. And, we realized that we, too, had been unconsciously contributing to the perpetual silence of something we were so yearning for within our school contexts.

Each of our storystones identified the need to uncover the silencing qualities shaping our school landscapes and the impact these qualities can have on our relationships. For instance, the profound *difference* Orié brought forward in her story was that, at times, the school landscape she was negotiating left her knowing of others “empty” and “blank.” This sense of isolation was also experienced by Clara when she

described the “unprofessional environment” that “got really bad”—one in which parent requests became potentially “damaging...to a teacher’s self,” resulting in student placements made in isolation, in silence, behind closed doors. This common thread of being distanced from others, was also visible in Suzie’s story when, in talking about the hierarchical separation that can exist between principals and teachers on school landscapes, she questioned: “Why is it that there’s so much riding on the line if you want to talk to the principal and say, ‘It’s like this’ or ‘It’s like that’ or ‘Can I have some help here?’ or ‘What do I do there?’ ” Looking closely at our stories created further openings for exploring how complex and fragile the inter-relationships are within a landscape. We began to wonder aloud about the qualities shaping our school landscapes and our selves as we lived within such fragile relational spaces—spaces where selves, as Silko (1996) reminded us, must experience “a viable relationship to the terrain—the physical landscape” (p. 38) if they are to more fully emerge. Was it possible for our selves and the selves of others to shape relational spaces on the out-of-classroom places on our school landscapes? Would the “silencers,” both within and outside our selves, *allow* such alternative negotiations?

Noting these communal threads across our stories, we began to see alternative sightlines of possibility...images of the kind of relational knowing that “enables us to cross the empty spaces between ourselves and those we...have called ‘other’ ” (Greene, 1995, p. 3). What appeared to shift the empty spaces between our selves and our co-researchers, both within our larger teacher inquiry group and in our continuing inquiry as the text of this paper unfolded, was our gradual acknowledgement of our own uncertainties and vulnerabilities. Our second storystone uncovered this increasing exposure of self in the presence of one another. When Suzie and Orie spoke of their senses of feeling “overwhelm[ed]”, “afraid”, and “not confident” on their school landscapes, they created openings that enabled shifts in continuing to live, or feel compelled to carry, a story of expert in one another’s presence. As they told more of the

stories behind their stories of living expert plotlines or scripts, additional vulnerable stories came forward. In the unfolding of these increasingly vulnerable stories, our masks were stripped (Anzaldúa 1987, 1990; Greene 1995), and our telling of cover stories shifted to the telling of secret stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, 1996).

Continuing to explore the intimate relationship between voice and silence in our stories to live by and on our school landscapes, we began to wonder about the construction of relational spaces and the importance of these spaces to the nurturing of voice, and the possibilities they held for shifts away from silence. Attending to the moral qualities shaping the self in these two very different spaces, we were drawn to what became visible as we laid Josselson's (1996) notion of "holding environments" in which the self was enfolded in care and where freedom to explore was nurtured, alongside Appadurai's (1988b in Rodman, 1992) experience of place as prison in which people become incarcerated, "images come to stand for particular areas," and place becomes reified. These authors helped us name states of consciousness that, we imagine, profoundly shaped our stories to live by. Was it possible that while living through these silent stories on our school landscapes, our selves were imprisoned in states of isolation and stillness, while in the process of telling and seeking to understand our silent stories within our inquiry group, our selves were freed to shift and grow across their multiplicity? Returning once again to our storystones, we realized that our school landscapes had come to represent static places. We also recognized that a less visible layer of the images we held of some of our colleagues, also kept their stories imprisoned. Even if we knew other stories of them during the years we shared school landscapes, had we, even momentarily, been able to re-imagine alternative stories of them?

Recognizing this inextricable link between landscape and self led us to an even deeper exploration of how this reification of place might shape our evolving stories to live by. In each environment~one of voice, one of silence~very different possibilities exist for the expression of the three desires Clandinin and Connelly (1995) discuss as

essential to school landscapes: “the desire to tell stories; the desire for relationship; and the desire to think again, to reflect on actions taken and things thought” (p. 154)—desires necessarily embedded in an epistemology of voice. We wondered what our school landscapes might be like, and who we might become, if they were experienced as voiceful environments. What alternative stories might we each have told about our school landscapes? Might each of our stories have shifted to ones more inclusive of our colleagues’ stories to live by? Might our school landscapes have opened up allowing us to more freely explore the silences shaping us—scripted stories, positional power, distancing hierarchical structures, etc.?

Knowledge and power.

*Where language and naming are power,
silence is oppression, is violence.*

*~Rich (1977, in Belenky, Clinchy,
Goldberger & Tarule, 1986, p. 23)*

Our wonders surrounding knowledge on our school landscapes were not expressed to diminish the important place of knowledge as we worked with students, their parents, care-givers, and our colleagues. What troubled us about dominant stories of knowledge as they intersected with, shaped, and became reified within our school landscapes, were the ways knowledge was often framed. When knowledge was interpreted as though it were an unapproachable object of power, independent of human agency, something to be transmitted, passed *down—onto* others, the multiple relational borders shaped out of these imposed framings, at times, felt overwhelming. Confined within such framings, our narrative histories and unfolding stories to live by felt distant and removed from the selves we enacted on these landscapes, and in some of the relationships we negotiated with others who shared these social spaces. In the first storystone, Orie acknowledged the different ways we experience relationships on school landscapes when she said, “I guess what I’m trying to say is maybe there’s different ways we *live* in schools.” The separation and distance she felt from another colleague became clearly audible. Attempting to re-

read this storystone in the more voiceful context of our inquiry group, we began to see the pervasive influence of dominant scripts on our evolving and shifting stories to live by. For Orie, the self she enacted with this colleague left little space to negotiate something different and so she and, we imagine, this colleague as well, became overwritten by scripts of distance, eventually contributing to their continued separate existence on the school landscape.

The second storystone, unfolding around a plotline of power and authority, and intersecting knowledge and teacher evaluation, spoke of the tensions we experienced on our school landscapes when the dominant story of knowledge was constructed around certainty. Feeling caught within such stories of school, our selves and our embodied knowledge⁷ we drew upon as we engaged in our daily work, became diminished. This storystone helped us attend to the risk involved in being vulnerable and making our uncertainties visible. Orie uncovered the extreme nature of her sense of vulnerability when she said, “People would have been blown away had they really known how afraid I felt inside.” What became visible in this silent story was that when the dominant narrative of teacher evaluation becomes a thread woven in with stories of knowledge as certain on school landscapes, the possibilities for negotiating alternative storylines, become scarce. As Suzie revealed, she felt a great deal of risk in attempting to negotiate a relational space with her principal, a space where her wonders and uncertainties might be brought forward. Likewise, the unquestionable story around parent requests, made visible in Clara’s telling, spoke to us of the lack of spaces available in school contexts for inquiry, enabling tellings, and possible retellings or relivings of our stories. Laying these stories alongside one another, we recognized how the dominant stories of school shaping our school landscapes, were stories where we were to listen only to the story of knowledge scripted on our external landscapes, often at the expense of silencing our internal, embodied knowing. Recognition of the prescribed talk which can often shape our social contexts, increased our awareness of how, in such contexts we might begin to enact

masked, inauthentic stories to live by, aligning our selves with the dominant scripts, and thereby, silencing our embodied knowing.

