AMBIGUOUS PRESENCE:
(РЕ)SEARCHING THE NEGOTIATIONS OF BE(ОМ)ING TEACHER

A Thesis in
Curriculum and Instruction

by
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ABSTRACT

The textual space of this dissertation is performative and fluid; using the metaphors of yoga and glasswork, I invite multiple voices and bodies to enter into the Om of a collective and tangled interrogation of the experiences of be(com)ing Teacher. By openly piecing the voices and stories of those be(com)ing Teacher, both my own and those pre-service teachers I work with, I offer opportunity for rearrangement and layering of the (un)broken windows of perception. I invite the reader to join me in the fluid fusing of insight – Sel(f)es melting into Other(s) as we move collectively across a landscape of the (un)known moment of be(com)ing. This (re)searching process is not meant to be comfortable as one negotiates across open and shifting spaces – but in the dis/comfort new ways of seeing are exposed. These spaces are pedagogical, offering one the opportunity to allow his/her voice to echo, reverberating experience until it can be viewed as a new and hopeful possibility belonging to all who journey through the textual space of living inquiry.

Across the landscape of this dissertation I offer a/r/tographical methods (de Cosson, A., 2002; de Cossen&Irwin, 2004; Springgay,Irwin & Wilson, 2004; Springgay, 2003) as a means to shake up traditional notions of what it means to do (re)search. Awakening to the presence of the breath across moments of be(com)ing Teacher, I offer a space for collective and performative (re)search that exists in the openings and folds that evolve through dialogue. Moving through the collective dialogue, I consider the ways in which my/sel(f)es and my students negotiate across the landscape of the academy’s un/spoken demands for a named identity of character of Teacher to perform in the classroom and how I might I help them move through this space of dis/comfort so that they might find a
sense of praxis amidst the emotional and political space of teaching? I do not seek to answer these questions; rather, I seek to acknowledge the pedagogical possibility that arises when one begins to open the spaces of the silent ordinary – happening everyday, but spoken of rarely - to the act of living and performative inquiry. Perhaps as we continue in our journey as educators, fused fragments of our blended and shifting stories might lead to a sense of acknowledgement or agency within structures that seek to silence the stories. It is through the Om of the (un)spoken dialogue that we are able to interrogate the movements of be(com)ing Teacher, letting go of attachments and acknowledging desires. Through the motions of a present and performative dialogue we create openings where multiple voices can begin to shift or disrupt meaning inviting us to embrace the possibility in what we have been and what we might be/come.
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DEDICATION

For my mother
Chapter I

Entering into the OM

(re)Turning in hope

There are shards of glass
Broken windows upon my memory
of being Teacher
a whirling of what
could have been
or that which never was
or was
my desire
I look at the faces of Teacher mine
or yours
or theirs
But the images are cracked
the possibilities
perhaps
only ending in what I thought
I lost
and so
in loss I begin
the journey again
to find hope amidst
the chasms of experience, emotion
and thought
echoing across the darkness
bouncing upon the psyche new
lights are born reflecting the image
of what could be
upon the shards of what we remember

(re)searching fragments
The yogic journey guides us from our periphery, the body, to the center of our being, the soul. The aim is to integrate the various layers so that the inner divinity shines out through clear glass. (Iyengar, 3)

She arrived early that morning in the attempt to move past those feelings of powerlessness and fear. Two weeks of freedom after what seemed way to short of a winter break, but now she was back. No matter how much she did not want to be there new she had her responsibilities – to the children, the administration ... she could not leave. As she set herself to write the days agenda on the board she found herself overwhelmed with a feeling that she could neither place nor name. Vivika, her mentor, who questioned all this young teacher had ever dreamed of in her visions of education stepped through the door. At that moment the darkness began to lower its veil upon her vision and the young teacher had to sit down, knowing that otherwise she would fall and there was no way that she would lose control in front of this woman who she felt held all she believed in such great disdain.

Vivika: Are you alright? You didn’t eat breakfast did you?

Young Teacher: (to herself: just like you to make the negative assumption) No, no I am fine, probably just low blood sugar.

Of course this is what she is saying, but inside every fiber of her being shakes as she tries to keep herself from breaking in front of this woman who claims superiority.

Vivika: I will go get the nurse

The young teacher makes attempts at normal breathe, nodding her head – desperate for the arrival of the school nurse, Marcia. She trusts Marcia, who has just arrived this year, but she is older and confident and has no problem saying what she thinks and people seem to respect this. The young teacher, too continues to try to say and do what she believes is right – yet somehow she feels that nothing is accomplished and in fact her power dwindles further. Marcia arrives and the young teacher feels a sense of relief but also a rush of the grief that must of pressed its veil upon her vision; she is safe now. Tears begin to flow down her face and she cannot catch her breathe – and she knows she cannot escape.

Marcia: It looks to me like you had an anxiety attack

Young Teacher: I don’t know I just feel so funny
Marcia: You can go if you need to, I will let them know that you need a substitute because you are sick…But you are miserable here, have you thought of leaving. The young teacher things to herself, if only you knew – but then where would I go? What would I do?

Dear Young Teacher,
I remember you, breath shallow as you used every ounce you had to tread the waters of the educational system you had been thrown in. Nothing could have prepared you for that, or so you thought. Each attack that you had was built upon your own sense of failure as you saw your every desire whither across a pedagogical landscape that was not your own.
I cannot save you, I cannot return your desires so that you might once again step into a classroom of your own and I cannot silence those who silenced you. But I know I have a responsibility to you and it is with this sense of responsibility that I write – sharing my story of being both teacher and teacher educator as I weave through the stories of those pre-service teachers I work with. I want to be with their negotiations, helping them become more aware – in a manner that you could not. I could not give you what you needed, but perhaps by offering up space for the dialogue of the experience of be(com)ing Teacher they might begin to move through the discourses that position them, aware that they are not alone. Maybe, if they enter into a collective conversation of experience they might find their breath that which you so long ago lost.
I have moved forward young teacher, but you remain forever in my memory as I remember that I was you and you are me. I write this letter seeking to offer spaces for active movement within those borders that we for so long dreamt of crossing. I admit, this work, this research that I do is problematic as it arises from my own desire to discover that which I could name along my own journey of being teacher. Yet it is this same problematizing that offers opportunities to get lost within the fragments of story and desire, finding new paths and ways of knowing those discourses that shape our subjectivities.
I can finally breathe now, but my breath is now one of fluid awareness – where desire is fleeting and possibility is plentiful.

Love,
Sarah
Through pain and pleasure: movements of be(com)ing

The light that yoga sheds on Life is something special. It is transformative. It does not just change the way we see things; it transforms the person who sees. It brings knowledge and elevates us to wisdom (Iyengar, xxi)

The life of be(com)ing Teacher is one that moves through the spaces of multiple moments of struggle and delight. Like the yogi moving through postures, the pre-service teacher may find her body shaking as she strives to align herself – finding difficulty in the poses; however, she may also find herself moving joyful across the space as she breathes through postures that both energize and delight. Our society tells us we must name these movements of experience; however, there is possibility that arises when we let go of the attachment to naming and instead embrace the varied nature of experience as it exists for those who are or have been Teacher\(^1\). Throughout this dissertation, I strive to examine both the struggles and delights of be(com)ing Teacher - acknowledging the multiple facets of experience, while tangling the understanding of experience with the voices of those who travel across similar landscapes, so that we might enter into a collective OM through dialogue that invites relationship. I offer a/r/tographical methods (de Cosson, A., 2002; de Cossen&Irwin, 2004; Springgay,Irwin & Wilson, 2004; Springgay, 2003) as a means to (re)turn to the experience, breaking through traditional modes of understanding what it means to be with/in experience. Using the yogic breath,\(^2\) I explore those stories

\(^1\) One is named through her actions, I choose to capitalize the T of teacher as a means to illustrate the nature of becoming one who is named amidst those discourses that trouble and position the one who seeks to be part of the collective ideal of being a teacher.

\(^2\) “To remain silently attentive to the breath comes down to respecting that which, or who, exists and maintaining for oneself the possibility to be born or to create (Irigaray, 2002, p. 51)
that offer a glimpse of the desire and struggle for agency within the space of being a new teacher, from varied facets of awareness.

The yogic breathe and these facets of awareness I mention, arise from two metaphors that will be used across the landscape of this dissertation as a means to offer shared “points of departure” (Pente, 2005, p. 93) from which we might begin our journey of exploring across the landscape of be(com)ing Teacher. The first metaphor I draw on is that of the practice of yoga. It is this practice that offers up enlightenment, but an enlightenment that goes beyond the notion of a Truth; instead embracing inner and outward awareness and fluidity of being. The practice of yoga is a practice of possibility; however, like the work of be(com)ing Teacher, yoga is a practice in which individuals experience both struggle as they work through postures that are not always comfortable, and joy as the body finds itself awakened with newfound energy. Postures as considered by Iyengar (1976) are movements of reflection and being as one works through making sense of the world. These postures are not simply physical movements, but rather exist also as responses of the mind, thoughts that become embodied connecting the facets of sel(f)es with the physical world. The second metaphor that pieces together across the dissertation is that of the fused glass. Fusing glass is a process of fluidity as variations of glass are cut and shattered, yet these fragments join together into something seemingly concrete and unified through the heat of momentary insight or the kiln. The pieces that result are varied based on the way in which fragments are positioned, many times the pieces are seem as jewelry, ready to be worn and recognized; however, the fused piece is

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Throughout the dissertation I have chosen to add an ‘e’ at the end of the word breathe as a way to illustrate the active nature of this process. By returning to the breath we might be able to breathe our evolving stories and insight across the textual landscape of this space of making sense of be(com)ing.
glass, fragile and fluid, easily broken and (re)pieced together across time. As one engages in the work of be(com)ing Teacher she arrives like a piece of fused glass, fragments of experience have come together to shape her subjectivity; yet subjectivity is fleeting as one’s truths may be shattered by multiple realities and moments of experience. The shattering of an image/ined self does not mean the end as some might fear, but rather offers opportunities for re/piecing one’s sense of sel(f)es with/in the world. Both the practice of yoga and the fusing of glass are personal, projects of which I have across time found myself engaged in. Through my own active involvement in these projects, I began to explore my own understandings of the negotiations of one be(com)ing Teacher and it is from that space which I begin, a space explored by both Pente (2005) and Lakoff and Johnson (1980) who note:

Just as in mutual understanding we constantly search out commonalities of experience when we speak with other people, so in self-understanding we are always searching for what unifies our own diverse experiences in order to give coherence to our lives. Just as we seek out metaphors to highlight and make coherent what we have in common with someone else, so we seek out personal metaphors to highlight our own pasts, our present activities, and our dreams, hopes and goals as well…Self understanding requires unending negotiation and re-negotiation of the meaning of your experiences to yourself (232-233).

Beginning perhaps with the personal, I want to move into a collective and pedagogical space of possibility and as such, I use the metaphors of the yogic practice and fusing of glass as a way to engage a collective search for meaning – that draws on both personal and public ways of constructing meaning.
Across the landscape of this dissertation, I move to shake up traditional notions of what it means to do research, instead offering a space for collective (re)search that exists in the openings and folds (Irwin, 2003) that evolve through dialogue -inviting one to engage with image and text as it exists within the pores of their own being with/in experience. The OM might be entered into through the multiple openings and breaks as each reader embarks on her own path, a path that might embrace image, poetry, or prose as her chosen terrain or perhaps she might engage with the multiple forms of (re)searching that take place across the landscape of this dissertation. I offer up my own stories of being Teacher and teacher educator, as well as those stories of the pre-service teachers I work with; each story leaves space for both loss and possibility, offering fragments to be rearranged and reflected upon as we consider how teachers find themselves both shaped and alienated within education. It is across these caverns of (re)searching that one can not find insight in isolation - my voice cannot exist alone.

Within and outside each chapter, other voices may enter in, real or imagined – as I invite the dialogue of those pre-service teachers who move through the postures of be(com)ing Teacher. I attempt to make each voice visible by using various fonts, to illustrate intention, person, voice, and emotion as we help one another find direction along the journey. There are moments where my voice joins that of the pre-service teacher as I pull their words, cutting and rearranging, creating poetry as a means to offer new spaces for perspective. Images too, hold still at moments but are easily broken to expose new meaning with/in the movement of be(com)ing teacher. I invite you to infuse the text with your own ways of meaning making and storytelling, to enter into the dialogue of pedagogical possibility. The poetry, image, and other textual renderings of
experience evolve to become something entirely different as each reader begins her\(^4\) own journey through the performative spaces of the text. It is my hope that as we continue in our journey as teacher educators, our blended stories of be(com)ing and teaching Teacher, might lead to a sense of acknowledgement or agency within structures that seek to silence the stories. As we speak of the movements of be(com)ing Teacher, might we embrace the possibility that exists in what we have been and what we might be/come.

I invite you to enter with me into this textual space of inquiry (Richardson, 2000), where in the writing we might find ourselves with/in the complications of understanding and being. Research exists across multiple contexts, shaped through the subjectivity and intention of those telling and seeking story. Springgay (2004) observes that “Postmodern and psychoanalytic theories maintain that subjectivities are inherently unfixed, unknowable, and uncertain”(60). There is no possibility for prediction, there are no connections that might remain concrete; instead the nature of knowing is one that demands a sense of openness to the possibilities of the present and the fluid existence of the past. As Valerie Janesick (2000) identifies in her metaphorical exploration of research as choreography, the story searched is one of improvisation, evolving over the course of moments. In searching, the selves of artist, teacher, and researcher collide in the discomforting space of un/knowing. Truth, that has for so long been recognized as that which holds pedagogic value within the telling space becomes fragmented, slipping in and out of the subjectivities of multiple voices. As these voices come together in a cacophony of storied selves, pedagogy evolves becoming something outside the

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\(^4\) Throughout the dissertation, I refer to the reader as female not as a means to exclude any particular sex or individual. Instead the female I address is she who exists within both female and male – she who is able to give birth and experiences the making and changing of life in a very intimate way.
hegemony of a starving society desperate for Truth. Through the fragmented lens of stories, there is more to be seen; in naming my/self as artist, researcher, and teacher, I find myself wandering through a space crowded with the vividness of my own and others’ intention, desire, and definition. There is a yogic quality to such a space of inquiry, as knowing moves fluidly, inviting individual and collective attention to the moment.

Embracing the spiritual nature of inquiry with/in pedagogy and research, I seek to honor its patterns by offering up textual renderings of the frayed and fragmented layers of being as one seeks understanding across experience. Stories become intertwined, through the space and text honoring the multiplicity of knowing across and through multiple contexts and subjectivities, spaces are opened to invite new writing of experience to enter into the movement, and reality becomes tangled within the deformed nature of being of the world. Each complication of the known invites the OM, that which binds the breathing self to other – so that we might grow, nourished by the confusion and beauty of the collective experience.

**Fragments of sel(f)es**

As the main goal of the dissertation I seek to ask: **what are the experiences through the movements of being and becoming Teacher?** - not as a means to define clear plans to erase these struggles or even to find a distinct answer. Rather the asking arises out of the desire to create pedagogical openings that are alive. Openings, that as Judith Robertson (1997) notes in her own exploration of pedagogy, create space for full involvement of the self; both the flesh and the psyche dance upon the pages of the
journey – breathing life into the experience. The pedagogical asking works as a means to open up a textual space that invites reflexivity across the ordinary and helps one regain a sense of agency within the echoes that reverberate (Luce-Kapler, 1997; Norman, 2000; Irwin, 2004) through the emotions of silence, pleasure and being, even within the broken caverns of those ambiguous losses that cannot be named. As I consider the postures of be(com)ing Teacher I find myself conflicted, now an educator of pre-service teachers I still (re)turn to my own, at times clouded, experiences of being Teacher.

My days as an elementary school teacher were miserable; daily I found myself drawn to help my students, to stand up to the injustice that existed in the systems of administration, to prove to myself and others that I was a good teacher as I tried on new ways of accepting and attempting to move within my position as Teacher. But the days slowly faded into one another, and as each experience passed one into the other, I found that I too was fading. I did my best to speak what I believed, but my voice became softer, my body clenched to prevent the tears from flowing and my patience with those students I felt responsible for became nothing less than forced. The struggle had overtaken me and I felt there was little I could do.  

4 Throughout the course of my research I reflect on my own (past and present) experiences as I seek to make sense of my present experiences and those of my students. These reflections are written in the Bradley hand font as a way to separate my own reflections.
My struggle is relevant and worth (re)turning to as a means to enter into the discussion of be(com)ing Teacher, but I must tread carefully upon the shards of my own memory as I invite students to consider the notion of Teacher. My memory is clouded with emotion as I still find myself at times searching for a voice with/in my past; I must be careful not to imprint this desire upon my students, clouding their own experiences of be(com)ing Teacher. While my conflict as a teacher educator begins to fuse across the strands of the naming oneself as Teacher; there is often an inner sense of turmoil - pleasure, conflict, and confusion collide as one finds oneself seeking and being asked to be named amidst a space of ambiguity and desire. With/in this space, I consider: how might I, a teacher educator, best meet the needs of the pre-service teachers I work with? They too have dreams, those that are both as meaningful and as flimsy as my own. But there are multiple factors that I must address to help them become the teachers that they want to be. Each student arrives having developed some image of the teacher they want to be; however, these images are different, rooted in past experiences that vary across class, culture, and place. As I seek to attend to the needs of my pre-service teachers, I find myself returning again and again to the question, what is it my students experience as they seek to define themselves as Teacher amidst the academy’s un/spoken demands for a named identity or character to perform within the classroom and how might I help them move through this space of dis/comfort so that they might find a sense of praxis amidst the emotional space of teaching?

6 It is the emotion as Paulo Freire (1973) remarks, that often freezes one into various postures. Through dialogue one is able to acknowledge and move beyond the single movement, instead experimenting with various postures that open spaces for understanding.
**Fragmented be(com)ing**

In a recent call for papers in the journal Educational Insights, a question was posed: “are we educating teachers out of education?” This is an especially powerful question to consider when reflecting on how pre-service teachers attempt to name themselves, and how we as teacher educators encourage them to look at these names. To consider the idea of being teacher, it is important to explore the multiple facets of self that are involved in the ambiguous movements of be(com)ing Teacher: how does one respond, what are the variations of response, why might they exist? I share my own story, but in the sharing, the fragments of various voices fuse together; the teacher educator, the pre-service teacher, beginning teacher, and all those interactions that shape the subjectivity of self and other within the context of the classroom begin to lay remnants of their own perceptions across the landscape of be(com)ing Teacher.

I ask students during our class introduction meetings to share why it is that they have chosen to enter into the field of education. There is often a sense of hesitancy as they search for responses that are varied. This hesitancy reflects the complexity of the position they have chosen to pursue, (Bolotin & Joseph, 1994) – teaching is an exceedingly complex profession that is imagined in the technical, political, and emotional. Even those who find themselves ‘called’ to teach must ask, where is it this calling comes from? There is a tangling that occurs as one begins to move, with the breathe of awareness, through the personal and political spaces of be(com)ing teacher.
**Aparigraha: the possibilities of letting go**

Energy needs to flow, or its source withers. By covetousness or miserly clinging on, we stop energy from flowing, from creating more energy, and eventually, by this offence against a natural law, it is we who are impoverished and poisoned by our own hoarding of life’s riches (Iyengar, 254).

In yogic philosophy there exists a value of aparigraha, meaning non-possessiveness or nonattachment to things, people, places, and ideas. By letting go of attachment, one is freed from the burden of want – able to move to new levels of enlightenment, somehow knowing that upon no level will one remain for long (BHAGAVAD-GITA). My desire to hold tight to the stories I claim as my own is wrapped deeply within the chasms of my own subjectivity, yet aparigraha allows me to release these stories so that they might become something else. As a postmodern artist, researcher and teacher I want to open up spaces so that multiple truths might enter into the OM, yet there are moments when I find myself desperately attached to a singular meaning of experience seeking to claim the experience as it was for me within a given moment:

To let go

of attachment

the experience may

lose the meaning

I have placed upon

with that loss

I fear

I will lose loved

aspects of myself
the possibility for freeing
voice
body
once silenced
during the moment
of the lived experience.
Clinging
desperately
to a single facet
momentary Truth
I miss
opportunities unable
to move beyond the barriers
of a single story
unable
to develop
relationship with
Other
instead I remain silent
alone
I speak
my words schizophrenic
holding
momentary meaning for me
alone
unintelligible to anyone
who
I do not let in.
Possessed
my boundaries tight
allowing
few
rays of the fluid story
to enter
sealing the porous spaces
of being
freezing movement
turning
through what
I have known
Caught
in my attachment
there is no room
to connect
grow
I am
forever trapped in the waters
of silent narcissism.

7 Throughout the dissertation, I use poetry as a means to make sense offering up spaces for reinterpretation. The poetry at times is a reflection of my own experiences as a teacher and teacher educator and also a reinterpretation of my students writing. When I claim the words as my own the font is Arial Narrow, Book Antiqua, and Garamond, when the words are a joining together of my voice with my students, I use Eras Light ITC - to highlight their voices and also as a metaphor to illustrate the hesitancy in the work of be(com)ing.
The yogic philosophy of aparigraha offers both the teacher educator and she who is be(com)ing Teacher, the possibility of moving beyond those myths that shape one’s perception of what should be, as we are able to let go of absolutes and begin to be present to all that is going on around us. Aparigraha arises from the breathe, as one releases that which might once have been clenched within a holding pattern. Through the concept of aparigraha one is called upon to detach the self from possession of both thing and experience, relieving herself of greedy ways and thus discovering new energy. There is value in this work of non/possession as we consider the pedagogical possibilities of the collective story as it might begin to weave across the textual terrain of shared experience, inviting one to let go or at least recognize preconceived notions of what is true. It is through aparigraha that might allow one to become present with/in the story; releasing the tight grip upon those ‘loved’ aspects of the experience and the self. I consider this first from the perspective of my/self, once a beginning teacher, the writer who begins the sharing by clinging to her tale. Yet I can open the pedagogical space by admitting that my work arises from my own attachment to those experiences of struggle that have shaped my understanding of myself. I want to disrupt this attachment to that which I perceive as my own personal truth as a means to move beyond the singular experience opening space for movement and possibility. My experimentation of aparigraha within the textual landscape releases the need for protective isolation, inviting both myself and the reader to perform varied possibilities of understanding what it means to be(come) Teacher.
Be/coming present – pedagogy of the breath(e)

Perhaps by embracing the postures of entanglement, by entering into a dialogue of experience and possibility, we might invite teacher educators, beginning and pre-service teachers to move beyond the isolation of the unsaid along their search for position within a complex profession. The embrace engages a collective strength so that they might have the choice to stay, claiming agency with/in the ambiguity, moving in hope across the context of evolving experiences of being and becoming Teacher. Throughout this dissertation we will not arrive at answers, instead our postures will begin to flow into a place of pedagogical possibility - that which arises when one begins to breathe through the spaces of the silent ordinary, becoming attentive to the movements thus embracing the act of living inquiry. The questions that I move to occupy and invite the reader to enter into begin as I explore the experiences of our/sel(f)es as Teacher. The exploration is one of reflection; by weaving spaces for the un/known upon the textual landscape, I seek to create openings where multiple voices can begin to shift or disrupt meaning, thus opening the windows of dialogue.

I begin to write, to negotiate my place within questioning, a (s)p(l)ace is similar to Lather’s (2003) notion of research striving to be that which vacillates “between knowing and not knowing” (p.265). It is in this vacillation amongst and between the complexities of life’s entwinement with/in the moving circles of experience that I find my/self seeking purpose and (awareness of) position. It is as I make myself present
to the tangles

of the moment,

that I might find

peace (Thich Naht Hahn, 2001, p. 19),

rooting and honoring myself within those moments in which my understanding may become more than simply knowledge, becoming something that transcends Truth.

Moving toward this spiritual place of enlightenment, I seek to bow to those possible ways of being and knowing that intersect at the prism of creation – allowing for transformation, justice, beauty and movement through the spaces of a life lived. But how is it that I might journey along this spiritual terrain of understanding? I speak of terrain rather than destination as I perceive the spiritual nature of research as pedagogy from the poststructuralist position discussed by Butler (1992) – that which shifts across contexts

as the subjectivity

of my/self as researcher

existing and interacting with the powerful echoes of all those moments of my past, present, and desires for the future. The spirituality of being and understanding is one recognized by Irigaray (2002) as evolving and incomplete; I am teacher, researcher, artist, writer, student – one moving in and out of the other, balanced and askew - seeking my/self with/in those traumas that have been inscribed upon my body (Slattery, 2000; Davies, 2000) and continue to impact my perceptions and practices. With/in my seeking I “… must try to connect the here and now of today, this present moment of our life, to the
reality of yesterday and tomorrow” (Irigaray, p.21). It is in the space of this paper that I wish to explore the possibilities, those practices of multiple and blurred genre (Barone, 2001; Richardson, 2000) that are never fixed - but rather react to the shifts of nature and soul

soul and nature

nature

soul

shifting

that might allow my understanding to reach a conscious place of fluid enlightenment. A fluidity of spirituality and insight that allows me, the researcher to establish connection and relationship with/in time and (s)p(l)ace, with an other – inviting and joining the dialogue of the reader as we explore what it means to be in the world through our movements and words.

(Un)marking the journeyed landscape

Each chapter, across the textual landscape of this dissertation, offers spaces to engage with sel(f)es across multiple experiences of re/searching the negotiations of be(com)ing Teacher. The spaces of engagement exist across the landscape and continue between each chapter as create intentional pauses for reflective fragmentation and preparation for the next step. Chapter two, (Re)marking the OM, offers a means to open the door to the spiritual aspects of the negotiations of be(com)ing. I invite the reader, to move beyond traditional positivist notions of what it means to do research, considering the possibilities that arise from the spiritual work of re/search, that which is both poststructuralist and
a/r/tographical (Irwin, Wilson, Springgay, deCossen, 2004) in nature. Across this space I invite readers to awaken to the moment, allowing themselves to become present to the echoes that cross their own and others fragments of (self) understanding. Chapter three, *With/in the (Re)search* offers renderings of my own methodological explorations as I consider the possibilities of engaging text. Visual images collide with written word as I expose my/sel(f)es as active with/in the analysis, at the same time creating spaces for my own analysis to be shattered and rearranged. It is with/in this chapter that my voice begins to intersect with those students who have joined in the dialogue of be(com)ing Teacher. These voices become louder, as I introduce the students in the short interlude between the fragments of chapter three and four. With/in this space I offer a snapshot of the students who speak through the textual landscape of the dissertation and how the voices of these students came to enter into the dialogue. The students offer their own stories of be(com)ing Teacher within chapter four, *Be/coming to Teacher*. Each story opens a window into making sense of the ways in which discourses interact as pre-service teachers attempt to name themselves as both teachers and learners. I too breathe my own sense making upon this chapter as I dis/rupt students’ performances and words, by pulling and rearranging the text into poetry. I offer up these poet spaces noting Irigaray’s (2002) suggestion that through the creation of poetry we “… use respiration in a way other than obedience to an already written word or text, expressing orders or laws, more than praises or graces” (54). While my interpretations move across the landscape of this chapter, so to do multiple open spaces – created as crevices in which the reader might enter offering her own ways of (un)knowing. Chapter five, *Fused Image/ination* is the story of searching across multiple textual renderings of be(com)ing Teacher. I try to
consider my students’ relationships with these texts as I acknowledge my own prejudices by piecing together, poetry, image, and traditional prose. Throughout the dissertation, I allude to my own experiences of be(com)ing Teacher, acknowledging their role in my perception of negotiation and discourse; yet it is not until Chapter six, *Breathing Witness: Performative Testimony as (re)Turning to Possibility: my/self(es) storied*, that I bear witness to those events that even today remain etched upon my perceptions of the experience of be(com)ing Teacher. I share this testimony, not as a search for recognition – but rather, as a means to consider the collective nature of the storied experience. I may speak my story, but it does not speak in isolation; instead as I share my story, inviting the reader to disrupt my own interpretations as they erase and add to the text, actively engaging with the pedagogical nature of the OM. Chapter seven, *In(con)clusion – Savasana* calls our collective, journeyed selves to reflect upon the fragments of experience and insight that have shattered or fused across the textual landscape of the dissertation. I re/turn to the inclusive nature of the OM, while also addressing the nature of Savasana - that which one might consider to be a pause. In the yogic pose of Savasana, one allows the experiences of the practice to wash across their being - to for a moment allow for stillness before one begins the work again. The work of this dissertation is not something that I believe can ever truly come to conclusion, instead we might pause and begin again upon our collective journey of considering the work of be(com)ing Teacher.
“To be” is to inter-be. You cannot just be by yourself alone. You have to inter-be with every other thing (Thich Nhat Hanh, 2001, p. 56).