Our concerns over this “mind/body dualism” (Debold, Tolman & Brown, 1996; Goldberger, 1996) and tensions surrounding external and internal agency, were desperately important to us. This inseparable link between context and the multiplicity within our stories to live by (Bateson, 1989; Butala, 1994; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Lopez, 1989; Mullin, 1995; Silko, 1996) was illuminated in each storystone as we uncovered both how we positioned our selves and how we felt positioned within the dominant narratives shaping our school landscapes. What was highlighted in our tellings was that our positionings distanced us from a process of inquiry in which we could risk being uncertain. We imagine that if our school landscapes had been more open to the uncertain, complex, and relational nature of knowledge, we might also have experienced our identities as teachers differently. Within these more open, more tenuous experiences, might we then, have also become more attuned to the multiplicity and fluidity of our stories to live by? Like Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986), our silent stories made audible that when our knowledge as teachers was constructed as certain, expert, and separate, defined externally by those who perpetuated stories of knowledge as “received”:

Our basic assumptions about the nature of truth and reality and the origins of knowledge shape[d] the way[s] we [saw]...the world and ourselves as participants in it. They affect[ed] our definitions of ourselves, the way[s] we interact[ed] with others, our public and private personae, our sense of control over life events, our views of teaching and learning, and our conceptions of morality. (p. 3)

Caught within such conflicting stories⁸, our sense of agency, situated within an understanding of knowledge and knowing as fluid and shifting, and as constructed in relation with others (Bateson, 1994; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin,

1999; Goldgerber, Tarule, Clinchy, & Belenky, 1996; Trinh, 1989), was jeopardized.

Facing Moral Dilemmas.

At the edges of our second storystone, where our selves felt diminished within silencing plotlines of power and certainty, lay our yearnings for openness on our school landscapes~openness to uncertainty, toward recognition of the complexities we faced, and the fragile, evolving nature of our stories to live by as we negotiated these complex landscapes. Recognition of the multiple silences shaped by the dominant stories of school and how they diminish spaces for inquiry, relational knowing, and the negotiation of our stories to live by in the complex social spaces of schools, were critical to our understanding of the “moral dilemmas” (Lyons, 1990) our stories called us to face. Reading and reflecting across our stories, we saw dilemmas of disconnection of selves from landscapes and from others, disconnections so profoundly shaped by the absence of relational agency. In this distance, the moral qualities of our school landscapes become relationally impoverished~taken-for-granted~and in our lack of awareness, the status quo became perpetuated in a fixed state of existence. As Noddings (1984) wrote:

In fear, anger, or hatred we will treat the other differently, but this treatment is never conducted ethically. Hence, when we must use violence or strategies on the other, we are already diminished ethically. Our efforts must, then, be directed to the maintenance of conditions that will permit caring to flourish. (p. 5)

In our third storystone, we saw Clara faced with a moral dilemma as she struggled with the placement of students in a classroom she perceived as harmful to children. The parent request forms, as one unquestionable school story, along with Clara’s perceptions of this teacher, seemed to perpetuate stories of “good teacher,” “bad teacher,” with narrowing spaces left for reshaping these scripts in relationship. What is not directly apparent behind and within this storystone, was how this teacher’s framing as bad teacher became shaped. Noddings (1992, referring to Buber, 1965) helped us give voice to the

periphery of this storystone when she described how “act[s] of affirming and encouraging the best in others” can only take place “if we know the other well enough to see what he or she is trying to become” (p. 25). In this storystone, the teacher described by Clara as “scary” and “destructive to children” became nothing more than a reified object on the school landscape~the teacher’s stories invisible to others, buried beneath parent request forms and other unnamed isolating practices shaping the school landscape. A similar plotline of objectification of Others was also visible in Orié’s story of a teaching colleague. Clara and Orié’s descriptions of their Othering perceptions and the stories they then constructed of their colleagues, shaped in what appeared to be isolating and separate spaces on their school landscapes, reminded us of what Anzaldúa (1990) described as “selective reality”:

The narrow spectrum of reality that human beings select or choose to perceive and/or what their culture ‘selects’ for them to ‘see.’ Perception is an interpretive process conditioned by education. That which is outside of the range of consensus perception is ‘blanked out.’ (p. xxi)

Our narrative process of retelling in relation enabled us to shift and expand our former perceptions of the stories we lived and told, and the characters present within them, so that, to us, they were no longer “blanked out.” This shift, not only enabled us to know one another, but to develop relationships of reciprocal learning where we were able to resist the dominant story of sameness or agreement, authoring, instead, an inquiry space embracing difference, where multiple stories to live by could become visible and challenged to grow.

Embodying Relational Spaces of Hope: Transmuting Silences

*To be yourself is to be in process of creating a self, an identity.
If it were not a process, there would be no surprise.
The surprise comes along with becoming different—
consciously different as one finds ways of acting on envisaged possibility.
It comes along with hearing different words and music,
seeing from unaccustomed angles,
realizing that the world perceived from one place is not the world.*
~Greene (1995, p. 20)

Through necessity, and our deepening relationships with one another, we gained courage to increasingly uncover and explore some of the silent stories of school marking our school landscapes and our selves. The relational space we negotiated through our teacher researcher inquiry group and the process of writing this paper, shifted and expanded as each new storystone was laid, creating relational knowing embracing strength and possibility. It is a space we each carry with us as our stories to live by continue to shape, and be shaped by, the present and future landscapes on which we live and work.

Hallendy (1996) reminded us of the carefully thought out placement and arrangement of silent messengers on landscapes: “Some are placed to be visible from a great distance, others to be hidden from casual view” (p. 39). This resonated for us when we thought about symbols, stories, and images which were pervasive on our school landscapes, yet recognizably distanced from our experience, at times, to the point of becoming invisible. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) speak to these stories as disconnected from their origins, existing “independent of human agency and the conditions of inquiry” (p. 11). Drawing these distant stories closer to us within the reflective space of our narrative inquiry, we began to see, with new eyes, how these stories had been revered, by both our selves and others, “as materialized forms of power...as actual loci of power” (Hallendy, 1996, p. 39).

What we recognized through our *relational retellings* of these storystones were the subtleties of the stories of school on our landscapes and, it was in paying attention to their

subtleness that we found hopeful retellings to our stories. Attending to our silent experiences expanded our thinking around silence and the fragile borders between voice and silence. Awakening to these borders, we thought harder about their shift-fulness...of their fluidity and the delicate balance in which our stories to live by are “created and cradled, given back to ourselves in the intimacy of connection” (Godard, Knutson, Marlatt, Mezei, & Scott, 1994, p. 123). In such relational spaces, our selves are not shaped solely by external forces but by our internal landscapes as well. It was our experiences within our inquiry space where we began to attend to the temporality of our evolving narrative histories. Embracing the unfolding nature of our stories, we imagined middle spaces, spaces where voice and silence might be lived through less dichotomously, and where alternative images of our school landscapes might become more visible. It was our teacher co-researcher inquiry space alongside our co-constructed inquiry space from which this paper emerged, which offered images of the fluid nature of voice and silence which are constantly and necessarily negotiated in spaces of relation. Such understandings lead toward thinking about our stories to live by as multiple, moving away from “the tendency to dichotomize human experience.... [For] in the starkness of this light, the blends and subtleties disappear” (Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997, p. 19). It is, we imagine, a move away from emptiness, of telling stories at a distance from and of one another, and toward composing stories of negotiation, of understanding, of *living in relation*. It is, we hope, a growing appreciation of the complex nexus of people who live in relation on school landscapes~landscapes that are alive, fluid, shifting, and changing...that have a heartbeat...that have a spirit.

*As we learn to bear the intimacy of scrutiny
and to flourish within it,
as we learn to use the products of that scrutiny for power within our living,
those fears which rule our lives and form our silences
begin to lose their control over us.*

~Lorde (1984, p. 36)

Endnotes

¹ Anzaldúa (1990) portrays soul as a metaphor for understanding identity.

² The unfolding of this paper has occurred across many months and through numerous textual shifts. One aspect of the paper that remained present and which we seemed constantly drawn back to, was this beginning, written in poetic form. In a recent conversation we each talked about the significance of this poem to our thinking around this paper. We found it interesting to puzzle over why this poem, which had always seemed like the “soul” for our paper, carried such meaning for us. Lorde (1984) writes that poems “give us the strength and courage to see, to feel, to speak, and to dare” (p. 39). Her thoughts brought us closer to accounting for the shifts in understanding we experienced through this writing. Approaching our initial work on this paper through poetry, helped us to name aspects of our professional lives that had previously been nameless. That they could be named, brought meaning, marking a beginning in shifting our stories toward new imaginings.

³ Many authors have conceptualized bordercrossings in their work (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Greene, 1995; Leddy, 1997; Lugones, 1987; Trinh, 1989). One particular author who has broadened our understanding of the interfaces of silence, identity, and context, is Gloria Anzaldúa (1987, 1990). She describes a border as a dividing line “set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*” (p. 3). Multiple crossings of these borders, shifts selves from places of oppression, silence, and isolation to more conscious states in which the selves’ “senses become so acute and piercing that we see through things, view events in depth” (p. 39). Anzaldúa describes these shifts in perception as awakenings to, and deeper experiencing of, our selves.

⁴ Inuksuit represents the plural of inuksuk.

⁵ In earlier papers (Huber & Whelan, submitted; Sweetland, Huber, & Whelan, submitted), we play with the notion of narrative inter-lapping as a process of relational storytelling and response enabling us to negotiate momentary understandings of our differences. This ongoing process entails both interior and exterior shifts in understanding our selves and others in relation.

⁶ We resonated with Clark’s (1998) understanding of identity as fluid and shifting across multiple landscapes. He expanded our understanding of identity as transient rather than fixed in one locale.

⁷ Our understanding of embodied knowledge has developed through the work of Connelly and Clandinin (1988), who describe this knowing as “personal practical knowledge”: “a term designed to capture the idea of experience in a way that allows us to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons” (p. 25).

⁸ We understand Clandinin and Connelly’s (1995, 1996) notion of “conflicting stories” as stories of difference enacted on school landscapes which bump up against larger stories of school. Clandinin and Connelly make visible the “potential power” these dominant stories hold to silence stories which conflict with their plotlines.

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CONCLUSION

Returnings to Relational Agency

Janice Huber *in relation with* Karen Whelan

she
walks into a room
knowing that people have gathered to hear *her* stories
she pauses
looks at their faces...their eyes,
and wonders:
how will she express
alone...separate...
from an other,
with whom she has dwelled
what she has come to know *in relation*
through seasons of storied inquiry

from a small bag she carries with her
she brings forth a simple candle
the slight trembling of her hands
revealing her feelings inside
she lights the candle
making visible
the words *imagine*
and in their illumination from the delicate glass
in which the light is cradled
she feels both the presence and the absence of her friend

yet
there is
in her heart
understanding
that the flame
brings hope and possibility~
knowing that lives within her
bringing strength, courage to her voice~
knowing that is relational...multiple...ever-evolving
shaping
who she imagines her self to be in this (and every other) space~

her sense of self...
relational

shapes consciousness
that will carry her
in this moment...
into tomorrow...
always...

Imagining our selves into a future context through poetic form provided a tentative beginning from which to conceptualize *relational agency* as a vital, complex, and interconnecting thread running across the papers comprising this shared work. Looking back from this present vantage point, profoundly shaped through increasing narrative awareness, we are able to trace our intense desire for relational agency across our emerging narrative histories. Enfolded within this work has been our own sense, little by little, of awakening to the ways in which our family contexts shaped our continuing *need* for these relational storylines in our lives. And, nested within multiple research spaces negotiated with teachers, principals, and teacher educators, our relational inquiry makes visible how our understanding and living of relational agency has been undeniably strengthened and expanded. Collectively sharing and exploring our stories across diverse professional and personal landscapes within each of these spaces of inquiry, brought texture and new meaning to our understanding of the possibilities shaped through spaces of shared voice (Huber & Whelan, 1995; Huber, 1997; Whelan, 1997).

Recognizing that there can never be a definitive border around what relational agency might be, in both our lives and in this writing, we consciously choose not to frame it but instead, to explore the expansiveness this negotiation of knowledge and identity offers—an expansiveness shaped by the shifting and fluid multiplicity of lives and stories unfolding within and between selves sharing social contexts. Attending to this thread across our research, we recognize that it is, by necessity, negotiation that happens moment by moment—it is as different and complex as each life history, each present voice, shaping it. Our growing anticipation to continuously engage in, and experience this

negotiation, with ever-expanding communities of people across increasingly diverse contexts and histories, sustains our passion...sustains our hopefulness.

Raising Questions of Borders Around Relational Agency

*...restructuring involves much more than changing policy;
it means a break with the past and the status quo.*

The shift is radical—

*from an unquestioning acceptance of 'facts' (thereby maintaining inequality)
to a critical awareness of the politics of knowledge creation.*

*It means recasting all aspects of education to reflect the experiences and intellectual
viewpoints*

of those who have historically been left out.

~Gosh (1996, p. 36)

As the papers in this narrative inquiry highlighted, there are, still, many unheard cries and yearnings unfelt for relational agency on school landscapes. Again and again, we heard in the stories shared and explored in these inquiries, the silences and dilemmas experienced through borders constraining relational agency within schools and within the selves living there. Our research brought forward many wonders around these borders, wonders that both increased our consciousness of their complexity and shaping influence on identities, while also calling us to imagine future openings where the necessity for relational agency on school landscapes is no longer taken-for-granted or smoothed over.

Our early wonders around borders and identity drew us toward a diverse range of authors, some, who like us and our larger inquiry group (see Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), were explicitly naming and exploring borders as intimately connected with identity, and as dwelling within both interior~internal and exterior~external landscapes (Anzaldúa, 1987, 1990; Hoffman, 1989; Lopez, 1989; Silko, 1996). These authors had a shaping influence on our unfolding research as we inquired both into our own lives, and the lives of our principal and teacher co-researchers. They helped us to attend more closely to the complex intersections between and across these two landscapes and to explore their relationships with borders and bordercrossings. In this returning on relational agency, we

continue to raise questions and explore possible openings for future research emerging from the interface of these external and internal borders.