But the sense of being part of this wonderful whole was so strong that I could not raise my voice. I opened my mouth and tried to make a sound, but no sound would pass my throat. I could not possibly disturb this oneness by yelling, by feeling panicked. I could not be afraid – after all, I was part of this oneness (Wolff, 2001, p. 159).

Spiritual progress can be understood, then, as the development of communication between us, in the form of individual and collective dialogue (Irigaray, 2004, p. 8).
Chapter II

(Re)marking the OM

The yogic journey guides us from our periphery, the body, to the center of our being, the soul. The aim is to integrate the various layers so that the inner divinity shines out through clear glass. (Iyengar, 3)

Postures of possibility: opening up to the moment

There is a certain spiritual quality that can exist across the work of doing (re)search. Perhaps this quality exists in the nature of the act of (re)searching – searching for insight and connection. Wilson (2005) recognizes the spiritual with/in her own artful search, remarking:

I began to see art-making as contemplative practice as a prayerful act. I saw similarities between inquiry and search for revelation and understanding and prayer. In this way I came to think of art-making as prayer, as a deeply spiritual act giving voice to the inner longings of the spirit with an attitude of receptivity and openness. Prayer can be viewed as giving voice to deep and unutterable longings. It can also be understood as conversation, waiting in hope with receptivity and openness (57).

Across this chapter I seek to build on Wilson’s idea of the contemplative and prayerful nature of (re)search, encouraging further awareness and intentionality across the practice so that our textual vocalizations fuse together, though the OM, the facets of spiritual longing through experience allowing (re)search to move beyond the closed doors of Truth. Research as inquiry is not a passive, pedagogical process; rather it requires a lively awareness or presence to and/or of the raw details and personal breathe that exist across and along the seeking journey (Springgay, Irwin, Wilson-Kind, 2004). As one
attends to those moments of haunting (Dunlop, 2001) that never quite escape the psyche, she must embrace the practice of aparigraha, releasing herself of the desire for ownership, instead creating a space open to those multiple voices that so often go unheard (Dunlop, 2001, p.17). The act of creating this space does not allow one to hold too tightly to the desire to answer with finalized specificity, a single question existing out of the assumptions born of moments past – instead one must be willing “… to allow for discomfort, frayed edges, and holes” (Springgay, Irwin, & Wilson-Kind, 2004, p.9). It is these spaces of discomfort and interruption that establish one with the opportunity to engage with/in the spiritual practice of presence.

Breathing in

this moment

I become

fresh

free

found

AWAKE

However, since the dawning of Enlightenment and before, individuals have sought an “Ultimate Truth” established within a notion of “Reason” that provided fixed answers and knowledge that established a feeling of safety (Flax, 1992). Irwin (2003) recognizes a shift back to that sort of seeking, noting that:
In recent times, analytic reasoning and rationality rooted in detached cognitive ways of knowing have found a new life in government created policies, laws and curricula. As someone witnessing this regressive move, I am fully conscious of a publish desire the chaotic, structure the unordered, and deny the ambiguous. This harkening back to Enlightenment is a search for certainty and predictability, standardization and conformity (63).

Thus much research returns to what is defined in the particular ways of positivism – to meet personal, political, and at times religious agendas (Bernstein, 1975). As Barone (2001) reminds us the cultural myths that drive these positivist agendas did (do) not exist without a reason, as they did

… provide a set of ideal images, definitions, justifications, and measures for thought, feelings, and agency that work to render as unitary and certain the reality it seeks to produce. Myths provide a semblance of order, control, and certainty in the face of uncertainty and vulnerability of the social world (p. 222).

But these same myths built up a barrier between soul and action, leaving one’s spiritual understanding and breathe weak. I address the spiritual nature of research and pedagogy – defining spirituality as that rising out of the

\text{OM}(Prabhavananda&Isherwood, 1983)

that which unifies earth and beings in a place of both ecstasy and pain through personal and collective presence. While I believe it is important to acknowledge intentions that exist within particular forms of teaching and research, I find these intentions can often be dangerous as one begins to fuse ideology and Self – leading to further entrapment and the death of spirituality (Denzin, 2003). I believe within the space of the spiritual

\text{OM}
all facets of the self are at work; thus the notion of the personal and political (hooks, 2000; Shreve, 1989) is not something I wish to overlook as I explore and position myself as researcher. The notion of passionate politics and understanding provides the opportunity to embrace spiritual states of ecstasy (hooks, 2000) as self is acknowledged as being part and with the ecological life. Thus I find my/self striving to dance (Snowber, 2002) with/in this sp(l)ace of ecstasy, while at the same time grounding myself with questions so that my agenda will not subtly silence those who do not fit within the patterns of my own desires. As I seek, striving to be aware both sensually and intellectually, of that which might or does entangle my understanding (Springgay, Irwin, Wilson-Kind, 2004) I never reach a conclusion; for my spiritual journey is across a cyclical trail that I forge in my seeking relationship and sense of the world in which I move. And so across the space of this dissertation, I move seeking to negotiate through my own perspectives of research process and purpose.

“**We began in the midst. We end in the midst**”

The search of re/search exists in the midst of multiple understandings, understandings that cannot be arrived at in any clear or colorful sense unless the search is that of action and awareness – calling for a spiritual presence on the part of she who is doing the re/search. Like Buttignol (1999), I recognize that:

The heuristic process involves openness and discovery. Far from being predictable and safe, I (will) experience various degrees of lows, floundering, ambiguities, vacuums, chaos, and even fears. But along with the heuristic discovery, there is also the possibility of Self – awakening or transformation (p. 121).
Awakening is the foundation of the spirituality of research, as I open my senses to the fragments of experience that surround my (not) knowing (Springgay, Irwin, Wilson, 2004) and being I am able to be present amidst ambiguity, discovering the rich textures of each given or momentary experience.

Re/Turning

prismatic reflections of experience

My body turns
my understandings -
the sights
I see

Textual (re)turns

become something
different,
shifting
moments collide
across
the space of psyche and experience.
I am caught

Running
Reaching
for
the unnamable

Wrapped in the heaviness
Of yesterday
The spiritual nature of research as pedagogy is embodied in the human tendency to grasp out toward something that might explain the purpose of existence. But existing with/in each lived story is the confusion of complexity and contradiction. It is easy it is to get caught up in running from the ambiguity (Barone, Eisner, 1997) with/in our stories, afraid to turn and look beyond the Truth toward multiple facets of possibility, and meaning within context. But if we continue to run from the complexities of our stories, we miss the opportunity to relish in the spiritual ecstasy of uncovering those layers that exist below the surface, we lose out on the OM of being connected to earth and other. It is important to consider Springgay, Irwin, and Wilson-Kind’s (2004) idea that when we open ourselves up to the unraveling of those meanings to which we held most tightly we also gain, for “There is both a loss of meaning and simultaneously a realization of it, provoking a presence of what isn’t and what might become” (15). But as we unravel meaning with/in the web of ambiguity one begins to understand the experience in a manner that is spiritually revealing of an understanding of selves in/and experience within space and time. Our searched stories are complex, shifting across every moment and interaction – exposing multiple textures and spaces (Wilson-Kind, 2004) that offer new lenses of perspective on the self, other, and earth. Identifying the complexity of the unified, storied self – it is important to embrace the notion of letting go, while inspecting that which
binds us to a way of seeing that rejects the idea of turning back to re/examine the experience. But turning the prism of experiential knowing is exactly what will allow one to look deeper, pulling apart the layers, of “Our fragmented selves and the textuality of our existence” (Norman, 2001, p.148) moving them to create new stories or ways of knowing that invite more than the participation of a single, storied Self. The subjective nature of self is reflected in experience; by re/turning to the experience with an awareness and openness to new ways of seeing, we are freed from the heaviness of desperation that drags along with our every step forward (and back) toward an empty Truth.

You do not have to carry this alone
I will walk with you
Breathe with you
Open myself
Vulnerability
Is not to be feared
In turning
You and I might fall
In turning
What might we see
Differently
Even in falling
We find ourselves
Saved
By the limbs and layers
Earth and self
Body

Bodies

Living

Live

Turning

I we are

EMBRACED

Re/Search,

Re/Turn,

Re/Mark

... I move seeking within the moments that define my/self in relationship to pedagogy, a sort of understanding, connection that might lead to a fluid transformation of my/self and other. I am a teacher, researcher, writer, and artist seeking to tell my story and in the telling develop some sort of spiritual or embodied sense of my existence in relationship to all that is around me, so that silences might be broken and experience acknowledged, allowing me to articulate and take responsibility for those norms which have shaped my perceptions (Greene, 1973). In my movements I release attachments to that which confines or defines my past understanding, instead
Searching across the moments that speak to my soul; Turning so that I might explore new facets through the prism of multiple experiences; and Marking the landscape of the text with the inscription of myself in momentary understanding (Merleau-Ponty, 2004). My understanding is momentary as I invite the reader to spray the graffiti (Grumet, 1988) of his/her own collective epistemologies upon those markings I claim as my own, interjecting the personal throughout the text of inquiry as well as continuing beyond the space of the text – “…continuing the complex and multifarious act of meaning making” (Springgay, Irwin & Wilson-Kind, 2004, p.12), so that images and insight are ever new, present to the fluid and spiritual nature of life.

Breathing

I wake

Moments

seen

and unseen

Thoughts

heard

and silenced

Other alone

Self unified

My mind

Body
swelling
waking
be/coming

She
my/self
tiptoes
and stomps
upon the sp(l)ace

Where
multiple selves
tread firmly

gingerly
unified
footprints

Shifting
Water floods
those grooves

until

The image
Re/turns

Re/coming something

else

Re/Search
In my living, I have learned the skill of inattention (Bateson, 1994, p.101), forgetting to look beyond the assumed or desired aspects of experience; instead I often remain wrapped up in the emotion that Freire (1973) warns of, that which might freeze my breathe within a space that opens me up to exploitation, stopping my searching through darkness as I become blinded, no longer able to move with awareness across the landscape of my journey. I acknowledge Freire’s warning, but also find myself attentive to ways in which my emotions shape my desire to do research (Behar, 1997)

Momentary shifts
understanding
Student
Teacher
Woman
Child

The thin line
becomes transparent
through the fog

I seek
to know my name

As my momentary self echoes
all the selves
I dreamed

or was
My practice of pedagogy and re/search, is one tangled in the strands of the professional and emotional selves seeking, and as such, I believe this might also be considered spiritual seeking, has continued throughout the course of my life. Responding to the ebbs

and

flows

of the young child trying to make a sense of her place, my search as an adult has shifted to being that of finding my/self amidst a world where I cannot hear my voice. My absent stories, the absent sel(f)es and other living in the world becomes that which I am seeking, but I wonder at times how attentive my search is; where does the OM of humanity exist with/in this quest.

Shattering the I Story: finding collective fragments of the moving (un)known

I have admitted that when I originally began to ponder the nature of research it was with truly selfish intentions. I wanted to make sense of my experiences, give voice to the pain and joy that I had known in my life – and in speaking, I thought perhaps my experiences might thus be validated. My search was for my/self, a ‘true’ Self that existed deep within the regions of my bodily and emotional landscape and homeland (Davies, 2000; Behar, 1997), a self that had been silenced by within social. I believed that if my experiences were acknowledged I might somehow be freed – able to be she who I was born to be – rather than a victim of those experiences that scarred my existence in the world. I now recognize this narcissistic search for an individual Self, was extremely
naïve and did nothing to validate or give voice to my experiences, as I moved deeper within the melancholic regions of my isolated being, failing to notice or recognize a relationship with the spiritual − that which grows out of the OM, connection and rootedness with the personal, with earth, and with the other (Behar, 1997; Smith, 1999).

In my searching I continued to see that which I had seen before all through a shallow, tunnel
lens
that
looked
only

upon the surface of emotion and experience. As I moved along this search, my growth was null − rather I saw myself as a victim, continuously silenced. Insight existed only in so much as I knew my ‘choices’ to become a teacher, performer, writer, and researcher, were ultimately a result of my own needs of one living in the world (Luce-Kapler, 1997). While perhaps I had these insights, I sought only to further know myself in an isolated manner, where my actions and experiences were those of an unautonomous victim − living
disconnected
from
all
that
surrounded
her.
There is a certain danger to the quest I had begun, as I sought to meet my own needs – I often forgot that others, those like and unlike myself lived in the world; I had a certain responsibility to acknowledge the social nature of self and other. I had failed to recognize the power of the OM, that collective story that which binds individuals together – moving them outside the (s)p(l)ace of utter isolation or alienation (Richardson, 1997). Wrapped up so much in myself, I would never be able to grow, to become reflexive, moving out of my isolation as I deepened my connection to the landscape of self and other (van Manen, 1997) – to live and relish in the colorful tangle of experience. Experience is fluid belonging to the multiple sel(f)es of the I and other; while I admit I wanted to return to that which I believed was my Truth alone, it was important that I recognize:

It is not, therefore, a question of uttering a truth valid once and for all but of trying to make a gesture, faithful to the reality of yesterday and today, that indicates a path toward more continuity, less tearing apart, more interiority, concentration, harmony-in me, between me and the living universe, between me and the other(s), if that is or becomes possible, as I hope it is, given respect for the living universe and its temporality (Irigaray, 22).

Taking Irigaray’s (2002) reflection into account, I can return to what I perceive as truth through the practice of aparigraha, letting go of the perceived truth of an experience – recognizing the temporality and collectivity of the experience. And as Naths (2004) reminds me: “What is an experience unless it is reflected on and connected to the world” (Naths, 2004, p. 124). My search had to begin anew.

To begin anew requires a return to the breathe; becoming present to the moment as I explore the movements of my own telling. Tuhuwai-Smith (1997) reminds me that
“academic writing is a form of selecting, arranging, and presenting knowledge” (p. 36). As I rearrange it is difficult, even in telling the stories of my sel(f)es, not to somehow become part of a new process of colonization as I not unlike the imperialists, collect and then in many ways create a “… re-arrangement, re-presentation and re-distribution” (62) of what I find in my own embodied process of collecting experience. I have to ask myself, what is the mark my story places upon the subjectivity of other, what might their own mark place upon the patterns of my own perception? I had been searching for a long time, collecting and examining the moments in my life that I thought determined my state of being; what I had failed to recognize all that time was that my state of being did not exist statically or in isolation – rather it was “ambiguous and fluid”, responding and reacting to the people and moments (Richardson, 1997) that moved through the pores of my existence, whether that be personally or in a more absent sort of way. However desperately I sought, I could not finally arrive to a place of ultimate enlightenment – alone, transformed, and validated. And thus I begin to reconsider the idea of research.

Within poststructuralist thought, research can never be fixed; knowing is “intertwined” with moments of interaction (Richardson, 1997). Thus research exists not as a static space providing for ultimate enlightenment; rather the pedagogical nature of research is an active process, offering brief moments of understanding and insight,
moments that provide the foundation for the fluid development of an understanding that exists in relationship with a larger world (van Manen, 1997) outside the self.

Within such a subjunctive space, one realizes the complexity of experience while seeing the openings – the syncopes – to call into question what we have believed. (Luce-Kapler 2003, p.7)

Fact and fiction

“muddled”

present

and past

unified

in tension

and collaboration

In experience

Experience

Experience

(un)Broken truths

From a poststructuralist standpoint Truth is a problematic term. There are multiple reasons for this troublesome terminology, but here I will focus specifically on how the notion of Truth is especially troublesome for a re/search and pedagogy that is
embodied, existing spiritually in relationship with earth and other. Understanding and definitions of truth are rooted within the situated moment – shifting across time and space, evolving to exist as something new through our interactions with earth and other. By defining something as truth we seek to balance the moments, quantifying experience so that it might become something real. But, “As time goes by, our hearts are open and our vision clears, we discover there is nothing really to balance: mind, body, and spirit are one; the mystical and the pragmatic are one” (Lozoff 200, pp. 20-21).

I can re/turn to the experience, but I must re/imagine, re/experience, and welcome multiple bodies and sel(f)es to interact within this past space that I might now bring to life – acknowledging the OM as I realize within the breathe of each moment of re/experiencing I am not the only one who speaks or moves. “We all partake of this world and its knowledge through the vast store of accumulated collective experience” (Iyengar, 2005, p. 6). By inviting the layers of sel(f)es and moments that fuse the crystallization of my subjectivity, I invite a new way of being within the past that keeps it alive and owned by no one or everyone. This new practice of re/searching requires body and mind to join together in becoming sensible to those (un)named experiences. But I wonder, is it possible to share the experience of my story outside the ruling thoughts of the rational mind, re/turning with/in the moment as it exists within the space of this new moment? Irigaray (2002) believes it to be possible yet also notes that for many within Western culture, we have lost touch with the senses of the body. “The body is no longer educated to develop its perceptions spiritually, but to detach itself from the sensible for the more abstract, more speculative, more sociological culture” (Irigaray, 2002, p.56). Seeking a static and grounded Truth, I, the seeker remained, sensually unaware, focused
on the end result – perhaps afraid to be present to that which might question all that I believed or sought, even questioning my existence in the world. Unwilling to fix the gaze of my consciousness to a (s)p(l)ace outside the (safe) boundaries of hegemony – my imagining remained fixed. Holding tight to the path of discovery I was not willing to let go of those patterns of Truth that I had claimed as my own; I found myself frozen in a posture of the colonize(d)/er (Tuhuwai-Smith. 1997).

My (un)conscious desire for destination left me with false sight, that which Bateson (1994) determines to be a “… Blindness (which) is likely to affect anyone who pursues and single goal, whether the quest is for the Holy Grail or a return investment” (p.104). As I continued to focus all my energy on that single goal, I failed to become immersed in ‘the ritual of ikebana’ the practice where “One comes to knowledge not by trying to grasp and control it, but by letting go and moving into the unknown” (Prior, 2003, p.4). The vividness of the experiences becomes muted in Truth, truth that silences so many dimensions of the event or group (Rosaldo, 1989). With my tunnel vision,
I could not hear any story of b(com)ing Teacher that moved outside those I claimed as my own, I could not step off the path and thus as I continued to move forward never straying from the path of the ‘known’ my vision became cloudy. Caught up in my own fear of vulnerability and the invalidation of my own experiences – I remained trapped caught up in the reality Felman (1992) identifies in the work of Lacan “… that which always comes back to the same place” (Quoted: 68). Returning again and again to those same stories of trauma where the shards of experience became something I could not fuse except by losing sight of who I thought I wanted to be as Teacher, I wanted my story of not being heard as Teacher, or watching as children were silenced within the same structures in which I also believed myself, to be challenged:

uttering

the exact same words,

looking

at the exact same images,

I was unable or unwilling to stray from the path. Unable to risk a new way of sojourn, moving beyond the initial moment of experience, that which might shine upon something that I had not seen before, or might lead to an encounter with an other who encouraged me to think differently. I could not move beyond that reality of trauma that I believed defined me, thus there was little space for reflection(van Manen, 1997). Like Caroline Knapp’s description of her frightening love affair with alcohol (1996), I would return again and again to those same places, (s)p(l)aces that however painful, felt normal and numbed me
to the world around me. In my numbness my search had become almost ritualized (Bateson, 1994).

Fluid postures of fragmentation

INTERRUPTION

SYNCOPE (Luce-Kapler, 2003; Davies, 2000)

The wind blows

Truth comes into question
Definitions along the path
Become vulnerable
Creeping Others
Move silently
Stealthily
Grabbing hold of my truths
Strangling them
Gasping for breathe
I run
And run
Tripping along the way
But I do not stop
or look back
for fear

My story
My experience

Thoughts collide

Across

My psyche

My body running

is broken

Caught in the thoughts of yesterday

That I seek to own

TO ESCAPE

But I run

Until

I finally stop

For breathe

Present but for a single moment

The Other too has

Stopped

And whispers in my ear

You are not alone

Your story is my story

Mine is yours

We can walk together

Aware

moving

forward

I have discussed my role as writer and that in the writing I tell my own story; but as part of the storytelling of self experience, I strive to be aware of my/sel(f)es within the
autobiography – noticing the variations of intention and purpose that hinder or move me forward within what I hope to be the social space of the text. Across the space of the performative, textual landscape, I seek to be/come the landscape – moving across the texts of my/self so that I might begin to open spaces for collective exploration through the inscriptions of the political and historical across the landscape of being (Davies, 2000) within experience. I choose to expose my/self and shatter those experiences I claim as my own upon the text as a means to fragment and fuse understandings so that they might become part of a new, evolving work of the experience of the teacher’s work of be(com)ing. As we fuse and fragment (un)knowing, moving through textual weavings of sel(f)es (Grosz, 1995) into a more collective story of unraveled truths and experiences, I consider the possibilities of testimony – both my own and those beginning and pre-service teachers who journey across the landscape of be(com)ing Teacher, as a means to open up spaces that the shadows of a normative culture have hidden. Renee Norman (2000) points out: autobiography arises out of ‘re-produced meanings of knowledge that “is culturally constructed” (142). Perhaps, in the performative autobiography that I (we) might offer opportunities for teachers to share and become part of a collective group of those who resist the structures of hegemonic notions of teachers, returning to the concept of conscious raising (Shreve, 1990). But as in all self-writing there are road blocks that might turn one upon the narcissistic path of longing that without reflexivity and recognition, freezes one within the (past) momentary experience.

It is by embracing a poststructuralist lens that I believe we might be able to melt the frozen experience of sel(f)es and move into the work of reflection and from that action. But what is it about the nature of poststructuralism that offers this disruptive
possibility? Bronwyn Davies (2000) notes, that “within poststructuralist theory, language is understood as the most constitutive force shaping what we understand as possible and what we desire within those possibilities” (170). It is within language that we find ourselves bound, yet it is with/in the language that we might become present. Embracing Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) notion of the rhizome (Davies, 2000; Springgay, 2004) – I shatter the glass of perception, scattering the fragments across the unpredictable terrain of (un)knowing, engaging a collective presence within.

As we become present moving amidst the language of experience—where there is no distinct beginning, middle, or end; knowledge is not tightly packed, but rather it be/comes that which is intervened – as heterogeneous elements flow through the storied experience, moving beyond that which at a moment was accepted as Truth. It is the rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) that calls one to move into dis/comfort, to embrace the notion of aparigraha, as meaning becomes an entanglement of multiple moments of witnessing ‘reality’. It is my hope that through my own reflection with/in aparigraha, I might be able to use poststructuralism as a means to offer up possibility and praxis, not only for myself as a teacher, but also to consider how it might impact pre-service teachers as well as teachers and other teacher educators with/in the field of education. Across the pedagogical and textual spaces of this dissertation, I seek to move outside of my attachments, attending to the historical positionings of my subjective self that have shaped my own perception of experience.

Embracing aparigraha as I move outside these attachments, I seek to become present to these evolving facets that shape my understandings and have for so long held me within a space of desire that I have not been able to move beyond in any practical,
active sense. By sharing my story and inviting the voices of un/certainty, belonging to both those who I have known and those who ‘read’ the text to enter into the dialogue, I consider how we might collectively break down those structures of hegemony that name and confine Teacher, tangling them across a space of ever-evolving possibility.

_(un)Charting the journey of the OM_

“I recognize you is the/one condition for the existence of I, you, and we” (Irigaray, 2004, p.8)

Across the layered landscape of this dissertation, I seek to develop relationship with the other, she who is both reader and writer of the emerging and evolving text. It is this relationship that lays the foundation for pedagogical possibility through a performative collectivity of being present to that which might be owned by all who journey across the landscape of the text, that which is the storied experience of be(com)ing Teacher. The stories I share exist as (a) layer(s) that may weave through the dissertation as a means to offer voice and openings for dialogue. In the sharing, I offer my own light as a way to add dimension and perspective throughout the textual journey across the space of this living inquiry. I seek to tangle the voices of the beginning teacher, pre-service teacher, and teacher educator as I find a way to exist and understand the struggles of being Teacher, amidst the ambiguity of being with/in the world. By tangling it is my hope to acknowledge not only my own experience or those of my students, but also invite the reader to step upon the pedagogical landscape of the text, weaving her own stories and understandings across the tangles that already exist. The landscape of the text does not offer a safe space to read of another’s experience, rather by
intertwining the voices, there is confusion. It is this confusion that I hope to embrace so that we might be able to enter into a dialogue amidst the movements of experience to name the shifts that tug at the desiring self, leaving her in a state of ambiguous excitement, longing and melancholy. By entering into dialogue might our storied fuse and shatter, moving in possibility and perception so that we might not be frozen, in our confusion, but rather enter into the crevices and cracks that lead to new understanding – that exists not in the single story, but in a collective, ever emerging, ever changing story of the private and social sel(f)es.

(s e l f) R u s h i n g  D r e a m

**Present sel(f)se**

My story of a particular experience exists in context, and what I tell/understand is a result of my age, location, education … and the list continues (Nealson & Searls-Giroux, 2003). It is my responsibility to constantly reflect on what is being seen/said, my

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10 Collage is the act of collective (re)creation where multiple discourses and sel(f)es come together to (re)present a moment. Please refer to page 76 where the concept of collage is explained in further detail.
interpretation and what shapes that interpretation; certainly someone else studying the exact same moment may perceive the whole experience very differently (Rosaldo, 1989). By opening up the space of experience and understanding to something that is complicated and collective, I invite my research and teaching to enter into the OM, becoming something more than a revalidation of what I already know; instead there becomes a new presence that offers varied perspectives, tangling stories of my/self with those of the other. In the tangles we move together – individuals existing upon the land – our paces are varied, movements distinct; but we are no longer alone. As I move aware that I am not alone, I gain insight, “… that depth of understanding that comes by setting experiences, yours and mine, familiar and exotic, new and old, side by side learning to let them speak to one another” (Bateson, 1994, p.14). Sharon Todd (2003) reminds me change is not possible without this communal relationship that calls for question and change within acceptance of self in relation to the other.  