External Borders

Borders shaped through mandated policies and prescriptions emerging from provincial and district initiatives were explored across this narrative inquiry. What became glaringly apparent in the stories we lived, shared, and inquired into, was how pervasively centred mandates can become, shaping landscapes where selves, their voices and knowing, become obscured and silenced at the margins. Attending to the dilemmas emerging from these borders, we saw how profoundly they impacted *who* teachers and principals, as well as, children and families, could be. We also began to see alternatives for transgressing external borders through acknowledging the relations living between selves on school landscapes as inseparably connected.

Learning from hooks (1984) and her knowing of the necessity for attending to both the centre and the margin of our experiences, we return to wonders shaped out of our writing: How might stories of relational agency be lived out, or even imagined, on school landscapes where silence and non-negotiable spaces, shaped through policies and mandated prescriptions, reside at the centre? What might become possible if relational agency shifted from the margins, to places more audible, more valued? When agency is controlled by some one or some thing, removed from the intimate knowings emerging as people negotiate lives on school landscapes, what possibilities exist for viable, relational spaces? Do relational spaces, like the selves yearning for relation on school landscapes, become fragmented and diminished? Who will care to listen to the cries echoing at the edges of our school contexts?...the silent screams suppressed within? Do they matter?

Borders of positioning, both emerging from, and shaping, policies and prescriptions that come *down onto* school landscapes, alongside the day to day interface between people attempting to negotiate meaning filled lives, were also explored in our work. Revealing how borders of positioning can emerge from perpetuated, hierarchical

structures both within and outside of school contexts, our narrative inquiries made visible the dramatic ways in which knowledge, identity, relation, and agency can be constructed on professional landscapes. When selves were positioned in expert roles, holding authority *over* an other or others, we saw relational agency suffocated, narrowing opportunities for continuous questioning or re-imagining of alternatives on school landscapes. Attending with depth and breadth to our unfolding narratives, our work uncovered the shaping influence borders of positioning, often constructed at a distance from classroom and school landscapes, could have on professional contexts and selves.

These narrative uncoverings around power and positioning raised additional, lingering questions for us: When power resides in a select person or group on school landscapes, what limitations are placed around shifting or re-imagining school spaces and the stories that shape them? Who does the self become when positioned by defined roles and responsibilities, set within a hierarchy shaped by power and control? In the absence of relational agency...what is denied?...what yearns to be heard, to be otherwise?

As our research conversations awakened us to, there are still many scripts, fixed and certain, creating borders around relational agency. Our concern lies with the ways in which these scripts can unconsciously smooth over our contexts and our selves, so that, we too, begin to perpetuate their unquestioned plotlines. If, as explored in our papers, relational agency is a process of continuous negotiation honoring uncertainty, inquiry, and difference, there is an urgency to attend to, and open up, the borders reifying school structures.

Many wonders around these borders continue to pull at us: If the structures we work within suppress inquiry and ambiguity, are there, possibilities then, for shifting our consciousness to embrace stories of difference rather than sameness? Caught within such smooth and certain plotlines, what happens to the multiplicity of self? And, what happens to possibilities for knowing our selves and others, for shifting and changing in response to the intimate unfoldings of our lives? How many layers must be eroded in the

sedimented borders shaped out of fixed and certain scripts on our school landscapes, so that the necessarily fluid and open process of relational agency might become possible? What new contours in the landscape might become visible if the borders shaped through certain and fixed scripts were to erode? Are these contours, often hidden on our school landscapes, worth exploring?

Internal Borders

This work also explored, in-depth, the internal borders we embody and struggle to understand in the absence of spaces for self-inquiry. Our research revealed the potential these interior borders held in profoundly shaping the ways in which we come to, and experience, any given context. When selves become constructed in fixed and certain spaces, dominated by external borders shaped by scripts about who and how they are to be, much of what comes to the surface in these reified contexts, are the internal borders selves bring to them. What remains buried in such contexts are underlying narrative histories, rich in texture, diversity, and experience. Whether we choose to attend to these diverse, narrative histories or not, they are necessarily carried into our school contexts. Yet, as our work revealed, narrative histories are, for the most part, suppressed...silent...absent. And, in this void, relation, safety, vulnerability, and trust~qualities vital for inquiring into our past, present, and future experiences~become sacrificed to the more dominant scripts defining the landscape. We are left then, with narrow enclosures where selves become arrogantly constructed as Others, and, in this abyss of silence, Othering becomes the dominant form of expression, shaping spaces of non-relation. Until there are increasingly visible and valued spaces where we can begin to explore our own internal tensions alongside the tensions of others, relational agency seems unlikely.

Questions of internal borders stay with us: When professional contexts become numb to emotions, necessarily arising from the embodied qualities of our narrative experiences, what happens to possibilities for understanding our own and others' internal tensions? When opportunities for inter-lapping narrative histories diminish and become

replaced by school, district, and provincial scripts of sameness, how, and with what, are the spaces between hierarchically positioned people, filled? If our school landscapes open up enough for narrative histories to intersect would there be room then, for the emotions and tensions we experience in this interface to be accepted...to be explored?

Raising Questions of Constructed and Emergent Identities on School Landscapes

*To 'tell your or my story'
as singular, unified, chronological, and coherent,
is to maintain the status quo,
to reinscribe already known situations and identities
as fixed, immutable, locked into normalized conceptions
of what and who are possible.
~Miller (1998, p. 152)*

Reading between and across our narrative exploration of identity, images of how the self can become shaped within contexts bordered by policies and prescriptions, positioning and power, certainty and reification, became visible. In the interface of these external and narrative histories, recurring threads of fear, disillusionment, silence, emptiness, isolation, marginalization, and separation emerged across the stories shared in both our principal and teacher inquiry spaces. Embraced in the relational spaces negotiated through our inquiries, our co-researchers gave voice, some for the first time, to their fragile sense of self being shaped in the absence of relational agency on their school landscapes. Nested within the safe and trusting spaces continuously negotiated, moment by moment, through our exploration of the diverse narrative histories of our co-researchers and our selves, we listened, responded to, and learned from, alarming tellings where selves became tightly bound by these borders. We heard anguish in their voices and we felt pain in their experiences as they described being pushed, at times, to places so marginal and isolated, on their school and larger professional contexts, they no longer felt able to search for, or attempt to sustain, viable relational spaces with others. What, we ask(ed), do we have to learn from their stories...their leavings? Do they matter?

They matter(ed) to us and they matter(ed) to the diverse storytellers whose voices and knowing so profoundly shaped this work. Laid alongside stories of who the self became in bordered relational spaces, were more hopeful stories~stories of emergence, stories of who the self *could* become when such spaces opened up and were valued in schools. In the stories told of this emergence of self within the still tentative negotiation of relational spaces on school landscapes, teachers told of border openings with principals and colleagues where narrative histories intersected; principals, in their yearnings, crossed borders finding connections with teachers; and, both teachers and principals spoke of their intense need to break through borders, enabling them to meaningfully re-enter relationships with children and their families. Within the layers of these stories, school contexts were also reshaped, momentarily becoming more fluid and open to possibility. Knowledge became shaped by a chorus of voices, and in its multiplicity~uncertainty, tension, and difference were honored. And, in this presence to one another's narrative histories, positional labels such as "parents," "students," "principals," "teachers" were transcended. Policies and prescriptions held less power as relational agency became negotiated with attentiveness to the intimate particularities of the lives shaping each school context. Yet, the marginal position these stories held on their school landscapes spoke, in piercing tones, of how scarce such openings were (are).

Pushing against this scarcity of relational spaces *on* school landscapes, we heard stories of the necessity for searching out sustaining spaces *off* our school landscapes. Our principal co-researchers, for example, came to our research conversations already living and knowing a relational space with one another. They often spoke of how this space, negotiated over time and multiple school contexts, provided a place where they could tell of their struggles, uncertainties, fears, as well as their bordercrossings and celebrations. As we engaged in inquiry with them, we were, from our initial vantage point as teachers in these conversations, profoundly stuck by their narratives of *also* feeling unable to express their emotions within the borders constraining their school and district landscapes~

borders positioning them as certain, holding power, authority, *special* knowledge, and as ultimately responsible. The space we negotiated with these four principals awakened us to our own shifting sense of self in relation with them. Unlike so many other contexts we negotiated as teachers on school landscapes, these *people* became deeply present to us. Their willingness and ability to look across, into our faces...into our experiences, simultaneously created openings for redefining them selves in their own terms and for shaping a space where we, Janice and Karen, could also begin to cross the internal borders we carried within us around stories we had lived of principals on our childhood and professional landscapes. Learning to return one another's gaze within this relational space, was an awakening for all of us~one which enabled us to shift from arrogant to loving perception (Lugones, 1987).¹

As co-researchers, we also knew the difference the inquiry space we had been negotiating off our school landscapes since 1993 made, and was continuing to make, as this work unfolded. Not only did this space continue to help us make further sense of who we had been on our school landscapes, but it helped us to inquire more broadly into the complexity of selves living on school landscapes. As this work unfolded, we also saw that it was necessary that we continue to negotiate a larger research space so that we could begin to make sense of the wonders, dilemmas, and stories coming forward across the diverse and expansive professional contexts emerging in this and our teacher and principal inquiry spaces. Our shared history with Chuck, Jean, and Annie within this larger inquiry space, enabled each of us to share our uncertainties, our fragile and tentative tellings, around experiences we had lived and our concern for conceptualizing identity more intimately...expansively...narratively.

Relational Agency~Negotiating Hopeful Acts of Resistance

*We acknowledge the harshness of situations
only when we have in mind
another state of affairs in which things would be better.
~Greene (1995, p. 5)*

Deepening our understanding of relational agency through living, negotiating, and inquiring within the narrative unfoldings of this work, is critical to our expression of what might be possible through multiple acts of resistance across multiple contexts. Nested within the stories told, retold, and explored across this work, we understand, differently, how relational agency, negotiated within and between selves living in social contexts is, in its most audible and intimate expression, an act of resistance.

Dilemmas rose for us as we tried to imagine voiceful expressions of relational agency within contexts we understood as still, pervasively silent and bordered. Returning to Anzaldúa's (1987) conceptualization of a "new mestiza" as consciousness we *can* awaken to and learn to carry within, reminded us, once again, of the powerful and sustaining place relational agency can hold in our unfolding sense of self. Embedded within the many stories told across our narrative inquiries, we saw how we, along with our co-researchers, were able to re-imagine possibilities within complex and silencing contexts *because* of relational spaces. Whether situated at the far edges of our school contexts, or negotiated away from them, relational agency was carried within us as we stepped back into, or even away from, these same contexts.

Even now, in this returning to our work, our acts of resistance continue. We recognize that unless questions of relational agency interrupt the larger structures shaping our profession, little will change. In our continuing need for relational resistance, we ask questions...image possibilities.

What might happen to school landscapes, re-imagined through relational agency?
Would staff meetings become places where multiple voices "convened conversations" (Lambert, 1999), openly exploring what matters within the particularities of *their* lives,

school, and classroom contexts? Might tensions arising from such diverse and open conversations be acknowledged and valued as necessary? Would the narrative histories holding promise for enriching the school community~*all* children, families, staff members~find more viable spaces to live within school contexts, pushing externally driven, prescriptive policies and mandates to the edges? Would the borders between in- and out-of-classroom places on school landscapes break down in the face of people, working and inquiring, *together* to understand the complexities of their context(s) and the diverse lives gathering and unfolding within them? Might classroom practice, and the mandated curriculum which drives it, be opened up to inquiry from multiple vantage points, by multiple voices?

What might happen to district and provincial policy-making, re-imagined through relational agency? Would non-relational policies continue to be constructed if attention shifted, instead, toward diversity, reshaping current practices of token agency? Would our current hierarchical structures begin to crumble, creating increasingly new ground on which we might begin to look *into* the eyes of an other, feeling profoundly, who we~they are in this relational presence to one another? How might the stories we each live by as we compose our lives emerge differently in the absence of scripts funnelled down onto school landscapes...onto lives...selves? Would attention to the fluid, shifting, uncertain nature of our lives, our contexts be embraced? Could we then, celebrate multiplicity?...diversity?...possibility?

What might happen to programs of teacher education, re-imagined through relational agency? Would theory and practice become more intimately connected through presence to diverse, unfolding narrative histories? Would the borders insulating self from other~schools and universities, families and institutions, faculties and departments, academics and teachers, etc.~shift, creating instead, spaces attentive to the necessity for ongoing inquiry within and between multiple contexts? Would attention to the diverse voices of children and their families, and what matters in *their* life contexts, become a

thread woven across teacher education programs? Would teacher-educators and beginning teachers see their work as important acts of resistance holding the potential to reshape status quo, taken-for-granted scripts over-writing our selves, our profession, and larger social contexts? Might teacher education students shift from being viewed as passive, receivers of knowledge to being valued as capable and aware teacher researchers~people passionately engaged in relational constructions of knowledge?

What might happen to future research possibilities, re-imagined through relational agency? Would the questions raised through this narrative, relational inquiry be heard~valued enough to be explored further? Would the prescriptive guidelines shaping graduate research open up enough to recognize that knowledge is *never* owned, constructed in isolation, or absent from relation? Would teachers, engaged in research emerging from relationships negotiated within their particular classroom, school, and university contexts, be valued for the research contributions they are making, and the far-reaching implications their work holds? Might there be further possibilities for narrowing the gaps and breaking down the hierarchy currently restricting relational research between practitioners and university researchers?

It is research questions such as these that will be important as we continue to explore the complex, shifting nature of relational agency, identity, knowledge, and the social spaces of schools. It is research questions such as these~questions resisting taken-for-granted scripts, which hold promise for awakening us to new and hopeful consciousness~wide-awakeness that will carry us in each moment...into tomorrow... always.

Endnotes

¹ Lugones describes “loving perception” as a process of attempting to identify with an other’s experience through “ ‘world’ -travel,” shifting from a place of arrogance shaped through separation and exclusion.