The Other signifies a limitless possibility for the self, and it is by coming face to face with such limitlessness that the self can exceed its own containment, its own self-identity, breaking the solitude of being for the self. In this view teaching is only possible if the self is open to the Other, to the face of the Other. Through such openness to what is exterior to the I, the I can become something different than or beyond, what it was; in short it can learn (Todd, p.30).

11 I acknowledge Todd’s capitalization of Other; however, throughout the text I have chosen to reflect upon Irigaray’s (2004) thought that this capitalization separates Other from the self freezing subjectivity and knowing. Therefore, across the space of this dissertation I have chosen to leave self and other open by not capitalizing them, thus embracing the possibility of fragmentation and fusing of un/knowing.
No longer alone, I am not afraid of losing my footing, my ‘reality.’ Without fear we can challenge the elements that confine one along the path of Truth, opening up spaces for new possibilities, new ways of knowing that shift with every footstep along the search.

**journey**

Here are words written down—
footprints on sand,
cloud formations.

Tomorrow
I’ll be gone.
- Call me by my true names (in Thich Naht Hanh, 2001)

“Recognizing you means or implies respecting you as other, accepting that I stop before you as before something insurmountable, a mystery, a freedom that will never be mine, a subjectivity that will never be mine, a mine that will never be mine” (Irigary, 2004, p.8).

There is a certain loss that lays itself over Irigaray’s words, “a mine that will never be mine,” might I then believe that my experience, myself has gone, be(com)ing that which is lost, which might never have been? By embracing the notion of poststructuralist re/search within pedagogy, I am able to seek in a manner that allows me to move beyond the complex bindings of a desperate Truth, built upon my un/conscious desire for immortality; my search becomes something more than simply a destination or quest for acknowledgement. No instead, through the process of spiritual and embodied writing that recognizes the other both with/in and outside myself, my search becomes collective –

moving
across space and time

while acknowledging the shifts, stories, and confusion that evolves – opening up spaces for new moments of unified understanding and self production (Norman, 2001). This unity of understanding as such is spiritual in nature as it allows for the individual to move in presence – aware of connection, existing in this space yet remaining honored as a self, subjective yes, but also alive to each unique and messy (Jardine, 1997) experience that crosses the individual’s path. Entrapment is not necessary, if I loosen the reigns of my attachment to a self defined experience. As I loosen my attachment, stirring the waters of my narcissistic gaze, I open spaces for multiple voices to enter in to and move outside the experience, I discover I do not experience in isolation (Norman, 2001). My voice is no longer silenced as multiple selves and others join in the OM of experience and question.

As these voices echo across the psyche of a single self, I find myself experiencing a spiritual push – moving me to become present outside of the single facet of my isolated story. I discover that I am in fact not alone – my perspective may have been different – but others too, see and question, feel pain and learn. My stories do not simply exist for me as a means to honor my silenced selves; they exist as a part of the collective story of the living (Davies, 2000) that allows for a sort of strength and spiritual unity. When I am fully present, “… really there, (I) … appreciate the presence of the other” (Thich Naht
Hanh, 1998) – that of earth and body - One is always in sight of the other, able to offer a hand, a question, a thoughtful response – we are no longer attached to the boundaried path of singular experience instead we are free to get lost in the woods of our stories – all the while knowing if we shout for direction and insight – some One will be there.

Subjective existence

Re/Marking momentary inscription

The (re)marks I make upon the page are simply reflections of a re/turn to experience and question as I seek to position myself within context of research. I move across this textual terrain relating my self to other thus to create the spatial space for the OM. Rather than establishing a foundation for my/self, or the single facet of an
experience to be viewed as spectacle or Truth, I invite dialogue so that we might leave multiple marks upon the fluid landscape of self and experience. Through inter/textual dialogue, I seek to offer up a theoretical space that invites reflexivity and praxis on the part of all who are involved in the journey. Lather (1986) comments on the possibilities of open theory, proposing that:

Theory adequate to the task of changing the world must be open-ended, non-dogmatic, informing, and grounded in the circumstances of everyday life; and moreover, it must be premised on a deep respect for the intellectual and political capacities of the dispossessed (Lather, 1986, p.262).

Like the confusion between the marks of religion and reflection of the spirit, there also exists a confusion when one seeks to name self and method within teaching and research. There is no dogma established within this space of spiritual un/knowing and aporiatic practice, my experience does not stand above our outside that of the other; rather through the OM of our collective subjectivities – we may begin to claim responsibility as we take our own steps upon the landscape of understanding.

I have a story too
Tell
Spoken
Outward
Inward
Tight within the clench of my fist
My story
Does not breathe
I do not
Want
You
to see it

to love

or hate me

I just want

the story to be

as it was

And will be

Always ...

the word

echoes across the space of religions that claim Truth, but too always echoes across the landscape of a fearing self. As I reflect, pulling away the brambles that confuse ideology with purpose, I become aware that all too often I seek to leave the mark of my (momentary) Truth, so that my story, my voice may not be forgotten, my life becoming somehow immortal. But I forget that life and death are intertwined, for even in loss of Truth there comes a rebirth. I acknowledge the way I seek is rooted in a history that continues to breathe lightly upon each movement I make upon the textual and actual space of research and pedagogy, but it is now joined by the multiple breathes of prismatic knowing which exists across space and time.

I now have a ‘choice,’ I can claim knowledge, moving blindly through the ideological space of the single faceted social or look deeply into the pool of my own knowing. Re-writing Narcissus, Renee Norman (2001) invites us to see self-reflection as that which is not simply isolated; rather she offers the notion of the “mirror world” where others enter into our gaze, shifting the nature of understanding. Considering research as spiritual, I build on this notion of the other; as we examine the waters of experience the
OM begins to stir the water, allowing for the fluidity of understanding to move across our reflections of knowing. My actions and understandings are a result of a larger landscape, a landscape whose waters I am capable of interacting, to reach new levels of understanding while claiming responsibility for the actions of my (re)searcher self. Accepting responsibility and my role within the spiritual space of the collective story (Davies, 2000), I become aware that the concept of always sends a violent chill across the waters of understanding, freezing those possibilities that might lead to transformation.

In rejecting the notion of dogma or a single faceted Truth, what then happens to the mark of my desire for validation? Do I remain forever lost within the echoes of the other, or do I become somehow grounded, allowing for the seedlings of experience to take root. In the OM, I recognize that I mustn’t reduce the other to my/self, for in the reduction or in/corporation of self and other, something or some/one becomes lost (Irigaray, 2002). Instead I become one who morphs through the slips, textures,

and reverberations

that shape my communal journey. While the self transforms, so too do definitions of rootedness, self, and understanding. No longer do I leave my mark upon a living tree that I assume will never change; instead I invite others to join me in the OM of a collective mark making, recognizing that the marks will weather, eroding over time becoming something else – and every so often across space and time, the echo of another’s voice might also leave a mark. In the marking, knowledge is no longer fixed but shifting
and these shifts are something to be celebrated in the understanding that life as spiritual and embodied, cannot be owned by one single self or group as we have been raised to believe (Irigaray, 2002). My self does not exist in isolation as I embrace my role in an emerging dialogue with/in the OM that echoes across the landscape(s) of experience.

**Embodied (un)knowing**

It is not enough to claim aparigraha or connection with the other, the process of re/turning and re/marking in re/search and teaching is that which demands an active awareness to the light of emotion and body with/in experience – as such research becomes embodied. Just as we learn to stray on the outward path, freeing ourselves from notions of Truth or ultimate destination, so to must we learn to stray inward (Lymburner, 2004). Attention to that which moves me outside the body, now begins to reflect upon my inner experience. Turning to explore the shifting and multiple layers within the kaleidoscope of the embodied self, I begin to see that which I had overlooked, feared and silenced within myself. I begin to recognize too, that there are shadowed spaces where the light is not ready to shine. All these shadowed spaces hold the tools of the social that inscribe upon the body its positions and assignments (Cranny-Francis, 1995), those that too often remain in the darkness, holding the embodied self in captivity. It is the presence of breathe (Irigaray, 2002) in this (s)p(l)ace of inquiry where I find myself finding a sense
of spiritual (Wilson-Kind, 2004) enlightenment and freedom, as those shadowed spaces and voices I had overlooked become a part of something I can interact with. Through interaction with/in the multi-facets of momentary knowing, I am no longer locked within a specific Truth; as I know Truth exists simply as a reflection of the bindings upon the self. Through reflection I can slip out of the bindings of Truth to open myself up to new positions, possibilities and awakenings (Cranny-Francis, 1995). No longer bound, I find in the unfolding of my new knowledge and discovery of aporia within the lived experience, I have new responsibilities that are not limited to any given moment or person, but rather extend outward as the landscape of self becomes that of the universe. In re/turning and re/marking, I am no longer a victim that seeks the knowledge or recognition of my own victimization; instead I am transformed (be)coming to a place of reflexivity, praxis, and opened enlightenment.
By alternating between moving and resting, going towards the other and turning back within oneself, spiritual evolution and the irradiating of the body by a more subtle energy, a duration is woven which, certainly differs from a linear course or perpetual repetition of tautology (Irigaray, 2004, p. 28)
Chapter III

With/in the (re)search

The point we are seeking to reach is where we can act directly in the present. Direct action stems from direct perception, the ability to see reality in the present, as it is, without prejudice and act accordingly. This is what it truly means to live in the present moment (Iyengar, 137)

Windows

There is a broken window in my (re)membered classroom and it is through this window that I can begin to see myself as a woman, artist, researcher, and educator. It is through the textures of layered image and word that I am able to linger with/in those spaces that I have accepted as being what I do and believe across the territories upon which I have been positioned. My art-making is not a solitary act of inquiry or in/sight, rather – by making art I am able invite the voices of other experiences into the chorus and as such the images become part of a collective, fragmented and evolving understanding of the state of being Teacher. Each image or knowing exists temporally, for a moment there is a glimpse of a reality that across time shifts to become something else. There is little linearity across this process, rather, as I have mentioned before, I begin with the rhizome (Delueze and Guattari, 1987; Davies, 2000; Springgay, 2004), beginning in the midst as the subjectivity of those selves involved rarely moves across a simple line. Moving in the midst of the living inquiry, I am able to work toward choreographing my own improvisation (Janesick, 2000) of understanding, my body moving within the shards
of multiple ways of making sense of experience. Knowing is confused with/in experience and the discourses that make additions and wear holes upon the perceptions of one with/in and reflecting upon experience begin to become a part of the image, allowing one to gaze further within the living space of inquiry.

**A/r/toography**

A/R/Tography (Irwin; Wilson; DeCossen; Springgay, 2005) allows me to (un)fold image and text into something that opens up spaces for multiple interpretation and ways of knowing. The process of art-making as inquiry echoes the confusion of being within the experience by re-creating the metaphor of the experience. I consider the process to be one of experiential reflection, where in the confusion one grasps to find new ways of seeing through the fog of what one believes to be Reality. There is no clear beginning or end to this type of inquiry as it both begins and exists amidst moments that flow in and out of one another – reverberations (Luce-Kapler, 1997; Irwin, Wilson, DeCossen and Springgay, 2005) being shaped and shaping the subjectivity of those involved in the process. There is often dis/comfort in the act of un/folding self into a collective moment – as one’s senses are affected through each rhythm of image and text. But it is the rhythms of the intertextual spaces between image and word that allow one to hear the whispers of those others who exist with/in us. Rebecca Luce-Kapler (1997) believes that our understandings as researchers are ‘filtered’ and each one of us has the responsibility to tell the story, but acknowledge too that “The writer is the data, the data is the writer. The writer that initiates the research becomes implicated, the research bespeaks her; she bespeaks the research” (187). I am the research, yet by creating a texture of openness
through the blending of genres across space, I seek to invite multiple interpretations – to shatter the glass of my knowing so that it might become something else. Text and image are positioned in ways that allow the reader to (re)create and (re)interpret meaning into personal and public possibility.

As illustrated in the layered variations of color, media, and word of ‘Circling Sel(f)es,’ meaning is fluid – easily shifting across various levels of consciousness, disrupting what is known. Janesick (2000) identifies, “too often we become comfortable in our worlds”(392), resistant to examining understanding from perspectives that seem to disrupt our sense of place within the world. By using a/r/tography (Springgay, Irwin, Wilson-Kind, DeCossen, 2004), I am able provide a textual landscape that asks all involved to be present as fragments of poetry, theatre, image, and prose fuse together, becoming the story of them moment. The story is unpredictable and un/comfortable as
each new voices enters upon the landscape, no longer can one be complacent within a perceived ‘reality;’ instead, the voices fuse their own shards of subjectivity upon the text – allowing for a more crystallized experience of the un/known.

…the central image is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter, but are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, and arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends on our angle of repose (Richardson, 2000, p.934)\textsuperscript{12}

The performative nature of A/R/Tography (Irwin, DeCossen, Springgay, Kind, 2005) provides the space to blend and merge the facets of both that which one believes she knows and that which she might question with/in a postmodern world. I find, in the blurring of genres, I am able to move further – finding myself and getting lost upon an unfixed labyrinth of truths where “excess, openings, reverberations, living inquiry, and metaphor/metonymy” get caught up in the tangle of being present to the un/knowing (Springgay, Irwin, Wilson, 2004).

Exploration cannot be fixed within a particular genre, for like the world around us, there are variations in terrain and we must move through this geography – adapting, becoming and losing along our journey. As such being the case, my story of the (re)search evolves through an inquiry process of multiplicities, fragments of expression

\textsuperscript{12} Janesick (2000) also references Richardson’s consideration of the process of crystallization as an ‘answer’ to the more traditional work of triangulation. As a poststructuralist researcher, I cannot triangulate to prove validity – instead only break down understanding to allow multiple ways of interpretation to become part of the (re)search text.
coming together in performance (Pollock, 1998) as I seek to be present to the many aspects of being and moving upon this landscape of be(com)ing Teacher – by dancing (Janesick, 2000) in and out of textured language and image. Fusing the shards of collecting experience such as poetry, image, open spaces, reflected fiction, collage and being open to those other system of signs that may evolve along the way, I might begin to honor the understanding of this particular moment of (re)searching the movements of be(com)ing Teacher, and those competing discourses that inform and position my knowing and un/knowing along this un/marked trail.

I move along this un/marked trail aware of my own presence within the story, I shape the story and am shaped by the story, just as all of those who may choose to enter upon this textual landscape. Laurel Richardson (2000) discusses this notion in her discussion of CAP ethnography, that which “displays the writing process as deeply
intertwined; both are privileged. The product cannot be separated from the producer or the mode of production or the method of knowing” (236). I agree firmly with Richardson, and believe it is important to honor the particular spaces and moments of knowing both as part of the subject and object – moving through the inquiry process with/in and with/out the text. For as Irigaray (2003) notes, through the recognition of the other, we might be able to enter the dialogic space of hope and possibility, a space that can be neither named or predicted without claiming something that cannot exist outside Truth. Noting the embeddedness of self and other within the process of inquiry, I find myself hesitant to fully embrace specific criteria for what might be considered arts-based (Barone&Eisner, 1988) or even multi-genre research (Romano, 1995), for boundaries of what ‘should be’ restrain the voices of those with/in experience. Instead, the landscape I begin to etch out opens spaces for multiple subjectivities to move and share and collectively be(com)ing, even if only for a moment.

But even in the collectivity there is a certain discomfort locked within the possibility. Pollock (1998) considers:

all discourse is encompassed within a multilayered, reflexive, reproductive ‘text’, rise questions, trembling with imperatives for performance: what words remain to the body are at once abject by history and abstract by textuality? How then can we speak? What is or might be, purview of writing/performing subject? How might performative writing not only speak the surrounding darkness but hail loss and lost pleasure in the place of rank commodification (74).

(Re)turning to my own experiences of being and observing, I have come to believe that these struggles are not simply intellectual or emotional, but rather they also
arise from the body. It is this same body that Greene (1973) notes often becomes invisible in doing the work of be(com)ing Teacher. Thus as I ask what are those emotional movements experienced, I must also consider how it is that one might move through the opaqueness of this space.

(Re)turning to the Performance: theatrical representations of teacher

Teaching is a practice of performance, but as a teacher educator I consider the practice of be(com)ing teacher as students work through their own improvisations or grasp on to those scripts that have come before. Reflecting upon Dewey’s suggestions for teachers, Sarason (1999) observes the concept of performance within teaching, remarking:

Although he never put it in these terms, it is obvious that Dewey regarded the teacher as performer, someone who took on or manifested certain characteristics considered necessary to affect her audience in specified ways, and indeed, to meet their expectations of what a teacher should be like and how an audience should respond (42).

Pre-service teachers often find themselves negotiating to make sense of the characteristics of teacher determined by those out/side themselves. I reflect back upon my own work of preparation; however, this work is in another place altogether – as I prepare myself for the stage role of Laurie in Oklahoma. To know my character, to be(com)e believable in my performance I had to examine both the external and internal factors that shaped my understanding and actions. This method, developed by Stanaslavski (1936) offers those be(com)ing teacher, and myself as artist, teacher, and (re)searcher, the opportunity to look deeply at that which shapes one’s conceptions of
Teacher. Through their performances both intentional and unintentional, I encourage students be(come) present to the discourses that frame their own evolving pedagogies. Our interpretations are varied, I try to offer the same space for this varied interpretation across the textual landscape of this dissertation sharing observations and then analysis that breaks into poetry and image, calling for further reflection on the process of be(com)ing Teacher. I play with font to make my own voice visible, shattering any notion of authority within my own interpretation.

They have set a scene for their fellow pre-service teachers ... a classroom where learning takes place they way believe it shouldn’t. The teacher calls someone to the front of the room – to dictate to classmates as they take notes. Most students are working diligently trying to grab each word read – at least to transpose to the page. There is one student who sits in the back slouching, he leans over and whispers “this class is so lame, I can’t stand Mr. Whatchmacallhim.” His disinterest grabs the interest of the more diligent students ... who begin to wiggle in their own spots uncomfortably. The teacher ignores the student, but again the student leans over and whispers, this time asking what another’s plans are for the weekend. At that moment the teacher stops all action in the class – coming over to the talker and removing him from his seat-demanding that he go sit next to a quieter student. He returns to the student doing the dictation – reminding the class to write everything they think is important. But the challenge between the ‘disruptive student’ and teacher is far from over. As the dictation continues, the student begins to write intently – but he is not taking the dictation – instead he is creating a rendering of his teacher and sharing it with the student on his right. As laughter erupts, the teacher turns a deep purple and drops his books down on the floor – screaming “GO STAND IN THE
CORNER.” The student continues to seek the attention of those around him, but he is now in the background, easy to be ignored.

Resistance

Mumbles

Rumbling upon the psyche

Of the one

Becoming

Who will be

Recognized

Silenced

Standing in the corner

Yet in becoming the oppressor

Creating the object

There is Pleasure

In the Offer

Of A new way of seeing

Within the spaces of my own interpretation, I invite you to make your own marks, repositioning the postures of interpretation around the needs of your own subjectivity – making the necessary adjustments crossing out that which might make not make sense, adding what might be needed. The performance, never truly ends as each interpretation changes the act.
**Inter(play)tations of being difference**

To consider the nature of interpretation, look at the image *Lucifer’s Daydreams*: what is it you see? Perhaps it is a blurring of color that seems to be more of a mistake than an intentional image. Or maybe you see a bird struggling to fly outside the flames? Or is it hell that you see across the waves of red and orange? I do not believe it is necessary to believe that any one of these interpretations is wrong; rather, it is important to consider the historical and social positioning of the creator of the interpretation. Through the process of naming the image, the reader becomes a co-creator of the image. Barthes (1977) identifies this relationality across the dialogue of image creation and interpretation, remarking: “The language of the image is not merely the totality of utterances emitted …, it is also the totality of utterances received: language must include the ‘surprises’ of meaning”(47). As I consider my own intentions and understanding across that which I create to make sense of my ‘knowing,’ I recognize that the process is fluid and dialogic, evolving as new voices utter the experience of interaction across the text; thus shifting the context and character of the language and story of the experience.

Main Entry: ¹posture

Pronunciation: ‘pās-chər

Function: noun

Etymology: French, from Italian *postura*, from Latin *positura*, from *positus*, past participle of *ponere* to place -- more at POSITION

1 a : the position or bearing of the body whether characteristic or assumed for a special purpose <erect posture> b : the pose of a model or artistic figure

2 : state or condition at a given time especially with respect to capability in particular circumstances <maintain a competitive posture in the market>

3 : a conscious mental or outward behavioral attitude  

Merriam-Webster
Consider the yogi working through various postures, no individual will be positioned in the same way, instead, bone structure, shape, and flexibility position how one looks upon the mat. It is the shared variations of being that add dimensionality to the ways in which we perceive and move with/in experience. Iyengar (1976) asks:

Where does the body end and the mind begin? Where does the mind end and the spirit begin? They cannot be divided as they are inter-related and but different aspects of the same all pervading divine consciousness (41).

This divine consciousness that Iyengar refers to is not one of separateness or Truth, rather it arises through the breathe of the collective and different sel(f)es. Breathing we are able to grow, gaining a sense of strength and presence as we practice our subjectivities through experience. It is this practice Iyengar (1976) notes that helps one gain equilibrium as subjectivities balance and it is through this balancing that our attention and awareness shifts toward that which we can no longer claim, that which is connected to the universal OM. Irigaray (2002) remarks:

It is not, therefore, a question of uttering truth valid once and for all but of trying to make a gesture, faithful to the reality of yesterday and to that of today, that indicates a path toward more continuity, less tearing apart, more interiority, concentration, harmony—in me, between me and the living universe, between me and other(s), if that is or becomes possible, as I hope it is, given respect for the living universe and its temporality (22).

As self moves through the postures of being one with the living universe, she may grow in attentiveness, becoming open to the fragile and fluid nature of un/knowing. It is this awareness that offers possibilities for further fusing of the fragments of the subjective experience of being.
I am alone
in my space
thinking
re/turning to the experience
I try to remember
the feelings
the thoughts
my body becomes tense
I breathe
allowing my thoughts to transform
my being
in this moment
what are the negotiations of be(com)ing
Teacher?
I consider
I see a reflection of myself in the glass
variations of color
my body
mind moving
I take a hammer to the glass
the sound surprises me
it does not jar
or demand notice
instead it is soft
pieces varied
the colors have changed
shifted
some have moved
away
while others have come together,
overlapping
Again I see
my/sel(f)es a reflection in the glass
I focus my camera on this image
momentary
shifting
of multiple lines and shades
to be considered by me
or you
or who
Is this be(com)ing?
The movements made with/in experience exist both as memory and that which dis/rupts and interrogates our understandings upon the text of living inquiry (Irwin, deCossen, Springgay, Wilson Kind, 2005). I remark throughout my inquiry using both image and poetry, upon the delight, excitement, confusion, and feelings of loss that occur; hoping that within the inquiry I might place my ear upon the ambiguity of these notions, offering up what they might be for one – and as such, offering up possibilities of what they might be for another. My inquiry invites the body to enter into the dialogue, as a means to explore the body performing and becoming something that it may not have intended. The struggle that I inquire into is not something that I believe can be named; there are only fragments within the (collective) story that might lay brush strokes of what is or what might have been, across the landscape of the text. To attend to this struggle in questioning can be a dangerous act as one may return to painful aspects of the self that they might not be ready to face; however it is the danger that invites praxis by actively engaging multiple aspects of the self. Wilson-Kind (2005) explores this further as she considers the work of Ted Aoki, attending that embracing loss allows one to come face to face with experience, “Opening ourselves to the daily struggles we bring to our work, our teaching, learning, and to our research”(44). How is it, that one might be able to enter into this unsettling space?
**Fused fragmentation of the (un)known experience**

Through my own work with the (un)fused glass, I attempt to enter into the unsettling space of the lived experience of researcher, teacher, woman, and artist. As I have mentioned across the early moments of this dissertation, the practice of fused glasswork operates as a metaphor for subjectivity and temporality of sel(f)es across experience. Yet for me, as one re/searching, the process of working with the glass allows my search to be(come) embodied as process and product tangle and fold across my consciousness. Stephenson (2005) quotes Eisner (1997) as she considers the value of the image as a tool for sense making: “pictures depict, they show us what things, places, and people look like (5)” (162). When one begins to look at the image of fused glass, sel(f)es and experience are reflected and infused upon the sense of what is to be seen, to know. Like poststructuralist re/search, the image is varied across time, relating to multiple factors such as light and position. Each person who engages with the glass recognizes fragments, looks and different lines and spaces that might not appear present to some. Diamond and van Halen-Faber (2005) use a different metaphor to reflect upon this process, remarking:

> We are weaving fabric fragments into new forms. Thus, in arts-based educational research and teacher development, we are constantly refabricating and sewing together isolated shreds of experience into new bodies if experienced knowledge of events, including those relating to self (82).

Working with glass, to fuse fragments across space is similar to this refabrication that Diamond and van Halen-Faber (2005) consider; however, the reflective nature of the glass allows one to both see and dis/rupt what they believe as the known experience.
As a way to make sense of this process, I want to return to the definitions:

My re/search is a collective process, through which I gather fragments positioning them in ways that might seem appealing to me, coming up with a final product. But the finality of the piece I create is only temporary as my/sel(f)es and others begin to act on the piece, shattering or cutting the image, melting fragments into one another, creating

---

13 The image once a distinct pendant is blurred, extended by my own manipulation. One might consider this in terms of knowing through re/search – through experience we re-shape what is seen, blurring absolutes.
bubbles, openings, and cracks. As individuals come together in this piecing process we are embraced by the OM of a collective un/knowing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Entry:</th>
<th>1 glass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation:</td>
<td>'glas, 'gl[a]s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function:</td>
<td>noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usage:</td>
<td>often attributive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etymology:</td>
<td>Middle English glas, from Old English geolu yellow -- more at YELLOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 : any of various amorphous materials formed from a melt by cooling to rigidity without crystallization: as a : a usually transparent or translucent material consisting especially of a mixture of silicates b : a material (as obsidian) produced by fast cooling of magma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 a : something made of glass: as (1) : TUMBLER; also : GLASSWARE (2) : MIRROR (3) : BAROMETER (4) : HOURGLASS (5) : BACKBOARD</td>
<td>b (1) : an optical instrument or device that has one or more lenses and is designed to aid in the viewing of objects not readily seen (2) : FIELD GLASSES, BINOCULARS -- usually used in plural c plural : a device used to correct defects of vision or to protect the eyes that consists typically of a pair of glass or plastic lenses and the frame by which they are held in place -- called also eyeglasses, spectacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 : the quantity held by a glass container</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 : FIBERGLASS</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The nature of the glass allows us to see beyond those truths that we might once have accepted blindly, but our seeing will always shift as new fragments and voices are added into the process. Across the space of this dissertation, all text takes on the nature of the fused glass.
Textual representations of teaching and learning sel(f)es

Writing in the moment we find ourselves ...

Each semester I share with my students, Natalie Goldberg’s (1990) ‘rules of the writing practice’:

1. Keep your hand moving
2. Lose control
3. Be specific
4. Don’t Think
5. Don’t worry about punctuation, spelling, grammar
6. You are free to write the worst junk in America
7. Go for the jugular. (1-5).

The rules she shares are not those that bind, but rather, like the breathe, they free the writer from the ‘monkey mind’ that sits upon her shoulder, questioning her every choice. Writing without the ever present self editor allows one to enter upon the terrain of the psyche, exploring fantasy and fear, experience and image where moments may come colliding to become something altogether different. Annie Dillard (1989) explores this process of moving and becoming within the writing, observing:
When you write, you lay out a line of words. The line of words is a miner’s pick, a wood carver’s gouge, a surgeon’s probe. You wield it, and it digs a path to follow. Soon you find yourself in new territory. Is it a dead end, or have you located the real subject? You will know tomorrow, or this time next year.

Writing reveals, and hides various aspects of the self in relationship to the world – moving in and out of discourses until one claims, or is momentarily lost within the space, but this is all part of the process of becoming. This process of be/coming is especially important within inquiry as it moves one to look more deeply at the subjective self moving across space and time, coming to a brief understanding of experience. Desire and reality exist together shifting and adapting as one realizes neither is fixed. Through the writing process pre-service teachers return to who the want and fear they might become.

I am constantly in motion, moving with my students. We are having fun. I am laughing so hard I start to cry. I am inspired by my students, and I am inspiring my students. The smell of the room is sweet. I am pleased that every dream I have ever had is coming true. The children are laughing and falling around. They never had so much fun in school. They don’t want to leave, never grow up. They think their teacher is the best. But they know a time will come when they have to leave me. They are only in Kindergarten, but they know no one can change their mind about school. They love it and don’t want to leave it. I have given them a new place to go, something great to enjoy. Yes, this is my heaven.

Love and joy dance up/on my psyche
Inspiration and play
Exist
in a place of learning
a place where others have failed
to inspire
perhaps have failed to inspire me
but today
I will be successful
My students will love me
in my heaven

I am in the image
but the image is not me
existing in temporality
light of new moments
shines upon
the fragments of an (un)known self
bleeding experience
across the crystallization
of my subjectivity
flowing light
upon my perception

Reverberation
Visual representations of be(com)ing

The visual arts can serve as a way to return, to move forward as one explores the relationship between the conscious and unconscious as they move about interacting with those discourses that position the self within specific contexts.

Drawing and the fusing of collage, provide individuals with different opportunities for interaction. Through the act of drawing one moves through color and image to re/create specific dreams – ‘real’ or imagined. Mitchell and Weber (1995) point out:

Much of what we have seen or known, thought or imagined, remembered or repressed, slips unbidden into our drawings, revealing unexplored ambiguities, contradictions and connections. The which we have forgotten, that which we might censor from our speech and writing, often escapes into our drawings (34)
The fusing of collage invites the participant to directly engage with and involve those images outside the self, that define and disgust the creator. Charles Garoian (2002) considers the potential for the collage to be a performative and “…reflexive process whereby students learn to mime and resist their bodies’ inscription and oppression by the rarified codes of academic culture” (218). This process moves beyond the traditional academic structures of text as participants and creators, join together to engage in multiple discourses and ways of knowing as they negotiate across their renderings of self in the world.

“Students events and experiences molding me”

a “person/teacher I am”

children “radiate way for the heart”

children “enter into the world”

14 All images without a given name are those representations of teaching sel(f)es created by students. Whether an image has been given a name or not, whether they have been created as part of my own re/search of part of the work of my students – interpretations are meant to be dis/rupted and analyzed, always evolving to become something else, to someone else.
“I will ALWAYS teach with all of my heart”
“bring all of me in/to the classroom”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>desire and intention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a curiosity of the self and experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>moving beyond simply the self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to love</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>an other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>connected yet a shadow self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a/part</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With each image, those created by my students and those that evolve out of my own trying to make sense of experience, I attempt to fuse self and other, teacher educator and pre-service teacher - allowing the echoes of my own momentary understanding to come into play within the inquiry, often in the form of poetry. It is in these poetic spaces that I hope that those who begin by reading might also imag(in)e their own ways of understanding the movements of be(com)ing Teacher.

I forgot who I was
One morning
The damp winter air
Running
Through my veins
Mixed
With the thickness of chalkboard dust
Each breathe
Labored
The contractions so strong
My vision is clouded
I could no longer stand.

Getting ‘lost’ in the response

In seeking answers along a path of brambles and broken destinations, the text of my body/my stories becomes something else, marked not only by my new and fluid understandings but by the voices that join me along the journey bridging the spaces between self and other (Slattery, 2000) across the landscapes of a (re)searched experience. This dialogical journey is “linked by love, hope, mutual trust, (allowing self and other a space so) they can join in a critical search for something” (Freire, 1973, p.45), a something that exists beyond the space of imagination and desire.

And so I enter into the midst so that I might begin to create and involve myself with the images of my understanding of Teacher; but even at this beginning, I have been here before and will return – somehow new. What are the movements, I ask myself? I write of what I believe I know and see, words of experience enter upon the page as I remember and re-experience my life as Teacher. My words and images do not linger alone as I seek to tangle multiple renderings of teacher upon the collage of the struggles of being Teacher. The positions upon the textual landscape of this personal and collective inquiry begin with the question, both to myself and those pre-service teachers I have worked with – who is it that you are as teacher? I ask this question both as a means to get students to begin the process of reflection, but also to shed light on those broken shards of experience that have begun to flood both my own and my students’ perception.
The responses are varied in image and word, momentary renderings of ‘reality’ and dream. Each might stand alone – to represent a single moment or thought, however as I delve into the space of inquiry my understanding shifts as does the textual and performative landscape of my inquiry, with the variations of tone and thought - belonging to those who enter into the dialogue.

(Im)possibilities of the fragmented dialogue

Poststructuralist theory serves as the lens that acknowledges the confusion of the collective be(com)ing of each participant’s subjectivity across specific contexts. Nealon and Searl-Giroux (2003) remark on the possibilities of this clarifying/confusing lens of poststructuralism by stating that “… it is when you don’t know or can’t figure out the underlying structures of meaning that the existence of these structures becomes more apparent”(134). By seeking out that which is being said and unsaid and breaking down those structures that shape the truths of participants, multiple images and stories unfold – but can never be claimed as ultimate truths existing outside a single moment; knowing slowly slips through the hand of discourse and one is left to redefine that which she believed to be real (Weedon, 1997). The stories of the moment become renderings that exist as “visual, aesthetic, textual, and educational performances that play alongside one another, reverberating in excess” (Spinggay et al., 2005) For as Shoshana Felman (1997) reminds us, there is no totalizable knowledge nor can we totalize ignorance, instead I believe it is important to be present to that which exists in the single moment, looking into the depths of the image and emotion, until one is almost lost. While lost the researcher searches breaking through the boundaries of the moment to become part, but
not completely, of the collected stitches and folds that create an image of something both known and unknown. It is through this unfolding or untangling of images and texts that the reader may be invited to become a participant within the dialogue of unraveling the movements of being and becoming teacher (Wilson, 2004 Lather, 2003).

Language that can adequately, or almost adequately, speak forth the truths of human experience, must itself be living; and sense those truths are always somewhat dark, kaleidoscopic and elusive, and appropriate language will to some extent, and with chosen controls, reflect those qualities (Wheelright, 1962, pp. 43).

The story of the movements of be(com)ing of Teacher unfolds through an interactive text of living inquiry, in which text is defined as that which communicates and symbolizes the deepest form of experience/interaction for the participants and writer(s). The notions of loss and rupture with/in the context of a pre-service teacher’s ‘reality’ are those which might be embraced allowing for “openings,” “slippages,” and “displaced meaning” (Springgay, Irwin & Wilson, 2004) providing both the researcher and those who choose to step onto the page the space to move about this kaleidoscope of knowing, peeking into the shadowy spaces to come to a new sense of knowing and possibility.

**Mindful multiplicities**

Reflecting upon the textual renderings of these spaces, I find myself considering the movement of be(com)ing Teacher, through the lens of my own experience as teacher. My experiences of struggle across the context of the classroom and my/self belong to me and continue to chip away and evolve responding the nature of being within the world. However, it is by recognizing the other that exists with/in my self and story that I am able
to move into a dialogic space (Irigaray, 2004) of pedagogical possibility. My story is one, like perhaps for all of us, which is rid with emotion and a sense of purpose that I fear, without keen attention might cast a shadow upon the possibilities that could exist as I tell the story of myself as teacher. My story is in a sense my own, but at the same time, across this textual landscape, I seek to disrupt my story by offering up spaces within image and text – inviting the voices of self and other to become collaborative authors in the space of living inquiry. This collective dance of confusing experience is one that invites both discomfort and aporia (deCossen, 2005); however as we begin to unfold and (un)tangle the layers of story, marking our own graffiti (Grumet, 1988) of subjectivity upon the text, we begin to move upon a landscape holding spaces of ever evolving, pedagogical possibility.

As I search it is not enough for me to embrace a particular method of writing, as I want to explore as many caverns and silences among the particular vocalizations that
exist upon the page. My voice is actively involved and present on this quest, for as Rebecca Luce-Kapler (1997) remarks of her own experience working with women in a writing group, there are consequences of remaining hidden within the text of research:

If I remain hidden in the research text, then I can be a women speaking for other women relating “our” experiences of writing in the world. But that is to write from the patriarchy; to leave oneself open to assumptions. I have to add my voice to many, but stand up and be heard. Take responsibility for the research I am writing; the writing I have researched (193).

While acknowledging my own role and place within the journey of research, I believe it is important too, to consider the place and space of research upon the page. The blurring of genres offers a rendering of the confusing nature of the world around us, there are variations in terrain and we must move through this geography – adapting, becoming and losing along our journey.

Entangled (un)known

Text and image tangle as the understandings of the movements of be(com)ing Teacher begin to unravel and break, leaving the reader and writer to ponder the structures
that position them within the context of vocation. There is no single answer to the struggle, there is no single struggle; instead what exists upon the landscape of this dissertation is the aparigraphic breaks of being that invite one to enter into the pedagogical dialogue of experience and possibility. It is the dis/comfort and aporia (DeCossen, 2005) of a/r/tography that leads to multiple stories shattering across the landscape of understanding the struggle of being and becoming Teacher. Each shard of experience shared through what I strive to offer as an open textual space, invites one to be openly present to what is, or was, or what perhaps was that which was imagined. It is through this presence and aparigraha that we might release and claim the desired possibility of agency with/in that which may bind, thus growing within the context of being Teacher – ever evolving as subject and always be/coming one who might be. The struggles remain, but the voices have begun to enter into a dialogue, claiming agency in difference and moving forward in reflexivity and possibility.
The other is one whom I shall never reach, and for that reason he/she forces me to remain in my self in order to be faithful to him/her and us, retaining our difference (Irigaray, 2004, p.9)
... we bring to life what is hidden under the words; we put our thoughts into the author’s lines, and we establish our relationships to other characters in the play, and the conditions of their lives; we filter through ourselves all the materials we receive from the author and the director; we work over them, supplementing our own imagination. The material becomes a part of us, spiritually, and even physically; our emotions are sincere, and as a result we have a truly productive activity – all of which is closely interwoven with the implications of the play (Stanislavski, 1936, p. 56).
Stepping Back in Time: what happened to who, when, in the be(com)ing?

They have arrived in the classroom, ready to learn how to become a teacher. Most of the students in this introduction to elementary education course are freshman; this is the first course they take as education majors. For some students, they know that this is what they want to do – for others there is a sense of hesitancy, waiting for some answer on their journey toward fulfilling employment. As both teacher educator and re/searcher, I invite them to begin their journey first by sharing a little bit about who they are, why it is that they are taking this class, what they hope to get from this class and perhaps a little about what they care most about. The following dramatizations are presented as a means to offer a glimpse into how students engage in considering how they might represent themselves and teachers and learners and what they believe about teaching and learning. The activities and students that are involved with/in these dramatizations exist across the course of several semesters, varied introductory education courses ranging in size from fifteen to fifty, and two different universities. While each student, course, and university was different, I will attempt to create a rendering that illustrates the nature of the experiences and the students involved.

Characters:

Elizabeth: Is a student who has just transferred to this university, she has taken many education courses before and is quite familiar with how to write lessons, she believes this is the most important thing for teachers to know.

Mike: Is a freshman who admits he is really not sure why he is taking this course. His mom has been a teacher for twenty five years and he really admires her. He figures since he likes coaching, teaching might be a good place for him to start.

Tabitha: Is a sophomore who has just changed majors. She is extremely enthusiastic about teaching, but is conflicted. She likes to look at ideas critically, often differently from her classmates yet when it comes to thinking about her teaching she reverts back to the way she was taught.
**Bobby:** Has known from the very early on that he has wanted to be a teacher. He is a freshman who is extremely excited to take the steps necessary to reach his goal.

**Nelsa:** Is a non-traditional student who really wants to be an artist, but knows she will never get a job that way. Her years as a school-age student were not easy ones and as a mother herself she sees as her own children struggle. She wants to help children find joy during their days in the classroom.

**Stella:** Is a freshman who can barely contain her excitement as she begins her coursework. She has wanted to be a teacher for as long as she can remember, she loves children and wants to be a teacher students remember and love.

**Scene I:**
It is the first day of class students have already introduced themselves to one another and are now busy at work, creating images to share for their class gallery of sel(f)es.

**Stella:** Why is it that we are drawing these pictures? I am not sure I quite get what you mean when you say “a picture that represents you and why you are here” …

**Bobby:** (staring thoughtfully at his paper) Would something like a book be ok?

**Elizabeth:** How is this relevant to teaching? When are we going to start learning something? I do have some ideas though

**Nelsa:** Good to hear someone has an idea, I am stuck – all I can think of is including images of my children.

Students continue to work and struggle, coming up with images that illustrate who they are and why they are taking this class. (lights fade)

(lights up) It is the second day of the course, students have completed their images and have taped them to the wall.
**Instructor:** I commend you all for taking the risk of exposing yourself through the creation of these self posters. I have asked you to create these posters for several reasons. First, I hope that we can establish a community of learners and in order to do that it is important to feel safe taking risks and sharing a little about ourselves. Secondly, it is important to consider the ideas and experiences that have most impacted your ideas about education. We all learn and communicate in different ways, and using the images is one way to include more people in our conversations. So to begin our conversation, we will take some time to view the images you have created for your gallery.

Students begin to move about the space, stopping to look at pictures at moments bodies move quickly from one image to the other, then there are moments where they stop – taking a moment to jot down notes so that they will remember who these people, their peers, are.

**Scene II**
Several weeks have now passed in the semester, students are becoming more comfortable with one another, continuing to share aspects of their ideas and lives. (lights up) The desks have been arranged by the students to form a circle of sorts. The students are waiting for class to begin, talking about their reading, the class they had right before, and trying to clarify questions they have about getting candidacy in the teacher education program.

**Instructor:** (passing out a pink sheet of paper) We have talked about the multiple forms of media that we use to communicate at the start of this course. For this assignment, we will take that communication one step further, by working with metaphors to represent our ideas about who we are as teachers and learners. So let us think about some possibilities for metaphors – anybody have any ideas regarding what they might do?

**Mike:** I was thinking that I might do a football because it is flexible and always moving around across the field and I think I will always be moving around as a teacher – and I know I am a person who learns best when I am moving around.
Tabitha: I was thinking about maybe doing a map because teaching is a journey.

Stella: Do you have any suggestions? What do we have to include, to get an A?

The conversation goes on as students think about the concept of metaphor and what they might use to represent themselves as teachers and learners.

Instructor: I have examples available if you are struggling how you might approach this activity; however, I am hesitant to share them with you because this is your representation and I do not want to present a template that might take away from your own ideas.

(lights down) we can hear the instructors voice fade with the lights

Scene III
It is a new day of class, the day that the students’ representations are due.

(lights up) Students mill around the room trying to find a spot for their varied posters and other creations. One student it peeling an orange, while another is taping her poster to the wall.

Instructor: In a few minutes we will begin our ‘conversations’ about how you see yourselves as teachers and learners. We have talked some about the various discourse communities that you belong to and the idea that each one of us is influenced by these communities, I encourage you to consider this as you are writing your responses to the representations you look at.

As students prepare there are a number of side conversations going on at the same time. Some of these conversations note the similarity between images, others mention the challenge of this activity, and some are even excited about their creation.
**Bobby:** I really didn’t know what to do, I don’t know anything about who I will be as a teacher, all that I know is that I will learn how to be a good teacher here. So I created a yellow brick road of the experiences that I will have here and my own personal characteristics (things that I think make someone a good teacher) that will lead me to my own classroom.

**Nelsa:** I thought it was important to consider my past experiences when I was coming up with my representation. I came up with the idea of the orange when I was getting my sons lunch ready. I like the idea because I am sweet, but there are also many sections to who I am because of the things that have happened to me in my life. Sometimes the orange gets too chewy kind of like when you are teaching and you reach an obstacle.

**Mike:** I finally decided on the basketball because I really like basketball and I want to be a coach someday.
Basketballs are always busy bouncing from one thing to the next and there is always a goal – to get the ball into the basket. Basketballs have to be created through a process and all those things come together to make something so many people can use.

Stella: On your poster you wrote a good teacher always bounces back, do you think there might be a time when you couldn’t bounce back? It seems like you sort of think teaching is easy.

Mike: I am not sure, I mean I think if you are well prepared then you will be able to bounce back from anything.

Stella: I am not so sure about that.

Conversations like this go on throughout the sharing of the representations. Students come up with images that somehow make sense to them, even if they do not always make sense to the people around them. Some accept the images as definitely related to the act of teaching and so they do not ask questions, others struggle to understand what their peers mean and try to clarify or challenge them with new ways of looking at things.

(lights fade)  

over the course of the rest of the semester students continue to ‘play’ with ideas of who they are as teachers – in their writing, drawing, and performances.

**********
All such feelings are the result of something that has gone before. Of the thing that goes before you should think as hard as you can. As for the result, it will produce itself (Stanislavsky, 1936, p. 43)
Chapter IV

Be/coming to Teacher

Stepping on to the mat

All games are meaningless if you do not know the rules. When you do, the can become very good fun. You still take a few knocks and lose a few games, but at least you are participating; you are playing the game (Iyengar, 7)

Yoga is a practice of presence and connection between self, other, and the world: It is a practice in which many beginning yogis, when they step upon the practice mat, start with a strict and focused attention to form and correctness, without an awareness of body, spirit, or relationship to the world; instead they find themselves seeking to imitate the images or follow the ‘rules’ of yoga that echo across their consciousness. The desire is similar for many entering the practice of be(com)ing Teacher; students step into the space of preparation seeking to know the ‘rules’ so that their movements as Teacher might be met with success and recognition, yet few stop to reflect upon the relationship of these ‘rules’ to themselves, the world, or other. Yet, Teacher, is a word, a profession packed with much emotion, politic and power – rooted in a past full of contradiction entwined with ideology, myth and the desire for something better. Ultimately, as Deborah Britzman (1991) points out, it is the power of these contradictions that preserves the status quo and often leaves teachers feeling powerless, as if they must ‘endure.’ Engaging those be(com)ing Teacher in a dialogue about the ‘rules’ rather than simply passing out a list for them to absorb, may open up new spaces for reflexivity across a terrain that seems pre-
determined. In my Elementary Education courses, students are asked through the un/spoken spaces of curriculum, to consider: what are the necessary qualities of a teacher? What does it mean for us to be literate as teachers? What discourse communities have impacted the ways you perceive education? When pre-service teachers are asked to read into the meaning of this word, this practice of Teacher, the denseness of contradictions becomes evident – responses are often vague or rigid as each student seems so often to be seeking the ‘right’ answer to describe his or her place within the profession, to make the grade and be accepted by those around her.

This search for acceptance impacts students as they move to get the rules of the work that they want to do.

More than a few eager pre-service teachers have entered my classroom exhibiting a strong desire to ‘get the rules’, to follow them and achieve the image of the successful teacher that has been for so long engrained upon their consciousness. There is a certain danger, both for the teacher educator as well as the pre-service teacher when confronted
with desire that is rooted within a space of conformity. Britzman (1998) points out that “…conformity in its adherence to dictates of social convention, privileges routinized behavior over critical action. Its centripetal force pulls toward reproducing the status quo in behavior as it mediates our subjective capacity to be in the world” (29). Mothers, fathers, neighbors, brothers and sisters, even past teachers have all helped etch a particular image of what the work of be(com)ing Teacher might be like. Pre-service teachers often cling to these images, believing success to be achieved when they fit the mold that has been determined for them.

Teachers should enjoy every subject they teach in order for students to be eager to learn. Teaching with enthusiasm and energy is important because it is contagious. Students react to a teacher’s vibe. Therefore the vibe should be a good one.

What is she thinking? Does she believe that she will have to be happy and enthusiastic all the days of her life? What is she is not, what if she is asked to do something that she absolutely abhors? What if she finds
herself wanting to scream and knowing she can’t? I wonder, if she knew of my own experience of teaching – knew of the days I came in forcing myself to just be present and that was the best I could do, what would she think? Is she being set up to perceive herself as a failure? How can I encourage her to examine this statement, without discouraging her enthusiasm toward this profession?

As a teacher educator, I want to encourage students to look beyond the mold, to question the mold, yet there are challenges.

Every voice speaks to particular ways of knowing as it positions the speaker within an epistemological community. Each of our images of what constitutes knowing, and hence knowledge is part of what structure’s one’s subjectivity: what is valued as truth and what is discarded as fiction (Britzman, 1991, pp.23-24)

Considering Britzman’s statement, it becomes easy to recognize the conflict of the teacher educator; students arrive with their particular ways of knowing and it is this knowing that shapes their responses to our own teaching and questioning. What then, does the teacher educator do when she finds herself confronted with images of the sunny teacher, shining the light of her enthusiasm and love upon eager children?
The sun is warm
comforting
always there on a day like this
lighting the world
encouraging one to come out
   and play
in its rays
Teacher
   I am like the sun
warm
   comforting
gentle
   loving
a shining   guiding light
 in the life of a child

**Movements toward a desire remembered**

And this is where I find myself needing to pause, to begin to examine my own path of be(com)ing Teacher, to ask myself the same questions I ask my students: Why is
it that I became Teacher? Who do/did I imagine myself as Teacher? And now, today, why is it that I teach pre-service teachers? For as Pente (2005) notes “My life’s work is a negotiation of my personal and public lives as the form into unanticipated results, shaping my students and myself in ways that can best be understood in retrospect” (91). There is a sense of resistance, as so often it is easy to gaze upon others through the lens of our own subjectivities, but to look deeply at the positions of my/sel(f)es, I discover my own movements in reaction to something much greater than myself, something that I might neither control nor predict. Existing in a place of confusion, my journey is not unique, as I try to make sense of where I might fit in the world.

When I first decided to become an educator I believed I knew everything - for I felt that those who had come before me had failed and I had learned from those mistakes. I wanted to return, to revise the mistakes made by my own teachers so that I might make both my own life and the lives of my students better. I was in a sense a process of catharsis and healing. I believed I had learned from my past teachers mistakes - I had known what I needed as a child and therefore I would know what it was that my own students would need. As luck would have it, many of my instincts held to be true, but the ‘narcissistic’ approach I had chosen left me feeling drained - as if once again I had been let down.

craziness
   a whirlwind
   children chatting
   squirrels on parade
laughing and chattering
   running to and fro
   who might say yes
   or no
my/self screams
   restrained
   composure
   a mirage
I try to hold on to

And hold on I did, facing multiple moments of whirling emotions – I held tightly to the ideal that teachers could positively impact the lives of their students; however, I could not survive in the space of the classroom. Education has always been about the weaving of private and public autonomy and norms – I believed my responsibility as Teacher was to give my students the opportunity to find their own voices – making a difference in their lives and the world. What I did not recognize was that I, in pursuit of Teacher, had lost my voice and therefore could not become she who I so desired to be. I found myself in the same position as many educators, afraid that I would not measure up with the standards and expectations set by administration, parents, and government. I wanted to value the uniqueness in each one of my students, to encourage them to be agents of change and justice, yet I found myself, one treading the waters of a system I believed might drown me. I could not move further and so for a moment I stopped.

I see myself today, a teacher educator, and wonder where it is my students will journey, who it is they dream of becoming and what I might do to help them develop a sense of awareness of their own subjectivity across their own desired performance of Teacher. There are moments I find myself
frustrated as I observe students piecing together other people’s ideals of Teacher; however, when I pause, I recognize their movements are not unlike my own.

Can you see
me
it is I
performing
before the lights that shine
in my eyes
I cannot see you
see me
I try to remember
the script you have given me
to not forget the lines
for what might be
if I forget
or I fall off
the stage
you have created

The work of be(com)ing Teacher continues and I remind myself of the value of stopping to observe and listen to the echoes of discourse that help fuse the images of Teacher. These images shift as we move across the mat of space and time, yet it is important for both teacher educators and pre-service teachers to pause engaging with the OM of (im)possible be(com)ing.

Rejections of performing the (un)known sel(f)e

A bright light shines upon their faces, a group of pre-service teachers exploring the impact of current policies on their teaching and the learning of their students. An eager young women stands at the front of the room … reading from a script, she begins “today the standards tell us we will be learning about …” her voice drifts off as attention is drawn to the students in the class. Students shift in their seats, playing with bubble gum and passing notes, whispers about tonight’s party are audible to listener. As the moments continue one is invited into another teaching and learning moment with this teacher and student. It is silent sustained reading time … as the teacher announces this time to the students she makes it very clear that this is a requirement of the curriculum – not a time for choice, but rather a distinct slot of time for a specific activity. Each student takes out a book – some reading upside down, others sit with their book on the desk while their eyes roam about the room. There is another student reading in the classroom – her activity is focused as she clearly engages with the text she is reading. The text is a Harry Potter book… as the teacher’s eyes roam the room she notices the guerilla text and quickly comes to the side of the student. “What are you reading,” she demands. The student confidently states “Harry Potter, this is my favorite series.” The teacher moves in closer to the student – standing tall as the student slips further down into the safety of her seat. In a voice for all to hear, the teacher charges, “this
book is not on the list of approved books from the school board, I must confiscate it.” The student attempts for a brief moment to challenge this, but is quickly struck silent by the teacher’s repetition, “this is not on the list of approved books from the school board, I must confiscate it.” Taking the book with her, the teacher returns to her desk and the stack of papers laid upon it. The student who has lost her book, sits silently moving deeper into the space of her chair, until it seems like she has almost disappeared. In that moment the light disappears and the television goes blank.