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Returnings to Multiplicity

Karen Whelan *in relation with* Janice Huber

*[The self]...is...not a unified subject,
a fixed identity, or that solid mass
covered with layers of superficialities one has gradually to peel off
before one can see its true face....*

[The self]...is, itself, infinite layers.

~Trinh (1989, p. 94)

Returning on the papers composed within and across multiple inquiry spaces negotiated with diverse people~teachers, principals, and teacher educators~with life experiences across diverse professional contexts~urban, rural, international, elementary, junior high, high school, and university~we knew it was necessary for us to draw together the ways in which multiplicity has shaped this unfolding research. We also wanted to acknowledge the profound place our co-researchers held in enabling us to understand, in-depth, how multiplicity is intimately connected with understandings of identity as narrative constructions and reconstructions of experience.

It is now nearly four years since we began our doctoral course work. And, as we first came to this inquiry, wondering deeply about why the stories we were attempting to compose as teachers living in relational ways with children, families, and colleagues, felt incredibly fragile, we too, spoke of our selves as divided into compartments...categories and as feeling as though “parts” of our selves were becoming “lost.” Engaging with the work of Bateson (1994), Carr (1986), Coles (1989); Dewey (1938) and Oakley (1984), alongside our ongoing inquiry with Jean Clandinin, Annie Davies, and Chuck Rose (see Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) into the shifting, complex, narrative nature of professional contexts, knowledge, and identity, these constructions of our selves as fixed, independent, authentic, began to shift. Looking back now, from our present vantage point, we understand with new insight the narrow definitions of identity surrounding us. We know, too, that in many social contexts, even yet, it is risky to name or reveal our own and others’ multiplicity. Yet we feel strongly that unless we become courageous and begin engaging in this necessary resistance to the taken-for-granted

scripts simplifying and suppressing our selves and our contexts, little else seems worth struggling for.

Knowing the complexity and expansiveness of multiplicity, its emergence from, and intimate connection with infinite layers living within and between selves, in both our lives and in this writing, we consciously choose not to define it. Instead, through attending to the inter~lapping narrative histories shaping this work, we wanted to explore the fluid, forward and backward, inward and outward unfoldings of multiplicity as well as the borders often denying its hopeful emergence and expression. Alongside others (Anzaldúa, 1987; Greene, 1995; hooks, 1994; Lorde, 1984; Morrison, 1999; Trinh, 1989) we feel strongly that it is this necessary and often marginalized work~work outside boxes...outside frames, that brings new insight...new hope.

As so much of our writing has revealed, these narrative inquiries have been about learning to embrace the multiplicity of peoples' lives~the often complex and contradictory work of simultaneously living and composing multiple stories~as mothers, teacher-educators, principals, women, fathers, grand-daughters, relational researchers, sons, care-givers, teachers, partners, daughters, men, friends, etc. Whatever differences and similarities cut across this multiplicity of storylines, all of the people coming to our research conversations share(d) common concern for the lives of children, families, and the life space of schools. Nested in the unfolding lives of twelve people, many who came to know of one another only as stories became visible in our writing, this returning to multiplicity necessitated a close up and personal conversation with the people who have shared so much of themselves with us. It has been the inter~lapping of their~our stories~lives that have so profoundly shaped and reshaped this work and the understandings of identity emerging from *our* multiplicity of voices.

*Letters...
personal, reflective
bringing forward a necessary sense of closeness*

*looking back from the present
looking forward
expressing our feelings
giving language to our knowing~
relational knowing...multiple knowing*

*letters...
a way to appreciate
you
your presence in this work
the diversities of our lives...*

Lingering Wonders Around Multiplicity

...Dear Peggy, Tony, Emily, & Cheryl-

From you we learned of the difficulties and isolation you experienced because of the ways you were positioned on school landscapes. Your stories made present so much of what we were unable to know, unable to imagine, having not lived your experiences as school principals. We were profoundly moved by the wisdom and vantage points you brought to this unfolding work. We listened with care as you told of your need to find relational spaces, safe and trusting spaces, where you could begin to share and explore your own vulnerabilities, dilemmas, and tensions. You awakened us to the fears you, too, experienced as you tried to negotiate spaces of community among the people sharing your school contexts-fears arising from the marginal ways in which you were often positioned and from the lack of spaces available for you to express your knowing-knowing often seen as separate from the knowing of others.

Entrusted with your fears and vulnerabilities, you enabled us to travel to your experiences, profoundly feeling your sense of loneliness and exclusion. That you felt safe enough to share your most vulnerable stories with us, and that you consciously entered into our stories, fills us with hope as we begin to imagine school landscapes where hierarchies, scripts, and silences shift in the presence of relational knowings that we were able to imagine together. You helped us retell our own stories of principals with whom we both lived in various school contexts, narrowing the distance we often felt and helping us to revisit these past stories, re-imagining them differently.

That you were not able to name your selves within the context of this inquiry still pulls at us, filling us with sadness. Yet, in the same moment, we understand the fragile place in which you live-we feel the risk and know that so many stories would have fallen silent had you made your selves fully visible. In the safety of our shared inquiry space, your names, your faces were known. Looking across at us, and we at you...our inquiry space became a place embracing of difference-a place where others were (are) known. You helped us to see with different eyes and to understand with new consciousness, what might be...

How people position themselves or are positioned on school landscapes was a recurring theme in our research conversations. When positioning became defined by, and played out within, fixed and certain scripts, whether internally or externally constructed, borders emerged around multiplicity. In so many of the stories shared in relation to positioning on school landscapes, we saw multiplicity denied, replaced instead, with character roles where the players were expected to act in certain and specific ways. In the lives of our principal co-researchers, we heard of these scripts as they told of being held solely responsible and accountable for the lives of their entire school communities.

*...Dear Cheryl and Peggy~
Your stories of experiencing marginalization as you shifted from differing positionings of administration within your professional landscapes, created openings where we could explore further the sense of loneliness that seemed to close in around you. As these stories unfolded over our many research conversations, your feelings of loss around relationships and self highlighted for us the place that positioning can play in shaping how we live, sustain, silence, deny our multiplicity...*

*...Dear Tony and Danielle~
While you were both positioned differently on your school landscapes~one as a teacher, one as a principal~the tensions you each expressed around working with children and families who, because of their cultural and economic backgrounds, were composing life stories so distanced from and incomprehensible to the status quo middle, further awakened us to ways in which our current school structures overwrite (with assumptions and labels) the multiplicity of people and their experiences coming together on school landscapes.
Through your stories, we were privileged to enter into overlapping experiences of your living as either teacher~parent or principal~parent in relation with school contexts. We were struck as we listened to you shift backward and forward to tellings of each of your son's experiences in their schools, laid alongside the spaces you were each trying to negotiate with the children in your care. We could not help but attend to the tensions and dilemmas which emerged as you experienced the contradictions shifting across these multiple vantage points...*

Stories linger with us...and we wonder: Why is openness to, and exploration of, multiplicity, still such a marginal experience on school landscapes? How do we sustain our selves in spaces where multiplicity is denied? What impact do the scripts overwriting our multiplicity have on our evolving identities? Do we unconsciously begin to live...to become these scripts? What

stories of our selves are we able to uncover, to say, and who or what decides what these stories will be? What of who we are...were...might become is *allowed* to emerge? In the

“...emphasis on authenticity reinforces the belief in self-contained identities and replicates already existing divisions. The boundaries between various groups of people—and, by extension, the theoretical perspectives designed to represent them—become rigid, inflexible, and far too restrictive” (Keating, 1996, p. 16).

absence of multiplicity does Othering become the accepted way of relating? And, how does Othering shape our contexts?