Teaching is as William Ayers (1993) points out, autobiographical. Ayers (1993) notes that “Of all the knowledge that teachers need to draw on, self knowledge is the most important (and least attended to)”(129). Yet when pre-service teachers present their own representations of a teaching self, their bodies are often absent, illustrating the pattern of those life stories that might be forgotten; past, present, and future become something that they cannot quite be a present to, instead they reach for the image. I introduce Gee’s (1987) definition of discourse:

- a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, of acting that can be used to identify oneself as part of a socially meaningful group or ‘social network’ (21).
After working toward a clarification of this definition, I attempt to engage students in a
dialogue of examining the impact discourse might have upon their own practice and
perceptions of the work of be(com)ing Teacher. It is disheartening at times, when I find
so many students presenting responses that still remain wrapped up within the norms
established by those communities in which they are a part.

I have a very high energy, active family who holds strong family values
and a strong work ethic; therefore, those characteristics will carry over
into my classroom, where my room will not only be full of life and
energy, including many interactive learning centers, but at the same
time will offer an inviting, comfortable, learning environment where my
students will not only succeed academically but socially.

My primary discourse is my family. My family has
helped shape me into the person that I am today.
They have instilled good morals and values in me.
The way I was raise will affect my teaching. My
parents have taught me to always do my best and
education is the opportunity to better yourself and
your life.

Pre-service teachers negotiating to make sense of the characteristics of teacher are often
unaware of their own subjectivity, rarely recognizing that the very notions of Teacher and
knowing that they both desire and fear have been determined by those out/side
themselves.

They sit around tables, a large piece of paper in front of them, discussing
the imaginary future – the day when they will be teachers presenting
their thematic unit in a morning message. “What shall we write they
say?” Each group approaches the task differently, some mumble quietly,
others appear very serious carefully assessing each word they might
write, another fills the space with raucous laughter as they discover various connotations within their message to the students. The scenes continue, the group laughing begins tossing markers at one another, while trying to maintain some sense of focus.

Warm ups – dreaming of the (im)possible

Dear Future Teaching Self,

Why do I want to teach?

I know I am not quite sure the exact reason that I want to teach but I know I want to do something important. I know I don’t want to known by millions for something frivolous but for being an inspiration. I remember all the teachers that helped me. I know teaching wasn’t something I wanted to do my whole life but the experiences that I’ve had have swayed me into a direction I never thought I would go. Whenever I get discouraged, I just have to keep remembering that this is what I wanted regardless of whatever anybody else wants for me. I know it is not going to be easy and I should probably do something like accounting, but I know that wouldn’t make me happy, and isn’t that the
ultimate question that I have to keep asking myself: Am I going to be happy?

Each semester, I ask students to write a letter to the teachers they imagine themselves becoming. There is often a sense of apprehension in these letters, a searching of sorts within the ambiguity of expectation and desire, regarding what it might really mean to be Teacher and how, by choosing this profession she will be perceived by others in the world. Arnstine (1995) notes “Education can succeed only if teachers know what they are teaching for” (22). As pre-service teachers work to make sense of Teacher, many struggle to come to terms with the purpose(s) of this profession as it relates to their own desires. Students are both encouraged and discouraged from becoming teachers and it is within these conflicting messages that they ask themselves, “will I be happy … is this the right choice?” Yet few during the early work of be(com)ing Teacher ask, “what is it for?” While they struggle to ponder the reasons behind the profession, when I ask students to create representations of who they see themselves as teachers and learners, the pre-service teachers I work with are often eager to take on the task.
Visualize
I am a teacher
self in the sky
the stars of my constellation
shine brightly
full of
imagination
creativity
laughter to get me through
organization
understanding in exploration
and most important of all
inspiration
and individuality
for
it is most important to stay true to who
you are

Many of these pre-service teachers are not quite aware that they are situated within the folds of the ‘Truth of Education’, that their desire is socially constructed (Martusewicz, 1997). They are caught up by the image of fictions long (u)recognized that have slowly, without reflection and action, evolved into a mythological truths of being one within the world. Maxine Greene (1973) makes note of both the potential and dangers of this fictive knowing quoting Frank Kermode: “Fictions can degenerate into myths whenever they are not consciously held to be fictive. Fictions are for finding things out and they change as the needs of sense-making change. Myths are the agents of stability, fictions are the agents of change”(31). Within the traditional structure of
schools, it would seem that many students find themselves, often unaware, searching for something that has been so solidified in ideology that it might seem hard to gain an awareness; however, there are spaces of possibility even within the myths.

**Vigorous Breath – ambivalent excitement**

Through the yogic breathe one becomes present, aware of themselves, connected to the earth and other. Vigorous breathing brings energy and greater awareness, but this arrives with intention and a willingness to be open. Many pre-service teachers enter the classroom full of excitement and a sense of ambivalence, ready to do what they need to do; but their breathing is shallow, in their excitement to ‘be(com)e the best teachers they can be’ they forget to take the deep breathe of critical reflection. Britzman (1991) points out, “The problem is to distinguish how we come to know what we know, what it is that structures what we know, and how our knowledge of the world works to position experiences as lived”(214-215). However, it is very difficult for many pre-service teachers to reflect upon that which shapes their movement as they fuse together the opaque shards of discourse that shape what they believe about the nature of being.
Teacher. They want to hold tight to the image of one who is love; trying to become the individual in the mythological image, they seek the formulas for becoming she who already is, shying away from the possibility of becoming someone different, open to vulnerability and perhaps even failure (O’Quinn & Garrison, 2003). I encounter an unspoken desire on the part of many pre-service teachers to see the job of being teacher as easy – grasping for the formulaic image of rules, books, procedures – but they do not see or are afraid to admit that there might be a struggle, to consider what Britzman (1991) has discussed as the “more private aspects of pedagogy”. Furthermore, when I ask students to consider how their experiences will impact their teaching they move within the safety of generally shallow responses. It is likely that I will hear responses such as, “my family is important to me,” “my friends support me and have helped me become a good person.” This same ‘happy’ view is displayed when they are asked to practice their role in the classroom, the relationships that they create either as students or teachers often resemble those of children, doing the work of play – voices change and they return to their own childhood memories of “playing teacher”. I consider these reflections and ways of naming as limited, built around an infatuation with an image that they have yet to shake up, to see beyond the inflection of voice, smiles and shapes. But even in this moment of reflection, I see my judgment
I invite students to engage with the brambled landscape of being Teacher as a means to help them consider the steps that they might take along this journey, steps that
might lead to a greater sense of agency rather than a sense of helplessness. We struggle along this journey as many students resist ideas that exist outside their own spaces of desire, reluctant to examine that might call everything they believe they know about teaching into question. These visions can seem dangerous for the pre-service or beginning teacher as they open one to the vulnerability of becoming one who does not fit within the ideological notions of being Teacher; thus the teacher risks rejection and as such, many remain caught within the chilly space of de/finite being. O’Quinn and Garrison (2003) remark that if one is frozen within the image of loving teacher, she is unlikely to become an ‘active agent of it’ (55). Feeling a lack of agency, many find themselves searching within an infatuation that leads these beginning teachers to perhaps feel hopeless as they struggle within their profession.

**Playing Teacher**

Roots separate
what I have known
I look at how my students attempt to name themselves as teachers in writing assignments or visual representation of how they perceive themselves as Teacher, or even in their own work of ‘playing teacher’. Across this often vague a collection of smiling people, trees, books, letters, and desks – it appears there is rarely a recognition of their own subjectivity or self within the context of the classroom; instead it would seem that students are following a script that they struggle to make their own.
I have strong foundation
Indestructible from the core
learning established
cannot be broken
but I can
take these pieces
without judgment
hear
both sides to the story
determined to finish anything
I start
life can have rough patches
but I am confident
and creative
will do what
I am told
I listen
under pressure
my teaching will be great

My life
is one of order
and learning
what I have
been given
I will give
to my students
At times I wonder, observing the infatuation with the clichéd images of teacher, evident in not only my observations of students work but also in the research of Mitchell and Weber (1995), might it be the safer for the pre-service teacher to dwell with/in the blind desire, would it be possible for them to remain comfortable within this mythic state being as they move into their own classrooms. There is a degree of comfort as one imagines herself as caretaker, information giver, and challenger. Yet, what disservice would I do my students, if I did not ask them to look again at the images that they have created to name themselves, searching for the multiple voices at work so that they might recognize that there may be rough terrain in the life they are choosing to embark upon. Britzman (1991) notes:

While we all live in myths, some myths instigate repressive norms of pedagogy and identity, while others open us up to the dialogic. This later image of teachers – as negotiators, mediators and authors who are becoming – is the places where identity becomes infused with possibilities(6).

It is the myths that draw many students to the profession of Teacher as they imagine themselves; myths that exist across discourse communities. Judith Robertson (1997) remarks on the ways in which those be(com)ing Teacher use these myths, noting that “Beginning teachers actively deploy the material of everyday life – including images of teaching from film and other forms of popular culture – to help shape their thinking and learning”(75). Yet as they draw on these images, few recognize how imbedded they are within a hegemonic view of Teacher, instead they see that which is presented as the ideal, she who she must learn how to emulate and become. The pedagogies and identities
of pre-service teachers do not stand alone, but instead as Charles Lemert (1997) comments “… most of the actions and feeling that helps us enter into working relations with fellow members of the world are not all that private … (t)hey are in fact, performances we execute in acceptably close conformity to widely accepted social rules” (128). While dreaming of themselves in the ideal role, Mitchell and Weber (1995) remind one that “those who teach are in the position to re-enact, perhaps in unconscious ways, the very same scenes that they themselves have experienced” (34). When they begin to question this image and how she may or not be able to fit within the mold many teachers begin to reevaluate their place within the profession.

**Searching: going from one place to the next**

In 2005 the National Center for Education Statistics examined those trends that have begin to imprint deeply upon education in the United States. One such trend that is discussed widely is that of teacher attrition and mobility. The goal of the center, in their examination of mobility was not to attempt to explain the reasons for the shifts teacher attrition and mobility, but rather to explore statistically, what has happening to the teacher workforce. This study explored the age range of beginning teachers as well as the relative effectiveness of those teachers entering into the workforce. What was discovered across those lines was that teachers were entering the profession later, generally holding bachelor’s degrees and that those teachers with “3 or fewer years of teaching experience are not as effective as teachers with more years of experience “ (NCES, 2005, p.5). However, if one was to examine the “gains” made by teachers, the study highlighted that the largest number of gains were made during the first three years. I look at this period of ‘gains’ and I reflect upon my own experiences, it was with/in these first three years of being a fulltime classroom teacher, that I struggled to decide whether or not I could survive within
the context of the school environment. Beginning in the early 2000’s schools began to replace a larger percentage of teachers each year, and with each placement, it could be expected that, according to the NCES study, 3-17 percent of teachers are recent graduates – both graduate and undergraduate. While teachers left each year for various reasons, including retirement or going to another school 8% of the 16% that did leave each school, chose to exit the field of education entirely – for multiple reasons. According to the NCES report, the percentage of teachers who left the field of education entirely had increased over time, while other reasons for leaving a particular school remained. This study references that ‘leavers’ were generally forty years of age or older; however, the study also recognized a large number of younger, less experienced teachers transferring to other schools. I consider this exodus and wonder, perhaps it was with the desire that somewhere, they might be the teacher that they so desired they might become? I can only reflect upon my own experience at this moment; yet, I remember days of fantasizing about the perfect school where I could really be the Teacher I so desperately wanted to be. I tried some of those different schools, and each time I was accosted with the ‘reality’ that there was little I could do, to be content within my chosen vocation. Teachers are leaving education, they are leaving the places where they first become teachers – and the rate of this exodus is growing; however, we know little of that which may inspire this exodus, beyond that which whispers across the numbers. I hear the whispers and I feel that I must stop to listen more carefully. It is in the stopping, the searching for reasons and the recognition of what is, that I begin to focus in on the voices of those beginning teachers who have chosen to speak out about what they are experiencing.
I think I should be considerate
    caring    loving
    fun
approachable so that everyone
    is comfortable

I need
    to be
    consistent
in my beliefs
    demonstrating good morals
inside and out
    I want to be loved
    to be wanted.
“Their immediate aims and objective are shaped by their values, but their long-range goals are guided by ideals. Their activities are regulated by standards, too. Not just academic standards, but standards of discipline as well. Even standards of decorum (Arnstine, 1995, p.22)

**Bodily reverberations – holding on with/in discomfort**

Many teachers find themselves at a crossroads when they enter the classroom, no longer can they rely on the pleasures of ‘playing’ teacher, instead they have to answer to those around them who demand that they name themselves according the various normative structures of the social system within which they are working. While there are pedagogical possibilities as one begins to engage in dialogue with these structures, there can also be much confusion and alienation within the field of education. Maxine Greene (1986) notes that “… teachers are too deeply uncertain when it comes to risking ‘in the name of full human connection’ because they are uncertain as to what it signifies to
realize an ideal of the self”(180). As one seeks to find a place, a name within the struggle, she is bombarded with mixed messages and expectations regarding exactly who she is meant to be. The reaction to these contradictory messages of expectation is often one of ambivalence. Ursula Kelly (2003) considers this sort of ambivalence to be “…. double edged: It is the lens through which one views and is viewed. Ambivalence not only manages one’s impulse to hate; it also manages trust, the extent to which one will love (and believe oneself to be loved)”(158).

I am swirling with excitement as I stand in front of my first classroom. The walls are decorated with encouraging posters, my artwork, and plans for the future. My students desks are arranged in groups around the room, their names taped to the tops, pencil boxes on the inside and notebooks in them.

Bell rings

They file in, all 23 of my first, second grade class. The boys are wearing blues and greens, the little girls have pink barrettes, yellow ribbons, pigtails and braids. There is chaos as the find their seats, some complaining about who they are seated next to, others too nervous to complain.

I breathe it all in …

This is my moment. I see my face in every child’s eye. This is what I’ve wanted to do for the last 20 years and I am finally doing it. I don’t even know them, and I think I already love them. I have the freedom to teach them, to instill in them values, to love them, to make them step outside the box. It is the most exciting and frightening feeling. What if I don’t do a good job? I can’t think that way, I must do a great job … I have faith in myself.

What do I do
I dream

I speak

I am another

My identities shifting

I try

...to make sense

Neither identity, however, could be embodied without contradictions. Nor were they sufficient for constructing creative, participatory, and relevant pedagogy, because such identities are only capable of defining students in terms of what the lack – authority or freedom – and defining the teacher as the sole agent of the classroom (Britzman, 1991, 226).

As the student speaks her dream of self as teacher she does not say, “I am not sure;” however, ambivalence exists as she speaks in contradiction, noting that “she has the freedom to teach them what she wants” but worried that she will not to a good job. She has yet to recognize who or what it is that defines her work as good or bad, yet there is an awareness – even in her dreams, that exhibits a sense that things may not be as she so desires.

Like many of my students, I was ambivalent as a beginning teacher; believing I had lost any sense of agency, I had to find some way to reassert my voice and my sense of being within what Maxine Greene (1973) has described as tension. As I call on students to arise and become that which they dreamed – when I find my very own breathe as a teacher being becoming forced. My choices were those many teachers find themselves faced with: I could choose to leave the vocation, an act that felt somewhat like a desertion of the children I had made a commitment to be an advocate for, or I could choose to stay and slowly
whither within a space that pulled the light out of everything I believed I could offer as a teacher. I spent a great deal of time pondering these choices, at times believing that ultimately there would be no escape, either way I would fail at the journey I had embarked on. Finally, I did make my choice - and I left the classroom. I have found a sense of praxis and agency working as a teacher educator; however, even today, when I walk into an elementary school I find myself filled with an overwhelming sense of discomfort and anger. I wonder as I try to pull myself out of the waves of discomfort that seem to overwhelm me whenever I enter the elementary school or think what has become of those students I struggled to teach, I wonder - are these the only options?

Journeyed Expectation

I think of myself as Teacher and find my body overwhelmed; rocks of emotion break the glass of my memory and I find myself feeling frozen. This young Teacher who
I once was struggles with this new role of teacher educator, I want to open spaces for dialogue and change yet, find myself in the same position as many teacher educators “… unable to combat what they perceive as firmly entrenched stereotypes and ideas about teaching” (27). Liston (2003) notes, “Without attending to learning’s emotions, we distort and underestimate the activity that defines our lives, without underlining the emotions of learning in our teaching, we pass on a heritage that will disfigure the souls of others to come” (103).

Teaching by its very nature is an emotional vocation and it is this emotion situated within the historical moment that leads one along various paths of being and responding within the pedagogical sight. The only option is to educate oneself, to reflect upon the roots of the emotions and to become versed in the ways of the Other, she who moves across various definitions of being – she who we both love and hate.

Born
my morals became my core
but new ideas
colors of possibility and being
came into view
I added these to the ball of who I am
the beginning is the base
shaping everything
I do
but friends and family and lessons
add new colors
to the ball of who I am
I will share
this with students to help them
become good people
Broken gazes

But if we look deeply the other although seemingly unrecognizable, returns our gaze when we look in the mirror, whispers dreams in our ears – and slowly we may become unable to see the lines that position and paint the face upon our subjective selves (Irigaray, 2004). Wrapped up in the motions of the self both pre-service teachers and teacher educators become inattentive to the mirrored waters of self and other, it may be easy to drown in these unreflective waters of self preservation, unless one begins to re-examine what object exists within the gaze, the other, Norman (2000) refers to as she who exists within ‘our selves’.

Narcissa (re)Turns

In her work with student teachers, Britzman (1991) problematizes the tensions of the becoming pedagogy of Teacher as she explores the ways those practicing Teacher negotiate through the complex terrains of discourse as they work to make sense of the
“multiple meanings, constraints and possibilities of the teacher’s identity in the process of constructing one’s own”(2). As Britzman (1991) notes, after years of being ‘schooled’ there is a certain overfamiliarity with the practice of Teacher; many of those be(com)ing Teacher, believe they know the profession well having been students for many years they often take for granted actions and expectations. Britzman (1991) remarks:

The mass experience of public education has made teaching one of the most familiar professions of this culture. Implicitly, schooling fashions the meanings, realities, and experiences of students; thus those learning to teach draw from their subjective experiences constructed from actually being there. They bring to teacher education their educational biography and some well worn and commonsensical images of the teacher’s work. In part, this accounts for the persistency of particular worldviews, orientations, dispositions, and cultural myths that dominate our thinking and in unintended ways, select the practices that are available in educational life (3).

Upon entering the landscape of be(com)ing Teacher, many find themselves bound in contradiction as they negotiate through the multiple and often contradictory discourses of teaching and learning. There are many directions one might take when moving through the multiple discourses of be(com)ing Teacher. Too often pre-service teachers find themselves actively absent, unaware of the impact of their own subjectivity upon their profession. This absence of awareness leaves many of those be(com)ing Teacher feeling trapped as they move beyond that which they thought was the absolute, known practice of teaching. Britzman (1991) calls those be(com)ing to enter into a space of “double consciousness,” becoming actively aware of their position across and through the multiple discourses of be(com)ing. It is this active awareness that offers one the opportunity to enter into the dialogic space of be(com)ing. As the one be(com)ing
Teacher, becomes aware of her movements through and beyond those ‘surface images’ that tell of Teacher, she may become able to dialogue with rather than accept those definitions of pedagogy and practice that speak loudly across the cacophony of ideologies that the dominant society speaks of as ‘common sense’ definitions of teacher and pedagogy.

I am constantly in motion, moving with my students. We are having fun. I am laughing so hard I start to cry. I am inspired by my students, and I am inspiring my students. The smell of the room is sweet. I am pleased that every dream I have ever had is coming true. The children are laughing and falling around. They never had so much fun in school. They don’t want to leave, never grow up. They think their teacher is the best. But they know a time will come when they have to leave me. They are only in Kindergarten, but they know no one can change their mind about school. They love it and don’t want to leave it. I have given them a new place to go, something great to enjoy. Yes, this is my heaven.
Movements of spoken (be)longing

Teachers are not merely victims of society’s cultural imagery. Although they are born into powerful socializing metaphors, some of them manage to break and recreate images while making sense of their roles and forming their self-identities (Mitchell & Weber, 1995, p.26).

As I invite students to enter into the dialogue through their own work of creating and representing, sharing my own evolving understandings, images and text begin to tangle … the ambiguity of the experience of being and becoming teacher begins to weave into something visible as they move back and forth through multiple discourse, becoming both aware and at moments unaware of the terrain along their own journey of be(com)ing Teacher. I believe there exists a sense of hope as discourses begin to battle upon the page
I begin with a simple white canvas so that all of the people could use their visual learning ability. I am a visual learner and I think it is the only way I could truly represent my learning and teacher definitions. This canvas is like our minds, ready to absorb knowledge. The first layer of the canvas represents the ever-changing seasons in life or unpredictable situations that may occur. The top layer is the background that creates my personality and teaching philosophy. Everything from the places I have been, the people I have met, to when I won awards. I have included all of these things because a teacher is what she has learned and what she is open to. Teachers should learn each day from everything around them. The painting has layers. You can add more to change it whenever necessary. The layers represent flexibility. The different layers should
different sides to a person and what they are able to withstand in their classroom. Students come from various backgrounds and the differences throughout my life have equipped me to help their emotional needs as well as decide how they learn information. Different children learn in different ways and the different seasons represent the different possibilities a teacher may have to endure.

Norman (2000) notes that our lives and stories are layered; as the voices of those who have been silent about their experiences fold into the textures of self and other they may begin to join together into a chorus of collective silence and struggle that might be able to become heard amidst the cacophony of expectations that have so often hindered any possibility for movement beyond the boundaries of what should be. Davies (2000) discusses the value of this sort of collectivity when she examines the collective biography:

Through listening to the stories of others, through talking out loud the remembered fragments, through writing the memories down and seeing how language shapes them with cultural patterns of meaning – making, the collective group searches for the kind of ‘truth’ that comes from inside the remembered even and also from the process of remembering (42)

Entering these fragments upon the performative landscape of text, one finds agency through the temporality of action and understanding. The movement of this awareness does not mean that the work might not be (un)comfortable; however, this awareness invites one to sense that they experience is not their alone, that it exists within a context. Noticing the contextual nature of the experience, those be(com)ing Teacher
begin to recognize that there are others who move through the space, others who may
have a sense of what they experience might be like.

I imagine the Teacher, sitting quietly in her classroom one afternoon – miserably
wondering, what it is that she might do to move beyond the ambiguity that leaves its
imprint upon her everyday. All one has to do is to step into a faculty lounge to see that
teachers do in fact have conversations about their work – delight and frustrations; yet
rarely do these talks go beyond the surface moving toward active awareness. What
would she do, if she was able to speak of her experience of be(com)ing Teacher and
know that it was welcomed? What then would happen, if in the sharing she discovered
that there were structures that impacted her experience and sense of self within the
experience – would she feel a greater sense of agency, would she begin to reflect upon
her experiences differently? As pre-service teachers are invited to do this work of
awareness across the course of their be(com)ing Teacher, more opportunities for may
dialogue arise. There is much talk about action research in the classroom these days, but I wonder what might happen if this inquiry became more of a critical inquiry into person and pedagogy moving with/in context? I do not believe the work of this inquiry can offer up answers, but rather offer up the pedagogical possibility of what might be and thus offering hope amidst feelings ambiguity through the work of be(com)ing Teacher.

In their movements of be(com)ing Teacher, many students work hard to learn the rules. It is these same rules that have echoed across their consciousness and sense of self in the world, from birth – yet few have stopped to think, “why”? Through the interrogation of self performance, I see students repeating the same ‘rules’ they have heard before as they try to make them their own. Yet there is conflict as multiple discourses contradict what it is they might be(come) and so she who is be(com)ing Teacher must never stop her search with/in the rules, so that she might begin to recognize the nature of her own movements across the tangled and ambiguous discourses that name Teacher.
Whether we know it or not, we transmit the presence of everyone we have ever known, as though by being in each other’s presence we exchange our cells, pass on some life force, and then go on carrying that other person in our body, not unlike springtime when certain plants in fields we walk through attach their seeds in the form of small burs to our socks, our pants, our caps, as if to say, “Go on, take us with you, carry us to root in another place.” This is how we survive long after we are dead. This is why it is important who we become, because we pass it on (Goldberg, 1993, p. 74).
Chapter V

Fused Imag/ination

Transformation is sustained change and it achieved through practice (Iyengar, 224)

Looking toward the reflections of Teacher

Why do we teach? Who are we that teach? Perhaps simple enough questions, but as one moves to acknowledge a sense of intention and self within the profession, they become questions rooted in ideology, personal desire and conflict, and those moments that so heavily penetrate one’s subjectivity. As Parker Palmer (1998) explores in The Courage to Teach, it is rare to consider who it is this self that teaches, but it is important to consider as one begins to reflect upon pedagogy and intention within the classroom; the teaching self is complex, woven through notions of the individual and ideas of the social. It is through the weavings of these notions that the pre-service teacher is able to develop a representation of the desired teaching self. While the representation is of a desired self, it exists in a cultural context shaped by the social and ecological space and time. Wrapped up in the idealized image of an autonomous self many pre-service find themselves in the position described by Grumet (1998):

Trapped in the dualisms of individualism and idealism, we become convinced that whatever we see in our mind’s eye is a private vision, split off from what others know and feel, split off from the synesthesia that integrates our perceptions, splits off from the body, the other, the world (129).

Immediately upon being asked to consider who they are as teachers and why they are drawn to the profession, many of those in the position of be(com)ing Teacher, find
themselves trapped within the position Grumet describes. The stories heard are those of a single mythic self, operating autonomously to meet personal needs and attend to the individual needs of their students; position and relationship are forgotten as they strive to achieve the image of a single ideal. Yet there is value in looking at these mythical images; Lakoff and Johnson (1980) note that “Each myth is motivated by real and reasonable concerns, and each has grounding in cultural experience” (226). By reflecting upon the fragments of a pre-service teacher’s textual renderings of self and the ways they interact with the texts of Teacher, we may begin to identify and reposition elements of multiple myths that shape these images, becoming further able to articulate and explore exactly why and who we find ourselves to be in the classroom (Mitchell & Weber, 1999).

Sel(f)es evolutions

Laughter
sweet simplicity
echoes across my consciousness
with the violent chorus of expectation
twirling
in the tangles
I am teacher
she who
who
is she
I
these voices
that name me
pull at the chords of my desire
I want
listening
desperate
to be
noticed
I answer
the call
yet I am
afraid
to be seen
in my own shadows
the light of who I am
who they are
beckons be
friend or foe
I wonder
is my name my own?

I became a teacher, to return to and be recognized in the place that for so long silenced me and to acknowledge the voices of the children – those who like myself wanted to be validated for who they were within a moment, not who someone else wanted them to be. My journey as an educator has been scattered with the leaves of trauma, at times covering the path of possibility, as I once again found both myself and my students lost within the jungle of performance and expectation – both of which existing outside ourselves. Moving across the performative terrain of this dissertation, the
leaves remain, remnants of loss and desire, but light shines upon these stories and invites the wind of our reflections as teacher educators, to stir up these remnants offering up new possibilities and understandings of what it means to be Teacher.

Reflecting on the above poem, I have come to realize that my desire for ownership has shifted, flowing to become something outside myself. No longer do I find myself desperate to be acknowledged within a space I cannot quite define; instead I seek to transform the echo of my own voice as I my own (un)knowing begins to fuse and shatter as it engages with the voices of those pre-service teachers I now work with. Regularly I ask them to consider who it is who names them as teacher, why it is that they have been drawn to teaching, how do they imagine their lives as teachers? The responses are varied in velocity, but continue to echo across an ideological landscape, where the self imagined becomes something elusive, existing within the ruptures of practice and definitions of teacher. This self imagined exists as part of the project of Enlightenment, a lens that separates self from social (Finke, 1997). Unable to claim the absent facets of this idealized and separate self, many beginning teachers find themselves moving across a space of loss, as desire and expectation shift becoming something much further from that which they have been positioned to desire, an imagined self seemingly unattainable (Britzman, 1991). The trauma of these sometimes slowly evolving ‘realities’ can become a heavy burden as once energetic dreamers find themselves defeated with/in their work to create the perfect posture of Teacher – not quite sure where to turn to grasp the glimpse of who they wanted to be. To make sense of this process, I turn to Finke’s (1997) consideration of the psychoanalytic perspective that moves one beyond the frozen image of this self that cannot be grasped, pointing out:
In effectively politicized feminist psychoanalysis, the individual woman’s psyche must be construed as a social and ideological process, constituted by and within language and culture, not some privatized interiority. ‘Raising’ her consciousness is not simply a matter of translating isolated private and prelinguistic experience into discourse but in negotiating the ways in which she …is culturally and ideologically imbedded in history (122).

The imbeddedness of self is a difficult concept for many pre-service teachers to make sense of, as much of their previous education has been wrapped up in ideas of liberalism, and it is through this lens that they have learned to make sense of their worlds. It only takes a moment looking at the words students choose to use to describe themselves as Teacher, to see how engrained the notion of individuality is upon their perception of self.

I am a caring individual who will bring my unique way of looking at things into the classrooms I teach in. I will allow my students to be individuals and require them to respect one another.
There is a tremendous amount of resistance that occurs, when I attempt to ‘raise consciousness,’ inviting students to place themselves within a cultural and historical context. When I first began asking students to reflect upon the role of history in their perceptions and practice of Teacher, the responses were limited and in fact many students said that history had no impact on their life.

If I were to consider the role of history on how I see myself as teacher, I would have to say I do not think history has any impact on what I do. I live in the present moment and will do what I need to do to help my students learn. History has some impact on the way I will teach. I agree with Horace Mann about education for everyone and also believe, like Franklin that education should not be about religion. I don’t know what else, I suppose I will also learn from the mistakes and successes of others and try some of those things in my own classroom.

Even those who attempted to reflect on the impact of culture and history on the ways in which they had been positioned – defined history as that which happened in the past; they were not able to recognize that they themselves were situated within a cultural and historical space.
Choosing new voices to enter the OM

Each semester, I attempt to create experiences that provide the pre-service teachers with a chance to move with/in the ideological space of be(com)ing Teacher. I strive not to darken their journey, but rather offer variations of possibility and experience through questioning, so that they might begin to develop a practice of awareness and inquiry as they move toward the work of Teacher. As I work to piece together opportunities for conscious inquiry into the practice of be(com)ing Teacher, I have encountered many stumbling blocks as well as surprises with regard to what engages the students. Drawing on Robert Cole’s (1989) work that examines the ways stories might help one make sense of her own life, I began to integrate stories into the context of my own classroom. I considered the question posed by Pinar (2004), “What would the curriculum look like if we centered subjects in the autobiographical histories and reflections of those who undergo them” (38)? The curriculum I was looking at was not an immediate exploration of history of culture, yet as I encouraged students to consider the relationships between discourse and pedagogy there was a obvious connection. There are hundreds of stories of be(com)ing Teacher, yet it was important to me to find texts that students would both find relevant, but also those that would challenge they ways in which students looked at their positions and ideas for practice. Listening carefully to the texts created by students as they sought to make sense of the Teacher they might be(come), I began to consider what stories they would be able to relate to.

Finding myself positioned as teacher educator, I recognize the impact of the ways on which I have been positioned impact the choices I make regarding what I share with the pre-service teachers I work with. I reflect upon my own be(com)ing, thinking about
stories that give voice to my own perceived experience; while at the same time I recognize that my students are not myself – our positions are varied and as such, it is important to invite these varied fragments of being and seeing teacher to enter the landscape of our inquiry. I seek to engage, through image and word, multiple voices of educators whose experiences mirror and disrupt students own perception of Teacher, exploring both their practical negotiations as well as the ideologies that shape their intention and place them within a particular dream of Teacher. In my own preparation as teacher educator, I engage these voices in dialogue across the landscape of this dissertation, yet I recognize each articulation is shrouded by my own judgment, desire and understanding of the teaching self. Jardine (1997) observes that as these stories unfold and move in and out of one another, multiple voices begin to echo dodging back and forth across the page and beyond, becoming something new, but oddly familiar. The work of teacher is “a tangle of texts” (Lyburner, p. 24), no Truth exists by itself of without opposition or conflict. As the textual performance moves across twisting and unpredictable terrain, it is important to recognize that the collage of our representations and understandings of Teacher, is never ending as each voice weaves in thoughts that shift one’s sense of pedagogy and self.

**Un/collected Sel(f)es**

Enacted in every pedagogy are the tensions between knowing and being, thought and action, theory and practice, knowledge and experience, the technical and the existential, the objective and the subjective. Traditionally expressed as dichotomies, these relationships are not nearly so neat or binary. Rather, such relationships are better expressed as dialogic in that they are shaped as they shape
each other in the process of coming to know. Produced because of social interaction, subject to negotiation, consent, and circumstance, inscribed with power and desire, and always in process of becoming, these dialogic relations determine the very texture of teaching and the possibilities it opens (Britzman, 1991, p.3).

Teaching is a daily act of be/coming to realize an (un)intentional self performing within a space of limitation and possibility existing simultaneously in the space of dream and nightmare (Todd, 2003). As one examines their dreams of being Teacher, she who is individual and loved, there is a fear that this imagined individual will be wiped away by some other who attempts to name her. We may perhaps believe our actions are autonomously chosen, but we are subjects responding to environment and experience. The script of teacher is complicated, read differently by each individual; directed uniquely and purposefully by each political and/or ideological discourse. While these paradigms of view may shift, James (1998) notes their relationship to the notion of hegemony, reminding one that “Since it is institutional and systematic, hegemonic control is pervasive and usually not attributed to a controlling group, but to the ‘nature’ of society” (79). This notion of nature shape the rhythms of one’s positional beats of reaction and purpose shape the teaching self into one who is inevitably vulnerable (Palmer, 1998). But what we choose to do, or how we might respond to this sense of vulnerability plays a large role in how we move across the classroom stage. Great teaching calls for a reflective sense of inner knowing as one continuously responds to the present moment and those other actors moving across the moment (Ayers, 1993). Rarely though does one examine the representation of teaching self in a way that recognizes the
inner self in relationship to the external operations of a political world. Felman (1997) remarks:

For teaching to be realized, for knowledge to be learnt, the position of alterity is therefore indispensable: knowledge is what is already there, but always in the Other. Knowledge, in other words, is not a substance, but a structural dynamic: it is not contained by any individual but comes about of the mutual apprenticeship between two partially unconscious speeches which both say more than they know (29).

By engaging with story, both my/self and my students begin to interact with the knowledge that exists with the space of dialogue with one who is not one/self. The stories of Mark Gerson (1997), Esme Codell (2000), and Jonathan Kozol (1985) offer renderings of be(com)ing Teacher, renderings that offer fragments both of ourselves and of an other. As teacher educators and pre-service teachers begin to consider and re-position the fragments of these stories, along with those that they claim as their own across multiple discourses – new images and ways of being Teacher unfold.

Conformed openings

Once someone was able to provide an alternative to students’ suspicions and fears – a refuge from the frightening, unjust world they could not understand or control – his powers of manipulation became nearly limitless (Gerson, 1997, p.28)

Mark Gerson (1997), a graduate of Williams College made the decision to defer his enrollment at Yale School of Law to spend a year learning and giving back to a impoverished world that he had never known. After a surprisingly long search for
employment, he finally finds himself in the classroom. He makes it his mission during this one year experience to bring something to the children – to share with them the opportunities that he has had. Committed to his students, Gerson finds himself looking down upon this inner-city classroom from the upper class hills of his New York neighborhood. He teaches while establishing a relationship of respect and spaces for opportunity, but something is lost as he seeks to share with students the possibilities of his own world – encouraging them to look beyond the limitations of a world that he believes will forever leave them intellectually, emotionally, and economically barren. Teaching to a specific group of students, Gerson encourages appreciation and adaptation to those “existing structures of power” (Giroux, 2003, p. 93) that perpetuate his own way of being in the world. Limited, students must lock themselves away from the realities of their own lives as they seek to embrace a reality defined by a teacher who operates within the structures of white patriarchal culture; a reality, or truth based on presumptions that might in fact be wrong (Orr, 1994). Whether they are correct or not, the presumptions made by teachers leave a heavy imprint upon a student’s sense of self. Identity fades as ideology leaves its brand upon the voices of children living in the ghetto.

As I have mentioned previously, ideology is a difficult concept for many beginning teachers to grasp as they are asked to consider their own sense of purpose in relationship to a “…context that privileges the interests, values, and practices necessary to maintain the status quo …” (Britzman, 1991, p.11). The idea that desire may in fact be something exists outside themselves strikes out violently upon one’s representation of the ideal teacher. I remember a conversation, not long ago, with a student regarding the humanistic paradigm represented in the movie Dead Poets Society. This student refused
to reflect upon the message that might be sent to students when only specific texts (written by dead white men) were explored; instead this student wanted to remind me that Robin Williams was an excellent teacher, that he engaged students and that was what ultimately mattered. Gerson, as he represents himself, seems too, to be an excellent teacher, but I wonder did he or his students ever reflect on who was missing? The absent voices of varied knowing opened the way for his intentions to be paved upon the psyche of his student’s conception of the world. For as my student and Gerson’s retelling illustrate, we often forget that “students are being taught in various and subtle ways beyond the overt content of courses” (Orr, p. 14). The subtlety of these messages dwells in the hidden well of unconscious intention, even ignorance exists as something more than lack. Felman (1997) acknowledges ignorance as the active performance of a “desire to ignore” (26); when Gerson places judgment upon the experiences of his students he prepares himself for an egotistical battle between self and other. Like many beginning teachers, Gerson believes the world that he has known, is the world that one must aim to be a part of any challenge this conception disrupts his position within the world. Gerson exhibits a desire to maintain his position, while at the same time encouraging students to recognize this position as best. It is posturing as Gerson lectures students to open their minds, for in the performance he slowly, but powerfully lays the gravel of patriarchy and ‘progress’ upon the forested terrain of varied experience. A question that many consider, Gerson believes that that “perhaps the biggest challenge of teaching is convincing them why they should learn”(96). The why is important to attend to as its interpretation is relevant to position. The “why” that Gerson presents is based in his own perception of success and reality, and his story exhibits great commitment to
helping his students rise to his own definitions of being in the world. His representation of himself as committed and creative Teacher, shines an idealistic light upon his choices of performance, thus sending the message to those beginning and pre-service teachers that it is enough to give of oneself, “…to search for (my)self in their answers (Martusewicz, p.101), that it is the gravel of self that paves the way to progress, as a resulting silencing those who do not fit within the presentation.

Reflecting upon the work of my own students, I see the insipid nature of hegemony as students aim to repeat and share those same ideologies that have shaped their own perceptions and actions within the world. What happens then when I ask students to shatter the image presented by Gerson, to look at each fragment of action and belief and try to find its origin?
Disruption... is not seen as a good thing by Gerson – rather it is something a good teacher must grab a hold of....allowing their own epistemologies to drown out the echoes of another's experience.

The image is layered in story as the teacher at the center, both rooted and growing attempts to spread the light of his own experience upon the students – exposing them to the Truth of Frank Sinatra’s world. While possibility lurks upon the page it is confused as students are encouraged to shift perspective, silencing what they ‘know’ to be true.
As I read Gerson’s story of be(com)ing Teacher I find myself overwhelmed with both a sense of concern and disgust. Disgust as I watch him manipulate his words and actions, creating false truths rising out of his own ideological knowing. And concern as I think, what about my students? They talk of the impact of their own discourse communities upon their teaching and they place definitions of value even as they speak. How might I encourage them to look beyond what they know to be True? Even as I consider this, I wonder – am I placing my own mores upon what my student’s perceptions? What can I, the teacher educator do to disrupt this way of being Teacher?

He Speaks:15

My students
   My self
I see
   the opportunity
   to move beyond
   “accentuating the positive”
   glimpses of another Truth
   a better truth
I face resistance
   of the limitations

15 I have chosen to use fonts unique to my own perceptions of who Gerson, Codell, and Kozol render themselves to be.
of poverty and (in)experience
minds open
they speak of violence
pain and loss
but too desperate
to be fed
the chance of a world
I know
to see beyond the prejudice
limitations
of ignorance that echo in the words
of brothers and sisters
voices tug and pull
within exists no possibility
I know
better voices
that sing
melodies that speak to (my) soul
bridging the space
between
the hills
and the city
offering a foundation
to build
to be
and thus I find
they find responsibility
Recognition

... I enter my profession with excitement instead of trepidation, and the understanding that really, I have no right to indulge in lack of confidence. It would only interfere with the task before me (Codell, 17)

What happens when the beginning teacher finds herself in the classroom for the first time? Desire and preparation collide with the expectation of those outside the self. How one chooses to react to this situation shapes the epistemological relationship of the self in vocation, the self acting within the classroom. Esme Codell (2000) shares a story of herself, a beginning teacher, acting within the space of school where ignorance seems to weigh heavily in the air. She responds to this ignorance through the telling of her story, a story of resistance that reflects a single Truth, and perhaps the desire to be affirmed, to have people care that she is alive, that she has worth (Martusewicz, 1997). By acknowledging what she believes to be her own Truth within her story of teacher, Codell reclaims a sense of power – that which is often erased as the new teacher seeks to find a place of acceptance and recognition in his/her new environment, where complacency and conformity are the norm. Codell’s reaction of the story is one set to reveal, both the ignorance of those around her – the chauvinistic and uneducated principal, the clueless teachers, the parents – abusive or absent while respecting her power and authority, and her own creativity, lovability, and intellectual ability as teacher.

Codell’s story echoes across the ways in which many pre-service teachers seek to represent themselves. In my own classes, I have been asked – have I read this story of
the young teacher who is both irreverent and successful? They seek to follow in the footsteps of the teacher who students love, the beginning teacher who stands up for herself and seems to do everything right. They desperately want to be this teacher, she who is daring and loved. As they create their own representations of self, the echoes of Codell’s own claimed image often speaks loudly; however, it is these “Representations of a predetermined identity (that) become stumbling blocks rather than pedagogical tools for transformation” (McWilliam, 1997, p. 125). As students (re)present that which someone else has claimed as their own, questioning nothing, the may find themselves caught further, blinded within the hegemonic structures of teaching. As Codell and the pre-service teachers who read her story cling to the Truth of this representation of Teacher, reluctant to explore the actions of this Teacher in a reflexive nature, the possibility of multiple truths becomes limited.

This desire to be the ever-ready teacher, she who is recognized and loved by those around her is not uncommon, but as one grows in pedagogical knowing it is important to recognize self in relationship to other, the possibility of failure, and the rootedness of desire and perception, as a means to (be)coming as opposed to standing still. It is through the active process of inquiry that students may begin to recognize how both they and Codell have been positioned and that there might be ways to move with/in that position. Instead, Martesewicz (1997) remarks “we trap ourselves in the belief that we could somehow avoid the problem of imperfection, gain power over it through fullness of self, of ‘me’”(107). Codell concludes her story of Teacher, in a place of searching for recognition of a self she wants to be, a searching that might never be fulfilled.
As I consider my own students, and the ways in which they seek to represent themselves as teachers, I think of Codell and her sense of longing for recognition of a imagined self created within the mold of hegemony. Might it be possible for students to recognize that the self they imagine is a construction that exists as a result of the ways in which they have been positioned in the world? As they come to this sense of recognition, might students be able to be(come) an agent with/in their profession and their perception?
Words echo across the image as the brilliant teacher shines her rays upon the minds of her students. Squares represent the careful preparation of the physical space, one of order that offers aesthetic delight. Books, outside the limitations of mandated curriculum stand out, piled upon the dismal collections of those Others. It is these others, always present that exist within one teacher’s monologue – placing a shadow upon her own rays of creativity and knowing. But the madame prevails always to be remembered if not recognized.

*Reverence*
SHE SPEAKS:

Preparation

I know
the echo of my mentor’s voice
I hear her
now deceased
speaking of the way things were
the way
a teacher might be
and I am
such a teacher
"I will kick pedagogical ass in her memory"(19)
ready to inspire
ready to fill my students
with knowing
outside the texts
chosen by the other
principals
teachers
parents
my students
love me
images of the creative
I will not follow the protocol
of ignorance
my children need me
the witch
the bitch
standing in front of them
ready to intimidate
ready to be loved
I have so much to give
so much
I know and do
I see
A chill runs through my soul
for who is it
who sees me?

They love her, my students ... they see humor in her work, they want to be like her. It is a Thursday afternoon and I have asked students to
share a visual response to the story that Esme has shared. I listen to their conversations. “Don’t you just love what she did there?” “What would you have done in the parent came into your classroom like that?” “Do you think it was right for her to tell the principal off in front of the students?” I listen carefully and do not hear: “What was it that left her so unhappy in the end?” “Why was it that she could not stay in that school and even when she went to one where she got recognition, she still felt like she did not have enough? How do I engage students to engage in these sorts of conversations of inquiry?

Verses

The truth, however is that I did not often talk like that, nor did many of the other teachers, and there was a practical reason for this. Unless you were ready to buck the system utterly, it would become far too difficult to teach in an atmosphere of that kind of honesty. It generally seemed a great deal easier to pretend as well you could that everything was normal and okay (Kozol, p. 32-33).

One teaches for multiple reasons; I chose the field of education to recognize those aspects of myself (in my students) that had been silenced. As I examine my own intention as educator, I find myself identifying most with Jonathan Kozol, who creates an image of the classic liberal, one who teaches to honor the children, to repaint the lines of self and other that have been erased by a culture of oppression. Aware of his own naiveté, Kozol paints a portrait of his teaching self as one set solidly in a sense of pedagogical rightness, yet also with awareness that there is much to be learned. He enters into dialogue within the hegemonic space of the classroom, where being is defined by race and submission, acknowledging those voices that negotiate across the structure of
school. We see the students as those who are victimized by a patriarchal culture that continues to seek to dominate those who are perceived as beneath – it is clear that these children are the purpose behind Kozol’s story and intention to teach. However, there are other voices that speak within the story – these other teachers seek to claim self and purpose that is good within a school world struggling to stay afloat upon the cultural shifts of an unsteady world.

But in the act of claiming it is important to recognize those that are drowned out of the story. It is a challenge to determine who it is, who is really the “unknowable Other” (Todd, 2003) within Death at an Early Age, as the Kozol’s own personal conflict weaves its way across the stories of the children who are facing the oppressive culture of Boston schools. Across the space of the text, move multiple others – those children, who one sees as victims as well as those teachers who continue along as complacent participants in the cycle of oppression. Kozol too, it would appear represents himself as other, one who cannot quite find his place in the system. Instead he finds himself teetering on the edge of varied discourses, never fully a participant of either. He has experienced privilege and can momentarily identify with those that share his role as teacher, yet also he is able to recognize the multiple positions of self – carrying a sense of desire to open up possibility for moving beyond the structures of a white patriarchal society. Facing the fearful ‘idealists’ who desperately cling to an image of a singular reality belonging in a dream world, Kozol attempts to find his own purpose – wanting to expose and acknowledge “the odds” faced by those in a race that the school and classroom only served to represent (76).
A sense of purpose and desire to recognize other can be painful and perhaps ultimately leads to some outcome of failure. In his telling Kozol exposes his own discovery of failure … the failure to resist and thus provide some opportunity or foundation for change. He adapted to a school space doing what he thought was the best he could within the limitations of the particular discursive community. But upon reflection, it is clear that Kozol improvised his temporary role in the same fashion that many teachers do, he moved about in fear – seeking to honor, but not be recognized for honoring the child other. It is only as he begins to challenge this sense of fear, that he recognizes his own failure to subvert those structures that silence and oppress the children. The trauma of this experience echoes across the landscape of the story, as well as Kozol’s perception of himself as teacher.
Darkness and disorder lay heavy burden upon the colorful dream of a beginning teachers sense of self and pedagogy. As the fire of reality leaves torn pages of irrelevant stories – possibility and hope begin to fade left only as remnants to be looked at with a fearful glance toward what might have been.

The root is colorful and good, but it is hidden by a reality that seeks to shut out and silence those that challenge the world as it is. Desperately seeking some sense of unity – ultimately one finds oneself disconnected and out of control along a cycle created by someone else. To return to the possibility, it seems one must jump from the bindings, challenging from outside.

*The Silencing of a Subversive Tide*
HE SPEAKS:

It isn’t
what I did do
no
It is what I didn’t
Vulnerability beneath
the breaking windows of chalkboards

and the self
rattan whips upon the bodies
of beings
who we or they

forget to see
the surface wounds heal
and we forget
to look in

fear
what is it
that I do
his pictures spoke a story

no one else would hear
a reality existing
hidden in fear
of the pain that might

echo
across the consciousness of do-gooders
who teach
even with the limitations

of these weaker
beings
to ask for change
    is subversive
        they say it will do no good
I see the good that glistens in the tearful eyes
    of children
        those we forget
        my responsibility
failure
    who is it I teach for
        what is it I teach
the landlord
    what joy
        might be found in acknowledgement
but in the recognizing
    the teaching self
is changed
    claiming voice
        through honor
        I find myself
SILENCED
    and so it is
        for the children
        I must forever speak

I am drawn to his story, perhaps because in a sense, I too saw myself as victim. Before I move further, I believe it is important to (re)turn for a moment to that which shaped my own journey toward becoming a teacher educator. For a long time I had been driven by the desire to positively impact the lives of children, to acknowledge their silenced
voices, although at times not really knowing what that meant. Entering the space of the school I found myself silenced – forced to conform to the expectations of administrators, certain parents, and mentors who demanded I fit within a specific mold. And so I left the elementary and high school classroom, hoping to once again acknowledge my own silence by honoring and inviting the voices of my students – this time pre-service teachers.

**Inter/twined conclusions**

An odd shock of recognition: We have been here before, huddled around this fire, commiserating in the tales we tell of ourselves and our work and our world. Our stories are therefore, in and about this place, living parts of a living world and all its spooks and spirits, all its familiar and strange languages and words, all its shared and contested traditions and desires and voices. (Jardine, 1997, p. 164).

It seems as if there begins to be a conflict of the desired self and understanding of the aesthetic and passionate nature of teaching as one becomes immersed (lost) within the demands and nature of teaching performance. As demonstrated by Gerson (1997), Codell (2000), and Kozol (1985), the stories of be(com)ing Teacher help illustrate the conflicting and ambiguous nature of the profession as they begin to weave textual representations of their own teaching selves in the experiential and performative space of the classroom. “To teach is to bring our questions to others, to share as teachers and students in the process of thinking about who we are on this earth” (Martusewicz, p.112). Each of these stories represents the narcissistic nature of self performing in a pedagogical space of power and vision. But as Renee Norman reflects when considering the possibilities of autobiographical work, “The Narcissus myth can be re-written as the Narcissa myth in
light of these parts, doubles, extensions so that the feminist self looking in the mirror is reflective of positive self-representations”(145). If we examine this notion of the positive self-reflection from a postmodern perspective, the reflection shifts to become something that is neither fixed, nor owned by the self, but rather fluid, shared between self and other. Each self represented can become other. As Todd (2003) proposes:

The Other signifies a limitless possibility for the self, and its coming face to face with such limitlessness that self can exceed its own containment, its own – identity, breaking the solitude of being for the self. In this view teaching is only possible if the self is open to the Other, to the face of the Other. Through such openness to what is exterior to the I, the I can become something different than, or beyond, what it was; in short it can learn (30).

The growing pains of self and other coming face to face can be traumatic as one begins to recognize desire not belonging to, but rather existing outside the self.

It is important to consider the social and psychic representations that the self may in fact be using to prepare and develop their role or position in relationship to how they make sense of the ambiguity in stories of being Teacher. Performances seem too often to become mechanical, scripted through a method of clichéd movements and behaviours (Stanislavski, 1936) that have been accepted as the norm, as one seeks to find his or her way out of the space of loss – rather than moving through and being present to the loss. Yet without attention to that which shapes ones desire and representation of self, it is virtually impossible to learn. “We search for identity, for connection to the world, and for love, and at the same time, we seek transcendence from this imperfect “humanity,” this essential emptiness of being” (Martusewicz, 102). Yet without the other whose
actions we too often seek to silence, one remains alone never able to see the reflection of self in another’s eye.

Is it possible then, to listen carefully to hear the echoes of buried discourses that may exist in fantasy and breath and come to play in teacher’s negotiations and sense of self? I believe it is significantly important for teacher educators to listen carefully, taking the time to dig into student’s presentation of self and pedagogy, rather than react or state what should be. Creating change comes from educating ourselves and our students to become familiar with the discourses in motion so that we might be able to enter into a dialogue of praxis and possibility (Freire, 2002), rather than desire and the violence of its loss. Entering into an active dialogue with both those discourses that may limit and empower teachers, we may better meet the needs of pre-service and beginning teachers within our schools of education, providing a space for critical pedagogy and reflexivity, as they seek to better make sense of sel(f)es with/in practice.
The other is the one towards whom we advance in darkness, the disclosure of their coming never being revealed in the light of day. Nor does the memory of the other amount to that of a thing which can remain immutably tied to the word. It is rather a question of remembering a living being, multiple in what it is and still in becoming (Irigaray, 2004, p.31).
Breathing Witness: Per/formative Testimony as (re)Turning to Possibility: my/sel(f)es storied

Memory is useful if it helps you prepare for the future, to know whether or not you are moving forward. Use it to develop. Memory is useless if it brings about a repetition of the past (Iyengar, 144).

Shifting spaces
Of disequilibrium
and disconnect
wanting
waiting
until in a moment of return

it isn’t

TEACHER  WOMAN  ARTIST  child

Fact or fiction

or what does it matter

Voices sing

A chorus in unison

Did you see me

know me

recognize my pain

Moments be/come something different

(Re)turning to place

the landscape

the self

a text to be read

and written

Ac/knowledge(ment)

Secrets

and silence

echo across the psych

Fact

Fiction

The line is blurred

Until the story becomes one of recognition

Self and other

Identified
Journeying through the (in)scripted self

As I have mentioned, I draw on Natalie Goldberg’s (1990) concept of the writer’s practice, a process that calls on freeing oneself from those constraints that might otherwise silence and paralyze the self – by writing continuously and without judgment, when I ask my pre-service teachers to consider themselves in the classroom. Writing of the image and experience they imagine or remember, they share dreams, fears, moments of shame and excitement as they consider their own experiences as students and the possibilities of being teacher. Following the model of Donald Graves’ (1994) classroom writing process, I always write with my students during this time. I too return to a space of the imagined moment moving across time, reality, and fiction seeking to (re)experience that which I recover across the subconscious memory of imagination and reality. Goldberg (1993) has commented that “(w)riting is the willingness to see”
(Goldberg, p.4) and I see each time I write, perhaps rather reluctantly, one thing, I tell one story – (re)turning to a (s)p(l)ace of mourning and loss.