Attending further to the scripts and assumptions shaping Others on school landscapes, we saw how far reaching borders around multiplicity are. We heard, in the stories of our co-researchers, their struggles with finding viable spaces filled with others who would at first hear, and then listen with

openness, to the difference about the invisibility of so many children and families with whom these teachers and principals intimately shared their lives. We felt the contradictions they experienced as they attempted to broaden the possibilities for the expression of diverse lives and histories within white, middle-class structures so laden with labels and assumptions made at a distance. We also shared in their frustrations as they continually felt unable to bring *all* of who they were to the complex spaces of their school contexts. Whether parent, daughter, grandson, etc., their personal lives and knowing seemed unimportant.

Stories linger with us...and we wonder: What is expected to be left outside the school walls as people enter these social spaces? In this truncation of self, increasingly pervasive on school landscapes, what are the *acceptable* stories of self we are allowed to bring...what stories of self are left behind? How, morally, can we turn away from the life experiences of those with whom we dwell? Does our profession *really* believe that the construction of knowledge is disembodied, de-contextualized, isolated from the multiplicity of lives coming together in school contexts?

...Dear Marilyn

From your stories we learned of courage and hope and of how fragile the self becomes in spaces where multiplicity and difference are denied. Our lives, as part of this inquiry, intersected with your life at a point of tremendous change, fear, and uncertainty. The courage you showed as you shared your own internal struggles with us~struggles around your identity as a teacher and who you would become having left a school context you could no longer sustain your self within~moved us to new places of understanding around the necessity for communities embracing of multiplicity. We want you to know how profoundly your tentative and uncertain feelings around sharing your stories were to shaping openings in our research space where others, including our selves, could begin to make audible our most vulnerable moments on our school landscapes~moments where the multiplicity of our selves were at risk.

Moving beyond the pain in your stories...we saw hope in your resiliency~in your strength to re-imagine a story of your self in a new context~a context where you would consciously work to shape spaces where your multiplicity was embraced rather than denied. Naming your self through the relational authorship of a paper was also a hopeful moment in our shared inquiry. Exploring the silences we had each experienced in our school contexts within the voice full space of our inquiry group helped us to restory, with imagination and new consciousness. All of who you are, Marilyn, within the shifting, complex, and fluid process of living your life has made a profound difference to us...

We were struck as we listened to other stories of selves attempting to negotiate spaces embracing of multiplicity on their school landscapes. Attending to the pain, and often further marginalization made visible in these narratives, increased our consciousness of how embedded stories of sameness, prescriptive practice, power over, certainty, etc., can be, to the point where a self's only possible response is to leave. Yet, in these same narrative unfoldings, we realized that leaving itself was an act of resistance pushing against borders around multiplicity.

Stories linger with us...and we wonder: What, within our professional contexts needs to shift in order for multiplicity to be less marginally positioned? How and with whom, might these shifts occur? At what point will we finally place value in negotiating contexts where the multiplicity of self is honored? What place does attention to narrative histories hold in imagining and living out acts of resistance? What kinds of stories will

need to be courageously told before this can happen? And, who, we ask, might care enough to listen and respond to these stories so that shifts can unfold in our contexts...ourselves? Who can escape the borders around multiplicity long enough...far enough, to engage in this necessary yet difficult work? Is there any one with freedom enough to choose?

...Dear Emily~
Threads of resistance ran through so many of the stories you shared with us. By helping us to understand behind and at the edges of your narratives and, to see where these stories emerged from for you, shaped vital openings for us to imagine further, the necessity of resistance in our unfolding work. What you helped us to see more clearly, Emily, was that by attempting to ignore the dilemmas we experienced on our school landscapes, nothing shifted. You taught us that staying, and continuing to work at engaging in conversation pushing against some of the reification surrounding us, shaped spaces and openings where resistance~the creation of new narratives and alternative possibilities for life on school landscapes~could unfold...



“Life without danger, with no question about what the future may hold, is not a life, it is a carefully structured drama, a play in which our parts are written for us”
~Heilbrun (1999, p. 102)



Hopeful Possibilities Around Multiplicity

In the living and negotiation of our multiple inquiry spaces~spaces filled with the diverse narrative histories of those who consciously and courageously chose to be there~we experienced vital openings where multiplicity was recognized, valued, and nurtured in its unfolding. Gradually, through a process of storytelling and response in the

safety of research conversations away from our school landscapes, we awakened to how the expression of, and inquiry into, multiplicity is an act of resistance.

Recognition of multiplicity as a process of resistance, helps us in imagining the far-reaching implications resistance might have in shaping and re-shaping spaces open enough for diverse life histories, and the differences nested within them, to intersect. For us, it is within these hopeful moments of inter-face (Anzaldúa, 1990), that selves can look intimately *within and outside*, crossing borders in loving relation with others who have a face...who have a name. What, we wonder, might become possible if such spaces were imagined *on* school landscapes, *within* district and provincial policy-making, programs of teacher education, and in future research directions. What new horizons might become visible? With imagination, we explore these possibilities with further wonders.

...Dear Wendy~

Living in relation with you, we were able to explore internal and external borders in ways we never had before. So many times, you called us to move out from the borders our own narrative histories caused us to construct...and travel.

“...travelling to each other’s ‘worlds’...enable[d] us to be through loving each other” (Lugones, 1987, p. 8).

Travelling to your childhood experiences, so different from each of ours’, moved us to new places of understanding of who you were~are~can become, and in relation, who each of us were~are~can become. Facing our selves within our research conversations and our relational writing was a tremendously difficult, yet educative process in this inquiry~difficult, because the tensions brought forward as our differences intersected threatened, at times, to shift us back to safer, less complex ways of living with one another~educative, because our desire to stay in conversation with these differences, to embrace them in all our multiplicity, were stronger than our moments of wanting to turn away.

Living this process of world-travel with you awakened us to the necessity for spaces on school landscapes where loving perception might become possible~spaces where acts of resistance open up tensions and ambiguities as the diverse life histories of selves sharing social contexts, inter~lap.

Thank you Wendy, for risking with us and for sharing in our desire to enter the worlds of others~to enter difference~with loving perception. Your stories, inter~lapped with ours’, brought incredible insight and meaning to this ongoing work...

...Dear Danielle~

You came to our research conversations living stories as a mother, a beginning teacher, as a woman deeply connected with a strong sense of family history. In such gentle and inviting ways, Danielle, you so often shook our own taken-for-grantedness around living as teachers on school landscapes~you brought different puzzles...wonders...experiences to our space of inquiry.