There are moments in one’s teaching when she fails to do that which she thought she was meant to do (for herself and her students), it is these moments that will forever haunt me. But is also these moments, that I must (re)turn to by bearing witness, thus allowing me to see in a new way, possibilities and moments hidden within those discourses that shaped me at the time and those that continue to move in and out of my being teacher. It is time to (re)turn to those moments that press upon my psyche until my breath becomes weak and my words lose their meaning (Bateson, 1994, p.58), except for a single moment that defines at once both the desire and emptiness of (my)self as teacher during my last year working in the public school system.

(Re)turning
I see
That which was
As is today
Past and present
Merge
To invite a new moment
Of real(ity) to be

Self
Other
I become one
As I have not been
Before
Across time space
Experience
Reflecting
for some understanding
Existing
for a brief moment
neither
above or below
the experience
of
(an)other
who I may be/come

A dampness hung heavy in the air that evening when light and dark collided. I remembered thinking to myself earlier that something was going to happen – I kept waiting for this ominous loneliness to reach its crescendo – opening its door to the darkness or light, but nothing came ... just the rattle of leaves and the ticking of tree limbs ... my thoughts began to wander.

Thoughts in silence and awake, I find myself (re)turning to the place where my desire emptied into a void of that which I could not name. There is a void that forever echoes across my practice and sense of self as teacher – a void created by the loss of life and desire. In a progressing moment a child’s life is taken and my/self a young teacher found herself drowning within the confinement of performance, expectation, and invisibility. The inscription of this experience upon the text of my/self(ies) subtly repeats itself within my pedagogy and thus to move forward, I feel I must (re)turn – identifying
the patterns, tears, and emotions that shape my being with/in this moment today. The act of (re)turning moves me beyond that which Felman (1992) refers to in the work of Lacan as he discusses the return to a ‘reality’ dominant upon my psychic memory and daily action, a reality that I must embrace, bearing witness in community so that I might be heard and also stop to listen, finally moving outside the experience - moving forward as a re/searcher, woman, artist, and teacher.

Who
are you who runs
along
and calls a name
(un)recognizable

Beyond a memory
Of what

Thought

Moving along the textual space of inquiry, I seek to engage with those emotions and moments of experience that shape my understanding of self as Teacher. Yet there is a sense of ambivalence as I am aware of the ways in which my own storied experience creates heat, melting my understanding into something fixed. I have held on tightly to this fixedness for a long time, often being caught up in a sense of helplessness and hostility as I returned over and over again to the memory of a child, my dream of giving children the opportunity to challenge conformity, and the hegemonic notions of childhood and education that erased my (imagined) sense of autonomy. I can tell my story asking you to look at me, to damn those who did these things to ‘me’ and I admit,
that for a long time this is exactly what I wanted – to be recognized as a victim with/in the ambiguity of (un)nameable loss. To do this leaves me and those I might draw in to the story, caught up in the sticky fluidness of the attached story, treading water – but never moving forward.

I am lost

do not know

or claim

I am just

present to

the real

or imagined

moment

passed

and so

we become

and become

and become ...

she who I do not know
(un)comfortable positions

... Like many moments in my life, I remember myself racing that day, knowing that I needed to arrive in a timely fashion, but also seeking to belong within the space of that which had already been foreshadowed in my mind. A child may no longer be with us, I had thought to myself as I awoke, but I could not quite grasp or accept this, and so like I had before - I prepared myself.

The dis/comforting order of the textual landscape mirrors my own confusion as I consider my position as teacher educator and reflect upon a time of be(com)ing, when desire and death intertwined in my beginning years as a teacher. Moving to re-experience my own pain, as a means to open up spaces for collective (un)knowing, I (re)turn to a story of my/sel(f)es as one who has not only experienced the psychic trauma of recognizing the difficulties of maintaining sel(f)es in an educational space that silences desire, but is also traumatized by the physical loss of a student whose experience of being silenced become embodied in those of my own. In shifting in and out of story, intertwining voices and genre, fiction with fact I am able to (re)turn to that which sucked upon the marrow of my private self, creating new threads of possibility beyond that which I considered traumatic, thus becoming a participant in the struggle rather than a victim (Behar, 1996). I invite participants to join me along this tangled journey with/in and with/out the landscape of my teaching body; may you pause, get lost, and hear the reverberations of your own stories echo across the spaces of experience.

Mine was the last car to pull into the parking lot that morning and with that knowledge I felt as if I had failed, had become someone who
could not achieve within the expectations of the administration and myself. As I walked into my room, the silence of the school echoed, nothingness ... And so, alone I walked along the corridor, seeking someone to take my hand - to tell me that everything was fine and would continue to be fine.

As we traverse along a terrain that continues to (re)appear across the landscape of my (our) teaching, I am ready to face the challenge of vulnerability as I (re)experience, perhaps catching “a glimpse of the lighthouse” (Behar, 1996, p. 3) along this collective journey, removing the layers of multiple moments of ‘truth,’ trauma, and being as they intersect, (be)come, arrive, and disappear (Rosaldo, 1989) within the historical (s)p(l)ace of a moment. I seek to move with you the reader, through the inscriptions of (my)self/(our)selves in loss, seeking to come to a new place of recognition – as my(our) “… self is constructed from continuing uncertainty” (Bateson, 1994, p. 234). With each step along the terrain of uncertainty, may we further claim self with/in experience.

The body is (in)scribed, but not in any final way. The body in landscape, the body as landscape, landscape as an essential extension of the body, is worked and reworked, scribed and reinscribed. The physical, discursive, emotional, political and social landscapes in which we are subjected and become speaking subjects are both solid and coercive and fluid and shifting (Davies, 2000, p. 61).

Bodies and names move across the landscapes of experience, tangling within loss and be/coming. I ask what meanings are the strongest as I construct the terrain of my own ‘realities’ as teacher, re/searcher, artist, and woman? It may be difficult to negotiate along the path, that for so long has been overridden with a seemingly impossible web of
brambles - for (my)“…self is often neglected, hidden, even repressed to conform to the
‘norm’ that is teacher” (de Cossen, 2002, p.11). Caught in the fog of trauma untold, it is
a challenge for both the writer and reader to ask/speak, moving across and beyond this
vulnerable landscape of self – but it is this same vulnerability that allows for the
malleable and resilient nature of the growing subject.

He was just a child, another one of those souls I claimed in my statement of
philosophy – whom I wanted to empower. I don’t know what that means anymore … to
empower … beyond the ideological myth that compartmentalizes, contradicts, and
silences the multiple and shifting realities of being within the world. These myths
Britzman (1991) remarks:

… structure a particular discourse about power, authority,
and knowledge that heightens individual efforts and
trivializes school structure and the agency of students. The
problem is that when the power of the individual effort
becomes abstracted from the dynamics of the social …
teachers cannot effectively intervene in the complex
conditions that push them to take up normative practices
and discourage their desires for change (222)

Through the process of learning (to teach), one struggles with losing loved aspects
of the self, moving through positions of comfort to a world that neither answers nor
validates the self within its space (Britzman, 1998). It is of value to consider what factors
play the greatest influence on the identities of a teacher across the un/stable space of
performative inquiry, so that we might come to find in/sight into the shaky practice of
negotiating a teacher identity within a culture whose dominant ideologies thrive within
the discourses of fear, power, and silence (Boler, 1999) and of course, contradiction.
Deborah Britzman (1991) remarks on these contradictions between what one desires and
that which exists, noting the shifts over time as one seeks to make sense of and construct her teaching self through time and space, while sometimes blindly negotiating or being guided through those established discourses that may in fact silence, leaving no light for reflection. In my own trauma of physical death and the death of desire of being the imagined Teacher, I like the pre-service teacher described by Britzman (1991), was treading water in the cold space of persuasion, remaining frozen, unable to melt out of the contradictions of a patriarchal culture that seem to say one should be exhibit autonomy yet submission. Confusion joins the stream of being and discovering, emotion scattering across to free or freeze one’s self into sp(l)ace (un)nameable without reflection. Reflection is often resisted as one becomes wrapped up in emotion, recognizing her own vulnerability in the possible discovery of something that she does not want to know. Yet as Margolis (1998) so clearly articulates, “However emotions evolve(ed), they seem to be the capacity that allows humans to build, maintain, or dissolve boundaries around the self. They provide us with the ability to feel a kind of glue binding us to some people and a kind of wall separating us from others” (p. 135). In testimony, the ‘glue’ that both binds and frees me from the entrapment of an unacknowledged experience is the act of bearing witness and being listened to in that process.

**Scripting the (un)known**

Remembering ...
Broken pieces/

/peaces Broken
... become a new fiction ... fleeting ...
visions and feelings move through the folds of my being
flesh and word moving
becoming one
in testimony

Karla, my team member and friend who had started at the school the year previous with me mouthed the words “It’s Bo” ... my heart stopped ... She had called me the night before, confused and scared. “My husband just told me, that I received a phone call from our principal, that one of our students hung themselves...” That was all he had said in the message ... We spent a while going through the roster of students we had grown to love; they had been my first class of students and while their reputation had warned me of their independence and challenging nature, I had been met with a group of children who had a desire so strong, to embrace and challenge the world – to name it their own way within the spaces they had been positioned.

Young Teacher

I too
sought and desired
my image/ined
self(f)es

I hadn’t learned yet how special they were, but as Karla and I went through the list trying to decide, which one - who out of those forty children had taken his or her own life ... I was reminded of why I had chosen or had been ‘called’ to teach and realized how truly special each one of those children had been.
Teachers are ‘gently’ instructed to follow the script of policies and expectations established by government and popular culture, and whether or not those speaking fully understand what it means to teach, their claims are strong and play a powerful role in the ways beginning and experienced teachers shape their understanding of Teacher. Many who choose to become teachers find themselves in a place of conflict, aware of the challenges they face, but somehow believing that “they can adjust to the circumstances, tolerate sometimes dismal conditions” yet still be able to make an impact, a difference in the lives of those students with whom they come in contact (Danielewicz, 1996, p. 127). While many teachers believe they can tolerate or overcome particular conditions, they shut the doors of their classroom, opening them perhaps for a moment to speak of the surface frustrations, but rarely to expose their own movements of be(com)ing. What happens to our perceptions and reactions, how do we perceive and challenge the scripts of an idealized infallible and submissive Teacher that we are presented with – how will our representations and challenges be perceived by those outside (our)selves … acknowledged, or disregarded?

There are moments
when
exhaustion creeps her delicate hands
across my navel
wooziness replaces wakefulness
my head embraced
by an outstretched hand
beckoning me deeper
within her grasp
Exhaustion
It is my hope that by entering into this collective dialogue of performatve, living inquiry, one might be able to return to the other, not as one who controls or is controlled, but rather as one who recognizes glimpses of her incomplete self (Todd, 2003). Moving forward in this recognition, we might also be able to overcome or at least acknowledge those feelings of alienation that arise for so many who choose to be(come) Teacher. As the story evolves, we might be able to transgress (hooks, 1994) those hegemonic notions of Teacher that silence any sharing of experience beyond the shifting boundaries of what is ‘right’. Across each moment of being present with/in the collective and poetic self-inquiry, one’s postures become active, moving beyond the boundaries to see others entering into the dialogue. Through the collective gaze of the poetic representation of experience, the alienation becomes something to recognize rather than something to dwell within, allowing one to become conscious to the textures of a teaching life. This is a consciousness that is, thought by Greene (1973) to be “always something; it grasps, intends multiple structures of meaning. There are dreams, memories, layers of belief and perception, stocks of knowledge, fantasies”(133). (Re)turning to the echoes of their layers of consciousness through dialogue of awareness, a teacher might be able to develop new and hopeful possibilities as she uses a new lens that rattles the once normalized experience. The rattling of presence opens up space for confusion as the
stories no longer seem to fit the neat formula that so many individuals claim to desire, but it is through these stories that our postures are shaped, that breathes across our every step and holds tightly even, when like myself, we claim we have moved on. Perhaps as we share collectively in the ambiguity of be(com)ing Teacher, we might be able to acknowledge the struggle and thus begin to find ourselves amidst a pedagogical chaos that directs full presence and thus possibility with/in the space of be(com)ing Teacher.

Running through the list of each child – unique and struggling in her own way, we finally arrived at Bo … perhaps … We had said “perhaps it is Bo, he never quite fit within the school … he had a different language and moved upon a different plain.” I had been left lost after that conversation – having no clue which of our beloved was gone, and wishing desperately to believe that perhaps it had only been an attempt – a desperate call that we might heed so that we might be able to protect and love that child as no one had before … so that he or she might see what an amazing and valuable person he or she was.

As Karla mouthed those words … “It’s Bo” I knew that he was gone and I wondered as my heart beat out of rhythm, outside myself, if I too might follow … Moving blindly, I a young teacher, wrapped up in my own desire wonders … Perhaps in my failure … to take the time to say “I see you, and I love you and you are wonderful and valuable and you will be and are amazing” I had done more than I could imagine. And then I saw all those faces of the other teachers perhaps lost, or confused, some having not known this child - feigning pain and I wanted to scream … it is your loss, it is your fault … he breathed and called out to be seen and you did not see. **Who is it?**

**Who sees the children?**

**Who is it?**

**Who sees me?**
In the pain of losing this beautiful and amazing being, I saw that I too was not seen, that I too was becoming lost, just as I felt I had been as a child, a child I had returned to in my own teaching - trying to go back, to meet those needs of my own that had not been met ...and in that moment I found myself losing ground and breath as I lost my Self - becoming some Other who might be able to perform within this moment, within this loss. I continued stepping carefully upon the dark carpet, meeting the eyes of my colleagues, each puzzled within their own breathe and thought, quickly casting my own eyes down and then toward a destination of safety - secretly believing that in this place I might never find safety, only a rhythm of comfort riddled in untruth and perhaps a seat upon which I might momentarily rest. And so I crept onward until I found a seat, suddenly fatigued by the wrenching pull upon my chest, but also very aware - or fearing - those eyes of judgment cast upon me.

Reverberating possibilities of the (un)recognizable

I have thought for some time regarding how I might live with/in the ambiguity of the storied experience amidst my own conflicting present intentions. Recognizing my own narcissistic desire for my ‘truth’ to be recognized, I find my/sel(f)es stumbling across my intention to engage with the stories of be(com)ing Teacher through the lens of poststructuralist inquiry. Kamonos-Gamelin (2005) notes that “A teacher’s role is not to replicate suffocating conditions that stunt self-awareness and self-knowledge, but to set up conditions that will inspire, that will literally give breath to student’s visions of themselves as ‘knowers’” (187). I consider my inquiry as pedagogical, I am learner as are those who choose to participate across the textual landscape of this dissertation; I
teach, yet as I begin to open up the stories I share, I too might begin to learn and as such transform as I listen to the whispers of others who might dis/rupt my (un)knowing. I have told the stories of my/sel(f)es and students with/in the space of preparing for the work of Teacher, yet it is in this chapter that I begin to engage with my most personal aspects of the story of be(com)ing. Reflecting on the nature of the personal, it is easy to get caught up in the attachment, looking back at an image that cannot be readjusted; however, I return to the idea of aparigraha, releasing my attachment so I might begin to attend to what is, what was, or what might be with/in this present moment. Bateson (1994) remarks:

To attend means to be present, sometimes with companionship, sometimes with patience. It means to take care of. Its least common meaning is to give head to, for this meaning has been preempted by the familiar, pay attention, which turns a gift into an economic transaction. Yet surely there is a powerful link between presence and care. The willingness to do what needs to be done is rooted in attention to what is (109).

Presence is rooted in the breathe, that which exists with/in the aesthetic spaces of be(com)ing. The aesthetic spaces I refer to are not necessarily beautiful by conventional definitions; instead, the spaces are messy and alive, shifting across people and moments, responding to the fluidity of experience, the temporality of life. As one becomes present, she can no longer live her story in isolation, with each inhalation of awareness she moves closer toward the OM of remembering. Richardson (1997) considers the pedagogical and transformative possibilities of the OM, reflecting that “By emotionally binding people together who have the same experiences, whether in touch with each other or not, the collective story overcomes some of the isolation and alienation of contemporary
life”(33). I may ‘tell’ (my) story, yet by offering spaces, I invite multiple voices to enter into the dialogue of experience, dis/rupting that which I or we might claim as our own. By opening my testimony, it becomes a work of sel(f)es-study and as Perselli (2005) notes “… all self-study texts are meant to be worked on (rather than recognized as ‘art’: we appreciate ‘performance’ not ‘genius’)” (32). The genres I fuse are varied, existing with/in a moment, yet they are meant to be spread out openly ready to be cut, cracked, and rearranged. While each genre might have its own qualities, I consider my testimony to be a form of poetic representation. It is this poetic representation that Richardson (1997) proposes “… reveals the process of self-construction, the reflexive basis of self-knowledge, the inconsistencies and of a life spoken as a meaningful while …” (143).

I am

I am not

I speak

I do not

I RAGE

... Each movement a risk of overexposure of my self, confused – I move to comfort those around me, seeking my own solace or way of being as I reject the spastic motions and wells of my own loss - negotiating my need to be present within a place of expectation.
The struggle is often an intense one as teachers seek their own (imagined) definitions of self(es) within the boundaries established by school and federal policies, the portrayal of ideal and not so ideal teachers in the media, and one’s own experiences as a learner, as well as those other experiences that might deeply impact one’s sense of being in the world – both within and without the context of the classroom. Teaching is a practice of negotiation as one seeks ownership of (imagined) choice of pedagogy and personal action, while maneuvering oneself as subject within the space of desire, ideology and power. While the illusion of autonomy is enticing, there is often a feeling of melancholy (Salvio & Kesson, 2004) as teachers discover that within each (imagined) choice of practice and being there exists a certain sense of loss. Loss of the imagined self who might be in control becomes a constant for many teachers as they move through spaces of education in which they may feel there is no chance to practice as they believe they so desire. William Ayers (2002) comments on the challenge to negotiate among these ‘choices’ that seem to shout out limitations of being within the context of the school and classroom:

Teachers must always choose – they must choose how to see the students before them, how, as well to see the world, what to embrace and what to reject, whether to support or resist this or that directive. In school where the insistent illusion that everything has already been settled is heavily promoted, teachers experience a constricted sense of choice, diminished imaginative space, a feeling of powerlessness regarding the basic questions of teaching and the larger purposes of education (p. 42).

Yet choice is a problematic term, hence my inclusion of the word imagined throughout this discussion; for as even when one feels that she is making choices, she
continues to move within particular discourses that shape the lens of thought and decision. In speaking the experience through the poetic spaces of sel(f)es-inquiry, I step toward and inward presence, where my gaze can be/come attentive even as I remain a part of the imag/ined. While I am finally able to gain a new perspective, to see through new lenses, my desire shifting, I am not untangled, as new discourses and powers leave etchings across these new lenses. Etchings or no etchings, the prism of poststructural (un)knowing cannot possibly be reached while one remains trapped returning/reliving the moments of trauma without the benefit of those insights gained through a telling that enables an engaged and embodied (re)turning to and (re)living of the moment.

**Seeking sel(f)es**

My life as a teacher has always been that wrought with resistance and desire – as I move to make some sense of the tangles that pull me toward an ambiguous emptiness. Faces, voices intersect as the multiple stories of teacher (self) entwine with the pull of those discourses that encourage and push (my)self, the other to in/visibility (Bateson, 1994, p.57). It is in this in/visibility that I am haunted by the echoes that move across the void created by and existing within loss. At times I wonder, am I mad – existing at once both on the outside and inside (Felman, 2003), having no place in which or with which I might belong. But in belonging nowhere I dis(un)cover something new, fresh, beginning for as I am reminded again that, “Loss, shift, and rupture create presence through absence, they become tactile, felt, seen” (Springgay, Irwin, Wilson Kind, 2004, p. 4).

I hear the echo of (my)self
Coming from a distance
A place with no name
I run
Until in a moment I realize
I have gone (no)where
What is it I see
Know
No
I am winded as I seek
To claim the echo
And so I stop
Only to return
Some other time
The emptiness remains
And I am lost
In my confinement
For an/other
Moment

Returning to myself, I once again was protected, aware of emptiness, but also safe from the chance of a moment of unexpected expression. As each moment slipped into the other words, faces, and emotions became blurred, meaning slipped outside the quiet of the library toward another space and time.

I find my/self seeking
today and tomorrow
yet yesterday circles
dancing with my inspiration
and space of degradation
a hand my hand
reaches out toward
something
in a space of
nothingness
Yesterday
the trauma still beats
within my veins
the day
desire

desire

It is not concrete experiences, but rather multiple messages from the media, government, parents, and supervisors amongst others, that seek to place the self within a hegemonic roles; it is these messages clustered as stories we tell ourselves and others tell us that become the means to make sense within the present story or stories. Judith Robertson (1997) notes in particular the ways in which pre-service teachers identify with those aspects of films about teaching that reach into their own fantasy life, but those fantasies are limited often being about devotion, and empowering students while overcoming obstacles of economics, ability, and expectation.

MEANING ?????

Even in teaching

We ask

and are told ...
If we consider the notion of sel(f)es, understanding that identity is a relationship evolving through one’s interaction with and in particular contexts, belonging to specific institutional and societal structures (McCarthy&Moje, 2002) it is important then to be attentive to the contradiction that exist as those be(com)ing Teacher move through the multiple (un)named postures that position them, attempting to honor both the subjective self and the desire to be recognized (Hillman, 1988) as well as valued and/or approved (Mitchell&Weber, 1995, Danielwicz, 2001) within those discourses that may silence the self. I ask, is it my desire to see my/self as described by Nealon and Searls-Giroux (2004) an “inwardly generated phenomenon, a notion of personhood based on particular (yet strangely abstract) qualities that make us who we are” (p. 37); I attend to this question with purpose, recognizing the danger of returning to what might seem a tantalizing myth. Our selves do exist singularly, yet self also clearly rises out of a collaborative fiction of the desiring self living in society. If I see myself as this static individual moving across one space, with one basic way of knowing (my)self, I am left vulnerable, unaware of those external influences that factor in my choices and perceptions of the world.

*(un)truthful be/longing*

I can/not hear

my/self

moving in and out

of
... Children lined up in the hallway, like the beads upon a belt each adding his or her own color and expression, highlighting a story of hope and expressed individuality. It had been Halloween and all the children were dressed up for the annual parade - anticipation weighed heavy, perhaps so heavy that few had remember to even carry their books across the hallway as the prepared for the next class. I always liked watching the students switch for each subject, the brief glimpse of an interaction existing outside the conforming space of the classroom.

On this particular morning, I chatted with the first students I had been able to call my own as they waited to enter the classroom across the hall - they laughed and pushed and told stories of tests and crushes. Bo was busy in the unfolding of tales, working hard to entertain those around him with his own special beat. Waving his hands in the air and dancing about, he reminded everyone that he was a peaceful hippie and to “just love, that is where it’s at.” Even today, I can still hear his deep little voice, the way you could tell how he never quite opened his mouth when he spoke - and see him dancing about his classmates, making them smile. In that moment I saw the child as I wanted him to be.

Will you not listen

You must complete

see me

the task

standing

assigned

I want so much

perform

to cross

as determined
When reflecting upon my educational experiences I always find myself caught within Gilman’s (1913) wallpapered room … regimented patterns of the horizontal and vertical create strict boundaries on my imagined self, preventing the opportunity to run beyond - to see something (un)defined and (re)markable. But the experience of truth and desire, entrapment and escape, individuality and communality exist dually as problematic and possible as Merleau-Ponty (2004) describes:

As a matter of principle, humanity is precarious: each person can only believe what he (she) recognizes to be true internally and, at the same time, nobody thinks or makes up his mind without already being caught up in certain relationships with others, which leads him (her) to opt for a particular set of opinions (p. 87).

What is my truth but that belonging to (an)other – shifting and existing but only for a moment. Bound by the trauma of confined desire and death, opinions scream – tightening their grip upon my conception of the teaching self, until by bearing witness, I claim the experience and am acknowledged by the other, who is my/self or she who may never be visible to me (Irigaray, 2004).

I became a teacher to claim my ‘truth’ – to give my own childhood the chance to breathe and exist within a world that sought to maintain and manipulate my self into a being who might ultimately wither within an environment that provided little nourishment to those desires and losses for being Teacher, that dwelt within. I chose to teach, at first, with the desire to make a difference giving to my students that which I believed I had needed and not gotten as a student – to empower and give voice to those that might otherwise not be heard ... and perhaps in some small way I have
accomplished this goal however (un)nameable it is, but I find myself remaining lost - caught within the fantasy of my childhood - to be heard, seen, and valued and it is in this place, this moment that I stop to reflect on the teacher I have become and she who I desired and desire to be. My desire is a yearning that exists in a messy tangle of paradigms and imagined personal ‘freedom’ with that of a loss a sense of self and other, that remains and defines so much of what I do. Deborah Britzman (1994) explores this complexity of tangled ideals and selves in teaching remarking that:

... teaching can be recognized as a struggle for voice and discursive practices amid a cacophony of past and present voices, lived experiences, and available practices. The tensions among what has preceded, what is confronted, and what one desires shape the contradictory desires of learning to teach (Britzman, 8).

Contradiction and desire become entangled in the sp(l)ace of my (teaching) trauma. It is only by speaking of my feelings of be(com)ing invisible and losing a child that shouted out his claims for visibility, that I might hear my voice through those discourses that bind and confuse.

Teacher

voices echo

my Self

and all the selves

I want to

Be

Seeking answers

Singular or multiple

of who I am

Teacher

A voice

amongst many
An (un)certain gaze toward sel(f)es

Moving across the landscape of memory, I find myself “venturing further into postmodernism, (but) I welcome the anxiety of leaving uncertainties and conflicts unresolved, and questions unanswered” (Buttignol 1999, p. 124). But still caught up in the uncertainty, I again need to ask – is there something that I have returned for – to be recognized, validated, somehow prove myself? By bearing witness, perhaps I seek to (un)name those losses that burden my (imagined) teaching (self), and the voices that
exclude me – existing and interacting along the terrain of my subjectivity – for perhaps in the (un)namning I might be led or lead myself to a place of praxis.

Praxis (re)shows me – (re)learns me through the moment of being in that sp(l)ace of not knowing – I (re)learned something I say all the time in my teaching- that it is in letting go that we find, we cannot be found until we are lost. Yes that is what I have learned – I learned, (re)learned what I know but forget or hang onto too lightly (deCossen, p. 24).

“Hello,” I say and I can hear a gentleness in my voice, a warm wind in me, for I am not greeting only her, but myself” (Slater, 1996, p. 181).

This sixth year of school had been a rough one for my independent friend, he had faced isolation as punishment - spending his lunch breaks eating with the children in the primary grades and spending recess time in the library. But it seemed that he made the best of it, relishing in those brief moments of opportunity when we was able to laugh and play with his classmates. It seemed that Bo was invincible, refusing to conform or accept the normalizing limitations that many of those around him pressed upon his being. The stories of his debacles often filled the teacher’s lounge with laughter, perhaps it was in admiration of this bright boy who sought to fill in the cracks of conformity with his own vivid language, learning a new word each day to enhance that which he wrote and that which he did. But the those lines of structure that hold the self within the space of school are peculiar things - often times as teachers and students, we don’t know quite where they are sending us.

In teaching I sought to acknowledge the child within, a child who was silent and alone having somehow never had a chance to be. While I have left the classroom space
that pushed and pulled across the caverns of my psyche, I somehow remain Teacher, she who is in a process of continued formation and transformation as I seek to make sense of what I am doing and the possibilities for what my movements may be/come (Britzman, 1994). When I entered the classroom where I would be called Teacher, I saw my own reflection of desire shadowed and highlighted in the faces of those children who I would call my own and standing beside each child was an image I could not quite recognize - another, my/sel(f)es. Perhaps it was this inability to move my attention beyond myself (Martusewicz, 1997) that froze me in a sp(l)ace of melancholic wandering, but I was overwhelmed by the need/desire to give – and perhaps in the giving, experience – that which I had not received.

A child
(my) self
stands
on the edge
waiting
looking toward
a sea of possibility
where
she may (be)come
the color of hope
shifts with the day
she continues
but can/not
wait
Performing whose desire, where?

I remember a month or so after Bo’s death, his teachers were getting his things together to send to his parents – his report card included. My friend Karla, red with a rage that seemed to bleed out her pores stomped into my classroom overwhelmed within the confusion of grief and outrage at the comments another teacher had left on Bo’s report card: “Language Arts: D, Bo did not follow the directions and decided to write on topics of his own choice and did not turn in several papers.” Ripping up the copy of the report card, Karla demanded that this teacher write something else that might respect the memory of this boy who wrote poems and told stories that mirrored an insight beyond the grasp of his years – for how could one possibly send anything else to grieving parents. I agreed, but also I saw how even in his absence, Bo would never be accepted, his self never honored beyond that which did not resist conformity.

As beginning teachers find themselves drawn to the practice of teaching, they are often blinded, in the space of passion and desire, to those outside influences that play such a significant role in the way they themselves perceive their positions and responsibilities as teachers. The pedagogies and subjectivities of pre-service teachers do not stand alone, but instead as Charles Lemert (2002) comments “… most of the actions and feeling that helps us enter into working relations with fellow members of the world are not all that private … (t)hey are in fact, performances we execute in acceptably close conformity to widely accepted social rules” (p. 128). Teaching may be recognized as a performance, one we prepare for our entire lives, but in this preparation knots occur that impact our (inter)action. While rendering the images of pre-service teachers dreaming of
themselves in the ideal role, Mitchell and Weber (1999) remind us that “those who teach are in the position to re-enact, perhaps in unconscious ways, the very same scenes that they themselves have experienced” (p. 34). As one grows as a teacher, so to do his or her understandings of self in practice, yet, as Max van Manen (1997) articulates, “A person cannot reflect on lived experience while living in the experience” (p. 10). While I concur with van Manen’s assertion, I believe it is important to address what is meant by the lived experience. Reflexivity through testimony is a means of (re)living experience that offers many possibilities for praxis. When one re-enters into the space of (re)lived experience, reflections shift, intersecting with multiple moments of past, present, and future. As one negotiates through the tangles of moments, identifying the subtleties and silence, the pre-service and beginning teacher begin to move about, developing new understanding and insights across space and time; by (re)turning to (re)experience the ‘scenes’ of a ‘lived’ moment these understandings may become richer, but they are always fluid and shifting. However, this shift can never occur unless one speaks, moving beyond the moment of origin.

Past
Present future
Working

In Unison

Becoming

Moments of consciousness colliding ...
In the fog, of knowing and loss I slowly walked toward my classroom, that room a container that protected and restricted each child held within. How was it possible for me in my own pain and confusion, my isolation ... how was it possible for me to create a sense of normalcy, when I felt that I was spinning out of control, my desire crashing upon the rocky shore of ‘reality’? I saw Bo sitting in the back of my room, in a row that I had been told I must create by a supervisor, I heard him say “I have an idea” ... I have an idea ... Bo had many ideas and they were different and they were brilliant and I wondered ... Had he known? Had I honored him? Perhaps I had failed Bo, as I felt I continued to fail my own self (both the adult and the child), but I could do something for my students. In that moment I decided that above anything else I must make it clear to each child with whom I came in contact with that who he or she was - was beautiful and that child was loved. In all my pain, I still think I succeeded in doing that on that particular day, as we told and read stories and shared in one another’s tears and basked in moments of play. But did I continue?  

Oh how I wanted to  
To love as a teacher, is a challenging task especially if you cannot quite recognize why who it is that is doing the loving.

**Witnessing the movements of (im)possibility**

I (re)turn to the (s)p(l)ace that beckons me, moving through the loss – to see and (re)experience that which I had forgotten to acknowledge or explore when the moment
first arrived. The churning of expectations tugs at my consciousness, but I move on, in unison with the voices of those other experiences – mine and yours – that in the telling, (be)come something tangible. It is in the (s)p(l)ace of bearing witness to my loss(es) that I can move, freeing myself from the expectation of a moment, stepping gingerly and heavily across those footprints set before – as I add my own – somehow different than before. Desire reignited and ‘reality’ exist together, shifting and adapting as I realize neither is fixed. A teacher, woman, child I return to those texts of trauma, landscapes of self and other that tell us a story, layered in complexity, of who I want to be with/in and with/out each shifting moment.

Present
and Past
Collide into something
unified breaking
and becoming
moving forward
back
shifting searching for the known
to make sense of the un/known
images text
reality confused
imagined and real
until it becomes a part of the being
doing
Teaching is a social process that weaves the voices of authority, other and sel(f)es as it grows into the moving tapestry of classroom and action. In this fluid (be)coming it is important to look closely at the movement, color, (w)holes and texture. This process/experience of reflection through collective and performative testimony establishes the potential for reflexivity and praxis on the part of all those individuals acting within the process. Penny Lewis (1993), reflecting on the work of Jung, remarks that “… individuals do have a personal unconscious, which is filled with their repressed history and split-off part of themselves, but they also have access to a universal pool of knowing from which archetypal movements, sounds, themes, and images emerge” (p. 38). Until one speaks outside the (s)p(l)ace of isolation, diving into the pool of the (traumatic) experience by giving testimony, these themes cannot be recognized and thus praxis is unimaginable.
In the space of current educational policies and agendas it is as bell hooks (1994) contends, “… crucial that critical thinkers who want to change our teaching practices talk to one another, collaborate in discussion that crosses boundaries and creates a space for intervention” (p. 129). But these discussions cannot occur until we move beyond the pain that paints a restricted line across our living selves. It is the act of performative testimony that offers the opportunity to move beyond the tangled lines of restriction. As teachers it is important to open ourselves to those opportunities of loss, movement, experience and change becoming critical thinkers and participants within the dialogue of what it means to teach, to be. Listening, moving carefully about the space of our existence to hear and (re)experience the echoes of buried discourses that may exist in fantasy and breathe as they come to play in teacher’s negotiations and sense of self, exposing one to the terrain of the experience. I believe it is significantly important for me, as teacher to listen carefully, taking the time to dig into the (s)p(l)ace of loss, bearing witness to my own traumas, in presentation of self and pedagogy, rather than (re)acting, escaping, or stating what should be without insight. Renee Norman (2001) acknowledges this value of testimony as she considers Gilmore’s (1994) idea that confessional writing is an act of transgression, a movement I see as moving beyond Truth or ‘reality’ into the space of possibility and the (un)known. We do not know … instead we move with/in the space of our subjectivity – reflecting and exploring various caverns of understanding across our losses. Creating change comes from the process of untangling those traumas that bind, educating ourselves as we become present to all that is and was around us, be(coming) familiar with those discourses in motion so that we might be able to enter into a dialogue of pedagogical breathing.
Savasana is about shedding .... (like) the snake sloughing off its skin to emerge glossy and resplendent in its renewed colors. We have many skins, sheaths, thoughts, prejudices, preconceptions, ideas, memories, and projects for the future. Savasana is a shedding of these skins, to see how glossy and gorgeous, serene and aware is the rainbow colored snake who lies within. We even lie on the ground as the snake does with the maximum possible surface of our bodies in contact with the earth (Iyengar, 2005, p. 232).
Chapter VII

In(con)clusion – Savasana

We don’t know all the reasons that propel us on a spiritual journey, but somehow life compels us to go. Something in us knows that we are not just here to toil at our work. There is a mysterious pull to remember (Kornfield, 2000, p.5).

Rigorous Experience

“To teach is to bring our questions to others, to share as a teacher and as students in this process of thinking about who we are on this earth. But that means, of course, facing the paradoxical space that circulates in our attempts to say or write or teach about this life and this earth, to face the constant and beautiful return of the question and our imperfection at answering” (Martusewicz, 1997: 112)

I remember when I first began considering the idea of a dissertation: people asked me, what will you hope to discover, what will your work determine, how will your work be different? I think back to those questions as I reach the concluding pages of the (re)search journey I have shared with the multiple authors who have entered and might enter the space of this dissertation, and reflect on the multiple facets of my own writing voice; I am a teacher learning. My work has not been an attempt to bring new information to willing pupils, but rather to engage a lively dialogue of movement and making sense of experience.

We arrive at the mat

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16 Savasana, the corpse pose, is a movement of absolute letting go and relaxation usually done at the end of a yoga session, although it may be done at anytime during the practice. Many use this pose as a way to provide time for the postures of the session to resonate through the body becoming a part of the practitioner. For further clarification of Savasana please see the previous page of fragmentation.
with us
the events
of the day
our bodies
broken and energetic
our minds racing and lethargic
there is a need
a waiting for a response
a fulfillment
an asking
and so the space is open
what is it
you need
to move
to rest
what hurts
what feels good
in the back of the circle
a soft voice speaks
I need to just stop, to relax
I need to move, to awaken another speaks
one other needs to stretch
it goes on and on
until we pause for breathe
to share the OM
we are (not)ready
the instructor speaks
listen to your body through the movements
challenge yourself
but if something is too painful, stop readjust, wait
and we are relieved
ready
to begin the journey
toward (re)awakening and relaxation
but the movements are rigorous
to complete them
we must return to the breathe
to our bodies and thoughts
so that we might be(come)
within a moment
that which we are
within but a moment

When one (re)turns to the moment through the breath of awareness, senses are alive – calling on the attentiveness and responsiveness of both body and mind. However, as Irigaray (2002) identifies, over time we have learned to step away from the body, separating embodied experience from the intellectual, “The body is no longer able to develop its perceptions spiritually, but to detach itself from the sensible for a more abstract, more speculative, more sociological culture”(56). There is a certain ease when one disassociates experience from the body as the struggles or pleasures are then something from the mind, and as thus are problems which might be solved. When body and mind join together across experience in a space of presence, there is no longer a problem to be solved; rather, like the yogi in practice, one begins to make readjustments and respond within the movements of be(com)ing. There is no perfection in these
responses as we are responding across a moment that is fluid and multifaceted, the knowing never ends because the practice is one that does not come to a conclusion. This inconclusivity of a yogic flow mirrors that of the work of performative inquiry; Lather (2001) considers this in her own work noticing that:

A focus on excess and dissemination, rather than ontological fixity shifts the concept of the concept in a way that they asymmetrical dualities collapse in order to exacerbate the tensions between theory and practice, to reveal the undecidability of praxis, its constitutive exclusions(11).

The nature of this undecidability brings with it a sense of dis/comfort as participants become aware of their own position with/in the ambiguity; discovering that they might move with/in, but there is no way out.

Across the space of this dissertation, participants have been invited to move with/in a journey across experience, to engage with the movements of be(com)ing Teacher as a means to acknowledge the varied nature of the experience. The work we do is that of living; Wilson-Kind (2005) articulates as our goal as teachers, artists, and (re)searchers along this landscape of meaning-making: Living, as it were, not at a distance, but face to face and engaged. Opening ourselves to the daily struggles and challenges we bring to our work, our teaching/learning, and to our research”(44). Doing this type of work, being present to our performances of understanding across space and time is rigorous work as we push our minds and bodies to their limits, facing realities that we might not feel ready to face. While the nature of aparigraha calls on us to let go, many hold dearly to our notions of self experience, believing that we know what it really means to be within the experience. There is a sense of dis/comfort in this act of holding
on, as new Truths begin to echo upon the poststructuralist landscape of this performative and poetic sel(f)es-inquiry.

My body is tired
I have held on
to my knowing
the pose of my/self
is that which I time
wanting my performance to be exact
looked upon by others
as something
to emulate
I stop
there is a pain
have I held to long
should I readjust
I look to someone else
to validate my movement
to tell me
how I must move
again
I stop
becoming present
my body moving
with others
breathing deeply
I attend to my bodies
position
I shift and there is pain
shift again and find pleasure
my movements beautiful

hideous

coming together with others

I realize this is hard work

but my spirit

my awareness

grows

There is a collective dis/comfort as we begin to inquire into our movements, reflecting on what positions each limb of action. My students arrive at my classroom ready to be told the rules for practicing Teacher, ready to embrace the postures that have been established. When I ask them to pause, to move through the postures by using image, word, and performance many are troubled for they have always trusted the established images of these postures to be true; there is a certain sense of fear as they begin to expose the movements of their adopted truths, fear that there might be nothing left to grasp on to. Yet with hope, their movements through the journey of be(com)ing Teacher, will be(come) those that they might be present to, making adjustments when they find something does not seem to work, recognizing even the adjustments are momentary and need to be (re)turned to, no truth taken for granted.

Grumet (1988) notes looking at concepts of curriculum, “In order for curriculum to provide the moral, epistemological, and social situations that allow persons to come to form, it must provide the ground for their action rather than their acquiescence” (172). This can be challenging for the (re)searching teacher educator as she tries to engage in a
hopeful dialogue of present inquisition, that demands her own awareness of posture and position and a recognition that the work she does is not her own; instead her voice is simply an addition to the OM of a shared experience in be(com)ing. Across the landscape of a performative pedagogy of possibility the ground becomes shaky, making the negotiations of those be(com)ing Teacher all the more rigorous.

Entering into the rigorous work of yogic practice across collective re/searching, we begin to embrace a new sense of pedagogical possibility across multiple moments of meaning making; Irigaray (2002) suggests “… yoga—was what could help awaken or reawaken and discover words and gestures carrying another meaning, another light, another rationality” (6). Through the rigorous work of present be(com)ing - might we be renewed.

(Re)turning to the breathe

The movements of be(com)ing Teacher and the work of making sense of these movements is no doubt un/comfortable for all those involved as they (re)visit, release,
and (re)engage with that which might be (un)known. “Consumed by a desire for security, prestige, and power, we tend to identify ourselves and others with what we have and what we can control and not with who we are or what we experience (Liston, 2003, p. 112); this desire to grasp the known leaves many looking forward toward a Truth of self and other outside experience. As I have mentioned previously, we often attend to the rules of be(com)ing rather than becoming present to the moment. Wrapped up in a truth seeking engagement with past and future, many of us find that we have forgotten to breathe during the present experience. However Irigaray (2002) reflects, “…remaining linked to experience, it engenders a sort of milieu that is at once natural, sensible, and spiritual where knowledge of the past circulates and where that of the present and the future is elaborated” (59). To encourage the sort of healthy circulation Irigaray refers to, one must breath, allowing the reverberations to move throughout one’s regions of be(com)ing.
Through the breathe these reverberations of sel(f)es with/in experience begin to layer themselves upon the landscape of our perceptions; colors of the present and future merge and separate as they fuse with that which is held within our own memories of be(com)ing. Irigaray (2002) notes that “… if this breathe is situated at the level of the center (of the chakra) of heart, if speech, of listening – as in the Annunciation – this breath is pure spiritual being” (86). I recognize this way of ‘spiritual being’ as that which allows one to transcend attachments, instead only gazing at them as a way to make sense of the movements of be(com)ing. Breathing, looking at each (un)known, one is able to interact with and move these fragments with/in and across experience, creating space from the released attachment.

As the teacher educator (re)searching, I attempt to breathe across my observations, developing a sense of awareness of both self and other. The breath allows my senses to engage with the experience, listening carefully to both that which is and that which is not present.

When I listen, I surrender myself to the Others dense plots, to the profound idiosyncrasies that mark her speech as bearing her own historical relevance without knowing how or why, and I yield to her appeal to welcome me and respond to her (Todd, 2003, p.135).

As Todd considers the ‘dense plots’ of Other, I reflect on the relationship that develops with the breathe. The word plot might insight an image of one who is against my/self, yet my interpretation of plot exists across the performative landscape of this dissertation. Plot becomes a complex story of living where knowing becomes tangled with multiple
interpretations of the experience. This fusing of interpretation is important in that it offers varied means of making sense of the experience of be(com)ing.

I am broken

my story

just shards of a self

I once believed

was I

the lines of my knowing

are they

make believe

what is it you see

in your own imagination

what do

the shards in space

become?
As the fragments of momentary knowing are collected and (re)arranged, new ways of making sense of experience emerge. It is the breath that invites an engagement with the image. I might look at the image quickly without breath and see a messy tangle of color, or something fixed; yet if I pause, becoming present through my breath, I see the image shift, lines of color intersecting and breaking, circles connecting the fragments; as I continue with the breathe each fragment moves across the moment opening up multiple spaces and ways of knowing.

I run

Attempting

not to be

who I fear I might be(come)

my body tired

movement frozen

attached to that which I thought

I let go

I do not breathe

to go on

my heart must pump

I have a need

for oxygen

and so I

breathe

I have found

new energy to move forward

breathing I can see where I am
I can see forward knowing my lungs my mind there are spaces open to (be)coming

The spaces that emerge through the breathe are pedagogical, offering one the opportunity to allow her voice to echo with/in the chorus of multiple (un)known movements, reverberating experience until it can be viewed as a new and hopeful possibility belonging to all who journey with the breath along the textual space of living inquiry.

**Awakening and wondering**

I have entered into the textual space of this dissertation, ready to share my own experience – to offer spaces for dialogue, recognizing that the experience of be(com)ing Teacher is not mine alone. I admit that my perceptions have been established as I gaze through the subjective lens of self; therefore, there are limitations in my expression. As I move across the landscape of this text, attempting to better understanding the ambiguous nature of be(com)ing Teacher, I continue to interact with new and varied stories of Teacher, seeking to explore the experience and ways pre-service and beginning teachers
negotiate their sense of self and understandings within those structures that seek to include and exclude those imagined aspects of the self that may seem most meaningful to the individual. The interactions across this space have called on all participants to awaken, becoming present to experience through the breath; however, like any yogic journey, there comes a time when we must pause to refresh and reflect upon the experience.

There was a time not long ago and perhaps even today, when one might ask me, what is the purpose in doing work that is so autobiographical in nature? We live in an unstable society, where to often we find ourselves searching for answers when they do not exist in the sense we imagine them. Denzin (2003) notes “The dividing line between private troubles and public issues slips away” (257). I believe that there is value in this line slipping away, when considers the work of (re)searching. We are intimately involved in our work; Irigaray (2002) highlights this when reflecting on Nietzsche’s comment “our works are our children.” Every claim we make is in a sense a brushstroke upon the portrait of the self we want others to see. Yet I consider Denzin’s (2003) thoughts about this slippage between the private and public, are there not new images and sel(f)es that unfold as we enter into the OM of collectivity?

In the discursive spaces of performativity there is no distance between performance and politics that the performance enacts. The two are intertwined each nourishing the other, opposite sides of the same coin, one and the same thing (Denzin, 2003, p. 224)
By entering into a collective dialogue in which I tell my story, not as an intentional means to be visible, but rather to invite the visibility of multiple selves who engage in a dialogue of varied story along the experience of be(com)ing Teacher. As perspective shifts the story is no longer singular, rather it becomes part of a collective understanding, one that may not be claimed by any particular group or individual – instead all participants fuse the graffiti of our own epistemologies and experience across the space of this (un)sacred text (Grumet, 1998).

My journey through movements of this dissertation is not mine alone; therefore, I wonder what the text might look like as others begin to fuse their own interpretations and stories across the landscape of that which I share and consider. What is it that one might cut out or add? What questions might arise? I participated not long ago in a Collective Biography workshop conducted by Bronwyn Davies. The experience at the time was not a positive one for me, as Davies asked us to be present within the experience we were writing of. It was a story that I was passionate about, my first memory – one of loss, revelation, and a spiral staircase. I wrote that story, through the lens of the intellectual trying to paint a picture of what it meant rather than what it was then and how I might re/imagine it through the shifting spaces of my own subjectivity. Davies tried to explain this to me, but I was wrapped up in my own need to be a good writer and to give voice to what I thought the experience was. I was not ready to understand, to be present to the fluidity of body and soul upon the landscape of self and experience - instead I was somewhat offended. Our stories are alive, shifting and be/coming, flowing through the spaces and as Davies’ (2000) describes “folds”. One cannot choreograph knowing; rather, our stories are improvisational – reacting and existing within historical spaces and time.
In clinging to what I believed was true for me, I left the story grasping for breath - so that it might stay alive… I had thought about it, tried to make sense of it for so long that I had come to conclusions of what it was and what it meant. I did not want to invite the reader in to share the experience, rather I wanted to shut the reader out – to allow them to see me as I had for so long desired to be seen, a desire and image that over time had become fixed, but did this fixed image (or desire) ever really belong to me?

And so I (re)turn to this dissertation recognizing the beating of my own voice across the living landscape of inquiry. There are stories that I have shared, those of my students and my/sel(f)es; however, the voice I hear is my own. I try to acknowledge this voice as Davies (2000) reflects in response to Benson:

… by allowing oneself to be aware of the contradictions, of the discursive constitutions of the self as contradictory (by claiming rather than disowning the unconscious and ‘irrational elements of subjectivity), one may have access to other ways of knowing and to powerful ways of being that are not the result of normative judgment from within the dominant discourses made by those positioned as agenic within them(59).

What might I do to dis/rupt my knowing further? Throughout this work, I reflect upon the idea of aparigraha – yet my words tie together in a storied flow and I find myself asking, is this not attachment. Like my mentioned experience with the collective biography workshop, I find myself holding tight to some claiming of my own position with/in experience. There is value in my claims, not as a means to convey truth, but rather by establishing a starting point from which to begin the living interrogation of performative inquiry. I consider the next step I, or you, or we might take through our movements of making sense of the ambiguity of be(com)ing Teacher and I return to the
metaphor or the fused glass. The glass presents a beautiful image, but the image is fragile, breakable, my natural response would be to hold tight to the treasure; instead in my (re)awakening, I see this as a new beginning, a time to shatter the image and rearrange the fragments once again, asking what new pedagogical possibilities might arise from the space?

**Amidst a hopeful concl/(f)usion**

We have learned through the journey, living, noted by Wilson (2005), “… not at a distance, but face to face and engaged. Opening ourselves to the daily struggles and challenges we bring to our work, our teaching/learning and to our research”(44). Through an active engagement with the breathe, knowing is never finished as new voices enter into the dialogue of this living and performative inquiry. It is within the space of this conclusion that I seek to offer continued dis/ruption of those understandings which have been arrived at, acknowledging that they exist within a specific moment, and like breathe, they are fleeting. Yet it is these same fleeting understandings that engage new dialogue across the space of inquiry offering up pedagogical possibility. While the text of the dissertation may end, the stories never end and thus what is known remains as that which might also be (un)known, unless we engage in a collective dialogue of reflection throughout the space of be(com)ing Teacher. And so, as I conclude in the midst – I consider the space that the dissertation has offered and what new spaces might be carved upon the glass of the collective experience – offering up hope for those who struggle in the process of be(com)ing Teacher.
Dear Young Teacher,

I write this letter in a space of forgetting and remembering. The you I once knew no longer exists; instead new teachers and I’s begin to etch their names across the path of my knowing what it means to make sense of sel(f)es within the classroom and world. I remember you, waking, overwhelmed with what the day ahead might have presented and feeling as if there was nowhere to turn – all the while looking for Truth and contentment in far off places where you could be the Teacher you once dreamed of. I wonder now, writing to you – what would you say to me today, what would you tell me about the work you did and what you needed?

There are moments in my writing, where I think you return – your anger and frustration as well as the desire and hope that still followed you even in moments of (in)visibility. I question myself, thinking that perhaps you take my pen and direct the story – clouding space for other stories to enter into making sense of the negotiations of be(com)ing Teacher. I believe there might be danger in that, and so I stop, pause, to question my intention throughout the work of my performative (re)search. Even while I hear the echo of your voice and find your hand grasping at my pen wanting so much to tell your own story, your voice has begun to fade. No longer do I find myself desperate to tell your story so that your pain might be recognized; the moment has passed. Instead I wonder if the you I remember is one who existed at all. Are you a figment of my imagination, a creation of multiple stories of be(com)ing Teacher fusing upon the landscape of my own making sense as a teacher educator?

Perhaps it does not matter, for there is a you who I remember, a you who will change as I change. It is these changes I think where the possibility lies, where we can move outside the limitations of an individual momentary knowing into a fluid and collective story that embraces experience as a tool to make sense of practice across context. I do not know, but I hope.

Love,

Sarah
There is this moment
    ending
    perhaps
    beginning
the lights go up
    candles blown out
and we are called to (re)turn
to the work
    of daily living
and I feel
    a sense
    of apprehension
yet somehow
    know
we are just beginning
    to breathe

NAMASTE

fused (un)knowing: breathing
References


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VITA
Sarah K. MacKenzie

Sarah Kate MacKenzie was born in Niskayuna, NY on February, 24, 1976, the daughter of Lisa and Jonathan MacKenzie. She came into this world amidst color and chaos and has continued to reflect upon the nature of be(com)ing throughout her life. Graduating from Albany Academy for Girls in 1994, Sarah sought to find a place where her explorations might be challenged and encouraged. She found such a place at the University of New Hampshire, where she graduated with a B.A. in Theatre in 1998 and a M.Ed. in Elementary Education in 2000. Not accustomed to staying on one place, Sarah had a variety of experiences during her short tenure as a classroom teacher, including teaching fifth grade at a rural school in New Hampshire, being a lead teacher at an Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound Charter School in Asheville, NC, and working as a Reading Specialist with high school students in Southern New Hampshire. Interacting with students and teachers, Sarah made it her commitment to honor the voices of those individuals in education who might otherwise be silent. She continued this commitment as she pursued her doctoral work in Language and Literacy Education at Pennsylvania State University where she received her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction in August, 2006. Sarah believes that research, education, and life are deeply intertwined and moves to acknowledge this throughout her work – integrating spirituality, art, text, and personal experience within her practice as a researcher and educator. She recognizes that knowing is an active, ever-evolving process that is simply a shifting and malleable piece in the collective kaleidoscope of being. She is grateful for her experiences and all those individuals who have been a part of her life.