The concerns you expressed around naming your self within the context of this inquiry revealed so much to us about the vulnerability of positionings on school landscapes. As a beginning teacher, your identity was placed in a precarious state of existence where only some stories of who you were becoming could come forward on your landscape~stories of being certain, knowledgeable, confident, secure, independent. We feel honored to have lived a space with you where you felt, in time, safe enough to tell other stories~stories of uncertainty, of feeling insecure, and alone.

And Danielle, in such important ways, your stories rekindled our joy in knowing that little in life means more than when a child whose life history is scripted as unworthy, lets us know that s/he feels our presence and attention to his/her voice...context.

So trustingly, you shared stories of your family history Danielle, and while your storytelling ways seemed to draw out our laughter as we heard of your memories with your grandmother and of extended family gatherings at her house, you helped us to see ways in which these memories were shaping and being shaped and reshaped in your relationships with your own children and the children you lived alongside in classroom contexts. You helped us to understand more deeply, Danielle, the place stories hold in our evolving identities...

What might be if school landscapes were attentive to multiplicity? Would there be spaces, then, where the contradictions, emerging at the interface of our narrative histories and the current hierarchical structures of schools, could be revealed...explored...further understood? How much of what we currently hold sacred about our present educational system might require change as children and families measured against and marginalized by white middle class standards, begin to find viable spaces where they can make their differences audible...visible...worthy? Embracing multiplicity, would tightly defined school time-tables and programs of study begin to shift?

What might be if district and provincial policy-making were attentive to multiplicity? We can't help but wonder what role district and provincial policy-making might play if multiplicity were honored. Would there continue to be a perceived need for uniformity across school districts and this province? Shifting away from generalizations that smooth out difference, would we begin to acknowledge the particularities of diverse

school contexts~urban, rural, inner city, suburban, etc.? What alternatives to non-negotiable, de-contextualized policy-making might emerge as individuals on school landscapes are enabled to live their multiplicity in ways deeply attentive to *their* context? What fresh and inviting possibilities might emerge in this shift away from standardization ...normalization?

We think of the self as a central continuity,
yet recognizing that the self is not identical through time
is a first step in celebrating it as fluid and variable,
shaped and reshaped by learning.

~Bateson (1994, p. 64)

...Dear Annie, Chuck, and Jean~

There is, in our hearts, such deeply felt gratitude for the places you each hold in our lives. The shared space of our inquiry group over the past seven years has been such a necessary place for us, a place profoundly shaping our becoming. While we were both teaching full-time, there were week-ends where we felt uncertain about engaging in our ongoing research conversations with you, particularly at those times of the year when we were faced with the intensity of progress reports or beginnings of relationships with new children, families, and colleagues. Yet each Saturday evening, as we came away from our conversations we felt renewed, ready to carry on in our work and lives as teachers until we would meet again. Many times over the years we have asked one another why this space of inquiry made, and continues to make, such a difference in our lives.

Telling stories and attending closely to them are rare experiences in our professional contexts, yet in the space we share(d) with you, we were able to make visible and explore the multiplicity of our teaching lives~our moments of uncertainty, our stories of distance and upcloseness as we negotiated multiple school landscapes, of the significant place the children and families we were living alongside, had in our day to day work and feelings about our selves. That you encouraged our voices~our teacher voices, our voices sometimes angry, sometimes sad, sometimes joyous, yet, always somewhat tentative~has mattered so much. And, that you heard deeply, not just the words we made audible but where they emerged from, and that with care and sincerity you cradled our stories, thought hard about their tellings, responding in loving perception to them, shaped multiple, ongoing retellings.

Letting us know that you trusted us enough to also share your stories and that we, too, would hear and respond to them in ways that could reshape the present and future significance they held(hold) in your lives, spoke loudly to us of what might be in professional contexts where authority is negotiated so we might look into one another's lives. Together, we shaped a safe place in which we could begin to explore the narrative unfolding of identity within classroom, school, district, and provincial contexts. Your presence to our needs, our uncertainties, our, at first, tentative wonders around identity were so critical to who we imagined our selves to be in relation with our co-researchers in these inquiries. In differing ways and places throughout these dissertations, we have written about the significance of carrying knowing...understanding, within us as we shift across time and place. Our space, and the ways in which our knowing has been shaped in relation, stays with us...

What might be if programs of teacher education were attentive to multiplicity? How might understandings of knowledge and knowing begin to shift? Would we become attentive, then, to the narrative histories of the teacher education students in our care, opening up more and more spaces that encourage their voices...that honor their stories? And, what new responsibilities would be held by teacher-educators? Would they, in the presence of students telling their stories, risk enough to reveal and explore *their* narrative histories? What non-relational borders might be crossed in such spaces of multiplicity? How might these shifts within the university context translate into the lives of future children, families, and colleagues with whom these beginning teachers negotiate school landscapes? What rigid frames and hierarchical structures might begin to crumble around practicum experiences if the multiplicity of *all* involved was no longer buried beneath standardized categories, pre-determined expectations, and check-lists of knowledge, skills, and attributes?

What might be if future research possibilities were attentive to multiplicity? Would the narrative histories of those with whom we inquire, begin to emerge more fully and finally, be acknowledged for the profound contributions they make to such relational work? Would the strength and courage we find in our stories inter~lapping with the stories of others', begin to re-write scripts of knowledge as individually owned and constructed? Would *we* begin negotiating research possibilities *with* the co-researchers we want and *need* to learn alongside? And, in such close-up negotiations, would there continue to be a place for "permission" from those positioned at such distances from the contexts and lives mutually explored? What multiple, diverse, and exciting forms and representations of research might come forward as the taken-for-granted presently holding power and constraining possibility, diminish in the light of growing relational research work?

...Dear Jean~

There are many emotions washing through us as we come to this place~some of the final writing for these dissertations. Flooded by memories of the past three and a half years, we are intensely moved by knowing that your continuous presence beside us~as a friend...as an advisor~has so significantly impacted this work, our experiences negotiating a university landscape, and our understanding of our lives...past...present...future. Like the rare crocus that sways in the dry grass of spring, your passions for living and for attending to the unfolding of lives, to keep working toward the negotiation of places expansive enough to embrace a multiplicity of people and experiences, and to, with a profound sense of sincerity and humbleness, acknowledge, at times, your own fragile sense of self, continues to inspire us.

Not once did you look away from our dreams of relational doctoral work and we know, that had you not been the person you are, this work would have unfolded in significantly different, far less educative, ways.

It is hard to find words to describe what your presence in our lives has meant to us. Your wisdom and experience has been shaped through seasons of storied inquiry with so many over your life time. Inviting us into your life experiences, your profoundly deep knowing of narrative spaces of inquiry, has brought texture, meaning, hopefulness to our lives.

From the start of our travels with you, each at differing points in our lives as teachers, we felt, deeply, your need to relate across rather than above us. We have always known you as Jean, no title or formalities required. You listened with interest to our stories~our teacher stories, which seemed to hold such little value in other social spaces in our lives.

Living a research story with you has been so very different from other research stories we have lived~contexts in which the researcher held the knowledge and was positioned above and separate from our selves and our knowing. Negotiating research conversations with you over the past seven years has been about shared inquiry and relational knowing~our voices...your voice...the voices of others...have always mattered...

Love,
Karen and Janice

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